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INCENTIVE SYSTEMS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION
CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENTS IN ONTARIO

BY

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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Constituency Presidents in Ontario.

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ABSTRACT

INCENTIVE SYSTEMS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:
CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENTS IN ONTARIO

The object of this paper is twofold: first, to suggest a theoretical framework for the study of high level participation in political parties and, second, to undertake a study of party activists within this framework. Two approaches to the study of participation are introduced, the sociological and the economic approaches, and an argument is made for the applicability of the latter at high levels of electoral participation. An economic theory of incentives, plus research already undertaken on participation in political parties, is used to suggest hypotheses. The research on constituency presidents in Ontario suggests that the economic theory is only of limited applicability to high level participation. However, the findings of the study identify the dominant incentives of constituency presidents from all parties and outline sensitive areas in the relationship between the party as a unit and potential participants.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The study of political participation in the Canadian context is still in the initial stages and it seems that, so far, in an effort to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge of the Canadian political culture, our attention has been focused primarily on voting behaviour.¹ With certain exceptions there has been very little emphasis on the intensity or extent of participation itself.² In particular the study of active participation in Canadian electoral politics is only just beginning.³

¹The most frequently mentioned collections of voting analysis in Canada are John Meisel, (ed.), Papers on the 1962 Election (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964); and John Courtney (ed.), Voting in Canada (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

²The most notable exception is Rick Van Loon, "Political Participation in Canada: The 1965 Election", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. III, No. 3, (September, 1970), pp. 375-399.

³A significant contribution has been made by Allan Kornberg, Joel Smith and David Bromley, "Some Differences in the Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian and American Party Officials: A Preliminary Report", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. II, No. 1, (March, 1969), pp. 64-88. The distinction between electoral and non-electoral political activity is an important one. The primary emphasis here will be on electoral political activity, but for a discussion of the distinction see R. Van Loon and M. Whittington, The Canadian Political System (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Co., 1971), pp. 80-81.

This paper is aimed at making a modest contribution to both the theoretical and the empirical study of the active political elite who participate in and operate Canadian political parties. We begin with the very general object of discovering who participates and why at one particular level in the local organizations of each political party in Ontario. Our theoretical concern is with suggesting a fruitful way of approaching this question of high level political participation.

Clearly, the theoretical part comes first. As Lester Milbrath puts it, "the first task is to find a way to think about political participation".⁴ And it might be added that it is equally important to avoid excluding entirely alternative ways of thinking about participation. Various perspectives which appear irreconcilable in theory, may be combined and adapted to provide new and more satisfactory perspectives from which to assess the broad question of political participation. At the same time certain perspectives may be better suited to the understanding of participation in different circumstances. There is no need to assume, for example, that the approaches which seem suited to explain why some Canadians vote and others do not are

⁴Lester Milbrath, Political Participation (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), p. 5.

equally capable of explaining why some people run for party office while others do not. In fact, it is likely that there exists no particular concept or set of variables which will, unaided, open the door to an understanding of the entire range of political participation in Canada.

Instead, we begin with the working hypothesis that the two approaches outlined below are more suited to explaining participation at different levels of involvement. This suggests simply that the investigation of high level activity may respond to an entirely different theoretical framework from one that has been successful in the research and investigation of low level activity. Part of the theoretical discussion included in chapters two and three will be devoted to defending and illustrating the logic of this argument. But before the theory can be discussed, and the research plan explained, it is necessary to dwell for a moment on some crucial definitions, in particular what we mean by "approaches", "suitability", and "different levels of involvement".

The term "approach" as employed here, is in no way intended as a synonym for "theory", although it is possible to construct theories that are peculiar to each approach. To borrow from a recent contribution to methodology in political science, an approach will be defined as "a

general strategy for the studying of political phenomena".⁵ Sometimes the approach is contained in a definition of politics. In that case the general strategy is determined by what are considered to be the salient features of political life.⁶ These are the approaches that see the study of politics as the study of institutions, interest groups, power, political roles, or decision-making.

The approaches discussed here will be referred to very broadly as the economic and the sociological approaches to politics.⁷ Unlike the ones mentioned above, neither is easily translated into a definition of politics and both do more than specify subject matter. As implied, these approaches are often identified with other disciplines and, indeed, their basic frameworks have emerged from these disciplines. But it is not our intention to equate each approach with that of another discipline, or to argue that an economist or a

⁵Allan Isaak, Scope and Methods in Political Science (Homewood Ill.: Dorsey Press Ltd., 1970), p. 98.

⁶The idea of equating an approach with a definition of politics is found in Vernon Van Dyke, Political Science: A Philosophical Analysis (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1961).

⁷The designation of these two approaches is not meant to imply that other approaches of a similar kind could not be identified. Psychologists, for example, have made unique contributions to the study of participation, particularly in mass movements. The fact that some of their findings are later subsumed under the sociological approach illustrates that these terms are used very broadly and that some indulgence is required.

sociologist would easily understand the economic or the sociological approach when it is applied to the study of politics. Nor should it be assumed that because these approaches are identified with other disciplines, political scientists have never taken an interest in or used these approaches. The ideological origins of each approach are to be found in political theory, and, as Brian Barry has pointed out, it is possible to pick up the strands of each at several different places in the history of political thought.⁸ Although both approaches will orient research they will do so by the different questions they ask, the different assumptions each makes about the social order, and the different techniques each employs in the construction of theories. An "economist", according to our usage, is simply one who employs the economic approach in an investigation of political participation, a "sociologist" one who employs the sociological approach.

It would be difficult and probably pointless to argue the "suitability" of either approach on the basis of the assumptions each makes about the nature of society and the nature of man. In the end one is likely to decide

⁸Brian Barry, Sociologist, Economists and Democracy (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1970), pp. 7-10.

that one approach depicts the nature of human and social interactions more accurately than another, and that the question of suitability is therefore not a valid question at all. This conclusion does not really advance our knowledge, nor does it leave much hope for the future of inter-disciplinary work -- even though the arguments may be most edifying. The suitability of an approach will have to depend on the success it achieves in providing answers to important questions, and, since each approach structures its own questions, on which questions seem more logically appropriate. The object is not to prove suitability but to provide good reasons for believing that under certain circumstances some questions are more relevant than others, some assumptions more justifiable than others.

The different situations discussed here are the different "levels of involvement" reached in political activity. It is generally conceded that these different levels of involvement exist and that, as the phrase implies, it is possible to conceive of what Lester Milbrath has called a hierarchy of participation.⁹ As he has pointed out, this is made easier by the fact that a hierarchy of participation is also a hierarchy of costs. Different levels

⁹Milbrath, op. cit., p. 19.

of involvement are more easily identified by the time and energy required for the performance of duties than by any attempt to rate activities in terms of importance. At the same time, however, we have come to expect that as an individual devotes more and more time to political activities, he will perform more specialized and onerous tasks.

But while it is relatively easy to conceive of a hierarchy, some guidance is required in actually establishing one. The hierarchy set out below is constructed on the assumption that those who participate at higher levels usually perform, or have performed, all those activities common to participants at lower levels.¹⁰ Not all activities that may be assembled under the rubric of political participation are included here, but the hierarchy does include those most commonly connected with electoral participation.

HIERARCHY OF ELECTORAL INVOLVEMENT

High Level Activities	Holding a public office
	Being a political candidate
	Holding a party office
	Soliciting party funds
	Attending a caucus or strategy meeting or planning a campaign

¹⁰This hierarchical organization of electoral participation can be found in Van Loon, op. cit., p. 378. It is adapted from the one which appears in Milbrath, op. cit., p. 18.

Transitional Activities	Contributing money to a political party
	Being an active party member
	Contributing time in a campaign
	Attending a meeting or rally
	Attempting to persuade people to vote a certain way
Low Level Activities	Initiating a political discussion
	Paying attention to political stimuli
	Voting

As we move from the bottom to the top of the hierarchy it is clear that fewer and fewer people are likely to take part in the activities described. Van Loon has stated in a recent paper that while 70 to 75 per cent of eligible voters actually cast their vote, only 20 to 25 per cent are involved in transitional activities, and a mere 3 or 4 per cent take part at high levels of involvement.¹¹ Different levels of involvement are distinguished, therefore, not only by the importance of the activity and the costs imposed on the individual, but also by the number of participants.

Most of our interest is concentrated on high levels of involvement and the term "high level participation", or its equivalent, will be used with reference only to those

¹¹Van Loon, op. cit., p. 378.

high level activities denoted in the hierarchy, especially the holding of a party office. The term "party activist", on the other hand, will be used in a more general way to describe those who perform either high level or transitional activities within the party. The need for a more general term belies a certain difficulty that comes with discussing participation in political parties (and as the hierarchy clearly shows, most electoral activity beyond low levels occurs within political parties). In the first place, some difficulty has been encountered in specifying what is entailed in "joining" or "belonging" to a political party. Secondly, it is difficult for the student to know what is actually involved in "being an active party member", for example. Definitions will only provide a rough guide to what activities are being discussed, and we can only hope that they denote activities which are more or less similar among participants in different political environments.

The Approaches Outlined

As implied, the sociological and the economic approaches can be treated as approaches to the study of politics in general. Our interest here is in the theoretical guidance they offer for the study of political participation and, in particular, high level participation. However, the brief outline which follows summarizes each approach on

a general basis in the hope that the specific references made to participation at later stages will be rendered more complete and understandable by a discussion of the main features of each approach. Naturally, it would be useful if concise definitions of the sociological and economic approaches were available. Unfortunately, neither are amenable to this type of procedure. Instead, it is necessary to take a more circuitous route and to examine their respective areas of interest, their assumptions about society and the nature of human action, and the attitudes they adopt toward the construction and the testing of theories.

The practitioners of the sociological approach are often referred to as political sociologists, although some may be political scientists and others sociologists by discipline. Sociologists, as we shall refer to them here, have traditionally been interested in political behaviour and political systems, but not simply as facets of a larger society. Seymour Martin Lipset insists that political sociology concentrates on the "interaction between society and polity, between social structures and political institutions".¹² Although many contemporary political

¹²Seymour Martin Lipset, "Political Sociology" in Neil J. Smelser (ed.), Sociology (New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1967), p. 440. As we might expect there have been quarrels with this definition. Burns has argued that

sociologists agree with this definition, as Eric Nordlinger has pointed out, by far the greatest efforts of sociologists have been directed toward illustrating how societal factors influence political phenomena rather than how they interact.¹³ The sociological approach usually sees political phenomena as dependent variables that have to be explained by independent societal variables.

There is a concern with societal stability and systems maintenance in the sociological approach that is not nearly as evident among economists. Although not all sociologists subscribe equally to the importance of

this is a gross simplification and that sociology is parasitic upon other disciplines in the sense that criticism is parasitic. It is the task of sociology to question assumptions current among those who work at politics, on a day to day basis. See Tom Burns, "Sociological Explanation", in Dorothy Emmet and Alastair MacIntyre, (eds.), Sociological Theory and Philosophical Analysis (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1970).

¹³Eric Nordlinger, Politics and Society: Studies in Comparative Political Sociology (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1970), p. 3. For a discussion of political sociology, its shortcomings and its potential, see Giovanni Sartori "From the Sociology of Politics to Political Sociology", in Seymour Martin Lipset (ed.), Politics and the Social Sciences (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). Sartori describes political sociology as a "connecting bridge" between political science and sociology. But while he is concerned that political sociology continue to examine how society conditions political phenomena he argues that at the same time political sociology must begin to examine how political phenomena condition the structures of society.

this concern, there has been a tendency, in recent political sociology and among certain political scientists, to emphasize the study of consensus and integration in society where an older school of political sociology, particularly Marx, Mosca, Pareto, and Michels, emphasized conflict. This concern with societal consensus has been expressed in more specific concerns, particularly political socialization.

The economic approach does not share this interest in social stability nor in the socialized attitudes and beliefs of members of society. As James Buchanan puts it, "the political structure is conceived as something that emerges from the choice processes of individual participants".¹⁴ The individual is the basic entity of the economic approach and it is not his general values but his specific choices that determine the structure of society.¹⁵ This point of view stems from an insistence on reducing explanations of social phenomena to explanations of individual behaviour. Economists devote very little time to a discussion of the underlying basis of society, and little mention is made of the forces and factors that makes the social system a more

¹⁴James Buchanan, "An Individualistic Theory of the Political Process", in D. Easton (ed.), Varieties of Political Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966), p. 26.

¹⁵Ibid.

cohesive unit.¹⁶ The overwhelming concern is with the logical processes of individuals who are choosing from among different courses of action in different situations. The parameters of these situations are determined by the rules that must be observed, the amount and accuracy of information available, and the goals and strategies of others. Thus, once the situation has been specified and the participants identified, the economist grapples with means-ends problems almost totally oblivious to societal values and their sources.

The attitude of the economist toward theory construction is consistent with a tendency for providing interconnecting definitions and specified frameworks for investigation. He begins with a small set of axioms or principles from which he constructs what Kaplan has called a hierarchical theory.¹⁷ The laws of the theory are explained by showing that they follow or can be deduced

¹⁶On the other hand, economists have rekindled an interest in government and particularly the process of public policy formation. William Mitchell, for one, claims that the economic approach is characterized by its interest in collective decision-making institutions and resource allocation. According to Mitchell, the "new political economy" will begin to take a greater interest in the study of public finance and the role of government in the economy. See William Mitchell, "The Shape of Political Theory to Come: From Political Sociology to Political Economy", in Lipset, (ed.) op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁷Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry (Scranton, Penn.: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 298.

from the axioms. As Eugene Meehan has pointed out, the axioms may be universal statements or they may be probabilistic generalizations. All that is required is that observable consequences can be deduced from them.¹⁸ Each of these conclusions must establish its own legitimacy by reference to empirical data. In practice most economic theories will also provide a calculus that specifies theoretical entities.

The major axiom that pervades and governs the work of economists is simply that men pursue their goals rationally. This is the topic of further elaboration but it serves to emphasize that the economic approach, as the term is used here, is not to be confused with the study of goods, services, and money. Instead, it depends on the logic of rational choice and, as Mancur Olson Jr. has argued, it has its most obvious utility where actors have determinant wants and, at the same time, an abundance of the means required to achieve them.

This means that economic (or more precisely micro-economic) theory is in a fundamental sense more nearly a theory of rational behaviour than a theory of economic goods.¹⁹

¹⁸ Eugene Meehan, The Theory and Method of Political Analysis (Homewood III.: Dorsey Press, 1965), p. 336.

¹⁹ Mancur Olson Jr., "The Relationship between Economics and the other Social Sciences", in Lipset, op. cit., p. 117.

Sociologists have been unable to employ the hypothetico-deductive method in the construction of theories and it is perhaps an understatement that they have not constructed theories with the same rigor as economists. On the other hand, sociologists have produced, or are at various stages of producing, concatenated theories -- theories whose component laws are related in such a way that it is possible to identify a pattern. The theory explains the law when, as Abraham Kaplan puts it, "its place in the pattern is made manifest".²⁰ The theory's elements, then, are essentially empirical ones. Generalizations, usually in the form of tendency statements, are added to a central empirically substantiated core whose explanatory power grows as a result. A complaint sometimes levelled against the sociological approach is that while a great deal of data has been collected often no effort is made to relate it to an existing pattern or to specify what that pattern is.

Both the economic and the sociological approaches to the study of politics have abiding problems. Although the economic approach is capable of generating several propositions and hypotheses on the basis of a few, albeit significant, assumptions, it shows marked difficulty in

²⁰Kaplan, op. cit., p. 298.

discussing the social system and assumes what Herbert Simon has called "a preposterously omniscient rationality".²¹ In a recent article Paul Kress has argued trenchantly that the "individualistic utilitarian" approach cannot provide a theoretical concept of social institutions. Social institutions, he claims, are based on such non-rational phenomenon as religion, ritual and habit.²² The sociological approach, on the other hand, has displayed more concern with values and their modification through experience, but has been unable to generate many testable propositions and no full-fledged theories of political participation. A concern with political socialization and with societal stability has also meant that even in a discussion of political participation sociologists have had to answer charges that they entertain a conservative bias.

If it were possible to dispense with these and other deficiencies, clearly political scientists would be advised to employ both these modes of analysis at the same time. Since this is quite unlikely we can at least advocate a judicious use of each approach. After all, as W.J.M. MacKenzie has pointed out, we have a rather curious situation: "Sociology

²¹Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. xxiii.

²²Paul Kress, "The Web and the Tree: Metaphors of Reason and Value", Midwest Journal of Politics, Vol. XI, No. 3, (August, 1969), p. 407.

and economics have both occupied the traditional territory of political science: but what is left to arbitrate their dispute -- except political science"?²³

The Research Plan

As the basis for a study of high level participation we have argued that there are different approaches to the question of political participation and that no particular approach ought to be viewed as the best or the only means of explaining why people become involved in politics. The two approaches of interest here have been outlined in two general approaches to the study of political phenomena, but we will use them only as they apply to the study of political participation. We have also suggested that as a guide to the use of these approaches attention should be paid to the different levels of political involvement. What is required is the development of some testable hypotheses which we have reason to believe are relevant to the question of why people participate in high level electoral activity in Canada.

The second chapter discusses the question of participation at different levels of involvement from the point of view of the economist. The ideas and the

²³W.J.M. Mackenzie, Politics and Social Science (Middlesex Eng.: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 152

work of various authors are mentioned, but particular attention is paid to Anthony Downs' An Economic Theory of Democracy²⁴ and to Mancur Olson's The Logic of Collective Action.²⁵ The discussion is directed particularly at the logical difficulties that are encountered by an economic theory which seeks to explain participation at low levels of involvement. Olson's theory is aimed at explaining participation in organizations, or what might be described as high level participation (although high level participation in a union for example, is not the same as high level participation in a political party, and there are difficulties in using the same words to describe different situations). We conclude that the logic of this economic theory, with its emphasis on incentives, may have some application to the study of participation in political parties although Olson himself makes no real effort to extend his theory in this direction.

The efforts of sociologists to explain political participation, and some of the difficulties they have encountered, are described in the first part of the third chapter. The main object of that chapter, however, is to draw together the specific work that has been done on high level participation both in political parties and in other

²⁴Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).

²⁵Mancur Olson Jr., The Logic of Collective Action (New York: Schocken Books, 1965).

organizations. From these diverse and sometimes divergent sources, some testable hypotheses are advanced. For example, our survey of the literature gives us several basic clues about who normally participates at the office holding level in political parties. It also allows some speculation on the reasons for this participation and the degree to which reasons may change with the passage of time. The major hypothesis derived from Olson's theory in some ways contradicts the work of others and an attempt is made to illustrate how Olson's theory relates to the work which has already been conducted on participation in party organizations.

Olson's main concern, and our concern here, is with the incentives which determine participation. Many studies approach the problem of determining dominant incentives with a questionnaire designed to discover directly from the participant his motivations for participation. In keeping with this technique a questionnaire was mailed in February, 1971, to constituency presidents of all political parties in Metropolitan Toronto. The constituency president was chosen because he is normally both easily identifiable within the party hierarchy and easily approached. Moreover, in terms of the levels of involvement described earlier, he is clearly a high level political participant.

Of the eighty-one questionnaires which were mailed out, fifty completed replies were returned and these formed the basis for a pilot study. In June, 1971, the main study was conducted on the remaining constituency presidents in the province of Ontario. The fourth chapter is devoted to a discussion of the results, and how they bear on the hypotheses. The questionnaire was changed with some additional questions asked and some former questions removed (See Appendix). The names and addresses of constituency presidents were obtained from each party's headquarters in Toronto. The questionnaires were mailed to 265 constituency presidents and 135 responded giving us a response rate of slightly over 50%.

Unfortunately, a mailed questionnaire does not always permit the openness of response that is desirable and that can perhaps be achieved in an interview situation. The mailed questionnaire is a more structured device for gathering information and the necessity of providing a battery of possible items from which to choose suggests that the answers may be structured as well. Also, the kinds of answers which may be revealing in an interview may be stifled under this type of format. But the prospect of personally interviewing a large group, such as this one,

is quite beyond the scope of this study, and the alternative of offering a more thoroughly open-ended type of questionnaire would likely have produced major difficulties in interpretation and coding.

