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**Unionized public employees' attitudes in the United States and  
the possibility of developing a labor party**

**Bosworth, Stefan, Ph.D.**

**City University of New York, 1987**

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UNIONIZED PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ATTITUDES  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE  
POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A LABOR PARTY

by

STEFAN BOSWORTH

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in  
Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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## Abstract

Graphs with Deborah Greene

by

Stefan Bosworth

Advisor: Professor Bogden Denitch

This dissertation asks whether the American trade union movement is going to continue with the traditional union politics of the last three quarters-of a century which has been to punish it's enemies and to reward it's friends or whether it will follow a new political direction and form a labor party. The research focuses on public employees unions because they have been the most organizationally active in the last thirty years. It is believed by the researcher that any change in the political direction of the trade union movement will take place in growth areas of the trade union movement.

The research is divided into two sections: a historical section and a field research project. The historical section gives a brief history of the development of the American trade union movement with particular attention paid to the development and growth of public employees unions. This historical section of the research also focuses on the relationship of the radical movement to the trade union movement.

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The field research project focuses on public employees in two distinct areas of the country: New Orleans and New York. Since the research was done in only two areas of the country and only among a small number of workers, approximately 135 respondents, this project must be considered a pilot project.

Two distinct regions of the country were chosen on the belief that if similar responses were obtained from two different regions of the country, those responses would be significant. In fact, in many cases the responses of the two groups of workers were quite similar. In categories that ranged from the view of the future to support for a labor party, responses were similar.

The results of the survey were surprising in a number of ways. One result that was most surprising was that workers in both regions of the country felt quite optimistic about the future. This optimism was a particularly surprising in New Orleans, considering that workers had not received a pay raise in years and that many of the public employees interviewed were facing layoffs. While working conditions and salary were better in New York than they were in New Orleans, layoffs and wage freezes had occurred in the immediate memory of most of the workers who were interviewed. Yet, in spite of this condition, most of the workers had a positive view of the future.

while the results on view of the future were surprising they represented one of the many areas in which responses were similar in both regions.

Another area of similarity of responses was the area of union satisfaction. In both regions of the country, the category of satisfaction along with workers' participation in the union were very low. Minority workers were more likely to be dissatisfied than white workers and women were more dissatisfied than men, but all groups showed high levels of dissatisfaction. Again, participation levels were low among all subgroups.

In the category of support for the existing political parties, support was low to moderate among all groups except hispanic workers in New York. The results were expected except for the responses of hispanic workers in New York.

In the category of support for a labor party, workers in both regions showed relatively low levels of support for the idea of a labor party. A profile of the type of worker most likely to support a labor party was developed. Such a worker was likely to be a member of a minority group and a female worker. Support for a labor party among this group was only moderate.

The results of the research indicates important findings for at least the public employees interviewed. The respondents were fairly optimistic about the future,

dissatisfied with their unions, disenchanted with the two major political parties and indicated that there was some support for a labor party.

The results do not come from a large enough sample to indicate whether these feelings are widespread or confined to these two groups of workers. It remains unknown whether the passive support that did exist for a labor party could be turned into active support. There is no indication from the research of a major shift in the political direction among public employees unions, or trade unions in general, away from the traditional trade union politics of supporting one of the two major political parties towards the idea of developing and supporting a labor party.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine what prospects the American trade union movement spearheaded by public employees unions has in developing a labor party before the end of the century.

In order to examine this question, I must first ask: is the uniqueness of the development of the American political system such that a labor party could not develop in the United States? or is America more like other industrialized countries than commonly supposed? Perhaps the question should be phrased in another way. Is American exceptionalism a valid theory in today's context to explain and project the continued lack of development of a third party with labor at its forefront? Does the fact that there is no labor party in the United States today mean that there will not be one in the near future?

### Description of Research

The research consists of two distinct sections. The first is a discussion of the historical development of the American working class with an emphasis on the development of public employees' unions. The historical aspect of the research traces the political development

of the labor movement from the end of the Civil War to the present. This history is presented as background in order that the present political situation can be better understood.

The second and major part of the work is a study of two groups of public employees, one in New Orleans and the other in New York City. The study used the survey research method. Questionnaires were distributed to rank and file members of the two groups of unionized public employees who were used in the study and interviews were conducted with local leaders wherever possible.

In New Orleans, all respondents were members of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees Union (AFSCME) and in New York, most respondents were members of the same union. However, some were members of the Communications Workers of America and some were members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Questions used were designed to give some indication of both the present and the future political orientation of respondents.

#### Background of Interest in This Subject

I grew up in a home where the word union was almost a sacred word. Both my parents were union organizers throughout their lives. I was brought up to believe that unions were the major forces that changed society for the better.

In the 1960's. I found that the unions did not always play such a progressive role in society. Unions could also play a very conservative role or at least it appeared so in the 60's. I wanted to develop a better understanding of the politically happenings in the trade union movement. Was the trade union movement really part of the establishment or was this a temporary situation that could change overnight? Did the leadership's points of view really reflect those of the rank and file or not? Would unions once again become progressive forces in the United States or was their progressive role over for good?

I decided to study two United Automobile Workers Unions (U.A.W.) and used them as the research for my master's thesis. The two locals that I chose was a Ford plant in Milpitas, California which was local 560 and a General Motors plant in Van Nuys, California which was local 645.

The project was a joint collaboration with my colleague Terrence McNeill. In our research, we compared the responses of rank and file workers with union leaders. The research raised the question of whether union workers were more militant than their leaders or vice versa. We were interested in a wide range of issues from political issues to shop issues. We were also interested in regional differences between northern

California and southern California. Respondents were randomly selected and we also employed trained researchers to conduct the interviews.

The study raised as many questions as it answered them. The rank and file of both locals were clearly more militant than the leadership on almost all issues (McNeill, Bosworth, 1970).

Since the research was completed, I have personally been involved in a number of unions. These unions included The American Federation of Teachers, Service Employees Unions and the American Federation of State County And Municipal Employees Union. These recent experiences have created a number of additional questions as to where the trade union movement is heading politically. In particular, I have become increasingly interested in the political development of the public employees unions.

#### Purpose of the History Chapter

This project will review the development of the American trade union movement. My intent is not to write a history book of that development but to better understand the failure of the trade union movement to develop an independent labor party or social Democratic Party. The development of the American working class will also be questioned as to whether it was really a unique development.

There are certain historic periods that will be focused on as it is my belief that these periods are crucial in the development of the trade union movement in the United States and particularly, to the political development of the American trade union movement. The period from the 1870's to 1886 and the development of the Knights of Labor will be examined first, followed by the development of the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.). Also, the period from 1900 to 1920 was very important because of the rise and fall of both the Socialist Party and of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). A next focus will be on the development of the Congress of Industrial Organization (C.I.O.) and the relationship of the Communist Party to the new industrial union. Particular attention will be paid to the lack of independent political development during this period of massive trade union growth.

The great strike wave that followed World War II and the ouster of radicals and particularly, the communists from the trade union movement, will be the next focus. Then, the development and massive growth of public employees unions, even while the rest of the trade union movement began to decline, will be examined. An attempt to try to show some of the connections between the growth of public employees unions and the growth of the civil rights movement will be made. Also, the development of

the student movement and the total separation that movement had from the trade union movement will be discussed, along with the most militant and rapid-growing section, the public employees. Finally, the decline of the student movement and the re-emergence of the traditional liberal coalition will be discussed.

The question as to why a labor party failed to develop in the United States and what might be different about the present historic epic that could lead to the development of a labor party will be raised. Of particular interest is the role that unionized public employees might play in such a development.

It is my belief that the historic periods focused on were the most likely periods for a labor party to form in the United States. It is important to understand why a labor party was unable to develop during such periods.

### Survey

The major part of this study consists of a field work project using the survey research method. The questionnaire will have a series of questions pertaining to union satisfaction, job satisfaction and political orientation. It is hoped that these questions will give some indication of the likelihood of a labor party developing in the United States before the turn of this century. Union workers were interviewed because I believe that there is strong historical evidence that

union workers usually form the nucleus of a labor party. This data was certainly true in Canada (Lipset, 1986). I have chosen to interview public employees because public employees unions have been the most vibrant section of the trade union movement since World War II. It is my belief that it will be in the areas of union expansion that any nucleus for a labor party will develop.

The workers I used for the study were largely members of the AFSCME although some members of other public employees unions were also surveyed. I chose to survey public employees in New York City and in New Orleans. When possible, I surveyed both rank and file and local leadership. The two areas were chosen the two areas because they were geographically, ethnically and economically diverse.

In both areas the workers surveyed had widely diverse jobs and often there was a large spread in income and education as well. Both areas contain both blue collar and white collar workers among their public work force and among the union workers I interviewed.

#### Justification

An understanding of the past history of the American working class is vitally important to this dissertation. This understanding is necessary if we are to have any understanding of the present political situation in the trade union movement or make any projections about the future.

Why does this research need to be done at all? Hasn't there been enough historical work done on the American working class? Hasn't the American working class been sufficiently surveyed? Haven't the very questions that are being raised already been answered? I think not. I believe that we live in a new historic period in which these questions remain largely unanswered. I believe the trade union movement is under attack and may resort to new ways of defending itself. I further believe that much of the American promise is no longer there for today's workers, neither a better standard of living, a better future for a worker's children nor job security. These underpinnings of the American way of life have eroded substantially during the 1970's and 1980's (Kerr, Roscow, 1979).

It is also my belief that often the questions that workers are asked in survey projects are the wrong questions. Also, the interviewers themselves, by their age and appearance, often bias the answers of the respondents.

It is my hope that the research will produce data that will give a better understanding of the current political development of the public employees union movement. I do not expect to have complete answers to these questions but at the end of the research, I hope to have a better indication of what trade unions are likely

to do politically and most particularly, what public employees union are likely to do. I also hope that this research will lead to further research in the future by myself and others that will lead to a better understanding of the American trade union movement of the late 1980's.

Is the tie to the two party system permanent or is it eroding? This question must be both raised and answered anew. I do not believe that the old axioms hold true. I can not even say with certainty that a break with the two major parties will lead to the development of a third political party. Again, the research is intended to give us some indication of whether such a break will lead to the development of a new political party. Most researchers believe that a third party has little chance of success in the United States (Kerr, Roscow, 1979), is this still true ?

Even if the theory of American exceptionalism was valid in the past, is it still valid in the context of American society today? Have the dramatic political economic and social changes that have taken place in America in the last thirty years removed the pillars that have supported American exceptionalism?

It is clear from reviewing the material that has been written on the American trade union movement recently, that there is really not much material at all. There is

a lack of information on the political attitudes of the American union worker of the mid and late 1980's. There is a definite need for new research in the field. What research that has been done concerns dissident workers in unions or worker dissatisfaction on the job. The research, even in this area, is not extensive.

This lack of information reflects the failure of the political left and the political mainstream who, in recent years, have tended to either ignore the American trade union movement or write about it in stereotypic terms. It seems that many researchers in the field believe that enough research has been done about the political attitudes of the American trade union member already. Yet, because of this lack of further research, we know very little about the political attitudes of the American trade union member. This reason is why new research must be undertaken. It is my hope that this research project will begin to fill the gaps in knowledge on the political attitudes of the American trade union movement, particularly public employees, and on the future development of those attitudes. We need to know more about what worker discontent is likely to turn into. We need to know whether job dissatisfaction is growing or not and what is the political significances of such growth if it does exist? Can we expect economic deterioration to turn into independent political activity?

I do not believe that by interviewing a little more than a hundred public employees, I will have the answers to these questions. I view my research as a pilot project that will stimulate further research. As a pilot project, it will give some indication where that research should be directed.

#### Description of the Survey

I chose to survey public employees in two regions of the country: New Orleans and New York City. All of the questionnaires were distributed to members of AFSCME in New Orleans and most of the questionnaires were mailed to members of AFSCME in New York City. Some questionnaires in the New York section of the survey were distributed to public employees members of the communications workers union.

The New Orleans district council of AFSCME 1737 is small. It has less than 6000 members in all of southern Louisiana, whereas district councils 37 in New York City has over 125,000 members (McNeill, Bosworth, 1970). A sample of workers were taken in both cities. The samples were taken, using two different methods in the two regions. Workers were interviewed before union meetings in New Orleans and workers were selected from a mailing list and were mailed the surveys in New York City.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on local 560 of the United Auto Workers. This pre-test was done to eliminate questions that did not produce clear responses. Most questions used were either multiple choice or required a yes or no response. This method reduced the chance for misinterpretation.

### Conclusion

The American worker of today is as much an invisible man or woman as the black man or woman of twenty years ago. The American worker either is ignored or is presented as an Archie Bunker character except when he or she goes on strike. Yet, the unionized working class alone has 17.4 million members, a fifth of the work force is thus unionized (Galenson, Walter, 1986). We cannot afford to ignore a group so large nor can we afford to view such a group through stereotypes.

What current literature that exists is on the unionized worker is limited often to what a worker will do at the plant or what he or she thinks about his or her union. The literature on the public employees unions is no more extensive than the literature on industrial or craft unions. Although public employees unions have grown enormously in the last 35 years only limited research has been done on the political attitudes of public employees. We must know more in this crucial period.

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It is necessary for us to have a better understanding of what the trade union movement is likely to do politically. With this in mind, I have decided to look at public employees, the most vibrant force in the trade union movement. While this research is only a pilot research project, it is my hope that it will lead to more extensive research in the field.

## Chapter 2

### The Political Development of the American Trade

#### Union Movement

While a number of craft trade unions developed as early as the beginning of the 19th century mostly in New England and the Northeast particularly in the shoe trades, the first major trade unions in the United States did not develop until after the Civil War (Bimba, 1968). The Civil War brought large scale industrialization in the north and a need for a greater supply of labor. Immediately following the Civil War, the completion of the transcontinental railroad helped spread the rapid industrialization, that was taking place in the northeast, across the country. With this surge of industrialization came the development of the first major trade union movement in the United States.

#### The Knights of Labor

The first mass labor movement in the United States was the Knights of Labor. It was both a trade union and a fraternal organization. Initially, it did not have either a political program or much interest in politics. As the movement developed, it became more involved in politics that were often of an

independent nature. The movement grew episodically as there were periods of rapid expansion followed by periods of rapid contraction. Usually, periods of growth coincided with economic upturns and periods of skrinkage coincided with periods of depression.

The Knights of Labor was the first union in the United States to organize on an industrial basis and it was the first union to have a truly mass following. Unlike the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) and the Congress of Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), the Knights of Labor involved itself in independent political action, believing that this involvement would improve its chances for success.

While the union had many strengths, it had many weaknesses as well. The union was very successful among American-born workers but it was almost totally unsuccessful among foreign-born workers. Further, it was a union that was characterized by internal dissent even over the question of whether it was a union or not. (Bimba, 1968).

The significance of the Knights of Labor was that it organized on an industrial basis and met with the first major successes of any American trade union movement. Its ultimate demise was due to a number of factors, the most important of which was its weak internal structure

and its lack of clarity of goals.

### The Development of the American Federation of Labor

On December 8, 1886 a new labor organization was created that was to set the pattern for craft unionism in this country from then until the present. That organization was the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) and Samuel Gompers was the key figure in the creation and development of this organization.

Samuel Gompers came to this organization with considerable union experience. He helped create and lead the cigar makers union which had been very successful in improving the lot of the cigar maker. Gompers tried to expand upon his successful experience with the cigar makers by using his craft union as a model for all future unions that were to be part of the A.F.L. He also tried to learn from the failure of the Knights of Labor. Gompers believed that the Knights of Labor had two major failings: one, it had tried to organize industrial workers and two, it had involved in independent politics.

Gompers decided that all unions affiliated with the A.F.L. would have to be organized along craft lines and that the A.F.L. would only involve itself in economic struggles and refrain from politics. He believed that industrial workers were not organizable and therefore, it was pointless for Gompers' new federation to attempt the

organization of industrial workers.

Actually, the idea of organizing only craft workers was not unique. The English trade union movement organized along craft union lines when it first started and for many years thereafter (Pelling, 1954). One major difference between the English trade union movement and the American A.F.L. was that the English movement became involved in politics from the very beginning through the Chartist and other movements. That involvement helped the English trade union movement expand whereas the A.F.L., at least theoretically, had a commitment not to become involved in politics (Thompson, 1963).

Samuel Gompers soon changed his attitude about political involvement from one of indifference to one of participation in the political process. He developed a policy that one should punish labor's enemies while helping labor's friends. Gompers also felt that it was important for the trade union movement not to ally itself with either one political party or the other. He further believed that the labor movement should not form a political party of its own because such a party would be inherently weak and isolated from power. As time went on, the A.F.L. became closely aligned with the Democratic Party even though Gompers never admitted such an alliance.

Samuel Gompers' Political Attitudes While Dominant Today

Were Not Dominant During The Early Years of The A.F.L.

While the attitudes of Samuel Gompers concerning labor's role in politics have become the dominant theme in the trade union movement of today, this situation was not always the case. There were a number of groups inside the trade union movement that were pushing for independent political action in the early years of the A.F.L. both within the federation and among independent unions. The Knights of Labor worked closely with the Socialist Labor Party until the former finally ceased to exist. Many locals of unions, as well as national unions that were either independent or not, helped found the Socialist Party. Just a few were the Brewery Workers Union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Garment Workers Union. This small sample of such locals does not even begin to list the independent unions that were strong supporters of the Socialist Party.

In the beginning at least, Samuel Gompers' view might be seen as a minority view within the labor movement (Bimba, 1968). The reasons that his view became the predominant view in the American labor movement are long and complicated but are usually explained by the theory of American Exceptionalism. This theory explains the uniqueness of the American political development on the following: the frontier, the fact that the workers in

this country were not instrumental in the winning of bourgeois rights as they were in Europe, the constant flow of immigrants and upward mobility. It is not my intention to discuss at this point the theory in depth although I will proceed to do so later in the chapter.

It is important that the reader realize that the A.F.L. did not have ideological hegemony over the labor movement until well into the twentieth century. Many of the great strikes conducted by the labor movement from 1886 until 1920 were not conducted by the A.F.L. whose attitude was rather lukewarm about strikes but were instead conducted by independent unions. These unions had different ideological attitudes from the A.F.L. on everything from how unions should be organized to what the trade union movement should do politically. Unions, such as the National Union of Railway Workers and The Western Federation of Miners, were organized along industrial lines and were also politically oriented towards independent action. These unions either involved themselves in the Populist Movement or in one of the socialist parties. Even some of the unions within the A.F.L. were involved in independent political action or were organized along industrial lines. The biggest industrial union in the A.F.L. was the United Mine Workers (Bimba, 1968).

The Development of The Socialist Party in The United

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## States

The labor movement had a real political choice for the first time with the development of the Socialist Party in the United States. Actually, this move towards an independent political party in the United States paralleled those events occurring in Europe, particularly the development of a labor party in England (Pelling, 1965).

In the beginning, both the Socialist Party in the United States and the Labor Party in England were isolated from the masses of the working class and even from the mass of unionized workers. In the case of England, most of the official leadership of the labor movement were supporters of the Whig Party; whereas, in the United States, most of the official leadership had no commitment to any political party. Nevertheless, both movements began to gain strength among organized sections of the working class. The voting strength of the American Socialist Party, as well as its membership, grew throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Such similar development was true of the Socialist Labor Party in England. However, there was one important difference. The English Labor Party was formed directly by a segment of the labor movement whereas the Socialist Party in this country developed with labor union support but was not initiated by the

labor movement (Pelling, 1965). Still, many unions affiliated with the new Socialist Party in this country (Shannon, 1955).

It is often asserted that the reason third parties fail in the United States is that, unlike parliamentary democracies, there is no room for third parties to gain political power. Actually, a number of third parties have met with considerable success. The Socialist Party did fairly well. It managed to elect mayors and even members of Congress. During World War I, it received over a million votes for the presidency (Shannon, 1955).

Ultimately, the Socialist Party was destroyed as a mass movement by several factors. The party was badly split over American participation in World War I and government labor policies during that war. In the aftermath of the war, the party split into two groups with the left wing becoming the foundation of the Communist Party and the right continuing as the Socialist Party. Another important factor in the weakening of the Socialist Party was its failure to attract the bulk of organized labor. It was particularly unable to penetrate the leadership of the A.F.L. and finally, its failure to lure immigrants into the party was enormously damaging to its efforts to build a mass movement. While the English labor movement became exceedingly more involved in the

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development of a labor party, the American labor movement became significantly less interested in independent political action after World War I.

### Rise And Fall of the Industrial Workers of the World

A major event that took place in the early part of the twentieth century was the development of the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.). The union was formed as an industrial union to organize the great mass of unorganized and unskilled industrial workers. Initially, this new union was formed by several radical unions of which the most important was the Western Federation of Miners. Its formation was possible because of the support of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party. Support of the Socialist Party was primarily due to Eugene Debs, who had himself been a major figure in the development of radical unionism in America.

From the very beginning, there were serious problems with the I.W.W. Within the new union was a group of radicals who did not believe in involvement in electoral politics but instead, believed that only revolutionary action would improve the lot of the working class. This group of syndicalists had to co-exist with a conservative group in the Socialist Party that felt more comfortable with the traditional unions (Brissenden, 1957). This co-existence made the coalition weak from the start. In

addition, there was yet a third group at the founding convention of the I.W.W. which was the Socialist Labor Party. The Socialist Labor Party was the first Socialist Party to form in the United States. It had always remained both small and separate from other political groups as well as from the traditional unions. In fact the Socialist Labor Party had organized its own unions to compete with traditional unions (Kipnis, 1968). The Socialist Labor Party's role had usually been divisive and it had this effect on the I.W.W. as well.

Out of this widely diverse group came the I.W.W. which grew rapidly although episodically. Unfortunately, most of its component parts eventually left the group. The Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party left fairly quickly while the Western Federation of Miners left later. The result was that the I.W.W. became a syndicalist union with a clear anarchist ideology. The loss of a diverse range of support greatly weakened the new movement.

What this loss meant was that a union which might have been a major pillar of a labor party or a Social Democratic Party instead removed itself from the development of either kind of political party. The groups that were interested in developing such a party thus divorced themselves from the I.W.W. With the aforementioned defections, the new radical union became

isolated from most of the rest of the radical movement.

Despite these problems, the new union grew rapidly and continued to grow until the end of World War I. This growth took place even under massive repression from the government. Many of the union's leaders were jailed, executed or lynched. In spite of these hardships, the membership reached a quarter of a million members at its high point (Brissenden, 1957). Most of its members were unskilled workers in the textile industry or migrant agricultural workers. The I.W.W. was most successful among the most exploited.

What finally helped destroy the union was its own unbending commitment to ideology. The I.W.W. would not sign a contract with management even after winning a strike. The union viewed the settlement as only a temporary truce in the class war. The result was that after a settlement, management would immediately sign a contract with another union that it thought was more conservative. This meant that the membership of the union was extremely unstable. These facts, plus the constant hostility of the bosses, the government, the conservative unions and much of the radical movement, ultimately led to the destruction of the I.W.W.

The I.W.W. was to be a very important model for future industrial unions which capitalized on its strength. The Congress of Industrial Organization

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(C.I.O.) developed much of its organizational model from the I.W.W. It was the success of this radical union that helped kindle an interest in organizing workers who had previously been thought to be unorganizable.

#### The Creation and Development of the Communist Party

The next major development in the trade union movement and the radical movement in this country was the formation of the Communist Party. The new party was created out of the left wing of the Socialist Party and by many independent radical trade unionists. The I.W.W. was invited to become a full participating member of the new organization but refused to join although some of its key members did join (Haywood, 1929). The development of the Communist Party in the United States paralleled developments in Europe. In most of the socialist parties of continental Europe, the left wing of the socialist parties split to form the new communist parties.

While the Socialist Party and the I.W.W. had attracted largely American born workers, the new Communist Party attracted large numbers of immigrants (Howe, Coser, 1959). The Communist Party organized itself into ethnic sections. Each European language group had its own section of the party. The attraction of the Communist Party to large numbers of immigrants was related to the fact that it represented the first successful socialist revolution in the world. The

revolution laid to rest the uncertainty of whether workers, led by a socialist party, could take power. For many radicals, the question of whether a socialist society could be created by peaceful means was answered.

The repression that followed the revolution was worldwide. A number of countries in Europe and the United States sent troops to put down the revolution. In addition, many European nations and the United States also repressed the new communist parties that developed in their own countries. The United States used such means as beatings, imprisonment and deportation to try to destroy the new party. During this period of time, the chances for reforming the political system through peaceful means seemed particularly unlikely.

The Socialist Party which had already been weakened by deep division over the issue of American involvement in World War I, was now further weakened by the birth of the Communist Party. The Socialist Party was never to regain the strength that it had once had. The same was true of the I.W.W. which had been weakened by government repression and large scale defections of its own leadership.

While the Communist Party grew quickly in the beginning, it was unable to attract any of the leadership from the traditional A.F.L. unions except for the head of the recently defeated steelworkers. Most of the A.F.L.

leadership had become steadily more conservative. Even those who did consider themselves to be radical were strongly tied to the Socialist Party. Another problem was that most of the craft union members were American-born and most of the new communists were foreign-born at a time when there was growing anti-foreign feeling among native Americans. This fact further helped to keep members of the traditional craft unions out of the new Communist Party. Also, those unions with a radical tradition in the A.F.L. had become more conservative in the twenties and certainly did not want to participate in an avowed revolutionary organization.

The new Communist Party did not help to bridge the gap. It took the official position that all of the craft unions were inherently reactionary and it was the role of a revolutionary organization to form new revolutionary unions that could be used to destroy the reactionary unions. The Communist Party planned for the first time in the United States to combine a political movement with a trade union movement. While this approach met with considerable success in countries like France, it proved to be a total failure in the United States (Bittelman, 1937). The new communist led unions competed with other unions in the same plant, weakening both unions. Workers came to view the communists as undercutting the successes

of the trade union movement. Naturally, employers were quick to use these divisions to destroy both unions if they could.

The Communist Party recognized the failure of its policy and abandoned the communist unions. The new communist policy was to bore from within. The communists decided to become members of the traditional craft unions in hopes that they could gain influence in these unions and affect trade union policy. While the Communist Party at this time gave up the idea of independent trade unions, they did not yet give up the idea of independent political action (Howe, Coser, 1959).

It is not clear whether the Communist Party's new policy was more effective or less effective than the previous policy in recruiting new members. The failure of the Communist Party to continue to expand rapidly in the twenties was based on two factors. First, after the initial excitement about the Russian revolution, many members of the Communist Party became disillusioned and left the party. Two, the twenties in the United States was a period of political conservatism in which radical movements as a whole shrunk and the Communist Party was no exception. Even the conservative craft unions lost members during this period of time.

### The LaFollette Campaign - An Odd Exception

During the twenties, the A.F.L. became even more closely tied to the Democratic Party although it had been unofficially tied to the Democratic Party for a long time. The only exception to the trend towards the Democratic Party on the part of the A.F.L. was the presidential campaign of 1926. In this campaign, Robert LaFollette, a disaffected progressive, broke with the two major political parties to form his own new party, the Progressive Party. What was surprising was not that the party was formed but that Samuel Gompers endorsed the candidacy of LaFollette. At first, Gompers was very excited about this candidacy and was a strong and active supporter. However, as the campaign progressed, Gompers became less and less enthusiastic about the campaign and gave very little support to it. As it turned out, LaFollette did not do well in the election which further convinced Samuel Gompers that there was no room for independent political action in the United States.

What is perplexing is why Gompers who had tied himself to the two major political parties long ago ever endorsed a third

party candidate. To this day the reasons are unclear. What does seem clear was that he regretted the decision soon after he made it and backed away from it as quickly as he could.

#### The Birth and Growth of the C.I.O.

The next major period of growth for the trade union movement came during the great depression. A new wave of radicalism came with the great depression, the latter being the worst in American history. This wave swept the A.F.L. as much as it did the rest of American society. Many of the leaders of the A.F.L. began to question the concept of craft unionism. They looked at the great mass of unorganized industrial workers and began to wonder if it was possible that they could be organized. These union leaders also realized that a number of craft strikes had been broken by unorganized industrial workers in the twenties. They also believed that they could capitalize on the widespread unrest in the country to organize previously unorganized workers (Preis, 1974).

At the same time, the radical movement saw an opportunity for growth and expansion after years of decline. The Communist Party was particularly quick to capitalize on this opportunity by organizing the unemployed. Their influence among this group grew quite rapidly. The Socialist Party also tried to organize the

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unemployed but was less successful. However, both groups managed to grow during this period of time (Preis, 1974).

As was often the case in American political history, the resurgence of the trade union movement and the resurgence of the radical movement were occurring at the same time but separately. The union leaders, who were re-thinking the idea of traditional craft union organization, were for the most part bread-and-butter unionists and not the radicals in the trade union movement. In fact, many of the traditionally conservative union leaders, such as John L. Lewis, were key figures in the development of the new C.I.O. It was true that most of the old socialist union leaders were also involved in the birth of the new union but they had also become steadily more conservative as the years had passed.

Of course, there were some radicals among the new leaders of the C.I.O. such as Harry Bridges, head of the West Coast Longshoreman's Union. These leaders were instrumental in proving that the formally unorganized could now be organized and that this result could be done most effectively with an industrial union model. Harry Bridges had organized the whole west coast and had won a key strike in San Francisco with a general strike. There were other union leaders with a strong radical history in the new C.I.O. such as David Dubinsky and Sidney Hill.

These leaders led two important unions, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union respectively. Both had been involved with the Socialist Party and both at least gave lukewarm support to the idea of independent political action (Preis, 1974).

Such activity was occurring during the great depression, one that was unlike any other depression in American history. It lasted longer and was far more devastating than any previous American depression. In past depressions, the trade union movement had usually suffered greatly, barely surviving. This condition was because workers were desperate and would take any job at any wage even if it meant crossing a picket line. Union membership in this depression, rather than shrinking, was to have its greatest growth in history. By the end of the great depression and for the first time in American history, all of America's basic industries would be organized. In addition, the first public employees unions were organized and while the progress made in organizing public employees was much smaller than the progress in organizing private employees, some progress was established and the foundation for post war success was laid.

Failure of The Radical Movement In The Thirties To  
Produce Either A Mass Socialist Movement or a Mass Labor

## Party

Why all this economic activity did not turn into independent political activity is one of the most widely debated questions in American history. Independent radicals usually blame the Communist Party for its failure to organize a third party, others blame the leadership of the C.I.O. for not taking its new union into an independent political direction and still others argue that a labor party did not develop because of the uniqueness of the American political system (Preis, 1974). At this time, I believe what is important is not to debate why a mass labor or socialist party did not develop but only to observe that it did not.

There was certainly reason to believe that the time was right for a third party to develop. The United States had a weak president, Herbert Hoover, more people were unemployed than ever before and none of the additional solutions seemed likely to work. In addition, there was a mass upsurge of radicalism. It is true that one of the two political parties that was part of the new radical upsurge, the Communist Party, moved rapidly away from a position of political independence towards one of popular coalition. The other major party in the radical movement, the Socialist Party, was at least ambivalent on the question of independent political action.

A quick look at this period of time seems to

indicate an enormous opportunity for independent political action. The disillusionment with the two major parties was extremely widespread. Also, the trade union movement was going through a period of rapid growth as well as rapid change. Adding to this situation, the new C.I.O. rapidly developed a strong communist contingent with many of the new C.I.O. unions being dominated by the Communist Party. In spite of all these developments, there was no significant move to create a labor party although there were some feeble attempts.

In the thirties, the radical movement, and particularly the Communist Party, had its greatest influence on the trade union movement in history. Yet, it was unable or unwilling to turn this influence towards an independent political direction. The Communist Party, which had the greatest influence of all radical groups in the thirties, followed the same political line that it had done in Europe after 1935. Their action was to form a coalition with the progressive wing of the capitalist party. The American Communist Party interpreted this action to mean support for the Democratic Party. The Socialist Party pushed its independent candidates but had much less influence than the Communist Party and was not in a position to develop a labor party on its own (Howe, Coser, 1959).

It is important to understand the extent of the

influence that the Communist Party had in the C.I.O. The Communist Party had considerable influence or control over the following unions; The International Longshoremens and Warehousemens Union, The National Maritime Union, The International Electrical Workers Union, The United Mine. Mill and Smelter Workers, The International Fur and Leather Workers Union, The United Furniture Workers Union, The United Public Workers Union, The United Transport Workers Union and The Association of Food, Tobacco, Agriculture and Allied Workers (Preis, 1974). While the Communist Party never controlled the C.I.O., it had enormous influence throughout the thirties. It could be argued however, that while the Communist Party thought it was using the C.I.O., in fact, the C.I.O. was using the Communist Party.

The C.I.O. used the Communist Party as its left cover. The C.I.O. also used the Communist Party because it had effective organizers and generally hard workers who would work for little pay. It was in fact rare for unions to be led by actual members of the Communist Party. Usually, the party controlled unions by influencing sympathizers. The Communist Party only pushed its politics in the most general way in the C.I.O. and many members would have been hard pressed to explain the difference between the politics of the Communist Party and that of the C.I.O.

While the thirties failed to produce either a mass socialist party or a mass labor party, it did produce the mass organization of industrial workers. The new union movement resembled unions in Europe although the one major difference was the lack of a class party. whole industries were unionized during the thirties. To name a few, there was the auto industry, the steel industry, the electrical industry, the rubber industry and the docks. These victories did not come easy. They were hard fought with militant action on the part of workers and long painful strikes. Yet for the first time, the workers succeeded in major area of manufacturing and other basic industries. The A.F.L. also grew during this period, partially by adopting many of the tactics of the C.I.O. As of 1937 the C.I.O. had five million members (Preis, 1974). Why this depression led to such great successes in organizing when other depressions led only to failures is an important unanswered question.

What is important is that by the beginning of World War II, the American trade union movement represented most workers in heavy industry as well as many workers in light industry. In addition, the American trade union movement had begun to organize the public sector. It is also important to realize that for the first time a majority of blue collar workers in the basic industries were unionized (Preis, 1974).

### World War II Brought Changes To The C.I.O.

World War II brought changes to the C.I.O. The union moved away from confrontational strategies that had epitomized the struggles of the thirties to strategies that involved greater cooperation with management and government. The government had increased its involvement in labor management relations in the thirties with the Wagner Act which, in many ways, made the government the arbitrator of last resort and also guaranteed unions certain rights. With the war, the government greatly increased its involvement with labor management relations. The government requested that unions were to sign a "no strike" pledge for the duration of the war. Virtually every union did so. In return, the government would settle disputes between labor and management and also, the government made it easier for unions to be recognized. The confrontation between the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. was greatly muted for example.

The theme of the period was cooperation. This theme permeated both the communist influenced unions and the non-communist influenced unions. The government, for its part, tried to act as an unbiased arbitrator by keeping warring factions at bay. To please management, the government instituted a wage freeze and to please labor, the government introduced a price freeze. While unions were allowed to keep organizing, that organizational

effort was not allowed to interfere with production. The government did not allow management to break unions while it did force unions to sign no strike contracts. In situations where there were jurisdictional disputes between unions, the government forced an arbitrated decision.

World War II was not a period in which independent political action was likely to develop. It was a period defined by economic cooperation and government intervention. As far as the union leadership was concerned, all was going well. In fact, there was an enormous number of wildcat strikes during the war, indicating the rank and file were not as happy with the labor management cooperation as were the union leaders (Preis, 1974). The strikes that occurred usually occurred because the government was very slow to resolve disputes. In most cases, the union leadership did all in its power to break these strikes as did management. The Communist Party, which was the major radical representative during the war, was more enthusiastic about breaking strikes even than the more traditional union leaders. By helping to break strikes during World War II, the communists isolated themselves from militants in the union. This separation of militant economic activity from political radicalism already had a long history in the United States. It was a tradition that

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severely hampered either activity's chances of success. During the war, due to the communists' adamant attitude about the "no strike" pledge, the separation between militant political action and militant economic action was completed. It was impossible to be both a militant trade unionist and a member of the Communist Party at the same time. This fact helped isolate the communists from possible sources of support when the communists came under attack after the war (Preis, 1974).

The only important authorized strike that occurred during the war was led not by a radical union, but on the contrary, a conservative union which was the United Mine Workers Union under the leadership of John L. Lewis. This strike was denounced by the Communist Party as well as many other radical groups and most of the trade union movement. In spite of this denouncement, the strike was won.

#### The Great Strike Wave and The Wave of Anti-Communism That Swept the Country After the War

When the war ended and wage and price controls were removed, the pent up anger of the workers during the war exploded into the greatest strike wave in American history. There were more strikes in 1946 than any previous year (Preis, 1974). The strikes were militant and many took weeks or months to settle. Most of the strikes that occurred ended in economic victory for the

workers. At first, the Communist Party was hesitant to support these strikes although it did so eventually. It was rarely involved in the leadership of the strikes.

As the great strike wave swept across America, so did a wave of anti- communism. This wave not only swept the country as a whole but it also swept the trade union movement, particularly the C.I.O. Many of the communists' strongest allies in the union movement could see the writing on the wall and therefore became avid anti-communists. The new anti-communists helped the old anti-communists to sweep the communists from many of their traditional union strong holds. This activity was fairly easy to accomplish for two reasons. One, the communists were very slow to react and two, the communists had so alienated non-communist militants and other potential supporters during the war that they found it difficult to get any outside support in many of the unions. Many independent radicals failed to support the communists at first. They did not understand that attacks on the communists would later led to attacks on themselves.

In many ways, the communists were victims of their own politics. They had not tried to politicize the rank and file of the unions they controlled nor had they tried to develop independent political activity within the unions that they controlled. In fact, the unions the

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Communist Party dominated were dictatorially run from the top with little input from the membership.

The communists had crushed any group within the union that disagreed with their policies. Finally, they had actively crushed militant wildcat strikes during the war, often helping to blacklist participants. When the communists themselves were under attack, they failed to try to rally their own rank and file. The communists preferred to try to negotiate with the leadership of the C.I.O. All these factors led to a massive routing of the communist in the late forties (Preis, 1974).

In many cases, they were swept away with hardly a struggle such as what had happened in the transport workers union. In other situations, the struggle was long and bitter and very damaging to the union movement as a whole. In some cases, the C.I.O. was forced to set up rival unions to compete with the communist led unions. However, this tactic was mostly successful in destroying the communist led unions. Some of the communist unions did survive as independent unions such as the Electrical Workers and the West Coast Longshoremen. Where the communist unions did survive, they were usually greatly weakened. The industries took advantage of this situation to force both the communist led and the C.I.O. led unions out of the work place or to set up the two unions as competing forces.

While the C.I.O was largely successful in purging the communists from the unions as well as other radicals, such an action meant that the labor movement lost a lot of its vigor and energy and many of its most effective organizers. This purging of the radicals led to the almost complete separation of the radical movement from the labor movement. This separation exists to this present day. Whereas in the past, radicals had found a home in segments of the labor movement, they were now isolated from the labor movement. The new radical movement that began to develop in the late fifties and early sixties did not view labor as a potential friend as had previous radical movements. The purging of the radicals from the temple of labor also meant that the issue of independent political activity was almost totally dead within the labor movement. There was no longer a group within the labor movement to raise the question (Preis, 1974).

The lack of a radical grouping in the labor movement had a strong effect on the support that Henry Wallace received during his 1948 presidential campaign. While Wallace was nothing more than a liberal Democrat, he represented the hopes of the now largely isolated radicals of stemming the tide of anti-communism. Wallace broke with the Democratic Party to run his own independent campaign. The Communist Party, now totally

isolated from both the Democratic Party and the labor movement had no alternative but to endorse Wallace. Wallace also received support from many independent radicals and some liberals who were concerned about the drift to the right that was taking place in the two major political parties. Both groups believed that they could use Wallace to build a new movement that would stem the tide of conservatism. The Liberals and the radicals also thought they would receive some trade union support and in doing so, break the back of the conservatives who had gained control of the C.I.O. (MacDougall, 1965).

Rather than producing a show of strength that these forces had hoped for, the campaign ultimately showed how weak these forces had become. The unions failed to support Henry Wallace except for a few communist controlled unions and instead, the unions supported Harry Truman. In fact, Wallace received only a million votes. More importantly, the progressive party was not really a move towards an independent political party. In most cases, the progressive party failed to run local candidates and instead, simply supported democrats. In any case, the defeat of Henry Wallace represented the final rout for the left. Following the elections, the final expulsions of the communists from the C.I.O. were completed.

The Merging of the A.F.L. And the C.I.O.

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The way for a merger was paved when the C.I.O. was freed of its communist and radical contingent and when the A.F.L. softened its position on industrial unionism. There was no longer the strong difference between the two groups that had previously existed. The C.I.O. had become progressively less interested in organizing and, like the A.F.L., had become complacent and satisfied.

Both major labor federations had been weakened by the warring of the two groups. Raiding had cost the loss of members for both groups and employers had effectively used the competition between the two federations to weaken unions representing their workers. With the basic differences gone between the two unions, the time had come to merge. As early as the late forties, a number of working relations had been established between the two union federations. Finally in 1956, the two federations merged into one. This merge was only possible because of the great changes that had taken place in the C.I.O. (Preis, 1974).

The C.I.O. had begun to look more like the A.F.L. The militancy and radicalism of the past was gone. Both groups were feeling pressure from a political atmosphere that was both conservative and anti-union. The C.I.O. went so far as to organize craft departments within its industrial unions. On the other side, the A.F.L. had to concede that in fact, industrial workers could be

organized successfully. Therefore, when the merger came, it came with virtually no opposition since the opposition that might have once existed had long been silenced.

In many ways, the merger was always desirable. It strengthened the labor movement as a whole and reduced the problems of unions competing for the same members. However, the merger represented not simply a strengthening of the labor movement but also a giving up of much of the historic social commitment which the C.I.O. had had. The merger entrenched the conservative A.F.L. with the conservative elements of the C.I.O. No longer would the C.I.O. represent the unions that supported social change and the A.F.L. represent the unions that supported social conservatism.

In fact, the unions that were involved in social issues were now distributed in both the A.F.L. and the C.I.O. For the most part, the unions that continued to have a social commitment were part of the union movement that was growing rapidly such as the public employees unions. AFSCME, which in particular was the fastest growing public employees union, was also one of the most socially involved unions in the period of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Public employees became the vibrant section of an often moribund labor movement.

Beginnings of a New Radical Movement And New Militancy In  
A Segment of The Trade Union Movement

The old left, as it was later to be called, had shrunk to a near non-existence by the end of the 1950's. However, there was a new movement of social activism. The civil rights movement in the south was developing into a significant political force. This movement certainly did not start out as a radical movement but simply as a movement for social justice. While it involved an number of old left radicals and some unions, the civil rights movement was led by people who did not consider themselves radical. This movement quickly spread to the colleges and universities of the north. Students in this region headed south to join the struggle. While this new movement did not consider itself radical, it laid the foundation for the unrest that was to take place among students in the sixties (Lipset, 1971).

At the same time that the civil rights movement was developing, there was also a burst of militant activity in the union movement in the area of organizing public employees. Throughout the 1930's and the 1940's, public employees unions had been small. In the 1950's, the number of public workers grew steadily due to two factors: the greatly increased efforts to organize public employees and the readiness of public employees to be organized. The number of unionized public employees in 1950 was under fifty thousand; by 1960 it had more

than doubled and would increase by tenfold by 1970 (Bellush, Bellush, 1984). Many of the public employees that were organized were at the bottom of the economic barrel. Large numbers of these workers were black. While the civil rights movement was not directly connected to the organizational efforts of public employees, the consciousness raising of the civil rights movement clearly had an affect on the organizational successes which public employees unions experienced during this period of time.

