The Urban-Rural Cleavage in Political Involvement: The Case of France*

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Of the many cleavages that score the political landscapes of modern nations, the gap between urban and rural society is perhaps the most intriguing and the least understood. While the industrial worker follows the timeclock, the peasant is apparently imprisoned by the inexorable march of the seasons in a community that time seems to have forgotten. Does this cultural isolation cut him off from the national political community, or create a delay in the reception of political symbols or produce in the peasant simply a qualitatively different citizen than his urban compatriot?

If we look only to the most isolated remnants of traditional peasant society or study rural communities without comparing them to urban ones we may exaggerate the differences between peasants and other people as well as romanticizing the rural world. The consumer revolution, the demographic uprooting of two world wars and a depression, and the virtual stamping out of illiteracy have exposed the peasant to the joys and horrors of the wider universe. It would be peculiar if these changes had not brought with them a pattern of greater involvement in the national political community.

But integration need not imply imitation. Just as the peasant's possession of a television does not mean that he will retain the same information as his urban compatriots,[1] involvement in national politics need not make him an identical participant either. Rural communities sometimes retain many aspects of their traditional political posture but in forms that are compatible with their new position. Thus, as has been argued elsewhere, a traditional rural clientele system, instead of disappearing with the advent of national mass politics, may be integrated unchanged into the national political community through the party system.[2]

This is only another way of saying that national political communities may be highly integrated without becoming homogeneous—which is precisely why it is impossible to measure "integration" as a subjective state. What is measurable—and may differ greatly from society to society—is the particular pattern of rural involvement in the national political community. Some classical patterns are: (1) the rural world is apathetic towards national politics, mediating its participation through effective interest group leaders, as in the United States; (2) the farmer participates more actively, through a farmers' or a largely rural party that defends his interests in national politics, as in Scandinavia; (3) the real adaptation takes place in the structures of the national, urban-based political parties as they attempt to penetrate the rural world, as in Southern Italy?[3] The peasant may remain isolated culturally and geographically, and in one way or another still be involved in the political community.

In this paper, I want to investigate the urban-rural cleavage in political involvement in France, which, I shall argue, demonstrates a different pattern of rural integration into national politics than the three patterns listed above. My sources here are mainly secondary: historical studies of the peasants' relationship to national politics;[4] published studies of French rural communities;[5] and evidence from French

* I would like to thank Suzanne Berger, Jean Blondel, Fred Greenstein, Mark Kesselman, Juan Linz and Laurence Wylie for comments on a draft of this paper.

[1] Michel Souchon, *La Télévision des Adolescents* (Paris: Les Éditions Ouvrières, 1969.)

[2] Sidney Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), ch. 12.

[3] See Angus Campbell, *et al, The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960); Chapter 14 offers strong support for this view. For Norway, see Henry Valen and Daniel Katz, *Political Parties in Norway* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964), p. 27. For southern Italy, see Tarrow, *op. cit.*

[4] The major historical studies are surveyed in Barrington Moore, Jr., *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967); in Henri Mendras, *La Fin des Paysans: Innovations et Changement dans l'Agriculture Française* (Paris: S.É.D.É.I.S., 1967); and in Gordon Wright, *Rural Revolution in France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964). These three studies and the following work, Jacques Fauvet and Henri Mendras, *Les Paysans et la Politique dans la France Contemporaine* (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Cahier #94; Paris: A. Colin, 1958), were especially useful in the preparation of this article.

[5] The major community studies are Laurence Wylie, *et al, Village in the Vaucluse* 2nd Ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1964); Laurence Wylie, *et al., Chanzeaux: A Village in Anjou* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Edgar Morin, *Commune en France: La Métamorphose de Plodèmet* (Paris: Fayard, 1967); Lucien Bernot & Bernard Blancard, *Nouville* (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1953); and Julian Pitt-

and comparative sample surveys.[6] The choice of these very different types of evidence is in part inevitable, but mainly deliberate. By its very nature, the survey instrument flattens cross-sectional differences that historical studies, with their broad sweep, and community studies, with their urge to sniff everybody's stew-pot, may exaggerate. In the process, it will be possible to say a good deal about the relative utility of all three types of evidence in studying rural political involvement in France and elsewhere.

I. Dimensions of Political Involvement

(a) Interest in Politics. Despite a long tradition of study, little clarity exists about the degree and character of the integration of the rural sector into French national politics. Given the cultural isolation of the peasant, many observers have emphasized how his response to national politics differs from that of his urban compatriots, and have inferred from this that rural France is poorly integrated into the national political community. As Georges Chaffard wrote of the reaction to May, 1968 in the French provines, "Although the Parisian cauldron seemed like an impassioned moment in French history from the banks of the Seine . . . it did not penetrate at all deeply into the leathery tissue of peasant France."[7]

This view is supported by what we know of the stony individualism of the French peasant, who, according to Henri Mendras, "has the intimate conviction that his field is unique, because he is the only one to know it, to love it, and to own it."[8] It is also sustained by what we know of the suspicious, anti-outsider subculture of the French village, based on the assumption that "the *ils* outside Peyrane," in Wylie's words, "are dangerous because they are anonymous, intangible and overpowering."[9] In point of fact, many peasants today (forty-two percent of a national sample interviewed by the IFOP in 1966) own farms that have been in their families for less than a generation and many communities are less isolated than Wylie's perched village in the Vaucluse,[10] but few would deny the cultural isolation that has hindered the peasant's entry into the modern world.

In apparent harmony with these facts is the lack of interest in politics often expressed by rural Frenchmen. When asked whether they were "interested in politics" a great deal, somewhat, a little or not at all, fully one-half of the residents of towns of less than twenty thousand inhabitants answered "not at all," as opposed to thrity-seven percent in cities of more than one hundred thousand residents.[11] Similar questions in other surveys have turned up equal differentials between urbanites and rural dwellers in France.[12] Such survey results are familiar to students of other democratic systems, but show a greater gap in "interest in politics" between urban and rural France, where the statistical mode is usually found in the "least interested" response category. In most other countries, the largest group of respondents in both the urban and rural population is usually found in the intermediate response category. Some comparative survey findings from France, Finland and the United States are presented in Table 1 below.

Should we conclude, on the basis of this evidence, that rural France is very poorly integrated into the French political system? There would be much precedent for this conclusion in writings on peasants in French politics. But several characteristics of rural France should leave us uneasy with this line of reasoning. First, some observers have felt that interest in politics in rural France is very great. Traditional lore on rural France supports this latter view. Henri Mendras, a leading French rural sociologist, has written:

> Our villages are almost always divided into two clans: the reds and the whites, the republicans and the reactionaries, the partisans of the schoolteacher and those of the priest.[13]

Henry Ehrmann, a leading foreign observer, feels that the more personal quality of politics

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Rivers, "Social Class in a French Village," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 33, no. 1 (1960).

[6] The major source of survey materials on the French peasantry are two issues of *Sondages;* "L'information chez les Agriculteurs," 26, no. 1 (1964); and "Les Agriculteurs Français, Conditions de Vie et Opinions," 28, nos. 3–4 (1966), to be cited below as IFOP (Institut Français d'Opinion Publique), (1964) and IFOP (1966).

[7] Georges Chaffard, *Les Orages de Mai* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1968), p. 10.

[8] Mendras, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[9] Wylie, *Village in the Vaucluse*, p. 206.

[10] Most of the village studies come from singular villages in relatively isolated parts of France: Roussillon (Wylie's Peyrane) in the Vaucluse, Plodèmet (*Commune en France*) on the tip of Brittany, Chanzeaux, virtually in the Vendée, and Magnac ("Social Class in a French Village") far off in the Pyrénées. There is no "typical" French village, but life is probably much less isolated to the peasant in the Loire Valley, the North or the East of France.

[11] "Le Retentissement des Événements de Mai 1968," *Sondages*, 31, nos. 1–2 (1969), p. 13.

