

# Unequal Political Voice and the Broken Promise of American Democracy

**Kay Lehman Schlozman, Boston College**

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# THE **UNHEAVENLY** **CHORUS**

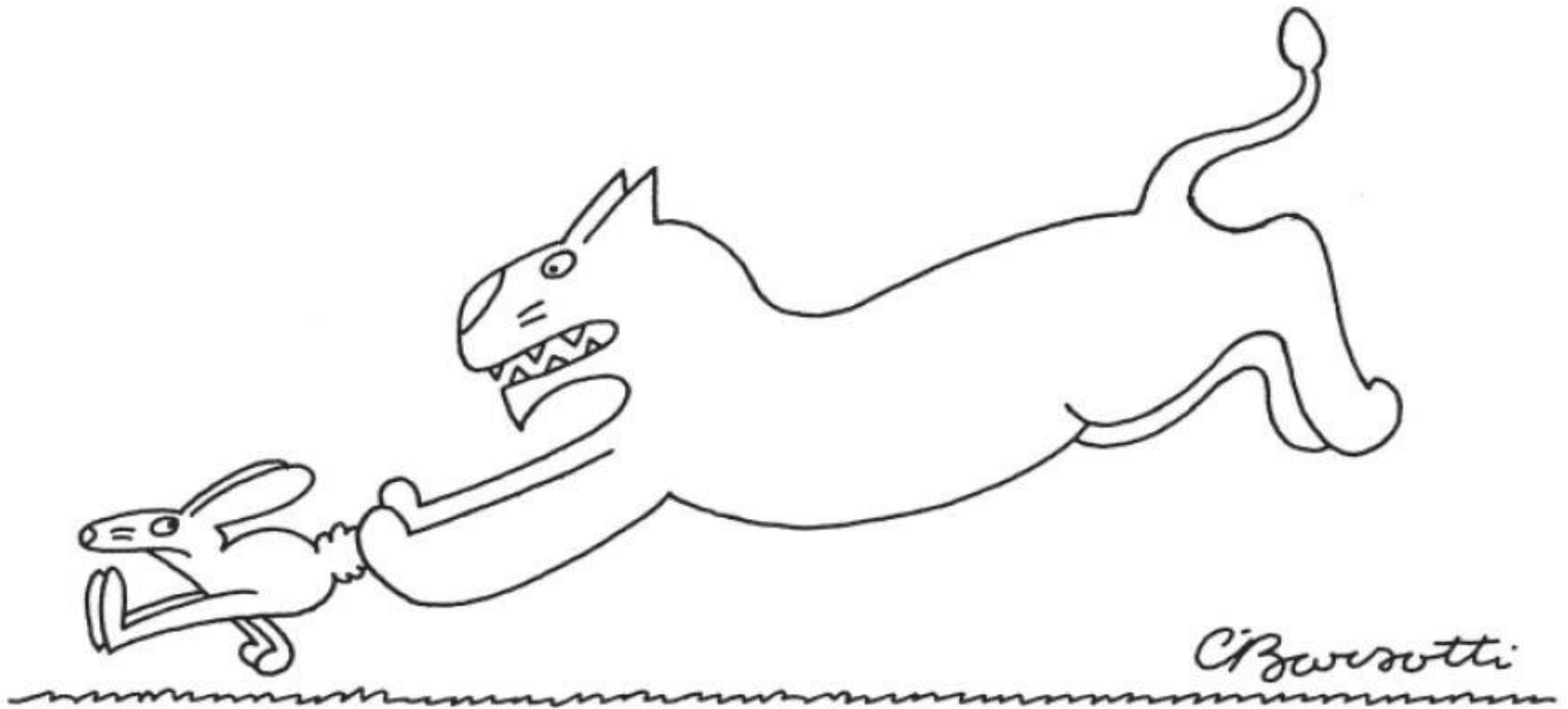
**UNEQUAL POLITICAL VOICE  
AND THE BROKEN PROMISE  
OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY**

