

INFLUENCE AND PARTICIPATION

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INTRODUCTION

The authors of this paper were some years ago engaged in a research project on local democracy, studied particularly within the context of planning processes. The local planning system in Finland presupposes decision-making on the local level concerning practically all aspects of the social life in the communes which the local government, with at least some autonomy, can influence. We were particularly concerned with the planning process leading to so-called communal plans.

Engaged as we were in a study of local democracy it seemed natural to approach the subject from a normative or a value point of view. In an empirical study such an approach includes three levels of analysis (Ståhlberg & Helander 1972, 5–10). On the first level the norms of the study must at least loosely be indicated. The normative level of analysis also includes the construction of a frame of reference corresponding to the norms. The second level of analysis can be labeled the empirical level. At this level reality is studied in terms of the normatively chosen frame of reference. As a result of the analysis on the normative and empirical level, a comparison between the ideal and actual type of democracy can be made. As it seems reasonable to expect a discrepancy between ideals and reality, a third level of analysis should be included in the study. We may call this the constructive level of analysis. At the constructive level of analysis one tries to bridge the gap between ideals and reality by proposing changes that are deemed desirable from the normative point of view adopted in the study.

Roughly, the normative, empirical, and constructive levels of analysis may be seen as consecutive phases. It is, however, worth pointing out that all three levels have connections with each other. At the normative level concessions must be made to the researchability of the concepts in terms of which the

ideal type of democracy is formulated. The normative level of analysis naturally influences the empirical level in that it provides the concepts in terms of which reality should be perceived. Pointing out the connection between the normative and empirical levels of analysis is of course to note the obvious. What is, perhaps, less obvious is the connection between the empirical and the constructive level of analysis. The constructive aspect presupposes on the empirical level a search for mechanisms conducive to desirable changes. This entails the notion of action relevance. By action relevance we mean that the explanatory variables should preferably be manipulatable. For a variable to be manipulated there must be a manipulator. Action relevance therefore implies consideration of concrete actors in the political system as well as the action competence of these actors. Since the aspect of action relevance is intended to influence the choice of variables in the study, it means that one is bound to make a priori suppositions as to which actor can manipulate certain variables in the study. These suppositions are, as we see it, heavily normative.

The purpose of this paper is to present some of the reflections that we made on the normative level. The paper is divided into four main parts. First we discuss our conception of democracy. Central to this conception are the concepts of influence and participation. We discuss these concepts separately in parts two and three. In the last part of the paper we comment on the connection between influence and participation.

A NORMATIVE CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY

There are of course different ways in which one can discuss democracy. In the Nordic countries, for instance, there has been a tradition of discussion which emphasizes the formal requirements that have to prevail for a society to be democratic (e.g. Ross 1968; Tingsten 1964). We have, however, taken as our point of departure the debate around democracy that has mainly been going on during the 1960s and even during the last few years.

We can roughly divide the positions taken in the debate about democracy into two main groups or schools of thought. Such a division is perhaps not entirely clear and certainly does not do justice to all positions taken by individual representatives of each school. A rough division of participants in the debate into representative elite democrats and participatory democrats seems, however, to be fruitful in that it is built upon distinctions that correspond to our value-based approach.¹ According to the representative elite conception of democracy, classical democratic theory had an idealized and

empirically false conception of democratic man. Therefore one should revise the classical theory, or at least one should look at democratic theory from another perspective. The perspective of the representative elite democrats is perhaps more system oriented than the perspective of the classical democratic theorists. As *Leif Lewin* points out, *Schumpeter's* famous definition of democracy fairly well represents the representative elite theory (Lewin 1970, 19–20). According to Schumpeter »the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote» (1966, 269). This view does not put as much weight on individual participation in democracy as does the classical democratic theory and as do its modern proponents, the participatory democrats. Rather, democracy is defined in terms of system properties such as the number of competing groups, etc. (e.g. Lipset 1963).

The participatory democrats do not see any reason to abandon their classical democratic ideals merely because reality does not correspond to the ideals. Reality rather than ideals — that all participate — should be changed. From this point of view participation becomes an important feature of a democratic system. Indeed one could, as Lewin does, define the participatory conception of democracy in terms of participation. We then get the following definition: »Democracy is that type of government which is realized to the same degree as there is popular participation in the political decision-making process». (Lewin 1970, 18)

At first sight it indeed seems as if participatory democrats do not consider the effects on the whole system which follow from widespread popular participation. This may well be, but it is not clear that this is true. This side of the participatory theory has been rather neglected. Some interesting points have, however, been presented in connection with the well-known Skeffington report.² We shall not in this connection dwell on the topic. Rather we shall discuss the connection between the participatory conception of democracy and the classical democratic theory.

Sten Johansson, in his interesting report on political resources within the Swedish level of living study, summarizes the position taken by *J.S. Mill*, one of the foremost proponents of the liberal classical democratic theory, in three paragraphs worth citing (Johansson 1970, 12).

- (1) Only if all participate in the political decision-making process it is guaranteed that the interests of all citizens are a part of the weighing of interests that takes place in the decision-making process.
- (2) Participation trains participants so that they grow into a habit of defending their interests.

- (3) Participation develops the personality of the participants so that they feel themselves as being a part of the whole community and having responsibility not only for themselves but for the whole community as well.

