

1. The Nature of the Problem

In a political system where nearly every adult may vote but where knowledge, wealth, social position, access to officials, and other resources are unequally distributed, who actually governs?

The question has been asked, I imagine, wherever popular government has developed and intelligent citizens have reached the stage of critical self-consciousness concerning their society. It must have been put many times in Athens even before it was posed by Plato and Aristotle.

The question is peculiarly relevant to the United States and to Americans. In the first place, Americans espouse democratic beliefs with a fervency and a unanimity that have been a regular source of astonishment to foreign observers from Tocqueville and Bryce to Myrdal and Brogan. Not long ago, two American political scientists reported that 96 per cent or more of several hundred registered voters interviewed in two widely separated American cities agreed that: "Democracy is the best form of government" and "Every citizen should have an equal chance to influence government policy," and subscribed to other propositions equally basic to the democratic credo.¹ What, if anything, do these beliefs actually mean in the face of extensive inequalities in the resources different citizens can use to influence one another?

These beliefs in democracy and equality first gained wide acceptance as a part of what Myrdal later called the "American Creed" during a period when the problem of inequality was (if we can disregard for the moment the question of slavery) much less important than it is today. Indeed, the problem uppermost in the minds of the men at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 could probably have been stated quite the other way around. To men concerned with what was then a unique task of adapting republican institutions to a whole nation, the very *equality* in resources of power that American society and geography tended to generate seemed to endanger political stability and liberty. In a society of equals, what checks would there be against an impetuous, unenlightened, or unscrupulous majority? A half century later, this was also the way an amazing and gifted observer, Alexis de Tocqueville,

1. James W. Prothro and Charles M. Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," *Journal of Politics*, 22 (1960), 276-94.

posed the question in probably the most profound analysis of American democracy ever written. For Tocqueville, the United States was the most advanced representative of a new species of society emerging from centuries of development: "In running over the pages of [European] history, we shall scarcely find a single great event of the last seven hundred years that has not promoted equality of condition." So he wrote in the introduction to the first volume of his *Democracy in America*.

Whither, then, are we tending? [he went on to ask] No one can say, for terms of comparison already fail us. There is greater equality of condition in Christian countries at the present day than there has been at any previous time, in any part of the world, so that the magnitude of what already has been done prevents us from foreseeing what is yet to be accomplished.

In the United States he had looked upon the future, on

one country in the world where the great social revolution that I am speaking of seems to have nearly reached its natural limits . . . Men are there seen on a greater equality in point of fortune and intellect, or, in other words, more equal in their strength, than in any other country of the world, or in any age of which history has preserved the remembrance.²

The America that Tocqueville saw, however, was the America of Andrew Jackson. It was an agrarian democracy, remarkably close to the ideal often articulated by Jefferson.

Commerce, finance, and industry erupted into this agrarian society in a gigantic explosion. By the time the century approached its last decade, and another distinguished foreign observer looked upon the United States, the America of Tocqueville had already passed away. In how many senses of the word, James Bryce asked in 1899, does equality exist in the United States?

Clearly not as regards material conditions. Sixty years ago there were no great fortunes in America, few large fortunes, no poverty. Now there is some poverty (though only in a few places can it be called pauperism), many large fortunes, and a greater number of gigantic fortunes than in any other country of the world.

He found also an intellectual elite, among whose members the "level of exceptional attainment . . . rises faster than does the general level of the multitude, so that in this regard also it appears that equality has diminished and will diminish further."

2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, Vintage Books, 1955), I, 5, 6, 14, 55.

It was true that in America there were no formal marks of rank in the European sense. However, this did not

prevent the existence of grades and distinctions in society which, though they may find no tangible expression, are sometimes as sharply drawn as in Europe . . . The nature of a man's occupation, his education, his manners and breeding, his income, his connections, all come into view in determining whether he is in this narrow sense of the word "a gentleman."

Yet, remarkably, the universal belief in equality that Tocqueville had found sixty years earlier still persisted. "It is in this," Bryce wrote, "that the real sense of equality comes out. In America men hold others to be at bottom exactly like themselves." A man may be enormously rich, or a great orator, or a great soldier or writer, "but it is not a reason for bowing down to him, or addressing him in deferential terms, or treating him as if he was porcelain and yourself only earthenware."³

Now it has always been held that if equality of power among citizens is possible at all—a point on which many political philosophers have had grave doubts—then surely considerable equality of social conditions is a necessary prerequisite. But if, even in America, with its universal creed of democracy and equality, there are great inequalities in the conditions of different citizens, must there not also be great inequalities in the capacities of different citizens to influence the decisions of their various governments? And if, because they are unequal in other conditions, citizens of a democracy are unequal in power to control their government, then who in fact does govern? How does a "democratic" system work amid inequality of resources? These are the questions I want to explore by examining one urban American community, New Haven, Connecticut.