[12] Emeric Deutsch, *et al., Les Familles Politiques dans la France d'Aujourd'hui* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1966), pp. 104–105. In this survey, only twenty-seven percent of the peasants interviewed declared themselves to have "much" or "some" interest in politics, compared to thirty-five percent of the general population.

[13] In Fauvet and Mendras, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

Table 1. Degree of "Interest in Politics" for Urban and Rural Respondents, France, Finland and the United States

Degree of "Interest in Politics"*	France[1] (IFOP, 1969)		Finland[2] (Pesonen, 1958)		United States[3] (SRC, 1960)		
	Less than 20,000 pop. (%)	More than 100,000 pop. (%)	Korpilahti, (4,276 pop.) (%)	Tampere, (140,000 pop.) (%)	Rural Farm Pop. (%)	Rural Non-farm (%)	Urban (%)
High	13	25	19	29	19	31	42
Medium	36	37	51	51	51	41	34
Low	50	37	30	20	30	28	24
Non-response	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total N	(**)	(**)	(501)	(97)	(121)	(209)	(767)

* *Note:* The categories "High", "Medium" and "Low" interest in politics are constructed in the following way: France and Finland, "High" = the survey categories "much interest" and "a great deal" of interest; "Medium" = "a little interest"; and "Low" = "no interest." In the United States, the index is drawn directly from the SRC's composite index of (a) interest in the campaign and (b) in its outcome.

** N's not provided by the IFOP in their report.

Sources: 1. *Sondages, Revue Française de l'Opinion Publique*, 31, Nos. 1 and 2 (1969), p. 13.
2. Pertti Pesonen, *An Election in Finland: Party Activities and Voter Reactions*, (New Haven, 1968), pp. 61 and 84.
3. A. Campbell, *et al.*, *The American Voter*, (New York and London, 1960), p. 411.

in rural France endows it with greater interest. He points to

> . . . the greater personal intensity experienced by the rural voter during the campaign and afterwards in his relations with *his* deputy. During the electoral campaign, the smaller the districts, the more fascinating became the personal confrontations of the candidates, their mutual accusations in the electoral materials, and the equally vehement discussions among their followers.[14]

The testimony of such talented observers cannot be sloughed off easily.

(b) Party Identification. A second perspective supports their view. Cross-national survey materials ought to be used judiciously when they touch upon cultural predispositions that few citizens could articulate intellectually, but which can adversely affect the comparability of the findings.[15] The ostensibly bland survey item, "Est-ce que vous vous intéressez à la politique beaucoup, un peu ou pas du tout?" intended in the polls as a neutral measure of a person's interest in the sector of the social system we call 'politics,' in France seems to tap a more controversial dimension—that of commitment to a political *party* and involvement in the conflict-strewn world of partisan politics.[16] If "interest in politics" really meant to the voter "commitment to a political party," then we ought to reject it as a neutral measure of rural Frenchmen's involvement in politics, unless we meant by "involvement in politics" only involvement in the party system.

The tense connotation of the term "interest in politics" in France can be illustrated by a comparison of French election surveys over a long period of time. During the doldrums of the Vth Republic, in 1962 and 1966, thirty and thirty-five percent, respectively, of Frenchmen interviewed said they had no interest at all in politics. But during the birth pangs of the DeGaulle republic, in 1958, and during its death agony in the months after May, 1968, forty-three and forty-one percent, respectively, of interviewed Frenchmen denied having any interest in politics.[17] It seems unlikely that the

[14] Henry Ehrmann, *Politics in France* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1968), p. 100.

[15] For a general discussion of this problem in cross-national attitude research, and for a suggested attempt to solve it through the development of semi-projective interviewing techniques, see Fred I. Greenstein and Sidney Tarrow, 'Comparative Political Socialization: Explorations with a Semi-Projective Procedure," *Sage Professional Papers in Comparative Politics* (Beverly Hills, California: 1971).

[16] The techniques explored in the citation above turned up a great deal of wariness and suspicion even in French pre-adolescents when they were interviewed on political subjects. For a brief description of some of these interviews, see Fred I. Greenstein and Sidney Tarrow, "Children and Politics in Britain, France and the United States: Six Examples," *Youth and Society*, 2, no. 1, (September 1970), pp. 118–121.

[17] The 1958, 1962 and 1969 results are summarized in *Sondages*, 31 (1969), nos. 1 and 2, p. 12. The 1966 figures are from Deutsch, *et al.*, *Les Familles Politiques, loc. cit.*, pp. 104–05.

level of political interest, objectively conceived, was falling as the Fifth Republic was being born and threatened. It appears more plausible that Frenchmen were withdrawing from *partisan* involvements as the regime and its political alignments were being transformed.

The logic of this discussion should become plain when we consider, first, that of all western democracies, France has the lowest percentage of party identifiers,[18] and, second, that party identification—understood as psychological involvement in the party system—is clearly weakest in rural France. In survey after survey, the weakness of partisan affiliation in rural France has been underscored. When asked by interviewers of the SOFRES in 1966 to state a broad ideological preference, small town and rural Frenchmen were more likely than any other category to report no preference or to choose "the center" and declare very low political interest.[19] Forty percent of the residents of communes of less than two thousand inhabitants are categorized by the SOFRES in this group,—which they picturesquely label "the marais"—as opposed to thirty-two percent of the sample as a whole.

Although the cross-national survey findings are mixed, in most western democracies strong party identification is generally rarer in the rural sector than in the cities.[20] But in France the incidence of "voting for the man rather than the party," the lack of citizen interest in the national party affiliations of local candidates, and the claim, "Moi, je ne fais pas de politique," are far more widespread in the villages than in the cities.[21] If party identification is indeed so weak in rural France, and if Frenchmen interpret "interest in politics" as an affiliation with political parties, then the low level of "interest in politics" that the surveys find in rural France may mean nothing more than weak party identification, and may tell us little about interest in politics at all, unless we mean by that term *only* partisan involvement in the political system.

c. Electoral Participation. What we have said so far leads to an apparent paradox. If the lack of declared "interest in politics" really means nonpartisanship and not low political involvement, then we still know nothing directly about the political involvement of rural Frenchmen. On the other hand, survey results in the United States and elsewhere show that the non-party identifier is less likely to participate in elections than the identifier. As Robert Lane writes:

> . . . in general, party identifiers tend to vote more than those with no party loyalties at all; and those with strong identifications tend, in each party, to participate more in the election campaign than those with weak identifications.[22]

If rural France is full of people whose psychological attachment to the party system is weak, and if partisans are more likely to participate than nonpartisans, we should find that voting turnout (and hence involvement) is dramatically lower in rural, than in urban, France.

Alas, this turns out not to be the case at all. On several more-or-less standard measures of participation, the French peasant scores *higher* than most of his urban compatriots: higher, in some cases, than those with more education. On others, levels of participation are comparable. Some of these measures are perforce impressionistic or non-comparable. For example, a 1966 IFOP survey shows that thirty-two percent of the peasants interviewed had participated in demonstrations like the ones that broke out in Brittany in 1961. Similarly, twenty-four percent of the peasants interviewed by the IFOP reported that they were very interested in peasant movements in the rest of France. Although comparisons are difficult, perhaps only the general strike of May, 1968 had so strong a meaning for the French working class as these demonstrations had for the peasants. They showed that behind the mask of apparent organizational incapacity, the peasants have an enormous capacity for participation when the situation does not divide one from another.[23]

[18] The standard source on this problem remains Philip Converse and Georges Dupeux, "The Politicization of the Electorate in France and the United States," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 26 (1962), p. 9. Partisan identification in France was slightly higher in 1967 than it was in 1958, when Converse and Dupeux's data were collected, but was still lower than in most other countries. See, for example, Roy Pierce and Samuel H. Barnes, "Public Opinion and Political Preferences in France and Italy," paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the APSA, Los Angeles, September 8–12, 1970, p. 3.

[19] Deutsch, *et al., op. cit.,* pp. 106–07.

