INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
Citizen participation: An analysis of parent participation in district advisory councils in three Ohio school districts

Ingram, Booker T., Jr., Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1991

Copyright ©1991 by Ingram, Booker T., Jr. All rights reserved.
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: AN ANALYSIS OF PARENT PARTICIPATION IN DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCILS IN THREE OHIO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

DISSERATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Booker T. Ingram, Jr., B.A., M.A.

The Ohio State University

1991

Dissertation Committee:

Randall B. Ripley, Ph.D.
John R. Champlin, Ph.D
William Nelson, Ph.D.
Aage Clausen, Ph.D.

Approved By:

Randall B. Ripley, Advisor
Department of Political Science
Copyright by
Booker T. Ingram, Jr.
1991
DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS

For their unyielding belief and faith in the virtue of knowledge and the value of education, I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Helen and the late Booker T. Ingram, Sr. The daughter and son of poor, rural Georgia sharecroppers, their poverty was the lack of material wealth, not of mind and soul. They, like many working-class African-Americans, were of noble spirit and placed a premium upon self-pride, honesty, diligence, and determination. They very much valued learning. This dissertation represents an affirmation of their belief and faith.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the process of writing and completing a dissertation, one encounters various problems that can only be resolved through the assistance of others. I am indebted and forever grateful to those who assisted in the completion of this document. I express sincere appreciation to Dr. Randall Ripley, my principal advisor, for his guidance, insight, and unwavering support throughout the project.

Sincere appreciation also goes to the other members of my advisory committee. Thanks to Dr. William Nelson for his poignant suggestions and comments. Very special thanks go to Dr. Aage Clausen for the many hours he spent very patiently analyzing and helping me make sense of the data. To Dr. John Champlin, my graduate school mentor, thanks for the many years of support and encouragement. It was under your tutelage that I matured as a scholar and teacher. Your instruction has been invaluable.

Gratitude is expressed to Presbyterian College for providing the appropriate resources and atmosphere by which the completion of the dissertation could be realized. Many thanks go to several of my colleagues at Presbyterian College. I am most appreciative for the technical assistance Dr. Ted
Hunter and Dr. Robert Freymeyer provided. They taught me a lot about the intricacies of data analysis. My indebtedness to my colleague, Dr. J. David Gillespie, cannot be measured. The conclusion of this project would not have been realized without Dr. Gillespie's untiring and adept proofreading of each draft. Thank you for the many hours of unselfish aid.

Special thanks must go to Dr. Winona Somervill of Dillard University and to my undergraduate mentor, the late Dr. Cleveland Williams. The suggestions and technical assistance Dr. Somervill provided during the writing of the original draft proved invaluable to bringing the final product into focus. Thank you very much. It is difficult to express fully the impact that Dr. Cleveland Williams had upon my intellectual growth and development. I am extremely grateful for the support, encouragement, and nurturing he provided during my undergraduate years.

Finally, I owe an immense debt of gratitude to my wife and to my sister. To my sister, Elaine Hobbs, I offer heartfelt thanks for the skillful and conscientious typing of each draft and the revisions. To my sister's family (James Hobbs, Sr., James, Jr., and Brittany), thanks for demonstrating incredible patience and understanding during Elaine's frequent absences. To my wife, Florence, I offer sincere thanks for your unshakable faith in me and your willingness to endure my complaints and frustrations. I could not ask for a better wife.
VITA

September 17, 1951 .................. Born - Vero Beach, Florida

1973 ............................... B.A., Winston-Salem State
University, Winston-
Salem, North Carolina

1973-1974 ......................... University Minority
Fellowship, The Ohio
State University, 
Columbus, Ohio

1974-1976, 1980-1982, 
1985-1986 ......................... Teaching Associate,
Department of Political
Science, The Ohio State
University, Columbus, 
Ohio

1975 ................................. M.A., The Ohio State
University, Columbus, 
Ohio

1978-1980 .......................... Instructor, Department of
History and Government,
Kentucky State
University, Frankfort, 
Kentucky

1982-1984 .......................... Instructor, Center for
Afro-American Studies,
Ohio University, Athens,
Ohio

1986-1987 .......................... Instructor, Division of
Social Sciences, Dillard
University, New Orleans,
Louisiana

1987 to present ...................... Instructor, Department of
Political Science,
Presbyterian College,
Clinton, South Carolina
FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Political Theory

Professor John Champlin

Studies in History of Political Theory: Machiavelli to Hegel.

Studies in History of Political Theory: Hegel to the Present.

Studies in Marxist Political Theory.
Professor James Scanlon

Minor Field: Public Policy

Studies in Public Policy and Policy Analysis.
Professor Randall Ripley

Studies in Executive and Bureaucratic Politics.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. THE PARTICIPATORY CONTEXT: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADVISORY COUNCILS</th>
<th>62</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Origin of Advisory Councils</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Feasible Participation</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Passage of Title I of ESEA (1965)</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of Compliance</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Participation: The Legislative Evolution</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Politics of Implementation</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT IN COLUMBUS, CLEVELAND, AND TOLEDO</th>
<th>109</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure and Organization of District Advisory Council</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Characteristics</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of Members</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Protocol</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V. FINDINGS</th>
<th>136</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DACs and Their Decision-making Style</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social influences on Participation</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VI. SUMMARY</th>
<th>180</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What Have We Learned/Discovered?</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections Upon Realist and Idealist's Claims</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Recommendations</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Future Research</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDIXES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL EVALUATION REPORT--COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES--COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES--TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA--COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL AGENDA--CLEVELAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. DISTRICT WIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
   AGENDA--TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS . . . . . . . 233

G. LETTER TO DAC MEMBERS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 234

H. DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL QUESTIONNAIRE . . . . 236

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 245
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Five-Year Trends: Council Membership</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Opportunities for Parents to Participate in the</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision-making Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Percentage of Districts with DACs</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Percentage of Schools with SACs</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Students Served by the Chapter I Program</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Breakdown of DAC Members' Total Family Income</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Political Breakdown of DAC Members Party</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Breakdown of DAC Members' Education Status</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>DAC Members' Perceptions of the Importance of</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council Work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>DAC Members' Perceptions of the Influence Their</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments Have Upon Administrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Parent Involvement in Program Design, by How</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Were Informed About Chapter I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Person Most Responsible for Informing About DACs'</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>DAC Members' Perceptions of the Influence Their</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comments Have Upon Decisionmaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Parent Involvement in Program Design, by Percentage</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Frequency of Voting in Presidential Elections</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Frequency of Voting in Local Elections .......... 166
17. Frequency of Attendance at DAC Meetings .......... 167
18. Frequency of School Visitations ..................... 168
19. Influence of Education on Number of School Visitations ............... 171
20. Influence of Income on Number of School Visitations .......... 172
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Columbus DAC Attendance 1985-86</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Public participation historically has been linked to citizenship, political power and democratic government. Western man's ideal of democratic government has consistently identified citizen participation as the core or foundation of any democratic system. Such a view has been held by great thinkers from Aristotle to Robert Dahl, from ancient times to the very present.

Although most Western thinkers agree that citizen participation is a defining characteristic of any system of democratic governance, many disagree as to the extent participation can be realized in existing democratic societies. Many political thinkers, cognizant of the complications associated with participation in mass industrial societies, express serious doubt that each socio-economic group, especially the poor, will be able to make input into those decisions affecting their lives.\(^1\) Hence, the extent to which the poor will be able to participate in the political

---

process has been a persistent problem and concern for Western thinkers.

Moreover, the issues of citizen participation and the role of the poor in the political process have fueled a long philosophical and political debate in Western academic and political circles. Theorists have developed a number of contrasting perspectives that have influenced different aspects of democratic practices. Major theoretical frameworks range from the elitist, pluralist and participatory democratic approaches, each advocating varying degrees and different forms of citizen participation.

The Western philosophical tradition with its advocacy of public participation has significantly influenced the development of American political ideas and institutions. Lines of theoretical debate have been framed in the United States through statutes like the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, with its emphasis upon "maximum feasible participation," and in the education field primarily through the 1974 education amendments to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). In an era of decentralization, the Johnson administration's policy of "maximum feasible participation" officially allowed, for the first time in America's history, full participation by the poor and minorities. "Maximum feasible participation" was designed to give the poor and minorities (i.e., Blacks and Hispanics) a chance for input into the formulation and
implementation of community development policy decisions that impact their lives.²

Likewise, in the 1974 amendments to Title I of ESEA Congress mandated the establishment of district-wide and school-site parent advisory councils in local school districts. By mandating such councils, Congress created a citizen participation component that would allow, for the first time, parents of disadvantaged students to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of an education program that significantly affected the educational opportunities of their children.

Given the contrasting views of Western thinkers regarding the role of the poor in a democratic political system, the 1974 amendments, strengthened in 1978 and transformed somewhat by the 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act and Chapter I, afford us the opportunity for empirical research of the participation of the poor in the implementation of a federal program at the local level. A fundamental aim of this dissertation is to evaluate the claim of participatory democratic theorists that widespread citizen participation,

even among the poor, can be achieved if meaningful and effective participatory institutions are established at the local level.\(^3\) An effort will be made to ascertain what in fact poor people actually do when given a structural opportunity to participate.

In pursuing a related aim, we will examine participation as a public policy. Hence, we will examine the organization and consequent institutionalization of the poor's interest as a constituent component of the Title I (which in 1981 became Chapter I) program. We do so in order to gather insight and information which may help determine whether that form of participation is a viable strategy for overcoming the socially inegalitarian features of the American political process. For various reasons, some of which will be presented later in this study, a number of political thinkers are skeptical of the federal government's efforts to arrange or create structural opportunities for participation by the heretofore politically powerless.

This dissertation also seeks to address other research aims that derive, for most part, from the issues, concerns, and arguments shaping the debate regarding public participation and the role of the poor. A brief review of

these major issues and concerns is necessary in clarifying the other aims of this research.

The Issue of Political Participation

Political scientists past and present have shown sustained interest in citizen participation and how widespread participation should be in a democracy. This issue has been a major topic of research by contemporary political scientists. One well-known political scientist observed that:

The interest in citizen participation is hardly new. It is a central theme of Aristotle's medieval disquisitions over the nature and obligations of citizenship and it is at the core of any theorizing about democracy. Discussions and arguments on the topic have a rich lineage. What is new is systematic empirical research setting forth how much of what kinds of citizen activity actually exist, what factors affect it, and what consequences follow from it.4

Many modern thinkers contend that a democracy can exist without widespread mass participation. Many others, however, feel that mass participation is necessary for satisfying the basic requirements of a democracy. Suffice to say, contemporary democratic theorists maintain contrasting views on this subject.

The contrasting views and/or theories are usually sorted into two major categories. The political scientist James J. Lea labels these two categories as democratic "realism" and

democratic "idealism." The categories are distinguished by the theorists' conceptions of the essential features of a democracy and the extent to which political participation is necessary. While here refraining from full explication of the arguments shaping the positions of "realist" and "idealist" theorists, we will briefly differentiate the ideas of the major thinkers and their thematic arguments shaping the contrasting categories of democratic thought.

Historically, the Western political tradition has consistently identified some degree of political participation as the core or foundation of any democratic system. Nonetheless, as Western scholars have grappled with the ideals and realities of existing democracies, they have for long engaged in a scholarly debate as to what degree citizen participation must exist before a society satisfies the participation requirements of a true democracy. Commenting upon this debate, political theorist William Kelso offers this useful summary: "While all forms of democratic theory see the public as playing a crucial role in the politics, they disagree on three fundamental issues: (1) what the scope of the public's power should be; (2) how the public should be defined and how it should express its views; and (3) what

---

5James E. Lea, Political Consciousness and American Democracy (Jackson, Miss.: University of Mississippi Press, 1982), pp. 167-73.
purpose should be served by popular participation in politics."\(^6\)

Participation and its purposes, role, and values in today's democracies are subjects that are fundamental to the "realist" v. "idealist" debate. Several differences distinguish the realist from the idealist theory; but one of the most salient differences is the contrasting methodological approaches employed by theorists of the two schools. Realist theorists argue that their conception of democracy derives from their observance and documentation of the modern practices of democratic governance; the idealist conception emanates instead from normative claims idealist theorists make about the intrinsic and instrumental values of participation. Realists further argue that their observations and claims about existing democracies are empirically grounded, and that the normative claims of the idealists lack any such empirical support.

The methodology shaping the realist theory of democracy has come to be known as behavioralism. Behavioralism resulted from the new intellectual and theoretical developments that shaped social science research at the end of the nineteenth century. Scholars during the late nineteenth century began to manifest increasing interest in observing and documenting what was actually going on in a particular society rather than

simply describing ideal societies. In their review of that period, the political scientists Joe Allman and Walter Anderson wrote that:

By the end of the nineteenth century, American scholars were earnestly in pursuit of a more "realistic" understanding of man, society, and politics. Some of the early scholars in American political science were already examining what was "really" going on in politics and were searching for theory and data that would more clearly meet the requirements for a science of behavior... They sought for theory that would explain the hard realities of politics, rather than prescriptions describing how people and governments should ideally behave.7

The behavioral methodology would eventually have a significant impact upon the study of political society, political behavior, and the analysis of politics. This will lead to another major difference between realist and idealist theories. Realist theorists employing a behavioral approach, have come to challenge and refute the notions and claims of classic liberal democratic theory. Classic democratic theory of the modern age originated in the seventeenth century in Europe among liberal thinkers such as John Locke, but it also had certain foundations in Greek thought, notably Aristotle's Politics and in the "Funeral Oration of Pericles" in Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War. In their writings, liberal thinkers emphasized the rights of the individual and the role that the individual citizen should

play in maintaining a healthy democracy. Also, according to classic liberal thought, the government of a democratic society should consist of elected representatives whose political decisions should reflect the people's needs and wants.8 There are several other major notions that are germane to classic liberal democratic theory. Political theorist Lane Davis offers the following summary of the major notions characterizing classic liberal democratic theory:

This theory posits the existence of rational and active citizens who seek to realize a generally recognized common good through the collective initiation, discussion, and decision of policy questions concerning public affairs, and who delegate authority to agents (elected government officials) to carry through the broad decisions reached by the people through majority vote.9

Empirically oriented theorists such as Gaetano Mosca (The Ruling Class) and Robert Michels (Political Parties) at the beginning of the twentieth century, seriously doubted that the level of participation and the form of democracy embraced in classic democratic theory and by participatory democrats was attainable, given the elitist tendencies of contemporary, large democratic organizations. According to Carole Pateman, both Mosca and Michels maintained that "the size and complexity of industrialized societies, as well as the


emergence of bureaucratic forms of modern organization, cast grave doubts on the possibility of the attainment of democracy as that concept is understood by participatory democrats.\textsuperscript{10}

Both these theorists felt that the newly formed large democratic organizations and institutions of modern capitalist society, in the final analysis, would prove to be as elitist as the old aristocratic anti-democratic institutions of feudal society that they were replacing. They contended that the organization of political units and institutions in a mass industrial state would not be conducive to the maximum participation of all the people.

Robert Michels in particular contended that large organizations tend strongly to be dominated not by their rank and file members, but by a relatively small number of leaders and activists. Studying the large Social Democratic Party of Germany, Michels eventually set forth, in characterizing such large organizations, his "iron law of oligarchy." According to Michels,

\begin{quote}
It is organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandatories over the mandators, of the delegates over delegations. Who says organization says oligarchy.\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}


Undoubtedly, the views of Mosca and Michels influenced the development of one set of arguments that questioned the feasibility or likelihood of achieving widespread mass participation as envisioned by classic democratic theory. Mosca and Michel's views represent a type of elitism which came to be a central component of realist theory. During the early decades of the twentieth century, studies and analyses by other political scientists and sociologists employing behavioral analysis tended to corroborate the claims of Mosca and Michels.

Also very significant in the development of elitism within realist theory are the ideas and thoughts of Joseph Schumpeter. Schumpeter's influential 1942 work, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, also repudiated the premium placed on mass participation by classic democratic theorists. He began his analysis by redefining democracy. In his reformulated view, democracy is a "method of government in which people have the basic right to choose the government rather than the right to make decisions and policy."\(^{12}\)

Schumpeter, who ironically was normative rather than empirical oriented, expressed little faith in the average citizen's capability to make a rational choice of policy. Schumpeter believed that citizen participation in modern democratic systems should be restricted or limited to voting

for political leaders. He further maintained that "democracy is no longer a system in which people affect public policy by electing representatives to do their will; instead, it is a system in which people choose a particular group or political elite to be their government, which in turn make decisions for them."\textsuperscript{13} Schumpeter further argued:

It will be remembered that our chief troubles about the classical theory centered in the proposition that "the people" hold a definite and rational opinion about every individual question and that they give effect to this opinion—in a democracy—by electing "representatives" who will see to it that the opinion is carried out. Thus the selection of the representatives is made secondary to the primary purpose of the democratic arrangement which is to vest the power of deciding political issues in the electorate. Suppose we reverse the roles of these two elements and make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the elections of the men who are to do the deciding. To put it differently, we now take the view that the role of the people is to produce a government or else an intermediate body which in turn will produce a national executive or government. And we define: the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.\textsuperscript{14}

Schumpeter rationalized his skepticism of widespread popular participation through his contention that public decision making and policy making require expertise and knowledge which few citizens possess. In Schumpeter's view a society with an elite structure of decision makers would

\textsuperscript{13}Schumpeter, p. 268.

\textsuperscript{14}Schumpeter, p. 269.
qualify as a democracy so long as the people had free discretion in choosing the elites.

The elitist critique of existing democratic society was to be supplemented by the pluralist interpretation. Significantly, at about the time Robert Michels was composing his important work *Political Parties*, Arthur Bentley, the pioneer of interest group theory, was developing a thesis that also would challenge the notions of classic liberal theory. Bentley's behavioral analysis emphasized the significance of groups operating in the political process of existing democracies. He viewed groups as the pivotal mechanism by which individuals would be able to realize their desired political, social, and economic ends.\(^{15}\) Bentley's thesis, in part, rejected the central place posited by classical democratic "idealists" emphasizing individual action or participation in determining political outcomes. Bentley's work thus was to influence the development of another component of realist theory, that being the pluralist critique of classical liberal democratic thought.

Pluralist theory eventually gained acceptance through David Truman's extraordinarily influential work, *The Governmental Process*. Working very much in the Bentley tradition, and resurrecting Bentley's thesis, Truman argued very convincingly that group interaction was the real

determinant of public policy in the American democratic system. He was convinced that the study of group interaction should take primacy over studying the forms of government in the analysis of modern practices of democratic governance.\textsuperscript{16}

Contemporary adherents of pluralist theory maintain, as did David Truman, that political power in the American political system is fragmented among various competing interests, such as labor, professionals, business, religious associations, civil rights interests, and farmers. Because the interest groups compete for power within the political system, no group is all powerful or dominant. Moreover, government's policies derive from group bargaining and compromising over desired ends. Government enforces the policies that so derived through the group process. Advocates of pluralism ultimately argue that a democracy can be maintained without widespread individual participation so long as there is diverse group participation safeguarding against the centralization and monopolization of power.

Both elitist and pluralist theorists contend that their analyses of existing democracies offer a more accurate and factual description of the modern practices of democratic governance than classic democratic theory. Theorists of both camps argue that democracy can and does survive without widespread mass participation. There are some elitist

theorists who are actually critical of widespread mass participation. Two in particular, Giovanni Sartori and Samuel P. Huntington, contend that limited participation is beneficial to the overall health of a democracy. It is their view that widespread participation would endanger the stability or equilibrium of a democracy.

According to Sartori, once a democracy has been established, the principal threat to its existence is not from tyrannical rule of a powerful few, as commonly feared, but from the mediocrity of mass rule. He feared that mass political participation would yield political domination by undemocratic counter-elites or demagogues.17

Similarly, Samuel Huntington regarded the grass-roots political movements of the 1960s as politically unhealthy and undesirable. He echoed Sartori’s political sentiments by stating that the primary danger to democracy comes from the "internal dynamics of democracy itself in a highly educated, mobilized society."18 Interestingly, he perceived that the disorders of the 1960s originated partly in the teachings and rhetoric of a "stratum of value-oriented intellectuals who often devote themselves to the derogation of leadership, the


challenging of authority, and the unmasking and deligitimation of established institutions."¹⁹ He reasoned that such intellectuals, i.e., college professors, were guilty of undermining the democracy by their over emphasis upon equalitarian ideas, encouragement of mass participation, denunciation of capitalism, and their hypercriticism of established institutions. All of this led Huntington to ultimately conclude that, "a value which is normally good in itself is not necessarily optimized when it is maximized. We have come to recognize that there are also potentially desirable limits to economic growth. There are also potentially desirable limits to the indefinite extension of political democracy.²⁰

Sartori’s views, as well as the views of the previously discussed thinkers, consistently argued for a form of elite democratic rule that challenged the participatory ideals of classic democratic thought. Collectively, their views, and the views of other theorists not cited in this study, were influential in shaping a "realist" theory of democracy. Significant as well to the development of democratic realism have been the modern empirical voting behavior studies.

Employing some of the most advanced behavioral methodologies at that time, some of the 1950s studies of

¹⁹Ibid., p. 64.

²⁰Huntington, pp. 114-115.
voting behavior and public opinion were conducted for the stated purpose of testing democratic theory. One of the pioneering researchers put it this way, "...empirical research can help to clarify the standards and correct the empirical presuppositions of normative theory." With the advent of behavioral analysis, realist theory would now be given hard empirical evidence to corroborate the observations made by earlier empirically oriented theorists.

The behavioralist approach eventually became the dominant methodology of political scientists and other social scientists. Early voting studies by Berelson, Campbell, and others revealed a general apathy or lack of interest in politics and political activities in various strata of the electorate, particularly in lower socio-economic status groups. Their findings reveal a lower level of political efficacy among poor people. Just as significantly, they showed a higher level of non-democratic or authorization attitudes in the lower status respondents. Their data thus contradicted some of the claims of classic democratic theory.

---

21Bernard Berelson, et. al., Voting, as quoted in Allman and Anderson, pp. 192.

And some of the voter studies offered evidence seemingly lending support to the views of Sartori and Huntington.

Having reviewed the findings of some of the major studies, Carole Pateman wrote that "The conclusion drawn (often by political sociologists wearing political theorists’ hats) is that the 'classical' picture of democratic man is hopelessly unrealistic, and moreover, that in view of the facts about political attitudes, an increase in political participation by present non-participants could upset the stability of the democratic system."\(^{23}\) In his analyses of the research literature, Robert Salisbury likewise noted that the general inference of this voting behavior research in the 1960s was that "non-voters and marginal voters were especially ill-informed and least competent to make reasonable judgments about candidates for office. If they failed to come to the polls, therefore, it might be just as well for the effectiveness and health of the policy."\(^{24}\)

Many behavioralists thus concluded that the claim made by democratic theorists such as Jean Jacques Rousseau and Peter Bachrach that an informed, active and vigilant mass citizenry is necessary for a truly democratic society was inaccurate. Behavioralists inferred from their voter study data, just as Schumpeter had argued intuitively, that

\(^{23}\)Pateman, p. 3.

America's system of governance could operate without extensive citizen participation. They assumed, more than verifying or explaining, its democratic character.

In summary, the realist theory of democracy, shaped largely in data from behavioralist studies but also by pluralist and elitist commentary on modern practices of democratic governance, bears five central tenets:

1. Political power is diffused among a wide range of competing groups/elites, with no group dominating public policy making.

2. Public policy is shaped by competing interest groups/elites through a bargaining and compromising process.

3. The competing groups/elites responsible for creating public policy are accountable to the masses primarily through elections and competition. Due to elections, through which new elites may be selected, existing elites compromise on public decisions in order to maintain necessary support. Competition among the competing elites representing various interests yield a type of accountability, and the elites cognizant of the possibility of additional competition, maintain democratic values in rendering public decisions.
4. The maintenance of a state democracy need not require or encourage the maximum participation of each citizen.

5. Citizens do enjoy access to the policy-making elites.

Although the realist theory of democracy gained broad acceptance by many social scientists and theorists, the democratic idealists, fervent champions of participation, were unpersuaded either by the new empirical data or by the contentions of pluralist and elitist theory. Idealists, particularly participatory democratic theorists, continued to make normative claims about the purpose and value of participation in a democratic society.

Idealists found justification in maintaining their normative claims due, in part, to what they perceived as a major flaw of realist theory: "... Their (realist) theory of multiple competing elites permitted political analysts to value the system of democracy as a process of governance, without evaluating its ability as a political mechanism to encourage people to become more involved and better-informed citizens." Realist theorists maintain that democracy, in the modern use of the word, must be redefined to fit the "facts." Idealists, especially participatory democratic theorists, take a very different view. They argue that if

---

classic democratic theory does not fit the facts of modern practice, the practice needs to be changed.

Participatory democratic theorists, foremost among the idealists, have consistently identified and valued citizen participation as requisite to any system of democratic governance. Their arguments were used by policy planners of the 1960s to underscore the value of direct involvement by non-professionals, many of them low-income, in administrative processes of government. In the following section, we will briefly discuss some of the major arguments participatory democratic theorists (radical democrats from Pericles through Rousseau through the theorists of the 1960s) make in support of citizen participation of the poor.

Value of Participation: Participatory Democratic Theory

Participatory democratic theorists long have argued that in a democracy, the consent of the governed must mean more than just that consent implied through the act of voting. Such thinkers from Jean Jacques Rousseau to Carole Pateman and J. Roland Pennock have argued that consent of the governed also means having some meaningful say in important governmental activities that affect people's lives. John Stuart Mill very eloquently captured the political sentiments of participatory democrats:

Political machinery does not act of itself . . . .
it has to be worked by men, and even ordinary men.
It needs not their simple acquiescence, but their active participation.26

Participatory democratic theorists go much further than other classic democratic theorists in support of political participation. They contend that the existing democratic systems, representative in character with limited citizen involvement, should be transformed into direct democracies with full citizen participation. Participatory democratic theorists argue that more, not less, popular participation is the appropriate approach to democracy. Of the participatory democratic lines of defense of this claim, the political scientists Terrence Cook and Patrick Morgan write that:

The arguments can be divided into two types: First, those that emphasize the beneficial experience of the very process of participation, or that direct participation in some way makes the participants "better" men or citizens; second, those that stress the beneficial end results of the decisions made through such participation, or that the decisions shaped by direct participation mean "better" consequences.27

Advocates of participatory democratic theory, notably Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, emphasize the psychological effects political participation can have on the individual. Both thinkers felt political participation to be essential to developing the public-spirited character in each

---


citizen. Rousseau in particular maintained that the underlying assumption on which truly democratic governance is based stresses the importance of political participation in enabling citizens to know and act on their real needs and interests.

In the Social Contract, Rousseau argued that the act of participation would allow the citizen participant to gain new insight and awareness equipping him to discern, understand, and pursue the broader interest (general will) rather than his more narrow-self (selfish) interest. Ideally, the citizen participant would be transformed by the participative experience; the resulting benefits accruing to both participant and community. The participant becomes a more politically conscious citizen and the community benefits from the participation of a more enlightened and concerned body of citizens.²⁸

Beyond these psychological effects of participation, some theorists also contend that participation has a developmental effect. They argue that the individual gains a sense of 'self-rule' and 'self-realization' from the act of participating. Aristotle asserted that only through sustained political involvement could the individual realize his full human potential. Thus, for Aristotle, participation in

civic/political affairs is essential for the ethical and humanistic development of the citizen.29

John Stuart Mill likewise felt political participation necessary for the development of public-spiritedness in each citizen. Mill believed political participation would bring the citizen to a more "public regarding" and less selfish perspective. Mill once wrote that:

The participant is called upon . . . to weigh interests not his own; to be guided, in case of conflicting claims, by another rule than his partialities, to apply, at every turn, principles and maxims which have for their reason of existence the general good . . . He is made to feel himself one of the public, and whatever is their interest to be his interest.30

Cook and Morgan reason that if Mill is correct, "then participatory democracy could enhance the legitimacy of the larger political system by fostering loyalties that expand to wider horizons."31 Thus, in their view, participatory democracy could be a central element in solving the modern crisis of legitimacy.

