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RESPONSIVENESS TO CITIZEN DEMANDS AND PREFERENCES: REFLECTIONS ON PAST FINDINGS AND FUTURE RESEARCH*

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Abstract

In this paper the recent literature on responsiveness is reviewed and synthesized in order to lay the foundations for the development of a systematic "middle-range" theory of political responsiveness. Responsiveness is viewed as a multi-dimensional concept pertaining to the causal relationships between various demand stimuli and various policy-maker responses. An attempt is made to suggest the conditions which facilitate policy-maker responsiveness to each of a variety of demand stimuli. A review of theory and research regarding the conditions of responsiveness suggests the conclusion that it is difficult to enhance responsiveness through such reforms as professionalizing political institutions, centralizing formal power in political executives, decentralizing territorial control of policy-making, etc. The reason for this is that such conditions appear to enhance policy-responsiveness to some demand stimuli while reducing responsiveness to other demand stimuli. Although some conditions--economic development, party competition, high citizen participation--seem to enhance responsiveness to a variety of stimuli, these are conditions which are difficult for reformers to control.

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During the past five years, questions regarding the responsiveness of American political institutions, processes, and policies have become important research topics among political scientists. In principle, a focus on the concept of responsiveness has considerable merit because it implies synthesizing two rapidly advancing, but still relatively distinct, areas of inquiry: the community power research and comparative state and local policy research. Students of community power have moved beyond researching "who governs?" and are now largely concerned with researching the more difficult question "what difference does it make who governs?" (Wilson, 1966). By investigating the policy-making result in American cities and, more specifically, by discerning "to whom public policy is responsive," community power theorists hope to make inferences about the power structures of communities. For example, if policy adoptions fail to reflect the preferences and needs of lower-class citizens, the limitations of the pluralist view that community power is dispersed would be apparent (Parenti, 1970, and Hayes, 1972). State policy analysts also have begun to see utility in investigating the concept of "policy-responsiveness." When research began to suggest that political institutions have little impact upon public policy, some researchers suggested that there was a need to reconceptualize public policy. Instead of investigating the effects of political institutions on policy levels, some state policy analysts began to study the effects of political variables on the degree to which public policy responds to lower-class needs and demands (Fry and Winter, 1970), dominant citizen preferences (Munger, 1969), and other measures of citizen needs, demands, and preferences. Because variations in political structures and processes are apparently related independently to variations in "policy responsiveness," the importance of "political" factors in the policy-making process has been partially reaffirmed.

An emphasis on the concept of responsiveness would thus seem to suggest a theoretical marriage of the best aspects of two important research traditions. The concern of state policy analysts with explaining public policy is combined with the community power theorists' concern with "who benefits?" from public policy. Community power theorists can better evaluate the democratic character of American governments by measuring the degree to which American states and cities adopt responsive policies. Utilizing Hannah Pitkin's notion that representative government involves "acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin, 1967, 209), the existence of unresponsive policies can be interpreted as evidence that representative democracy has not been fully achieved. The concern of state policy analysts with explaining public policy can be carried forth in an increasingly relevant and prescriptive fashion. Because few scholars doubt that policies should be responsive, it is important to ascertain the determinants of responsive policy outcomes. If, for example, professionalized political institutions are positively related to responsive policies (as argued by Shade and Munger, 1973), then policy analysts can urge the adoption of professionalized legislatures and bureaucracies in order to enhance responsiveness.

Despite the potential importance of research and theory regarding the concept of responsiveness, a review of the existing literature in this area suggests that there is little agreement over past findings or over the most promising directions for future research. For exam-

ple, there is almost no agreement regarding the degree to which American governments are indeed responsive. In a fashion similar to the old "Who Governs?" debate, elite theorists contend that such cities as New York and Newark have "political systems [which are] not as responsive as the pluralists had predicted." (Bellush and David, 1971:13; see also Parenti, 1970). Others reach more pluralistic conclusions. On the basis of an extensive analysis of public policy and public opinion in the states, Ronald Weber argues that

"the data suggest clearly that the states are much more responsive to public opinion than might have been thought. In addition ... the trend is for responsiveness to increase. These results should caution those who argue that state governments are becoming less responsive to public opinion." (Weber, 1975:197)

The diversity of findings regarding the degree of responsiveness of American governments suggests that American governments are sometimes responsive, sometimes unresponsive, and sometimes partially responsive; therefore, the intellectual task facing students of responsiveness is to explain this variation in the degree of responsiveness. However, attempts to explain this variation have been little more successful than attempts to describe it. For example, Shade and Munger (1973) argue that party competition is a strong determinant of policy responsiveness to public opinion, but Shaffer and Weber (1972:27) find that "party system factors have very little significance for political responsiveness in the American States."

Many of the inconsistencies in the findings regarding the concept of responsiveness are doubtlessly due to methodological problems and differences in research design. However, it is the purpose of this paper to suggest that in previous research the concept of responsiveness has not been used in a rigorous manner, and that theoretical difficulties rather than methodological difficulties have thus far prevented an accumulation of knowledge regarding the responsiveness of American governments. In an effort to rescue the concept of responsiveness from the ambiguities currently surrounding it, this paper will proceed as follows. First, the conceptual meaning of responsiveness will be discussed and a multi-dimensional definition of the concept will be presented. Second, some implications of this multi-dimensional formulation of responsiveness will be discussed. And third, drawing on previous theory and research findings, some propositions regarding factors which enhance or retard responsiveness in American governments will be presented.

I. Responsiveness as a multi-dimensional concept

The major obstacle to any serious investigation of responsiveness is the casual manner and contradictory ways in which the concept has been previously defined. Consider the following definitions of responsiveness as presented in the state and local politics literature.

"Leaders are responsive if they accurately perceive citizen priorities, if they agree with the citizenry on the nature of the community problems, and if they are active in trying to solve those community problems seen by the citizenry." (Verba and Nie, 1972:

"Responsiveness, then, characterizes the relationship between council and community when the former governs in a manner responsive to the expressed interests of the latter. ... Responsive councils are more likely than not to behave in ways they consider counter to majority preferences. It could hardly be otherwise, for these are councils which do respond to the 'intense minorities' in their communities. It is the people who speak out who are listened to." (Eulau and Prewitt, 1973:426,434)

"At any given point in time and space, a delicate balance between opinion and policy would exist. This balance could be captured by some empirical measure of responsiveness. At any given point in time and space, opinion and policy may be in balance (i.e., responsive) or opinion and policy may be inconsistent (i.e., unresponsive)." (Shaffer and Weber, 1972:4)

"The notion of responsiveness will be conceptualized in two different ways. First, we may impart an interpretation which can be derived from democratic philosophy. That is to say, states which implement policies that are consistent with public opinion can be labeled 'responsive' ... Second, states and localities can respond to specific policy problems under consideration. The second notion of responsiveness focuses upon the ability to devote money and effort to the problem, rather than public opinion regarding the allocation of funds." (Clync and Shaffer, 1975:9,12)

This brief listing of conceptions of responsiveness makes clear that the concept has taken a number of divergent meanings. If decision-makers respond to majority preferences, they are labeled as "unresponsive" by Eulau and Prewitt and are labeled as "responsive" by Shaffer and Weber. Decision-makers who try to solve community problems are labeled as responsive by Verba and Nie, but they must actually "implement policies" in order to be responsive according to Clync and Shaffer. Given such ambiguity as to what constitutes responsiveness, it is little wonder that no consensus has emerged regarding the description and explanation of responsiveness.

Despite the limitations of each of the definitions of responsiveness presented above, each is useful in pointing the way to a more satisfactory concept of responsiveness. To begin with, each of these definitions suggests that "responsiveness" refers to a stimulus-response relationship. In other words, the concept of responsiveness is concerned with the linkage between two types of variables: stimuli variables, such as public opinion or the existence of community problems; and response variables, such as the adoption by public officials of certain policy outputs (Luttbeg, 1974; Erikson and Luttbeg, 1973:253-322). Responsiveness occurs when decision-makers, usually acting as a collectivity, react positively to an external stimulus. Unresponsiveness occurs

when decision-makers fail to react or react contrary to the way desired by those providing the stimulus. Because the concept of responsiveness thus refers to a relationship between stimulus variables and response variables, the meaning given to "responsiveness" varies in any particular study depending upon (a) the nature of the stimuli to which public officials are expected to respond, and (b) the nature of the required behavioral response. In other words, various students of responsiveness adopt alternative criteria variables concerning the stimulus to which policy-makers should respond in order to deserve the honorific label of "being responsive." And these students also adopt various standards of behavioral response expected of "responsive officials." Let us consider, first, the response and, second, the stimulus aspects of responsiveness.

