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## Electoral Participation in James City County (1966-1970): A Case Study

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ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN JAMES CITY COUNTY (1966-1970):  
A CASE STUDY

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Government  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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by

Philip Sparks

1975

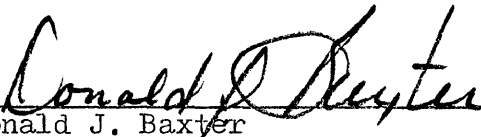
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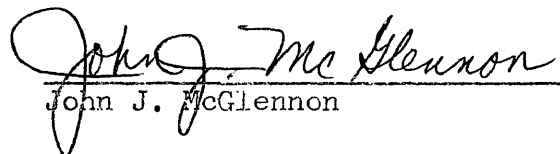
Master of Arts

  
Philip L. Sparks

Approved, May 1975

  
Donald J. Baxter

  
William L. Morrow

  
John J. McGlennon

For my wife, Ann

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The tedious, complicated and controversial job of correlating the raw voting data fell to Mrs. Willafay McKenna. The author is very grateful to her for her assistance as well as to Mrs. Betty Winstead, Registrar of James City County, Virginia, for her cooperation. He also wishes to thank his wife, Ann, for the long hours she devoted to this darn project.

Finally, a special note must be made of The Daily Press and its reporter, Mr. Will Molineaux, for their exciting pre-view coverage of this thesis several years ago.

## PREFACE

After having worked in sixteen political campaigns during the past eight years, it was probably inevitable that I would select a thesis topic pertaining to electoral participation. Combining a study of voter participation with the local setting of James City County, Virginia evolved naturally for me since many of the campaigns in which I had been involved centered in James City County.

I had canvassed James City County door by door for a variety of political candidates over the years and wanted to put to use in another way some of that political experience gained first hand. I asked myself why a scientific study of James City County electoral participation couldn't be of some value, and it was that question that lead to the final form my thesis took.

In 1966 I worked on my first political campaign in James City County as a volunteer doing door to door canvassing for votes. Subsequently, I worked for numerous local and state political candidates in the James City-Williamsburg area.

I learned first hand what public apathy in elections can mean and I spent the better part of four years trying to overcome such voter apathy in James City County, particularly in primary elections. I remember the arduous tasks of voter identification and voter registration in James City County. I also remember several election day canvasses which failed to produce anything more than a ripple at the polls. I know James City County from the ground up; so this overview study has its roots in the backroads and suburban housing developments of the county that I have canvassed relentlessly.

James City County and graduate school always seemed to bump into each other. My entrance into graduate school was affirmed one day in 1969 after I had just completed work in an unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign. My premature exit from graduate school almost occurred two years later as a result of another political campaign in the area. A political candidate I worked for in James City County was controversial and so, it turned out, became my thesis!

My thesis fell victim to a "dirty trick" by the local Republican Party. An anonymous "Gordon Liddy" type burglarized the College of William and Mary computer room in an ef-



fort to prove that my research data, computed with the use of state facilities, was being used by a local candidate for the state legislature. While my thesis deals only with summary results, detailed information on registered voters in James City County was originally put into the College's computers for collation and computation. It was this "raw" data, data which I with the help of many good friends had labored hundreds of hours in gathering, that the local GOP took in their "entry" into the College computer room.

À la the pumpkin papers in the Hess affair, my computer data on James City County mysteriously turned up on the front doorstep of an outraged senior College administration official, himself a James City County Republican officeholder. Demanding some kind of immediate administrative action, he turned the "evidence" in to the College President. Almost simultaneously, the local Republican Party charged in a press conference that my thesis data, computed at state expense, was being used in the state legislative race by the Democratic candidate for whom I worked. Seeming to make matters worse, it was pointed out that the head of the James City County Democratic Party had helped me design my computer program.

Calls and telegrams went out to the Governor of Virginia, and the College President initiated an investigation into the matter. In retrospect, the whole episode seems comical; but, at that time it did lead to a full-scale investigation involving the Department of Government and the College administration. An appointed committee, upon gathering all the facts, several weeks later completely exonerated me and my graduate standing was reaffirmed. A letter of reprimand was sent to the person responsible for the "entry", for he was connected with the College, and nothing was done to the College official who involved himself.

For a day or so my thesis made headlines in the local newspaper. It attracted more publicity than most academic endeavors by lowly graduate students. However, it seems certain that this final form of this study will go unnoticed by the media.

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## ABSTRACT

While the University of Michigan Survey Research Center and others have fully documented electoral participation in presidential elections, little research has been done on electoral participation in state elections at the local level. This study will examine electoral participation in Virginia general and primary elections in order to compare the findings with established theories of voting participation based on presidential elections already surveyed.

Among the theories examined with data from the Virginia elections are (1) that as a group older people vote more often than younger people, (2) that whites vote more often than blacks, and (3) that males vote more often than females. Additional variables not examined by the Michigan Survey Research Center are examined for their effects, if any, on electoral participation. The three variables included for study are (1) the length of time registered, (2) membership in a household group, and (3) socio-economic status.

The findings of this study agree with the established theories of voter participation in most cases. James City County data from 1966 to 1970 indicate that of the eligible voting population voter participation by age is greater among the 35-54 age groups than among all other age groups, with the 55 years and older group ranking second and out-voting the youngest age group of those 21-34 years old. The data conform to the theory that voter participation may be greater among males than among females. The data further indicate that electoral participation by race is greater among whites than among blacks in state general elections but is nearly equal among the races in state primary elections.

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN JAMES CITY COUNTY (1966-1970):

A CASE STUDY

## INTRODUCTION

Studies of political participation have noted a great many ways in which citizens interact with the political system. Working for candidates, putting bumper stickers on cars, contributing to political campaigns, and obtaining membership in political parties are all functions of political participation. Nonetheless, the most frequent act of political participation is voting. Enormous amounts of time and money are spent by political organizations and by political candidates in order to motivate eligible voters. Yet, in the United States only 60 to 70 percent of those eligible to vote in presidential elections do so. In other elections electoral participation drops off dramatically. Voting is often assumed to be the keystone of a democratic system; yet, this right is exercised at significantly low levels in state and local elections.

Most of what we know about elections comes from studies at the national, presidential level. Very little is known

about electoral participation at the state and local level and whether electoral participation trends vary between general elections and primary elections.

In this study some of what we know about elections will be tested using evidence from local races at the general and the primary election level.

In Chapter I this study will present an overview of electoral participation based on current data. Studies conducted by the Michigan Survey Research Center dealing with the variables of age, race and sex and their effects upon voter participation at the national level will be examined.

In Chapter II the setting of this case study, James City County, Virginia, will be detailed together with a description of factors in James City County which might affect electoral participation there. The data compiled by the Michigan Survey Research Center relating to electoral participation and the impact of age, race and sex upon it will then be compared to results in James City County for the 1968 Presidential election using the same three variables.

Chapter III will analyze electoral participation data compiled by the researcher in James City County according to



the variables of age, race and sex. The Michigan Survey Research Center results will be compared to those results in James City County drawn from Virginia general and primary elections. Also, this chapter will look at three additional variables in electoral participation not examined by the Michigan Survey Research Center studies--length of time registered, membership in a household group and socio-economic status.

Included in Chapter IV will be the overall conclusions drawn by this study. The results using the variables of age, race and sex in examining electoral participation in James City County are found to be consistent with the Michigan Survey Research Center's findings in most cases. Furthermore, it is found that a direct correlation may exist between the additional variables examined and electoral participation at the state and local level.

## CHAPTER I

### OVERVIEW OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

#### Political and Electoral Participation

Political participation among American adults ranges from one out of twenty who have worked in a political campaign to the maximum of seven out of ten who have voted in a presidential election. Other figures on overall political participation in the United States often list the standard rankings compiled by Lester Milbrath:

Four to 5 percent of the American electorate are active in campaigns, about 10 percent make monetary contributions, about 13 percent contact public officials, and about 15 percent display a bumper sticker. Around 20 to 30 percent try to influence others to vote a certain way, and from 40 to 70 percent receive political messages and vote in any given election.<sup>1</sup>

The focus of writers such as Milbrath, Angus Campbell and Sidney Verba in dealing with political participation has been almost exclusively on national elections and not on state or local elections. Only brief mention has been made

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<sup>1</sup>Angus Campbell, et al., The American Voter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), p. 67.

of political participation below the presidential level with the assumption being made that voting falls off dramatically from the presidential high water mark.

In the field of electoral participation authors Bernard Berelson and Richard Scammon have concentrated their voting studies on national elections and national turnout. Hypotheses relating age, race and sex to electoral participation have been examined using data primarily from presidential elections. Brief mention is made of the decline in participation in state general or primary elections as compared to presidential elections. Since the basis of comparison is always a presidential election, there has been little opportunity to examine the ways in which the presidential electorate may differ from the state or local electorate. Also, little research has been done dealing with the possible differences between the primary electorate and the general electorate.

#### Michigan Survey Research Center Findings

For more than twenty years, the University of Michigan Survey Research Center has been surveying the political involvement of the American electorate. Placing its emphasis on the results of presidential elections since 1948, the Sur-

vey Research Center has financed grants which have enabled the identification of many important influences on the American electorate.

However, while a great deal of time, money and effort has been extended to the study of the phenomena of presidential elections and influences upon them, little work has been done by the Survey Research Center or other groups on elections below the national level. On one hand, aggregate data on state and local elections has not been readily available and, on the other, the costly survey methods of the Survey Research Center have centered on national elections because of their perceived greater importance. As a result, many findings by the Survey Research Center have yet to be confirmed at the state or local level.

