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Continuities in Political Action

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Continuities in Political Action

A Longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies

M. Kent Jennings, Jan W. van Deth and
Samuel H. Barnes, Dieter Fuchs, Felix J. Heunks,
Ronald Inglehart, Max Kaase, Hans-Dieter Klingemann,
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Part I:

Political Action Revisited

Jan W. van Deth and M. Kent Jennings

1 Introduction

Taking the tide at the flood and looking at the wash of the waves is a popular image used to depict recent social and political changes in advanced industrial societies. According to this picture, a wave of youthful activism, political protest, resurrection of ideological thinking, radicalization, and reorientation swept these countries in the 1960s. New and revived modes of political participation appeared, trust in governments declined, and traditional commitments to political parties and interest groups were put to severe critical tests. An "ice age" had come to an end. The time that authority and tradition were sufficient to guarantee stable political affiliations and cleavages belonged to the past.

The events of the 1960s startled scholars as well as politicians. Their apparent inability to predict these rapid social and political changes, however, was soon replaced by a number of speculations and explanations that made the concern with this remarkable decade a minor branch of the social sciences. Some of the interpretations consisted of older Marxist, functionalist, or structuralist theories of social dynamics; other approaches tried to develop new insights for this seemingly unique historical constellation. Apart from a few ad hoc interpretations in terms of specific incidents and circumstances, most explanations referred to the process of long term economic and technological developments in advanced industrial societies. As the nature of the production of goods and services changes, top priority shifts from production to consumption, the service sector becomes increasingly important, new communication and transportation facilities become available, and birth and death rates stabilize at some low level.

For the individual, the consequences of this process can be evaluated in two ways. *Positive* outcomes are usually cited in terms of such practices as the spread of material affluence, increased leisure time, social and geographical mobility, rising levels of information, and educational gains—in short, consequences which imply a relief from the daily struggle to survive and in that way create opportunities for individual growth and self-fulfillment. There are, however, outcomes that are

widely perceived to be *negative* in tone. Attention is directed to such factors as a deteriorating physical environment, spiritual emptiness, alienation from the larger society, and the gradual isolation of the individual in a society where consumer values predominate. It has been argued that as a result of these twin outcomes several segments of populations of advanced industrial societies in the 1960s—experiencing an unprecedented period of economic success in a period of relative international and domestic peace—were disturbed by the negative products of that very system. Compared with other historical eras, however, possible redress was at hand. Many of the discontented, and others who were not necessarily so negative in their evaluations, could now afford the luxury of making widespread political demands, often expressed in an unconventional way. So, both the positive and negative features of the long-term process lead to the same conclusion: economic success and political stability breed political unrest.

Even before this sort of theorizing was completely spelled out by social scientists, the waves of protest began to recede. Instead of a permanent revolution, the popular image from the early 1970s onward is a picture of accommodation, restoration, reorientation, and realignment. Student activism was dampened, severe forms of political demands became less frequent, social critics gradually lost their audiences, and rightist extremism existed next to leftist extremism. Furthermore, two oil crises and a severe economic recession in the western countries replaced the economic boom of the 1960s, the Vietnam War ended, and a neo-conservative revival emerged. As a reflection of these events and trends, by the end of the decade many liberal, social-democratic governments had been replaced by conservative, center-right governments.

It is still not undisputed as to how these political developments, first in the 1960s and then in the 1970s, should be interpreted. On the one hand there is the analogy of the wave: a large swell will be succeeded by a lessening that restores the original level. The notion that the speed of social and political change has slowed down, on the other hand, can be the result of a kind of optical illusion. If a broad action repertory becomes accepted by major parts of the population, if protest and critical assessments of government performances become routinized, then the depiction of a rapid fall-off from the height of the 1960s movements might be nothing more than mistaking the waves for the floodtide. In other words, even high levels of political discontent and

diversified actions in the 1970s would look pale before the common sense myth of the 1960s as a revolutionary era.