New York was central to the development of public employees unions nation-wide. It was here that the union underwent its most rapid growth and greatest successes. The AFSCME, which has become the largest public employees union in the country, had most of its first major successes in New York. In 1951 AFSCME had eight hundred members in New York and by 1957, it had twenty-five thousand members in New York (Bellush, Bellush, 1984). The union continued in the tradition of the C.I.O., both in terms of being active organizers and in having a firm social commitment. It was the president of AFSCME, who walked with Martin Luther King in a number of demonstrations and it was often members of AFSCME, who swelled the numbers of civil right demonstrations.

Still, the new student militancy of the Student Non-Violent Coordination Committee (SNCC) and the

activism of public employees unions were not part of one movement but two separate movements that occasionally worked together. The new left was not to be found in the labor movement. For the first time in American history, the political left and the labor movement were almost completely separated. This separation meant that the chances of developing an independent labor party or an independent radical party that would include a large segment of the labor movement was probably less likely than at any point in American history.

In the late 1950's, the forces that usually made up the traditional American left were divided. The trade union movement was tied to the Democratic Party and usually not to the liberal wing of that party. The old left was disoriented and alienated from both the union movement and the new left and the latter had no clear political orientation at all. The new left's politics ranged from liberal to radical often within the same group. In addition, the new left, as well as the civil rights movement, was more oriented to street protests than to electoral politics. Many new left groups actively opposed any participation in the electoral process. While the civil rights movement was not openly opposed to participating in elections in the early development of the movement, it did not focus on electoral politics but instead, spent its energies on

demonstrations. Certainly the likelihood of any third party movement developing during this time was remote. Student Unrest, Civil Rights, The Anti-war Movement and the Militant Growth of Public Employees Unions  
Characterize The Sixties

As the 1960's progressed, the separation between the labor movement and the radical movement became more obvious than it had previously been. Student radicals found it difficult to imagine that only twenty or thirty years earlier, the labor movement had been the center of the radical movement in the United States. Since the new student radicals viewed the labor movement as a conservative part of the establishment, they basically were not interested in forming an independent political party of which labor would be a key player (Marcuse, 1966). The student radicals looked towards other forces in society to be the formenters of change.

The 1960's brought a major upsurge of radical activity in the United States as well as Western Europe. This activity in the United States was usually considered to have begun either with the formation of Students For A Democratic Society (SDS) or with the free speech movement at the University of California at Berkeley. In fact, the student movement had really begun with the civil rights movement in the south. Many of the first student leaders had been participants in the civil rights

struggle. Nevertheless, the student movement burst into public consciousness with the free speech movement. This occurrence seemed to the public the beginning of a new wave of radicalism that was later to sweep America.

The new radicals were the children that had grown up in the apathetic fifties. They were the first of the baby boomers. They had not been nurtured by the old left nor did they come from the trade union movement. While many of these new radicals were the children of workers and some the children of radicals, many were not. Their demands, unlike many past radical demands, were clearly political and not economical. They were more interested in the quality of life than the quantity of life.

In addition to the unhappiness about the material basis of American culture, there was another major cause for the political unrest of the 1960's which was the war in Vietnam. The war was causing increased unhappiness among both the student population and the American public as a whole. The unrest that resulted from these two issues was not restricted to a few major campuses but touched off activities at campuses and communities all across America.

A second group of Americans who went through a process of radicalization during the 1960's were black Americans. The civil rights movement in the south had spread to the north. This unrest, unlike the student

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unrest, clearly had its roots in the economic despair of black Americans. In addition to the unemployment rate that was listed by the government and in itself quite high a large number of black Americans were not counted as unemployed because they had given up looking for work. Those black Americans that did hold jobs were usually at the bottom end of the pay scale. They were also the first affected by economic downturns (Major, 1971). As black Americans in the south began to meet with some success in their struggle, northern blacks felt encouraged to begin a struggle on their own.

Besides the economic discontent in the ghettos, there was growing discontent about the war in Viet Nam. It was not that black Americans opposed the war per se but rather that they opposed the disproportional numbers of black Americans killed in the war in comparison to whites. Many black Americans saw this fact as another example of a white racist society .

The unrest in northern ghettos was very different from the unrest of the civil rights movement in the south. The movement in the north was either poorly organized or not organized at all. The revolts were usually short-lived and with little or no further action following.

The roots of the black unrest were quite different from the roots of the student unrest on the campuses.

While the two movements might have had similar goals from time to time, they were virtually unable to work together throughout the period of the sixties. Partially, this inability was due to lack of leadership in the northern ghetto but mostly it was due to the enormous disparity between the two groups. Even when strong leadership existed in northern ghettos as in the case of Oakland and the Black Panther Party, the black leadership mostly disassociated itself from the white student radicals.

In fact, the black rebellion in the north had more ties to the trade union movement than it had to the student movement. Many of the participants were members of unions, particularly of industrial unions such as the United Auto Workers Unions and The United Steel Workers Union. Many of the participants were members of public employees unions such as the Service Employees International Union and The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union. As part of their activity, these black militants set up caucuses inside major industrial unions as well as public employees unions. Although the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership usually viewed these groups negatively, it had considerable rank and file support among black workers.

#### Two Attempts To Organize An Independent Political Party In The 1960's

There were only two serious attempts to establish a

third political party in the 1960's. Both started in California and in fact, both started in the San Francisco Bay Area. One was a student based party which was the Peace And Freedom Party and the other was a party formed by black militants called the Black Panthers Party.

The Peace and Freedom Party was an attempt to organize the growing anti-war movement into a powerful political force. The feeling among organizers was that this attempt had become the only effective way of fighting the pro-war Democratic Party. Like most third party movements in the United States, this party was basically a one issue party. The new party did manage to be put on the California ballot which was a none too easy feat to accomplish. The political party was never able to develop a national organization and even in California, it did not receive a large percentage of the vote. The new party also lacked support from minority groups and was almost totally isolated from the trade union movement.

The second major attempt to organize an independent political party was the formation of the Black Panther Party. The Black Panthers Party was a multi-issued party that initially developed as a local phenomenon in Oakland, California but rapidly became a national organization. In the beginning, the Panthers were not interested in electoral politics but rather in what they

called revolutionary politics (Foner. 1984). They believed that in order for black people to be free in America, they would have to conduct an armed revolution. This position caused black leaders of national stature to stay away from the Panthers. The important black national leaders continued to support the Democratic Party and denounced the violent tactics of the Panthers. The Black Panthers Party never gained any footholds in the south and was always confined to northern urban areas. Its most important strongholds were the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. Even in these cities, they never commanded a majority of the black population (Stavis, 1969).

The Black Panthers Party was ultimately suppressed by the government. This action was done fairly easily due to the Black Panthers Party's isolation even within the black community. While the party did try to reach out to black workers and even to white student radicals, its success was limited. Today the Panther's party serves only as a pressure group in the local politics of Oakland.

Neither of these political parties ever had mass support and both were isolated from the trade union movement and from each other. The Black Panthers Party did have some contacts with black workers in industrial unions and was even able to help set up a few caucuses

but these groups continued to remain small and isolated in most cases and the Black Panthers Party had no support from the official leaders of any of the unions where they had influence (Lipset, 1971). Had these two parties been able to build a coalition with each other and with progressive elements in the trade union movement, they might have become an important political force. Their failure to do so guaranteed their ultimate political failure.

Other than these two attempts to organize a third party, the radicals of the 1960's stayed away from independent political action. They either refrained from electoral politics or they endorsed progressive Democrats. In fact, the radical politics of the period typified American radical politics and militant action in the streets but an unwillingness to break away from the traditional two party system. As with militant unions who preceeded them in the radical movement, street action for the radicals of the 1960's was often viewed as a way to pressure the two major political parties, particularly the Democratic Party and not necessarily a way to build an independent movement (Starvis, 1969).

The major difference between the radicals of the 1960's and the radicals of the past was not in the way they conducted themselves but in the fact that the unions were not at the center of the struggle or even involved.

Also, the black movement, while often having similar goals as the white student movement, was separated from the student movement.

The official leaders of the trade union movement were hostile to the new radicals. The most militant unions such as the AFSCME gave only lukewarm support to some of the activities of the students. Although an enormous percentage of its members were black, it steered a course that kept it safely away from northern black militants while allowing the union to be a key supporter of the civil rights movement in the south (Aronowitz, 1983). AFSCME's involvement in a great militant struggle of its own to organize a million workers, of which many were among the poorest paid in America and a large percentage were members of minority groups, was similar to other unions in its failure to connect its struggle with that of either the black militants or the student radicals. While the student movement did not connect its struggle with the militant struggles of the public employees unions black militants often did particularly in the south although not in the north.

What is important to emphasize about this period and the early seventies is that while in many ways the radicalization typified past American radicalism, it was profoundly different in two ways. One, it was not encompassed within the trade union movement and two, the

traditional parties of the old left were not the key players (Lipset, 1971).

Most of the student radicals in the United States presumed that the working class was dead as a progressive force in history. They saw the workers' movement as a reactionary part of the establishment. Although many of these students were the sons and daughters of workers, many thought that blue collar workers were likely to largely be automated out of existence. Naturally, this attitude only furthered the rift between workers and students and in this country between workers and blacks (Marcuse, 1966).

There was a restlessness particularly among young workers in the late sixties. Young workers were becoming far more interested in quality of life issues rather than just being interested in the amount of the pay check. These issues led to important strikes such as the one at Lordstown, Ohio (Aronowitz, 1973). Unlike the student unrest, the workers' unrest was to continue beyond the sixties. Older workers usually were divided from younger workers on these issues and were perplexed as to what the young workers wanted. This division in the working class between young and old characterized the labor movement almost as much as the division between black workers and white workers. These issues would remain even after the student revolt had long disappeared.

The Seventies and Eighties, The Traditional Liberal  
Coalition Re-emerges

While the seventies and eighties have not seen the trade union movement emerge as a radical force, they have seen labor unions play an increasingly liberal role. This change has taken place while the student movement has all but disappeared and the black urban unrest of the sixties is almost a memory.

The only groups to support Walter Mondale in his bid for president in 1984 were Jews, blacks and trade unionists (Blumenthal, 1984). By the late seventies, there really was no radical movement in the United States. However, the liberal movement was being led by those who traditionally would have led such a movement in the past; the industrial unions, public employees unions, blacks and Jews.

Several other changes took place in the work force in the seventies. The work force was now better educated. This fact was particularly true of blue collar workers. Many blue collar workers had attended at least some college. Unemployment was more of a threat particularly to blue collar workers than it had previously been during the sixties. In fact, unemployment levels were the highest since the great depression. There were far more black workers among blue collar workers than there had ever been and the former were becoming a major force in

many industrial unions (Gould, 1977). New contracts often brought wage cuts or freezes rather than the customary increases of the past. Workers could no longer count on a better life for themselves and their children for in many cases their standard of living was going down and their children were unable to find jobs. Plants were closing at a rapid rate and unions were under attack.

What was happening to workers as a whole was also happening, and often more intensely, to public employees. Many cities and even some states faced bankruptcy. These cities and states began to lay off city and state workers and to cut the wages of those remaining on the payroll. The center of the largest public employees union in America, New York City, was one of the cities that came closest to bankruptcy. Militant public employees' unions were forced to make major concessions even in the face of member opposition. In New York City, wages were frozen or even cut and thousands of union employees lost their jobs (Thomas, 1987). In the public sector and to some extent in the private sector, white collar workers were under the same pressure as blue collar workers. For the first time in many cases and certainly for the first time since the great depression, white collar public employees faced a reduced standard of living or even the loss of their jobs.

Unions In The Late Eighties Are Being Forced By Members  
To Be More Militant And More Politically Active

Unions, both public and private, industrial and craft, have been largely unable to effectively deal with this new situation. Their strategy has been to give back fringe benefits and accept reduced wages to preserve jobs. As we enter the late 1980's, we find that unions are under increasing pressure from their membership not to give back anymore wages or benefits. On the other hand, unions are under increasing pressure from management to give back rights that were won long ago.

Unions have responded to this crisis in a number of ways. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. has taken the unprecedented move of endorsing candidates before they are primary winners. The union believes that it can increase its influence in politics by endorsing a candidate early in the campaign (Raskin, 1986).

Public employees' unions have faced increased pressure from their members in the face of cutbacks. One response has been an advertising campaign explaining to the public as to what public employees do. Another response has been continued organizing efforts. Even in the face of cutbacks and layoffs, the number of unionized public employees has decreased only slightly. Thirty four percent of public workers are unionized as compared to 17 percent of private workers (Troy, 1986). Public

employees' unions have also become more involved in local politics. Both public and private employee unions have become more vehement about attacking military expenditures pointing out that the money could be used for domestic needs.

In what was surely a surprising move, the A.F.L. organized an international boycott against Shell Oil Company to oppose apartheid. This action emphasizes the new activism in unions as well as the increased interest in liberal causes by the trade union movement.

### Conclusion

The development of the American trade union movement has not led to a corresponding development of a labor party or a social democratic party as it has in Europe. While there were signs of such a development during the turn of the century and again in the 1930's, this development did not take place. The reasons for this failure to develop a class party are usually explained by the argument of American exceptionalism (Aronowitz, 1983). The underpinnings of this argument are that four factors played a role in hampering the development of a class party. One was the frontier; two was the fact that major bourgeoisie reforms were granted prior to industrialization; three, that workers could look forward to an improved living standard for either themselves or their children, i.e. upward mobility; and four, that the

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type of political system we have does not allow third parties to wield any significant political power.

It is important to recognize several changes that have taken place in America that may affect the future political development of the trade union movement. The radical movement became disassociated with the trade union movement in the fifties and sixties. This fact was true of both the new left and old left. The economic struggles of workers were no longer the struggles which radical movements were built on.

The trade union movement was no longer at the forefront of progressive struggles in America and even began to withdraw from the major struggle of organizing the unorganized. Most of the unions in the private sector failed to grow after World War II and in fact, in many cases have been skrinking. The C.I.O was no different in this lack of organizational effort than the A.F.L.

In the fifties, sixties, and seventies public employees unions have been the only major section of the labor trade union movement to show significant growth and their growth has been tremendous. The public employees unions, particularly AFSCME, have had much of the fervor that the C.I.O. had in the thirties. They have also been active in the civil rights movement and many other liberal causes. Public employees unions, particularly

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AFSCME, were some of the first unions to come out against the war in Viet Nam and to join the demonstrations against the war. Public employees' unions have become the vanguard of the trade union movement.

Many of the new union workers are different from the older workers. They are public employees, both blue and white collar. They struggle not against corporations but directly against city and state governments and sometimes even the federal government.

There is another change that took place in the early seventies. The standard of living of the working class stopped rising. The sons and daughters of workers are often not better off than their fathers and the future is often not brighter than the present, particularly for the union worker. Public employees are often hit even harder than the private sector with calls for wage freezes and givebacks.

It is at this historic juncture that I have decided it would be important to survey the attitudes of workers of the public employees union about their unions, about their jobs, about the future and about politics. It was my decision to survey public employees because they are the section of the trade union movement that is expanding and they often belong to the most progressive unions in the country. At the same time, they are under increasing pressure to give back benefits that had

previously been won. Public employees are also in an arena were they, like the workers of the early thirties, have few rights guaranteed to them by law.

Public employment is still a growth industry and until recently, a growth section for the unions. Public employees, as a percentage of all unionized workers, are growing and will probably continue to do so. Their influence on the labor movement as a whole is pivotal. It was with this point in mind that I chose these workers to survey.

The question comes up as to why raise the issue of a labor party at this time and why choose public employees as the workers who would be most likely to form such a political party? The economic and political situation is different today in America than it has been in the past for the reasons stated above. These differences could have a strong impact on the future political development of the American trade union movement.

Public employees' unions were chosen because they represent the most vibrant section of the trade union movement and because they represent large numbers of minority workers. In addition, they often represent many of America's poorest paid workers. The choice of selecting AFSCME as the union to use in this study was made because it is the largest public employees union in America and

AFSCME represents a wide cross section of public employees. It is the assumption of this research project that if a labor party or a social democratic party is to develop in this country, it will first develop from the most vibrant sections of the labor movement. It is with this in mind that I have decided to conduct the present research.

## Chapter 3

### Results of New Orleans Research

#### Background

One of the two district councils chosen for the sample was District Council 1737 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Union (AFSCME). The district council, a relatively new council, has been in existence for about seventeen years. The district council has jurisdiction over most of the State of Louisiana, extending from Shreveport in the northwestern part of the state to Houma in the southwest to the Mississippi border. The district council is divided into five geographic subdivisions. The subdivision that was chosen for this study encompasses the metropolitan area of New Orleans and includes New Orleans and its surrounding suburbs.

In the New Orleans area, the district council has locals in state facilities such as the University of New Orleans, city facilities such as the Sewage and Levy Board and Charity Hospital workers in both the Jefferson Parish schools and the New Orleans parish school district. Most of the workers, who are organized in this region of the district council, would be considered either blue collar workers or service employees.

The membership of the district council is approximately 4,000 in the New Orleans area which includes Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish. This membership, according to the organizer for the district council in the area, represents a growth of about 1,000 members during the 1985-86 year (Johnson, 1986). This number represents more than ten percent of the public employees work force.

All workers represented in the area by the district council, except for workers at the Sewage and Levy Board, are under contract and a contract was in the process of being negotiated with the Sewage and Levy Board at the time the survey was done. Each contract represents a different agreement and there is no master contract with either the city or the state. Not only does each agency negotiate separately with the union, but often each subunit of an agency negotiates separately.

The union sees enormous growth potential in the south and particularly in Louisiana. It has invested considerable money and staff in taking advantage of that potential. Louisiana is a "right-to-work" state and therefore, it is against the law to sign a union shop agreement. Up to this point in time, the district council has been far more successful in organizing state workers than it has in organizing the city workers in New Orleans or its surrounding municipality. The union

attributes this success to its lack of involvement in city politics versus its heavy involvement in state politics. Thus, the union has made a definite decision to become more heavily involved in the politics of the City of New Orleans.

Another major hurdle in the union's organizing effort among both state and city workers is that both the state and the city are near bankruptcy and are not in a position to offer very much even if both wanted to do so. The state has based much of its taxation on the continued rise in the price of oil. Since the price of oil has done nothing but fall in recent years, the state finds itself in a position where it must both lay off workers and raise taxes. Therefore, it is not anxious to recognize unions or to grant wage concessions. State workers have not received a pay raise since 1981 (Times Picayune, July 12, 1985).

The city finds itself in a similar position. While its budget is not directly based on the expectation of oil tax revenue, it is based on substantial state assistance. Since that assistance is no longer available, the city has been forced to cut wages and lay off workers. In addition to these problems, both the state and the city have been suffering a recession for the last several years and unemployment continues to rise. The unemployment rate is currently around thirteen

percent (New York Times, December 4, 1986). The high unemployment rate means that both income tax and sales tax revenues have been nearly reduced. All these conditions have made union organizing quite difficult.

Despite these conditions, George Johnson, who is the union organizer, saw large growth potential for the union. It was his opinion that the district council had failed to grow in the past for two reasons. One reason was that the union did not have adequate staff and resources. There was only one representative for 16 locals and that representative had to do everything from negotiating contracts to handling grievances. The second reason was that the union had failed to use its political muscle, particularly at the city level. With the increase in staff and the willingness to get involved in local politics, the union thought that it would be successful in even organizing public employees in the State of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans.

The organizer of the district council felt there were a number of inducements that could be offered to workers in order to encourage them to join the union. First among these was responsiveness to the membership and its demands. Second was the power of being part of the largest union in the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Finally, the organizer felt the importance of the responsiveness and the democratic nature of the union would appeal to potential members.

George Johnson saw both his responsibility and that of the local leadership as to first meet the needs of the rank and file worker. In union elections leaders were freely elected by the rank and file. He also made a point of saying that the union viewed the needs of its members as more than "bread and butter needs." It was the job of the union to provide for the welfare of its members. This responsibility meant that the union should do everything from involvement in politics at the local, state and national levels to providing burial protection for its deceased members.

George Johnson repeatedly made reference to the need for the union to be politically involved, both in terms of supporting candidates and in terms of lobbying on issues that might affect the members. This lobbying power would be particularly useful in a state such as Louisiana which has very little legislation that is helpful to workers or protects their rights and considerable legislation that restricts workers' rights, particularly the right to organize and the right to strike.

George Johnson made it clear that he was not simply referring to issues that only pertained to union matters but also to issues that might affect the members in other ways. He felt that the union could affect issues in two major ways. First, by endorsing candidates who would

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first commit themselves on a list of positions or issues that the union was concerned with and second, by lobbying efforts at all levels of government. When asked what would happen when candidates failed to keep their promises, he was unclear as to what alternatives he thought the union had recourse to except to endorse another candidate. One important aspect of this union that differentiates it from many other unions is that the endorsements of candidates are made by the membership at general membership meetings. This endorsement does not mean that the leadership does not suggest candidates for endorsement but it does mean that the membership, or at least that part of the membership that comes to meetings of the local, has a say in who the union endorses.

In talking with George Johnson, it was clear that he saw that changes were taking place in the trade union movement. Although more changes were needed, he felt that most of these changes dealt with the day-to-day struggle but were not in the basic political orientation of the American trade union which was, in the days of Samuel Gompers, to help your friends, who were usually Democrats and to punish your enemies, who were usually Republicans (Aronowitz, 1983).

#### Description of the Respondents

The demographic information was coded individually. A mean was calculated for each scaled response group as well as a standard deviation.

The average age of the work force was found to be 40.2 years. However, the range in age was from 25 years to 64 years. There were hardly any young workers on the job as the city and state had done almost no hiring in the last few years (Times Picayune, October 24, 1986).

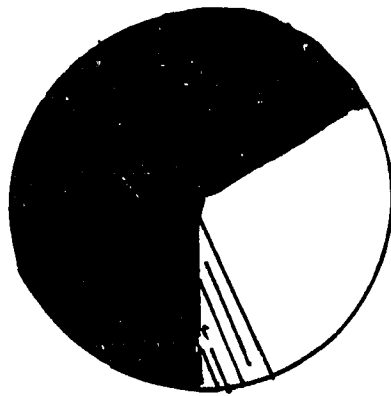
Of the workers who were interviewed, 65.7% were black (23), 28.5% were white (10) and 5.7% classified themselves as other (2). fig. 3.1 next page These figures, according to union officials, were reflective of the work force that they represented. fig. 3.1 and fig.3.2.

The work force interviewed was almost evenly divided between male and female. 52.9% of the respondents were male (18) and 47.1% were female (16). fig. 3.2.

The majority of the work force was married, 67.6% (23) as compared to 22.4% that were single (11). In addition, the mean number of children was 2.37 with a standard deviation of 6.95.

Most workers had been on the job for a relatively long time. The mean was 8.87 years with a standard deviation of 2.49.

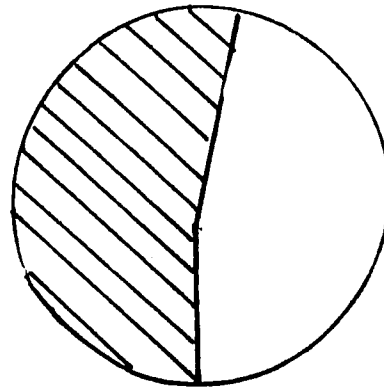
Racial Distribution  
New Orleans



■ Black  
□ White  
▨ Other

Fig. 3.1

Male - Female Distribution  
New Orleans



▨ Male  
□ Female

Fig. 3.2

Most workers, who answered the question of their amount of education, had at least a high school diploma with figures of 76.6% as compared to 23.4% who did not. Raw figures are 23 and 7. However, a full 14% (5) did not answer the question at all. It is hard to gauge the significance of this result but it is an unusually high figure and may reflect embarrassment about low levels of education. The union data on education also seems to be questionable as education levels in these jobs are rarely checked by the employer and there would be reason to overstate educational attainments.

Income was divided into a number of categories. It was felt that workers were more likely to answer the question of what was their income if they did not have to be specific. Categories ranged from less than ten thousand dollars a year to more than thirty-five thousand dollars a year. Categories were broken every five thousand dollars between ten and thirty-five thousand dollars. Thirty-three of our thirty-five respondents answered this question. Of those who responded, 15% earned less than ten thousand dollars a year, 57% earned between ten and fifteen thousand dollars a year, 15% earned between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars a year and 12% earned more than twenty-five thousand dollars a year. fig. 3.3 next page. The mean income was \$13,487 while income ranged from less than ten thousand dollars

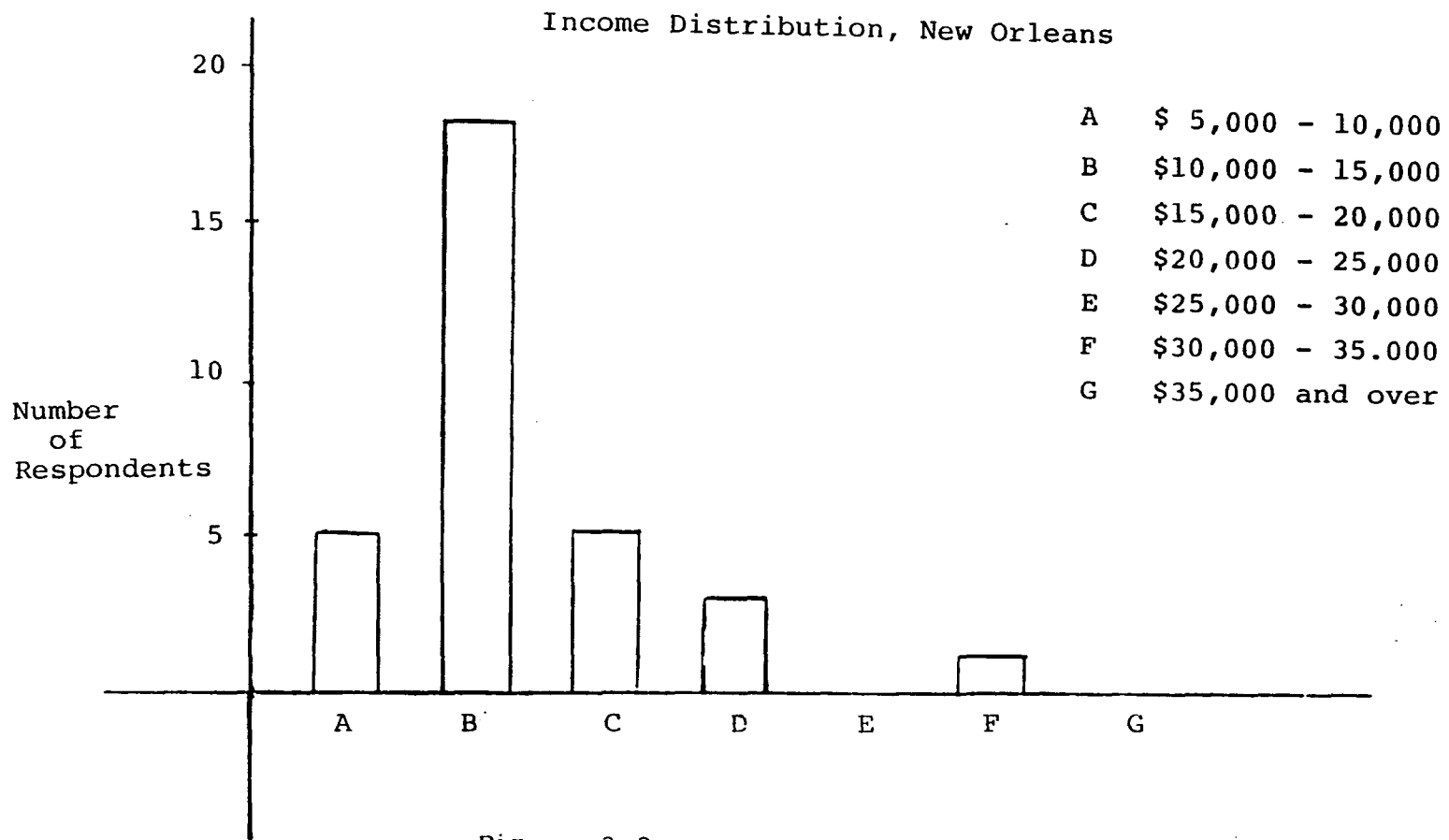


Fig. 3.3

to more than thirty-five thousand dollars. The group as a whole was low paid.

Of those workers who were married, according to the 62.8% of those who responded, the vast majority had working spouses. A full 72% (16) were working as compared to 21% (6) who were not. The mean income for the working spouses was \$13,750 which is slightly higher than the average for the workers themselves which was \$13,487.

The work force described above is a predominantly black work force. This work force is reasonably stable and this stability is possibly explained by the low levels of education as well as the high rates of unemployment in the New Orleans area (Times Picayune, December 30, 1986). The work force is about evenly divided between male and female workers. Those workers, who have spouses, have most of them as working; thus about half of the workers interviewed have a second income (45.7%). If the mean of the joint income of those workers with working spouses is taken, the family mean income becomes \$27,237. Naturally, this amount makes an enormous difference in the standard of living. However, it must be mentioned that there was wide divergence of spouses' income, ranging from less than \$10,000 to more than \$35,000 dollars a year.

For the most part, the jobs that these workers do are unskilled or semi-skilled. For many of these workers, these jobs would be the only kind of work that they would find although some workers did have as many as four years of college education.

In coding the data, categories were created and then each category was scaled. The categories were the following: job satisfaction, class identification, union participation, support for existing political parties, support for a labor party and a view of the future. The scale for each category was based on the number of questions in that category.

After going over the data, it was decided that in several categories it would be more useful to compare certain subgroups. The two demographic criteria looked at was sex and race. It was important to see if there were sharp differences in the responses that could be attributed to either sex or race. The group that interviewed was almost evenly divided along sexual lines. There were 18 male respondents and 16 female. The work force was black versus one quarter that was white and there were two others.

The primary question to investigate was to find out whether there were any differences in income based on sexual or racial designations. First looked at was the mean income for male respondents. The mean income for

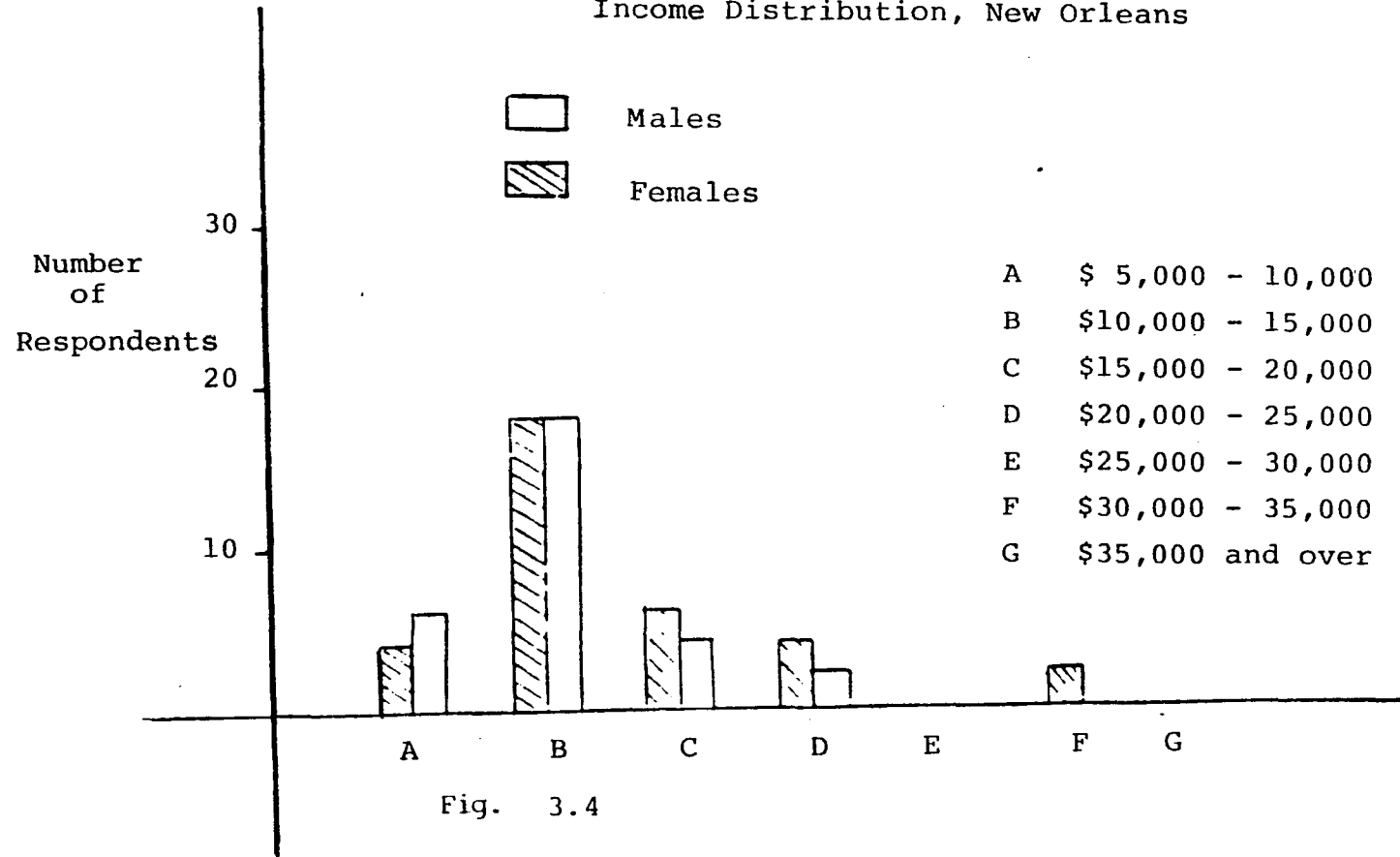
male respondents was \$15,100. The mean income for female respondents was \$12,200. These figures meant that of the people interviewed, females only earned 81% of what male respondents earned. This result was a substantial difference. fig. 3.4.

When black respondents were compared to white respondents, it was found that the mean income for black respondents was \$13,000 whereas for white respondents it was \$15,000. fig. 3.5. These figures meant that black workers only earned 92% of what white workers earned. While this was a much smaller difference than that of male and female workers, it was still a substantial one.

One of the most interesting correlations made for the respondents was between income to that of support of existing parties and support of a labor party. When income was correlated to support for a labor party, the assumption was that the workers with lower income would be more likely to support a labor party and that workers with more income would be more likely to support the two major existing political parties. It was thought that while this would be true for some of the subgroups that were looked at, it might not be true for all of them.

An attempt to correlate income to support for both a labor party and support for the existing political parties was tried. The belief behind this attempt was that the lower the income, the more likely the support

Income Distribution, New Orleans



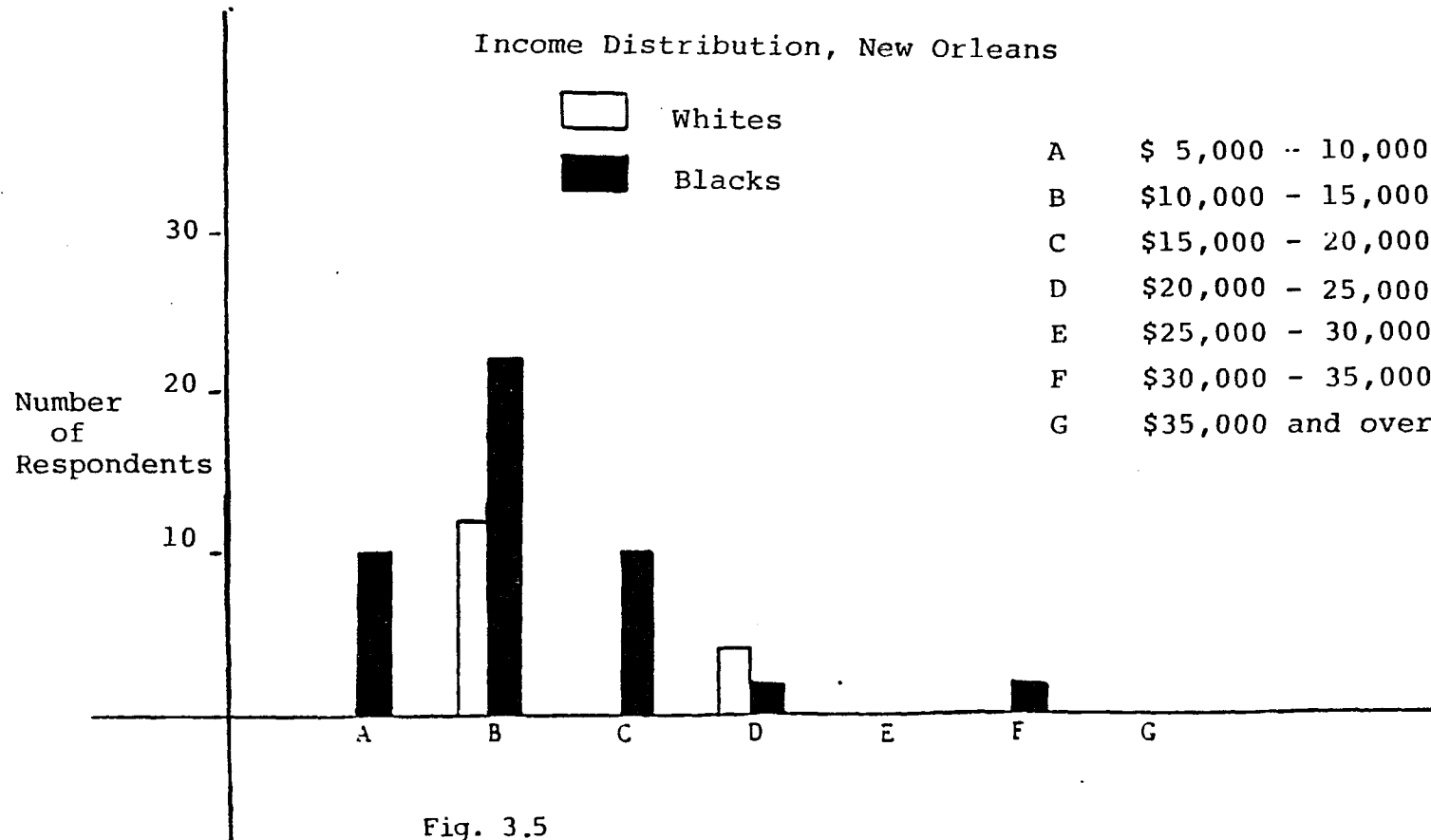


Fig. 3.5

for a labor party and the higher the income, the more likely the support for the existing political parties. A significant correlation between decreasing income and increasing support for a labor party was found. The correlation coefficient was .33427 but there was no significant correlation between support for existing political parties and income. The correlation coefficient was  $-.2360$ . If this pattern was to hold up among workers on a national scale, it could be an important tool for predicting labor party support. Unfortunately, the New York data does not seem to establish any pattern but rather widely diverse patterns of support depending on which subgroup was looked at. Further research would be of value in this area. There was significant correlation between income and support for a labor party among many subgroups but there was a slight correlation between income and support for existing political parties in one major subgroup.

Correlations based on race and sex were tried. The exact same columns were compared with the results of one strong correlation based on race and none based on sex. White workers, who supported the two existing political parties, were far less likely to support a labor party than white workers who did not. The correlative coefficient was  $-.6805$ .

Income was scaled and then the amount of money earned was correlated with support for the two existing political parties and support for a labor party. The assumption was that the lower the income, the higher the support for a labor party and the lower the support for the two existing political parties. No significant correlation was found between income and support for either a labor party or support for the two existing political parties for white workers. The correlation was .2046 between income and support for a labor party and 0.00 between income and support for existing political parties. However, a significant correlation for black workers between income and support for a labor party was discovered. fig. 3.6. The correlation coefficient was .4035. A correlation between support for existing political parties and income for white workers was also found. The correlation coefficient was .3867. fig. 3.7.

