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POLSC 2603: Intro to Comparative Politics (SP 19: OCCC)

Dr. Stacey

**ROBERT DAHL: WHO GOVERNS? DEMOCRACY & POWER IN AN AMERICAN CITY!**

**ROBERT DAHL BACKGROUND: (Dec 17<sup>th</sup>, 1915-Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014)<sup>1</sup>:** Dahl grew up in Inwood Iowa. His childhood was during the Roaring 20's and his teenage/undergrad years were during the great depression. In 1936 he finished his undergraduate degree from the University of Washington before heading to Yale to complete his PhD in 1940. His thesis was *Socialist Programs and Democratic Politics: An Analysis* Also in 1940 he married his first wife Mary Louise Bartlett and that marriage would last for 30 years until 1970 and included 4 children. In 1973 he would go on to marry his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Ann Sale who he would remain faithful to until his death in 2014. During that time span in 1995 Robert was awarded the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science.<sup>2</sup> Over the course of his life he influenced large number of students including Guillermo O'Donnell<sup>3</sup>, Ian Shapiro<sup>4</sup>, Edward Tufte<sup>5</sup> and James Fishkin<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Date of Birth, Hometown and name of both wife's + number of children from Robert Dahl's Official Wikipedia Page: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_A.\\_Dahl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_A._Dahl) Accessed and viewed February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019

<sup>2</sup> Degrees, name of thesis and the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science common knowledge to the author, however the author of this paper hadn't actually read the thesis prior to writing this paper. Its like knowing the name Shakespeare, knowing the name of all the plays but not having read or watched all of them.

<sup>3</sup> O'Donnell Guillermo: The Hellen Kellogg Institute for International Studies: *Delegative Democracy* [https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old\\_files/documents/172\\_0.pdf](https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old_files/documents/172_0.pdf) Accessed and viewed on Feb 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019: Delegative Democracy: 5 Key Concepts: 1: Existing theories/typologies of democracy refer to representative democracy as practiced, with all its variations/subtypes, by developed capitalist countries. 2: Newly installed democracies are considered democracies because they meet Robert Dahl's criteria for the definition of Polyarchy. 3: These democracies are not—nor seem to be moving toward—representative democracy; they present a set of characteristics which tempts me to call them Delegative Democracies (DD). 4: DDs are neither consolidated nor institutionalized democracies, but might be enduring; in many cases no imminent threat of an open authoritarian regression, nor advances toward institutionalized representativeness is in sight. 5: Deep social/economic crisis that most of these countries inherited from their authoritarian predecessors powerfully multiplies the consequences of certain conceptions/practices that lead in the direction of DD, NOT Representative.

<sup>4</sup> Worked with Robert Dahl to publish the Democracy Sourcebook in 2003. In addition Ian Shapiro was from South Africa and wrote 11 books that were influential in his sub specialization. The author of this paper is considering doing a separate paper on Ian Shapiro.

<sup>5</sup> Was influenced by Robert Dahl and wrote *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information Beautiful Evidence*

<sup>6</sup> Deliberative Democracy and Polling.

**GENERAL SUMMARY OF ROBERT DAHL'S OTHER WORKS<sup>7</sup>: Politics,**

**Economics and Welfare (1953):** A systematic attack on ideological purism solutions to complex economic problems. Think of Capitalist and Socialist today. A mix of social safety net, regulation and freedom is needed otherwise the pendulum swings too far.

Without the social safety net its hard to train workers or ensure a large enough customer base to buy the products. However too much regulation forces businesses to close, takes out the profit and creates misery. Complete freedom leaves survival of the fittest.

**A Preface to Democratic Theory (1956 & Reprinted in 2006): Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN 9780226134345:**<sup>8</sup> In 1956 Dahl's book launched Democratic Theory as a new political science field/sub specialization discipline. He examines, compares and contrast the Madisonian & Populist Theories of Democracy before concluding that neither accurately describes the operation functionality of modern day democracies. He then proposes his own model on how contemporary democracies actually function, thus bringing enlightenment to his schools of thought on Popular Sovereignty and the American Constitutional System. As Rhianna would say, he makes his views Shine Bright Like a Diamond in the Sky.<sup>9</sup>

**Political Oppositions in Western Democracies (1966):** This book focuses on Comparative Politics while dumbing down the standard jargon<sup>10</sup> for people NOT in the field.

