

# PEASANTS AS ACTIVISTS

## A Reevaluation of Political Participation in the Countryside

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**S**ocial scientists have long characterized peasants as politically passive and uninvolved in day to day political activity. Latin American peasants in particular have been singled out as politically nonparticipant. For example, anthropologists Díaz and Potter (1967: 159) state that "In Latin America . . . the striking thing is the relative *absence* of a sense of association, which makes it extremely difficult for peasants in this area to organize to meet the challenges of the modern world." Similarly, sociologists Landsberger and Hewitt (1970: 559) emphasize that "It is unfortunate but true that peasant organizations have been difficult to establish in Latin America." Political scientists

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join in the chorus by stating that "the vast majority [of peasants] are essentially apolitical (Adie and Poitras, 1974: 49), and that "the peasantry has simply repudiated politics" (Williams and Wright, 1975: 155). Moreover, it is argued that "peasants aspire to nothing other than what they have, they will not make demands on the political system" (Adie and Poitras, 1974: 48). Indeed, Mathiason and Powell's (1972: 304) survey of the literature on peasants led them to summarize the evidence as suggesting "that peasants are conservative, that they are difficult to organize, and that they tend to be passive, feel politically powerless, and lack interest in politics."

Students of peasant political participation have not only typified it as rare, but as less complex than the political activity of urban dwellers. They view peasants as living in comparatively simple societies in which political behavior is likewise simple. As one observer puts it, "Politics in the agrarian sector is often patronal, undifferentiated and ideologically quite unsophisticated . . . and many of the dimensions of the urban polity are represented here only in incipient forms" (Ranis, 1971: 163). As a result, when peasants do become involved politically, they rarely do so in well-defined, conventional ways; rather, they become involved in social banditry and millenarian movements which have been considered by one researcher as "pre-political" in nature (Hobsbawm, 1959). When peasants actually become involved in revolutionary activity they sometimes provide the dynamite which brings down the old social order, but, because of their lack of political sophistication, they become the revolution's first victims (Moore, Jr., 1966).

Scholars have attributed the passivity and undifferentiated nature of peasant political participation to peculiarities of their cultures. In general terms, they allege that the poor quality of interpersonal relationships among peasants makes political participation difficult, if not impossible. Hence, peasants are frequently characterized as "suspicious, distrustful, and envious of others, viewing the universe around them as essentially hostile" (Foster, 1967: 297). Other characterizations include a high degree of fatalism and a low degree of empathy (Rogers, 1969). In Costa Rica in particular, the focus of this paper, one classic study has referred to strong peasant distrust (Loomis et al., 1953: 206).

Perhaps Oscar Lewis's "culture of poverty" notion provides the best-known and most comprehensive explanation of peasant passivity. According to Lewis (1966: xlv), "The lack of effective participation and integration of the poor in the major institutions of the larger society is

one of the crucial characteristics of the culture of poverty." Lewis not only suggests peasant passivity at the level of national politics, but specifically argues that *campesinos* remain uninvolved at the local level as well. Thus, he states that at the community level there is "a minimum of organization beyond the level of the nuclear and extended family" (1966: xlvi). Lewis argues that such cultures come into being as an "adaptation and reaction" of people to their objective situation of poverty, but that the cultures become self-perpetuating. Hence, peasant societies characterized by the culture of poverty should manifest little participation. Another well-known image of peasant culture comes from Edward Banfield's research in Southern Italy. He explains the "political incapacity" of the villagers by positing the notion of "amoral familism." According to Banfield (1958: 83-84), "In a society of amoral familists, no one will further the interests of the group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so. . . . For a private citizen to take a serious interest in a public problem will be regarded as abnormal and even improper." As a consequence, individuals take little or no part or concern in politics, public affairs, or local organizations. Foster's (1965) image of "limited good" is held to be the dominant cognitive orientation of "classic peasant societies." Peasants with a limited good orientation regard all good things as finite and unexpandable, and since they cannot be increased there is no reason to try. Hence, Foster posits that peasants suffer strong feelings of powerlessness and seldom get involved politically, since activism offers no rewards. One other image of peasant passivity is the "*encogido* syndrome." Erasmus (1968) suggests that many peasants are highly obsequious and therefore rarely take any initiative within the community. Peasant communities dominated by the *encogido* syndrome would likely show low levels of political participation.

In sum, then, scholars have traditionally regarded peasants as normally passive—uninvolved in day to day political activity to any significant extent. This norm is, from time to time, dramatically shattered when the pent-up frustrations of poverty, exploitation, or economic reversal drive peasants to political violence.

Some recent evidence, however, has challenged the conventional wisdom of peasant passivity. Whyte's (1969) research in highland Peru states that peasants are much more politically active and capable of organization than previously believed. A recent conference on political participation in Latin America organized by the authors (Seligson and Booth, 1976) brought together researchers who presented substantial

evidence from several Latin American countries which seriously questions the traditional view of peasant politics (see Booth and Seligson, 1978a; Seligson and Booth, 1979a). In the general reevaluation of participation now underway for Latin America as a whole (Booth, 1979), peasants are found to be more politically involved and sophisticated than previously thought.

## OBJECTIVES

In this article we systematically examine peasant political participation in Costa Rica. Our first goal will be to determine how peasants participate in order to see if, as a result of their allegedly distinct cultural traits, their political participation is amorphous rather than clearly differentiated into the various modes found in cross-sectional studies conducted in a wide variety of countries. Research in Austria, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the United States, and Yugoslavia has revealed that political participation consists of several separate modes including voting, campaign activity, citizen-initiated contacting of public officials, and communal activities (Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1971; Verba et al., 1973). The modes of political participation are not, of course, identical across nations; rather, there are similarities with individual differences depending on regime type. For example, in authoritarian regimes where elections and political parties are suppressed, voting and campaign activity may not occur. On the other hand, certain regime types may stimulate forms of participation not found in other systems. Research in Yugoslavia (Verba et al., 1973), for example, has uncovered a "self-management" mode which consists of membership on workers' councils and housing unit councils. In Latin America such a mode may exist in Cuba, as well as in cooperative agrarian enterprises in Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Peru. Nevertheless, despite these anticipated differences recent research reveals considerable similarity in the structure of participation in Latin America regardless of regime type (Booth, 1979). Thus, while in authoritarian Peru, for example, the electoral mode is suppressed, Peruvians contact public officials, communicate about politics, take part in organizations, and work to improve their communities.<sup>1</sup> We focus on Costa Rica, a liberal constitutional regime which does not systematically suppress or restrict any of the commonly observed participatory modes. We would expect, therefore, that the modes of participation uncovered there should look much like those which have been found cross-nationally. We find that Costa Rican

peasant participation is not undifferentiated, as the traditional literature suggests, but that it forms several distinct modes similar to those found cross-nationally.