According to Johansson these sentences can be taken as postulates, since they are difficult either to verify or falsify. We share this position, although we feel that there is more evidence supporting this view than Johansson is willing to admit. But true, there is also evidence to the contrary.³

Be this it as it may, the three paragraphs above show the close connection between the classical democratic theory — as it is represented by Mill — and the participatory theory. Also they show that there is at least some consideration of system effects in the classical democratic theory.

The division of disputants into participatory democrats and representative elite democrats can be related to an interesting development within political science as a discipline. The behavioral approach to political studies was well suited for research around the validity of the classical democratic theory and its conceptions of political man. After behavioralists had produced an endless amount of research results concerning political behavior, there arose a natural need to incorporate all these findings into one frame of reference. This search for a general frame of reference can be seen as having resulted in the system approach which today is so prevailing in political science. Political behavior could be seen as input factors in the political system. This possibility explains why political scientists with the advent of the system approach were strongly biased in favour of paying attention only to the input side of the political system.

Within the system approach attention was soon directed to both the output and input side of the political system. For analysts having this orientation it is handy to define democracy as having to do with output, i.e., with what the political system produces. This is a type of definition of democracy which corresponds fairly well with the conception of democracy that underlies the socialist critique of liberal democracy.

In our study we do not accept this type of definition, which in our opinion easily leads to an authoritarian conception of man. Defining democracy in terms of the content of the decisions that the government produces implies that regardless of what the people want or vote for, certain decisions ought to be produced. In this view individuals are not seen as capable of defining what is good for them. We do not accept this position; we rather hold to the classical liberal view, which defines democracy in terms of stipulations concerning the decision-making process, that is, concerning the way in which decisions are produced rather than concerning the content of the decisions.

The foremost requirement in the decision-making process is, as we have seen, that it should allow for the widest possible popular participation.

If one looks at the participation studies that have hitherto been produced in political science, one soon realizes that it might not be enough only to stipulate that there should be much popular participation in the political process. There are at least two aspects concerning participation that are particularly important: influence and education. Participation is assumed to influence the decision-making process so that the interests of the participants are weighed in the decisions. Usually this aspect of participation has been under-emphasized in empirical studies. This is surprising, because traditionally political scientists have paid much attention to influence and power.

Participation then has been seen as a means to exert power in the political process. But educative participation may not necessarily involve wielding power. We feel the distinction between influence and participation to be of such importance as to merit being incorporated into the very definition of democracy. Tentatively one could then define democracy as the type of government which is realized to the extent that the citizens influentially participate in political decision-making.

In the above definition participation and influence are seen as two variables that are independent of each other. The two variables are independent although it is true that influence has often been operationalized in terms of participation. Using the two variables we can distinguish between four types of situations:

		Influence is	
		high	low
Participation is	high	1	2
	low	3	4

If we look at these four situations from a normative point of view, it can be said that the ideal type of democracy involves high participation which is effective, that is, which wields high influence. Educative participation can be seen as an example of the type 2 situation. This type of participation can properly be seen as conducive to influential participation. In this sense educative participation is normatively acceptable, influential participation still being the *prima facie* form of democratic participation.

The two remaining types of situations (types 3 and 4) seem to be normatively unacceptable according to the position taken in this paper. The type 3 situation could be understood as referring to cases in which some kind of implicit influence is exercised. In such situations decision-makers (participants) take into consideration a third party without that party having com-

municated any demands to the decision-makers.

The definition of democracy that we propose can *mutatis mutandis* be brought to bear on local democracy. On the local level popular participation should of course concern local political decision-making, usually defined somewhat vaguely. Often it is maintained that there can be no local democracy, since the scope of local political decision-making is so narrow. In this view narrowness is defined in terms of the degree of steering on the part of central government of local government activities. The degree of steering could for instance be operationalized by the amount of local expenditures tied directly to national regulations or laws. This is to some extent true, but we are not here concerned with what we perceive to be a question mainly of the division of competence between the central and the local governments. We are thus interested in the decision-making at the local level as it presently exists in Finland and in the context of planning processes which we a priori see as decision-making processes allowing for comparatively large local autonomy.

Participation and influence are perhaps best understood as structural terms. They stand for relations — or better — they say something about the relation between actors in a system. In the communal political system we can distinguish between at least five groups or types of actors: the local authorities taken as a whole, the elected representatives, the officials, the organizations, and the citizens at large. According to our normative view, these actors should relate to each other in the following way:

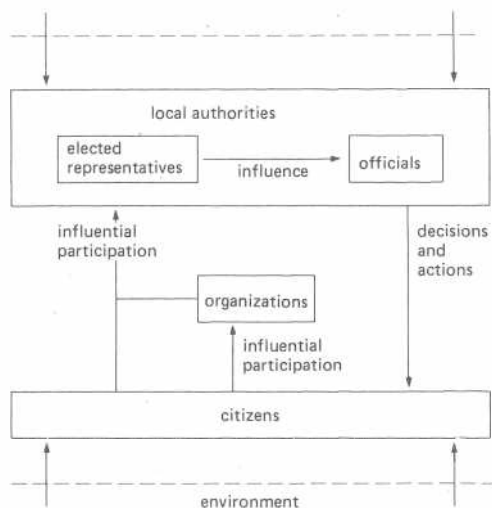


Figure 1. The Communal Political System.