The study we report in this book is a response to the theoretical and empirical obscurity that overshadows the discussions about social and political change in the past decade or so. This response will be based on an analysis of data from three different specimen of advanced industrial societies, namely, the Netherlands, West Germany, and the United States. In 1974, as the protest era wound down, national probability samples of the mass publics within each of these countries were interviewed as part of an international project on dissatisfaction, protest, and change. Six to seven years later, in a much-altered social, economic, and political environment, we undertook another survey. In addition to reinterviewing the same people questioned in 1974, we added a fresh cross-section sample in each of the three countries to compare with the original benchmark established several years earlier.

With this database it is possible to depict change and stability in political orientations among mass publics at the individual level as well as at several levels of aggregation. As a result we are provided with the evidence for advancing more substantial explanations of the changes in our three countries in particular and similar countries in general. Such questions as the following may be addressed: What happened to the extreme political activists of the earlier era, to the concept of an enlarged action repertory, to some basic political orientations of people now in a post-revolutionary period? What segments of the population have changed the most and what types of attitudes and behaviors have altered the most? Was there really again a turn of the tide in the second half of the 1970s or is that just an optical illusion? And do the attitudes and behaviors of the newest birth cohorts imply a widening or a narrowing of the generation gap that seemed to underlie the revolts of the 1960s? This book will deal with these kinds of questions from both a comparative and longitudinal perspective.

On Revisiting Political Action

In the early 1970s social scientists from several advanced industrial societies, sharing a curiosity over the determinants and outcomes of the

protest movements that had swept over their respective countries, designed a comparative empirical research project. By the end of 1974, extensive fieldwork had been carried out in Austria, Great Britain, the Netherlands, the United States, and West Germany. Two years later, data collections had been completed in Italy, Switzerland, and Finland.¹ The first major report from this study was *Political Action* in 1979, which dealt with the first five mentioned countries and focussed on the concept of the political action repertory (Barnes, Kaase, et al., 1979). The second major report will be *People and their Politics* (forthcoming), which deals with all eight countries and which is addressed to social and political cleavages.

Although both reports are restricted to the analysis of cross-sectional data, conclusions and speculations have been stated in dynamic terms. Printed in italics to emphasize the importance of the statement, *Political Action* (p. 524) made clear that "We interpret this increase in potential for protest to be a lasting characteristic of democratic mass publics and not just a sudden surge in political involvement bound to fade away as time goes by." This expectation could be stated by tacitly assuming that political change in these countries was *primarily* the result of generational changes and not due to life cycle phenomena or short-lived period effects. A few arguments were used to underline the plausibility of this choice. First, unconventional political behavior proved to be strongly affected by age, education, cognitive skills, and "postmaterialist" values. These relationships displayed too much of a structural component to be considered just a fad of the young. Second, for several of the concepts in *Political Action*—especially the action repertory and political values—it was assumed that abilities and orientations acquired through experience and learning would not be dropped even if conditions changed substantially. Third, because there was little indication that differences between parents and their children were often translated into intergenerational conflict, it seemed unlikely that these differences would fade as the young matured.

In spite of the fact that almost every empirical finding in *Political Action* seems to support interpretations along these lines, it is hard to accept the dynamic conclusions on the basis of cross-sectional analyses alone.

1 Information about the details of the study can be found in Zentralarchiv, 1979, *Political Action: An Eight-Nation Study, 1973-1976*.

Furthermore, the economic prospects in particular changed dramatically between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s. Alteration of political orientations among mass publics had become more likely than most observers would have thought likely only a few years ago. But even if attitudes and behaviors remained more or less the same at the individual level, we still have to deal with the rise of a new generation coming of age in a period of economic stagnation, if not outright decline, and confronted with the fact that their immediate predecessors impede their access to advancement opportunities. It is certainly not self-evident that this new generation has copied the political predispositions of the immediately preceding cohorts simply because the levels of education, cognitive skills, and even postmaterialist values are not expected to decrease. In this way, the modifications in the economic, social, and political constellations in our three countries imply an attractive challenge for many explanations of political behavior that rest on attributes of individuals.

