

varieties of Pluralism

The search for unity is pervasive in the academic world. According to Michael Walzer, "the deepest assumption of most philosophers who have written about justice, from Plato onward, is that there is one, and only one, distributive system that philosophy can rightly encompass."¹ Similarly, social scientists who have studied and written about community power, from Floyd Hunter onward, have searched for the one model that best describes and explains the resolution of community issues.² Reflecting the "perspectives" outlined in Chapter 1, these models typically identify the most important issues facing communities, the most important cleavages that develop around these issues, and the most important actors who participate in and influence the resolution of these issues; the most common pattern of policy outcomes is then evaluated in terms of some conception of justice and/or the public interest.

For example, Neo-Marxists argue that the most important concrete issues facing communities concern the priority of economic growth and development, that these issues involve class conflicts, that developers, bankers, landlords, and realtors constitute "the Growth Machine" of propertied interests dominating these issues, and that the imperatives of achieving economic growth predetermine that the Growth Machine will emerge victorious over the poor and minorities who are unjustly displaced by new economic development projects.³

In contrast, the bureaucratic-dominance model suggests that

the delivery of urban services is the key issue in community politics (Which neighborhoods get their snow removed first? Which have the most parks?), that neighborhood conflict sometimes occurs over such issues, that agency administrators who make allocative decisions about service delivery on the basis of their "bureaucratic rules" are the most powerful actors in community politics, and that these rules result in reasonably equitable "unpatterned inequalities" in the quality and quantity of services across neighborhoods.⁴

Pluralism contends that such models describe and explain important aspects of community politics, but that a more complete theory is possible.

The Normative Theory of Pluralism

One strain of pluralist theory has been normative, advocating tolerance and diversity against the tyranny of monistic political systems where "the one best solution" to social problems is imposed through centralized and coercive processes.⁵ Pluralists have acknowledged the existence of conflicting views on political issues and have argued that such conflict need not be destabilizing to political systems when the legitimacy of expressing all views is recognized and divergent and, indeed, unorthodox views are tolerated.

In response to the first normative question raised in Chapter 1, pluralism has denied that well-governed communities should pursue certain policy directions. Whether local governments should promote or restrict economic growth (or other policy objectives) can only be answered in a way that is relative to a specific context. Economic development may be viewed by

people in the community as a "collective good," benefitting all.⁶
But if economic growth policies adversely affect some persons,
opponents are entitled to a fair hearing.⁷ Negotiations and
compromises among diverse interests should result in "mutual
adjustments" of goals, as pluralism prefers policy directions
that are "muddled through" rather than those that provide
unambiguous policy directions.⁸

In response to the normative question of who should exercise
predominant power, pluralism has suggested that public officials
should exercise more power than private elites, but the power of
elected officials should not be unlimited and arbitrary.⁹ The
policy process should be open to the views of other actors.
Pluralism advocates a decentralized system where organized groups
and unorganized activists and even inactive voters exercise
influence on the decisions of elected officials.

In response to the normative question about the distribution
of power among various interests, pluralism has advocated "equal
opportunity" where citizens who are relatively disadvantaged in
economic and social assets are not similarly disadvantaged in the
political realm. Thus, policy successes by the poor, by racial
minorities, and by women are viewed by pluralists as democratic
achievements.¹⁰ But absolute equality in political power --
where the preferences of various interests are equally reflected
in policy decisions -- has not been a pluralist objective. What
is important is that no interests monopolize power and no
interest be without power.¹¹ And barriers to the equal
opportunity of various interests to exert influence should be

removed if pluralist ideals are to be realized.

In short, pluralists are skeptical that the public interest or the demands of justice can be objectively defined when concrete political issues are raised. Thus, policymakers should be open to a multitude of views while being particularly sensitive to the interests of the relatively powerless; policy should be shaped by diverse interests; and competing policy directions should be compromised.

Pluralism-I

Early efforts to develop an empirical theory of pluralism --
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what John Manley calls Pluralism-I -- attempted to show that
the possibilities of normative pluralism were substantially
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realized in some American communities like New Haven, El
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Paso, Oberlin, and Syracuse.

Pluralism-I maintained -- and its proponents continue to
assert -- that people have diverse interests because they hold
different positions in society and because they have attachments
to a variety of social groupings. Interests and thus policy
preferences are affected by one's social class and by other
situational and background variables, such as race, ethnicity,
neighborhood, religion, and partisan identification. Thus,
community conflict exhibits not only class cleavages but a
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variety of other cleavages as well. Often these cleavages are
cross-cutting, which reduces the rancorousness of community
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conflict and enhances political moderation and stability.