Theorists make several other normative arguments in support of participation; i.e., "participatory democracy may gratify man's need for community in an age of massive


31 Cook and Morgan, pp. 10-11.
"bureaucratic institutions" and "the experience of participation in local affairs engenders civic and even leadership competence for political participation at higher levels of government."\footnote{Cook and Morgan, pp. 9-10.} Mill himself embraced the second of these propositions. He contended that it was only by participation at the local level and in local associations that the individual could learn democracy.\footnote{Mill, \textit{Considerations on Representative Government}, p. 14.}

Due to the social, political, and economic conditions and circumstances of the 1960s, democratic idealists of that decade usually posited a more practical purpose for their defense of citizen participation. These theorists emphasized the instrumental value of participation as well as the need for decentralized political power. Many of them viewed political participation as an instrument by which deprived groups--the poor and minorities--could challenge the status quo and demand a more equitable distribution of resources.

William Kelso, in his study of democratic theory, pointed out that many recent advocates of community control and citizen participation have believed "that political decentralization is necessary in order to increase the ability of minority members to shape their own lives . . . Unless a centralized political system devolves more power to local neighborhoods, Blacks and other minority groups will lack the
leverage to control those policies which directly affect their communities."^{34}

The Civil Rights Movement (sparked as it was by a remarkable exercise in minority civic participation, i.e., the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955), civil unrest, and confrontational politics had focused national attention upon the problems of the poor and minorities in American society. Affected by such events, participatory democrats of the 1960s committed themselves to making participatory politics a reality for the poor and disadvantaged. Aware though they were of the empirical studies that revealed political apathy among the poor, they offered powerful justifications in their push for more public participation. In their view, the research documented political apathy, but did not validate the conclusion that such apathy is inevitable.

In his commentary on participatory democrats' reactions to the research findings, Robert Salisbury observed that, "they insisted that alternative institutional arrangements, involving the redistribution of power from current elites to masses of ordinary people, would enable competence to develop and flourish."^{35} Participatory democrats argued that the poor would fulfill civic responsibilities and negate elitist charges of civic incompetence and political apathy if they

^{34}Kelso, p. 4.

^{35}Salisbury, p. 2.
received the proper participatory mechanisms from which to associate, to articulate their views, and to affect the decision-making process.

Moreover, participatory democrats believed that "realist" emphasis on low electoral turnout rates among the poor exaggerated poor people's disinterest in participation. They agreed with Anthony Downs in his argument that "rational citizens cannot be expected to vote unless they can hope to gain some benefits that exceed the cost of voting." Some of them perceived poor people's reluctance to exercise the franchise as a rational response to an unresponsive political system. Michael Parenti, for example, wrote that:

The non-participation of many people often represents a feeling of powerlessness, a conviction that it is useless to vote or demonstrate, useless to invest precious time, energy and hope, risking insult, eviction, arrest, loss of job and police assault--useless because nothing changes. For many ordinary citizens, nonparticipation is not the result of contentment or apathy or lack of civic virtue, but an understandably negative response to the political realities they experience.

Martin Rein offered empirical support of this view. While doing research on Community Action Programs during the 1960s, Rein noticed that when the community projects involving

---


citizen participation were put in place, poor people responded with much enthusiasm and wide-ranging participation.  

Rein found that when given meaningful opportunity for a say in the political decisions affecting their lives, poor people will participate. He concluded that, "The poverty program experience suggests that we should replace the proposition, if people participated more, they would benefit more with the proposition, if people benefitted more, they would participate more." Similarly, in his study of political participation, James O. Wright found that one of the main reasons the low-income participate less is that they do not think their actions really make much difference in the exercise of political power.  

Both realist and idealist theorists present substantial arguments supporting their differentiated perspectives on public participation and the role of the poor. The realists offer persuasive evidence that within the existing institutional arrangements one's socio-economic status is a very good predictor of political participation and political efficacy. Empirical studies have shown that individual traits

---


39 Rein, p. 4.

or social characteristics, e.g., level of education, income, occupation, substantially influence the likelihood of participation in the electoral process. Such studies conclude that persons of higher socio-economic status are more likely to participate in elections and feel more politically efficacious than people at the lower end of the socio-economic scale.41

On the other hand, the implied critique of existing institutional arrangements by idealist theorists suggest if you are poor, you may rationally infer that your participation is now irrelevant. The impetus for the participatory democratic theme comes from a sense that we really need to transform the opportunities for participation. Participatory democrats argue that the poor would fulfill their civic responsibilities and refute claims of civic incompetence and political apathy in the event of transformed and meaningful participatory mechanisms.42

The debate encompasses many issues and concerns relevant to any attempt to define democracy and to discern the role of participation in a democratic polity. The arguments of both camps on participation are persuasive, and it would be impossible to choose between the realist and idealist

41Berelson, et. al., 1954; Angus Campbell, et. al., The American Voter (New York: Wiley, 1960); Angus Campbell The Voter Decides (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1954).

positions simply by reading the theoretical literature and grand generalizations about institutional opportunities on the one hand and personal traits on the other. A choice between the two requires indepth empirical analysis of participation.

But participation is a broad concept. Realist studies, reflecting the dominant literature in American politics, focus on the act of voting and related things, e.g., wearing a button or having a bumper sticker, as the appropriate indicator of participation. These studies document political differences among respondents at the various demographic levels. Significant though this is, it is but one dimension of participation and only one way of looking at participation. There are alternate forms of participation.

Political scientists have examined other dimensions of participation. Two in particular, Verba and Nie, in their study of political behavior and participation, examine acts that are aimed at influencing government either by affecting the choices of government decision makers or by affecting the choices made by those decision makers.43 Lester Milbrath, in his study, focuses upon the behavior of citizens that affect government processes.44


If we adopt the Verba and Nie and the Milbrath concepts of participation, we are not limited to the narrower view embraced by some realists. This study thus will treat parent participation in school and district advisory councils and parental school visits as other indicators of participation, and as acts aimed at influencing the policy choices made by Chapter I decision makers (i.e., teachers, principals, and administrators). One argument herein will be that any effort to explain political behavior should consider the institutional arrangements and the character type of participatory opportunity allowed by such arrangements.

A central contention of the present study is that we must look not only at participatory differences at different socio-economic levels, but also at differentiated opportunities to participate. We infer that when we observe the creation of new institutional possibilities, (e.g., citizen participation component of Title I/Chapter I), we may foresee new and enhanced participation rates. Citizens who in one context have not participated indeed may do so in another.

Participatory democrats of the 1960s concurred when they focused upon the instrumental value of participation, that proof would have to be gathered that the poor would participate in a persistent and continued way. It would not be sufficient to point out the sporadic and temporary participation in the confrontational politics of that time. They fully understood that in order to salvage and possibly
advance the cause of participation, major political and policy reforms would have to be instituted at the federal, state, and local levels. In other words, the suitable institutional arrangements would have to be established to insure grassroots participation.

The War on Poverty, with its citizen participation component, created the political and institutional arrangements by which public involvement in the political and administrative processes was to come to fruition. It altered America's political reality but it did not solve the ancient problem of confirming or invalidating participatory democratic claims. At an earlier moment of history, John Stuart Mill, in discerning the difference between theory and practice, poignantly observed, "But in political and philosophical theories as well as in persons, success discloses faults and infirmities which failure might have concealed from observation."45

Initially, the citizen participation component of the War on Poverty was associated primarily with community development programs rather than education programs. But gradually, citizen participation came to be a key feature of the federal government's primary aid program to elementary and secondary schools. Parent advisory councils originated during the legislative evolution of ESEA Title I.

In 1965 Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which, through Title I, provided financial assistance to local education agencies. Title I funds offered supplemental assistance primarily in math, reading, language arts, and supportive services to children performing below grade level.4

During the early years of Title I there were no policy statements issued regarding citizen participation or parental involvement. The most important change in federal requirements pertaining to parent involvement came in 1974, when Congress mandated district and school advisory councils. The 1974 legislation mandated that council members be selected by Title I parents and council majorities actually be Title I parents. The 1978 amendments further strengthened the citizen participation component. The 1978 legislation required that school advisory council and district advisory council members were to be "elected" by parents rather than "selected" by parents as stated in the 1974 amendments. School districts

---

were also required to train parents for council participation and to give them access to project records and documents."\(^4\)\(^7\)

But when Chapter I was legislated in 1981 to replace ESEA Title I, the citizen participation component was altered. Since 1981, parent advisory councils are no longer mandated. "Instead, school districts must 'consult' with parents on project design and implementation. Form of the consultation is left up to the local school officials."\(^4\)\(^8\) In the three school districts analyzed herein, local school officials chose to maintain SACs and DACs as the way to satisfy the Chapter I parental "consult" requirement. Parents usually become acquainted first with the school advisory councils (SACs).

SACs usually meet in the school building the child attends. In Ohio, most school districts elect representatives from the SACs to the seats on the district advisory councils (DACs). There can only be one DAC per school district, but numerous SACs exist in each school district.\(^4\)\(^9\) The purpose of parent advisory councils, DACs especially, is to advise the local education agencies (LEAs) in the planning,


\(^4\)\(^8\)Children's Defense Fund, p. 21.

The Goal of the Study

Parent participation in district advisory councils (DACs) is the primary focus of this dissertation. One hundred and fifteen (115) low-income to lower-middle income parents who were members of Chapter I DACs in the Ohio school districts of Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo were interviewed. Data collection took place during the 1985-1986 school year. Title I/Chapter I was chosen for this study because it is a program created to meet the needs of educationally deprived children living in low-income areas and because, with its citizen participation component, it allows us to study participation by the poor in the implementation of a federal education program.

A key goal of this dissertation study is to assess the participatory democrats' claim that the poor will participate if given opportunities that appear meaningful. One hundred and fifteen DAC members were interviewed in search of answers to the following questions:

1. **What kind of threshold of opportunity is required to get people to bother with participation?**
   
   a. How good of an opportunity does it take to get people to participate?
b. Do they have to be granted substantial power or will they participate at a lower threshold?

2. What difference does it make that the poor have these new structural opportunities to participate?

a. Are they transformed in character because of the experience?
b. Do they become better citizens?
c. Do they become happier citizens?
d. Do they feel they were able to influence the formulation and implementation of local Chapter I projects?

Justification of the Study

Contentions and proposals of participatory democratic theorists doubtlessly have exerted some influence upon formulation and implementation of some of the government policies mandating new participatory structures. But there have been very few empirical analyses assessing the validity of participatory democratic theories in what these theories project about impact upon participation and upon the participants. Such a research effort thus seems essential for several reasons.

First, a study of parent participation in a federal education program in which major policy decisions are to be made by district advisory council members and the local education agency may offer insight into the practicality or
feasibility of participatory democratic theories. "The collection of empirical data is central to a proper assessment of the benefits and drawbacks of participatory democracy."

Furthermore, since participatory democratic ideals have been given some concrete reality in the new avenues of participation, the question is whether and what we can learn from the experience. As Nelson Rosenbaum has stated, "to continue the policy debate solely on the ground of value conflict (i.e., citizen participation as the mother's milk of democracy versus citizen participation as the subverter of governmental efficiency and stability) is pointless without relatively hard information on how specific methods and procedures bear upon these values."

Secondly, a significant number of the members of the DACs are low-income (poor). The Chapter I parental involvement component allows the poor the rare opportunity by which to have effective control of educational decisions that affect the lives of their children. The participation of the poor and low-income in the Chapter I program has been widespread since the mid-seventies, but research on this participation has been very limited. Very little data have been collected on low-income participation in district advisory councils, and

---

50Kelso, p. 20.

on efforts of the poor to influence public policy at the school district level. This is the first study to research participation in Ohio DACs.

Thirdly, an empirical assessment such as this of political participation by low socio-economic people will be useful in either supporting or challenging the findings of other recent studies that examine the political attitudes, efficacy, and behaviors of low-income people. Many of the research studies analyzing political behavior reveal that low-income respondents express a disinterest in politics and political activity. This study attempts to discern whether the political attitudes and participation rates of the poor in participatory institutions (DACs) are similar or dissimilar to low socio-economic status participation rates as revealed in the large-scale empirical research studies.

Finally, political behavior and policy implementation have been and are the focus of important research as political scientists gather additional data, evidence, and information to explain more fully individual political behavior and the nuances of the policy process. This author trusts that the later chapters of this dissertation provide important new data explaining the political behavior of the poor and also contributing somewhat to the policy implementation literature.
CHAPTER II
METHODOLOGY

Nature of the Study

This research paper is exploratory in nature. Research studies and literature regarding participation in district advisory councils are almost nonexistent. Very little research has been done in this area. A few studies of Chapter I programs do analyze administrative and management practices, but they only hint at the impact such practices have upon participation. Expectations rather than null hypotheses guide this study. Moreover, due to its exploratory nature, this research will attempt to identify possible relationships associated with political participation. It will involve a descriptive analysis.

Structure of the Councils

The lack of compliance and the mismanagement of Title I funds (which will be detailed in the next chapter) were possibly two of the reasons for the government’s move in the mid-seventies to a mandated system of parent advisory councils. Furthermore, such a system was in keeping with the

\[52\text{See Title I District Practices by Advanced Technology, Inc., Maclean, Va., 1980, and also see Chapter I: An Interim Report, Children's Defense Fund, 1984.}\]
recommendations of parents' rights advocacy groups such as the Washington Research Project (which predated the Children's Defense Fund) and the NAACP's Legal Defense Fund. Together the education amendments and the 1978 technical amendments to Title I established mandated parent advisory councils. Each public school, elementary as well as secondary, that had forty or more students served by Title I or one full-time Title I staff member was required to have a school advisory council (SAC). The SAC was to be made up of members elected by the parents who reside in the attendance area. Moreover, if seventy-five or more students were being served in the school, the SAC was required to have a minimum of eight (8) members who were to be elected for two-year terms. In schools where less than seventy-five students were being served, the number of members and length of terms were left to local decision-making.\textsuperscript{53}

Members of the SAC were to be elected by a general assembly of parents at the beginning of each school year. Any resident of the community was eligible for election to the SAC so long as the majority of the council members were parents of students being served by Title I. Principals were given the responsibility for calling the general assembly in the schools and were included as members of the SAC, but without the right

to vote or to be appointed chairman of the SAC. Teachers who lived outside the attendance area were eligible for council membership. Liaison between the individual school and the local education agency (LEA) was provided by parent coordinators who worked out of the office of the LEA administering Title I.

At the district level, the 1974 and 1978 amendments mandated the establishment of the district advisory council. The DAC consisted of one elected representative from each school served by Title I. DACs normally meet once per month. Their members were to be residents of the district and a majority of their members had to be parents of children served by Title I. Teachers in the district were also eligible for election to the DAC. A key legal function of SACs and DACs is to give advice to the district personnel (LEA) in planning for the Title I project. They also offer advice in the implementation and evaluation of the project. DAC members are also responsible for electing a chairperson. In Ohio, the chairperson is responsible for carrying out several related tasks that include: "signing a page of assurances in the project application that the proper procedures have been followed in establishing parent participation in the district; and reviewing and sharing with council members reports issued by the State Department of Education of federal and state
auditing, monitoring, and evaluation of the Title I project."\textsuperscript{54} The DAC is also responsible for approving a project application if special exception to the usual methods were used to select children and buildings to be served.\textsuperscript{55}

The monies for conducting Title I/Chapter I programs are appropriated by Congress and allocated to states based on the following formulas:

(a) Census data relating to number of children aged 5-17 from low-income families;

(b) AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children from families in excess of the current index of poverty;

(c) Number of children in state institutions for neglected and delinquent children;

(d) Number of children in foster homes.\textsuperscript{56}

"The sum of the above is multiplied by forty (40) percent of a state's average per pupil expenditure except the amount shall be no less than eighty (80) percent of the national per pupil expenditure, and no more than one hundred twenty (120)\textsuperscript{54} Ohio Department of Education, p. PC-2-81.

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{56}National Coalition of ESEA Title I Parents, Organizing an Effective Parent Advisory Council (Washington, D.C., 1980), p. 2.
percent of the national per pupil expenditure." At the local level in Ohio, schools are prioritized or ranked for delivery of Title I/Chapter I services based on the percentage of students in each elementary cluster or middle and high school that qualify for a free or reduced price lunch. According to the Ohio Department of Education, "Any school with twenty-five (25) percent or more of the enrollment from low-income families is automatically eligible for Title I/Chapter I services." The percent or number of children from low-income families is determined by the number of students eligible to receive free or reduced price lunches.

Study Design

One of the primary aims of this dissertation is to study both the impact of citizen participation on the attitudes of participants and the influences on political participation by low-income parents. This study involving the researching of DACs in three (3) Ohio school districts specifically conforms to the multiple or comparative case study. The multiple case study is employed because it was conceptualized as the best approach by which to obtain the following types of information:

---

57 Ibid.
58 Ohio Department of Education, p. R-3-81.
59 Ibid.
Detailed descriptions of parent participation in the Chapter I program.

Identification of factors which enhance or deter parent participation.

Documentation of participation and its consequences upon the participants and the program.

Case study designs, whether single-case or multiple-case, tend to share a common quality: "The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: Why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result."\(^60\)

Robert K. Yin, documenting the case study approach as a research strategy used in psychology, political science and public administration, observes that, "Multiple-case designs have distinct advantages in comparison to single-case designs. The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust."\(^61\) Yin stops short of arguing that multiple-case studies can demonstrate causality.

Although causality is very difficult to establish in political participation and policy implementation studies


\(^{61}\)Yin, p. 48.
(due) in part to the large number of variables), this research employed a comparative case study approach in an attempt to generate findings that point in a similar direction. In Yin's view, this is essential in satisfying the replication logic that he associates with multiple-case studies approach. Yin asserts, "that the replication logic underlying the use of multiple-case studies is analogous to that used in multiple experiments. Each case must be carefully selected so that it either (a) predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) produces contrary results but for predictable reasons, a theoretical replication is inferred." Following Yin's thinking, if similar results are obtained from all three cities comprising this study, then we may conclude that replication has taken place.

The intensive character of the empirical work required by our multiple/comparative case study design, specifically in interviewing a substantial number of DAC members and Chapter I officials and in data gathering as a participant-observer at various DAC meetings, necessitated limiting the number of cities to three. By selecting cities in the same state and with similar urban characteristics, we were able to control for some structural and political variables. With some variation, the cities' school districts chose to maintain SACs

---

62 Yin, p. 48.
and DACs despite the 1981 education reform that eliminated the requirement for them.

The school districts of Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo have all organized their compensatory programs centrally, with the unit of planning and management at the district and project levels, rather than at the school level. Oversight and monitoring of the districts' Chapter I program are provided by the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Federal Assistance and the local education agencies (LEA's). All three LEAs are committed to the continual participation of parents. Thus all three school districts share the same state political, fiscal, and legal context.

The cities were also selected on the variables of city size, the percent of population living below poverty, and the number of Chapter I students served. The cities are the three largest Ohio cities still maintaining SACs and DACs. All have Chapter I programs serving more than 5,000 children, and all have significant segments of their population below the poverty line. Collectively, the demographics of the cities assured a representative cross-section of low-income and lower-middle income participants.6

---

6 In 1980, the city of Toledo had a population of 364,635 with 13.6% of its inhabitants living below the poverty line. Cleveland had 573,822 inhabitants, 22.1% of whom lived below the poverty line; and Columbus had a population of 565,032, 16.5% below the poverty line. These figures are presented in the U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1983 (U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1983) pp. 889-892. According to figures released by the Ohio Department
Selection of cities and their school districts did not involve probability sampling. Hence, it is not possible to generalize our findings to all cities in a simple and direct way. But we contend that the three cities illustrate their type: cities with more than 300,000 inhabitants, with poverty rates of ten (10) percent or more, and with school districts which through Chapter I service more than 5,000 students. It is anticipated that the purposive sample employed in this study and designed to reduce variation on some factors will enhance our ability to develop a fuller understanding of the factors influencing parent participation in district advisory councils. We believe the factors identified in this study will be common to many cities and that our conceptual scheme and method will be useful for understanding the political mobilization of the poor in other settings.

Population and Sources of Data

During the 1985-1986 school year, the DAC's for the three school districts had a total membership of one hundred eighty-six (186). One hundred fifteen of these 186 were surveyed for this study. Demographically, the group of respondents was racially mixed. Sixty-two (56.4%) were Black, forty-six (41.8%) White, and two (1.8%) Hispanic. Five (5) members did
not indicate their ethnicity. The respondents were also predominantly female. Only eight (7%) of the membership were male. Sixty-one (53%) were unemployed. Forty-three (43%) had annual incomes of $12,000 or less.

The primary data in this study were derived from an instrument which the researcher personally administered and which was designed to obtain data about:

1. Parents' perceptions about the attitudes of Chapter I staff people (teachers, principals, administrators, and parent coordinators) toward SACs and DACs;

2. Parents' perceptions of DAC's influence upon policy-making; and

3. Parents' demographic characteristics and political participation.

Other data came from open-ended personal interviews with DAC members, officials in the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Federal Assistance, and Local Chapter I administrators; and from observing DAC meetings as well as examining federal and local Chapter I documents. Conversations were conducted with all three Chapter I directors, several principals and teachers, and all three chairpersons of Chapter I DACs. Conversations were also held with ten (10) of the thirty-four (34) Chapter I supervisors serving the three school districts and open-ended interviews were held with four (4) of the nine (9) parent coordinators serving the three (3) school districts.
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual scheme that guided this study was developed from suggestions found in the political participation literature. The results of research studies conducted by political scientists Sidney Verba and Norman Nie tend to infer that the participatory democratic ideal of direct participation merits serious consideration given the nature of the contemporary decision-making process. Verba and Nie have found that participation is important and that it does indeed make a difference in the political process. Their findings reveal that political leaders are more likely to concur with the problem priorities of participants than with those of non-participants. Moreover, Verba and Nie infer that this is to be so not because leaders and participants come from the same socioeconomic background but rather as an independent result of participation itself.

While America's political process allows various forms of political involvement by its citizens, political participation has not been consistently or continually exercised by some significant segments of the citizenry. According to survey researchers, minorities and the poor, in particular, have low participation rates. Survey researchers have identified a

---


"Verba and Nie, p. 333."
common set of variables that help to explain participation or the lack of political participation. It is common consensus among most survey researchers that an individual's social characteristics (e.g., age, sex, race, education, income) will influence the rate of political participation.

The previously cited findings of studies by Berelson, Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes, and others likewise suggest a strong relationship between social characteristics and political participation. Political participation as usually measured by survey researchers and political scientists include the following two dimensions: 1) voting in local elections, and 2) voting in national elections. When measuring political participation as defined by voting in local and national elections, most survey findings suggest that persons of higher socio-economic status will participate or vote at higher rates than persons of lower socio-economic status. Thus, social groups or ethnic groups such as Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans who make up large segments of the poor, participate at much lower rates than the non-poor.

On the other hand, studies by several social researchers of Anglo, Black, and Mexican Americans' participation in voluntary associations conclude that Blacks are more likely to
be affiliated with formal voluntary associations than Whites, especially at the lower-class level.66

Suggestions given for active participation by Blacks are generally subsumed under the heading of "compensatory" theory. Gunnar Myrdal was the first to suggest that Blacks were prone to join voluntary associations in order to compensate for discrimination. Myrdal stated,

It has been noted that he (Black person) may become an inveterate joiner in clubs or cliques with high sounding names and much ritualism . . . these are attempted compensations for a lack of capacity for relatedness.67

While Myrdal introduced the notion of compensation to describe Blacks' willingness to join voluntary association, sociologist Anthony Orum was "the first to label the exaggerated tendency for Blacks to affiliate as "compensatory" in the more general sense of fulfilling needs not readily available in the larger society."68 Orum thus is credited


68J. Allen Williams, et. al., "Voluntary Associations and Minority Status,": pp. 637-46.
with the development of "compensatory theory." He did so after reviewing the studies conducted by Babchuk and Thompson (1962) in which the findings showed a high rate of Black participation.

The studies compiled by Olsen, Babchuk, Orum, and Thompson, among others, offer evidence to refute the reasons often given for the limited participation of minority groups. Their insights fall within what might be called isolation theory. "Essentially the argument is that persons do not participate because they are not integrated into society. They lack the social skills necessary for participation and are not aware of the possible benefits of affiliating."

Moreover, the findings of early 1960s studies on Black participation in voluntary associations are consistent with the findings of studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s that surveyed Blacks' participation in community action programs. In their analyses of the urban poor's participation in community action programs in Buffalo, New York, during the 1960s researchers Cataldo, Johnson, and Kellstadt reported that Blacks "participate more than whites even when they are of lower status, have lower political information levels, are

---

Ibid.

J. Allen Williams, et. al., pp. 637-46.
more cynical about politics and are no more efficacious, because they feel the need for governmental action."\textsuperscript{71}

These studies suggest, in part, the need for an expanded definition of political participation that would include participation in voluntary associations. Ostensibly, the studies suggest that participation in voluntary associations is one of the ways an individual may become politically involved in a democracy. Unfortunately, except for the studies of the poor's participation in voluntary associations, there are few studies using an indicator other than voting to yield information about political participation among the poor. So it is difficult to examine participation when it exists among the poor because it is less clearly defined. While there exists no scientific consensus on another indicator of participation, this research, influenced by the voluntary association studies, contends that participation in district advisory councils is a way that people participate and have a say in those political decisions that impact on their lives.

Therefore, this research in studying political participation adds two additional dimensions to the two traditionally used to measure political participation. They

are: 1) parental participation in parent advisory councils (SACs and DACs), and 2) the frequency of informal school visits made by parents to the school in which their children are enrolled.

This research also identifies parents' perceptions as a major factor influencing participation. Parents' perceptions were added to this research after a review of Lester Milbrath's analysis of studies dealing with individuals' perceptions and their political efficacy. Milbrath argues, having analyzed several studies dealing with perceptions and political preferences, that the literature suggests that persons who perceive themselves or an associated group as having an impact on public policy are more likely to express their policy preferences to authorities than those individuals perceiving themselves or their groups as having little or no impact. 72

A. Dependent Variables

Four discrete indicators (variables) will be used to measure political participation. These dependent variables are:

(1) frequency of parents' voting in Presidential elections;

(2) frequency of parents' voting in local elections;

(3) frequency of informal school visits made by parents; and

(4) by parents' participation in school advisory councils (SACs).

B. Independent Variables

The study has ten (10) independent variables. As noted previously, the independent variables fall into two categories. The first category holds eight (8) variables vis-a-vis parents' social characteristics: **Sex, Age, Race, Marital Status, Home Ownership, Residential Mobility, Education, and Income.**

The second category bears two (2) variables related to parents' perceptions of the importance and effectiveness of DACs. Parents' perceptions were studied through two questions:

1. **How important do you feel the council's work is?**
   (Circle one)--Question 25
   1. Very important
   2. Important
   3. Somewhat important
   4. Not very important

2. **Do you feel that the comments and observations made by the DAC members actually influence the thinking and behavior of the Chapter I administrators?**
   (Circle one)--Question 31
   1. Very much so
   2. Somewhat
   3. Very little
   4. None at all
Research Questions

This study was guided by several research questions evolved from a review of the literature and an inquiry into the workings and functions of district advisory councils. Two of the questions are central to our efforts to explain the impact and consequences of participation. The two central questions are:

1. What kind of threshold of opportunity does it take to get people to bother with participation?

2. What difference does it make that the poor have these new structural opportunities to participate?

Two other questions are specifically related to our effort to identify those factors that tend to enhance or deter participation; they are:

3. What are the social influences on participation?

4. What influences do perceptions have on participation?

Also, in pursuit of our effort to offer a comprehensive description of Chapter I's parental involvement component and DAC's activities, the following group of ancillary questions will be addressed:

- What are the attitudes of local Chapter I administrators regarding the implementation of the parental involvement component?
- Was parental input utilized in the planning of program objectives?
- What has been the impact of Chapter I reforms on the overall implementation of the parental involvement activities?
What is the local education administration's (LEA's) policy for parent training under Chapter I?