I have said "explore" because it is obvious that one cannot do more by concentrating on one community. However, New Haven embodies most of the equalities and inequalities that lend this enterprise its significance. In the course of the book, I shall examine various aspects of these that may be related to differences in the extent to which citizens can and do influence local government. But it will not hurt to start putting a little paint on the canvas now.

One might argue whether the political system of New Haven is "democratic" or "truly democratic," but only because these terms are always debatable. In everyday language, New Haven is a democratic political community. Most of its adult residents are legally entitled to vote. A relatively high proportion do vote. Their votes are, by and large, honestly counted—though absentee votes, a small fraction of the total,

3. James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth* (London, Macmillan, 1889), 2, 602-03, 606-07.

are occasionally manipulated. Elections are free from violence and, for all practical purposes, free from fraud. Two political parties contest elections, offer rival slates of candidates, and thus present the voters with at least some outward show of choice.

Running counter to this legal equality of citizens in the voting booth, however, is an unequal distribution of the resources that can be used for influencing the choices of voters and, between elections, of officials. Take property, for example. In 1957, the fifty largest property owners, in number less than one-sixteenth of one per cent of the taxpayers, held nearly one-third of the total assessed value of all real property in the city. Most of the fifty largest property owners were, of course, corporations: public utilities like the United Illuminating Company, which had the largest assessment (\$22 million) and the Southern New England Telephone Company (\$12 million); big industries like Olin Mathieson (\$21 million) which had bought up the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, the famous old New Haven firearms firm; family-held firms like Sargent and A. C. Gilbert; or department stores like the century-old firm of Malley's. Of the fifty largest property owners, sixteen were manufacturing firms, nine were retail and wholesale businesses, six were privately-owned public utilities, and five were banks. Yale University was one of the biggest property owners, though it ranked only tenth in assessed value (\$3.6 million) because much of its property was tax-free. A few individuals stood out boldly on the list, like John Day Jackson, the owner and publisher of New Haven's two newspapers.

Or consider family income. In 1949, the average (median) family income in New Haven was about \$2,700 a year. One family out of forty had an income of \$10,000 or more; over one family out of five had an income of less than \$1,000. In the Thirtieth Ward, which had the highest average family income, one family out of four had an income of \$7,000 or more; in the Fifth, the poorest, over half the families had incomes of less than \$2,000 a year. (Technically, the First Ward was even poorer than the Fifth for half the families there had incomes of less than \$700 a year, but three-quarters of the residents of the First were students at Yale.)

The average adult in New Haven had completed the ninth grade, but in the Tenth Ward half the adults had never gone beyond elementary school. About one out of six adults in the city had gone to college. The extremes were represented by the Thirty-first Ward, where nearly half had attended college, and the Twenty-seventh, where the proportion was only one out of thirty.⁴

4. Assessments are from the city records. The average ratio of assessed value to actual prices on property sold in 1957 was 49.2, according to the New Haven Taxpayers Research Council, "Assessment of Real Estate," *Council Comment*, No.

Thus one is forced back once more to the initial question. Given the existence of inequalities like these, who actually governs in a democracy?

Since the question is not new, one may wonder whether we do not, after all, pretty well know the answer by now. Do we not at least know what answer must be given for the present-day political system of the United States? Unfortunately no. Students of politics have provided a number of conflicting explanations for the way in which democracies can be expected to operate in the midst of inequalities in political resources. Some answers are a good deal more optimistic than others. For example, it is sometimes said that political parties provide competition for public office and thereby guarantee a relatively high degree of popular control. By appealing to the voters, parties organize the unorganized, give power to the powerless, present voters with alternative candidates and programs, and insure that during campaigns they have an opportunity to learn about the merits of these alternatives. Furthermore, after the election is over, the victorious party, which now represents the preferences of a majority of voters, takes over the task of governing. The voter, therefore, does not need to participate actively in government; it is enough for him to participate in elections by the simple act of voting. By his vote he registers a preference for the general direction in which government policy should move; he cannot and does not need to choose particular policies. One answer to the question, "Who governs?" is then that competing political parties govern, but they do so with the consent of voters secured by competitive elections.