Pluralism-I suggests that the diverse interests of persons
in different situations are adequately represented in the policy-

making process. Early pluralists thought that persons having common interests usually form groups. Group leaders and lobbyists then ensure that group interests are articulated when issues are resolved. Pluralism-I also suggests that new interests and concerns are easily mobilized. If normally apolitical and unorganized citizens have their primary interests threatened (for example, by proposed developments disrupting their neighborhoods), they can readily muster their previously idle (slack) resources, organize on an ad hoc basis, participate, and be effective. For Pluralism-I,

there is a "frictionless transition" from shared interest to acting interest group. Thus while direct participation in policy issues is limited to professional politicians, group leaders, and issue-specific activists, and while citizens directly participate only when their primary interests are threatened, such participation represents diverse community interests.

Pluralism-I is most well-known for its rejection of the idea that a monolithic community elite dominates issues and thus rules communities. Instead, it stresses that public officials dominate policymaking, while various types of group leaders and activists, and even uninvolved citizens play important roles in the resolution of community issues. Even when ordinary citizens are not mobilized, Pluralism-I suggests that voters have substantial "indirect influence" as elected officials, aware of their need to respond to voter policy preferences in order to win re-election, will anticipate these preferences and resolve issues in ways that are normally consistent with these preferences. And even if certain interests (such as business leaders) are disproportionately involved and influential in resolving certain community issues (such as

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downtown redevelopment), their involvement and influence is limited in other areas which are dominated by other interests. Thus, Pluralism-I asserted that power is widely shared in a decentralized policymaking process.

Pluralism-I has also asserted that power is rooted in a wide variety of power resources -- such as social standing, wealth, popularity, control over jobs, and control over the sources and flow of information and that the exercise of power is proportionate to the extent and skill with which these resources are employed. Having access to a wide variety of resources and employing these resources frequently and skillfully make a person relatively powerful. But no persons control all important resources and all persons have access to some useful resource -- if only the right to vote and the ability to disrupt others through unconventional protest. Even the relatively powerless can mobilize their meager resources through skillful and sustained political action.

Finally, Pluralism-I has suggested that no particular policy principles dominate the policy process. Economic growth may be prized by many actors, and urban redevelopment may be pursued by governmental officials because it is perceived as a "collective benefit" for the community, but competing principles -- like neighborhood protection -- can also be articulated and embodied in policy decisions. Pluralism-I never systematically addressed the role of principles in the resolution of community issues; the power of competing interests -- not the dominant abstract values of community members -- are conceived as the main

determinant of policy decisions. But, because different interests are viewed as having different policy orientations and because all interests are viewed as having significant levels of power, Pluralism-I has implied that diverse principles are reflected in policy decisions.

In summary, Pluralism-I is a theory providing empirical descriptions and explanations of the resolution of community issues that correspond closely with the ideals of the normative theory of pluralism. It asserts that the normal pattern of community policymaking is characterized by the presence of diverse competing interests. The participation of persons representing diverse interests (including interests that arise on an issue-specific basis) and the dispersion of power among various interests ensure that no groups, interests, or principles dominate the resolution of policy issues and that no groups are without power. Even citizens relatively disadvantaged in economic and social assets can exercise significant political power by persistently and skillfully mobilizing the political resources at their disposal.

Pluralism-II

The antithesis of Pluralism-I has been elite-dominance theory. For many years, political scientists and sociologists who were interested in community power debated the scientific merits of Pluralism-I and elite theory; as these debates became more ideological and more obscure, the field of community power studies was largely abandoned (see Appendix A). But partly in response to criticisms from elite theorists, Pluralism-I was modified; Pluralism-II emerged as empirical analysis revealed the failure of American governments "even after years of

opportunity...to live up to the expectations of progress on
economic and social equality".
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Pluralism-II has retained the basic notion that people have diverse interests based on different circumstances concerning their social status, their social and ethnic identities, their gender, their neighborhoods, and so forth. Thus, many types of cleavages occur on community issues, but these cleavages are not necessarily cross-cutting. Instead, various cleavages are partially overlapping. For example, racial minorities and women tend to have lower incomes than whites and men, and the lower class and racial minorities tend to occupy neighborhoods which experience the disruption of economic redevelopment projects. Thus, many community issues involve conflict between "the haves and the havenots" where stratification systems based on race, gender, neighborhood, and so forth reinforce and/or substitute for those based on economic class. The conflicting interests and policy preferences of the haves and the havenots -- defined on a variety of situational variables -- is thus a persistent feature of community life, providing stimuli for social change. Indeed, achieving changes in the social and economic circumstances of the havenots is deemed as important as ensuring political stability
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by advocates of Pluralism-II.

Despite the conflicting interests and preferences of the haves and the havenots, the havenots do not necessarily struggle against the haves on policy issues where these interests might be furthered. Pluralism-II has rejected the assertions of Pluralism-I that relatively powerless persons and normally

inactive citizens can be readily activated or mobilized to defend their interests. For example, the ability of neighborhoods composed largely of the poor and minorities to mobilize against the intrusions of the Growth Machine is highly problematic. ²⁹

Critics of Pluralism-I have argued that mobilization of the disadvantaged is facilitated by such factors as the presence of entrepreneurial leaders, ³⁰ pre-existing organizations, ³¹ and selective incentives that counteract the free-rider problem. ³²

However, these facilitators of mobilization are often lacking among the lower class and minorities, resulting in their underrepresentation in the bargaining processes of pluralism.