No significant correlation for females between income and either support for a labor party or support for existing political parties was found, although there did seem to be a slight correlation between rising income and support for the two existing parties. The correlation coefficient for income and support for a labor party was .2039 and for support of existing parties was .2968. When the same correlations for men were tried, there was a significant correlation between income and support for

Income vs. Support for a Labor Party  
Blacks, New Orleans  
 $r = .4039$

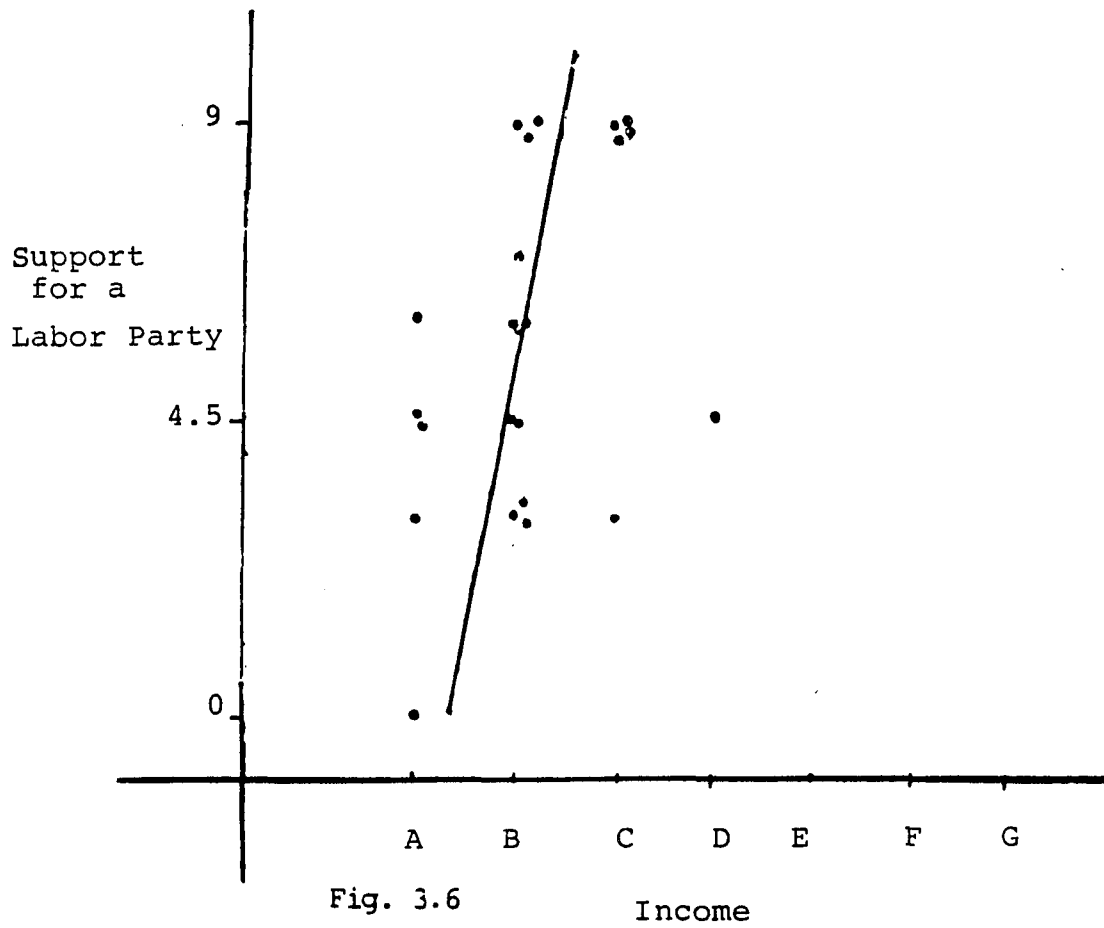


Fig. 3.6

Income

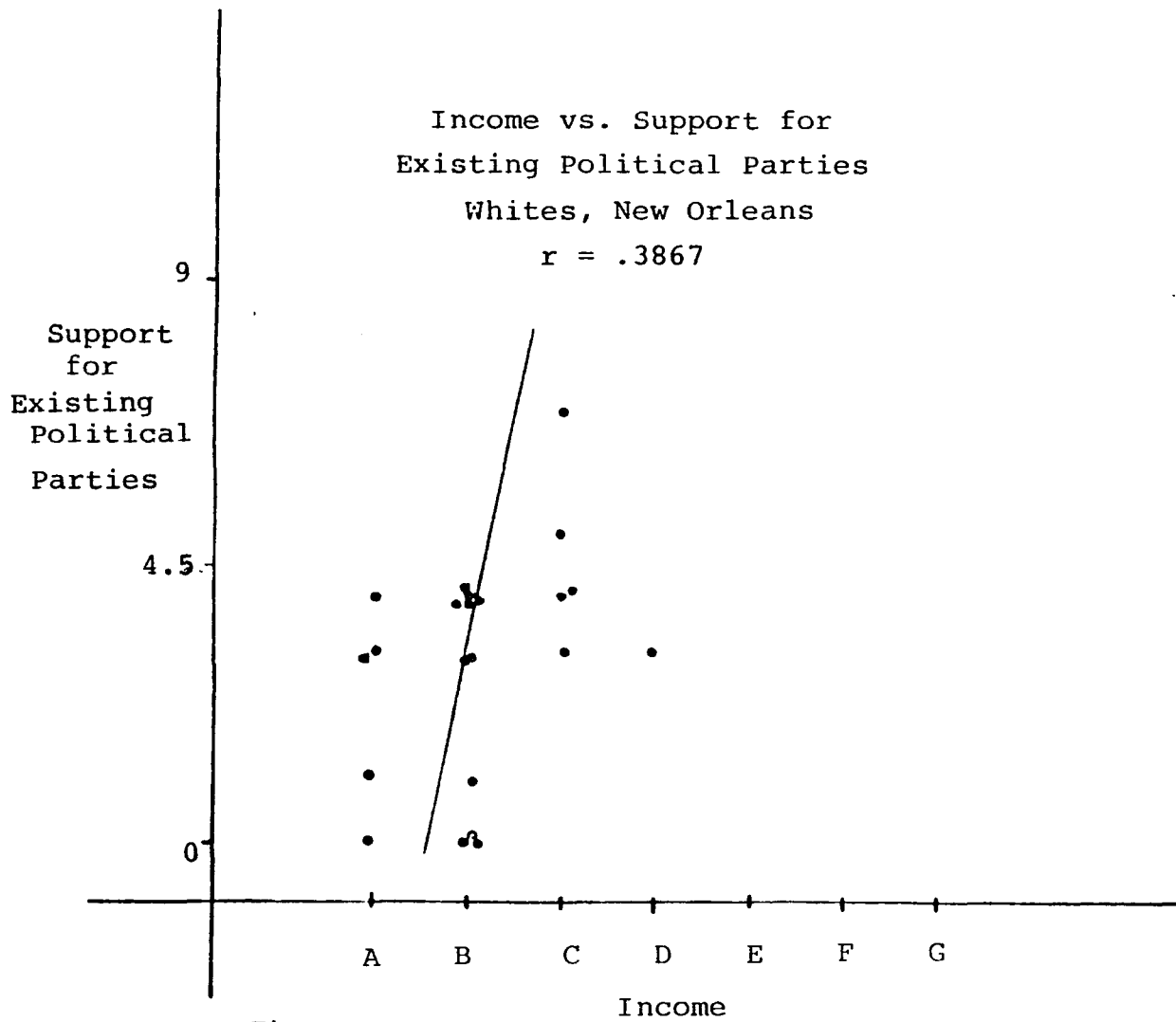


Fig. 3.7

a labor party. The correlation coefficient was .4385. There was no significant correlation between income and support for existing political parties. The correlation coefficient was .1834.

While income was a good predictor for some groups as to whether they would support a labor party or not, it proved to have no predictive value for other subgroups. In only one case was income a good predictor of support for existing political parties. Even in such a case, the figure was only slightly significant. Why income proved to be a good predictor of support for black workers and male workers and a poor predictor of support for white workers and female workers is difficult to explain. It would take data from other regions of the country to tell whether this pattern continued to prove to be a good predictor for the same groups. The pattern of correlation was quite different in New York which suggests that this pattern is not a general one.

#### Job and Union Satisfaction

In the area of job satisfaction, a mean of 4.5286 was found. This figure represents a moderate degree of job satisfaction on a scale of 0 - 10. The standard deviation was 2.8619, showing that there was a considerable range of job satisfaction among the work force.

Respondents again showed a moderate degree of satisfaction with the union. On a scale of 0 - 20, the average was 10.071. The standard deviation was 5.938 showing that there was a wide range of opinion on the area of satisfaction for the union. Workers ranged from highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied with the union. It should also be noted that the only people interviewed were those people who came to a meeting called by the union. It may be presumed that the data on union satisfaction might look significantly different if a cross section of the whole membership could have been interviewed.

The area of unknown participation was scored on a scale of 0 - 24. The mean was 11.2571. This score has to be viewed as a rather low score, particularly if one considered that the people being interviewed were at a union meeting. A standard deviation was 4.8467. This figure represented a much smaller standard deviation than was found in the area of union satisfaction and it also meant that virtually none of the union members interviewed had a high degree of union participation. It seemed likely that the membership as a whole would have a much lower score on union participation. This observation was being backed up by statements of the local leadership who said that turnouts at union meetings was usually well under 10. In fact, the organizer also

said that to encourage the local leadership to even come to a union meeting was very difficult. Low participation was further suggested by a personal experience at a meeting of the Sewage and Levy Board union local. Less than 15 members, out of a total membership of over 100, attended even though the meeting was called to discuss the progress on the negotiations of their first contract.

Workers had a relatively positive view of the future. On a scale of 0 - 7, the mean was 4.1286. However, views of the future varied greatly as evidenced by a standard deviation of 2.1190. Still, this result was surprising, considering the income of most of these workers, the limited job opportunities for them and the general economic situation in Louisiana which seemed likely to have both an immediate and long range effect on workers and their children. Even layoffs seemed a possibility for some of the workers who were interviewed, along with cuts in pay. The newspapers were filled with such warnings almost every day (Times Picayune, October 18, 1985). In light of this gloomy situation, it is hard to interpret the moderately positive view of the future. It would seem that the positive view was based on factors other than the ones which were mentioned. It might, in fact, represent cultural attitudes found in New Orleans. A common slogan there is "bon temp roule" or "let the good times roll."

Union satisfaction with job satisfaction was correlated. The presumption was that those workers who were most satisfied with the job would also be most satisfied with the union. This presumption turned out not to be the case. There was no significant correlation between job satisfaction and union satisfaction. The correlation coefficient was .2560.

Job satisfaction was then correlated to union participation on the belief that those workers who were most satisfied with the job would be least likely to participate in the union. This assumption was incorrect. There was no significant correlation. The correlation coefficient was .1078.

Union participation was correlated with union satisfaction. The belief was that dissatisfied workers were more likely to participate in union affairs than satisfied workers. This assumption was not the case. There was no significant correlation between union satisfaction and union participation. The correlation coefficient was .2466.

#### Job and Union Satisfaction, Race and Gender

When looking at the category of job satisfaction, it was found that there were significant differences between male workers and female workers. Male workers had a mean of 5.22 whereas female workers had a mean of 3.90. fig. 3.8a. The standard deviation for male workers was 3.1353

and 2.3960 for female workers, suggesting a much wider divergence of satisfaction among male workers than among female workers. The explanation of the difference in levels might lie in the difference in levels of income.

When the category of race was broken down, there was little difference of job satisfaction found. The mean score for whites was 4.5 and 4.4157 for blacks. fig. 3.8b. There was wide divergence in the standard deviation. The standard deviation for black workers was 4.6689. However, it was 8 for white workers. The data indicated that black workers were less divergent in their view of the job than were white workers.

In the area of union satisfaction, significant differences between male and female workers again were found. The mean level of union satisfaction for men was 12.6111 on a scale of 0 - 20, showing moderate levels of satisfaction with the union. For women the mean was 7.1875, indicating low levels of satisfaction with the union. fig. 3.9a. Much of the local leadership was male and this fact might help to explain the differences in levels of satisfaction between male and female workers. Also differences in income might also affect feelings of satisfaction with the union.

There was some divergence in satisfaction between black workers and white workers although the level of divergence was not as extreme. White workers tended to

Job Satisfaction  
New Orleans

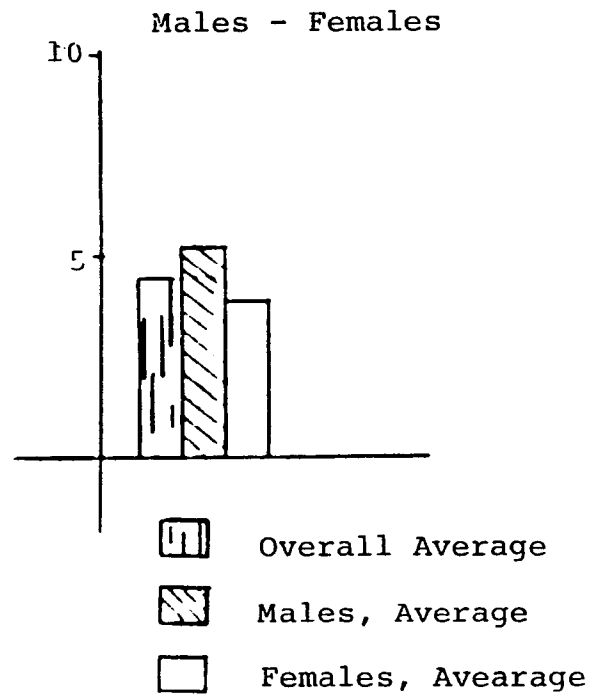


Fig. 3.8a

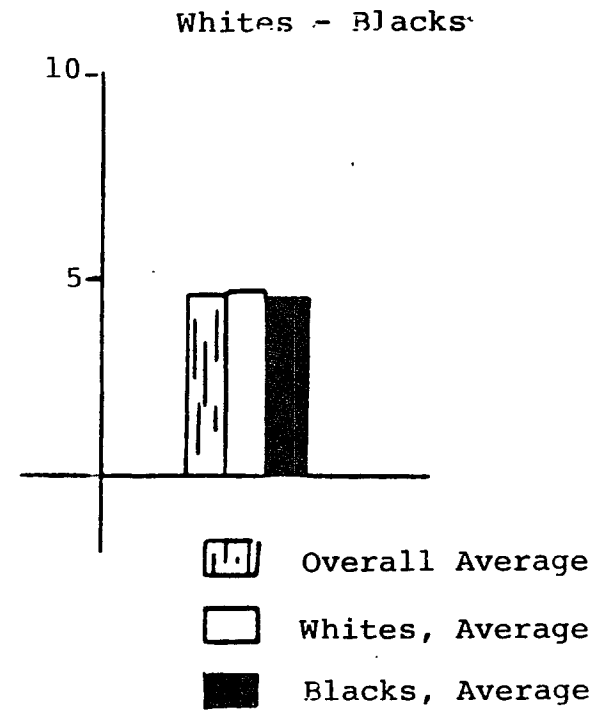


Fig. 3.8b

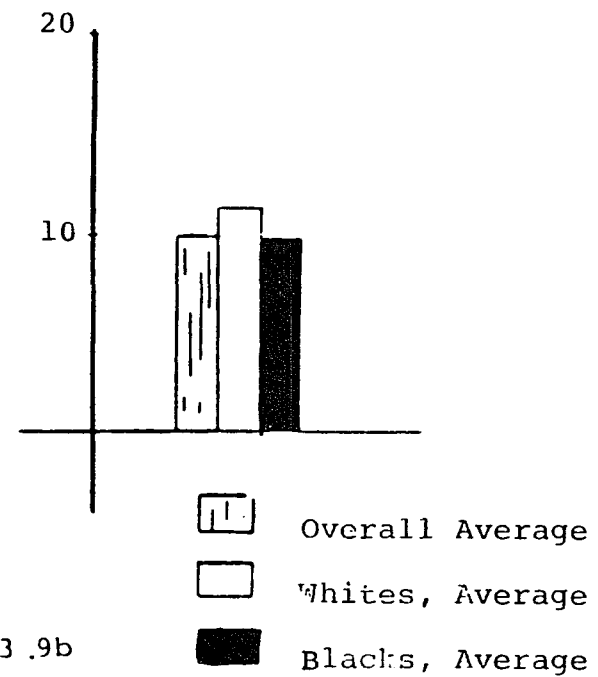
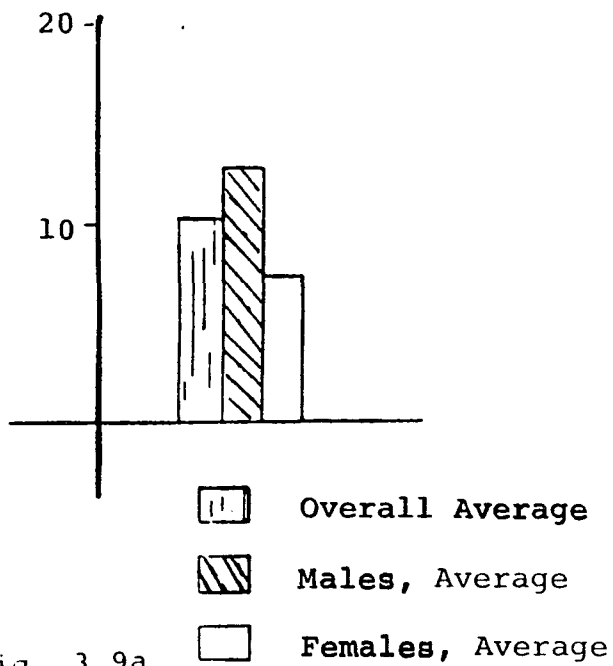
be more satisfied with the union with a mean of 11.2222 and black workers tended to be less satisfied with a mean of 9.75. fig. 3.9b. Still, both measurements showed a moderate degree of satisfaction with the union. There was a much greater spread of opinion between black workers than there was with white workers. The standard deviation for black workers was 4.2363 whereas for white workers it was 3.3458.

It is difficult to explain the lower levels of union satisfaction for black workers since almost the whole local leadership of the union is black. It might reflect lower pay scales among black workers than among white workers.

When male and female respondents were compared on levels of union participation, the mean score for males was 11.8235 on a scale of 0 -24. The standard deviation was 3.9248. For females the mean score was 10.200 and the standard deviation was 5.9306. fig. 3.10a. These figures meant that there were slightly lower levels of union participation for female respondents than for males but both groups showed moderate levels of participation.

Comparing levels of union participation, it was found that black workers were slightly more likely to participate than white workers. The mean for black workers was 11.5833 whereas for white workers it was 9.5556. fig. 3.10b. Neither group showed particularly

Union Satisfaction  
New Orleans



Union Participation  
New Orleans

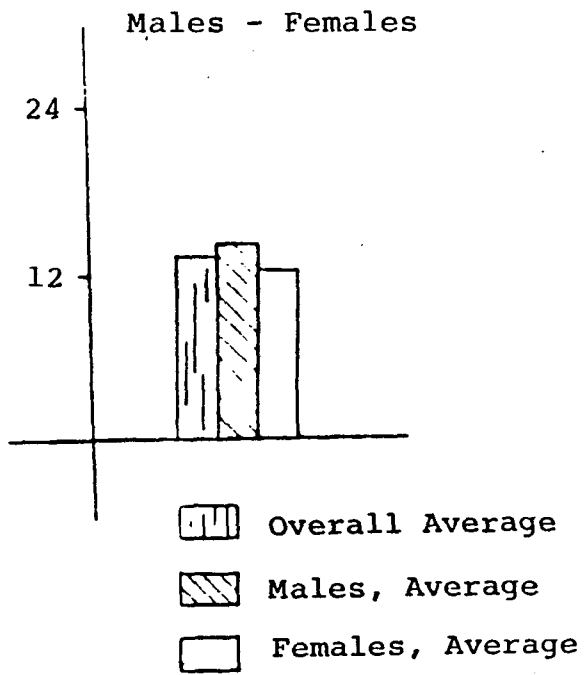


Fig. 3.10a

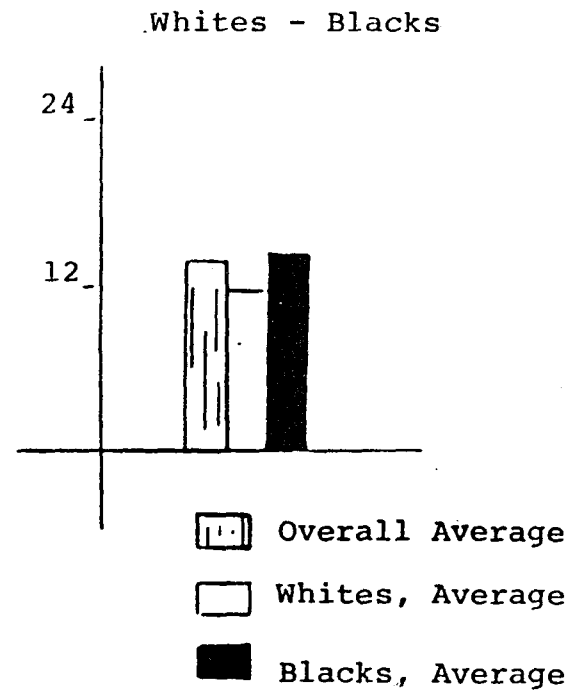


Fig. 3.10b

high levels of participation and in fact, it would be presumed that the levels would be even lower had a broader cross section of the union been interviewed. Remember that the workers interviewed were all attending a meeting called by the union.

It was surprising that black workers were slightly more likely to participate in the union than white workers, given that they were less satisfied with the union. However, it must be remembered that a very small sample was being used and therefore, this difference might not be significant. A second possible explanation of the higher levels of participation among black workers than among white workers was that lower levels of satisfaction led to higher levels of participation, possibly in hopes of changing the union to create higher levels of satisfaction. Unfortunately, there was not enough data to draw any conclusions.

The standard deviation for black workers was 5.3480 whereas for white workers it was 8. While white workers were more spread in their levels of union participation, the differences did not seem significant. Again the spread might be simply the result of the size of the sample.

In the category of outlook for the future, there was significant differences between men and women. On a scale of 0 - 7, men had a mean of 5.7350, reflecting a

fairly positive view of the future, whereas women had a mean of 3.0276, reflecting a mildly pessimistic view of the future. fig. 3.11a. This difference in perspective might have as much to do with factors outside the work place as with factors within. The major work related factor probably was that female workers were more likely to hold lower paying jobs and jobs that required less skill. While in the sample there was substantial difference in income between male and female workers, there was not much difference in levels of skills. There was not enough data to even speculate on the external reasons that might tend to make women who were interviewed more pessimistic about the future than men.

There was very little difference in standard deviation between the male and female workers. Both groups had relatively low standard deviations. The male standard deviation was 1.9739 and the female standard deviation was 1.6279. This meant that the mean was rather reflective of each group as a whole.

There was some difference between black workers' view of the future and white workers' view of the future. Black workers tended to be more positive about the future than were white workers. The mean for black workers was 4.3750 whereas for white workers it was 3.3889. fig. 3.11b. The reasons as to why black workers were more optimistic about the future than white workers might have

View of the Future  
New Orleans

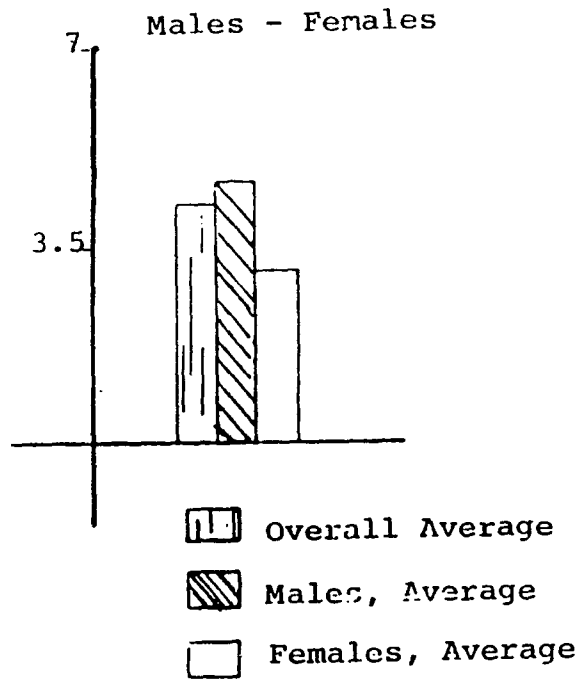


Fig. 3.11a

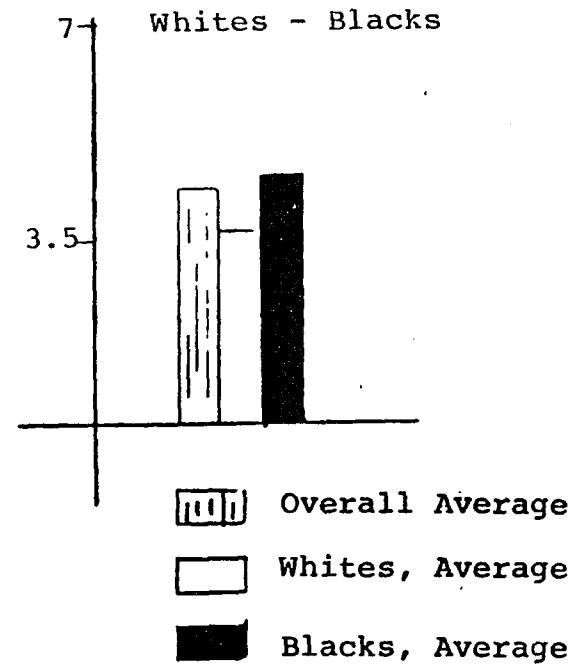


Fig. 3.11b

nothing to do with the job. While there was no data to prove these reasons, such results might be a reflection of the civil rights movement and the changes that the movement brought to the south, particularly to Louisiana. An enormous number of changes occurred in the south, especially in the way black people were treated and the opportunities that were open to them. Such important changes might have influenced the way black workers perceived the future.

Again, there was very little difference in the standard deviation between black workers and white workers. Black workers had a standard deviation of 2.1832 and white workers had a standard deviation of 1.9965. Again, as with the male - female category, there was not much spread in the responses.

Job satisfaction was correlated with union satisfaction for male workers. A correlation coefficient of .1364 was found, indicating that there was no significant correlation. When the two categories for female workers was correlated, no significant correlation was found. The correlation coefficient was .2362. The two categories were then correlated along racial lines. First, the data for white workers was correlated. There was no significant correlation found. The correlation coefficient was .1322. Then, the two categories for black workers were correlated and again, there was no

significant correlation. The correlation coefficient was .2362.

From the above data, it was clear that there was no significant relationship between satisfaction on the job and union satisfaction. It was believed that there would have been a positive relationship at least among some of the subgroups. The reason that workers, who were satisfied on the job, might not feel satisfaction with the union was that the union was a relatively new force in their lives and had not had enough time to affect the quality of the job.

Job satisfaction was then compared with union participation. No significant correlation was found for males. The correlation coefficient was .2153. When the same comparison was made for female workers, again no significant correlation was found. The correlation coefficient was  $-.0637$ . The two categories were then correlated along racial lines. No significant correlation for either black workers or white workers was found. The correlation coefficient for black workers was .2888 and .1322 for white workers. It became clear from this data that there was no relationship between job satisfaction and union participation.

It was decided to compare union satisfaction with union participation for all the subgroups. It was assumed that those workers most satisfied with the union

would be least likely to participate because they would believe that the union was already meeting their needs. Therefore, their input was not needed. Male workers were looked at first. There was a significant correlation found between union satisfaction and union participation. The correlation coefficient was .5041. fig. 3.12. While the correlation was significant, it was in the opposite direction of what was expected. Then, the two categories for female workers was correlated and no significant correlation was found. The correlation coefficient was .0332. Therefore, while union satisfaction was a significant indicator of participation for male workers, it was not for female workers.

Next, the two categories for black workers were compared and again, it was found that union satisfaction was a significant positive indication of union participation. The correlation coefficient was .4106. fig. 3.13. The same comparison was made for white workers and it was found that union satisfaction was not a significant indicator of union participation. The correlation coefficient was  $-.1761$ . This data reflected a significant difference between black and male workers and white and female workers in the relationship between union satisfaction and union participation.

Working Class Identity and Political Orientation

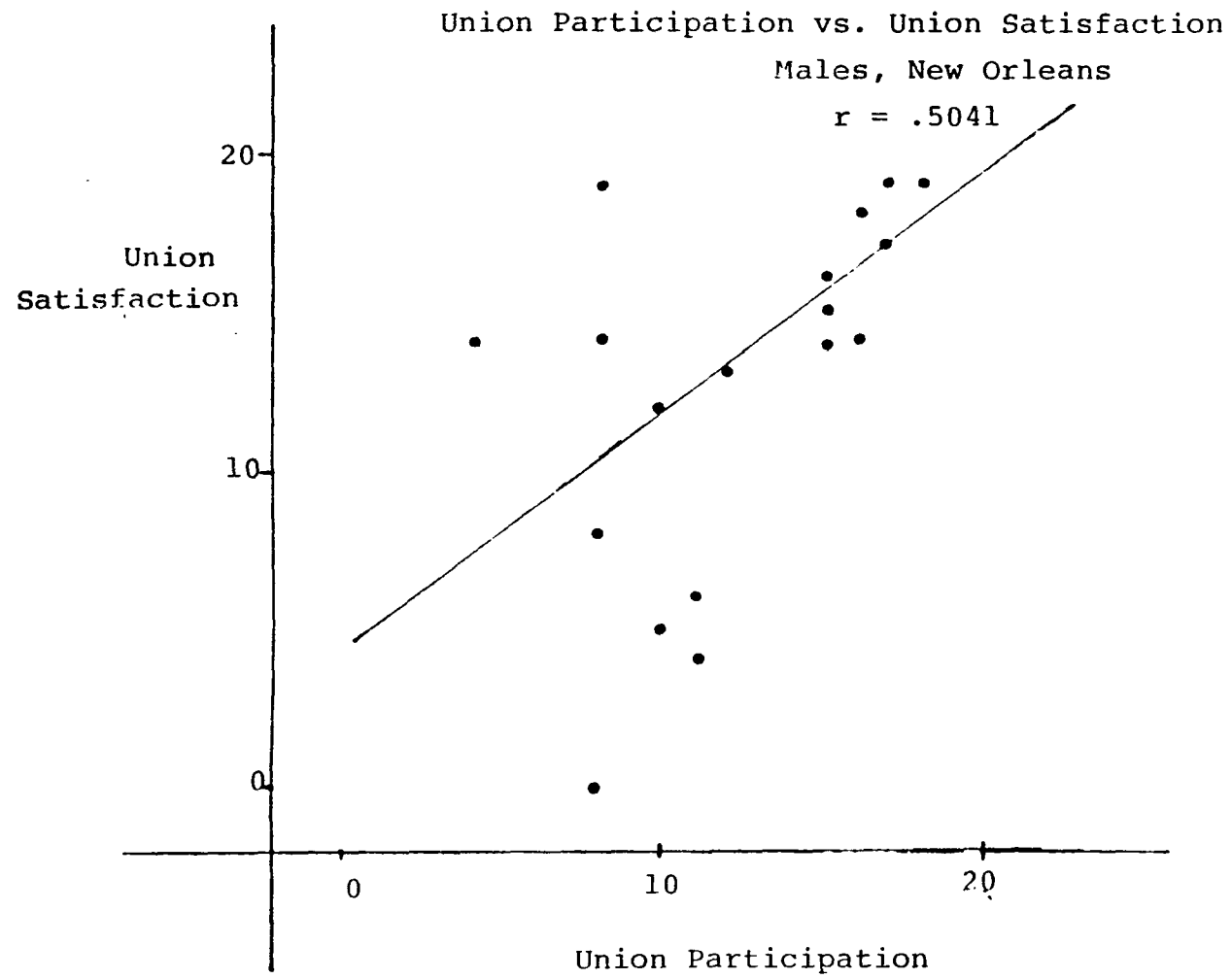


Fig. 3.12

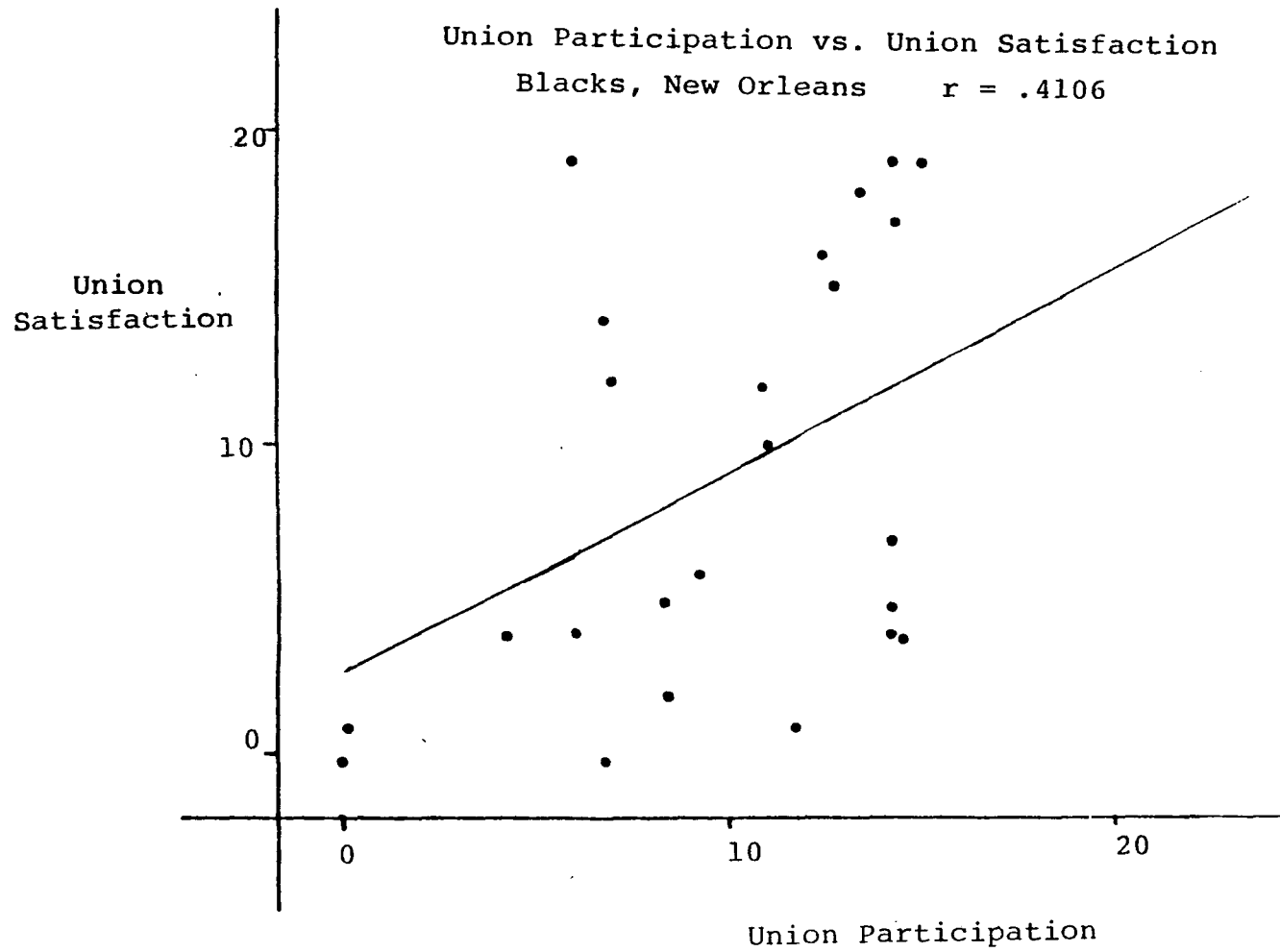


Fig. 3.13

A moderate level of class identity was found in the category of working class identity. The mean was 4.5588 on a scale of 0 - 8. The standard deviation was a moderately highly 2.4174. While some workers showed a high degree of working class identification, other workers showed almost none.

Support for the two major existing political parties was at the low end of average. The average was 3.3429 with a fairly small standard deviation of 1.9394 on a scale of 0 - 8. These figures might be so due to a number of factors. One is that the two party system in Louisiana is particularly underdeveloped. Louisiana was dominated by the Democratic Party for years although Republicans do play a role in Louisiana politics today. However, candidates for most offices are picked in a primary where several candidates from both parties run against each other, regardless of political affiliation. The two candidates with the highest score run in November if no candidate has a majority of the vote. This procedure is true even if the two candidates are from the same political party. Neither political party has been well developed as a political organization.

Another reason that there might be low levels of support for the two existing political parties is that the state is in a severe economic slump. Many people believe this slump was caused by the fact that both

political parties looked to oil as a salvation for Louisiana's economic problems. No doubt there are also other reasons with broader implications than just the local political situation described here for the relatively low levels of support for the two major political parties.

On the issue of support for a labor party, moderately high levels of support were found among rank and file union members. The mean was 5.7429 and the standard deviation was 2.4275 on a scale of 0 - 9. This issue was one that showed sharp divergence of both opinion and perception between the rank and file and the local leadership. When the local leadership was asked this question during interviews, they universally thought that the formation of a labor party would be a poor idea. When asked how they thought the rank and file in the union felt about a labor party, they were convinced that there was little support for the idea.

Next, union participation was correlated with working class identity. It was believed that those workers most active in the union were likely to have the highest level of working class identification. This assumption proved to be incorrect. The correlation coefficient was  $-.0497$  which indicated that there was no significant correlation between these two factors.

Union satisfaction then was correlated with support for a labor party. There was no expectation as to whether there would be a correlation that was significant or not. There was no significant correlation. The correlation coefficient was .1651.

Union participation was correlated with support for a labor party. It was believed that even though the union's official position was to support one of the two major political parties, workers who were active in the union might be likely to support the concept of a labor party. They might not see a contradiction between current support for one of the two major parties and future support for a labor party. A significant correlation was found with the correlation coefficient of .3913.

#### Working Class Identity and Political Orientation, Race and Gender

When looking at the category of working class identity, there was virtually no difference between males and females. The mean for men was 4.5560 and 4.5625 for women on a scale of 0 - 8. fig. 3.14a. Both groups showed mid-range levels of working class identity. There was also little difference in the standard deviation which was 4.5565 for men and 2.0966 for women. There was little difference also found between black workers and white workers in this category. Black workers had a mean

of 4.5 and white workers had a mean of 4.7778. fig. 3.14b. There was also little difference in the standard deviation. The standard deviation for black workers was 2.3591 and 2.5386 for white workers. This category became one of the few categories where neither race nor gender seemed to make much difference.

When support for existing political parties between male and female respondents was divided, it was found that levels of support were lower for women than they were for men. However, such levels were not much lower. The mean for men was 3.556 and 3.3125 for women. fig. 3.15a. The standard deviation for men was 1.9470 and 1.8519 for women. Again, there was little difference between male and female respondents.

Black workers were compared with white workers and there was a strong difference in levels of support for existing political parties. Black workers showed a low level of support for the existing political parties with a mean of 2.8846, the lowest of any of the subgroups measure. White workers showed a mean of 4.6667, a moderate level of support for the two existing political parties. fig. 3.15b. Therefore, while gender was not a good predictor of support, race was. The standard deviation was similar in both groups for black workers. It was 1.8185 for black workers and 1.7321 for white workers.

Working Class Identification  
New Orleans

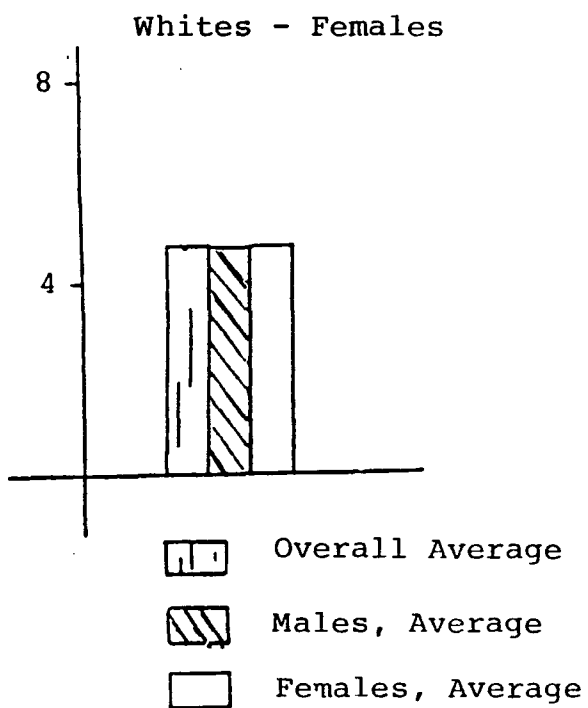


Fig. 3.14a

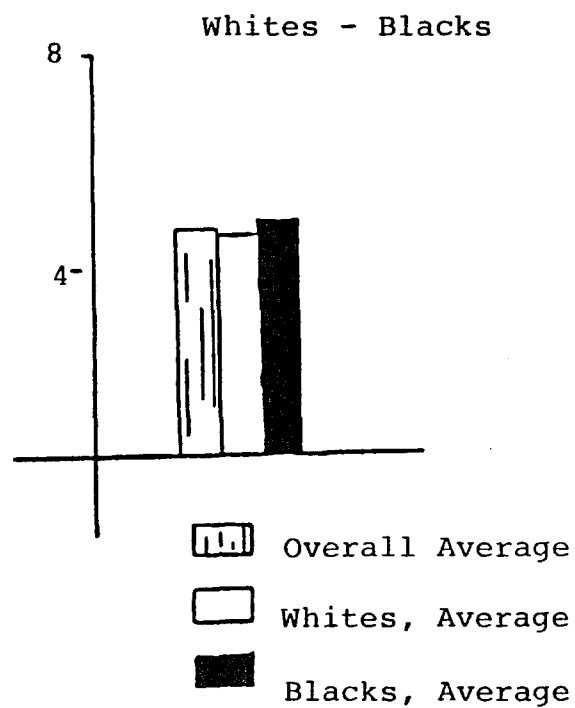


Fig. 3.14b

Support for Existing Political Parties  
New Orleans

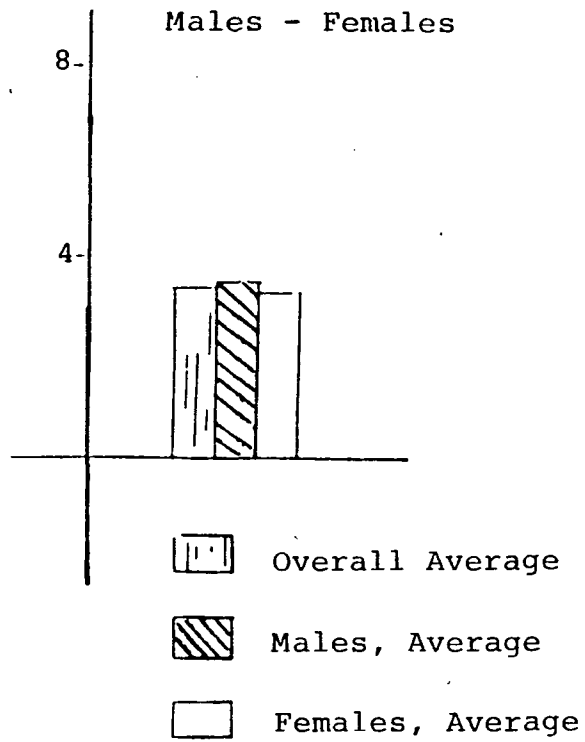


Fig. 3.15a

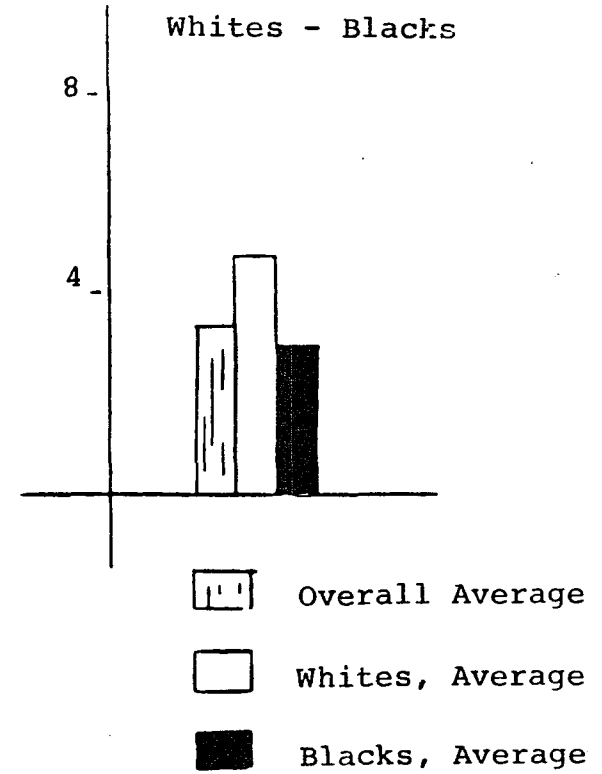


Fig 3.15b

The explanation of this support in part might be related to lower levels of income found among black respondents than white respondents. Also, there was the fact that black workers were excluded from the political process in the south for so many years. Other factors, which might be more national in character, might be considered as explanations.

In the category of support for the development of a labor party, only a slight difference between male workers and female workers was found. The mean for male workers was 5.8333 and the mean for female workers was 5.4431. fig. 3.16a. The difference in mean might reflect the fact that women historically had tended to be more politically conservative than men. More likely, it might mean nothing at all, given the small size of the difference. Both scores showed moderate support for a labor party on a scale of 0 - 9.

There was little difference between standard deviation between male and female. The standard deviation for men was 2.5147 and the standard deviation for women was 2.334. In both cases the standard deviation reflected a fairly wide range of opinion on the subject.

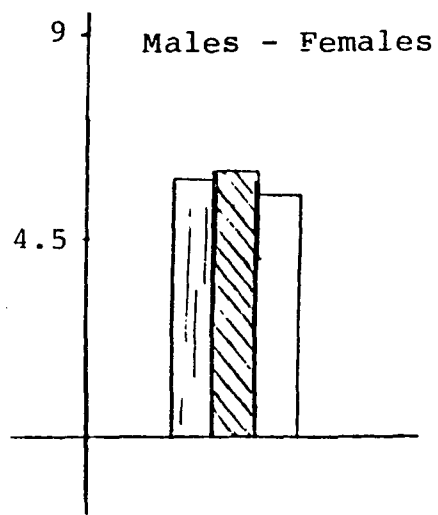
There was significant differences in levels of support for a labor party between black workers and white workers. Black workers showed a moderately high level of

support for a labor party with a mean score of 6.0625 whereas white workers showed a relatively low level of support with a mean of 3.9375. fig. 3.16b.

These figures reflected an extremely significant difference between black and white workers. It is believed that the difference was explained by forces outside the work place. It might be related to the long isolation blacks were kept in for so long in the south. The Democratic Party, which is the party the trade union movement regularly endorses, was the political party that represented segregation in the south. While it has since become a vehicle for many blacks into elective offices, it still bears the history of segregation. Many leading party members were active members even when the Democratic Party was the official party of segregation.