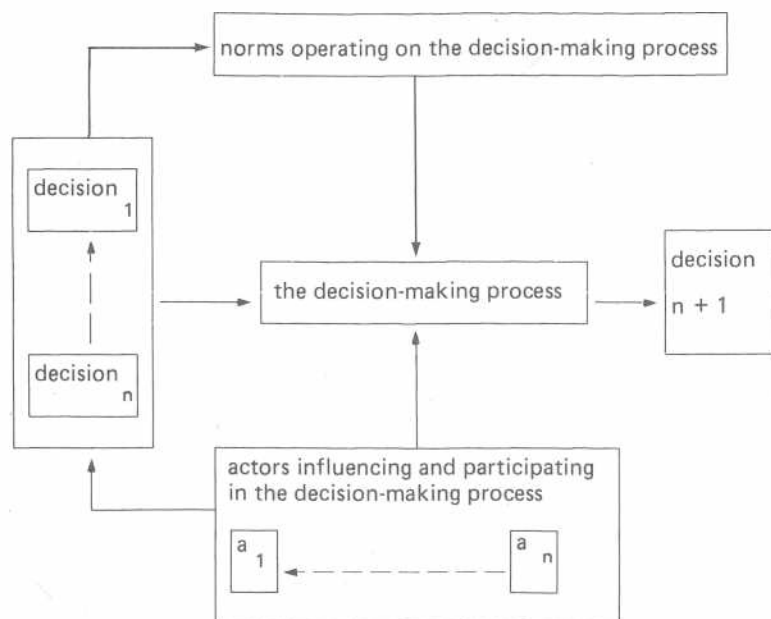
In this connection it is not necessary to comment in any detail on the character of the different types of actors in the communal political system. One clarification is needed, however. By organizations we mean all kinds of organized groups in the communes. Consequently organizations comprise such different types of phenomena as political parties, pressure groups, business enterprises, etc. Here they have been treated in one group merely to indicate the difference between organized citizens and citizens acting alone or unorganized.

Empirically one should of course not expect to find the type of structure that is indicated in the Figure between the different actors. On the very contrary, one must start out by trying to map contacts in all directions between the actors. This should be done, as we have said, in the context of local planning. Therefore it is useful at this stage to present another Figure indicating what kind of imagination one could have of the object of the study when processual aspects are included.

The decision-making process concerns the production of a communal plan. This process includes many subprocesses, which we will not discuss here. The decision-making process consists of interactions between actors. These actors influence and participate in the process in different ways. But there are of course other factors influencing the planning process which must be taken into account in order to understand what part different actors play in the process. One such factor is earlier decisions which have been made either inside or outside the communal political system and which cannot be altered by those engaged in the planning process. Also influencing the planning process are different norms that prevail among the actors in the communal political system. These norms may function as barriers for some groups or individuals to participate and influence the planning process. In this context such norms are taken as given, that is, as attitudes and beliefs which are difficult to alter, at least within a short span of time.

These distinctions can be summarized in the Figure on page 41.

The arrows in the Figure indicate the direction of influence between the different elements. It is at this stage important to note that actors can influence and participate in the decision-making process in different ways. Influence can be exerted directly or via another actor in the decision-making process. Influence can also be exerted via earlier decisions that are taken as given in the actual decision-making process. This type of influence can of course also be exerted indirectly. Anyway, it is important to note that it is not enough to include in the study only the direct contacts between actors and the planning process; indirect contacts, either via other actors or via earlier decisions, must also be included.



Two more points need to be stressed. Firstly, some actor may try unsuccessfully to influence the decision-making process. It is naturally also important to include this type of relation in the study. Secondly, it may be argued that the norms operating in the process are such that they prohibit some individual or group from exercising or even attempting to exercise influence. These groups or individuals may then be steered by others without themselves knowing it. In such cases not much can be said if the study is based only on information of manifest behavior. One way to heed this argument is to look at the decision $n + 1$ (the communal plan) and the kind of value distribution following from that decision. These distributive aspects can be included in a survey questionnaire measuring knowledge of and attitudes toward the distributive decisions on the part of the citizens. Pursuing this line of argument too far, however, leads us, as we have argued elsewhere, to a view of democracy that defines democracy in terms of the content of the decision rather than in terms of the way decisions are made.

These points have an obvious relation to the concept of power as it has been discussed in political science. In the next part we try to relate this discussion to the normative conception of democracy which has been indicated above.

INFLUENCE AND DEMOCRACY

It is not our intention here to discuss different ways to define influence. Suffice it to say that we have in our conception of power and influence been inspired by the views put forth by *Robert A. Dahl* and *Bachrach/Baratz* in the debate concerning, among other things, the second face of power (Bachrach & Baratz 1970; Dahl 1958, 1961, 1970). In the following we present one conceptualization of the concepts of influence and power with the intent to relate this conceptualization to our normative view of democracy. This seems to us to be a fruitful enterprise, since we know that there are many different types of relations which have to do with influence and power, and that these relations are not substitutable in our tentative definition of democracy without the definition losing its intended normative meaning.