Since some of the questions require respondents to assess the nature of past experiences we are confronted with the problems of recall data. Not all students of incentives are interested in incentive change (Olson, for example, certainly is not), but those who are usually employ recall data, and most admit that it is a technique inferior to studies which extend over a period of time. It is impossible to estimate the extent of accurate recollection and therefore the extent of error. In an effort to help distinguish between the different periods for which information was being solicited, the questions relating to incentives were spread throughout the questionnaire.

It might be objected that a questionnaire is not a proper nor even a fair way of testing an economic theory. Olson's theory, for example, has been tested by secondary data which document the flow of participants into and out of organizations over a period of time.²⁶ And game theory,

²⁶For a recent application of Olson to Canadian pressure group activity see Ronald Manzer, "Selective Inducements and the Development of Pressure Groups: The Case of the Canadian Teachers' Association", Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. II, No. 1, (March, 1969), pp. 103-117.

which economists have used to produce some of their most interesting findings, is tested and developed within the confines of a laboratory and on a suitably small sample of individuals. Therefore, it may be somewhat dangerous to presume to have tested an economic theory with the conventional tools of the sociologist.²⁷

However, if it is possible to formulate testable hypotheses there is no reason why Olson's basic propositions cannot be evaluated in the light of responses to particular questions. Furthermore, we are also interested in the nature of incentives -- the reasons themselves -- and in comparing our results with the results of political scientists who have studied incentive systems in party organizations. Direct questioning is a means of probing for those incentives.

Before an examination of the economists' study of participation and an examination of Olson's theory it is useful to point out that the study of high level participation

²⁷ This is especially so since it means relying on the impressions of respondents to gauge the presence or absence of objective phenomena, i.e. some types of incentives. While respondents may not recognize or respond to these kinds of incentives, they may nevertheless be present. Unfortunately, without detailed information regarding the party's practices or secondary data which will chart the record of participation among constituency presidents, it is difficult to gauge the objective presence or absence of particular kinds of incentives.

by political scientists is usually subsumed under the study of party organizations. Thus a discussion of participation has often been confined to a context of power distribution or structural-functional analysis. In this paper the emphasis will be on the study of participation itself, although we can hardly ignore the circumstances. In fact, we argue that the party as a unit relies on a certain amount of participation for its survival, and that in some cases it may be able to affect participation.

This, however, depends both upon the participants and upon elements in the party's organization. In an effort to determine what some of these elements might be, unstructured interviews were obtained with organizers from the different political parties in Ontario. Each of the organizers interviewed is a paid employee of the party and works in the Toronto based headquarters. Each is conversant with the party's organization and practices as they relate both to the constituencies and to the central party headquarters. The discussions were designed to complement the questionnaire and relevant statements are mentioned in chapter four.

The point is that the nature of high level participation may eventually provide clues to the behaviour of political parties and, perhaps, to the nature of the Canadian political culture. An important question will be the degree to which either of the approaches can help to identify elements in a party's organization that have an effect on participation at this level.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMIC APPROACH TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

When a man reasons, he does nothing else but conceive a sum total from addition of parcels, or conceive a remainder from subtraction of one sum from another.

Thomas Hobbes

Man is a rational animal -- so at least I have been told. Throughout a long life I have looked diligently for evidence in favour of this statement, but so far I have not had the good fortune to come across it.

Bertrand Russell

The notion that men approach political tasks, and politics in general, in a rational manner is the cornerstone upon which economists have built their theories of politics and political participation. And sociologists, for their part, have tended to limit their comments on economic theory to the possibility of rational political action. Generally they seem unconvinced. Richard Rose, for example, in a recent book devoted to thoughts on man and his involvement in politics, is very sceptical of the methods and claims of economic theory. "Elegant reasoning," he says, "can be aesthetically satisfying but it can also be misleading as a way of studying ordinary

people..."¹ Since very few economists will admit to studying only extraordinary people, an impasse clearly exists, and its core is this notion of rational action in politics.

The object of this chapter is an examination of the concept of rationality and its use by economists. More specifically, it includes a discussion of the problems economists have encountered in the explanation of low level participation and an attempt is made to account for some of those difficulties. At the same time, an argument is made for the utility of economic theory in the explanation of high level participation. The chapter concludes with a description of Olson's theory of collective action, alluded to in chapter one, and a suggestion for how Olson's propositions and recommendations can be used in the study of high level political activity. All of this, however, is predicated on an understanding of the rational-choice model which economists have constructed and some of its basic shortcomings.

The Concept of Rationality

Despite the fact that many doubt the validity and usefulness of an assumption of rationality, emphasis on rational choice and the exercise of rationality has been

¹Richard Rose, People in Politics (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), p. 32.

ubiquitous in the history of political thought. Not surprisingly, there exist discernible differences in meaning and application among those who use the concept. This is most evident in comparing the attitudes of economists to those of political philosophers. Plato, Hobbes, and Bentham all assumed that man is rational and inquired into the nature of that rationality. Each was interested in determining whether man's rationality leads him to the pursuit of his own self-interest, or to the maximizing of some external good. For economists, the concept is attractive more for methodological reasons than for philosophical ones. The assumption of rationality has provided economists with a powerful conceptual schema; one that promises greater predictability and certainty in explanation.

Quentin Gibson, among many others, has noted how difficult it would be to conduct any kind of social inquiry without presuming at least some degree of rationality on the part of human beings.² Most of us, for example, make a habit of anticipating the reactions of others to certain situations. We do so by figuratively placing ourselves in the same situation, plotting a course of action, and assuming

²Quentin Gibson, The Logic of Social Inquiry (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), pp. 161-165.

that those whose activities interest us will plot and follow the same course of action. This does not mean that our own behaviour, any more than the behaviour of those who interest us, is necessarily rational. It does mean, however, that when we perform this exercise we tend to assume that behaviour is basically intentional, that it is directed toward a goal. Therefore, if this assumption is an accurate one, the reasons people offer for their actions are of utmost importance in explaining behaviour. Rational action, so important as a concept to economists, is first of all a form of intentional behaviour. It is, of course, a special form.

Rational behaviour is distinguished primarily by the element of calculation. A rational actor considers the different courses of action open to him and calculates which one will achieve his goal with a minimum of personal cost. Rational action can therefore be very roughly equated with the most effective means to the desired end. In keeping with this equation Anthony Downs has defined rational action as "action which is efficiently designed to achieve the consciously selected political or economic ends of the actor."³ Even this commonsense notion of rationality itself involves some basic assumptions. The

³Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy, p. 20.

first is that individuals have the ability to rank all goods and services and combinations of them and that this ranking is transitive.⁴ The second assumption is that this ranking is based upon adequate information capable of accurate interpretation. However, at the core of any definition of rationality or rational action is the idea of using the best means available to achieve some given goal.

This concept of rationality, as it is used by economists, makes no effort to provide, either implicitly or explicitly, the goals toward which behaviour ought to be directed. Until the economist postulates the goals of the political actor, rational action is a morally neutral concept. It is always reserved for a discussion of means; ends or goals can never be more or less rational. The criminal can be rational in the practice of crime just as the doctor can be rational in the pursuit of medicine.

We are left, then, with a limitless range of goals which a rational actor can pursue. Of necessity, the economist has had to assume the task of assigning very general goals to the rational participant in the political arena. And it is hardly surprising, given the success

⁴This assumption is made quite explicitly in James M. Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, The Calculus of Consent (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 33.

economists have had with the concept of "economic man" in market situations, that rational political man should bear such a resemblance to him. Most of us assume that the gains which a rational man in the marketplace will seek to maximize are material ones. He will seek to acquire goods and services while at the same time minimizing the costs incurred for such items. It is not quite as easy, however, to identify some of the goals that a rational political man will seek to achieve. Riker, for one, avoids the question of precise goals and concludes simply that a politically rational man is one who would rather win than lose, regardless of the stakes.⁵ In much the same vein, Buchanan and Tullock have argued that a man is rational when he "chooses 'more' rather than 'less' and when he is consistent in his choices"⁶ Even though economists are reluctant to specify precise goals in the political realm, many explicitly adopt the view that a rational man will behave in a self-interested fashion. Downs has called this "the self-interest axiom" and although not all economists accept this as a proper rendering of rational behaviour it is adopted here

⁵William Riker, A Theory of Political Coalitions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 25.

⁶Buchanan and Tullock, op. cit., p. 33.

as a useful means of describing rational behaviour in politics.⁷ The single concept used to encompass all the benefits that may result from this type of behaviour is the notion of "utility".

Even though the self-interest axiom may be operative in market and non-market situations, economists have recognized the differences implicit in these two situations. Despite the fact that market choices are made in the face of some uncertainty, there is usually a clear relationship between the action an individual takes and the results of that action. In those political situations which require collective action, however, this confidence is absent.⁸ In such situations there is usually an element of uncertainty because rational action depends on the actions of others which are often unknown. Similarly, an individual in a market situation usually assumes full responsibility for his own choices. In a non-market

⁷Downs, op. cit., pp. 27-28. For a discussion of "procedural rationality" wherein men are invariably rational and "substantive rationality" wherein goals must be attributed see William H. Riker and William J. Zavoina, "Rational Behaviour in Politics: Evidence from a Three Person Game" American Political Science Review, Vol. 64, No. 1, (March, 1970) p. 49.

⁸Ibid., pp. 77-81 and passim. Also, Buchanan and Tullock, op. cit., p. 37.

situation, however, it is not always clear where responsibility for decisions resides. There is a related problem as well:

Secure in the knowledge that, regardless of his own action, social or collective decisions affecting him will be made, the individual is offered a great opportunity either to abstain altogether from making a positive choice, or to choose without having considered the alternatives carefully.⁹

Both of these problems, and especially the latter, are of fundamental importance to an economist investigating the participation of individuals in collective action.

Economists have to face a more urgent problem however. Their detractors have taken pains to point out that men rarely seek only one goal at one particular time. In the course of maximizing his own self-interest a man is sometimes forced to choose between various competing goals. To insist that he is, nevertheless, maximizing his own self-interest may fulfill the economist's minimum requirements for rational action but in the end it is a rather vacuous proposition. Downs is particularly concerned to avoid the tautologous situation in which political behaviour is always deemed rational because it can always be described as somehow contributing to an individual's unique utility function.

⁹ Buchanan and Tullock, op. cit., p. 38.

Although it is possible to escape from the tautology, it is not possible to escape from the basic criticism. In order to accomplish the former, Downs stipulates that for the purposes of his study rational behaviour is limited to the realm of politics.¹⁰ To illustrate he gives the example of a man whose wife prevails upon him to cast a vote against his personal preference. Complying with her wish may be perfectly rational for the man who wishes to preserve matrimonial harmony, but Downs insists that the same action is irrational in the realm of politics.¹¹ There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this idea of political rationality since most models used in the study of politics and political phenomena are simplifications. The major advantage of such a narrow definition of rationality is that it provides for the possibility of politically irrational behaviour.

However, the basic criticism still remains. Regardless of the assumptions, men undertake activities not usually considered political and very few people confine all or even most of their activities to the political realm. The decision to vote or not may be a political choice, but many people may be influenced in that decision by phenomena which are not normally considered political, at least not by economists.

¹⁰This is only a partial solution of course. "Politics" may be defined very widely or very narrowly. In the end, the considerations and the goals which are deemed "political" are usually the ones which economists specify in their own equations.

¹¹Downs, op. cit., p. 7.

Besides that, the political goals they pursue are often in conflict. Professor Eulau makes the point quite simply: "Unlike organizational or economic behavior political behavior rarely centers in the search for the achievement of a single goal or a single value."¹²

It would be a mistake for an economist to argue that these criticisms are not without some validity, but neither should they be overstated. Economists have created a model political actor and, like any other model, it is not designed to explain political behaviour; its accepted function is the suggestion of hypotheses. As Downs puts it, "Theoretical models should be tested primarily by the accuracy of their prediction rather than the reality of their assumptions."¹³ But economic models can be attacked on the basis of their logic as well as their accuracy. An argument can be made that if a rational political actor performed the calculations which Downs suggests he would perform, it is difficult to understand why he would bother with low-level participation, in this case voting.

¹²Heinz Eulau, "Rationality and Unanimous Decision-Making" in Carl J. Friedrich, (ed.), Nomos VII: Rational Decision (New York: Atherton Press, 1964), p. 37. For an extended discussion of this line of criticism see Thomas Conrad, "Rationality and Political Science: A Critical Analysis of the Consumer-Choice Model," Polity, Vol. 111, No. 2, (Summer, 1970), pp. 477-493.

¹³Downs, op. cit., p. 16.

Downs proposes only two types of actors, the parties and the voters. Like the profit-maximizing entrepreneur, the party has a single goal -- to win elections. The voter, acting much like the rational consumer, trades his votes for the policies and benefits the party provides. As we mentioned before, the economists argue that a man will "spend" his vote only if his benefits exceed his costs. The costs of voting are usually estimated in terms of time and effort but provision is also made for the costs of obtaining information. The amount of benefit a voter expects to receive is heavily dependent upon whether or not there is a substantial difference for him between the competing political parties. If he feels that a victory for a particular party will have a considerable effect on his utility function, he is much more liable to vote than if he perceives very little difference. At the same time, however, he must also calculate the chances that the entire election will turn on his vote. For voters in all but the smallest of elections, the chances are infinitesimal.¹⁴

¹⁴It has been suggested that, regardless of the actual probabilities involved, people may not interpret them in this way. See William Riker and Peter Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting," American Political Science Review, Vol. 62, No. 3 (September, 1968), p. 27. While this may be an accurate estimation, it is probably fair to say that if actors are rational, and possessed of adequate information, they are unlikely to make such an error in calculation.

Once he considers the product of these two variables the whole exercise becomes of dubious personal value. On the basis of this Downsian calculus it seems, therefore, that the economic approach is unable to explain why people vote.

In an attempt to salvage a somewhat paradoxical situation, Downs suggests that the satisfaction entailed in voting and thereby complying with the democratic ethic is sufficient to constitute a "reward" or a "benefit" in our rational calculus.¹⁵ If one adds to this the suggestion that in voting a man is investing in the long-term viability of the political system, then it seems we have arrived at a solution.¹⁶ Riker and Ordeshook attempt to account for voting in much the same way. Like Downs they include the notion of civic duty, but they add the satisfactions that come from affirming a partisan preference, affirming one's efficacy in the political system, and simply making a decision.¹⁷ In doing so they explicitly reject the distinctively Downsian notion that the parameters of the

¹⁵Downs, op. cit., p. 268.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 270. "We call the part of this reward the citizen receives at each election his long-run participation value."

¹⁷Riker and Ordeshook, op. cit., p. 28.

concept of political rationality ought to be limited. As far as Riker and Ordeshook are concerned, it is simply not sufficient to relegate a sizeable amount of political activity "to the mysterious and inexplicable world of the irrational".¹⁸ They are willing to risk a tautology (all behaviour is in some manner rational) for the sake of a more complete description of all those things which a rational individual takes into account before he decides to vote.

But, as Brian Barry points out in a very perceptive discussion of Downs, this line of reasoning calls into question the whole point and value of the economic approach.

It is no trick to restate all behaviour in terms of "rewards" and "costs"; it may for some purposes be a useful conceptual device but it does not, in itself, provide more than a set of empty boxes waiting to be filled.¹⁹

In a purely formal way, voting may be accounted for by including almost every conceivable benefit within the economic framework, but the final product resembles a description more than an explanation. The number and

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁹ Brian Barry, Sociologists, Economists and Democracy, p. 14.

combination of values which may influence a decision to vote is almost infinite and their analysis would mark a radical departure from the simplified model which is so clearly the mark of economists. Besides that, the more relevant questions would be sociological and psychological ones -- how do people acquire these values and why do some people hold them more strongly than others?

Unless economists are willing to sacrifice the explanatory power which accompanies a strict definition of politically rational action, it seems that they will have some difficulty explaining why people vote. The question of suitability, which was introduced in chapter one, is raised here with regard to the success economists have had in explaining low-level political activity. Should the economist be prepared to accept that some situations are more amenable to the use of a strictly economic approach than others? The answer must be very solidly in the affirmative. An economist can calculate which courses of action are open to the individual participant and which will bring the greatest return for the effort expended, but he must also endeavour to anticipate those elements in the situation he is studying which might pose obstacles to rational behaviour. As Barry puts it, "Whether a situation is 'appropriate' or not depends on the extent

to which other factors can be safely ignored."²⁰ The lack of adequate information or the existence of an overriding value commitment may, for example, lead an individual to act in a politically irrational manner.

An investigation of the hypotheses which are generated by an economic theory is the most straightforward and satisfactory way of assessing the reliability of the model. Nevertheless, we can probably make some effort to anticipate the likelihood of rational behaviour. To borrow Quentin Gibson's example, it is probably reasonable to assume that men will be more rational in the pitching of a tent than in the discussion of immigration policy.²¹ Also, men are more likely to be rational in the face of a simple problem than a complex one. Since it is difficult to be sure whether a potential political actor regards participation as a simple problem or a complex one, it is helpful to concentrate on what the costs of participation are likely to be and what benefits might accrue. As we discussed earlier, these differ depending upon the level at which the individual participates.

²⁰Ibid., p. 15. Gibson makes the point in much the same way. "An estimate has to be made of the extent of the influences leading to error, and if the enquiry is to be taken further, something must be known of their character." op. cit., p. 165.

²¹Gibson, op. cit., p. 166.

The costs of participation in terms of time and energy are more substantial at higher levels of involvement. We are forced to assume that these costs reflect the extent to which the individual is involved in politics and the extent to which his decisions are affected by political phenomena at the expense of other considerations. If this is the case, we can tentatively assert that a man is more likely to be politically rational at higher levels of political involvement than at lower levels. The decision to participate is more likely to be the product of a calculation including only political considerations if participation is to be of a high level variety. To reformulate Downs' own example, it is less likely that a wife will succeed in encouraging her husband to change his political allegiance if he holds an office in a political party than if he is simply a party sympathizer. Our expectations for rational behaviour are highly dependent upon the situation we are investigating. Our argument is that those who devote large portions of their time and energy to electoral activity, or who are contemplating such an expenditure, are more likely to be rational in the political sense than those who do not.

The simple assertion that the costs of participation are greater at higher levels does not, of course, remove the possibility of obstacles to rational behaviour. It

may be more important for a man to maximize his self-interest in his political activities than in any others, but that is no guarantee that some factor will not be present to thwart his desire. In formulating a theory which utilizes a rational-choice model it is important to know whether or not political scientists and sociologists have provided sufficient information about behaviour to justify an assumption of rationality. In the next chapter we will examine the results of some empirical investigation into high level involvement in political parties. In the meantime, it is well to remember that Mancur Olson does not claim universal applicability for his theory. His main interest is clearly participation in trade union and pressure group activities. The political scientist is left to speculate whether or not the logic of his theory can be transferred to the study of political parties.

The Logic of Collective Action

We have noted so far that passive political activity, or low level involvement, is distinguished by numerous participants and relatively low costs. A glance at the hierarchy on Page 7 shows that it is also distinguished by personal, unorganized action. An individual who participates only at the passive level can vote, initiate political discussions, or pay attention to political stimuli

without the benefit of organization. Those who participate at higher levels, however, usually organize to do so, and in the case of electoral activity the organization is usually a political party. It is clear, therefore, that the nature of organizations in general, and political parties in particular, is of some importance in assessing high level participation.

People usually join organizations or associations when individual, unorganized activity will not suffice to achieve their goals. Most organizations are formed to promote and advance the interests of their members.²² Farmers' associations may be formed to ensure the passage of legislation beneficial to farmers (or to prevent the passage of legislation which is detrimental) and trade unions exist to obtain higher wages or better working conditions for union members. Olson concentrates on those organizations which are expected to perform in this manner.

His contribution to the economists' study of participation is grounded in his recognition that these organizations promote common interests and that they do so by providing public goods. Olson defines a public good as any good which cannot be withheld from any member of a specified group once it is supplied to one member of that group.²³ It would be very difficult, using the example

²²Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, p. 18.

