

Racial Differences in Protest Participation*

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Introduction

During the years of the past decade an extraordinarily wide variety of Americans have chosen at one time or another to take their politics into the streets. The diversity of those who have employed protest tactics is striking: urban and rural blacks, college and high school students, farmers, veterans, white homeowners, the parents of school children, the peace constituency, so-called hard hats or construction workers, religious groups, ethnic minorities, and conservative organizations have all recently engaged in widely publicized protests of one form or another.¹

While scholarship on protest is beginning to accumulate, a problem of limited perspective continues to inhibit our understanding of the phenomenon. This perspective, constrained both by lack of data and by inadequate conceptual development, has given rise to the view that protest is essentially extraordinary in character² and that those who use it must do so because they lack the resources to employ more conventional means of bringing demands to bear on the political system. The purpose of this article is to challenge this view and to begin to restate some of the generalizations built upon it. In particular, I would contend that if we examine the attitudes toward protest, the social characteristics of protesters, and the uses and organization of protest among blacks and whites separately, we find racial

variations important enough to suggest substantial modifications in the standard interpretation of the role and nature of this form of political expression. Protest among blacks was found in the present research to be carried out primarily by members of the adult middle and working classes and to represent an integral and normal feature of the black adaptation to urban politics in particular. Protest among whites, in contrast, is an extraordinary form of participation at all levels of politics for a small, predominantly upper middle-class segment of the white community. One of the chief ironies of this more complex view of the role of protest in domestic politics, as we shall see, is that the routine quality of protest and its institutionalization in the black community—a strength in the short run—are eventually bound to strip the technique of much of its force as a means for blacks of making political demands. In pursuing this analysis, we will find that the data challenge and clarify some assumptions about the relationship of participation in protest to the possession of social resources.

Data and Research Setting

The data on which this analysis is based are drawn from a 1970 survey of Milwaukee residents age 18 and over. The study design was constructed to yield two separate probability samples, one each of the black and white populations as close in size as possible. The final sample numbered 331 whites and 246 blacks.³ Comparing 1970 Census data from Milwaukee with the survey sample indicates that with a few minor exceptions the fit of the sample with its universe is high. Sample distributions along the sex, occupation, education, and income dimensions closely match the corresponding census distributions, except that low education (less than high school) blacks and whites and high income (over \$10,000) whites

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¹Jerome Skolnick, *The Politics of Protest* (New York: Ballantine, 1969) p. 22.

²Lester Milbrath has written, for example, that protest demonstrations are "by definition, extraordinary rather than normal." *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 27. And Michael Lewis argues that one of the common defining threads which characterize various sorts of demonstrative political manifestations is their proclivity to go "beyond the constraints of the institutionalized political process." "The Negro Protest in Urban America (1968)," in *Protest, Reform and Revolt*, ed. Joseph Gusfield, (New York: John Wiley, 1970), p. 151.

³The black population of Milwaukee numbered 105,000 in 1970, or 14.7 per cent of the total. This proportion of blacks is not especially small for cities of this size. Milwaukee falls among the second ten largest cities in the country. The average percentage of blacks in these cities is 20.7. The percentages of blacks in Boston (16.3), San Francisco (13.4), and Indianapolis (18.0), all of which cities fall in the second ten largest group, compare most favorably with Milwaukee.

are slightly undersampled. Interviewers were all professionals, and they were matched with their respondents by race.

Since cross-sectional surveys in single cities suffer the obvious disadvantages of limited time and geographical perspectives, it is necessary both to warn the reader of the tentative nature of the findings and to make explicit at least one relevant characteristic of the research setting, i.e., that among cities of its general size Milwaukee has a particularly rich recent history of political protest and violence, especially among blacks. Among the riots in the summer of 1967, for example, the Milwaukee riot was considered by the Kerner Commission to be among the three most severe in the nation.⁴ The city appears to occupy a similarly high position in regard to the level of protest activity: in one study of protest in 43 large American cities over a six-month period in 1968, Milwaukee experienced more protest incidents than any other city.⁵ Milwaukee's most notable protest campaign occurred in 1967 and involved six months of daily street marches and rallies led by Father James Groppi to secure open housing laws. Although these marches drew predominantly from the black community, a large number of whites took part sporadically. Other major black protests included a school boycott (1965) by an organization called Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC) to protest racial imbalance in the inner city schools. Various private institutions have also been targets of prolonged protest: the Eagles Club, a major supermarket chain, and the largest manufacturing employer in the city, Allis-Chalmers, have been picketed and boycotted by black organizations to protest various discriminatory racial practices. Finally, during 1969, the National Welfare Rights Organization became active in Milwaukee and helped to sponsor a number of demonstrations and sit-ins by welfare recipients and their sympathizers.

This high level of political intensity and militance may have increased the extent and diffusion of individual protest participation in both the black and the white communities to such an extent that patterns reported here are atypical of what we might find in other parts of the country. The rare and scattered bits of comparable evidence from other surveys cited in the text, however, generally sup-

port the Milwaukee findings. One presumed advantage of the frequency and scope of protest in Milwaukee is that it virtually ensures a significant pool of protest participants for analysis which random sampling techniques can be expected to tap.

Attitudes Toward Protest as a Political Tactic

Protest may be defined as a form of collective expression, disruptive in nature, designed to provide its users both with access to decision makers and with bargaining leverage in negotiations with them.⁶ While protest relies for its dynamics on a delicate balance of threat and moral appeal,⁷ it falls short of and may be distinguished from outright political violence.⁸

Most surveys which have sought to tap attitudes toward protest have revealed predominantly hostile sentiments, leading to the view that protest is a form of political nonconformity. For example, a national Harris poll conducted in 1965 showed that 68 per cent believed that antiwar picketing and demonstrations were more harmful than helpful; 68 per cent believed that civil rights demonstrations were likewise more harmful than helpful; and 65 per cent felt the same way about student demonstrations.⁹

In 1966 the Harris poll asked whites whether, if they were in the same position as Negroes, they would feel justified "to march and protest in demonstrations." Exactly half the sample said they would not feel justified; 35 per cent said they would.¹⁰ A later Harris poll, taken in 1968, found that a full 82 per cent of their respondents "disapproved" of Negro "demonstration tactics."¹¹

In a smaller survey conducted in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Marvin Olsen found that disapproval of protest was not only relatively high but that it focused particularly on mass dem-

⁶ James Q. Wilson was one of the first to characterize protest as a bargaining process in these terms. "The Strategy of Protest: Problems of Negro Civic Action," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 3 (September 1961), 291-303.

