

# Beliefs in Government



Oxford

Max Kaase  
Kenneth Newton

## BELIEFS IN GOVERNMENT

Volumes of a Research Programme of the European Science Foundation

*Series Editors:* Max Kaase, Kenneth Newton, and Elinor Scarbrough

## BELIEFS IN GOVERNMENT

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BELIEFS IN GOVERNMENT VOLUME FIVE

# BELIEFS IN GOVERNMENT



MAX KAASE  
*and*  
KENNETH NEWTON

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# FOREWORD

This is one of five volumes in a series produced by the Beliefs in Government research programme of the European Science Foundation. The volumes, all published by Oxford University Press in 1995, are as follows:

- i *Citizens and the State*, edited by Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs
- ii *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance*, edited by Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Sinnott
- iii *The Scope of Government*, edited by Ole Borre and Elinor Scarbrough
- iv *The Impact of Values*, edited by Jan van Deth and Elinor Scarbrough
- v *Beliefs in Government*, authored by Max Kaase and Kenneth Newton

The first chapter of *Beliefs in Government* presents a brief history of the research project, its general concerns, approach and methods, and an outline of the relationship of each volume to the project as a whole.

All five books share a debt of gratitude which we would like to acknowledge on their behalf. The European Science Foundation (ESF) supported and funded the research programme throughout its five long and arduous years. Eleven of the research councils and academies which are members of the ESF have made a financial contribution to the overall costs of the project—Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. We would like to thank the ESF and these member organizations five times over—once for each book.

All five volumes were copy-edited by Heather Bliss, whose eagle eye and endless patience are unrivalled in the Western world. At Oxford University Press we were lucky indeed to have two understanding editors in Tim Barton and Dominic Byatt.

In particular, John Smith, the Secretary of the ESF's Standing Committee for the Social Sciences, and his staff put in huge efforts

and gave us encouragement at every stage of the project. Having gone through the process with other ESF research programmes a few times before, they knew when we started what an immense task lay in wait for us all, but were not daunted. We cannot lay claim to any such bravery, and have only our innocence as an excuse.

Max Kaase  
Kenneth Newton  
Elinor Scarbrough

*December 1994*

# PREFACE

Academic research invariably accumulates debts of gratitude to many people. This book has accumulated far more than most. Apart from anything else, it is based upon a collective research project which stretches across West Europe from Portugal to Finland and from Ireland to Greece, and it has absorbed the energies and talents of some sixty scholars. Our thanks go to these people whose work can be read in the four companion volumes of the *Beliefs in Government* series. A list of chapters and authors appears on pp. xiv–xv.

Eleven member organizations (research councils and academies) of the European Science Foundation agreed to make a financial contribution to the programme—that is, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Their help is gratefully acknowledged.

At the outset we had the support of Jean Blondel. His role in the project is described in the introduction which follows. It is sufficient to say here that his energy and huge enthusiasm were crucial in getting the project going in the first place.

In Strasbourg we had the unfailing help of the European Science Foundation at every stage of the work. Helga Nowotny was Chair of the ESF's Standing Committee for the Social Sciences, and then Guido Martinotti took over. Both facilitated our work with care and concern. Stein Kuhnle kept a kindly watching brief over us for the ESF Standing Committee, offering good and timely advice and a steadying presence. In the office of the ESF we had the unfailing help of the staff, especially Liz Altham who was always ready and willing to assist.

At the Essex office we were fortunate enough to have had the help of three wonderfully cheerful and efficient staff. Chris Wilkinson got the show on the road with skill and panache, Helen Sibley took over and drove it like hell (she may yet pass her driving test), and Sharon Duthie finished it off with the calm assurance it needed. All of them coped with recalcitrant photocopiers, wilful software, illegible faxes, e-mail messages from outer space, phones that never stopped ringing, and the incessant and exacting demands of researchers from all over Western Europe. John Simister and Steven Studd collected data, compiled



tables, ran computer programs, checked bibliographies, searched the literature, and mastered the finest details of SPSS and Word for Windows. Last but not least, we also profited greatly from the quiet but highly skilful secretarial support of Jutta Hoehne of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.

Our first plenary sessions were held at the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung where Konstanza Prinzessin zu Löwenstein, with her inimitable charm and unrivalled efficiency, went to great trouble to provide us with excellent working conditions and memorable hospitality. The second plenary meetings were held in Essex, where Elinor Scarbrough and Chris Wilkinson laboured long and hard to make things run smoothly and successfully.

Our final meeting at Le Bischembourg in the Alsace was beautifully organized by Liz Altham—in addition to all her other work. It was an important meeting for us because we benefited from the invaluable advice of Richard Eichenberg, Ronald Inglehart, Helmut Klages, Beate Kohler-Koch, William Lafferty, William Miller, Ekkehard Mochmann, Gunnar Sjöblom, and Albert Weale. Their comments have greatly improved the quality of the final product.