²³Ibid., p. 14.

of an exceptionally large group, to deny military protection or the service of the courts to one segment of the population while at the same time offering it to the remainder. When legislation is passed to stabilize grain prices among wheat farmers the benefits of that legislation extend to all other wheat farmers. When a machinists' union succeeds in obtaining better factory lighting, all workers benefit. Those organizations which fail to promote the common interests of their membership begin to lose members.

In light of this, it is hardly surprising that much of traditional group theory has been constructed on the assumption that because people desire the provision of public goods they participate in order to assure that these goods will be provided. Added to this is the very uneconomic notion that human beings have a natural propensity to join and that North Americans display this more intensely than anyone else.²⁴

Olson's thesis is essentially a refutation of this point of view. It is his contention that in a large group providing public goods a rational actor, regardless of his

²⁴The most famous expositor of this view was Alexis de Toqueville, Democracy in America (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 198. Among political scientists, the inevitable character of group affiliations has been emphasized by Arthur Bentley among others. See The Process of Government, (Evanston, Ill.: The Principia Press of Ill., 1908).

desire to see a public good provided, would not become a member and contribute for that reason. In large groups where there are many potential beneficiaries the provision of a public good will be suboptimal as far as the group as a whole is concerned. This occurs because the rational, calculating, individual must consider whether or not the public good would be provided regardless of his contribution. In the case of large groups, his conclusion will almost always be in the affirmative. Just as profit-maximizing firms in a perfectly competitive industry are expected to refuse financial support to a lobby that would bring benefits to the entire industry, a rational individual will refuse to participate in order to assure the provision of public goods. He will not calculate that if everyone refused to contribute to the provision of the public good, it would not be provided. A large group, by Olson's definition, has sufficient members that the withdrawal of one would have no effect on the provision of the public good.²⁵ If there are no obstacles to this logical sequence, the result is a suboptimal provision of the public good. Fewer people will be willing to contribute the necessary time, energy and funds required.

²⁵Olson, op. cit., p. 44.

According to Olson, if people are to participate in large groups that provide public goods, then, as well as the public goods, these groups must also provide "selective incentives". Unlike public goods, selective incentives stimulate rational individuals to act in a group-oriented way. A selective incentive operates discriminately -- on members of the group but not on non-members.²⁶ They may be either positive or negative, that is they may have the effect of coercing the individual or they may be a positive inducement for him to continue or begin his participation in the group. Only with the provision of selective incentives, Olson argues, can we expect the rational man to take part in large groups.

The necessity of confining discussion to large groups may be somewhat uncomfortable for the study of party organizations. Here the component units may be sufficiently small as to constitute a group whose members know or at least recognize one another. The small group, according to Olson, is one in which a particular member may value a public good to the degree that he sees fit to provide the good for the

²⁶Ibid., p. 51. "The incentive must be "selective" so that those who do not join the organization working for the group's interest, or in some ways contribute to the attainment of the group's interest, can be treated differently from those who do."

whole group simply in order to obtain it for himself. But the party organization would likely qualify as a "federal" group.²⁷ The constituent units are organized for the accomplishment of a particular task but the public good is provided only by the larger organization. The political party in toto provides the programs and policies which constitute the public goods to be provided.

It might be argued that the constituency president is sufficiently close to the process of policy formation that he may have, or feel he has, an impact on its direction. If such were the case his participation would not be dependent on selective incentives. But it is doubtful either that the constituency president is, or feels he is, likely to have much of an impact on policy formation, even when his party is in power. Constituency presidents rarely interact with the party leadership and, according to party organizers, they rarely, if ever, meet as a body. Besides that, as we show in chapter four, policy formation is ranked quite low in importance by our respondents themselves. It is assumed that even though constituency presidents do distribute rewards to other workers they too are tied to party activity by the same types of incentives. It is important to note, however, that in some organizations, at certain levels of involvement or for certain types of

²⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

involvement, it is sufficient that participants have a distinguishable impact on the provision of the public good to ensure their participation.

It is not absolutely true that the size of the group determines whether or not a group will be able to provide itself with public goods without resorting to coercion or selective inducements. In most groups, some individuals will profit more through the provision of a public good than others. In the state it might be those who have a larger personal investment, and, in the trade union, those whose salaries will be raised the highest in the event of successful negotiation. In the political party it may be the politician or those who have a particular interest in the success of a party policy. In all of these cases, however, once the group grows the smaller the fraction of group benefit that will be acquired by the individual. And since no collective good can be obtained without some agreement, co-ordination, and organization, the larger the group the greater these costs will become.

It should be evident now why Olson refers to large groups as "latent" groups. Members will be inclined to favor the provision of a public good but unwilling to contribute to the provision since their effort will not make a noticeable impact on the ability of the group to provide the good. These groups are latent in the sense that their members have

the willingness and the capacity to make a contribution yet in the absence of selective incentives they fail to do so.

We have examined in this chapter the concept of rational action as it has been employed by some economists in the investigation of political phenomena. The object has been to provide a justification for the use of economic theory in the study of political participation. The conclusions must be tentative, but according to our argument the costs and benefits involved indicate that participation is more likely to be the product of a rational calculation at high levels rather than at low levels of involvement. This does not mean that economic theory will automatically provide accurate generalizations. This is a conclusion warranted only by empirical investigation. However, if this justification is acceptable, it provides reasons for examining in detail the hypotheses of economists which bear on high level participation.

Olson's theory of high level participation in certain groups suggests some hypotheses which should be examined in the explanation of participation at the office-holding level in political parties. Whether the incentives of party activists conform to expectations is only one of the questions of interest. The idea of studying incentives is not particularly new. Of interest also will be the degree to which the findings of this study support or contradict similar studies. In a fundamental sense, Olson has provided a new impetus and some different reasons for studying incentives. The task of examining them in a more thorough fashion falls to political science.

CHAPTER III

INCENTIVE SYSTEMS AND PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES

Mancur Olson's theory of collective action has at least two appealing characteristics for the study of participation in political parties. First, it seems to solve what Henry Jacek describes as the main problem in that study -- the absence of a theoretical framework which would unite generalizations about party institutions as a whole with low level statements about individuals within the party organization.¹ Secondly, the theory is economical in the sense that it aims at the generation of important propositions on the basis of very few assumptions. It suggests that a single variable (or, more precisely, a constellation of variables), selective incentives, might be profitably explored in the explanation of costly or high level political activity.

¹Henry Jacek, "The Comparative Study of Party Organizations in Canada and in the United States", (mimeographed) paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1969, p. 1. Jacek suggests that the concepts of function and role might be usefully combined in the study of party organization. He does, however, acknowledge the need to study incentives, socialization, and the socio-economic-demographic characteristics of party activists.

In the light of these two positive claims it is necessary to recall some of the observations and assertions made at the outset of this paper. We stated that economists are characteristically concerned with generating hypotheses on the basis of a few important assumptions about the choice processes of individuals. The concern of sociologists has been directed primarily at the effects of societal variables on political phenomena. As an economist, Olson seems to fit this pattern well. His concern is with the conditions that must be present for an individual to choose participation; the social and economic background and the level of politicization of participants are all items which hold no great interest for him. Therefore, when it is asserted that Olson has provided a theoretical framework to unite generalizations about party organizations and about individual participants, it should be recognized that this does not include any generalizations about individuals beyond those that deal with their relationship to the organization. And, when the complex rationale behind this relationship is set aside, the relationship itself emerges as a relatively simple one. In short, the claim that a schema has been provided might be justified, but the low level generalizations about individuals are neither numerous nor complex.

In connection with the second claim, that of providing a variable which might explain high level participation, it has been stated at the outset that to our knowledge there exists no single variable which alone can account for all types of political participation. In fairness to Olson it should be remembered that even though the idea of selective incentives is probably his most important contribution he does argue that other variables, especially the size of the group or organization, will also affect individual behavior. Also, Olson's theory does not presume to explain all types of participation. It does not explain participation except at the level of the political organization and we have already argued that the economic approach may be better suited to account for participation at this level of activity. In spite of this it is exceedingly difficult to accept the proposition that any single variable might be perfectly independent, even in one particular circumstance of political participation.

These observations and misgivings are clearly connected. Olson has constructed a theory which confines its attention to the organizational framework of participation and to a very few variables within that framework. Sociologists, on the other hand, seldom employ such a tightly

defined schema and normally examine a wider range of variables. As well as Olson's theory and the nature of the incentives, a question of some importance must be the extent to which some of the findings of sociologists can be applied to Ontario party activists and the extent to which some of the variables employed by sociologists are related to incentives in general. In short, we have no intention of excluding from consideration the work that has already been done on active political participation and on incentives.

For these reasons this chapter will include, first of all, a discussion of some of the generalizations about political participation, and about high level participation in particular, that have come from the research of sociologists. This will eventually involve an assessment of recruitment studies and their bearing on the study of incentives. Secondly, we will need to evaluate the usefulness of Olson's theory itself in the further study of incentives and to examine the work of others who have contributed both theoretically and empirically to the understanding of the incentive systems of party organizations. Finally, it will be necessary to develop, or, more precisely, to adapt a system of classifying incentives and to suggest some testable hypotheses that can be examined by reference to our own study of constituency presidents.

Sociologists and The Study of Political Participation

In a formal and rigid sense, there exists no sociological theory of participation. Instead, sociologists have proceeded from a variety of perspectives and have assembled an extensive fund of empirical knowledge, some of which, though not related to any existent theory, may eventually provide the empirical grounds for such a theory. Data on relationships between societal and personal variables and the extent of political participation have existed for some time almost in a theoretical vacuum. In commenting on their own work recent writers on the subject of high level participation have made this state of affairs quite explicit:

At this point the research and related reports are, frankly, atheoretical, though, we hope, exploratory analysis such as this will lead to the formulation of testable theory.²

It seems that among sociologists one of the first steps in analysis has been to discover how, if at all, political activists differ from the population from which they have been drawn. In this regard some of the findings

²Allan Kornberg, Joel Smith, and David Bromley, "Some Differences in the Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian and American Party Officials: A Preliminary Report", op. cit., p. 64.

of voter studies, or studies of low level participation, provide helpful clues. Regardless of the level of analysis, most of the sociological studies of political participation begin with the working hypothesis that not all people are equally likely to take part in politics or political activities. The tendency to participate will probably be positively or negatively correlated with a series of independent variables. Moreover, the tendency to participate at higher levels in electoral activity will also be related to these variables. We are already aware that continuous, overt, high level participation is confined to a very small percentage of the population. Sociologists have endeavoured to determine the extent to which variables that are related to participation at lower levels are also related at higher levels of participation. What has emerged is a set of "prerequisites" or "resources" for political activity which that small percentage of political combatants who operate the political parties generally possess in generous quantities. Much of the effort of sociologists to explain participation at all levels is aimed at isolating these various requirements and determining the extent to which each is able to account for participation at different levels.

Among the variables most favoured for examination are those that deal with a participant's socio-economic resources.³ A summary of the generalizations which bear directly on the relationship between participation and socio-economic resources can be found in Lester Milbrath's Political Participation.⁴ Since participation requires time and sometimes money, even at very low levels, perhaps the most general, and most important, observation is simply that the more affluent tend to participate more often and for longer periods.⁵ Income is positively correlated with participation. Furthermore, individuals with a better education and with

³Studies of high-ranking party officials are sometimes referred to as "profiles" suggesting a reliance on socio-economic-demographic characteristics as a basis for classifying activists. Examples include Robert Hirschfield, Bert Swanson, and Blanche D. Blank, "A Profile of Political Activists in Manhattan", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. XV, No. 3, (September, 1962), pp. 489-506; and Charles Wiggins and William Turk "State Party Chairman: A Profile", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, (June, 1970), pp. 321-332.

⁴Op. cit.

⁵Van Loon has pointed out that it is necessary to examine the resources which accompany a given socio-economic status as well as the status itself as a factor in determining participation. Rick Van Loon, "Political Participation in Canada: The 1965 Election", op. cit., p. 380.

a higher social status tend to participate at higher levels of activity.⁶ Sex is also an important variable. As Milbrath puts it, "the finding that men are more likely to participate than women is one of the most thoroughly substantiated in social science."⁷

If a participant is to extent his involvement in politics even a short distance beyond the act of voting he must also possess certain personal psychological resources. Many political activities, especially within a political party, require certain social skills which may not come automatically with socio-economic resources. In a study of Washington lobbyists conducted in 1962, Milbrath and Klein concluded that personality variables, as well as environmental ones, had to be employed to account for differing rates of participation.⁸ The authors examined the concepts "esteem", "dominance" and "sociability" to determine their relationship to political participation.

⁶ See, for example, the findings of Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964), pp. 250-254; Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1966), pp. 282-301; Robert Lane, Political Life (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959), p. 222; and, in Canada, Van Loon, op. cit., pp. 384-385.

⁷ Milbrath, op. cit., p. 135.

⁸ Lester Milbrath and Walter Klein, "Personality Correlates of Political Participation", Acta Sociologica, Vol. 6, (1962), p. 55.

Not surprisingly, those who scored high on each of these indicators were more likely to participate than those who did not. From another perspective, Van Loon has also argued that "people who have more social ability and who are efficacious in other social relationships are more likely to participate in politics."⁹

There are many other socio-economic and psychological variables that seem to have a role in determining the extent and likelihood of political participation. Some have argued the importance of a sense of political efficacy and others the level of political interest.¹⁰ Added to all of this is the recent interest expressed in the learning of political attitudes and skills and in the unique political backgrounds of those who participate actively in politics.¹¹

⁹Van Loon, op. cit., p. 381.

¹⁰Campbell et al., have recognized the importance of both for electoral participation. "The extent of a person's interest in the campaign, his concern over its outcome, his sense of political effectiveness ... will be seen to have a clear influence on whether he joins the electoral process", op. cit., p. 14. Van Loon has ascribed particular importance to the level of interest as a final determining factor in political participation, op. cit., p. 381. For a discussion of efficacy, and other variables in a comparative context see Norman H. Nie, G. Bingham Powell, Jr., and Kenneth Prewitt, "Social Structure and Political Participation: Developmental Relationships, II", American Political Science Review, Vol. 63, No. 3, (September, 1969), pp. 814-818.

¹¹The literature on political socialization is voluminous and growing. Among the more important and influential theoretical works are those of David Easton, "The Theoretical Relevance of Political Socialization",

Some of this interest has been directed toward legislative elites, but a recent study has concentrated attention on party officials.¹²

Kornberg, Smith and Bromley chose two American and two Canadian cities in which to examine political activists. Because their study represents probably the most systematic and thorough investigation of high level participation in Canada, and at the same time allows for comparisons with activists in the United States, it deserves some attention. The authors examined the social and economic characteristics of party activists in both countries, selected aspects of their socialization, and the contributions of various socializing agents. Their data on the socio-economic backgrounds of the population examined provide further evidence for the widely accepted view that a disproportionate number of the politically active come from high socio-economic backgrounds. In this regard the authors conclude that, "the holding of party office remains so sufficiently special that it tends to be denied to people of low status."¹³

Canadian Journal of Political Science, Vol. I, No. 2, (June, 1968), pp. 125-146; and Jack Dennis, "Major Problems of Socialization Research", Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 12, (1968), pp. 85-114.

¹²Kornberg, et al., op. cit.

¹³Ibid., p. 72.

The aspects of political socialization examined closely in the Kornberg study were party identification, interest, and awareness. During the development of their political orientations Canadian activists generally identified with more parties than their American counterparts, but the development of political interest seems to be quite similar among both groups. Unlike the socio-economic characteristics which are a relatively easy measure of the difference between activists and the rest of the population, little information is available on the level of political interest among ordinary citizens. What evidence there is seems to suggest that in general people are neither aware of, nor particularly interested in, public affairs. The fact that activists tend to be more interested in politics than the average individual is an important discovery, but the authors of this study are also concerned with showing that the traditional sequence of awareness-interest-identification is not supported by their data. Their findings lend some support to Van Loon's model of political participation in which the level of political interest appears as the final intervening variable.¹⁴

¹⁴Van Loon, op. cit., p. 380.

As Kornberg et. al., put it, "A relatively high level of interest appears to be the last rather than the second threshold necessary for party work"¹⁵

Although important weaknesses exist, studies of political socialization have the redeeming quality of providing a framework, if not a theory, from which to proceed with a study of the interaction of societal and political factors and their effect on participation. They also provide a way of organizing some of the information which sociologists have so far gathered about participants and types of political participation. But while many variables are treated, no suggestion has yet been made that any one is capable of explaining, entirely on its own, why some people participate and others do not. Nor has there been any suggestion (at least not yet) that if we understand fully the process of an individual's politicization we will be able to accurately gauge the extent and nature of his participation. We may be able to generalize with some confidence about the socialization of Canadian party officials but the real enigma are those people whose politicization sequence closely resembles that of party activists, but who do not participate actively in politics.

¹⁵Kornberg, et al., op. cit., p. 80.

Similarly, we can generalize about the socio-economic status of activists, their level of education and even their personalities, but there seems to be no easy way for sociologists to explain why so many who possess these various resources fail to participate beyond low levels of involvement.

This problem in the sociological analysis of high level participation has been recognized before.¹⁶ In a study of local party officials in Massachusetts and North Carolina, Lewis Bowman and G.R. Boynton noted that "there are far more people who have all of these characteristics than there are people who actually hold political office."¹⁷ The apparent validity of this observation is enhanced by recalling that only 3 or 4 per cent of the Canadian population actually participate at high levels. Lester Milbrath maintains that a pool of potential participants exists from which political activists are drawn. Those included in this group of potential activists have the necessary "resources" for participation, including

¹⁶"Study after study has underscored the contrast between the high proportion of voters and the low proportion of politically concerned and alert citizens within the electorate". Stein Rokkan, Citizens, Elections, Parties (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1970), p. 29.

¹⁷Lewis Bowman and G.R. Boynton, "Recruitment Patterns Among Local Party Officials: A Model and Some Preliminary Findings in Selected Locales", American Political Science Review, Vol. LX, No. 3, (September, 1966), p. 672.

the necessary interest in politics. On the basis of an AIPO study of the 1954 presidential election, Robert Lane has stated that, at face value, some 22 per cent of the eligible electorate are willing to electioneer for a party or candidate even though only some 5% actually do so at any single election.¹⁸ To help account for the presence of a "reservoir" instead of a much larger group of politically active citizenry, Lester Milbrath has suggested that a "push" is required to move a political actor from one level of involvement to another and that this phenomenon is especially characteristic of the transition from transitional to high level activities.¹⁹ He captures this idea with the concept of "threshold".

A person needs an extra strong push from the environment (eg. earnest solicitation from a friend) or needs to feel very strongly about an issue or a candidate before he will cross the threshold and become a political combatant.²⁰

Beyond recognizing the existence of a threshold the sociologist's quest to explain why people participate at high levels of involvement in politics seems to require a study of party organizations themselves. A recognition

¹⁸Lane, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁹Milbrath, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

²⁰Ibid., p. 20.

that all of the variables traditionally examined in connection with participation will not account for the total variance, and a general interest in the manner in which political parties renew their membership has prompted studies on recruitment and incentives. Since the major vehicle for high level electoral participation is the political party, presumably its practices should have profound effects on the question of who participates and who does not. Furthermore, few writers on the functions of political parties have failed to stress the function of selecting and training leaders.²¹

But while the importance of the party organization is generally acknowledged and the study of recruitment patterns has enjoyed some popularity, there are good reasons for agreeing with Joseph Schlesinger that today political parties stand outside the mainstream of organization theory.²² In the first place, much of the work on party organization has been done in the United States and, as such, it has exhibited a very significant concern with the reform of the party machines.

²¹For an enumeration of functions emerging from a comparative point of view see Sigmund Neumann, Modern Political Parties, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 396-400. With reference to Canadian political parties and this particular function see Van Loon and Whittington, The Canadian Political System, p. 232.

²²Joseph Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization", in James G. March (ed.), Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965), p. 764.