**KAY LEHMAN SCHLOZMAN**

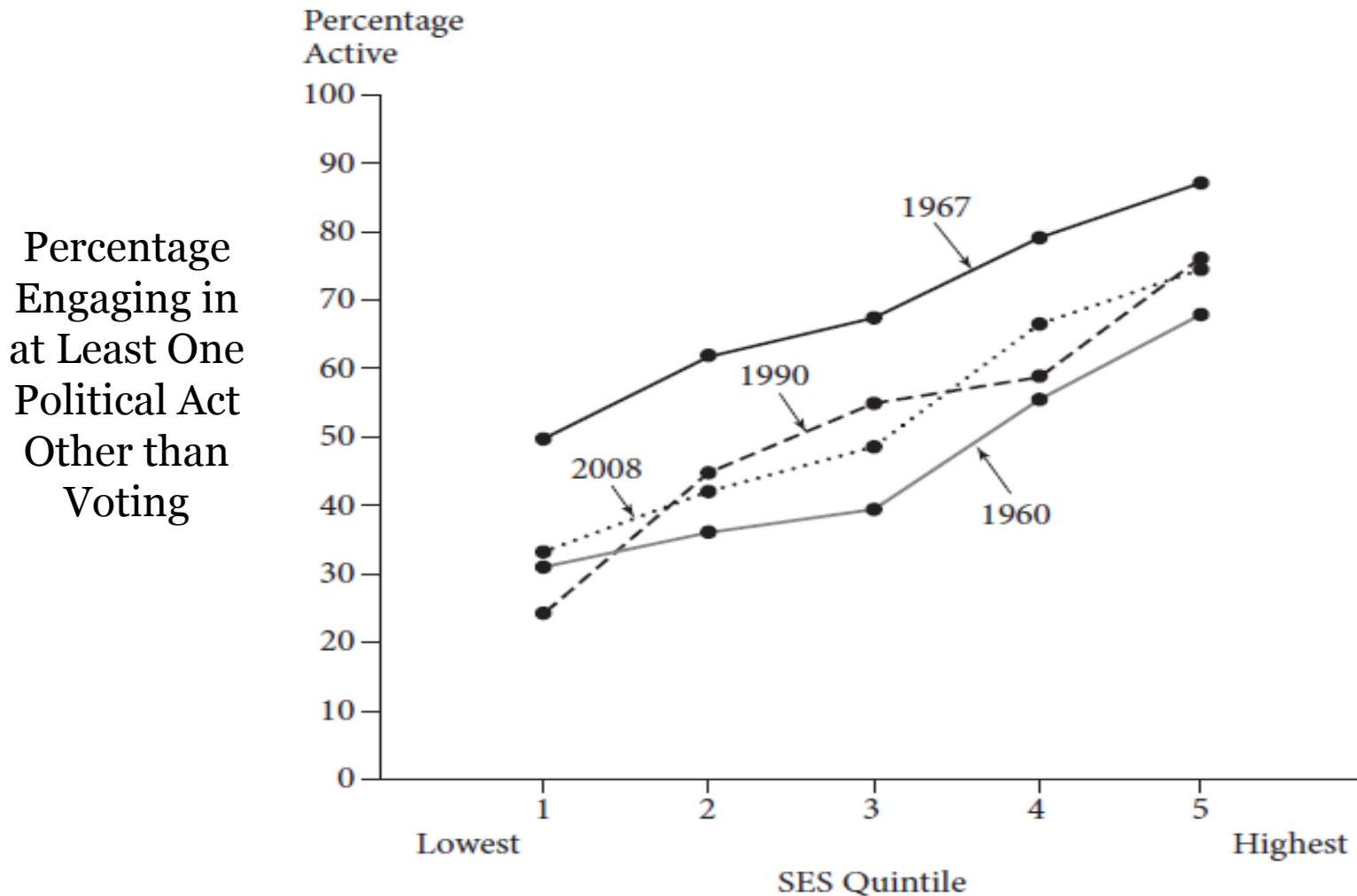
**SIDNEY VERBA**

**HENRY E. BRADY**

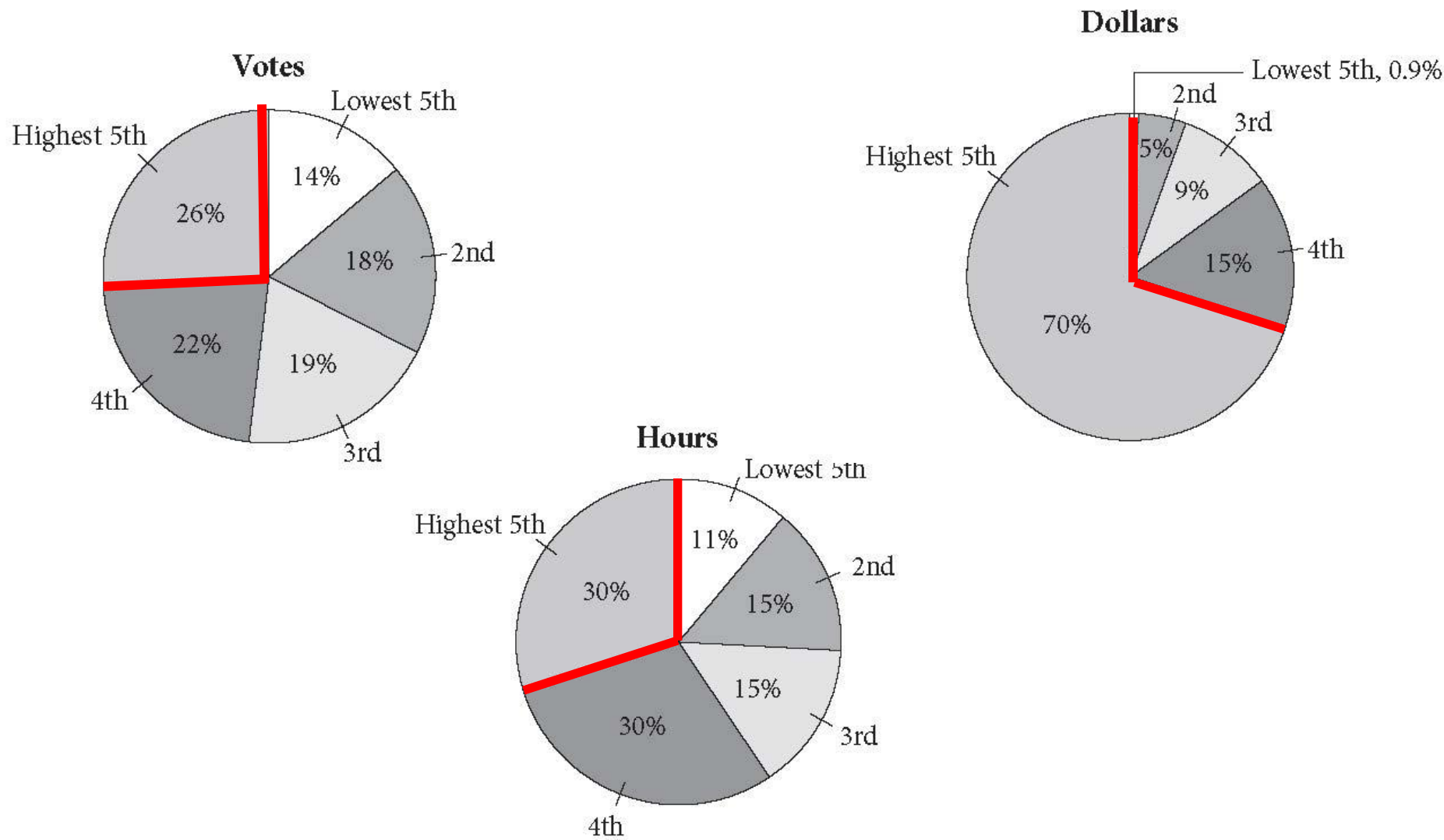
“What are you Complaining about?  
It’s a level playing field.