It will be the purpose of this study to test the three main Survey Research Center findings pertaining to voter turnout in presidential elections for validity at the local level using state general and primary election results as well as results from one presidential election as a basis of comparison for James City County, Virginia. The study will further compare the sociological characteristics of the voting

population of James City County for similarity to results of the Survey Research Center surveys.

#### Partisanship and Party Identification

Before any examination can be made of the influence of factors such as age, race and sex upon the electorate, a word must be said about the importance of party identification in the Survey Research Center findings concerning political participation. The Survey Research Center has stated that "few factors are of greater importance for our national elections than the lasting attachment of tens of millions of Americans to one of the parties."<sup>2</sup> However, party identification does not usually reflect an active membership in a particular political party. As seen in the low figures previously cited for political involvement beyond voting, the American voter has a loosely formed image of his identification with a particular political party which fails to interest him much beyond voting. Still, even without a consistent record of party support or formal membership in a political party, party identification constitutes a strong psychological.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

factor in political participation. The individual voter may only have a general image of his party's voting record or platform; but, a majority of the American electorate can be classified as strong identifiers, for they mentally label themselves Democrat or Republican.

While avoiding active involvement in political parties then, American voters nevertheless have a strong conception of their identification with the two major political parties. This allegiance to a particular political party has remained at about the same level for the twenty years of measurement by the Survey Research Center in spite of frequent shifts in Republican and Democratic presidential majorities.

Apparently party has a profound influence across a full range of political objects to which the voter responds. The strength of relationships between party identification and the dimensions of partisan attitudes suggests that responses to each element of national politics are deeply affected by the individual's enduring party attachment.<sup>3</sup>

#### Age as a Factor in Electoral Participation

Party identification is described by the Survey Research Center as the most important factor in electoral participation. Yet, the sociological categories of age, race

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

and sex also represent elements of daily societal attitudes which cannot be cancelled out of calculations concerning electoral participation. "Individuals who are located in a given category are likely to behave differently from those who fall in another category."<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, specific socially defined roles resulting from classification by age, race and sex do have an electoral effect.

Survey Research Center studies show that among adults "the sharpest differences in participation occur in the earliest years after [voting] eligibility."<sup>5</sup> The longer a person retains a partisan attitude the more likely he is to identify with a party. The same is true of electoral participation. Voting can become a habit so that the more a person votes, the more likely he will vote in future elections. It is therefore not surprising that young people as a group have the lowest level of electoral participation (see FIGURE 1).

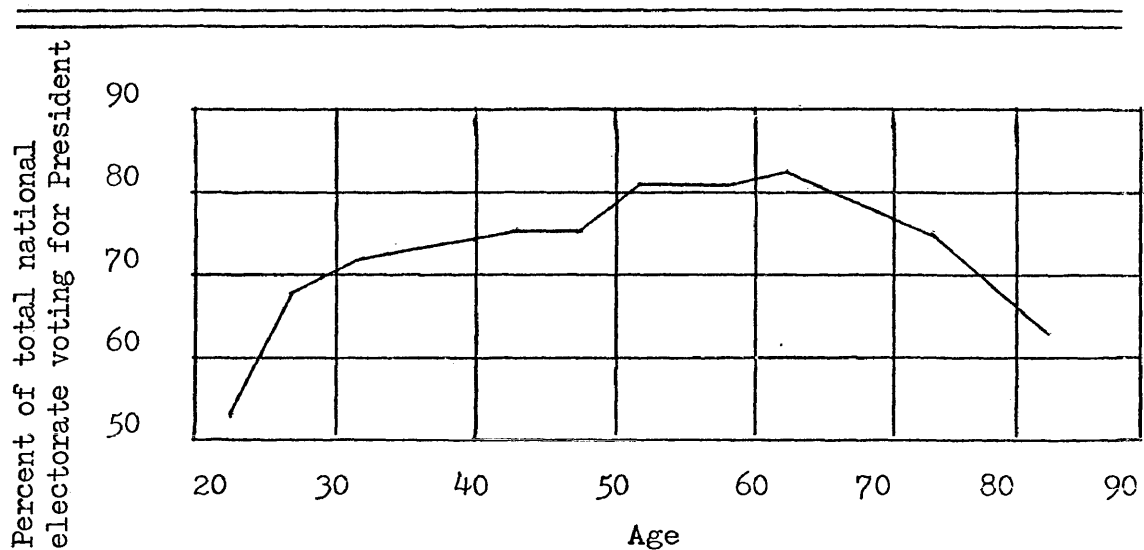
Young people between the ages of 21-34 are further subject to competing influences which often include completing an education, establishing a family and embarking on a career.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 250.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

FIGURE 1  
 RELATION OF AGE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION  
 FOR PRESIDENT: 1952 AND 1956<sup>a</sup>



All of these outside pressures contribute to a general ordering of priorities that puts political activity among the young at a lower level than among older age groups.

As a young person ages, however, his partisan attitudes and subsequent identification with a political party become stronger. He becomes less mobile, settles down at a job in a community and begins to move into a more stable status in society. He is a parent, wage earner, taxpayer and citizen,

<sup>a</sup>Ibid., p. 262.



and as all of these he becomes aware of the influence on his life by those who govern. His personal associations as well as employment associations become more politically homogeneous in sharp contrast to the young adults of whom only one-half are in political agreement with all three of their close friends and of whom one-third disagree with two of the three.<sup>6</sup> Finally, peer group pressures at work and in the community become sharper in the 35-54 age group, bringing about greater electoral participation. The habit of voting, once established, begins working to increase electoral participation with age.

Voting finally tapers off steadily in the 55 and over age group and nears but does not reach the lower voting levels of the 21-34 age group. This reversal in voting habits can be attributed to less intense peer group pressure, a decrease in the sense of political efficacy and an increase in mental and physical infirmities of the old which restrict their voting turnout. The over 64 age group also begins to feel that it does not have as big an economic or political stake in society,

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<sup>6</sup>Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, Voting (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 96.

thereby decreasing its electoral participation.

The Survey Research Center studies at the national level indicate that electoral participation by age is almost a bell curve, varying directly with age until the peak year of 64 and then reversing. In presidential elections the 21-34 age group has the lowest rates of electoral participation of all other age groups. As age increases to approximately age 64, so does electoral activity. Over 64, however, voting frequency varies inversely with the increase in age and eventually drops back down to nearly equal participation levels of the youngest voters. According to the Survey Research Center studies of presidential election turnout, of the registered 21-24 year olds, 52 percent actually vote compared to 70 percent of the 30-34 age group. Seventy-nine percent of those registered in the 50-54 age group vote and 82 percent of those 60-64. By the age sixty-five though, voter turnout by registrants begins to approach voter turnout rates of the 21-24 age group.<sup>7</sup>

#### Race as a Factor in Electoral Participation

Prior to civil rights directives of the federal govern-

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<sup>7</sup>Campbell, American Voter, p. 262.

ment in the mid-1960's, suffrage restrictions through the enactment of the poll tax and the literacy test in many southern and in a few northern states dramatically retarded the electoral activity of blacks. Consequently, when the Congress took aim at breaking those legal barriers contributing to lower voting levels among blacks by passing the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Acts of the 1960's, it was assumed that blacks would be free at last to vote in greater strength. To the contrary though, Survey Research Center studies conclude that restrictive elections laws toward blacks were not the only reason for relatively low motivational levels among blacks. Sociological and extra-legal pressures still remain to hamper black voting in general (see FIGURE 2).

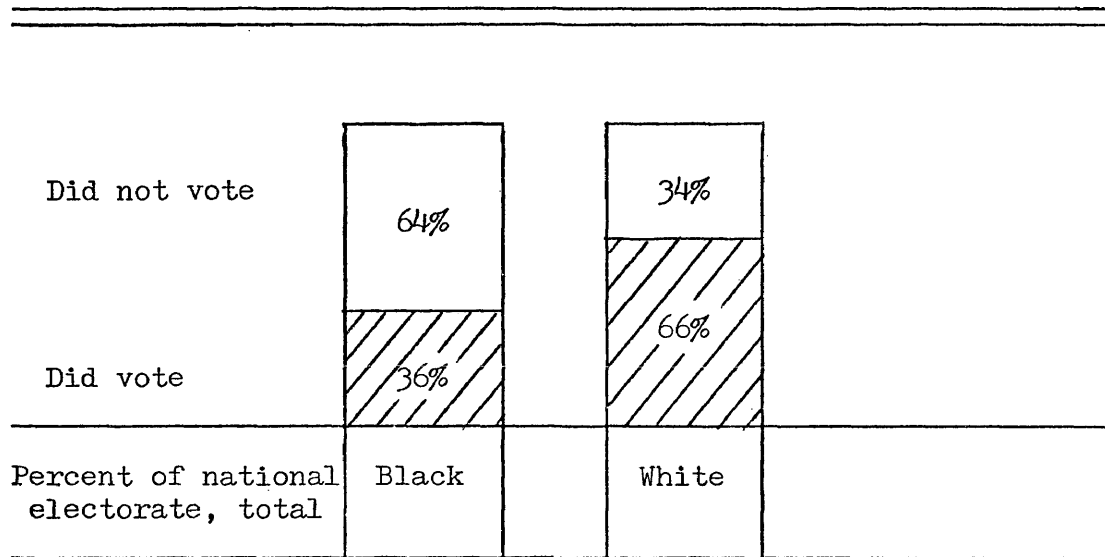
Most Negroes living in heavily Negro counties do not vote--regardless of the stringency or leniency of state laws. Second, Negroes living in counties with a smaller proportion of Negroes in the population vote more often than do other Negroes living in the same states under the same laws<sup>8</sup> but in counties with larger Negro populations.<sup>8</sup>

As V.O. Key has pointed out, counties with small black populations present no challenge to the white majority, and therefore the pressure on blacks not to vote is

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

FIGURE 2  
RELATION OF RACE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION  
FOR PRESIDENT: 1948 - 1964



lessened. On the other hand, counties with large black populations, those defined by the Survey Research Center as having more than thirty percent black residents, present a greater threat to the white majority; consequently, racial pressures not to vote are greater upon the black population there.