However, no sooner had observers begun to discover the extraordinary importance of political parties in the operation of democratic political systems than others promptly reduced the political party to little more than a collection of "interest groups," or sets of individuals with some values, purposes, and demands in common. If the parties were the political molecules, the interest groups were the atoms. And everything could be explained simply by studying the atoms. Neither people nor parties but interest groups, it was said, are the true units of the political system. An individual, it was argued, is politically rather helpless, but a group unites the resources of individuals into an effective force. Thus some theorists would answer our question by replying that interest groups govern; most of the actions of government can be explained, they would say, simply as the result of struggles among groups of individuals with differing interests and varying resources of influence.

The first explanation was developed by English and American writers, the second almost entirely by Americans. A third theory, much more

36 (Mar. 9, 1959). Data on incomes and education are from a special tabulation by wards of the data in *U.S. Census, Characteristics of the Population, 1950*. Income data are estimates by the Census Bureau from a 20% sample.

pessimistic than the other two, was almost exclusively European in origin, though it subsequently achieved a considerable vogue in the United States. This explanation, which has both a "Left" and a "Right" interpretation, asserts that beneath the façade of democratic politics a social and economic elite will usually be found actually running things. Robert and Helen Lynd used this explanation in their famous two books on "Middletown" (Muncie, Indiana), and many studies since then have also adopted it, most notably Floyd Hunter in his analysis of the "power structure" of Atlanta.⁵ Because it fits nicely with the very factors that give rise to our question, the view that a social and economic elite controls government is highly persuasive. Concentration of power in the hands of an elite is a necessary consequence, in this view, of the enormous inequalities in the distribution of resources of influence—property, income, social status, knowledge, publicity, focal position, and all the rest.

One difficulty with all of these explanations was that they left very little room for the politician. He was usually regarded merely as an agent—of majority will, the political parties, interest groups, or the elite. He had no independent influence. But an older view that could be traced back to Machiavelli's famous work, *The Prince*, stressed the enormous political potential of the cunning, resourceful, masterful leader. In this view, majorities, parties, interest groups, elites, even political systems are all to some extent pliable; a leader who knows how to use his resources to the maximum is not so much the agent of others as others are his agents. Although a gifted political entrepreneur might not exist in every political system, wherever he appeared he would make himself felt.

Still another view commingled elements of all the rest. This explanation was set out by Tocqueville as a possible course of degeneration in all democratic orders, restated by the Spanish philosopher, Ortega y Gasset, in his highly influential book, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930), and proposed by a number of European intellectuals, after the destruction of the German Republic by Nazism, as an explanation for the origins of modern dictatorships. Although it is a theory proposed mainly by Europeans about European conditions, it is so plausible an alternative that we cannot afford to ignore it. Essentially, this theory (which has many variants) argues that under certain conditions of development (chiefly industrialization and urbanization) older, stratified, class-based social structures are weakened or destroyed; and in their place arises a

5. Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1929) and *Middletown in Transition* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1937). Floyd Hunter, *Community Power Structure* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1953) and *Top Leadership, U.S.A.* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1959).

mass of individuals with no secure place in the social system, rootless, aimless, lacking strong social ties, ready and indeed eager to attach themselves to any political entrepreneur who will cater to their tastes and desires. Led by unscrupulous and exploitative leaders, these rootless masses have the capacity to destroy whatever stands in their way without the ability to replace it with a stable alternative. Consequently the greater their influence on politics, the more helpless they become; the more they destroy, the more they depend upon strong leaders to create some kind of social, economic, and political organization to replace the old. If we ask, "Who governs?" the answer is not the mass nor its leaders but both together; the leaders cater to mass tastes and in return use the strength provided by the loyalty and obedience of the masses to weaken and perhaps even to annihilate all opposition to their rule.

A superficial familiarity with New Haven (or for that matter with almost any modern American city) would permit one to argue persuasively that each of these theories really explains the inner workings of the city's political life. However, a careful consideration of the points at which the theories diverge suggests that the broad question, "Who governs?" might be profitably subdivided into a number of more specific questions. These questions, listed below, have guided the study of New Haven recorded in this book:

Are inequalities in resources of influence "cumulative" or "noncumulative?" That is, are people who are better off in one resource also better off in others? In other words, does the way in which political resources are distributed encourage oligarchy or pluralism?