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to the other ones mentioned here, there are many additional works by Robert Dahl that the author of this paper has NOT had the chance to read and therefore will NOT attempt to summarize. The oversimplified summaries of the work have been read by the author of this paper.

<sup>8</sup> Author of this paper has read the book in its entirety in 2015 and is recalling this book from memory in regards to the explanations provided. It was the 1956 version. Author of this paper hasn't read the 2006 reprint.

<sup>9</sup> Rihanna Diamonds

<sup>10</sup> When I first read this in 2014, I was very appreciative of the dumb downed language.

The primary focus is constitutional democracy in Western Europe emphasizing 10 countries<sup>11</sup> discussed by specialist in their fields that Dahl managed to organize and bring together.

**Democracy and its Critics (1989):** Dahl compiled a list of complaints, misconceptions, critics of and arguments against democracy. He then examines and explores in detail each of the ones that he views as credible and either confirms or debunks them while going on to promote some of this previous works. For understanding complaints about democracy and those against it that have an open mind, it's a great work to start with.

**Polyarchy:** His first known concept of Polyarchy appeared in his 1956 book A Preface to Democratic Theory and then in 1971 he published his book Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. Based off the understanding of the author his best definition for Polyarchy came in 1989 with Democracy and its Critics when he gives 7 characteristics and conditions.

<b>CHARATERISTICS:</b>	<b>CONDITIONS:</b>
Control of Government Policy decisions is in the hands of government officials.	Historical Sequence of peaceful evolution within an independent nation state.
Elected officials are chosen peacefully, replaced frequently with free and fair elections under limited corruption.	Socioeconomic Order-Concentration: Competitive regimes can't be maintained in a country where military forces are accustomed to intervening. <sup>12</sup>
All adults have the right to vote.	Socioeconomic Order-level of development: A: Literacy, education for all and effective communication. B: Pluralistic <sup>13</sup> social order created. C: Prevent inequalities.
Most adults can run for these positions.	Equalities & Inequalities: A: Hegemonic regimes reduce public contestation B: Inequalities increase the chance comparative politics will displace hegemony
Citizens have freedom of expression, can criticize the government and its officials and dissenting opinions from the dominant view are allowed.	Subcultures, Cleavage Patterns & Governmental Effectiveness
Free press and alternative information not directed or provided by the government.	Beliefs of major political activist are treated as independent variables.
Right to join and form multiple party membership and political interest groups.	Foreign Control/Domination can affect all conditions and available options.

<sup>11</sup> Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK and the US.

<sup>12</sup> Venezuela in the struggle between Nicolas Maduro and Juan Guaido. Modern day example attempt. 2/28/2019

<sup>13</sup> Multiple sources of power. Opposing viewpoints are respected and problems settled in civil discourse.

***On Democracy (First Published: 1998: Yale University Press: ISBN #978-0300-***

***8455-9. Republished in 2008***): Dahl begins with the history of democracy and describes the fall of anti-democratic forces known as Communism, Fascism and Nazism. He then shines the light on what he describes as emerging democracies. He then explains his definition of democracy, the values it entails, how democracy works and the future challenges he predicts it will take. He also lays out the criteria such as needed institutions, social/economic conditions required and the favor of development and maintenance to support and uphold democracy. He also explores and examines how democracy in India works. He also mentions how market capitalism can be both a blessing and a curse to democracy. He then ends with problems and challenges facing democracy in the 21st, Century from the complex economic orders of globalization and cultural diversity.

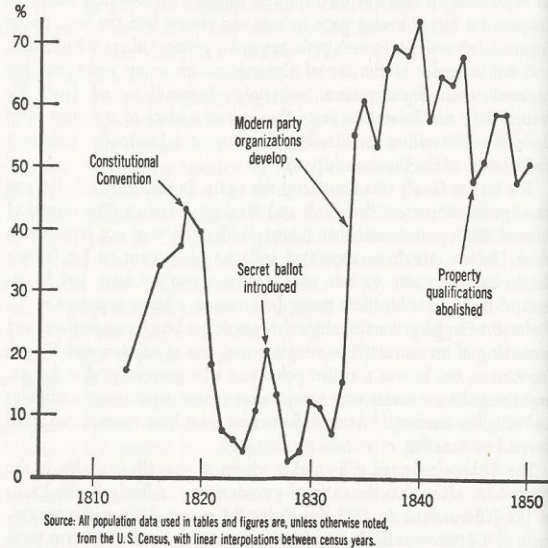
**WHO GOVERNS? DEMOCRACY & POWER IN AN AMERICAN CITY:**