Do the parent participation findings suggest any common strategies, procedures, and/or activities for affecting meaningful and effective parental input?

In summary, it is hoped that this study in addressing the central and ancillary research questions will provide a detailed description of the types and levels of parental involvement activities, factors facilitating or retarding participation, personal traits of the participants, and some discussion and analyses of the consequences of parental participation in order to explain political participation more fully.

Procedures for Obtaining Data

The primary data collection method employed during the multiple site study was a survey instrument and also interviews with key individuals at the district level. Chapter I directors, district advisory councils' chairpersons, and members in the Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo school districts were contacted by letter (See Appendix A), their permission asked to utilize their programs for the current study. Preceding these communications were personal visits during the months of January, February, and March of 1986. The letter contained information related to the purpose of the research and the procedures that would be followed in
conducting the study. All participants were assured anonymity.

The researcher asked and gained permission from the Chapter I directors as well as the DACs' chairpersons to administer the questionnaires to members during the monthly meeting. In each of the three cities, the DAC chairperson designated twenty (20) minutes of the monthly meeting for use in completing the questionnaire. In each of the cities, the researcher personally distributed and collected the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered to a total of one hundred and twenty-two (122) DAC members in three cities. In seven (7) cases, the respondents did not provide adequate information on all items on the instrument. All seven (7) incomplete questionnaires were removed before final computation. Therefore, one hundred and fifteen (115) respondents make up the population of this study.

A second data collection strategy involved observation techniques. The three (3) sites were visited at least three times prior to administration of the questionnaire. The visits allowed the researcher the opportunity to observe and gather first-hand information relative to parent participation activities that took place at each site. The researcher was also able to observe advisory council meetings, social interaction among Chapter I staff and parents, and parents' participation within and outside the classrooms.
Finally, documentation associated with parent participation was analyzed. While visiting the various sites, the researcher collected and analyzed relevant documents such as minutes of meetings, newsletters or bulletins, advisory council by-laws, district policies and procedures, brochures and leaflets announcing activities for parents.

Survey Instrument

A review of the political participation literature as well as a survey of studies on participation in voluntary associations provided information suggesting variables that influence participation. The four discrete indicators of political participation, likewise the influences on political participation, provided the basis for the development of the questionnaire. In order to get an overview to improve and sharpen the instrument, I telephoned and also held personal conversations with Chapter I administrators, coordinators, and parents of children in the Chapter I program.

My impressions, shaped by the telephone and personal conversations, were compared to the insights offered by Chapter I administrators, coordinators, and parents in Columbus in order to determine whether or not useful information about participation could be derived from the questionnaire. Also, the instrument was reviewed by a faculty member who has studied participation, and revisions were made
to reflect his suggestions. All necessary revisions were made
before the instrument was administered.

**Data Analysis: Statistical Techniques**

This study explores the concept of political
participation by examining parental participation in DACs.
Descriptive statistics are primarily used in order to provide
a preliminary review of the data. The relationships between
political participation and the perceptions of parents, as
well as social characteristics, were examined by Chi square
and Gamma when appropriate. Although a scientific sample was
not drawn, Gamma and Chi square are used to indicate possible
explanations of political participation.

**Limitations of the Study**

From a policy analysis perspective, there are several
major questions that might have been addressed and that could
have offered suggestions as to how well the Chapter I program
was working. Concerns about programmatic decisions and
outcomes are very important in the field of public policy.
But this research did not focus upon such concerns as whether
parent participation influences the policy decisions and the
budgetary priorities within the Chapter I program, neither
does this research consider the policy issue as to what level
of participation is most conducive to the realization of the
program's policy objectives. All of the above represent
substantive policy concerns that were not considered relevant to the main focus of this study.

The primary concern of this study was to examine political participation. Therefore, it focused upon participation in DACs and treated such involvement as a major indicator of political participation. In that sense, the research was directed toward specific indicators. In addition to analyzing the level of participation, an examination of the quality of participation might have yielded some relevant findings.

Particularly, it would have been useful to attend each of the monthly DAC meetings for an extended time to observe the decision-making process and to determine whether parents' interaction and attendance varied and how such variations might affect program outputs. All of the above, had they been done, might have enhanced the study to some extent. But due to time and resource constraints, this study was directed toward a narrower range of concerns. Given more time and substantially greater funds, it might have been feasible to examine all DACs in Ohio. Finally, this study does not make any claims of causality. Whatever quantitative results or empirical evidence is uncovered, the findings should not be taken as a full "explanation" of the phenomena being explained.
CHAPTER III

THE PARTICIPATORY CONTEXT: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT
OF THE ADVISORY COUNCILS

This chapter of the study will review the origin of parent advisory councils, their evolution, and their relationship to the community action concept of maximum feasible participation. Such a review is necessary in order to understand more clearly the milieu in which PACs originated and also, to differentiate the goals and objectives of PACs from those of the community action boards. Upon first glance, without reviewing the history of parent advisory councils, a common misperception that is commonly made by many about the origin of parent advisory councils is that such councils are a direct result of the 1960s liberal democratic policy of maximum feasible participation.

While such a characterization of many of the community action programs would be accurate, nevertheless, the history of parent advisory councils predates the concept of maximum feasible participation. The parental involvement component of Title I/Chapter I shares similar attributes with the citizen participation component of the community action programs (they serve a somewhat similar constituency, offering federal assistance), but an important difference also serves to
distinguish the two. "The Community Action Program, for an example was specifically directed toward establishing control by the poor over the institution serving them. To accomplish this goal, the focus was on institution change and on the attainment of political power by the poor." A review of the original parental involvement component of Title I reveals that one of the primary objectives of parent advisory councils (PACs) was to advise school officials on the implementation of the Chapter I program. Quite unlike the Community Action Agencies' boards, the Title I parental involvement component did not grant institutional control to parent participants in the program. Moreover, the Chapter I PACs were not given authority to decide major budgetary or allocation issues.

Major allocation or budgetary decisions concerning the local Chapter I program are made by the local education agency (LEA) upon consultation with school officials and PAC members. The LEA, without question, is the chief policy and decision maker for local Chapter I programs. The parent participants in Title I and Chapter I parent advisory councils have traditionally participated in the delivery or implementation of Title I/Chapter I services. Hence, the decision making authority of Chapter I DACs is not as broad and definitive as the authority granted to boards of community action agencies.

---

That is not to say that such councils are powerless, but the duties and responsibilities as well as the histories of the action agency boards and advisory councils are somewhat different. While both institutions are identified as having originated as a result of the policy of maximum feasible participation, which is historically and politically accurate in the case of community action boards, the Chapter I parent advisory councils have a more diverse and cumbersome origin. Concerning this point, a Title I/Chapter I researcher has stated,

In short, as PACs have developed over the past decade, they have been and become fairly divorced from the War on Poverty conceptions that perhaps spawned them. The idea of maximum feasible participation and experience related to it provides a historical grounding, but understanding of the milieu in which PACs currently operate must come from examination of a different context. 74

The context in which the citizen participation component of Chapter I evolved is centered around problems of program implementation and compliance that precipitated changes in the educational delivery system. This chapter of the study will present a detailed review of the factors and circumstances that explain the context in which PACs evolved. An exploration and review of the factors and circumstances that helped to shape the development of parent advisory councils are necessary to explain the role that advocates of advisory councils hoped such councils would play in the policy process.

74Ibid., p. 9.
Also, such a review would be useful for a couple of other reasons. It would offer evidence that perhaps would distinguish the origin of this form of citizen participation from the form of citizen participation that derived from the policy of maximum feasible participation, allowing one to grasp more fully the milieu in which advisory councils originated; and offer evidence of the many difficulties that initially hampered efforts to implement the then TITLE I program. As was previously noted, problems of implementation and compliance were influential in the development of school advisory councils. Thus, the participatory context from which parent advisory councils emerged center around reforms allowing greater parent participation in the educational structure itself and the need for greater accountability in the implementation of compensatory educational programs and services.

The Origin of Advisory Councils

During the past twenty years, there has been a significant increase in citizen participation in public schools. Citizen participation has been stimulated through the use of both district and building-level school councils. There are now more than ten thousand district and school advisory councils, with more than a million members.75

The birth of school councils can be traced to several different sources. Traditionally, locally elected or appointed school boards functioned to represent the views and opinions of local citizens. While school boards are still the primary vehicle for representation of local citizens, school advisory councils articulate the views of local parents.

The first American school council was formed in Berkeley, California, in 1919. The council was established to address youth problems in the Berkeley area, and it was not designed to usurp the authority of the local school board. Furthermore, it was established primarily to address a community need requiring district parental involvement for resolution.

The Berkeley council was a forerunner of many other citizen advisory councils that would emerge during the depression years and also World War II. Many of the councils would serve as auxiliary vehicles to the local school boards, with the objective of bringing the schools and the community together to address the social problems of that time. Community involvement and the worry over school-community relations during a time of economic, political, and social crises fostered some 10,000 citizen advisory councils by 1954.76

76Ibid., p. 18.
The school councils of the pre-1960s were generally local, voluntarily organized, quasi-political structures operating independently of state or federal initiatives or mandates. The pre-1960s councils emerged out of concern by local citizens. The citizen advisory councils of the 1950s were to be supplanted by school and district advisory councils of a new type by the 1970s.

The political turmoil in American politics during the 1960s, specifically the civil rights movement, and a more general leftward drift, brought support for citizen participation in the governmental process. A popular philosophical embrace of broader citizen participation by African-Americans, Hispanics, and other politicized groups led, in part, to the establishment of formal political structures that would allow widespread grassroots participation. The community action boards and councils that emerged during the 1960s and 70s owe their origin in part to policy initiatives by the then-influential liberal wing of the Democratic party.

Maximum Feasible Participation

Citizen participation in the administrative processes of schools and community development and service programs became a salient political and policy issue during the 1960s. On the national level, President Lyndon B. Johnson, through his War on Poverty program, demonstrated his support of citizen participation with his advocacy of "maximum feasible
participation" of the poor in the administration of community development programs at the local level. Also, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which was the premier piece of legislation by which poverty was to be combatted, specifically called for the "maximum feasible participation" of residents of the community development area and members of the group to be served.  

Clearly, President Lyndon Johnson and his advisors made citizen participation a central component of the administration's War on Poverty program. The various categorical grant programs created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 had to satisfy the citizen participation requirement before gaining official approval. The issue became highly visible because many officials inside and outside the Johnson administration disapproved of and/or opposed the idea of participation by the poor in various administrative processes. 


The Passage of Title I of ESEA (1965)

The Johnson administration also had, as a cornerstone of its War on Poverty program, an unprecedented piece of education legislation that would ultimately involve grassroots or local citizen participation in school councils. Title I of ESEA represented a monumental federal effort to increase the achievement levels of poor children in America who suffered with the most serious educational needs. Title I of ESEA also marked a significant achievement and accomplishment for Congress. After more than 100 years of trying to pass some form of education legislation that would provide federal aid to public elementary and secondary schools, Congress was successful with the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.79


The obstacles and barriers that Congress had to overcome in order to adopt a comprehensive federal education aid package were numerous and complex. Historically, there had been several persistent obstacles of a rather serious nature that hampered legislative efforts to pass a federal education aid bill. The obstacles centered around (1) public school interests voicing opposition to the possibility of federal aid going to private schools directly or indirectly; (2) liberal and minority interest opposing federal aid to racially segregated schools; (3) a traditional antagonism on the local and state levels towards the federal government's efforts to control public education. The Johnson administration, however, was able to overcome the obstacles by developing a legislative package that the Congress and the various interested parties found attractive. This represented a remarkable turnaround given the multiplicity of forces that historically had opposed such legislation. Upon review of the turnabout, J. L. Sundquist observed:

The sudden turnabout reflects, perhaps most of all, a simple fact: people do learn from experience. First, both sides of the religious controversy had learned. The NEA and its public school allies now knew that an all-or-nothing attitude would mean, for the Catholic schools, nothing. For each side the question was whether it preferred to maintain or receive some tangible benefits for its schools... The National Defense Education Act had shown that special-purpose aid, carefully designed,

---

80Eidenberg and Morey, pp. 17-22.
could be enacted at a time when general purpose aid could not be.\textsuperscript{81}

Thus, President Johnson's education proposal was adopted in large part because it held promise for a wide constellation of competing interest groups. This, in the final analysis, would prove to be somewhat problematic due to the legislation's vague and ambiguous policy statements.\textsuperscript{82} This will result in Title I of ESEA sharing a common defect that seemingly marred many of the Great Society programs of the Johnson Administration. Policy observers, through the years, have argued that many of the policy statements of the Great Society were so broadly worded and ambiguous that program details emerged only during the implementation process.\textsuperscript{83}

Substantively, the legislation contained five components of titles with multiple goals. The first component, Title I, was to serve as the cornerstone of Johnson's War on Poverty by assisting school children with learning deficiencies. Title II provided funding for the purchase of school library resources and textbooks. Title III supported the establishment of supplementary centers and services. Title IV


supported the upgrading and strengthening of state departments of education.\textsuperscript{84}

While many of its policy statements might have been ambiguous, the purpose of Title I could be found in its declaration of policy that precedes the substantive provisions of the legislation. The declaration of policy reads:

In recognition of the special educational needs of children of low-income families and the impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs, the Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance...to local educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs by various means (including preschool programs) which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.\textsuperscript{85}

It should be noted that while Title I recognizes special needs of low-income children, it also provides financial assistance to school districts of high poverty concentration in order to meet the needs of all educationally deprived children, be they poor or middle-class. Thus a school district establishes the eligibility for Title I funds on the basis of the number of low-income children residing in the district, but the programs financed by the grants (categorical education) are open to all students whose achievements' levels

\textsuperscript{84}Murphy, (1973), p. 162.

\textsuperscript{85}As quoted and cited in Title I Litigation Materials, (The Center for Law and Education, Harvard University, 1972), p. 3.
fall below the levels that are "appropriate for children of their age, even if they are not poor."  

Since its inception, Title I has been the most heavily funded of the various ESEA titles. It distributes funds to school districts in ninety-five percent of all counties in the country, and in one hundred percent of all congressional districts. The program's mammoth size suggests a need for persistent monitoring on the part of federal, state, and local officials, as well as parents to make sure it achieves its policy goals. But unlike the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the original provisions of Title I did not provide for a mandatory citizen participation component. The provisions for mandatory parental involvement would ultimately come as the original piece of legislation evolved and new statutory amendments were added.

Problems of Compliance

During its evolution, Title I was destined to be amended considerably (with statutes that responded to concerns of critics and proponents). In the first five years, many disturbing facts and evidences were uncovered that revealed a need for more careful and consistent monitoring of the Title I program. There were many protests, testimonials, and critical reports that led Congress to expand the parental involvement

"Ibid., pp. 3-4.

"Title I Study," The Federal Educational Project, p. 6.
component of Title I. Most notably and influential was a report compiled by the Washington Research Project (a forerunner of the Children's Defense Fund) and the NAACP Legal Defense, Incorporated, entitled Title I: Is It Helping Poor Children?" The report offered a very negative appraisal of the effectiveness of the early program and it also documented various forms of mismanagement and the misuse of federal dollars. The study concluded that dollars were not reaching the targeted population of disadvantaged students who had some form of educational learning deficiencies in the areas of reading, language, and math skills.

Congress was stung by the report's findings and called for the United States' Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to be more rigorous in monitoring the program. The Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee in 1969 extended the impetus for more rigorous monitoring of the program via parental involvement with the following commentary:

Vigorous action to answer the proper and effective use of Title I funds is in keeping with the monitoring responsibility of the U.S. Office of Education under the law. The committee expects this monitoring function to be performed so that all states are subject to continuing review on the effectiveness of the program in meeting the special needs of poor children within each state. To this end, the office should assign a sufficiently high priority to the administration of Title I activities to assure the availability of staff to carry out this assignment... It is incumbent upon federal, state, and local officials to assure that the funds are concentrated on the priority needs of poor children and not diverted to meeting other
needs of school systems however pressing these other needs may be. The committee expects the Commissioner to exercise fully his authority and responsibility under the law to see that state agencies abide by assurances they have given in agreeing to administer the Title I funds in keeping with the intent of the law.\textsuperscript{88}

The Washington Research Project's report, \textit{Title I of ESEA: Is It Helping Poor Children?}, documented the various and many ways that Title I administrators and staff misused and supplanted some of the monies, materials, and equipment that were targeted by the federal government for Title I use only.

The major effect of the Washington Research Project's Report was to challenge the federal government to do a better job of monitoring the implementation of the Title I program. The federal government responded affirmatively to the Project's challenge. The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW) gave its Audit Agency the responsibility of monitoring and investigating possible Title I abuses.

The violation that was revealed by Washington Research Project's investigation would be verified by findings of DHEW investigators. The following documented cases illustrate the types of violations uncovered by DHEW's investigators:

Our review of local agency equipment purchase disclosed that 23 Parish School Boards (in Louisiana) had "loaned" equipment costing $654,624 to schools that were ineligible to participate in

the Title I program. We find no basis for an expenditure of funds for schools that do not meet the criteria established for eligibility under Title I. These funds are provided for special groups of underprivileged children and all expenditures must be for the purpose of accomplishing the stated goals of the approved project.

Our site visits disclosed that some of this equipment was set in concrete or fastened to the plumbing. Much of the equipment had been at the ineligible school since its acquisition and in some instances was delivered by the vendor to the ineligible schools. We believe that circumstances as noted above preclude any classification of equipment "on loan." We are recommending that the cost of the equipment "loaned" to ineligible schools be reimbursed to the federal government.

DHEW's Audit Agency was able to uncover and present undeniable evidence and documentation of program abuses by local officials in various states. The evidence uncovered included the following violations:

Title I funds are being used for construction, teacher salaries, libraries, and other programs and facilities which the school district would normally purchase with local and state funds. In many areas, particularly the South, Title I payments are being used to provide poor schools with high concentrations of economically underprivileged negro students with facilities and services which the local educational agency has already provided the white school in the district.

The Agency's documentation of violations opened the door for suits and litigation on the part of Title I parents who

---


See, e.g., DHEW Audit Agency Reports on Tennessee, Connecticut, Georgia, Michigan, and Alabama.

"Title I Litigation Materials, pp. 9-10."
felt that such violations and abuse could prove disastrous and would prevent Title I from achieving its primary goals of raising the academic skills of educationally deprived students. Moreover, the Audit Agency's findings finally convinced people inside and outside of government that there existed "A massive failure to carry out the statutory mandate of Title I, and there are few signs that responsible governmental authorities will act voluntarily to correct this failure."  

Given the earlier challenge and findings by the Washington Research project, and coupled with the Audit Agency's findings, parents of Title I students were given enough legal ammunition by which to fight litigation battles throughout the country. In their litigation battles, the parents of Title I students consistently cited several common complaints against Title I administrators and officials. The complaints were persistent and somewhat identical regardless of the state in which they were filed. The complaints that were cited most frequently and almost without revisions were the following:

* inadequate parental involvement;
* refusal to permit inspection of relevant Title I information;
* general misuse of Title I funds, particularly the use of Title I funds for the benefit of ineligible children, and use of Title I funds to purchase for poor children what state and local funds purchase for others (a case of

---

92 Ibid., p. 1
and failure of state and federal Title I officials to effectively evaluate and audit the Title I program.93

These complaints served as the basis for several major court cases that were argued in various states. Several states tackled the Title I complaints and charges early on. That states of Rhode Island, California, and Massachusetts took a leadership role in addressing Title I issues and complaints. The states' courts, in rendering favorable decisions supporting the parent's positions, were able to establish parental involvement precedents that later would be adopted by the federal Congress in bringing about uniform procedures for establishing mandatory parent advisory councils in every state that received Title I funds.94

Parent Participation: Its Legislative Evolution

During the early years, there were many documented cases of wrongdoing in the Title I program that alerted governmental officials that a more consistent effort of monitoring and oversight was needed to ensure proper and effective implementation of Title I. While the previously cited Washington Research Project's study was the first to document

93Title I Litigation Materials, p. 82.

94The most pertinent court cases that helped to resolve the parental involvement issues and the issue of effective monitoring were: Babbigs v Richardson, C.A. No. 9410, (DRI), 1976; Sanchez v Richardson, C.A. (N.D. Me.), 1970, in Title I Litigation Materials, pp. 55, 79, 108, 149, 191-196.
widespread misuse of Title I funds and inadequate monitoring of the program by public officials, many other cases of abusive spending and mismanagement were uncovered by DHEW's investigators and federal auditors. Given the number of such revelations of wrongdoing, along with the various judicial battles initiated by Title I parents who felt their children were not receiving proper instructions, collectively signaled a need for more active parental involvement in the administration of the Title I program.

Upon reviewing the history of Title I, its origin and evolution, this researcher was able to identify three major reasons that justified the need to expand the parental involvement component. First of all, in order to reduce various forms of abuse and mismanagement of program's funds, many parents and interested parties called for the establishment of citizen oversight.95 Secondly, many social scientists, in studying the influence of parental involvement in schools, had identified a statistical linkage between parental involvement and student achievement.96 Thirdly, the impetus of maximum feasible participation created a political atmosphere that encouraged wider grassroots participation in most War on Poverty programs. Public officials at all three

95See the Washington Research project's Study, "Title I: Is It Helping Poor Children?"

levels of government welcomed or were compelled by federal statutes and/or executive orders to establish participatory institutions at the local level. It was during this period of participatory expansion, coupled with the previously cited instances of program abuses and noncompliance, that the proponents of parental involvement were able to make convincing arguments that persuaded the members of Congress to make parent advisory councils a mandated component of the Title I program.

In fairness to the federal officials in the United States Office of Education (USOE), who were responsible for administering the program in the early years (1966-70), reviews of the program's early years reveal that those officials had issued some guidelines encouraging parental involvement in the Title I program. In one of his studies of Title I, M. Hayes Mizell observed that "by 1966, federal officials trying to implement Title I were urging local school officials to involve parents."97 In 1967, USOE issued a publication that required local school officials to include "appropriate activities or services in which parents will be involved."98 The language of the policy statement was broad and vague. Local school officials were given broad discretion


98Ibid.
in interpreting its meaning. The USOE offered further clarification of the policy statement when in 1968 it issued a program guide wherein the goal of parental involvement was more clearly defined as building "the capabilities of the parents to work with the school in a way that supports their children's well-being, growth and development." Later in the same year, "USOE recommended that parent advisory councils be established by local school districts to facilitate parent involvement in Title I."100

USOE's recommendation of parental involvement was basically ignored by local school officials. This meant that parents of Title I students would have very little influence in the implementation of the program. But that is not to say that federal officials would have a "free-hand" to implement the program in a classic hierarchical style. The implementation process, for a number of reasons, would prove to be complex and cumbersome. Each group that had a stake in the formulation of the legislation also sought to influence its implementation. Paul Hill, a noted policy observer, once remarked, "Title I was enacted with the support of a loose coalition of public school lobbies, teachers' associations, and minority groups. Each group saw the program as an

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
opportunity to advance its own agenda." Due to the legislation's ambiguous and broad policy statements USOE officials had to contend with various well organized groups making policy demands that would promote their interests.

The Politics of Implementation

In the policy process, problems of non-compliance can be and often are the consequence of implementation complexities that are associated with broad and ambiguous policy statements that were, in this case, part of the original Title I legislation. Generally speaking, Title I and many of broadly worded social programs of the 1960s have been given negative reviews and critical policy assessments by many policy observers. One of the chief architects of Johnson's Great Society programs once declared that implementation was the Achilles' heel of the Johnson administration's social policy. Many of the early implementation studies have tended to identify several common deficiencies that marred the

101 Ibid.


programs and led to serious breakdowns in the implementation process. One of the more commonly identified deficiencies has been the claim that many of the programs' directives lacked legislative clarity. Policy observers typically argue that policy statements of the Great Society programs were so broadly worded and ambiguous that serious difficulties were encountered by administrators in the implementation process. The prevailing view holds that such vague and ambiguous policies usually lead to ineffective implementation due in part to policy implementors not knowing precisely what they are supposed to do or what they are to implement.

Moreover, many policy observers have been critical of the discretionary authority that the broadly drawn legislation of the 1960s granted to policy implementors. Many policy observers, most notably Theodore Lowi, expressed concern that the democratic norms of accountability and responsibility were being undermined by the allocation of too much discretionary authority to administrative implementors (See Lowi, 1979).

Historically, many policy analysts have noted that when power is distributed widely among a variety of administrative units (federal, state, local), legislative factions, and non-governmental actors, that it becomes exceedingly difficult for one particular center of power to impose its policies upon the
others. Other studies have shown that the successful implementation of such policies more like will involve bargaining and compromising among the various administrative and non-governmental actors. "Local implementation of federal policy is often a process of "mutual adaptation" in which local administrators seek to both change local practice to comply with federal directives and adapt federal policy to local political and institutional realities."  

Undoubtedly, America's highly fragmented policy process has created serious implementation problems that have often resulted in administrators at the federal, state, and local

---


levels being unable to realize a classic hierarchical approach in administering broadly worded social policies. As a result of such complications, Title I funds that the federal Congress had appropriated to aid educationally deprived children were in fact used by many school districts for general school purposes, while other districts used the funds to supplant state and local revenue.\textsuperscript{107} Once again, the ambiguity surrounding Title I's policy statements eventually led to a debate concerning the use of Title I funds.

Many traditional and established education groups, such as the National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), National School Boards Association (NSBA), and National Congress of Parents and Teachers all viewed Title I as a general aid program or a distributive policy, the monies of which were to be distributed to school districts throughout the nation.\textsuperscript{108} Hence, during the early years the traditional, established groups composed the most dominant constituency of Title I, thus policy implementors tended to emphasize the distributive-general aid aspects of the legislation.

Historically, in policy battles that involve profes-


\textsuperscript{108}Stoner, 1976.
sionally, well-established groups and the poor and less well established, the well-established groups usually are victorious and able to dictate the program’s priorities. While Title I was primarily established to provide financial assistance to local education agencies (LEA’s) to meet the needs of educationally deprived children living in low-income areas, the target group, the poor, historically, have had very little say in the implementation of such programs.

Give the ambiguous nature of Title I policy statements and the dominance of well-established interest groups, USOE was unable to implement Title I to the satisfaction of the Johnson Administration. The ambiguity of policy statements often resulted in two or more interpretations being made by persons responsible for implementing the policy. In the case of Title I, two distinct interpretations evolved, requiring two very different implementation scenarios on the part of federal implementors in the USOE.

One type of interpretation, as was previously mentioned, that evolved was supported by the traditional, well-established education interest groups that stressed a very limited federal role or federal involvement. This general aid interpretation and its supporters felt the federal government’s role should be limited to determining the site of entitlement and signing the checks.

On the other hand, a second type of interpretation emerged that involved those interests that supported a
categorical interpretation and felt that the federal government should be directly involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of Title I projects. The Johnson Administration was supportive of the categorical interpretation because it felt a strong federal presence was needed to ensure that the poor would be allowed to participate in the implementation of Title I.\textsuperscript{109}

While the Johnson Administration clearly intended for the poor to participate in the administering of local Title I programs, nothing concrete had been established to ensure or guarantee their involvement. Even though USOE had issued a program guide mandating the establishment of parent advisory councils, such program guide mandates did not have the legal bite of a statutory amendment.

Some policy observers, in the early days of the programs, recognized the need for mechanisms to be put in place that would prevent local school systems from excluding low-income and minority citizens from participating in the administering of Title I programs. This concern was especially true in the Southern states. As early as 1967, M. Hayes Mizell of the Southeastern Public Education Program (SEPEP) testified before Congress, telling of the difficulties surrounding the implementation of Title I. Mizell warned Congress ... it would seem there is a need for local school districts to have an external advisory committee of

\textsuperscript{109}Ibid.
parents whose children are participating in ESEA programs, or such a committee with representatives of these parents... There needs to be some mechanism, hopefully created voluntarily by local school officials, but if necessary, created by law or required by the U.S. Office of Education that will allow parents and community leaders to express their ideas and opinions, and to know their rights and responsibilities under ESEA funded programs. While the details of ESEA funded programs are public information, in fact, such information is not easy to secure on the district level and even those who seek it on the state level are not free of subtle bureaucratic intimidation.¹¹⁰

Mizell's testimony was representative of the political sentiments and policy concerns shared by a confluence of interested groups and citizens, all of whom wanted Congress to take steps to ensure the participation of parents of Title I students in the program's Administrative process. Groups such as the Children's Defense Fund, the American Friends Service Committee, the National Welfare Rights Organization, the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, and many others shared mutual political and policy objectives in demanding an expanded role for parents to play in the implementation of Title I programs and projects.