How are important political decisions actually made?

What kinds of people have the greatest influence on decisions? Are different kinds of decisions all made by the same people? From what strata of the community are the most influential people, the leaders, drawn?

Do leaders tend to cohere in their policies and form a sort of ruling group, or do they tend to divide, conflict, and bargain? Is the pattern of leadership, in short, oligarchical or pluralistic?

What is the relative importance of the most widely distributed political resource—the right to vote? Do leaders respond generally to the interests of the few citizens with the greatest wealth and highest status—or do they respond to the many with the largest number of votes? To what extent do various citizens *use* their political resources? Are there important differences that in turn result in differences in influence?

Are the patterns of influence durable or changing? For example, was democracy stronger in New Haven when Tocqueville contemplated the American scene? And in more recent years, as New Haven has grappled

with a gigantic program of urban reconstruction, what has happened to popular control and to patterns of leadership? In general, what are the sources of change and stability in the political system?

Finally, how important is the nearly universal adherence to the "American Creed" of democracy and equality? Is the operation of the political system affected in any way by what ordinary citizens believe or profess to believe about democracy? If so, how?

The answers to these questions which seem best to fit the facts of New Haven will gradually unfold in the chapters that follow. I warn the reader, however, that I shall not attempt to dispose of all these questions in any one place. Each chapter tells only a part of the story; thus I shall not deal directly with the last pair of questions until the final chapter. Since each chapter builds upon those that precede it, the analysis in the final chapters presupposes knowledge of all that has gone before.

7. Overview: From Cumulative to Dispersed Inequalities

In the United States as a whole, an industrial society followed an agrarian society. In New Haven, an industrial society followed a hierarchical urban society dominated by a patrician oligarchy. In the agrarian society, political resources were dispersed in an approximation to equality such as the civilized world had never before seen. In the old oligarchy of New Haven, political resources were concentrated in the familiar pattern of hierarchical societies. Against the background of an agrarian society, the institutions and processes of industrial society produced a concentration of political resources. Against the background of oligarchy in New Haven, the institutions and processes of industrial society produced a dispersion of political resources.

But this dispersion did not recapture the equalitarian distribution of political resources that existed in agrarian America. Industrial society dispersed, it did not eradicate political inequality.

In the political system of the patrician oligarchy, political resources were marked by a cumulative inequality: when one individual was much better off than another in one resource, such as wealth, he was usually better off in almost every other resource—social standing, legitimacy, control over religious and educational institutions, knowledge, office. In the political system of today, inequalities in political resources remain, but they tend to be *noncumulative*. The political system of New Haven, then, is one of *dispersed inequalities*.

The patrician-Congregationalist-Federalist elite that ruled New Haven prior to 1840 was a tiny group that combined the highest social standing, education, and wealth with key positions in religion, the economy, and public life. The entrepreneurs drove a wedge into this unified elite; social standing and education remained with the patricians, but wealth and key positions in corporate and public life went to the new men of industry. With the rise of the ex-plebes there occurred a further fragmentation of political resources. Rising out of the newly created urban proletariat, of immigrant backgrounds and modest social standing, the ex-plebes had one political resource of extraordinary importance in a competitive political system: they were popular with the voters. Popularity gave them office,

and office gave them other political resources, such as legality and city jobs. Office, legality, and jobs gave the ex-plebes influence over government decisions.

Within a century a political system dominated by one cohesive set of leaders had given way to a system dominated by many different sets of leaders, each having access to a different combination of political resources. It was, in short, a pluralist system. If the pluralist system was very far from being an oligarchy, it was also a long way from achieving the goal of political equality advocated by the philosophers of democracy and incorporated into the creed of democracy and equality practically every American professes to uphold.