Like Pluralism-I, Pluralism-II has rejected the idea that a monolithic elite rules communities. But while Pluralism-I claimed that elected officials occupy central and authoritative roles in the policy process, Pluralism-II has asserted that elected officials have much less power and authority than they need to govern effectively. In some formulations of Pluralism-II, private business elites are viewed as occupying privileged positions which prompt officials to adopt their agendas and resolve issues in ways that respond to business priorities. ³³ In other formulations of Pluralism-II, authority is delegated to administrative officials and private organizations who dominate particular policy areas. ³⁴ In still other formulations of Pluralism-II, elected officials find it necessary to respond to unrelenting pressures from grassroots organizations and of public opinion, making impossible the development of policies that impose immediate costs on citizens in order to realize long-term public benefits. ³⁵ Thus, Pluralism-II has viewed power as being

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widely dispersed in community politics, but the dispersion of power does not ensure that particular and short-term interests will be controlled and that issues will be resolved by representatives who are open to various inputs while exercising their independent judgment.

Pluralism-II has also recognized that power is rooted in a variety of power resources, but its proponents have maintained that some resources are generally much more effective than others and that these resources are, to a significant degree, unequally distributed in a cumulative manner. Control over capital, organization, and social status seem to be the key power resources in community politics.³⁶ Policymakers are encouraged to respond to the needs of those who control capital; in order to provide more extensive services without raising taxes, officials need to attract and retain businesses and individuals who generate revenue and add to the tax base of the community.³⁷ Policymakers usually recognize that organizations contribute to the good of the community and represent legitimate concerns. Because organizations are vital to community life -- providing for the human needs of belongingness, enabling persons to cooperate for the attainment of their common interests,³⁸ and providing important vehicles for political participation -- officials are inclined to defer to the wishes of organizations. Policymakers are also inclined to respond to the preferences of individuals with high status because of their reputed competence,³⁹ civic-mindedness, and other admirable qualities. To a significant degree, revenue producers, leader of community organizations, and persons having high status are the same

people, and their resources give them disproportionate influence in the resolution of community issues.

Other resources that are more widely available have a much more questionable impact. The vote is a potential source of power for the havenots, but sustained electoral mobilization and the ability to form electoral and legislative alliances are required to translate votes into policy victories.⁴⁰

Unconventional protest is another potential resource available to the havenots, but such protest is often viewed as illegitimate and officials have a variety of tactics available to them to blunt protest efforts.⁴¹ Thus, Pluralism-II has agreed with Pluralism-I that persons who most persistently and skillfully utilize their resources will be most powerful in community politics. But it has also asserted that it is easier for the haves to apply the resources available to them than it is for the havenots to apply their more limited resources.

Finally, Pluralism-II agrees with Pluralism-I that dominant principles play little role in the resolution of community issues. According to Theodore Lowi, the only principles that prevail in pluralistic policymaking are the principles of "pluralist ideology." Such principles are merely procedural, as they affirm the desirability of group competition to achieve an equilibrium of power among interests, which Pluralism-I equates with the public interest.⁴² While substantive principles have little impact on policy decisions, the pluralist process nevertheless yields decisions reflecting some orientations more than others, regardless of the distribution of support for these orientations. For example, pluralist processes inevitably lead to

extensive subsidies of business in pursuit of economic growth and to more extensive governmental services benefitting particular interests, because those benefitting from such subsidies and services are able to exert more political power than are the competing interests that must pay for them. ⁴³ Pluralism-II is highly critical that such orientations dominate the policy process without having widespread support.

In summary, Pluralism-I has praised the performance of American city governments, while Pluralism-II has criticized such governments. These different evaluations are due, in part, to different empirical findings, as Pluralism-II has found that there continue to be enduring conflicts between haves and havenots, that there are serious obstacles to bringing all interests (especially those of the havenots) to bear on policymaking, and that significant inequalities of power persist. But these different evaluations are also due to different evaluative standards. Pluralism-I demanded no more than that no group or interest monopolize power and that no group or interest be without the potential for power. Pluralism-I suggested that democratic ideals were achieved if there was "formal equal ⁴⁴ opportunity" -- if all groups received a fair hearing. In contrast, Pluralism-II suggested that democratic ideals required more equal results. It sought "simple equality" in the political ⁴⁵ realm, implying that all interests should be equally represented and effective in the resolution of political issues. Advocates of Pluralism-II found that stronger interests normally prevail over weaker ones -- even if procedures are open and

formally fair -- and they questioned whether pluralist processes were adequately democratic.