⁷ See the discussion of this point in Ralph Turner, "The Public Perception of Protest," *American Sociological Review*, 34 (December 1969), 815-831, at p. 820.

⁸ Eisinger, pp. 13-14; see also H. L. Nieburg, "The Threat of Violence and Social Change," *American Political Science Review*, 56 (December 1962), 865-873, at p. 872.

⁹ These data are cited in Amitai Etzioni, *Demonstration Democracy* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1970), p. 10.

¹⁰ William Brink and Louis Harris, *Black and White: A Study of Racial Attitudes Today* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), p. 222.

¹¹ Etzioni, p. 10.

⁴ *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968), pp. 158-159.

⁵ Peter K. Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *The American Political Science Review*, 67 (March 1973), 11-28.

onstrations and sit-ins. Sixty per cent of his sample, most of which was above average in education, expressed strong negative opinions regarding such tactics.¹² Angus Campbell, summarizing findings based on the 15 city Michigan Survey Research Center study, writes that:

White response to the black protest movement . . . was generally unfavorable, a majority believing it to be pushing too fast and too violently and with hurtful consequences . . . Black evaluation of the black protest was far more positive than that of whites. . . .¹³

As instruments for assessing attitudes toward protest, these surveys are suggestive, but they have two major shortcomings. One is that, with the exception of Campbell, investigators generally have failed to introduce controls for race in their reports or their study design. Either marginal totals are presented for racially undifferentiated samples, or the surveys themselves have been conducted only among whites. A second shortcoming involves the phrasing of questions: Respondents were asked about their feelings toward *antiwar* picketing, *civil rights* demonstrations, *student* protest, and the *black* protest movement. Thus, the resulting negative attitudes may simultaneously reflect hostility toward any or all of the following: toward a particular mode of political expression (protest), toward presumed positions on certain broad substantive issues (civil rights, the war in Asia), and toward certain distinct protesting groups in society (blacks, students).

The advantage of the Milwaukee survey is that it asks both blacks and whites questions about protest itself, without reference to the issues which might give rise to protest or the groups which use it, although, to be sure, we still cannot be absolutely certain that respondents did not supply their own substantive associations with protest in answering the questions. Sharp racial differences emerge in the assessment of protest as a tactic. Favorable attitudes toward protest are widespread in the black community, and these feelings transcend the boundary dividing those who have actually taken part in protest from those who have

¹² Marvin Olsen, "Perceived Legitimacy of Social Protest Actions," *Social Problems*, 15 (Winter, 1968), p. 299. Other sources of data showing similar attitudes toward protest may be found in Skolnick, p. 22-23; and Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Demonstrations and Race Riots," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31 (Winter 1967-1968), 655-677.

¹³ Angus Campbell, *White Attitudes Toward Black People* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 1971), p. 139.

Table 1. Explanations of the Reasons for Protest

	Black	White
Instrumental Reasons	56% (138)	36% (119)
To gain attention; to win demands		
Expressive Reasons	20% (49)	15% (48)
Because they are angry; to express outrage		
Negative Reasons	8% (20)	38% (123)
Imitation; trouble-making		
Other	1% (2)	1% (2)
DK	15% (37)	12% (39)
	100% (246)	102% (331)

Differences significant at .001 level (Chi-square = 63.503).

not.¹⁴ Black protesters come to participate in demonstrative politics in an aura of subcommunity approval and confidence. But while the attitudes of the black subcommunity reinforce, if not stimulate, individual decisions to engage in protest, those of the white community are largely antipathetic to such participation.

A majority of the blacks in the sample are convinced that the motivations which lie behind protest participation are largely instrumental in nature. When respondents were asked in the survey why they supposed that "people protest and demonstrate so much these days," 56 per cent of the blacks explained that protest was essentially a device to gain certain ends. People were seen to protest in order to gain attention or access to decision makers or they protest in order to gain substantive goals. (Table 1). Only eight per cent attributed pro-

¹⁴ This finding seems consistent with the observations concerning widespread black support or at least sympathy for black rioters. Matthew Holden has written in this regard that:

in addition to people accustomed to violating the law or being in trouble with the police—whose participation in riots could be easily predicted—there was a substantial reservoir of more respectable black people who were at least *sentimentally* friendly to violence. They did not perceive how many black people—hard-working, tax-paying, and responsible—would permit themselves to 'get caught up in the situation,' let alone how many more would say 'I wouldn't do it myself, but I can understand those who do.'

Politics of the Black "Nation" (New York: Chandler, 1973), p. 77. Empirical evidence to this effect surfaced first in the Watts riot studies: David O. Sears and T. M. Tomlinson found in their study of attitudes after that riot that the major opinion cleavage in interpreting the disturbances was between the races, not between black rioters and black nonrioters. "Riot Ideology in Los Angeles: A Study of Negro Attitudes," *Social Science Quarterly*, 49 (December 1968), p. 485-503.

Table 2. Percentage Which Would Like to See More, Fewer, or No Demonstrations, Controlling for Protest Participation

	Black			White		
	Protesters	Nonprotesters	Total	Protesters	Nonprotesters	Total
More	71% (37)	36% (69)	43% (106)	26% (9)	5% (14)	7% (23)
Fewer	13% (7)	20% (38)	18% (45)	40% (14)	53% (157)	52% (171)
None	4% (2)	24% (46)	20% (48)	6% (2)	27% (80)	25% (82)
Doesn't matter	10% (5)	21% (40)	18% (45)	11% (4)	14% (40)	13% (44)
DK, NA	2% (1)	* (1)	1% (2)	17% (6)	2% (5)	3% (11)
	100% (52)	101% (194)	100% (246)	100% (35)	101% (296)	100% (331)

Differences between black protesters and white protesters are significant at the .001 level (Chi-square = 19.044). Differences between black nonprotesters and white nonprotesters are significant at the .001 level (Chi-square = 92.062).

test participation to negative motives such as imitation ("It's the thing to do") or meaningless trouble-making. By contrast, 38 per cent of the white sample interpreted protest negatively as trouble-making or imitation, while 36 per cent saw it as an instrumental tactic. To explain protest participation in terms of instrumental motivations is not necessarily to approve it, of course, but it is to concede that some people find it genuinely useful for serious purposes. Most blacks do not question the integrity of the motives of protest participants, but a substantial number of members of the white community apparently do.