Not only was Congress hounded by the political demands of the various groups, but research studies that were being

conducted on the Title I program began to produce findings that demonstrated serious inadequacies and abuses surrounding the administration of the program, many of which were made public and all of which eventually influenced Congressional thinking. Upon consideration of documented cases of abuse, Congress passed the 1978 Education Amendments that greatly strengthened the parent participation component of Title I.

The three major studies that were most influential in shaping Congressional thinking towards the need for increased parent participation were the studies conducted by National Institute of Education (NIE) and the Syracuse Research Institute International (SRI). The National Institute of Education conducted two major studies in 1977 entitled Administration of Compensatory Education and Title I Funds Allocation: The Current Formula. SRI International conducted a major study entitled Trends in Management of ESEA Title I: A Perspective From Compliance Reviews.

The three reports revealed some of the positive and negative aspects surrounding the administration of the Title I program. On the negative side, the reports produced empirical data and evidence indicating widespread spending and managerial abuses within the program. Moreover, the studies noted that the federal staff given the responsibility of monitoring the program was not large enough to do its job adequately. Therefore, the studies recommend a more expanded role for parents to play in oversight and the monitoring of
The study of Compensatory Education conducted by the NIE uncovered the following program flaws within Title I:

**Inconsistent Administration** (Summarized from national Institute of Education 1977, pages 23-44). The requirement to use Title I funds to supplement and not to supplant state and local expenditures for children participating in Title I projects was not being administered consistently at the federal level. This problem resulted from differences in legal interpretation as well as fundamentally different educational orientations in the Title I program office and the office of the Associate Commissioner for Compensation Education Programs (the office to which the Title I program director reported at the time). Although the program regulations were logical and consistent with the statute, the discussion of the non-supplanting requirement in the regulations was not sufficiently specific to prevent disagreements over certain applications of the requirement. Not only had these disagreements halted programs on a number of administrative actions, such as the resolution of certain audits of SEA administration of Title I; they had also brought to a standstill efforts toward defining precise state and local responsibilities under the non-supplanting requirement, a key issue in many state and local Title I offices.

**Lack of Clarity in Rules and Guidance** (pages 17-18 and 21-22). The document transmitting Title I rules and guidelines to SEA's and LEA's often were not sufficiently clear and understandable to the individuals who had to translate this information into local decisions. More seriously, the many interpretive letters issued by the Title I administrations had not been assembled and disseminated to all potential users of that information. Thus, certain Title I offices were operating with more (and therefore sometimes different) information than that available to other Title I units. In short, Title I offices across the country did not know what clarifications had
been issued on points of general concern to Title I administrators.

Lack of Resolution of Audits (pages 37-44). OE's record with regard to the handling and resolution of Title I audit findings was extremely poor. Lengthy, and in some cases, intentional delays occurred in the handling of audits in which the HEW Office of the Inspector General had recommended the recovery of Title I funds. These delays were not only examples of very poor OE management practice, but more importantly they led to a loss of credibility for the audit process by the agencies that were themselves subject to the process. It should be noted that NIE attributed much of this delay to the internal OE disagreement over the proper interpretation of the Title I non-supplanting requirement. Though seemingly trivial, this disagreement—in its different forms—permeates much of the discussion of Title I administrative improvement.\footnote{As summarized in Elizabeth R. Reisner, The Office of Education Administers Changes in a Law: Agency Response to Title I, ESEA Amendments of 1978 (Washington, D.C.: The National Advisory Council on Education of Disadvantaged Children, U.S. Education Department, May 1980), p. 17.}

While the two studies conducted by the NIE were influential in Congress, expanding the parental involvement component of Title I, the SRI International had a less direct influence. Nevertheless, it went a long way to help make an even stronger argument for parent participation in Title I. The SRI International study, much like the NIE studies, identified some of the problem areas and flaws that hampered the administration of Title I. Many of the problem areas uncovered by the SRI study tended to confirm the findings of the NIE work. The SRI study was conducted in 1979, two years after those of the NIE. Therefore, it was not available to
Congress at the time of the 1978 Education Amendments, but Congress eventually was made cognizant of the study's findings. The SRI study uncovered the following problem areas:

No supplanting and general aid rules. (Summarized from SRI report, 1979, pages 103-106). Problems were attributed to a lack of clarity in the interpretations of the rules and their applications to particular situations.

Comparably of sources in Title I schools to services in non-Title I schools. Major problems were due to a reluctance of States to enforce the statutory councils.

Parent Involvement. Problems centered on questions about the effectiveness of parents' involvement in programs, the extent of training needed for parents, and ambiguities about the proper responsibilities of parent advisory councils.

Student Selection. State and LEAs were struggling with the issue of selecting participating students according to "greatest needs," while considering the value of retaining current participants, whatever their relative need for services.

Private Schools. Two persisting problems were the nature of the relationship between public and private school staffs and the operational meaning of "comparable services" for private students.

SEA Monitoring and Auditing. The HEW audits and program reviews revealed inadequacies in the frequency and scope of on-site visits.112

The NIE repeals, as well as the SRI report, were consistent in discussing the problems surrounding the implementation and administration of the Title I program. The report's findings of financial and managerial abuses clearly

112As summarized in E. Reisner, pp. 21-22.
illustrated the need for consistent on-site monitoring of the Title I program. The report's findings showed that monitoring activities were a necessary requirement if Title I was to be administered and implemented properly. Advocates of the categorical purposes of Title I, i.e., groups like Children's Defense Fund, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under the Law, etc. consistently articulated the importance of citizen and/or parent participation in the administration of the Title I program.

Even though the reports were critical of the way many of the Title I programs were being administered at that time, nevertheless, one of the NIE studies pointed out that not all Title I programs were being mismanaged and abused. The NIE study, The Administration of Compensatory Education, 1977, contended that "...the vast majority of school districts apparently make serious efforts to abide by Title I regulations, and eligible children do receive additional services of the kinds intended." Most school districts welcomed the Title I monies to assist students with reading, writing, and math deficiencies, and therefore made every effort to comply with federal directives.

Also, a common strategy employed by the federal government to insure compliance is the threat or use of fiscal sanctions (the withholding or withdrawal of federal monies). According to policy analysts who studied the implementation of the Great Society programs, seldom did the government actually
invoke such sanctions, but in most cases, the possibility of sanctions proved to be adequate deterrence. But the influence of fiscal sanctions should not be overstated; for many policy experts disagree about the effectiveness of fiscal sanctions in bringing about compliance. Paul Hill once remarked after reviewing some of Title I's early outcomes:

Those successes cannot be wholly attributed to the use of fiscal sanctions. States and LEA's know that very few school districts ever visited or audited, that HEW seldom tries to recover funds, and that many audit exceptions are not repaid. Some school officials obviously need no special incentives to obey laws they support. But many others are explicit about their disenchantment with the constraints placed on them by Title I. For those officials, the best explanation for their compliance is that they are responding to actions and incentives that are not formally controlled by the centralized enforcement system. These actions and incentives, which I shall call the informal management system rely on political and professional pressures on state and local administrators, rather than on the threat of legal action and forcible recovery of funds.113

Hill argued that a more organized and persistent pressure, utilizing political resources and human capital would prove more successful than fiscal sanctions. He contended that the formal centralized enforcement system was inadequate when it came to the implementation of a broadly worded federal educational program. He also maintained that in addition to public officials serving as monitors, that an informal management system composed of interested citizens and/or citizen groups would be needed to assist in monitoring

113Paul T. Hill, pp. 5-6.
programs in order to insure compliance and effective implementation. Hill believed that the three enforcement functions of rulemaking, oversight, and sanctioning as being conducted by USOE at the time could not ensure effective implementation of Title I. In noting the inadequacy of the centralized management system, Hill offered the following comments:

Like all management systems, the centralized enforcement system is not built to run purely on coercive force. It assures that most LEA's will comply with the intent of the program once they understand the rules and consequences of being found in violation. Rulemaking and monitoring are thus principally ways of disseminating information about federal requirements. However, when LEA's resist or try to evade or fail to understand the program rules, the system becomes coercive. In such cases the rules become standards for idealizing non-compliance; oversight becomes the process through which specific instances of non-compliance are identified; and fiscal sanctions become the culmination of the enforcement process.114

Hill, in developing the informal management system, makes, from a realist perspective, a point that is very much consistent with the ideals of participatory democratic theorists, the need for greater citizen participation in the political process. He was able to distinguish the informal management system from the centralized enforcement system by noting several major differences. He observed that the latter system is basically defined by three major activities, e.g., rulemaking, oversight, and sanctioning. Whereas, the former

114 Ibid., p. 1.
system consists of the following five elements:

1. **A network of state and local officials whose concerns have become focused on the administration of federal programs.**

2. **Non-fiscal sanctions that federal officials can apply directly, free of formal review processes.** Though the federal government can apply financial sanctions only. After elaborate quasi-judicial processes, it can punish non-compliance through three kinds of non-fiscal sanctions. First, by subjecting non-compliant agencies to special audits and performance reviews. The inconvenience of enduring such reviews is itself a sanction; second, by directing public criticism at the officials responsible for managing programs, and third, by subjecting constituent agencies (e.g., the school districts served by a state education agency) attribute their inconvenience to the superior agency's actions, their complaints constitute a sanction.

3. **Technical Assistance.** The federal Title I office documents and disseminates "exemplary projects," i.e., examples of high-quality instructional services that are permissible under Title I rules. This process provides an opportunity for federal officials to affect local decisions about instructional issues that are beyond the scope of the regulations—e.g., the balance of instructional and non-instructional services, and the selection of curricula for Title I instruction.

4. **Private citizens who support the objectives of federal programs.** Every state and most localities contain groups of people who support the stated objectives of federal programs. These supporters are often organized in community action agencies, lawyers, civil rights groups, minority group caucuses and welfare beneficiaries associations. In addition, Title I requires the establishment of local parent advisory councils composed of parents of beneficiary children. Those groups supplement the federal government's monitoring activity by calling attention to potential misuse of program funds. They are also a general source of
local pressure for compliance.

5. Federally funded evaluations of the effects of Title I services of children’s achievement. The existence of such evaluations serves notice on LEA officials that federal funds are expected to produce improvements in the services provided to disadvantaged children. By paying for evaluations and collecting the results, the federal government emphasizes the fact that Title I funds are to be used to help particular students.115

Hill’s analysis, along with the NIE studies, as well as the SRI study, all presented persuasive arguments and evidence demonstrating the need for parents, citizens, and citizen groups to take part in the monitoring and implementation of Title I. This groundswell of evidence and empirical findings went a long ways to convince the Congress to pass statutory amendments that would guarantee a stronger and more active role for parents to play in the design, development, and implementation of Title I programs. Beginning with the 1974 amendments, local school districts were required to have a parent advisory council at each school that had a Title I program.

Thus, as one tracks the origin of Title I’s parental involvement component, the government’s effort to resolve problems of non-compliance and malfeasance that resulted in the government allowing wider parent participation played an important, but not singular, role in the origin of the parental involvement component. Parent participation was also

115Ibid., p. 16.
given additional support and credibility by educational studies that were emerging at that time. The Congress and USOE officials were very much influenced by arguments and findings offered by education scholars that demonstrated a statistical linkage between parental involvement and student achievement. The research findings in this area also put additional pressure on Congress and federal officials to find ways to involve parents in the implementation of the Title I program.

A study conducted in 1966 by the prominent education researcher, James Coleman, was heralded by scholars as the first major study to establish a statistical linkage between parental involvement and student achievement in the field of education. The study entitled, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, found that a student's positive attitudes about himself and his control over the environment are critical to achievement and that school "input" factors such as class size or teacher credentials are not as important.\(^{116}\) Coleman went on to conclude that family background is the single most important factor in a child's education.\(^{117}\) While Coleman's work pioneered the research in this area, it only somewhat loosely established the statistical linkage between the two


\(^{117}\) Ibid.
variables. It was not until later studies that the statistical linkage between parental involvement and student achievement was more finely tied and given more sound empirical and theoretical support.

Coleman's study, however, was very influential in directing some significant education research in the 1970s. Two major and influential education studies emerged in the 1970s. George Mayeske in 1973 completed a reanalysis of Coleman's study in which Mayeske identified several family influences that seem to determined student achievement. The influences include:

(1) students' and parents' expectations for academic performance;
(2) the extent to which they engaged in activities to support these expectations; and
(3) the student's attitude toward hard work as necessary to success.\(^{118}\)

The Coleman and Mayeske studies make subtle but somewhat convincing arguments for parental involvement in a child's program. A more compelling case was made by Christopher Jencks in 1972. Jencks also re-examined Coleman's study and "found that schools with an active PTA chapter had higher average student achievement, regardless of their social background."\(^{119}\)


\(^{119}\)Christopher Jencks, "The Coleman Report and the Conventional Wisdom," in Frederick Mosteller and Daniel Moynihan eds., On Equality of Educational Opportunity (N.Y.:
Even more forceful, stronger arguments emerged from the research findings linking parental involvement to student achievement. Most of the studies corroborate the contention that "when parents show a strong interest in their children's schooling, they promote the development of attitudes that are key to achievement, attitudes that are more a product of how the family interacts than of its social class or income."\textsuperscript{120}

Some studies, such as the study done by Edward L. McDill, et. al., made legitimate claims that "parent involvement was found to be the critical factor in the achievement and aspirations of high school students."\textsuperscript{121} The study conducted by McDill and associates offered convincing evidence that high school students, and not elementary or junior high students alone, can benefit academically from parental involvement. It has been shown that the studies linking parental involvement and achievement also substantially influenced Congress' thinking regarding parent participation. Thus, in the final analysis, parent participation would lead not only to greater student achievement, but it would assist

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
in the informal monitoring of the Title I program and help resolve problems of non-compliance and supplanting.

Finally, all of the factors cited above were crucial to the Congress mandating parent advisory councils, but as was noted at the beginning of this chapter, an atmosphere had been created that made it easier for Congress to be receptive to the idea of greater parent participation. Congress did not reach its position supporting parent participation without being influenced by "maximum feasible participation."

Congress did not reach its position supporting parent participation without being influenced by the 1960's concept of "maximum feasible participation." After all, Title I was an original and fundamental part of President Johnson's "War on Poverty" program. The Johnson's Administration policy of "maximum feasible participation" that advanced the notion that people, particularly poor people, at the grassroots level must be allowed the opportunity to participate fully in the policy-making and decision-making processes that affect their lives truly was an advanced democratic principle. After reviewing various educational programs involving parent participation, Henderson expressed the following: "The question of whether to have parent involvement is much larger than its potential affects on students' reading and math scores. It is central to our democracy that parents and citizens participate in the
governing of institutions."\textsuperscript{122}

Congress moved towards greater parent participation in the Title I program with its statutory amendments to the program in that same year. The Education Amendments of 1974 included a new requirement that mandated the establishment of district and school advisory councils.\textsuperscript{123} The Amendments also included a requirement that "council members must be selected by Title I parents and a majority of members must be Title I parents."\textsuperscript{124} Therefore, the 1974 Amendments, in very close language, required that local school districts not only have a parent advisory council (PAC) at the district level, but also a PAC in each school with a Title I funded program. Thus DAC's (District Advisory Councils) and SAC's (School Advisory Councils) were mandated under the 1974 Education Amendments. The Congress went even further to strengthen the role of parents in the administration of Title I by declaring, under the Education Amendments of 1978, Title I funds were to be available to school districts only if parent advisory councils were organized. Also, "The 1978 Amendments to the Title I law require(d) local school districts to give PAC's the responsibility to advise the district and Title I project schools in planning for and implementation and

\textsuperscript{122}Henderson, p. 8.


\textsuperscript{124}Children's Defense Fund, p. 28.
evaluation of its program and projects funded under Title I."\(^{125}\)

The 1978 Amendments also contained specific mandates "enacting new parent advisory council requirements, including procedures for electing members, the composition of the council, the minimum number of meetings required, and rights of access to information."\(^{126}\)

Overall, the 1978 Education Amendments greatly strengthened the parent participation requirement of Title I. The Amendments gave parents the right to establish parent advisory councils (PAC's) at the district-wide level (DAC's) as well as at the school-level (SAC's). The Amendment also granted Title I parents authority to review and have access to all Title I records and documents at the local level. A provision in Section 125 of the 1978 Amendments required that "each SEA shall provide a copy of any report resulting from state or federal auditing, monitoring, or evaluation activities in any district to the (district-wide) parent advisory council... in such district."\(^{127}\) Moreover, included in the 1978 Amendments were monies to finance the training of Title I parents, so that they would be better able to carry out the goals of the

\(^{125}\)Mizell, p. 2.

\(^{126}\)Children's Defense Fund, p. 29.

\(^{127}\)Children's Defense Fund, p. 29.
Title I legislation.\textsuperscript{128}

While parent participation in Title I may have reached its zenith in the 1970s, the 1980s represent a decade of reversal of parent participation as far as the federal government is concerned. Chapter I was created in 1981 to replace Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Under the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, specific requirements for parent councils were eliminated. The parent participation requirements that accompanied the 1974 and 1978 Education Amendments were basically eradicated by the 1981 reforms. In looking at parent participation, at this time, an effort will be made to analyze how Title I officials have interpreted the consultation requirements of Chapter I.

Unfortunately for parents, when Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was officially replaced by Chapter I of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act on July 1, 1982, several major changes accompanied the new law. The significant changes included:

(a) The new law does not mandate a specific structure to assure that parents and other citizens are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Chapter I funded projects;

(b) Local school districts are no longer required to establish parent advisory councils (PAC's),

school advisory councils (SAC's) or district advisory councils (DAC's) that were mandated by Title I;

(c) Instead, local school officials are only required to "consult" with parents and teachers of children in Chapter I funded projects. (The specific methods to be used to fulfill this requirement will be left to the discretion of local school districts.)

Most research has shown that Chapter I of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981 has had a significant effect upon parent participation in parent advisory councils. The Children's Defense Fund's Report, An Interim Report on the Implementation of Chapter I, states that, "Twenty-four state Chapter I directors reported a significant decline in organized parent involvement under Chapter I." Chapter I has resulted in a significant decrease in parent involvement.

The Children's Defense Fund's report also offers the following empirical evidence to show the significant decrease of parent participation in parent advisory councils:

... in Kansas, 20 out of 190 Chapter I programs still use parent advisory councils (PAC's). In Rhode Island, all school-level councils have been eliminated except one, and only 25 of 40 districts have maintained their advisory councils. In Tennessee, only 6 of 146 district-level councils remain, and most school-level councils have been

---


130Children's Defense Fund, p. 6.
However, the implications of the Children's Defense Fund's report concerning the impact of Chapter I upon parent participation should be tempered given the findings of another study addressing the same concern. The REA/WESTAT national survey that was conducted during the 1985-86 school year found that 51% of school districts had a formal advisory council for parents, 44% had a district advisory council, and 36% had one or more school advisory councils.\footnote{As cited in Jay and Shields, 1987, p. 11.} So a full four years after ECIA of 1981 and its provisions reversing mandated councils, a large number of school districts chose to maintain their existing councils. The evidence presented by the Children's Defense Fund study, as well as the REA/WESTAT survey, revealed that Chapter I negatively affected parent participation in rural and smaller school districts, while many medium-sized and larger metropolitan school districts had not been affected in a significantly adverse manner. Case in point, the various medium-sized and larger urban school districts in the State of Ohio decided to maintain both parent advisory councils and district advisory councils. During the fall of 1985 when asked by this writer about Ohio's plans concerning parent involvement under Chapter I, a Chapter I official remarked, "Most local school districts recognize the

\footnote{Children's Defense Fund, p. 6.}
valuable contributions that parents can make; therefore, many will likely decide to continue to have parent advisory councils at both the school and district levels."

Seemingly, the Chapter I official's remarks proved to be quite accurate for the State of Ohio. While there has been some decrease in parent participation in some school districts, overall, parent participation has a great deal of support in many school districts within the state. It is noteworthy, that, while doing my research in three Ohio school districts four years after the official implementation of Chapter I, nearly all of the school officials I interviewed welcomed continued parent participation even though such participation was no longer required by law.

In this chapter of the study, we have reviewed the origin of parent advisory councils, examined some of the factors that affected the councils' development and the influence of maximum feasible participation in hopes of clarifying the milieu in which PACs and DACs originated. We also looked at how the documenting of problems of non-compliance, supplanting, and the misuse of Title I funds helped shape political arguments supporting parent and citizen participation in the Title I/Chapter I program.

Furthermore, we were able to show that the parental involvement component of Title I derived from the need to monitor the program more closely and to establish greater accountability between program administrators and recipients.
In regards to this concern, policy analyst, Paul Hill, had pointed out in his discussion of his "informal management system," how parent participation could assist in the areas of compliance, monitoring, and accountability. We are also able to show that the courts proved to be an influential source of legitimizing citizen participation in schools.

Finally, we were able to show that the Congress, by mandating PACs in 1978, was very much influenced by the previously cited factors and also very much influenced by the empirical studies showing a linkage between student achievement and parental involvement. All of which is important in gaining an understanding of the role that SACs and DACs theoretically were to play in the implementation of the Title I/Chapter I program, but such an analysis fails short of explaining how SACs and DACs actually function in the real policy process. Hence, our analysis leaves three questions unanswered: 1) what opportunities actually exist for parents to participate in and influence Chapter I's decision-making process; 2) what is the nature and extent of parental involvement, and 3) what difference does it make that parents have this opportunity to participate? We will deal with these questions in the next two sections.
CHAPTER IV
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT COMPONENT IN COLUMBUS, CLEVELAND, AND TOLEDO

In this chapter we will analyze the implementation of the Chapter I parental involvement component. This analysis examines the nature and extent of parent participation in the Chapter I program. A multi-site case study approach was employed to collect data and information that would help to illuminate the following concerns: the structure of parent involvement activities at the district and local level, the scheduling and running of DAC meetings, workshops, attendance patterns, and interaction between parents, teachers, and administrators. This researcher attended at least two DAC meetings in each of the cities in gathering the data. Furthermore, the details of parent involvement activities were ascertained through a closed-ended questionnaire, opened-ended interviews, conversations, personal observations, and review of DAC newsletters, brochures, and the minutes of the monthly meetings.

Although the Chapter I legislation reduced the parental involvement requirements, interviews in each of the three cities with various Chapter I officials and parents who had ten or more years participation in the Title I/Chapter I
program revealed that the nature and extent of parent participation in the Chapter I program is very much consistent with and similar to participation during the latter years of the Title I program. Each school district continues to maintain a budget line for parental involvement activities. Each of the Chapter I directors views parental involvement as a positive not a negative, and each has chosen to maintain parent liaison services. Parent liaison services provide a link between the LEA, the school, and the community. Parent liaison responsibilities are carried out by parent coordinators who are assigned to participating schools.

Parent coordinators play a pivotal role in developing and maintaining ties and a network by which Chapter I information may be distributed to parents. They are dedicated to developing and maintaining parent involvement in Chapter I activities. Columbus has two full-time parent coordinators whose chief responsibility is to encourage parent participation in the Chapter I program. The two coordinators are assisted in their responsibilities of covering 52 elementary schools and 50 middle schools by four other program coordinators. Cleveland has seven full-time coordinators who are part of the district's parent liaison services. Toledo established in 1972 the Parent Partner Program to work with parents and encourage their involvement in the Title I/Chapter I program.
Along with maintaining parent liaison services, all three school districts have some form of parent involvement at the local school level. Columbus and Toledo continue to maintain and operate their SACs just as they had done under Title I, while the members of Cleveland's DAC decided in 1981 to replace their SACs with Parent Project Priorities Committees (PPPC'S). According to the 1985-86 chairman of Cleveland's DAC, whose SAC membership extended back to 1980, the thinking of the DAC membership in 1982 was:

They felt SACs weren't functioning as they should have under Title I. Any local school attendance area that had students had to have a SAC of at least 8-10 parents that met at least three times per year. We found that in some cases that was happening, but in most cases it wasn't happening. It didn't happen to the letter of the law. Most parents were more interested in the DAC monthly meetings.

Cleveland's DAC members felt that parents were not able to have meaningful input into the operation and implementation of the Title I program under the then existing school advisory councils (SACs). It was pointed out that many of the SACs failed to meet more than twice a year with very little interaction between parents, teachers, and Title I officials. It was also pointed out that parents were not being properly informed about program developments and changes in Title I legislation. Given these shortcomings parents were unable to monitor and were unable to evaluate local Title I projects. DAC members in Cleveland felt that since Title I/Chapter I offered a variety of educational programs, math, English, and
reading, among others, that it would be better to organize parents around the educational program or project in which their child was enrolled rather than around the school the child attended.

In an effort to illustrate the difference, let us suppose that Mrs. Brown's daughter, Ann, attends the Whitelaw Elementary School and is enrolled in the Chapter I reading program at the school, and Ms. Jones' son, Chuck, attends the same school and is enrolled in the Chapter I math program. Under the school advisory council (SAC) concept, Mrs. Brown and Ms. Jones would belong to the same SAC due to the fact that their daughter and son attend the same school even though the children are enrolled in different Chapter I programs.

On the other hand, the PPPC concept places primary emphasis upon the program (project) for organizing the parents. A project coordinator would be responsible for organizing parents district-wide. In the case of Mrs. Brown, the project coordinator for the Reading Strategy Project would organize the PPPC district-wide for all schools that have a Chapter I reading project. In a city the size of Cleveland more than 20 elementary and middle schools might have reading projects. The parents from the various schools would meet at a central location to discuss, critique, and evaluate Chapter I's reading program. In such a setting, the parents would be able to compare their child's reading program with others within the school district. Ms. Jones, whose son Chuck
is enrolled in the math program, would participate in the district-wide Math Assistance PPPC. All in all, Cleveland has 10 projects around which the PPPC's are organized:

1. Reading Strategy Project
2. Basic Skills Reinforcement Project
3. Children-In-Residential Schools Project
4. Child Development Project
5. Basic English Language and Literacy Project
6. Mathematics Assistance Project
7. Project Star (Elementary)
8. Reading Improvement Project
9. Pupil Adjustment Program
10. Diagnostic Reading Clinic

PPPCs eventually replaced SACs as the mechanism by which parents become involved in Cleveland's Chapter I in an effort to improve parental monitoring, input, and general oversight of the Chapter I program.

Prior to 1982, the major responsibilities of SAC members in Columbus, Toledo, and Cleveland were to review Title I applications prior to annual submission to the state department of education, to make recommendations for improving Title I activities as they related to the needs of the children, and to maintain involvement in the program throughout the school year. Parental involvement activities included working on committees, observing classroom activities, organizing activities in which other parents might become involved, and working as volunteers within the schools. These activities and responsibilities were firmly established by the 1978 Technical Amendments to Title I.
But under the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) of 1981, specific requirements for parent participation as well as SACs and DACs' mandated responsibilities were eliminated. The various participation requirements were eliminated and replaced with a simple statement calling for Chapter I officials to be in "consultation with parents and teachers" regarding Chapter I projects and policies. Moreover, the specific means to be used to satisfy the "consultation" requirement are to be left to the discretion of local school districts.

Many of the parents (DAC members) interviewed in this study indicated that they did not feel that the Chapter I administrators and school officials in their school districts have used the "consultation" provision to limit parent participation. Figures supplied by the Ohio Department of Education's Division of Federal Assistance and Division of Special Education tend to support their perception, though there has been a noticeable decline in DAC membership. (See Table 1.) Table 1 highlights the following trends regarding parent participation in SACs and DACS in Ohio:
TABLE 1

FIVE-YEAR TRENDS: COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>SACs</th>
<th>DACs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>22,950</td>
<td>10,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>25,217</td>
<td>9,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>26,177</td>
<td>8,172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>26,238</td>
<td>7,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>30,118</td>
<td>4,469</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to officials in Ohio's Department of Education, the decline in DAC membership was expected in the absence of mandated DACs. They reasoned that parents in large city school districts and also those parents in rural districts preferred to be involved at the school where their children attended. This position is at odds with the viewpoint expressed by the 1985-86 chairman of Cleveland's DAC. The general trend indicated by the figures also contradicts the findings of a national survey compiled by REA/Westat.