These voting patterns are especially applicable in the counties of the South where local institutions outside the formal laws and protection under the civil rights acts are clearly an

important factor in the electoral participation of blacks.

As many voting studies have demonstrated, blacks still have a low sense of political efficacy and political duty. Blacks, particularly, feel that the act of voting does not affect their own political advancement; for, too often white politicians in the past have nullified black efforts at bloc voting or have failed to act on black political demands, and the lesson has not been lost on the blacks. The Survey Research Center studies conclude that while the civil rights acts and voting rights acts did increase electoral participation among blacks somewhat, other outside pressures on blacks still remain to keep blacks voting at lower levels than whites.

#### Sex as a Factor in Electoral Participation

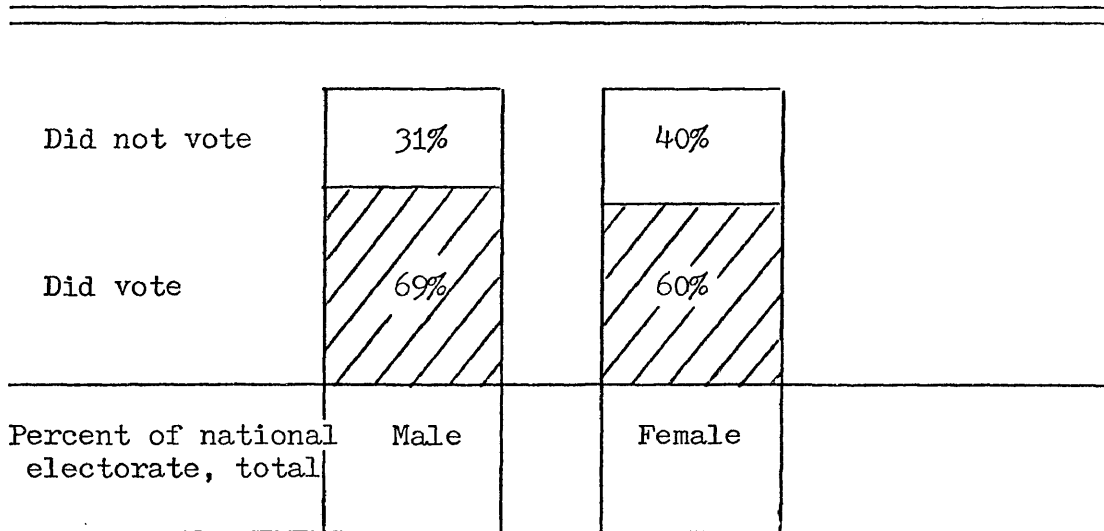
The traditional role of females in political activity has retarded their electoral participation in comparison to males according to Survey Research Center studies. The perception of the female as mother and homemaker has outweighed political activities of all kinds, including the act of voting. The right of women's suffrage did not become effective in the United States until the 1920's, and appar-

ently female activity in politics is still being hampered by the formerly accepted social role of females which discouraged their participation in politics. In Survey Research Center studies of presidential election turnouts from 1948 to 1964 "the voter participation rate among women . . . is consistently ten percent below that of men, as an overall estimate."<sup>9</sup> See FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 3

RELATION OF SEX TO VOTING PARTICIPATION

FOR PRESIDENT: 1948 - 1964<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 256.

Sex differences in voter turnout are especially sharp in the South where the social role of women is closest to the traditional view held by men and women alike that women have no place in politics. The lower figures for female voting in the South reflect a sex-role lag in the area. It seems that a sense of political efficacy is especially lacking in southern females and among all other American females generally, leading to lower voter turnout rates by women.

The idea of women as the weaker sex, for the moment at least, is still transferred into the political arena of electoral participation with the Survey Research Center concluding that social attitudes still influence voter participation by sex resulting in lower female turnout than male. There is an indication, however, that this pattern may be reversing with the advent of the Women's Liberation Movement, the proliferation of various women's consciousness-raising organizations and the call for equal rights and opportunities for women gaining considerable interest and lobbying.

## CHAPTER II

### JAMES CITY COUNTY CASE STUDY:

#### 1968 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The preceding chapter revealed that the average turnout nation-wide for a presidential election usually ranges between sixty and seventy percent of the total adult population. In James City County, however, the turnout for the 1968 Presidential election was markedly lower.<sup>10</sup> This fact may be attributed in part to James City County's region--the South--and its nature--rural--both lower turnout areas in the nation.

The ways in which James City County is similar to and different from other parts of the country will be the subject of the first section of this chapter. Following this discussion of the setting, the logic of the research design will be outlined. Finally, a comparison of voting turnout in James

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<sup>10</sup> According to the data compiled in this study, only thirty-eight percent of the total adult population voted. See FIGURE 6.



City County and the nation at large will be seen in a third section, describing the Presidential election of 1968. The conclusion reached is that the setting chosen is suitable to the researcher's purposes.

### The Setting

The unit chosen for case study is James City County, Virginia. It lies in the middle of Virginia's urban corridor which stretches from the seaport of Norfolk to the outskirts of Washington, D.C. Its population is comparable to the percentages and general growth rates of the state and the urban corridor itself. James City County's population is also expanding at rates typical of the urban corridor with its population increasing from about 10,000 in 1960 to 17,000 in 1970 and with resulting influences on the political environment. According to the 1970 United States Census, the 21-34 age group constitutes 34 percent of the adult population, the 35-44 age group 19 percent, the 45-54 age group 19 percent and the 55 and over age group 29 percent of the adult population. Thirty-five percent of its adult population is black compared to 65 percent white, and 51 percent of its

adult population is female compared to 49 percent male.

Politically, James City County also reflects the politics of the urban corridor of Virginia; it tends to be more nationally Democratic while at the local level, Republicans are making inroads. The Democratic presidential ticket receives more support locally than it does state-wide and the Republican party has been successful in winning elections for more local offices than is the case throughout most of Virginia.

James City County was selected for this study because of the researcher's familiarity with state and local politics there, and because the hypotheses examined are more manageable at this level of study. It is recognized that a study of James City County portrays results that may be homogeneous due to the small size of the unit studied; however, limiting the study to the local level should not prohibit the examination of electoral participation as it bears on state and national elections. This particular case study was examined because it was possible to accumulate rather precise voting data, data otherwise unavailable from a physical point of view to the researcher at a more general level.

### The Research Design

This case study of James City County examines voter turnout in one presidential election, three state general elections and four primary elections in Virginia during the years 1966 to 1970. Both state general and state primary elections in James City County are included for study here not only because of an attempt to study electoral participation as voting drops off considerably from the presidential peak but also because of the importance of the primary in the South generally and in Virginia politics specifically.

V.O. Key has detailed the importance of primaries in Southern politics. His study concluded that the Democratic primary often represents the real, or final, election because of the absence of Republican challengers in the general elections. In James City County, as well as throughout the state of Virginia, Democrats still choose their candidates by primary vote while Republicans continue to nominate their candidates in a convention. Although the importance of the Democratic primary has diminished in Virginia in light of the burgeoning of a two-party system within the state, the primary remained an important political force during much of the

period studied.

In addition, since Virginia law allows cross-over voting and since local Republican candidates are chosen by convention, primary elections for state-wide offices in James City County have a special importance generally associated with the primaries throughout the South. Among blacks in particular James City County primary elections have the same importance as general elections.

The data were obtained from two sources--the James City County voter registration lists and the 1970 United States Census. Voter registration data, compiled from the approximate whole population of registrants in James City County, were gathered in September of 1970 from voter registration lists available as public record from the county registrar.<sup>11</sup> Census data, compiled from the entire general population of James City County, were completed by May of 1970. Since voter registration data and census data were gathered within a few months of each other, both sets of information have the same chronological basis.

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<sup>11</sup>The whole population of registrants is only approximate due to omissions of data in the voter registration lists and elaborated further on page 24.

The researcher arbitrarily determined the time period used because of the availability of precise election and registration figures for that time span. For instance, any data compiled after 1970 would not contain racial designations due to a federal law passed that year barring such designations from voter registration cards. Attempts to obtain voter information by age, race and sex further back than 1966 were hampered by frequent purges of the voter registration books as well as the continual addition of new voter registration cards which rarely listed electoral participation before 1966.

Classification of the voter registrants and the general population of James City County by age, race and sex was possible using the same units of measurement within each variable studied. Information concerning age, race and sex was required on all voter registration forms in Virginia and was carefully recorded on each registrant's card, until 1970 when the Civil Rights Act barred designations by race; therefore, it was possible to determine an exact profile of the electorate for each instance. Party identification, however, was not determinable since party identification information

is not required by Virginia state law.

This study will examine the electoral participation of the whole voting population of James City County as of September, 1970 in all state-wide elections and in the one presidential election since 1966 in order to advance the hypothesis that the Michigan Survey Research Center's studies of age, race and sex variables and their influence upon electoral participation at the presidential level are consistent with the findings of this study of local election results for the presidential election sampled. Furthermore, it is hypothesized that these same findings will also hold true for the election results in state general and state primary elections. More specifically, the Survey Research Center's hypotheses examined in this study for possible application to state elections at the local level are the following:

(a) Voter participation by age is greatest among the 35-54 age group in the eligible voting population than among all other age groups, with the 55 years and over group taking second place and out-voting the youngest age group of 21-34 years, i.e., 35-54 > 55 and over > 21-34.