THE RESPONSE ASPECT OF RESPONSIVENESS. The behavioral repertoire of public policy-makers who are confronted with various stimuli is large and varied. When demands are made on officials, they can react by doing what is demanded of them, by setting up committees to study the issue (Lipsky, 1970:177), by making symbolic gestures to those making demands (Edelman, 1963), by simply ignoring the demands entirely, etc. Given the diversity of possible responses which policy-makers can make to stimulus variables, when should we say that policy-makers have acted in a "responsive" manner? The purpose of this sub-section is to suggest a rank-ordering, in terms of increasing responsiveness, of some of the most important behaviors which policy-makers can adopt when confronted with various demand stimuli. Four broad types of responses to demands are considered. (1) Officials can seriously consider the demands and make issues of them; a positive response of this type can be labeled "issue-responsiveness" or "agenda-responsiveness." (2) Officials can enact policies intending to respond to the demand stimuli; such a response can be labeled "policy-responsiveness." (3) Officials can fully implement and enforce their policy intentions; such efforts can be labeled "output-responsiveness." (4) Officials can enact and enforce policies which have the desired impact; such results can be labeled "outcome-responsiveness." In other words, policy-makers can be considered increasingly responsive as they place on the community's agenda, enact, enforce, and deliver policies which correspond to demands made upon them.

As demands are made into issues and placed on the agenda of policy-makers, an initial "responsive" action has been taken. As mentioned above, Verba and Nie (1972:302) seem to suggest that such actions are sufficient to warrant the label of "being responsive;" responsiveness, as indicated by Verba and Nie's measure of concurrence, occurs to "the extent to which citizens and leaders in the community choose the same 'agenda' of community priorities." Thus, if policy-makers agree that demands for gun control laws, open housing laws, pollution regulation, etc. are legitimate and deserving of a full and impartial hearing, Verba and Nie imply that these policy-makers ought to be considered "responsive" even if there is no policy response. The literature on "nondecisions" and "nonissues" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; Cobb and Elder, 1972; Frey, 1971) suggests that translating demands into issues is indeed an important, perhaps necessary, condition of responsive behavior.

Many students of responsiveness would argue, however, that additional steps beyond "agenda-responsiveness" must be taken by officials

to warrant being considered responsive. Ronald Weber (1975:193), for example, suggests that responsiveness "occurs only when the substantive demands of the interests are embodied in policy." This points to a second level of responsive behavior: policy responsiveness. In addition to seriously considering demands, policy-makers can pass laws and otherwise enact policies which respond positively to demands. Open housing laws, gun control laws, and pollution abatement regulations can be established by policy-makers in response to demands for such laws. For many students of responsiveness, such behavior is sufficient; if policy enactments correspond to demands, the officials have been "responsive."

Our illustrations regarding gun control laws, open housing laws, and pollution abatement regulations are suggestive of the notion that those making demands upon policy-makers may not consider the mere enactment of laws to be a sufficiently positive response. Many gun control laws, open housing laws, pollution abatement regulations and other policy enactments exist but are not fully enforced (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). Thus, a higher standard for what counts as responsive policy-maker behavior, "output-responsiveness," might be concerned with the extent to which policy outputs, defined as actual policy or service levels (Sharkansky, 1970), correspond to demand stimuli.

A fourth, even more rigorous, standard for responsive behavior, "impact-responsiveness," can be suggested. Even fully implemented and fully enforced responsive policy outputs may not have the intended consequences. Gun control laws may not reduce crime on the streets. Open housing laws may not lead to integrated housing. In this regard, Levy, Meltsner, and Wildavsky (1974:6,8) have made an important distinction between outputs ("the goods and services produced by government") and outcomes ("the distant consequences [of policy outputs] for citizens"). From this perspective, it is necessary to consider the delivery of policy outputs to citizens. Using this standard, responsive policy-maker behavior would occur only when the consequences of policy outputs are satisfactory to those making the stimulus demand.

The extent of "agenda-responsiveness," "policy-responsiveness," "output-responsiveness," and "impact-responsiveness" in American political systems should be conceptualized as continuous variables. At the non-responsive end of these scales, it is possible to envision policy-makers as behaving in ways directly contrary to the demands made upon them. At the responsive end of these scales, it is possible to envision policy-makers as behaving in ways fully congruent with the demands made upon them. Figure 1 summarizes the argument by depicting a matrix of possible response behaviors by policy-makers to demand stimuli. Instances of partial repression and partial responsiveness to demand stimuli can also be envisioned.

In short, the responsiveness of policy-makers is, in part, a function of the type of behavioral response which is expected of them. If all that is expected of officials is that they translate demands into issues, a judgment of high responsiveness will probably result. If what is expected of officials is that they alleviate the underlying conditions which gave rise to the original demand, then a judgment of low responsiveness is more probable. It is therefore useful to consider these four levels of responsive behavior as conceptually distinct aspects of

responsiveness. Separate measures of the extent of agenda-responsiveness, policy-responsiveness, output-responsiveness, and impact-responsiveness should be attained, and the unique determinants of each level of responsiveness should be investigated. Understanding the level and causes of impact-responsiveness is probably the most significant research problem. Such a focus would ensure that mere symbolic actions by officials at the policy enactment stage of the policy-making process would not count as "responsiveness" and would instead imply a rigorous standard for maximal response to various demand stimuli. But investigation into this aspect of responsiveness is hindered by enormous problems of discovering and measuring the impact of policy-responsive actions. For this reason, most empirical research on responsiveness has been concerned with policy-responsiveness (Shade and Munger, 1973; Shaffer and Weber, 1972; and Schumaker and Loomis, 1975), and, to some extent, with output-responsiveness (Loomis and Schumaker, 1975).

THE STIMULUS ASPECTS OF RESPONSIVENESS. Figure 2 suggests some of the demand stimuli that responsive decision-makers are expected to take into account in making policy decisions.¹ Demand stimuli are explicit or implicit requests upon decision-making authorities indicating that a particular public policy is preferred.²