[20] The relevant American findings can be found in Angus Campbell, *et al., op. cit.,* p. 405; for Germany, see Juan Linz, "The Social Bases of West German Politics" Diss. Columbia University 1959, pp. 787-89; for Finland, see Pertti Pesonen, *An Election in Finland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 85; and for Norway, see Valen and Katz, *op. cit.,* p. 214.

[21] For these points, see *Sondages,* 29, no. 3 (1967), p. 28; and Mark Kesselman, *The Ambiguous Consensus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), p. 136; Jean Piret, "L'opinion au début de l'année 1965," in *Revue Française de Science Politique,* 15, no. 3 (1965), p. 536.

[22] Robert E. Lane, *Political Life: Why and How People Get Involved in Politics* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1959), p. 300, and Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1970), p. 355.

[23] IFOP (1966) pp. 64–65; see the account of this also in Mendras, *op. cit.,* p. 275–79.

Other measures of participation are more comparable between urban and rural France. The most obvious and important is the level of voting turnout. Electoral statistics show that turnout in local elections in France varies *inversely* with the size of the commune. In a study based upon three French departments, Kesselman showed that voting turnout in rural communes averaged eighty-two and one-half percent. In communes of more than two thousand inhabitants, only seventy-six percent of the eligible voters had voted. In national elections, the same study showed, the rural communes were two percent lower than communes with more than two thousand inhabitants—a difference that hardly suggests nonparticipation.[24]

The polls show a much stronger picture of rural turnout and a weaker one of urban voting. An IFOP survey of 1951 reveals a broader pattern of participation on the farm: the abstention rate among farmers was seventeen percent; among people in commerce, industry and the professions, twenty-two percent; among workers twenty-three percent; and among white collar workers twenty-five percent.[25] More recent surveys show a similar result. Peasants vote more regularly than all other social groups, except for those at the very highest educational level. On the first ballot of the 1962 national elections, only businessmen (five percent) and managers (six percent) reported a lower abstention rate than peasants (nine percent). With about the same educational level as the peasants, fifteen percent of the workers reported non-voting, according to this survey. In a 1966 IFOP survey, eighty-nine percent of the peasants were "normal voters" (seventy-eight percent always voting and eleven percent voting often).[26] In 1969, eighty-one percent in towns of less than 20,000 population intended to vote, the same percentage as the sample as a whole.[26]

This high rural turnout rate is underscored by the low voting rate among farmers in the United States, where the rate of "turnout variability" is forty-six percent for farmers, forty-three percent for rural non-farm respondents and thirty-nine percent for city-dwellers. In a Finnish election, twenty-three percent in a rural district did not vote, as opposed to twelve percent of those polled in an industrial city. Only in Norway do surveys show higher voting levels among farmers than in the general population.[27]

The high voting level in rural France is particularly striking when we recall that French elections are held so *often*. Since 1965, for example, Frenchmen have gone to the polls for one local election, one cantonal election, 2 presidential elections, a referendum and two legislative elections—a total of 11 times in five years, remembering the two ballot system used in local, presidential and legislative elections.

A plausible explanation for this high voting participation in rural France is sometimes offered. According to this view, elections in rural France are merely occasions on which social conformity requires one to vote. As Wylie writes of some of Chanzeaux's citizens; "... one of the tokens of their respectability is the fact that they do vote, even if they have nothing to vote for."[28]

I do not think this explanation is very persuasive. For rural voters seem to have a rate of *objective* interest in elections that goes far beyond voting. In this respect, a careful study by Georges Dupeux shows that participation of various kinds in electoral campaigns is higher among the residents of rural communities than in the rest of French society.[29] When Dupeux combined several measures of campaign participation—(1) voting, (2) attendance at campaign meetings, (3) reading election posters and (4) trying to persuade others how to vote—he found that peasants and rural residents ranked higher than almost any other group—and highest of all, if only men are considered. Table 2 reproduces Dupeux's most important findings, but excludes the control for sex.

Thus the high rural voting turnout is probably not a result of social conformity, since it is accompanied by levels of campaign attention greater than would be compatible with that inference. The rural French voter is not apathetic, even if he is not a partisan. What has to be explained, then, is not only the high level of participation in rural France, but its combination with an absence of the partisan identifications we have come to assume as a necessary corollary (and even as a cause) of political involvement. How can the rural Frenchman be politically involved if he lacks the integrating

[24] Alain Lancelot, *L'Abstentionisme Électorale en France* (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Cahiers #162; Paris: A. Colin, 1968), pp. 195–97.

[25] Lancelot, *ibid.*, p. 190.

[26] IFOP (1966) p. 83; and François Goguel, *Le Référendum d'Octobre et les Elections de Novembre, 1962* (Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Cahiers #142; Paris: 1965), p. 239; *Sondages*, 3, no. 3 (1969), p. 33.

[27] Campbell, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 406; Pesonen, *op. cit.*, p. 276; Valen and Katz, *op. cit.*, p. 158; also see Linz, *op. cit.*, p. 787.

[28] Wylie, *Chanzeaux*, p. 275.

[29] "Citizen Participation in Political Life: France," *International Social Science Journal*, 12, no. 1 (1960), pp. 41–42, for a description of the index used and pp. 45–47 for the data reported here.

Table 2. Participation Index by Place of Residence and by Occupation[1]

	Participation Index			
	No.	High	Moderate	Low
Place of Residence				
0–2,000	328	25.0	31.0	44.0
2,000–20,000	267	13.5	41.5	45.0
20,000–100,000	133	15.0	36.0	49.0
Over 100,000	142	15.0	35.0	50.0
Occupation, Head of Family				
Farmers	91	24.0	35.0	41.0
Prof, Executives	59	27.0	35.5	37.5
Artisans, Trade	127	20.5	36.0	43.5
Clerical	162	19.0	41.0	40.0
Workers	257	15.0	37.0	48.0
No Occup. or Retired	173	14.5	29.0	56.5

1. Source: G. Dupeux, "Citizen Participation in Political Life: France," *International Social Science Journal*, 12, no. 1 (1960), pp. 45–47.

psychological involvement in the electoral contest afforded by partisan identification? On the other hand, how can he be politically uninvolved if he participates so fully in both national and local electoral contests? Is there something in the way we conceptualize political involvement that makes these findings appear ambiguous when they should not be?

II. The Dynamics of Political Involvement

This way of posing the problem makes explicit what has grown implicitly out of the discussion thus far: that since rates of electoral participation and levels of partisan identification are less than perfectly matched in rural France, the two dimensions should be separated analytically, even though they seem to be closely related empirically in research settings like the United States. Without bothering too much about nomenclature, we may say that political involvement consists of two major dimensions: a) citizen involvement, and particularly a belief in, and regular exercise of, the vote and; b) partisan involvement, or an approach to the political system that uses partisan identification as a mental economizing device. Expressing these dimensions typologically, we can say that there are four theoretical categories of participants:

		Citizen Involvement	
		High	*Low*
Partisan Involvement	*High*	Partisans	Outsiders
	Low	Nonpartisans	Parochials

Those who vote regularly, using party as an organizing principle, we will call *partisans* (this implies no intensity of involvement); those who vote regularly but lack that partisan perspective on the political community we will call, for the moment, *nonpartisans;* those citizens who neither vote nor have a partisan approach to participation we can call *parochials;* and those who, despite a partisan identification, do not vote, we will call *outsiders.* The total balance among these types in any democratic society will say a great deal about its political dynamics, and probably relate closely to the historical relationship between the expansion of the suffrage and the extension of the party system. It should also differentiate analytically between social and demographic groups within the same society in terms of the ratio between "partisans" and "nonpartisans" within the stable voters of each group. Traditional lore about the peasantry would lead us to suspect that most rural voters in France would be found in the bottom right-hand quadrant, among the "parochials." Looking, first, at citizen involvement, and, second, at partisan involvement, and then at the two variables in combination, we shall see that this is not the case.