There seem to be at least four dimensions in terms of which one can define different concepts of influence. These dimensions are:

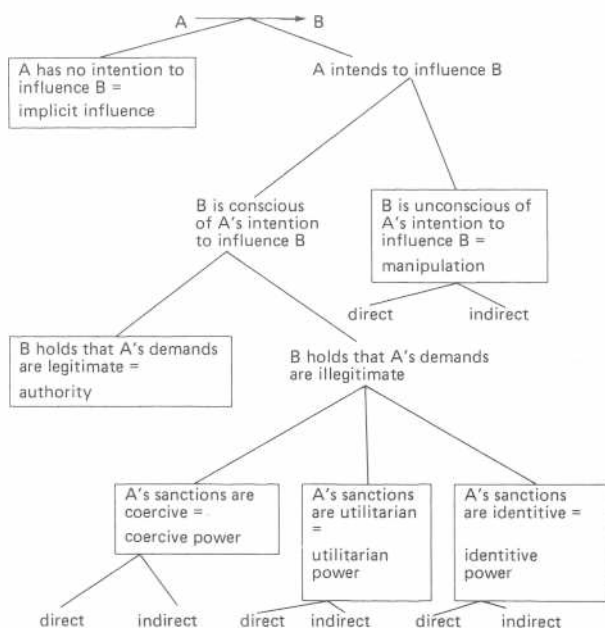
- (1) The consciousness of the actors who are involved in an influence relationship. The consciousness of the actors can vary from complete consciousness to complete unconsciousness.
- (2) B's attitude toward the demands made by A. In this relationship B is the one being influenced and A is the influencer. B can hold A's demands to be legitimate or illegitimate.
- (3) The resource base that A can draw on in order to get compliance from B, notwithstanding resistance on B's part. The resources can be typologized in different ways. One possible typology is the one proposed by *Amitai Etzioni* in which he differentiates between coercive, utilitarian and identitive (normative) resources (1961, 1968).
- (4) The directness of influence. In direct influence relations there is an unmediated relationship between A and B. In an indirect relation A influences B via either the social or material environment of B.

Before we utilize these four dimensions in a typology of influence relations, a few more distinctions have to be made. Influence is exercised in different situations. Each situation or environment in which influence is exercised has a different meaning in terms of which type of possessions can be used for exercising influence. We are thus distinguishing between environmental factors and possessions. This distinction differs somewhat from other comparable distinctions in that we do not consider it possible to define the concept of resources in a way that presupposes knowledge of the usability of a person's possessions. By resources we therefore mean possessions multiplied by a factor that denotes the usability of the possessions in a particular environment.

This definition of resources raises some problems concerning how we can determine what possessions are usable in a particular environment. There exists no clear answer to the question. We must study such factors as the norms — formal as well as informal — prevailing in a particular organizational culture, the conceptions that people hold about usability of possessions, the possessions of persons who are generally regarded as exercising influence, etc.

Our conception of resources makes the term synonymous with potential influence, a term used by Dahl (1970). Potential influence of course does not mean that a person exercises influence. In addition to possessing resources a person must be motivated to exercise influence in order to have manifest influence. The typology of influence which we are to present then is applicable only to relations of manifest influence, a term still used in accordance with Dahl's terminology. We are thus interested in relations where B's behavior can in some way be explained by referring to A.

Using the four dimensions above one can present the typology of influence outlined in the following way:



The typology above is of course a reduction of the total property space which can be obtained by combining the four dimensions. One could think of

other further divisions of the main types. It is, for instance, possible to enquire into the resource base of A in relations where A exercises implicit influence. It seems, however, for our purpose to be enough to stop with the types of influence that are indicated above. One should not of course forget the other possible combinations in empirical studies if they seem to be fruitful. We shall at this stage use only the six main types of influence for our further discussion.

There are a number of problems associated with the dimensions in terms of which the typology has been constructed. Some of these problems we have discussed elsewhere, and we shall therefore not discuss them again (Ståhlberg 1974, 22–23). Before we relate the typology of influence to our normative conception of democracy, we must note that the relations between actors can be looked at from the point of view of the different actors. A relation which, from the point of view of one actor, is authority, may, from the point of view of another actor, be seen as utilitarian power. Taking into consideration that actors are engaged in a number of relations, and that these relations may concern a number of different questions, it seems appropriate to look at normative relations between the actors from the point of view of both or all actors one at a time. We then get a number of normatively acceptable relations that can (or may) exist between different combinations of actors.

Such a combination of normatively acceptable relations between actors in the communal political system can be constructed by using the types of influence that were presented above. When one looks at the different types of influence in the typology, it is immediately clear that all types of influence do not have the same normative status. It is, for instance, not normatively acceptable that the actors in a democratic political system are engaged in coercive power relations. A differentiation of this type concerning the relations between actors is based on the view that it is difficult (or even practically impossible) to weigh together all different types of relations between two actors which may exist concerning different questions. A may exert identitive power over B concerning certain aspects of a communal plan, while B may exert utilitarian power over A concerning other aspects of the plan. These different combinations of relations that may exist between the actors are, as we see it, difficult to combine into some kind of net effect which A has on B in all questions relating to the decision-making process.

In the following Figure we present one view of the normatively acceptable relations that may exist between the actors in the communal political system. The Figure can be seen as a development of Figure 1, that is, as an elaboration of our first crude normative definition of democracy.