The project had an insatiable appetite for quality data, more quality data, and still more quality data. The appetite was (almost) satisfied by the prompt services of national archives—especially the ESRC Archive at Essex, the Steinmetz Archive in Amsterdam, the NSD in Bergen, the DDA in Odense, and the SSD in Göteborg. Above all, Ekkehard Mochmann, the Director of the Zentralarchiv in Cologne, and the ZA staff showed great understanding and consideration of the special needs of a cross-national comparative project of this kind.

To all these people we offer our grateful thanks, but two names stand out from all the rest—John Smith and Elinor Scarbrough. John Smith has been tremendous—patient, understanding, humorous, diplomatic, and enormously encouraging at all times. It is a simple fact that we could not have begun, never mind finished, this project without him.

Last and most important, Elinor Scarbrough has been Research Co-ordinator for the BiG project since it started. She has worked exceedingly hard and taken the most meticulous care over it. On behalf of the whole of the Beliefs in Government research team, we express our affection, our admiration, and our thanks to her.

Max Kaase  
Kenneth Newton

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# ABBREVIATIONS

BASS	Belgian Academic Survey Data Archive
CESSDA	Council of European Social Science Data Archives
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Aid
EB	Eurobarometer
EC	European Community
ECPR	European Consortium for European Research
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ERM	Exchange Rate Mechanism
ESF	European Science Foundation
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council (UK)
EU	European Union
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
G7	Group of Seven
ICPSR	Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (University of Michigan)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Oil Producing and Exporting Countries
SCSS	Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (of the ESF)
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USIA	United States Information Agency

*Standard country abbreviations used in the tables and figures*

AU	Austria
BE	Belgium
DK	Denmark

FI	Finland
FR	France
GB	Britain
GE	Germany
GR	Greece
IC	Iceland
IR	Ireland
IT	Italy
LU	Luxembourg
NI	Northern Ireland
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PO	Portugal
SP	Spain
SV	Sweden
SW	Switzerland

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# The Tale of a Comparative Political Science Project



## *How It All Came About*

In 1986 Jean Blondel, then chairman of the Government and Law Committee of the Economic and Social Research Council of the UK (ESRC), proposed that the Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS) of the European Science Foundation (ESF) hold a conference to discuss comparative research in Western Europe. The intention was to strengthen links between the national research councils, the ESF, and individual researchers, and to discuss ways of promoting comparative research. The SCSS agreed, and a meeting was jointly organized by Jean Blondel, John Smith, the Secretary of the SCSS, and Ken Newton, then chair of the Research Board of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). Some twenty representatives from ESF member organizations in sixteen countries, most of them social scientists, discussed research modes and priorities and considered substantive projects which would particularly benefit from a comparative approach.

One of the many ideas that came up during the meeting was 'Beliefs in Government', a study of changing mass attitudes towards government in Western Europe in the post-war period. It was felt that a great deal on this topic had already been done, mainly from a national perspective, and that there was a strong case for bringing leading scholars together to re-examine the data with a fresh eye, a comparative approach, and an interest in long-term stability and change. The meeting recommended that an intensive, specialist workshop should be organized in order to explore the potential for the project.

This suggestion was enthusiastically accepted by the SCSS as the first activity of its third (1988–92) mandate. Max Kaase, of the University of Mannheim, and Ken Newton, of the University of Essex, were asked to prepare a working paper for the workshop, which was held in September 1988 in Strasbourg. It was attended by eighteen specialists in mass survey research from twelve nations. They considered the rationale of the research and the difficult problem of suitable and available data. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for the project and a belief that the data situation, while very far from ideal, was at least satisfactory. As a result, the workshop was able to agree an outline research programme. It also made a most important decision that the project should be divided into four sub-topics, namely: attitudes towards democratic politics; the internationalization of government; the scope of government; and the impact of values.

Kaase and Newton put some finishing touches to the research programme agreed by the workshop, and Kaase presented it to the November 1988 meeting of the ESF General Assembly. It was unanimously accepted. Work started on the project in 1989. A steering committee was set up which first met at the University of Mannheim in May 1989.

Six years later, the end product of the Beliefs in Government research programme is a series of five books published by Oxford University Press, as follows:

- i *Citizens and the State*, edited by Hans-Dieter Klingemann and Dieter Fuchs
- ii *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance*, edited by Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Sinnott
- iii *The Scope of Government*, edited by Ole Borre and Elinor Scarbrough
- iv *The Impact of Values*, edited by Jan van Deth and Elinor Scarbrough
- v *Beliefs in Government*, by Max Kaase and Kenneth Newton

The rest of this chapter outlines the logic of the research, its approach and methods, and the relationship of each volume to the project as a whole.

### *Of Time and Space*

If there is one sub-discipline of the social science where the famous Merton (after Isaac Newton) dictum ‘On the shoulders of giants’

applies, it is empirical and cross-national comparative research (for an account of the major developments, see Scheuch 1990). Such work is built on the four corner-stones of theory, methodology, empirical studies, and an appropriate infrastructure. In all these respects the pioneers of comparative politics of the 1950s and 1960s created the basics of modern political science. They taught us the need for systematic comparative research, for broad-based comparisons, and for historical perspectives. In addition they laid down the foundations of university and private research centres, and of data archives such as the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at Michigan, the national data archives of Western Europe, and the Roper Center in the United States. There is no question that a project like *Beliefs in Government* could never have started without the intellectual and institutional basis created by the pioneers of comparative government since the 1960s.