Thus, Pluralism-II has demonstrated the defects in pluralist practice.⁴⁶ By arguing that the ideals of the normative theory of pluralism are seldom realized, Pluralism-II moves pluralist theory to the "left" and "calls into serious question much of what generations of American political scientists have taught and believed is true about pluralist democracy in the United States."⁴⁷ However, Pluralism-II is probably best understood as a refinement of, rather than as a rejection of, Pluralism-I. As Stone says, "the pluralism reported is genuine enough."⁴⁸ The basic conceptual framework remains the same: community politics involves diverse interests participating on policy issues, seeking to influence their outcomes.⁴⁹ Pluralism-III also retains this basic conceptual framework and attempts to synthesize the divergent normative standards and empirical propositions of Pluralism-I and Pluralism-II.

Pluralism-III

Pluralism-III provides three normative criteria for evaluating the extent to which local governments achieve democratic ideals: principle-policy congruence, democratic performance,⁵⁰ and complex equality. While advocating tolerance of diverse principles, Pluralism-III adopts the criterion that policy decisions should reflect the principles that are predominant in local political cultures. While advocating the dispersion of power, it adopts the criterion that democratic performance is highest when issues are resolved in a consensual

manner that permits representatives to exercise their independent judgments while also responding to the dominant preferences of citizens, group leaders, individual activists, bureaucrats, and even private notables. While questioning the justice of many observed inequalities in political power, Pluralism-III adopts the criterion of "complex equality" permitting certain inequalities in the political success of competing interests if these inequalities have reasonable explanations. Having provided criteria for effective democratic politics, Pluralism-III then proceeds with scientific and empirical analyses that describe whether these criteria are met in the resolution of various community issues and that explain some of the facilitators and hindrances to the achievement of more democratic practices.

Principle-Policy Congruence. Monistic political communities suppress dissenting views of broad policy goals, as certain policy objectives are held as irrefutably true. Pluralistic communities are skeptical of such claims and tolerate -- and even encourage -- the expression of competing policy principles. For example, the East Lawrence downzoning issue involved competing land-use principles, as realtors and developers held property-rights principles (that owners of private property should be free to use their property as they see fit) while most members of the ELIA held neighborhood-protection principles (that owners of private property should be prohibited from using their property in ways that harm neighbors). Pluralism-III does not hold that either of these principles is absolutely correct in all circumstances. In different political cultures, different land-use principles should prevail.

Ideally, specific communities have ongoing dialogues about such principles, and a consensual "shared understanding" about these principles should emerge. ⁵¹ Realistically, cultural norms result in one set of principles (e.g., neighborhood protection in Lawrence) becoming dominant, but with contrasting principles (e.g. property rights) being preferred by some members of the community.

Because conservatives are important ideological "friends" of pluralism, ⁵² Pluralism-III accepts the conservative contention that dominant principles -- those general policy goals and political understandings that comprise the widely-accepted and traditional values of local political cultures -- should be respected by policymakers. Thus, if neighborhood protection is a dominant principle in the political culture of Lawrence, and if neighborhood protection is at stake in the downzoning controversy, the passage of the downzoning ordinance would be at least partially justified.

This does not mean that persons holding minority views are wrong; in Lawrence, persons maintaining property-rights principles should not be suppressed. In pluralist communities such persons have at least two options open to them. First, they can draw upon a specific issue and its concrete consequences to persuade community members to adopt their principles. The East Lawrence property owners could argue that harm done to them by restrictive zoning policies could befall landowners generally; if such arguments change the principles of enough citizens, property-rights principles could become dominant in the

community. Second, the holders of property-rights principles can introduce additional principles where dominant community sentiment is on their side. For example, the East Lawrence landowners could argue that the "real" principle in the downzoning controversy was economic growth. If the promotion of economic growth is a dominant principle in Lawrence and if the property owners can convince others that downzoning will curtail such growth, an alternative principle could be introduced to balance their minority position on land-use principles.

This discussion of the principles involved in the East Lawrence downzoning issue illustrates that principles do not always provide clear-cut criteria for resolving issues. But Pluralism-III suggests that resolving issues in a way that is sensitive to the competing principles that are at stake on concrete issues is very important -- perhaps more important than resolving issues by responding to citizens' preferences on specific issues or by compromising competing preferences and interests. The dominant principles among the public-at-large constitute an important expression of the broader goals of the public; they provide general guidelines to policymakers about the public's desired destinations for the political community.