Having established that Costa Rican peasants take part in politics in modes similar to those found in other countries, our second objective is to examine the form and intensity of peasant participation to determine if peasants in Costa Rica participate in ways different from and are more passive than other social sectors. We do this principally by comparing peasants to urban dwellers, our reason for this comparison being that urbanites are typically viewed as being politically active when compared to peasants. While some explanations of urbanite activism rest on the greater exposure of urbanites to the mass media, other explanations focus on the higher socioeconomic status of the urban resident. Salisbury's (1975: 326) recent review of the participation literature, for instance, asserts that "well-educated, high income citizens participate more than the poor, no matter what the context or institutional setting." Since peasants are almost invariably less educated and poorer than urban dwellers, it is expected that peasants would be less politically active than city residents. In our own data the peasants had a mean education of 2.6 years, and a mean annual income of \$492, whereas the urban residents had attended school an average of 10.2 years and earned an average of \$3,304 per year. One would hardly expect to find peasants more active than urban dwellers, yet for some modes of participation, this is precisely what our data show.

Our third objective is to look more closely at peasant society itself, in order to determine whether participation is homogeneous across socioeconomic strata within the peasantry. Researchers who have scrutinized peasant society have recognized that peasants may be differentiated according to their land tenure status (Stinchcombe, 1965; Fromm and Macoby, 1970; Stavenhagen, 1975). Land ownership implies power in rural Latin America: "In predominantly agricultural societies the ownership of land is the main source of economic, political and social power. As a simple rule, it can be affirmed that the greater amount of land owned, the greater the power of its owner" (Feder, 1971: 83). Indeed, some researchers state that the distinction between landed and landless in rural society is so great that the landless agricultural worker should not be considered a peasant at all (Greaves, 1972; Mintz, 1973).

Our finding that landed peasants participate "within the system" more intensely than do landless peasants, whereas landless peasants are

more active in strike behavior, prompts us to reexamine the question of land reform and the potential consequences for inaction in this sphere.<sup>2</sup>

### THE DATA

Although we are exploring largely uncharted terrain, we are able to employ two comparable but independently collected data sets, gathered in the same country at the same time. This fortunate opportunity has several benefits. First, it permits simultaneous replication of important parts of the analysis, testing the validity of the findings and hence increasing our confidence in them. This confirmation is especially reassuring given that we are challenging previous research. Second, we avoid doubts which have been raised about the validity of the cross-national findings obtained by the Verba-Nie team. Their work was collaborative in design, execution, and analysis, so that, as Verba, Nie, and Kim (1971: 69, n. 15) openly admit, "the data represent far less than perfect independent tests of the existence of similar structure." In our case, collaboration began only at the analysis phase. A final advantage of using two samples is that while our data sets have important similarities, they do not overlap completely. As we shall indicate below, this both enhances the validity of certain findings and permits the filling of lacunae of one data set by material from the other, and vice versa.

The subjects in this investigation were adult male Costa Rican peasants, selected on a probability basis, who responded to our two surveys carried out in late 1972 and early 1973. While the two surveys were conducted independently, they do permit the isolation of comparable samples of persons from an identical universe of rural cultivators. In order to distinguish between the two sets of data, one will be called the Peasant Study (PS) sample, and the other the Community Development (CD) sample. Although the CD sample did contain females, they were dropped from the sample for this analysis in order to make the sample comparable to the all-male PS sample. The exclusion of females from the PS study was necessitated because a major section of that study focused on land tenure patterns and agricultural subjects unfamiliar to many peasant women. When the analyses on the CD sample reported below were run including females, no significant alterations in the results were detected.

The PS sample, with a total N of 531 peasants, was collected by Seligson and Berk-Seligson as part of a larger investigation of agrarian

capitalism among Costa Rican peasants (see Seligson, 1974, 1975, 1977a, 1977b, 1979b). The CD data were collected by Booth and a team of 35 Costa Rican interviewers from the Costa Rican National Community Development Agency (DINADECO) as a part of DINADECO's Typology of Communities Project (see Booth, 1974, 1975a, 1975b, 1976; Booth et al., 1973). This sample has a total N of 1488, from which all urbanites, town dwellers, females, and nonpeasants were eliminated so as to derive a subset of peasants similar to those in the Seligson study. A total of 306 cases of the CD study are directly comparable to the PS data set. Each study employed a sample design which was aimed at covering the widest possible geographic area so as to constitute a broadly representative sample. The samples were drawn from 48 rural districts and over 100 villages. Both surveys were oral interviews generally lasting a bit less than one hour. Similarities and differences between the two surveys are discussed in the Appendix. The data presented there (Table 5) demonstrate that, despite differences in sample design, nationality of the interviewers, and elapsed time of the survey, the data obtained are similar at least in terms of major demographic characteristics. Further evidence of this similarity appears as the findings are discussed.

## FINDINGS

### THE DIMENSIONALITY OF PEASANT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

We examine four types of political participation which largely correspond to the definition of participation used in Verba, Nie, and Kim's (1971: 15-19) cross-national research. These modes are (1) communal activity; (2) citizen-initiated contacts; (3) voting; and (4) campaign activity. Data for the first three appear in both data sets, while only the CD study treats campaign activity. Since Verba and Nie's definition of political participation has been criticized as excessively narrow (Rusk, 1976) because it includes only those activities which are "within the system" (Verba and Nie, 1972: 3), we attempt to widen the scope of the research by including what we might call "outside of the system" participation. While we do not feel completely comfortable with this term, we use it to distinguish this type of participation from the more conventional modes. Data for this mode are contained only in the PS sample.

*Communal Activity.* In Costa Rica there are several kinds of organizations which have wide local membership, attendance, and support. Foremost among these are two committees which concern the local primary school: the school board (Junta de Educación), an organization which has limited decision-making power over school policy, and the Patronato de Educación (similar to the PTA). Other important groups include community development associations; health, welfare, and infant nutrition center committees; and religious groups of several types.

Membership in organizations such as those mentioned above does not necessarily mean that the individual actively takes part in a community improvement project. As is the case elsewhere, many individuals participate in community organizations solely for the purpose of socializing. Active involvement in a project, however, is qualitatively different from attending community meetings. Community improvement projects typically include the construction or improvement of a local school, water system, community center, soccer field, and the like.

*Citizen-Initiated Contacting.* In looking at contacting public officials, we focus our attention on municipal government, since, in contrast to the national government, it is both accessible and highly visible to the peasant. The *municipalidad*, the government of the *cantón* (i.e., county), is the lowest level of government and therefore the closest to the rural dweller.<sup>3</sup> Although Costa Rican municipal governments generally lack financing and resources, they do have wide-ranging responsibilities for cantonal affairs. These responsibilities include building and maintaining local roads, supervising the police (Guardia de Asistencia Rural), assessing and collecting several local taxes, supplying electricity and potable water,<sup>4</sup> assisting local villages with their projects (parks, schools, health and nutrition centers), and maintaining local sanitation.<sup>5</sup> Only a few relatively wealthy urban municipal governments, however, are able to fulfill these responsibilities satisfactorily. The many and varied activities of municipal government stand in marked contrast to the considerably lower profile maintained by the central government, which heavily concentrates its activities in the nation's capital. Because of the importance of local government in the country as a whole, and the lesser role of the national government in rural areas, we have decided to focus our attention on the former.<sup>6</sup>

*Voting.* Over 80% of the Costa Rican electorate normally votes. Although in most Latin American nations authoritarian regimes have

usurped the electoral process and restrict or manipulate voting in rural areas, such is not true in Costa Rica. We therefore believe it appropriate to include voting among the participatory activities to be examined.<sup>7</sup>

*Campaign Activism.* Taking part in politics through election campaigns is commonplace in Costa Rica. Elections are hard-fought contests among the numerous national (and even local) political parties and coalitions. Many citizens belong to parties and electioneer for them during campaigns.