Not only do most blacks believe that protest is a useful political tool, but a significant proportion of them would like to see it used more often. Forty-three per cent of the black sample would like to see more demonstrations rather than fewer or none, compared to only seven per cent of the white respondents. As might be expected, black protesters contribute disproportionately to the black group which would like to see more demonstrations, *but the percentage of black nonprotesters¹⁵ who say they would like to see more is larger than that of white protesters who hold the same view* (Table 2).

In short, support for protest is greater in that segment of the black community which has never taken part in protest than it is even among white protesters.

Among protesters themselves, blacks were much more confident than whites about the

impact of their particular efforts. The protest participants were asked whether each of the protests in which they had taken part had helped "to get what you wanted." In 53 per cent of the instances of participation, black protesters answered in the affirmative, compared to 38 per cent among whites.

Black protesters receive other supportive cues from the black community, but whites engage in protest in the face of strong community opposition. For example, the figures in Table 3 show that a high number of blacks believe that demonstrating is *better* than voting in Milwaukee as an instrumental device. (Forty-one of the 59 blacks who agree with this proposition are *nonprotesters*.) The overwhelming proportion of the white sample expresses an unambivalently negative opinion concerning the primacy of protest. Even the white protesters themselves disagree that demonstrations are "better" than voting.¹⁶

Blacks also regard protest in general as an *effective* device to gain the attention of government. Protesters and nonprotesters scarcely differ on this score. More whites, however, doubt the efficacy of protest.

Finally, blacks appear to subscribe to an attitude similar to the notion of citizen or civic duty which scholars have developed in relation to voting. We might call this attitude "protest duty." A sizable majority of whites are either ambivalent about or opposed to the necessity of protest participation, but most blacks believe it is important to take part.

In summary, the attitudes of the black subcommunity, in contradistinction to those of the larger white community, support protest participation and foster expectations of its effective-

¹⁶ Twenty-two of the 35 white protesters disagreed with the statement; only three agreed.

¹⁵ As I explain in greater detail later on, protesters are those who answered affirmatively when asked in the interview whether they had ever taken part in a sit-in, demonstration, mass march, or other type of protest action. The category "protester" does not include those who merely engaged in union picketing on strike.

Table 3. Attitudes Toward Protest

		Black	White
Demonstrations are better than voting in this city because demonstrations are about the only way to get your point across.	Agree	24% (59)	4% (14)
	Agree & Disagree	22% (54)	11% (38)
	Disagree	47% (115)	82% (270)
	DK	7% (18)	3% (9)
		p < .001 (Chi-square 79.201)	
Demonstrations and mass marches are one good way to get the city government to listen to you.	Agree	69% (169)	23% (75)
	Agree & Disagree	19% (47)	20% (66)
	Disagree	9% (23)	54% (179)
	DK	3% (7)	3% (11)
		p < .001 (Chi-square 157.320)	
It's sometimes important to take part in demonstrations because that's one way to make your voice heard.	Agree	73% (179)	29% (97)
	Agree & Disagree	13% (31)	19% (63)
	Disagree	10% (24)	47% (153)
	DK	5% (12)	5% (16)
		p < .001 (Chi-square 120.381)	

tiveness. Favorable attitudes toward protest are not held by a splinter minority, but seem widespread among blacks, both those who take part in demonstrative politics and those who do not. Previous surveys, then, have given an incomplete impression. While protest may constitute an act of political nonconformity in the society at large, it enjoys major and widespread support as an acceptable device for political self-expression among blacks.

Social Status and Protest Participation

Efforts to generalize about the relationship between social status and protest participation have produced a forest of ambiguities. Part of the problem may be attributed to inadequate data, but the more important source of confusion stems from inconsistent, vague, and occasionally inaccurate conceptualizations of the roots of protest.

Most empirical efforts to explore the social correlates of protest participation have been based on surveys of college students. Samples have invariably been racially homogeneous or so nearly uniform that interracial comparisons cannot be made with confidence. Drawing entirely on the educated young, these selective samples ensure that even the most tentative generalizations must be extremely limited in scope. The difficulties inherent in these studies are compounded by the contradictory conclusions which are beginning to emerge. Early studies of the southern civil rights movement and of campus protest indicated that protest participants among both black and white students were more likely to come from middle- rather than lower-class families, a finding which suggested that protest participation, like voting, is likely to be associated with the indi-

vidual possession of social resources.¹⁷ One of the most recent studies of campus political activists, however, concludes that protesters are in fact sociologically no different from nonparticipants and conventional activists.¹⁸

The Milwaukee data have the advantage of being drawn from the entire adult populations of both racial communities, which therefore renders them somewhat more reliable bases than student samples for the construction of general propositions about protest participation.

The major ambiguities in the discussion of the relationship between protest participation and social status, however, derive not from the empirical works cited here but rather are found in the more influential theoretical literature. In speaking of the sources of protest, several writers view the tactic as a technique of the "powerless" or the "relatively powerless."¹⁹

¹⁷ On the social backgrounds of white student protesters see David Westby and Richard Braungart, "Class and Politics in the Family Backgrounds of Student Political Activists," *American Sociological Review*, 31 (October 1966), 690-692. Seymour Martin Lipset offers a thorough summary of the literature which arrives at these findings in "The Activists: A Profile," in *Confrontation*, ed. Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol (New York: Basic Books, 1969), pp. 45-57. On black student protest participation see Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, *Negroes and the New Southern Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 418; and John M. Orbell, "Protest Participation Among Southern Negro College Students," *American Political Science Review*, 61 (June, 1967) 446-456, at 450.

¹⁸ James W. Clarke and Joseph Egan, "Social and Political Dimensions of Protest Activity," *Journal of Politics*, 34 (May 1972), 500-523.

¹⁹ Wilson uses the term "powerless." Michael Lipsky speaks of the "relatively powerless." Lipsky, "Protest as a Political Resource," *American Political Science Review*, 62 (December 1968), p. 1144.

Powerlessness is conceived in a generally narrow sense as a function of low social status, a condition characterized largely by the absence of middle-class resources. For Wilson, blacks are a prime example of a powerless group because they lack, among other things, the resources which come with class status.²⁰ Lipsy characterizes "relatively powerless groups as those lacking in conventional political resources, namely those various currencies of political exchange which accompany high position in the social order."²¹

The problem here is that the Milwaukee data show that *individuals* who participate in protest activity in fact possess the social attributes of middle-class status. These findings, apparently at odds with the blanket conceptualization of protest as a tactic primarily of those low in the possession of social status resources,²² suggests the need for some attempts at reconciliation and reformulation.