There are three potential ways of operationalizing what I have called citizen involvement: first, by the frequency of actual participation; second, by the value placed on the norm of voting; and, third, on the citizen's stated determination to vote in a particular election. Since we are interested in voters' orientations, and not directly in their behavior, the first measure seems less than perfect, and since a voter's expression of the "norm of voting" may be ritualistic, so is the second. The determination to exercise the vote may serve as an adequate indicator of citizen involvement, since it combines intended behavior with personal conviction, but is primarily attitudinal.

In the January, 1967 IFOP survey to be analyzed here,[30] a sample of close to two thousand Frenchmen were asked:

a. Do you intend to vote on Sunday, March 5th, on the first ballot?
b. (if yes) To what extent are you decided you are going to vote; would you say it is absolutely certain, that there is a good chance you will vote, or that it isn't certain?

Those who answered positively on the first part of the question and then said they were "absolutely certain" they were going to vote on the

[30] Survey No. ER 170, provided by courtesy of the Roper Center for Opinion Research.

second were scored "high" on citizen involvement; all those who were less than certain, including those with no intention to vote, were scored low. The results, for the sample as a whole, and for the five basic classes of communes, are as follows:

Table 3. Citizen Involvement, Based Upon the Certainty of Voting, by Demographic Class of Community (IFOP, Jan. 1967)

	0–2,000 pop. (%)	2,000–20,000 pop. (%)	20,000–100,000 pop. (%)	Over 100,000 pop. (%)	Paris Region (%)	Total (%)
Certain voters	77.2	82.6	78.8	78.5	81.2	79.1
Uncertain and non-voters	22.8	17.4	21.2	21.5	21.5	20.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N.	708	270	241	381	345	1945

$X^2 = 4.1$ with 4 degrees of freedom.
Not Significant

As the table shows, voters in communes of less than 2000 inhabitants are right near the national average in the percentage who are "absolutely certain" to vote in the legislative elections of March, 1967. Moreover, if we look at communities of between two and twenty thousand inhabitants, a larger than average percentage declare themselves to be certain voters. The statistics for all demographic groups are very close to the national average, and there is no linear relationship between certainty of voting and community size. The interesting question is: "How do these largely invariate relationships interact with partisan involvement in the survey population?"

The search for an adequate operational measure of partisan identification presents problems familiar to many researchers outside the United States. In countries in which parties have appeared, disappeared and changed their nomenclature frequently, the ordinary voter may find it difficult to articulate to survey researchers his "underlying partisan predisposition" even when he has one.[31] Many partisan voters seem to think in terms of *tendance,* rather than party, and others hesitate to reveal their affiliations. This is particularly the case in France and Italy, where those voters most likely to have a strong attachment to their party—the Communists—may oppose the very regime they live under. Rural voters, as well as claiming the status of "independent" more frequently than others, are also most likely to "not remember" whom they last voted for.

[31] For a discussion of some of these problems, see Pierce and Barnes, "Public Opinion and Political Preferences in France and Italy," *op. cit.,* pp. 2–3.

This large nonresponse category would be less deterring if we knew that it represented *only* habitual party identifiers disguising their affiliations. But it also obviously includes a "real" category of casual voters who cannot remember their last voting choice and a certain number of non-voters unwilling to admit that they did not vote. Almost forty percent of the non-respondents on a question about their probable future vote in a 1965 French survey lived in communes of less than 2,000 inhabitants.[32]

Given this problem, it was decided to use as an operational measure of partisanship one that did not tie the respondent to a particular party and did not require him to declare for whom he habitually voted at all, but simply asked (in a survey administered before the election campaign began) whether or not he had *decided* for whom he would vote. Surveys administered in other countries have shown that voters who make up their minds before the campaign begins are more likely to be strong partisans than either weak partisans or independents. This is true in the United States, in Finland and in Great Britain.[33] French studies have shown that those whose partisanship we know to be strong —the Communist identifiers—habitually make a voting choice long before the election.[34] This would seem to legitimize the technique of using

[32] *Sondages,* 28, no. 2 (1966), p. 14.

[33] See, for this point, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard R. Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice,* 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 55; Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 128 ff; Campbell, *et al., The American Voter, op. cit.,* pp. 78 ff; Pesonen, *An Election in Finland, op cit.,* pp. 82–83; David Butler and Donald Stokes, *Political Change in Britain* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1970), p. 428.

[34] For evidence about Communist identifiers, see *Sondages,* 29 (1967) no. 3, p. 47. In any case, the risk involved in this procedure seems preferable to the risks involved in using declared party identification literally.

Table 4. Partisan Involvement, Based Upon the Time of Voting Choice, by Demographic Class of Community (IFOP, Jan. 1967)

	0–2,000 pop. (%)	2000–20,000 pop. (%)	20,000–100,000 pop. (%)	Over 100,000 pop. (%)	Paris Region (%)	Total (%)
Voting choice made before campaign	26.8	35.2	36.5	34.1	43.2	33.5
Voting choice undecided or unclear	73.2	64.8	63.5	65.9	56.8	66.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total N.	708	270	241	381	345	1945

$X^2 = 34.9$ with 4 degrees of freedom.
$p < .001$.

the variable of the period of voting decision (before or during the campaign) as a "stand-in" for an adequate direct measure of partisan identification.

Proceeding on this basis, we find, in the same January, 1967 survey analyzed above, that three-quarters of the voters in French villages did not yet know for whom they would vote (and this includes some voters who were not certain they would vote at all) in the March legislative election of that year, compared to two-thirds of the voters interviewed in larger towns and cities, and fifty-six percent of the voters interviewed in the Paris region. Thus, while more than forty-percent of the respondents in Paris had already chosen their candidates two months before the election, and about one-third had done so in most other French communities, only one-quarter of those interviewed in the villages had made a pre-campaign choice.

Two comments seem useful before proceeding to an examination of the relationship between the certainty of voting and the early choice of a candidate in urban and rural France. First, the traditional—and probably correct—interpretation of deferred voting choice in America is the voter's uncertainty caused by attitudinal cross-pressures.[35] It is certainly not in our armory of inherited wisdom to see the French rural voter in this way. Second, voters who have not made up their minds (and who cannot be written off as abstainers) have a greater tendency to be influenced by the election campaign, and might be expected to be the target of intensive campaign propaganda. But the fact that they are found disproportionately dispersed in villages inhibits the effectiveness of urban-based campaign efforts. If they were disproportionately non-regular voters, this would reduce the politicians' risks in not seeking to influence their vote. But, as we can see in Table 5, by far the largest group of respondents in communes of less than 2,000 inhabitants are citizens who 1) are certain they will vote and 2) had not made a voting choice at the start of the election campaign.

In Table 5, the two variables analyzed in Tables 3 and 4 have been cross-tabulated in terms of the typology of "citizen and partisan involvement" above. As the table shows, the "nonpartisans" are the modal category in each class of commune except Paris, where the proportions of partisans and nonpartisans are almost equal. In the smallest communes, the percentage of "nonpartisans" is greatest and the partisans are less than twenty-five percent of the surveyed population. There are slightly more "parochials" in the villages than in the other classes of communes, but this group is less than twenty percent of the surveyed population in all cases. There are, as expected, very few "outsiders," but this may result jointly from the nature of the population and the type of operational indicators we have used.

The Table verifies what we have suspected all along: that there are in France numbers of voters involved in the political system as citizens without, for all that, confronting their electoral choices as committed partisans, and that there are more of these "nonpartisan" voters in rural France than elsewhere. Hence the oddity of a population grouping that produces low declarations of political interest (in a partisan sense) but consistently high levels of voting turnout.

The most striking comparison between respondents in the rural communes and the rest of the population is not the composition of the entire group, but the relationship between partisans and nonpartisans in the active voting population. Among those who are "absolutely certain" they are going to vote, the ratio of

[35] See Campbell, *et al., The American Voter, op. cit.*, p. 83, for an examination of this problem.