Secondly, the parties, until recently, have been reluctant to undergo intensive analysis, especially of their financial workings. Even more important, however, is the general reluctance to discuss political parties as organizations because of what Schlesinger refers to as the intractable character of political parties.²³ Most students of organizations prefer those in which an employee-employer relationship exists. For one thing, payments and rewards can usually be measured by empirical referents. In the political party it is not always easy to accurately gauge the rewards and satisfactions which participants receive. Finally, there has been a tendency to emphasize the role of the party in the political system to the exclusion of other perspectives. Much of the work on political parties treats the party as a public agency rather than as an instrument of its membership.²⁴

In spite of these difficulties and inclinations it is impossible to avoid the fact that political parties, like other organizations, must compete for participants. Whatever distinguishes political parties from other organizations, they still must attract (in different

²³Ibid.

²⁴Joseph Schlesinger, "Political Parties", Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, David Sills (ed.), Vol. 11, (1968), p. 429.

proportions) supporters, members, and activists. For this reason an economic theory which emphasizes incentives is well worth considering in an examination of high level participation. Of interest as well is the degree to which Olson's economic framework, organization theory, and the findings of students of party organization, can be reconciled for the establishment of a classification of incentives and the generation of some hypotheses.

Incentive Systems

Before a discussion of specific incentives can be attempted, it is necessary to distinguish between "incentives" and "recruitment".²⁵ Until the existence of

²⁵The literature on recruitment is extensive but most of it is confined to case studies of recruitment to elected positions. Nevertheless, they include the basic assumptions upon which the study of recruitment is based. See Lester Seligman, "Political Recruitment and Party Structure: A Case Study" in William Crotty, D.M. Freeman and Douglas Gatlin (eds.), Political Parties and Political Behavior (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1966), pp. 224-242; Peter Rossi and Phillips Cutright, "Political Organization in an Industrial Setting", in Morris Janowitz, (ed.), Community Political Systems, (Glencoe Ill.: Free Press, 1961), pp. 81-116; Jacob Herbert, "Initial Recruitment of Elected Officials in the U.S. -- A Model", Journal of Politics, Vol. 24, (1962), pp. 703-716; and Dwaine Marvick and Charles Nixon, "Recruitment Contrasts in Rival Campaign Groups", in Dwaine Marvick (ed.), Political Decision-Makers (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1961), pp. 193-217.

studies which dealt specifically with incentives, the tendency had been to combine and confuse the study of recruitment of party activists, and the study of incentives to involvement at the office holding level. A good example of this problem is a "recruitment" study undertaken by Lewis Bowman and G.R. Boynton, and the recruitment model which they developed. The authors inquired of the activists first, how they became initially involved in political activities, and, secondly, why they decided to run for party office. In each case answers involved a reference both to particular individuals and to particular reasons. The authors report that the most frequently offered reason for initial activity was the request of friends or relatives. The second most frequently offered reason was a concern with policy matters.²⁶ The first refers to the external circumstances of participation, the second to purposes and reasons. There is no single definition of what "recruitment" means or what a "recruitment model" should contain, but for the sake of clarity we might attempt to distinguish between reasons for participation and the circumstances of participation.

Generally, the term "incentive" will be used to denote those personal satisfactions and rewards which the party official obtains or feels he obtains from his participation

²⁶Bowman and Boynton, op. cit., p. 672.

in the party organization. The term "recruitment" will be employed to mean the process through which these rewards and satisfactions are transmitted to the prospective participant. There is some justification in usage for the association of recruitment with the efforts of other individuals, or groups of individuals, to encourage political action. Lester Seligman, in a study of candidate recruitment, has stated, "recruitment in parties is the work of groups with various interests and goals".²⁷ Frank Sorauf in defining recruitment has also recognized its unique meaning: "Recruitment, in whatever form, is a matching of the motives and goals of the individual with the incentives and expectations of the party organization".²⁸

It is certainly possible that people will join political parties without being actively recruited. Eldersveld makes room for this possibility in his own recruitment model. He subsumes the mechanisms of recruitment to political activity under three main headings: outside influences, self-generating forces and accidental involvement.²⁹ It is unlikely, according to our definition, that self-generating

²⁷Seligman, op. cit., p. 240.

²⁸Frank Sorauf, Political Parties in America (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1968), p. 92.

²⁹Samuel J. Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1964), p. 274. Bowman and Boynton, though they devise their own recruitment model, end up building on Eldersveld's classification.

forces should be included in a model of recruitment (even though they may conform generally to Sorauf's notion of what constitutes recruitment). But to avoid further difficulties it is assumed here that all participants have reasons for their participation in political parties over and above the fact that they may have been approached and asked to participate.

Even though a concern with the incentive systems of political parties has not been widespread, writers have painted profiles of party activists which often include generalizations about their reasons for participation. Those who have systematically investigated incentives to participation in political parties sometimes assume a posture similar to that of economists. Frank Sorauf, for example, begins a discussion of incentive systems by saying that, "if a party is to continue functioning as an organization it must make 'payments' in an acceptable 'political currency' adequate to motivate and allocate the labors of its workers".³⁰ Sorauf is one of the few students of political parties to adopt this attitude and his enumeration deserves some attention though it is intended to describe incentives exclusively within American

³⁰ Sorauf, op. cit., p. 81.

parties. It is likely that, given regional variations, comparable incentive systems are operative in Canadian parties, but this assumption is based on very little empirical work.³¹

The most effective challenge to the assumption is the importance normally credited to the role of patronage as an incentive to activity in American parties, and normally denied as such in Canadian political parties. In the United States patronage positions extend from the highest of ambassadorial posts to the smallest of part-time jobs dispensed by civic administrations. Despite this Sorauf maintains that it is doubtful patronage was ever the dominant incentive to participation and that its use is on the decline in the United States.³² In Canada we may be able to estimate its importance at present, but whether this represents an increase or a decline is a matter of speculation.

Another type of incentive to participation is the system of preferments, or grants of extraordinary treatment,

³¹As R. McGregor Dawson puts it, "Through all forms of Canadian party organizations runs a current of influences from the United States, clear and persistent, yet not strong enough to bring about complete imitation." R. McGregor Dawson, The Government of Canada (4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 475.

³²Sorauf, op. cit., pp. 82-83.

employed almost exclusively by governing parties. Preferments may mean little more than prompt service, or they might extend to the offering of government contracts. The possibility of a career in politics is also an important incentive to participation. In a system where access to most offices is predicated on at least some prior involvement, participation is usually a prerequisite to a political career. Besides that, extensive activity is often required to develop the necessary personal contacts and support.

In addition to these tangible rewards for participation, there exists a rather extensive list of personal rewards of a social and psychological nature. For example, high level participation may confer status to the participant and be a source of socio-economic mobility by bringing him into contact with higher socio-economic groups.³³ As well as the promise of possible social mobility there is the opportunity to make new friends and meet new people. Party activity, especially during elections, may offer a rather pleasant and exciting diversion for those who lack it in their everyday life. Some speculation and work has also been done on the psychological needs which are fulfilled

³³Eldersveld, op. cit., p. 235.

through political activity.³⁴ These include the somewhat discredited "power drive" pioneered by Harold Lasswell, or the need to satisfy a nagging obligation to participate for the betterment of society. Active participation may also permit identification with a more powerful figure or personality, or an opportunity to redress an apparent or real injury.³⁵

Others may be attracted to party work by the goals and principles which the party seems to espouse. These may be of a particular and specific nature, such as the repeal or enactment of a particular statute, or they may be more general. Connected with the incentive of party programmes and principles is the well-being of the party and the party organization itself. We should expect that over a period of time the organization will come to have a positive value for some individuals even if it was not the incentive which originally induced their participation.

In assessing the influence and importance of these different incentives for initiating and maintaining participation in political parties, some students of party

³⁴See, for example, Robert Lane, op. cit., chapters 7, 8 and 9; and J.C. Davies, Human Nature in Politics (New York: 1963).

³⁵Frank Sorauf, Party Politics in the American System (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1964), p. 84.

organizations have argued convincingly that in recent years incentive systems have been changing and that these changes are having profound effects on the political parties and the political system. In a book entitled The Amateur Democrat, James Q. Wilson has argued that a new type of political participant has made his presence felt in local American politics and in American party organizations.³⁶ He can be identified partly by his social and economic background, but also by his reasons for participating. Wilson refers to this ideal-type as the "amateur", and the political actor he is replacing Wilson has labelled the "professional".

The amateur is characteristically a well-educated, professional person. His income, education, and social-status all tend to be much higher than the norm in his community.³⁷ Most amateurs have a separate source of income and do not see politics as a career. Wilson explains that the amateur, unlike the professional, finds politics intrinsically interesting. It is not his age, his education, nor his class that sets this kind of participant apart and makes him worth studying -- it is his style of politics.³⁸

³⁶ James Q. Wilson, The Amateur Democrat (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

³⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

The amateur finds reward in the principles and policies of the party he supports and in having satisfied an obligation to participate in the political process. He feels it is part of his duty to contribute to the development of his community and that politics is a legitimate and useful way of accomplishing these goals, and satisfying the principles which direct his action.

This view of the party worker is fundamentally at odds with previous conceptions. The party activist in America has traditionally been portrayed as a dedicated "machine politician", concerned only with the material benefits which are the direct result of participation. Wilson does not dispute the accuracy of this model. Indeed, his "professional" is someone who is concerned primarily with material rewards and who sees politics as a game with winners and losers.³⁹ Wilson's point is simply that this stereotype is no longer adequate to describe the new kind of participant that has been recently attracted to American political parties. Furthermore, Wilson is not alone in identifying this new participant. Hirschfield, Swanson and Blank, in a study of Manhattan activists, also found that intelligent and informed citizens were taking an increasing

³⁹And for the professional, who is attracted by extrinsic rewards, winning is essential, Ibid., p. 17.

interest in political activity. Like Wilson they concluded that "while self-interest remains an important consideration in entering politics, most activists, consciously or unconsciously, subordinate it to a concept of the public interest."⁴⁰

Before we begin employing the terms "amateur" and "professional" it should be noted that, according to Wilson, other dispositional factors are also related to amateurism. For example, amateurs are also supposed to differ from professionals in their attitudes toward, and beliefs about, intra-party democracy, various campaign styles, the requirements of party loyalty, and the best political candidates. It has been pointed out that this type of characterization may have a tendency to strain the dicotomy.⁴¹ For our limited purposes we need only consider some basic socio-economic variables and their relationship to incentive systems. The terms "amateur" and "professional", as they are used here, are intended to refer only to them.

⁴⁰Hirschfield et al., op. cit., p. 492. They report that all of their data reveal a strong deviation from the stereotype "boss" or "hack".

⁴¹See Richard Hofsteter, "The Amateur Politician: A Problem in Construct Validation", Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 15, (February, 1971), pp. 31-56.

In concentrating on the participant and his effect on the party organization, Wilson exhibits no real concern that the party may be a unique type of organization. His concern with payments and benefits is peripheral to his interest in the participants themselves, their attitudes, and the response of the various party machines. A main problem in Wilson's approach is his reluctance to curtail his discussions and offer more than a general description of the different types of incentives which are supposed to attract amateurs and professionals. Mancur Olson experiences difficulties of a different sort in his discussion of incentives. He insists that private goods, in the form of selective incentives, and public goods, in the form of collective incentives, ought not to be lumped together since the participation of individuals, and the persistence of large organizations, depend exclusively on the former. Unlike Wilson, Olson does not explain by examples but by the logic of economic theory. As a result his analysis appears rigid and detached. Olson tends to be dogmatic in his approach to incentives, Wilson discursive, and hence it is difficult to reconcile one with the other for the generation of some hypotheses which might have a bearing on party organization.

What is required most is simply a classification of incentives which will offer some common ground. On this point organization theorists have made some contribution. In an earlier article, Wilson and Peter Clarke devised a classification for organizations based on the types of incentives each one employs.⁴² The three varieties of incentives they identify are material, purposive, and solidary. The fact that these are designed essentially to classify organizations and not participants is important. There is a strong tradition in organization theory which emphasizes the conditions necessary for organizational survival. The names most often linked with this concern are those of Chester Barnard⁴³ and Herbert Simon,⁴⁴ and this concern is usually subsumed under the heading "organizational equilibrium". An organization is in equilibrium, to the degree that it succeeds in arranging payments to its participants adequate to motivate their continued participation.⁴⁵ This explains the emphasis

⁴²Peter Clarke and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations", Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 6, (1961-62).

⁴³Chester L. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938).

⁴⁴Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: Free Press, 1957).

⁴⁵James G. March and Herbert Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1960), p. 83.

in organization theory on incentives (or what we have called "incentive systems") and on contributions to the organization.⁴⁶ And this perspective, as we mentioned earlier, has rarely been employed with any rigor in the study of participation in political parties.

Clarke and Wilson contend that while no organization relies exclusively on only one type of incentive, most organizations depend principally upon one type or another. Under this assumption organizations are categorized according to their incentive structure. Participants can also be categorized according to the incentives to which they respond, but, because there may be an infinite number of personal incentives, most party activists are "pure types" only for the benefit of classification. In each case we are speaking only of tendencies which may be more or less pronounced.

⁴⁶The propositions regarding incentive systems which flow from organization theory and those which come from Olson's economic theory are by no means radically different. In both cases it is assumed that people participate because the benefits of participating are greater than the costs incurred. But while Olson stays strictly within the bounds set out by an assumption of rationality, organization theorists have been concerned also with the impact of psychological and sociological factors, including self-images and conflicting roles, on participant behaviour. Their findings and propositions are much richer in detail than those of economists though they may lack the security of an assumption of rationality. For example, March and Simon, suggest that a satisfaction-dissatisfaction balance exists

Material incentives are tangible rewards and Clarke and Wilson label those organizations which utilize them, utilitarian organizations. The most obvious example is the business firm although labor unions and those political machines which rely heavily on patronage can also be included. The material incentives themselves may be actual monetary rewards, such as payments to poll captains in some political parties, or payments to salaried workers; or they may take the form of preferments or jobs. Organizations which have continuous access to these types of incentives usually enjoy flexibility in their goals and principles.

Both solidary and purposive incentives are intangible rewards. Solidary incentives are those personal satisfactions derived directly from participation itself. They include status and prestige, social contact and fellowship, and the "fun" derived directly from the activity. Women's luncheon clubs and voluntary associations are among the best examples of organizations which rely heavily on solidary incentives. According to Clarke and Wilson, the

for an individual participant and that this complements the inducement-contribution balance which is the key to the equilibrium notion and the basis for Olson's economic theory. This permits speculation on why the "satisfied" sometimes leave an organization and the "dissatisfied" sometimes stay; something which Olson's theory does not seem to anticipate.

basic internal tensions within these organizations occur over the distribution of prestige and status and the admission of new members.⁴⁷

Purposive incentives are those satisfactions related directly to the goals of the organization. Individuals who respond to purposive incentives are concerned with the goals the organization is attempting to realize and with the organization's principles. Political parties are sometimes cited as organizations which depend on purposive incentives, but better examples may be those whose goals are always explicit and specific, such as organizations established to protect a particular species of animal or to correct injustices perpetrated on others. Organizations such as these, which are continually examining and often reformulating their goals, may have difficulty attracting and retaining participants. As Clarke and Wilson put it, "The continual problem of purposive organizations is to select ends that divide the association from other groups in the community without at the same time dividing the association's members from one another."⁴⁸

This classification, although it does not differentiate between selective and collective incentives, does complement Olson's economic theory. Like Olson, the authors emphasize

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 146.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 147.

the importance of incentives in determining the structure and future of organizations. As they put it, "The basic hypothesis of this paper is that the incentive system may be regarded as the principle variable affecting organizational behavior."⁴⁹ Like Olson, they argue that the maintainance of the organization is dependent upon how effectively individuals can be induced to participate in realizing its substantive goals. According, to Clarke and Wilson the actual creation, clarification, and promulgation of these substantive goals is part of the leadership function. It is the executive which is responsible for perpetuating the organization and this is a separate function.⁵⁰

Clarke and Wilson go on the claim that power belongs to those who have control over incentive resources, and changes in executive behavior reflect changes in the supply of, and demand for, available incentives.⁵¹ While this conclusion may be warranted after an observation of some organizations, it is by no means necessarily applicable to political parties.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 130.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 133. The notion that executive and leadership functions are distinct is concurred in by Austin Ranney although it is unlikely that he sees the party executive in exactly the role that Clarke and Wilson ascribe to the executive in other organizations. See Austin Ranney, "The Concept of Party", in O. Garceau (ed.), Political Research and Political Theory (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 151-152.

⁵¹Clarke and Wilson, op. cit., p. 132.

In the first place, it is not always easy to separate the executive from the membership. The term "party member" may be stretched to cover all those who have sympathy for the party, or it may be deliberately constricted to mean only the uppermost elite. If party organizations are decentralized, as is the case in Canada and the United States, then this becomes an even more important factor. The fact that political parties amount to very little in terms of formal organization may be one of the reasons Olson is inclined to regard pressure groups as better examples of political organizations.⁵²

But the apparent lack of formal organization is not the only reason to doubt that the party executive carefully controls and dispenses incentives. Clarke and Wilson suggest another reason in their own classification of incentives. Purposive incentives, those relating to the goals and principles of the organization, are more or less in the hands of the leaders rather than the executive. They argue that in most organizations it is difficult to manipulate goals and purposes anyway. To the degree that the party relies upon purposive incentives to stimulate loyalty, the executive has little control over the extent

⁵²Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action, "That any one of a vast number of pressure groups, each representing a relatively small proportion of the American population, should amount to more as a formal organization than either of the great political parties... is surely a paradox." p. 163.

and duration of participation. This does not mean that the party executive has no control over incentives. Some incentives, however, are more easily "controlled" than others. It is particularly appropriate to keep this in mind since many political scientists have argued that a sense of civic obligation is an important motive for participation in politics. Not only does this incentive fail to fall neatly within the classification system outlined above, but it is not at all clear that the party executive has any kind of control over it.

Much of our discussion has been based on the assumption that while a political party may be a unique kind of organization this does not necessarily mean that Olson's theory and the propositions of organization theory have no application. The classification system may require adjustment, and consideration should be given to the decentralized structure of political parties in North America, but presumably collective and selective incentives can still be identified and some hypotheses tested. In fact, the major obstacle to the suggestion of hypotheses has little to do with the nature of political parties as organizations, but rather the relationship of selective incentives to the Clarke and Wilson typology. Specifically, it is difficult to know what ought to be considered a selective incentive.

Once Olson has distinguished "selective" from "collective" incentives he does not devote much of his book to an examination of them. He discusses social rewards as examples of selective incentives and agrees with those organization theorists who treat them in much the same way as monetary incentives. But he imposes no theoretical limits on what might be considered a selective incentive. In fact, in a footnote he goes as far as to say that,

In addition to monetary and social incentives, there are also erotic incentives, psychological incentives, moral incentives, and so on. To the extent that any of these types of incentives leads a latent group to obtain a collective good, it could again only be because they are or can be used as "selective incentives...".⁵³

In chapter two we noted that at the risk of a tautology it was possible to formulate an exceptionally extensive range of rewards which might accrue to the rational voter. The problem then was that any action could be considered rational as long as it had the appearance of contributing to an individual's utility function. In the case of selective incentives Olson risks the same kind of tautology. If almost any kind of reward is to be considered a selective incentive then the argument that selective

⁵³Ibid., p. 61.

incentives are necessary to insure participation is non-falsifiable.⁵⁴ Any attempt to assess the suitability of Olson's theory in the study of participation in political party organizations must begin by limiting the category of selective incentives and, in this case, by reconciling it with the typology developed by Clarke and Wilson. As long as the theory cannot be manipulated to account for every conceivable form of behavior we are able to gauge more precisely its utility in different circumstances.

For the purposes of this paper the categories of material and solidary incentives will be considered selective incentives in the sense that Olson employs the term. Both categories denote the types of satisfactions which can be withheld from some and made available to others.⁵⁵ Purposive incentives and the incentive of civic duty, which does not appear in the Clarke-Wilson typology, will be considered collective incentives in the sense that Olson employs the term. Purposive incentives, those relating directly to the goals and principles of the organization, redound to the benefit of all in the eyes of

⁵⁴This argument is made cogently by Brian Barry, Sociologists, Economists and Democracy, pp. 33-34. Much of the discussion contained here follows from his analysis.