Many blacks still continued to feel isolated from the political power of the Democratic Party in Louisiana. A reflection of that isolation was the Jesse Jackson campaign. When it appeared that Jackson might win the democratic primary in the state, the democratic governor tried to end the primary. While he failed in his effort and the primary was held, Jesse Jackson did win. Jackson won in spite of the opposition of all the white leadership in the Democratic Party (Times Picayune, February 8, 1984). Many of the resentments created by the white supremacist history of the Democratic Party might

Support for a Labor Party  
New Orleans






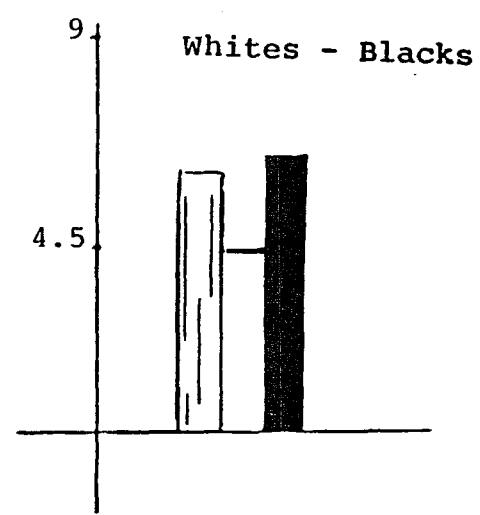
-  Overall Average
-  Males, Average
-  Females, Average

Fig. 3.16a






-  Overall Average
-  Whites, Average
-  Blacks, Average

Fig. 3.16b

be reflected in the greater desire of black workers to form an independent labor party.

There was little difference between the standard deviation among black and white workers. The standard deviation among black workers was 2.237 and the standard deviation among white workers was 2.2589. In both cases the standard deviations were fairly large and reflective of a fairly wide range of opinions on the subject.

Union participation was then compared with working class identification. The assumption was the workers, who participated in the union, were more likely to see themselves as workers than those who did not. When the correlation for male workers was done, a significant negative correlation was found. The correlation coefficient was  $-.3236$ . fig. 3.17. When the two categories for female workers were compared, no significant correlation was found. The correlation coefficient was  $.1927$ .

Then the two categories were compared along racial lines. No significant correlation for either white workers or black workers was found. The correlation coefficient for white workers was  $-.1672$  and  $-.0068$  for black workers. Therefore, with the exception of male workers, there was no relationship between working class identity and union participation.

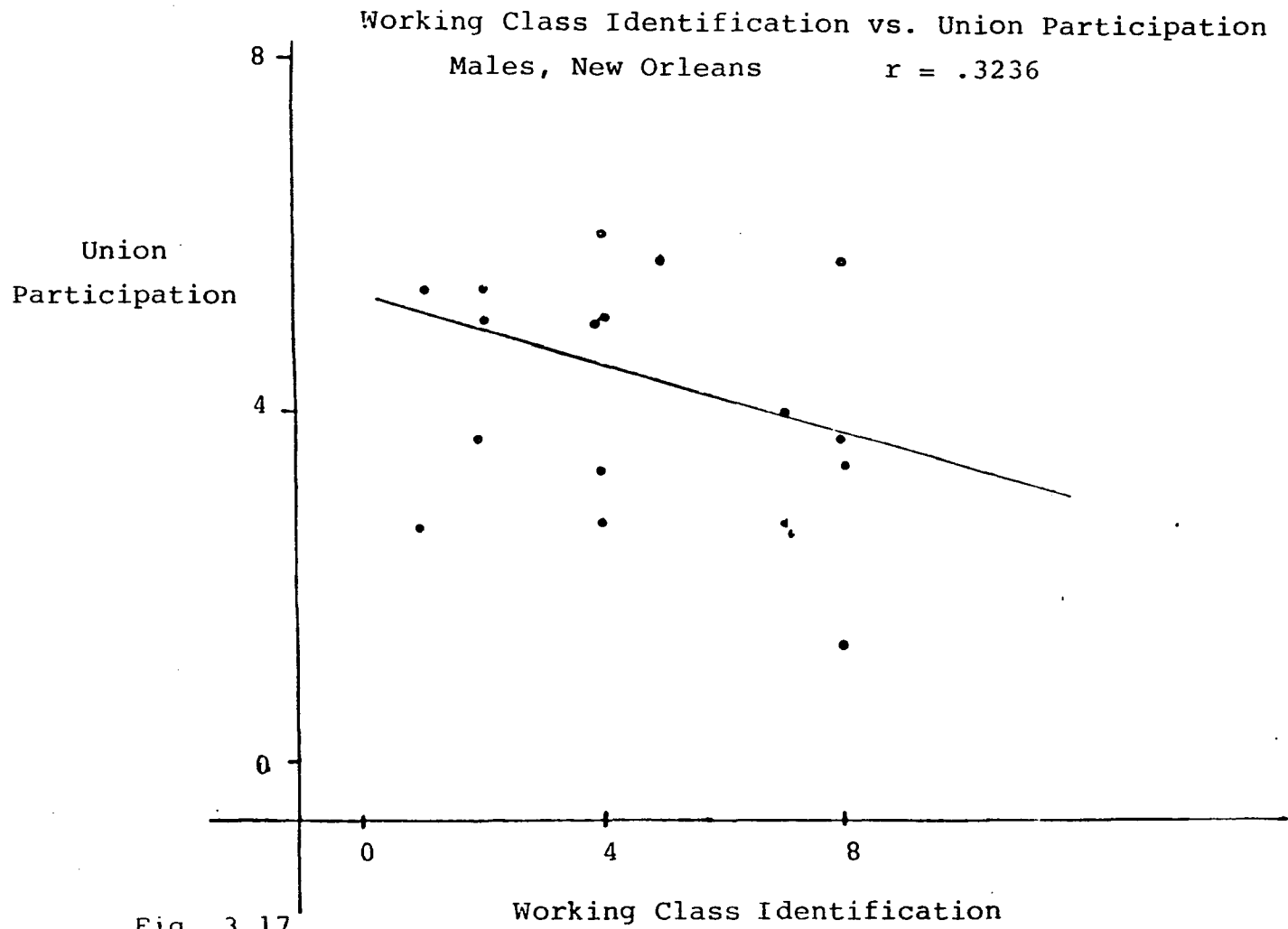
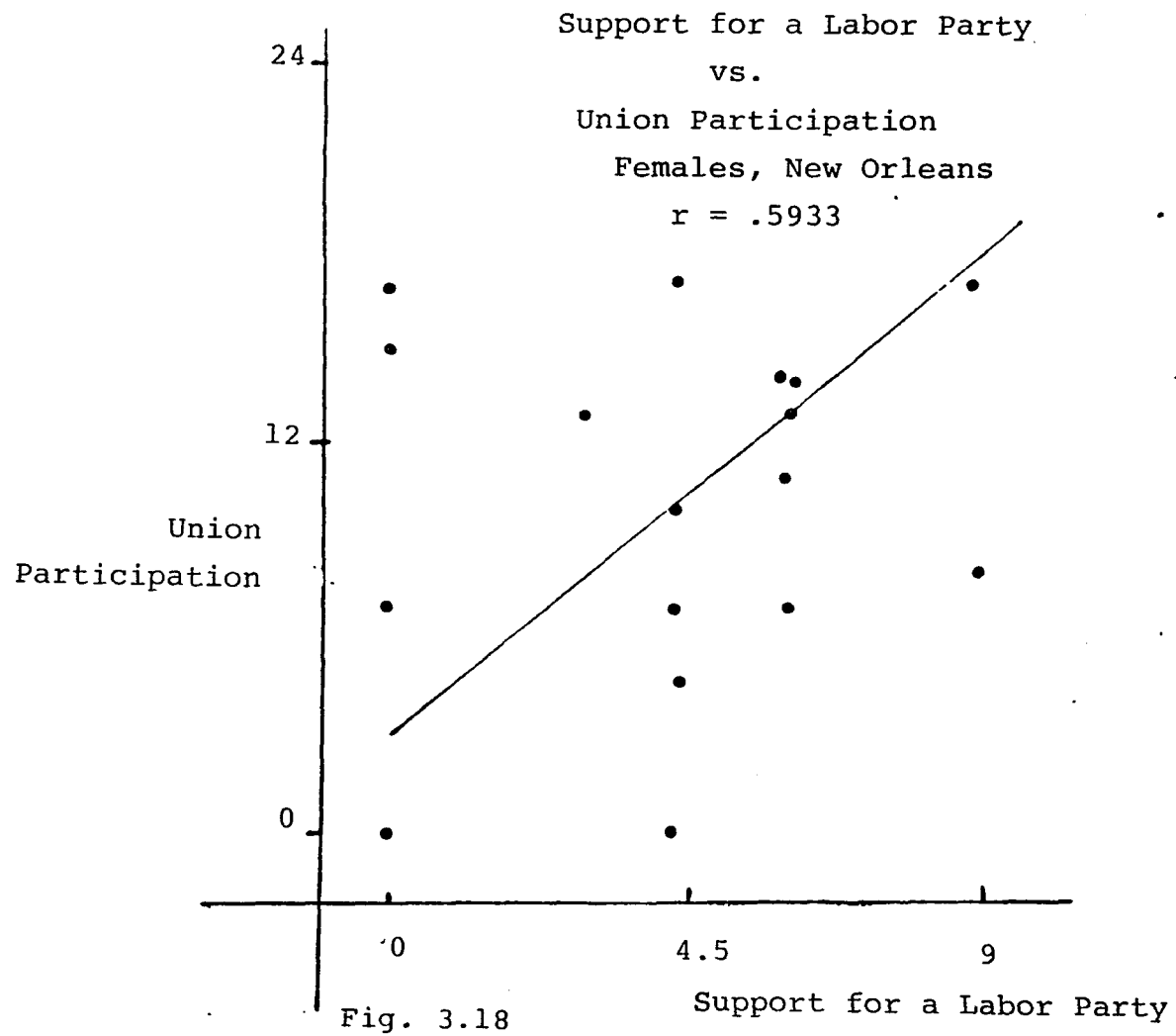


Fig. 3.17

Next, it was decided to compare union satisfaction with support for a labor party. There was no significant correlation found for any of the subgroups. The correlation coefficient for male workers was .2273 and .0429 for female workers. For black workers the correlation coefficient was .2694 and .0 for white workers.

Union participation was then compared with support for a labor party. There was a significant correlation for female workers and for black workers. The correlation coefficient was .5933 for female worker and .4835 for black workers. fig. 3.18 and fig. 3.19. There was no significant correlation for male workers or for white workers. The correlation For male workers was .0889 and -.2812 for white workers. Union participation was a good indication of support for a labor party for black workers and female workers but not for white workers and male workers. However, the sample size was too small to know whether these results would continue to be true among other public employees.

The category of working class identification was compared with support for a labor party. The assumption made was that workers with stronger working class identification would be more likely to support a labor party than workers who did not identify themselves as workers. This assumption was not the case. There was no



Support of a Labor Party  
vs.  
Union Participation  
Blacks, New Orleans  
 $r = .4835$

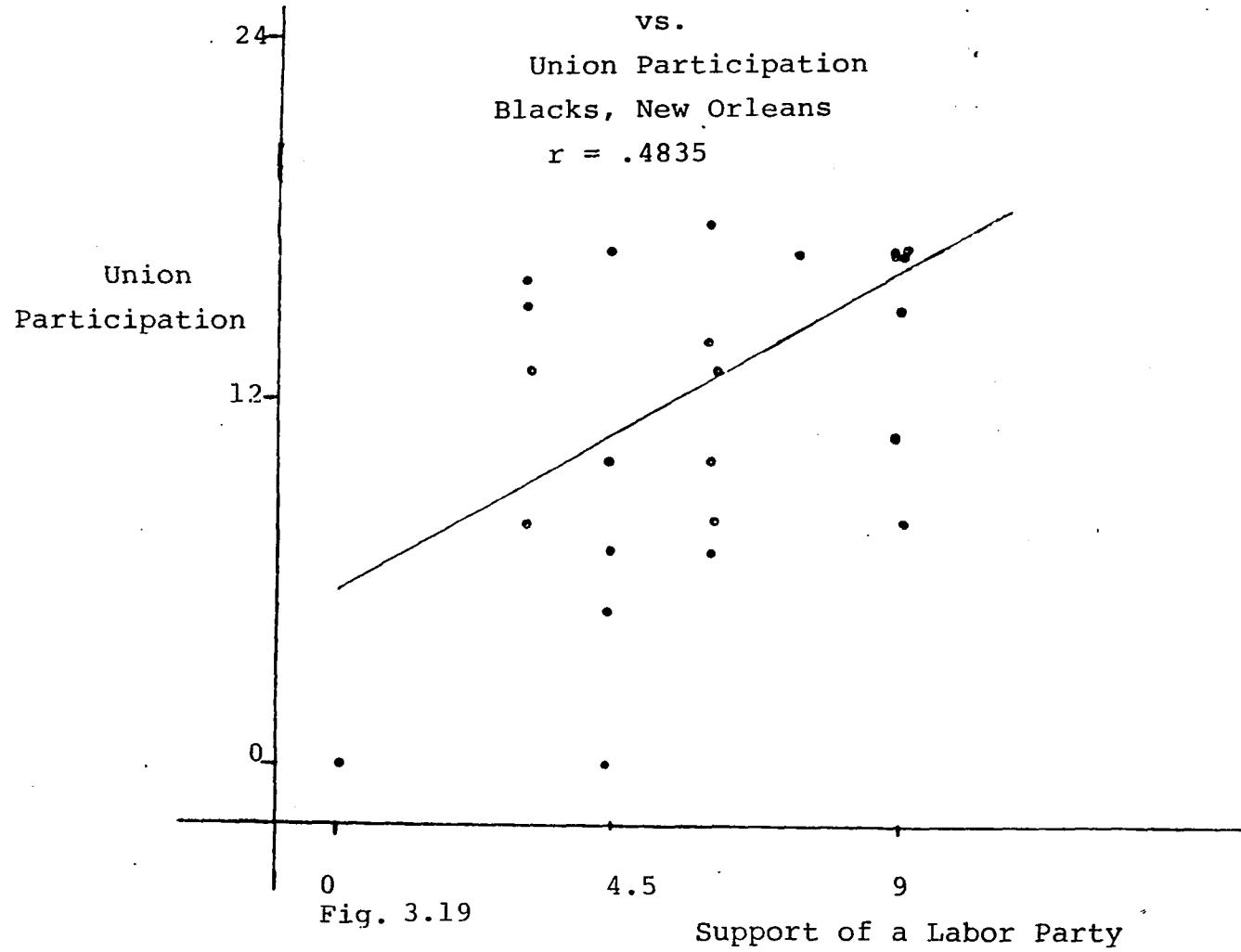


Fig. 3.19

significant correlation for any of the subgroups. The correlation coefficient for male workers was .0217 and -.0849 for female workers. The correlation coefficient for black workers was .0763 and -.0546 for white workers.

Since the sample for both white workers and male workers was quite small, the data accumulated might not have much significance. However, the strong correlations for female workers and black workers were quite significant, suggesting that it would be important to study whether this pattern continued with other groups of public employees.

Support for existing political parties was compared with support for a labor party based on the assumption that strong support for existing political parties would imply weak support for a labor party. However, no correlation of significance for either male or female workers was found. The correlation coefficient for male workers was -.0340 and -.0724 for female workers.

When the data was divided along racial lines, a significant negative correlation for white workers was found. The correlation coefficient was -.6805. fig. 3.20. Also found was a significant positive correlation for black workers. The correlation coefficient was .3098. fig. 3.21. The results for white workers were predictable. The results for black workers were the opposite of what would have been predicted. Black

Support for Existing Political Parties

vs.

Support for a Labor Party

White Workers, New Orleans  $r = -.6805$

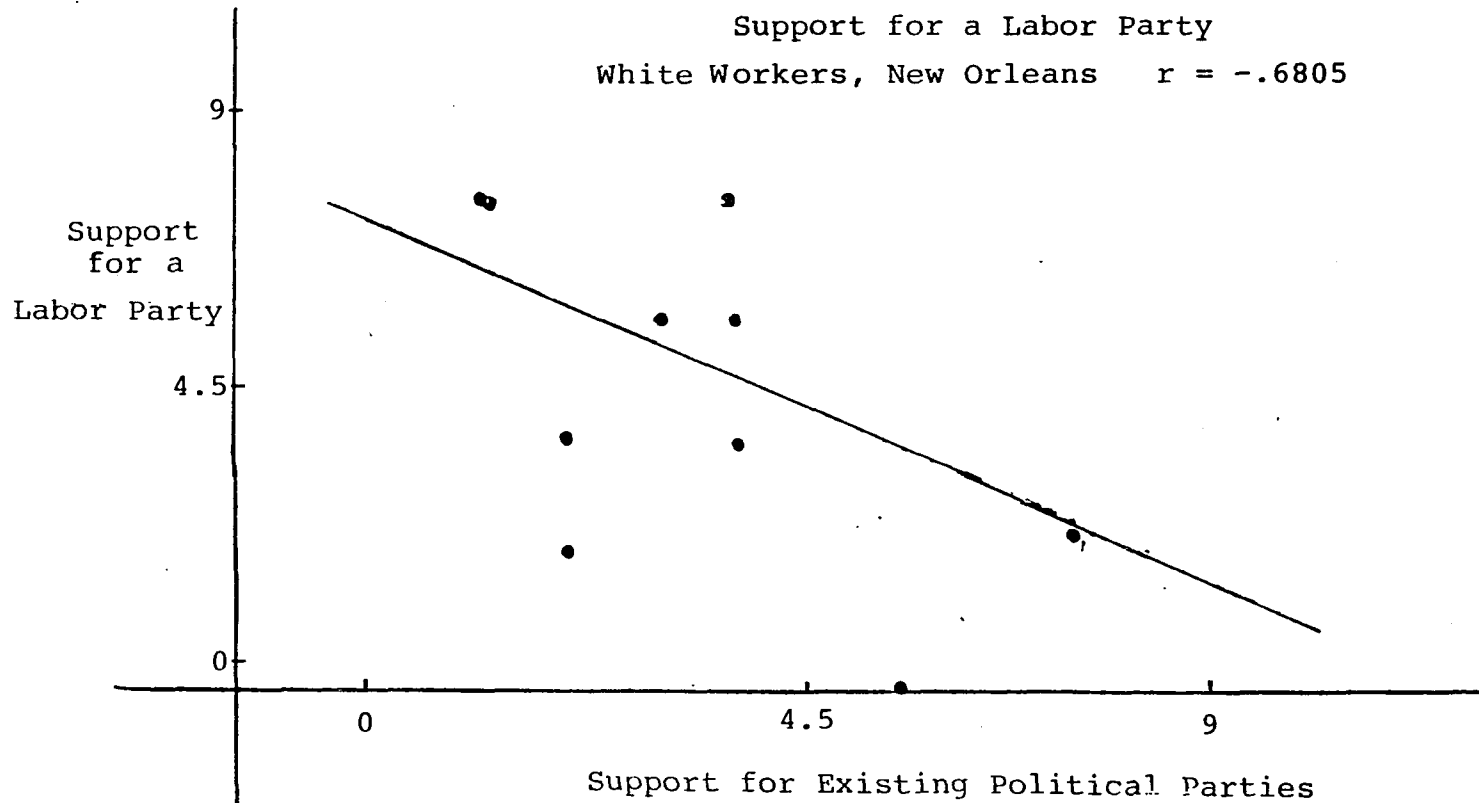


Fig. 3.20

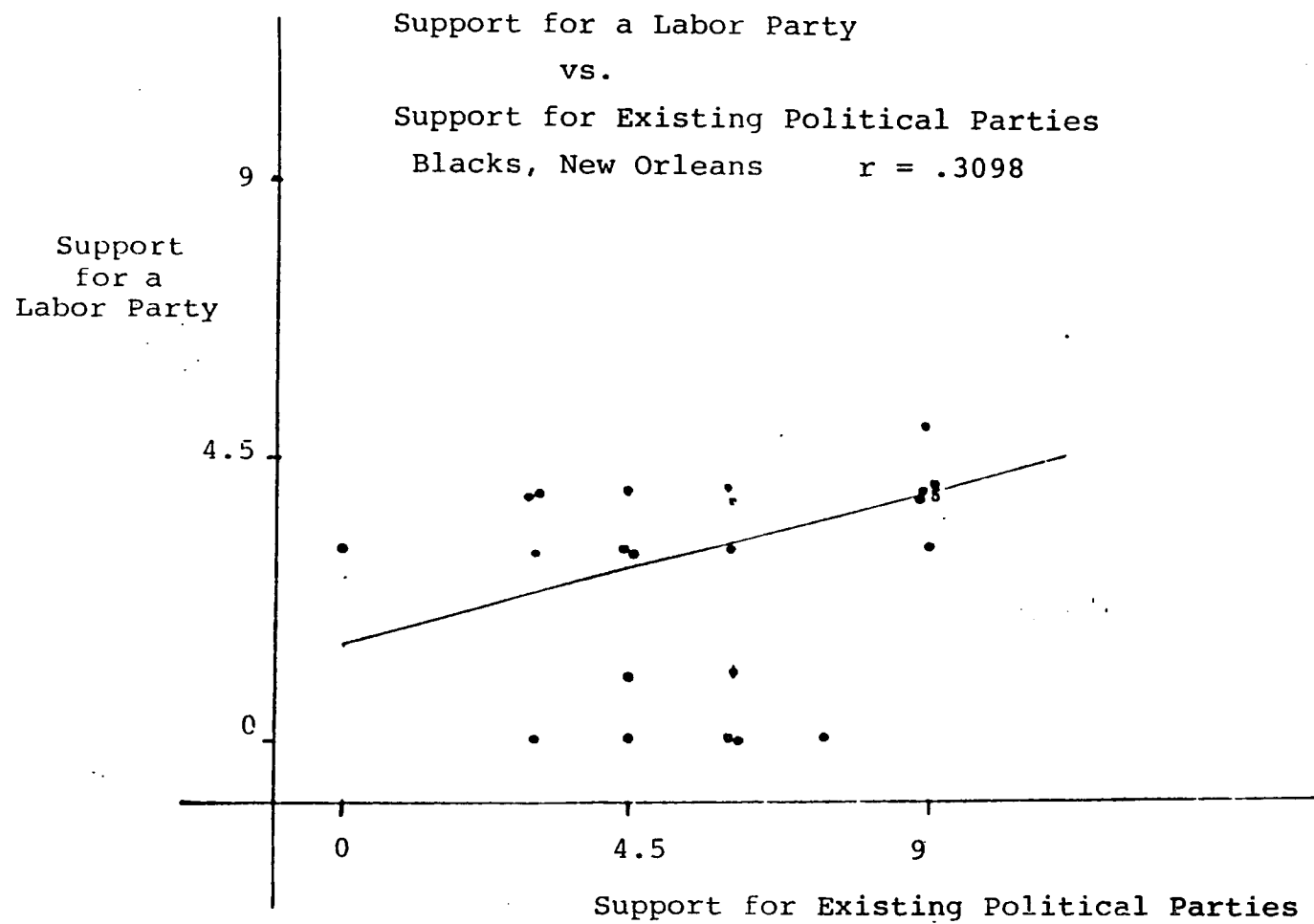


Fig. 3.21

workers, who were supporters of the two major parties, were more likely to support a labor party than those black workers who did not.

Thus, this limited data sample, based on the questions, is unable to provide us with a profile of the type of worker likely to participate in the union or likely to support the development of a labor party. How does this limitation then bode for the development of a labor party? On one hand, since a profile of the type of worker who would be most likely to support a labor party has not been developed, the data seems to suggest that any worker might support such a party. This conclusion is true because workers, who did support the development of such a party, came from all groups of workers studied in this district council. However, a better profile of the worker most likely to develop such a party can be assessed with future research, asking both additional questions and drawing on a larger sample.

The sample size may have be the second problem in correlating the data. The sample is simply too small to be assured that the correlations attempted could not have become more significant if data could have been drawn from a larger sample.

A third problem with the sample is that it is potentially unrepresentative. It consists of those members of the union who at least occasionally go to

union meetings which is in fact, a very small percentage of the total union membership. According to local leadership, around 10% of the membership attended although personal observations of several union meetings suggests the figure might be under 5%.

Further research of this district council will have to be done before a clearer idea of what type of worker is likely to vote for a labor party and what type is not. It is also suggested that a different methodology for collecting interviews be set up. Based on later experience in New York, a system of mailing out the survey with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and then following the mailing with a telephone call is both cost efficient and provides a much higher response rate.

There was moderate sentiment for the development of a labor party among the rank and file worker, particularly the black worker indicated in the limited sample. This sentiment was determined by race but not by sex. Sentiment among white workers for the formation of a labor party was much weaker and sentiment among the leadership was literally non-existent.

Another fact that may affect this data is that these locals have little political experience even in the traditional sense that most unions do. According to the local leadership, these locals have been basically uninvolved in politics at the local or state level. The

local leadership had planned to change this situation and greatly increase involvement in politics at the local and state level by endorsing and helping to campaign for local and state candidates. It will be interesting to see how this strategy will affect the work force.

One final factor that may affect the results of this research is the "newness" of the locals involved in the study. While most of these workers have worked at their jobs for a long time, they have not been members for very long of the locals that were studied. The oldest local used in the study is no more than six years old and the newest one is just a year old. These workers do not have a tradition of being unionized workers. In addition, these workers operate in an environment where their union is severely limited in what it can do by state law. The very existence of the union has no support in law. There is a feeling among many of the workers interviewed that the union could disappear very easily if the city and the state simply decided that they did not want the union around. This perception may, in fact, be correct. Nowhere does the union have a union shop situation or even an agency shop agreement and both would be in violation of state law. In fact, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, as the research was being finished, the union was largely in the process of pulling out of the state. It had removed all of its full-time staff except

for one person and that person had been notified that he only had another sixty days to continue working with the union in Louisiana.

With this situation being the case, the workers' political attitudes have not really been molded by the union even in the limited sense that it might have been somewhere else. Their attitudes may be far more a reflection of Louisiana's political culture than of any influence the union might have had.

While the size of the sample was small being  $N=35$  and the procedure in which the questionnaire was administered may both have affected the results, it is strongly believed that the results of the New Orleans research does give some indication of the type of worker most likely to support a labor party and the type of worker who does not. The problems of the survey has been described previously so there seems little reason to discuss them further. Let us now discuss what has been learned.

The conclusions of the sample demonstrate that minority workers are far more likely to support a labor party than workers at the higher end of the scale. Of equal significance to the factors discovered that affect support for a labor party are the large number of factors that have little or no effect on support for a labor party. While race is a good predictor of support for a

labor party, gender in New Orleans is not. Support of the existing two major political parties does not prove to be a good predictor of lack of support for a labor party. While higher income proves to be a good predictor of lack of support for a labor party, it turns out to have no predictive effect on support for existing political parties. A positive or negative view of the future has no clear relationship to support for a labor party. Satisfaction with the union does not translate either into support for the two existing political parties or for a labor party. Even union participation bore no relationship to support for existing political parties or for a labor party.

In spite of all the problems with this data as discussed above, one factor that suggests that much of this data is reliable is that the results are often quite similar to the results in New York where the data was collected very differently and where the N was much higher. This fact is considered very important. It is even more important if one considers how different the New York respondents are from those in New Orleans. While there are some things in common such as being public employees and belonging to the same international union, the differences are at least as great as the similarities which will become clear in the next chapter. The New Orleans data is most useful not in

giving us predictive factors but rather in showing us which factors are not helpful in predicting supporting for a labor party.

## Chapter 4

### Results of the New York Research

The second group of union workers who were interviewed were members of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) which represents many city employees in New York City. The District Council is the largest district council in the entire international union with over 125,000 members. The union encompasses a wide range of job titles from hospital workers and city clerks to tutors at colleges in the City University system. Its members are found in every city agency.

### Description of the Respondents

The average age of the workers who returned the questionnaire was 42.5 year. Ages ranged from 19 years to 68 years, The average age of the respondents was 2 years older than the respondents in New Orleans. The average age for the New York respondents was surprising as it was not expected that they be that old. One possible explanation for the slight increase in age was that the Center for Workers' Education, from which was obtained the list of people asked to answer the questionnaire, discourages enrollees who are not at least 25 years old. Also, a second reason was that in the mid 1970's, there were a large number of layoffs among younger workers and a subsequent hiring freeze was in

effect that extended for several years. Thirdly, it is possible that older workers were more likely to respond to surveys than younger workers.

Of those workers who responded to the question concerning racial identification, 51% (44) said that they were black, 33.7% (29) identified themselves as white, 10.4% (9) identified themselves as hispanic and 4.6% (4) of the respondents fell into the category of other.

fig. 4.1. These numbers are not completely reflective of the work force who was interviewed and seem to indicate that black workers were more likely to respond to the questionnaire than other workers. Also, black workers appeared in disproportionately high numbers in the sample.

The respondents were predominantly female, 73.8% (62) as compared to 26.2% (22) male. fig. 4.2. This difference is reflective of the fact that the sample had a disproportionately high number of females and that females surveyed were more likely to respond.

A majority of the respondents were married, 53.5% (46) as compared to 46.5% (40) who were single. The average number of children was 1.76 with a standard deviation of .81. While a majority of the respondents were married, it was only a slight majority. This fact seemed surprising, considering the age of the respondents, particularly since widowed respondents were counted as married.

Ethnic Distribution  
New York

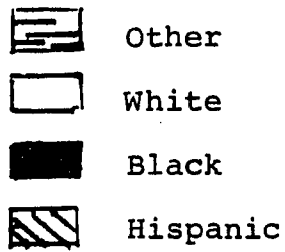
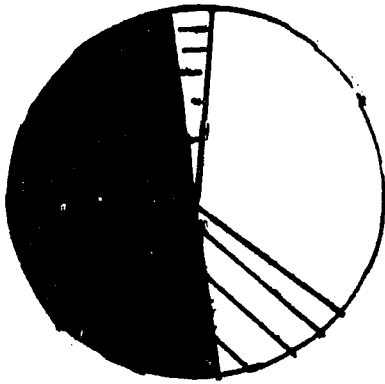


Fig. 4.1

Male - Female Distribution  
New York

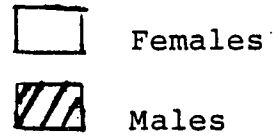
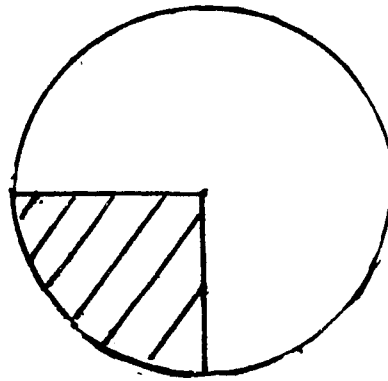


Fig. 4.2

Workers were at the job an average of 10.4 years with a standard deviation of 8.18 years. This figure means that the work force has been fairly stable with a large number of the respondents having been on the job for an extended period of time. This fact is not surprising, given the average age of the work force. Again, the lack of substantial numbers of new workers may be reflective of city hiring policies, including a number of hiring freezes; the fact that the city wages are comparatively high and therefore, there is a lack of incentive for workers to leave their jobs; and finally, the fact that the sample was drawn from workers enrolled in college at The Center for Workers' Education which tends to exclude younger workers.

Of the workers who responded to the question on the amount of education attained, 96.3% (79) had at least a high school diploma. Only 3.6% (3) did not. The percentage who did not respond to the question was 6.8% (6). Of the respondents who had a college education, at least 85% (70) had some college education and 9% (8) had college degrees. This finding is not surprising as the sample was drawn from The Center for Workers' Education. The level of education is probably not reflective of the work force as a whole.

Income distribution was divided into seven categories from the lowest category of \$5,000 to the highest which was in excess of \$35,000. This approach was used because it was felt that workers would be more likely to respond to categories than if they were asked specifically as to what was their income. In spite of such efforts, only 50% (45) of the respondents answered this question, the lowest response rate to any question on the survey. Of those who responded, 15% (7) earned less than \$10,000 a year, 8% (4) earned between \$10,000 and \$15,000, 13% (6) of the respondents earned between \$15,000 and \$20,000, 18% (8) earned between \$20,000 and \$25,000, 20% (9) earned between \$25,000 and \$30,000, 11% (5) earned between \$30,000 and \$35,000 and 13% (6) earned above \$35,000 a year. The mean income was \$22,700. fig. 4.3.

Of those respondents who were married, the vast majority, 77.2% (34) had working spouses as compared to 22.8% who answered that their spouses were not employed. The average income for working spouses was \$24,200 which was slightly higher than the mean income for respondents. The mean family income was over \$46,000 a year, well above the national average (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1986). One can see from the income that a large number of the respondents have what would be considered a good solid middle class income. There is enormous variance among spouse income with a standard deviation of \$11,200.

Income Distribution, New York

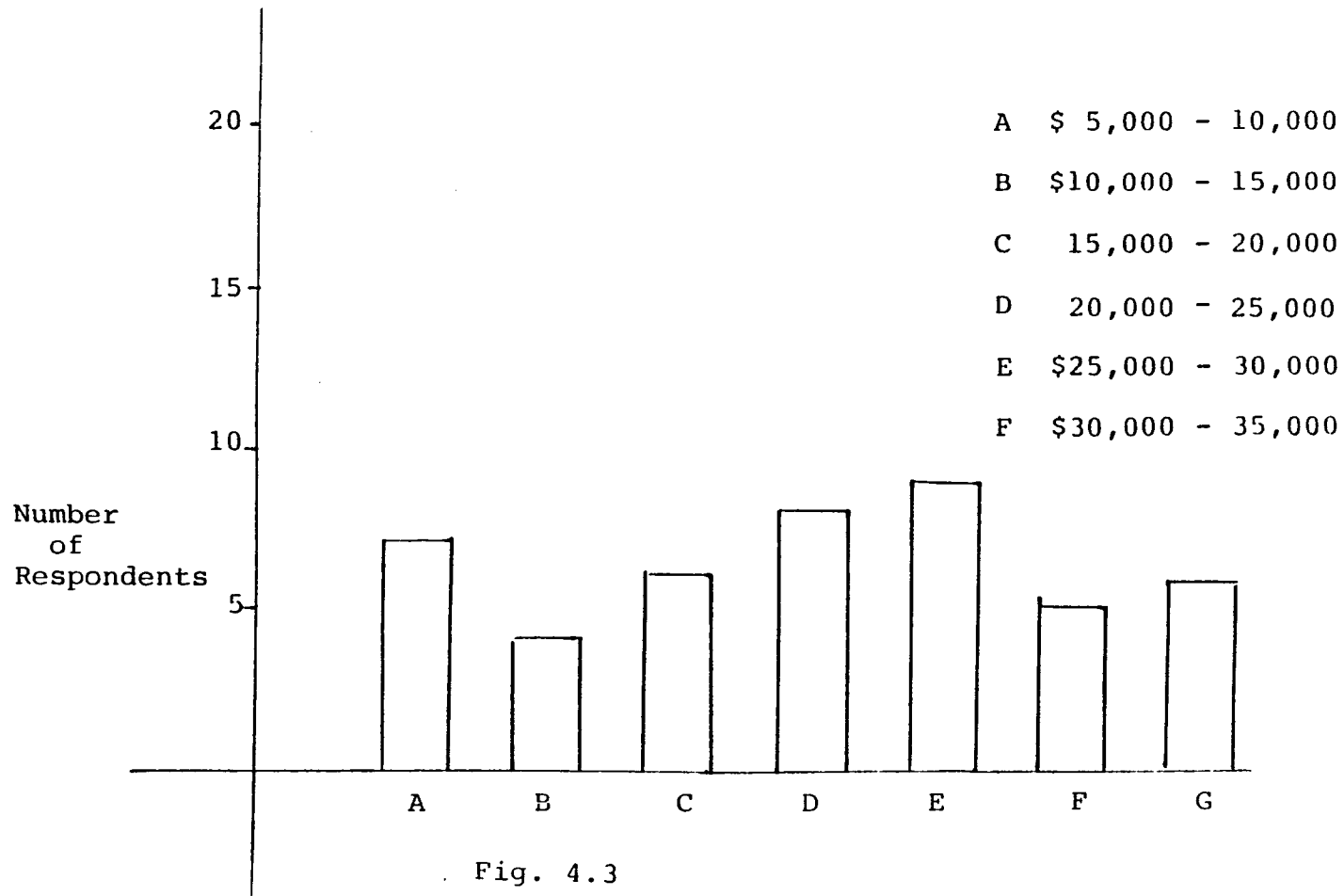


Fig. 4.3

The jobs that these respondents hold are enormously diversified although very few require a college education. Many of the jobs are considered service jobs or semi-professional. Most of these workers are paid at levels that would be hard to match elsewhere. This fact may account for the high degree of stability within the work force.

Each of the seven categories of questions used was scaled. The categories are the following: job satisfaction, scaled 0 - 7 with 0 representing a low level of satisfaction and 7 a high level; union satisfaction, scaled 0 - 20 with 0 representing no satisfaction and 20 a high level of satisfaction; union participation, scaled 0 - 24 with 0 representing no union participation and 24 representing a high level of union participation; working class identity, scaled 0 - 8 with 0 representing no identification with the working class and 8 representing a high level of identification with the working class; a view of the future, scaled 0 - 7 with 0 representing a very pessimistic view of the future and 7 representing a very optimistic view of the future; support for existing political parties, scaled 0 - 8 with 0 being no support for existing parties and 8 representing a high level of support for existing political parties; and support for a labor party, scaled 0 - 9 with 0 indicating no support and 9 indicating a high level of support for a labor party.

The first category examined was income distribution. Male income was compared to female income. There was little difference found between the mean incomes of male and female respondents. The mean income for females was \$22,500 and the mean income for males was \$23,100. fig. 4.4a.

When mean incomes were compared along racial and ethnic lines, substantial differences were found in income between whites, blacks and hispanics. The mean income was \$26,000 for white workers, \$20,800 for black workers and \$18,800 for hispanic workers. fig. 4.4b. These figures meant that black workers earned 80% of what white respondents earned and hispanic workers earned only 72% of what the average white respondent earned. Women workers earned 97% of what male workers earned and therefore, showed little difference. Minority workers earned substantially less than white workers, whether male or female.

#### Job Satisfaction and Union Satisfaction

A mean of 5.1325 was found in the area of job satisfaction, representing a high level of job satisfaction among the respondents. The standard deviation was 3.1604 which implied that there was a fairly wide range of opinions on the subject. What was somewhat surprising was the high level of job satisfaction as there is a great amount of research that

Mean Incomes  
New York

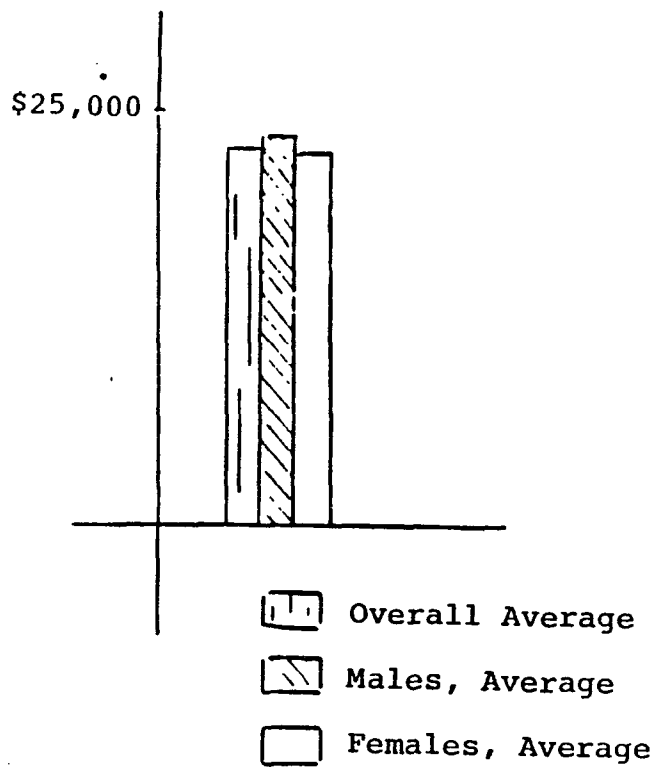


Fig. 4.4a

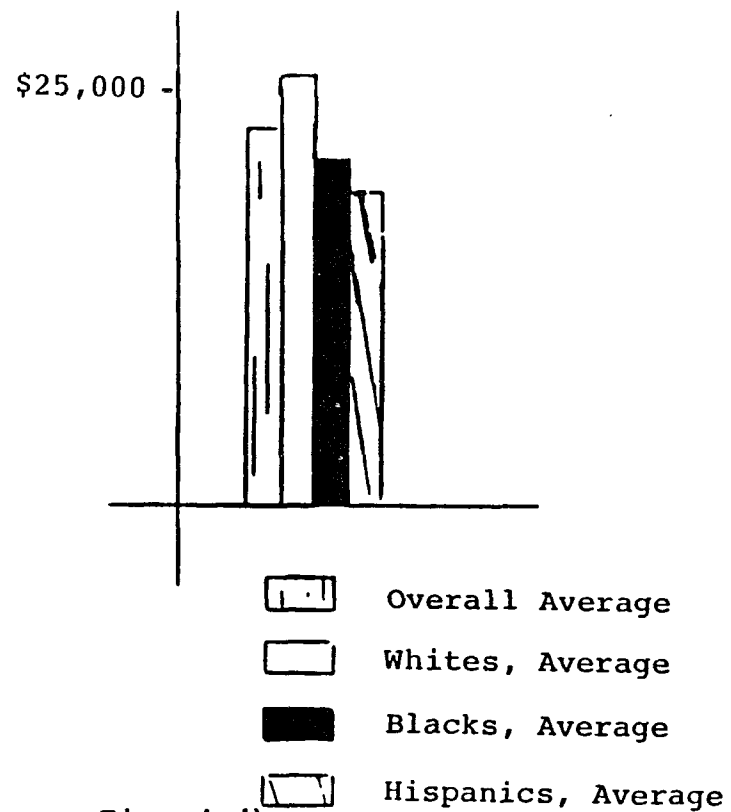


Fig. 4.4b

suggests that workers are growing dissatisfied with their jobs.

Levels of union satisfaction were quite low with a mean of only 7.3393 on a scale of 0 - 20. This result is not surprising as there is often not much day to day contact between the union and the workers and the workers rarely see what the union does. In addition, workers have virtually no choice as to whether they join the union or not as they must pay union dues even if they choose not to be members.

In the area of union participation, the data reflected low levels of participation. On a scale of 0 - 24, the mean was 6.9107 with a standard deviation of 5.0653. This data meant that there were very few respondents who participated in the union on a regular basis. It was pointed out in the previous chapter that the participation rate in unions is very low. District Council 37 of the AFSCME estimates that 10% of their members participate in a union meeting once a year (Bell, 1985). One suspects that even this estimate is high.

In the category of a view of the future, it was found that workers had a moderately optimistic view of the future, again in contradiction to what would have been predicted and in contradiction to some recent research. There was a mean of 4.7083 and a standard deviation of 2.0332 on a scale of 0 - 7. While some workers were not optimistic, some were.

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### Job Satisfaction and Union Satisfaction, Race and Gender

The data accumulated was then compared in the same procedure as had been done with the data acquired from the New Orleans survey. Comparisons were made based on both gender and race. The gender comparisons were identical to the ones in New Orleans, but the racial or ethnic comparisons differed. The ethnic breakdown for New York was black, white and hispanic and not the white and black breakdown that was used in New Orleans.