(b) Voter participation by race is greater among whites

than among blacks, i.e., whites > blacks.

(c) Voter participation by sex is greater among males than among females, i.e., males > females.

In order that James City County electoral participation results of state-wide elections be consistent with the Survey Research Center's conclusions of national participation results of nation-wide elections, the aforementioned hypotheses concerning the variables of age, race and sex must also hold true for James City County. Three more variables which have been mentioned infrequently and then only briefly in national studies of electoral participation will also be examined for their possible impact on voter participation. These variables include the (1) length of time registered, (2) membership in a household group and (3) socio-economic status in the community. It will be determined whether they have any bearing on the subject under study.

A brief description of the procedure used to derive James City County's electoral participation is included here for clarification purposes. The population figures for James City County are estimated on a yearly basis using the United States Bureau of the Census method of taking the

population gains for James City County as a whole and for certain classifications in particular between 1960 and 1970, dividing by ten and then assuming a linear growth rate. However, the registrar for James City County has deleted from the voter registration books those who have died between 1968 and the 1970 data compilation date, has noted some out-migration from James City County and has purged some names from the registration lists. Therefore, while the Bureau of the Census population figures take into account yearly increases, the James City County voter registration records of individual electoral participation exclude some of those who were recorded as voters in 1968 but have since been purged from the voting lists for various reasons according to state law. This continuous voter purge and the subsequent loss of the voter's election record results in lower electoral participation figures the farther back the study proceeds from the 1970 date of compiling the data from the voter registration lists. This fact determined the selection of the 1968 Presidential election and that presidential election alone for inclusion in this case study. It also determined the use of those state general and state primary elections



after 1968 for a case study. Voting records of individual behavior prior to 1968 were often sketchy, inaccurate and not recorded uniformly.

In spite of the resultant lower level of electoral participation in James City County, voter turnout results are still consistent at these lower levels with the Michigan Survey Research Center findings. The results of voter participation in James City County in the 1968 Presidential election follow.

#### Presidential Election Results of 1968

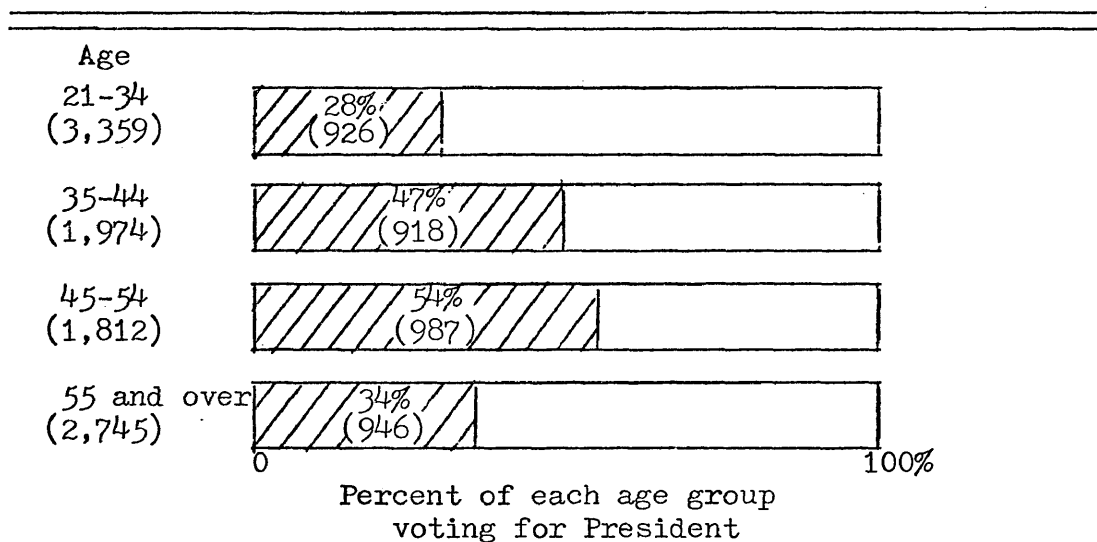
##### Turnout by age

In studying voters and non-voters in presidential elections, the Survey Research Center findings break up the eligible voting population into four age groups--21-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55 and over--even though its hypothesis is presented in the more general terms of middle > older > young. Within this same framework, an examination of James City County voting in the Presidential election of 1968 mirrors the results of the national studies conducted by the Survey Research Center. Although actual electoral participation figures are lower in James City County, the rankings

for each age group remain the same as in the Survey Research Center rankings. See FIGURES 1 and 4.

FIGURE 4

RELATION OF AGE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION FOR  
PRESIDENT: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1968



The 21-34 age group in James City County ranked last in 1968 voter turnout and the 45-54 age group's vote, ranking first, nearly doubled the youngest voters' turnout. The 55 and over group voted less than the 45-54 age group but still managed to vote at a higher rate than did its young counterpart. The rankings of electoral participation by age

group then remain the same as in the Survey Research Center's studies: (1) 45-54, (2) 35-44, (3) 55 and over and (4) 21-34. The Survey Research Center hypothesis that the middle age group turns out in greater strength in presidential elections than does the older age group which still votes more than the youngest age group does in fact hold true for presidential election results in James City County as well.

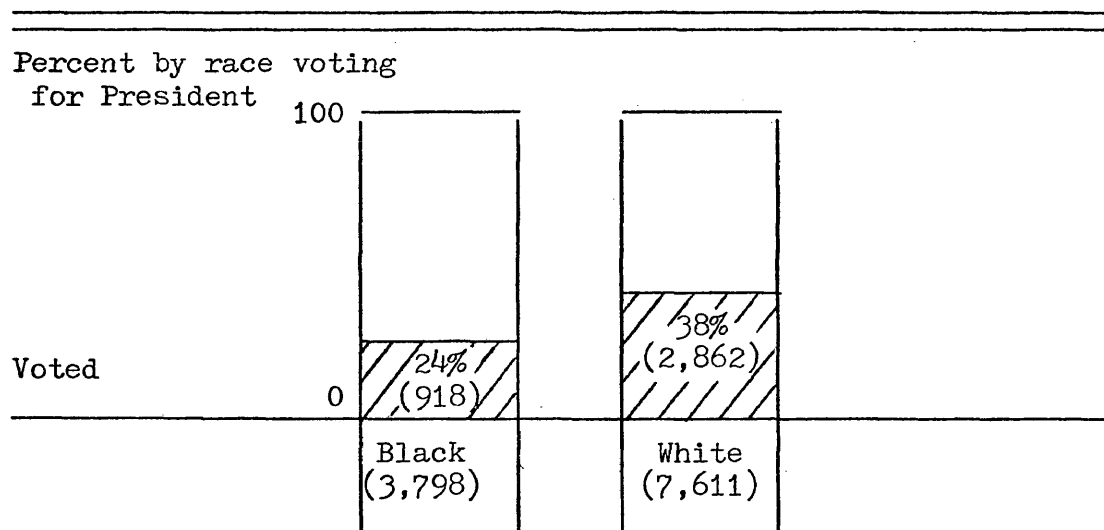
#### Turnout by race

As the Survey Research Center surveys point out, presidential voting is lower among blacks than among whites in national turnout statistics. The Survey Research Center makes special note of voting in the South where lower levels of electoral activity by blacks are especially accentuated. Moreover, counties with a black population defined as heavy, i.e., over thirty percent, have even lower black voting turnouts as discussed earlier. All three of these factors led to black electoral participation in James City County in the 1968 Presidential election which is nearly two-thirds that of white participation. See FIGURES 2 and 5. As the figures indicate, in James City County the racial voting gap is narrower than in national studies where whites outvote blacks

nearly 2:1.

FIGURE 5

RELATION OF RACE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION FOR  
PRESIDENT: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1968



While overall electoral participation by race in James City County is still admittedly lower than the national participation figures in the Survey Research Center findings and the gap is narrower, the rankings of black and white voting in presidential elections remain the same in both studies.

Turnout by sex

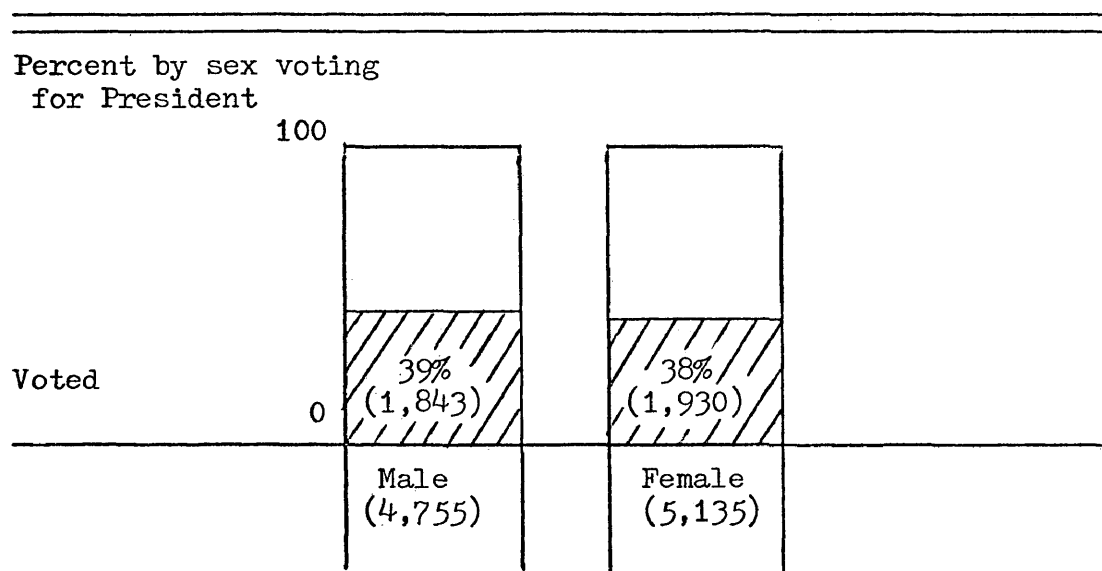
The social role of women, as noted in Survey Research Center studies, has led to lower voter percentages in the pres-

idential elections studied. Concurring with the Survey Research Center's results, the same general voter turnout patterns by sex may hold true in James City County as indicated by FIGURES 3 and 6.