⁵⁵This is most important, but they also denote satisfactions which represent private goods, and in that regard they are congruent with Downs' self-interest axiom.

those participants who are dedicated to the aims of the organization. Once realized, the goals of the organization cannot be withheld from some members and granted to others. Olson suggests that the collective incentives of the political party organization are the policies it institutes once elected.⁵⁶

Those who claim to participate out of a sense of civic duty should also be regarded as participating for collective incentives. Civic duty is not a purposive incentive since it need not bear a direct relationship to the goals of an organization. However, civic duty is a collective incentive in the sense that it reveals a concern with the future state of a society which will have an effect on all of its citizens.⁵⁷ Furthermore, there is no obvious organizational control over the extent of its distribution. The fact that Clarke and Wilson omit civic duty as a unique form of incentive reflects a pre-occupation, previously noted, with organizations other than political parties in which civic duty seems to play almost no role at all.

⁵⁶Olson, op. cit., p. 61.

⁵⁷Civic duty may be described as a personal satisfaction but more in the tautological sense that everything we do emanates from a desire for personal satisfaction. This may be an interesting and even an accurate observation but it is not of great help in understanding political behavior.

Some Hypotheses

A discussion of organization theory, incentive systems, and an economic theory of participation, leads to the formulation of some general hypotheses about participation in political parties. It would hardly be profitable, however, to exclude from consideration some of the hypotheses on which sociologists have based their studies of high level participation. Also, the detailed work which has been done on incentive systems in political parties has contributed testable hypotheses. The fact that they emanate from different sources means that the hypotheses discussed below are of different magnitude and may even appear to conflict.

1. The findings of sociologists and the characteristics of Wilson's "amateur" suggest that constituency presidents will likely come from families with a history of political activism, have high social and economic backgrounds, be young and well educated, and have an interest in politics.

Although it is impossible to give a thorough treatment to each of these variables, on the basis of the questionnaire we should be able to construct a profile of the party official in Ontario.

2. If the logic of collective action is operative in decisions to participate in political parties and if such participation is characterized by rational, self-interested behavior, then a preponderance of participants should be active for reasons which can be associated more or less directly with solidary or material incentives.

This hypothesis is derived indirectly from Olson's work, making use of the Clarke-Wilson classification and relying on a restricted definition of selective incentives.

In the absence of an in-depth study, perhaps a case study, it is difficult to test some of the major hypotheses of organization theory. March and Simon state that the decision to remain in an organization or to leave it is composed first, of those items and elements which make it desirable to leave and, second, of the alternatives forgone in order to stay.⁵⁸ Something might be ventured of the former, but a questionnaire distributed throughout the province will suggest very little about the latter. The number of perceived organizational and extra-organizational alternatives remains unknown. Similarly, in connection with the satisfaction-dissatisfaction balance mentioned by March and Simon, it is difficult to estimate how "satisfied" a participant is and how sufficient his incentives are without detailed information about his particular social

⁵⁸ March and Simon, op. cit., pp. 100-103.

and psychological condition. Even if selective incentives are available these are variables which may serve to coax a rational participant away from one organization and into another where the satisfactions are greater.

Although circumstances in this study make it impossible to assess the impact of these variables among participants in political parties, the level of involvement should have a significant effect on the satisfactions and rewards which are attractive and available. Poll captains, for example, may find party work more materially rewarding than those who occupy higher offices within the party. In other words, different incentives may be operative at different levels of involvement. Alternatively, since we are concentrating our attention on only one level of involvement, we might expect that incentives will change over time.

3. Those incentives which first induced an individual to participate in a political party will be different from the incentives to which he currently responds.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Samuel Eldersveld, p. 235; James Q. Wilson, The Amateur Democrat, p. 3; Lewis Bowman, Dennis Ippolito, and William Donaldson, "Incentives for the Maintenance of Grassroots Political Activism", Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 13, (February, 1969), pp. 126-139; and Margaret Conway and Frank Feigert, "Motivations, Incentive Systems and Political Party Organization", American Political Science Review, Vol. 62, No. 4, (December, 1968), pp. 1159-1173.

One of the most interesting questions, for Olson's theory and for party organization in general, is the direction of incentive changes should they take place. Case studies of party officials in the United States suggest the major hypothesis in this regard.

4. Purposive responses and civic obligation will be the most frequent reasons given for initial participation in politics but over a period of time other incentives, particularly solidary incentives, become more important.⁶⁰

This conclusion seems to support one of our original contentions, namely that Olson's theory may be more useful at higher levels of involvement where participation in politics tends to become more costly. Since we are concentrating on only one level of activity, we must assume that most party officials do not begin their political activity at the highest level and that by analysing a change of incentives among individuals over time a reasonably accurate assessment of incentives at different levels can be made as well.

⁶⁰See especially Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Not all agree on the rate of attrition. Divergent findings in this regard have prompted interesting hypotheses some of which can be linked with organizational theory. Case studies facilitate their testing. Case studies, however, do not always permit an examination of high level party officials, especially in Canada where there may be as few as three office-holders per party in each constituency. More will be said in this regard in the final chapter.

At least one student of party organization has maintained, to the contrary, that at certain levels of involvement there may be only minimal incentive change. Examining incentive change among county-wide officers, the highest level of party leadership in the county's party organization, Dennis Ippolito claims that, "previous conclusions relating to the transience of amateur activism may be overdrawn".⁶¹ He suggests that higher levels of leadership may be capable of exerting more direct control over incentives and therefore have little need to adjust their own. Those purposive incentives which first induced participation will therefore still be operative. But whether constituency officials in Canada ever have control over incentives which effect them is questionable, particularly if those incentives are purposive.

How constituency presidents see the incentives of others may be important for organizational stability. To appreciate this phenomenon as it relates to the party as a whole would require a study of activists at different levels of involvement. However, some indication of how closely personal incentives correspond to the perceived incentives of others can be offered by this study.

⁶¹Dennis Ippolito, "Motivational Reorientation and Change Among Party Activists", Journal of Politics, Vol. 31, No. 4, (December, 1969), p. 1100.

5. There is contradictory evidence but we should expect most constituency presidents to feel that the average party worker participates for selective incentives.

The profile of the constituency president will at best provide the descriptive background against which incentive systems operate. If we are correct in assuming, with Olson, that the decision to continue participation is a product of rational calculation resting basically on the presence or absence of selective incentives, then socio-economic factors should have no bearing on that decision.

6. No socio-economic or demographic variable will correlate with whatever incentive system seems to prevail among party officials. Moreover, although it has been suggested that the New Democratic Party, and its predecessor the CCF, tend to attract more people who participate out of a firm ideological conviction, party affiliation should not correlate with incentive systems either.⁶²

We might expect, on the other hand, that other distinctively organizational variables will correlate with dominant incentive systems. In particular, the length of time a constituency president has been a "party member" and the length of time he has been an "office holder" should emerge as variables with some predictive capacity.

⁶²The idea that the N.D.P., unlike the other parties in Canada, represents a basic ideological tradition, enjoys some acceptance among Canadian political scientists. Among those who have written of the party's development stressing this aspect and the tensions it has created are Leo Zakuta, A Protest Movement Becalmed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964); and, Walter Young, The Anatomy of a Party (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 1969).

In this chapter we have assembled and examined the literature which seems to have a bearing on the topic of incentive systems in political parties. Because in each case the work comes from different sources with different theoretical interests, it is often difficult to suggest the extent to which efforts contradict or complement one another. The chart set out below is an attempt to summarize the relationship of some of the concepts.

Political Style	Professional	Amateur
Incentive System	<u>Selective Incentives</u> Material Solidary	<u>Collective Incentives</u> Purposive Civic Duty

We have also discussed in some detail the sociological approach to political participation and some of the findings and hypotheses which relate directly to high level participation. While incentive systems may operate quite independently of these variables, there can be little doubt that a "profile" of the party activist in Ontario will itself be illuminating and suggestive. In the next chapter we will discuss this profile, the hypotheses suggested here, and the role of the constituency president in Ontario's political party organizations.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENT IN ONTARIO: INCENTIVES AND BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Anyone interested in the incentive systems of political parties, and in the actual reasons people have for participating in politics at the level of the political party, is ultimately faced with the problem of how best to determine the nature of purposes and reasons.¹ In chapter two we examined the economic approach to this problem and how it employs an assumption of rationality to connect all reasoning to costs and benefits. By assuming that a man's decision is an expression of his utility function, economists have avoided approaching political actors about the reasons for their actions.

The argument from rationality, as employed by Olson and others, was criticized in chapters two and three mainly because of its tautological nature. A related criticism, mentioned in chapter three, is the lack of detail in Olson's

¹There are, of course, some who seriously doubt that an interest in purposes or reasons for action is a philosophically well-grounded one. See for example, Michael Oakeshott, Rationalism in Politics (London: Methuen and Co., 1962). This question, with all its ramifications, can only be noted here.

discussion of selective incentives. It was suggested there that unless a more specific definition or classification of selective incentives were provided it was difficult to see how the theory could be of much use to the study of participation in political parties. The fact that observed behavior may or may not correspond to what Olson argues is rational makes up only part of our interest in collective and selective incentives. We are also interested in the nature of these incentives, in the type of detail that will take us even a short distance beyond pure speculation.²

Because of this, and because it is possible to directly approach the people concerned, we have relied on a questionnaire to test our hypotheses. The questionnaire itself and some of the reasons it was mailed to constituency presidents have been discussed in the first chapter. It was designed both to test the hypotheses suggested in chapter three and to contribute some basic information to the study of party activists in Ontario. Like most methods of eliciting information this one has its deficiencies and those not alluded to already will be mentioned in the discussion of data.

²In this regard Vernon Van Dyke has argued that, "The action of human beings...usually relates somehow to their desires. Human beings are purposive. They are goal-oriented. And when desires or purposes exist it is helpful to know them if the related behavior is to be explained". Vernon Van Dyke, Political Science: A Philosophical Analysis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 23.

The main object of this chapter, however, is an examination and evaluation of our hypotheses and a comparison of our findings with those American studies which have concentrated on party activists and incentives. Some of the social, economic and demographic characteristics of our respondents are examined first. Of particular interest here are the "resources" apparently required for participation and the degree to which the "profile" of our respondents corresponds to the "profile" of Wilson's amateur democrat. Secondly, the data which relate directly to questions about incentives will be examined and particular attention paid to the significance of selective incentives in the study of party organization and the question of incentive change. Finally, we will examine how our respondents perceive the rewards of average party workers, and the relationship between present incentives and some of the social, economic, and political characteristics of our respondents.

Since the nature of each party organization, in structural terms, and the role of the constituency president in it, may provide important clues in each of these areas, an effort will be made to mention relevant factors. In this regard we rely heavily on the unstructured interviews, mentioned in the first chapter, which were obtained with organizers from the different parties. Some references are

also made to the findings of the pilot study but only where noteworthy differences exist since the questionnaires were not identical, and the pilot study is not the object of our attention here.

A Profile of the Constituency President in Ontario

Although no attempt has been made to compare the data derived from this study with comparable data on the population at large in Ontario, it seems that in terms of the socio-economic resources required for participation constituency presidents from all parties possess generous quantities. In this regard at least, they resemble Wilson's amateur. It should be noted, however, that the tendency to draw activists from the better educated and higher status groups was less pronounced here than in the pilot study which was devoted entirely to constituency presidents in Metropolitan Toronto. The present study encompassed both rural and urban activists, and although respondents were not segregated on these grounds (and no empirical evidence is offered here) other authors have suggested that rural and urban organizations are distinctly different, both in activities and in membership composition.³

³R. McGregor Dawson, for example, states that, "The organization may vary from party to party, although even more striking differences will be found...between rural and urban constituencies". R. McGregor Dawson, The Government of Canada

Nevertheless, over half of the 135 constituency presidents who responded to the questionnaire had, at one time or another, attended college or university, and 40% hold university degrees. Table I summarizes what seems to be a generally high level of education. The pilot study revealed slightly higher percentages in both regards: those holding university degrees comprised 54% of respondents, and slightly more than 75% had attended university. Among respondents to the later questionnaire more than half of those who attended university went on to do graduate work. In absolute figures this represents only 39 individuals, but at the same time a very high proportion. It is interesting that 23 of the 39 are members of the Liberal party and, without detracting from its significance, most of their graduate training is in the field of law. This probably accounts for much of the fact that using a chi-square distribution in comparing constituency presidents from the various parties reveals a significant difference in the level of educational attainment. At the opposite end of the educational continuum only 5.9% of our respondents have had less than a secondary school education.

(4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 143. Echoing this view on the difference between rural and urban constituencies, Leon Epstein states that, "Party organization, with or without mass membership, tends to be more highly developed in cities than in small towns or farm areas". Leon Epstein, Political Parties in Western Democracies (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger Inc., 1967), p. 101.

TABLE: I
EDUCATION
(percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.....	N.D.P.....	Total
Primary	7.3 ₍₃₎	1.9 ₍₁₎	9.8 ₍₄₎	5.9 ₍₈₎
Secondary	34.1 ₍₁₄₎	33.9 ₍₁₈₎	39.0 ₍₁₆₎	35.6 ₍₄₈₎
Technical	7.3 ₍₃₎	5.6 ₍₃₎	9.8 ₍₄₎	7.4 ₍₁₀₎
College (no degree)	19.5 ₍₈₎	1.9 ₍₁₎	9.8 ₍₄₎	9.6 ₍₈₎
College (degree)	12.2 ₍₅₎	13.2 ₍₇₎	12.2 ₍₅₎	12.6 ₍₂₂₎
Graduate	19.5 ₍₈₎	43.4 ₍₂₃₎	19.5 ₍₈₎	28.9 ₍₃₉₎
	n=41 99.9	n=53 99.9	n=41 100.1	n=135 100.0
df=10 $\chi^2 = 19.4$ significant at .05				

The annual income of constituency presidents, taken as one objective measure of class, indicates that most are recruited from the higher socio-economic brackets. Table II shows that 66.4% of our respondents reported an income in excess of \$10,000 per year, and 31.7% earned over \$15,000 per year. As we expected these are moderately high incomes, but, contrary to our expectations, there is a significant difference among constituency presidents in the different parties. It may be remembered that Wilson takes pains to point out that the amateur phenomenon, as a whole, is not confined to any particular party or parties.⁴ However, only 12.2% of N.D.P. respondents earn in excess of \$15,000 as compared with 50.8% of Liberals and 26.8% of Progressive Conservatives. This evidence, on its own, does not contradict our hypothesis, nor does it establish that New Democrats do not require the same resources for participation that are required by others. It does illustrate that there are no precise parameters to the amateur phenomenon and there is a need to be more specific in defining the amateurism. There may be some weaknesses in the suggestion that all participants have or require the same kinds of resources in the same

⁴Wilson approaches this problem in assessing the relationship between ideology and amateurism. "What is necessary is a definition that distinguishes the new (amateur) from other politicians, but which is applicable equally to liberals and conservatives". James Q. Wilson, The Amateur Democrat, p. 2.

TABLE: II
INCOME
(percentages)

Annual Income	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Under \$7500	12.2 ₍₅₎	13.2 ₍₇₎	19.5 ₍₈₎	14.8 ₍₂₀₎
7500 - 10,000	26.8 ₍₁₁₎	15.1 ₍₈₎	14.6 ₍₆₎	18.8 ₍₂₅₎
10,000 12,000	19.5 ₍₈₎	11.3 ₍₆₎	31.7 ₍₁₃₎	20.0 ₍₂₇₎
12,000 15,000	14.6 ₍₆₎	9.4 ₍₅₎	21.9 ₍₉₎	14.8 ₍₂₀₎
15,000 17,000	4.9 ₍₂₎	13.2 ₍₇₎	7.3 ₍₃₎	8.8 ₍₁₂₎
20,000 25,000	7.3 ₍₃₎	20.6 ₍₁₁₎	4.9 ₍₂₎	11.9 ₍₁₆₎
Over 25,000	14.6 ₍₆₎	17.0 ₍₉₎	---	11.0 ₍₁₅₎
Total	99.9 n=41	99.8 n=53	99.9 n=41	100.1 n=135
df=12 $\chi^2 = 24.4$ significant at .05				

proportions. And, to that extent amateurism in politics, as loosely defined by Wilson, becomes a matter of degree.

Part of the reason for the relatively high annual incomes of constituency presidents is, of course, their occupations. In keeping with our expectations, Table III shows that the majority of our respondents, 55.5%, are either members of a profession or businessmen. Once again, however, a chi-square distribution suggests a significant difference among the parties. In relative proportions, the New Democratic Party is more heavily represented by teachers, the Liberal Party by lawyers, and the Progressive Conservatives by those we have called "businessmen and other professionals". On the other hand, 51.2% of New Democratic respondents are non-professionals, compared to approximately 40% of respondents from the other two parties. It seems, at first glance, that most of the difference can be found between professions rather than between professionals and non-professionals. If this is the correct interpretation, it would perhaps be most fruitful to explore these findings by sampling the entire membership of each party and searching for relationships on that basis.

These three indicators of socio-economic status seem to suggest that Kornberg et al. were indeed correct in

TABLE: III
OCCUPATION
(percentages)

Occupation	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Lawyer	9.8 ₍₄₎	20.6 ₍₁₁₎	---	11.1 ₍₁₅₎
Teacher	4.9 ₍₂₎	13.2 ₍₇₎	24.4 ₍₁₀₎	14.1 ₍₁₉₎
Businessmen & Other Profess- ionals	43.9 ₍₁₈₎	24.5 ₍₁₃₎	24.4 ₍₁₀₎	30.4 ₍₄₁₎
Non- Profess- ional	39.0 ₍₁₆₎	39.6 ₍₂₁₎	51.2 ₍₂₁₎	42.9 ₍₅₈₎
Retired or Housewife	2.4 ₍₁₎	1.9 ₍₁₎	---	1.5 ₍₂₎
Total	100.0 n=41	99.8 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df=8 $\chi^2 = 20.6$ significant at .01				

concluding that Canadian party officials are not "just plain folks".⁵ Each indicator lends some support to the hypothesis that, at least in terms of background characteristics, the amateur politician is dominant in Canada. Several studies of American party officials parallel our results with regard to these three indicators. Conway and Feigert interviewed precinct leaders in two different counties, and while they noted important differences between counties, most activists corresponded to this part of the amateur model.⁶ At a higher level, that of state party chairman, the findings of Wiggins and Turk seem to illustrate a generally close correspondence with our own. They found that almost 75% of their respondents held university degrees and, very similar to our data, almost 50% of these had done graduate work. Like the constituency president, the vast number of state party chairmen were either members of a profession or businessmen.⁷

⁵Kornberg, Smith, and Bromley, "Some Differences in The Political Socialization Patterns of Canadian and American Party Officials", op. cit., p. 72.

⁶Margaret Conway and Frank Feigert, "Motivations, Incentive Systems, and Political Party Organization", op. cit., pp. 1162-1164.

⁷Charles Wiggins and William Turk, "State Party Chairmen: A Profile", op. cit., p. 323.

The fact that individuals with relatively high annual incomes, and in occupations which depend upon personal contact, are directing the party's constituency operations is important in assessing their duties and the costs of their participation. In all of the parties, to a greater or lesser extent, the constituency president is the official who acts as a "lynch-pin" between the party's central executive and the local organization. He is the one to whom most party communications are addressed,⁸ and he receives most of the requests for advice and information as well as for contributions. It is apparent that for those who perform their job actively and continuously, as the job demands, a great deal of time and even money is required. No party pays all the expenses (and very seldom even part of the expenses) required to travel to area and provincial conferences. This can present a particular strain in parties where officials are encouraged to be delegates to provincial caucuses, as they are in the N.D.P. Furthermore, each of the party organizers with whom this question was raised was certain that these expenditures represented only a part of the total which constituency presidents forfeited in the service of the party.

⁸Some parties, for example, have a special bulletin which goes to all constituency presidents, and another which goes to the general membership.