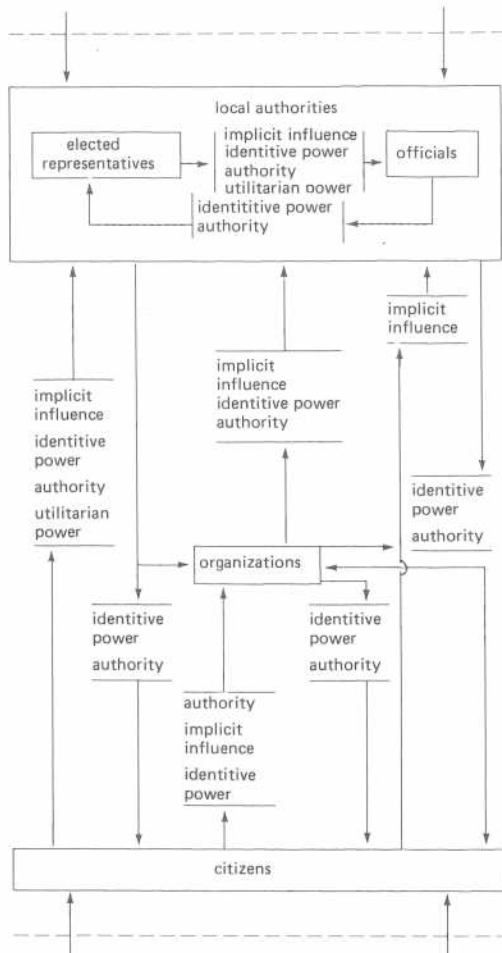


Fig. 2. A Normative View of the Structure in a Democratic Communal Political System.

There are a few aspects of the above Figure which can be commented on further. One aspect concerns the relation between our normative conception of democracy and the concept of interactive democracy put forth by Lewin (1970, 221–247). According to Lewin, the normativists rightly stress participation as important for democracy. The functionalists have correspondingly rightly underlined the role of elites in democracy. Lewin wants some kind of reconciliation between these two views. This reconciliation could, according

to him, be interactive democracy, meaning that democracy is realized to the extent that there exists an interaction between the elite and the citizens at large in the political decision-making process. The interaction leads to consensus. As far as we can see, this is thought to happen in a way that gives the citizens a decisive say in consensus building. Lewin's comments on the nature of this interaction are few. Our normative conception of democracy in terms of influence relationships can perhaps be seen as a further development of the conception of interactive democracy.

If we relate the above Figure to conceptions of the role of public administration in political systems, it can be pointed out that we have tried to adhere to a political view of public administration. Public officials should relate to citizens and organizations mainly via elected representatives. This is indicated by the relations going from elected representatives to officials. Officials can be influenced by the public through implicit influence. By this type of influence we understand in this connection that officials take into consideration the views put forth by the public while they are preparing questions. The public should not directly influence officials in any other way. Officials for their part may influence the public by use of identitive resources, that is, by presenting facts which they as specialists do have better knowledge of than the public.

The use of utilitarian influence as one type of normatively acceptable relation between citizens and elected representatives refers to the fact that elected representatives are dependent on voters for their seats in the communal councils. In this example the position of an elected representative is taken as something worth striving for. This may of course not be true, in which case having a vote and possibilities of stopping the re-election of a representative does not constitute a usable resource for someone trying to influence the representative. In any case, the use of the term utilitarian resource in this connection does not refer to situations where influence is exercised over representatives by means of bribery. It would perhaps have been better to leave out utilitarian relations of influence from the Figure entirely when considering the relations between citizens and elected representatives; our use of the term should therefore be given a narrow meaning, as we have indicated.

It is now possible to formulate the purpose of research more precisely. We are interested in what types of influence exist between the different actors in the communal political system in order to see in what way the existing relations differ from the normatively desirable relations. The types of influence should further be related to different forms of participation. The connection between influence and participation is far from clear, and therefore,

before turning to some final comments on this relation, we need to comment on our conception of political participation.

THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION

Up to this point we have not explicated the meaning of political participation. This concept has, however, as has the concept of influence, been widely treated in political science literature. One could therefore try to comment on the role of participation in our tentative view in democracy just as we did concerning influence. It seems to us, though, that this line of thought is not fruitful. Different forms of participation do indeed differ in their normative desirability, but this difference can be accounted for by type of influence to which the different forms of participation are conducive. Because of this we shall in the following discussion restrict our comments to rather general observations concerning our conception of political participation. In the final part of the article we shall return to the normative side of the concept. Here we are explicating what conceptual distinctions are to be made concerning political participation in order to make the concept usable for research related to influence.

In studies concerning political participation there have existed different views as to what the term participation refers to. Usually the term denotes some kind of political activity (Verba & Nie 1972; Milbrath 1965). By this use of the term such factors as motivation to participate or attitudes toward participation are kept apart from participation *per se*. Often, though, studies of political activity or behavior have included these psychological elements as well. We are adhering to the narrower use of the term political participation.

Verba and *Nie* define political participation as referring to »those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take» (1972, 2). This definition is interesting in that it explicitly combines participation and influence. According to the definition, such activities that are not aimed at influencing governmental activities are not to be considered as political participation. With this definition activities that can be thought of as »ceremonial» or »supportive» are not considered to be political participation. As an example of supportive activities, we can mention participating in parades or comparable occasions intended to demonstrate support for the government.