After reading *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* it can be summed up in 11 figures (Figures 2.1, 2.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.11, 12.1, 12.2, 25.1, 25.2, 26.1 & 26.8), 2 tables (4.2 & 11.1) from his book plus four (4) chapters (16: Pattern A: Spheres of Influence, 18: Pattern C: Rival Sovereignities, 20: Social Standing and 23: Controls over sources of Information). The underlying theme throughout the book is dynamics of power. To follow is a description of each important part before wrapping up with the conclusion that ties them all together.

**Figures 2.1 & 2.2: VOTING EXPANSION RULES CHANGES:**

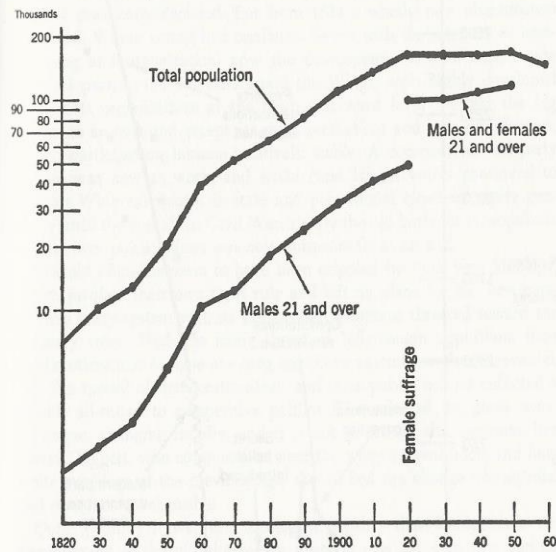
triumph: the secret ballot, the spread of the suffrage, the growth in population, mobilization of the voters by the political parties, and ideol-

FIGURE 2.1. Total votes cast in New Haven in elections for governor, as percentages of males 21 years old and over, 1813-1850



ogy. Of these, the last two were probably far and away the most

FIGURE 2.2. Population and electorate of New Haven, 1820-1960



quirement in 1845, the effect on the turnout at elections was negligible not only in New Haven (Figure 2.1) but in the whole state.<sup>10</sup>

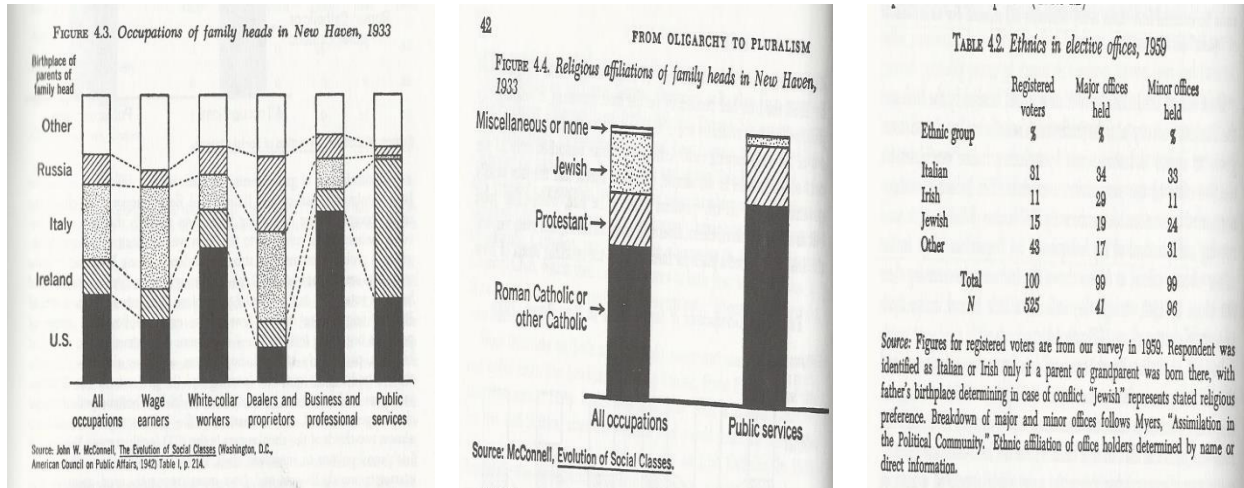
Meanwhile, New Haven was rapidly ceasing to be a small village. Between 1820 and 1860 the population grew at the rate of about 4.3 per cent