The switch in perspective from a static to a dynamic approach requires a shift in the emphasis placed on several parts of the theories used for both *Political Action* and *People and their Politics*. In general terms this means that interpretations cannot be limited to statements about the levels or sizes of some phenomenon but, in addition, that it has to become clear what is implied or possible for these levels or sizes as two or more points in time are considered. The developmental perspective so prominent in the theoretical impetus of *Political Action* could not, at that time, be adequately underpinned by the data available to the researchers, which was of the static, cross-sectional variety. Nor could this deficiency be satisfactorily overcome through relying on data from other sources, scarce as they were in any event. Simply too little continuity in concepts and measures was available in those studies upon which to base the speculations about future trends. While it was thus absolutely necessary to attempt a replication of the initial study, at least two options regarding the form of that replication were present: a new independent cross-section sample, or a return to the respondents of the initial survey. The design finally chosen combined the best of both worlds in that it includes another cross-section as well as returning to the original respondents for a two-wave panel (see Appendix A).

The main themes of this study are the possible changes in political attitudes and behaviors at distinct levels of aggregation in light of one major and two lesser developments. The major development takes place

at the macro level and concerns the emergence of a period of economic stagnation and cultural reorientation that contrasts vividly with the preceding period. The "lesser" developments are of two types: 1) population replacement, primarily in the form of new cohorts entering the adult mass public; and 2) life stage transitions and modifications experienced by many individuals over this same period of time. As we shall note on occasion, the time interval covered by our two sets of survey observations is not as long as we might like for analytical purposes. This is especially so in the case of population replacement and life stage transitions, where we might wish for a longer span of time so that a greater incidence of each type would have occurred. But even the structural alterations represented by economic and cultural shifts at the macro level were not necessarily cataclysmic or sustained. Nevertheless, there have been sufficient shifts of all three types to supply us with ample opportunities to pursue the question of political response at various levels of aggregation.

Structural and Environmental Forces

Let us begin with the larger canvas. Despite the impressive variety of interpretations used to explain particular political attributes, the underlying patterns of the interpretations offered throughout this book are more or less alike. They can all be seen as variants of a rather simple analytic scheme consisting of three areas or elements linked by two chains: (1) systemic properties in the form of structural and environmental circumstances and changes which have some impact on (2) individual orientations and/or social positions of individuals that, in turn, have consequences for (3) the political behavior of these individuals. Obviously, the resulting behavior will have implications for the existing structural and environmental circumstances, and it is only for analytical purposes that this behavior is depicted as a terminal stage. Simple schemes like this one underlie many treatises on social change, sometimes explicitly spelled out (e.g., Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1971, p. 55; Inglehart, 1977, p. 5), more frequently just implicitly assumed. Two quite distinct interpretations along these lines will be briefly outlined. The first one takes political orientations as the intermediating concept between structural

and environmental phenomena and individual behavior; the second emphasizes social position as the central concept.

The structural and environmental circumstances and changes we are dealing with are those of modern, advanced industrial societies. From a macro-sociological point of view the long-term changes in these kinds of societies have been described by many authors, using such divergent labels as "Modernization," the rise of "Spätkapitalismus," "Mass Society," or "Postindustrial Society" for what is basically the same development. Usually the assumption introduced is that the twin processes of technological innovation and economic growth are the main forces behind social and political developments. The concentration of production in ever larger plants is a common characteristic of ongoing industrialization, as is the continuation of such developments as urbanization, the further division of labor (specialization), and increasing congestion.

A critical point is reached, symbolically if not substantively, when the so-called post-industrial or advanced industrial state is achieved. Consumption now replaces production as the most important economic objective, while the central part of the labor force shifts, first, from the agricultural to the industrial sector and, second, from the industrial to the service sector of the economy. Modern transportation facilities increase the geographical mobility of people to impressive degrees and several means of communications can bring information from the farthest corners of the world "live" into every living room. Developments like these require new skills and so the existing educational system is adapted or enlarged.

In spite of the numerous facets that can be distinguished when looking at this complex mix of developments, the basic pattern is identical in most societies: industrialization, division of labor, urbanization and suburbanization, increasing prosperity, leisure, congestion, secularization, and rising levels of education. The demographic parameters of the populations in these countries also change. High birth and death rates in the first phases of industrialization decrease after some time and tend to stabilize at much lower levels.

Changes in the international system often accompany those in domestic systems. The web of economic and political relationships expands as multinational corporations and other forms of interpenetration develop.

Nations and sectors of these nations become more interdependent and their fates become intertwined.