It is imperative, first of all, to consider the sort of powerlessness which gives rise to protest behavior on the part of individuals as a multidimensional phenomenon, one that may include other characteristics and conditions besides low social status. Second, it is necessary to make clear that, so long as we do conceive powerlessness in social status terms, among others, such powerlessness may refer to the relative position in society of the *group* or *collectivity* from which the protesters are drawn without necessarily implying that the individuals who actually participate in protest are also low in status.

Let us turn to the data. The extent of protest participation in Milwaukee is just high enough to enable us to discern patterns with some measure of confidence. Among blacks, 21 per cent ($N = 52$) claimed to have taken part in at least one protest, while 11 per cent of the whites ($N = 35$) said they had done so. Protest participation was determined by answers to a series of questions inquiring whether the re-

spondent had ever taken part in a mass march, a demonstration, a sit-in, a protest rally or protest meeting, or any other form of protest or direct action. The variety of terms employed to refer to protest is of little importance for analytical purposes. Rather, it simply reflects the numerous conventional ways of characterizing protest in current usage.

Each respondent was asked how many of each type of protest he had participated in. Then he was asked a variety of questions concerning the details only of the three most recent of each type of incident.

Black respondents reported a total of 226 instances of participation, of which we have some details on 149. Whites reported 153 instances, of which they described 97. (It is important to note that in the later discussion on patterns in the use of protest the unit of analysis is often an instance of participation, not a separate protest incident. Sometimes instances of participation by different individuals occurred in the same protest incident.) While more blacks, proportionally, took part in protest, the rate of participation by individual protesters did not differ much by race: white protesters averaged 4.5 instances of participation, while blacks averaged 4.3.

In order to examine the relationship between protest participation and status, respondents were first divided within each racial sample into groups of those who had participated in protest and those who had not.²³ Protesters ranked

²³ Protest participation was initially treated both as a dichotomous dummy variable (protest/no protest) and as a continuous variable (frequency of protest participation, ranging from 0 to 10 or more). Fifty-six of the 87 protesters had taken part in more than one protest. The relationships between protest participation, treated as a dummy variable, and socioeconomic and demographic indicators are, for the moment, more important, since the object of the analysis is to distinguish those who take part in such activity from those who never do. The relationships are uniformly slightly stronger than when protest is treated as a continuous variable. Pearson's r coefficients are compared in the table below when the protest variable is treated differently.

Table A. SES and Protest Participation as a Dichotomous and a Continuous Variable

	Black		White	
	Protest/ no protest (dichotomous)	Frequency of protest (continuous)	Protest/ no protest (dichotomous)	Frequency of protest (continuous)
Age	-.27	-.20	-.20	-.12
Income	.06	.08	.10	.01
Education	.37	.25	.43	.35
No. of Organizational memberships	.24	.16	.19	.05

²⁰ Wilson, "Strategy of Protest," p. 292.

²¹ Lipsky, p. 1144. Lipsky does not enumerate those resources but relies on Robert Dahl's list of resources in "The Analysis of Influence in Local Communities," in *Social Science and Community Action*, ed. Charles R. Adrian (East Lansing, Michigan: Institute for Community Development and Resources, 1960), p. 32.

²² Wilson has written, for example, that "Protest actions involving such tactics as mass meetings, picketing, boycotts, and strikes rarely find enthusiastic participants among upper-income and higher status individuals." "Strategy of Protest," p. 206. Etzioni has argued that it is the "underclasses," socioeconomically speaking, which "have a special affinity for protest." *Demonstration Democracy*, p. 6. That blacks as a group, regardless of the objective social status of any given black individual, may comprise a racial "underclass" is a possibility I shall consider later.

Table 4. Socioeconomic Differences Between Protesters and Nonprotesters by Race*

	Black			White		
	Protesters	Nonprotesters	Entire Black Sample	Protesters	Nonprotesters	Entire White Sample
Mean Income	\$6790 (48)	\$6300 (172)	\$6400 (220)	\$8320 (34)	\$7310 (270)	\$7400 (304)
Mean No. of Group Memberships	1.90 (52)	1.02 (194)	1.21 (246)	2.14 (35)	1.28 (296)	1.37 (331)
Mean Education	11.96 Yrs. (52)	9.89 Yrs. (193)	10.3 Yrs. (245)	14.57 Yrs. (35)	10.96 Yrs. (294)	11.04 Yrs. (329)

* Differences between protester and nonprotester means for both races are significant at .001 level using a two-tailed difference of means test (t) except for difference in black income means (not significant) and white income means ($p < .10$).

higher than nonprotesters in terms of income, education, and group memberships,²⁴ as we see in the figures in Table 4.

Protesters also fall disproportionately in the higher occupational categories. For both races, protest and high occupation are positively related. The gamma coefficient for blacks is .38, for whites .41.²⁵ Eighteen per cent of the black protesters are professionals or businessmen compared to seven per cent of the nonprotesters. In the white sample 37 per cent of the protesters are professionals (none fall in the business category) compared to 12 per cent of the nonprotesters who fall in either the professional or business classifications. Among whites, skilled and semi-skilled workers are underrepresented among the protesters, but among blacks they are nearly perfectly represented. Twenty-nine per cent of the black protesters fell in these categories compared to 30 per cent in the entire sample. Only 15 per cent of the white protesters fell here compared to 30 per cent of the entire white sample.

By all standard indicators of socioeconomic status, protesters are better-off than nonprotesters within each racial group. If these data reflect accurately more universal patterns of the correlates of protest behavior, then any implication that protest is primarily a tactic of poor individuals is clearly wrong.

While both black and white protesters stand

²⁴ Robert Alford and Harry Scoble offer a discussion of organizational membership as a political resource in "Sources of Local Political Involvement," *American Political Science Review*, 62 (December 1968), 1192-1206.

²⁵ Goodman and Kruskal's gamma is a nonparametric measure of association for ordinal grouped data. Occupational categories, based on the U.S. Census classification, are ordinally ranked. For a discussion of gamma, see William L. Hays, *Statistics for Psychologists* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 655.

above the average status indicators of their respective racial samples, it would appear that the black protesters *do not differ as much* from the black population as a whole as white protesters differ from the white population. In this sense it seems possible to argue that black protesters occupy a slightly different social location in their racial community than white protesters do in theirs.

White protesters possess all the trappings of the upper middle class. They not only tend predominantly to be professionals (the second largest occupational category for whites is housewives, however), but they are the only group with a mean education which falls in the post high school years. They have nearly four more years of education than white nonprotesters and they earn substantially more money. By these characteristics alone, they stand apart from the bulk of the white population. They are unrepresentative of the mass, a minority by virtue not only of their participation in protest but also of their status.