**Explanation:** This examines the changes in voting from an elite system to constitutionally backed followed by changing who is allowed to vote and when/if preferences are protected such as those introduced with the secret ballot, non-property holders and finally equal voting rights of genders. With the elite comes the aristocracy whims followed by law and order with the Constitution. When the secret ballot is introduced votes dramatically drop, but people are now free to vote their conscience. The population shifts on minds sets coming to the modern party system of individuals joining political tribalism like a gang and then the masses flock when property ownership is abolished as a voting requirement creating democracy of the mob. In the 1920's hostilities are lowered coming off the high of the Bull Moose when women are allowed in. It's like elites maneuvering against the people's will in high stakes game theory by expanding

<sup>14</sup> Prior to the 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the US Constitution which took place after this book was written the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 which is why the charts show 21 and over for voting instead of 18. In addition it emphasizes only males in elections prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1920 which gave most American women the right to vote.

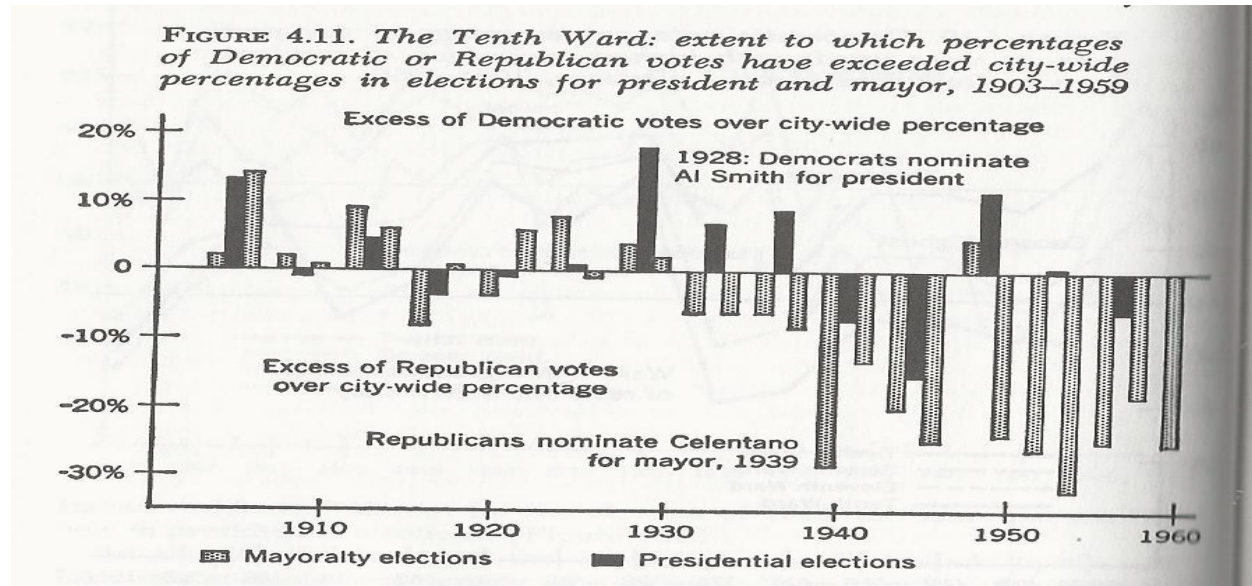
the pool of eligible voters which changes policy discussion to create newly elected orders of orchestrating the majority mob while protecting the survival rights of the minority to one day change the game again in the future.

**Figures 4.3, 4.4 & Table 4.2: RELIGIONS, ETHNICITY & OCCUPATIONS:**



**Explanation:** As presented by Dahl of what his data shows and is interrupted as here, the conviction (unofficial sub conscience club) of Religion plays an important role in voter demographics as ethnic politics and who gets what types of jobs which shapes income and ballot access and connections of economic self-interest coalitions. Within New Haven Irish and Catholics dominated the public service sector while Italians were wage earners as labor via their Catholic connections and Jews ran a majority of the businesses.