Following *Political Action* we will use the term “advanced industrial” to identify societies where the broad, multifaceted processes outlined above have been at work for several decades. Modernization figures as a short-hand word for the process itself. The first element or area in our simple analytic scheme of social change consists of the structural and environmental circumstances and changes indicated by the label, advanced industrial. The second part of the scheme can be divided into two variants depending on the emphasis placed on either individual orientations or social positions of individuals. Let us have a closer look at these two interpretations.

The impact of structural and environmental characteristics on individual orientations is perhaps the most classical theme in social research. Sociologists such as Durkheim, Tonnies, Marx, and Weber have tried to formulate answers to this question. For Durkheim the rise of “anomie” is the individual counterpart of changes at the macro level of society, while Tonnies paid attention to the urge for *Gemeinschaft* in a *Gesellschaft* characterized by the ongoing depersonalization of human relationships. Marx stressed the degradation of these relationships according to their use value, and Weber focussed on what he calls *Rationalisierung* in an ever growing number of segments of modern societies. Ortega y Gasset’s description of the “Mass Man,” Riesman’s “Lonely Crowd,” and Inglehart’s “Postmaterialist,” to mention only a few examples, also can be seen as answers to the question about the impact of structural and environmental phenomena on individual orientations.²

Skippping over the many differences between the various approaches, for the moment the most remarkable and relevant point is the fact that there seems to be some consensus about the direction of the change in individual orientations induced by modernization, especially by what might be called the “new” modernization. Researchers with different backgrounds, theoretical approaches, and data collecting strategies have stated their conclusions in terms of a shift from the emphasis placed on such qualities as docility, material advantages, and traditional arrang-

2 A more elaborated version of these interpretations can be found in Van Deth (1984, ch. 2).

mements toward those stressing self-fulfilment, independence, emancipation, and "autogestion." As has been indicated earlier, there are two ways to present an interpretation of this shift. Positive assessments refer mainly to the relief from the daily struggle to survive that creates opportunities for independence and self-fulfilment for ever larger parts of the population. Negative evaluations pay attention to the fact that people in modern societies lose their structures of belonging and become alienated from their own atomistic, depersonalized societies.

From this vantage point it is not hard to imagine how the third and last part of the analytic scheme, human behavior, can be conceptualized. Assuming priority of attitudes over behavior, analyses of the content of these attitudes will lead to predictions about behavior. For instance, when people give top priority to independence and self-actualization, it can be expected that they will be much more willing to participate in unconventional modes of political participation than in cases where they stress conformity and the importance of traditions. Or, if higher value is placed on the protection of the environment than on economic growth, it is not extremely complicated to predict the reactions to a proposal to build a new nuclear plant. In these ways, structural and environmental characteristics and changes therein may result in particular individual outlooks which, in turn, can have an impact on individual behavior.

In the second variant of our analytic scheme, the central mediating concept is social position instead of individual orientation. This approach also has a long tradition in the social sciences and is usually intertwined with approaches based on individual orientations. For analytic purposes it is presented here as a distinct variant. In this view the long-term developments in advanced industrial societies result in the rise of a category of intellectuals, symbol specialists with a relatively high level of formal education looking for positions in the rapidly expanding employment sectors of these societies. In his overview of the theoretical approaches to the rise of this "new class" Briggs (1979) mentions such authors as Veblen, C. Wright Mills, Galbraith, and Bell. Surely, Schumpeter deserves a place in this list, too. In general, the category under consideration can be defined as "...staff, not line, and they produce or deal in 'ideas' or words and hold their positions by virtue of possession of analytical and literary skills usually obtained through formal education" (Briggs, 1979, p. 6). The main characteristic of these skills is the firm rejection of every kind of authority and tradition in favor of argumentation or at least verbalization. It is, in the

words of Gouldner, a “culture of critical discourse” (Gouldner, 1979, p. 28).

Obviously, this critical attitude implies the same change in individual orientations towards self-fulfillment, independence, and emancipation as outlined in the first variant of our analytic scheme. However, there is another interpretation in terms of social positions. In that case, members of the new class are viewed as a passionate minority searching for profitable outlets in which to invest their human capital. This capital mainly has the form of a relatively high level of education without the disadvantage of being a too narrowly trained specialist. The kind of jobs that provide investment opportunities are to be found in the service and government sectors of the economy. Being rather neutral, Lasch (1978) labelled these positions “helping professions,” while Illich (1980) thought there were good reasons to speak of “disabling professions” instead.