Job satisfaction was examined. First, the data by gender was separated. It was found that women were more satisfied with their jobs than men. The mean score for men was 4.9750 and 5.2083 for women. On the other hand, the standard deviation for women was significantly greater than for men, the deviations being 3.3303 and 2.9933 respectively. fig. 4.5a.

When black workers, white workers and hispanic workers were compared, it was found that white workers were most likely to be satisfied with their jobs with a mean score of 5.8296. Black workers also showed a high level of job satisfaction, having a mean score of 5.1667. However, when black workers and white workers were compared to hispanic workers, there was rather a sharp difference in the levels of job satisfaction. Hispanic workers had a mean of 3.8510, displaying a much lower level of job satisfaction than either black or

Job Satisfaction

# Job Satisfaction

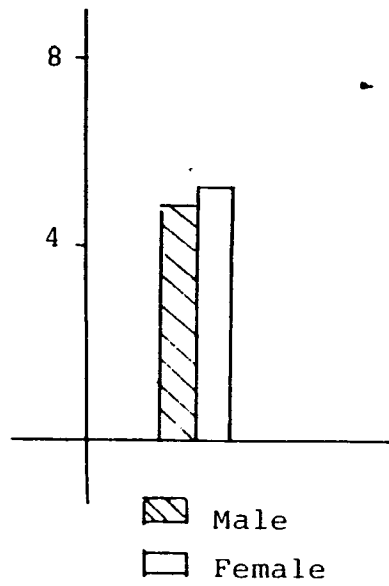


Fig. 4.5a

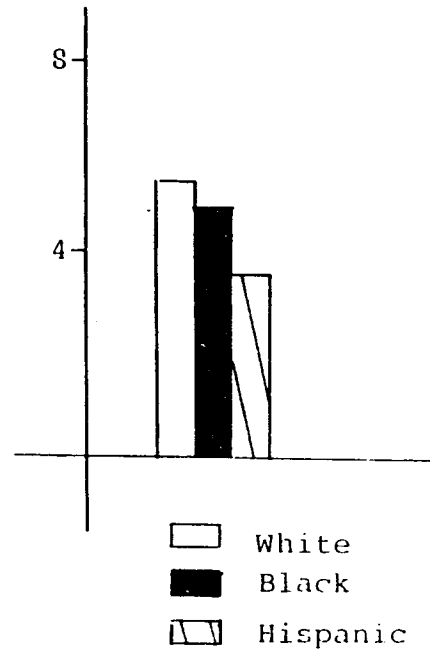


Fig. 4.5b

white workers. fig. 4.5b. The standard deviation was highest among black workers and hispanic workers with respective figures of 3.3720 and .0783 while white workers had a standard deviation of 2.8599. All the standard deviations showed a fairly wide range of responses. The lower level of job satisfaction for hispanic workers might be reflective of significantly lower wages earned by either black or white workers.

Satisfaction with the union was low among all groups of workers. Rates of satisfaction with the union were higher among female workers than among male workers. Considering that on a scale of 0 - 20, the mean score for female respondents was 7.7833, a low level of satisfaction was still displayed. The mean score for men was 6.3750. fig. 4.6a. The standard deviations for both groups were fairly large being 4.7935 for women and 5.3971 for men. When this category was looked at along racial and ethnic lines, low levels of satisfaction were again found among all racial and ethnic groups. White workers were the least satisfied with the union with a mean score of 6.4038. Black and hispanic workers had almost identical scores, 7.8222 and 7.8571 respectively. The standard deviation was high for all three groups. It was highest for white workers at 5.2269, second highest for black workers at 4.9683 and lowest for hispanic workers at 3.9761. fig. 4.6b.

Union Satisfaction  
New York

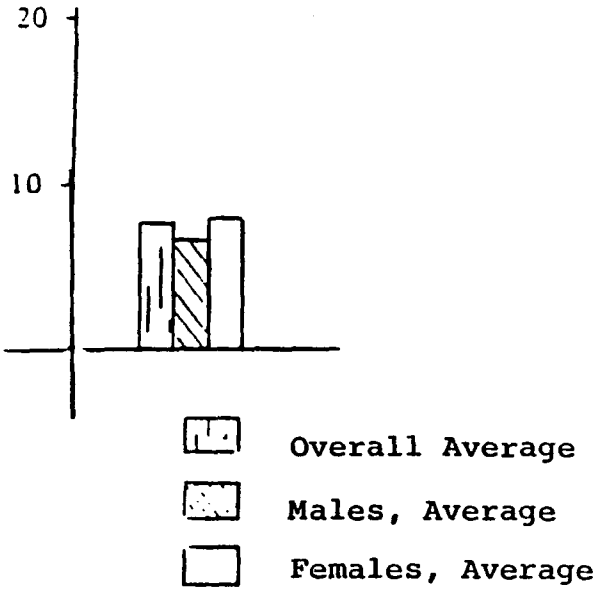


Fig. 4.6a

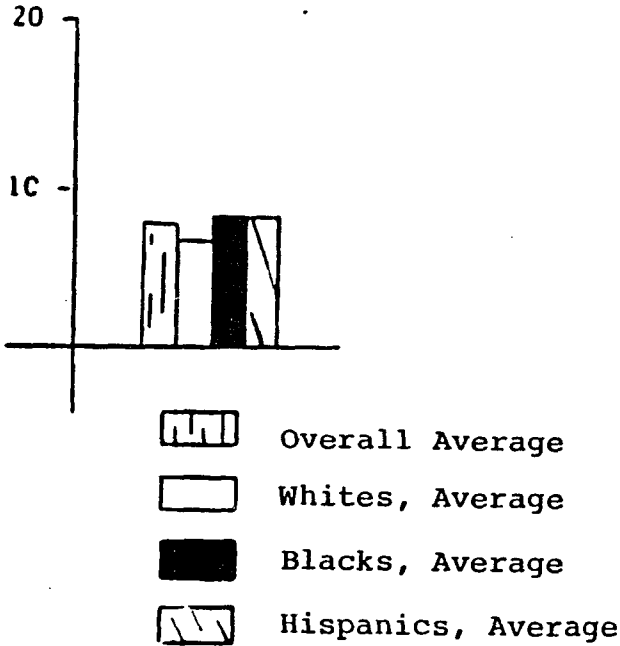


Fig. 4.6b

Levels of union participation were also quite low. When levels of participation by gender were looked at, it was found that the levels were similar. The mean for female workers on a scale of 0 - 24 was 6.5500 and it was slightly higher for male workers at 6.9417. fig. 4.7a. Standard deviations were also quite similar. The standard deviation was 5.2011 for females and 5.1039 for males.

When the categories were divided along racial and ethnic lines, some sharp differences appeared. While levels of participation among all groups were low, levels of participation among black workers were much higher than among hispanic or white workers. The mean for black workers was 8.0333. Among hispanic workers it was 6.000 and among white workers it was 5.3846. fig. 4.7b. The standard deviations for all groups were similar: 5.0950 for black workers, 4.4721 for hispanic workers and 5.0682 for white workers.

It was certainly not a surprise that levels of participation in the union were low for respondents. The turnouts at union meetings traditionally have always been exceedingly small. The literature indicates that often workers do not know who are the leaders of their unions and many do not even vote on their contracts. What was a surprising was that black workers showed levels of participation that were much higher than any other group, a result that must be looked at more closely.

Union Participation  
New York

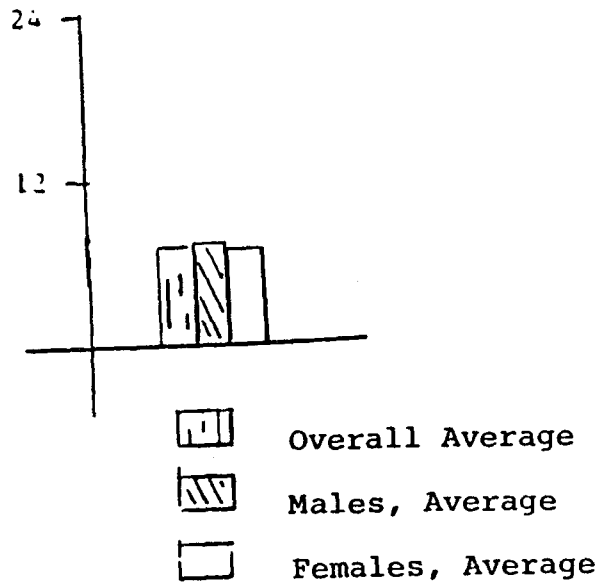


Fig. 4.7a

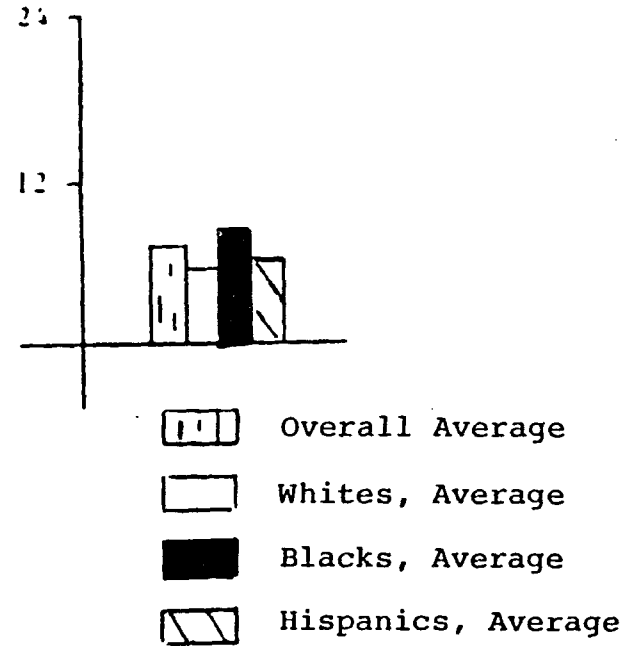


Fig. 4.7b

When comparing views of the future, both men and women were found to be optimistic about the future although women were slightly more optimistic than men. The mean score for females was 4.7333 and 4.4250 for men on a scale of 0 - 7. fig. 4.8a. Again, the standard deviations were large, particularly for men. The standard deviation for men was 2.3015 and 1.9904 for women.

When comparing views of the future based on racial and ethnic divisions, positive views of the future for all groups again were found although hispanic workers were less positive about the future than either black workers or white workers. Black workers were the most positive about the future with a mean score of 4.9111 while white workers had a mean of 4.5192 and hispanic workers had a mean score of 4.000. fig. 4.8b. The optimism exhibited by the work force when viewing the future was surprising. Given the layoffs of workers that had occurred in the not-so-distant past, one would have expected a somewhat less optimistic view of the future than what the respondents exhibited. A possible explanation for the positive view of the future is that the length of time that the work force has been on the job is quite long and the income averages well above the national average. Also, those respondents who were workers for the City of New York had their incomes

View of the Future  
New York

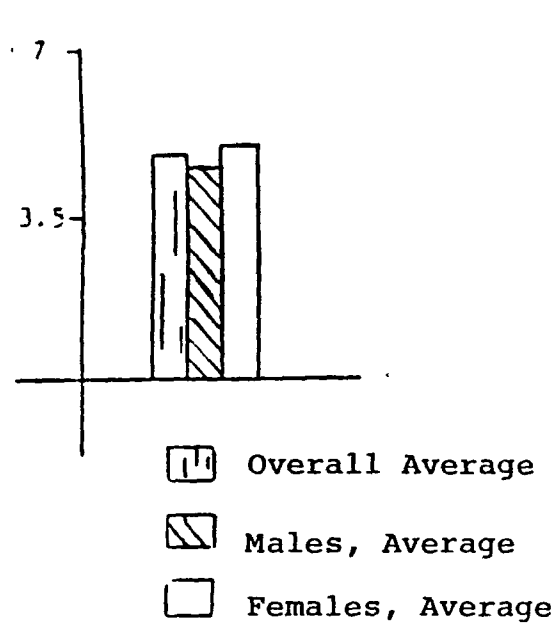


Fig. 4.8a

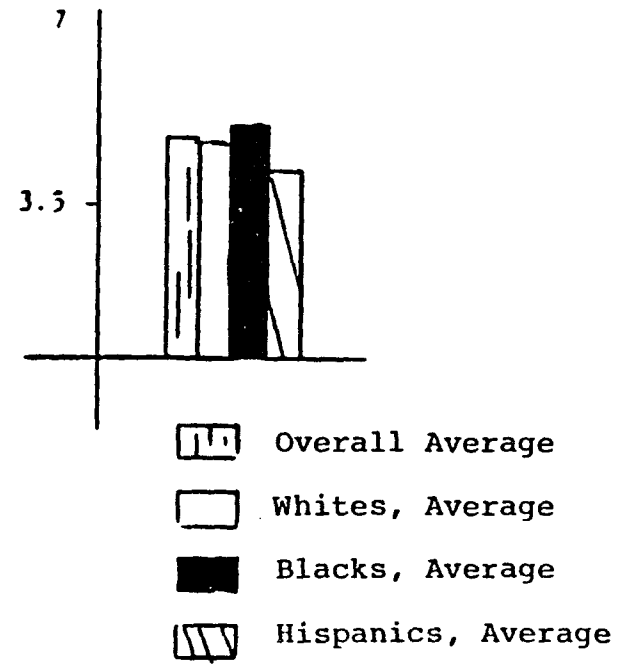


Fig. 4.8b

increased at a fairly steady rate since 1978 (Thomas, 1985). The optimistic view of the future may also be related to the fact that all of the respondents were enrolled in college, presumably to try to better their own lives. Still, considerable optimism was found from the workers interviewed in New Orleans where none of the above factors were true. There is not an adequate explanation for the less optimistic views of the future found among hispanic workers.

When correlating job satisfaction to union satisfaction, it was found that there was no correlation for any subgroups of respondents. The correlation coefficient was .0437 for female workers and .0553 for male worker. The correlation coefficients were -.1805 for black workers, .2176 for white workers and .2840 for hispanic workers. While there is quite a spread in these figures, there is no significant correlation for any group.

Correlating job satisfaction to union participation, again no significant correlation was found for any of the subgroups. Comparing males to females, the correlations were found to be 0.0800 and -.0521 respectively. When these factors were correlated along racial and ethnic lines, again no significant correlations were found. The correlation coefficient for black workers was 0.0598, -.0339 for white workers and -.1574 for hispanic workers.

Comparing union participation with union satisfaction, significant correlations were found for many of the subgroups. Comparing male respondents to female respondents, a correlation of .3912 was found for female respondents but a significant inverse correlation for males was  $-.6808$ . fig. 4.9. and fig. 4.10. These figures suggested that male workers, who were happy with the union, were less likely to participate in the union than male workers who were unhappy with the union. Female workers, who were happy with their union, were more likely to participate than those who were unhappy. While there is a correlation for both groups, it is interesting to note that they are in the opposite direction.

When the correlations were compared along ethnic and racial lines, at least significant correlations for all ethnic and racial groups were found. There was a correlation coefficient of .5131 for black workers, indicating a positive correlation. fig. 4.11. There was a correlation coefficient of .5496 for white workers, again showing a positive correlation. fig. 4.12. For hispanic workers there was a significant inverse correlation coefficient of  $-0.7780$ . fig. 4.13. What is interesting is that while all groups show some degree of correlation between these two factors, three specific groups, black workers, white workers and female workers,



Union Satisfaction vs. Union Participation  
Males, New York

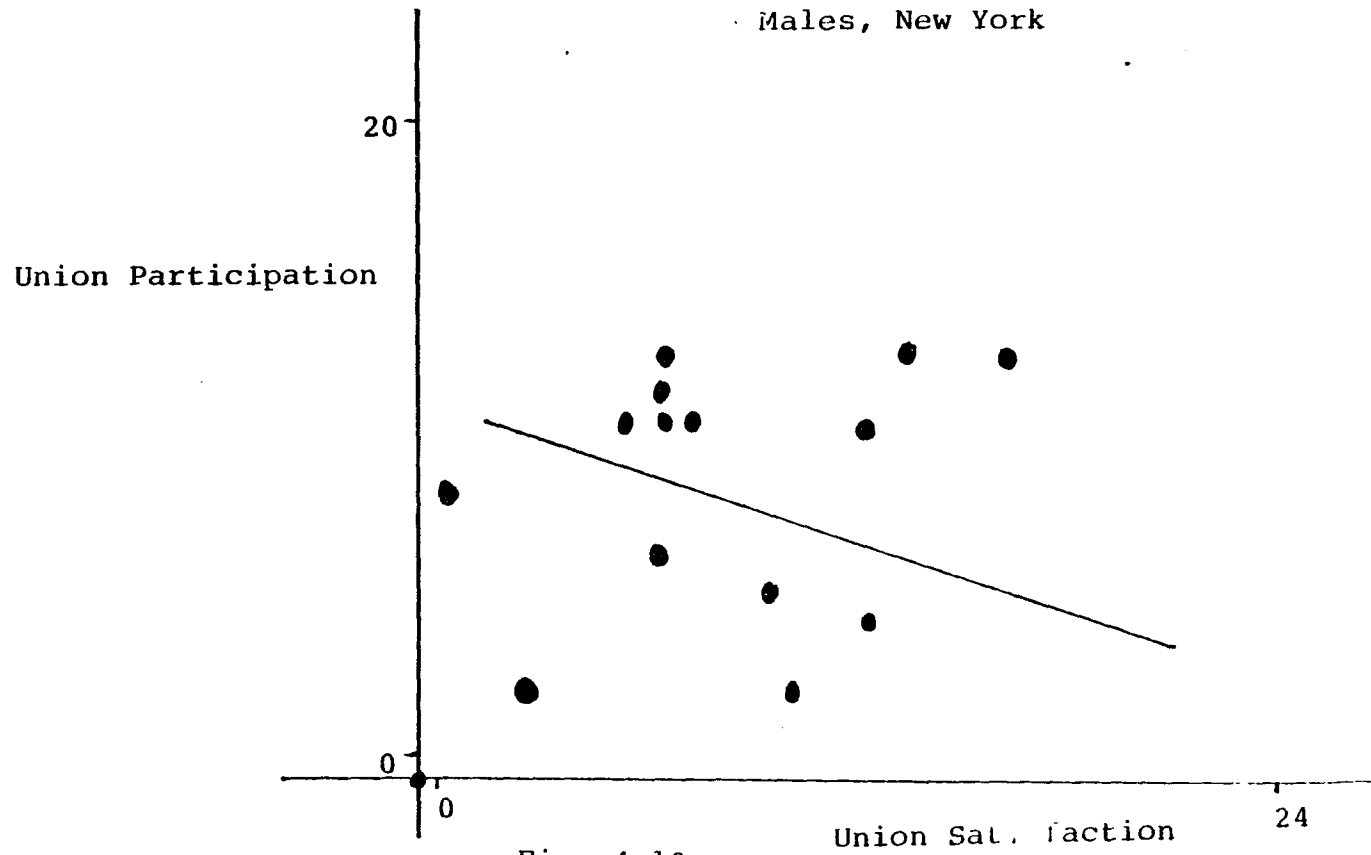


Fig. 4.10



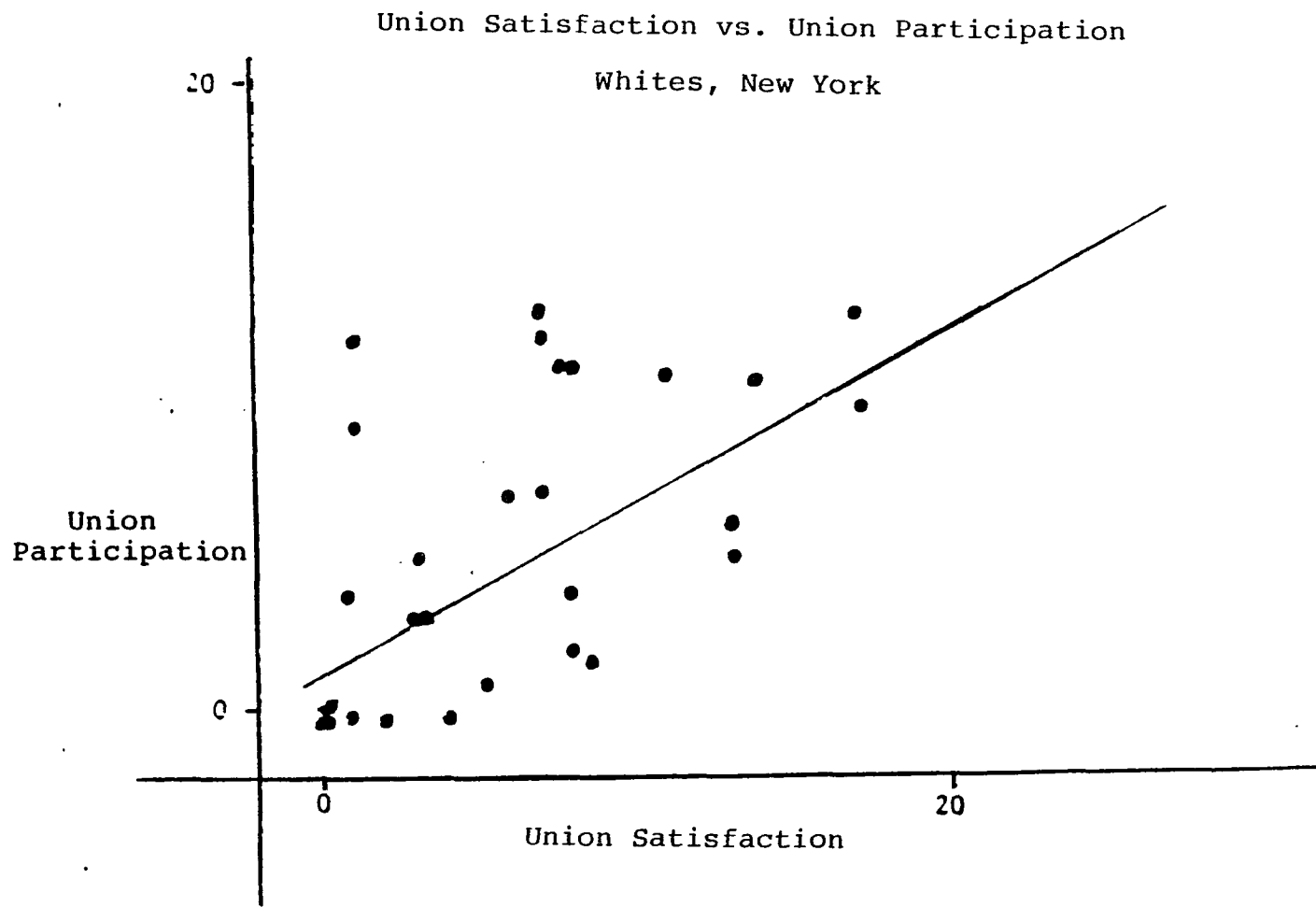


Fig. 4.12

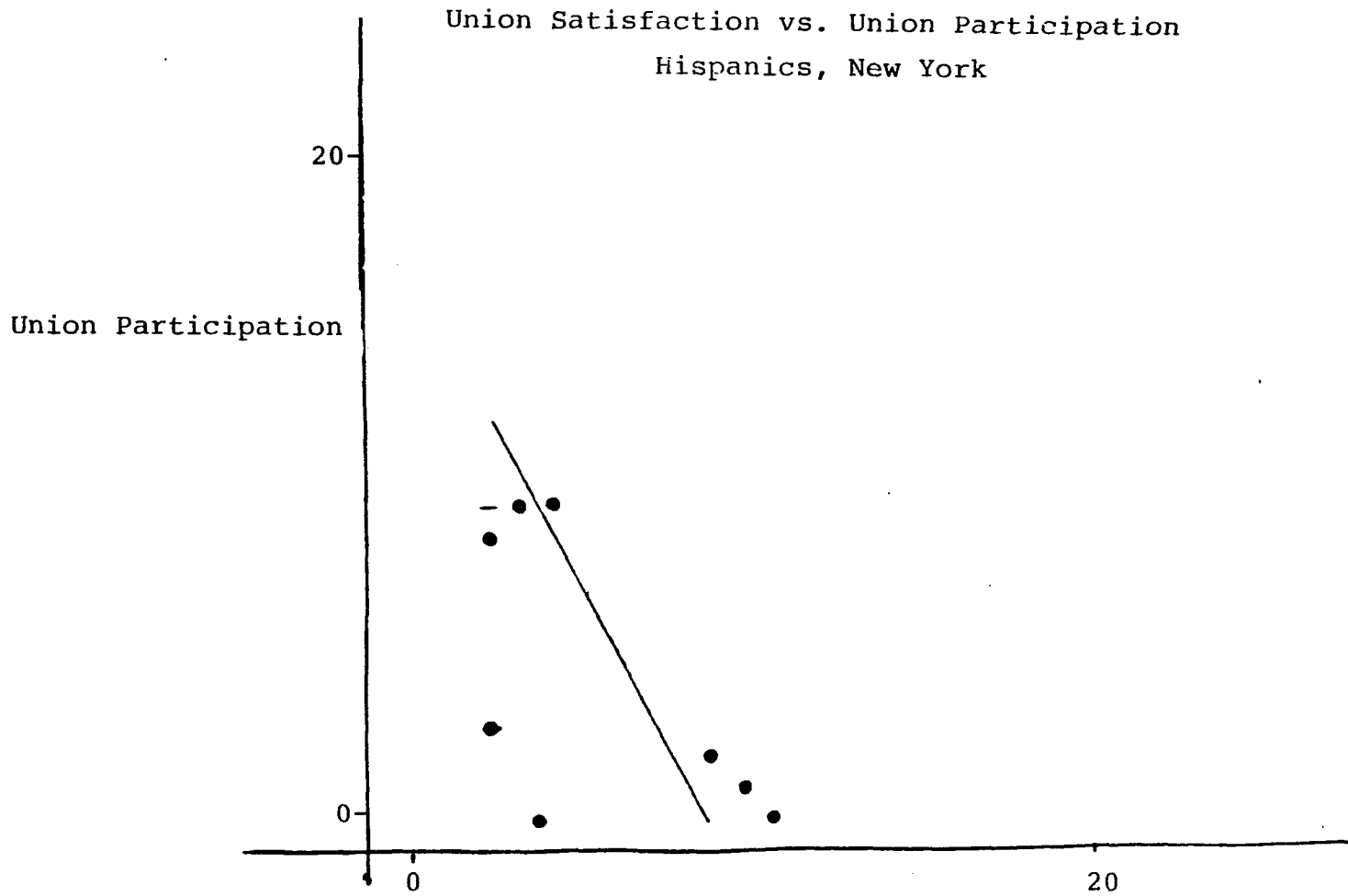


Fig. 4.13

show a positive correlation that suggest union satisfaction is likely to lead to greater participation in the union. Two groups, hispanic workers and male workers, show a negative correlation, indicating that union dissatisfaction is likely to lead to union non-participation. In the case of hispanic workers, this inverse correlation is quite strong, possibly because most hispanic workers surveyed were also female workers.

#### Working Class Identification, Political Orientation

In the category of working class identity, relatively low levels of identification with the working class were found. On a scale of 0 - 8, the average was 3.5120 and the standard deviation was 2.2198. These figures indicate that a minority of workers identified themselves with the working class while a majority did not.

In the area of support for existing parties, relatively low levels of support for the two major parties were found. On a scale of 0 - 8, the mean was 3.8214 with a standard deviation of 2.3137. While a majority of the respondents did not show strong support for existing political parties, the standard deviation indicated that there was a sizable minority where support was stronger. This result was expected and in fact, it might have been expected that there would be less support for the two major political parties than there actually was.

On the question of support for a labor party, the data indicated that there was a moderate level of support for the development of a labor party. On a scale of 0 - 9, the mean score was 5.3294 with a standard deviation of 2.7727. This data indicated that there was more support for the development of a labor party than there was support for the two existing parties.

Working Class Identification and Political Orientation,  
Race and Gender

Levels of working class identification were low among all groups of workers surveyed. Women had a slightly higher level of working class identification than men. On a scale of 0 - 8, women had an average score of 3.5334 while men had an average score of 3.4500. fig. 4.14a. This figure represents some level of working class identity in both cases. The standard deviation for women was 2.2510 and 2.1878 for men. The level for men was very similar to that of women respondents.

When looking at the data along racial and ethnic lines, there was not much difference between racial and ethnic groups in working class identity except for hispanics. White workers had the highest level of working class identity and hispanics had the lowest level. The mean was 3.6538 for whites, 3.5556 for blacks and 2.8572 for hispanics. fig. 4.14b. While both black and white workers as well as female and male workers had

Working Class Identification  
New York

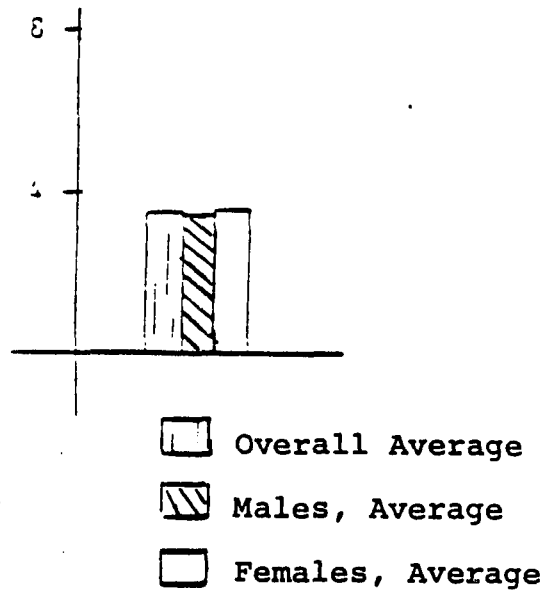


Fig. 4.14a

Working Class Identification  
New York

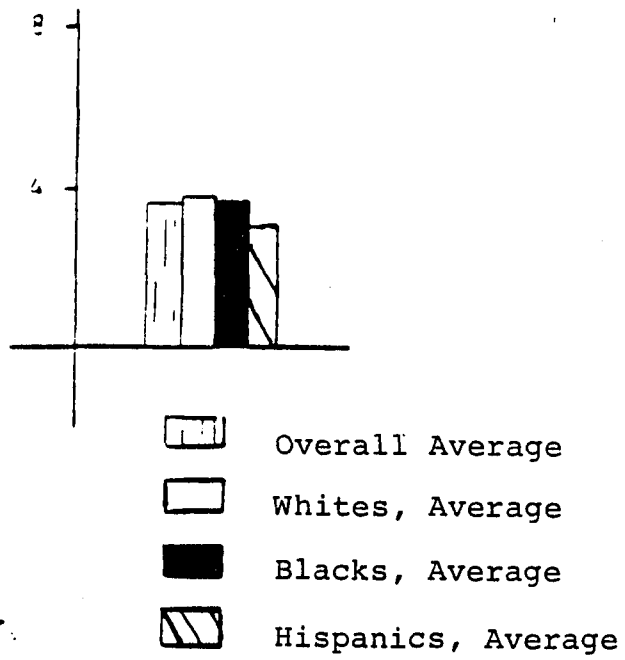


Fig. 4.14b

moderate levels of working class identity, hispanics had a low level of working class identity. Again, except for hispanics, the standard deviations were fairly high and rather similar. The standard deviation was 2.2794 for white workers, 2.2918 for black workers and 1.9518 for hispanic workers. The differences exhibited by the hispanic workers may have to do with cultural differences, immigrant status, income differences or simply the fact that the sample of hispanic workers was significantly smaller than the other groups surveyed.

Support for the creation of a labor party showed itself to be moderate to strong among all categories of respondents. Female workers were more likely to support the creation of a labor party than male workers, but only slightly so. The average score for female workers on a scale of 0 - 9 was 5.3361 and 5.1000 for male workers. fig. 4.15a. The standard deviation for female workers was 2.6626 and 3.0548 for male workers. As with almost all the categories, there was a wide divergence of opinion with regards to support for a labor party.

In comparing responses along racial and ethnic lines, a wide divergence of opinion was found. Hispanic workers showed strong support for a labor party with an average score of 6.8571. Black workers and white workers showed similar levels of support for the formation of a labor party although white support was slightly lower than black support. fig. 4.15b.

Support for a Labor Party  
New York

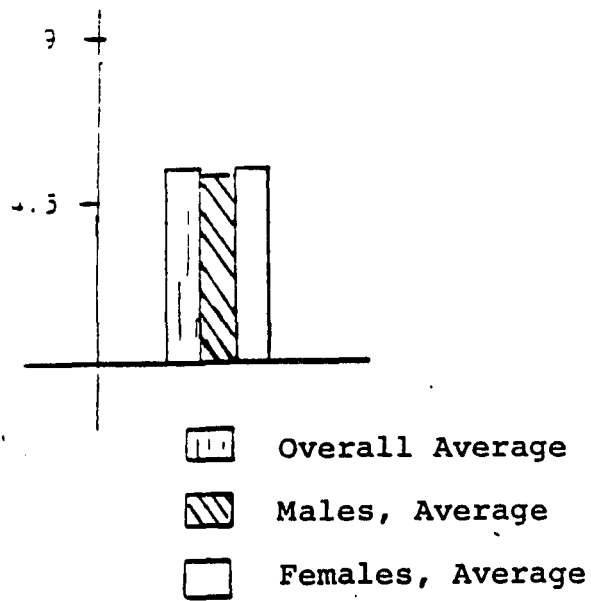


Fig. 4.15a

Support for a Labor Party  
New York

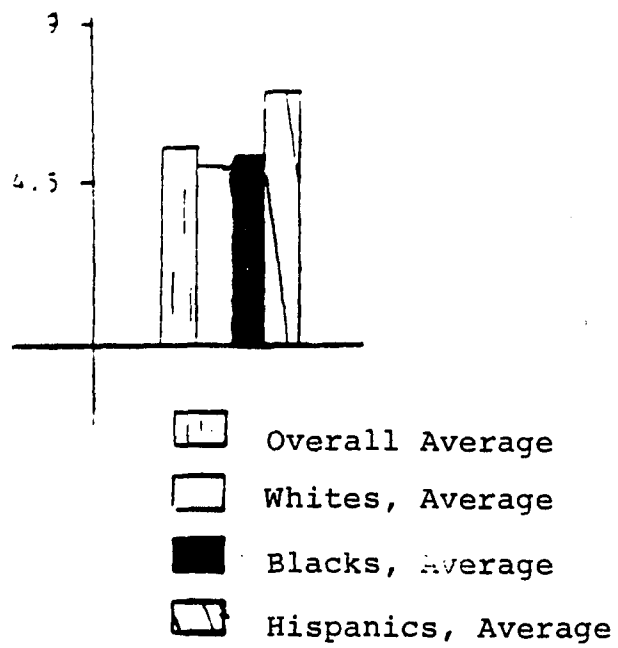


Fig. 4.15b

The mean for black workers was 5.0667 and 4.9038 for white workers. The standard deviation was 2.0959 for hispanic workers, 2.4624 for black workers and 3.3287 for white workers. These figures indicated a fair amount of unanimity among hispanic workers and a large spread of opinion among white workers.

Some support for the two major political parties was found among all subgroups. Using a scale of 0 - 8, it was found that men were more likely to be supportive of the two major existing parties than women. The average score was 4.0500 for men and 3.4833 for women. fig. 4.16a. The standard deviation for men was 2.3015, suggesting a fairly large range of support from male respondents. The standard deviation was 2.1032 for women, indicating a slightly smaller range of support for the two existing political parties.

When support was divided for the two major existing political parties along racial and ethnic lines, some sharp differences appeared. Hispanic workers showed fairly strong support for the existing political parties with a mean score of 4.5714, whites displayed less support for existing political parties with an average score of 4.1154 and black workers showed substantially less support for the two main political parties with a mean score of 3.3778. fig. 4.16b. Standard deviations were less divergent with standard deviations being 2.0702

Support for Existing Political Parties  
New York

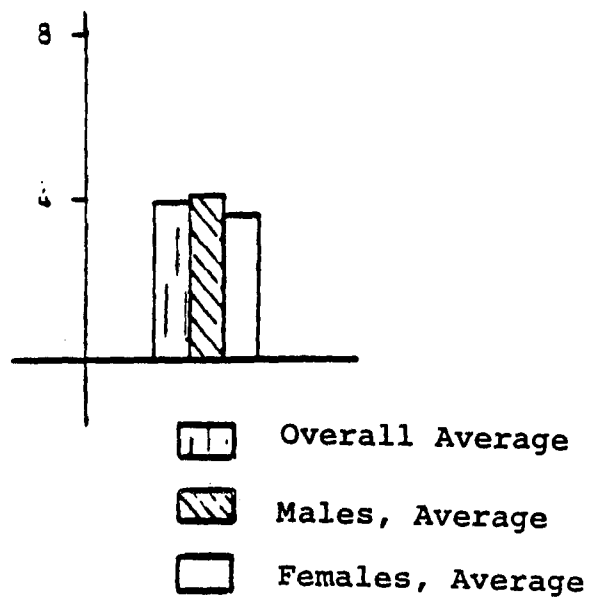


Fig. 4.16a

Support for Existing Political Parties  
New York

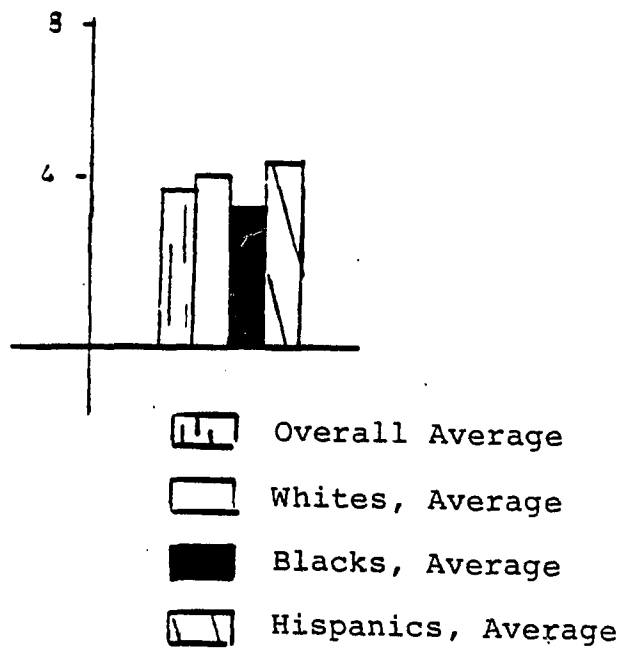


Fig. 4.16b

for hispanic workers, 2.4711 for white workers and 2.0702 for black worker. The support for the two existing parties among hispanic workers and the lack of support among black workers seemed to indicate fairly divergent political views with white workers falling almost right in the middle.

Hispanic respondents often answered very differently from either black workers or white workers. Language barriers, cultural barriers or isolation from the rest of the work force might be possible explanations for this phenomenon. It would be important to do further research to see if this pattern is a fluke or not and if not, why. It was also surprising to discover that hispanic workers showed support for both the existing political parties and the creation of a labor party.

The general level of support for a labor party among all groups was not surprising. The question that arises is will this level of support eventually turn into political action? Further discussion will be presented later and some projections as to what might happen in the future will be advanced.

Income distribution was broken down into three groups; low, middle and high. Low income was identified as being below \$20,000 a year, middle income was identified as being \$20,000 to \$25,000 and high income was identified as being above \$25,00 dollars a year. It

was found that the greatest support for a labor party came from the middle group with a mean of 6.1304 as compared to a mean of 5.0156 for low income workers and a mean income of 4.875 for high income workers. fig. 4.17.

The relationship between support for existing political parties and income was looked at next. Support for existing parties went up as income went up. Support among the low income group was a mean of 3.2188. The mean was 3.9130 for the middle income group and 4.2143 for the high income group. fig. 4.18.

When support for existing parties was correlated, compared to support for a labor party based on income, a moderate negative correlation with low income workers was discovered. The correlation coefficient was  $-.4848$ . Only slight correlations for the other two income groups were found which was a  $-.2647$  and  $-.2453$  for the high income groups.

It was then decided to correlate levels of education to both the support for existing parties and support for a labor party. What was found was that support for a labor party went down and support for existing political parties went up as levels of education increased. The mean level of support for a labor party among workers with a high school diploma or less was 5.6250 and the mean level of support for existing political parties was 3.2500. For workers with one to two years of college, it

Income vs. Support for a Labor Party  
New York

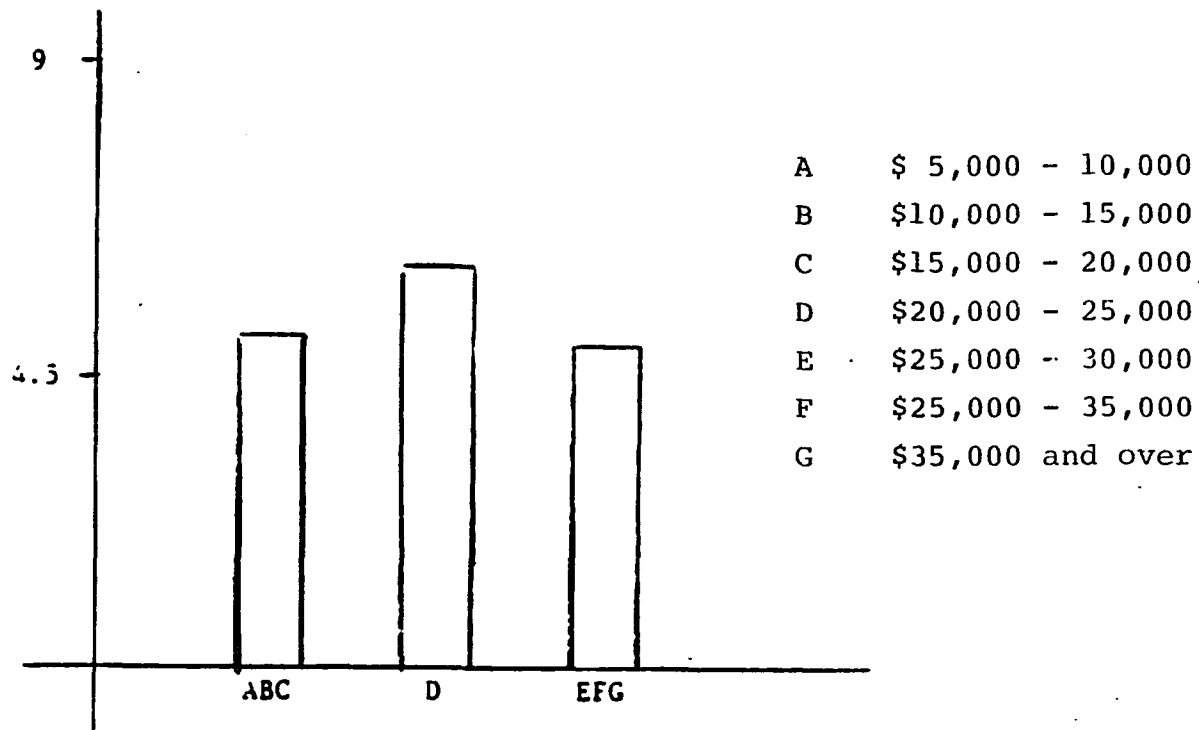


Fig. 4.17

Income vs. Support for Existing Political Parties  
New York

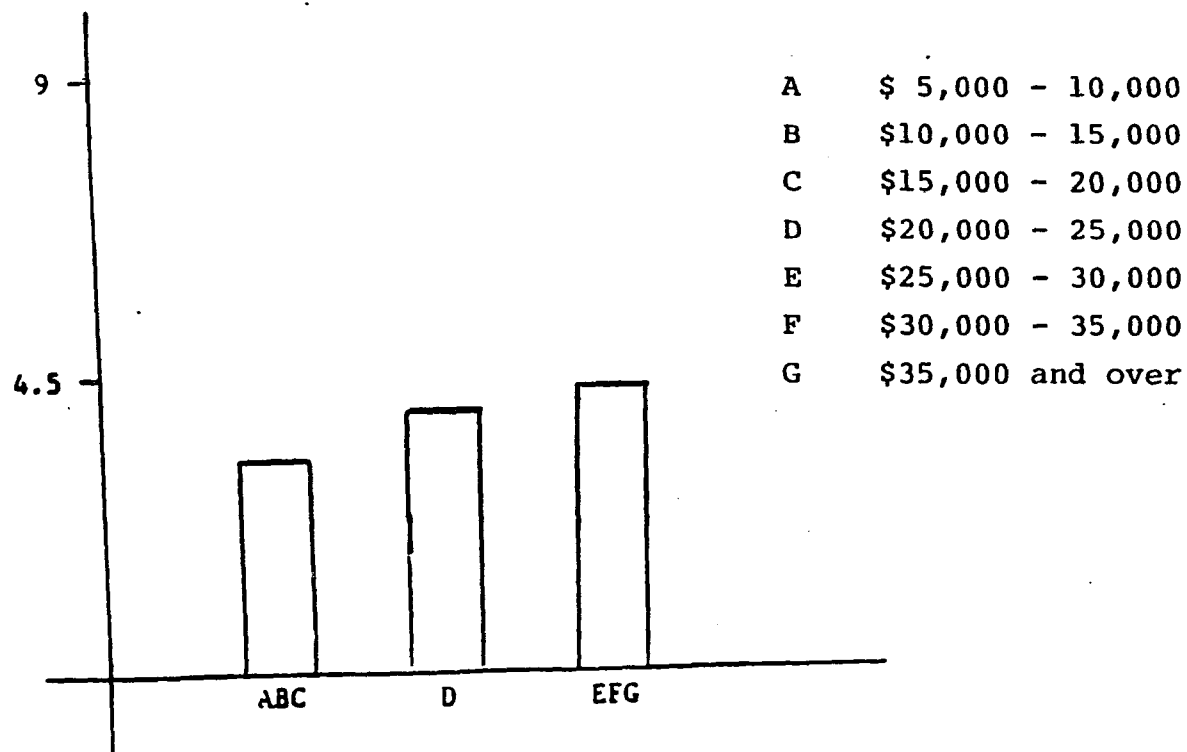


Fig. 4.18

was found that the mean level of support for a labor party was 5.4265 and the mean level of support for existing political parties was 3.6176. For workers with three to four years of college, the mean level of support for a labor party was found to be 3.6333. For workers with a college degree, the mean level of support for a labor party was 4.5000 and the mean level of support for existing political parties was 4.7143. fig. 4.19.