Thus, by responding to dominant principles, the authority of the public is enhanced. By responding to dominant principles, public input transcends unstable, fickle, and more easily manipulatable policy-specific preferences. By responding to dominant principles, officials also transcend narrow and immediate interests. Thus, Pluralism-III emphasizes the vital -- if indeterminant -- role of principles in the resolution of policy

issues in order to move normative pluralist theory beyond populism (where policy is based on the issue-specific preferences of the majority of voters) and interest-group liberalism (where policy is based on the power of competing interests).⁵⁶

Chapter 4 expands on the role of principles in pluralist theory by describing some of the main competing principles that underlie the resolution of community issues and presenting the views of Lawrence citizens on these issues. Chapters 5 to 10 consider the relevance of these principles to the resolution of concrete issues and evaluate the outcomes of these issues in terms of their consistency with dominant relevant principles. Chapter 11 summarizes findings about the role of principles in community conflict and the resolution of issues.

Democratic Performance. Authoritarian governments maintain that legitimate governmental power resides in the hands of absolute rulers, but pluralist communities prefer representative government. Because liberals are another important friend of pluralism, Pluralism-III accepts the liberal position that predominant power should reside with elected representatives,⁵⁷ who normally exercise their independent judgments when resolving community issues.⁵⁸ In exercising such judgments, however, representatives must be open to various viewpoints and they must not be persistently at odds with their constituents.

In pluralist communities, legitimate power or authority resides with both citizens-at-large (as voters) and with their elected representatives; these are the formal actors whose powers are specified in state constitutions and municipal charters.

Except for those issues that legally require public referenda, elected officials are empowered to use their independent judgments in deciding issues. Election to public office has "elevated" representatives to a "superior position" relative to citizens-at-large; representatives must not be merely reactive, but must exercise initiative and independent judgment. However, an unhealthy and potentially undemocratic situation exists when representatives exercise independent judgments that are contrary to the will of their constituents. According to Hannah Pitkin:

"The representative must act independently; his action must involve discretion and judgment; he must be the one who acts. The represented must also be (conceived as) capable of independent action and judgment, not merely being taken care of. And despite the resulting potential for conflict between representative and represented about what is to be done, that conflict must not normally take place. The representative must act in such a way that there is not conflict...."

While elected officials have the right to exert their independent judgments, they cannot be criticized strongly for deferring to constituency preferences. After all, elections make representatives accountable to voters, and democratic performance is not seriously impaired when representatives act as instructed delegates who defer to public opinion.

Elected officials are more vulnerable to charges of dissipating their authority when they defer to preferences other than those of the public-at-large. If representatives set aside their own judgments, ignore public opinion, and defer to the

views of bureaucrats, notables, activists, or group leaders, democratic performance is relatively low and the policy process can be infected by such maladies as bureaucratic control and elite rule. This does not mean, however, that representatives should be closed to the views of these participants. On the contrary, democratic performance is relatively high when policy outcomes reflect not only the judgments of representatives and dominant public opinion, but also the concerns of bureaucrats, notables, activists, and group leaders.

In short, democratic performance is highest when representatives exercise their political authority and do so in a way that is responsive to their constituents and other legitimate actors in the policy process. Representatives should be open to persuasion by the expertise of bureaucrats, but they should not simply defer to bureaucratic recommendations out of respect for their office. Representatives should be open to the arguments of private elites about the economic and social needs of the community, but they must not be pressured by the economic and social resources that elites command. Representatives should be open to the demands of group leaders while not becoming captives of the organizational resources of special interests. And representatives need to listen to the intense preferences of issue-specific activists, though such concerns must be balanced against those of the silent majority. While bureaucrats, notables, group leaders, and activists have the right to participate and persuade representatives and citizens of the legitimacy of their preferences, democratic performance is

impaired if they prevail in the resolution of issues without
being persuasive. ⁶¹

In Chapter 12, a scale of democratic performance is developed. However, these preliminary considerations permit rough assessments of democratic performance on the parking lot, city manager, and downzoning issues. Assuming that Mayor Francisco thought that the community was best served by retaining Watson and subjecting him to more frequent reviews, a high level of democratic performance was achieved on the city manager issue. Not only did Francisco's judgment empower most representatives, but it was also responsive to the predominant views among citizens and various types of participants. Democratic performance was somewhat lower on the East Lawrence downzoning issue. While this issue was resolved in a way that was consistent with the independent judgments of commissioners, these judgments were unsupported by bureaucrats and notables; and the preferences of an uninformed and divided public provided little support for the decision. Democratic performance was lowest, however, on the parking lot issue. Despite the judgments of representatives that the city was best served by proceeding with the parking lot, the issue was resolved in a way that was opposed by most activists and citizens. While none of these decisions violated the norms of representative democracy, they illustrate that there can be different levels of democratic performance within representative government. Indeed, the ideals of representative government may suffer at lower levels of democratic performance than those observed on the parking lot, city manager, and downzoning issues are sometimes attained in

the resolution of issues in pluralist communities.