The type of work performed by these new professionals and technicians is either to be found in some branch of the government bureaucracy or in semi-independent organizations heavily financed with governmental subsidies. Therefore, members of the new class can be expected to have more than average involvement with politics. What they are looking for is entrance into elite positions. The most secure, fastest, and most profitable way in which to succeed seems to lie in turning to the government for protection and regulation. Their overt enthusiasm for human welfare, self-fulfilment, and participation functions as an ideology to mask the search for well-paid professional positions.³ Or so is the case from this viewpoint.

In terms of our analytic scheme, modernization leads to an ever growing number of symbol specialists. The third element of this scheme refers to behavior. Here the resulting behavior consists of the search for investment opportunities or, more specifically, involvement with politics to obtain protection and regulation of career opportunities. These activities have been referred to as resource mobilization (Zald and McCarthy, 1979). By using this line of reasoning an attractive explanation is provided for the well-known fact that the more passionate actors on the

3 See Van Deth (1984, ch. 3) for a more elaborate presentation of this line of reasoning.

political stage are often found among the highly educated, relatively well-to-do segments of the youthful population.

It is not necessary to spell out the many variations and combinations that can be constructed with the two main variants of our scheme outlined above. At this point we will confine ourselves to this brief overview. More elaborated and varied interpretations are to be found in the several chapters of this volume.

Population Replacement and Individual Change

In addition to this major theme guiding our analysis we have two sub-themes that are of special relevance in view of our unique research design and the substantive focus of our inquiry. Up to this point we have talked about change and the potential for change in terms of what we have called structural and environmental explanations. There are both long-term and short-term versions of these explanations, the former describing the industrialization and postindustrialization processes we have noted and the latter describing shocks and disturbances—such as the economic stagnation of the 1970s—that may delay or accelerate the long-term processes. Such systemic developments occur, however, as the population itself is undergoing change. It is these population dynamics, already alluded to in the foregoing, that we now examine in more detail.

As indicated above, the consequences of the evolving economic and social structures in advanced industrial societies do not fall equally on the populace. New cohorts with relatively short memories, open minds, and malleable temperaments are more vulnerable and susceptible to the effects of structural and environmental changes.⁴ Older cohorts are not only less likely to be fundamentally affected by such changes; they are also, at the extreme, leaving the population. This inexorable population replacement is one of the basic ways in which the distribution of attitudes and behaviors can be altered. Of course, if the new cohorts

4 This, of course, is the basic idea underlying most theories of generational change. See, among others, Eisenstadt (1964).

equal in number and political character the composition of the departing cohorts, the exchange is symmetrical.⁵ In societies such as the three we are studying, however, the exchange is more likely to be asymmetrical. New cohorts are being politically socialized under quite different settings than were the older cohorts and they face immediate structural conditions quite different than those which were confronted by departing cohorts at a comparable point in their lifetimes.

For students of political culture the phenomenon of population replacement assumes especial importance when replacement seems to result in new generations entering the populace. Mannheim has described actual political generations as being formed in periods of “dynamic destabilization,” when same-aged individuals “. . . participate in the characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period, and insofar as they have an active or passive experience of the interactions of forces which made up the new situation” (Mannheim, [1928], 1972, p. 119). He goes on to make a crucial distinction: “Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation-units” (pp. 119-120). Such terms as the “Depression Generation,” the “Silent Generation,” and the “Protest Generation” reflect Mannheim’s conception of political generations, though more precisely one might want to label them generation units.

One aspect of our analytic strategy is clearly dictated by joining the notion of political generations with that of changing structural and environmental conditions. If newer cohorts are being more heavily influenced by changing structural forces, then we should expect them to differ from preceding ones—as we know they do on the basis of the first segment of our study as outlined in *Political Action*. Younger respondents, born in the post World War II era, tended to have different value structures, greater cognitive skills, and more extensive action repertoires than did older cohorts. They appeared to have several characteristics that set them apart as a separate generation.