Table 5. Citizen and Partisan Involvement, Based Upon the Certainty of Voting and the Time of Voting Decision, by Demographic Class of Commune

Class of Commune N=	Involved Voters*		Uninvolved Voters**		Ratio of Partisans to Nonpartisans	Total (%)
	Partisans (%)	Nonpartisans (%)	Parochials (%)	Outsiders (%)		
0–2,000 (708)	23.3	54.0	19.2	3.5	1/2.31	100.0
2,000–20,000 (270)	34.1	48.5	16.3	1.1	1/1.42	100.0
20,000–100,000 (241)	31.5	47.3	16.2	5.0	1/1.50	100.0
100,000– & above (381)	31.3	47.2	18.6	2.9	1/1.51	100.0
Paris region (345)	40.3	40.9	15.9	2.9	1/1.01	100.0
Total %	30.4	48.7	17.7	3.2	1/1.60	100.0
(N.) (1945)	(591)	(948)	(345)	(61)		

$X^2 = 40.7$ with 12 degrees of freedom
$p < .001$
* For relationship between "partisans" and "nonpartisans":
$X^2 = 32.1$ with 4 degrees of freedom
$p < .01$
** For relationship between "parochials" and "outsiders":
$X^2 = 4.5$ with 4 degrees of freedom
Not significant

partisans to nonpartisans is 1/2.3 compared to ratios of about 1/1.4 in the rest of the sample. In Paris, there are approximately the same number of partisans as nonpartisans, while in the villages of less than two thousand people there are twice as many nonpartisans as partisans.

Some hypothetical consequences of this higher level of nonpartisanship among the active voters in the villages can be briefly outlined:

(a) since most of those who will vote make their voting decision during the campaign, its timing and rhythms are relatively more important in the villages than in the cities;

(b) but since nonpartisan voters in the villages are, by definition, dispersed throughout the society, they are more difficult to reach by national parties using urban-based campaign organizations;

(c) as a substitute, these parties may improvise village campaign organizations by seeking the support of small-town political leaders (the so-called "notables") who will act as temporary brokers between the parties and the non-partisan voters;

(d) failing this possibility, the small town vote is probably less predictable and more volatile than the urban vote, and less susceptible to influence by campaign strategists operating out of party organizations. As a result, candidates in rural districts may be encouraged to run on non-party labels in national political elections.

This last possible consequence of the dynamics of involvement in rural France seems particularly important because of the *character* of nonpartisanship that appears through the cracks in the survey evidence and is starkly evident in the community studies. For the active rural voter who lacks a party identification seems to be far more than non-partisan. In many ways he is *antipartisan,* in the sense that he rejects, not only affiliation to one party or another, but the very notion of the party system as a legitimate way of structuring the vote and determining national priorities.

There is much impressionistic evidence to support this assertion. For instance, in his rich case study of the 1968 elections in a rural circumscription of the Loir-et-Cher, Georges Chaffard quotes one peasant who came to see a candidate, and then left quietly, remarking; "I hope no one saw me come in . . . I wouldn't want anyone to think I take part in politics."[36] Rural Frenchmen are uninterested in a candidate's attitudes toward the regime; fifty-eight percent of the rural respondents in a 1965 survey took this view, as opposed to forty-six percent of the sample as a whole.[37] And in a survey of 1967, forty percent of the residents of rural communes and forty-one percent of the peasants

[36] Chaffard, *Les Orages, op. cit.,* p. 145.
[37] Jean Piret, *loc. cit.*

Table 6. Hostility to Political Leaders, by Level of "Interest in Politics" for Urban Workers and Peasants (IFOP, 1962)

Interest in Politics	Hostility to Political Leaders							
	Workers				Peasants			
	N=	Hostile	Non-hostile		N=	Hostile	Non-hostile	
High	(92)	25	75	100	(54)	14	86	100
Medium	(154)	44	56	100	(84)	52	48	100
Low	(49)	76	24	100	(50)	74	26	100

said they regarded their vote for a deputy purely as a vote for a local representative and not as a vote for or against a national government, compared to thirty-three percent of the sample as a whole.[38]

But the term "antipartisan" implies an active hostility to the party system, and this we have yet to demonstrate. First, it ought to be said that during the Fifth Republic, hostility to the party system, and particularly to its leaders, has been common in all classes of the population. But, secondly, it is particularly widespread among those traditional population groups who have been most deeply hurt by the rapid changes which have occurred in French society since the end of World War Two. According to Guy Michelat, those with the greatest hostility to the party system are (a) Gaullists, right wing voters and chronic abstainers, (b) women more than men, (c) those in the lowest and the highest income ranges, (d) artisans, shopkeepers, white collar workers and managers. Farm owners are found only about halfway up the scale of "antiparliamentarism" that Michelat has devised.[39]

What interests us here is the relationship between what I have until now called "nonpartisanship" and hostility to the party system, or, differently put, the affective attitude towards the party system of those voters—urban and rural—who both vote regularly and do not use a partisan perspective when they go to the polls. Michelat's scale of "antiparliamentarism" contains many items that largely concern the party leadership (although others do so only inferentially).[40] When we look at the relationship between "antiparliamentarism" and "interest in politics"—which we already know is closely related to partisan involvement—we can then assess the degree of hostility to the party system of both urban and rural voters whose partisan involvement is weak. Table 6 presents these relationships for urban workers and peasants interviewed during the election campaign of 1962.[41]

As Table 6 shows, there is found in both workers and peasants a strong and inverse relationship between "interest in politics" (which we have inferred to be in reality a measure of partisanship) and hostility to party leaders. In other words, both workers and peasants are much more hostile to party leaders when their declared "interest in politics" is weak. Hostility to party leaders decreases rapidly with an increase in political interest, but this decrease is more dramatic among peasants than it is among workers. For both groups, but proportionately more so among peasants, weak partisan involvement is not just an *absence* of partisanship, but is related to an active hostility to the party system, or antipartisanship.

These relationships, statistically similar in workers and peasants, seem to be politically more important in the latter group, and perhaps in rural France as a whole. This is so for two reasons. First, more peasants than workers, according to Michelat, declare themselves to have "no interest in politics" (twenty-six percent as opposed to seventeen percent of the workers in his sample). Second, as Table 7 shows, sixty-six percent of the peasants with "no political interest" actually vote, as opposed to only fifty-six percent of the workers in the same category. In other words, in terms of our initial typological discussion of the problem, peasants are more likely to be "nonpartisans" than "parochials" and their hostility to the party system manifests itself in active voting behavior, which is much less likely to be true of the workers in the same category. Thus, voter hostility to the party system is a more active constraint on the campaign behavior of candidates in rural, than in urban, districts.

The political consequences of antipartisanship are, of course, far more complex than

[38] *Sondages,* 29 (1967), no. 3, p. 28.

[39] See Guy Michelat, "Attitudes et comportements politiques à l'automne 1962," in Goguel, *op. cit.,* pp. 254–264.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 256 for the items composing this scale.

[41] I am grateful to Guy Michelat for graciously providing me with the unpublished material presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 7. Voting Intentions of Workers and Peasants by Level of "Interest in Politics" (in %)*

Interest in Politics	Voting Intention								
	Workers					Peasants			
	N=	Left	Right	Abstain		N=	Left	Right	Abstain	
High	(92)	63	29	7	99	(57)	39	51	9	99
Medium	(154)	40	35	22	97	(84)	33	48	19	100
Low	(49)	27	29	43	99	(50)	18	48	32	98

* The rows in this table do not uniformly total 100% because percentages were calculated only up to two decimal points.

those of simple *non*partisanship would be.[42] In this context, I want merely to speculate about its relevance to local political organization and campaign behavior in local elections. For it has long been well known that French local elections in small towns are seldom bouts between party lists, that the French rural mayor —the key small town notable—rarely belongs to a party, and that party organizations have difficulty surviving in the villages as long-term propositions.[43]

The reasons given for this apolitical nature of the rural elite generally take two forms: first, that French local government is but a pawn in the bureaucratic hierarchy of the prefectural system, and that party politics has little objective reason to survive in the small town; and, second, that the peasant is too parochial to see political life in partisan terms, and substitutes the politics of local unanimity for the politics of party conflict. The "bureaucratic" explanation seems to fail in explaining the apolitical character of local government in France for the simple reason that, in a similar prefectural system—that of Italy—the evidence is abundant that local elections are run along partisan lines and that local party organizations flourish in most regions.[44] The "parochial" explanation seems to fail too, because, as we have seen, the French rural resident is an active participant in elections and, as we shall see, is also a relatively attentive citizen.