Complex Equality. Tyrannies permit weaker interests to be subordinated to stronger interests. In capitalist societies, the owners of capital dominate the working class. In racist societies, Caucasians normally dominate Africans and Asians. In sexist societies, men normally dominate women. While there are many forms of tyranny, they all share a common feature. One segment of society has extensive political power, which it employs to ensure that issues are resolved in ways that uphold their interests and worldview. The counterparts of the dominant interest are the victims of political domination, as their interests and aspirations are continuously ignored when issues are decided.

Socialism, the third ideological friend of pluralism, has been most concerned about such political inequalities. While some socialists would, no doubt, prefer to reverse the usual patterns of domination and subordination (making, for example, the working class more politically powerful than the bourgeoisie), a more common long-term goal of opponents of tyranny is "simple equality." Simple equality would occur if political power was equally distributed between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, whites and minorities, men and women, and so forth. In this case, policy outcomes of divisive issues might reflect equally the preferences of different segments of the community. Or, over a broad range of issues and over time, the victories of capitalists, whites, or men on certain issues would be offset by the victories of the proletariat, nonwhites, or

women on other issues.

Because simple equality would, by definition, end tyranny, it is an attractive ideal, but pluralists have never fully embraced this ideal. Some issues cannot -- and perhaps should not -- be compromised in ways that are equally responsive to all interests. Would it make sense to demolish half of Bryon Anderson's "toy factory" to build half of a parking lot -- simply to ensure that the Growth Machine and their counterparts (the Preservationists) had equal political power? Equal political power among competing interests will always remain an impossibility. If power could magically be distributed equally today, it would become unequally distributed tomorrow, when the next issue is resolved in ways more responsive to one interest than another. Most importantly, it is not clear that different interests ⁶² should be equally powerful. Perhaps the inequalities that occur can be explained, and perhaps these explanations justify the inequalities.

The condition of complex equality occurs when there are no significant unexplained inequalities in the political power of competing interests. ⁶³ Consider the inequalities in power between classes in Lawrence. The lower class seemed to lose on the parking lot and the city manager issues while it succeeded in having East Lawrence downzoned. Suppose that this pattern of power became even more pronounced on additional issues, with the lower class almost always being defeated by the middle and upper classes. This pattern illustrates a condition of simple inequality, and the lower class would probably view themselves as the victims of the tyranny of the upper class. But simply

describing such simple inequality is inadequate. To evaluate whether these inequalities are justified and to prescribe ways of achieving more equality, it is important to discover the causes of inequality.

Perhaps upper class domination of the lower class is due to the underrepresentation of the lower class among elected officials. In pluralist policymaking processes, representatives are supposed to be the most potent actors, and their judgments will likely be colored by their class backgrounds. Under conditions of pluralism, the failure of the lower class to elect commissioners that represent their interests can explain the lack of policy responsiveness to the preferences of the lower class.

Perhaps upper class domination of the lower class is due to the greater participation of the upper class in the resolution of issues. In pluralist processes, representatives are supposed to listen to the arguments of bureaucrats, notables, group leaders, and other activists, and they are sometimes persuaded by these arguments. The failure of the lower class to participate in these roles can explain their lack of power.

Perhaps upper class domination is due to their supporting positions that are relatively popular with the public. In pluralist processes, representatives are supposed to be sensitive to public opinion; sometimes they act as instructed delegates of the public and sometimes they must permit the public to decide issues through referenda. If the positions of the lower class are unpopular, they are unlikely to be successful in the resolution of community issues.

And perhaps upper class domination is due to their holding political principles that are more dominant in local political cultures than the principles held by the lower class. In pluralist processes, policy decisions should reflect dominant community principles. If the lower class supports policies that undermine dominant community values, their lack of political power is understandable.

The criterion of complex equality is thus "reasonable." Pluralists do not label every political inequality as tyrannical. But if there are no adequate reasons for significant political inequalities, a prima facie case exists that discrimination has entered into the policymaking process. If the relative powerlessness of the lower class cannot be explained by class differences in representation, participation, popular support, compatibility with the political culture, or other plausible and compelling reasons, it can be concluded that class biases exist. When complex equality is unattained, policymakers discriminate against the lower class -- or other subordinated interests -- simply because they are lower class. Conversely, when complex equality is unattained, policymakers respond to the upper class simply because they are wealthy, have more education, and have more status. Such discriminations violate pluralist ideals, because in pluralist policymaking processes, such matters as wealth, educational background, social status, race, and gender are irrelevant to the legitimate possession of power. ⁶⁴

While the criterion of complex equality is reasonable, it is also radical. Simply because an inequality can be explained does not mean that the inequality is justified. If the subordination

of the lower class is due to its underrepresentation among elected officials, questions about the legitimacy of such underrepresentation can be raised -- and most likely will be raised -- by those with socialist concerns about inequality. The underlying causes of underrepresentation will be probed and may be traced to structural features of the electoral system; perhaps lower class and minority underrepresentation is due to the absence of partisan labels and wards in many local communities. ⁶⁵