The black protesters are not strictly representative, socioeconomically, of the black mass population, for they too are better-off, but they seem more than their white counterparts to resemble the norm of the community out of which they come. That is to say, simply, that the gaps in education, income, and group memberships between black protesters and nonprotesters are smaller than those between white protesters and nonprotesters.

One must be cautious in dealing with this difference, for it is to some degree an artifact of statistical constraints. The *range* in the white income and education data is simply greater than it is in the black data.²⁶ Nevertheless, it

²⁶ The standard deviation for black income is 87, for white income 166. For black education the standard deviation is 99, for white 183. This simply indi-

would be ill-advised to dismiss the difference altogether. Consider the data on education. White protesters average two and a half years of college; white nonprotesters do not quite average completion of high school. Both black protesters and nonprotesters, however, average less than a high school education. The difference between high school and even some college education makes a profound difference in psychology, outlook, earning potential, and opportunity. Simply by entering college, an individual differentiates himself from his fellows in the community who do not go to college in a way far more significant than the year or two which this adds to his educational level would indicate. The simple number of years of education, in other words, does not always represent a perfect additive interval measure of all the things for which education stands, especially when the step upward between high school and college is considered. In short, the black protester with his high school education is more like the average black individual than the white protester with his college years is like the average white individual.

Two other minor points here support the argument that black protesters are more typical of their racial community than white protesters are of theirs. One is that the income difference between black protesters and nonprotesters is not statistically significant, as we saw in Table 4, while the difference in white incomes is significant at a moderate level. We may be relatively sure, then, that the white protesters do differ on this dimension from the nonprotesters, but we cannot make the same assertion about blacks with confidence.

Another point involves an examination of the correlation coefficients derived from running the frequency of protest for protesters only against the status indicators. (That is, protest is treated as a continuous variable, but since we have eliminated nonprotesters from the calculations, the range of protest frequency now runs from one to 10 or more.) It will be recalled that protest and high status are positively related to some degree for both races, whether protest is treated as a dichotomous or a continuous variable. When nonprotesters are eliminated, however, we discover that for black protesters the frequency with which an individual takes part in protest *decreases* as status indicators increase. But for whites protest frequency and status vary together positively.

cates that the dispersion around the mean for blacks is lower, signifying a greater probability that black protesters' means will fall closer to the sample mean.

Table 5. Correlations (Pearson's r) Between Frequency of Protest and Status Indicators for Protesters Only

	Black	White
Income	-.14	.14
Education	-.12	.08
Number of organizational memberships	-.13	.23

These coefficients are, of course, extremely small, but they do at least hint that once an individual makes the decision to protest, his subsequent patterns of protest participation will differ depending upon his race. The more whites protest, the more likely it is that they are socioeconomically differentiated from the norm, i.e., from the mean scores on the various status indicators. Black protest is most frequent, however, among those who stand just above the socioeconomic norm. As blacks advance up the status hierarchy, becoming increasingly differentiated from the black socioeconomic average, they are less likely to protest with great frequency. Thus, if frequency of protest can be thought to indicate the degree of commitment to protest or seriousness of intent, then the most committed and serious black protesters are more likely than occasional black protesters to resemble socioeconomically their fellows in the community who do not protest. To this extent at least, protest attracts a more "normal" constituency among blacks than it does among whites.

Other data suggest that black protesters not only resemble the socioeconomic norm in the black community but that they are also drawn disproportionately from its more integrated, stable elements. Black protesters are more likely than black nonprotesters to own or to be in the process of buying their homes. Among whites, however, the pattern is reversed: protesters are more likely than nonprotesters to be renters (Table 6).

Black protesters and nonprotesters also tend to resemble one another in terms of the average length of time they have lived in the city. The average for the former is 13.6 years, for the latter, 15 years. White protesters have lived in the city an average of 11.4 years compared to the white nonprotester average of 24.2 years.²⁷ While these figures are to some

²⁷ Black protesters have lived in their neighborhoods an average of 5.4 years compared to 4.5 for black non-protesters. For whites the figures are 6.5 and 11.3 respectively.

Table 6. Home Ownership and Protest Participation

	Black			White		
	Protesters	Nonprotesters	Sample	Protesters	Nonprotesters	Sample
Own	12% (6)	8% (16)	9% (22)	20% (7)	32% (96)	31% (103)
Buying	35% (18)	24% (46)	26% (64)	17% (6)	17% (49)	17% (55)
Rent	52% (27)	68% (131)	64% (158)	57% (20)	49% (144)	50% (164)
Other	2% (1)	* (1)	1% (2)	6% (2)	2% (6)	2% (8)
	100% (52)	100% (194)	100% (246)	100% (35)	100% (295)	100% (330)

degree a function of age,²⁸ they nevertheless add to the evidence that black protesters seem more centrally located in or integrated members of their racial community than white protesters do of theirs.

The discovery that individual protest participation cannot be explained by the absence on the part of the protesters themselves of conventional resources does not necessarily require that we abandon the notion that protest is a political tool of the powerless, *as long as we understand powerlessness as a function of other factors besides low status.*

Powerlessness may, for example, be related not so much to individual poverty as to lack of group legitimacy. To lack legitimacy is to be distrusted, ignored, or dismissed by those in power. Legitimacy implies that decision makers will accede willingly to petitions for a hearing and will take seriously substantive demands. Middle-class people have traditionally had legitimacy in American politics, but status is no guarantee of legitimacy. Race, age, and ideology are other, often more important, factors which enter into a community's judgment about the legitimacy of citizen political groups. When legitimacy is withheld, members of penalized groups are not readily admitted to positions of power in political parties or electoral organizations; they are not appointed to administrative posts; their advice is not actively or routinely sought by decision makers. Since protest is a means of gaining access to councils of power by groups which have been denied legitimacy,²⁹ protest may be conceived as a strategy employed by those who are rela-

tively powerless in terms of the legitimacy they command.

The resort to protest may also be a signal of impatience regardless of whether or not a group has status or legitimacy. For the impatient, protest is a particularly useful interim tool between periods of electoral activity designed to force consideration of certain controversial issues by an often unwieldy political system. But even in politics in which such issues are raised and discussed, action may be deemed slow or inadequate. Groups which do not control the governmental apparatus capable of hastening consideration or fulfilling of demands are likely to feel impatient and powerless. It goes without saying that blacks fall into this category. From this perspective, it is not difficult to understand why blacks have persisted in their use of protest despite the fact that the political system has at times finally been responsive. To be impatient about the *pace* of change and at the same time unable to affect that pace with a high degree of certainty is also to be powerless.