FIGURE 6

## RELATION OF SEX TO VOTING PARTICIPATION FOR

PRESIDENT: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1968



Male turnout rates continue to exceed female turnout rates, but just barely. While the national average differences in voter participation between males and females is approximately ten percent, the difference in James City County is dramatically lower, only one percent. It must be noted,

however, that even though female turnout is lower than that of males in percentage, numerically they cast more votes than males. Voter turnout in James City County, according to sex in this instance, may be said to remain consistent with the Survey Research Center findings: males vote more often than females in presidential elections. Yet, with such a narrow gap between the two groups, the possibility for error does exist.<sup>12</sup>

#### Conclusions

Although the overall voting turnout in presidential elections by percentages in James City County is lower than those at the national level in the Survey Research Center findings, the relative voting patterns remain about the same. By age, those occupying the middle age groups of 35-44 and 45-54 years clearly dominate the voting population with voter turnout by the oldest age group tapering off but never quite reaching the lowest turnout rates of the youngest age group. By race, whites out-vote blacks, and by sex, males out-vote females, though just barely.

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<sup>12</sup>For a possible explanation of the difference on this point between the findings of this study and the Survey Research Center findings, see p. 63, below, and especially note 14.

The data suggest that voting by age group coincides with studies of electoral participation conducted by the Survey Research Center although at lower levels of overall participation in James City County. On the national level, the Survey Research Center finds that whites out-vote blacks by almost two to one in presidential elections. Similarly, the Survey Research Center findings show that males out-vote females by 9 percent in presidential elections nation-wide.

In James City County the whites still out-voted blacks in the 1968 Presidential election and males still out-voted females in the same election; however, the gap was much narrower. Whites out-voted blacks by about 3 to 2 in James City County in the 1968 Presidential election and males only out-voted females by one percentage point in that election.

Therefore, the findings of this study using the 1968 Presidential election returns in James City County as a comparison to national results at the local level roughly coincide with the Survey Research Center conclusions of voter participation according to the variables of age, race and sex. It is further concluded that James City County does not seem to be atypical in its voting patterns in presidential elections

when compared to Survey Research Center findings. An exception may be the narrow percentage difference between electoral participation by males and females where the possibility of error exists.



## CHAPTER III

### PRELIMINARY STUDY OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION

#### IN STATE ELECTIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In Chapter I patterns of electoral participation in presidential elections described by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center were confirmed to be approximately similar to James City County voting patterns. The following preliminary study will investigate electoral participation in state-wide elections at the local level using James City County, Virginia as a case study. Since studies of voting frequency by age, race and sex have not been attempted for state elections at the local level, and more specifically have not been attempted in the state of Virginia, differences and similarities between the variables selected for study will be examined in relation to state-wide elections in Virginia for Governor and the United States Senate between the years 1966 and 1970. The results will be compared to Survey Research Center findings of presidential electoral partici-

pation to see whether established presidential voting patterns exist in state elections at the local level as well.

When compiling the voting data necessary to conduct this preliminary study, a great deal of additional information was available on the voter registration cards. Since it was not known then how much of the total information would be utilized in this study, more detailed data than necessary on James City County voters was recorded--data not used in Survey Research Center profiles of national presidential voters. This additional information that was included proved to be interesting and useful upon examination. It was therefore decided to include in this study the three additional variables which follow: length of time registered, membership in a household group and socio-economic status in the community.

#### State General Elections

While most available voting studies have examined the factors of age, race and sex in voter turnout in presidential elections, studies pertaining to these factors in state general elections have been confined almost exclusively to the compilation of cumulative data for elections below the

national level. It has been assumed that the Survey Research Center studies of national voter participation in presidential elections apply to lower levels of electoral participation as well.

#### Turnout by age

As indicated in FIGURE 7, in state general election results for James City County the 45-54 age group continues to occupy the dominant position in voter turnout when compared to all other age groups. In the three examples studied of state general elections between 1966 and 1970, voting by the 45-54 age group consistently maintains the highest turnout percentages with a peak turnout of 39 percent reached in the 1969 run-off election. The 55 and over age group again outvotes the 21-34 age group; but, in one of the three elections, the 35-44 age group votes in lower percentages than do the oldest voters, thereby switching its usual second place for third in electoral participation rankings. The 21-34 age group in these state elections, moreover, has an even lower percentage of electoral participation than it did in the 1968 Presidential election, even after allowing for across-the-board decreases in turnout numbers in state elections. It would

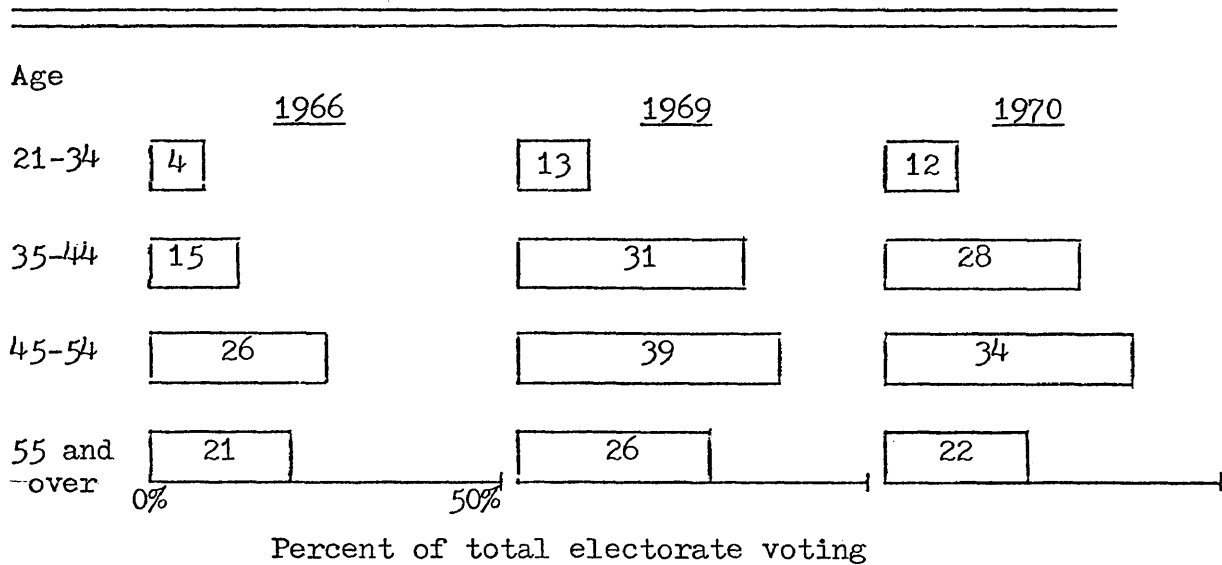
appear then that the youngest voters are most affected by the diminishing importance of state elections as perceived by the voters and reflected in their low voter participation.

FIGURE 7

## RELATION OF AGE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION

IN STATE GENERAL ELECTIONS:

JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970



Even with the exception noted of the change in ranking by the 35-44 age group from second to third position in one of the three state general election turnout results, the Survey Research Center results relating the variable of age to voter turnout in national elections are maintained in this first case study of state elections. The hypothesis that

middle > old > young continues to hold true in state elections examined at the local level.

#### Turnout by race

An examination of state general election results by race in James City County between 1966 and 1970 reveals that blacks continue to turn out in fewer numbers than whites. The voting gap between the races is considerably narrower, however, in the particular elections studied than in the Survey Research Center studies (see FIGURE 8). The closing margin between white and black voting in state elections can perhaps be attributed to the nature of the three particular elections studied in Virginia. While the state general elections were arbitrarily determined by the time period selected for study, it may be that circumstances in these elections make them atypical of state general election results in general. In all three cases the general elections followed Democratic primaries which were closely contested and where interest, if not voting, was high. More significantly though, in two of the three elections Senator Harry Byrd, Jr. was running for the United States Senate. It was expected that blacks in James City County as well as throughout the state would attempt to mobilize a strong

black vote against Byrd, whom they saw as the heir to the Byrd machine that had existed under his father and had oppressed them for so long, and would thereby increase their usual level of voting turnout.

FIGURE 8

## RELATION OF RACE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION

IN STATE GENERAL ELECTIONS:

JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

Race	Percent of total electorate voting		
	1966	1969	1970
Black	..... 10%	..... 15%	..... 15%
White	..... 14%	..... 27%	..... 21%

While blacks did not muster enough votes to defeat Byrd, they did turn out the vote in record-breaking numbers, thereby lessening the voting margin between the races and in one election coming within four percentage points of white voter turnout. Although the percentage spread between white and black voter participation rates was narrower in James City County than nation-wide, the Survey Research Center

finding that whites vote more than blacks in presidential elections still applies to state general elections as well.

Turnout by sex

The narrow electoral advantage that males had over females in James City County in the 1968 Presidential election is maintained in the state general election results. While males out-vote females by only one or two percentage points in each of the three elections studied, the results are nevertheless consistent with the 1968 Presidential results: in all three elections, males out-vote females (see FIGURE 9).