Figure 1

A Matrix of Possible Responses by Policy-Makers
to Demand Stimuli

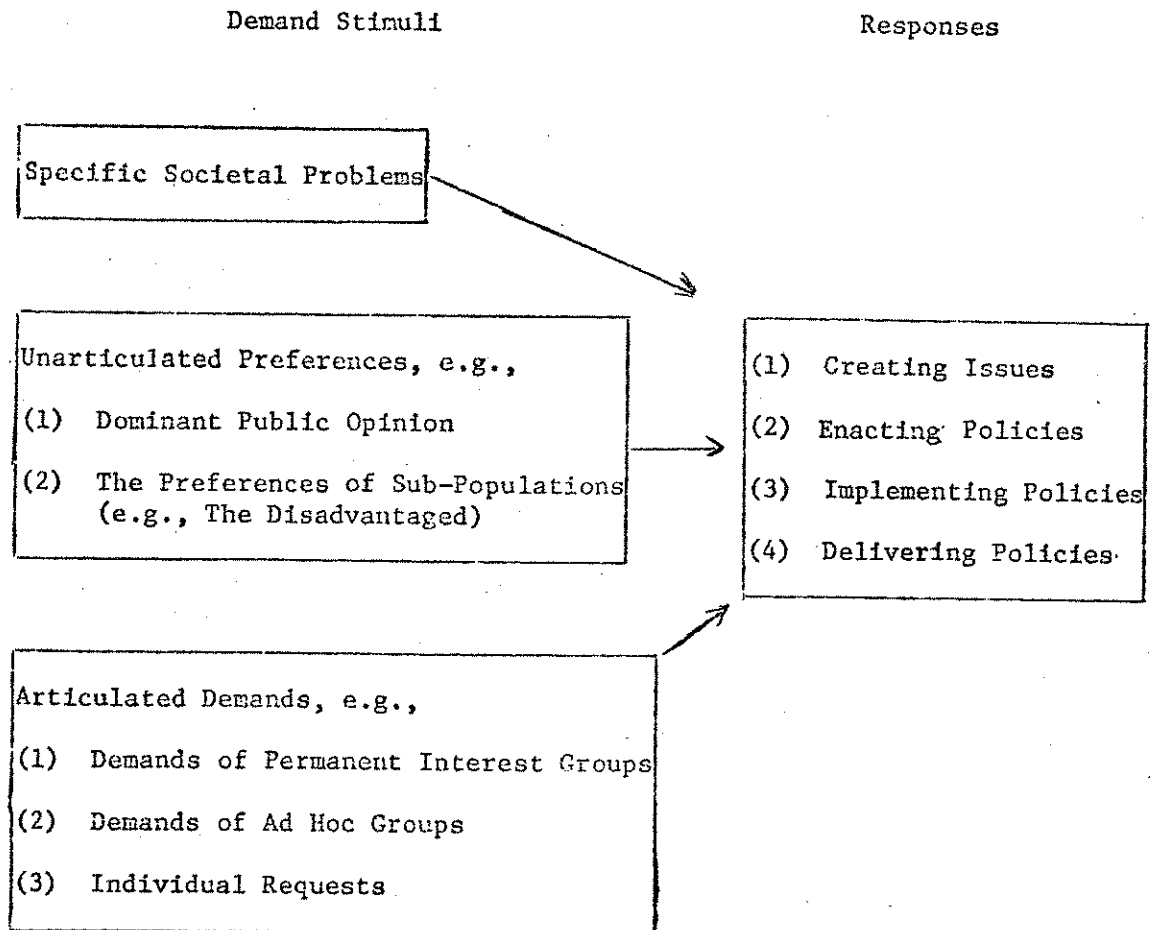
Type of Response Degree of Response	Creating Issues	Enacting Policies	Implementing Policies	Delivering Policies
Repressive Response	Negative Agenda Responsiveness	Negative Policy Responsiveness	Negative Output Responsiveness	Negative Impact Responsiveness
No Response	No Agenda Responsiveness	No Policy Responsiveness	No Output Responsiveness	No Impact Responsiveness
Full Positive Response	Positive Agenda Responsiveness	Positive Policy Responsiveness	Positive Output Responsiveness	Positive Impact Responsiveness

Three broad types of demands illustrate the diversity of demand stimuli: (1) directly-communicated or expressly articulated expressions of policy preferences by identifiable persons or groups; (2) policy preferences which, although unarticulated and not directly communicated to public officials, constitute the "public opinion" of a community; (3) the existence of stress-producing environmental problems. The existence of these three types of demand stimuli implies that policy-makers can respond in various degrees to (1) the views of those citizens with highly intense views who are sufficiently motivated to take the initiative to contact officials (Verba and Nie, 1972:268-269), (2) the dominant preferences of all citizens in a community including non-participants as well as participants (Cnudde and McCrone, 1966), and (3) the existence of problems in the environment regardless of citizen preferences regarding these problems.

Figure 2

The Concept of Responsiveness:

A Multi-Dimensional View



The problem of responding simultaneously to these various demand stimuli can be illustrated by considering demands for gun control legislation. Because of the high degree of activity and influence of the National Rifle Association (NRA) and other gun lobbies, responding directly to articulated demands would probably entail the adoption of lenient gun control laws. However, because most public opinion polls indicate that over 70 percent of Americans favor stricter gun laws, responsiveness to public opinion would probably entail the adoption of restrictive measures. Similarly, increasing crime rates and large number of homicides might be considered as evidence for the existence of an environmental problem of sufficient magnitude that a policy response is required regardless of the nature of either articulated or unarticulated preferences. The point is that there are a variety of legitimate demands made upon policy-makers, and "being responsive" to all demands is impossible if some demands are contradictory. Any rigorous treatment of the concept of responsiveness requires a careful stipulation of the demand stimuli to which public officials are responding.

One important stimulus to which policy-makers respond is the existence of stress-producing environmental problems. Police are responsive to societal problems when they react quickly and effectively to crime. Courts are responsive to the environmental condition of de facto school segregation when they order school busing. Pollution control boards are responsive to environmental deterioration when they restrict industrial waste. These examples illustrate the notion that officials are often expected to respond to the existence of societal problems even if such "responsiveness" entails being unresponsive to community preferences of group demands.

Much of the literature on the effects of environmental variables on policy has implicitly been concerned with the linkage between societal problems and public policy. In this regard, Ira Sharkansky (1971) has pointed out that environmental variables measure both resources and societal needs, and that at least some of the stimulation for policy-maker decisions comes from observable measures of societal problems. Clynch and Shaffer (1975) have also found that state policy-makers respond to the occurrence of societal problems. They conclude, for example, "that three LEAA expenditure variables are uniformly responsive to the growing crime rate" (Clynch and Shaffer, 1975:20). In another study, Loomis and Schumaker (1975) have also found that objective community problems stimulate policy responses. They argue, however, that there is great variation in the linkage between societal problems and public policy. In the area of open housing, they found that housing segregation has an independent effect on policy. In the area of pollution control, the existence of pollution problems indirectly stimulates policy responses by activating public preferences for stricter pollution control are, in turn, responded to by public officials. In the area of gun control, they found, however, that crime rates are not important stimuli to which community policy-makers have responded by enacting strong gun legislation. In short, the existence of societal problems appears to be an important stimulant to which policy-makers are responsive, but much remains to be learned about the extent of this type of responsiveness.

From the perspective of democratic theory, the most important stimuli to which policy-makers are expected to respond are the dominant

public preferences of citizens. In this regard there have been several recent attempts to measure public opinion in state and local politics and relate these measures of community preferences to public policy (Munger, 1969; Shaffer and Weber, 1972; Weber and Shaffer, 1972; Schumaker and Loomis, 1975; and Loomis and Schumaker, 1975). These studies have normally found some association between holistic public opinion and public policy, prompting Weber (1975:196-197) to argue that "the states on the average are quite responsive in nonfiscal policy-making." Recent research has also found positive associations between public opinion and municipal fiscal policies, although the strength of these associations seems to vary depending upon the areas of fiscal policy under consideration (Schumaker and Loomis, 1975).

Although it may be true that there are some broad relationships between holistic opinion and policy, most political scientists are interested in the distributional aspects of politics; they wish to know if the underlying but unarticulated preferences of particular sub-populations are disproportionately responded to by policy-makers. Many scholars suggest, for example, that the preferences of lower-class citizens and minority groups (the "disadvantaged") are not taken into account by policy-makers to the same degree as are the preferences of middle and upper-class white citizens. There has been, to my knowledge, no direct systematic test of this proposition, but recent research by Susan Hansen (1975) is suggestive in this regard and points the way to important research. Using the Verba and Nie sample of 64 small American communities, Hansen disaggregated mass preferences by social class and related the preferences of different classes to the attitudes of political elites. Her findings indicate that there is indeed a bias against the disadvantaged as the preferences of upper-class citizens were significantly closer to elite preferences than were the preferences of lower-class citizens. Such an analysis suggests both the possibility and utility of examining how policy-makers respond to the unarticulated preferences of various sub-populations to the actual policy outputs of political systems. Additionally, there is a need to ascertain the conditions which give rise to such biases.

Just as it is possible to make distinctions among the unarticulated preferences of various sub-populations of politics, it is also possible to distinguish among various types of directly articulated demands. Three types of articulated demands have been identified in the literature on responsiveness: (1) the demands communicated to policy-makers by permanently-organized interest groups; (2) the demands communicated to policy-makers by ad hoc issue-specific groups; and (3) the demands articulated by unattached individuals contacting officials under their own initiative. The distinction between the demands of permanent organizations and ad hoc groups has been suggested by Prewitt and Eulau (1970:430).

"First councils can consider the views and wishes of attentive publics, of fairly well-defined and permanent interest clusters in the community. ... We say that the council, by acting in response to the viewpoints and thinking of attentive publics represents these publics. Second, the council may not concern itself with cohesive publics but may, instead, act

in response to ad hoc pressures and petitions. Neighborhood groups, for instance, may organize on a sporadic basis (and) make demands for some service or benefit."