*Outside the System Activism.* Our only data on this type of activity come from the PS sample, in which we obtained information on attitudes toward peasant strikes. Although strikes are generally not considered "outside the system" in the contemporary North American context, in the Costa Rican social and legal milieu they are often regarded as unconventional. Most strikes, especially in rural areas, are commonly believed to be associated with communism, and strikers are often called "communists." Furthermore, in order for a strike to be considered legal in Costa Rica a complex series of procedures must be followed by the potential strikers, procedures invariably violated by peasants who lack access to lawyers who could assure their compliance with the regulations.

## FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS

In order to uncover the dimensionality of peasant political participation in Costa Rica, we apply factor analysis to both samples. We expect that, although the particular measures used in each sample are not identical in many cases, the structures revealed by the analysis should be quite similar. This comparison of the factor analyses utilizing somewhat different indicators from each sample follows Przeworski and Teune's (1970: 124-131) suggestion that different indicators can be shown to be equivalent or nearly so.<sup>8</sup> Verba, Nie, and Kim (1971) have demonstrated that despite differences in indicators, equivalence of factor structure is revealed in their multination study, and conclude that similar modes of participation exist cross-nationally.

The factor model we employ is component analysis (principal components with unities in the principal diagonal).<sup>9</sup> Thirteen variables are included from the CD sample: communal activity is measured by eight variables (CD<sub>1</sub>-CD<sub>8</sub>)<sup>10</sup>; campaign activity by two variables (CD<sub>9</sub>-CD<sub>10</sub>)<sup>11</sup>; citizen-initiated contacting by two (CD<sub>11</sub>-CD<sub>12</sub>)<sup>12</sup>; and voting

by one (CD<sub>13</sub>).<sup>13</sup> We include sixteen variables from the PS questionnaire: communal activity is measured by twelve (PS<sub>1</sub>-PS<sub>12</sub>)<sup>14</sup>; citizen-initiated contacting by two (PS<sub>13</sub>-PS<sub>14</sub>)<sup>15</sup>; strike activism by one (PS<sub>15</sub>)<sup>16</sup>; and voting by one (PS<sub>16</sub>).<sup>17</sup>

The factor analysis results for both the CD and PS studies appear in Tables 2 and 3. The varimax rotated solutions reveal three important findings. First, contrary to expectations from the literature, political participation, rather than being undifferentiated, is neatly clustered into several distinct modes in both samples. Second, the dimensions of citizen-initiated contacts, voting, and campaign activity repeatedly uncovered in cross-national research clearly stand out in our peasant data. The only variation is that the communal activity dimensions in our data breaks down in both samples into two distinct factors. One of these involves membership and leadership in community organizations, a dimension we call *communal organizational activism*. The other consists of involvement in community betterment projects, which we call *communal project participation*. Both dimensions do involve communal activity and can be considered subsets of this more general dimension uncovered elsewhere. Third, the two data sets reveal similar factor structures despite using different questions and different sample designs. Thus, four dimensions revealed in the PS sample also appear in the CD data. Verba, Nie, and Kim (1971: 69, n. 15) and Verba and Nie (1972: 381) argue that when similar factor structures are revealed in different samples using different questionnaire items, the researcher can be quite confident that the underlying structure of the data is similar. We believe the solutions presented in Tables 1 and 2 reveal a strong similarity in the structure of peasant participation in Costa Rica.

#### COMPARISON OF PEASANTS AND URBAN DWELLERS

Having delineated the dimensionality of political activity within the Costa Rican peasant sector, we will now briefly compare peasants with urban dwellers. Does the structure of political participation among peasants differ from that of urbanites? Are there differences in the levels of participation between the groups? Here we must rely on the CD study alone, since it consists of a representative national sample of Costa Rican family heads, whereas the PS study contains only peasant respondents.

TABLE 1  
Unrotated and Varimax Rotated Factors  
Peasants  
Community Development Study (CD)

	I	Unrotated Factors				V	h <sup>2</sup>	I	Rotated Factors				V
		II	III	IV	II				III	IV			
<u>Communal Organizational Activism</u>													
CD <sub>1</sub> Member PTA or School Board	.80	-.07	-.36	-.02	-.11	.79	.88	.08	-.07	.08	-.05		
CD <sub>2</sub> Officer PTA or School Board	.70	-.07	-.34	-.06	-.11	.76	.87	.08	.01	.04	-.04		
CD <sub>3</sub> Average group leadership	.84	-.11	-.20	-.17	-.04	.79	.86	.06	.16	.04	.10		
CD <sub>4</sub> Average group attendance	.84	-.12	-.13	-.14	-.01	.78	.86	.07	.16	.04	.11		
CD <sub>5</sub> Total group memberships	.78	-.15	-.11	.14	-.09	.66	.80	.06	.15	.37	.09		
<u>Communal Project Participation</u>													
CD <sub>6</sub> Ever taken part in community improvement project	.43	.82	.17	.20	-.02	.70	.17	.93	.03	.08	.01		
CD <sub>7</sub> Contributed material or labor to community project	.09	.86	.11	-.11	-.14	.80	-.06	.95	-.04	-.27	-.04		
CD <sub>8</sub> Total number of community projects	.45	.74	.20	.11	-.10	.79	.17	.84	.02	.24	.08		
<u>Campaigning</u>													
CD <sub>9</sub> Party membership	.35	-.27	.77	-.23	.20	.88	.97	.00	.93	.08	.03		
CD <sub>10</sub> Attendance at party meetings	.45	-.29	.71	-.19	-.18	.86	.93	.00	.96	.14	.03		
<u>Citizen-Initiated Contacting</u>													
CD <sub>11</sub> Contact municipal executive	.22	-.34	.36	.35	.16	.64	.10	-.04	.02	.78	-.10		
CD <sub>12</sub> Contact municipal councilman	.36	-.36	.29	.48	.24	.52	.12	.07	.16	.68	.09		
<u>Voting</u>													
CD <sub>13</sub> Vote 1970 election	-.18	-.01	.11	.24	.86	.97	.08	.01	.05	-.01	.98		
Eigenvalue	4.25	2.19	1.62	1.11	0.96								
% Variance	32.7	16.8	12.5	8.5	7.4								

*Comparing Modes of Participation.* Table 3 compares the structure of peasant political activity with that of the 24% of the CD sample who were male residents of greater metropolitan San José, the national capital. (We exclude females from the CD sample for comparability with the all-male peasant sample. Including females on the factor runs, performed for comparison, did not alter the structure of the solutions.) We note that the structure of political participation for the urbanites (Table 3) is very similar to that observed for peasants alone (Tables 1 and 2). The communal project participation, citizen-initiated contacting, voting, and campaign factors each appear.