During the 1985-86 school year, REA/Westat surveyed 641 school districts to determine how many districts continued to maintain parent advisory councils (both SACs and DACs) in the absence of mandatory requirements. They found that 51% of districts had a formal advisory council, and 36% had school advisory councils. (See Table 2.)
TABLE 2
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
(Percentage of Districts; N = 641)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had Parent Advisory Councils</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had District Advisory Councils</td>
<td>(44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had School Advisory Councils</td>
<td>(36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had Annual or Periodic Meetings</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Had Parent Advisory Councils</td>
<td>(45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But Did Not Have Parent Advisory Councils</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted Parent Surveys</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted Surveys Only</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had No Formal Mechanisms for Parent Involvement</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source, Adapted from Jay and Shields, p. 12.

The figures above indicate a significant drop in the number of SACs and DACs, the number of SACs declining at a faster rate than DACs. The Ohio Department of Education figures show a contrary trend: Ohio DACs declining while its SACs increase.

Jay and Shields, in trying to ascertain to what extent parent participation in an advisory role in SACs and DACs in the Chapter I program differs from the Title I years, decided to compare REA/Westat survey findings with the results of the 1980 Keesling study and the 1983 study conducted by Advanced
Technology, Inc. Jay and Shield's comparative analysis of the three surveys revealed the following results:

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF DISTRICTS WITH DACs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I (Keesling 1980)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I (Advanced Technology, Inc., 1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I (REA/Westat, 1986)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^134^Source: Adapted from Jay and Shields, p. 20.

As shown in Table 3, during the period when DACs were mandatory, i.e., before 1981, nearly every school district receiving Title I funds had established DACs as a formal mechanism to ensure parent participation. A year after the 1982 implementation of the ECIA, an extraordinary majority of districts still maintained DACs. But only three years later school officials had embraced the reduced parent participation requirements that were part of the ECIA legislation and consequently, the number of existing DACs was greatly diminished.

Moreover, Jay and Shields eventually noted that while the reduction of advisory councils at the district level was quite substantial, the reduction of advisory councils at the local
school level was greater still as indicated by the following table:

**TABLE 4**

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS WITH SACs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title I (Keesling, 1980)</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I (Advanced Technology, Inc., 1983)</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I (REA/Westat, 1986)</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Jay and Shields, p. 21.

Given the findings of the REA/Westat (1986) study that showed 44.2% of school districts still maintained DACs while only 38.6% of school districts still maintained SACs, Jay and Shields concluded that the 1981 ECIA legislation had a greater negative impact upon participation at the school level. In their explanation of this, they turned to the Advanced Technology Inc., Study (1983) that "reported that the many federal requirements regarding the formation and operation of advisory councils placed a significant burden on local administrators, one that was not outweighed by its benefits in many districts." Hence, once the requirements were removed, local administrators moved quickly to free themselves

---

135Jay and Shields, p. 21.

136Jay and Shields, p. 21.
of the perceived burden; consequently, the number of SACs was greatly reduced.

Although the number of parent advisory councils has diminished as a consequence of the 1981 reform legislation, the numbers of SACs and DACs alone tell us very little about the nature and extent of parent participation. In support of this view, Jay and Shields observed in their study that "the elimination of parent councils in many districts and the reduction in the participation of parents in those districts that have maintained councils do not, in themselves, signify a reduction in parent input into the decisions concerning the Chapter I program." They maintained that the diminution of a number of advisory councils most likely had a relatively modest effect on the extent and nature of parent participation. They reasoned that "in some districts, parent councils may have existed solely on paper for compliance purposes. In those districts, parents may never have had much influence over the compensatory program. Conversely, districts may have found other effective means for involving parents."

The focus of this chapter will be upon the structure and activities of DACs in three Ohio school districts in order to

---

137Ibid.

138Ibid., p. 31.

139Ibid., p. 21.
ascertain the extent to which parents play a role in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the Chapter I programs in Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo. Likewise, essential to the focus of this study is the perception of the parents and how much input they perceive they have in influencing Chapter I’s decision-making process. This chapter initiates the analysis of parents’ perception of their influence in Chapter I’s decision making. This analysis will conclude in the next chapter.

The following discussion concerns the structure of parent involvement activities at the district level. Primary focus will center upon scheduling and running of DAC meetings, attendance patterns at the meetings, the meetings’ agendas, activities, speakers, and participants. The description of a DAC meeting will illuminate what typically goes on at such a gathering.

Structure and Organization of District Advisory Councils

Structure. In each of the three school districts DAC members were familiar with Chapter I bylaws concerning parental involvement. Each district had elected officers who provided leadership. These officers included a chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, and sometimes a treasurer. Officers typically served a two-year term. Monthly planning and activity meetings are held in each district. In Columbus the DAC meeting is held the second Thursday of each month from
9:30 to 11:30 a.m. The DAC's planning committee meets the Tuesday following the DAC meeting. Cleveland's DAC meeting is held the third Tuesday of every month during the hours of 9:30 - 11:30 a.m., and its planning committee meets the first Tuesday of each month. Toledo's DAC meets the third Thursday of the month.

In the monthly planning meeting the officers and some parents, who make up the planning committee, meet to determine the agenda and activities of the monthly activity meeting. The planning committee in Cleveland's district is called the executive committee. The planning/executive committee decides who the speakers and/or presenters will be at the monthly meeting. The subject matter, issues, and topics to be discussed are decided by the officers. Typically during the DAC activity meeting Chapter I teachers (reading, math, language) are called upon to give demonstrations and explain techniques/methods employed to teach Chapter I students. These frequent demonstrations at DAC meetings have the intent of exposing parents to teaching strategies, which they subsequently could apply when working with their children at home, thus reinforcing what has been taught at school.

The chairperson presides over the meetings and has the authority to create committees and appoint members to serve on them. The chairperson has final say over planning the agenda for the activity meeting. Minutes of the meetings are recorded by the elected secretary. Administrators usually
attend the monthly DAC activity meeting. Staff members such as the parent and/or project coordinators attend every activity meeting. Parents are given evaluation/reaction sheets to fill out after every meeting. (See Appendix A for a copy of an evaluation form.)

The legal responsibilities of the DAC are to give advice to the district personnel in planning for the Chapter I project, and to advise in the implementation and evaluation of the project. An annual evaluation form is filled out by DAC members in all three school districts. The chairperson of Cleveland's DAC remarked that in the Cleveland school district, Chapter I DAC members still participate in the "sign-off procedure." This procedure is a checklist of policy items that DAC members review to determine whether or not the school district is in compliance with federal guidelines, as if the district were still operating under the more restrictive guidelines of Title I. In fulfilling the sign-off procedure, DAC members respond to these questions:

1. Did the school district provide copies and updates of any changes in the Chapter I legislation and regulations?

2. Did the school district provide funds and facilities for parent advisory councils to meet?

3. Did the school district solicit input from parents in the evaluation of the project, and did it solicit parents' recommendations for the coming year's proposal?

Once the DAC members responses have been gathered, the chairperson is responsible for signing a page of assurances in
the project renewal application that the proper procedures have been followed for parent participation. The state department of education is responsible for making available to the chairperson federal and state auditing, monitoring, and evaluation reports of the Chapter I project.¹⁴⁰ Final decision-making authority concerning DAC matters rests with the chairperson.

Membership Characteristics. Each of the DACs was racially mixed; however, the majority of the 115 DAC members interviewed were Black (56%). Forty-two percent were White and 2 percent Hispanic. As indicated by Table 5, the racial make-up of the DACs roughly reflected the racial distribution of students served by Chapter I during the 1985-86 school year.

### Table 5

STUDENTS SERVED BY THE CHAPTER I PROGRAM 1985-86

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>CITY</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>3,789</td>
<td>9,453</td>
<td>2,988</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3,410</td>
<td>2,898</td>
<td>1,937</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian/ Alaskan Native</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7,385</td>
<td>13,591</td>
<td>5,301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Ohio Dept. of Education.

Although over 93 percent of the 115 members interviewed were females, the chairpersons in Columbus and Cleveland were Black males. A White female served as chairperson of Toledo’s DAC. All three districts had female vice-chairpersons. Only 51 percent of the members were employed. At the time of our study, the U.S. government defined as poverty stricken a family of four earning $12,500 or less per year. As indicated by Table 4.6, roughly forty-three percent of members’ families earned $12,000 or less per year.

**Data compiled by Ohio Department of Education, Division of Federal Assistance.**
Sixty-two percent were renting the dwelling in which they lived, only 38 percent were buying or owned their homes. Forty-four percent of the members were married, 24 percent were single, and the others 32 percent were divorced, separated, or widowed. A substantial majority (72%) said they were Democrats. Around eight percent were Republicans, eleven percent were Independents, and roughly nine percent expressed no political identification. (See Table 7.)

### Table 6
**Total Family Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1000-2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2000-5000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5000-9000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9000-12000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$12000-15000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15000-19000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$19000-23000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$23000-26000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$26000 or more</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 7

POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY ID</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most members had two to three years council experience. Sixty-eight percent of the members were between 25 and 44 years of age. Twenty-six percent of the members had nine to eleven years of high school education, 44 percent were high school graduates and about ten percent had 1 to 2 years of college as shown in Table 8.
### TABLE 8

**EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11 Years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Years College</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Years College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Grad and More</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Selection.** In the Cleveland and Toledo districts, DAC members are still elected, but under dissimilar electoral procedures. In Columbus, standard practice is to treat all parents who come to DAC activity meetings as members of the council. Ideally, and as was the case under Title I, DAC membership would require that the parent be elected from his/her local school advisory council (SAC) as representative on the DAC. Toledo has been the most steadfast in employing the original method of choosing DAC members. As part of Toledo's monthly DAC activity meetings, elected
representatives still give a report of the SAC meeting and activities occurring in the local school building.

As previously noted, Cleveland's DAC members, under the relaxed provisions of ECIA, chose to transform their SACs into PPPCs. Each of the ten PPPCs elects three parents to serve as elected representatives to the DAC's executive committee. The thirty elected members of the executive committee compose Cleveland's DAC. Some parents who are not DAC members attend DAC meetings in Cleveland and Toledo. The monthly meetings in each district are open to the general public.

Council members in all three districts have to be residents of the district and a majority must be parents of children being served by Chapter I. Teachers in the district may be elected to the council, and several teachers regularly attended the DAC activity meeting. Occasionally a few principals would also attend. Parent coordinators are present at each district's monthly DAC activity meeting, as are some Chapter I administrators from the local LEA. In Toledo the Chapter I project director attended each monthly DAC activity meeting, having done so since 1966. Columbus' superintendent of public education consistently sent a high level assistant to represent his office at the monthly activity meeting.

Attendance at each monthly DAC activity meeting varied throughout the school year. Chart 4-1 indicates the month-by-month variance in attendance for October 1985 through February 1986.
Each district provides transportation to and from DAC meetings and babysitting services for those parents who are in need of such services. The DAC officers give training sessions for new DAC members to help them become familiar with the Chapter I program, its history, goals, and objectives and, equally important, the duties and responsibilities of DAC members. All three districts still include in the budget section of their application a line for expenses to cover parental involvement activities.

Toledo’s Chapter I project director pointed out that the number of people attending the monthly DAC meeting and participating in DAC activities has declined significantly since the late 1970s days of mandated SACs and DACs. Nevertheless, he and his fellow administrators still give
priority to parent participation in the Chapter I program. He noted that "during the 1970s as many as 200-300 parents would be in attendance at some meetings as opposed to the 40-50 parents who currently attend the monthly meeting."

As was stated earlier, the reduced attendance and smaller advisory council membership says very little about the extent to which participating parents are involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the Chapter I program. Closer scrutiny of activities taking place at DAC meetings, review both of the minutes of the meetings and of policy concerning the actual duties/responsibilities of DACs, and with interviews and conversations with DAC members, Chapter I staff members and administrators do provide insight as to the extent to which parents are involved in the Chapter I program.

A summary protocol is used herein to describe the activities that take place at the monthly DAC activity meeting. The summary protocol amplify the observations this researcher made while attending a DAC activity meeting. An analysis of the survey conducted with 115 DAC members in the three cities is presented in the next chapter. (See Appendices B and C for minutes of DAC meetings in Columbus and Toledo; and Appendices D, E, and F for agendas of DAC meetings in Columbus, Cleveland, and Toledo.)
The meeting of the Columbus DAC was called to order by the chairperson at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 13, 1986. The chairperson then greeted those in attendance and called for a moment of silent prayer. This was the fifth DAC meeting of the school year. All three of the DAC officers were present, as were 41 parents, two principals, 31 Chapter I staff people (teachers, aides, administrators, and program coordinators). A total of 77 persons attended the meeting. Those present received an agenda and materials describing Chapter I's CLEAR (reading) Program.

The vice-chairperson introduced and welcomed the visiting teachers and principals. Then the chairperson put to question the approval of the minutes of the January meeting. The minutes were approved. Approval of the minutes was followed by one of the parent coordinators explaining the importance of parents sharing information about the Chapter I program. She noted that there had been a meeting at the Oakland Park Alternative School on "Parents Sharing Information," and that many of the parents had found it to be very informative and interesting. After the parent coordinator concluded her remarks, a Chapter I administrator presented certificates to the five Columbus DAC members/parents who attended at least
nine workshops during the Region V Conference that was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on March 15, 1985.

Next, a program coordinator gave a brief overview of the results of the diagnostic tests that had been conducted in the district’s middle schools. She explained that the test results are used to group students and would ultimately allow teachers to develop individualized programs for their students. Following the discussion of the diagnostic test results, at approximately 10:25 a.m., the 78 persons attending were divided into two groups of equal size and went to workshops on Chapter I’s regular CLEAR lab and the Computer CLEAR lab. Four Chapter I CLEAR teachers presented at the workshops.

This researcher attended the Computer CLEAR lab workshop. The two Chapter I teachers conducting the workshop discussed the purpose of the CLEAR lab and explained to the parents how computers were being used in the reading program to help improve their children’s reading skills. The teachers were very informative. They encouraged the parents to ask questions about the program, and many did so. At approximately 11:15 a.m., the workshops concluded and everyone returned to the original meeting room.

Back in the plenary session the chairperson gave the announcements. He announced that the National Parent Conference would be held in Cleveland rather than Columbus, due to hotel availability. He also asked that all parents
planning to attend the Regional Conference in Cincinnati on May 5-9, 1986, to please see him before leaving. He thanked the parents and presenters for their participation. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Summary

We were able, in this chapter, to describe and examine the structure and activities of the DACs operating in the three school districts. This examination allowed us to gain significant insight regarding both the nature and the extent to which parents are involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the Chapter I program. The examination also revealed information regarding the support and priority all three LEAs give to maintaining parental involvement in the program. We were able to gather evidence of the level of interaction between Chapter I officials, teachers, coordinators, and parents.

We learned that there are formal and informal mechanisms that allow for interaction among parents and officials. The monthly DAC activity meeting is the formal mechanism that allows for the exchange of ideas, information, grievances, and policy suggestions between parents and Chapter I officials. School tours, informal school visits, workshops, conferences (national, regional, state), as well as parents volunteering as aides to assist in the implementation of the local Chapter I project are informal means by which parents interact
with the officials and also monitor the project's implementation.

Conversations with a number of DAC chair and vice-chairpersons, many of whom having ten or more years of DAC experience, revealed that there is a widely held view amongst them that the Chapter I officials in their district have not lessened their commitment to parent participation even though, since 1981, mandated requirements have been eliminated. The chairperson of Cleveland's DAC remarked, "that if anything has changed since the 1981 reforms, it has been the actual expansion of participation opportunities in the district."

We also learned that each of the districts makes available evaluation/reaction forms for parents to fill out at the monthly activity meetings and periodically, districts' officials survey the parents regarding DAC activities and the Chapter I program. But more importantly, in all three districts DAC members still participate in the annual "sign-off" procedure that is part of the annual evaluation, review, and renewal process.

We have established that the Chapter I officials in these three districts are receptive to parents participating in the program, and they have treated the "consultation requirement" of ECIA (1981) as a supplement to the already existing structures and activities that allow parent participation in the Chapter I program. Moreover, we learned, basically through conversations thus far, that it is the general
perception of the DACs' chair and vice-chairpersons that the DACs do influence the design, implementation, and the evaluation of the Chapter I program. But what we do not know is how the DACs' rank and file members view the influence of the DAC upon Chapter I's decision-making. Nor do we know whether the perception of the DACs' officers will hold up under closer scrutiny. Therefore, in the next chapter we will analyze the DAC members/parents' perceptions of the influence of the DACs upon Chapter I decision-making.
CHAPTER V
FINDINGS

This study, as was noted in Chapter II, was guided by several research questions that evolved from a review of the literature and an inquiry into the workings and functions of parent advisory councils. The questions that remain germane in our effort to explain parent participation in district advisory councils are:

- What threshold of opportunity is required to get people to bother with participation?
- What difference does it make that the poor have these new structural opportunities to participate?
- What are the social influences on participation?
- What influences do parents' perceptions of the council's work have on participation?

In this chapter we will analyze the findings of our on-site visits, interviews, and survey data in search of explanations
and meaning to the questions listed above.

**DACs and Their Decision-Making Style**

Evidence in the foregoing chapter revealed that while the origins of Title I parent advisory councils (PACs) coincided with the War on Poverty's emphasis on maximum feasible participation, and with a time of intense discussion of community control of local public institutions, Title I PACs originated in different circumstances and they exist for a different set of objectives. Arguments supporting community power and community participation, were instrumental, however, in creating a political climate in which alternative forms of compensatory participation could evolve. The subject of community control is now being raised, as we begin our conclusions, in order to explain more fully the participatory opportunity that DACs allow parents in Chapter I decision-making vis-a-vis the level of participation allowed participants in the community action programs and also in the traditional PTAs' governing process. A key concern here is the degree to which DACs are able to influence Chapter I decision-making. Do DACs have major influence, equivalent to the influence of the community action boards? Or is the DACs' influence minimal, more on the level of the traditional PTA-type organizations?

Experiments in community control of schools, most notably, Ocean Hill-Brownsville in New York City, involved
school authorities within the centralized educational administration returning control of local schools to community residents. Policy analysts researching community control of schools have concluded that, "The move to community control of schools, as its name suggests, was a move to include parents and other community leaders in the policy-making process within the public schools. Such policies pertained to curriculum development and staffing and to specific decisions about each of these and other areas."142

Unlike the experiments in community control of schools, parent participation in Title I/Chapter I DACs is not ostensibly directed toward changes in the governing structures. Instead it is primarily devoted toward meeting the educational needs of disadvantaged children. In other words, the major goal of parent participation related to Chapter I is improved student achievement. In that sense, DACs serve as an advisory component rather than as an authoritative decision-making component of the local education agency (LEA). This advisory role is central to the effective implementation of Chapter I program; DACs serve a "watchdog function" to ensure the proper delivery of services. Policy observers of the parental involvement component have concluded that, "The goals of the involvement of parents in this advisory role have been to ensure program accountability and to improve the

142CPI Associates, p. 9.
information on which program decisions are based." Though studies show that the participatory opportunities in the governing process of community action boards and PACs differ, the two structures do share certain characteristics in common. Both structures provide a mechanism by which public officials may solicit informational input from community members.

Educators and educational officials generally have viewed community/parent involvement as a negative, and some have feared that such participation might threaten their professional autonomy. A review of education literature reveals, moreover, that typically, when educational officials have had to accommodate parent groups like the Parents Teacher Associations (PTAs), their response has been to try to coopt such groups. In most cases they have succeeded and have subsequently used these groups as vehicles for marshalling parental support for their policies and objectives.

Robert Dahl in his classic study, Who Governs?, offered this appraisal of New Haven's PTA, an assessment paralleling other studies' findings about organizations of the type:

---

142Jy and Shields, p. 7.


Ostensibly, of course, a Parent-Teacher's Association is a democratic organization of parents and teachers associated with a particular school, brought into being and sustained by their joint interests. In practice, a PTA is usually an instrument of the school administrator. Indeed, an ambitious principal will ordinarily regard an active PTA as an indispensable means to success. If no PTA exists, he will create one; if one exists he will try to maintain it at a high level of activity.146

Far more recent studies of PTAs and other parental involvement organizations validate Dahl's assertion. Researchers Lucas, Lusthaus, and Gibbs, in their study of school/parent involvement groups, maintain that most studies depict PTA-type organizations as part of "a civil cocoon or web work of citizens groups, constituting a professionally led influence structure, employed by school authorities in building consensus around educational issues, and ultimately conferring special advantages upon the insiders in the local educational establishment."147

Studies thus have documented and shown how cooptation of the PTA takes place, and how it has stifled any attempt by groups like PTAs to influence education policy-making. Further analysis reveals that the consequences of such


cooptation can be even more serious. Lucas et.al. point out that in many of the studies "PTAs have been depicted not only as failing to independently infuse policy demands into educational policy-making, but also as serving in effect to block the infusion of such demands by more independent sources."\textsuperscript{148} In deference to parents and officials who are proponents of the PTA-type organization, Lucas et.al. acknowledged that their characterization "is probably not a fair picture of the initiative of local PTA members or of the political influence of the organization."\textsuperscript{149} Nevertheless, their evaluations and conclusions are quite consistent with the conclusions generally found in the literature, and accurately reflect this literature's characterizations of PTAs.

Many education officials view both PACs and PTAs as vehicles by which parental involvement supportive of their governing structure and policies can be organized. Given that perspective and the record of cooptation of PTA organizations, a prior suspicion of similar possible cooptation of PACs by Chapter I officials might seem logical. In their study of the impact of community participation, CPI Associates placed PACs and PTAs on one end of the community involvement continuum, the end opposite to that where the community action agencies

\textsuperscript{148}Lucas \textit{et.al.}, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{149}Ibid., p. 2.
and their boards are situated. CPI Associates concluded that both PACs and PTAs could be appropriately classified as "non-control-oriented parent participation groups".\textsuperscript{150}

However, through our interviews with parents with histories of involvement in both PACs and PTAs, we learned that those DAC members rejected the notion that Chapter I officials had coopted the councils. Many strongly believe that the DAC, rather than the PTA, is the viable vehicle for organizing parents and for articulating their viewpoints. One DAC member, a former chairperson of the Columbus DAC, when questioned about the similarities of DACs and PTAs, very emphatically asserted that there is a tradition of parental control over the DAC meetings in the Chapter I program. She observed that parental control no longer exists in the PTA:

\begin{quote}
The district advisory council is very different from the PTA. The PTA is controlled by principals and teachers. I know because I attended PTA meetings for over ten years. Parents have very little say. The principal organizes the meetings. He decides the agenda for the meeting, including what will be discussed and who will discuss it. In the DAC meeting, we parents decided the agenda, the speakers, the activities--for we still control the meetings.
\end{quote}

That DAC member's view about fundamental differences between DACs and the PTA was shared by the seventeen DAC members who had a least five years of service in both DACs and PTAs. Moreover, none of the 115 DAC members interviewed expressed

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{150}CPI Associates, p. 12.
\end{flushright}
any concerns or beliefs that Chapter I officials had in any way coopted the DACs. Generally, the members referred to the DACs as "our DACs". A reference that suggests the DAC members strongly believed that they were in control of DAC activities.

It was our impression that DAC members extensively view their relationship with Chapter I officials as a partnership in which they share a mutual or coinciding interest—to improve the learning skills of disadvantaged children who suffer with learning deficiencies. In fulfilling this responsibility, DAC members are also very much aware of the additional responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Chapter I program. DAC members are often reminded of these responsibilities by way of newsletters, position papers, and studies compiled by the Children's Defense Fund and the National Coalition of Title I Parents.

The National Coalition of Title I Parents and, particularly, the Children's Defense Fund provide DACs with written reports and studies that alert members to potential problems and that also include helpful suggestions and recommendations that DACs might pursue to enhance the program's overall quality. DAC members also attend state, regional, and national conferences at which national and state organizations such as the Children's Defense Fund and the Citizens' Council for Ohio Schools, respectively, put on workshops and seminars. The workshops and seminars are very useful for educating and informing DAC members of the
educational strategies, techniques, program reforms that are being tried and/or have been successfully implemented in other school districts. Suffice to say, there are several means by which DAC members are reminded and persistently made aware of the separate and independent role they are to play in the implementation of the Chapter I program.

In our effort to delineate the threshold or degree of participation allowed by DACs, we have compared DACs with the community control groups of the 1960s and with the traditionally "professional-led" PTAs. It is obvious DACs do not represent community control over the Chapter I program. The Title I legislation unlike the Community Action Agency statute, did not extend to DAC members authoritative decision-making powers. Moreover, in their study, the CPI Associates concluded that professional educators and school administrators were receptive to the type of parental participation and input granted PAC members because it did not affect administrative control. School officials seemed to have reasoned that the PACs, like the PTAs, represented "non-control-oriented parent participation".131

But DAC members interviewed in this study believe their councils do allow more parental participation and input into the governing process than do the traditionally "professional-led" PTAs. Our study has been limited in that it did not

131CPI Associates, p. 12.
undertake to measure or gauge the actual impact of PTA or DAC members' input upon programmatic decision-making. Thus it is not possible to determine whether DAC members' input actually influence programmatic decisions more so than PTAs. Our focus has been upon the perception by parent-participants of DACs influence upon Chapter I decision-making.

Nevertheless, the DAC members' cognitions about their roles as representatives, their conviction that their participation in the councils is meaningful, and their belief that the activities of the councils do allow them input in the governing process, all are conducive to active parental participation. CPI Associates concluded from their study of the impact of PACs "that if PAC members and similar individuals do not have a clear understanding of and belief in the purpose of the organization they will not participate actively and may ultimately cease their involvement."152

Our research reveals that all three DACs in this study placed priority upon their members having knowledge of the goals, aims, and the purpose of Chapter I program and an understanding of the purpose of parent participation. As was previously noted, DAC members in all three school districts were conscious of the council's by-laws. During our interviews the three DAC chairperson stressed the importance of DAC members learning the by-laws. They noted that the by-

152CPI Associates, p. 22.
laws, and the duties and responsibilities of the members are reviewed during the training sessions held each year for new and returning DAC members. Traditionally, the first DAC meeting of the year in each district is an orientation and training session.

In all three districts veteran members serve as socialization agents for the first year members. This is particularly true in the Cleveland district. In an effort to make the transition smoother for new members, Cleveland's DAC members several years ago, instituted a "buddy-system" in which a new (first year) member is paired with a veteran member. The veteran member answers any questions about the Chapter I program that the new member has. The Cleveland chairperson informed us that the "buddy-system" generally works well, "particularly ... for those parents who might be too shy to ask questions in a group setting due to weak verbal skills or for whatever other reasons." Many of the DAC members interviewed indicated that they regularly attend the monthly DAC meetings and have long been active participants in DAC projects. Eighty-two (82) percent of the 115 DAC members interviewed said they attend each of the monthly DAC meetings and many had done so for at least two years. When asked how important they feel the council's work is, an extraordinary (89.5%) majority (see Table 9) indicated that they felt the council's work was "important" and "very important". An extraordinary majority of DAC members in all three cities
(Columbus—88.6%, Toledo—94%, Cleveland—86%) felt the council's work to be "important" to "very important".
TABLE 9

IMPORTANCE OF COUNCIL WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very Important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if they felt the comments and observations they made at the DAC meetings actually influence the thinking and behavior of Chapter I administrators, as an aggregate, a sizeable number (45 percent) of the 115 members indicated their feeling that their comments and observations influenced the administrators "a great deal". When we looked at a site by site comparison, however, there was some variation among the DAC members' responses. In Columbus fifty-one percent of the DAC members felt their comments influenced administrators "a great deal," whereas 48% of Toledo's members felt likewise, and only 37% of Cleveland's members felt their comments influenced administrators "a great deal". Aggregate results
are shown in Table 10. Overall, only two members felt that their comments did not have any effect at all.