In addition to examining responsiveness to group demands, Jennings and Zeigler (1971:296) argue that it is useful to have "a second approach at responsiveness from an angle which allows for more personalized, individual indicators." They thus argue that "individualized responsiveness" where public officials respond to individuals in specific role situations is a frequent occurrence.

It should be noted that when articulated demands are classified in this fashion, there exists a relatively high degree of consensus regarding the responsiveness of American public officials. Most political scientists argue that the policy adoptions of American governments tend to reflect the demands of permanent interest groups rather than other forms of articulated demands (see, for example, Lowi, 1969; Lipsky, 1970; David and Peterson, 1973; Salamon and Wamsley, 1975). This feature of the pluralistic political system is particularly troublesome to those who note that it is upper-class persons who are disproportionately members of interest groups (Schattschneider, 1960; and Verba and Nie, 1972: 174-208). From this perspective, then, being responsive to on-going organized interests is to be unresponsive to the many citizens making demands contrary to those of permanent interest groups who participate only sporadically in ad hoc organizations or as individuals.³

SUMMARY. It has been argued in this section that "responsiveness" is a complex, multi-dimensional concept concerned with the relationship between stimulus variables and response variables. First, responsiveness must be delineated according to various standards of response expectations. Agenda-responsiveness, policy responsiveness, output responsiveness, and impact-responsiveness refer to different types of responses available to policy-makers. In other words, important aspects of responsiveness include the degree to which policy-makers respond to demands by (a) seriously considering them and placing them on their political agenda, by (b) enacting policies congruent with demands, by (c) fully implementing and enforcing policies congruent with demands, and by (d) delivering policy outputs having the desired impact. Second, responsiveness cannot be discussed without indicating the stimuli to which policy-makers are responding. Policy-makers can respond to the explicit, direct communications from groups and individuals; they can respond to unarticulated community preferences; and they can respond to the existence of stress-producing community problems. In addition, policy-makers can respond in various ways to different types of directly-communicated demands, to the preferences of different sub-communities, and to different types of community problems.

When responsiveness is considered in this multi-dimensional fashion, it seems likely that the following propositions regarding the "degree of responsiveness" of American policy-makers will be confirmed.

1. In regard to all types of demands, there is a relatively high degree of agenda responsiveness; there is a lesser degree of policy-responsiveness; there is even less output-responsiveness; and there is

relatively little impact-responsiveness. In other words, policy-makers are relatively responsive in terms of seriously considering demands made upon them, but they are not very responsive in terms of being able to deliver services and policies which ultimately satisfy demands and preferences.

2. In American political systems, policy-makers are, in general, most responsive to articulated demands; policy-makers are somewhat less responsive to unarticulated preferences; and policy-makers are least responsive to the existence of community problems when groups fail to demand solutions to these problems or when these problems are of little concern to mass publics (Wolff, 1965).

3. Nevertheless, the relative importance of various types of demand stimuli to which policy-makers respond vary depending upon the nature of the policy consideration. When policy is concerned with the delivery of separable goods, policy-makers are most influenced by the articulated demands of groups and individuals. When policy is concerned with the delivery of public (or collective) goods, policy-makers are most influenced by holistic community preferences and by the existence of community problems.

4. In American political systems, policy-makers are most responsive to the articulated demands of permanently-organized interest groups; they are less responsive to the articulated demands of ad hoc issue-specific groups; and officials are least responsive to individual requests.

5. In American political systems, policy-makers are most responsive to the unarticulated preferences of those sub-populations of the community having the most political resources. This means that American political systems are biased against the preferences of the disadvantaged.

II. Elaborations and implications

A full elaboration of responsiveness as a multi-dimensional concept and a discussion of all the implications of treating responsiveness in this multi-dimensional fashion will not be attempted in this paper. Nevertheless, in this section it will be instructive to consider three important points concerning the above treatment of the concept of responsiveness. First, the idea that responsiveness refers to a unidirectional relationship between stimulus variables and response variables will be discussed. Second, the relevance of the concept of responsiveness to more general theories of politics will be considered. And third, the role of political institutions and processes in theory and research regarding responsiveness will be addressed.

RESPONSIVENESS AS A UNIDIRECTIONAL RELATIONSHIP. The concept of responsiveness refers to stimulus-response relationships in which the stimulus variables cause the response. Thus, responsiveness does not occur when, through feedback processes, response behaviors affect the stimuli. Consider, for example, the stimulus of public opinion and the response of policy enactment. If public opinion supports open housing legislation and such preferences cause officials to adopt laws corresponding to these preferences, these officials have been responsive. But suppose

that officials adopt open housing policies, and in reaction, a previously hostile public opinion became increasingly supportive of such laws. Such a situation is conceived of as a responsive situation by Shaffer and Weber (1972:40).

"For capital punishment and parochial aid legislation, our analysis indicates that a change in opinion was one of the principal determinants of increased ... responsiveness. For these two areas of state regulation, there was little or no change at all in policy; instead greater responsiveness occurred when the citizenry changed its opinion to conform with existing policy."

Thus, Shaffer and Weber argue that responsiveness occurs whenever preferences (the stimuli variable) and policy (the response variable) are congruent. For them, it does not matter whether preferences cause policy or whether policy adoptions cause preferences. I would argue, however, that congruence and responsiveness are two different concepts. Congruence occurs when stimuli variables and response variables are positively related. Responsiveness occurs when stimuli variables and response variables are positively related because the stimuli cause the response. Conceptualizing responsiveness in this fashion makes it possible to distinguish situations where policy-makers use symbolic politics to manipulate public preferences and demands from situations where policy-makers react to pre-existing preferences and demands. In short, congruence between demands and policy can occur when "citizens act and the system reacts" or when "the system acts and citizens react." Only citizens-act/system-reacts situations correspond to a democratic conception of responsiveness.

This does not suggest, of course, that citizens-act/system-reacts situations are more frequent than system-act/citizens-react situations. It is because policy-makers frequently do affect their own demand environment that it is necessary to distinguish the causal sequences involved (Key, 1961:409-410). Students of responsiveness thus must be aware of methodologies which enable them to determine whether the demand stimuli affect the policy response or whether policy enactments cause the demand (Loomis and Schumaker, 1975).

RESPONSIVENESS AS A CRUCIAL CONCEPT IN SYSTEMS THEORY. A second point to be considered here regarding the concept of responsiveness is its relevance to more general theories of politics. In this respect, it should be clear that the concept of responsiveness as discussed above has a close relationship with the dominant paradigm in political science, system analysis. Indeed, our designation of stimuli and responses as the key aspects of responsiveness corresponds quite closely with Easton's concepts of inputs and outputs. Additionally, responsiveness is an important element in systems theory and is defined by Easton (1965:434) as the willingness of authorities

"to take the information of expressed demands into account and give it consideration in their outputs and [to] do so positively in the sense that they seek to use it to help avert discontent or to satisfy griev-

ances over the initial outputs or some unfulfilled demand."

Despite its close relationship to systems theory, the concept of responsiveness has a theoretical integrity of its own. Systems theory is an over-arching "grand theory" of politics and the degree of responsiveness by authorities in political systems to various demand stimuli is only one of its concerns. Indeed, Easton's most conclusive statement regarding responsiveness is that "responsiveness of authorities will vary from extreme sensitivity to stony impermeability to the wants and demands of the politically relevant members of the system." (Easton, 434).

When responsiveness is the central concern of political theory, there is a desire to go beyond such unhelpful generalities to a specific set of propositions regarding the causes of responsiveness. In other words, scholars interested in "responsiveness" are concerned with "middle-range" theory which specifically informs empirical investigations ascertaining the conditions of responsiveness. Such a middle-range theory will draw on the insights of systems analysis in formulating hypotheses about factors enhancing responsiveness (see below). But a theory of responsiveness will also draw on the insights of other important frameworks in political science. For example, it is possible to derive from role theory the hypothesis that the degree of responsiveness to citizen demands and preferences will be reduced if officials have predominantly Burkean role orientations (Prewitt and Eulau, 1970). Similarly, it is possible to derive from conflict theory the proposition that intense class conflict in a society will force officials to be increasingly responsive to the interests and demands of the largest and/or most unified class (Dahrendorf, 1959). Additionally, it is possible to derive from power theory the proposition that the dispersion of power in society will increase responsiveness to mass preferences (Dahl, 1961). In short, a theory explaining the forms and degrees of responsiveness will synthesize the concepts and propositions derived from many frameworks of analysis that exist in political science.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES AND POLICY RESPONSIVENESS.