What we are far less certain about are two other questions. First, do

5 Although these ideas about symmetrical and asymmetrical change used here and with respect to individual-level change are not new, we are indebted to a neat formulation of them in Pierce, Beatty, and Hagner (1982), pp. 34-41.

these younger cohorts remain distinctive from preceding cohorts as they march through time? *Absolute* and *relative* continuity are two important tests of the generational thesis, tests which call for longitudinal data of the type described below (Jennings, 1987). By absolute continuity we mean the degree to which the putative generation maintains its own political traits over time; by relative continuity we mean the degree to which the generation maintains its distance from preceding generations even though both may change over time. An especially acid test of generational continuity is raised in the present context due to the economic adversity which set in after years of economic boom.

A second question stems from the fact that a new cohort has entered the populace in the time period covered by our longitudinal study. In broad outlines it was socialized under the same long-term conditions as its immediate predecessor. However, it came of political age under a different set of circumstances, during a period of economic shock and disequilibrium and one of more conservative political temperament. Thus the question is whether the long-term processes marked by affluence, well-being, rising education, and stress on the values of self-actualization would prevail on this new, tender cohort, or whether the immediate exigencies of the mid to late 1970s would retard or even reverse expectations based on extrapolations of previous trends.

Population replacement and its attendant possibilities of new political generations replacing old ones is one mechanism by which change occurs. Another, of course, lies in the fact that individuals themselves can change. If modern survey research has taught us anything, it is that adult life is not static, that individuals are quite capable of altering their political orientations, though bedrock, consensual orientations are far more resistant to change (e.g., Converse and Markus, 1979; Jennings and Markus, 1984). As with population replacement, individual level change can result in essentially little or no overall change if contrasting movements are equally balanced—though if the composition of the change elements differs, this symmetrical change is not unimportant. Of greater substantive and theoretical interest are asymmetrical changes, wherein the net flow is disproportionately in one direction. This, of course, is what usually occurs when strong period or historical effects are at work.

Given the nature of our data base, we will be sensitive to the question of individual-level change and stability and the accompanying corollaries.

Indeed much of the foregoing discussion about the centrality of social positions in our analytic scheme implies a concern about a particular set of corollaries of special relevance to our interest in the politics of advanced industrial societies. A number of other characteristics embedded in social locations would also qualify as candidates for examining the possibility of differential responses to a changed environment.

But just as population replacement facilitates the likelihood of aggregate change in a populace, so too does a process occurring at the individual level, namely, life stage transitions. Other things being equal, the expectation is that alterations in adult statuses and roles will increase the likelihood of change in political orientations. Individuals experiencing absolutely no such alterations over their lifetimes are rare, of course, but the frequency, magnitude, and qualitative meaning of such alterations do vary enormously across individuals. Life stage transitions are often summed up simply by looking at aging. As a surrogate variable age may be quite suitable, though it may hide as much as it reveals. In our own study age is of special interest because of its connection to presumed generational differences in advanced industrial societies. Thus we are interested in the degree to which individuals in given cohorts, especially those born after World War II, maintain or alter their political orientations as they age.

Age, however, captures life stage transitions and significant events only imperfectly. Changes in employment and occupational status, educational attainments, marital and parental status, residential location, property ownership, organizational life, personal well-being, and political roles do not follow a neat progression with age. Moreover, there is reason to believe that such alterations are important not only in their own right as they affect political attitudes and behavior, but that they may also condition an individual's reactions to alterations in the larger social, economic, and political environment. Therefore, we will be alert to certain alterations in statuses and roles and their impact on political attitudes and behaviors. In particular, we will be able to test some of the hypotheses involving social positions by taking advantage of instances where individuals have vacated old or acquired new positions.

Research Design and Study Execution

Our research design follows directly from the theoretical notions presented in the foregoing discussion. That is, our major focus is on the consequences of long-term developments and short-term alterations in advanced industrial societies for individual political attitudes and behaviors, especially those connected with the phenomenon of political action. A related, secondary focus is on the possible consequences stemming from generational turnover and life stage developments. Given our starting point with the original research design, a replication of the earlier study was an obvious choice for the present inquiry. The implications of the comparative and longitudinal aspects of the research problem and the accompanying design considerations deserve some elucidation.