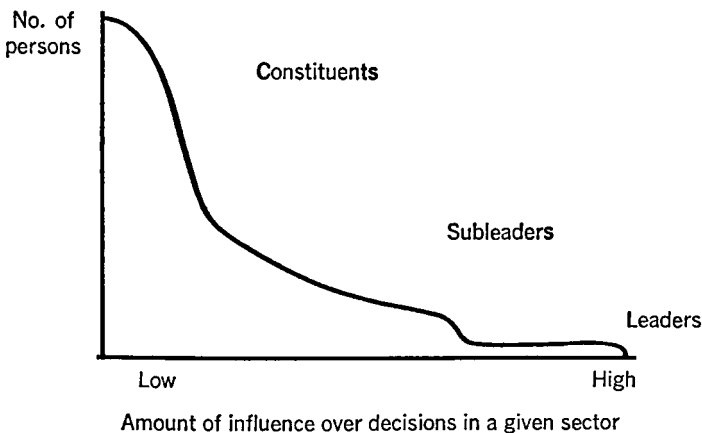
An elite no longer rules New Haven. But in the strict democratic sense, the disappearance of elite rule has not led to the emergence of rule by the people. Who, then, rules in a pluralist democracy?

12. Overview: Direct Versus Indirect Influence

The six hypotheses set out at the end of Chapter 8 seem to be consistent with the processes for making decisions in New Haven, at least in the three issue-areas examined in the preceding three chapters. If one analyzes the way in which influence in these three issue-areas is distributed among citizens of New Haven, one finds that only a small number of persons have much *direct* influence, in the sense that they successfully initiate or veto proposals for policies. These persons, the leaders, have subleaders and followers. Because of widespread belief in the democratic creed, however, overt relationships of influence are frequently accompanied by democratic ceremonials, which, though ceremonial, are not devoid of consequences for the distribution of influence. The choices made by constituents in critical elections, such as those in New Haven in 1945 and 1955, do have great *indirect* influence on the decisions of leaders, for results of elections are frequently interpreted by leaders as indicating a preference for or acquiescence in certain lines of policy.

Assuming one could measure the amount of influence each adult in New Haven exerts over decisions in a given issue-area, the distribution of *direct* influence would look something like Figure 12.1. Many con-

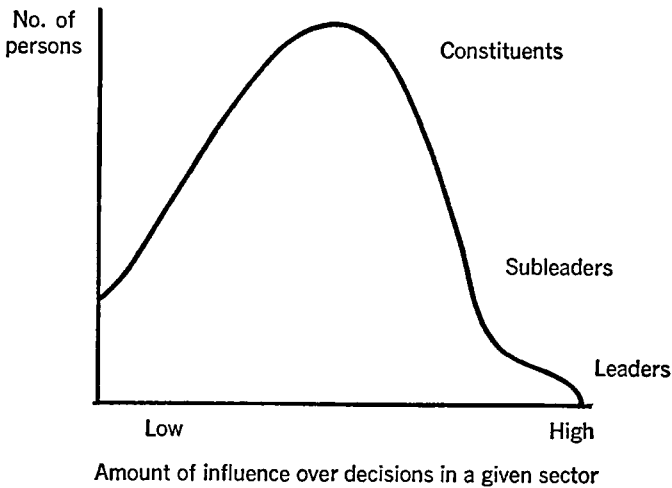
FIGURE 12.1. A schematic diagram of the distribution of direct influence on decisions



stituents have no direct influence at all; most people have very little. Subleaders of course have much more; the influence of the most powerful subleaders merges imperceptibly into that of leaders. Only a tiny group, the leaders, exerts great influence.

If one were to illustrate *indirect* influence, the distribution would look something like Figure 12.2. A few citizens who are nonvoters, and who for

FIGURE 12.2. A schematic diagram of the distribution of indirect influence on decisions



some reason have no influential contact with voters, have no indirect influence. Most citizens, however, possess a moderate degree of indirect influence, for elected leaders keep the real or imagined preferences of constituents constantly in mind in deciding what policies to adopt or reject. Subleaders have greater indirect influence than most other citizens, since leaders ordinarily are concerned more about the response of an individual subleader than an individual citizen. Finally, leaders exert a great amount of indirect influence on one another, for each is guided to some extent by what he believes is acceptable to some or all of the other leaders.

Unfortunately, one cannot measure influence so precisely; although the diagrams are convenient illustrations, they leave us with ambiguities in the relations of leaders and constituents which are extremely difficult and probably impossible to resolve satisfactorily at present by appeal to direct evidence. These ambiguities are created by the fact that leaders do not merely *respond* to the preferences of constituents; leaders also *shape* preferences.