The time required to adequately perform the duties of a constituency president would naturally vary with one's conception of those duties. Nevertheless, the position is clearly a key one in the party's overall organization and even performance of the routine tasks requires the type of freedom provided by economic security. The job demands continuous personal contact, and those occupations normally associated with this are well represented among our respondents. About 52% of our respondents belong to at least one other community organization and almost 25% belong to two or more. In short, the nature of the constituency president's duties demands the resources of economic security and social status and it demands a training in skills which may be easily adapted to politics.⁹ On a very cursory analysis most constituency presidents seem well qualified for their positions.

James Wilson also suggests that a greater number of women are now taking part in political activities.¹⁰ Our findings (Table IV) reveal little which suggests that females

⁹On the question of political skills, the point has been made several times that some occupational groups, on the basis of their training, are more adapted to a bargaining role which it is assumed that politics demands. See, for example, Herbert Jacobs, "Initial Recruitment of Elected Officials in the U.S. - A Model", Journal of Politics, Vol. 24, No. 3, (September 1962), pp. 703-716..

¹⁰Wilson, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

TABLE IV
SEX
(percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Male	98.6 (40)	98.1 (52)	90.2 (37)	95.6 (129)
Female	2.4 (1)	1.9 (1)	9.8 (4)	4.4 (6)
Total	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df=2 $\chi^2 = 2.43$ not significant at .05				

TABLE V
FATHERS INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES
(percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Very Active	12.2 (5)	13.2 (7)	9.8 (4)	11.8 (16)
Somewhat Active	26.8 (11)	28.3 (15)	17.0 (7)	24.4 (33)
Not Very Active	60.9 (25)	58.5 (31)	73.2 (30)	63.8 (86)
	99.9 n=41	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df=4 $\chi^2 = 2.4$ not significant at .05				

are assuming a larger role at the uppermost level of the constituency association. Once again it is difficult to speculate on rates of change, but only six of the 135 respondents were women and four of these belonged to the N.D.P.¹¹ However, according to the party organizers interviewed, women dominate the second level of the constituency hierarchy, the position of secretary.¹²

The range in ages of constituency presidents is quite extensive, but the majority of presidents, 34.8%, are in the age bracket of 41 to 50. It may be significant, however, that a comparable proportion, 31.1% are between the ages of 31 and 40. The median age of our respondents is 43 years.

Detailed questions regarding the extent and nature of politicization were beyond the scope of the questionnaire, but in order to give some expression to this dimension of the profile constituency presidents were asked about the degree of their father's involvement in political activities. With

¹¹Wiggins and Turk found three women out of 82 respondents, op. cit., p. 323.

¹²Beyond the office of constituency president there may be some dispute about ranking. The party organizers from each party seemed to agree, however, on the fundamental importance of the secretary's position in the local organization. A great deal of communication between the constituency and the party headquarters flows through this office, and the detailed tasks of organization are often carried out by the secretary.

the exception of Kornberg et al., very few students of political activists or party organization have expressed a keen interest in any facet of their subjects' political socialization. In general, the political activity of our respondents' families, as expressed by the fathers' political involvement, is quite high (Table V). Approximately 64% of our respondents claimed their fathers were "not very active" in politics and about 25% described their father as "somewhat active". A smaller proportion, approximately 12%, described their father's political activity as "very active", but this represents a significant number when compared with the 3 or 4 per cent who are normally very active in electoral politics. When the first two categories are combined, our findings correspond quite closely to those of Kornberg et. al. who reported that approximately 35% of the Canadian party officials interviewed had at least one politically active parent.¹³ Very little, however, can be accomplished by one question, even in terms of contributing to a general profile. A very cursory analysis might suggest that the family is a major factor in the ensuing political activity of constituency presidents, but a much more detailed analysis of this subject may force a re-consideration of even this assertion.

¹³Kornberg, et. al., op. cit. p. 82.

Constituency presidents were also asked how long they had been members of their political party.¹⁴ Among our respondents, very few newcomers occupy the top position in the constituency party. As Table VI illustrates, the majority of our respondents have been members for over ten years and a significant number of those have been in the party for more than 15 years. This finding permits some speculation. It seems, first of all, that in addition to the socio-economic requisites for participation, mentioned above, some record of service to the party is also a necessity. It further suggests that, given their relatively long association with the party, most constituency presidents probably had a fairly accurate conception of what the job entailed before they accepted it. Also, for most of them, a fairly significant amount of time has elapsed since they first became politically active (if we can assume that this point in time corresponds roughly to the first time they felt they "belonged" to the party). For all but a few there has been considerable opportunity for incentive change. This generalization applies, without significant difference, to respondents from all parties.

¹⁴ Admittedly some difficulties exist in any attempt to specify what "membership" in a Canadian political party actually entails, or what it means to "join" a political party. We are forced to assume that the answer to this question accurately gauges the extent of the individuals active association with the party beyond identification.

TABLE: VI
 LENGTH OF TIME IN PARTY
 (percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
1 - 3 yrs.	2.4 ₍₁₎	3.8 ₍₂₎	9.8 ₍₄₎	5.2 ₍₇₎
3 - 5 yrs.	12.2 ₍₅₎	9.4 ₍₅₎	14.6 ₍₆₎	11.9 ₍₁₆₎
5 - 7 yrs.	---	5.7 ₍₃₎	21.9 ₍₉₎	8.9 ₍₁₂₎
7 - 10 yrs.	17.1 ₍₇₎	26.4 ₍₁₄₎	19.5 ₍₈₎	21.5 ₍₂₉₎
over 10 yrs.	68.3 ₍₂₈₎	54.7 ₍₂₉₎	34.1 ₍₁₄₎	52.6 ₍₇₁₎
Total	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=53	99.9 n=41	100.1 n=135

TABLE: VII
 LENGTH OF TIME HOLDING POSITION
 OF CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENT
 (percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
1 yr. or less	36.6 ₍₁₅₎	41.5 ₍₂₂₎	53.7 ₍₂₂₎	43.7 ₍₅₉₎
1 to 3 yrs.	39.0 ₍₁₆₎	39.6 ₍₂₁₎	36.6 ₍₁₅₎	38.5 ₍₅₂₎
3 to 5 yrs.	12.2 ₍₅₎	16.9 ₍₉₎	7.3 ₍₃₎	12.6 ₍₁₇₎
over 5 yrs.	12.2 ₍₅₎	1.9 ₍₁₎	2.4 ₍₁₎	5.2 ₍₇₎
	100.0 n=41	99.9 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df=6 $\chi^2 = 8.96$ not significant at .05				

On the other hand, as Table VII illustrates, very few constituency presidents, from any of the parties, have held that office for more than four years, and almost 75% have held it for less than three. Among the Toronto constituency presidents who responded to the pilot study, this tendency was even more pronounced -- 90% had held their positions for less than three years, and 36% for less than one year. This finding has two important implications. In the first place, it means that for all but a few the length of time in office has been relatively short. From this we might expect that, in general, incentives to participation among constituency presidents will not be particularly different between the time they accepted party office and the present.

Secondly, it is tempting to conclude that whatever incentives are dominant they are unable to attract participants to this level of involvement for long periods. Bowman, Ippolito and Donaldson, in a study of party precinct leaders, found that very few became involved at this level of political activity for extended periods of time.¹⁵ Clearly this type of finding is important in assessing the success

¹⁵Lewis Bowman, Dennis Ippolito, and William Donaldson, "Incentives for the Maintenance of Grassroots Political Activism", op. cit., p. 127.

which parties have enjoyed in attracting and holding party workers with available incentives. It must be remembered, however, that while a heavy turnover in executive participation may indicate a weak incentive system, there are sometimes institutional constraints on continued office-holding. Many constituency constitutions specify the number of consecutive years a party official may hold office. Furthermore, retirement from office in a political party does not necessarily constitute the end of high level participation.

Informal constraints on continued office-holding also exist. Seventy-four percent of constituency presidents reported that they felt the pressure of such constraints and that after a certain length of time they would be expected to relinquish their office. There are significant differences among the parties, however. More Conservative and Liberal respondents claim that informal constraints exists than New Democratic Party respondents. One reason for this discrepancy might be a tendency on the part of New Democratic constituency organizations to constitutionally limit consecutive service.

Another dimension of the party activist's profile is his role in the party's organization or his orientation to the activities carried on by the party. Many studies have tried to determine the strengths of various roles and the

impact these have on other features of party organization.¹⁶ In this case constituency presidents were asked to assess the importance they ascribed to their office in the performance of two activities: policy formation and election campaigning. The latter was chosen as an organizational activity, the former as an ideological one, and it was hoped that answers would, to some degree, gauge how effective respondents felt they were in filling these two roles.

Tables XIII and IX indicate significant differences in the importance ascribed to each of these activities. Almost one half of our respondents considered that in terms of election campaigning their office was "very important", and another 37.8% felt it was "somewhat important". In terms of policy formation, however, constituency presidents were less impressed by the significance of their office. Only 17% felt their activities in this realm were "very important", and more, 28%, felt they were "not very important". No discernible differences appeared when the responses were broken down by party.

¹⁶We have already mentioned, in chapter three, Samuel Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis; and Lewis Bowman and G.R. Boynton, "Recruitment Patterns Among Local Party Officials: A Model and some Preliminary Findings", op. cit. For a more recent pertinent discussion of role definitions and views on party goals see Dennis Ippolito and Lewis Bowman, "Goals and Activities of Party Officials in a Suburban Community", Western Political Quarterly, Vol. 22, (1969), pp. 572-580.

TABLE: VIII

IMPORTANCE ASCRIBED TO OFFICE
IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN
(percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Very important	41.5 ₍₁₇₎	52.8 ₍₂₈₎	48.8 ₍₂₀₎	48.1 ₍₆₅₎
Somewhat important	43.9 ₍₁₈₎	28.3 ₍₁₅₎	43.9 ₍₁₈₎	37.8 ₍₅₁₎
not very important	14.6 ₍₆₎	18.9 ₍₁₀₎	7.3 ₍₃₎	14.1 ₍₁₉₎
	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df=4 $\chi^2 = 4.9$ not significant at .05				

TABLE: IX

IMPORTANCE ASCRIBED TO OFFICE
IN FORMULATING POLICY
(percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Very important	17.1 ₍₇₎	18.9 ₍₁₀₎	14.6 ₍₆₎	17.0 ₍₂₃₎
Somewhat important	48.8 ₍₂₀₎	62.2 ₍₃₃₎	51.2 ₍₂₁₎	54.8 ₍₇₄₎
Not very important	34.1 ₍₁₄₎	18.9 ₍₁₀₎	34.1 ₍₁₄₎	28.2 ₍₃₈₎
	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=53	99.9 n=41	100.0 n=135
df =4 $\chi^2 = 3.9$ not significant at .05				

Two important observations may be made from this data. First, only a very small proportion, 5.9% of our respondents, claimed that in terms of their office, neither activity was very important in their estimation. This may be one indication that most constituency presidents are satisfied their office is effective in at least some respects. Secondly, if Joseph Schlesinger is correct in asserting that the party's most important goal is the attainment of office, the fact that most of our consistency presidents feel efficacious in their electoral activities fits with this definition of their primary function. As we have mentioned, the constituency president may be described as a "lynch-pin" between the central party organization and the constituency party. His chief responsibilities include keeping the constituency active and working during the election campaign -- both organizational roles. The party organizers interviewed all claimed that if a constituency president showed any inclination toward a policy-making role he would be encouraged in his pursuits. But even here the emphasis was more on a "feedback role" than a role in actual policy formation. Party organizers themselves are seldom consulted on policy decisions and they are the individuals with whom constituency presidents seem to have most contact.

To determine the nature of their political ambitions constituency presidents were asked if they would seek a more

responsible party office if given the opportunity. With minor differences among the parties, the majority claimed that they would (Table X). At least half of our respondents could be recruited to higher levels of activity. This may also be interpreted as an indication that they have found satisfaction in their present political office since few would be willing to go on otherwise. But the intensity of commitment is a complex question and some may simply wish to abandon an office they consider dull and unrewarding. More questions of this type must be asked and the responses compared before we can make strong statements about either commitment or ambition.

While this data by no means gives us a complete picture of the constituency president in Ontario, the socio-economic backgrounds and the activities of our respondents do suggest some possible generalizations. In the first place, they do provide more evidence that certain socio-economic resources correlate with participation. Although we have not compared our data with similar distributions for the province as a whole, in general our hypotheses in this regard seem to be born out. Similarly, to the degree that our respondents comprise a homogeneous socio-economic group, they resemble amateurs more than professional politicians. The strength of this generalization is somewhat diminished,

however, since rural and urban respondents were not distinguished from one another. Wilson implies that amateurism is primarily an urban phenomenon and future studies should concentrate in areas where adequate comparisons can be made.

A second general point is the interesting differences that exist in the profiles of constituency presidents from the different parties. Our Liberal respondents are generally better paid and more highly educated than either Conservatives or New Democrats. The latter are more likely to be teachers or non-professionals than respondents from the other two parties. The qualities required for participation are, or seem to be, possessed by degree and the differences between the parties illustrate how difficult it is to be specific about "resources" and how much of each, beyond a basic level, is required for participation.

Our emphasis throughout on the different levels of involvement in politics leads to one note of caution. While the conclusions summarized above may be warranted at the level of the constituency president, party activists at other levels of involvement may not share their traits. In most urban ridings the parties maintain at least one individual per poll whose responsibilities include canvassing

the neighborhood and escorting voters to the polls. But unlike precinct captains in the United States, whose responsibilities are somewhat analogous, and unlike constituency presidents, poll captains in Canada are often not part of the permanent party organization. Scarrow discovered, in an examination of an urban constituency in the 1962 election, that over half of the poll captains were new appointees.¹⁷ Furthermore, very few had attended a meeting or an activity sponsored by the party in the preceeding year.¹⁸ Most poll captains were from the families of laborers and were using this activity chiefly as a means of obtaining extra income. Among Liberals and Conservatives this activity was dominated by housewives, but among the N.D.P. the vast majority were male.²⁰ These apparent differences are an indication that participation does not necessarily take the same form nor require the same resources at different levels of involvement.

¹⁷Howard Scarrow, "Three Dimensions of a Political Party", in John Meisel, (ed.), Papers on The 1962 Election (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 58.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁹Ibid. This, Scarrow speculates, is probably due to the fact that generally the N.D.P. do not pay their poll captains, and that this work is frequently carried on by volunteers, often members of the party's local executive.

Incentive Systems and Constituency Presidents

In order to test our most important hypotheses -- those regarding incentives -- constituency presidents were asked questions designed to determine which incentives they felt were dominant at three important points in their careers. They were asked about their incentives for participating in politics beyond the level of voting, their motivations in accepting the post of constituency president, and what they would miss most if they were forced to leave their political activities immediately. It was hoped that responses to these questions would give an accurate indication of the dominant incentive at these stages of their political careers. Respondents were asked to rank as very important, somewhat important, or not very important, a series of closed-ended positive incentive items. They were also asked which of the items best described the major reason for their participation or continued participation, and responses to these latter questions were used in the construction of the incentive tables. Each of the possible responses was designed to correspond as closely as possible to the incentive categorization adopted in chapter three, and all responses have been categorized as either purposive, solidary, material or civic duty. In those cases where respondents have insisted that several incentives were important and that none was dominant, responses have been categorized as "multiple".

TABLE: X

WOULD YOU SEEK MORE RESPONSIBLE OFFICE?

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Yes	63.4 ₍₂₆₎	43.4 ₍₂₃₎	70.7 ₍₂₉₎	57.8 ₍₇₈₎
No	36.6 ₍₁₅₎	56.6 ₍₃₀₎	29.3 ₍₁₂₎	42.2 ₍₅₇₎
	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df =4 $\chi^2 = 8.0$ not significant at .05				

TABLE: XI

MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE REASON FOR
INITIAL INTEREST IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Purposive	46.3 ₍₁₉₎	39.6 ₍₂₁₎	70.7 ₍₂₉₎	51.1 ₍₆₉₎
Material	2.4 ₍₁₎	1.9 ₍₁₎	---	1.5 ₍₂₎
Civic Duty	43.9 ₍₁₈₎	45.3 ₍₂₄₎	14.6 ₍₆₎	35.6 ₍₄₈₎
Solidary	7.3 ₍₃₎	9.4 ₍₅₎	4.9 ₍₂₎	7.4 ₍₁₀₎
No Response	---	3.8 ₍₂₎	9.8 ₍₄₎	4.5 ₍₆₎
	99.9 n=41	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135

df=8 $\chi^2 = 11.4$ not significant at .05

From Table XI we learn that most of the constituency presidents who responded to the questionnaire did not become interested in political activity for reasons easily reconciled with Olson's theory of collective action. Instead of being among the most important reasons for participation beyond voting, selective incentives -- the solidary and material items -- were by far the least important. Only two respondents declared that the major factor in their decision to participate more widely in politics was the business contacts that might be established or the fact that such activity might result in some personal material gain. A slightly larger proportion, 7.4%, claimed that solidary incentives were their most important inducements, but this is a decidedly smaller number than Olson's theory leads us to expect.

Slightly more than half of our respondents claimed that purposive reasons, those associated with the aims and principles of the party, were paramount in inducing their initial political activity. Approximately 35% of our respondents identified civic duty as the most important incentive. Taken together, these collective or impersonal incentives were cited by 86.7% of our respondents.

The overwhelming choice of these collective incentives seems to suggest that Olson's theory is not particularly suitable for this level of participation. On the other hand,

the data do match our expectations as far as the amateur politician is concerned. It will be recalled that Wilson argues that amateurs tend to participate initially for reasons associated with the goals of the organization.²⁰ At the level of initial political involvement it seems that the motivations of constituency presidents in Ontario, and their socio-economic backgrounds, converge to lend some credence to Wilson's hypothesis. The findings of other empirical studies closely parallel our own and provide more support for Wilson. Conway and Feigert discovered that while there were some significant differences among respondents in the two counties they studied, "ideological and other impersonal reasons" were clearly the major incentives for entry into politics.²¹ Eldersveld found that upper echelon activists, party committeemen, came to party work for personally-motivated reasons but that most precinct leaders were attracted by impersonal incentives.²²

A chi-square distribution of Table XI indicates that the choice of a particular incentive is not related to the variable of political party. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that while respondents from all parties displayed a

²⁰Wilson, op. cit., p. 4.

²¹Conway and Feigert, op. cit., p. 1165.

²²Eldersveld, op. cit., pp. 286-288.

tendency to cite collective incentives, constituency presidents in the New Democratic Party cited purposive incentives, as opposed to civic duty, more readily than the others.

As the data on the length of time in the party has illustrated, in most cases several years have elapsed between an individual's first interest in participation beyond voting, and the time when he assumes the highest party office in the constituency. In chapter three we hypothesized that incentives would change over time. With the added knowledge that most constituency presidents have served their party for several years before assuming their office, we might be led to expect a rather dramatic change in incentive patterns.

Table XII, which classifies the most important factors in the decision of constituency presidents to accept party office, indicates, to the contrary, that while incentives change somewhat, respondents still feel that purposive incentives and the incentive of civic duty are most important in their decision. It is true that material and solidary incentives are more important at this stage than before. Less than 10% of constituency presidents felt that these selective incentives were of major importance in inducing their original activity, while approximately 30% claim that these types of incentives were the most important in

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their decision to assume party office. But this is still far from convincing evidence for the usefulness of Olson's theory. What it does show is that constituency presidents feel their incentives have changed and that in general the direction of this change coincides with our fourth hypothesis.

The findings presented here also coincide with the findings of Conway and Feigert. In their study of precinct committeemen they discovered that a sense of civic duty was the most frequently cited reason for accepting the party post. This was followed by a concern with issues, a category which closely parallels that of purposive incentives.²³ Although constituency presidents in our study reverse this order of emphasis, in both cases collective incentives are dominant. Conway and Feigert make another interesting and related argument from their data. They note that the desire to elect a particular candidate was of minor importance in the decision of most committeemen to accept party office. Similarly, in our study, only 6.3% of constituency presidents who responded to this question claimed that this was a "very important" reason in their decision to become a

²³Conway and Feigert, op. cit., p. 1166.