One difference crops up in the organizational activism dimension. In the metropolitan area sample the two variables measuring education-related organizational activism split off from the general organizational activism variables, forming a separate factor. This difference is explained on examining certain demographic differences between city and

TABLE 2  
Unrotated and Varimax Rotated Factors  
Peasant Study (PS)

	Unrotated Factors					h <sup>2</sup>	Varimax Rotated Factors				
	I	II	III	IV	V		I	II	III	IV	V
<u>Communal Project Participation</u>											
PS <sub>1</sub> Naming of local problem	.86	-.31	.03	-.00	.05	.85	.92	.00	-.08	-.01	-.03
PS <sub>2</sub> Cause of local problem	.86	-.28	.04	-.00	.04	.82	.90	.03	-.09	.00	-.03
PS <sub>3</sub> Solution of local problem	.84	-.31	.02	-.00	.01	.81	.89	-.01	-.11	.01	-.04
PS <sub>4</sub> Respondent can solve problem	.70	-.19	-.02	.10	.10	.55	.73	.04	-.09	-.02	.11
PS <sub>5</sub> Chance to solve problem	.74	-.09	.02	.07	.00	.56	.73	.04	-.09	-.02	.11
PS <sub>6</sub> Respondent has tried to solve problem	.70	-.04	-.03	.06	.03	.47	.71	.14	-.14	-.05	.05
PS <sub>7</sub> Who can solve problem	.51	-.20	.29	-.12	.06	.40	.67	.16	-.16	-.01	.07
<u>Communal Organizational Activism</u>											
PS <sub>8</sub> Member of school board	.44	.59	.25	-.31	.07	.70	.22	.77	-.03	-.12	-.20
PS <sub>9</sub> Officer of Committee	.40	.70	-.06	-.09	.01	.67	.11	.74	-.31	-.11	.05
PS <sub>10</sub> Member PTA	.29	.65	.18	-.09	-.04	.55	.05	.73	-.12	-.04	-.05
PS <sub>11</sub> Member Church Committee	.21	.57	.16	.05	.09	.40	-.02	.62	-.02	.02	.12
PS <sub>12</sub> Member Progressive Committee	.11	.50	.37	.33	.05	.51	-.03	.57	.16	.29	.27
<u>Citizen Initiated Contacts</u>											
PS <sub>13</sub> Attend municipal meeting	-.35	-.21	.59	-.02	.41	.69	-.15	-.06	.82	-.01	-.02
PS <sub>14</sub> % of municipal councilmen named	-.36	-.31	.57	.01	.30	.64	-.13	-.18	.77	.07	-.06
<u>Outside of System Activism</u>											
PS <sub>15</sub> Strikes	.03	-.09	.50	.46	-.67	.93	.05	-.01	.04	.96	-.07
<u>Voting</u>											
PS <sub>16</sub> Vote 1978 election	.06	.21	-.32	.73	.42	.86	.01	.06	-.08	-.06	.92
Eigenvalue	4.73	2.39	1.38	1.00	.93						
% of variance	29.6	14.9	8.6	6.3	5.8						

countryside. While rural dwellers have large numbers of children ( $\bar{X} = 5.5$ ), urban Costa Ricans have many fewer ( $\bar{X} = 3.8$ ). Thus, *campesinos* are likely to have school-related organizational responsibilities overlapping other group activities for much of their adult lives, while for urbanites with fewer children, school-group activity tends to occupy a more discrete and shorter time.

The dimensional structure of political participation among Costa Rican peasants, then, is essentially the same as it is for urban Costa Ricans, except for the contextually determined difference in organizational activism.

*Comparing Levels of Participation.* In comparing rural and urban levels of participation, we applied a t-test to each of the activism indi-

**TABLE 3**  
**Unrotated and Varimax Rotated Factors**  
**Urban Males**  
**Community Development Study (CD)**

	Unrotated Factors						h <sup>2</sup>	Varimax Rotated Factors					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI		I	II	III	IV	V	VI
<u>Communal Organizational Activism</u>													
CD <sub>1</sub> Member PTA or School Board	.55	-.11	-.65	.38	.06	.04	.89	.09	.91	.21	.03	.01	.01
CD <sub>2</sub> Officer PTA or School Board	.54	-.11	-.64	.41	.12	.04	.90	.07	.93	.17	.04	.06	.01
CD <sub>3</sub> Average group leadership	.73	-.30	-.18	-.42	-.13	.00	.85	.08	.88	.10	.08	.08	.09
CD <sub>4</sub> Average group attendance	.66	-.34	-.11	-.50	-.19	-.10	.86	.03	.92	.12	.03	.03	.00
CD <sub>5</sub> Total group memberships	.74	-.16	-.06	-.24	-.01	-.09	.64	.17	.68	.19	.24	-.01	
<u>Communal Project Participation</u>													
CD <sub>6</sub> Ever taken part in community improvement project	.63	.67	.26	.63	-.16	.02	.87	.89	.14	.15	.06	.20	-.01
CD <sub>7</sub> Contributed material or labor to community project	.30	.73	.04	.04	-.41	.02	.79	.88	-.03	-.02	-.03	-.13	-.05
CD <sub>8</sub> Total number of community projects	.67	.56	.14	.02	.04	.08	.80	.76	.12	.17	.09	.40	.07
<u>Campaigning</u>													
CD <sub>9</sub> Party membership	.51	-.40	.55	-.38	-.18	-.06	.90	.03	.03	.15	.92	.12	.07
CD <sub>10</sub> Attendance at party meetings	.50	-.41	.52	.39	-.23	-.11	.90	.03	.04	.17	.93	.07	.02
<u>Citizen-Initiated Contacting</u>													
CD <sub>11</sub> Contact municipal executive	.45	.14	.34	-.17	.50	.03	.62	.17	-.10	.19	.08	.73	.09
CD <sub>12</sub> Contact municipal councilman	.43	.08	.21	.06	.69	-.10	.73	.04	.14	.04	.10	.83	-.06
<u>Voting</u>													
CD <sub>13</sub> Vote 1970 election	.14	-.19	.14	-.03	-.00	.96	.98	-.02	.02	.05	.07	.02	.99
Eigenvalue	3.95	1.95	1.66	1.13	1.07	0.97							
* Variance	3.04	15.0	12.8	8.7	8.3	7.5							

ators in the CD sample. We found that urban dwellers reported slightly higher voting, more frequent contact with the municipal executive, greater noneducation-related organizational attendance, and greater group membership than did the peasants (all sig.  $< .05$ ). In contrast, no significant differences appeared in group leadership, contacting municipal councilmen, and campaign activism, a finding which by itself undermines the notion of consistent peasant political passivity. But, most notably, mean levels of community project activism and education-related participation were *significantly higher* among the peasants than urbanites, a finding which refutes the image of passivity. Thus, peasants are not uniformly less active than urban dwellers.

Our first examination of communal activism demonstrated greater participation among peasants than among urbanites in education-related groups and projects, but lower peasant activity in noneducation-related groups. However a closer scrutiny revealed that peasants may exceed urbanites in overall group membership as well. Borrowing Sehlesinger's (1968) concept of "opportunity structure," we note that not everyone has available the same number of groups in which to take part. Since Booth (1975b) has found that the larger the community in Costa Rica, the greater the number of organizations, we see that peasants usually have fewer opportunities for membership than urbanites. We thus recompute the overall group membership index ( $CD_5$ ), controlling for opportunity structure by dividing the total group memberships by the total number of organizations in the individual's community.<sup>18</sup> With this control the t-test reveals a significantly higher group membership rate among peasants. We also believe that the measure of average group attendance would perform similarly because of the effect of harvest and planting seasons on the peasant's available time. Unfortunately, we lack the data to test this belief.