It is clear that among our New York sample that the higher the level of education, the lower the level of support for the idea of a labor party and the higher the level of support for the two major political parties. This finding is very important, particularly if it is found to be true among all workers. In fact, education seemed to be the most consistent predictor of support for a labor party or support for existing political parties. Unfortunately, this data could not be compared with New Orleans because the education distribution was very small and the total number of respondents was also very small.

If education continues to be a good predictor of support or non-support for a labor party in other areas of the country, this predictor may indicate that rising levels of education among the working class may produce lower levels of potential support for a labor party and larger potential support for the two major existing political parties. It is also believed that it will be

Levels of Education Correlated With  
Support of a Labor Party and  
Support of Existing Political Parties

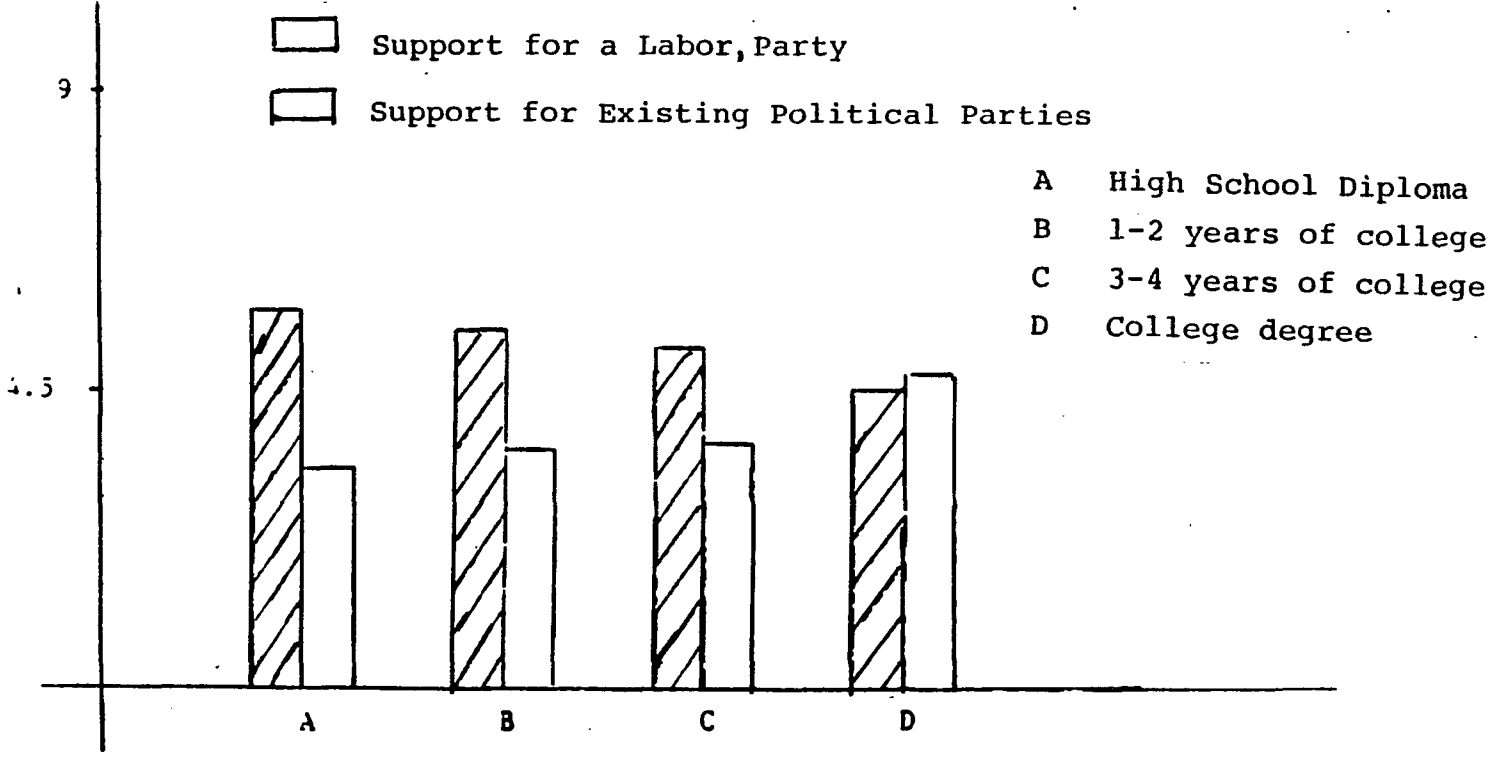


Fig. 4.19

very important to understand why increased education impacts on political support in this manner. Obviously, further research is needed.

It was decided to correlate income to support for existing parties, first on the basis of gender and second on the basis of racial and ethnic distinctions. No correlation was found between income and support of existing political parties among females. The correlation coefficient was .1561. When income for males was correlated with support for existing parties, it was found that there was indeed a correlation. The correlation coefficient was .5340, indicating a significant correlation between higher income and support for the two major political parties. fig. 4.20.

Then the correlation was run along racial and ethnic lines. When the correlation was run for black respondents, no relationship was found. The correlation coefficient was 0.0881. There was a positive correlation of .4600 for white workers and no correlation for hispanic worker. fig. 4.21. Thus, there is some evidence that as income increases for white workers and for male workers, so does their support for the major political parties. Why it is not true for other workers is a question that deserves future research.

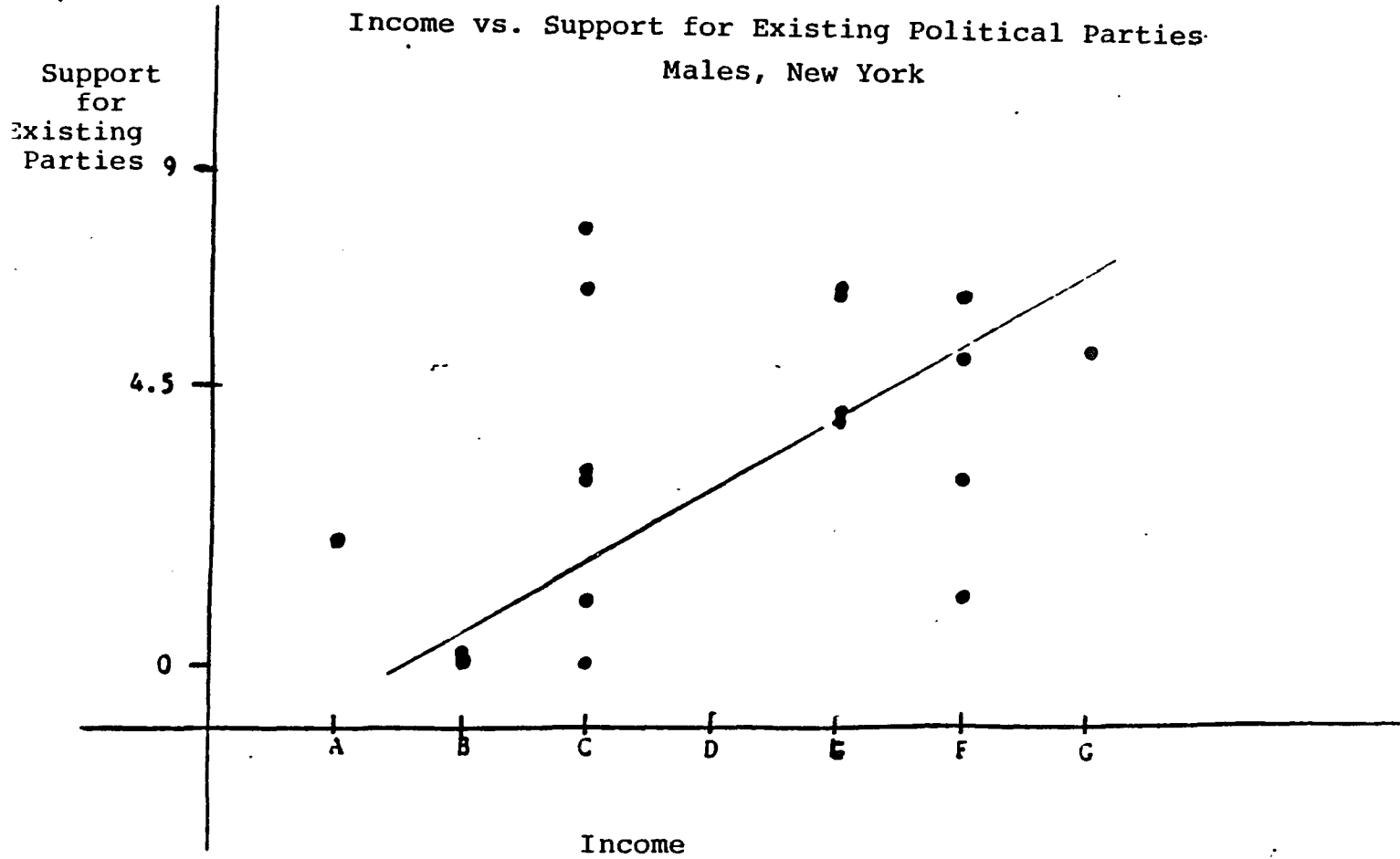


Fig. 4.20

Income vs. Support for Existing Political Parties

Whites, New York  $r = .4600$

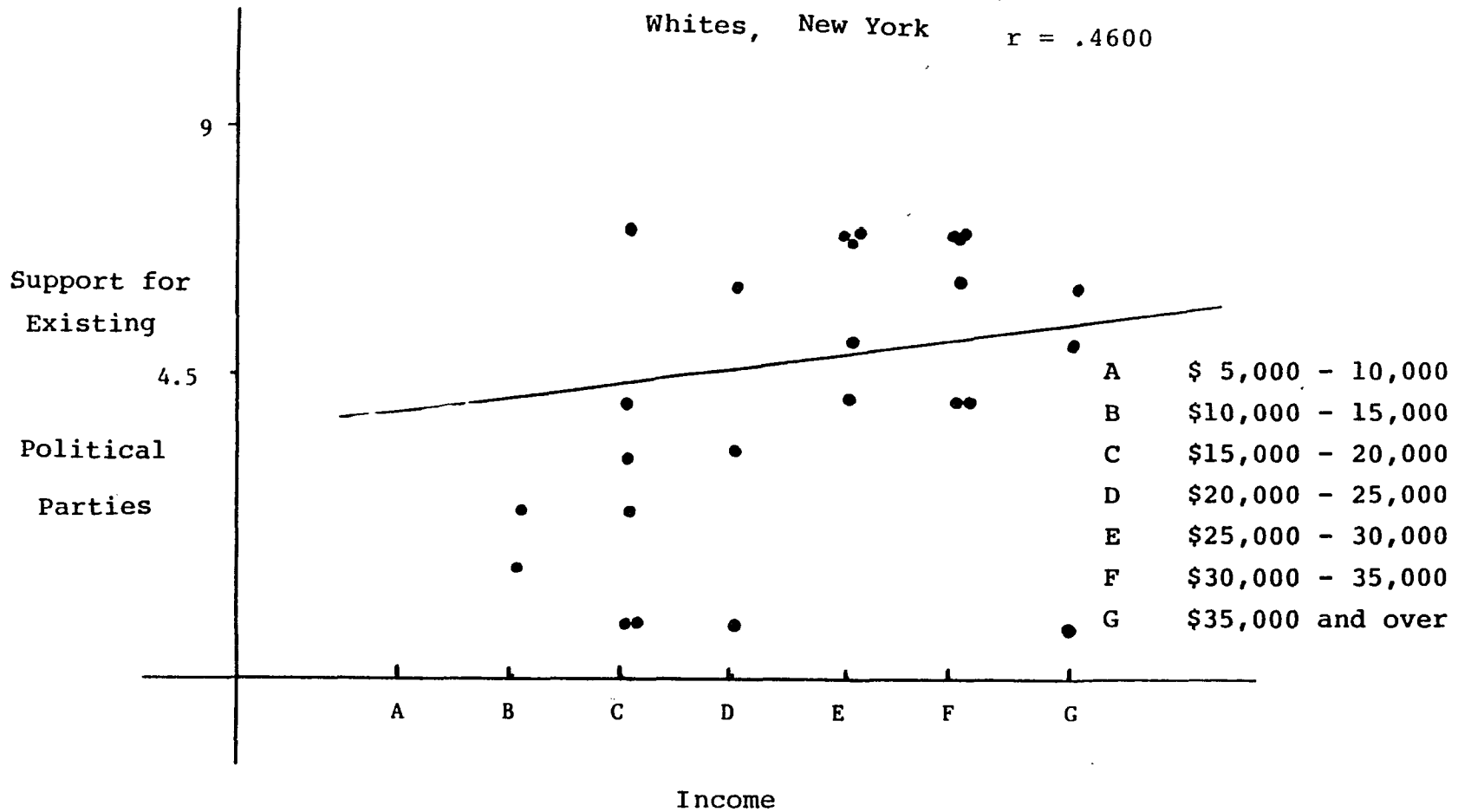


Fig. 4.21

It was then decided to correlate support for a labor party to income by sex and by racial and ethnic group. There was no correlation found between support for a labor party and income among female respondents. The correlation coefficient was  $-.1351$ . There was also no significant correlation between income and support for a labor party among male respondents. The correlation coefficient was  $.2052$ .

When the category was broken down along racial and ethnic lines, there was a significant correlation between income and support for a labor party for black respondents and white respondents but not for hispanic respondents. The correlation coefficient for black respondents was  $.3005$ . fig. 4.22. The correlation coefficient for white respondents was  $0.3090$ . fig. 4.23 next page For hispanic respondents the correlation coefficient was  $-.2208$ . It is clear from this data that income is not a factor in support for a labor party among any subgroups surveyed. It is interesting that the correlation for black workers was in the opposite direction compared to white workers.

It was discovered that there was a significant correlation between support for the two existing parties and support for a labor party. There was a significant correlation for female workers with a coefficient of  $.3447$  but not for male workers who had a correlation

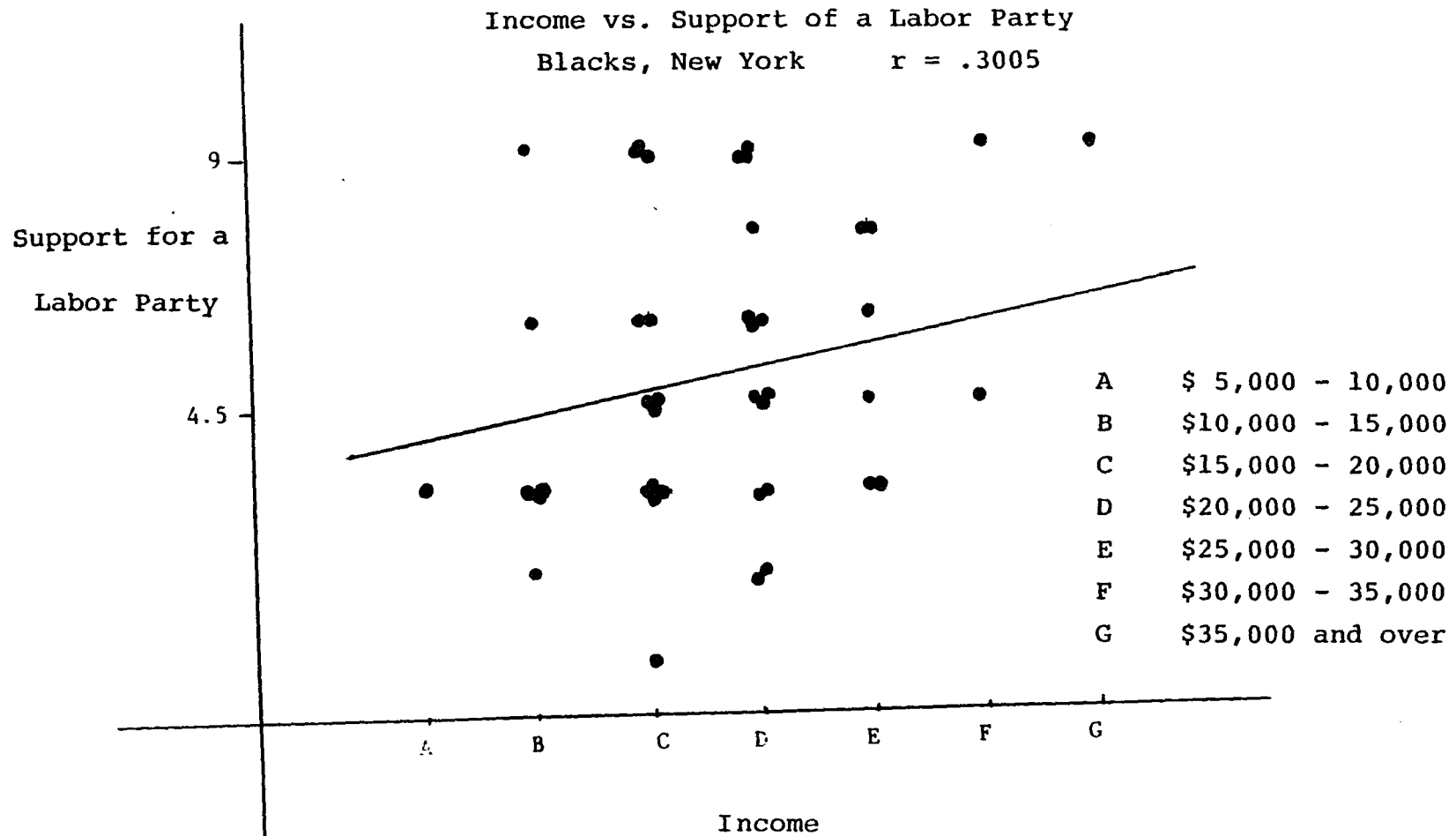


Fig. 4.22

Income vs. Support for a Labor Party  
Whites, New York  $r = -.3090$

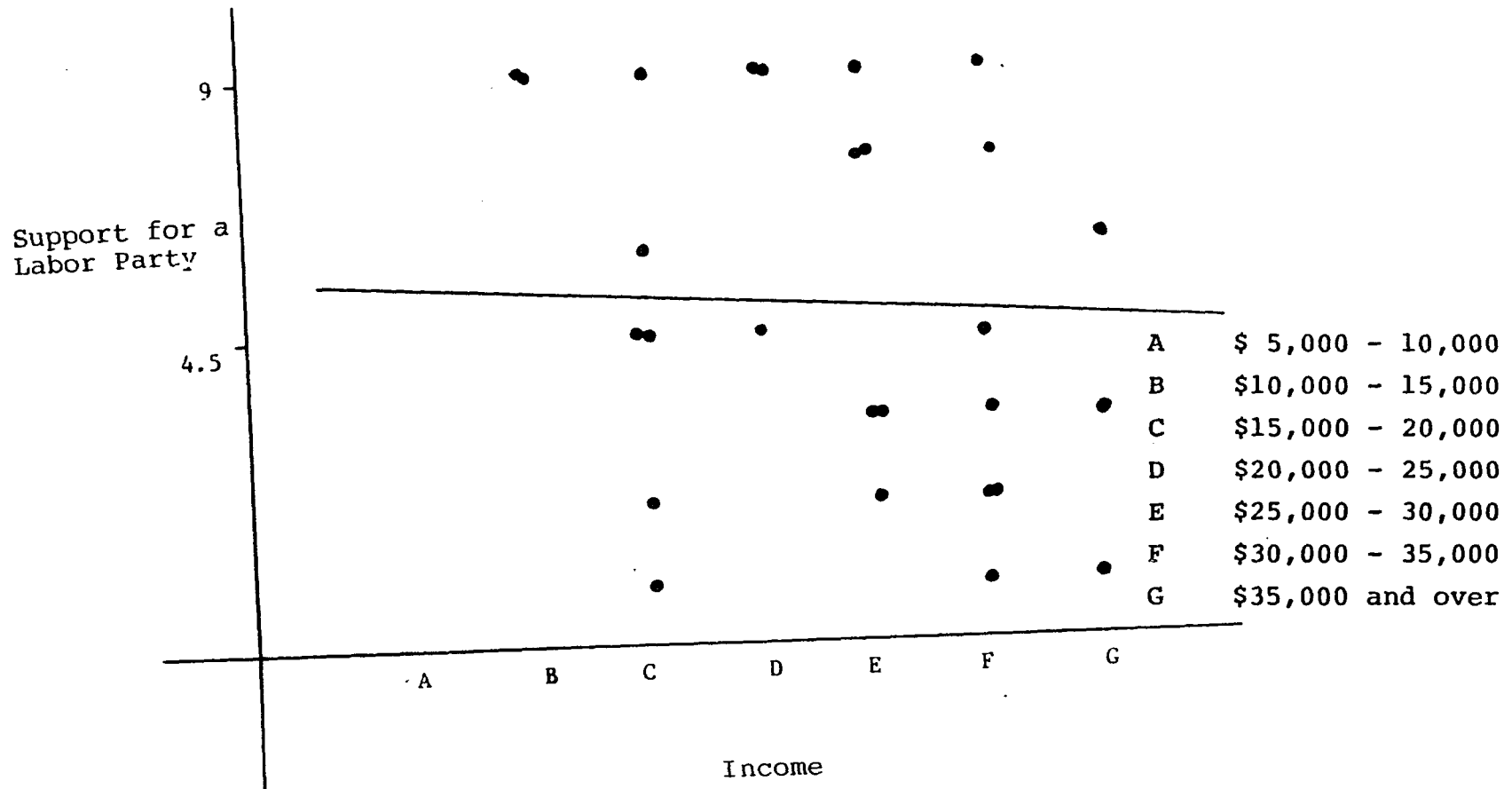


Fig. 4.23

coefficient of  $-.2075$ . fig. 4.24. When the respondents were divided into ethnic groups, correlations did appear for two of the three subgroups. For black workers, the correlation coefficient was  $-.2904$  but for white workers, it was a moderately significant  $-.5238$ . fig. 4.25 next page For hispanic workers the correlation coefficient was a significant  $.7326$ . fig. 4.26.

The result of the negative correlation exhibited by white workers was not surprising. It would have been expected that the lack of support for existing political parties would be more likely to create support for a new political party. The far more surprising correlation was the positive correlation found in male workers and the very strong positive correlation for hispanic workers. It was not expected that there would be strong positive support for existing political parties and that this support would lead to positive support for the idea of a labor party. It would have been predicted that dissatisfaction with existing political parties would lead to support for a labor party as it did among white respondents. The fact that there was no correlation for females and for black workers was a surprise.

When union satisfaction was correlated to support for a labor party, a correlation was found for male workers but not for female workers. fig. 4.27. The correlation coefficient for males was  $0.3025$  and  $-.0982$  for female.

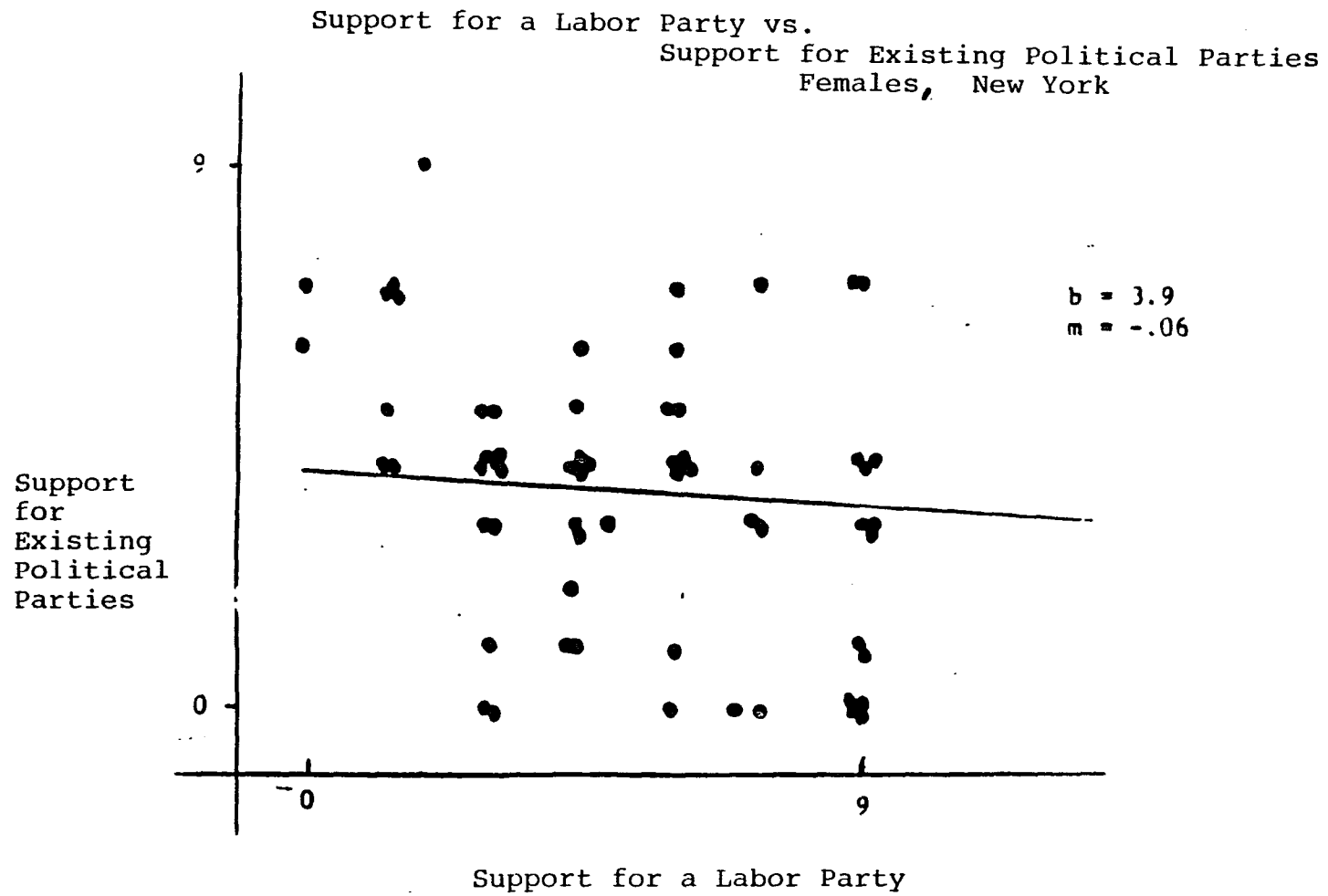


Fig. 4.24

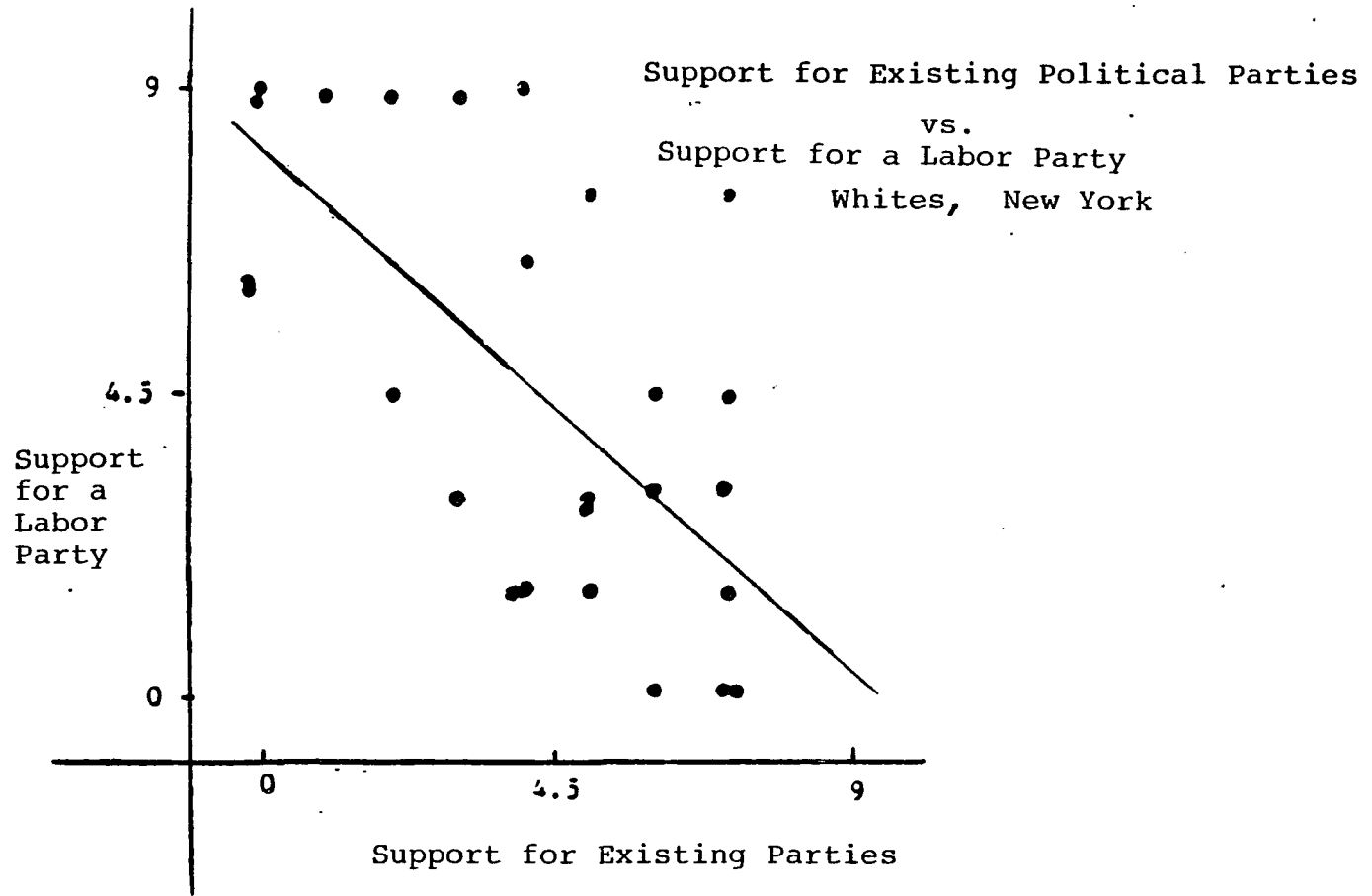


Fig. 4.25

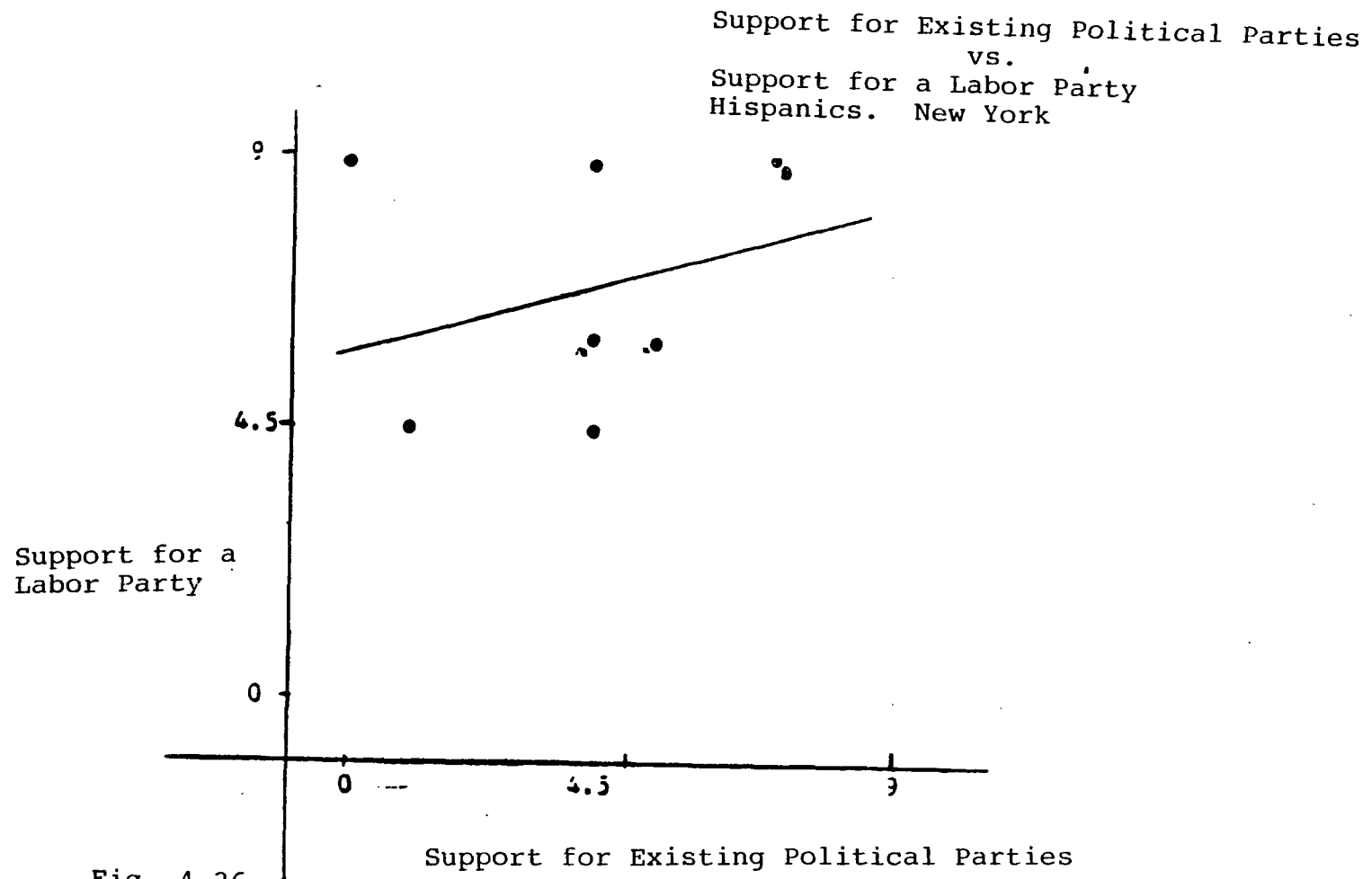


Fig. 4.26

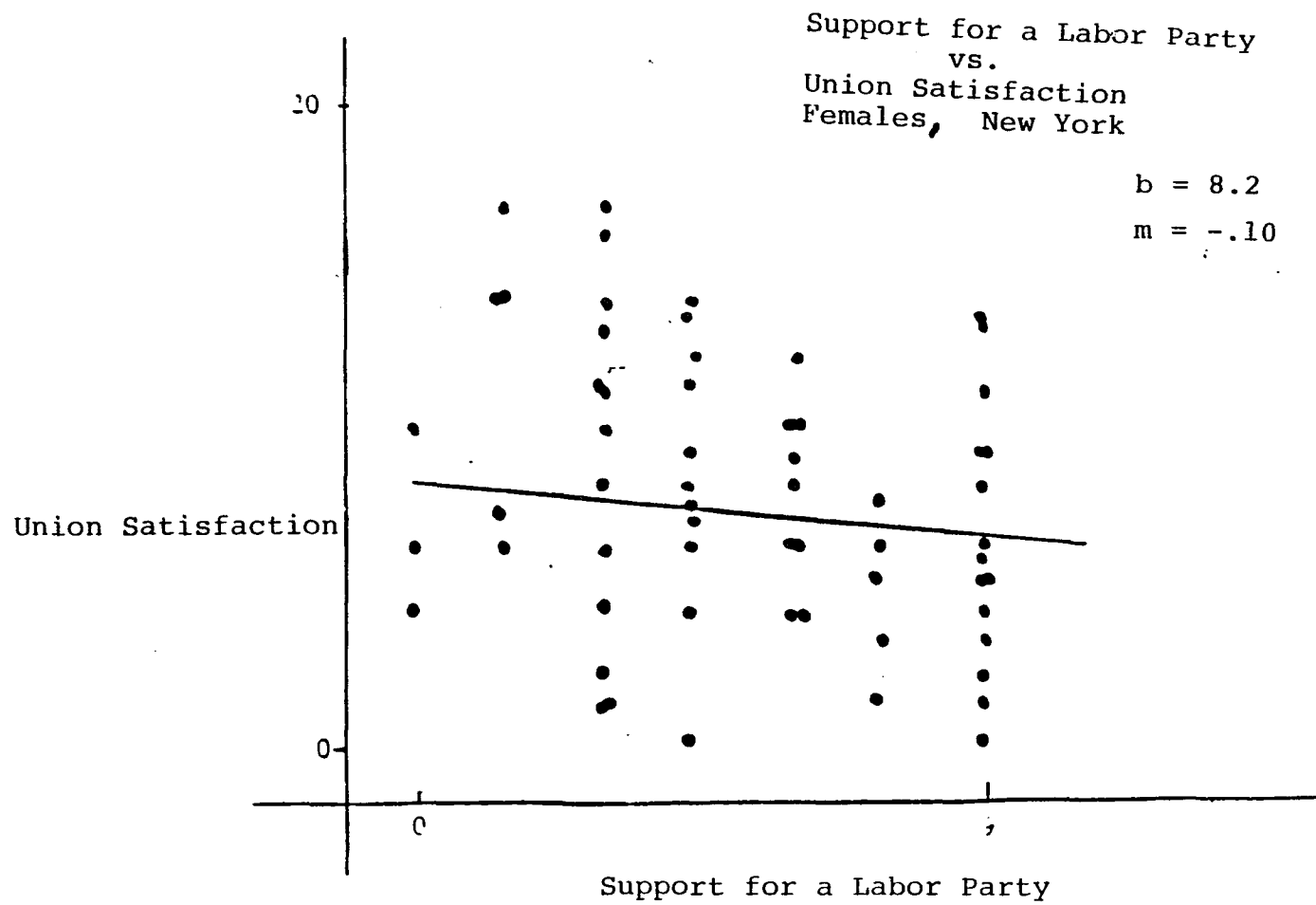


Fig. 4.27

When the correlation coefficients for workers were done along racial and ethnic lines, a negative correlation for black workers again was found but no correlation was found for any other group. The correlation coefficient was  $-.3357$  for black workers,  $-.2218$  for white workers and  $0.0129$  for hispanic workers. fig. 4.28. It is clear that union support or lack of union support is an indicator of support for the development of a labor party for some groups but not for others. It is important to point out that where it is an indicator, it is a negative indicator. Workers who participate in unions are less likely to support a labor party than those who do not. This result is not surprising, considering that all the unions involved have been consistent supporters of the Democratic Party. One might expect that members who were strongly satisfied with the union would be satisfied with their political stand and that members who were not satisfied with the union would be less satisfied with the union's political position.