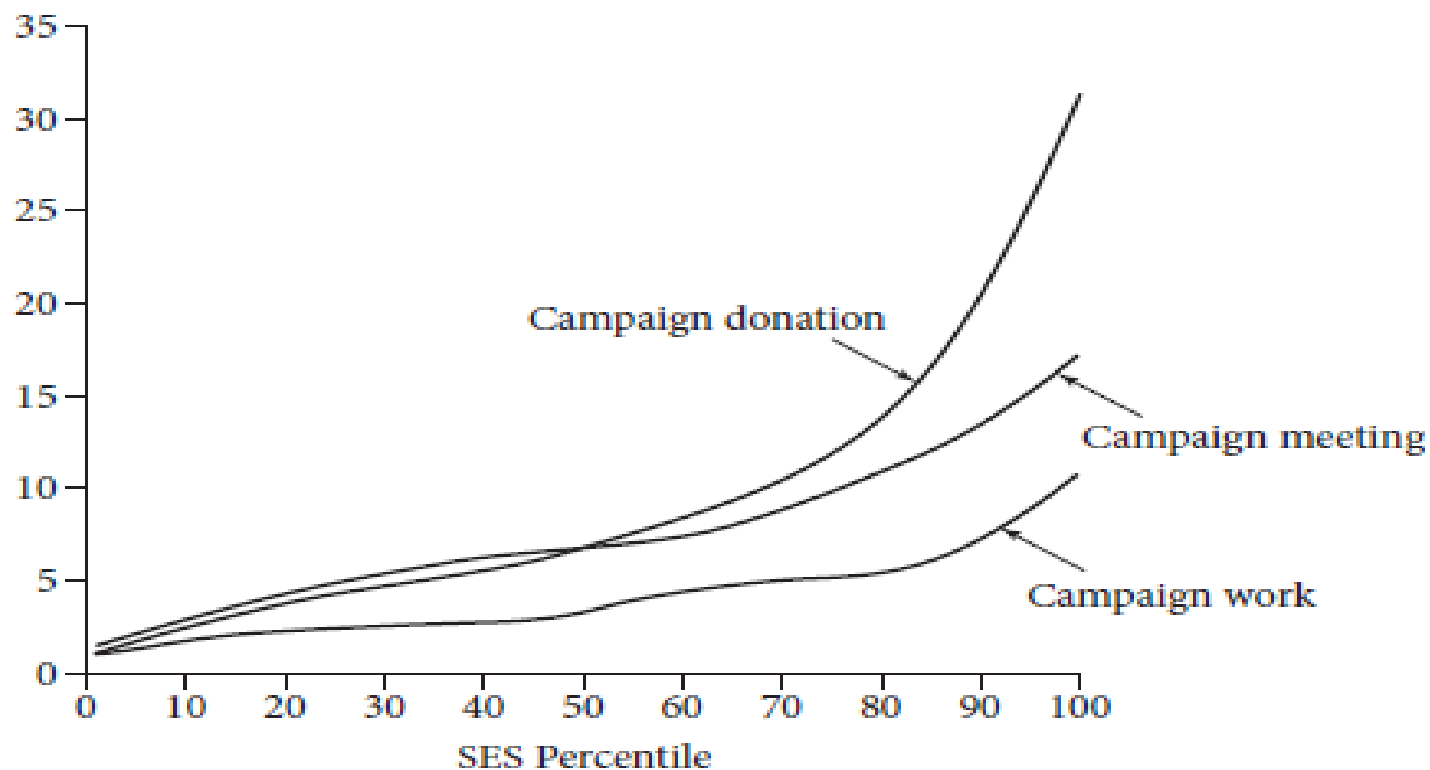
# Continuing Stratification of Political Participation by SES Quintile: 1960, 1967, 1990, 2008