Political Action (pp. 19-21) contains a discussion about the comparative nature of that study, accompanied by lengthy citations, especially from the work of Przeworski and Teune (1970). The position advanced there is still relevant for the present undertaking; a concise summary of that position follows. First, we are strongly committed to the nomothetic rather than the idiographic approach since only comparative research will enable us to "... distinguish between those regularities in social behavior that are system-specific and those that are universal" (Grimshaw, 1973, p. 5). Second, we assume "... that men's very different cultures might ... respond in basically the same way to certain of the relatively standard institutions and interpersonal patterns introduced by economic development and sociopolitical modernization" (Inkeles and Smith, 1974, p. 12). Third, in terms of the well-known conceptualization of Przeworski and Teune (1970), our research strategy can be characterized as a modified "most different systems" design. Less technically, and more appropriate to the theoretical notions of the present study, these three statements can be summarized as follows. In spite of the many differences among advanced industrial societies, we assume that the process of modernization will lead to more or less similar individual responses of the people in these societies.

Although we will present a description of the structural and environmental conditions and changes in our three subject nations, it is not possible to link that type of information directly to the socio-psychological

processes we are dealing with in this study. The complications of having several levels of analysis in our analytic scheme proved to be one of the most dangerous pitfalls we encountered. One strategy to overcome these problems is to break down the surrogate variable, country, into a number of structural and aggregate variables and, consequently, to relate that information to the aggregated figures derived from our individual-level data. However, much of the richness and contextual relevancy of the study is sacrificed thereby. Therefore, we decided to continue to present our results for the three countries separately, in easily visible fashion, as reminders of the unique properties of each country and the resultant differences perhaps generated by these unique properties. This invites, of course, a discussion of individual country variations in terms of structural/aggregate differences, as is demonstrated in several of the following chapters. At the same time we have attempted to capture that which is common to these three countries and, presumably, to similarly situated countries.

Compared with earlier reports growing out of the parent study, the present one is more limited in the number of countries available for analysis. The exigencies of funding and the variable availability of investigators led to the inclusion of only three nations in the extended version of our inquiry. As we shall point out in the succeeding chapter, however, and as is reasonably well known to students of comparative politics, the variations across even the Netherlands, West Germany, and the United States are considerable. Moreover, comparisons are multiplied by our repeated attention to particular strata and groupings within each country.

The longitudinal perspective of the research design also makes apparent a socio-psychological perspective. In order to trace the persistence and change of individual attitudes and behaviors we interviewed the same people at two points in time, separated by a period of six to seven years across the three countries. Although these two-wave panels are not the most ideal design from a methodological point of view, they are a vast improvement over one-shot, cross-sectional designs. Information gathered in this fashion can be used to explore a large number of hypotheses about the persistence of political orientations at the individual level.

Longitudinality was also achieved by conducting interviews with representative samples at a second point in time. The first waves of the panels can be viewed as representative samples for Time₁. Because it is

impossible to reinterview the complete set of respondents at a later point, and because of the inexorable process of population replacement, the second wave of the panel cannot be used as a reflection of the total population at a later date. Therefore, representative samples were interviewed at Time₂, thus enabling us to describe change and stability at the aggregate level of mass publics. The combination of these two features—the panel component and the two cross-section samples—results in an attractive set of longitudinal data. It will enable us to trace both individual and aggregate patterns of change and stability.

This comparative and longitudinal design provides the opportunity for a massive number of comparisons to be made. Levels of scores, changes in scores, and relationships between variables can all be compared across nations, subgroups, and time. Even quite straightforward aggregate analyses require careful consideration of possible complications such as ecological fallacies. Complexity in design is both a blessing and a curse. Consequently, as the analysis unfolds we will be spelling out what is being compared with what according to which interpretation.

Most of the empirical information presented in this volume was collected through large-scale sample surveys. In spite of some well-known difficulties of using surveys for the purpose of obtaining socio-psychological data, it is still the most efficient way to collect systematic information from a large number of people in a very short period of time. This is especially true in our case for at least two reasons. First, we needed representative samples of the total adult population in order to generalize about mass publics. We could have opted for other strategies, most obviously a study of protest-prone subgroups of the population (e.g., Muller, 1979; Opp et al., 1984; Sniderman, 1981). The decision to draw representative national samples of citizens 16 years and older reflects our understanding that for democratic societies governed by the overarching principle of “one person, one vote,” it is particularly compelling to study the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of the citizenry at large. The second reason for using the survey method is that we wanted information about a wide variety of social and political orientations and this, of course, implies the use of lengthy instruments. A large-scale survey is a relatively cheap way to obtain this type of information.