When union participation was compared with working class identity, again there were only two significant correlations that were found. The significant correlations were  $.3254$  for male workers and  $.3444$  for white workers. fig. 4.29 and fig. 4.30. The correlation coefficients were  $.2799$  for female workers,  $.2679$  for black workers and  $.0382$  for hispanic workers. It was

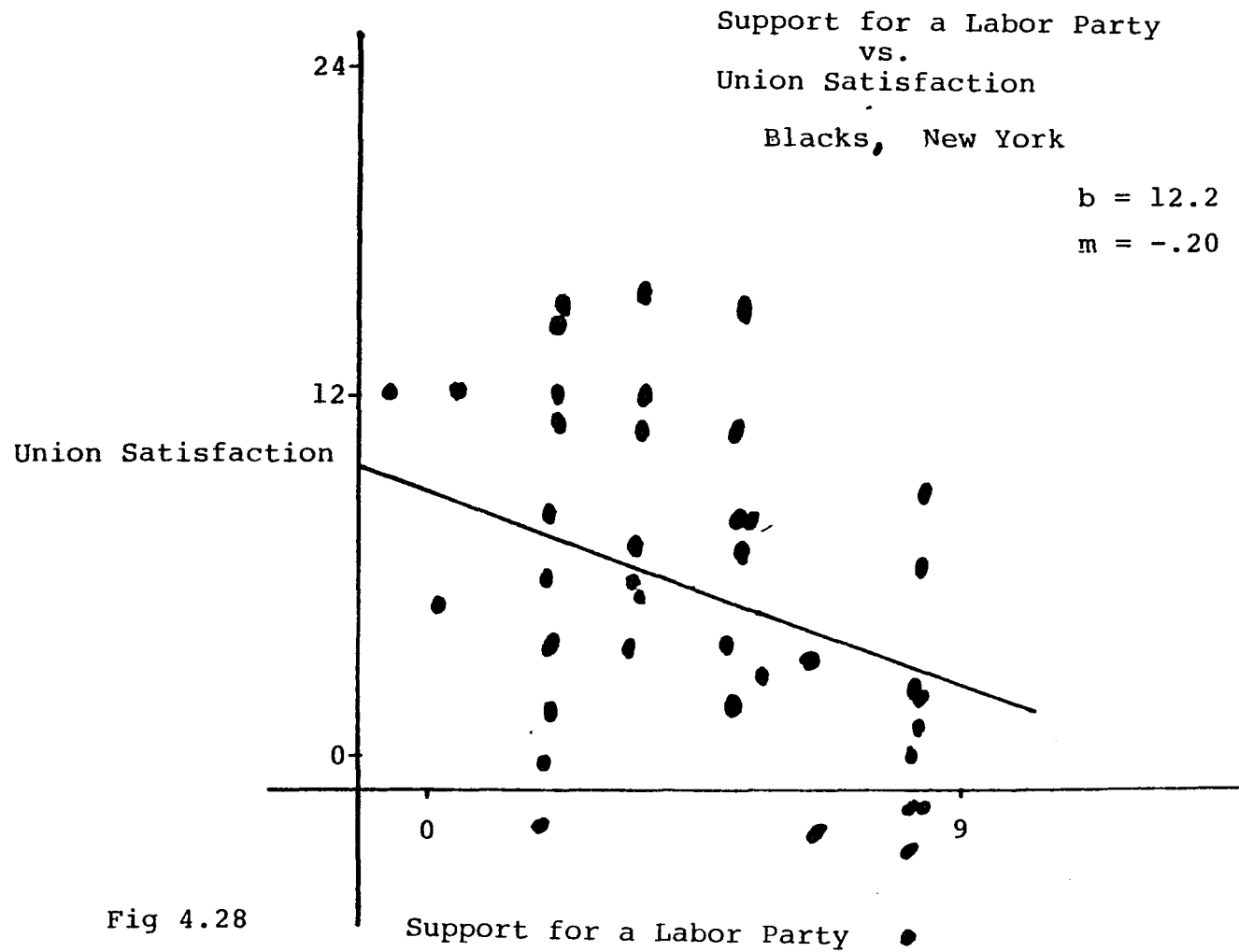


Fig 4.28

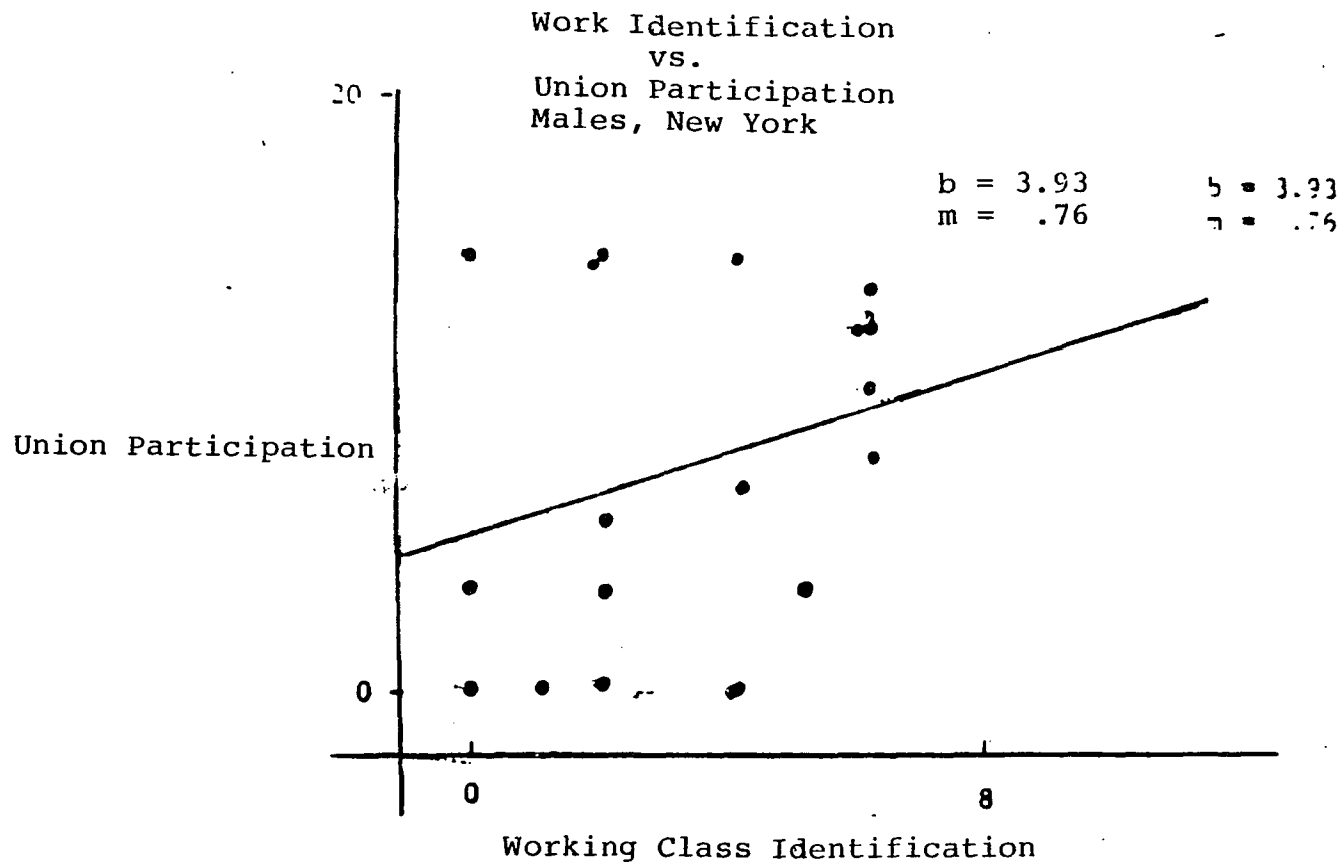


Fig. 4.29

Working Class Identification  
vs.  
Union Participation

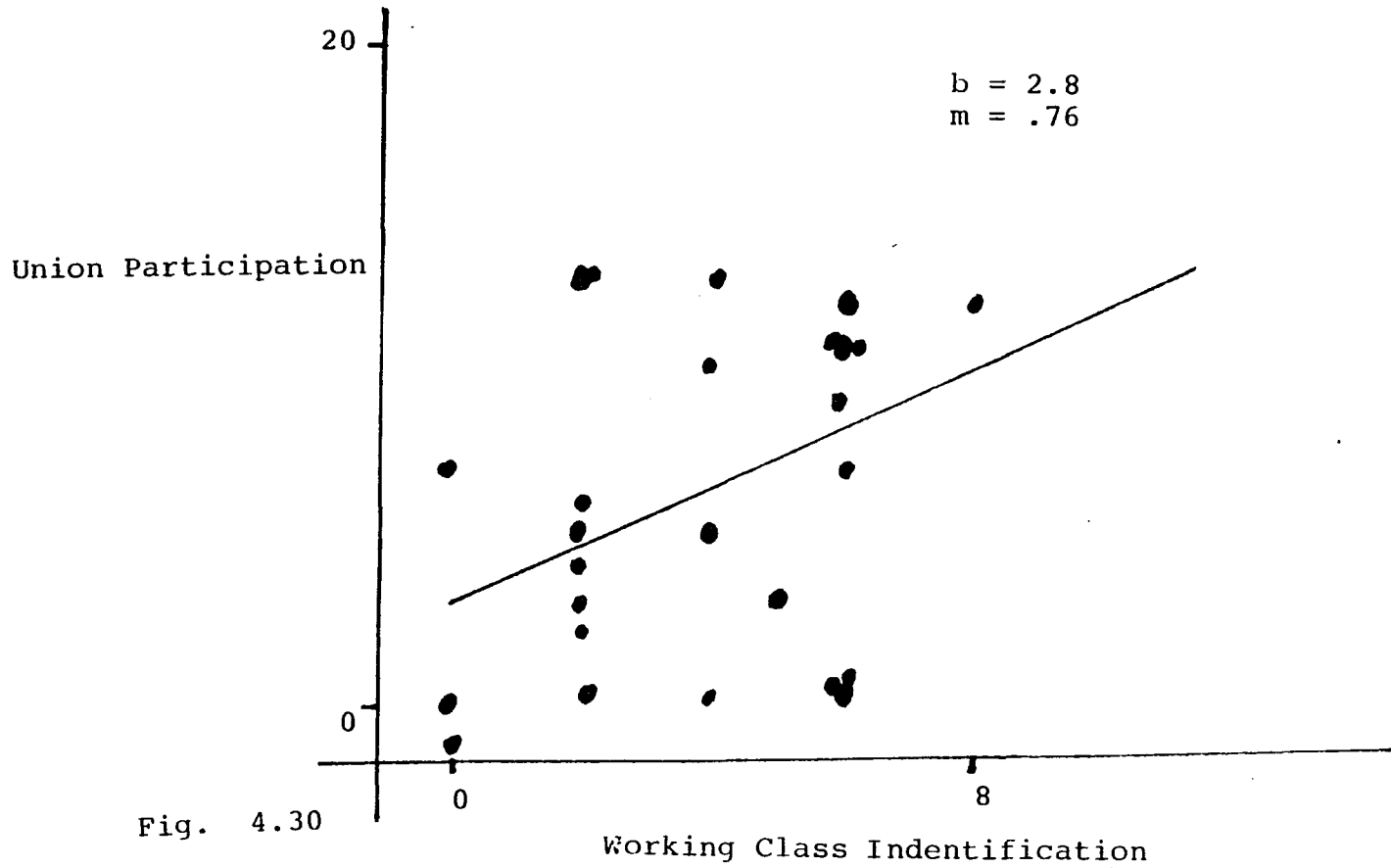


Fig. 4.30

surprising that there were no correlations between these two categories for some groups but not for others although one would have suspected that if there was a correlation, it would have been positive. But since unions in this country do not stress class identity, it is surprising there were any correlations at all.

Only one significant correlation between union participation and support for a labor party was found and that was a positive correlation of .3467 for hispanic workers. fig. 4.31. The correlation coefficient for male workers was -.1185. For female workers, it was -.2150. The correlation coefficient was -.2896 for black workers and .0771 for white workers. Again, one would suspect that cultural differences might explain the correlation for hispanic workers.

### Conclusion

Generally speaking, it would be very hard to predict from the data collected what type of worker would be most likely to support the development of a labor party. What was discovered was that it was almost impossible to look at workers as a single group. In almost all categories, there were wide differences based on sex as well as racial and ethnic identification. In some cases, these differences were so wide as to produce almost opposite results among different subgroups.

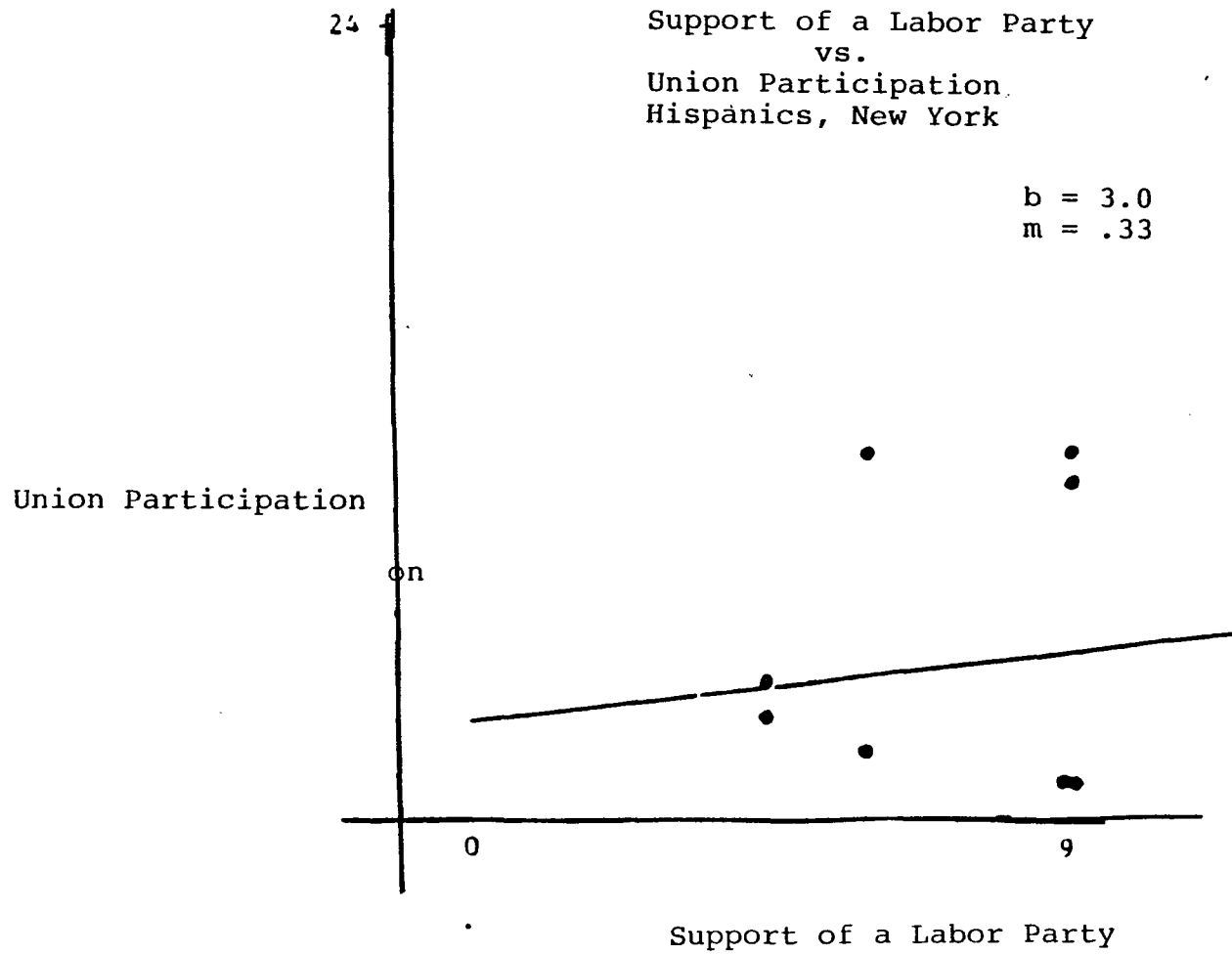


Fig. 4.31

In predicting who might be most likely to support a labor party, the most important factors seemed to be that of being hispanic and supporting the two existing political parties or being white and non-supportive of the two political parties. Both these groups displayed fairly strong support for a labor party. Being female or black also made it more likely that the individual would support a labor party but there was no evidence that particular types of female and black workers were more likely to support a labor party than other types of female or black workers.

One major problem with the sample was that of the workers who were asked to respond, those who did respond were older workers with the mean age being 42 years old. The responses of younger workers could not be compared to those of older workers although it seemed likely that younger workers, whether black, white or hispanic, male or female, would tend to have strong opinions on the issues surveyed. It is believed the age of the work force might also have strongly affected the category view of the future in a positive direction.

The sample was unreflective of the work force in certain other ways. It had a disproportionately high number of female respondents, some three-fourths. It also had a disproportionate number of minority respondents; over half the workers surveyed were black.

Since it is known that the majority of the city work force was white, this sample is clearly not a representative cross-section nor is it a representative cross-section of union workers. Also, the union workers have a white majority. The respondents were attending college and this factor made them different from the work force as a whole. This aspect might also make them more optimistic than they might otherwise have been.

Still, there is nothing in any of these factors that would make these respondents more likely to support a labor party than their fellow workers. It might even be argued that they would be less likely to support a labor party due to their relative success, job security and positive view of the future. In spite of these factors, at least moderate support for the development of a labor party was found among all subgroups of the respondents who were interviewed. It was clear from the data that being a member of a minority group made one more likely to support a labor party. The difference between support from black workers and white workers was not large nor was the difference in level of support from male workers and female workers although again, female workers were more likely to support the development of a labor party than male workers. Unlike other workers who showed moderate levels of support for a labor party, hispanic workers showed strong levels of support for a labor party.

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It would be important to better understand the differences between the hispanic workers and the other respondents on both the issues of support of a labor party and support for existing political parties. Were there responses different simply because of sample size or did they represent real differences between hispanic, black and white workers?

## Chapter 5

### A Comparison of Respondents in New Orleans and New York A Discussion of Similarities and Disimilarities of the Two Groups of Respondents

Comparing the data from the two regions that were surveyed, some major differences as well as many similarities were discovered between the two groups of respondents. In some ways the differences are less surprising than the similarities between the two groups.

#### A Comparison of Demographic Material From the Two Regions

The average age of the work force in New Orleans was 40 while in New York, the average age of the respondents was over 42. In New Orleans the racial breakdown was 52.9% black, 41.5% white and 5.7% who classified themselves as others. In New York the racial and ethnic breakdown was 51.1% black, 33.7% white, 10.4% hispanic and 4.6% other. While the number of black respondents was similar, the number of white respondents in New York were smaller and there was a large group of hispanic residents in New York which did not exist in New Orleans.

In New Orleans the work force was evenly divided between male and female respondents. The percentage of male respondents was 52.9% and the percentage of female respondents was 47.9%. In New York a majority of the respondents were female. The percentage of the respondents who were female was 73.8% while 26.2% were male respondents.

A majority of the respondents were married, but in New Orleans the majority was overwhelming. Over two-thirds or 67.6% were married whereas in New York the majority was a slim 53.5%. This was true even though the respondents were older in New York and therefore, might be presumed likely to be married.

Most workers had been on the job for a long time in both areas. The average length of time spent on the job among respondents in New Orleans was 8.87 years and in New York an even longer 10.4 years. The respondents represent a highly stable work force. The long amount of time on the job in New Orleans may be explained by the low levels of education among the respondents as well as high levels of unemployment in the region, making it difficult to move from job to job. However, in New York the work force was better educated and levels of unemployment in the region were lower. Therefore, one would have expected higher levels of job mobility. Another factor in the New York situation may be the relative high pay of city workers and the difficulty of matching those pay scales in the private sector.

It was found there were significant differences in the levels of education among the two groups of respondents. While most workers who responded to the question had a high school education, the percentage in New Orleans was 76.4, a lower percentage than in New York

where the percentage was 96.3. In addition, in New Orleans a full third of the respondents did not respond to this question at all. Virtually none of the respondents in the New Orleans area had any college whereas a full 85% of the respondents in New York had at least some college. It is clear that the New York respondents had higher levels of education even though most of the respondents in both groups were doing semi-skilled or unskilled labor.

Income also varied enormously between the two groups. fig. 5.1. In New Orleans 15% of the respondents earned less than \$10,000 a year, 57% earned between ten and fifteen thousand, 15% earned between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars and 12% earned more than twenty thousand dollars a year. The mean income was \$13,487. In New York 15% earned less than ten thousand dollars a year which was about the same figure as that in New Orleans, 8% earned between ten and fifteen thousand dollars, 13% earned between fifteen and twenty thousand dollars, 18% earned between twenty and twenty-five thousand dollars, 20% earned between twenty-five and thirty thousand dollars, 11% earned between thirty and thirty-five thousand dollars and 13% earned over thirty-five thousand dollars a year. The mean income was \$22,722.22 as compared to \$13,487 in New Orleans which meant that the average respondent in New Orleans earned

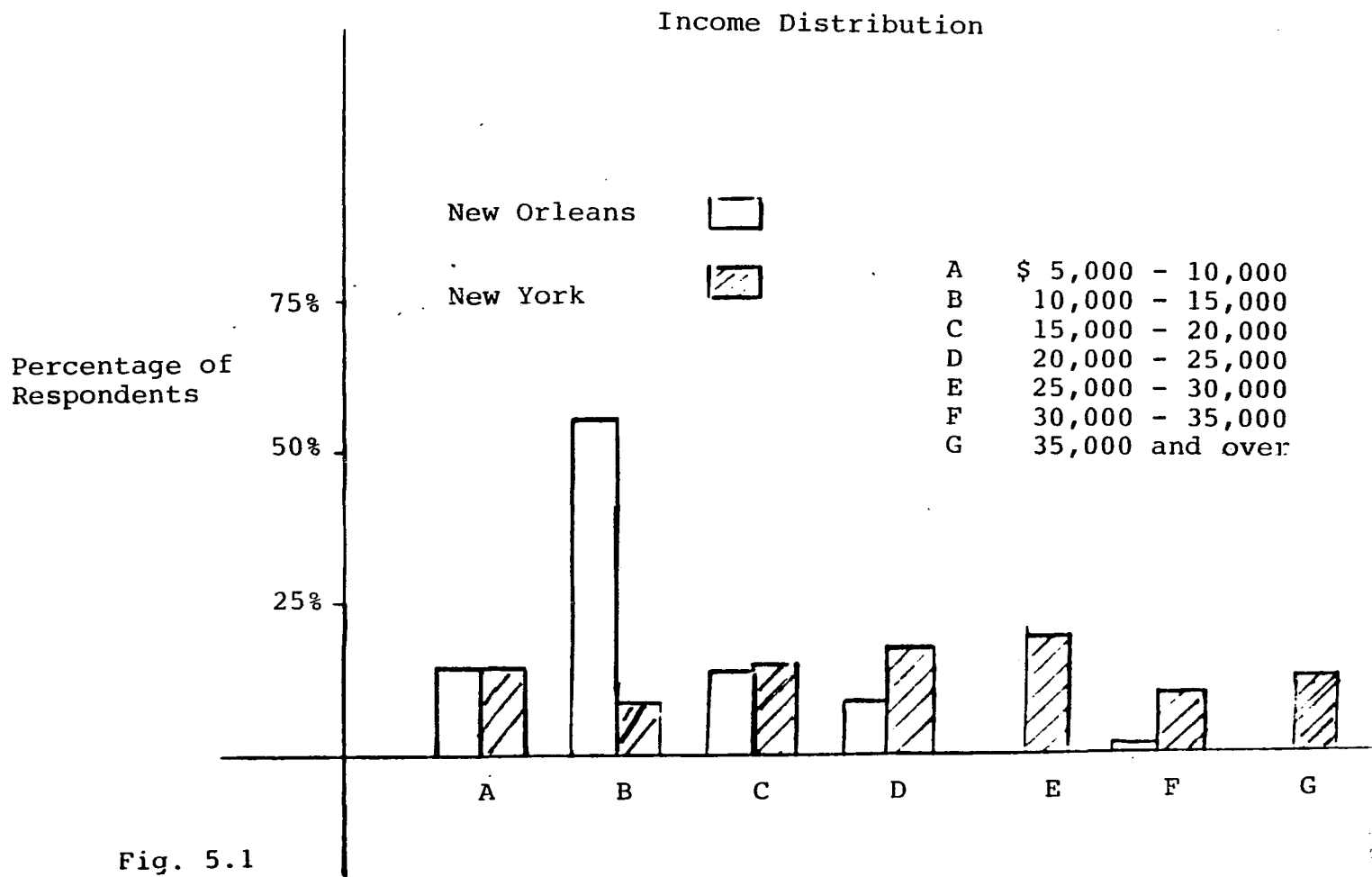


Fig. 5.1

59.9% of what the average respondent earned in New York. Even if one factors in the difference in the cost of living, this figure represents an enormous difference in income. The average mean family income showed a similar difference. The mean average family income of respondents in New Orleans was \$27,237 while in New York it was \$46,000. These figures meant that the average family among respondents in New Orleans earned 59.2% of what the average family among respondents in New York earned. Most spouses in both areas were employed at least part-time.

Before the scaled responses are compared, the similarities and differences as illustrated by the demographic material will be briefly presented. In both cases one is looking at a work force of public employees in widely diversified public jobs that are predominantly semi-skilled and unskilled. In both cases the majority of the work force is black. In both cases the work force is fairly stable.

The differences are at least as great as the similarities. The work force is evenly balanced between male and female in New Orleans whereas it is overwhelmingly female in New York. Respondents are better paid in New York and better educated. The respondents operate in an atmosphere of tremendous economic uncertainty in New Orleans which does not

currently exist in New York. Unemployment in New Orleans has varied between 11% and 13% over the last year whereas in New York it has varied between 6% and 8%. In addition, while there is a large group of hispanic respondents in New York, there is none in New Orleans. Finally, there is an enormous difference in relative levels of education. This difference is partly reflective of the lower levels of education in Louisiana per se and partly reflective of the fact that the respondents used for the survey in New York are all attending college or are planning to do so in the immediate future.

In comparing the scaled responses of the subgroups from each region, areas of both similarities and differences were found. The subgroups compared regionally were black workers and white workers as well as male and female workers. Hispanic workers could not be compared from the two regions as there were no hispanic respondents in the New Orleans area.

When income was compared among the subgroups, the mean income was found to be \$15,100 for males in New Orleans as compared to \$23,100 in New York. This result meant that the average male worker in New Orleans only earned 65% of what his male counterpart earned in New York. The average female worker in New Orleans earned \$12,200 as compared to \$22,500 earned by her counterpart

in New York. This difference meant that the average female worker earned only 54% of what her female counterpart earned in New York. fig. 5.2.

When workers were compared along racial and ethnic lines, the average black worker in New Orleans had a mean income of \$13,800 while in New York, the average black worker had a mean income of \$20,800. fig. 5.3. This difference meant that the average black respondent in New Orleans earned only 66% of what his counterpart earned in New York. The average white worker in New Orleans had a mean income of \$15,000 as compared to a mean income of \$26,000 for the average white respondent in New York. This difference meant that the average white respondent in New Orleans earned 57% of what his counterpart earned in New York.

Even if one factors in the cost of living, which is lower in New Orleans than it is in New York, the income of respondents in New Orleans among all subgroups is substantially lower than it is in New York. This factor might be expected to affect other categories but no evidence of this was found in most cases.

When the scaled categories were compared, there was found both areas of similarities and of differences. These areas might present both the similarities and the differences in the respondents as described by the demographic material.

Income Distribution

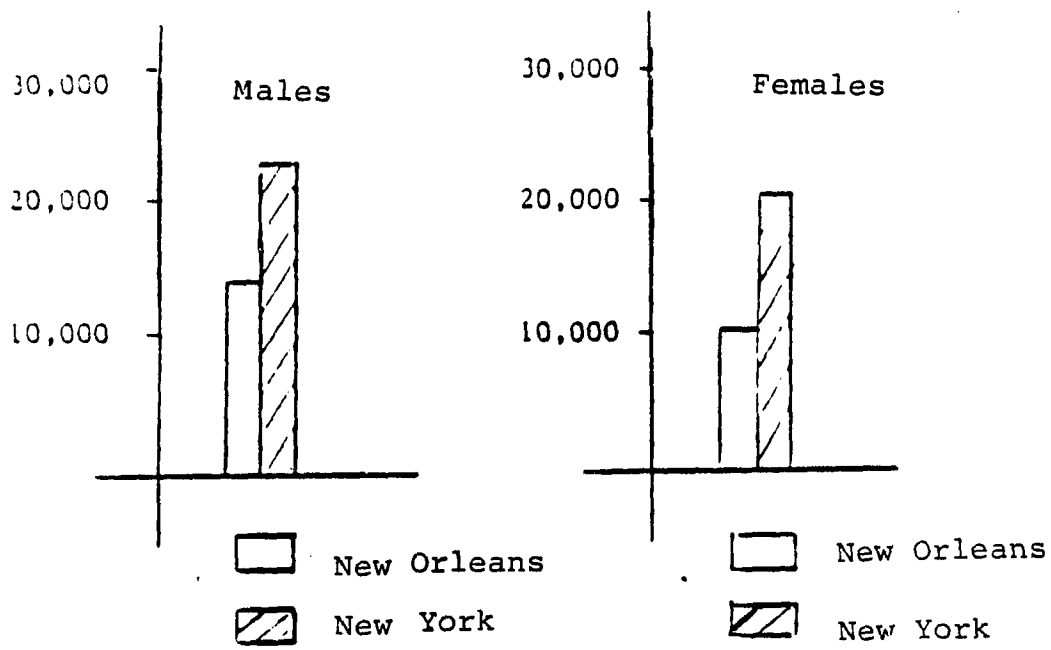


Fig. 5.2

Income Comparison Along Racial Lines Between  
New York and New Orleans

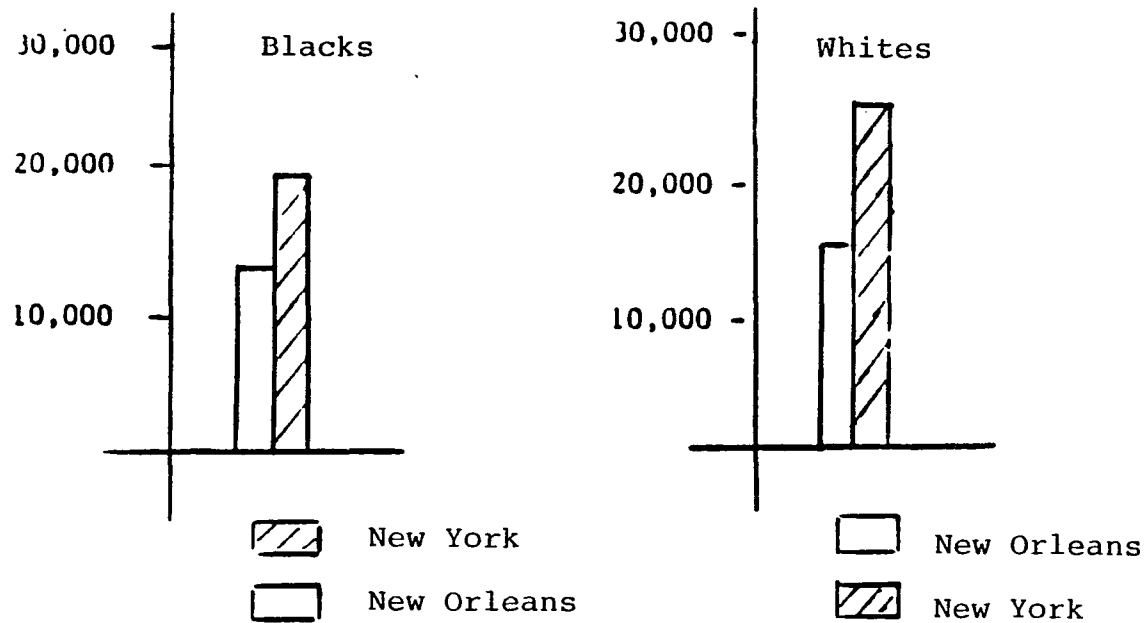


Fig. 5.3

### A Comparison of Responses on Job and Union Satisfaction

In the area of job satisfaction which was scaled 0 - 10, workers in New Orleans were found to be slightly less satisfied with their jobs than workers in New York. The mean score in New Orleans was 4.5286 as compared to 5.1325 in New York. fig. 5.4. Neither group showed high levels of job satisfaction and in fact, the levels were fairly similar which might be considered surprising considering the difference in income paid for the jobs.

Levels of union satisfaction were much higher in New Orleans than they were in New York. On a scale of 0 - 20, the mean in New Orleans was 10.071 as compared with a mean of 7.3393 in New York. fig. 5.5. This result might be explained by the fact that respondents in New Orleans were interviewed at a union meeting rather than through the mail.

In the category of union participation, a substantial difference was found between the New Orleans respondents and the New York respondents. The mean in New Orleans was 11.2571 on a scale of 0 - 24 as compared to 6.9107 for the New York respondents. fig. 5.6. While this is an important difference on paper, it should not be taken too seriously. Remember that the respondents in New Orleans were interviewed at a union meeting. This procedure meant that only those workers who attended union meetings at least sometimes, could have been

### Job Satisfaction

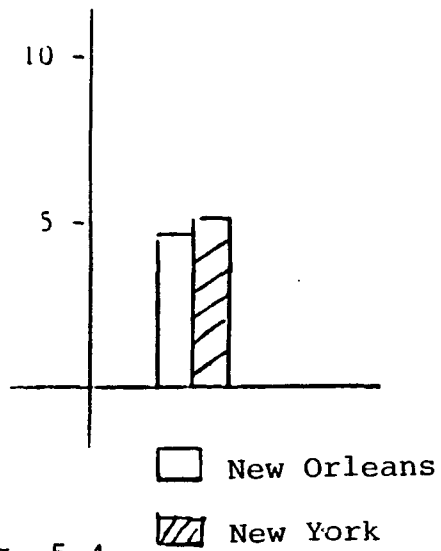


Fig. 5.4

### Union Satisfaction

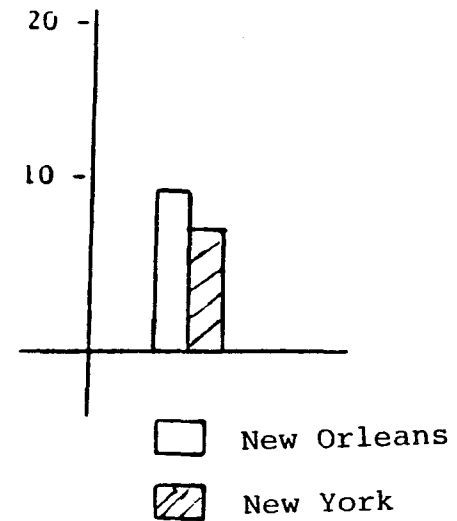


Fig. 5.5

## Union Participation

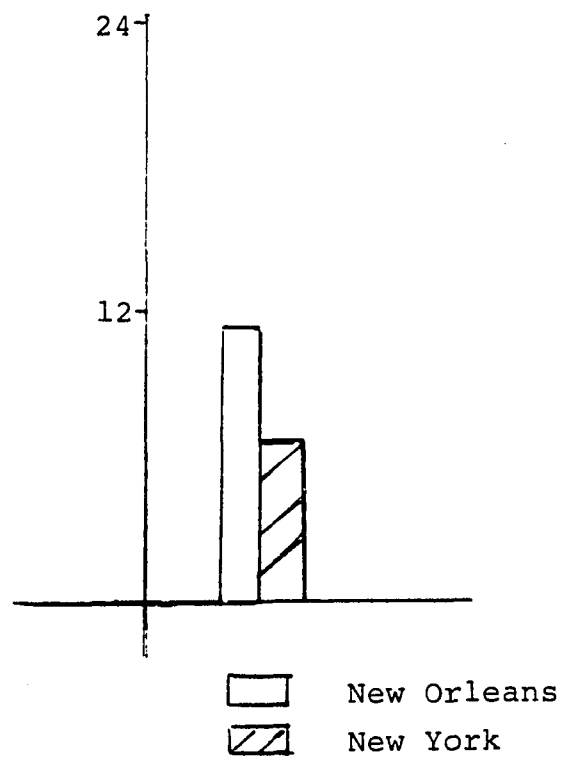


Fig. 5.6

interviewed. It was clear from attending several meetings and from talking to local leaders that most union members did not attend union meetings.

Both groups of respondents had a positive view of the future. Their mean averages were quite similar. The mean average for New Orleans respondents was 4.1206 on a scale of 0 - 7 as compared to 4.783 for the New York respondents. fig. 5.7. The New York respondents showed themselves to be slightly more positive about the future than the respondents in New Orleans. This is not surprising, considering the differences in mean income as well as the fact that while New York City workers have had a pay raise every year for the last six or more years, workers for the State of Louisiana and the City of New Orleans for the most part have not had a raise since at least 1981 nor are they likely to obtain one in the near future. In addition, it is likely that the view of the future is affected by the economic situation which is very poor in New Orleans. What is surprising is that all the respondents in New Orleans are not more affected by these factors than they presently are. One would have expected more dissimilarity in response than was found in this category.

A Comparison of Responses on Job and Union Satisfaction  
by Race and Gender

The first category compared was job satisfaction. fig. 5.8. The mean level of job satisfaction for male workers in the New Orleans area was 5.22 while in New York the mean level was 4.9750 for male workers on a scale of 0 - 10. In both cases, these figures show moderate levels of job satisfaction for male workers. The mean average for female workers in New Orleans was 3.90 and in New York the mean average was 5.2083. These figures meant that while female workers were far less satisfied than their male counterparts in New Orleans, they were slightly more satisfied than their male counterparts in New York. There is no explanation for this difference and the data does not give much of a clue except that the relatively low levels of income for women workers in New Orleans, compared to their counterparts in New York, might have affected the female workers response on the issue of job satisfaction. However, the same difference of income exists for male workers and yet, male workers in both respondent groups were similarly optimistic.

When comparing workers along racial lines, the mean score for white workers in New Orleans was 4.5 and in New York the mean score was 5.8269. fig. 5.9. The mean score for black workers in New Orleans was 4.4157 and 5.1667 in New York. fig. 5.9. In both cases, black workers and white workers together showed moderate levels

View of the Future

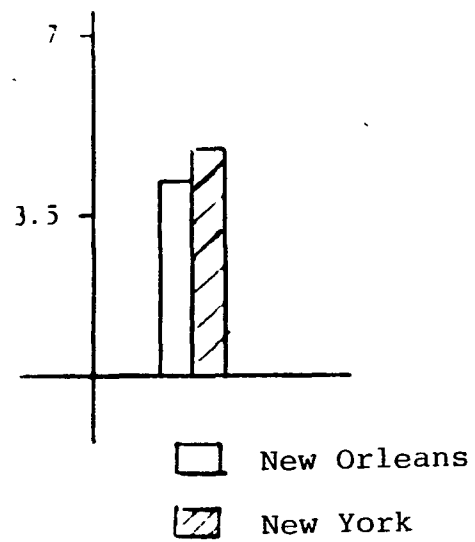


Fig. 5.7

Job Satisfaction

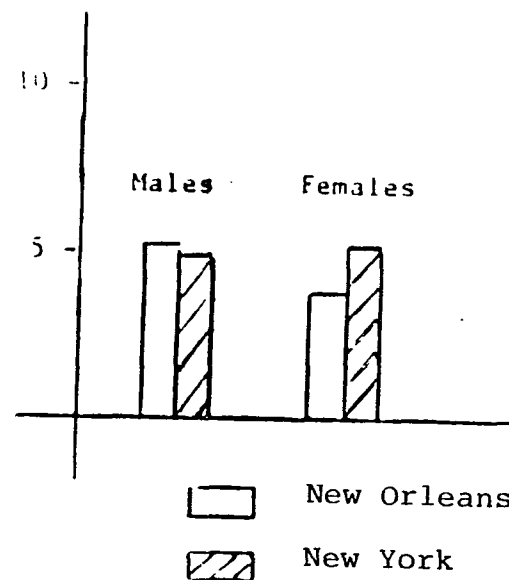


Fig. 5.8

of job satisfaction. In both cases, the levels of satisfaction were higher for white workers than for black workers. In both cases, respondents showed higher levels of job satisfaction in New York than they did in New Orleans. Levels of job satisfaction may have a relationship to income which, as previously stated, were much higher in New York than they were in New Orleans. This result may also explain the differences in levels of job satisfaction between white workers and black workers.

When overall levels of union satisfaction for male versus female workers in both regions of the country were compared, it was found that the mean average of male workers in New Orleans was 12.611 and in New York it was 6.3750 on a scale of 0 - 20. fig. 5.10 next page Obviously, there is an enormous difference in levels of job satisfaction between the two groups of male respondents. In New Orleans male workers show moderate levels of union satisfaction whereas in New York, they showed low levels of satisfaction with the union.

When female workers from both groups of respondents were compared, the mean was found to be 7.1875 in New Orleans and 7.7833 in New York. fig. 5.10. The female respondents were quite similar in their levels of union satisfaction although female respondents in New Orleans were less satisfied with the union than their male counterparts. In New York they were more satisfied than

Job Satisfaction

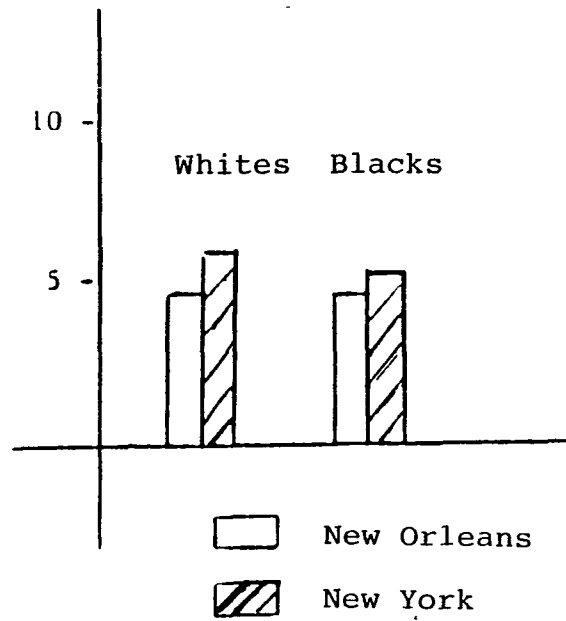


Fig. 5.9

Union Satisfaction

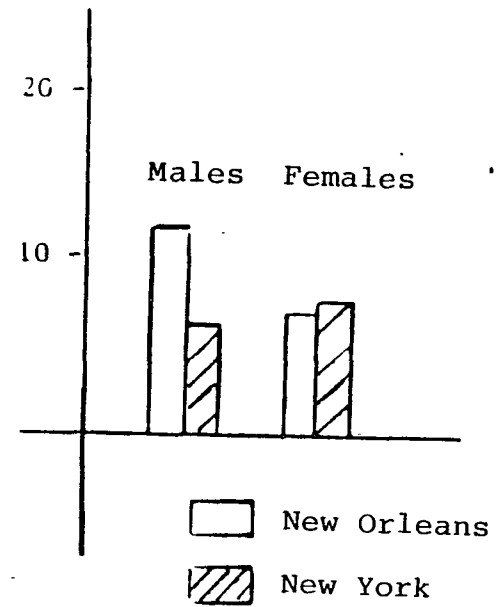


Fig. 5.10

their male counterparts. One possible explanation for the difference in the view of male respondents in New Orleans than in New York is that workers in New Orleans did not have to join the union. Therefore, the workers interviewed in New Orleans had chosen to join the union of their own free will whereas in New York, workers virtually were required to join the union. This fact may explain the difference in male respondents' levels of satisfaction but it does not explain the similarity of the responses of women respondents in both areas.

When comparing black respondents in New Orleans with black respondents in New York, it was found that black workers had a mean of 9.75 in New Orleans as compared to a mean of 7.8222 in New York, showing higher levels of satisfaction among black workers in New Orleans than in New York. fig. 5.11. When white respondents in New York were compared to white respondents in New Orleans, it was found that the mean for white workers in New York was 6.4038 as compared to a mean of 11.2222 for white workers in New Orleans. fig. 5.11. Again, workers in New Orleans, be they black or white, were more satisfied with their union than their counterparts were in New York. However, one major difference was that while white workers were more satisfied with their union than black workers were in New Orleans, black workers were more satisfied with their union than were white workers in New

## Union Satisfaction

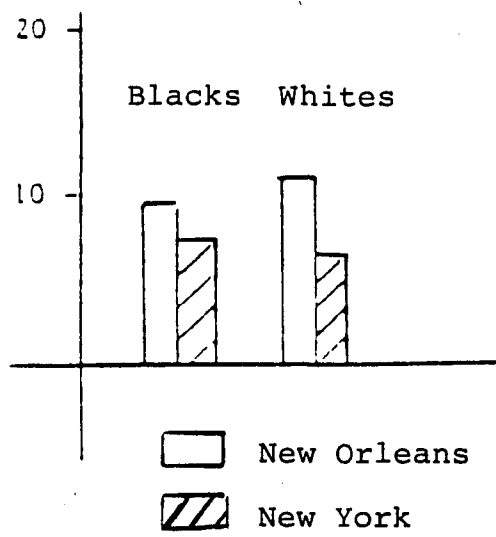


Fig. 5.11

York. This result is surprising when one considers that every officer interviewed in the New Orleans local, as well as almost every office in the district council, is black which is not true in New York.

When comparing levels of participation in the union among male workers, it was found that male workers in New Orleans had a mean of 11.8235 while male workers had a mean of 6.947 in New York on a scale of 0 - 24. When comparing female workers, a mean of 10.200 in New Orleans was found as compared to a mean of 6.5555 in New York.

fig. 5.12.

When comparing black workers in New Orleans to those respondents in New York, the mean was found to be 11.5833 in New Orleans and 8.0333 in New York. fig. 5.13. The mean for white workers in New Orleans was 9.556 and 5.3856 in New York. fig. 5.13.