# Distribution of Political Input: Percentage from SES Quintiles, 1990



# Campaign Work and Campaign Contributions by SES Percentiles

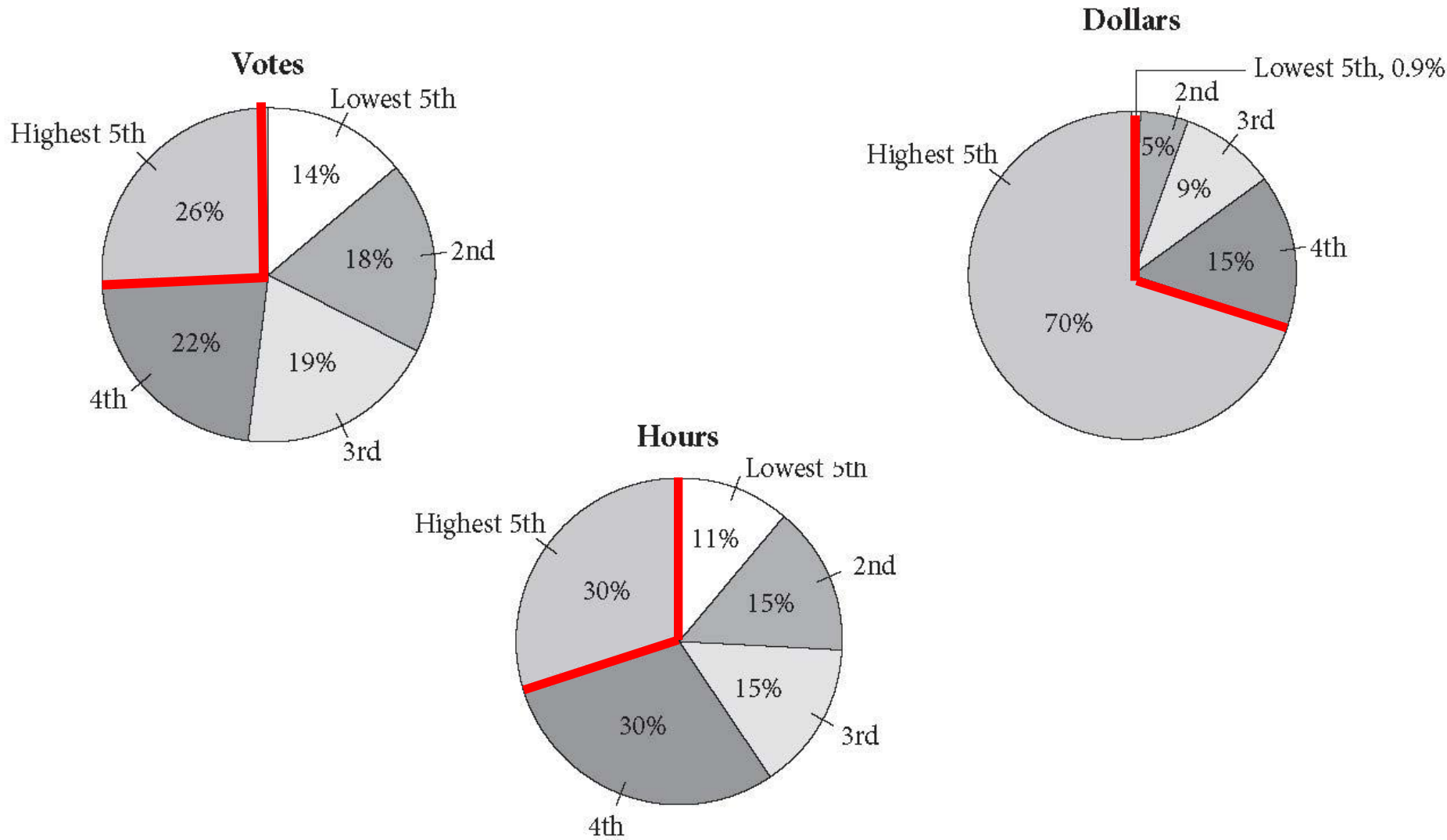


**Figure 5.2** Active in Campaigns—Donating, Attending Meetings, and Working by SES Quintile

Source: American National Election Studies (ANES) (1952–2008).

Note: For this analysis the ANES presidential surveys from 1952 to 2008 were pooled and the final results were smoothed using a LOESS smooth of 30 percent.

# Distribution of Political Input: Percentage from SES Quintiles, 1990



# Interests Represented by Organizations in Washington

**Table 11.3** Interests Represented by Organizations in Washington Politics<sup>a</sup>

Categories of Organized Interests	Distribution of Organizations
Corporations <sup>b</sup>	34.9%
Trade and Other Business Associations	13.2
Occupational Associations	6.8
Unions	1.0
Education	4.2
Health	3.5
Social Welfare or Poor	0.8
Public Interest	4.6
Identity Groups <sup>c</sup>	3.8
State and Local Governments	10.4
Foreign	7.8
Other	7.7
Unknown	1.4
Total	100.1%
N	11,651

Source: Washington Representatives Study (2001).

<sup>a</sup> Distribution of organizations listed in the 2001 *Washington Representatives* directory.

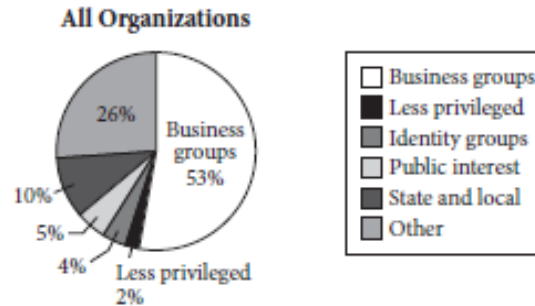
<sup>b</sup> Includes U.S. corporations, U.S. subsidiaries of foreign corporations, and for-profit firms of professionals such as law and consulting firms.

<sup>c</sup> Includes organizations representing racial, ethnic, or religious groups; the elderly; women; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) sexual orientation.