If so, changes in these institutional causes of underrepresentation can be prescribed and sought. If the subordination of the lower class is due to its holding principles that conflict with dominant cultural values, questions can be raised about the legitimacy of dominant cultural values. Socialists are likely to trace resistance to redistributive principles to the systemic power of capitalism and the ability of capitalists to create cultural values conducive to the needs of capitalism. If so, a transformation of cultural values will be urged as a means of achieving more political equality. ⁶⁶

In summary, Pluralism-III applies the idea of complex equality as a criterion for evaluating the inequalities of power between opposite interests defined by various political cleavages. Analysis begins by assessing the presence or absence of various kinds of cleavages on community issues. If a cleavage is observed on an issue, the extent to which the outcome favors one interest over another is assessed. If one interest usually prevails over the opposite side on a variety of issues, the causes of the resulting inequalities of power are explored. Such

analyses help to evaluate the justification of these inequalities and suggest the political changes that must occur if more political equality is to be achieved. In chapter 13, simple inequalities in the political power of various interests are described, and explanations for these inequalities are explored.

A Plurality of Explanations. Pluralism-I and Pluralism-II provide alternative descriptions of principles and power in the resolution of community issues. Pluralism-I describes New Haven as a community where policy decisions reflect cultural values emphasizing the attainment of "collective goods," where the prominence of Mayor Lee and the indirect influence of citizens leads to high democratic performance, and where dispersed inequalities in political resources reduce political domination.⁶⁷ Pluralism-II describes other communities -- e.g., New York,⁶⁸ Atlanta,⁶⁹ Denver⁷⁰ and the Central Appalachian Valley⁷¹ -- where dominant cultural values are ignored, where democratic performance is low, or where the economically-advantaged dominate the disadvantaged in the resolution of community issues. It may well be that the descriptions of Pluralism-II are more often accurate than those of Pluralism-I. But, both Pluralism-I and Pluralism-II are limited scientifically because of their preoccupation with describing normal or modal tendencies.⁷² In contrast to these earlier formulations, Pluralism-III focuses equal attention on the "deviant cases" -- such as the East Lawrence downzoning issue -- where weaker interests succeed. Pluralism-III seeks to explain both the (usual) success of the Growth Machine, of upper-status actors, and of well-organized interests and their (occasional)

failures.

The concept of complex equality has a built-in concern with explaining differences. To determine whether simple inequalities (or differences) in political power among interests conceal an underlying complex equality, a variety of possible explanations for the simple inequalities must be explored. The concepts of principle-policy congruence and democratic performance do not have such inherent explanatory features, but variations in the achievement of these goals call for explanations.

In chapter 11, three explanations for variations in principle-policy congruence are explored. First, policy outcomes may be most likely to reflect those dominant cultural values that are most relevant to specific issues. For example, neighborhood-protection principles may have been more relevant than economic-growth principles to the East Lawrence downzoning issue; the downzoning decision may simply have reflected the urgency or centrality of protectionist values and the questionable importance of growth principles to the issue. To test this explanation, measures of the relevancy of various principles to the 29 Lawrence issues are developed in chapters 5 through 10.

Second, policy outcomes may be most likely to reflect those principles that are not only dominant -- but are most dominant -- within local political cultures. For example, the parking lot issue seemed to involve economic growth and citizen participation principles. While both of these principles are dominant within the local political culture, there is more disagreement about the value of citizen participation. Thus, the greater dominance of

economic growth principles may explain why the outcome reflected growth rather than participation principles. To test this hypothesis, measures of the dominance of various cultural principles are developed in chapter 4.

Third, policy outcomes may most reflect those principles that reflect the economic interests of the city ⁷³ regardless of the distribution of support for these principles within the political culture. For example, Buford Watson may have been retained because he embodied not only the pro-growth principles that prevail in the local culture, but he rejected redistributive public welfare principles that, while dominant in the culture of Lawrence, undermine structural and economic imperatives. To test this hypothesis, an index of the extent to which proposed policy changes are consistent with economic imperatives is developed in Chapter 11.

Chapter 12 explores some explanations for variations in the level of democratic performance on various issues. Democratic performance may be strongly affected by characteristics of the policymaking body. Perhaps school boards are more democratic than city councils, or perhaps city councils achieve higher levels of democratic performance when they are dominated by liberals rather than conservatives. Democratic performance may also be affected by the extensiveness of citizen participation. Although many democratic theorists argue that more participation is essential to enhancing democratic performance, ⁷⁴ participation ⁷⁵ may also undermine the achievement of certain democratic goals. Democratic performance may also be affected by the characteristics of citizens. Perhaps an aware and informed

public provides a context that encourages more democratic policy outcomes. And democratic performance may suffer because of tensions between capitalism and democracy. Perhaps democratic outcomes are difficult to achieve on issues where the economic interests of the city are at stake -- where economic needs rather than the preferences of people determine outcomes.