**TABLE 10**

**COMMENTS INFLUENCE ADMINISTRATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Great Deal</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Little</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not At All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The DAC members in our study thus clearly perceive their DAC role as meaningful and influential. This perception may be realistic given the number of activities available to DAC members that allow them to make known their views to the program's staff and administrators. In all three Chapter I programs DAC members engage in activities through which they indicate their views to school official and Chapter I authorities.

DAC members alluded to the survey or questionnaire as a device that is regularly used by Chapter I officials to
solicit their viewpoints about possible changes (e.g., budgetary, curriculum, staffing) in the program. For example, veteran Columbus members recalled how diligent Chapter I officials had been in soliciting their views on how program funds should be spent after the drastic funding cutback that was part of the ECIA reforms of 1981. These cutbacks demanded tough budgetary decisions. Columbus' DAC members voted to end the funding of the Math component of the Chapter I program but to continue funding the Reading and Language components. DAC members felt their vote was crucial in convincing LEA officials to sustain the Reading and Language components. Several LEA officials interviewed acknowledged that the DAC's input had indeed influenced their thinking at the time. Other such surveys were taken and are still taken in all three districts.

We discussed in the previous chapter the formal and informal mechanisms used by DAC members to interact with program officials for expression of DAC members' views. In addition to attending DAC meetings and making informal school visits, there are several options open to DAC members for the transmission of their views to officials. The other activities include:

+ Participating in parent/teacher or parent/principal conferences;
+ Participating in state/regional/national Chapter I conferences;
+ Reviewing the districts's Chapter I application;
+ Providing comments to the LEA and/or SEA about the application;
+ Attending meetings, other than DAC meetings, to plan the Chapter I program districtwide;
+ Reviewing the budget for the Chapter I program;
+ Advising the district on changes in the budget;
+ Reviewing the district's plan for evaluation of the Chapter I program;
+ Participating in the evaluation of the program;
+ Reviewing the results of the program's evaluation;
+ Observing classroom activities;
+ Organizing training seminars for parents not in SACs or DACs;
+ Organizing conferences or meetings between parents and teachers/principals;
+ Participating as an aide or volunteer in a Chapter I classroom;
+ Investigating the grievances of parents and presenting findings and recommendations to district and school officials; and
+ Sending letters to parents about the Chapter I program.153

DAC members in all three districts have an imposing array of activities in which they may engage to voice their views to Chapter I and local school authorities. As was previously noted, our study does not examine the extent to which DAC members' views really are taken into account in Chapter I's governing process. But it is worthy of note that CPI Associates, in their study of PACs and PACs' impact upon the decision-making process, asserted that "the overall amount of impact might be related to the number and range of areas in

153Many of these activities are summarized in CPI Associates, p. 310.
which PACs are active."\textsuperscript{154} Although their study provides no definitive research findings to support that assertion, the CPI study does seem to imply that the relationship between impact and the range and areas of activities pursued is a viable one.

CPI Associates also noted that another study, Yin \textit{et al.}, "discussed some activities in which PACs might be involved and found that citizen participation organizations who exerted budgetary influence, engaged in grievance procedures, etc., had more programmatic impact than those who did not."\textsuperscript{155} The inference drawn by CPI Associates was that "organizations participating in such activities, we might say, had a broader range of activities than those who did not and thus exerted more influence."\textsuperscript{156}

Shields and McLaughlin point out in their study that many of the local institutional arrangements in their studied school districts, i.e., parent coordinators, community liaison, DAC meetings, formal school tours, bear the potential to enhance parent participation by increasing access to Chapter I program staff and by strengthening parents'
perceptions that their participation will make a difference. In corroboration of Shields and McLaughlin's claim, the REA/Westat study provided evidence, (See Table 11), demonstrating that in those school districts in which parents are informed about the Chapter I program through special meetings or advisory councils, that officials in those districts are more likely to say that parents were either "somewhat" or "substantially" involved in advising on program design than are those district that rely solely on teacher-parent meetings to inform parents (62% versus 24%).

---

**TABLE 11**

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAM DESIGN, BY HOW PARENTS WERE INFORMED ABOUT CHAPTER I**

*(Cell Entries Are Percents of Districts)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Involvement in advising on program design</th>
<th>Let school decide or relied on parent teacher meeting</th>
<th>Held special annual meeting</th>
<th>Held periodic meetings or used DACs/SACs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Involved</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Involved</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially Involved</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know/Refused</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(N=111) (N=328) (N=815)*

---

158 Source, adapted from Jay and Shields, p. 47.

In our study when we asked DAC members what person was most responsible for informing them about their DAC duties, we got the following responses and frequencies indicated in Table 12.

---

158 Jay and Shields, p. 47.
The data indicate that parents initially learn about the duties to be performed by Chapter I's DAC members primarily from Chapter I parent coordinators and secondarily, from the administrators. The REA/Westat study maintains that in those school districts in which parents are informed about the Chapter I program through special meetings or advisory councils, that officials in those districts are more likely to say that parents were either "somewhat" or "substantially" involved in advising on program design than are those districts that rely solely on teacher-parent meetings to inform parents. While we did not do any elite interviewing of Chapter I officials to determine whether they hold similar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I Administrator</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Coordinator</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Parents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
views as expressed by many of the officials and parent coordinators in all three cities use special meetings as well as advisory council meetings to inform parents of DAC members duties and the need for parental involvement in the program. If we accept the claim made by REA/Westat, then the officials in the three cities have created the conditions that are conducive to parental input into the program design.

Relative to this claim is the concern of one of our research questions that deals with the relationship parents' perceptions of the council's influence and their participation on SACs. When we looked at the relationship between participation on SACs and whether parents feel their comments at DAC meetings influence the thinking and behavior of Chapter I administrators we see a clear relationship. Looking at Table 5.5 we see that of those members who feel that their comments influence administrators "somewhat", "a little", or "not at all" only 46.6 percent were active on SACs, while of those who feel their comments had "a great deal" of influence, 76 percent were active on SACs. Conversely, of those who feel that their comments have at best a minimum influence 53.4% do not participate on SACs, while only 24% of those who feel their comments influence "a great deal" fail to participate on SACs. These results are significant at the .002 level.
TABLE 13
COMMENTS INFLUENCE ADMINISTRATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation On SACs</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
<th>Somewhat/Little/None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38 (76%)</td>
<td>27 (46.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12 (24%)</td>
<td>31 (53.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi-square ($X^2$) = 9.72
d/f = 1
p<.05, significant [p<.002]
Social Influences on Participation

In developing a conceptual scheme for this study, we reviewed the literature on voluntary associations. We did this to assist our analysis of another type of voluntary organization, Chapter I's district advisory councils. The literature focused much attention on the social characteristics of the associations' members. Most studies on participation show a positive relationship between socioeconomic status and organizational membership. In other words, the type of organization to which one belongs is determined substantially by one's socioeconomic status. The literature also shows that Whites are more likely than Blacks to join organizations.\(^{159}\)

The literature also shows that Blacks are more likely than Whites to be affiliated with formal voluntary associations, especially at the lower-income level.\(^{160}\) The most common explanation is that Blacks join voluntary associations to compensate for discrimination and fulfill needs not readily available in the larger society. That explanation has been challenged. More recent studies attribute the propensity of Blacks to join voluntary associations at a higher rate than Whites due to a stronger identification by Blacks with an


\(^{160}\)See Olsen, Babchuck, and Orum.
"ethnic community". This "ethnic community" thesis, as articulated by Dickinson McGaw and George Watson is that

In essence, this thesis suggests that members of ethnic minorities—whether based on race, religion, or nationality—may become active in social and political affairs because of social pressures exerted upon them within their ethnic community to conform to the norms of that community. Members of such an ethnic community are often more aware of their common bonds, and hence are more socially cohesive, than are white Anglo-Saxon Protestants—largely because of discrimination by WASP's. As a consequence, their ethnic community serves as a salient reference group for them.\(^{161}\)

In light of the participation literature, examination of the personal characteristics of DAC members should tell us (1) something about the type of individual who is most likely to become active on DACs and (2) provide some indication of the motivation underlying joining, or declining to join, the DACs. We initiated our discussion of social characteristics in the previous chapter. Our data revealed that ninety-three percent of the DAC members in the three districts are females, and that sixty-eight percent of the 115 members are between 25 through 44 years old. Fifty-six percent of the 115 members are Black. Forty-three percent of DAC members' families at the time of our survey earned $12,000 or less per year. At

the time of our field research, the official poverty line was defined as a family of four earning $12,500 or less per year. Nearly half (49%) of the members are unemployed. Each of the cities in which the DACs members live has a population greater than 300,000, with at least thirteen percent of the inhabitants living below the poverty line.

Examining the characteristics individually, as noted above, parents between the ages of 25-44 years make up the most active age group in our study of DAC members. In their study of political participation, Verba and Nie have shown that age is correlated to organizational membership and political participation. Their findings show that "in the early years after a citizen reaches voting age, participation rates are generally low. Then they rise during the middle years and decline in later years."162 Their demographics show that the 25-44 age group, the most active group in our study, to be the most active age group in broader society.

Previous studies have shown that men and women are nearly equally likely of joining organizations, but that they tend to join different kinds of organizations. Especially salient and consistent with our own study's findings it verified the propensity of women, more than men, to join civic organizations, including school organizations like PTAs and parent advisory councils. An earlier study explained this

behavior in terms of sex roles. Women, because their role is one of "support" for family members, tend to join organizations that are consistent with the supportive function. Parent advisory councils and the PTA are perceived as serving such function.  

A recent study serves to corroborate this claim. In her study of the political behavior of Texas women, Janet Boles observed, "...Traditional Southern culture forces Southern women to present their participation in politics as an extension of their domestic duties." She concluded that when Texas women do become politically active they are more likely to involve themselves in political activities that address family concerns such as education, welfare, consumer issues, etc. Although Boles limited her study to the political behavior of Texas women, the study may offer inferences about the political behavior of women regardless of region.

The large minority group representation (56%) on the councils in our study may result from the large number of Black youngsters who receive Chapter I services. The figures cited in chapter 4 indicate that of the 26,277 students served by Chapter I during the 1985-86 school year, 16,230 (62%) were

---


Black students. Shields and McLaughlin noted in their study that Title I/Chapter I generally has targeted as funding beneficiaries the poorer schools in predominately minority (Black and Hispanic) communities. In many instances, as Shields and McLaughlin note, the Chapter I program is perceived to be a minority community program; thus DAC politics and activities reflect the concerns of its minority members. Consistent with the "compensatory theory", Shields and McLaughlin concluded that Chapter I’s advisory councils provide a forum in which minority persons who heretofore feeling unrepresented in the school district’s decision-making process can now voice their concerns.165

Data compiled by REA/Westat in its study of parent involvement in Chapter I’s program offer some insight of the effect of large minority student representation in Chapter I (See Table 13). REA/Westat surveyed several school districts, focusing on the Chapter I program in an effort to ascertain instances of parents involvement in advising on program design and change. The study found (Table 13) that the districts with higher concentrations of minorities (at above 25%) were much more likely to report parents being somewhat or substantially involved in advising on program design and change than were districts with minority enrollment of 25% or less.

165See Jay and Shields, p. 55.
## TABLE 14

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAM DESIGN, BY PERCENTAGE MINORITY**

(Cell Entries Are Percentages of Districts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Minority Students</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent involvement in advising on program design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not involved</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat involved</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantially involved</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know/Refused</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N=503) (N=415) (N=354)

---

*Source*

The findings of the SRI case studies (rather) closely parallel those of the REA/Westat survey. SRI data indicate that all the districts surveyed with relatively high concentrations of minorities (over 25%) had very active Chapter I parental involvement programs. Conversely, none of the districts with

---

166 Adapted from Jay and Shields, p. 56.
minority enrollments under 25 percent had active parent involvement.\textsuperscript{167}

One of this study's arguments, inferred from a look at social influences on participation and at the response to this new participatory opportunity is that Title I/Chapter I DACs provide an opportunity for participation of a nature that attracts people to participate who would not otherwise do so. Given the information that we have on participation of a traditional variety, i.e., voting in local and presidential elections, this study viewed participation in Chapter I's SACs, DACs, and making informal school visits as being viable forms of political participation. The conventional political literature, as noted earlier, suggests, when using the traditional measures of participation, that the core group making up the DACs' membership, the poor and working class, tend to have lower rates of political participation when compared to members of the middle and upper middle class.

This study argues that while the poor may not vote or may vote very sporadically in local and presidential elections, their level of participation is more consistent and sustained in the SAC and DAC meetings and related Chapter I activities. We assumed that there are some people who do not participate

at the one level (traditional) who do participate at the other level (non-traditional). The data were analyzed to ascertain the frequency of DAC members' participation in local and presidential elections and their level and frequency of participation in SACs, DACs, and related activities. As shown in Tables 15 and 16 a high percentage (79.6%) of DAC members, since reaching voting age, had voted in "about half" to "every election" (local and presidential).

**TABLE 15**

**VOTING IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Election</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Elections</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Half</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ninety of the 113 (76.6%) DAC members who responded to the question stated they had voted in "about half" to "every election" and a significant number (64.6%) had voted in "most" to "every election".
Also, data were collected to test the hypothesis that there exists a positive relationship between DAC members' perceptions of the effectiveness of the council's activities and members' rate of political participation; as well as the testing of the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between DAC members' perceptions of the importance of their comments and observations in influencing the decision-making process and their rate of participation. The relationships between perceptions and participation in national and local elections proved to be insignificant. The results may have been largely due to the way that perceptions and political participation were measured in this study.

However, the data did suggest that those members who perceived the council's work and activities to be important and effective in influencing the political behavior and decision-making of Chapter I administrators did participate in SACs more consistently and more informal school visits than those DAC members whose perceptions were somewhat less positive of the council's work and activities. But on the other hand, very much similar to the results show in Table 15, Table 16 reveals an identical percentage (64.6%), 73 of 113, having participated in "most" to "every" local election.
**TABLE 16**

**VOTING IN LOCAL ELECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every Election</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Elections</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Half</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A review of the data detailing the parents' non-traditional participation activities, e.g., DAC attendance rates, as well as the number of annual informal school visits made by DAC members, reveal very similar and significant levels of participation. As shown in Table 17, 80 of 98 parents (81.6%) stated they regularly attend each of the monthly DAC activity meetings. Only 10 of the 98 (8.7%) who responded had a noticeably low attendance record; i.e., they attended only two DAC meetings per year.
Similarly, a significant majority (78.5%) of the parents reported visiting their child's school and the Chapter I program two or more times per year. Moreover, as indicated in Table 18, 56 of the 107 (52.3%) parents stated they visited the schools three or more times per year.
TABLE 18
HOW OFTEN VISIT A SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once A Year</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice A Year</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Or More</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>115</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the data in Tables 15 - 18 indicate that the level of participation here is essentially the same for the traditional as for the non-traditional participatory opportunity. Is such a finding enough to refute our argument? We argue that it does not. While our data indicate that DAC members participate in Chapter I meetings as well as they vote, we know voting is a low participation measure. Conventional political literature intimates that participating in elections is not a very high threshold requirement. Verba and Nie in their influential study, Participation in America, offer empirical evidence showing that although many people vote, there is, for fewer who engage in participatory acts, such as attending political meetings or rallies, actively working for party or candidate, working with others on local problems, or contacting local officials. This smaller group
of the more politically active citizens is drawn mainly from a higher social economic cohort.

The results of this study reveal a contrary perspective. It illustrates that DAC members, many of whom are poor, engage in participatory acts, i.e., attending meetings, attending workshops and Chapter I conferences and conventions, serving as volunteers in the classroom, evaluating Chapter I projects and programs, that are of a greater threshold requirement than voting. Our study shows that there are some very politically active citizens at this level and their political activism runs counter to the intimations of conventional political literature associating such acts only with individuals of a higher social economic status.

It should be noted, though, that while this countervailing perspective holds true for DAC members as an aggregate, a closer examination and a more rigorous comparison of individual DAC members' education and income status and their level of political participation yielded findings consistent with and supportive of the traditional literature regarding the influence of income and education upon political participation. Consistent with the findings of most empirical studies, we found that the DAC members who were more educated and who earned a larger income participate more actively at both the traditional and non-traditional levels than those DAC members who had less education and smaller incomes.

In conducting this more rigorous analysis, we first
divided the aggregate of 115 members into categories differentiating levels of education and income: (a) those members with less than a high school education in contrast to those with a high school education or more and (b) those members making $12,000 or less per year compared with those making more than $12,000 per year. Employing the chi-square statistic, we then did cross-tabulations of income and education with frequency of voting in local and presidential elections and frequency of making informal school visits and participation in SACs. Tables 19 - 22 illustrate the associations we found between income/education and level of participation on the non-traditional and traditional levels.
### TABLE 19

**EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of School Visits</th>
<th>&lt; H/S GRAD</th>
<th>&gt; H/S GRAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a Year or Less</td>
<td>15 (40.5%)</td>
<td>7 (10.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice per Year or More</td>
<td>22 (59.5%)</td>
<td>60 (89.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37 67

\[ \text{chi-square (X^2)} = 12.94 \]
\[ d/f = 1 \]
\[ p < .05, \text{ significant } [p < .001] \]
As shown in Tables 19 and 20 indicate, the relation between income and education on one hand and number of school visits on the other hand is consistent with what one may infer from the traditional literature. The higher the education and income of the respondents, the more likely they are to make more frequent school visits. Similar findings, as in Tables 21 and 22, were produced when we looked at the relation of income and education to the frequency of voting in presidential elections.
TABLE 21

INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Voting in Presidential Elections</th>
<th>&lt;$12,000 A Yr.</th>
<th>&gt;$12,000 A Yr.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every/Most</td>
<td>49 (70%)</td>
<td>29 (93.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Half</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Half/Never</td>
<td>21 (30%)</td>
<td>2 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*chi-square ($X^2$) = 6.67
\[d/f = 1\]
\[p < .05, significant\]

While thirty percent of the respondents making less than $12,000 per year indicated that they never voted in presidential elections or had voted in less than half of the presidential elections since the respondent reached voting age, only 6.5% of those making $12,000 or more per year indicated a similar low- or no-voting performance. The data in Table 22 indicate very similar results in the relationship of education to voting.
### TABLE 22

**EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Voting in Presidential Elections</th>
<th>&lt; H/S GRAD</th>
<th>&gt; H/S Grad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every/Most</td>
<td>29 (58%)</td>
<td>40 (97.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Half</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than Half</td>
<td>21 (42%)</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half/Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*chi-square ($X^2$) = 19.23  
d/$f$ = 1  
p < .05, significant

The findings likewise are in the expected direction. The respondents who had at a minimum a high school diploma voted more frequently in presidential elections than those respondents who lacked a high school diploma. Similar conclusions came from our look at income/education and voting in local elections and participation on SACs. Our study reveals that even in a federal program geared toward helping and involving the poor there is variation of participation among the poor that is consistent with the conclusions drawn in the conventional literature regarding the influence of
social economic characteristics: Even among those individuals legitimately designated as poor, higher the education and income, the more likely the individual is to participate in presidential elections, local school matters; that is, on a traditional or non-traditional level.

Beyond these personal characteristics of DAC members, we now turn to the variables of community context. Specifically, we want to ascertain whether parental involvement in Chapter I's governing process is influenced by the character of the local community. Several studies assert that the size of a particular school district is one of a number of factors influencing the nature of participation on parent advisory councils. These studies show that parent councils and other decision-making activities involving parents tend to be stronger and more influential in larger districts.  

Studies conducted by REA/Westat and SRI found involvement in decision-making to be stronger and more influential in larger school districts. Of particular importance to this research is the study conducted by SRI. SRI compared what it deemed large school districts (10,000 or more enrolled) with districts with less than 10,000 enrolled student to find whether district size affects parent councils' effectiveness. They found that all twelve districts with enrollments of 10,000 or more (including five over 25,000) had parent involvement in decision-making to be stronger and more influential in larger school districts. Of particular importance to this research is the study conducted by SRI. SRI compared what it deemed large school districts (10,000 or more enrolled) with districts with less than 10,000 enrolled student to find whether district size affects parent councils' effectiveness. They found that all twelve districts with enrollments of 10,000 or more (including five over 25,000) had parent

councils in which parents had effective voice in Chapter I's decision-making process. Jay and Shields pointed out that the SRI study "underscored the importance of the complexity and formality of decision-making in large districts. Districts with large Chapter I programs serving many schools tend to make decisions through a formal and complex process--one that often includes public hearings, task forces, and other mechanisms that provide parents an opportunity to give their opinions on district actions."\(^{169}\)

Collectively, the three studies (REA/Westat, SRI, and Shields and McLaughlin) identified three factors, i.e., the district/community size, poverty levels, and minority group representation, as related to active parent advisory councils. Although these three factors alone do not fully explain why some parent advisory councils operate in an active and effective manner, other factors including state guidelines and support, local staff attitudes, district support affect the outcome, they do tell us something about those types of districts which, according to the policy analysts, parent councils are most likely to make a difference in Chapter I's governing process. In their commentary on the relevance of these factors to parent participation, Jay and Shields concluded:

\(^{169}\)Jay and Shields, pp. 52-53.
Taken together, these three community factors create a picture of a community in which parent participation is mostly likely to be active, structured, and influential. A large, urban district with a high concentration of poverty and a significant minority population is more likely to have meaningful participation of parents in the decision-making process than is a small, rural, ethnically homogeneous community. The larger and poorer a district is, the more likely the Chapter I program is to be a politically salient program in which decisions are made through a formal process. In districts where there is a significant minority group that has been underrepresented in the past, that group is likely to seize the federal program as a channel for its concerns about the course of the schools.\(^\text{170}\)

In closing, in our analyses of the data we were able to uncover several findings that are relevant in addressing the issues raised by the research questions guiding this study. First of all, the findings of the national studies discussed strongly suggest that the DAC members' perceptions that their participation makes a difference in Chapter's I governing process are justified given that the DACs analyzed in this study share mutual characteristics and paralleling conditions to those identified in the national studies as having an impact. We also discovered that the DAC members' perceptions of the councils' influence upon Chapter I decision-making affected DAC members rate of program participation. Those members who felt that their comments made at DAC meetings actually influence the program's administrators were much more

\(^{170}\)Jay and Shields, pp. 55-56.
likely to attend SAC, DAC meetings and more likely to make more school visits than those DAC members who felt their comments had minimal or no affect.

We also discovered that the poor are very willing to pursue participatory acts of a higher threshold requirement than voting when they perceive their participation as meaningful and making a difference. But we also discovered that income and education influence poor people's rate of participation at the traditional and non-traditional levels. Thus, we have in this and the previous chapter supplied some partial responses and explanations to this study's research questions. However, we have yet to answer the final research question, "What difference does it make that the poor have these new structural opportunities to participate?". We will address that question in the next chapter.
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY

We began this study with a review of the contrasting views of the "realist" and "idealist" perspectives concerning the significance of citizen participation in a democracy. We felt that the realist claims, while having some empirical support, were based on a too narrowly drawn definition of participation. Many of the realists' claims can be found in the literature on participation. The literature traditionally has treated voting in the electoral process and other overt forms of political behavior, e.g., wearing buttons, displaying bumper stickers, as political participation. In defining participation in this matter, the existing institutional arrangements are treated as given. Hence, most political scientists in explaining political behavior take the institutional arrangements as a given, and in the effort to explain why some people participate and others do not, they focus on particular features (usually socioeconomic traits) of the participating and nonparticipating individuals. In such an analysis, it is the socioeconomic differences between some people and other people as individuals that do the explaining. Thus most of the studies show the middle and upper income
groups most active politically; the poor, predictably, in almost all cases appear to participate least, care least, have the least time to participate, and have the least resources to participate.

Criticism of the inegalitarian features of the existing institutional arrangements was voiced by "idealistic" participatory democratic theorists, e.g., Bachrach and Pateman during the late 1960s and, more recently, Benjamin Barber.\(^{171}\) Many participatory democrats believed the "realist" approach while explaining political behavior, failed to investigate and assess the institutional arrangements that undoubtedly shaped behavioral patterns. A great deal of the impetus for the more participatory theme came from a sense that we really need to transform the opportunities to participate. Participatory democratic theorists, as noted earlier, believed that widespread citizen participation, even among the poor, can be achieved if meaningful and effective participatory institutions are established at the local level.

They believed a more adequate method of studying participation would entail looking not only at differences among and between people, but also looking at differences among and between opportunities to participate. Participatory democrats argued that if the poor were to be given an opportunity that is worth something, an opportunity that would

affect their lives, they will participate. Thus they reasoned, new institutional possibilities (such as the parent advisory councils of the present study) may yield different responses; people who in one context do not participate may do so in this new context.

Impressed by the debate and wondering whether the participatory democrats' "idealist" assumption actually had merit, we decided, since their assumption had been given concrete reality through statutes creating citizen participation programs, to examine parent participation in one such program, Chapter I's district advisory councils (DACs). We hoped our analysis would yield findings that would illuminate the following concerns, (1) how good an opportunity is required to get people to bother with participating; (2) does direct participation in some ways make the participants "better" citizens; and (3) do the decisions shaped by direct participation yield "better" consequences?

**What Have We Learned/Discovered?**

In this very detailed analysis and discussion we have addressed the above concerns. However, we now need to address a larger and more comprehensive question: What do we now know about parental involvement in Chapter I's DACs that we did not know prior to this study? In response, we can point to several important insights from our study. **First**, we discovered, it appears, that people will participate at what
might seem to be analytically a fairly modest level of influence. Having no authoritative decision-making powers, the DACs generally advise Chapter I officials on the view of its members regarding a decision the LEA has to make. The primary focus of the Title I/Chapter I parental component has been to ensure parents an opportunity to comment on local program plans or progress. The legislation did not empower parents with the authority to play a crucial role in determining programmatic and/or budgetary outcomes. Their organization was characterized by CPI Associates as a "non-control-oriented parent participation" structure. Nearly all of the 115 DAC members, however, believed their input influenced the thinking of Chapter I decisionmakers "somewhat" or a "great deal". Perhaps, the reasons for this perception commonly held by DAC members is the impressively long list of activities through which they are able to communicate their viewpoint to the formal decisionmakers.

In an effort to articulate and make sense of the perception of power held by a significant majority of the members, we reviewed various definitions of political power. Agger, Goldrich, and Swanson, in The Rulers and the Ruled, developed a definition of political power which, although differing from the traditional definition of power, seemingly captures the essence of the power concept held by DAC members. The authors observed that, "political power depends not only on a participant's political influence with other
participants, but also on his position in a chain of events culminating in a decisional outcome." Analogizing the construction of a house to decisionmaking, the authors concluded that

If a house is completed—the decisional outcome of interest here—as a result of such joint efforts, we would conclude that all who had a hand in the building process shared political power, even if they had different degrees of political influence. Chapter I officials and staff, like DAC members, indicated to us that the advisory activities of the DACs had been incorporated into the routinized decision-making process of the LEA. We think the above definition allows appropriate flexibility in conceptualizing power that permits us to consider the institutionalized advisory role (rather than an authoritative decision-making role usually associated with power) the DACs play in Chapter I's governing process. As a participatory mechanism, the DACs actually have limited power and influence. Nevertheless, the members perceive that their voices do make a difference in Chapter I's governing process. Such a belief is important in regards to participation. Lester Milbrath has reviewed the findings of various studies that indicate that "persons who perceive themselves or their groups' choices as having an effect on the formulation of


173 Ibid., Chpt. 11.
public policy are more likely to communicate their policy preferences to officials than are those persons who perceive their participation as having little or no effect."\(^{174}\)

We conclude that given the opportunity to participate, people will participate. They do not have "to run the whole show" in order to participate, as long as they perceive their participation making a difference.