FIGURE 9

RELATION OF SEX TO VOTING PARTICIPATION

IN STATE GENERAL ELECTIONS:

JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

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Sex	Percent of total electorate voting		
	1966	1969	1970
Male	.... 16%	.... 27%	.... 22%
Female	.... 14%	.... 26%	.... 21%

It is possible that females and blacks may have acted similarly in their concern about the general elections studied. When compared to males, females as another minority may have sensed the importance of these general elections and increased their electoral participation.

Once again, the Survey Research Center findings are consistent with these state general elections, but by a narrower margin. Males still vote in greater numbers than do females, although the gap may again be so small as to raise the possibility of a margin of error.

#### State Primary Elections

As might be expected, local electoral participation in state primary elections is very low. While the Presidential election of 1968 brought out thirty-eight percent of the voting population in James City County, the 1970 Democratic primary brought out only three percent of the eligible voters. In no primary election studied did electoral participation for James City County as a whole exceed fifteen percent, compared to its forty-one percent turnout peak in the 1968 Presidential election. Although Democratic primaries in Virginia, as well as throughout the South, are the only ones held by a



political party and although the Democratic party is by far the largest party in Virginia and interest in it is traditionally high, actual voting activity in the four elections examined appears to be generally very low in James City County.

#### Turnout by age

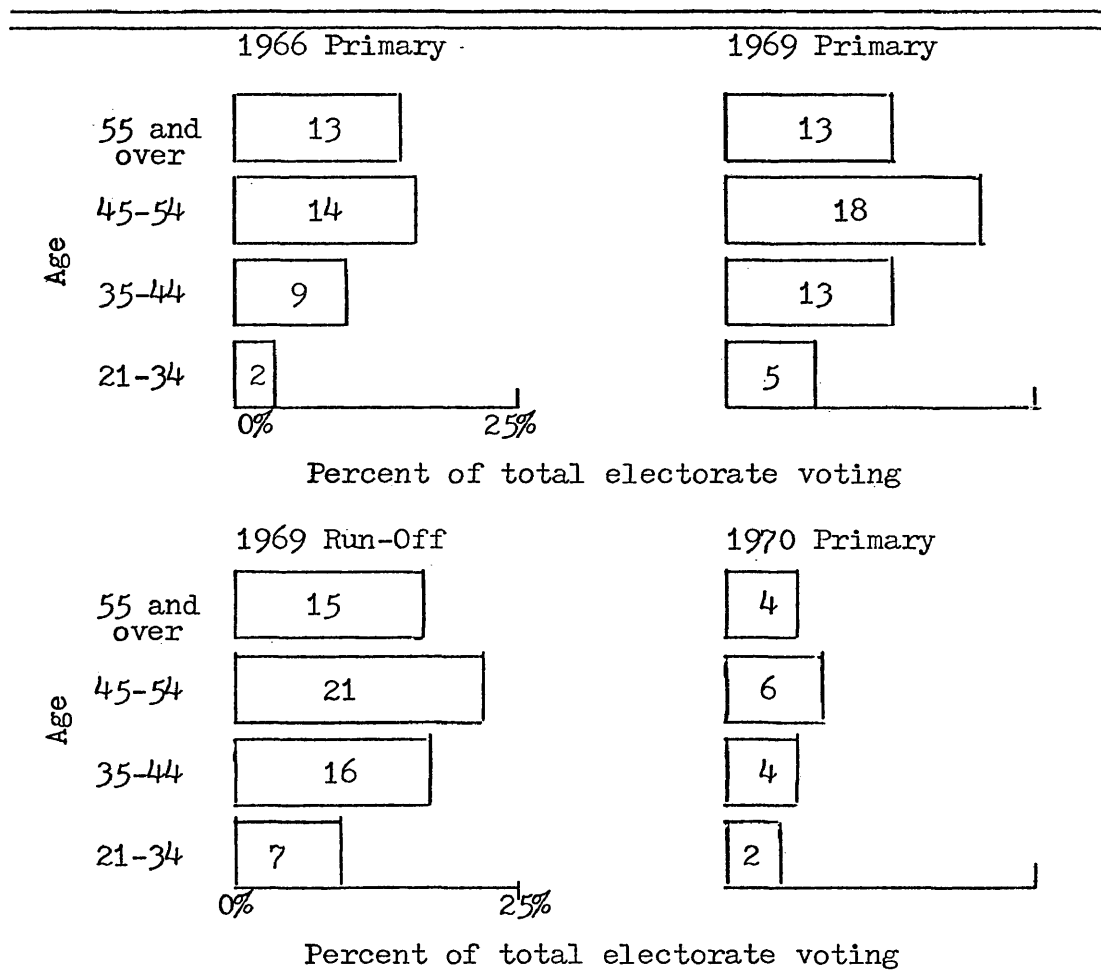
Not surprisingly, in the state primary elections of 1966, 1969 (two) and 1970 the 45-54 age group dominates the voting spectrum when compared to the other three age categories. The 55 and over age group remains a consistent second or third in electoral participation ranking with the gap between the 45-54 age group and it reduced somewhat. Voter participation among the 21-34 age group is further reduced in significance from its previous higher levels of voting in presidential and state general elections. Apparently, primary elections provide even less or no stimuli for these youngest voters and their general preoccupation, for the most part, with their own lives remains almost undisturbed by these particular elections.

In striking contrast to the young age group, the 55 and over group increases its electoral participation in the primaries as compared to other age groups but never overtakes

FIGURE 10

## RELATION OF AGE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION IN STATE

PRIMARIES: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970



the 45-54 age group; and, the 35-44 age group, which ties for second or ranks third by age and closes the lead of the 45-54 age group, likewise increases its electoral participation.

It appears that state primary elections and their consequences

have a particularly positive effect on the 35-44 and 55 and over age groups, a negative effect on the 21-34 age group and no significant effect at all on the middle age group of 45-54 years (see FIGURE 10).

However, in spite of voter turnout shifts by three of the four age groups studied, electoral participation rankings by age in state primaries in James City County remain consistent with the Survey Research Center rankings of presidential turnouts at the national level.

#### Turnout by sex

Similar to state general election results, levels of electoral participation in state primaries are higher among males than females in James City County, but by a similarly close margin. Again, the possibility for a margin of error is present in the closeness of the data results. There is never more than 2 percent separating male from female voting turnout in the state primaries and in one of these elections they were the same. The only exception then to male dominance in the voting arena is found in the 1970 Democratic primary where females voted in equal numbers to males. In this election, however, only 3 percent of the

eligible voting population actually voted. Therefore, the turnout levels by sex in this election cannot be very meaningful. Still, the noticeable increase in female voting participation in the 1970 election should not be discounted for it may be indicating the beginning of a reversal in the pattern of male dominance at the voting booth for all elections (see FIGURE 11). Only an examination of the succeeding election turnouts will tell.

FIGURE 11

## RELATION OF SEX TO VOTING PARTICIPATION IN STATE

PRIMARIES: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

Sex	Percent of total electorate voting			
	1966	1969	1969 (R-0)	1970
Male	.... 9%	.... 12%	.... 14%	.... 3%
Female	.... 8%	.... 10%	.... 13%	.... 3%

The Survey Research Center finding that males vote more than females in presidential elections can also be said to apply in the James City County case to a degree in state gen-

eral elections and to a degree in state primaries. The difference noted among the various survey results is the dwindling male advantage over females in electoral outcome in state primaries at the local level.

#### Turnout by race

While Survey Research Center findings indicate that whites vote in greater numbers than blacks in presidential elections and this study corroborates that finding and further shows that whites vote more than blacks in state general elections, election results in James City County for the four state primaries examined present a different picture. In the primaries of 1966, 1969 and 1970 blacks came to within one or two percent of whites in the first two elections and finally overtook and out-voted the whites in the last two elections (see FIGURE 12). It must be noted, however, that voter turnout rates in all four of these primary elections was very low, especially in the last primary, making it easier for blacks to increase their relative voting strength. Moreover, in three of the four elections the race was hotly contested and blacks had a clear-cut candidate whom they wanted to defeat. The whites, on the other hand, were divided on conservative and

liberal lines as to their candidate and therefore did not vote in bloc as did the blacks. Lacking this clear-cut stimulus that the blacks had, whites generally slacked off in their electoral turnout while blacks increased in their turnout.

FIGURE 12

## RELATION OF RACE TO VOTING PARTICIPATION IN STATE

PRIMARIES: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

Race	Percent of total electorate voting			
	1966	1969	1969 (R-O)	1970
Black	..... 6%	..... 9%	..... 13%	..... 5% <sup>a</sup>
White	..... 8%	..... 10%	..... 11%	..... 2%

<sup>a</sup>Blacks out-voted whites.

Contradicting the assumption that whites vote more often than blacks in state primaries, on the average whites and blacks voted in equal strength in the four state primaries in James City County with neither race having more than a three percent advantage in turnout in any given election. It is

therefore concluded that the Survey Research Center conclusion that whites vote more than blacks in presidential elections on a nation-wide basis cannot be assumed to automatically apply to state primary elections where a black choice is running and where whites have not divided on racial lines. It may also be significant that blacks outvoted whites in the last two primaries, possibly indicating a future trend in voter participation.

#### Additional Variables in Electoral Participation

##### Not Examined by the Michigan

##### Survey Research Center

In addition to the effect of the three basic and most commonly studied variables of age, race and sex in voter participation, the effect of three other variables not examined in the Survey Research Center studies is believed to be of some interest and significance in the examination of electoral participation. An examination of the length of time a person has been registered, membership in a household group and socio-economic status in a community reveals that these factors also affect voting frequency in this case study of James City County.