Finally, we may retain the original equation of powerlessness with the absence of conventional resources as a source of protest in one sense: that is that protest may occur *on behalf of those groups which are disadvantaged socioeconomically.* Protest in this particular context, then, is a means by which certain better-off members of the community can represent their disadvantaged fellows or their disadvantaged group in the political arena and dramatize their or its concerns.

To summarize, we have seen that both black and white protesters possess more resources than those who do not take part in protest. In this respect the protesters of the two races resemble each other. But we have also seen that black protesters appear much more to resemble the average member of their racial community than white protesters do theirs. This discovery has led to the construction of a tentative argument about the different social

²⁸ Pearson *r* coefficients for the relationship between length of residence and age are .53 for blacks and .74 for whites.

²⁹ A study of protest incidents in 43 American cities indicates that protest is a more effective tool for gaining access to public officials than it is for gaining substantive demands. Protesters met with their target to present their demands in 58 per cent of the 120 cases of protest, but they gained concessions in only 15 per cent of the protests. Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," p. 17.

location of protesters in their respective racial communities.

The Uses and Organization of Protest Among Blacks and Whites

To this point we have examined data which indicate that in Milwaukee (1) black attitudes are broadly congenial to protest as a tactic while white attitudes are generally hostile; (2) black protesters, while socioeconomically somewhat better-off than the norm in their community, are still more likely to resemble black nonprotesters than white protesters (also better-off) resemble white nonprotesters; and (3) black protesters seem to exhibit more stable attachments to the community relative to nonprotesters than do white protesters. All of these findings suggest that protest activity is a relatively normal form of political participation among blacks and that protest participants are integrated members of the black community. Protest among whites, however, is an act of nonconformity in the broader white community, and white protesters represent a minority not only by virtue of their small numbers³⁰ but by their marked deviance from the average measures of social status and community attachment. Further data on the use to which protest is put and the means by which it is organized confirm and complement these findings.

³⁰ It is appropriate to recall here that only 11 per cent of the white sample had ever taken part in protest, while 21 per cent of the black sample had done so.

First of all, protest in the black community is used almost exclusively in the local arena. While blacks occasionally participate in protests aimed at institutions of the federal government or at nongovernmental targets, the overwhelming focus of their protest in Milwaukee has been on municipal agencies. (Not only is most black protest aimed at city government, but, nationally, most protests against city government are carried out by blacks.)³¹

Whether or not this pattern reflects a greater interest among blacks in local government as opposed to government at other levels is difficult to say, but it does suggest a different level of focus. White protest participation was more evenly distributed among the various targets, as Table 7 indicates. White protesters also appear more physically mobile than black protesters. Forty per cent of the instances of protest participation cited by whites involved leaving the city of Milwaukee; only 11 per cent of those mentioned by blacks did.

In Table 7 instances of protest participation are divided according to the nature of the target and the particular area of concern which prompted the protest. State government is notably absent from the table, a reflection, undoubtedly, of its relatively low salience for the general public.³²

Those who took part in protests against the

³¹ Eisinger, pp. 16-17.

³² See for example M. Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler, "The Salience of American State Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June, 1970), 523-535.

Table 7. Targets of Protest

	Black	White
<i>Federal Government</i>		
Antiwar protest	(2)	(15)
Demonstrations to escalate the war in Vietnam	—	(7)
Presidential candidates	(2)	(1)
<i>Local Government</i>	68% (101)	20% (19)
Welfare	(9)	(1)
Schools	(12)	(5)
Police	(8)	—
Jobs	(8)	(3)
Housing	(64)	(10)
<i>Universities</i>	* (1)	10% (10)
<i>Martin Luther King Memorial Marches</i>	5% (8)	4% (4)
<i>Private Institutions</i>	—	3% (3)
<i>Protest Seeking "Civil Rights" or "Equality" (target unspecified)</i>	17% (25)	32% (31)
<i>Other</i>	7% (10)	7% (7)
	100% (149)	100% (97)

* Less than one per cent.

federal government and its representatives were largely antiwar demonstrators, participants in a movement in which blacks, by all accounts, were not vigorously active.

A breakdown of protest against local government targets shows that most Milwaukee blacks were moved to take part in protest through the campaign led by Father James Groppi for a local open housing ordinance. These marches took place almost daily over a six-month period from the end of August, 1967 to March, 1968. This ready availability of an outlet and focus for protest undoubtedly exaggerated or increased the concern for open housing in relation to other local issues. Nevertheless, even if the Groppi protesters are excluded, most blacks who took part in protest still directed their energies against local governmental institutions and agencies.

After housing, issues having to do with public education stimulated the most protest participation among blacks. This finding accords with data on aggregate patterns of protest incidents in American cities: a survey of protests against local government targets in 43 large cities found that the major target of protesters was the public education system.³⁸

The overwhelming focus of black protesters on local government is probably best explained by the greater black dependence on municipal services. For blacks much more than whites, the level and nature of the local public commitment to housing, police, schools, and welfare substantially determine the quality of their daily lives. Hence, the perceived failures, oversights, and transgressions of municipal government are less easy to ignore, for most blacks have no way of substituting private resources for inadequate public ones in order to secure the decent amenities of urban living. Whatever the explanation, the patterns of participation indicate that protest is a tactic of major importance on the local scene for blacks, an integral part of their pursuit of urban politics. For whites it plays a more peripheral role in local politics. Indeed, many whites who take part in protest directed at local targets do so in behalf of primarily black causes, judging from the proportion of instances of white participation in the Groppi marches.

While the races appear to use protest for substantially different purposes, one aspect of their protest experience is very similar. For most people of both races individual protest participation is not a function of organiza-

tional membership. Only 27 per cent of the black protesters and 20 per cent of the white said they belonged to an organization which had taken part in some type of protest.

Despite the lack of formal group affiliation among the protesters, however, most protests in which blacks took part have been carried out by stable, ongoing organizations rather than by ad hoc groups created for a single protest campaign. When respondents were asked who organized the protests in which they had taken part, blacks named Father Groppi as the organizer 75 times out of a total of 149 instances of participation. Groppi was the head of the NAACP Youth Council, also known in Milwaukee as the Commandoes. Groppi used the organizational base and resources of this group to launch a number of protest campaigns, including the six-month open housing marches among others. An additional 31 instances of black participation were inspired by civil rights and welfare rights organizations.