TABLE: XII

MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE REASON FOR
BECOMING A CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENT

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Purposive	25.0 ₍₁₀₎	21.1 ₍₁₁₎	61.1 ₍₂₂₎	33.6 ₍₄₃₎
Material	10.0 ₍₄₎	13.5 ₍₇₎	13.8 ₍₅₎	12.5 ₍₁₆₎
Civic Duty	42.5 ₍₁₇₎	30.8 ₍₁₆₎	5.6 ₍₂₎	27.4 ₍₃₅₎
Solidary	15.0 ₍₆₎	21.1 ₍₁₁₎	16.7 ₍₆₎	17.9 ₍₂₃₎
Multiple	7.5 ₍₃₎	13.5 ₍₇₎	2.8 ₍₁₎	8.6 ₍₁₁₎
	100.0 n=40	100.0 n=52	100.0 n=36	100.0 n=128
df=8 $\chi^2 = 25.3$ significant at .01				

TABLE: XIII

WHAT WOULD BE MISSED MOST
(percentages)

	P.C.	Lib.	N.D.P.	Total
Purposive	22.0 ₍₉₎	11.3 ₍₆₎	36.6 ₍₁₅₎	22.2 ₍₃₀₎
Material	9.6 ₍₄₎	15.1 ₍₈₎	4.9 ₍₂₎	10.4 ₍₁₄₎
Civic Duty	29.3 ₍₁₂₎	32.1 ₍₁₇₎	29.3 ₍₁₂₎	30.4 ₍₄₁₎
Solidary	36.6 ₍₁₅₎	37.7 ₍₂₀₎	26.8 ₍₁₁₎	34.1 ₍₄₆₎
No Response	2.4 ₍₁₎	3.8 ₍₂₎	2.4 ₍₁₎	2.9 ₍₄₎
	99.9 n=41	100.0 n=53	100.0 n=41	100.0 n=135
df=8 $\chi^2 = 11.8$ not significant at .05				

constituency president. From their findings Conway and Feigert conclude that the party organization is not a candidate-oriented social system.²⁴ Such a conclusion may be justified, but not unless it is supported by more and different evidence. It is quite possible that though constituency presidents generally do not accept party office because of the candidate, they may nevertheless be "candidate-oriented" once they begin to perform their duties.

We hypothesized in chapter three that constituency presidents from the different parties would display comparable incentive patterns at the different levels of their involvement. This appears to be the case regarding initial involvement, but a chi-square distribution reveals a significant difference by party in the incentives for accepting party office. While only 25% of Progressive Conservatives, and 21.4% of Liberals, cite purposive incentives, 61.1% of New Democratic Party respondents do so. The proportion of constituency presidents in each party who offered material and solidary reasons are comparable, but many more Conservatives and Liberals cited the incentive of civic duty than members of the N.D.P.

It is not particularly clear how to interpret the low appeal that civic duty seems to have for New Democratic respondents. The fact that the major differences among

²⁴Ibid.

respondents in each party surround their willingness to cite one collective incentive rather than another may be important. It is speculation, but the collective incentives, or what Eldersveld calls the "group-value-directive" incentives, may be closely related in the minds of constituency presidents. The logic of this assumption leads to the conclusion that among New Democratic respondents this orientation toward impersonal collective incentives is more readily expressed through a close identification with the goals of the party. The Conservative and Liberal respondents, on the other hand, are concerned with a form of societal obligation which does not necessarily involve the party directly. Unfortunately, we can only offer evidence for the tendencies in each case, and not for the connection between different kinds of collective incentives.

In order to determine the nature of current rewards and satisfactions, constituency presidents were asked what they would miss most if they were forced to drop out of political activity immediately. Replies to this question reveal a much heavier emphasis on selective incentives than before, particularly those incentives we have labelled as solidary. As Table XIII indicates, when taken together material and solidary incentives were cited as the major current attraction by 44.5% of our respondents. Of these,

solidary incentives are clearly the most popular.

New Democratic Party respondents continued to differ from respondents in other parties, but not as drastically as before. There was a substantial decrease in the number of New Democratic constituency presidents who offered purposive reasons for their continued involvement, although their proportion is still higher than the other parties. On the other hand, 29.3% of New Democratic constituency presidents offered civic duty as their major satisfaction, a larger proportion than did so in response to the other two incentive questions. As a result, there was only a small decline in the number of New Democratic respondents who identified collective incentives in response to each incentive question, but there was less emphasis on those current incentives which relate to the goals and principles of the party. The fact that only 14.6% of New Democrats rated their office as "very important" in relation to policy formulation may be instructive. If there is little opportunity for policy formulation in a party whose officers participate because of goals and principles, there may be an accompanying tendency (expressed over time) to justify participation in terms of another collective incentive such as civic duty.

We should not lose sight of the fact that despite evidence of an increasing emphasis on selective incentives, the majority of respondents, 52.6%, still identified purposive incentives and the incentive of civic duty as the most important incentives for their current participation. There is a pattern of incentive change, but not a dramatic one. Table XIV summarizes the relationship between the most important reason for initial interest and what the constituency president would miss most if forced to abandon his political activities. The largest changes were from an initial purposive response to a response of civic duty and to a solidary response. Also, over 13% of our respondents who cited civic duty as the most important reason for their initial activity switched to a solidary response when asked their current satisfactions. In short, while collective incentives remained dominant many switched from a purposive response to one of civic duty, and about an equal number of originally purposive and civic duty responses cited solidary satisfactions as what they would miss most. Approximately 29% of our respondents claimed that their original political activity was based on collective incentives and that these types of incentives still represent their major reason for political participation.

TABLE: XIV

RELATIONSHIP OF REASON FOR INITIAL INTEREST TO WHAT A
CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENT WOULD MISS MOST (percentages)

What CP Would Miss Most	Most Important Reason for Initial Interest				
	Purposive	Material	Civic Duty	Solidary	Total
Purposive	15.6 (20)	--	4.7 (6)	1.6 (2)	21.9 (28)
Material	3.9 (5)	--	6.3 (8)	.8 (1)	10.9 (14)
Civic Duty	17.2 (22)	.8 (1)	13.3 (17)	.8 (1)	32.0 (41)
Solidary	16.4 (21)	.8 (1)	13.3 (17)	4.7 (6)	35.2 (45)
Total	53.1 n=68	1.6 n=2	37.6 n=48	7.9 n=10	100.0 n=128

Figures may not total 100% due to rounding.

Certain studies of American party officials have offered evidence for the dominance or retention of collective incentives, but others have offered evidence of the opposite. Bowman, Ippolito and Donaldson studied party officials in five American communities and subsumed the civic duty responses under the general heading of purposive incentives.²⁵ Theirs was not a study of incentive change, but in examining current incentives they discovered that purposive or impersonal items were cited more readily than solidary or material ones. And, as we mentioned in chapter three, Dennis Ippolito's study of incentive change among Nassau County officials, revealed a tendency for party activists to maintain their original purposive incentives.²⁶

In contrast to these findings, Conway and Feigert discovered a pattern of incentive change similar to the one displayed by Ontario constituency presidents, but on a more dramatic level. Approximately two-thirds of the Democrats interviewed, and three-quarters of the Republicans, cited social contacts and other personal satisfactions as what they would miss most.²⁷ Eldersveld also found some

²⁵Bowman, Ippolito and Donaldson, op. cit.

²⁶Dennis Ippolito, "Motivational Reorientation and Change Among Party Activists", op. cit.

²⁷Conway and Feigert, op. cit., p. 1168.

important incentive changes in his study of Wayne County party officials. For example, 74% of Democratic precinct captains who responded reported that collective, "socially normative", incentives induced their original participation, but only 26% claimed they were the present incentive. This pattern was even more dramatic among Republicans. On the other hand, the upper echelon of party committeemen interviewed in Eldersveld's study, illustrated only a slight incentive change.²⁸

On the whole, the study of incentives among American party officials has produced what can only be called contradictory evidence. And, unfortunately, the findings of this study of party officials in Ontario are interesting from the perspective of the political party but are not particularly conclusive. At this stage perhaps a review of our major hypotheses on incentives will help illustrate the gaps and the problems of interpretation.

The major hypothesis derived from Olson, that selective incentives are the determining factors in continued organizational participation, does not appear to be substantiated, at least not entirely. As we pointed out in chapter three, it is difficult to be certain of the stage

²⁸Eldersveld, op. cit., p. 288.

of involvement at which Olson expects his theory to apply. He chose for his own analysis those organizations in which participation has a determined starting point and is not a gradual phenomenon. In the political party, as we have seen, several years may elapse before individuals are finally participating at the highest levels in the constituency party. Prior to this it is not clear how active their participation has been, or whether it would even be accurate to call them members, in Olson's sense of term.

For example, our data indicate that Olson's theory of collective action, with its attendant emphasis on selective incentives, is not particularly applicable when our respondents were first becoming involved in political activities. At this stage they were not participating at high levels of involvement, as we defined the term in the first chapter. And, because it is very hard to determine the extent of participation at this time anyway, it would probably be wise not to expect participation on the basis of selective incentives at this stage. However, Olson's theory leads us to expect that when individuals are considering accepting the post of constituency president, selective incentives will be important. This is clearly high level participation as we have defined the term. But instead of

being attracted by selective incentives, our respondents tend to cite those incentives which have larger, societal implications but whose provision, Olson tells us, should not be sufficient to stimulate participation. In overwhelming proportions constituency presidents claim they were attracted to party office by impersonal or collective incentives.

It is only when constituency presidents come to cite their current satisfactions that selective incentives become more important. And even at this stage the majority of respondents claim to be attracted by collective incentives. Olson's theory does achieve some degree of respectability, but there is no overwhelming evidence for its utility. Furthermore, because Olson makes no mention of the possibility that incentives will change over time, his theory is unable to explain why the decision to participate at high levels of involvement in the party is based on incentives which are different from the ones that are currently most important.

To the extent that incentives do change, and in the direction predicted, our fourth hypothesis, derived largely from Wilson, seems to be substantiated. There is an indication in Table XIV, that from the time of their first involvement in politics to their present level of involvement,

some constituency presidents abandon the incentive pattern of amateurs and adopt that of professionals. Contrary to Wilson, however, there was no increase in the importance of material incentives among our respondents. Very few claimed that these incentives were important and several responded with a degree of moral indignation at the suggestion. But the opportunity for social contact and the chance to be involved in the excitement of an electoral contest, has clearly become a more important form of satisfaction for our respondents. These are the kinds of selective incentives which seem to acquire some importance over time and which may have an effect on the nature of party organization.

Our fifth incentive hypothesis concerns a related factor which may also have an effect on party organization -- the perception constituency presidents have of the incentives of other workers within the party. We suggested in chapter three that, regardless of the dominant incentive patterns among constituency presidents, most would cite selective incentives when asked what they felt was the major reward or satisfaction which the average party worker achieved through his participation. In keeping with our expectations almost two thirds of our respondents, 65.8%, felt that the average party worker participated for solidary incentives, particularly the thrill of the political contest.

Of interest also is the degree to which the current incentives of our respondents correspond to the satisfactions they perceive other workers obtain from participation. In his study of Wayne County, Eldersveld found very little evidence of "projection" -- ascribing one's own motivations to others -- or "incorporation" -- assimilating the perceived satisfactions of others. He found, for example, that precinct captains were unwilling to attribute altruistic motives to themselves, but were quite willing to attribute them to others.²⁹ Our data, presented in Table XV, show that this tendency against incorporation and projection is also present among constituency presidents although it is not overwhelming. For example, over 21% of constituency presidents would miss fulfilling a civic duty but feel that the average party worker enjoys solidary satisfactions. On the other hand, approximately 26% of constituency presidents would miss solidary incentives and feel the same reward is most important for other party workers. In short, the fact that over two-thirds of our respondents feel that the average party worker participates for selective incentives is perhaps of greatest significance. The fact that only 37.8% of our respondents see co-workers as participating for the same types

²⁹Ibid., pp. 281-282.

TABLE::XV

RELATIONSHIP OF PERCEIVED REWARDS AVERAGE PARTY WORKER TO
WHAT A CONSTITUENCY PRESIDENT WOULD MISS MOST (percentage)

What CP Would Miss Most	Perceived Rewards of Average Party Worker				
	Purposive	Material	Civic Duty	Solidary	Total
Purposive	9.0 ₍₁₀₎	--	1.8 ₍₂₎	9.9 ₍₁₁₎	20.7 ₍₂₃₎
Material	.9 ₍₁₎	.9 ₍₁₎	--	8.1 ₍₉₎	9.9 ₍₁₁₎
Civic Duty	8.1 ₍₉₎	.9 ₍₁₎	1.8 ₍₂₎	21.6 ₍₂₄₎	32.4 ₍₃₆₎
Solidary	8.1 ₍₉₎	--	2.7 ₍₃₎	26.1 ₍₂₉₎	36.0 ₍₄₁₎
Total	26.1 n=29	1.8 n=2	6.3 n=7	65.7 n=73	100.0 n=111

Figures may not total 100% due to rounding.

of incentives as themselves suggests a potential for disintegration should rewards become a contentious issue.

As a final incentive hypothesis we suggested, in chapter three, that current incentives would likely be quite independent of party affiliation and other social and economic variables. It is possible to argue that in terms of the relationship between incentives and party affiliation we are at least partially correct. No significant differences were found in responses from the various parties to the questions regarding reasons for initial participation and current incentives. However, at the second stage of their careers, when constituency presidents were asked the most important reason for assuming their office, there was a significant difference among respondents in the various parties. Unlike the Liberals or Conservatives, New Democrats were heavily influenced in their participation by purposive incentives. This tendency is visible in response to the other two questions as well. It is not too clear just how strict Wilson intended to be in assuming that incentive systems would be similar in different parties. In Ontario at least, there is evidence that officials in some parties may be stronger and more constant adherents to the amateur spirit than officials in other parties.

As we hypothesized, a chi-square distribution shows no clear or significant relationship between current incentives and the socio-economic variables of education, income, occupation and age. The tendency to cite various kinds of incentives does not seem to be related to any particular set of social and economic resources. The differences in income, educational attainment, and occupation among respondents from the various parties are apparently not transferred to the realm of incentives. New Democratic respondents, for example, may tend to have lower annual incomes, but those with lower annual incomes have no marked tendency to cite one particular incentive rather than another.³⁰ Similarly, current incentives seem to be unrelated to the importance a constituency president accords to his activities as a campaign organizer or a policy formulator. There is no consistent pattern of variations in incentives in either case.

It was suggested in chapter three that, unlike the variables mentioned above, current incentives would correlate with the length of time a constituency president has been a "member" of his party and the length of time he has held that

³⁰EldersVeld's analysis of the relationship between dominant incentives and certain demographic and socio-economic variables reveals some variations. For example, he suggests that there may be a greater ideological motivation among the wealthy. Unfortunately, he does not make it clear how much confidence one should place in such a generalization. Ibid., pp. 295-296.

party office. Once again, however, we find no consistent significant relationship. Those who have been in the party, or who have held party office, for longer periods of time show no marked tendency to cite one incentive rather than another. This contradicts, to some degree, Eldersveld's findings that veteran party workers in the Wayne County study illustrate a greater tendency to cite purposive incentives.³¹

Finally, the willingness to seek another, more responsible party office, is also unrelated to incentive patterns. On a similar issue -- the question of willingness to continue in party office -- Bowman, Ippolito and Donaldson also concluded that there appeared to be no relationship between this variable and the dominant incentives.³²

It seems that with the possible exception of party affiliation there is no evidence of a relationship between current incentives and any of the variables examined. It is possible, of course, that other variables will be related to incentive patterns, but our tentative conclusion is that incentives are independent of those variables commonly employed in the study of participation in political parties.

³¹Ibid., p. 288.

³²Bowman, Ippolito and Donaldson, op. cit., p. 138.

In this chapter we have attempted to outline a profile of the constituency president in Ontario and to test some of the hypotheses on incentives which have been gathered from divergent sources. We have also attempted to assess the extent of possible relationships between some of the socio-economic-demographic characteristics of our respondents and their current incentives. In each of these cases some tentative generalizations have been advanced. Constituency presidents, for example, do seem to possess certain social and economic resources for participation and incentives to participation do seem to change over time.

The task now is to relate these findings to the somewhat larger and more subtle issue of participation in party organization. What does this study of officials and their incentives tell us about how party organizations in Canada survive and function? The job of relating some of these findings to our theoretical concerns also remains. What does this study tell us about the usefulness of using economic theory and incentives for the study of political party organizations? These are the questions taken up in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The first four chapters have been aimed at accomplishing two very broad objectives. First, we have attempted a small study of one dimension of political participation at one specific level within the political party organization. Secondly, we have provided some theoretical justification for our interest in this particular dimension while at the same time reviewing other theoretical positions. These two themes are clearly interdependent. The object in this final chapter is to assess the extent of their possible impact on the understanding and study of participation in the Canadian political system.

In chapter one we introduced and discussed two main approaches to the question of why people participate in politics. The sociological approach has been concerned generally with the interaction of societal phenomena and political behaviour, and, more specifically, with the social, economic, and psychological requirements for political participation. The economic approach has been concerned generally with the choice or decision processes of individuals, and particularly the costs and benefits of political

participation. No attempt has been made in this paper to show that one approach is basically correct or the other inherently worthless. We chose instead to suggest that at the different levels of political involvement one approach may prove more useful than the other.

To illustrate this contention chapter two was devoted to a comparison of the success which economists could claim in developing theories capable of explaining why people vote, and their success in developing theories of high level participation in organizations. We argued that given a narrow definition of rationality participation would likely be the product of a rational calculation at higher levels of involvement. Part of chapter three was devoted to a discussion of the efforts of sociologists to explain participation and the difficulties experienced, particularly in the explanation of high level participation. On the basis of these discussions we examined in some detail one particular economic theory of participation in organizations. The questionnaire was designed to probe some of the basic postulates of this theory and at the same time some of the items of information traditionally associated with the sociological approach to political participation.

In concluding a discussion of these, the theoretical portions of the paper, the major question involves the extent to which these various arguments assumptions and positions can be expected to further, either alone or in combination, the study of political participation in Canada. Such an assessment should probably begin with Olson's theory of collective action. Some of the shortcomings of his theory, particularly the problem of identifying selective incentives, have been mentioned already and do not require repetition. Of more importance here is what we conclude generally about the utility of Olson's theory. The political party, as we mentioned, is not a focal point of Olson's interest. Instead, he dwells on participation in trade unions where membership is compulsory and the major selective incentive is simply coercion, and on participation in pressure groups. When political parties are discussed they are either the center of what little "ideologically oriented behaviour" occurs in any society, or they are the political machines which do not work for collective goods but dispense selective incentives in the form of material goods and services.¹

¹Mancur Olson Jr., The Logic of Collective Action pp. 162-165.

Olson, it seems, does see the political party in more than one perspective, but, as Wilson and others have been arguing for years, the view of the political party as a machine staffed by professionals is no longer thoroughly accurate. Much of the patronage which existed in American politics has evaporated and it may be that in most of Canada it was never a major attraction to participation. If the results of the questionnaire are any indication, material and even solidary selective incentives are of minor importance in the decision to become more involved in politics or to accept party office. Even if patronage is available most respondents claim they are unattracted by it. In short, a great deal of evidence has been amassed to suggest that a heavy reliance on the political machine model of party organization, and on material incentives, to explain participation is probably misplaced.

There may exist other kinds of selective incentives which, while not associated with party machine would nevertheless be sufficient to induce participation on the terms Olson suggests. If it could be demonstrated, for example, that in political parties the offer of group travel rates for members, or of reduced rates for government services, is followed by an increase in membership and participation then we could claim,

at least tentatively, that a test of Olson's theory had been devised. But this type of information is not readily available and, on the basis of our questionnaire, we are forced to conclude that Olson's theory is of questionable utility in the study of political parties.