Length of time registered

This study of voting participation in James City County between 1966 and 1970 finds that a relationship does exist between the length of time registered and his voting frequency. The longer a person is registered the more likely he is to vote in all subsequent state elections, with the noted exception of those registering during the 1968 Presidential election year. It is likely that the existence of a direct variation between these variables reflects the development of a more stable political attitude within the registrant as time passes. With the passage of time each act of voting reinforces itself until the act finally becomes a habit which results in higher voting frequency.

In addition, since many of the state elections studied are Democratic primaries, it is possible that the political environment in James City County leads to at least nominal involvement in Democratic party affiliation on the part of voters. Traditionally, Democratic primaries have been closely contested and, in some cases, they have determined the eventual unchallenged nominee for state office. Obviously when an eligible voter is faced with the choice of voting in the





Democratic primary or possibly forfeiting his right to electoral choice in the general election, some voters chose to vote in the Democratic primary even if their affiliations were only nominally Democratic or were other than Democratic.

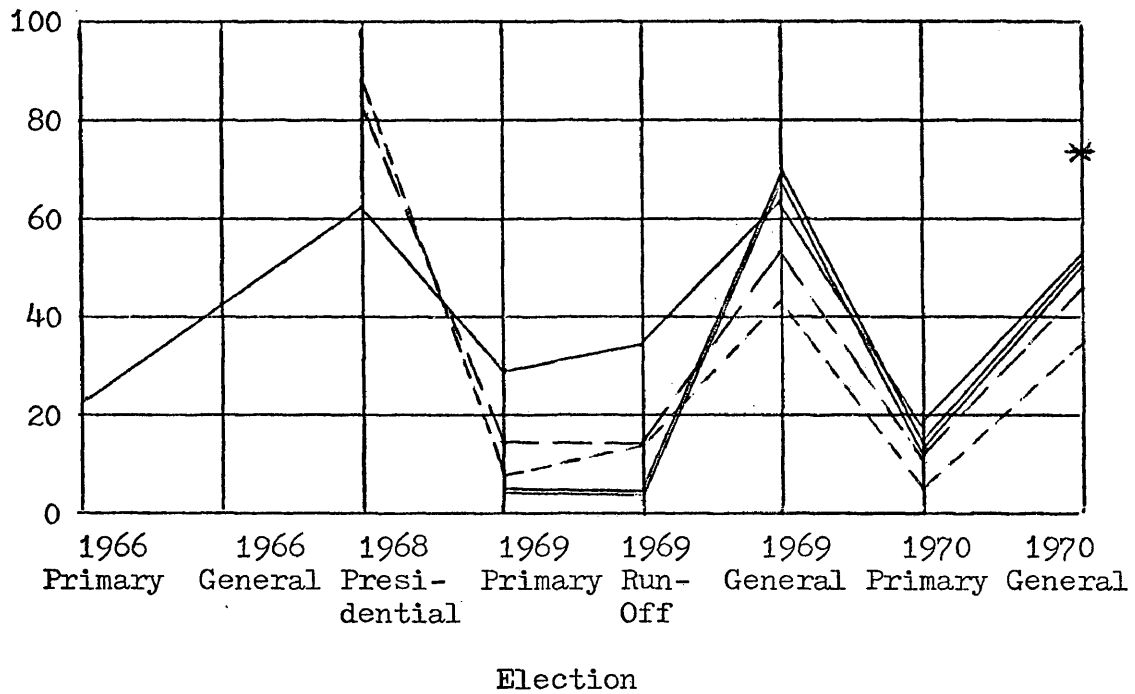
As indicated in FIGURE 13, those who registered in 1966 or before have a higher voting frequency than those who registered after that date. Voting frequency increases across-the-board as the length of registration becomes longer, except in the case of the 1968 registrants. Those who registered in that year voted less frequently in subsequent elections as compared to those who registered in 1966 or before, 1967, 1969 or 1970. The distinguishable difference is that 1968 was a presidential year, a year in which fifty percent of all registrants between the years 1966 and 1970 registered. Although those who registered in 1968 tended to follow through and cast their vote in that year's election, they did not continue to vote in the subsequent state elections. While 69 percent of the 1968 registrants voted in the presidential election, only 44 percent voted in the 1969 general election and only 30 percent in the 1970 general election. In contrast, the 1967 registrants were still voting 53 percent in the 1969 gen-

FIGURE 13

RELATION OF LENGTH OF TIME REGISTERED TO VOTING

FREQUENCY: JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

Percentage voting



Symbol	Year registered
—	1966
- - -	1967
- - -	1968
====	1969
*	1970

eral election and 41 percent in the 1970 general election.

It is concluded that the inordinately high registration figures in James City County in 1968 were stimulated by the special attraction of the presidential race with its bevy of campaign literature, media appeals, rallies, mailings, registration drives and so on, thereby accounting for a deviation from the established pattern in the relationship between the length of time registered and voting frequency. Nevertheless, excepting presidential year deviations, a direct variation between length of time registered and voting frequency does emerge in the examination of voter turnout for James City County.

#### Membership in a household group

The study of household groups, defined as groups consisting of persons listed by the same last name and same address, reveals that members of these groups tend to vote in the same elections whether it be primary, general or presidential elections. A random survey of 200 household groups in James City County, out of a total of approximately 1400, shows that 67 percent of the household groups sampled voted in the same elections or varied only one election out

of the seven state elections and one presidential election between 1966 and 1970 (see FIGURE 14).

The household groups surveyed ranged from two to six people twenty-one or older and totalled 476 registrants. Broken down by race, the household group sample almost equals the James City County race percentages in 1970. The household group sample was 28 percent black and 72 percent white while James City County population figures are 35 percent black and 64 percent white.<sup>13</sup>

A system was devised to test electoral participation among household groups. The system is based on whether or not the household voted or did not vote, as a unit, in a given election. If all members of a household group, for example, voted or did not vote, as a unit, in all eight elections, that group was assigned a classification of "0". If all members of a household group voted or did not vote, as a unit, in all but one election, the household group was assigned the numerical value of "1" and so on. This means that in this

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<sup>13</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Census of Population (Va.) 1970 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 14.

FIGURE 14

## RELATION OF HOUSEHOLD GROUP TO VOTING PARTICIPATION:

JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

Whole Population		Blacks		Whites	
69-"0"	67%	15-"0"	57%	54-"0"	72%
65-"1"		17-"1"		48-"1"	
24-"2"	12%	9-"2"	16%	13-"2"	9%
42-"3"	21%	15-"3"	27%	27-"3"	19%
Number of cases = 200		Number of cases = 200		Number of cases = 200	

Symbols

- "0" - Household group in which all members voted or did not vote, as a unit, in all eight elections
- "1" - Household group in which in all but one election, all members voted or did not vote, as a unit
- "2" - Household group in which in all but two elections, all members voted or did not vote, as a unit
- "3" - Household group in which in three or more elections, all members did not vote as a unit

system a value of "1" shows that in only one case did the household members deviate from acting as a unit by some members voting and some not voting in that election. All household groups in which in three or more elections the members deviated from acting as a unit with some voting and some not voting in the same election were lumped into one category and assigned a value of "3" for purposes of comparison (see FIGURE 14).

It was established that 67 percent of all household groups surveyed have a value of "0" or "1", 12 percent have a value of "2" and 21 percent have a value of "3". By race, 57 percent of all black household groups have a value of "0" or "1" and 72 percent of all white household groups have a "0" or "1" value (see FIGURE 14). As the results indicate, a majority of household groups in James City County, whether black or white, tend to vote as a unit without regard to the nature of the elections studied.

Recognizing the limits of this particular survey, it is probable that household groups do represent a cohesive unit of some significance in electoral participation. These results in James City County support national studies of

political attitudes and studies of voting which state that common political alliances are gained, shared and reinforced within the household environment. Thus while political and partisan attitudes are primarily acquired within the family, it appears likely that voting habits are likewise acquired within the same environment; for, membership in a household group varies directly with voter turnout.

#### Socio-economic status

Every person registering to vote in Virginia is required to list his occupation at the time of registration in addition to his age, sex and so on. While there are flaws in trying to determine socio-economic status by using voter registration information, a pattern does become apparent when comparing groups of voters who fall into one or the other categories with the common definition of blue collar or white collar worker.

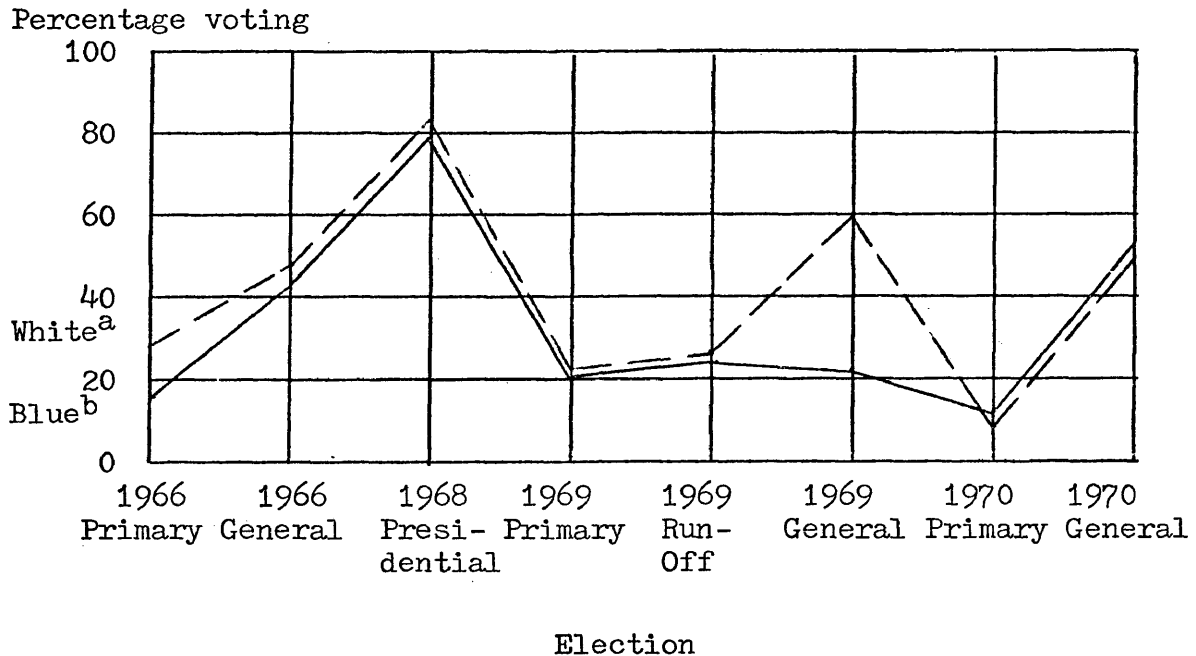
A breakdown of James City County voters by socio-economic status indicates that as a group those who were classified as white collar workers voted more frequently than those who were classified as blue collar workers (see FIGURE 15).