Suppose the leaders in every issue-area are substantially identical

and agree on the policies they want. One may even suppose that although not identical they are all drawn from a single homogeneous stratum of the community and therefore possess identical or complementary objectives—which is rather as it must have been in the days of the patrician oligarchy. The capacity of leaders to shape the preferences of citizens would surely be relatively high in either case. Ordinary citizens would depend on a single, unified body of leaders for information and cues about policies; they would have relatively little opportunity to pick up information about other alternatives. Moreover, if leaders in all issue-areas were substantially alike and agreed on objectives, they could combine their political resources to induce citizens to support their policies through many different techniques of coercion and persuasion. Leaders could, and presumably would, *aggregate their resources* to achieve common objectives.

Suppose, on the other hand, that leaders differ from area to area and disagree among themselves, and that because of their disagreements they actively seek for support from constituents. Then the capacity of leaders to shape the preferences of citizens would—other things remaining the same—be lower. Citizens would have alternative sources of information, and the techniques of coercion and persuasion employed by one group of leaders could be countered to some extent by other leaders.

Clearly, then, in order to answer the question, “Who rules in New Haven?” we need to know more than the *distribution* of influence. We need also to know something about *patterns* of influence. Four questions are particularly relevant.

First, from what social strata are leaders and subleaders in different issue-areas drawn?

Second, to what extent are they drawn from the same strata?

Third, to what extent do leaders and subleaders in the same or different issue-areas agree on objectives?

Fourth, to the extent that they disagree, how do leaders and subleaders in different issue-areas resolve disagreements?

15. Five Patterns of Leadership

The number of theoretically possible patterns of integration is almost infinite. However, because of their familiarity and generality, five possibilities were considered in our study of New Haven. These were:

1. Covert integration by Economic Notables.
2. An executive-centered "grand coalition of coalitions."
3. A coalition of chieftains.
4. Independent sovereignties with spheres of influence.
5. Rival sovereignties fighting it out.

The first of these, covert integration by the Economic Notables, is a common answer suggested by studies of a number of other cities. In this pattern the top leaders consist of a unified group of private citizens who arrive at agreements about policies by covert negotiations and discussions carried on in the privacy of their clubs, homes, business firms, and other private meeting places. Leaders gain their influence from their wealth, high social standing, and economic dominance. Usually the leaders are wealthy executives in important business firms; if this pattern fitted New Haven, presumably the top officers of Yale would be included because the university is one of the largest property owners and employers in the city.

A revealing aspect of this hypothesis is its insistence on the essentially clandestine or covert exercise of influence by the "real" leaders. Why? Because in most cities today the overt, public incumbents in the highest official positions—the mayors and other elected politicians, city officials, party chairmen, and so on—are rarely drawn from the ranks of wealth, social standing, and corporate office. By contrast, the patricians of New Haven were an *overt* political elite. They made no bones about their dominance. They not only openly occupied key positions in the religious, educational, and economic institutions of New Haven, but they also held a visible monopoly of all the important public offices. This, as we have seen, is indisputably not so today. If individuals of wealth, status, and corporate position dominate politics, evidently they *must* do so covertly.

The hypothesis of covert control by the Economic Notables is both

widely popular and strongly supported by many scholarly studies, from the Lynds' monumental examination of Muncie, Indiana in the twenties and thirties to Floyd Hunter's more recent analysis of the "power structure" of Atlanta.¹ Indeed the term "power structure" has so much passed into the vocabulary of the informed man that it has become a current bit of jargon among educated inside-dopesters. Although careful analysis has shown that the conclusions about influence contained in the academic studies often rest upon dubious evidence and even that some of the data found in the works themselves actually run counter to the conclusions,² some communities do seem to have conformed to this pattern in the past and some may today. Certainly some citizens of New Haven believe firmly in the existence of a covert elite and offer plausible evidence to support their view.

I believe the evidence advanced in previous chapters is sufficient to warrant the rejection of the hypothesis that this pattern applies to New Haven. In every city where Economic Notables are alleged to rule covertly, it is important to note, evidently they do so by means sufficiently open to permit scholars and newspapermen to penetrate the veil; indeed, an inspection of the information contained in descriptions of these cities indicates that the job of probing into the clandestine structure of power has presented few barriers to the assiduous researcher. It is all the more improbable, then, that a secret cabal of Notables dominates the public life of New Haven through means so clandestine that not one of the fifty prominent citizens interviewed in the course of this study—citizens who had participated extensively in various decisions—hinted at the existence of such a cabal; so clandestine, indeed, that no clues turned up in several years of investigation led to the door of such a group.