**Figure 4.11: NATIONAL V LOCAL ELECTION OUTCOMES & TURNOUTS:**



**Explanation:** When the National Candidate excites the base, voter turnout for local elections is higher whereas for local elections most people ignore and don't turn out.

**Table 11.1: EDUCATION LEVEL & ACCESS:**

**TABLE 11.1. Children enrolled in public and private schools in New Haven, 1926–1955**

	In public schools N	In private schools N	In private schools %
1926	30,444	4,796	13.5
1931	30,377	4,900	13.9
1936	27,010	3,976	12.8
1941	21,398	4,774	19.0
1946	17,783	5,027	22.0
1951	20,604	5,949	22.4
1955	19,995	4,634	18.7

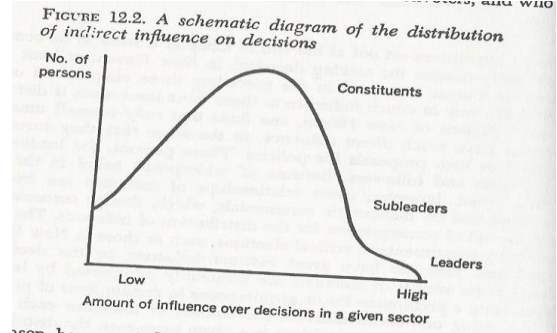
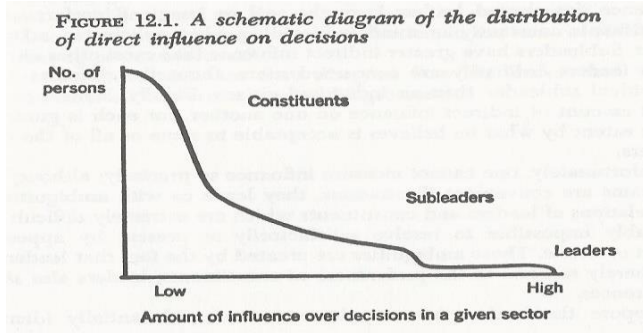
Note: Ages of children included are 4–16 from 1926–46, 7–15 for 1951, and 6–17 for 1955.

Sources: *New Haven's Schools*, p. 23; M. J. Ross, *The Relationship of Public and Non-public Schools in Connecticut* (Connecticut State Dept. of Education, Research Bulletin No. 6, 1956); and Bureau of Research and Statistics, State Dept. of Education, Hartford.

**EXPLANATION:** What is interesting to note is the drastic decline in school enrollment taking place between 1931 and 1946 where public school enrollment drops from more than 30,000 enrolled students to just below 18,000. In that same time span minus 1936 the percentage of those enrolled in private school increased while the total number of school enrollments decreased which can be attributed to the Great Depression, World War II, fewer

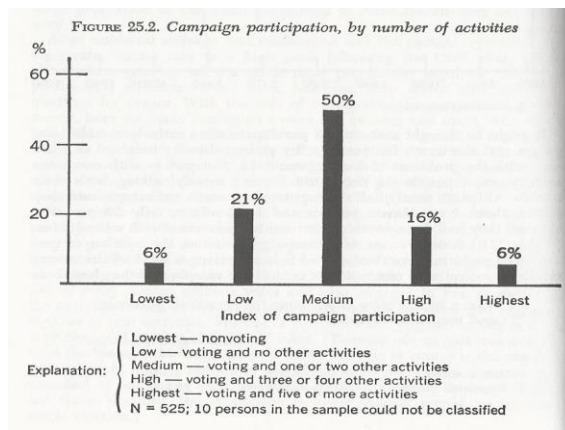
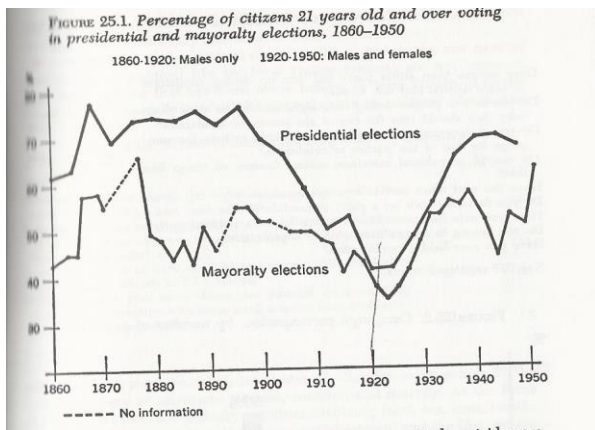
children being born and economic hardships people face which is why voting is viewed as flat in figure 2.2.