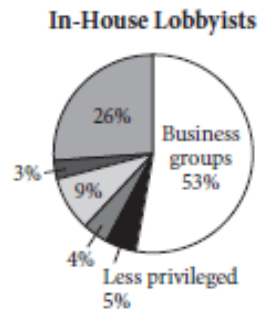


# Business Groups:

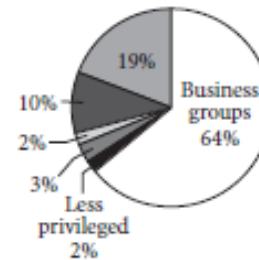
- Are Majority of All Organizations



- Have Majority of In-House Lobbyists

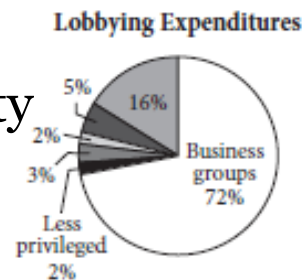


**Outside Firms**

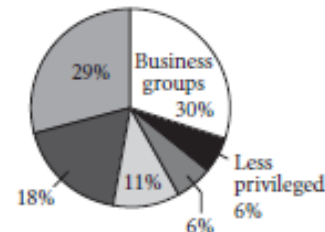


- Hire Super-Majority of Outside Lobbyists

- Spend Super-Majority of Lobbying Dollars

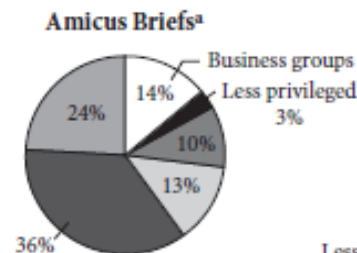


**Congressional Testimony<sup>a</sup>**

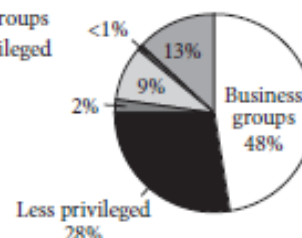