FIGURE 15

## RELATION OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS TO VOTING

PARTICIPATION: JAMES CITY COUNTY

1966-1970



<sup>a</sup>White collar: Professional, technician, proprietor, manager in office, clerical, sales or kindred workers

<sup>b</sup>Blue collar: Craftsman, foreman and kindred workers, operators and kindred workers, service workers including private household workers, and laborers

However, this data on electoral participation by socio-economic status can only be interpreted with caveats. Although



required to list occupation at the time of registration, many registrants simply fail to fill in their occupation or they list themselves unemployed. Then, too, the occupation listed by a newly registered voter is that which the registrant had at the time he registered and that information is never updated. Economic status may change if the registrant becomes a long time resident of James City county. In addition, very few women are included in the socio-economic groupings because most list themselves as housewives or homemakers, a category which does not fit into the standard definition blue collar or white collar worker as used by the United States Bureau of the Census.

Given these qualifications, the whole voting population of James City County was categorized into blue collar and white collar workers according to the definition used by the Bureau of the Census in the Statistical Abstract of the United States. The Abstract classifies white collar workers as: professional, technical, proprietor, manager in office, clerical, sales or kindred workers. Blue collar workers are classified by the Abstract as including: craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers, operators and kindred workers, service

workers including private household workers, and laborers.

White collar workers tend to be college educated, middle income and community oriented. Blue collar workers tend to have received a high school education, to be in the lower income brackets and to be less community oriented than white collar workers. The incentive is not as great for them to cast their vote on election day.

As shown in FIGURE 15, except for the 1970 primary and general elections, white collar workers voted consistently in slightly higher percentages than blue collar workers. The 1970 deviation can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the black vote, falling almost exclusively into the blue collar category in James City County, was disproportionately high because of the political circumstances of these elections already noted.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION:

#### JAMES CITY COUNTY 1966-1970

##### Presidential Election of 1968

While only 38 percent of the total adult population of James City County turned out to vote in the 1968 Presidential election as compared to the national turnout average of 60 percent, general results of this study of James City County presidential turnout as related to the variables of age, race and sex generally agree with the Survey Research Center conclusions concerning similar elections and their results on a nation-wide basis. Across-the-board percentages differ in James City County than nation-wide but rankings within each variable studied generally remain the same. It must be noted, however, that with a much narrower gap between electoral participation by race and sex the possibility of error exists for the variables.<sup>14</sup> The consistency of the rankings is an important factor in the testing of the three main hypotheses

in state general and state primary elections; for, James City County voting results portray the same findings as the Survey Research Center on the only basis of true comparison-- the 1968 Presidential election. The middle age groups of those 35-54 vote more than the oldest age group which votes more than the youngest age group; whites vote more than blacks; and males out-vote females.

#### State General Elections

Results of the examination of electoral participation by age, race and sex in the three consecutive Virginia state general elections between 1966 and 1970 indicate that, although the turnout margin by groups within each variable study narrows considerably in these elections compared to presidential

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<sup>14</sup>An attempt was made to explain the nearly equal electoral participation of males and females using other data compiled during the study. One possible explanation for the higher turnout among females was that increased electoral participation by black women might have brought the percentages up.

However, a check of cross-reference data showed that black males make up 12.5 percent of the total electorate and black females make up 13.5 percent of the electorate. Similarly, electoral participation among black males and black females is nearly equal. As if to confirm the data, a cross-check of electoral participation and registration of white males and white females turned up the same result.

This data was applied to every election studied and the results remained the same.

elections, the rankings of voter turnout within each study still remain the same as in the national elections. The middle-aged vote more than the old who vote more than the young, whites vote more than blacks and males barely out-vote females in spite of lower total turnout figures. Consequently, the hypotheses dealing with age and race are consistent with state general election turnouts at the local level as well as for presidential elections at the national level. The turnout among females in James City County at the state general election level mirrors their electoral participation in the 1968 Presidential election. Thus a confirmation of the hypothesis dealing with electoral participation among males and females can be considered tentative.

#### State Primary Elections

The findings from this study of voter turnout in James City County in state primary elections also support the conclusions of the Survey Research Center in presidential elections with one exception. The middle-aged vote more than the old who vote more than the young and males out-vote females, though just barely; but, deviating from the Survey

Research Center findings that whites out-vote blacks, blacks in James City County vote on the average in near equal percentages to whites in the four state primaries examined. This exception to the rule can be attributed most probably to the nature of the Democratic primary in the South as well as to the interest blacks took in these particular primaries because of the candidates involved. The blacks had a clear-cut choice in these particular elections which the whites lacked. Yet whether black interest will remain consistently as high as white interest, given other candidates, cannot be determined at this time. Nevertheless, results of this study of voter turnout in James City County are consistent with the Survey Research Center findings of electoral participation by age and inconclusive regarding race. Electoral participation by females paralleled the narrow gap seen in presidential and state general elections. The findings of electoral participation by sex must again be regarded as tentative.

#### Additional Variables

Three variables of electoral participation other than the most commonly studied factors of age, race and sex were examined for possible effects upon voter participation in

James City County within the given time period. Results of the study of the first variable, the length of time registered, indicate that the longer a person's name has appeared on the voter registration books the more likely he is to vote in subsequent elections, except in the case of those registering during a presidential year. As exemplified by 1968 registrants, those registering that year came into the voting arena upon impetus from the event of that year, the presidential election; and, just as quickly they abandoned the arena as campaign stimulants and interest slacked off in the ensuing elections resulting in lower voting frequency rates by 1968 registrants than any other registrants studied. Having noted the one exception of presidential registrants though, a direct variation does exist between length of time registered and voting frequency. It is probable that the act of voting reinforces itself as party attachments get stronger and party loyalty increases until it finally becomes a habit.

A second factor found to affect electoral participation is membership in a household group. It was found that membership in a home environment not only influences partisanship but voting habits as well. Household groups in James City

County, without regard to race, tend to vote as a unit (almost two to one) without regard to the nature of the election. It is therefore concluded that the membership in a household group plays an important role in the development of partisan attitudes and the voting habits of its members.

The last variable examined was socio-economic status and its impact upon electoral participation. While results of this examination are only as valid as the reliability of the raw data used to compute them, it is advisedly asserted that white collar workers consistently vote more frequently than do blue collar workers.

#### Michigan Survey Research Center Results

##### Versus James City County Results

Although James City County is admittedly a small unit of measurement compared to the extremely large unit used by the Survey Research Center, the results of this study nevertheless indicate that the Survey Research Center findings regarding the effects of age, race and sex on electoral participation at the presidential level apply to electoral participation in James City County, Virginia at the lower levels of state general and state primary elections as well as at the presi-



dential level. While Survey Research Center surveys and studies have almost exclusively concentrated on national election turnout with little or no research devoted to the lower levels of turnout, the examination of voter participation in James City County from 1966 to 1970 (including one presidential election, three state general elections and four state primaries) results in the same basic conclusions reached by the Survey Research Center. Overall voter turnout in state general elections is decreased in James City County compared to national election turnout; yet, the three main hypotheses originally put forth dealing with the effects of age, race and sex on voter participation still hold true in this instance with one exception noted where black turnout equalled white turnout in state primaries.

This preliminary case study of electoral participation in seven state elections and one national election in James City County between 1966 and 1970 suggests that Survey Research Center voter turnout results for presidential elections are in fact valid criteria for extension to other levels of electoral activity. For the moment at least, electoral participation in presidential, state general and state primary elections is essentially the same, considering the variables chosen, in spite

FIGURE 16

## NUMERICAL STRENGTH VERSUS VOTING STRENGTH:

JAMES CITY COUNTY 1970

GENERAL ELECTION

Total electorate	Percent of total electorate (10,733) occupied by age	Percent of each age group voting
21-34	..... 34%	..... 12%
35-44	..... 19%	..... 28%
45-54	..... 19%	..... 34%
55 and over	..... 29%	..... 22%

of lower actual participation at the local level.

However, this need not always be the case. If the young can put aside their preoccupation with their own lives long enough to vote in more proportionate levels to their numerical strength in the total electorate (e.g., in 1970 they occupied 34 percent of the total electorate compared to the 45-54 age group which occupied 19 percent of the total electorate but

out-voted the young nearly 3 to 1 in both elections [see FIGURE 16]); if blacks can overcome an apparent sense of political inefficacy and continue in their registration drives and get out the vote, and if females continue their demands for equality in treatment and opportunities in all facets of life and continue to expose as myth the age old thought that a woman's place is in the home, established electoral participation patterns on the national, state and local level may be in for a change.

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## VITA

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