In contrast white protesters were mobilized less frequently by ongoing organizations. Out of a total of 97 instances of participation, only 11 were prompted by Groppi, six by civil rights groups, and seven by peace groups. Twenty, however, appeared to be stimulated by ad hoc student groups and 13 by individual clergyman. Another 10 occurred in protests organized by ad hoc neighborhood organizations, formed to press one particular grievance (see Table 8).

These findings are suggestive on several counts. For both races the major portion of the potential protest constituency does not lie within the confines of organizational membership lists. While we can be certain that many protest leaders or organizers know their potential constituency, we can be equally sure that many do not. The task of mobilizing unattached or unaffiliated individuals for protest can now be seen to assume major proportions. Communication with potential participants is made more difficult by the absence of organizational ties and networks linking those indi-

Table 8. A Breakdown of the Type of Group Responsible for Stimulating Instances of Protest

	Black	White
Ongoing stable organization	72% (107)	26% (25)
Ad hoc organization	11% (17)	46% (45)
Undetermined	17% (25)	28% (27)
Totals	100% (149)	100% (97)

³⁸ Eisinger, p. 17.

viduals together. Protest constituencies must often be assembled anew each time a protest occurs.

The two races, however, seem to confront this problem differently. While we have no way of knowing at present whether or not this is peculiar to Milwaukee, blacks more than whites seem to have institutionalized the organization of protest to a greater degree. Hence, they are potentially more efficient in performing the mobilization task.

Institutionalization occurs because most protests are organized by ongoing groups. These groups supply a ready leadership cadre, as well as auxiliary workers. They have other resources at hand as well, such as office space and mimeograph machines. In addition, they have institutional experience and memories, both of which may be drawn upon over and over to provide guidelines and lessons for dealing with new situations. In effect the black organizations which mobilize protesters on a semiregular basis as one of their several functions are analogous in certain respects to local political party organizations and may in some sense be surrogates for them. Party organizations are after all essentially collections of leaders and workers, one of whose tasks is to seek out, identify, and mobilize potential voters among the populace.

The protest into which whites are drawn is less institutionalized in the sense that its organization is carried out most often by ad hoc groups created for the immediate purpose at hand. The task of mobilization is made all the more difficult by the fact that white groups must organize anew, establish leaders, create communications networks, seek workers and resources, and set out without prior institutional experience to identify likely partisans of a particular cause.

The patterns of the uses of protest and the ways in which it is organized substantiate and enlarge upon the earlier findings based on protester characteristics. All of the evidence presented indicates that protest is a tactic which blacks have singularly adapted to the pursuit of urban politics, a tactic moreover which represents an integral and widely accepted part of the institutionalized political life of the black community.

Protest for whites involves a more eclectic focus, for their efforts are not confined to the local political arena. In any given political setting, white protest is a relatively rarer phenomenon, carried out by a small, socioeconomically privileged segment of the population.

White protest is, then, extraordinary, noninstitutionalized, and deviant from the norms of the broader community.

Some Conclusions

While one might argue that even the most casual observers have known for a long time that blacks support³⁴ and use protest, the data presented above not only specify and describe the scope and nature of that support for the first time but also suggest its *integral* as opposed to its *extraordinary* role in the black community. This sort of modification and specification of commonly held interpretations is useful in itself. The data and analysis offered here, however, also throw light upon several other problems. These are: (1) the relationship of socioeconomic status to protest participation; (2) the relationship of the different social locations of black and white protesters to the differing racial attitudes toward protest; and (3) the implications of the institutionalization of protest among blacks.

(1) *Social Status and Protest Participation.* If we examine protest participation as a function of individual social characteristics, it is clear (at least in Milwaukee) that protesters themselves cannot be called "poor." They rank higher on every measure of social status than do their nonprotester fellows in their respective racial communities. To what extent can we accept, then, the alternative interpretation that protesters are at least drawn from "poor" groups, that is, in the words of Lipsky, those groups which are powerless by virtue of their lack of conventional resources?

This interpretation is of little use in understanding the roots of white protest, for the latter cannot be viewed as an expression by advantaged members of a socioeconomically disadvantaged group. There are at least two other interpretations, both more satisfying logically and empirically. On the one hand we might view white protest as an expression by members of groups which lack power either because they lack legitimacy or because their members do not occupy positions of authority and power. At least one fourth of the instances of protest cited by whites were connected with the peace movement or were organized by college students. These represent subgroups which, though high in social status, do not command universal attributions of legitimacy and whose ability to gain their ends is very much a func-

³⁴ Gary Marx published data documenting black support for protest as early as 1967. *Protest and Prejudice* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 15-17.

tion of the fact that their members do not occupy positions of formal power. On the other hand we may see white protest as a means of representing or supporting disadvantaged groups to which the white protesters themselves do not belong. This interpretation can help to explain why approximately half the instances of white protest took place on behalf of black groups and black causes. Viewing protest as a means of supporting or representing other groups, whose powerlessness may or may not be a function of the lack of conventional socioeconomic resources, scarcely permits one to call white protest a tactic of the poor.

Now in the case of black protest it is at first glance intuitively acceptable to view protest as a tactic of the relatively powerless whose condition is a function of their low status in the socioeconomic hierarchy. That is to say, we know that blacks as a racial group are socioeconomically disadvantaged in relation to whites as a group and thus are relatively powerless. Yet within that disadvantaged group, those who are most likely to take part in protest are better off. But the problem with interpreting black protest as a tactic of a poor collectivity is that it is not clear that the *powerlessness* of blacks is any *more* a function of their collective relative poverty than it is of their lack of legitimacy (a function simply of being black or of adherence to racially threatening ideologies) or of their lack of formal power in political institutions. In short, the relationship between the lack of conventional socioeconomic resources on the part of any given group and the tendency of that group's members to take part in protest is not at all clear. Previous formulations of protest as a tactic of the powerless (defined as a function of the lack of conventional resources), the under-classes, or the poor require further specification and clarification and may in many cases be plainly wrong.

(2) *Social Location and Attitudes Toward Protest.* In one part of this article data were presented concerning attitudes toward protest. Later we examined data which established the social status of the protesters, and more broadly, their social location in their respective racial communities. It is possible to argue—speculatively, at least—that the patterns of racial attitudes are related to the somewhat different social locations of black and white protesters.