Second, the study was shaped in part by the "idealist" claim of Rousseau and Mill that participation should be valued for its positive and educative impact on the individual. Although we do not have any hard evidence that participation in some way made the participants "better" citizens, we did discover that some DAC members believed the DAC meetings had a very valuable educative function. The idealists' claim that active citizen participation will lead to the participants' realization of citizenship receives support in our study. In each of the three cities we conducted detailed interviews with six DAC members who had two or more years of DAC experience. We asked the 18 veteran members, "What have you gotten out of your DAC experience?" In response to that question at least nine of the members cited benefits best articulated by a statement made by an officer in the Columbus DAC:

The program has taught me so many things that I can use in life. It has taught me how to help my

children with their school work and taught me about the education system . . . how it works and how it is financed. We have had workshops that told us how to spot problems our children might be having and how to handle them. In a lot of ways it has taught me how to be a better parent.

All 18 respondents reported the experience had taught them the importance of becoming involved in their children's education. Six of the respondents said their DAC experience had given them the confidence to volunteer their time and service for other school projects outside of the Chapter I program. Five respondents stated the DAC experience had given them confidence and inspiration to join other programs and organizations. Whereas none of the members were asked whether they had become more active in conventional politics due to the DAC experience, Murray Hausknecht in *The Joiners* presented a persuasive argument about how participation in a voluntary association might influence the participant to engage in greater political involvement generally. Hausknecht wrote:

By uniting in a voluntary association, those with common interests strengthen themselves in the struggle for the enhancement and protection of those interests. Association members are more easily made aware of their interests, and they formulate appropriate opinions with respect to specific problems they face. Once these opinions have been crystallized the association facilitates the spread of the opinion so as to influence others. The association then, is a means for involving the individual in the social and political processes of the society. Hence, as an association member, the individual has another source of exposure to and contact with what is occurring in the larger society. The association, therefore, may be said to have consequences of an educational nature. It provides factual knowledge of events, tends to promote insight into and
understanding of the significance of events; and a knowledge of, as it were, the mechanics of government and society generally. Since the association is part of the political and social processes of the society, it may also help train future social leaders and serve as a channel for their emergence into the society.\textsuperscript{175}

Generally the veteran members indicated that the DAC activities provided not only information about the Chapter I program, but also knowledge and utilized information covering a wide spectrum of concerns, i.e., the social-psychological needs of children, citizens' responsibilities in the educational process, improving parenting skills, the importance of participation, and bureaucratic decisionmaking. Consistent with the idealists' claim, the members perceived their parenting and citizenship skills to have been enhanced by their participation on DACs.

Third, as we saw in chapter three of this study, in the early days there were problems of non-compliance and the supplanting of Title I's monies by local school officials. In 1969, the fourth year of the policy's existence, The Washington Research Project produced its influential report revealing many of the problems surrounding the implementation of the Title I program. The report alerted federal officials to the various ways local school officials were misusing Title I monies. In response to the report's revelations, Congress decided to tighten up the program's compliance

\textsuperscript{175}Hausknecht, p. 10.
requirements, and in so doing, to consider instituting parental involvement to help ensure program compliance and local accountability. By 1974, Congress amended the Title I legislation by mandating the parental involvement component creating advisory councils. Since the implementation of the parental involvement component, for whatever reasons, the complaints and allegations of non-compliance and the supplanting of Title I/Chapter I monies have been absent.

We are not contending that institution of the advisory councils caused the problem to go away. We do not have the evidence to draw that conclusion. While we do not claim that compliance came in consequence of the establishment of advisory councils, we do argue that compliance and accountability were enhanced by the role performed by the advisory councils and other citizen groups. Let us explain.

Policy observers maintain that the problems of implementation are largely the consequences of the manner in which policy is formulated and legitimized in America's pluralistic democratic system. According to their argument, comprehensive policy formulated and legitimized in such a system generally is written in broad and vague language in search of approval. In other words, legislation is unclearly phrased in the American policy-making process because the legislation may win majority approval only if faction A can interpret it one way and faction B interpret it another way so that the final product is amiable to all active, interested
parties. The lack of clarity is essential to the passage of the legislation.

A major consequence of unclear legislation is that policy implementors possess wide discretionary authority in the implementation of the broadly worded policy. Many times the policy's objectives are reinterpreted and redefined by implementors, resulting in major implementation problems, sometimes even non-implementation. The original Chapter I statute, Title I of ESEA, was a hotly contested, comprehensive, and broadly written policy that allowed policy deliverers broad discretion, sometimes resulting in misinterpretation of program goals or non-compliance. It is very difficult to hold policy deliverers (bureaucrats) accountable in such a policy environment. Most policy experts recognize the need for accountability to link bureaucracy and democracy. A leading policy scholar, Michael Lipsky, commenting on the need for bureaucratic accountability, has said that

modern democracy depends on the accountability of bureaucracies to carry out declared policy and otherwise administer the ongoing structures of governmentally determined opportunity and regulation.\(^{176}\)

Some policy observers, Paul Hill among them, maintain that bureaucratic accountability and program compliance can be

realized, in large part, through citizen participation. Hill, in analyzing the problems of accountability and compliance plaguing the original Title I program, argued that extensive citizen participation was essential to resolving such problems. Hill's "informal management system" involves citizen groups acting as monitors in an initiative to ensure effective implementation of the program. Stearns and Peterson, who likewise advocate parental involvement in compensatory education programs, urged citizen participation on similar grounds:

If properly developed, parents could represent the interest both of the school board and the federal program in a much more finely tuned way than any other group is at present doing. They are close enough to know and monitor the operation of the school or compensatory project, and their perspective is not altered by a stake in professional advancement or by administrative constraint. Many of the difficulties of evaluation are reduced—and accountability through the school board is increased—if the evaluation is more clearly vested in the parents and exercised at the level of the individual school. Well defined use of parent groups might achieve many of the most important goals of accountability. 177

Although we recognize that several factors, notably the passage of technical amendments clarifying Title I/Chapter I policy statements, have contributed to accountability and compliance, we argue that citizen participation itself has substantially supported such bureaucratic accountability and

compliance. At least in the cities we studied, where there have been fairly active participatory programs, there also continued to be fairly thriving Title I/Chapter I programs that looked like, at least, monies were being spent appropriately and the educational needs of disadvantaged youths were being met.

In our historical review of the Title I/Chapter I legislation and its implementation, we noticed that when there have been moderately militant citizen groups—groups like Children's Defense Fund, National Coalition of Title I Parents, and Citizens' Councils for Ohio Schools—monitoring the program's implementation and bureaucratic behavior, there have been few if any allegations or complaints of supplanting and non-compliance. Conversely, during the years when citizen groups did not exist, complaints and allegations of the misuse of Title I monies and non-compliance were widespread. At the very least, we know that the problems and program abuses hampering Title I/Chapter I in its early days were not continued, certainly not worsened, by the advisory councils.

Fourth, in our analysis focusing on a modest number of DAC members (parents), we have been able to begin the process of understanding the participation of the poor and working class in a federal program that impacts their lives and seriously affects their children's intellectual development. In our study, we identified several factors that seem to relate to participation in SACs and DACs. Although we do not
claim that any one of the factors is a sufficient condition to activate participation in the advisory councils, we do contend these factors are associated with participation in Chapter I advisory councils. We were able to identify the following factors from our interviews of DAC members and the review of related literature: 1) perception that the councils' work is important, 2) community variables, 3) local staff attitudes and behavior, and 4) personal contact.

The DAC members interviewed in our study indicated they were more likely to participate in the councils if they perceived the council's work to be important and their own comments and opinions to influence the thinking and behavior of the Chapter I administrators. We recall from the previous chapter that nearly two-thirds (65.2%) of the respondents felt the council's work "very important". Over three-fourths (82.6%) believed their comments influenced Chapter I administrators.

Our own study does not examine the extent to which DAC members' views really are taken into account in Chapter I's governing process. There are studies, however, that suggest DACs existing in the cities of the type examined herein are perceived by Chapter I officials as having input on the local program's design and change. The REA/Westat and SRI studies reported in chapter five found that parent councils and other decision-making activities involving parents tend to be stronger and more influential in larger districts (>10,000
enrolled) with relatively high concentrations of minorities (>25%), and with a critical mass of parents who are poor.

The studies argued that districts with larger Chapter I programs serving many schools tend to make decisions through a formal and complex process allowing for greater citizen participation. Shields and McLaughlin noted that Title I/Chapter I has traditionally targeted as funding beneficiaries poorer schools in predominantly Black and Hispanic communities. Thus, they concluded, the councils provide a forum for a generally disfranchised segment of this society an opportunity to be represented and have their "say" in the school district’s decision-making process. Therefore, a conclusion drawn by Shields and McLaughlin, one that we here accept, is that those cases where council members are more likely to perceive their views and the council’s work as influential and important tend to be associated with larger urban school districts that have a high concentration of Blacks and/or Hispanics, and a critical mass of poor people.

In each of the three school districts we studied the local Chapter I administration and staff members were committed to maintaining parent participation in the program. Each district still maintains a budget line for implementing the parental involvement component even though the 1981 reforms eliminated the parent participation requirement. Each of the districts’ Chapter I directors viewed parental involvement as an important priority of the program. Parent
coordinators in all three districts viewed their liaison responsibility to contact and encourage parents to participate as crucial to the program's existence and overall quality.

Eighty-five percent of the 115 respondents (parents) stated that the information they received and the personal contact they had with Chapter I officials and staff members influenced their decision to participate. Our data indicate parents were more likely to participate if they received encouragement from the program's staff and administration. The data also showed parents were more likely to participate in school advisory councils if the local school principal emphasized parent participation in the council and the principal also was active in the council. Thus, we discovered that sustained personal contact between Chapter I staff members and the parents influence participation on the councils.

Fifth, in our efforts to discern and articulate the full range of consequences that derive from parental involvement in educational programs, we found that other researchers have discovered a linkage between parental involvement and student achievement in compensatory education programs and that fits into the general argument we are making. As noted in chapter three, studies compiled by James Coleman, Paula Matuszek, Edward L. McDill and others about parent participation in other compensatory programs, such as Head Start, suggest parental involvement can be effective in improving the
academic achievement of low-income and minority children. We did not examine parent participation and student achievement to see if a relationship exists, but it is something we would look at in doing additional research.

Sixth, we have observed that one of our cities is more active than the other two. It appeared, based on our conversations, interviews, and observations, that more intense DAC activity and more substantial parental knowledge of policy and by-laws existed in Cleveland than in the other two cities. A plausible explanation for that difference was that in Cleveland there were: 1) a well-educated veteran DAC chairperson stressing parental learning of policy objectives and by-laws; 2) a parent liaison service with seven full-time parent coordinators who were very persistent and aggressive in sustaining contact and interacting with parents; 3) the existence of district-wide Parent Project Priorities Committees (PPPC); and 4) an effective method to socialize new members.

The chairperson of Cleveland’s DAC was an activist who devoted much time and effort to DAC activities. He was very involved in local community affairs and was well respected by parents and school officials. During our visits and interaction with DAC members in the three cities, he was the parent who struck us as the most knowledgeable about the Title I/Chapter I’s parental involvement component and the council’s by-laws. More than the other two DAC chairpersons,
he emphasized parents being informed and knowledgeable of their rights and duties as DAC members.

Cleveland also had a parent liaison service with a staff of seven full-time (Columbus had two and Toledo one) parent coordinators more able than the Columbus or Toledo staff to make more frequent personal contact with the parents. Cleveland’s coordinators appeared able to share more information with the parents and make more follow-up visits with parents to reinforce what parents learned at the PPPC meetings, to answer parents’ questions, and offer more general assistance than did the overextended coordinators in Columbus and Toledo.

The structure--district-wide PPPCs-- that Cleveland employs to organize parents and the mechanism used to implement the parental involvement component allow parents to interact with the parents from other schools whose children are in the same Chapter I reading, language, or math component. Unlike SACs, in which parents whose children are enrolled in different Chapter I components meet at the school their children attend, PPPCs allow the district’s parents whose children are enrolled in a particular component to meet at a mutual site. The PPPCs allow the parents to compare strategies, techniques, and approaches being employed at different schools and understand how the specific Chapter I component is being implemented in the other schools. SACs are structures that really do not allow such comparisons. The
PPPCs allow the parents to see what is being done in the various Chapter I components from a district-wide perspective. The parents thus gain more information and knowledge for analyzing and evaluating the specific component, and a fact that came through in our talks with the parents.

Cleveland's DAC members also have created an innovative "buddy system". This is a system in which a veteran member pairs with a new member to help socialize the new member to the Chapter I program and general participation activities and to familiarize the new member with the duties and responsibilities of council members. Parents feel this form of personal contact is very conducive to sparking and sustaining participation. These factors seem to explain the more intense and widespread activity we observed in Cleveland's DAC.

Reflections Upon the Realist and Idealist's Claims

This research, as previously noted, was guided in large part by our interest in discerning the rationale and the validity of the realist and idealist's claims regarding the merits of political participation in a democracy. We noted in Chapter I that both camps present very persuasive arguments in support of their perspectives on participation. We also maintained that given the profundity of both camps' arguments, it is almost impossible to choose between the realist and idealist positions simply by reading the theoretical
literature and grand generalizations about institutional opportunities on the one hand and personal traits on the other. Having nearly completed our study, we still lack the compelling empirical evidence needed to resolve the debate. We contend, however, that through our analysis and examination of Chapter I's citizen participation component, we were able to ascertain evidence, testimony, and insights that allow us to comment upon the debate in a more informed manner.

A review of the claims made by the two camps reveals significant disagreement regarding the optimal level and the quality of citizen participation needed to sustain a democratic system of governance, in addition to disagreement regarding the object of participation. Realist and idealist theorists do agree upon one thing: that the level of political participation in the United States is low. Although they agree that widespread apathy and non-participation exist among various segments of the American electorate, the two camps disagree about the causes and consequences of political apathy and non-participation.

Most realists, in their analysis of non-participation and its causes, cite the findings of empirical studies that indicate political apathy to be the result of personal choice (men and women are consumed with various private activities) or personal inadequacies (i.e., lack of education). Democratic idealist theorists generally accuse realists of "blaming the victim" in explaining non-participation.
Idealists, for their part, usually fix the blame upon
a) structural barriers (non-uniform and cumbersome states' 
registration/election laws), b) institutions (i.e., political 
parties, mass media, schools), and c) non-competitive, 
issueless political campaigns. Since we earlier touched on 
this debate (see Chapters I and II), we would like now to 
focus upon: 1) the disagreement regarding the level and 
quality of citizen participation needed for democratic 
governance, and 2) the disagreement regarding the consequences 
of non-participation.

The data from various empirical studies invariably 
indicate that a substantial number of Americans do not 
regularly take part in conventional political activities, 
i.e., working in campaigns or working with a local party 
organization or being politically active in their local 
precincts. Moreover, in their analysis of political 
participation, realists typically conclude that for most 
citizens voting defines political participation. Realists 
point out that even, when measuring political participation as 
voting, the level of political participation in America is 
relatively low.

Realists have accumulated a substantial amount of 
evidence documenting widespread political apathy in America’s 
representative democracy. Given this evidence that realists 
interpret as indicating that America’s democracy is 
functioning well with a somewhat passive citizenry--an
interpretation that contrasts sharply to the active citizenry that classic democratic theorists associate with a healthy and functioning democracy as well as the Jeffersonian ideal of participation—we believe two questions beg to be answered: 1) What does the evidence really tell us about the viability and/or the health of America's democracy? 2) Does it not matter whether government policy reflects the popular will of its citizens?

Realists and idealists hold different perspectives regarding the function and meaning of participation in America's representative democracy. Before comparing the contrasting perspectives, perhaps it would be useful to cite once again the primary reasons given by classic democratic theorists for valuing and supporting political participation. Classic democratic theorists believe participation has two primary functions. First, they believe political participation has an instrumental function: It allows citizens to take part in determining their own political destiny/fate. Secondly, they believe it has a developmental function: It leads to individual moral, political, and intellectual development. Realist theorists stress and focus mainly upon the instrumental function of participation in their research. Idealist theorists, while treating the two functions as being inextricably linked to participation, nevertheless, focus primarily upon the developmental function. This contrast in focus ultimately shapes, in large part, each
camp's stance regarding the optimal level of participation needed to maintain a free and open democracy and the views of each regarding the consequences of non-participation.

In contrast to idealists, realists express mixed or varying views about the optimal level of citizen participation needed to maintain a free and viable democracy. We earlier observed that the realist theorists Bentley and Truman, in asserting that interest group interaction is the principal determinant of public policy in American politics (pluralism), infer therefrom that individual citizens need only be moderately involved, particularly during elections, for the American democracy to remain free and viable. Similarly, Giovanni Sartori and Samuel Huntington, in expressing views that reflect an even more pronounced acceptance of a passive citizenry, firmly maintain that the lack of widespread citizen participation and involvement has certain advantages for the overall health of the democracy.

Sartori and Huntington, like most other realists, place great emphasis upon stability as a political virtue; in their view, widespread participation endangers the stability and equilibrium of a democracy. Huntington believes, for example, that the 1960s were a crisis period when America's political system became dangerously overburdened due to the many demands placed on it by various grassroots movements. Huntington ultimately concluded that the 1960s reflect a period of excessive political involvement that diminished the
governability of America's democracy. He found the renewal of grassroots participation during that period to be, not a reason for celebration, but a cause for grave concern. A conclusion drawn by Huntington and other realists is that America's democracy, survives, perhaps even thrives, with marginal citizen participation; for such marginal participation is beneficial to the political system's stability and overall health.

Most realist theorists, despite claiming that their primary objective is to develop theories that describe and explain how America's democracy actually works, not how it ought to work, do, end up making normative claims. They elevate political stability and equilibrium to the highest of political values, and also imply that stability is to be achieved even at the expense of citizen participation and involvement. Many realists believe the optimal level of citizen participation to be that which allows elections to run smoothly and that facilitates just enough competition among energized interest groups to prevent any one group from dominating.

It could be argued that realists in repudiating the premium placed on citizen participation by idealists repudiate the Jeffersonian ideal that "political participation is both a process (political activity to elect and influence public

officials) and a result (government policy that reflects the popular will.)" We feel that the contemporary realist's response to studies showing a gap between the ideal and the reality of participation minimalizes the role that the common citizen should play in the American democracy's policy-making and decision-making processes. We find it extremely puzzling that realists, in reacting to low participation rates, chose not to call for the expansion of participatory policies, procedures, and institutions, but instead, have sought to refute the importance of participatory activities and institutions that idealist democrats argue are the essential requirements of any democracy. In their effort to explain how the American democracy works, even though a large number of its citizens are not politically active, realists, we maintain, are guilty of turning on its head the classic democratic argument calling for broader and meaningful citizen participation. They have ended up redefining democracy by developing a theory of democratic elitism to undergird their contentions. Astounded by the striking differences he discovered when comparing realist with idealist democratic theory, one scholar concluded, "In effect, realists have said that since the facts of participation do not fit the (classic) democratic theory, we must change the theory."  

\[179\] Harris, p. 677.

\[180\] Harris, p. 686.
In their reformulated view and definition of democracy, realist democratic theorists give less priority and attach less significance to citizen participation than do their idealist counterparts. Citizen participation in the realist's participation context is limited primarily to voting for political leaders. Various aspects of realist democratic theory are delineated in Schumpeter's writing. Schumpeter, we previously observed, viewed democracy as a system of governance in which citizens have the basic right to choose the leaders of government rather than the right to make decisions and policy. He strongly believed that a society with an elite structure of decisionmakers could qualify as a democracy so long as the citizens have free discretion in choosing the elites. Schumpeter and other realists find this form of democratic elitism to be compatible with their reformulated view of democracy. We conclude that any democratic theory that de-emphasizes political participation, disavows political participation's developmental function, and implies that the health of the democracy rests upon the passivity of its citizen, rather than upon active citizen participation, defends a weak, impaired form of democracy, what Barber calls "thin" democracy.

After reviewing a number of realists' claims, we conclude that the bulk of contemporary realist literature is devoted to "the defense of politics against too much democracy and to the
defense of democracy against too much participation."\textsuperscript{181} Furthermore, we disagree with the realists' interpretation of participation research data. We argue that survey research findings revealing widespread apathy provide evidence indicating that America's representative democracy, as currently structured and organized, is seriously deficient as a system for cultivating or promoting political participation and political involvement among all its citizens.

We also maintain that the realists' acceptance and endorsement of marginal citizen participation, their legitimation of democratic elitism, and their extreme devotion to political stability are antithetical to fundamental democratic ideals and principles. Moreover, we maintain, alongside the idealist democratic theorists, that the alienation and disengagement of a significant number of citizens from America's political system represent not a failure of the citizens, but a failure of the system. The political theorist Robert Pranger asserts, "What is sometimes taken as a cause of the politics of power, the unpolitical nature of ordinary citizens, turns to be an effect of the politics of power."\textsuperscript{182}

Idealist democratic theorists present numerous arguments opposing and criticizing realist democratic theory. We

\textsuperscript{181}Barber, p. 8.

previously discussed in Chapters I and II idealist democratic arguments made by contemporary idealist democratic theorists Pateman, Bachrach, Pennock, Kelso, and others in support of broader citizen participation. We will here not restate all of the individual arguments made by each theorist; rather, we will utilize, principally, summaries of some of their participatory democratic ideals as presented by Benjamin Barber in his seminal work, *Strong Democracy*.

A major idealist criticism of realist democratic theory is directed at the emphasis and significance realists attach to the instrumental function of political participation.Idealists maintain that "when the realists do consider the results of participation, they are almost exclusively content with examining the instrumental, or self-protective effect of participation--a person writing letters to get social security benefits, or voting against a tax assessor who has raised assessments for property taxes."\(^{183}\) While embracing and recognizing the importance and value of participatory activities of this type, idealists also "see participation as having positive results for individuals and society that go beyond instrumental effects."\(^{184}\) Idealists believe political participation to be foundational for any democratic system and its developmental function a central virtue. Unfortunately,

\(^{183}\)Harris, p. 688.

\(^{184}\)Ibid.
idealists point out, it is a virtue that is difficult to cultivate in a representative democracy:

One of the interesting facts about this form of government is that there is negative correspondence between the terms republic and democracy; that is, the more republican the government, the less democratic it becomes, and vice versa. Put differently, the more society gives its representatives to do, the less the people have to do themselves. Similarly, the more the people participate in their political system, the less power their representatives have.185

We share Baradat's appraisal of the debilitating effect representative government has upon citizen involvement and participation. As America's representative government has grown in size and responsibilities and as its bureaucracy has expanded so substantially, the decision-making process has been taken further and further away from the direct control or input of the common citizen.186 A review of American politics and the policy-making process reveals that America's democracy is being governed more and more by professional elites and specialists; its citizens becoming increasingly politically disengaged in what political scientist Samuel H. Beer calls an age of "technocratic politics":

I would remark how rarely additions to the public agenda have been initiated by the demands of voters or the advocacy of pressure groups or the platforms of political parties. On the contrary, in the fields of health, housing, urban renewal, 

---


186 Baradat, p. 104.
transportation, welfare, education, poverty and energy, it has been in very great measure, people in government service or closely associated with it acting on the basis of their specialties and technical knowledge who first perceived the problem, conceived the program, initially urged it on the President and Congress, went on to help lobby it through to enactment and then saw to its administration.\textsuperscript{187}

Idealists express much concern over the political disengagement and demobilization they assert are consequences and by-products of representative government. Barber writes that, "A well-known adage has it that under a representative government the voter is free only on the day he casts his ballot. Yet even this act may be of dubious consequence in a system where citizens use the franchise only to select an executive or judicial or legislative elite that in turn exercises every other duty of civic importance . . . The representative principle steals from individuals the ultimate responsibility for their values, beliefs, and actions."\textsuperscript{188} Thus it can be argued that the political practices of America's contemporary representative democracy have resulted in individual citizens delegating or perhaps forfeiting most of their civic responsibilities and political duties to elected officials and civil servants, thus, nullifying any chance of realizing the participative effects of self-rule and


\textsuperscript{188}\textsuperscript{188}Barber, p. 145.
political involvement. The inevitable consequence of political life in a system in which citizens are disengaged from politics is apathy and political indifference.

Idealists' view of the "political" is that it inherently activates citizens in making difficult choices and decisions affecting themselves and the broader community. Barber defines politics as "the art of engaging strangers in talk and of stimulating in them an artificial kinship made in equal parts of empathy, common cause, and enlightened self-interest." Idealists believe that a citizen's ability to make wise and prudent decisions is more likely to occur in an environment in which "participatory politics deals with public disputes and conflicts of interest by subjecting them to a never-ending process of deliberation, decisions, and action." Idealists argue that the political structure and organization of America's representative democracy are not conducive to the development of civic activities in which individuals can learn how to think publicly and make political decisions with a sense of a publicness and justice. Hence, they believe representation that usurps the bulk of citizens' civic responsibilities inevitably threatens freedom: "Freedom and citizenship are correlates; each sustains and

---

189 Barber, p. 189.
190 Barber, p. 151.
191 Barber, p. 152.
gives life to the other. Men and women who are not directly responsible through common action for the policies that determine their common lives are not really free at all, however much they enjoy security, private rights, and freedom from interference."192

Contrary to the critical interpretation given by realists to the political strife of the 1960s, idealist democratic theorists view that political turmoil in a positive manner. They believe it reflected, oh so fleetingly, renewed civic vitality in America's democracy. Conversely, they do not show the reverence for political stability manifested by their realist counterparts. Idealist believe that the "stability" so prized by realists can only be realized at the expense of the unorganized and inarticulate non-participants. More than a few political observers agree. Political scholar John Strange writes that, "...Economic, social, and psychological rewards are distributed through the action of the political system as a result of participation and by participation, with the attendant benefits, enhances the stability of the state."193 Contemplating the possible impact on stability if the unorganized and inarticulate were to become politically active for instrumental reasons, Dennis

192Barber, pp. 145-146.

Kavanaugh argues that: "When the sense of injustice among the 'outs' is allied to a sense of confidence that change can be brought about, perhaps by extra-constitutional means, then the stability may prove short-lived."¹⁹⁴

A final distinction between realists and idealists, worth noting, is the unequivocal posture most idealists take in endorsing maximum political participation and involvement of the common citizen in the electoral and policy-making processes. Idealists believe that given the proper political environment allowing responsible and meaningful participatory activities, that the currently unorganized and inarticulate non-participants would become politically motivated and actively involved. Idealists maintain that all segments of society should have input in determining the popular will. Barber, along with most idealists, maintain that there is no need to fear the popular will when it is the product of an informed citizenry politically engaged in a strong democracy, and in which participation is a way of life. Idealists do maintain, however, that there is reason to fear when the popular will is the product of a disengaged mass public; living in a political system in which political participation and the fulfillment of one's civic responsibility is simply a random and episodic activity that is pursued only during

constitutional crises or elections.

"Strong democracy in the participatory mode," as Barber uses that term, "resolves conflict in the absence of an independent ground through a participatory process of ongoing, proximate self-legislation and the creation of a political community capable of transforming dependent private individuals into free citizens and partial and private interests into public goods." 195 Realist theorists do not trust political decisionmaking to the common citizen, because they believe that such citizens are ignorant, uninformed, and incapable of rendering prudent political judgments. Barber contends, conversely, that since there is no absolute principle (or independent ground) that can serve as the basis of political judgment, in a political environment that promotes the cultivation of community judgment in which citizens interact with their fellow citizens, and regularly engage in civic activities and political deliberations, common citizens, just as elected representatives, are able to discern mutuality of interests and make wise political decisions. He argues that political wisdom and prudent political judgment are the products of participation:

It has generally been recognized that the political wisdom of representative statesmen and politicians is determined in large part by the extent of political experience. Why should it be different with citizens? To rule well they need first to rule . . . Faith in democracy requires a belief

195 Barber, p. 151.
neither in the benevolence of abstract human character nor in the historical altruism of democratic man . . . What is required is nothing more than a faith in the democraticizing effects that political participation has on men, a faith not in what men are but in what democracy makes them.  