To the extent that it defines political participation to be a type of inter-

action between the rulers and the ruled, the definition also links political participation to a special type of political system and to special types of political actors. The rulers are those who formally hold governmental positions and the ruled are the citizens. This delimitation of the concept of participation pertains mainly to representative governmental systems.⁴ Within this system, as we know, the rulers make all the decisions and the ruled merely try to influence the decision-makers without themselves being decision-makers at times. In this limitation of the participation concept Verba and Nie do seem to be influenced by the so-called representative elite mode of thinking, although we feel that Verba and Nie in their general comments on the importance of participation stand close to the participatory position. It can, however, be maintained that the definition of participation excludes participation in direct democracy from the category of political participation!

Verba and Nie distinguish four modes of participation which accord with their general conception of political participation (1972, 52–54, 70–73). The four modes of participation are voting, campaign activities, cooperative activity (later changed to communal activities), and citizen-initiated contacts (later changed to personalized contacts). These four modes of participation show a very typical bias toward activities related to political elections, but it also includes less typical modes of participation such as citizen-initiated contacts.

In this study we have a broader conception of political participation than Verba and Nie. First, we do not limit political participation to citizens only. Officials and elected representatives are also differently engaged in the decision-making process. The degree of engagement is, as we see it, one type of political participation. This view means that we distinguish between the persons who are taking part in the decision-making process and the decision-making process itself. Participation then implies being a party to the decision-making process in a wider sense. There are many elected representatives and officials who participate less in the decision-making process than do many organizational leaders. Looking at participation from the influence point of view means that a formal position in the decision-making process is naturally to be seen as one resource among others. But a formal position in the process does not merit speaking of participation as a relation between those holding such positions and those who do not hold formal positions in the decision-making process.

Secondly, we do not accept the delimitation of political participation which means reserving the term political participation only to legitimate forms of participation within the representative governmental system. Neither does it seem called for, generally, to exclude supportive or ceremonial activi-

ties from the category of political participation. A person taking part in a supportive demonstration or parade may well be conscious of the impact of such supportive activities on the possibilities of a government being able to realize its policy. As far as we can see this type of activity does qualify as political participation.

In a recent Scandinavian study of political participation by *Willy Martinussen*, participation is given a much broader meaning than the meaning given to it by Verba and Nie. According to Martinussen political participation can be equated with use of political rights (1973, 36). This definition does not restrict political participation to some specific type of political system. Neither does it exclude supportive and ceremonial activities, which perhaps is due to the fact that Martinussen does not incorporate the concept of influence into his definition of participation. On the contrary, the view of political participation held by Martinussen includes as participation even such »passive», influence-related forms of activity as reading newspapers or discussing politics. These activities cannot themselves be seen as influencing the political decision-making process, but they are probably in most situations to be seen as activities conducive to political activity which is intended to influence the decision-making process.

Martinussen further distinguishes between three types of participation which aim at influencing the decision-making process — namely direct influence in the process, influencing the election and appointment of decision-makers, and influencing organizations playing a part in political life. A fourth type of participation, which is not aimed at influencing the decision-making process, is, according to Martinussen, political readiness (1973, 36–38). Political readiness stands for such activities as reading newspapers, etc.

We find Martinussen's conception of political participation to be too broad. It does seem reasonable to distinguish political participation from mere interest in politics. Interest in politics and political readiness are probably important prerequisites for effective political participation, but they are not the same type of political activity as is direct involvement in the political decision-making process. We therefore need a conceptualization that takes account of these views.

With only slight changes in the terminology used by Martinussen we can present the view of participation proposed in this study. At a general level we can label as political activities all such activities as watching and/or trying to influence political decision-making. We shall not elaborate upon this by discussing the meaning of political decisions. Suffice it to say that in this study the term can be understood as referring to decisions that are directly a part of the planning process under study. They may also be indirectly related to

the planning process in that they are not deliberated upon within the planning process but are, with regard to the actors who decide, aimed at influencing the planning process.

Within the category of political activity we can distinguish between at least two types of activities, namely political participation and political observing. By political observing we mean political activity which is not intentionally directed toward any particular political decision. Political observing has an intended passive connotation and is in this respect to be equated with the term political spectator activities in *Lester W. Milbrath's* book *Political Participation*. Many of the forms of political activities which Milbrath considers to be spectator activities according to our terminology are, however, to be seen as political participation (1965, 5–38).

Political participation can be defined as political activity by which the actors are a party to or try directly or indirectly to influence the political decision-making process. This definition does not exclude activities by those who hold formal governmental positions from the category of political participation. Citizens and officials can both be participators. Further, when we look at the relation between citizens and local authorities in general, we cannot define participation in terms of the direction of the flow of information between the categories. Officials can take part in information meetings with the public and in this way be engaged in »downward» political participation.

As we have said earlier, we consider different types of involvement in the decision-making process to be examples of political participation. This point is important in that we are going to study in particular the relations between persons who in one way or another are party to the decision-making process. The persons involved in the decision-making process differ in their kind and degree of involvement. There is no reason a priori to expect that being involved in the process because of a formal governmental position would mean something different in terms of influence on the process than any other type of involvement. What the nature of different types of involvement is in terms of influence on the decision-making process is what we are interested in finding out.

The definition can, of course, be looked at from another point of view. An adequate definition should unambiguously delimit the defined phenomena from all other phenomena. In this sense a definition should make it possible to distinguish the defined phenomena from others when one sees it. A discussion of this kind means that we have to enquire into the exact nature of the terms in the definition. At least the intentionality and the term influence merit some comment in this respect.