What accounts for the greater communal activism among peasants? Verba and Nie (1972) attribute a similar finding for rural residents of the United States to the greater intimacy of small-town life. Testing this proposition for Costa Rica, we regress communal activism on town size for the whole CD sample (the peasant samples alone have little variance in community size). We find no significant correlation between town size and group activity, but do find a significant *negative* correlation ( $r = -.27$ ) between size and project participation.

We believe two additional factors, considered by Verba and Nie, also help explain the higher rates of communal activity among Costa Rican peasants. First, the level of the community's public service infrastructure

plays an important role. While the local and national governments provide residents of the Costa Rican metropolis with a broad array of services, rural dwellers generally go without such basic amenities (Booth et al., 1973: 115-129; Booth, 1974). Thus, peasants often work together to better their communities—building bridges, improving schools, constructing community centers, and so forth. Only rarely do such service infrastructure problems in the city directly affect life chances so as to motivate communal participation like that found in the countryside. Second, rural communities are too small and too poor to develop or to sustain effective municipal governments. Thus, while urbanites can turn to effective local governments for their service needs, rural dwellers generally find local governments of little help. Many studies from elsewhere in Latin America have also linked the intensity of communal participation among the urban poor to the public service infrastructure. For example, research by Cornelius (1973), Dietz (1974), and Goldrich (1970) shows that those most likely to organize and press demands on government reside in the *barrios* worst served by public utilities; such activism tends to diminish as service levels rise.

Finally, lower voting among peasants than urban dwellers in part may be explained by environmental factors. Peasants must usually travel long distances on rural buses (which charge a high per-mile rate because of the poor conditions of rural roads) to vote, while residents of the metropolis seldom have to travel more than a few blocks.<sup>19</sup> The high costs of rural bus service must be borne by peasants who earn an average of only one sixth of the city dweller's income. Thus, high transportation costs incurred by the peasant stand between him and the exercise of the franchise.

In summary, although the factorial structure of peasant participation largely resembles that of city dwellers, levels of activity vary considerably, with *campesinos* more active than their urban counterparts, in several ways due primarily to differences in the urban and rural social milieux. (For an extended discussion of this question, see Seligson and Booth, 1979b). Advocates of the passive image of the peasant, therefore, underestimate several important aspects of peasant political activity.

*Land Tenure and Participation.* While we have made a strong case against the "passive peasant" notion, we have not meant to imply that all peasants in Costa Rica are activists. Indeed, only an average of 17% of our respondents participated in all dimensions discussed in this paper. Moreover, some peasants are virtually uninvolved in political activity;

excluding voting (because of its mandatory nature), an average of 13% of the peasants in our samples did not take part in any of the other three modes. What distinguishes the politically active peasant from the inactive one? In order to answer this question, we return to the analysis of both the PS and CD samples to explore the link between participation and land tenure, long recognized as a key determinant of differences in peasant behaviors and attitudes. As Huntington and Nelson (1976: 84) assert, "In rural areas land ownership is generally a prerequisite to autonomous political participation."

We have divided both our peasant samples into landed and landless groups in order to compare their mean levels of activity for each of the participatory dimensions (see Table 4). This division corresponds to Paige's (1975) basic dichotomization of cultivators into those who depend primarily for their income on land versus those who depend primarily on wages.<sup>20</sup> Summary indices have been created for each mode, since our previous factor analysis revealed clear-cut dimensions within the peasant sector.<sup>21</sup> The landless peasants exhibit significantly lower levels of participation than the landed on four of the five "within the system" dimensions, and campaign activism shows no significant difference for the two groups.

We conclude from this evidence that land ownership does indeed increase certain kinds of peasant participation, probably because landed peasants perceive for themselves a greater stake in their society. They attend local organization meetings, work on community projects, and interact with municipal government in order to secure a better education for their children, improve health services, and, in general, improve their quality of life. Landed peasants may also believe that community improvements may indirectly increase the value of their farms by enhancing the general vicinity. The landless peasant, on the other hand, lacks such a stake in his community. Many landless peasants are rootless, shifting from farm to farm seeking work. Others are steady workers on coffee or banana plantations who look to the *patrón* for the satisfaction of their needs. Such workers are rarely asked to participate in the affairs of the plantation community, and in fact are often discouraged from doing so.

Conversely, the data on strike activism (available only for the PS sample) suggests the opposite pattern—the landless participate more. We find a significantly ( $p < .001$ ) more favorable attitude toward strikes among the landless peasants than among the landed (see Table 4). Of course, this finding is not surprising when it is realized that 74% of all

**TABLE 4**  
**Mean Levels of Participation for Landed and Landless Peasants, CD and PS Studies**

Participation Measure	CD Study				PS Study			
	N Landed	N Landless	Diff. of means t		N Landed	N Landless	Diff. of means t	
Communal Disputes/Local Activities Index	299	615	3.67	<.001	273	493	4.40	<.001
Communal Peasant Participation Index	250	564	4.78	<.001	246	417	3.73	<.001
Citizens' Political Efficacy Index	275	689	4.10	<.001	252	465	2.57	<.001
Unpopular Activities Index	294	573	2.71	<.01	263	484	2.74	.025
Attitude toward Strikes	---	---	---	---	154	211	3.50	<.001

strikes in the sample were engaged in by the landless peasants. The landless peasants, in contrast to the landed, have a clear target for their dissatisfaction: the land owner. Strikes among landed peasants, on the other hand, tend to have as their target the middlemen (e.g., truckers, storeowners) or the local government. When such strikes occur they usually involve blocking a major nearby road. Landless peasant strikes, in contrast, take a more typical form: workers refuse to work until their demands are met. Interestingly, whereas 67% of all landless peasants who had struck reported agreement with the aims of the strike, only 23% of the landed peasants agreed with the strike in which they took part. Hence, landless peasants not only engage more frequently in such unconventional participation, but they also regard strikes more positively than the landed.

Why do landless peasants favor unconventional participation more? We hypothesized that perhaps it stems from distrust of government and governmental officials. Since the early 1960s, with the establishment of the agrarian reform, the Costa Rican government has talked about land reform, but no major redistribution has yet occurred. Furthermore, a recent study of poverty in Costa Rica has found that 74% of all individuals classified as poor live in rural Costa Rica and that 63% of these are landless peasants (Céspedes et al., 1977; Agency for International

Development, 1977: 2-3). After over a decade of broken promises, landless peasants may have developed a fairly high sense of distrust in government. Attitudinal evidence gathered in the PS sample supports this hypothesis (no data on distrust were collected in the CD study). The respondents were asked a series of questions designed to measure trust/cynicism in government, which formed a unidimensional cynicism scale (using factor analytic criteria). As anticipated, the landless peasants demonstrated significantly ( $p = .05$  t-test) greater cynicism than the landed (see Seligson, 1979a, 1979c, 1979d; Seligson and Salazar, 1979).