It seems likely, on the other hand, that the largely antipartisan character of small town involvement may act as a constraint upon the politicization of local government and the growth of party organizations in rural France. If twice as many active rural voters are antipartisans as partisans, the successful candidate, irrespective of his own partisan affiliations, cannot risk appealing to them with a partisan platform or with party organizational support. If he does, he may risk having it said of him, "Lui, il fait de la politique." For there is, in the French village, a political culture of antipartisanship that no serious candidate for office can ignore.

III. The Origins of Antipartisanship

Before examining the sources of this culture, we ought to face squarely a question which has been glossed over until now: the difference between the peasant and the non-peasant population in the small towns with respect to both participation rates and partisan orientations. For it is possible that non-peasant rural groups have orientations towards the political system that differ radically from those of the peasantry, and if this were true, we should have to analyze the two separately.

As it turns out, even the social class in French small towns which has the least in common sociologically with the peasantry—manual workers in non-agricultural occupations—demonstrates both the high participation rate and the low partisan orientation that is characteristic of the small town as a whole. In Table 8, based on an IFOP survey of 1956, we can see that the voting record of small town workers was higher and their "interest in politics" was lower than that of workers in either larger towns or in cities.[45] Whatever the sources of the political culture of antipartisanship in the villages, it seems to affect manual workers to an equal degree as other rural classes. Workers vote more regularly and declare themselves to have less "interest in politics" than workers in the rest of France.

[42] This problem will be treated in detail in Sidney Tarrow, *The Grassroots in Italy and France: A Comparative Study of Elections, Parties and Elites* (to be published, 1972).

[43] For some evidence on this point, see Kesselman, *op. cit.*; *French Politics*, ed. Martin Harrison (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1969), p. 182; also see J. Gilli, "Les maires dans le département les Alpes-Maritimes," in *Revue Française de Science Politique* 18, no. 3 (June, 1968).

[44] On the Italian prefectural system, see Robert Fried, *The Italian Prefects:* A Study in Administrative Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963).

[45] *Sondages*, 18 (1956) no. 2, p. 64.

Table 8. Interest in Politics and Voting in Elections, Working Class Respondents, Demographic Class of Commune* (IFOP, 1956)

Size of Commune	Interested in Politics		Vote in Elections	
	A Lot %	Not at All %	Always %	Never %
less than 2000	6	48	80	7
2–5,000	9	33	75	8
5–20,000	18	31	68	8
20–100,000	14	38	73	10
More than 100,000	11	39	62	13

* Intermediate categories excluded and number of respondents not provided by the IFOP.

If we accept that the rural community is a coherent social unit, then, what seem to be the major sources for the high level of citizen involvement and the low level of partisan involvement—or antipartisanship—that we have observed there? Both have three major types of sources: (a) historical, (b) organizational and (c) ecological.

(a) Historical Origins. No study of political involvement in France can ignore the fundamental fact that France has had an almost unbroken tradition of mass exercise of the franchise since 1848, earlier, and with fewer inequalities, than that of any other European country.[46] That a phenomenon has origins does not explain its effects, but clearly the long tradition of widespread suffrage in France—even during the relative rigors of the second Napoleonic empire—is the necessary background within which we ought to see the high rate of rural participation in France.

But in many European countries, the extension of the right to vote was received with less enthusiasm in the rural than in the urban areas. Icelandic data cited by Rokkan, for example show that turnout in villages and other rural areas is much lower than turnout in the towns, although the gaps tend to narrow with time. If the French vote is higher in rural, than in urban, France, this is not unrelated to the fact that each of the two important regimes which governed the country between 1852 and 1940 —the Second Empire and the Third Republic —worked hard to win the vote of the peasants.

The techniques varied. Louis Bonaparte, ever an improviser, depended mainly on rhetoric and patronage—what Marx called, in his wonderful phrase, "champagne and sausages."[47] But the architects of the Third Republic were convinced that they would fail unless they could somehow turn the peasant from a clerical-monarchist into a republican. The strategy chosen was the establishment of a lay primary school in every village and its staffing with a shock troop of *instituteurs*—republicans to a man—who often doubled in the key role of Secretary of the Commune.[48] In turn, the parish priest, pinnacle of "authority and obscurantism" fought to bring out the vote of his parishoners so as to vanquish the "standard bearers of the Revolution."[49] An increase in the use of the vote followed accordingly.

But history tells another story as well. For unlike many other European countries, the extension of the suffrage did not coincide with the creation of a network of party organizations into the provinces from the capital. This was partly due to the circumstances that most of its first twenty-five years were spent under a semi-dictatorial regime in which elections were held but political associations were banned. In part, however, the French tendency to think in terms of *tendances* instead of parties is linked to a fundamentally anti-associational legal tradition dating back to the Revolution and to the Old Regime.[50] The politics of the Third Republic, when political association was legitimized, still show political leaders attempting to organize power through the control of the prefectures—that is, as State power—rather than through the creation of party organizations, or as political power.[51] Of course, the exemplar of the weakness of party organization in the provinces was the old Radical Party which could succeed in organizing the vote through networks of clientele relationships, and never needed anything more stable than Electoral Committees in the way of party organizations.[52]

[46] Rokkan, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[47] Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 78.

[48] For a summary of the campaign for the *école laique*, see W. D. Halls, *Society, Schools and Progress in France* (London: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1967), pp. 21–22, and pp. 75–88.

[49] Herbert Luethy, *France Against Herself*, 2nd ed., (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1957), p. 34.

[50] On the legal history of the restraint on association, see Arnold M. Rose, "Voluntary Associations in France," in Arnold M. Rose (ed), *Theory and Method in the Social Sciences* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), pp. 77–98.

[51] I am indebted for this insight to Aristide Zolberg. For an example see Georges Dupeux, *Aspects de l'Histoire Sociale et Politique du Loir-et-Cher, 1848–1914* (Paris and the Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), Part III.

[52] See, for example, Daniel Bardonnet, *Evolution de la Structure du Parti Radical* (Paris: Edition Montchrestien, 1960), chap. 2.

Thus we find in the nineteenth century origins of French electoral politics both an encouragement to the exercise of the franchise and a number of inhibitions on the creation of party organizations. In the nature of things, the weight of both the school teacher-priest encouragement to vote and the notable-clientele electoral organization was more profound in the countryside than in the cities. The spread of citizen involvement to the countryside did not occur simultaneously with the penetration of organized patterns of partisan involvement.

One heritage of the Third Republic's campaign for a schoolhouse in every village is extremely important in explaining why rural Frenchmen vote in such great numbers: the literacy rate in rural France is now over ninety-five percent. Rural literacy in Italy, where universal primary education has still to be achieved, is much lower.[53] This high rate of rural literacy narrows considerably the usual gap in newspaper readership between city and countryside, and increases the importance of secondary, as opposed to primary, media of communications in rural France. As many peasants report regular readership of news items as urban groups, and more peasants than the members of any other social group reported in a survey that they get "the greater part of their information on what happens in the world through the newspaper, rather than the radio, conversations or other means."[54] Table 9 reports the percentage of various occupational groups in a 1955 survey declaring "regular attention" to different types of newspaper articles.