- Do Plurality of Congressional Testimony

- Submit Small Fraction of Amicus Briefs



**PAC Donations<sup>a</sup>**



- Spend Plurality of PAC Dollars

# On-Line Political Activity At Least As Stratified by SES as Off-Line

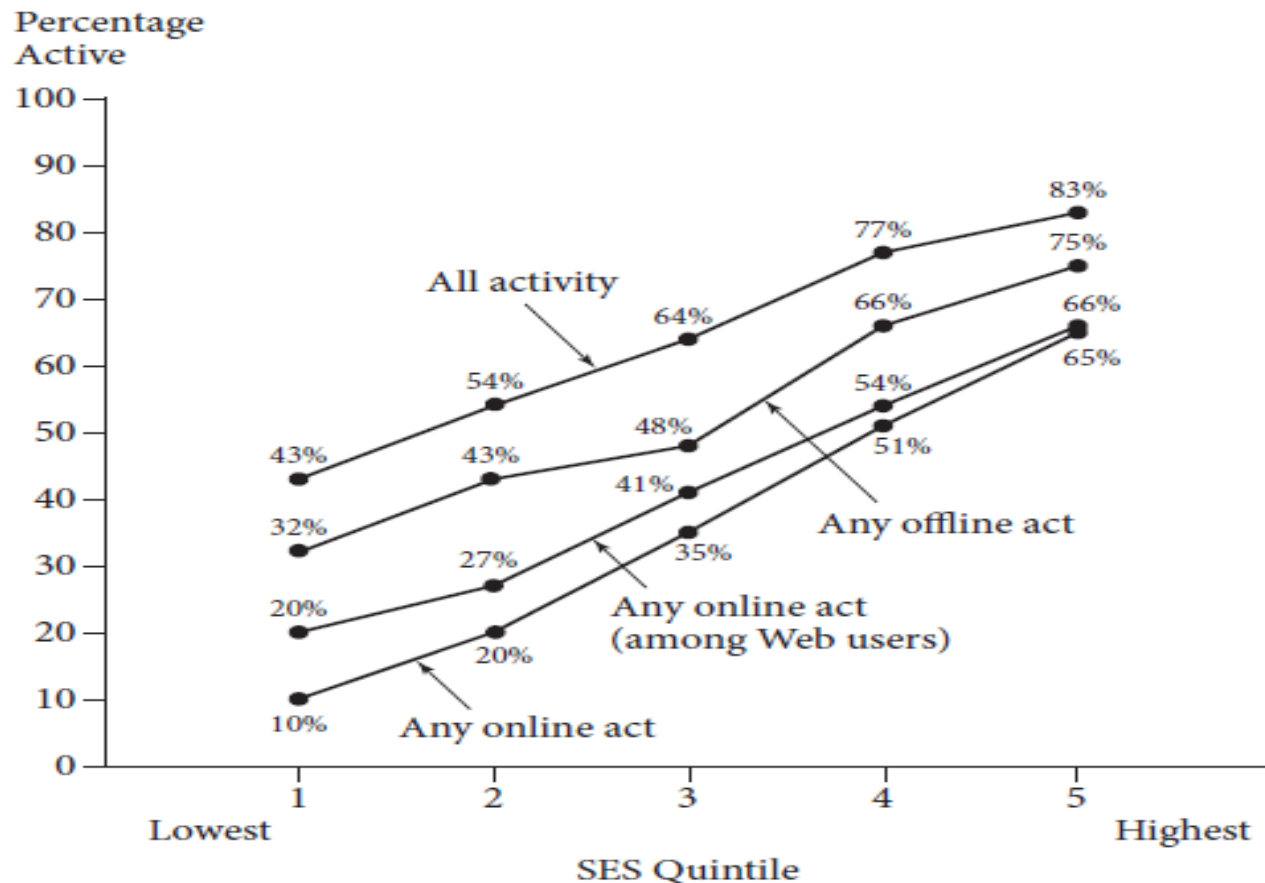
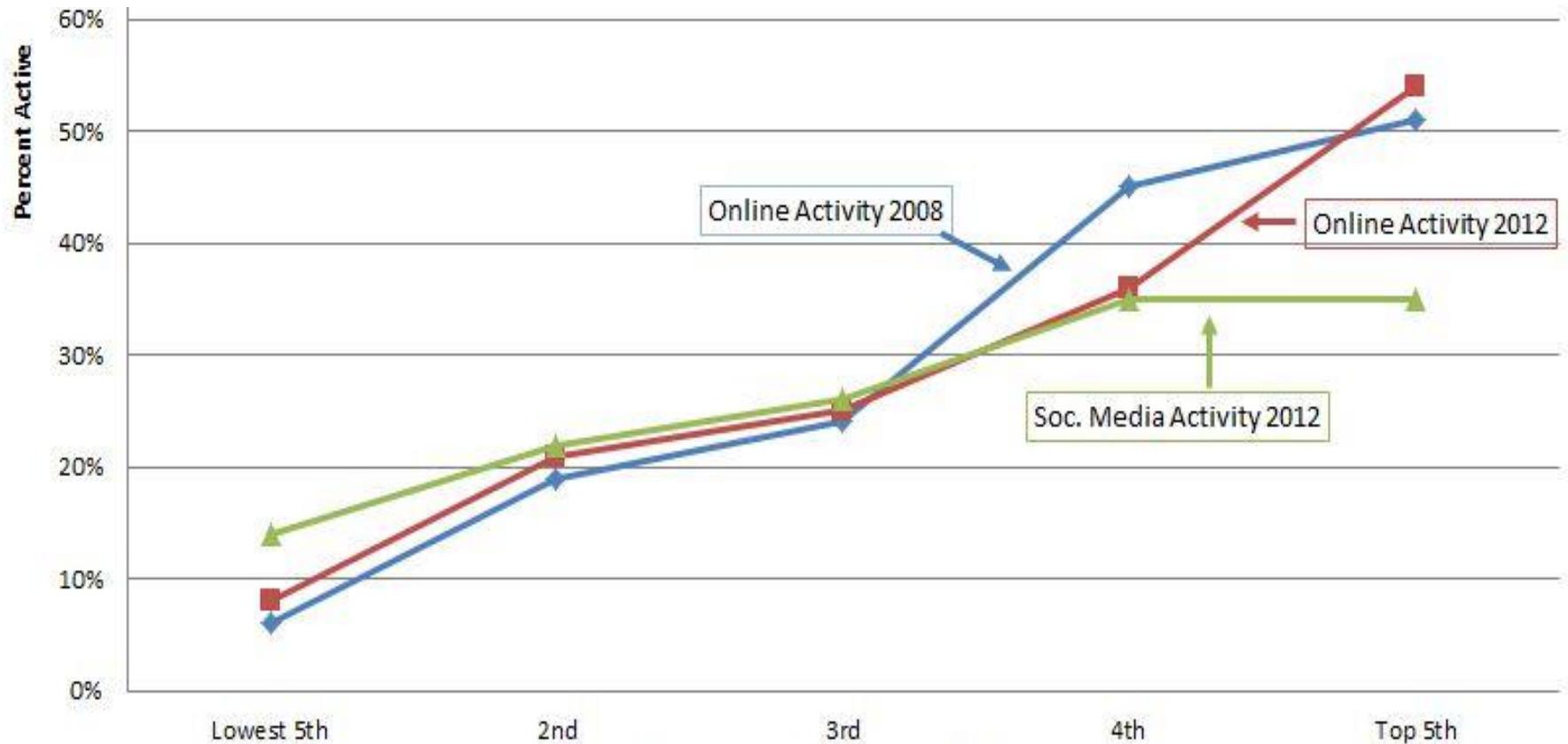


Figure 16.2 Online and Offline Political Activity by SES Quintile

Source: Pew Internet and American Life Survey (2008).