A third point to be considered here regarding the concept of responsiveness concerns the role of political institutions and processes in understanding "political responsiveness." Various political institutions and processes are said to be "responsive" or "unresponsive" depending upon whether or not they facilitate the communication of citizen demands and preferences to public authorities. For example, Peter Eisinger (1973:11-12) has argued that political institutions which "facilitate citizen activity in pursuit of political goals" can be considered "open" or "responsive." This formulation suggests that from the responsiveness perspective political institutions are important in the policy-making process as contextual specification variables which affect relationships between various stimulus variables and various response variables. Some political institutions (such as party competition or unreformed city structures) are important politically because they facilitate the translation of certain types of demands (such as citizen preferences) into public policy. Political institutions are important because their presence or absence affects the degree to which stimulus variables are positively correlated with response variables. The work of Lineberry and Fowler (1967) is suggestive in this regard. They identify unreformed

urban governments as important political variables because municipal policies are more reflective of community inputs when unreformed institutions are present in cities than when reformed institutions are present in cities.

This conception of political institutions as specification variables affecting the relationship between stimulus and response variables is, of course, based on the insight in systems theory that the political system is a "conversion process" which transforms political inputs into policy outputs. Easton's political system model thus clearly implies that different characteristics of political systems are contextual variables affecting how authorities respond to various inputs. However, in much of the policy process literature, which has claimed to be derivative of Easton's work, characteristics of political systems have been conceptualized as independent variables and attempts have been made to determine the independent impact which these variables have on policy adoptions. In other words, this policy literature has tested the possibility that political variables such as party competition, and form of government cause policy outputs. But from the responsiveness perspective, it does not make much sense to suppose that such political variables cause policy; demand stimuli are the factors to which officials react and which are the psychologically meaningful forces for political authorities. Political authorities would understand and agree with the idea that the articulated demands of groups, and the underlying preferences of citizens forced them to create certain policies; authorities would have great difficulty seeing how such political institutions as party competition or form of government forced them to make certain policy responses. (Blalock, 1961:9-11.) In short, there is little, if any, theoretical reason for supposing that political institutions are independent variables which directly and independently cause policy responses.⁴ The massive amount of research which shows that, statistically, political institutions do affect policy suggests that these variables are nevertheless very important in the policy-making process. The task confronting comparative policy analysts is to develop theories which accurately describe the function of political institutions in this process.

Because there are a variety of stimuli to which policy-makers can respond, the presence of certain institutions may facilitate the expression and importance of some stimuli while hindering the expression and importance of other stimuli. In this way, political institutions can have an important, if indirect and non-independent or non-additive impact on policy response. For example, reformed institutions may play an important role in municipal policy by reducing the causal impact on policy of articulated group and individual demands while enhancing the causal impact on policy of the existence of stress-producing problems. By facilitating responsiveness to some stimuli and by reducing responsiveness to other stimuli, political institutions appear to be important factors in the policy-making process.⁵

From the responsiveness perspective, then, the impact of political institutions is that they affect stimulus-response relationships. When researchers claim that their research shows that a political structure has an independent effect on policy, they really are expressing in an elliptical fashion the finding that the presence of a political con-

TABLE 1

Hypothesized Facilitators and Inhibitors of

Responsiveness to Various Stimuli:

Social System Characteristics

Conditions Affecting Responsiveness to Stimuli	Stimuli	Occurrence of Problems	Dominant Community Preferences	Preferences of the Disadvantaged	Organized Group Demands	Ad Hoc Group Demands	Individual Requests
High Economic Development		+3 Sharkansky (1971)	+3 Shade and Munger (1973)	+3	+3	+3 Schumaker (1974)	+3
High Social Pluralism		+2 Clynch and Shaffer (1975)	0 Shaffer and Weber (1972) Shade and Munger (1973)	-2	+3 Jennings & Zeigler (1972) Prewitt & Eulau (1970) Zisk (1973)	+2 Prewitt and Eulau (1970)	0 Jennings & Zeigler (1971)
Social & Demographic Instability		-2	-2 Shade and Munger (1973)	-2	-1	-1	0
Private-Regarding (Individualistic) Political Culture		-1	-2 Shaffer and Weber (1972) Banfield & Wilson (1963) Wolfinger & Field (1966)	+2 Banfield and Wilson (1963)	+1 Banfield and Wilson (1963)	+2 Banfield and Wilson (1963)	+2

Code: +: Facilitates Responsiveness
 -: Inhibits Responsiveness
 0: No Effect
 1: Weak Effect
 2: Moderate Effect
 3: Strong Effect

dition (e.g., party competition) has enabled some stimulus variable (such as political opinion) to have an important impact on policy while the absence of that condition (e.g., one party dominance) has hindered the impact of the stimulus variable. Because in most of these studies the stimulus variables (public opinion, group pressures, etc.) are not measured in the analysis and controlled for, it appears that political institutions have an independent impact. In reality, political variables may have merely enhanced or curtailed the importance of these unmeasured stimuli. This role, however, is an enormously important one for political structures and processes to play.

III. The facilitators and inhibitors of policy-responsiveness

In this section, an effort is made to explain variations in the degree of responsiveness of political authorities to various demand stimuli. Six stimuli to which policy-makers occasionally respond are considered: (1) the occurrence of stress-producing societal problems, (2) the dominant but unarticulated preferences of all citizens in political systems, (3) the unarticulated preferences of relatively disadvantaged citizens in political systems, (4) the articulated demands of organized interest groups, (5) the articulated demands of ad hoc issue-specific groups, and (6) the articulated demands of individuals. Thus, our concern is with ascertaining the conditions under which each of these stimuli are relatively important or relatively unimportant causes of the responses of political officials. In order to make this investigation manageable, attention is focused on the policy-responsiveness of officials. Although this aspect of responsiveness is probably less important than impact-responsiveness or output-responsiveness, we focus on policy-responsiveness because most research in this area has been concerned with the policy enactments of authorities. It is thus possible to discuss the findings of the policy-responsiveness literature as this research bears on the hypotheses offered. The degree of policy-responsiveness to each of these six stimuli is potentially affected by the presence or absence of several types of variables. In this section, four types of variables which can either facilitate or hinder policy-responsiveness to various kinds of stimuli are considered: (a) social system characteristics, (b) political system characteristics, (c) aggregate leadership characteristics, and (d) characteristics of the demand stimuli. Tables 1 to 4 present, in summary fashion, a large number of hypotheses which specify how these types of variables are expected to affect policy-responsiveness to various demand stimuli. If a variable is hypothesized to have a facilitating effect (i.e., enhancing the impact of a stimulus on policy-makers), this is indicated by a "+" in the appropriate cell. A scale of 1 to 3 is utilized to indicate whether the facilitating or inhibiting effect is believed to be strong ("3"), moderate ("2"), or weak ("1"). If no effects are hypothesized a "0" appears in the appropriate box. These hypothesized relationships are based on both theory and research. The literature most directly bearing on the hypothesized relationships is indicated by citations appearing in the appropriate cell. It will be noted that many of the cells in tables 1 to 4 contain no references. In such cases, hypothesized effects are still indicated, but the highly tentative nature of any propositions in these areas must be underscored. Even cells with references do not present conclusive findings regarding the causes of responsiveness. These tables are presented simply in order to take stock of our present knowledge regarding policy responsiveness and

to indicate areas where additional research is needed.

SOCIAL SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS. Although there are obviously many aspects of the social environment which may facilitate responsiveness, four social system variables have been selected for examination here. These variables and their effect on various aspects of responsiveness are summarized in Table 1.

The extent of economic development in a social system appears to be an important facilitator of responsiveness to a wide variety of demand stimuli. When groups or individuals articulate demands requiring financial expenditures, when citizens prefer higher levels of services, and when problems occur which require money to solve them, political authorities should be most able to respond positively to these demand stimuli when the necessary resources can be extracted from the social system. The fact that policy-makers cannot respond to many types of demands unless resources are available may explain why such indicators of resource availability as industrialization, urbanization, and wealth are highly correlated with policy levels (Dawson and Robinson, 1963; and Dye, 1966).