When an actor is said to try to influence political decision-making this means that he intends to influence the decision. This conception does not consider such behavior to be political participation which influences political decision-making but which is not intended to do so. The intention is seen as an individual property which can be established only by inquiring into the subjective dispositions of the actors. To establish this subjective disposition is of course difficult. In this respect the definition is not a very good one. Having influence over political decisions without being engaged in political participation is closely related to our conception of implicit influence.

Actors can further be engaged in activities which are intended to influence political decisions, but which have no measurable impact on the decision at all. Our definition of political participation does not tie the participatory act to its consequences; but it should be clear that there is a considerable difference between activities which merely seek to influence and activities which both seek and have a real influence. When we use the word influence in this connection we merely mean that the participatory act makes a difference in some respect concerning the decision. In the group of activities which merely aim at influencing the decision but which have no effect on the outcome, we have many participatory acts which are founded on a complete misunderstanding of the political game. Many of these activities should perhaps be excluded from the category of political participation, but it is difficult to find any sensible defining criteria for this exclusion. We must therefore be content with underlining the wide variety of activities which are included in our conception of political behavior when we look at the intentionality and influence aspects of the definition.

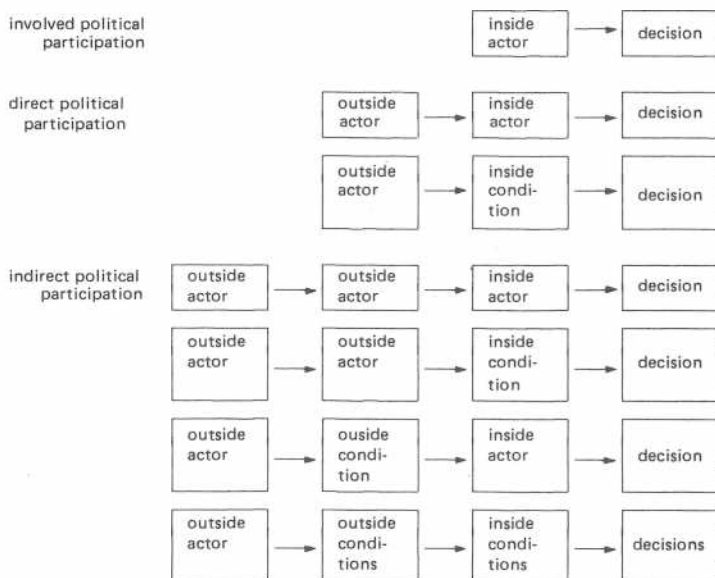
We can now turn to another distinction which is important in order to understand the variety of political activities which can be considered to be political participation. When one tries by way of participation to influence political decision-making this can be done either by way of contacting persons who are engaged in the decision-making process, or by way of manipulating conditions which must be taken as given within the decision-making process. This we tried to illustrate earlier in our second Figure. Both types of activities are to be seen as political participation. Hence political participation cannot be studied merely by inquiring into the activity centered around the actual decision-making process in which one is interested.

The definition of political participation in itself includes a rough typology of modes of political participation. There are three main types of political participation: being a party to the decision-making process, direct participation, and indirect participation. The first group of political participation includes such activities as being a member of bodies that are a part of the

institutional structure in which the decision-making process takes place. This category of participation also includes taking part in the meetings of these bodies. Further forms of such participation are informal contacts between the persons engaged in the process.

By direct political participation we denote direct contacts between persons outside and inside the decision-making process. In addition, this group of participation includes activities by means of which an actor manipulates conditions which are directly considered within the process. Indirect political participation consequently denotes activities through which one tries to influence the decision-making process via contacts with persons (or conditions) which are not a part of the process.

We have used a number of different terms in distinguishing between involvement, and direct and indirect political participation. Using these terms, combinations can be presented in the following relationships:



The above outline of different types of political participation can be taken as a base for some comments on studies of political participation. Political participation has apparently been studied primarily from the point of view of relations between actors or relations between the participant and some general

conception of decision-making. When one studies participation in a concrete decision-making process using the type of definition of political participation which we have used, it is unsatisfactory only to study direct relations to the process. This, however, seems to be the position taken in participatory studies.

If one starts out by inquiring from citizens about their involvement in politics, one usually ends up with measures of the direct involvement of these citizens in the decision-making process. This does not mean to say that it is impossible to include questions measuring indirect political participation in a survey. This is of course possible, and all the more so if one is only interested in finding out about relationships between actors outside and inside the decision-making process. If one also includes in the study the possibilities of influencing decision-making by manipulating the conditions of decision-making, it is not easy to rely only on survey results.

An inquiry into possibilities of influencing the conditions of decision-making – either directly or indirectly – should, it seems to us, also include, and perhaps start out with, an analysis of the decision that results from the decision-making process. The decision can be analyzed from a number of angles. One can compare what type of interests are furthered by the decision. This can be compared to the interests of different participators in the decision-making process and the interests of groups of citizens standing outside the process. Knowing what kind of elements a decision is comprised of, these components can be related to the views of different actors. Elements that seem to coincide perfectly with the interests of certain actors are of special interest, since they can either be a product of the influence of these actors, or they can be the product of conditions outside the decision-making process which cannot be changed within the process.

The conditions that are accepted as given in the decision-making process seem to be of three kinds. First, there are conditions which in a way belong to the total political system and to the subsystem of which the concrete decision-making process belongs. These then are conditions outside the subsystem which we study. In this study they can be interpreted as givens which are decided upon on the national level.