# Political Activity on the Internet and Social Media - 2008 and 2012



Sources: Pew Internet and American Life Projects  
2008 and 2012

# Activity Ratio for Highest to Lowest SES Quintile: Campaign Activity and Religious Attendance

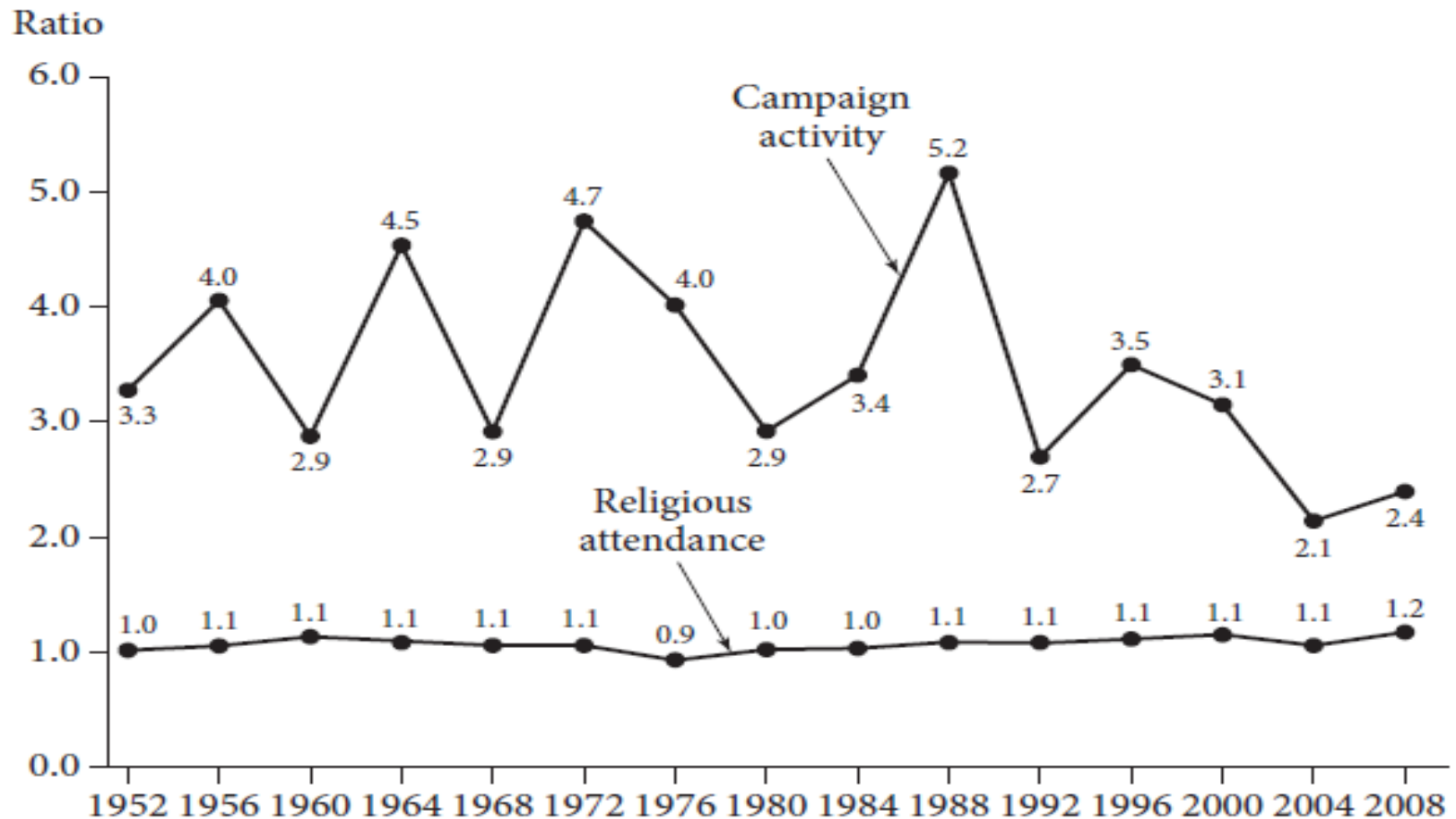


Figure 6.10 Ratio over Time of Highest to Lowest SES Quintile for Campaign Activity and for Religious Attendance, 1952–2008

# Are Activists Typical? Health and Housing

Table 5.1 Are Activists Typical? Health and Housing

	Universal Health Care <sup>a</sup>		Percentage with No Health Insurance <sup>b</sup>	Percentage with Housing or Neighborhood Problems <sup>c</sup>
	Percentage Who Favor	Oppose		
Inactives <sup>d</sup>	59%	24%	27%	28%
All Respondents	51%	36%	17%	19%
Voters	48%	40%	14%	16%
Campaign Workers	51%	37%	16%	19%
Campaign Contributors	44%	47%	7%	12%

Source: American National Election Study (2008).

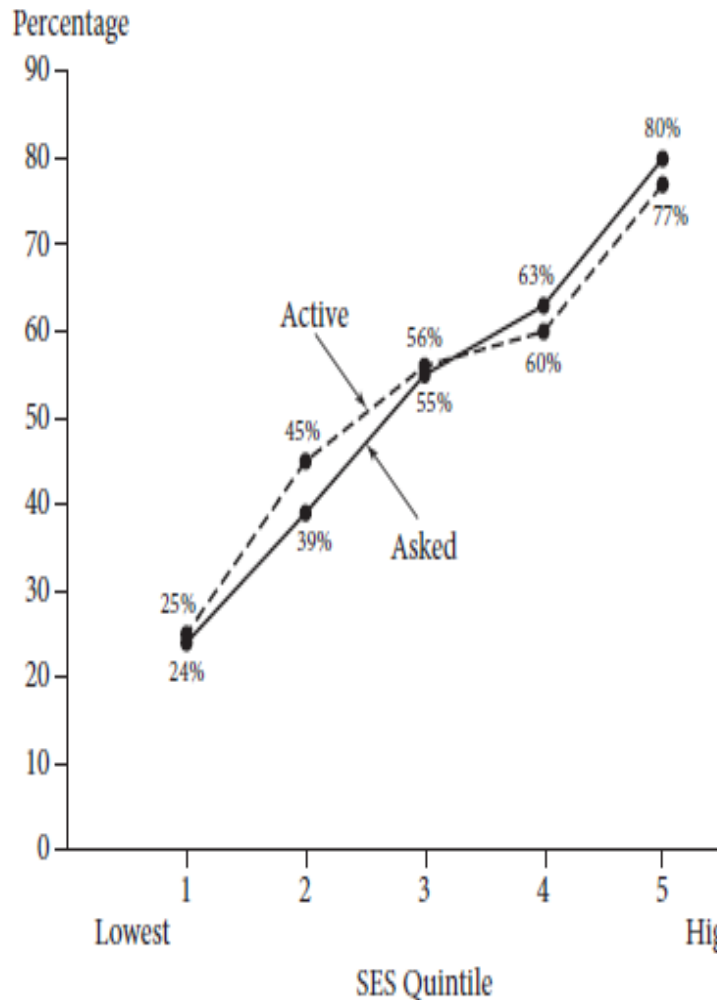
# Recipients of Government Benefits (1990): Who Has Political Voice?