The degree of social pluralism in a social system also should have an important, although more complex, impact on responsiveness. Social pluralism refers to the degree to which social systems have a diverse demographic composition. Heterogeneous social systems tend to have fairly well-developed organizational infra-structures which enhance the vitality of group life in pluralistic social systems. As indicated in Table 1, the extent of social pluralism in a society should affect the type of demand stimuli to which policy-makers respond. In heterogeneous societies, policy-makers should be relatively responsive to the demands of organized interest groups which are both numerous and strong in such an environment. The intensity of communications from organized groups should flood the communications channels of authorities in such an environment, and the demands of ad hoc issue-specific groups and individuals should be somewhat less important cues for policy-makers. Additionally, policy-makers are likely to believe that the variety of group demands made upon them in a heterogeneous social environment are an accurate reflection of community-wide preferences. However, because of the upper-class bias in the interest-group system, officials will be somewhat mistaken in this regard (Verba and Nie, 1972:268-269). The result is that policy-makers will frequently adopt policies which are unrelated to dominant community preferences and which are at odds with the preferences of lower-class citizens. Heterogeneity may also enhance responsiveness by policy-makers to the existence of societal problems, as suggested by Clynch and Shaffer (1975). In a heterogeneous environment, officials are likely to be aware of societal problems because at least some of the many groups in such an environment are likely to be aggressive spokesmen for alleviating the problems. By responding to organized groups, officials will thus indirectly respond to the existence of community problems.

A third social system characteristic which may affect policy-responsiveness is the degree of instability in the social environment. States and localities vary in the degree to which they experience rapid economic, social, and demographic change. On the whole, we would expect

that responsiveness to a variety of demand stimuli is reduced when communities are undergoing rapid social change. Both the underlying citizen preferences in a community and the articulated demands of citizens will change substantially as the demography and economic base of a society change. These changes will also result in the existence of new societal problems which require a policy response. However, the incremental nature of the policy-making processes in states and localities operates as a constraint retarding the ability of these political systems to be responsive to the rapid social changes occurring in the environment (Sharkansky, 1967; and Rakoff and Schaefer, 1973). In more stable social systems, the prevalence of incrementalism is a less constraining factor to responsiveness.

A fourth social system characteristic which is hypothesized to affect policy-responsiveness is the prevailing political culture in the society. Banfield and Wilson (1963) have presented a conception of political culture having an important bearing on political responsiveness. They argue that communities can be classified according to whether their dominant ethos is private-regarding or public-regarding. On the one hand, a political culture which is dominated by an immigrant, working-class, private-regarding, or individualist ethos is said to facilitate responsiveness to the competing and particularistic demands of special interest groups. We would expect, therefore, that policy-responsiveness to organized and ad hoc group demands and to individual requests is enhanced by the dominance of a private-regarding ethos. Because the private-regarding culture is the prevalent ethos of the disadvantaged sectors of society, political authorities may also be somewhat responsive to lower-class preferences in such a culture. On the other hand, a political culture which is dominated by a Yankee, middle-class, public-regarding, or unitary ethos should primarily facilitate responsiveness to community-wide preferences rather than to particularistic demands. In addition, policy-makers in a public-regarding culture are most likely to respond to the existence of societal problems regardless of particularistic demands or community preferences; for the prevailing political norms in such communities are to improve social conditions for the betterment of all (Wilson and Banfield, 1971).

POLITICAL INSTITUTION CHARACTERISTICS. Four aspects of political institutions which should affect policy-responsiveness to various stimuli will now be considered. The propositions are summarized in Table 2. Probably the most researched political system variable in this respect is the degree to which political institutions are professionalized. Institutional professionalism can be defined as the degree to which key policy-making roles are staffed by full-time, well-paid bureaucrats who are appointed rather than elected to their positions. State legislatures, for example, are said to be professionalized when legislators view their jobs as full-time and when they are aided by fully-trained permanent legislative assistants (Grumm, 1971). State executives are professionalized when key policy-making posts are held by civil servants rather than gubernatorial political appointees. City governments are professionalized when they adopt many "reformed" institutions. The appointment of city managers and the creation of extensive civil servant systems are examples of developing professionalized institutions which place power in the hands of professionals while reducing the power of "politicians" at the local level.

TABLE 2

Hypothesized Facilitators and Inhibitors of
 Responsiveness to Various Stimuli:
 Political Institution Characteristics

Conditions Affecting Responsiveness to Stimuli	Stimuli ¹⁾ Occurrence of Problems	Dominant Community Preferences	Preferences of the Disadvantaged	Organized Group Demands	Ad Hoc Group Demands	Individual Requests
Professionalized Political Institutions	+3 Clynch and Shaffer (1975)	-1 Shade and Munger (1973) Shaffer and Weber (1972)	-3 Lineberry and Fowler (1967) Hansen (fc) Brooks (1975)	-2 Jennings & Zeigler (1971)	-2 Schumaker (1974)	-1 Jennings and Zeigler (1971)
High Electoral or Party Competition	0	+2 Hansen (1975) Shade and Munger (1973) Shaffer and Weber (1972)	+3 Key (1949) Hansen (1975) Brooks (1975)	+1 Jennings and Zeigler (1971) Prewitt and Eulau (1970)	+1 Prewitt and Eulau (1970)	0 Jennings and Zeigler (1971)
Institutional Centralization	+2 Crain, Katz, and Rosenthal (1969) Greenstone and Peterson (1968)	+1 Shade and Munger (1973) Schumaker and Lockris (1975)	0 Brooks (1975)	-1	-1	-1
Territorial Decentralization	-2 Clynch and Shaffer (1975)	0 Shade and Munger (1973) Ostrom and Whitaker (1973)	+3 Peterson (1970)	+2	+2	+2

A literature has evolved which has both praised and damned professionalism in terms of its effects on responsiveness. For example, Carmines (1974) has argued that legislative professionalism increases the informational and resource capacity of political institutions and increases their ability to effectively convert political inputs into policy outputs. In contrast, Lineberry and Fowler (1967) have argued that professionalized reformed institutions serve to insulate policy-makers from citizens and make it more difficult for citizens to communicate their preferences and demands to policy-makers; they thus argue that "the greater the reformism, the lower the responsiveness" (Lineberry and Fowler, 1967:715). These contrasting hypotheses can be synthesized by suggesting that professionalism has the effect of facilitating responsiveness to certain stimuli while retarding responsiveness to other stimuli. In particular, professionalized institutions seem to reduce responsiveness to directly-communicated group demands. Not being held accountable at election time, appointed professionals have fewer incentives than politicians to placate the particularistic demands of groups, especially when these demands are at odds with "professional standards." Professionals are most likely to perceive that their special expertise is discovering the existence of societal problems and developing cost-efficient solutions to these problems (Wildavsky, 1961). Professionals are likely to be most ambivalent regarding the stimuli of dominant community preferences. Like politicians, most professionals have been socialized to accept the democratic norm that policy enactments should reflect public opinion. But again, professionals have fewer inducements than elected officials to respond to this stimulus, particularly when professionals believe that what citizens need and what citizens want are at odds. Because professionals are mostly upper- and middle-class, they are particularly likely to view the preferences of lower-class citizens in these terms. While the politicians who dominate non-professionalized political systems have some incentives to respond to lower-class preferences, many civil servants in professionalized institutions lack such incentives.

A second political system characteristic which appears to affect policy-responsiveness is the extent of party or electoral competition. For reasons spelled out by Key (1949), Cnudde and McCrone (1969), Hanson (1975) and others, party competition should facilitate policy-responsiveness to demands and preferences. However, party competition should not facilitate all demands and preferences equally. It has been suggested by some that when politics in a state or a community are not organized around party competition, politics is instead organized around interest groups. Thus, in the absence of party competition, policy-makers are probably highly responsive to interest groups (Schattschneider, 1960). The presence of party competition may somewhat boost this responsiveness because officials have an additional electoral incentive to be responsive. But party competition further facilitates responsiveness to other stimuli. Party competition forces policy-makers to anticipate the preferences of voters who fail to communicate directly their desires to them. In addition, because party competition is particularly important in organizing voting cues for the disadvantaged, the presence of party competition is particularly likely to enhance responsiveness to lower-class preferences. When discussing the consequences of one-party factionalism, Key (1949:307) argues that

"Organization is essential, however, for the promotion of a sustained program in behalf of the have-nots, although not all party and factional organization is dedicated to that purpose. It follows, if these propositions are correct, that over the long run the have-nots lose in disorganized politics."