To abandon the hypothesis of covert integration by Economic Notables does not mean that the Economic Notables in New Haven are without influence on certain important decisions. In Chapter 6 I have tried to describe the scope and limits of their influence; in chapters to follow I shall return to certain other aspects of their influence, particularly to the problem of explaining the paradox that a stratum of the community with seemingly superior economic and social resources has only limited direct influence on the decisions of local government. I shall take up this matter in Book V, where I try to account for the distribution and patterns of influence that exist in New Haven. Meanwhile, what the evidence seems to establish rather conclusively is this: if one wants to find out how

1. Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown and Middletown in Transition*; Hunter, *Community Power Structure and Top Leadership, U.S.A.*

2. For a detailed analysis of this point, see the forthcoming companion volume by Nelson W. Polsby, *Community Power and Political Theory*.

policies of different leaders are coordinated in New Haven, one must consider some pattern other than covert integration by Economic Notables.

A second pattern is envisioned in an alternative hypothesis: that today the top leaders are more likely to comprise a coalition of public officials and private individuals who reflect the interests and concerns of different segments of the community. In this view, a coalition is generally formed and the policies of the coalition are coordinated largely by elected leaders who draw on special skills and resources of influence that leaders without public office are not likely to have. This pattern of integration is usually associated with vigorous, even charismatic elected chief executives; presumably it was characteristic of the presidencies of FDR and Truman.³

In its implications the hypothesis of an executive-centered coalition is radically different from the first possible pattern. Where covert domination by Economic Notables reflects relatively stable social and economic factors, the executive-centered coalition may be more ephemeral; the coalition may fluctuate greatly in strength and even dissolve altogether when the coalition's leaders can no longer reconcile their strategies and goals. Moreover, in the pattern of covert domination, influence derived from public office and popularity with the electorate is completely subordinate to influence derived from wealth, social standing, and corporate position; in the executive-centered coalition, the prerogatives of public office, legality, legitimacy, and electoral followings are independent sources of influence with a weight of their own. Finally, the hypothesis of a covert elite logically leads to a certain pessimism about popular government. If government officials and elected politicians are merely handmaidens of the upper classes, one cannot expect much in the way of peaceful reform via politics. Change must come about either through the gradual action of outside factors, like changes in industrial organization or technique, or else through a revolutionary seizure and transformation of the state by leaders of social segments who for some reason cannot win elections and attain public office. The hypothesis of integration by an executive-centered coalition, by contrast, allows for the possibility that reformist or radical coalitions (as well as conservative ones) may, by peacefully winning elections, obtain control of the powers of government and introduce durable changes in the distribution of access to influence, wealth, education, and social standing.

The third pattern is seen as integration of policies in different sectors by a coalition of chieftains. Something like it fits the various party and

3. See Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1959), Part VIII; James M. Burns, *Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1956); Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power* (New York, John Wiley, 1960).

nonparty coalitions that control policy-making in Congress and particularly in the Senate.⁴ The difference between the second pattern and this one is of course only one of degree; in marginal cases it would be impossible to say whether a particular pattern of integration should be called executive-centered or a coalition of chieftains.

A coalition of chieftains, like the executive-centered coalition, is consistent with the hypothesis that nowadays top leaders are likely to be public officials and private individuals who reflect the varying and even conflicting interests and concerns of different segments of the community. In the executive-centered coalition, integration of policy is achieved largely by means of the skills and resources of an elected leader; in a coalition of chieftains, integration takes place mainly by negotiations among the chieftains that produce exchanges of information and eventually in agreement. The executive-centered pattern contains a sizable degree of hierarchy in the distribution of influence among the leaders. The chief executive is at the center of a "grand coalition of coalitions"; in the extreme case he is the only leader with great influence in *all* the allied coalitions, perhaps the only leader who even *participates* in all of them. Moreover, his special resources mean that every other leader in the grand coalition is more dependent on the executive for perpetuation of his influence than the executive is dependent on him. In a coalition of chieftains, on the other hand, if hierarchy appears, it is weak and may rest almost exclusively on a central position in the network of communications occupied by a particular leader or set of leaders. Thus, although a few chiefs may be somewhat more influential than others, they are all highly dependent on one another for the successful attainment of their policies. There is some specialization of influence by issue-areas; a chieftain in one area may be deferred to on matters lying in his domain, and he in turn defers to other chieftains in matters lying in theirs. But the chiefs actively coordinate their policies through extensive interchange of information and reciprocal favors. An awareness that their most important policy goals do not conflict and a predisposition for similar strategies provide a basis for agreement on strategies.