Table 5.3 Political Activity in Relation to Benefit Programs  
by Recipients of Government Benefits

Political Activity Related to a Government Benefit <sup>a</sup>	Percentage Who Receive Income Benefits		Percentage Who Receive Medical Benefits	
	AFDC <sup>b</sup>	Social Security <sup>c</sup>	Medicaid <sup>b</sup>	Medicare <sup>c</sup>
Vote	10%	25%	10%	26%
Campaign Contribution	0%	6%	0%	5%
Contact Public Official	6%	7%	3%	6%
Organization Member	2%	24%	4%	22%
N	(109)	(546)	(123)	(423)

Source: Citizen Participation Study (1990).

## Asked to Active and Active by SES Quintile



## Recruited and Spontaneous by SES Quintile

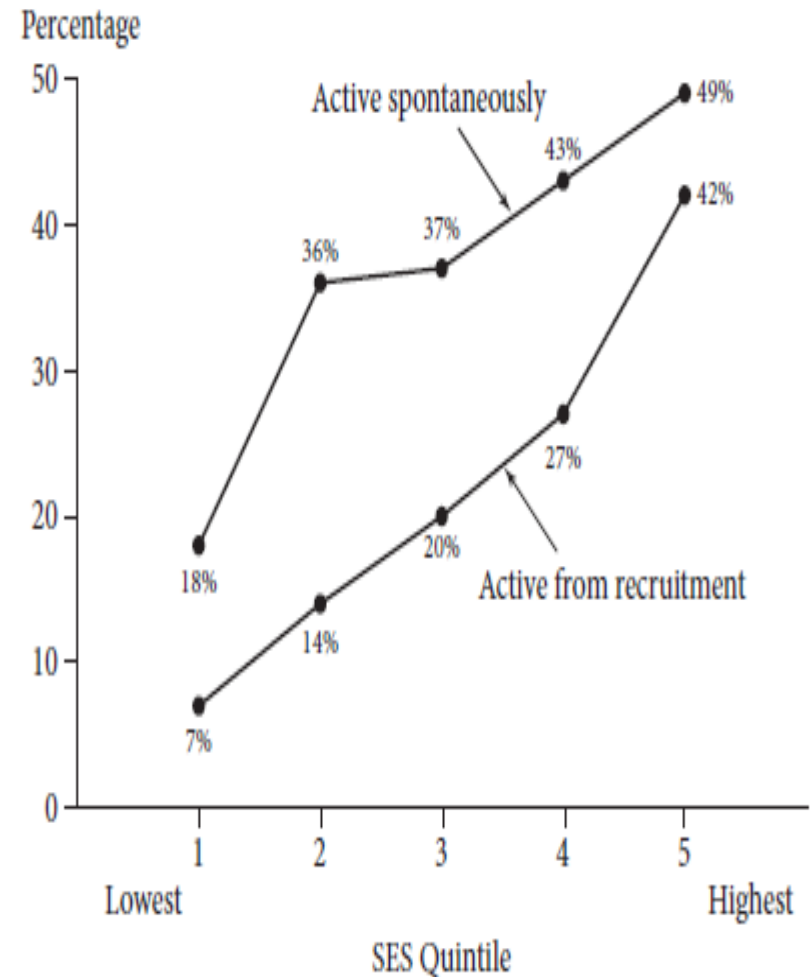
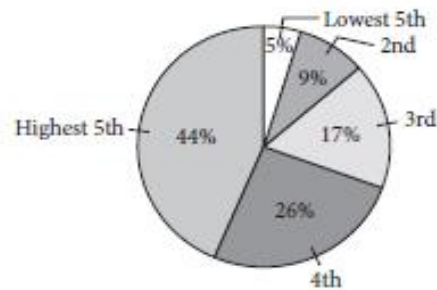


Figure 15.1 Political Recruitment and Political Activity by SES Quintile



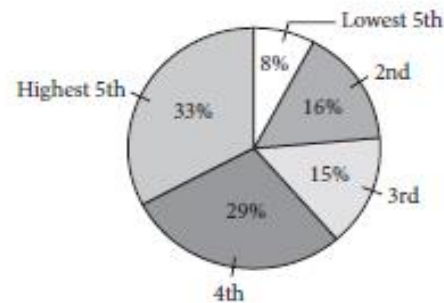
**Most Political Contributions Come from Higher Quintiles**

15.2.A Distribution of Contributions for SES Quintiles



**Spontaneous Contributions Less Stratified by SES**

15.2.B Distribution of Political Dollars Given Spontaneously from SES Quintiles



**Recruited Contributions More Stratified by SES**

15.2.C Distribution of Political Dollars Given as a Result of Recruitment from SES Quintiles

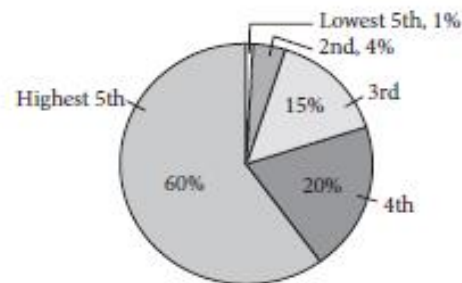


Figure 15.2 Where Do the Political Dollars Come From?

Source: Citizen Participation Study (1990).