Secondly, there are conditions which are taken as given in the decision-making process, and which are decided upon by actors within the subsystem in which the process takes place. These conditions are such elements in the decision-making process as should be related to different actors. One can then, in the same way as was suggested concerning relations between actors within the process, inquire about the participation of the actors in the decision-making process leading to the decision concerning these conditions.

Thirdly, there are conditions which are decided upon by no one. These

conditions can, of course, be further divided into different types. It is not necessary to develop new categories here, however. Suffice it to say that such conditions can be material or physical, i.e., having to do with the physical environment of the decision-making process. These conditions can also be social, i.e., having to do with prevailing norms, informal institutionalized patterns of behavior, or consequences of market mechanisms. Often such social conditions must be taken as given in a decision-making process, for, while they can in principle be changed, such change is difficult to bring about because it presupposes coordinated behavior on the part of a large number of persons (cf. Wolff 1968, 86-88).

Before we make any inferences as to the meaning of modes of participation in the decision-making process from evidence relating the interest-pattern of the decision to interests of participants or non-participants, we must ask about the nature of the conditions assumed as given in the decision-making process. It is not correct to infer that an actor who has participated in the process, and who entirely accepts and is rewarded by the decision, has also influenced the decision-making process. The value-distributional aspects of the decision can be a consequence of indirect factors operating in the decision-making situation. Only if no indirect factors have been operating on the decision-making process can such an inference about the relation between participation and influence be made.

THE RELATION BETWEEN INFLUENCE AND PARTICIPATION

We have presented a normative conception of democracy in which the concepts of influence and participation are central. These concepts were commented on separately above, and we can now turn to some final comments on the relationship between these concepts.

There are at least two possible lines of argument that we could pursue in order to discuss the relation between influence and participation. As we have said, influence has often been operationalized in terms of participation. One way to comment on the relation between these two concepts would be to establish a conceptual relation between them. This would lead us to some forms of participation which are assumed to have certain types of influence on the decision-making process. We then would get a few forms of participation which from our normative point of view are deemed desirable. This line of reasoning would at its best simplify the problems which one is to encounter in empirical research. Although it seems tempting to try this line of reasoning out, we do not think that it is the right thing to do. On the contrary, we

think that the relationship between influence and participation is an empirical one which should not be settled on a conceptual basis.

Another line of reasoning then is to consider influence and participation to be two conceptually independent variables, the relation of which one ought to study. This view, which we take in this paper, leads to a number of difficulties in empirical research concerning the operationalizations of the concepts of influence which we presented above. We are not prepared to discuss these problems now, however. It is even possible that one cannot find any meaningful operationalizations of the different types of influence, in which case one must revise some of the points we have stressed in this paper.

According to the position taken here, the task is to find different operationalizations of the concepts of participation and influence. This leads to the question of how one should treat the possible results from our normative point of view.

In terms of our previous reasoning influence is of primary importance. One can study the distribution of different types of influence among actors in the communal political system. From the distributional point of view one can first look at what kind of normatively undesirable relations of influence exist among the actors. Secondly, one can look at the distribution of desirable influence relations between the actors. In this regard our normative view evidently means that there ought not to exist actors or groups of actors who are clearly exercising less influence than other groups. It will, however, be difficult to weigh together different types of legitimate influence into a compound measure of influence. Consequently one should discuss the distribution of different types of influence relations among the actors separately.

We can also look at the types of influence from a correlational point of view. The correlation or clustering between different types of influence can be seen as a measure of inequality among the actors. From the normative point of view there ought then not to exist high correlations between types of influence. This pertains to desirable as well as to undesirable types of influence.

Participation can be seen as a variable explaining influence. At the same time it carries normative connotations of its own. As we have seen, we are particularly interested in influential participation. This can then be thought of as a search for high correlations between influence and participation. Knowing what kinds of participation correlate highly with influence and having identified possible causal relations between participation and influence, one can turn to a distributional analysis of different forms of participation. How do the actors in the communal political system participate in the decision-making process? In this analysis one must again look separately at different forms of participation. In addition, one can study correlations

between forms of participation, maintaining that high correlations are normatively undesirable.

According to what we have said there are five aspects to influence and participation that one should be interested in. These are the distribution of and correlation between different types of participation, as well as the correlation between participation and influence. Using these measures it is perhaps possible to comment on the degree of democracy within different communes.

NOTES

- 1 With reference to Lewin (1970, 17–28) we have earlier labelled the schools functionalistic and normative. In order to avoid the connotations of the term functionalistic, we have given the schools of thought new labels. These new labels correspond perhaps better to the distinctions made by many authors concerning the same distinctions we are making. See, for instance, Pateman 1970, Parry 1969, Walker 1966 and Dahl 1966.
- 2 'People and Planning', HSO, London 1969 (reprinted 1972). This so-called Skeffington Report has been criticized because of an alleged lack of system orientation. It has been maintained that the Skeffington Committee does not recognize that there may well be contradictions between an individual and a systems point of view. See Levin & Donnison 1969.
- 3 For summaries of findings see Lewin 1970 and Milbrath 1965. For an interesting discussion see Pateman 1970.
- 4 This does not mean that Verba and Nie defend an elitist government. On the contrary, they stress the importance of the law of anticipated reactions.

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