From the very outset the whole purpose of the project was to reconsider and re-analyse secondary data. To commission a European survey of our own covering all aspects of beliefs in government would have been impossibly expensive. In any case it would not have met the central aim of considering trends and developments over as long a (post-war) time period as possible. Given the logic of time-series research, we were bound to use published data sources. Besides its theoretical and financial logic, the project would also add an extra dimension to published material by setting it in a comparative and time-series framework—in the modern jargon, the research would have considerable value-added potential.

When the project was conceptualized, the organizers had, of course, a good knowledge of the relevant comparative work—Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture*, Verba, Nie, and Kim's *Participation and Political Equality*, Barnes, Kaase, *et al.*'s *Political Action*, the Inglehart-driven European Values Survey (now the World Values Survey), and the surveys of the International Social Science Programme (ISSP). However, national work was less widely known, and, unfortunately, national data archives, like those in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands, are not so well developed in other countries. What was worse, the documentation and dissemination of machine-readable national data files had not at that time reached a point where compatible studies could be identified without enormous initial effort. It was hoped that such data could be used for comparative

purposes, but, if that proved impossible, it was believed that its lack would not ruin the project.

Perhaps the most important source of information, which tipped the balance in favour of the study, was the bi-annual Eurobarometer surveys of the populations (aged 17 years and over) of the member states of the European Union. In addition, the data problem was subsequently eased by an agreement of the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) that the Cologne Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung would take on the vital role of supplying secondary data to the project. The agreement with the Cologne Zentralarchiv even allowed resources to be pooled so as to prepare questionnaire data from the United States Information Agency (USIA) covering attitudes towards politics, especially foreign affairs, in Europe. As a result of the Beliefs in Government project the data are now available from the Cologne archive.

In an ideal world, the complete information needs of the project could be represented in a three-dimensional matrix of time, countries, and variables. Measured against this ideal, the real situation is poor indeed. First, few surveys cover as long a time span as the Eurobarometers. Indeed, most are recent and cover only two or three time points. With the exception of *The Civic Culture* and the USIA surveys, there is little material before 1970. This hampered us enormously. Secondly, it is frequently the case that countries covered in comparative studies are chosen not on theoretical grounds but because survey teams happen to be available, or for some chance reason. For example, the regular country coverage of the Eurobarometers depends on which countries join the European Union (EU) and when. Thirdly, and most importantly, the areas of substantive research interests vary across time and space. Some questions are intensively investigated in some countries and at some periods, but not others.

Consequently, our high hopes at the outset of the project mellowed quickly. Nevertheless, we have managed to retain as a minimum criterion for inclusion in the project the requirement of studying at least two countries over at least two time points. Most chapters in the books cover many more countries and time points. This has demanded not just close and time-consuming collaboration between scholars in different countries, but also a huge effort to collect and collate the relevant data. Although the effort was huge, we believe that the pay-off is worth it in terms of more systematically comparative research which tracks changes over time.

When this project was conceived, no one anticipated the breathtaking political events of 1989–90 which resulted in the collapse of the Soviet empire. As fascinated observers of these momentous events, we discussed whether the whole scope and nature of the project should be transformed by them. The result was a clear-cut decision: neither the theoretical focus of the project on mass attitudes towards democracy, nor the lack of comparative longitudinal survey evidence, allowed us to extend the research into Central and Eastern Europe. In the special case of Germany, this meant that we could cover the Federal Republic only until 3 October 1990. However, the intellectual challenge is such that parts of *Citizens and the State*, Volume i, and *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance*, Volume ii, consider the implications of the politics of the new Europe.

### *The Analysis of Socio-Political Change*

Millions of deaths, the atrocities of the holocaust, and the expulsion of countless people from their homes and communities have sharpened the desire of scholars, politicians, and the public to search for conditions that would prevent the repetition of such things. Though challenged by the Cold War, the West has held firmly to its liberal belief that pluralist democracy, in the form of a *Rechtsstaat* (legal state), is the best guarantee. This view was widely though not universally accepted, while a reversion to authoritarian or totalitarian rule in the West was not entirely discounted either (Huntington 1991). Democracy is not to be taken for granted. As a consequence, it is important to study why democracy may fail (Linz and Stepan 1978) and, no less important, why most nations of Western Europe have stabilized themselves institutionally and maintained at least an acceptable level of public support. The Beliefs in Government project is firmly located in this tradition.

Methodologically, understanding the conditions that make for political stability and change requires one to examine various levels of the political system simultaneously. It has become customary to think of three such levels: the micro level of the individual, the meso level of intermediary organizations, and the macro level of the whole system. Given the survey data base of most of our project, it is the individual citizen who is the core of our analysis. This concern is also grounded in democratic theory which centres on the rights and duties of the individual, and on the principle of formal political equality between