In both cases, levels of participation were much higher in New Orleans than they were in New York. This result is likely due to two factors: one, workers who were attending a union meeting in New Orleans were only interviewed and two, workers in New Orleans had a choice as to whether they wanted to be union members or not. The workers chosen for the interviews had already made that choice in a positive way. It is interesting that both in New Orleans and in New York, black workers were more likely to be participants in the union's activities

### Union Participation

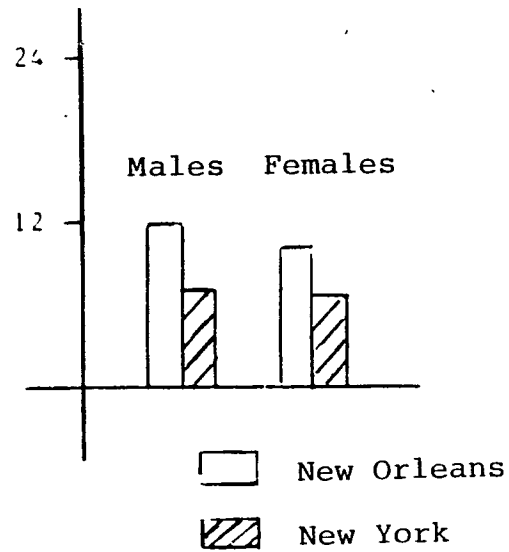


Fig. 5.12

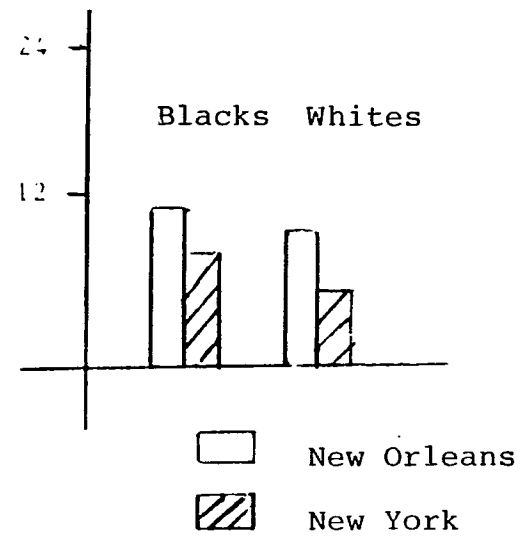


Fig. 5.13

than were white workers. In New Orleans this tendency may have had something to do with the fact that virtually all the leadership of the local unions, from where the respondents came, as well as the main organizer in the district council and the council president were all black although this may also be a reflection of the higher level of participation of black workers. It is harder to explain the higher levels of participation among black workers in New York. While some of the leadership of the locals from which the respondents came is black, much of it is not. In fact, much of the leadership is white. Still, black workers showed higher levels of participation in the union than their white counterparts. It would be interesting to know whether this tendency is true in other unions or whether the unions surveyed were exceptional. If it is true in unions that have a large black membership, it would be important to find out why.

When looking at the different subgroups and comparing both areas, it was found in comparing male and female workers that male workers in New Orleans felt more positive about the future than their counterparts in New York. fig. 5.14. The mean was 5.3750 for male workers in New Orleans and 4.4250 for male workers in New York. When the responses of female workers were compared, it was found that female workers in New York were more

## View of the Future

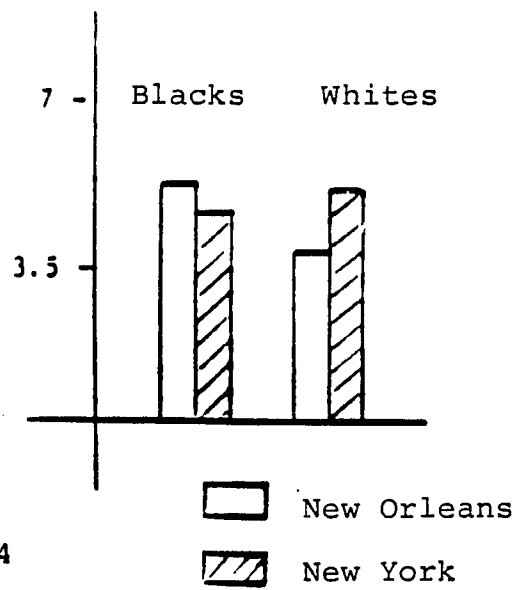


Fig. 5.14

positive about the future than their counterparts in New Orleans. The mean score for female workers was 4.7333 in New York and 3.0276 in New Orleans. fig. 5.14. What is surprising about these findings is not that female workers in New Orleans are less optimistic about the future than their counterparts in New York but that male workers in New Orleans are more optimistic than their counterparts in New York, given the situation in New Orleans as previously discussed. The explanation for this fact may be due to two reasons. One, male income in New Orleans, while significantly lower than its counterpart in New York, is significantly higher than that of female workers in New Orleans. The second factor may be external culture as previously discussed.

When workers were compared along racial lines, it was found that black workers had a more optimistic view of the future in New Orleans and that white workers had a slightly more optimistic view of the future in New York. fig. 5.15. The mean for black workers in New Orleans was 4.3750 and the mean for black workers in New York was 4.9111. The mean for white workers in New Orleans was 3.3887 and the mean for white workers in New York was 4.5192. In both areas of the country, black workers earned significantly less than white workers. So, it is unlikely that this result had much of a distinguishing effect on the workers' view of the future. Perhaps the

difference is related to the relative success of the civil rights movement in the south and the major changes that have taken place in the roles of black workers.

A Comparison of Responses on Working Class Identification and Political Orientation

Higher levels of working class identity were found among respondents in New Orleans in comparison to New York. The mean in New Orleans was 4.5429 on a scale of 0 - 8 as compared to 3.5120 among New York respondents. fig. 5.16. While the difference is not enormous, it does show that workers in New Orleans were more likely to see themselves as working class than they were in New York.

In the area of support for the existing parties, relatively low levels of support were found among both groups of respondents. On a scale of 0 - 8, a mean of 3.3429 was found for the respondents in New Orleans as compared to a mean of 3.8214 for the respondents in New York. fig. 5.17.

Among both groups of respondents was found a moderate level of support for the idea of a labor party. The mean response for New Orleans was 5.7429 on a scale of 0 - 9 while in New York, the mean was 5.3295. fig. 5.18. Levels of support were slightly higher in New Orleans than they were in New York but not by much. This fact seems significant, considering the conditions of work,

View of the Future

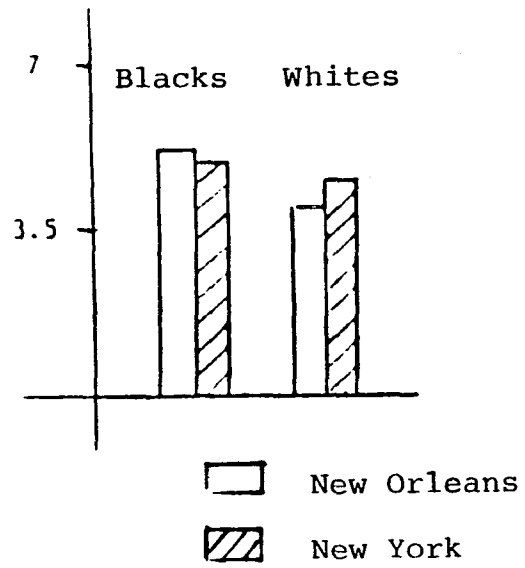


Fig. 5.15

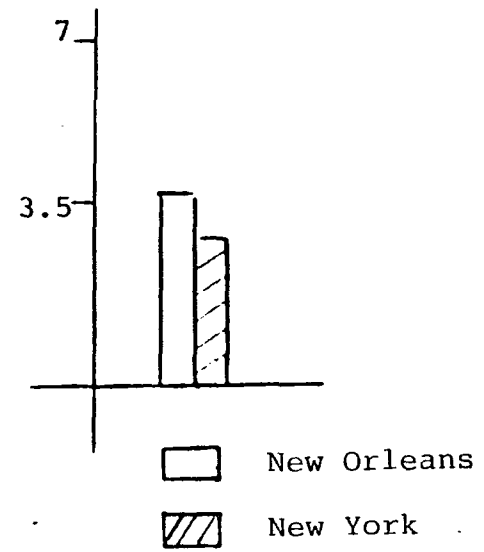


Fig. 5.16

Support of a Labor Party

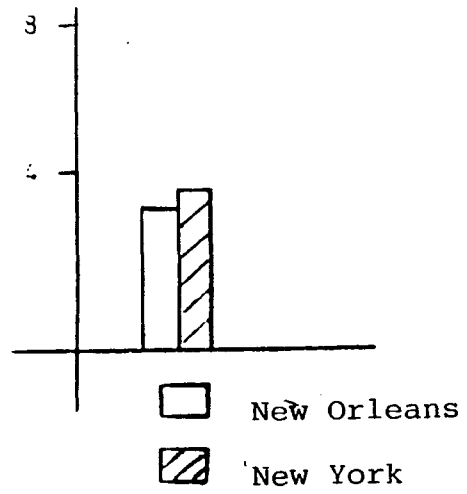


Fig. 5.17

Support of Existing Political Parties

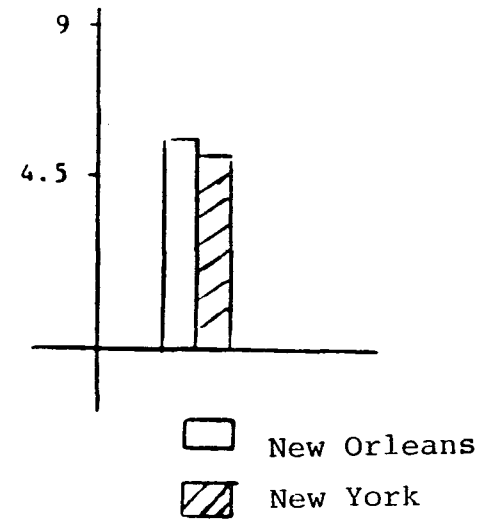


Fig. 5.18

educational levels and overall economic environment as well as the differences in the racial and sexual makeup of the respondents. There was a moderate level of support for a labor party among two fairly different work forces. Further research must be done to find out just how widespread the support for a labor party really is among union workers and what, beyond passive support, could union workers be willing to do to build a labor party.

A Comparison of Responses on Working Class Identification and Political Orientation by Race and Gender

When looking at working class identity among subgroups, a striking similarity was found between all subgroups in New Orleans and also between all subgroups in New York. Among every subgroup, working class identity was higher in New Orleans than it was in New York.

When male workers in New Orleans were compared to those in New York, it was found that the mean in New Orleans was 4.5660 and 3.4500 in New York. When female workers were compared, the mean in New Orleans was 4.5625 and was 3.5334 in New York. fig.5.19. When black and white workers were compared, the mean for black workers in New Orleans was 4.5 as compared to 5.0667 in New York. The mean for white workers was 4.7778 in New Orleans and 4.9038 in New York. fig. 5.20.

### Working Class Identification

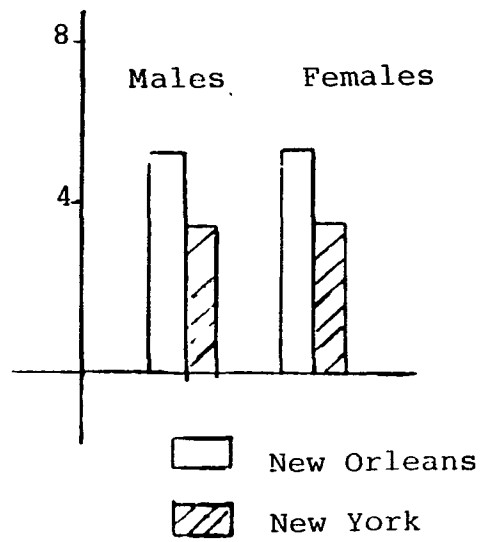


Fig. 5.19

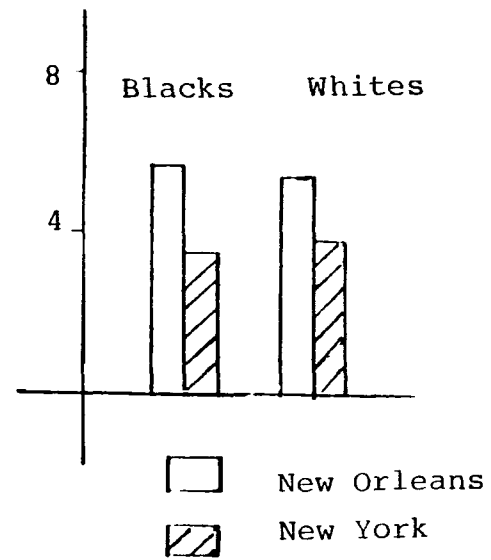


Fig. 5.20

What is striking about these results is not the differences in the two areas that were interviewed but the similarities in responses from all the subgroups in each area. It appears from the accumulated data that working class identity is not affected by either race or gender. This result appears to be true both where working class identity was fairly strong and where it was not.

Why working class identity was stronger among the respondents in New Orleans than it was in New York may be related to several factors. First, there is the fact that the workers interviewed in New Orleans were all workers who at least attended some union meetings. Identification with the union may be related to working class identity although there was not enough data to show a correlation. Two, the workers in New York were all workers who were attending college, a fact which may tend to weaken working class identity. Three, all the workers interviewed in New Orleans had only recently formed the union and the process of forming the union may have strengthened their working class identity.

When support for existing political parties was compared among male workers, it was found that the mean in New Orleans was 3.5556 as compared to 4.0500 in New York on a scale of 0 - 8. For women workers, the mean in New Orleans was 3.3125 as compared to a mean of 3.4833 in New York. fig. 5.21.

## Support for Existing Political Parties

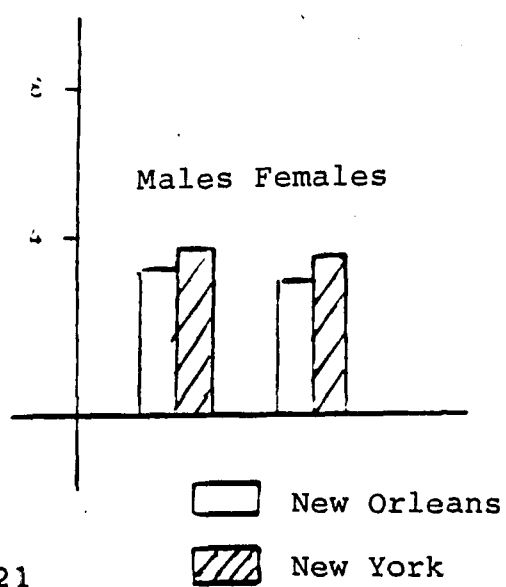


Fig 5.21

When black workers in New Orleans were compared to those in New York, the mean in New Orleans was found to be 2.8846 as compared to 3.3778 in New York. The mean for white workers in New York was 4.667 as compared to 4.1154 in New York. fig. 5.22.

Support for existing political parties was found to be higher among all groups of respondents in New York than it was in New Orleans. The amount of difference was usually very small, about half a point. One explanation for this difference is the long history of public employees unions in the New York area being involved in politics and in supporting one of the two major political parties. The union in New Orleans used for the interviews does not have such a history.

Even when the leadership of the district council in New Orleans was interviewed, they specifically made a point of saying that they were thinking of becoming more heavily involved in local politics. They believed this involvement might be a way of increasing their political power in the state. In addition, the union's history could not have been very long even if the union had been more involved in politics and had a past history of being involved, as none of the locals involved in the interviews had been in existence for more than a few years. The differences, however, are not that great and this result may be more significant. One curious thing

## Support for Existing Political Parties

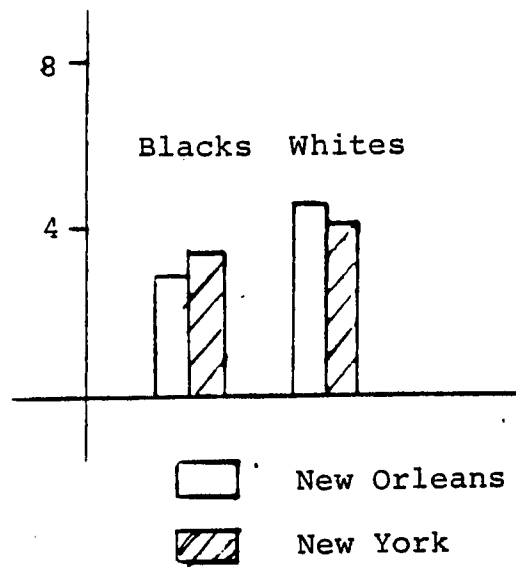


Fig. 5.22

is that all the groups showed less support for the two existing political parties in New Orleans with the exception of whites who showed more support than did their counterparts in New York.

When support for a labor party was compared between male respondents in New Orleans and those in New York, the mean for male workers was found to be 4.8333 in New Orleans on a scale of 0 - 9 as compared to 5.1000 in New York. fig. 5.23. The mean for female workers in New Orleans was 5.4431 and 5.3361 in New York. While there was some difference in the level of support of a labor party among male respondents with support in New Orleans being stronger than support in New York, the differences were not great and the figure for female respondents was almost identical. Another interesting fact was that while levels of support were slightly lower than their male counterparts in New Orleans, they were slightly higher than their male counterparts in New York. What is probably more important than the slight differences in levels of support between sexes and also between regions is how similar the levels of support were, given the diversity of the two groups of respondents.

When black workers were compared, the mean was found to be 6.0625 in New Orleans and 5.0667 in New York. When the scores of white workers were compared, it was found that the mean for white workers in New Orleans was 3.9375

Support for a Labor Party

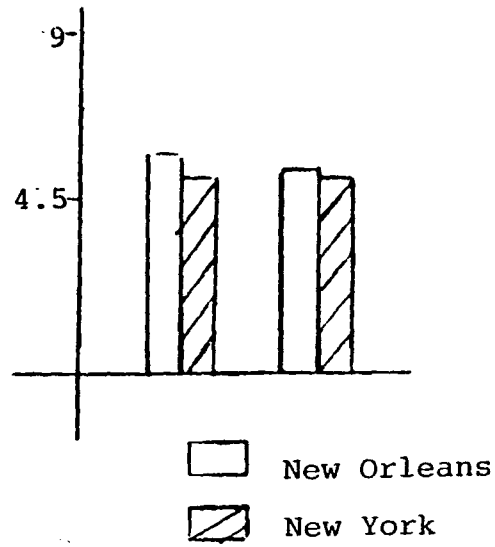


Fig. 5.23

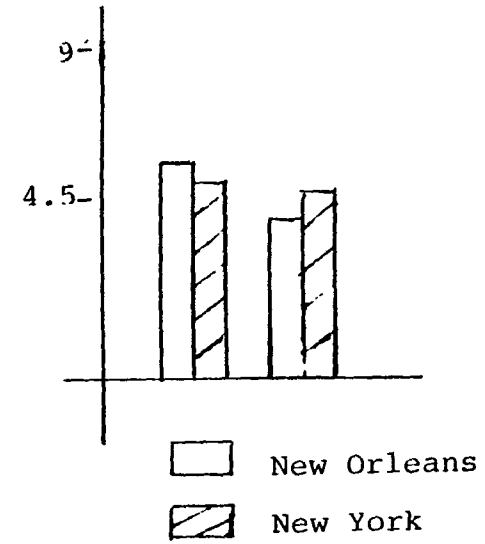


Fig. 5.24

and 4.9038 in New York. fig. 5.24. In both cases, black workers were far more likely to support the concept of a labor party than were white workers. While the differences were more pronounced in New Orleans with black workers showing strong support for the idea of a labor party and white workers showing weak support for the idea, the differences also appeared in New York where black workers showed moderate levels of support for a labor party and white workers showed slightly lower but still moderate levels of support. The strong differences in the responses among black workers in New Orleans may have to do with differences in income, education and opportunity than from their white counterparts. The flattening of those differences in New York may have to do with more equal levels of education and opportunity among those respondents.

It is important that in both areas of the country, black workers were more likely to support a labor party than were white workers. This result may have occurred due to a long history of discrimination in both parts of the country even if those levels of discrimination varied from one region to the other and to the alienation from the two major parties that developed due to that discrimination.

## Chapter 6

Factors That Influence SupportFor a Labor Party And Those That Do Not

When this research project began, it was my desire to know if there was any support for the idea of a labor party among members of the unionized working class, particularly public employees. If such support existed, where was that support the strongest? I also was interested in finding out what kind of variables, either positive or negative, affected support for a labor party.

Two distinctly different regions of the country were chosen for the study. It is my belief that if a similar profile was developed of the kind of worker who would support a labor party in two such different regions of the country, this profile might have broader significance and application beyond the limits of this research. I also believed that the more that was learned about the effects regionalism had on workers' attitudes concerning different issues, the better the understanding of how such regional differences would affect the development of a labor party.

The results of the research were surprising in some aspects and not in others. In addition, the results of the research raised as many questions as it answered. It is important that the research is viewed as a pilot

project due to the size of the sample and the fact that the survey was limited to public employees.

A profile did develop from the research of the type of worker most likely to support a labor party. The worker was likely to be a member of a minority group and most likely was a female worker. In both regions of the country, support for a labor party was higher among minorities and women than among whites and men. However, with the exception of hispanics in New York City, support was no more than moderately positive among any group.

These two factors were the only consistent predictive factors. Support for a labor party could not be consistently correlated to any other factor although there was reason to believe that if a larger sample had been used, income might become a predictive factor. It also must be mentioned that virtually none of my respondents were young workers and therefore, age could not be correlated to support or lack of support for a labor party.

I would have presumed that strong support for existing political parties would have an inverse relationship to strong support for a labor party. This was true for some groups but was untrue for many other groups. In fact, in the case of hispanic workers in New York City, there was a strong positive correlation between support for existing political parties and

support for the idea of a labor party. I believe that an expanded group of hispanic workers would need to be interviewed to see if this correlation continued to be valid or was simply a statistical fluke due to the small number of hispanic workers interviewed. If this correlation for hispanic workers were valid for a larger group, then it would be important to know why.

One of the problems with the research is that the sample size is too small. In total only 125 workers were interviewed. Obviously, this group would have to be greatly enlarged before more definite conclusions could be drawn. The research needs to be enlarged in the future in three ways; more regions of the country will have to be included, the number of public employees interviewed will have to be increased and if the research is to have application beyond public employees, then other workers will have to be interviewed. It will be particularly important to survey unionized factory workers.

Some of the results of the research seemed surprising. One result that was particularly surprising was the strong positive view of the future found among workers in both regions and among most of the subgroups. There was a strong positive view of the future even in New Orleans where pay was low and the possibility of being laid off was high. This finding was difficult to explain although

I attempted to analyze the finding in the previous chapter. It is my belief that further reseach must be attempted, despite previous research done on workers' views of the future for themselves and their children, in light of the information found in both New Orleans and New York .

If one defines alienation from the two existing political parties and support for a labor party as being more liberal than the opposite point of view, then woman respondents in both areas were more liberal than male respondents. This finding is an important one since historically, women have been presumed to be more conservative than men. The results are even more significant when one considers that the data was found in two such divergent regions of the country. It is even more significant if one considers the enormous differences in the two work forces that were interviewed. Further sampling among public employees and union workers in general would be useful to see if this phenomena is widespread.

As expected, workers were almost universally dissatisfied with their union. However, the research also indicated that the workers were only mildly dissatisfied with their union rather than strongly as one might have expected. Still, the results seemed consistant with other research in the field. There was

far more dissatisfaction with the union in New York than there was in New Orleans. This result was true for all groups of respondents except female workers who showed fairly high levels of dissatisfaction with the union in both regions of the country. This data is probably not as significant a result as it first appeared to be since the respondents in New York answered a questionnaire that was mailed to them; whereas, the respondents in New Orleans were all participants at a union meeting and were surveyed just before the meeting began. Although all responses were anonymous, the fact that the respondents were at a union meeting could have presumably affected their responses in two ways. One, it meant that only people who attended union meetings responded and therefore, it could be expected that these people might be more favorably predisposed towards the union. Two, respondents might have worried that the union would read their responses and be able to identify those who gave negative responses and thus penalize members for those negative responses.

Also, there might have been a more positive reason why respondents in New Orleans were more supportive of their union than their New York counterparts. In New York the union meetings are held at the union hall, some distance away from the work place. While they are open to all members, only elected delegates have voting rights

at the meetings of the district council. In New Orleans union meetings are either held at the workplace or right next door. Any member who attends may vote. This procedure makes the union seem more open and makes participation easier. There is one other major difference between the unions that were researched in the two cities. In New York one is a union member because he works for the City of New York; whereas, in New Orleans one is a union member because he has made a decision to become a union member. There is no agency shop agreement in New Orleans as there is in New York.

While there is some support of the idea of a labor party, it remains unclear from the study whether this support is passive or active. If the support is passive, it is unclear as to whether it could be turned into active support. My very limited data suggests that this support is unlikely to develop should support for the idea of a labor party be required from the leadership of the public employees union. The leadership, who I interviewed, were solidly behind the two party system. In addition, the record of political endorsements by public employees unions in both New York and New Orleans suggests a strong commitment to the two party system.

What about outside forces as a trigger for the development of a labor party? This possibility seems more likely. But then the question raised is what kind

of forces will produce a move towards the development of a labor party? I do not think that the forces will be primarily economic. This country has experienced a number of severe economic dislocations without producing a labor party. In order for a labor party to develop in the United States, new factors will have to come into play that previously were either not important or did not exist. There is no data from this study that indicates what these factors may be.

When I began this research project, I believed that a labor party was more likely to develop in the current period rather than in past periods as most workers would have a negative view of the future based on their own experience. While this view may be true in other unions, there was an overall strong positive view of the future among the workers surveyed. In addition, workers who did have a negative view of the future were no more likely to support a labor party than those who had a positive view of the future.

The role that blacks, hispanics and women play in the work force will determine whether a labor party develops in this country. All three of these groups are taking on increasing importance in the trade union movement in general and among public employees unions in particular. These groups are not part of the old order as they were never allowed to be so. Yet, through thirty

years of struggle, all three of these groups have gained enormous power relative to what they previously had obtained in the labor movement and society in general. They gained this power for the most part without much help from either of the two major political parties. In fact, both political parties were often in opposition to these struggles for rights. While these groups do vote for these political parties, their tie to the political parties may not be as strong as it has been among white male workers.

Jesse Jackson's campaign was a precursor of a new political coalition and while it operated within the Democratic Party, this coalition may be forced to break with the Democratic Party if it is to grow and develop. In 1984 this movement had the strong involvement of blacks, one of the groups mentioned above. The year 1988 will show whether the Jesse Jackson forces have a much wider appeal.

Obviously, more work must be done in this field of research to draw any firm conclusions. This work should be undertaken immediately. Also, there needs to be extensive research of public employee union workers on a national scope as well as on union members from traditional unions. Only with this type of research are we going to have a clearer understanding of the political direction the trade union movement is likely to take in the near future.

There will be many difficulties in conducting this type of research. Financial expenses must be considered in order to do research of this scope. Many unions will be hostile and difficult in cooperating. Designing appropriate additional questions will have to be done with great care.

This research project does give us some idea of the kind of worker most likely to support a labor party. We also need to know if workers in other unions who support a labor party have a similar profile. We also must develop a more complete profile. We need to know what young respondents think of the idea of a labor party as this survey only dealt with older workers.

Also, and more importantly, we need to know who is most likely to support a labor party. We need to know what factors will motivate those workers, sympathetic to the idea of a labor party, to become active in developing one. While my research does suggest moderate levels of passive support for a labor party among certain groups of workers, the research gives us no indication of what it will take to turn this passive support into active support.

During the research, I could not find any clear indication of different levels of support among blue collar and white collar workers on the question of support for a labor party. This problem may well have

been because my sample was too small and only included public employees. Further research must be done to indicate if such a difference does exist and if so, how much of a difference does exist.

We also need to know if there is a significant difference in attitude on this issue between public union employees and private union employees. Are traditional union workers more likely or less likely to support the development of a labor party?

This research project only gives us a glimmer of an idea as to what type of worker is likely to support a labor party or how widespread support is for a labor party. However, what the results of this project does give us is a better idea of how the research must be expanded so that we have a more complete view of the political development in the near future of the unionized working class in this country. Hopefully, the results of this research project will stimulate others to expand the research.

## Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire

Please circle the correct answer or fill in the blank.

1. What is your birthdate? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your birthplace? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you married? single?
4. What religion are you? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you have any children? \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Level of education A. 6-9 years B. 9-12 years  
C. High school diploma D. 1-2 years of college  
E. 3-4 years of college F. B.S. or B.A. G. B.S.  
or B.A. and 1-2 years of graduate school H. M.A.  
or M.S. Degree I Years beyond a Master's \_\_\_\_\_
7. White Black Asian Spanish Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Male Female
9. Are You a Democrat Republican Independent  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is your income range? A. 5,000-10,000  
B. 10,001-15,000 C. 15,001-20,000 D. 20,001-  
25,000 E. 25,001-30,000  
F. 30,001-35,000 G. More than 35,000
11. How many years have you worked at this job? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is your job title? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you consider yourself A. Working class  
B. Middle class C. Upper class D. Lower class
14. Is your spouse working? Yes No A. Full time

- B. Part time
15. How much money does your spouse earn a year?
- A. 5,000-10,000 B. 10,001-15,000  
C. 15,001-20,000 D. 20,001-25,000  
E. 25,001-30,000 F. 30,001-35,000 G. More than  
35,000
16. If your spouse working, is he or she a union member?  
Yes No
17. What was your father's occupation when he was your  
age? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Was your father ever a member of a union? If yes,  
which union or unions? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Did your mother work? Yes No
20. In the last five years do you think A. That your  
standard of living has gone up B. That your  
standard of living has stayed  
the same C. That your standard of living has gone  
down
21. At your present job A. Have you found that the  
work  
is more satisfying B. Stayed about the same  
C. Has become less satisfying than is was when you  
started
22. Do you think that there is room for advancement at  
the job? Yes No
23. If you had a son or daughter would you want them to  
do the same kind of work that you do? Yes No

24 . What jobs do you expect your children to hold in the future? Please list.

25. Can you name the leaders of your local? Please list.

26. Would you vote to re-elect A. All of your current local union leadership B. Some of your current local union leadership C. None of your current local union leadership

27. Can you name the national union leadership? Please list.

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28. Do you think the current local leadership is doing  
A. an excellent job B. A good job C. An average  
job D. A poor job of running the local union
29. Do you think the national leadership of the union is  
doing A. An Excellent job B. A good job C. An  
average job  
D. A poor job of running the union
30. Do you think local leadership as a group has the  
interest of union members first on their mind?  
Yes No
31. Do you think national leadership as a group has the  
interest of union member first on their mind?  
Yes No
32. Would you consider the last contract won by the  
union A. An excellent contract B. A good  
contract C. An average contract D. A poor  
contract Why? Please explain

33. Do you think that your child or children will have  
A. better life than you B. As good a life as you  
C. A poorer life than you
34. Do you go to local  
union meetings? A. All the time  
B. Some of the time C. Almost never D. Never
35. Did you vote in the last union election for local  
leadership? Yes No If yes, why? If no, why  
not?
36. Did you vote on the last contract? Yes No
37. How much say does the rank and file member have in  
who the union endorse in electoral campaigns? A. A  
lot B. A little C. Almost none D. None
38. Do you vote for the political candidate that the  
union endorses at the national level A. All the  
time B. Most of the time C. Some of the time  
D. Almost never E. Never
39. Did you vote in the last presidential election?  
If so, why? If not, why not?

40. If you voted for president, who did you vote for?
41. Do you think that President Reagan is an  
A. Excellent president B. Good president  
C. Average president D. Poor president
42. Do you think that either of the two major political parties serves the interest of workers like yourself? Yes No If Yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_
43. Do you think that workers should organize their own political party in the United States?  
Yes No Don't Know
44. If there was a political party organized by workers in the United States, would you vote for it?  
Yes No Don't Know
45. If such a party was organized, do you think it could be successful in the United States?  
Yes No Don't know
46. Could you list what you think are this country's

three most serious problems?

47. Do you think you will loose your job in the future?

Yes No

## Appendix B

### Methodology of New Orleans Research

The workers chosen for this study included workers from the Sewage and Levy Board and both hospital police and hospital workers at Charity Hospital. They were placed together as one group rather than separated into three groups for the following reasons; one, there were not enough workers in any one group interviewed to make valid comparisons; two, the workers were all in the same district council and three, the difficulties faced by all of these workers were very similar. In addition, there was as much difference in wages within each local as between them.

Since all of these locals were new as none on them were more than eight years old, members in the locals were all relatively new to being in this union. In many cases, members were new in their own unions in general. In the case of one of the three locals, the local had not yet signed it's first contract. That signing was expected to take place imminently. Contract negotiations were extremely difficult for all three of the locals used in the study for two reasons. First, the state of Louisiana is a right-to-work state, meaning that contracts that include either a union shop or agency shop provision violate state law. Second, both the state of

Louisiana and the City of New Orleans were near bankruptcy at the time the research was conducted and therefore, had little to offer at the negotiating table. In fact, the city's main interest in negotiations was to obtain concessions from the unions that would allow for lower wages and a reduction of fringe benefits.

The state was in the process of laying off workers while the research was being conducted and was not particularly interested in negotiations with unions at all. It must be made clear that under Louisiana law neither the state nor the city is under any obligation to negotiate with its employees.

#### How Interviews Were Conducted

The district council was extremely helpful while the research was being conducted. The district council allowed interviews to be held prior to union meetings and encouraged members to respond to the questionnaire. Interviewers were provided with locations as to where the interviews would be conducted. The district council was also very helpful in providing background information on union members.

The usual format for the interviews was to distribute questionnaires to those members of the union who came to union meetings. Prior to distributing the questionnaire, its purpose and intent were explained to

the membership who were to be interviewed. It was made clear to respondents that they would remain anonymous. If respondents had a question, either my assistant or I would respond, being careful to ensure that the responses did not affect the respondent's answers to the questionnaire. In fact, almost no questions were asked by respondents. When the respondents finished answering the questionnaire, they placed them into a box. Respondents were invited to stay for refreshments after the meeting was over.

#### Problems Encountered

In spite of the help of the district council, the interviewing of workers proceeded very slowly. Difficulties arose in gathering the data almost from the beginning. Meetings were often set up and then cancelled by the union which often meant that a trip to New Orleans, planned for interviewing workers, had been wasted. Communications with the organizer, George Johnson, were often difficult. There were long periods when he could not be reached. Also, when Mr. Johnson was finally contacted, another difficulty would occur as the international union would suddenly send him to another part of the country to help with an organizing drive. This problem could, and often did, occur without warning and for indeterminate amounts of time. Even when Mr. Johnson was in town, appointments were often missed due

to emergencies that he was forced to take care of. Thus, an enormous number of trips had to be made to New Orleans to even set up the meetings where the interviewing was to take place.

However, when meetings were set up for interviewing, they were combined with business meetings of the local. The union felt that by combining the local meeting with the interviewing, a greater number of members would attend. Unfortunately, despite this combination, attendance at the meetings was quite low. Usually, well under ten percent of the membership attended these meetings.

There was also poor coordination between the organizing staff of the international and the local leadership whose participation was needed if there was to be a meeting at all. Local presidents and other officers usually failed to return telephone calls from either George Johnson or his assistant Gary Coleman. In some locals it was not absolutely clear who were even the elected officers due to power struggles within the local.

While some of these difficulties were envisioned before the study was begun, the extent of the problems was much greater than expected. Low attendance at union meetings was expected but meetings being cancelled repeatedly without warning had not been expected as well as the constant disappearances of George Johnson and the conflict between local leaders and the organizer.

It was also presumed that there would be higher attendance at union meetings held at the work site, particularly since for many of the workers coming to the meeting meant getting away from work early. This situation did not prove to be the case. Attendance at union meetings was low no matter where they were held or for what purpose.

The other factor that had a major impact on the research was the collapse of both the state's and the city's economy while the research was being conducted. This event was quite unexpected and almost certainly had a major impact on the results of the research. One of the effects of the economic collapse was that AFSCME decided to withdraw its staff from the state. This withdrawal meant that overnight, the resources of the international were essentially no longer available to locals. It also meant that AFSCME had terminated virtually all organizing efforts within the state.

All of these factors made the surveying proceed at a pace much slower than originally anticipated. It also resulted in far fewer respondents than had been expected. Retrospectively, the kind of difficulties encountered were probably not all that unusual in this type of research. With the exception of the collapse of the state's economy, most of the other difficulties encountered might have been foreseeable.

While it is not the purpose of this study to make such projections, it seems clear that the immediate future of public employees unions in Louisiana is quite bleak which is particularly true for AFSCME. As long as the economy of the city and state continues to remain weak and as long as Louisiana continues not to grant public employees unions any legal rights, the future of such unions is quite bleak.

## Appendix C

### Methodology Used for the New York Research

The second group of public employees who were interviewed were public employees in New York City. Most of the respondents were members of District Council 37 of AFSCME. In addition, some respondents were members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA). The district council is the largest district council in the entire international with over 125,000 members (Thompson, 1987). The union encompasses a broad spectrum of workers, both blue collar and white collar, and its members are found in every city agency. The CWA represents public employees in only a few city agencies, mainly in the housing authority and some supervisors in mayoral agencies.

### Why The District Council Was Selected

The district council was chosen for a number of reasons. One, I had once been a delegate in the district council and had many contacts in the union. Two, the union prides itself on being a liberal union and three, the union emphasizes the democratic nature of its structure and the openness of the district council as a whole. The CWA was used only as a result of the methodology that was finally adopted.

### Difficulties Encountered

The expectation was that there would be little difficulty in receiving permission from District Council 37 to conduct the research and that the only difficulty in carrying out the research would be the usual difficulty of getting potential respondents to answer the questionnaires. However, this assumption proved to be completely wrong. From the very beginning, there was enormous difficulty in gaining access to the membership of the union. It took three months just to set up a meeting with the director of research, Mr. Ed Herndon. In our meetings, he reviewed the questionnaire very closely and was concerned about a number of questions, particularly the questions asking the rank and file to evaluate the performance of local leadership. He felt that local leadership might not feel comfortable with such questions on the survey. He asked me to remove the questions. When I refused, he suggested another meeting be held and he would make a decision in regards to the research.

Two months later, a second meeting was held. At this meeting, Mr. Herndon was again concerned about giving permission for the survey to be conducted. This time he said the union was conducting its own study and he did not want my study to interfere. Mr. Herndon did finally give verbal approval for the study to be conducted but on the condition that the New Orleans

section of the research be completed before respondents were interviewed in the district council in New York City. He continued to try to pressure me to drop some of the questions from the survey and to add new questions on local leadership for those which earlier he had requested that I should drop. While I assured him that I would present him with the results of the survey before they were placed into my dissertation, I told him that the questions that he wanted removed from the survey were extremely important and could not be dropped. He agreed to let me proceed but on the stipulation that I must contact him again before I started interviewing respondents in the district council.

Unfortunately, when I next tried to set up a meeting with Mr. Herndon, I discovered that he was no longer the director of research but had been appointed to a new position. The new director would have to meet with me instead. The new director was Ms. Debra Bell. Repeated attempts were made to contact Ms. Bell. After four months, a meeting was finally arranged. At the meeting, Ms. Bell said that she knew nothing about the project nor were there any records of previous meetings. Ms. Bell requested me to send her a copy of the survey and she would contact me thereafter. However, more months passed with no response. Finally, I began calling her again. Yet, she was never in when I called and she never returned the telephone calls.

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Another month passed before a meeting was finally set up. At this meeting, Ms. Bell raised concerns similar to the ones that had been raised previously by Mr. Herndon. When I explained to her that I had already received permission to do the study, her response was that there was no record of such permission being granted but she would check. In the meantime, she wanted a copy of my dissertation proposal and wanted to arrange a meeting with me that would include the former director of research and a representative from Victor Gotbaum's office to discuss whether permission should be granted to conduct the survey. By now, two years had passed since my initial meeting with the original research director.

Again, there were long delays before the meeting was set up. When it finally took place, the meeting was more like an inquisition than a meeting. Everyone present had read my dissertation proposal and no one was happy with it. They did not understand the goals of the research and thus, did not feel comfortable giving me permission to do the research.

The group spent considerable time informing me that their membership had just completed a similar survey conducted by the union and that the results were overwhelmingly positive. The group did not want to overburden their membership with yet another survey. They said that if permission was given to do my survey,

there might be a negative reaction from the membership. The group did say they would reconsider their decision if I gave them a different set of goals from the ones stated in the dissertation proposal which they considered to be too general.

A new set of goals was sent to Ms. Bell but by this time, I realized that permission was not going to be granted to conduct the survey. Another method had to be devised to survey workers of the district council. Without union permission, the study would become extremely difficult to complete. Yet, it had become clear that union permission was not going to be granted and as expected, there was no response from Ms. Bell to my new set of goals.

#### Decision To Use Public Employees Enrolled In The Center For Workers Education

Finally, another method for doing the research was designed. The major public employees unions in New York City co-sponsors a college program for their members. The program is affiliated with City College of New York. Enrolled in the program are over 250 public employees, most of them members of District Council 37. The center has each enrollee listed, with his union affiliation as well as home address and telephone number. This list thus provided me with another method for gaining access to public employees.

Another advantage of this alternative was that I already had an entree into the center as I taught a course titled Learning Skills and the Social Sciences for the center. A meeting was set up between the executive director, Dr. Steve Leberstein, and myself and he immediately granted me permission to use the center's files to pick respondents.

Unfortunately, the files at the center were not organized on the bases of union affiliation. This fact meant the I was forced to review the files of 1,000 students, in order to generate the names of 250 members of public employees names. While this method was a time consuming procedure, it was far less time consuming than trying to receive permission from District Council 37 to do the study.

Once the list was generated, there was still the problem of contacting the 250 people on the list. The method decided on was to mail the questionnaire to each person on the list, along with a brief letter of explanation, the questionnaire, and a return self-addressed envelope. In addition, the mailing was followed by a telephone call.

Designing the letter that went with the questionnaire had to be done very carefully. Too much information would confuse the respondents. Yet, there had to be enough information so that respondents felt

comfortable about responding. I then decided to design a letter with minimal information. This change would make the letter easy to read and if there were further questions, they could be answered with a follow-up telephone call. The letter simply explained that I was conducting the survey as part of my work on the dissertation and that respondents would remain anonymous. In addition, a brief description was provided on how to complete the survey. My biggest concern about using this method was that I would receive a low rate of response. In fact, the response rate was quite high, about 40%.

Of course, this was not a random sample. However, the survey would not have been a random sample even if the union had been more helpful. By using the group of public employees that I used, I biased the survey in terms of both age and education. All the workers were enrolled in college and all had to be over 25 to enroll in The Center For Workers Education. It also might be assumed that the workers who responded were a highly motivated group since they were both working full-time and attending college.

In reality, these factors did not seem to have much impact on the responses. In most categories the responses were quite similar to the responses gathered from the New Orleans data.

Another result of using this method was that while most of my respondents were members of District Council 37, some of my respondents were also members of CWA. This dual affiliation of some members could have affected the results. However, there was no substantial difference in the responses of the two groups except that CWA members usually had a better idea as to who was their local leadership in comparison to members of District Council 37 who did not.

## Appendix D

### Statistical Method Used

The statistical method used was based on a book called *Statistical Reasoning In Sociology*, (Mueller, Schuessler, Costner, 1977). Three main techniques were used; mean averages, regression analysis, and significant correlations based on the correlation coefficient.

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