As we have seen, the two racial communities in Milwaukee regard protest in substantially different terms. By engaging in protest,

both blacks and whites violate certain conventions of the dominant white community and thereby become subject to whatever social costs that community imposes—costs such as public disapproval, vilification, rebuke, ostracism, and even assault.³⁵ But the potential burden on black protesters is eased to some extent, for blacks find much support for protest in the attitudes of the black community. Black community support may in some sense serve as a countervailing force to the negative white attitudes toward protest. In short, protesters of different races face potentially different net social costs for their unconventional political expression.

Two points are needed to elaborate and qualify this argument. One is that social costs are not the only sanctions to which protesters might be subject. Economic reprisals (loss of job) and legal sanctions represent additional burdens which members of the society may choose to impose on protesters. These particular costs may in fact be potentially higher for black protesters than for white protesters, although we have little hard evidence to indicate that this is so. Nevertheless, it is a possibility. In the absence of data, however, the discussion here must be limited to an exploration of the impact of differential social costs.

Second, whites surely do not enter protest actions totally bereft of any social support; rather they generally do so with the approval of their reference groups, such as the student community or the peace movement. The support they derive from these subgroups may buffer the disapproval of the larger society just as the black community's social norms provide a buffer for black protesters.

The difference, however, is that blacks enter protest with the *broad-based* social support of their racial community. This is a general sort of social approval which *transcends* the distinctions between protesters and nonprotesters, and between black society at large and its subgroups. The support given white protesters on the other hand comes from subgroups which *themselves* frequently command only modest legitimacy or incur deep and wide-spread ambivalence in the white society at large. Furthermore, white protesters must eventually leave the protective cover (such as it is) of their supporting subgroups and come to terms with the greater society. College students graduate from school; the peace movement, diffuse in

³⁵ Merton discusses political nonconformity and the "almost inevitable punishment" by the group which results. *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957), p. 365.

the first place, has seldom supplied an all-encompassing or permanent life environment. Blacks, however, are always members of the black community and may always draw on the support it provides.

Given (1) that white protesters are subject to white norms and expectations, which are hostile in regard to protest; and (2) that blacks are subject to both black and white norms, which tend to neutralize one another to some degree, it is plausible to expect that these differences should have different consequences for the individual protester, depending on his race. It is highly probable that those who must potentially incur the greater social costs (whites) must have compensating resources and characteristics, while those who face much lesser costs (blacks) have less need of compensation. Now let us recall that white protesters stand significantly above the socioeconomic norm in their community, while blacks hover much closer to the norm in theirs. The reason for such a pattern, I would speculate, is that social status resources may provide the sort of compensation necessary to offset social disapproval.³⁶ Since whites face higher net costs, they have need of greater resources. Black protesters, too, are somewhat better off than the average member of their racial community, although they are not as socioeconomically secure or differentiated as their white counterparts. They have need of compensating resources as well, however: although they enter protest with the support of their community, they must also deal with the disapproval of the larger community in which they live.

Consider now the problem for whites of the costs of defying white norms from the perspective of the data on home ownership and length of residence. It can be argued that defiance is possible not only if one has compen-

sating resources but also if one's place in the community is relatively peripheral or less secure. It seems reasonable to assume that the more tenuous the roots one sinks in a community, the less likely he is to feel bound by its social conventions. Thus, we find that whites who take part in protest are less likely to own than to rent their home, and they have not lived in the community as long as white non-protesters have.

This argument as a whole has some curious implications. Given the potentially greater social costs for white protesters, and assuming that the value placed on social approbation does not vary systematically by race, it would seem that *on the average* white protesters must feel more intensely about the issues which draw them into demonstrative politics than black protesters do. Given the liberal conviction, perhaps, that the injustices blacks have protested against in the last decade stand at the top of the list of injustices in America, this is not a conventional interpretation of the domestic political scene. But it would seem to be a logical one in the context of this analysis: if whites must pay higher net social costs for their participation, then they will participate only when their feelings are deeply enough felt to make the expense worth it. Blacks, who risk less in terms of such costs, can afford to protest more casually.

Now, simply being white probably confers certain advantages in political contests, advantages which relate to everything from the manner in which an official receives petitioners to the likelihood of a favorable response. Blacks employed protest early in the 1960s in part to overcome such white advantages, for protest is a device which cuts through some of the subtle biases in the contest to influence public decisions. But if the foregoing analysis is correct, then whites, by their greater intensity of feeling in protest, have simply established yet another advantage over blacks in political conflicts in which the races are competing for the same resources or for an official's ear, insofar as intensity of feeling enters the calculus of decision making.

(3) *The Institutionalization of Protest in the Black Community.* It is a standard observation that the institutionalization of a process leads to its routinization, a reduction of its initial novelty, excitement, and impact. Protest among Milwaukee blacks is relatively institutionalized in relation to that among whites. If it is not yet routine, then it faces the danger of becoming so. After more than a decade of experience, the value of mass protest persists

³⁶ While this proposition remains here in hypothetical form, there is evidence that those with resources such as education and a prestigious occupation *value* those resources more than those without them. There is also some slight evidence that people without such resources (i.e., the working class) compared to those with such resources are more likely to feel dependent on others' opinions than on their own capabilities for economic advancement. Herbert Hyman, "The Value Systems of Different Classes: A Social Psychological Contribution to the Analysis of Stratification," in *Class, Status and Power*, ed. Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, 1st ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 430, 434, 437. These findings do not suggest that social resources may compensate for the loss of social approval, but they indicate that protesters, because they are better-off, may be more independent of the opinions of others and more personally satisfied with the status resources they control than are those who are both nonprotesters and less well off.

only so long as protest is organized more or less spontaneously for the issue at hand. Long protest campaigns and long-lived, stable protest organizations are not likely to maintain their status as frightening, forceful, galvanizing devices. To lose the capacity to shock, and thereby to gain media attention, is to lose a means of communicating with what Lipsky has called "third party reference publics," who serve as potential allies.³⁷

In such a situation the protest organizer will be under pressure to escalate his tactics to break the routine and re-establish the credibil-

ity of his passion. Escalation ultimately leads to the necessity to consider violence, a step which most practitioners of protest do not wish to take. So they are caught in a dilemma, the resolution of which is not at all clear. In any event, the routinization of protest implies that the more it is used, the less effective it will be. This means that black urban communities which have relied upon protest as an important means of wielding influence in the city may strip themselves of power by their own efforts to gain it through protest. To weaken oneself despite the intensification or persistence of one's own struggle is perhaps both the irony and the true meaning of powerlessness.

³⁷ Lipsky, pp. 1145-1146.