The extent of formal institutional centralization of power seems to be a third political variable affecting policy-responsiveness. Institutional centralization refers here to the extent to which state or municipal executives have been given the formal power to take the initiative in policy-making as well as in policy-execution and enforcement. Measures of gubernatorial strength (Schlesinger, 1965) and mayoral strength (Greenstone and Peterson, 1968) are indicators of the extent to which the state or local executive can control the legislature or council and the bureaucracy. Political scientists have frequently argued that institutional centralization enhances responsiveness (Ransone, 1956), but there has been some dissent from this predominant position (Gove, 1964). It makes sense to hypothesize that institutional centralization reduces the number of effective access-points for groups and individuals thus reducing policy-responsiveness to particularistic demands. However, institutional centralism should give predominant power in the political system to the one political official with a system-wide constituency, thus enhancing responsiveness to dominant community-wide preferences. Institutional centralization should also give the political system the capacity to respond quickly and efficiently to the existence of societal problems (Crain, Katz, and Rosenthal, 1969). The tentative nature of these propositions should be stressed, however, as the effects of institutional centralization on various aspects of responsiveness have not been well researched.

The extent of territorial decentralization is a fourth political variable which has been frequently discussed in terms of its effect on responsiveness. Territorial decentralization is here defined as the extent to which policy-making powers have been delegated to local or neighborhood officials. The existence of strong home-rule provisions illustrates the occurrence of territorial decentralization in state and local relations, and the existence of little city halls, multi-service centers, and neighborhood councils illustrates the existence of territorial decentralization in urban politics (Cole, 1974:23-28). Advocates of community control have argued, of course, that arrangements for territorial decentralization enhance political responsiveness as they place policy-makers closer to the people and their problems (Altshuler, 1970). However, the ability of territorial decentralization to facilitate responsiveness probably depends on the type of responsiveness being considered. It should be expected that territorial decentralization enhances responsiveness to articulated demands, whether these demands come from interest groups, ad hoc issue-specific groups, or individuals. Territorial decentralization should also enhance responsiveness to lower-class preferences. The middle-class and upper-class already have political systems (suburbs) responsive to their preferences, and territorial decentralization as it is discussed in urban politics implies the creation of similar political boundaries where lower-class preferences are dominant. However, it is much more problematic that territorial decentralization enhances the responsiveness of political authorities to the existence of

societal problems. It has frequently been argued, for example, that territorial decentralization leaves many decentralized political systems without the resource capacity to respond to the pressing problems placing stress on these systems. Whether territorial decentralization enhances responsiveness to dominant community preferences is also problematic.

AGGREGATE LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS. In addition to the institutional variables considered above, political responsiveness can also be affected by other "political" variables pertaining to the collective behaviors and attitudes of policy-makers. In this sub-section, we will consider how policy-responsiveness to a variety of stimuli is either enhanced or diminished by three characteristics of leadership: dispersion of influence, descriptive representation, and dominant attitudes. The propositions are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Hypothesized Facilitators and Inhibitors of
Responsiveness to Various Stimuli:
Aggregate Leadership Characteristics

Conditions Affecting Responsiveness to Stimuli	Stimuli	Occurrence of Problems	Dominant Community Preferences	Preferences of the Disadvantaged	Organized Group Demands	Ad Hoc Group Demands	Individual Requests
The Dispersion of Influence		-2 Hawley (1963) Clark (1968)	-1 Schumaker and Loomis (1975)	+3 Aiken (1970)	+2 Clark (1968)	+2	+2
Descriptive Representation		-1	+2 Schumaker and Loomis (1975)	+3 Peterson (1970)	+2	+2 Schumaker (1974) Eisinger (1973)	+2
Dominance of Burkean Attitudes		+3	-2 Eulau and Prewitt (1973)	-1	-3 Zisk (1973) Eulau and Prewitt (1973)	-3	-1

The degree of dispersion of influence among a variety of actors in the political system is said to have an important effect on responsiveness. Dispersion of influence refers to the informal structure of power in political systems; higher levels of influence dispersion indicate that many actors representing a variety of political interests participate fully in making policy-decisions (Dahl, 1961:85-86). Theory and research suggest that the extent of dispersion of influence among policy-makers facilitates policy-responsiveness to some stimuli while hindering policy-responsiveness to other stimuli. Power dispersion seems to reduce responsiveness to societal problems particularly in what Clark (1968:587-588) calls "fragile" policy areas. In the absence of widespread public or group support for solving community problems, centralized leadership may nevertheless be able to adopt policy innovations responsive to these problems. If influence is highly dispersed, assertive leadership will not exist, and some leadership group is likely to veto such policy innovations. However, dispersed influence may enhance responsiveness to other stimuli. Because dispersed influence structures provide many access points for individuals and groups, influence dispersion should enhance responsiveness to group and individual demands. Additionally, the top leaders in centralized influence structures are usually insulated from lower-class citizens and are thus slow to enact programs which respond to the preferences of the disadvantaged. Whether dispersed power structures enhance or retard policy-responsiveness to dominant community-wide opinion is uncertain. Clark (1973) has suggested in this regard that dispersed influence structures enhance the enactment of policies distributing separable goods while concentrated influence structures increase the attainment of collective goods. This suggests, of course, that centralized influence structures are most responsive to community-wide concerns. But there has been little solid evidence verifying this proposition.

A second leadership characteristic which appears to affect responsiveness is the degree to which policy-makers descriptively represent various sectors of society. Following Pitkin (1967:60-91), descriptive representation is defined as the degree to which policy-makers have the same demographic characteristics as their constituents. The extent of descriptive representation in political systems varies widely as some systems have, for example, blacks and minorities holding policy-making positions in proportion to their occurrence in the general population. In other political systems such groups are vastly under-represented. One would expect that responsiveness to a variety of stimuli would be enhanced when descriptive representation is achieved. In such circumstances, all groups and individuals should find somewhere in the policy-making arena a sympathetic ear for their complaints and demands. The disadvantaged groups in society are particularly benefitted by the existence of descriptive representation because such arrangements ensure that persons sharing their backgrounds and experiences are involved in policy-making. The existence of descriptive representation also helps to ensure that the policy preferences of all groups in a community are known by policy-makers. Thus, descriptive representation should enhance responsiveness to dominant community-wide preferences. As indicated by Table 3, there has been, however, little research pertaining to these propositions, although the available evidence does suggest that descriptive representation enhances responsiveness to a number of demand stimuli.

A third leadership characteristic which affects responsiveness con-

cerns the dominant attitudes of policy-makers. Most important in this respect are policy-maker attitudes regarding the proper relationship between themselves and their constituents. As suggested by Prewitt and Eulau (1970:430) policy-makers can believe that they should be attentive to the public or they can believe that they should ignore the public and act in terms of "self-defined images of what community needs are." We would expect, of course, that when policy-makers have predominantly "Burkean" attitudes, policy-responsiveness to a variety of citizen demand and preference stimuli should be retarded (Miller and Stokes, 1963). Such policy-makers, believing that their duty is to respond to community needs rather than to citizen preferences and demands, should be highly responsive to the occurrence of community-wide problems.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE PERSONS PRESENTING DEMAND STIMULI. The degree of policy-responsiveness to a variety of demands is affected not only by the social and political environment and the characteristics of policy-makers; it is also affected by the characteristics of those presenting the demands. If demand stimuli are effectively presented to policy-makers by those making demands there is a greater chance of a positive policy-response than if demands are not effectively presented. In this subsection, three variables regarding the nature of demand stimuli will be considered. A summary of propositions is given in Table 4.