French peasants are relatively well informed also, at least on issues relating to agriculture. Sixty-seven percent of a national sample of peasants in 1964 claimed to have heard of the Brussels EEC agreement on farm products. Fifty-nine percent of the same survey population were able to correctly name the Minister of Agriculture at the time. Surveys of the general population show that fifty to seventy percent of all Frenchmen are unable to express an opinion on any government minister.[55] On the other hand, peasants generally have a lower information score on issues which do not directly concern them.[56] Their information levels are lowest, as might be expected from the discussion above, on questions having to do with partisan alignments and evaluations of party leaders. When asked, in 1955, if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with Mendes-France as Prime Minister, forty-four percent of the peasants in an IFOP sample declared themselves indifferent or did not respond, as compared to thirty-three percent of the workers and twenty-two percent of white collar workers.[57]

Table 9. Percentage Reporting "Regular Readership" of Various Newspaper Topics by Occupation

	Peasants %	Workers %	White Collar %	Owners, Tradesmen, Professionals %
Politics	62	60	61	60
Local News	58	65	51	44
Human Interest	22	27	21	16
Sports	27	56	45	40
Columnists	38	45	47	48
Amusements & Books	9	11	33	34

Source: "La Presse, le public et l'opinion," in *Sondages*, 17 (1955) no. 3, p. 54. (Number of respondents not reported.)

The general literacy of the French peasant, his great attention to the press and his relatively high information levels seem to be important in helping to explain his high level of citizen involvement. Thus, he exercises the vote not as a mere tool of the village clientele leader (who, in any case, has disappeared from the scene as a political figure) but as an informed citizen, aware, at least, of the issues that concern him. For reasons that go back at least to the Second Empire, he does not exercise it as a partisan.

(b) Class and Professional Organization. A second group of variables also help to explain both the high citizen involvement and the antipartisanship in much of rural France. Political representation can take either a territorial or a functional form. In the former, existing territorial entities become the natural focus of representation and their internal cleavages are suppressed or diffused. In the latter, usually linked with urbanization and social differentiation, the internal cleavages of a territorial unit form the basis for political representation and competition.[58] In the rural sectors of some countries such as Italy, class cleavages resulting from the incomplete agrarian revolution in the nineteenth century join territorial cleavages as the bases for political competition. Hence class, and party based upon class, become a legiti-

[53] IFOP (1964); on Italy, see *Statistiche sul Mezzogiorno d'Italia, 1861–1961,* (Rome: 1964), p. 797.

[54] See, for this information, *Sondages* 17 (1955) no. 3, p. 26, pp. 31–32, and p. 54.

[55] *Sondages,* 25 (1963) no. 3, p. 54; IFOP (1964), p. 58, & p. 66.

[56] IFOP (1964), p. 65 and *Sondages* 25 (1963), no. 3, p. 80.

[57] *Sondages* 17 (1955), no. 1, p. 39.

[58] Rokkan, *op. cit.,* p. 89.

mate symbol around which to organize competing local groups.

But in France, rural party organization seems to suffer from the very totality of the success of the French Revolution in creating a national class of smallholding peasants as the backbone of the rural economy. For the rural community—ever susceptible to appeals based upon the so-called "unity of the rural world"—is even less susceptible to party appeals based upon class models when the majority of the local farmers are landholding small peasants with the same legal status. It is only in the Massif Central and parts of the South of France, where sharecropping was once widespread and where vast differentials could be found in the amount of land each peasant farmed, that a rural politics of class could appear and flourish. In most other areas of France, in order for a party to prosper, it needed to build its appeal on non-class symbols, to stress local, territorial issues rather than class issues, and purposefully fail to build party organizations. Hence the class structure emerging from the French Revolution and the legal reforms which followed it seem to be a definite brake upon the growth of party politics in rural France.

Not so for professional organizations. These syndicates, cooperatives and educative societies have not only improved the peasant's economic condition, but have enabled his class to survive despite the apparent obsolescence of the small peasant property as a commercial operation. Gordon Wright has outlined the role of the State in the encouragement of agricultural association, even during the Third Republic when industrial unions were banned and political associations were discouraged. By 1914, membership in agricultural syndicates was enormous—500,000 according to a conservative estimate and 1,600,000 according to an enthusiastic foreigner.[59]

Most writers have minimized the political importance of agrarian organizations in France, and have stressed that their major role was the economic one of providing cheap seeds, fertilizer and technical information. These organizations have also been dominated nationally by the interests of their larger and more powerful members in the Paris Basin, at the cost of their small peasant members in the South and West.[60] But since the FNSEA (National Federation of Syndicates of Agricultural Operators), like its predecessors, does provide bread-and-butter benefits for its members, it is likely to have the same impact upon electoral involvement as associational membership everywhere—to increase the tendency to vote and the informedness of the voter. As Linz concludes in his analysis of the politics of farmers in West Germany, "... the high degree of organization of farmers in pressure groups and functional organizations may account for the higher electoral turnout."[61]

This certainly seems to be the case in France, where over 700,000 peasants adhere to the FNSEA. In the 1964 IFOP survey, forty-eight percent of the peasants interviewed reported membership in agricultural syndicates and ten percent more were members of other professional groups. In the 1966 survey, in a question that probably overstates membership ("Are you satisfied or not very satisfied with the action of your syndicate?") only one-third reported that they were *not* members of any syndical organization. In the same survey, twenty-five percent reported themselves members of a cooperative, and eighteen percent said they were members of a veteran's association.[62]

These figures are strikingly high, no matter from what angle we view them. Compared either to traditional folklore about French rural individualism, to the organization of other French occupational groups or to farmers in other countries, they lead to the same conclusion: French peasants are exceptionally well organized. Not only syndical groups, but also technical and mutual aid associations are active in the French countryside. Henri Mendras has written of the "social inventiveness" of the peasant in adapting technical change to an agrarian society through such groups as the C.E.T.A. (Committees for Agricultural Technical Studies) and the C.U.M.A. (Cooperatives for the Joint Use of Agricultural Machines). In the past, agricultural improvement committees were animated by local notables or technicians, but "these new institutions, so different from their predecessors, are animated by young farmers and not by local notables or functionaries."[63]

It is interesting that syndical membership is highest among farmers engaged in the polyculture typical of traditional French agriculture. This does not mean that the mass of these farmers are backward, for, except in the rich plains of the North, polyculture has an economic rationale—hedging against sudden variations in the market price of any one product by producing several. Since these peasants are

[59] See Gordon Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 19 and p. 213, n.17; also see Fauvet and Mendras, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–37.

[60] Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and p. 104, and Fauvet and Mendras, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–52.

[61] Linz, *op. cit.*, p. 790.

[62] IFOP (1964), p. 27 and IFOP (1966), p. 64.

[63] IFOP (1966), p. 65; Mendras, *op. cit.*, p. 270 and Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 149–150.

more actively engaged in diverse economic relations than others, they need professional information more than the specialized farmer. If this is true, it may provide a partial explanation for the high level of syndicalism in rural France as a whole. For in a country in which sixty percent of the peasants are engaged in polyculture of one sort or another, a high level of associational life is an obvious corollary.[64]

Organized peasants are better informed politically than others. The 1964 IFOP survey shows that fifty-three percent of syndicated peasants were moderately or well informed on a variety of issues, compared to only thirty-six percent of non-organized peasants. Discussion of agricultural problems such as the Brussels Agreements was twice as high—with thirty percent—among the syndicated as among those with no organizational ties—sixteen percent of whom had discussed them. Syndicated peasants also attend more meetings than others; fifty-one percent of the organized peasants in the 1964 IFOP sample said that they attend meetings for farmers at least sometimes; twenty-three percent of the unorganized gave the same answer.[65]

Finally, a background in syndical or cooperative activity appears to be an important support in town council and in mayoral recruitment, and this appears to be true in smaller, just as in larger, communes. In fact, the relative unimportance of political parties in recruitment to local political roles in small French communes leaves the syndicates and cooperatives as the most important associational sources of recruitment. This results not only from the network of acquaintanceships that leaders of these associations build up, but also from their relatively high economic status, their dynamism and their technical modernity. Every technical change, writes Henri Mendras, "takes on a political significance, involving itself in the game of village rivalries." Since associational leaders are often in the forefront of technical change in agriculture, they also find themselves in line for municipal or provincial political positions too.