These findings have significant implications for Costa Rica's future. Once noted for its strong class of yeomen and relatively equitable distribution of land, the country today is burdened with a growing mass of cultivators without land and with extreme inequalities in land holding (Seligson, 1977a, 1978, 1979b). The 1973 agricultural census showed that the largest farms, constituting 1% of all farms, contained over 35% of all usable farm land; while at the other extreme, the smallest farms, 39% of the total number of holdings, contained only .2% of the farm land (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, 1974). Comparing Costa Rica to other countries, we find it has the twelfth most unequal distribution of any of the 54 countries whose Gini index of inequality is listed in the *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators* (Taylor and Hudson, 1972: 267).<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps even more significant than the maldistribution of agricultural land among land holders is the fact that only 36% of all economically active Costa Ricans who work in agriculture own any land, regardless of how small that plot may be, which is the smallest proportion of any Central American nation. Excluding the economically nonviable *microfundios* of less than one hectare from the calculation drops this figure to 29% (Dirección General de Estadística y Censos, 1975). The International Labor Organization expects unemployment rates to skyrocket from the less than 7% levels of the past decade to 23% by 1985 (Oficina Internacional de Trabajo, 1972). These factors have given landless Costa Rican peasants no choice but to turn to land invasion in order to avert personal disaster. As early as 1967 it was estimated that over 11% of all rural families in Costa Rica were squatters (Instituto de Tierras y Colonización, 1967; Downing and Mateson, 1965; Sandner, 1962). In recent years this figure has almost certainly increased as witnessed by the flood of newspaper reports of massive land invasions, many of them resulting in violent conflict.<sup>23</sup>

Our findings strongly suggest that since landlessness is associated with increased levels of distrust, relatively low levels of institutionalized participation and a tendency to prefer challenging the system through such actions as strikes, the steadily deteriorating land tenure situation in Costa Rica may portend considerable instability over the long haul. This has occurred in Colombia, where recent rural land invasions in northern coastal areas have been closely linked to the concentration of land ownership (Soles, 1972). With 60% of Costa Rica's population still residing in rural areas, rising discontent there may well forebode a major shift toward more violent modes of participation among the nation's increasingly hard-pressed landless campesinos. Indeed, this is what Paige's (1975) theory of agrarian revolution would suggest. In the Costa Rican case, smallholders and plantation workers, the two categories of peasants Paige argues are most likely to embark on reformist activities, constitute a progressively smaller share of the Costa Rican peasant sector. In contrast, the numbers of landless cultivators who depend on the land for their existence (sharecroppers, migrant laborers, and commercial *hacienda* workers) are growing in both absolute and relative terms. Paige argues that these are the groups most likely to engage in revolt or revolution.

We must temper our remarks regarding the possibility of rural conflict by recognizing that the Costa Rican political system has reflected both exceptional cohesion (Duff and McCamant, 1976: 137-144) and a capacity to implement social change. The government has recently channeled new resources into the land reform program (Seligson, 1977c, 1978) and has established a welfare program (*asignaciones familiares*). Nevertheless, the land reform program itself may have stimulated population growth above rural Costa Rica's already high levels (Seligson, forthcoming). Given the finite nature of the land resource and the burgeoning rural population, the potential for rural conflict looms ever larger and will undoubtedly test the government's capacity to cope with its rural problem.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis has made three main points: (1) Costa Rican peasant political participation is multidimensional, consisting of six distinct modes—communal organizational activism, communal project acti-

vism, citizen-initiated contacts with local government, voting, campaign activism, and strike activism; (2) while the modes of activism are largely the same for peasants and city dwellers, their levels of participation are quite different, with peasants tending to be more active in community improvement work, school-related organizations, and overall group membership (when opportunity structure is controlled), indicating contextually determined different styles of participation for urban and rural citizens; and (3) landed peasants are significantly more active than landless ones within the system, whereas landless peasants are more prone toward outside-of-the-system behavior.

Only rarely in the social sciences do we have directly comparable but independently collected data sets such as the Peasant Study sample and the Community Development sample. Thus, the successful replication of most of the analysis using these independent data bases (with different samples, instruments, time spans, and interviewers) strongly confirms the validity of both the findings and the reliability of the two samples themselves.<sup>24</sup>

We hope our research has helped to correct some commonly held myths about peasant society. Peasants appear and act quite differently from urban residents. Political scientists, like other observers of peasant society, have been struck by this distinctiveness and have generally assumed, without empirical substantiation, that such differences include political passivity. But our evidence suggests that systematic cross-national studies of peasant participation may well reveal that such assumptions lack foundation. In Costa Rica, peasants participate politically in much the same modes as individuals in other nations, and in some of these modes they are even more active than city dwellers. While some have argued that Costa Rica is unique because of its allegedly large yeoman population, we have demonstrated that inequalities in the distribution of land in Costa Rica are as great as or greater than they are in other countries of Latin America, and further, that the great bulk of Costa Rican peasants are landless. Rigorous empirical research, we suggest, will put to rest the myth of the passive peasant.

## APPENDIX

The *sample designs* for both projects were similar in most respects. Each used the Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) method to determine sample size. Both used the smallest political division in Costa Rica,

the district, as the primary sampling unit. Both were stratified multi-stage samples, although the variables which were used for stratifying were different. The CD study used geographical region and district population, while the PS study employed land concentration (measured by the Gini index of inequality of distribution), the nature of the agrarian enterprise dominant in the region, and the time the area first came under the influence of capitalist agriculture. Both samples were drawn from the Census Bureau's newly revised and exceptionally accurate 1973 area maps.<sup>25</sup>

One major difference in the samples is that the CD study employed *simple random selection of elements* to select dwelling units, whereas the PS sample employed *cluster sampling*.<sup>26</sup> For some time, concern has been expressed about the amount of bias cluster sampling introduces into a design (Frankel, 1971). If the effect is large, then clearly the substantial saving in research costs that it permits are really counter-productive. If, however, the bias introduces little noticeable effect into the results, then cluster sampling is acceptable. While the data we present here do not directly measure the design effect produced in the clustered sample, they can indicate if the discrepancy between the samples is great enough to alter seriously the substantive outcomes that are revealed when multivariate data analysis techniques are employed.

The *nationality of the interviewers* differed in the two studies. Other studies have questioned the use of foreign interviewers, since they may have a large and unpredictable impact on the respondent (Hymes, 1970; Frey, 1970). In the present study, the CD team consisted of 35 Costa Rican interviewers familiar with rural dwellers, whereas the PS study was conducted by two North American interviewers trained in the rural Spanish dialect of Costa Rica.<sup>27</sup>

The *elapsed time* of the projects also varied, introducing the possibility that significant events might have affected the respondents' thinking and their answers to our questions. The CD sample was obtained in a two-week period, whereas the PS sample, with many fewer interviewers, was conducted over a six-month period.