Explanations about democratic performance, principle-policy congruence, and political inequality can only be explored given the limitations of the Lawrence data; additional research on the resolution of policy issues in diverse communities including those outside of the contemporary American experience is needed to develop and test theories that account for the fullest realization of pluralist criteria. In short, Pluralism-III is only a temporary specification of pluralist theory, as future formulations of pluralism will be needed.

Summary

As a successor of Pluralism-I and Pluralism-II, Pluralism-III is a third generation of pluralist theory. It provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for describing, explaining, and evaluating the resolution of local policy issues, such as the parking lot, Watson retention, and East Lawrence downzoning issues in Lawrence. Pluralism-III analyzes the resolution of community issues in terms of three evaluative standards: (1) Are policy outcomes consistent with the dominant policy principles in a community that are relevant to specific issues? (2) Do the key actors in representative democracies -- representatives and voters -- exercise predominant power in the resolution of

community issues, and are they open to the concerns of other important actors -- like bureaucrats, notables, group leaders, and individual activists -- without allowing these actors to usurp governmental authority? and (3) Are there unjustified inequalities in the power of persons on opposite sides of various cleavages defined in terms of such characteristics as class, race, and gender?

Pluralism-III is principally concerned with providing a conceptual framework and measurement instruments for analyzing principle-policy congruence, democratic performance, and complex equality. Rather than providing a defense of governmental institutions (as was generally done by Pluralism-I) or a critique of these institutions (as was generally done by Pluralism-II), Pluralism-III has no preconceptions about the extent to which the three ideals of principle-policy congruence, democratic performance, and complex equality are realized in American political communities. No doubt these ideals will be more fully realized in the resolution of some issues than others. And no doubt some communities will have policy processes that more fully achieve these ideals than other communities. By investigating the conditions that facilitate and hinder the fullest achievement of these ideals, it is possible to suggest ways to realize more fully the normative aspirations of pluralist democracy.

Endnotes -- Chapter 2

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Peter Sperlich, Conflict and Harmony in Human Affairs (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971). The lack of any relationship between race and gender illustrates a perfect cross-cutting cleavage. Since racial minorities are as likely to be men as women, women's interests would have no greater appeal to blacks than to whites. Indeed, black women may find their race rather than their gender to be a more important factor in defining their political interests. Because the race cleavage cross-cuts -- or competes with and fails to reinforce -- gender cleavages, women's movements have difficulty

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The free-rider problem hampers the mobilization of many interests. The problem is that rational, self-interested individuals may conclude that they can achieve the benefits of a successful mobilization effort without incurring the costs associated with joining the group. When many individuals reach this conclusion, the movement is obviously weakened. In the Logic of Collective Action (New York: Schocken, 1965), Mancur Olson claims that one counter-measure to the free-rider problem is to provide selective benefits; these are benefits (such as newsletters, group insurance plans, and so on) received by due-paying members only.

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The importance of basing democratic theory on normative standards is discussed by Clarence N. Stone, "Elite Distemper Versus The Promise of of Democracy," in Power Elites and Organization, edited by G. William Domhoff and Thomas R. Dye (Beverly Hills, CA, 1987).

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"Independent judgments" by representatives refers to their aggregated preferences on policy decisions after full consideration of the merits of issues. Independent judgments are thus different from "initial positions," as policymakers can be persuaded to change their minds. Independent judgments are also different from "roll call votes" as policymakers sometimes abandon their personal preferences and vote in response to various pressures despite being unpersuaded by these pressures. The independent judgment of each policymaker is thus his or her preference on a policy issue as revealed in interviews in response to the question "after full consideration of various points of view, which outcome do you believe best serves the community?" The aggregated independent judgments of policymakers are the majority views among those policymakers with formal authority on particular issues.

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Earlier versions of pluralism do provide explanations as well as descriptions. For example, explanations of inequalities in favor of the upper class and organized interests have been presented, but such inequalities are described as central tendencies rather than as variables. The (constant) condition of inequality is then explained by other (constant) conditions. According to Stone ("Systemic Power and Community Decision Making," p. 982), decisionmakers favor "revenue producers because they are essential to institutional maintenance." According to Lowi (End of Liberalism, pp. 42-63), organizational privilege is sustained by governmental institutions because the ideology of "interest group liberalism" has become the

new public philosophy. Attractive as such theories are, they cannot explain the cases which deviate from the central tendencies described by Pluralism-II.

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Donald Brand traces pluralism back to Arthur Bentley, viewing David Truman as exemplifying the second generation of pluralism and Theodore Lowi as exemplifying the third generation of pluralism. See "Three Generations of Pluralism," Political Science Reviewer 15 (1985): 109-43. In our discussion, Truman is a representative of Pluralism-I and Lowi is a representative of Pluralism-II.