**Figures 12.1 & 12.2: POWER DISTRIBUTION:**

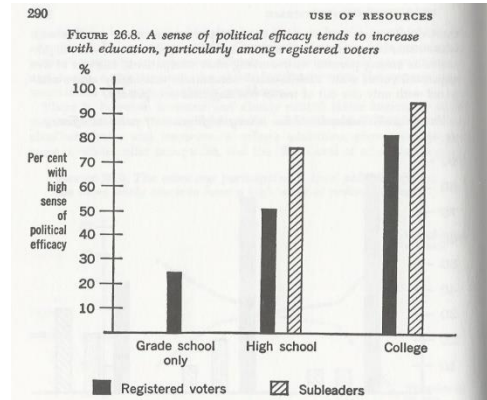
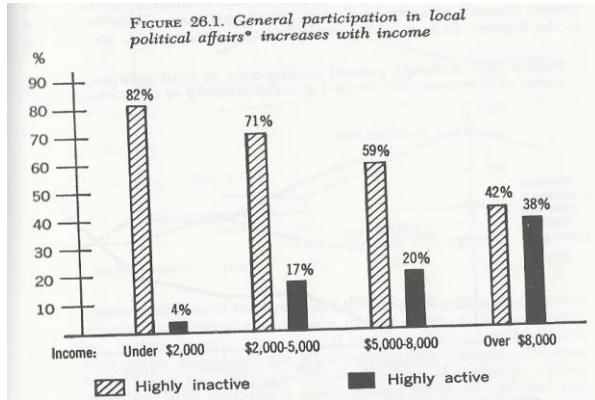


**Explanation:** The constituents have the ideas and are the populous. Certain actions make them happy like leading sheep while other action anger and awakening them like the World with the US Sleeping Giant of World War II. The sub leaders convey the will of the constituents to the leaders while carrying out what the leaders say. At the end of the day the leaders are in control as demonstrated in the distribution curves with influence in their sector.

**Figures 25.1, 25.2, 26.1 & 26.8: INVOLVEMENT FACTORS:**







**Explanation:** Outside of the national v local combined effect, there are 3 major

indicators that determine involvement in politics at the city level.

<b>ISSUE ADVOCACY &amp; CARE:</b>	<b>INCOME LEVEL:</b>	<b>EDUCATION LEVEL:</b>
The issues you know about and or believe that affect you, your family, finances and or job personally in some way.	The higher the income the bigger interest and incentive to back candidates or run yourself to protect your assets.	Those with higher education levels generally seem to be more informed and understand the correlation and domino effects of issues.