Students of survey research have suggested that any one of these design differences might seriously affect the results of the study. Our data seem to indicate that this is not the case. This is demonstrated by the close similarity of the univariate statistics listed in Table 5 and the multivariate analyses contained in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 5  
Selected Characteristics of the Two Samples

	CD Sample (peasants only) N = 306		PS Sample N = 531	
	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.
Age*	45.8	13.8	42.5	14.7
Education	2.6	2.3	2.9	2.1
Number of Children	5.5	3.8	5.5	3.9

\*The mean ages of the two samples are somewhat higher than might be expected because only those 18 years and older were interviewed.

## NOTES

1. See the extensive evidence on this point in edited volumes by Chaplin (1976) and Lowenthal (1975), and the papers by Dietz and Palmer (1978), Woy (1978), Fishel (1979), and Bourque and Warren (1979).

2. In recent years fragmentary empirical evidence has begun to show important differences between landed and landless peasants. Van Es and Whittenberger (1970) found that Brazilian wage laborers participate less in, and have less knowledge of, politics than do peasant proprietors. In Colombia Cartano (1968) found peasant wage laborers (i.e., landless peasants) significantly more anomic than peasant smallholders living in the same community. Mathiason and Powell (1972) revealed that Colombian smallholders had significantly greater feelings of political efficacy than did landless peasants.

3. The one other level of government which exists is the provincial, with the 83 *cantones* distributed among seven provinces, but the provincial subdivision has almost no importance or power. In fact, at present the replacement of the provinces by other regional units is under consideration.

4. With the creation of the National Electrical Institute (Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad) and a National Water and Sewage Institute (Instituto Nacional de Acueductos y Alcantarías), these functions are passing out of municipal hands. However, many *municipios* still operate small electric and water systems.

5. For a detailed discussion of municipal structure and function, see Baker, Fernández P., and Stone (1972) and Vicente Castro (1972).

6. The Verba-Nie team distinguished between contacts with particularized referents and contacts with communal referents. We believe this distinction may be problematic, but our data sets do not in any case permit us to isolate such differences. For a further discussion of this point, see Booth and Seligson (1978b). Furthermore, although we do not

include variables for contacting national officials here for the sake of comparability between the two data sets (the PS sample did not collect such data), when we ran a factor analysis on the CD study including these variables they clustered with the other citizen-initiated contacting variables.

7. While Costa Rican elections are free and democratically run, voting itself is mandatory. Since 1959 certain sanctions, including fines and the loss of the identification card (*cédula*) have been applied to nonvoters, boosting voter turnout to over 80% from the 1958 turnout of 65% (Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones, 1969, 1970; Aguilar Bulgarelli, 1973; Jiménez Castro, 1977). We should note that Verba et al. (1973) also include voting in their dimensional analysis of participation in countries such as Austria and Yugoslavia where voting is mandatory and turnout is as high as 96%.

8. On this point Przeworski and Teune (1970: 130-131) state, "Although it is a generally shared belief that the same stimuli (indicators) are more likely to provide a basis for equivalent inferences, we argue that this premise is not self-evident and is unnecessarily restrictive. . . . But under theoretical assumptions of varying strength, even instruments composed exclusively of indicators specific to each system can be shown to be equivalent."

9. This model analyzes both the common and the unique variance in the matrix. Components factor analysis makes no assumption about the data and "simply defines the basic dimensions of the data" (Rummel, 1970: 112). According to the scheme suggested by Vincent (1971: 11-12), component factor analysis is appropriate for data description and when unique variance is of interest.

Recent research has challenged Verba and Nie's use of the Pearsonian  $r$  as inappropriate because of their numerous dichotomous variables (Beck, 1974). Kim, et al. (1977) dispute this claim. We feel confident in our analysis because Beck's comments are largely irrelevant for three reasons: (1) many of our variables are in fact ordinal rather than dichotomous; (2) when the nominal variables are removed from the analysis in both the CD and PS samples, the other factors stand unaltered; and (3) we have independent confirmation of the factor structure we uncovered (i.e., both of our samples produce the same dimensions).

The eigenvalue of the fifth factor for each sample falls slightly below the Kaiser criterion of 1.0. However, the Kaiser criterion is but an arbitrary measure of factor significance indicating a factor explains more ( $> 1.0$ ) or less ( $< 1.0$ ) of the total variance in the matrix than any single variable (Rummel, 1970; 100-105). Since these factors single out the same important variable and the eigenvalue is nearly 1.0, we include them. Two tests support this: first, the application of multidimensional scaling techniques to the data (KYST) reveals that voting does lie on a separate dimension; and second, the removal of any other factor from the analyses leaves voting defining a last factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0.

10. CD<sub>1</sub>: "Are you or have you been a member of a school board or PTA?" Affirmative = 38.9%.

CD<sub>2</sub>: "Have you participated as an officer or as president of a school board or PTA?" Officer (14.8%), president (9.2%).

CD<sub>3</sub>: With respect to his/her organizational affiliations, the respondent was asked, "Is your attendance at meetings and activities frequent (coded 3), from time to time (coded 2) or seldom or never (coded 1)?" Nonmembers were coded as zero. The average attendance index summed the scores and divided them by the total number of group memberships.  $\bar{X} = 1.52$ .

CD<sub>4</sub>: This index is based on an individual's response to the following question for several specific organizations. "Have you participated as an officer or president in any of the following organizations: sports clubs, voluntary associations, religious organizations, social committees, etc." . . . A mean score was calculated by summing the leadership scores and dividing the sum by the total number of organizations belonged to.  $\bar{X} = 0.98$ .

CD<sub>5</sub>: The total number of groups to which the individual is a member (excluding political parties).  $\bar{X} = 1.19$ . While this index does partly subsume CD<sub>1</sub>-CD<sub>4</sub>, it also measures membership in any organization to which the respondent belongs, indicating global organizational activism.

CD<sub>6</sub>: "Have you ever participated in some effort to improve the community, such as work on the roads, the school, the church, or something like that?" No = 33.7%, yes = 66.3%.

CD<sub>7</sub>: This item isolates individuals who have given important support, such as money, materials, or land, as well as their own labor, to better their communities. No = 48.4%, yes = 51.6%.

CD<sub>8</sub>: Total number of community improvement projects participated in by the respondent.  $\bar{X} = 1.27$ .

11. CD<sub>9</sub>: "Are you now or have you ever been a member of a political party?" Yes = 23.2%.

CD<sub>10</sub>: "Is your attendance at party meetings and activities frequent, from time to time, seldom, or never?" Frequent and from time to time = 14.4%.

12. CD<sub>11</sub>: "Have you ever asked for help from the municipal executive?" Affirmative response = 9.4%.

CD<sub>12</sub>: "Have you ever asked for help from the *sindico* (district representative) or *regidor* (municipal councilman)?" Affirmative response = 10.1%.

13. CD<sub>13</sub>: "Did you vote in the last national election?" Yes = 83.9%.

14. The PS study utilized a series of questions to tap the respondent's active involvement with community projects. While only one of these questions (PS<sub>6</sub>) directly measures the respondent's participation in the project, we decided to use all seven variables because (1) the mean correlation between this item and the others in the set is  $r = .56$ , and (2) when the factor analysis is rerun including only PS<sub>6</sub> as a measure of project activism, it still forms its own factor.