The degree of citizen participation and/or mobilization is a stimulus characteristic affecting policy-responsiveness. This concept refers to the extent to which various persons presenting demand stimuli are active in communicating preferences, demands, and needs to policy-makers. In general, high levels of participation by citizens enhances policy-responsiveness to citizen demands and preferences. But the form as well as the extent of this participation also affects the stimulus to which policy-makers respond. If organized and ad hoc groups are highly active in a community, responsiveness to group demands will obviously be enhanced if group demands are major stimuli for policy-makers. If unorganized as well as organized citizens are active in the political affairs of a community, even if they do little more than vote, responsiveness to dominant community preferences will be enhanced. These propositions are consistent with the findings of Verba and Nie (1972:322-324), who contend that "voting can provide a lot of pressure on leaders (especially if they wish reelection)" and that "overall responsiveness" is thus enhanced by "the blunt but powerful techniques of the electoral process." Responsiveness to the disadvantaged should also be enhanced by high citizen participation through voting activity. High voter turnout would suggest to officials that the lower and working classes, which have the weakest propensity to vote, are active members of the electorate and that it behooves them to adopt policies which reflect lower-class preferences.

The responsiveness of political officials is not only affected by the extent of various forms of participation; it is also affected by the resources which citizens possess and utilize when they make demands on public officials. If citizens have high levels of conventional resources, policy-responsiveness will be enhanced. For example, if citizens in communities generally have high levels of access to political information, officials are apparently required to presume that these citizens are highly attentive to their policy-making activities and that prudence requires adopting policies congruent with dominant citizen attitudes (Shade and

TABLE 4

Hypothesized Facilitators and Inhibitors of

Responsiveness to Various Stimuli:

The Characteristics of Persons Presenting The Demand Stimuli

Conditions Affecting Responsiveness to Stimuli	Stimuli	Occurrence of Problems	Dominant Community Preferences	Preferences of the Disadvantaged	Organized Group Demands	Ad Hoc Group Demands	Individual Requests
High Participation or Mobilization		0	+2 Shade and Munger (1973) Verba & Nie (1972) Hansen (1975)	+3 Vanecko (1969)	+2 Zisk (1973) Eulau and Prewitt (1973)	+2 Mollenkopf (1973) Eulau and Prewitt (1973)	+2
Possession and Utilization of Conventional Resources		0	+2 Shade and Munger (1973)	+2	+3 Dahl (1961)	+3 Mollenkopf (1973) Schumaker (1975)	+2
Possession and Utilization of Un-Conventional Resources		0	0	0 Sears and McConahay (1973) Downes and Greene (1973)	+2 Gamson (1975)	+1 Schumaker (1975) Gamson (1975)	0

Munger, 1973). Officials are also more responsive to groups possessing legitimacy, legality, status, technical expertise, economic well-being and many other conventional resources than they are to groups which are limited in such resources (Dahl, 1961:229-267).

Finally, when citizens making demands on officials possess unconventional resources, policy-responsiveness to their demands and preferences may also be affected. Force and violence are perhaps the major unconventional resources utilized by groups making demands on policy-makers. Whether the use of unconventional resources by groups enhances or retards policy-responsiveness to group demands is a contested question. Some students of group processes argue that the threat of violence or the use of violence reduces both public and elite support for group demands, thus retarding responsiveness (Schumaker, 1975). Others argue, however, that groups that use violence "have a higher than average success rate" (Gamson, 1975:79). A balanced view in this regard would seem to suggest that the use of unconventional resources may occasionally enhance policy responsiveness to group demands under certain conditions. It is clear, however, that much more research is required in this area.

IV. Summary and conclusions

The concept of responsiveness has been widely discussed and researched in recent years by political scientists interested in American governments. The importance of the concept is undeniable, but much of the previous literature on responsiveness has been highly emotive and ideological. Rigorous scientific theory and research on the responsiveness of our institutions, processes, and policies have been far too infrequent.

In this paper an attempt has been made to advance the development of a systematic theory of political responsiveness. It has been suggested that there are many different types of responsiveness. For example, when political authorities enact policies which are positive responses to group demands, one form of responsiveness is achieved. When political authorities enact policies in response to dominant community preferences, another form of responsiveness is achieved. And when authorities enact policies in reaction to the existence of societal problems still another form of responsiveness is achieved. In short, authorities can be responsive to a variety of legitimate stimuli. When the demands imposed on officials by various stimuli conflict, officials cannot be equally responsive to all stimuli.

Therefore a rigorous treatment of responsiveness will determine the degree of responsiveness to each of a variety of important demand stimuli. More importantly from the perspective of political theory, it is necessary to specify the conditions which facilitate and hinder political responsiveness to various demand stimuli. In other words, it is important to discover the factors which enhance the importance of community preferences, group demands, and community problems as stimuli to which policy-makers respond by creating issues, enacting policies, implementing policies, and delivering policies and services.

An analysis of the literature regarding the conditions which facilitate and hinder responsiveness to various stimuli suggests the limi-

tations of many proposals for political reform. The difficulty is that many institutions which facilitate responsiveness to one set of stimuli also hinder responsiveness to another set of stimuli. For example, the professionalization of political institutions appears to enhance responsiveness to the occurrence of societal problems while simultaneously retarding responsiveness to citizen inputs. Increasing the formal powers of governors and mayors also appears to have "plus-and-minus" effects; centralized formal power seems to enhance responsiveness to community problems while perhaps reducing responsiveness to group demands. Territorial decentralization in the form of local autonomy and neighborhood governments probably enhances responsiveness to citizen demands while reducing responsiveness to societal problems. Thus, decisions regarding which type of responsiveness is preferred must be made prior to making prescriptions to reform these institutions.

Some factors seem to have "plus-and-plus," or at worst "plus-and-zero" effects on responsiveness. In other words, some factors seem to uniformly enhance responsiveness to each of a number of stimuli without simultaneously reducing responsiveness to other stimuli. High economic development appears to enhance responsiveness to a variety of stimuli. High citizen participation and party competition also seem to facilitate several types of responsiveness. The problem, however, is that these are factors over which reformers have little or no direct control.

The need for continued research in the area of responsiveness is apparent. The development of a theory of responsiveness will contribute enormously to a policy-relevant political science.

Notes

1. The types of demands listed here are not intended to be an exhaustive listing of all types of stimuli to which policy-makers respond. Voting messages illustrate an important type of demand stimuli which is not considered in this paper. By referenda, voter mandates, massive ousters of officials, etc. the public can present important policy-relevant stimuli to public officials (Cnudde, 1968; Broh, 1974). The preferences of a "power elite" may constitute another important stimulus to which policy-makers respond. These and other potential stimuli are ignored here simply to make the paper manageable.
2. As defined here, demands must be psychologically plausible from the perspective of policy-makers. The concept of demands should refer to something which policy-makers would agree are real demands to which they feel the need to respond. Policy-makers believe that they should and do respond to group communications, underlying community preferences, and real community problems. In contrast, policy-makers would be fairly perplexed if they were told that many of the environmental variables treated as "demands" by political scientists (e.g., the degree of urbanization, the degree of industrialization, etc.) are demands to which they react. (Schaefer and Raskoff, 1970)
3. It should be noted, however, that increased responsiveness to ad hoc

issue-specific groups and to individuals will not necessarily mean an increased responsiveness to lower-class interests. Orbell (1967), Matthews and Prothro (1966), and Eisinger (1974) have all found that participants in ad hoc protest groups tend to have higher SES than do non-participants. More generally, Verba and Nie (1972) have found that SES is positively related to both the tendency to participate in ad hoc issue-specific groups and to engage in individual participation.

4. The theoretical argument being made here has been forcefully suggested by Schaefer and Rakoff (1970), Weber and Shaffer (1972), and Jennings and Zeigler (1971). Clynch and Weber (1975) have made a recent attempt to utilize an appropriate methodology which treats political variables as specification variables rather than as independent variables.
5. The methodological technique which is most suited for testing the role of political institutions in facilitating or retarding various stimulus-response relationships is Analysis of Covariance (Blalock, 1972: 474-489). This procedure enables an examination of the effect of a stimulus variable on a response variable within sub-groups of cases defined by their value on the specifying political variable. For example, consider the hypothesis that party competition enhances policy-responsiveness to community-wide opinion. The effect of community preferences on policy outputs could be examined in all polities having low party competition. If party competition facilitates responsiveness to community preferences, the regression slope of the opinion-policy relationship should be significantly more positive in competitive polities than in non-competitive polities.

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