Consistent with other idealists' claims, Barber, in his discussion of strong democracy, sees political participation as having positive results for the individual and society. He consequently believes that there is power and value in the act of participating and in the interaction that political participation entails. Barber maintains that "Community grows out of participation and at the same time makes participation possible; civic activity educates individuals how to think publicly as citizens even as citizenship informs civic activity with the required sense of publicness and justice. Politics becomes its own university, citizenship its own training ground, and participation its own tutor. Freedom is what comes out of this process, not what goes into it."  

Similarly, the political theorist J. Roland Pennock writes, "The objective of equality (of power) is not merely the recognition of a certain dignity of the human being as such, but it is also to provide him with the opportunity--equal to that guaranteed to others--for protecting ad advancing his

196 Barber, p. 232.

197 Barber, p. 152.
Barber asserts that "the crucial terms in the strong formulation of democracy are activity, process, self-legislation, creation, and transformation." He maintains, that in contrast to "liberal and representative modes of democracy that make politics an activity of specialists and experts, strong democracy is the politics of amateurs, where every man is compelled to encounter every other man without the intermediary of expertise." "The objective is to reorient liberal democracy toward civic engagement and political community, not to raze it--destroying its virtues along with its defects." Barber, it should be added, is very realistic in his discussions and projections about the possibility of America's "thin" liberal-representative democracy being transformed into a "strong" participatory democracy.

He acknowledges that before such a transformation can take place, several prerequisites must be satisfied. They include the development of an entirely new grammar to be used in discussing citizen participation and to be applied in the
creation of a firm theory of citizenship. "As with so many central political terms, the idea of participation has an intrinsically normative dimension—a dimension that is circumscribed by citizenship. Masses make noise, citizens deliberate; masses behave, citizens act; masses collide and intersect, citizens engage, share, and contribute." This theory of citizenship will provide the philosophical foundation and undergirding for "strong democracy". He moreover recognizes the need for citizens to be provided with a civic education through which they are to be taught the theory of citizenship.

Finally, Barber concludes, strong democracy requires the development of mediating institutions in which all citizens can participate and that will facilitate institutionalizing strong democratic talk. "Every democracy rests on what de Tocqueville called the local spirit of liberty, and every democratic revolution has begun with a commitment to pervasive local participation—in town meetings or communes or revolutionary societies or committees or correspondence or soviets. The township may not have come 'directly from the hand of God,' as de Tocqueville liked to say, but it has always been the basic building block of democratic societies, the indispensable local forum that made talk possible.

202 Barber, p. 154.
Without talk, there can be no democracy."\(^{203}\) Barber also worries that the latter concern will be difficult to achieve. He asks, "How do we establish facilitating institutions?"\(^{204}\) He believes this challenge to be pivotal, and one that the American people have to resolve if America's representative democracy is to be transformed from a "thin" democracy in which the masses participate in the political system as consumers to a "strong" democracy in which the citizens become true-participants. "The challenge they face is how to contrive institutions that facilitate democracy without supplanting it and that enhance participation without making it unnecessary."\(^{205}\)

We believe many of the concerns and criticisms raised by Barber and other idealists regarding citizen participation or the lack of in America's liberal-representative political system are valid and meritorious. The data thus far collected overwhelmingly indicate low participation rates and large number of Americans who count government and civic responsibilities as a very small part of their "life satisfaction".\(^{206}\) We believe that such widespread apathy and passive citizenship are detrimental to the health and well-

\(^{203}\) Barber, p. 267.

\(^{204}\) Barber, p. 233.

\(^{205}\) Barber, p. 233.

being of the American democracy.

Barber, we feel, presents some very rational and constructive proposals by which participatory institutions and active citizenry may be realized. We believe it to be a fundamental requirement of a democracy that government policy reflect the popular will, and that participatory institutions exist that allow the common citizen to have input and influence governmental decisionmaking. We are in agreement with Barber that in the move towards a strong democracy the development of mediating institutions to facilitate political talk and civic competence are crucial. "The objective is not yet to exercise power or make policy: It is to create the conditions for the exercise of power—to instill civic competence."207 In that vein, we believe Chapter I's district advisory councils (DACs) examined in this study, while not representing a prototype, nevertheless are illustrative of the type of mediating institutions that Barber says are needed to facilitate political talk and instill civic competence.

Ultimately, Barber says, strong democracy must bring about the democratization of political authority and power, elected representatives and bureaucrats thus necessarily relinquishing power and authority to a politically active citizenry that will pursue self-rule and self-government. Our

207Barber, p. 268.
study revealed that while Chapter I's DACs are not yet able actually to exert any controlling influence over the decisions made by the local educational agency (LEA), they are able to render advice which the LEA takes into consideration in making programmatic decisions. We found, far from insignificantly, Chapter I's DACs to have prospective, rather than, authoritative power.

We believe that the prospective power of the DACs induces Chapter I coordinators and administrators to respect and treat seriously the DACs' role (i.e., suggestions, recommendations, evaluations) in the implementation of Chapter I. DAC members likewise take seriously their role because they perceive that their participation makes a difference in the implementation of the Chapter I program. Idealist democratic theorists have long argued that "local institutions can be a crucial training ground for democracy."208 We believe Chapter I's DACs afford low-income parents opportunities to interact in political talk, to engage as active citizens in policy deliberations, to discern and act on their mutual interests, and to gain political-civic experience; all resulting in the enhancement of civic competence.

Although we do not have any compelling empirical evidence that participation on DACs sparked more generalized political participation and/or positively affected feelings of political

208Barber, p. 235.
efficacy, this study produced, however, the testimony of at least seven DAC members who felt that they had become both better parents and more politically active because of their Chapter I involvement. One important bit of anecdotal evidence is the case of a Toledo DAC member. At our initial visit to Toledo's Chapter I DAC meeting, we observed a young, single, low-income, mother of three who stated that it was her first time serving on a council of any type. Due in part to very poor verbal skills, low self-esteem, and nervousness, she very awkwardly struggled, and gave a very disjointed and incoherent monthly report of the Chapter I activities at her son's school. However, by the time we surveyed the Toledo DAC, we noticed a remarkable change in her attitude, demeanor, and delivery. The young mother, who by then had participated in the program and interacted with other DAC members for most of the 1985-86 school year, was much more confident. She gave a clear and much more articulate report on Chapter I's activities at her son's school. She had become able to demonstrate awareness and knowledge of the program and make an informed judgment about the program's performance. We can reasonably speculate that the change was due in some large part to the participative experience. We surmise that there may be many other parents who have experienced similar growth and development because of their participation in Chapter I's district advisory councils.
Policy Recommendations

In the preceding chapters we sought to present an intensive analysis of parent participation in Chapter I's district advisory councils. The analysis included a thorough review of the origin and legislative evolution of Title I/Chapter I program and its parental involvement component. The research also involved numerous conversations with a large number of veteran program administrators, staff members, and parent participants who provided personal historical accounts of the development and implementation of Title I's parental involvement component. All of this provided us with the information necessary for assessment of the status of the program's parental involvement component. Our research revealed several issues of a serious enough nature to warrant governmental attention and action.

Issue #1: A Significant Decrease in Statutory Support for Parent Involvement. We previously noted that the federal government through the 1974 and 1978 amendments mandating school and district advisory councils communicated to state and local educational agencies in very clear and unequivocal language the importance it attached to parent participation. It was during the 1970s, the period of specific mandates, that parent participation peaked. Beginning in 1981, when Chapter I replaced Title I, the federal language became less clear and precise regarding parental involvement. Many local educational officials have interpreted the ambiguous language
to mean the federal government no longer considers parental involvement crucial. Several studies (e.g., Systems Development Corporation, Children's Defense Fund) have reported a significant decrease in parent participation under Chapter I. Our research indicates that only medium to large urban school districts have maintained some form of organized parental involvement in Ohio's Chapter I program.

Recommendation: Clarification of Federal Commitment Regarding Parental Involvement. Research conducted by Systems Development Corporation "found that the degree of parental involvement was directly related to specific mandates to school officials concerning the necessary components of parental involvement, such as informing parents about the program, providing them with training, meeting places, photocopying equipment, supplies, and other types of support." We believe the federal government should again send a clear signal to state and local educational officials, one that mandates or sanctions participation. District and local school officials could no longer hide behind the ambiguity of present statements of policy. Only then would district and local school officials pursue uniformed policies and eliminate the inconsistencies--some school districts committed to parental involvement, others are not--that characterize the existing policies.

Issue #2: Reduction of Federal and State Technical Support. "Studies conducted during the last few years emphasize that strong federal and state supervision and technical assistance are critical to the proper implementation of local Title I/Chapter I programs." Under Title I, state educational agencies previously were given funds to provide technical assistance and support of local districts' efforts to develop meaningful parental involvement. Beginning in 1982, Washington ended funding for this purpose. Jay and Shields reported that "Even in districts where administrators and teachers are committed to involving parents, they are often at a loss for effective ways to work with parents. Given the reduction most states experienced in 1982 when the state set-aside was reduced from 1.5% to 1.0%, many states have had to cut back on their assistance to local districts."

Recommendations: 1) Increased Funding for Technical Support and Assistance; 2) Recognition of Districts with Exemplary Parent Involvement. We believe a two-fold approach is needed to remedy this problem. First, the federal government needs to increase funding for technical support. The allocation of funds to state education agencies for this purpose should be increased at least to pre-1982 levels, with

211 Jay and Shields, p. 82.
appropriate adjustments. The monies would be used to train local school personnel and parents on how to develop meaningful parent participation. Secondly, the Department of Education should recognize and honor districts with exemplary parent involvement programs. More information about the methods, strategies, and activities utilized in the exemplary programs should be shared with other districts. We believe, for example, that Cleveland's Parent Project Priorities Committees (PPPCs) represent an innovative and effective method by which to organize meaningful parent participation. Cleveland's PPCPs merit examination for possible replication by other school districts.

Issue #3: Reduction of Federal, State Monitoring and Oversight. Research conducted by the Children's Defense Fund verified that the 1981 implementation of Chapter I resulted in drastic reduction in federal oversight and state monitoring of the program. "The U.S. Department of Education made no monitoring visits to state education agencies during school year 1982. In contrast, under Title I the department made yearly visits."212 The CDF study also revealed that:

Chapter I focuses the responsibility for monitoring and guidance almost entirely upon the states. Yet, 25 states have reduced or ended monitoring and technical assistance visits to school districts. Twenty-two states have shifted from a monitoring schedule in which each school district was visited annually to one in which each is visited every three to five years. Many states acknowledge that

smaller school districts are never visited. Three states--Colorado, Oklahoma, Washington--visit districts only when asked.213

It becomes very difficult to hold local school officials accountable when oversight and monitoring procedures have been drastically curtailed. This loss of accountability may undermine or threaten the effective implementation of the Chapter I's parental involvement component.

Recommendation: Efforts to Ensure Accountability—Re-establishment of Federal Oversight and State Monitoring. We believe federal oversight and state monitoring are necessary if meaningful parent participation is to be achieved in local school districts of every size. The Department of Education should visit each state agency annually, and state education agencies should make at least one on-site visit to each local district annually. In addition to increased oversight and monitoring, districts should be required to submit a detailed parent involvement plan when applying for Chapter I funds. Finally, all districts should be required to have a sign-off procedure in place that allows parents to evaluate the local Chapter I program and its parental involvement component. State education agencies should give priority to reviewing the parent's sign-off statement as part of their monitoring activity. We believe only after the adoption of reforms of

213Children's Defense Fund, p. 11.
Suggestions for Future Research

We have undertaken in this chapter to address the major concerns underlying this study, and to discuss those factors that revealed by our research to be associated with parents' participation in a federal education program, and to look at the impact that participation had upon the program's participants. Our study of DAC members and DAC activities in Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo's Chapter I programs has been exploratory and speculative; its main purpose being to describe likely associations.

We conclude by presenting suggestions for future research:

1. An updated replication of this study and an examination of differences between the two to determine the nature and direction of trends. Data for this study were collected in 1986, five years after the 1981 reforms eliminating compulsory participation requirements.

As of this 1991 writing, ten years have elapsed since relaxation of the participation requirements. It would be worthwhile to see (a) whether the level of participation on the DACs has increased, decreased, or remained stable since the collecting of the data for this study, (b) whether the program had undergone any structural changes in the years ensuing since 1986.

2. A study designed to examine the dynamics of lay-professional relations in DACs and SACs to determine which variables stimulate or produce meaningful input by advisory councils into
Chapter I's governing process and which variables seem not to do so.

3. We did not look at any school districts that did not maintain their SACs and DACs. It would be worthwhile to see what made the difference in the survival of advisory councils.

4. Collection and compilation of data drawn from samples of non-participants and parent participants respectively so as to compare to determine what made the difference between participating and not participating.

5. Construction and utilization of an instrument for elite interviewing; specifically the conduct of interviews with Chapter I directors and administrators to get their perceptions/views of parent participants' influence upon Chapter I's governing process.

6. A study to determine whether there is a relationship between parent participation and student achievement in the Chapter I program.

7. A study to determine whether participation on the DACs sparked more generalized political participation and positively affected feelings of political efficacy. The study would entail a pre-post DAC participation analysis.
Appendix A

DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL EVALUATION REPORT
COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 24, 1985
EVALUATION REPORT

Please indicate your appraisal of the worth of this meeting.
Check one.

_______ Very Worthwhile
       Worthwhile
_______ Some Value
_______ Little Value

Please make suggestions which the Program Planning Committee
can consider as they plan the program for the next D.A.C.
meeting:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE MEETING AND
GIVE IT TO ONE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF. THANK YOU!
The District Advisory Council meeting of January 16, 1986 was called to order by Mr. Melvin Chase, Chairman; followed by one minute of silent prayer. Mr. Chase apologized that he would not be available for the remainder of the meeting, however, Mrs. Bonnie Cordle, Vice Chairman would preside.

Ms. Charlotte Walker, Parent Program Coordinator explained the raffle ticket project. The tickets are $1.00 each and the drawing will be held March 8, 1986 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Winners do not need to be present. The proceeds will go to the National Coalition of Chapter I/Title I Parents.

Mrs. Barbara Jackson presented the ice breaker. Mrs. Brenda Roush presented parent sharing information. Mrs. Loretta Price from Stockbridge Elementary shared information regarding her parent meeting.

The program today featured a presentation on All Day Kindergarten and Primary Clear Programs. Following the presentations, a question and answer period followed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Submitted,
Donna Jackson
Secretary
APPENDIX C

DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Thursday, March 27, 1986
7:00 p.m.

Representatives of the following schools were present:

Birmingham       Newbury
Chase            Stewart
E. S. Central    Walbridge
Garfield         Westfield
King             St. Ann's

The meeting was held in the Board Room, Administration Building. Mrs. Rita Rogers, Chairperson, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Motion carried to accept minutes by Westfield and seconded by Newbury.

A report of the City-Wide Tour was given by Virginia Allen and a discussion of the tour followed.

Mrs. Rogers stated the last meeting of the year for the D.A.C. would be May 22, 1986. She said the Special Committee is planning a celebration for that night. There will be pictures on the walls, a slide presentation on the last 20 years, and a potluck dinner. The council will provide a meat dish and members were asked to sign up for a dish to bring.

The State Conference will be held April 29 & 30, 1986. Eight parents, including District Chairperson and co-chairperson will attend. Mr. Guilford said the agenda for the state conference is two days and one night. Two cars will be needed and the drivers will be reimbursed for mileage. The registration fee is $85 per person. The following people registered to go:

Virginia Allen       Lynn Rife
Mary Detlef          Thomas Barker
Dawn Campbell        Kathryn Watson
Rita Rogers          Florean Johnson
Appendix D

DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, February 13, 1986
9:30 a.m.

9:15 a.m. - Coffee
Registration
Distribution of Materials

9:30 a.m. - Call to Order ....................... Melvin Chase
One-Minute Silent Prayer
Welcome

Introduction of Principals, Teachers, New D.A.C. Representatives and Guests

Ice Breaker B. Price & W. Dutton

Minutes of the January Meeting

Parent Sharing Brenda Roush

Program - "Middle School CLEAR Program"
Introduction .................. Annie Roseboro
Program Coordinator
Presenters ......Mary Bolling, Sherwood M.S.
Barbara Tatum, Monroe M.S.
(presenting in the P.M.C.)

Kathy Hanna, Barrett M.S.
Dorothy Wilson, Starling M.S.
(presenting in the Large Gym)

Question/Answer Period

Announcements

Evaluation Sheet (please turn in before leaving)
District Advisory Council Agenda
Columbus Public Schools

Planning Committee - Tuesday, Feb. 18, 1986
9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
(please sign up for transportation)

Next District Advisory Council Meeting - Thursday, March 13, 1986
Appendix E

District Advisory Council Meeting Agenda
Cleveland Public Schools

Tuesday, April 22, 1986

9:30 a.m.  "Early Bird Special"

9:45 a.m.  Call To Order  Rudy Morton
           DAC Chairperson

9:50 a.m.  Welcome  Betty Jefferson
           DAC Parent

9:55 a.m.  Introduction/Remarks  Patricia B. Jenkins
           Supervisor, Compensatory Education

10:00 a.m.  Jean M. Patton  Rudy Morton
            Recognition Awards Dinner

10:10 a.m.  Lake Erie Girl Scout  Judy Roloff
            Council

10:20 a.m.  Featured Project:  Rebecca Jefferson
            Reading Improvement  Project Coordinator
            Pauline Williams  Reading Consultant

11:05 a.m.  Announcements  Andrea Moorer, DAC
             Corresponding Sec.

11:10 a.m.  P.P.P.C

11:30 a.m.  Adjournment & Refreshments
Appendix F

District Advisory Council Meeting Agenda
Toledo Public Schools

Thursday, April 24, 1986
7 p.m.

Opening........................................... Mrs. Rita Rogers
Chairperson

Reading of Minutes

School Reports

Chapter I Reading............................... Mrs. Julia Holt

Questionnaire................................. Booker T. Ingram, Jr.

Committee Report: City Wide Tour

New Business: Schedule of Outline & Budget Committees

Informational Remarks:
  A. May 22 - Special D.A.C.
  B. Allocation reduced from $4,706,261 to $4,691,471
  C. School ranking/qualifying school

Adjournment

Dates to Remember: State Conference - April 29 & 30
D.A.C. Special - May 22, 1986
Appendix G

Researcher's Letter To District Advisory Council Members

Department of Political Science
Ohio State University
223 Derby Hall
Columbus, OH 43210
April 22, 1986

Dear District Advisory Council Member:

Citizen and community-wide participation in the decision-making process of school affairs has greatly increased within recent years. Parents and other community members, like yourself, have demonstrated a sincere interest in education by serving as representatives of district-based parent advisory councils for Cleveland Public Schools.

I am currently involved in research at The Ohio State University, where I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science. This research has as its objective the participation of parent advisory councils in educational decision-making as perceived by parents and Chapter I administrators and supervisors in the Toledo, Columbus, and Cleveland Public Schools.

Your official title places you in the unique position of providing your advisory council with expertise and imaginative leadership. As a result, I am taking this opportunity of forwarding you a copy of the questionnaire being used for my study. I respectfully seek your help and cooperation in completing this research questionnaire.

I also believe that your leadership experience and keen insight into parental participation in educational decision-making for Chapter I projects and programs will provide responses that will be of great value to this study. Moreover, the success of this investigation depends upon your willingness to participate in it.

234
April 22, 1986

You may be assured that your views will be kept highly confidential. Every effort will be taken to protect your anonymity and your individual responses to the items on the questionnaire, for no names are required. The results of this study will be sent to you upon request.

Very truly yours,

Booker T. Ingram, Jr.
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosure
Appendix H
District Advisory Council Questionnaire

Columbus, Toledo, and Cleveland Public Schools

ECIA CHAPTER I DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL
1985-86

RESPONSE SHEET FOR DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. How often does your D.A.C. meet? (Circle One)
   1. Once a Month
   2. Twice a year
   3. Three times a year
   4. Four times a year
   5. Five times a year

2. Do you think the D.A.C. meets often enough?
   1. Yes
   2. No

3. Were your duties as a D.A.C. representative discussed with you by a Chapter I . . . (Circle as many as apply.)
   1. Teacher
   2. Principal
   3. Staff Member
   4. Administrator
   5. Fellow D.A.C.

4. For each of the people listed below, rate the influence each has had on increasing your knowledge of Chapter I.
   (Please rate the influence of each accordingly:)
   1. Very Great
   2. Somewhat
   3. A Little
   4. Not At All

   Teachers
   Principal
   Chapter I administrators
   Parent coordinators
   Other parents
   D.A.C. members

-236-
5. How often do you attend D.A.C. meetings? (Circle one)
   1. Once a month
   2. Twice a year
   3. Three times a year
   4. Four times a year
   5. Five times a year

6. Can you think of any reasons why you haven't attended a D.A.C. meeting? (Circle as many as apply)
   1. Lack of information about the meeting
   2. Unable to be excused from your job
   3. Lack of finances
   4. Transportation problems
   5. Lack of child care
   6. Could not meet on the scheduled meeting day
   7. Not interested
   8. Other

7. If program funds are cut, please indicate which of the current ECIA Chapter I programs you would recommend to be maintained. (Indicate by number, your first, second, third, fourth, and fifth choices.)
   ___ All day kindergarten
   ___ Elementary CLEAR
   ___ Elementary MATH
   ___ Middle School CLEAR
   ___ Middle School MATH

8. Which of the people listed below was most responsible for informing you about your D.A.C. duties? (Circle one)
   1. Teachers
   2. Principals
   3. Chapter I administrator
   4. Parent coordinator
   5. Other parents

9. Do you feel that most D.A.C. meetings are: (Circle one)
   1. Very worthwhile
   2. Worthwhile
   3. Somewhat worthwhile
   4. Not very worthwhile
10. Which of the program techniques employed during this year was the most fruitful for providing you with understanding about Chapter I programs? (Please rate the usefulness of each technique by using one of these ratings: 1. Very useful; 2. Somewhat useful; 3. A little useful; 4. No use)

- Printed materials
- Programs by staff members
- Presentations by teachers
- Display of materials and equipment
- Informal school visitation
- Workshops
- School tours
- Classroom simulation

11. Which of the school years have you been a member of the D.A.C. council: (Circle as many as apply.)

1. before 1980-81 4. 1983-84
2. 1981-82 5. 1984-85
3. 1982-83 6. 1985-86

12. How much encouragement do you feel Chapter I staff members and administrators give to parent participation in the Chapter I program? (Circle one.)

1. A great deal
2. Some
3. A little
4. Not very much

13. Have you participated on your School Advisory Council (S.A.C.)?

1. Yes
2. No

14. Do you feel your child's school principal consistently emphasizes the importance of S.A.C.'s and parent participation?

1. Very much so
2. Somewhat
3. A little
4. None whatsoever

15. How active has the principal been in your local S.A.C.? (Circle one.)

1. Very active
2. Somewhat
3. Not very active
4. Totally inactive
16. What time of the day during the week would you prefer D.A.C. meetings start? (Circle as many as apply.)
   a. Between 8:00 - 10 a.m.
   b. Between 10:00 a.m. - 12 noon
   c. Between 12 noon - 2:00 p.m.
   d. Between 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
   e. Between 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
   f. Between 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

17. What days of the week, including Saturday and Sunday, would you consider good ones on which to hold D.A.C. meetings? (Circle as many as apply.)
   1. Sunday  3. Tuesday  5. Thursday  7. Saturday

18. Are workshops about Chapter I programs ever held?
   1. Yes
   2. No

19. How often are the workshops given? (Circle one)
   1. 1-2 times a year
   2. 3-4 times a year
   3. More than 4 times a year

20. Do teachers and/or Chapter I staff members make presentations during D.A.C. meetings?
   1. Yes
   2. No

21. How often are such presentations made? (Circle one)
   1. 1-2 times a year
   2. 3-4 times a year
   3. 5-6 times a year
   4. 6-7 times a year

22. Do Chapter I administrators attend D.A.C. meetings?
   1. Yes
   2. No

23. How often do they attend? (Circle one)
   1. All the time
   2. Sometimes
   3. Once or twice a year
   4. Never
24. Do you feel the work that the D.A.C. does is important?
   1. Yes
   2. No

25. How important do you feel the Council's work is? (Circle one)
   1. Very important
   2. Important
   3. Somewhat important
   4. Not very important

26. In the elections for President of the U.S., since you have been old enough to vote, how often would you say you have voted? (Circle One)
   1. Every Election
   2. Most Elections
   3. About Half
   4. Less than half
   5. Never
   6. Once

27. In the elections for mayor and councilman, since you have been old enough to vote, how often would you say you have voted? (Circle One)
   1. Every Election
   2. Most Elections
   3. About Half
   4. Less than half
   5. Never
   6. Once

28. Which of the reasons listed below is the main reason you attended Chapter I meetings (D.A.C.)? (Circle one)
   1. Because I've always gone
   2. To meet my friends
   3. To participate in the decision-making process
   4. To learn more about the schools and the Chapter I programs
   5. To learn how to be a better person
   6. Makes me feel better

29. Have you ever made an informal school visitation or school tour during the school year?
   1. Yes
   2. No
30. How often have you visited a school during the school year? (Circle one)
   1. Once a year
   2. Twice a year
   3. Three or more times a year

31. Do you feel that the comments and observations made by D.A.C. members actually influence the thinking and behavior of the Chapter I administrators? (Circle one)
   1. Very much so
   2. Somewhat
   3. Very little
   4. None at all

32. Do you think the Council's activities make any difference in the way the Chapter I program is administered and operates?
   1. Yes
   2. No

33. Sex
   1. Male
   2. Female

34. Date of Birth: ________________________________

35. In which of the following programs do you have a child and/or grandchild enrolled this year? (Circle as many as apply.)
   1. All Day Kindergarten
   2. Elementary CLEAR
   3. Elementary MATH
   4. Middle School CLEAR
   5. Middle School MATH

36. Race
   1. White
   2. Black
   3. Hispanic
   4. Asian
   5. American Indian
37. Marital Status

1. Married
2. Single
3. Divorced
4. Separated
5. Widowed

38. What was the highest grade of school you completed? (Circle one)

1. 1-4 years
2. 5-6 years
3. 7 years
4. 8 years
5. 9-11 years
6. High school graduate
7. 1-2 years of college
8. 3 years of college
9. College graduate
10. College graduate and more

39. Are you buying or renting your home?

1. buying
2. renting
3. own

40. To the nearest year, how long have you lived at your present address? (Circle one)

1. 6 months - 1 year
2. 1-3 years
3. 3-5 years
4. 5-7 years
5. 7-9 years
6. 9-11 years
7. 11 years or more

41. What was your total family income in 1985? (Circle one)

1. $1,000 - $2,000
2. $2,000 - $5,000
3. $5,000 - $9,000
4. $9,000 - $12,000
5. $12,000 - $15,000
6. $15,000 - $19,000
7. $19,000 - $23,000
8. $23,000 - $26,000
9. $26,000 - or more

42. What is your religious preference? (Circle one)

1. Protestant
2. Catholic
3. Jewish
4. Baptist
5. Other
6. None
43. Are you employed?
   1. Yes
   2. No

44. What is your political identification? (Circle one)
   1. Democrat
   2. Republican
   3. Independent
   4. Other
   5. None

45. How many children do you have? (Circle one)
   1. one
   2. two
   3. three
   4. four
   5. five
   6. six
   7. seven
   8. eight or more

46. What are the ages of your children?
   1. Under 5 years of age ______
   2. 5 to 13 years of age ______
   3. 14 to 18 years of age ______
   4. 19 to 24 years of age ______
   5. 25 and over ______

47. How many grandchildren do you have? (Circle one)
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 or more

48. How many of your grandchildren live with you? (Circle one)
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 or more

49. How many are enrolled in the Chapter I program? (Circle one)
   0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 or more
50. How much encouragement do you feel your child's school principal gives to parent participation in the Chapter I program and Council meetings? (Circle one)

1. A great deal
2. Some
3. Not very much
4. None whatsoever

51. The name of the school your child or grandchild attends:
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Melaragano, Ralph, Margaret Lyons, and Maxine Sparks. Parents and Federal Education Programs. Santa Monica, Ca.: Systems Development Corporation, 1981.