PS<sub>1</sub>: "What is the most serious problem in this village, that is to say, of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of village used earlier in questionnaire filled in)." For the purpose of this article the responses were recoded so as to distinguish between those who mentioned a problem (63.1%) and those who did not (36.9%). A mandatory probe for this question was used if the respondent referred to a national problem instead of a local one: "Perhaps you can name another problem, not one which exists all over the country but one of this village of \_\_\_\_\_"

PS<sub>2</sub>: "How would you go about solving this problem?" All responses which proposed some solution (56.3%) were coded to distinguish these respondents from those who had no solutions (43.7%).

PS<sub>3</sub>: "How did this problem arise?" Coding comments for PS<sub>2</sub> apply here: response = 60.1%, no response = 39.9%.

PS<sub>4</sub>: "What chance would you and others like to have to solve this problem? Good, fair, or bad?": good = 25.2%, fair = 14.3%, bad = 20.2%, non = 40.3%.

PS<sub>5</sub>: "Do you think that you could do something to solve it?" Yes = 34.7%, no = 66.3%.

PS<sub>6</sub>: "Have you made an effort to solve this problem?" Yes = 29.8%, no = 70.2%.

PS<sub>7</sub>: "Is there anybody from right in this village who can help you solve this problem?"  
Yes = 23.0%, no = 77.0%.

PS<sub>9</sub>: "Are you or were you ever a member of the board of directors of any of the above committees that have just been mentioned?" (Note that this question was asked after PS<sub>8-12</sub>): yes = 26.2%, no = 73.8%.

PS<sub>8-12</sub>: "Many people don't have time to attend community meetings. Do you go to the meetings of the following committees?" Note: after each committee which R said he attended, interviewers asked, "Do you attend almost all the time, once in a while, or almost never?" Almost always was coded 1; once in a while, 2; almost never, 3; and never, 4. The committees are: PS<sub>8</sub> School board,  $\bar{X} = 3.1$ , PS<sub>10</sub> PTA,  $\bar{X} = 3.0$ ; PS<sub>11</sub> Church committee,  $\bar{X} = 3.3$ ; PS<sub>12</sub> Progressive Committee,  $\bar{X} = 3.6$ .

15. PS<sub>13</sub>: "Let's talk about the municipality of \_\_\_\_\_. Many people are so busy with their work that they don't have time to go to municipal meetings. Have you gone to a meeting of the municipality within the past year?" yes = 22.0%, no = 78.0%.

PS<sub>14</sub>: "By the way, do you know who the present councilmen in this county are?" If "yes", "What are their names?" The variable is the percent of councilmen correctly named ( $\bar{X} = 16\%$ ).

Of the two variables which tap citizen-initiated contacts, only PS<sub>13</sub> refers to direct contact with government officials. Knowledge of the names of the municipal councilmen (PS<sub>14</sub>) can either come from contact with the individuals or from hearing their names mentioned. Given the accessibility of local officials in rural Costa Rica, most of the respondents who provided the names of officials had probably had some prior contact with them. Indeed, familiarity was such that most respondents would even give the official's nickname. In any event, rerunning the factor analysis eliminating PS<sub>13</sub> left the structure unaltered.

16. PS<sub>15</sub>: "With respect to the strike(s) (you were involved in) were you in agreement with the strike, against it, or neither in agreement nor against it?" Agree coded 1, neither 2 and disagree 3.  $\bar{X} = 1.90$ .

17. PS<sub>16</sub>: "Did you vote in the last presidential election, that is the election of 1970?"  
Yes = 83.1%.

18. The number of organizations present in each community surveyed was obtained by elite interviews in the community. In the CD study the field team leader interviewed several key observers in each community to obtain extensive data. See Booth, et al. (1973). The boundaries of the community were defined by local informants as well. Hence, in the urban part of the sample, only those organizations functioning directly within the respondent-defined neighborhood (i.e., *barrio*) were counted so as not to inflate the number of organizations by including the multitude which exist in all of metropolitan San José. Further details of our procedure are reported in Seligson and Booth (1979b).

19. For example, one *cantón* from which a portion of the rural respondents was drawn sprawls over 3,004 square kilometers, while one urban *cantón* included in the study is confined to only 21 square kilometers.

20. We find interesting Paige's further subdivision of landed and landless (which yield four distinct types) and believe such distinctions may have important applications for future research. Elsewhere Seligson (1977b) has shown, based on the sample discussed in this paper, that there are in fact nine separate types of Costa Rican peasants arrayed along two dimensions (security and legality of land tenure). A full-scale discussion of the participatory characteristics of each of these types would take us too far afield in this article.

21. The index of community improvement project participation in the PS sample was constructed using the cumulative Guttman scale (coefficient of reproducibility of .93 and a coefficient of scalability of .80). The organizational activism and interaction with local government modes were scaled using an additive procedure without weighting the variables, because the scales are based on the number of organizations belonged to and the extent of interaction, no one organization having greater importance than any other.

For the CD sample, indices of the participation factors were constructed in the following way: (1) the index of community improvement activity is simply the total number of community betterment projects the respondent reported having engaged in; (2) the organizational activism measure is, as in the PS study, designed to take into account the opportunity structure of participation; (3) the measure of interaction with local government is constructed by awarding the respondent one point each for having contacted (zero for not contacting) a municipal councilman and municipal executive; (4) the vote variable was used in its unaltered form in both the CD and PS studies; and (5) the campaigning index sums for a respondent were one point each for party membership and attendance at least "from time to time" at party meetings and functions.

22. Including the minifundio-sized farms of less than one hectare, the Gini index (which ranges from zero to a perfect inequality score of 1.0) in 1973 was .82. The exclusion of farms of less than one hectare, a practice common to many agricultural censuses, lowers the index to .78, a figure which ranks Costa Rica fifteenth most unequal of the 54 nations in the *Handbook* (Taylor and Hudson, 1972). It should be noted that the *Handbook* figure for Costa Rica of .78 is based on the 1963 census, now over 15 years out of date, and does not include the farms of less than one *manzana* (.69 of a hectare).

23. See the pages of *La Nación* (San José) and *Pueblo* (San José).

24. Our effort is one which has been labeled construct validation. It involves an evaluation of both the theory and the instruments of measurement. Since the theoretical constructs (modes) suggested by Verba, Nie and others largely hold up under these tests in a cultural context vastly different from the ones in which there were developed, and since both samples show peasants far more politically active than conventionally believed, one can have a substantial degree of confidence in these findings. Were this not so, it would have been necessary to reexamine both these theories and the instruments employed. See Seltitz et al. (1959), Frey (1970), Kaufman (1973), and Portes (1973).

25. In sharp contrast to much of Latin America, where accurate maps of the countryside are usually unavailable, Costa Rica had just completed an exceptionally accurate mapping job in preparation for the 1973 decennial census in which all dwelling units are indicated for each district of the country.

26. Cluster sampling, designed to reduce interviewers' travel time within the primary sampling unit (PSU) introduced a certain amount of bias in the sample, called "design effect" (Kish, 1967).

27. This training consisted of Seligson and Berk-Seligson, the two PS study interviewers, (1) serving as Peace Corps volunteers in a peasant village in Costa Rica; and (2) having peasant friends coach interview delivery style during the pretests.

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