This has emerged dramatically in the ascendence of a new rural political elite since the nineteen-fifties, mainly drawn from progressive young farmers. Socialized through various Catholic Action affiliates, their first instinct was to reject the political process and to get agricultural modernization mainly through technical means. But it soon appeared that without the cooperation of the rural political elite, the infrastructure necessary for change could not be constructed. Where this help was not forthcoming, there was no alternative but to agitate politically through syndical groups and eventually to run for office.[66]

Thus, while the class structure of rural France militates against the organization of local political conflict along partisan lines and encourages territorial forms of representation, the great professional organization of French peasants improves rural political information levels, reinforces social integration in the village, and encourages electoral participation and running for office. But these forms of association themselves reinforce the tendency for territorial forms of representation, since their members organize, not against other groups in the same community, but against middlemen and distributors outside the village. Paradoxically, perhaps, the rich associational tradition of the French peasant is a corollary of antipartisanship.

(c) The Ecological Origins. A third, and final, class of variables also add to our understanding of both citizen involvement and antipartisanship in rural France. By the term "ecological," I simply mean the social logistics of village life: the impact of the size, structure and interrelations of the French village upon the political involvement of its residents. While sparsely populated rural areas appear to have a lower voting rate than cities, small but physically cohesive villages seem to have a higher turnout rate because of a) the social visibility of the individual behavior, b) the personal character of local government and c) the high ratio of formal political role holders to the population. As Rokkan writes;

> . . . We have reason to expect a higher level of active participation in the rural areas than in the cities simply because the smaller units of local government will allow a higher proportion of formal political roles than the larger units.[67]

In France, rural turnout is high in part because the average commune is small, compact, and has a high ratio of formal political role holders to voters. France has only 221 inhabitants per square mile, compared to 571 in West Germany and 783 in Belgium. They live in 38,000 communes, more than the rest of the Common Market and Britain combined.[68] Most of these communes are not made up of widely scattered farms but of village *agglomerations*

[64] IFOP (1966), p. 44.
[65] IFOP (1964), p. 64; Sondages 25 (1963), no. 2, p. 68; IFOP (1964), p. 60 and p. 68.
[66] Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–72; Mendras, *op. cit.*, pp. 153–160; Wylie, *et al., op. cit.*, p. 234 and Morin, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[67] Rokkan, *op. cit.*, p. 376.
[68] Ehrmann, ***Politics in France,*** pp. 21–27.

with all the social pressures and pleasures that this implies. It is mainly in the underpopulated Southwest that the rural population is physically dispersed in the countryside.[69]

Participation is also encouraged because of widespread local office-holding. The 1966 survey shows that in twenty-one percent of the peasant families interviewed, the husband was or had been a member of the municipal council. This astonishingly high figure compares to roughly 1.8 percent of the population as a whole.[70] Considering that the 35,000 French communes with less than 2,000 inhabitants have an average population of four hundred and fifty, and that each commune has at least nine municipal councillors, it is little wonder that one-fifth of the sample had local elective experience, or that such a rate of participation could not be matched in urban France. Mayors interviewed in small towns in southern France often maintained that one of the criteria in the selection of a candidate for their list was that he have a large family to turn out and vote for him. This conveys at once the personal flavor of the campaign and the statistical factor that the political ecology of the village encourages a large turnout, particularly in local elections.

But the very factors that increase citizen involvement also encourage antipartisanship. In a small village dominated by the corporate interests of a single social class—the small-holding peasantry—open partisanship threatens the community not only with political conflict but with personal strife. Where there is no underlying class division in a territorial unit, personal conflicts are expressed as the petty *brouilles* and *histoires* of village life and not automatically translated into party conflict, except in a sporadic and idiosyncratic way that everyone in the village understands to be conflicts of personality and not of party.

The attempt to systematize and concentrate personal animosities into village-type party conflict can threaten the harmony of family relations, the pleasure of social occasions and the informal work cooperation and sharing of tools that are crucial to the economic survival of each family. The small size of the French rural commune and its physical concentration make this threat ever more real. As Georges Dupeux explains it:

> The refusal of the peasants to recognize the interest that they have in politics is doubtless the consequence of their refusal to assume a partisan affiliation. And that can be explained by the sociological conditions where they live. To assume a partisan affiliation can, in the small communities, lead to a rupture of social relations with numerous neighbors with whom one must coexist from day to day, and can provoke a nearly intolerable isolation.[71]

As with the historical and the class and professional influences on political involvement, the political ecology of the village seems to contribute to both the high citizen involvement and the low partisan involvement of rural France.

Concluding Remarks

The line of argument in this article seems easy to sum up. I first tried to deal with some puzzling inconsistencies in the survey evidence on French political involvement (and with inconsistencies between the survey evidence and the community studies) by reconceptualizing political involvement into two aspects: (a) citizen involvement and (b) partisan involvement. I then showed that, unlike the United States and perhaps some other countries, the two aspects of involvement are in far less than perfect fit in France, and that the modal form of voter involvement in rural France is a combination of high citizen involvement and low partisan involvement. That the average voter in rural France is not simply "nonpartisan" but actively "antipartisan" was indicated by some impressions gleaned from the community studies and demonstrated by some survey findings.

The electoral consequences of the dominance of village antipartisanship were then suggested to be a greater volatility of the rural vote and a tendency of candidates for office to shy away from partisan affiliations. The origins of antipartisanship were sought in the historical background of modern French politics, in the class and professional structure of the village and in what I choose to call its political ecology. It was suggested, in conclusion, that high citizen involvement and antipartisanship are not only coincidental in the French village but derive from the very same factors.

The primordial fact that universal manhood suffrage appeared in France long before an organized party system may be peculiarly French, but it should alert us to a fundamental problem. We tend to conceptualize the expansion of mass participation in terms of a unilinear model of the "mobilization of the periphery" a concept which we perceive upon examination to be built on the assumption that parties are aggregative institutions expressing the conflicts and coalitions of the social system. But not all elements in the peripheries of their societies

[69] Lancelot, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

[70] IFOP (1966), pp. 64–5; also see Ehrmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–93.

[71] Written communication to the author.

have been mobilized in a partisan way, because party conflict cannot be perceived as legitimate by local communities lacking the social bases of party conflict. Such communities, I have tried to show, have a virtual culture of antipartisanship, and are widespread in rural France. We ought to inquire also how widespread they are in the rural and urban sectors of other modern societies.

This perspective can be enlightening also because of what it suggests about the nature of party organizations. Are they genuine aggregative institutions in a dynamic sense with respect to all the population groups of a given society, or only with respect to the social groups which originally gave rise to them: elements of an insurgent bourgeoisie, a defensive landed upper class or an industrial proletariat, each transforming its dominant values into the aggregative ideologies of, respectively, classical liberal, conservative and social democratic labor parties?

These doubts about the usefulness of looking at political parties as instruments of aggregation suggest a complementary perspective: that parties are agencies of penetration bringing an essentially urban model of representation to bear in peripheral communities to which they may be foreign. Hence the party either transforms its appeal in the rural setting, seeks the mediation of rural office holders or associational leaders, or leaves the rural periphery unorganized and subject to violent electoral shifts during and between election campaigns.

The age of the mass party may be ending in Western Europe. But in parts of France it may never have struck organizational roots, and in others—once deeply politicized, so the historians tell us—a de-politicizing process must have occurred. But since political involvement may be great, and even intense, without the intervention of partisan involvement, the phenomenon of antipartisanship in rural France intersects dramatically in the 1970s with antipartisanship from another source: I refer here to the revulsion from traditional partisan allegiances of key sectors of the urban population, particularly young workers and students. Whether these two antipartisanships will bring about, in the post–Gaullist age, the obsolescence of the mass party so long sought by de Gaulle, is difficult to predict.