**Chapters 16 (Pattern A: Spheres of Influence) & 18 (Pattern C: Rival**

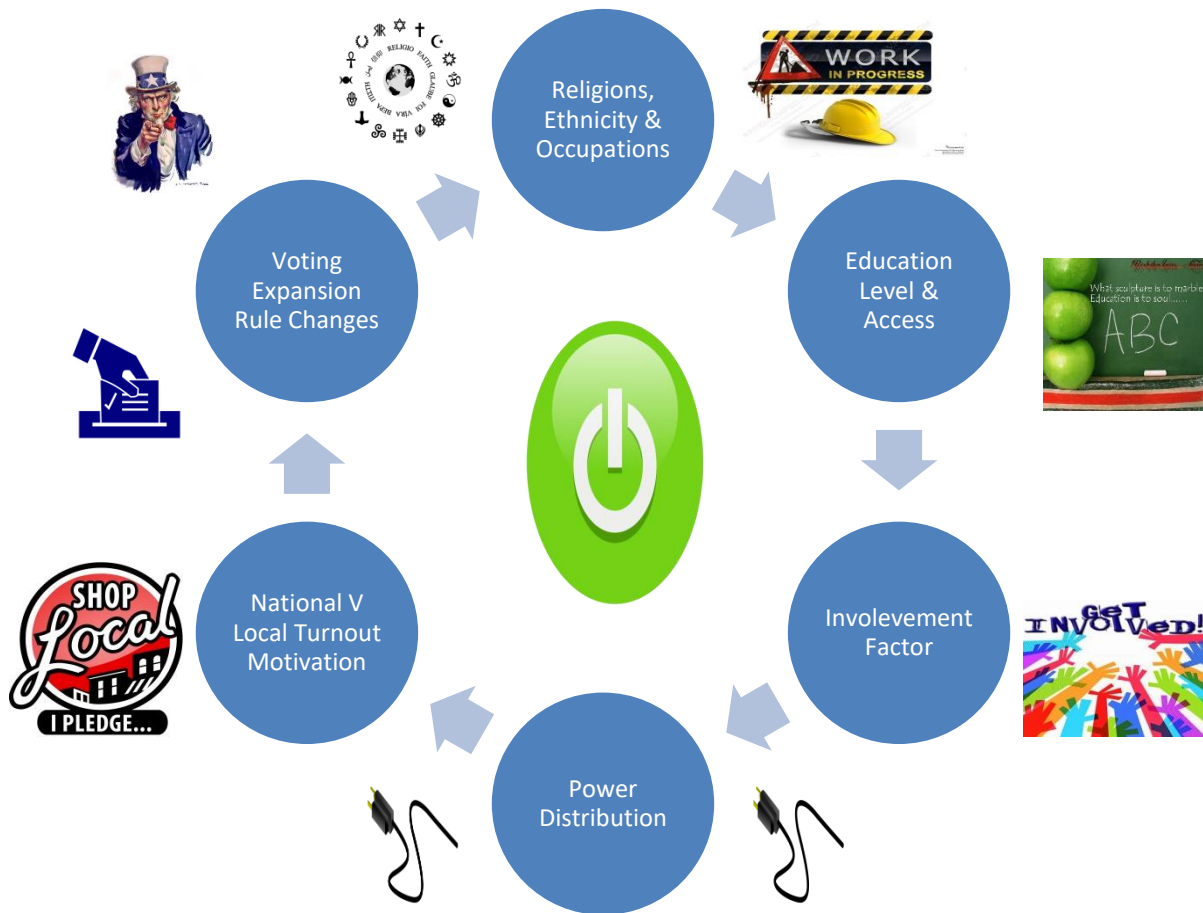
**Sovereignities):** When combined these two (2) are super important. Each sovereign holds power over a particular industry. It can be rivals like the families of Romeo and Juliet or independently wealth self made people or a family dynasty well respected that has stood the test time that has their own networks, connections, people and standing of a force that can be increased or weakened, however isn't going away and is next to impossible to remove. This thin creates the sphere of influence for that place which takes us into social contract theory. Like natural resources are limited, the rival sovereignties compete for power, prestige, influence, preservation and or implementation of their ideal image, this leads to the creation of rivalries.

**Chapters 20 (Social Standing) & 23 (Control Over Sources of Information):**

While forces themselves may or might not be sovereign that is separate from their social

standing (popularity and access) or what people know/don't know. The social standing is basically a measure of access, popularity and survival while the information sources control reputation and test who care enough to uncover lies or accept/reject truth right in front of people.

**Conclusion Rap Up:** Within *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* using the example of New Haven, Connecticut, there tends to be a reemerging pattern of 6 as is illustrated in the smart art graphic below when combined with what was discussed on spheres of influence, rival sovereignties, social standing and sources of information.



### **REFERENCES/WORKS CITED**

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Dahl A. Robert 1961 *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* ISBN #978-0300-000511

O'Donnell Guillermo: The Hellen Kellogg Institute for International Studies: Delegative Democracy [https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old\\_files/documents/172\\_0.pdf](https://kellogg.nd.edu/sites/default/files/old_files/documents/172_0.pdf) Accessed and viewed on Feb 21st, 2019:

Robert Dahl's Official Wikipedia Page: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_A.\\_Dahl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_A._Dahl) Accessed and viewed February 21st, 2019

### **PICTURE REFERENCES**

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1: All photos except for the chart on page 10 comes directly from Robert Dahl's Book

2: All photos in the chart on page are from Microsoft Clipart