Fortunately, the usefulness of Olson's theory is not confined totally to its success in adapting to different circumstances, such as the explanation of active participation in political parties. Part of the success of a theory, like the success of a model, can be estimated in terms of what it suggests for further study. In an important way Olson's contribution is simply the emphasis he places on the role of incentives in the study of participation. As we pointed out in chapter three, Olson is by no means alone in his interest in incentives. In fact, beside the array of studies and suggestions in this field, Olson's formulations sometimes seem rigid and simple. Political scientists who have studied participation in party organizations have not been bound, or guided, by an assumption of rationality in the formulation of their hypotheses. Unlike the economist they have suggested that incentives may change over time and that certain social and economic variables may correlate with certain incentives. Sociologists have noted that high level participants are a more or less homogeneous group of well

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paid and well educated activists, and have argued that these factors may also have a bearing on the extent of political participation. Organization theorists, from a perspective close to that of economists, have emphasized the role of incentives in maintaining the equilibrium of the organization.

But unlike others who are interested in incentives, Olson uses deductive theory to arrive at his formulations. His interest is theoretically grounded in the logic of choice and an assumption of rationality. He insists that from the point of view of the rational participant the incentives which are offered are the major factors determining the extent of participation. In the political party they represent the benefit side of the economist's rational calculus. Furthermore, he argues that there are two major kinds of incentives and that the difference is crucial in determining participation. By making his argument in this fashion Olson succeeds in drawing our attention to the fact that, whether his theory is appropriate or not, the nature of the incentive system will have an effect on the future of the organization and the extent of participation in it.

In the end we have a modest theoretical conclusion. From the point of view of the party as an organization, and from the point of view of the individual as a potential

participant, incentives ought to become an increasingly important dimension in the study of participation in political party organizations. Moreover, those who continue to study incentives at this level should probably adopt a more thoroughgoing view of participation in terms of costs and benefits. This does not necessitate an assumption of rationality nor the construction of an economic calculus of costs and benefits. It may simply mean that organization theory should be applied more resolutely to the study of political party organization and that political scientists should become more attentive to the costs and benefits of participation beyond certain levels in politics. And, as Olson argues, the kinds of benefits may be crucial. Finally, the hypotheses advanced and the case studies attempted should bear some relevance to how political parties operate in the political system and how they facilitate or hinder the participation of certain groups or kinds of people in the political process.

Those who study incentives will never be completely immune to the criticism that human motivations are much too complex to be studied without psychological theories. Much of our theoretical discussion has been aimed at suggesting the levels of involvement and the kinds of relationships that may be investigated without the aid of psychology. But to the extent that Olson's theory does not

apply, we should be warned against proceeding without the benefit of psychological theories and assumptions which social psychologists and organization theorists can provide.

This study of the dominant incentives of constituency presidents is a rather modest beginning toward a more general study of participation in Canadian political parties. However, it does permit some speculation. The incentive system itself should give an indication of the nature of what Eldersveld has called the "mutually exploitative" relationship between the party as a unit and those who participate in it.² The nature of the incentives which bind the participant to the party give some indication of how tight the bond is and what factors will disturb it. It is important to remember, however, in assessing these incentives that they must be examined within the context of the main goal or objective of the organization. If we assume that the survival of the party is at least partially dependent upon the success it achieves in attaining its goal, the dominant incentive system should aid or at least complement that goal.

The main goal of a political party in a Western democracy is usually included in a definition of party. The political party, to paraphrase Schumpeter, is a group

²Samuel Eldersveld, The Political Party: A Behavioral Analysis, p. 7.

of individuals who act in concert in the competitive struggle for party office.³ Admittedly, democratic political parties are infinitely more complex than this definitive statement allows, and there exists an impressive variety of perspectives. But Canadian political parties are, in essence, mobilizers of votes; they are those democratic mechanisms which make elections comprehensible and the formation of governments possible. Between elections, to a greater or lesser extent, the parties are subdued, eclipsed by party leaders and the forms and procedures of Parliamentary government.

Of importance also in assessing the impact of incentive systems is the role and duties of the activists being studied. Constituency presidents indicate that they feel more effective in their office during election periods. However, they do have other activities not directly related to the campaign. Discussions with party organizers indicate that from the point of view of the candidates and the central party organization, the constituency president is also charged with keeping the party at least moderately active

³ Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (3rd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1950), p. 283. A similar but more precise definition embodying the same idea can be found in Austin Ranney and Wilmore Kendall, Democracy and the American Party System (New York: 1956), p. 85. "Political parties are autonomous organized groups that make nominations and contest elections in the hope of eventually gaining and exercising control of the personnel and policies of government."

between electoral battles. The constituency association is the party's main unit for organizational and electoral activity, and the party's sense of cohesiveness and purpose at this level cannot be allowed to atrophy.

Each of these things -- the party's goal of public office and the duty of constituency presidents to stimulate interest and maintain activity -- should be kept in mind in assessing the impact of constituency presidents' incentives on the party's operation.

The fact that collective or impersonal incentives are dominant among most of our respondents at the early stages of their participation seems to relieve the party from the onus of providing sometimes costly selective incentives. On the other hand, the incentives which seem to be important for most constituency presidents are somewhat difficult to change or manipulate. It would be difficult, for example, to rationalize a change in the party's goals or principles simply to attract party workers to high levels of participation. Policies and policy changes are intended primarily to attract voters, not activists. The incentive of civic duty is even more remote from the will of the party. The party has very little control over the degree to which it is important in the eyes of a potential activist, although political parties could

conceivably discredit themselves as vehicles for the satisfaction of civic obligation.

An equally important point, however, is one made by Clarke and Wilson in their discussion of organizations which depend upon purposive incentives (including civic duty). They maintain that in these kinds of organizations the possibility exists for internal disputes among participants over programs and policy.⁴ It is possible that individuals who abandon the party because of a lack of selective incentives will leave quietly without announcing their motives. Those who are no longer satisfied with the parties policies or principles are more likely to give public expression to their dissatisfaction. They may even feel that this is yet another, if somewhat desperate, way to have an effect on these policies. The parties, for their part, seek tirelessly to avoid internal disagreement. This kind of dissension is most often identified with parties of the left and, consistent with this observation, New Democratic constituency presidents seem somewhat more likely to cite purposive incentives than constituency presidents from the other parties. The tendency is hardly overwhelming however,

⁴Peter Clarke and James Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems: A Theory of Organizations", op.cit., p. 140.

and each party seems fairly susceptible to ideological dissension.

If, as our data seem to suggest, selective incentives become more important to the political actor after he has been involved in high level participation for an extended period of time, this could also have a dramatic impact on the party's operations. It may suggest that political parties in Canada experience some difficulty in sustaining participation based on purposive incentives or the incentive of civic duty. This could be checked much more accurately by interviewing participants at different levels of involvement over long periods. It seems unlikely, however, that most parties would heavily commit resources to sustain the purposive incentives of members. Such a strategy would require an intense membership identification with the party and, perhaps, a constant promise of imminent victory. Success in this endeavour would be a significant accomplishment. As Brian Barry puts it, "self-interest can operate quietly, but mass altruism requires a series of dramatic and well publicized events to keep it going".⁵ It cannot be denied that some groups do survive this way, but Canadian political parties do not seem to be among them.

⁵Brian Barry, Sociologists, Economists and Democracy, p. 37.

If many high ranking party officials are participating because of the material or solidary satisfactions they expect to obtain, then it is incumbent upon the political party to make at least some effort to support and satisfy these desires. At the same time, it is not at all obvious that political parties will be able to maintain a continuous supply of selective incentives. To some extent the party can use offices and titles to insure the continued participation of individuals, even though most constituency presidents claimed that a desire for prestige was not a factor in determining their acceptance of party office. The constituency organization can create a pool of offices simply by determining the size of the association's executive. Some constituencies have more than ten offices in the executive. However, from the party's perspective, this may have the disadvantage of discouraging the formation of a cohesive continuous group of party workers.

Solidary incentives, like all others, are very complex. Sometimes the party organization is able to provide them, at other times they must simply encourage the situations most likely to satisfy those to whom they are important. The party organizers interviewed each vigorously affirming the idea of introducing more social

functions into the local party's activities. Each claimed that the party headquarters make an effort to encourage local associations to request ideas if they required new kinds of activities. There are problems however. Many participants tend to take a very narrow view of the political party as an organization. In dealing with those who see the party exclusively as a vehicle for political action, party organizers apparently find it difficult to encourage diversification of activities. As one of them put it, "It is hard to convince people in a political party that they can legitimately organize and take part in programs which are not political". The parties are painfully aware that while many are encouraged to participate by the excitement of political struggles it is difficult, even with the use of solidary incentives, to sustain enthusiasm for campaign fights during the long period between elections.

The infrequency of material responses at all stages of participation deserves some comment. Very few respondents cited the possibility of establishing business contacts or of building a career in politics as their main incentive to participation at any stage of their involvement. In conjunction with the information supplied by party organizers this data seems to support the hypothesis that

patronage is not particularly important in attracting participants and that party workers do not conceive of the party as an organization where clients can be found or business transactions negotiated. From the party's point of view this is perhaps unfortunate. Many of those who have commented on the role of patronage in American politics and on the demise of the party machine, have noted the important degree of flexibility which is provided by a fund of material rewards. This argument is summarized by Ippolito and Bowman, who state that,

When the party can attract and maintain activists through material incentives, its flexibility in choosing goals and strategies is greatest. But when the "substance" of politics becomes increasingly important as an incentive, the party must provide some "pay-off" in these terms and this inevitably introduces some limits upon organizational flexibility.⁶

But there is little use in lamenting the passage of this kind of organization. The patronage machine is based on an arrangement which, as Epstein succinctly puts it, is "no longer tenable in a modern society demanding efficient government services".⁷

⁶Dennis Ippolito and Lewis Bowman, "Goals and Activities of Party Officials in a Suburban Community", op. cit., p. 580.

⁷Leon Epstein, Political Parties in Western Democracies, p. 11.

Beyond showing that constituency presidents apparently possess some of the necessary resources for participation, the profile of the constituency president might suggest that participants are giving expression to a certain set of cultural values. This argument has been advanced by Edgar Litt in a study of participants and non-participants in an urban community in the United States. He claims that the democratization of cultural institutions and the rise of civic and reform political associations are related phenomena which signal "the politics of culture".⁸ Like this study he found that the professional and business strata dominated local politics and that others tended to be excluded.⁹ His main interest, as he describes it, is in "the use of partisan electoral politics to sustain the preferences of an educated minority in the selection of candidates and the determination of public issues".¹⁰

Given the limited scope of our study, our findings do not begin to offer the kind of evidence which would be required to substantiate his hypothesis. Furthermore, it

⁸Edgar Litt, "The Politics of a Cultural Minority", in M. Kent Jennings and L. Harmon Zeigler (eds.), The Electoral Process (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall 1966), p. 105.

⁹Ibid., p. 107.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 106.

is probably accurate to say that his study does not accomplish that objective either. The claim might be made that the constituency president is representative of a cultural elite given his social and economic background. But to further substantiate this kind of hypothesis some different concepts will have to be operationalized and a study conducted under more controlled conditions, perhaps in a single Canadian constituency. However, this perspective should not be lightly dismissed. The Canadian political culture, at least at its upper reaches, may be something more than what Van Loon has called "spectator-participant". It may even mean that there exists a political minority who feel they have certain cultural values to protect and that they are spurred on by more than a spectator interest in what is going on in politics.

However, until some workable alternative hypotheses are formulated, James Wilson's dual concept of the amateur and the professional politician is perhaps the best guide to the nature of participation in Canadian political parties. Unfortunately, it is difficult to know precisely whether or not a spirit of amateurism, with its emphasis on principles and the ends of action, has replaced a previous emphasis on what Wilson refers to as professionalism in politics. We are simply without the necessary information to make such

an evaluation. It is even difficult to draw definite conclusions from our own data regarding the amateur democrat. As Wilson makes clear in his book, the amateur democrat is more than a conceptual combination of background characteristics and dominant incentives. The amateur is characteristically possess of certain attitudes toward issues such as the degree of intra-party democracy required in the party and the type of candidates which ought to be recruited. Therefore, no assumption is made that we have succeeded in examining all of the dimensions of Wilson's complex, and sometimes confusing, ideal-type. But in terms of background characteristics, and in terms of dominant incentives, we can claim to have succeeded in identifying two main dimensions of amateurism among party activists at one level of the party organization in Ontario.

It is not certain what the presence of a significant number of amateurs (in the complete sense of the term) would mean for Canadian political parties -- or if it would mean anything. After all, even the external differences which exist between the American and the Canadian political systems are bound to have at least some effect on the significance of the amateur phenomenon for Canada. In the United States this group has created and dominated the "club movements" in various states, has played a large role

in achieving party reform, and has attempted the elimination of "machine politics" in the large urban areas. If a comparable number of amateurs exist in Canadian party organizations it seems either that they have yet to consider themselves (or be considered) as a viable force, or that their activities have escaped notice. While the latter is certainly within the realm of possibility, given the paucity of empirical studies on participation in Canadian political parties, only a systematic study with some of these questions in mind will help evaluate the impact of amateur politics in Canada. It might be that a spirit of amateurism is easily detected only in reaction to a dominant spirit of professionalism.

Finally, because the amateur politician represents the reformist tendencies in American political parties, there may be a tendency among academics to adopt a normative position sympathetic to his style of politics. In this regard it is perhaps wise to remember that an infusion of the amateur spirit throughout all levels of Canadian political parties might result in an unexpected disruption of at least part of the political process. We have already alluded to the difficulties which might be encountered by organizations that have to rely on purposive incentives and the incentive of civic duty. Wilson, however,

raises a question which goes beyond that:

Institutions should be judged by the ends that they serve, not by the motives of their members, and on this basis it is an open question whether the professional politician is not the person best equipped to operate a democratic government in a way that will produce desirable policies.¹¹

Future Research

One of the main difficulties in formulating future research designs in this area will continue to be the lack of basic information regarding the functioning of local organizations, their hierarchy, and the tangible rewards that are made available to the faithful. The case study, which American political scientists have put to use in the examination of practically every facet of local organization and personnel, has been used only intermittently in Canada, and usually in the study of local candidates and voting behaviour. If future research is to devote some attention to the costs and benefits of participation in political parties then some details on these costs and benefits will be required for the construction of meaningful hypotheses. These studies themselves will have to explore some of the more mundane details of party organization in search of operational measures.

¹¹James Wilson, The Amateur Democrat, p. 42.

Naturally there are many more variables which demand examination but which either could not be included comfortably in this study or were simply errors of omission. The extent of inter-party competition, for example, may have an effect on incentives, inasmuch as it has been a focal point in the analysis of patterns of candidate and activist recruitment. Similarly, the rural-urban composition of various ridings has been a factor of interest in American studies and should be examined in the Canadian context as well. Eventually there may be lengthy and complex list of factors. However, each one, examined in the context of the dominant incentive to participation, would help establish further the extent to which incentives are independent of other variables.

It is doubtful that much can be accomplished at first on a province-wide scale, mainly because it is very difficult to control for the kinds of variables that distort generalizations. For this reason the study of incentives in political parties might be aided under the microscope of a case study. Constituencies with particular characteristics could be chosen and personal interviewing would be facilitated. Furthermore, different kinds of participants could be studied within the same framework.

A study of incentives would also profit if it were accompanied by a study of recruitment to party offices. While we attempted to distinguish between the study of recruitment and the study of incentives in chapter three, it is of vital interest to be able to distinguish the "self-starters" from the actively recruited and to compare their incentives. Our knowledge of the party and its operations is seriously hampered to the degree that we remain ignorant of how the party and the prospective participant are brought together.

We are always, as Abraham Kaplan notes, pulled in opposite directions: "to search for data or to formulate hypotheses, to construct theories or to perform experiments."¹² In Canada we remain quite ignorant of the inner workings of even our major political parties. We are just beginning to take an interest in the means of participation which exist in our political system, the extent to which they are used, and the possible importance of these patterns. Studies of the various political parties and of participation in their activities should provide a perspective from which we may learn more about the parties in particular and about the Canadian political culture in general.

¹²Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry, p. 20.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

1. Approximately how long have you been a member of your political party? _____
2. How long have you held your present position of constituency party president? _____ Have you ever been a constituency party president before? Yes _____ No _____
3. If the opportunity were to come would you seek another, even more responsible party office? Yes _____ No _____
4. Taking each reason separately in explaining why you initially became interested in participating in politics beyond voting, would you say it is (1) very important (2) somewhat important (3) not very important
 - A. I began to develop a strong attachment to the goals of a particular party _____
 - B. I hoped that party work would help me establish business contacts _____
 - C. I saw campaign work as a way of influencing party policies _____
 - D. I hoped to meet people and establish new acquaintaintances _____
 - E. I felt that to participate more actively was part of my civic obligation _____
 - F. I believed that political activity might be of some personal material value _____
 - G. I was attracted by the action and the excitement of the political contest _____

Which of the above reasons would you say best describes the reason for your initial interest in political activity _____

5. What do you think is the major satisfaction or reward that the average party worker gets out of his political activities?

6. Taking each reason separately in explaining why you decided to accept the position of constituency party president, would you say it is (1) very important (2) somewhat important (3) not very important

- A. I had a friendship with a particular candidate _____
- B. I was interested in building a career in politics _____
- C. I had developed a concern about my party's policies _____
- D. I felt that it was in my own interest to keep the riding association active _____
- E. I felt that to participate more actively was part of my civic obligation _____
- F. It was an opportunity to become involved in the excitement of the political process _____
- G. I felt that I could make a contribution to the success of my party's basic principles _____

Which of the above reasons would you say best describes why you decided to accept the position of constituency party president _____

7. In response to the following please indicate whether you (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) disagree (4) strongly disagree

- A. Party organization and unity is more important than permitting the type of free discussion which may divide the party _____
- B. I would object to a candidate who compromises on his basic values if that is necessary to win _____
- C. Party programs should be deliberately vague in order to appeal to the broadest spectrum of voters _____
- D. As a constituency party president, by far my most important job is to help select a candidate who will win in the next election _____
- E. A good party worker must support any candidate nominated by the constituency even if he basically disagrees with him _____
- F. Organizational leaders in the party, at a higher level than myself, should make a strong effort to consult with party workers before making important decisions _____

8. If you had to drop out of political activity tomorrow what things would you miss most from such work? Indicate whether the following would be (1) very important (2) somewhat important (3) not very important

- A. The friendships and contacts I have made among people with similar interests _____
- B. The opportunity to discharge my civic duty and participate more fully in the democratic process _____
- C. The opportunity to serve the goals and principles of my party _____
- D. The enjoyment of being involved with others in politics and political struggles _____
- E. Other (please specify) _____

Which of the above do you feel you would miss the most _____

9. Do you feel that there are any informal constraints on your activity as a party president, that is, do you feel that after a certain length of time you will be expected to step aside and allow someone else an opportunity to be the riding president? Yes _____ No. _____
10. How would you describe your father's involvement in politics: (1) very active (2) somewhat active (3) not very active _____
11. Do you belong to any service-oriented organizations? If so, which ones?

12. A. In terms of the party's election campaign would you describe your activity as a constituency party president as (1) very important (2) somewhat important (3) not very important _____
- B. In terms of formulating the party's policies would you describe your activity as constituency party president as (1) very important (2) somewhat important (3) not very important _____

13. To what political party do you belong? _____
14. Into which age group do you fall? (please check)
A. 21-30 _____	C. 41-50 _____	D. 61-70 _____
B. 31-40 _____	D. 51-60 _____	E. Over 70 _____
15. What is your present occupation? _____
-
16. What was the highest level of education you reached?
(please check)
A. Primary _____
B. Secondary _____
C. Post-secondary -- Technical School _____
D. College (no degree) _____
E. College (degree) _____
F. Graduate training _____
17. Sex M _____ F _____
18. Into which of the following brackets does your annual income fall?
A. Under \$7,500 _____
B. \$7,500 - \$10,000 _____
C. \$10,000 - \$12,500 _____
D. \$12,500 - \$15,000 _____
E. \$15,000 - \$17,500 _____
F. \$17,500 - \$20,000 _____
G. \$20,000 - \$25,000 _____
H. Over \$25,000 _____

Thank you very much for your cooperation. If you have any questions or remarks you would like to add, please feel free to note them below.

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Articles

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