Since a coalition of chieftains depends almost entirely on likemindedness, reinforced by the arts of negotiation and compromise, the life of a coalition may be short or long depending on the state of agreement and the negotiating capacities of the chiefs. A coalition may reflect persistent

4. Recent observers describe Congress in terms that would fit the pattern here, although each offers highly important differences of emphasis and interpretation. Cf. David B. Truman, *The Congressional Party* (New York, John Wiley, 1959), Ch. 4; William S. White, *Citadel, The Story of the U.S. Senate* (New York, Harper, 1956), Chs. 8 and 14; Roland Young, *The American Congress* (New York, Harper, 1958), Ch. 3.

goals held among durable social and economic segments or the ephemeral goals of social elements in flux.

With some reservations as to historical accuracy, the fourth and fifth patterns might be regarded as analogous to a system of independent city-states or petty sovereignties. This is the pattern of congressional action dominated by virtually autonomous committees that was described by Woodrow Wilson in his classic *Congressional Government*. It is approached in some ways by what two recent observers find to be the pattern of decision-making in New York City.⁵ In this system of petty sovereignties each issue-area is controlled by a different set of top leaders whose goals and strategies are adapted to the particular segments of the community that happen to be interested in that specific area. As long as the policies of the various petty sovereignties do not conflict with one another, the sovereigns go about their business without much communication or negotiation. When policies do conflict, the issue has to be settled by fighting it out; but since the sovereigns live within a common system of legal norms, constitutional practices, and political habits, "fighting it out" means an appeal to whatever processes are prescribed, whether voting in a legislative or administrative body, decision by judges, executive approval, or elections. The practice of fighting it out increases the likelihood of appeals to the populace for support, and hence the extent to which leaders shape their policies to what they think are the predominant preferences of the populace. However, since fighting it out is mutually costly and the results are highly uncertain, strong spheres of influence may develop with a relatively clear understanding as to the limits of each sphere; in this case, fighting it out is avoided, appeals to the populace are less likely, and policies are shaped more to meet the goals of leaders, subleaders, and special followings.

Thus the way in which petty sovereignties integrate their policies tends to assume one of two patterns, depending on the extent to which the policies of the one sovereign are consistent with those of the other. If the petty sovereigns perceive their policies to be strictly inconsistent, in the sense that a gain for one means an equivalent loss to the other, then conflict is unavoidable and fighting it out is likely to be the method of settlement. This is the case, for example, if the sovereignties are two highly competitive parties, both intent on winning office for their candidates.

However, if the petty sovereigns perceive their policies to be consistent or even complementary, in the sense that a gain for one entails no loss for the other and may even produce a benefit, then fighting it out is likely to be avoided. Possibility of conflict is minimized by mutually accepted

5. Herbert Kaufman and Wallace Sayre, *Governing New York City, Politics in the Metropolis* (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1960), Ch. 19.

spheres of influence, combined with a strong presumption that the status quo must be adhered to; it is also understood that if disagreements arise they are to be resolved by implicit, or occasionally explicit, bargaining among the petty sovereigns without an appeal to the populace or other external authorities.

These five patterns of coordination seemed to us most likely to cover the range of possibilities in New Haven, though the likelihood of finding still other patterns could not be excluded a priori. During our investigation of New Haven two possible variations on the five patterns became obvious. First, the prevailing pattern might vary with different combinations of issue-areas. For example, the pattern of integration applying to nominations and elections might not be the same as the pattern applying to education and redevelopment. Second, patterns of integration might vary over time. The variations might be long-run changes, such as the decline of the patrician oligarchy; they might be short-run changes; conceivably, one might even encounter more or less regular fluctuations in integrative patterns associated with, say, periodic elections.

Except for the first pattern (covert integration by Economic Notables), which it now seems safe to reject, all of these possibilities appear to be entirely consistent with the evidence so far. In the chapters that follow I shall demonstrate, from an examination of particular decisions, that all of the remaining four patterns have actually existed in New Haven in recent years. Before 1953 there existed a pattern of independent sovereignties with spheres of influence, which I shall call Pattern A. This gave way briefly to a coalition of chieftains and then, under Mayor Lee, to an executive-centered "grand coalition of coalitions," which I shall call Pattern B. Standing quite apart, the pattern of integration with respect to the political parties has been that of rival sovereignties fighting it out, which I shall call Pattern C.