Both the comparative and longitudinal aspects of our undertaking have led to long discussions about the identity and equivalence of the

interview schedules across the three countries and at the two different time points. Consensus has been reached within our group about the comparability of the questions and ultimate measures that were employed. Furthermore, we decided to replicate in great part the instruments used in the first wave of the study. To the degree that we achieved equivalence in measurement at Time₁, we have also ensured that quality at Time₂ by the sheer act of replication. At the same time we have not stood blindly by the instrument used in the first study. Some questions were dropped after careful evaluation of their utility. Modest modifications were made in a few others, especially in some of the more formidable batteries. Finally, our reflections in the wake of the initial study led to the addition of several new questions.

As noted earlier, the present study utilizes primarily the longitudinal data available from the Netherlands, West Germany, and the United States. In each country the original data collection took place in 1974. The Dutch conducted their second survey around the turn of the years 1979/1980; the Germans followed in early 1980; and the Americans finished their data collection by late summer, 1981. Thus the elapsed time varies only slightly across the three countries, a similarity that maximizes our efforts to make comparative statements. Although we regret the absence of surveys from other countries included in the original study, this set of nations can be used to assess a number of ideas about aggregate and individual dynamics as societies and individuals find themselves in transition.

Basic details about the samples and field work are presented in Appendix A. Here it is sufficient to note that in each country the universe in each country consisted of the total, non-institutional population aged sixteen and above. In the United States area sampling procedures were used while in the Netherlands and West Germany the sampling utilized lists of the total population. In the two latter countries new samples were drawn for the second national survey; in the United States the "fresh" sample consists of a combination of the panel members (who thus do double duty) plus a complement of newly selected respondents.

Plan of the Book

The various chapters of this book are grouped into four broadly defined thematic parts that reflect the major research questions outlined in the present chapter. Because of its centrality for the rest of the book, the next chapter in the present part deals with the developments in political action and mass participation over the course of our study period. In this chapter the central behavioral expectations spelled out in *Political Action* will be placed in a dynamic perspective. Part II moves into domains that are integral to our understanding of political action and its corollaries. Topics addressed in this section include the value system of postmaterialism, economic discontents, personal difficulties, and perceptions of social injustice. Our intent here is two-fold: to describe the dynamics of the phenomena in question and to look at their relationships to various aspects of political action. Part III in a sense represents a modest, but important detour from our major objectives. Both the initial *Political Action* volume and the present one demonstrate the importance of general organizing principles when it comes to the content and thrust of political action. Thus the two chapters in Part III deal with two key orienting devices for our citizen respondents, namely, the left-right ideological schema and the left-right partisanship schema. Implicit in all of the foregoing chapters are the themes of persistence and change. These themes are discussed explicitly in Part IV, where political interest is presented as an important determinant of persistence, and the crystallization of orientations among young adults is considered. A concluding chapter marks Part IV.

This volume contains considerable variation across the several chapters, variation that reflects both the multiple authorships and our decision not to impose dogged uniformity. We have tried to eliminate repetitions and incompatibilities and to stress the commonalities and bridging features. Nevertheless, differences in presentation, analytic techniques, and interpretation remain. The final product is, in other words, a truly collaborative volume.

Max Kaase¹

2 Mass Participation

When the waves of political unrest hit the western democracies in the 1960s, a wealth of explanations was offered by ingenious social scientists and others. Few of those explanations, though, were based on reliable empirical evidence. Thus, the analysis in *Political Action* (Barnes, Kaase, et al., 1979) had a natural focus: What were the conditions, structure, and meaning of those kinds of political involvement that were termed, at that time, protest behaviors? While in the beginning the protest perspective dominated public perceptions and scholarly debate alike, a new view on uninstitutionalized political participation slowly emerged. This view was based on a particular variety of democratic theory which emphasized a broader role in political involvement for the individual citizen. The participatory revolution, as it is sometimes called, challenged the limited perspective of democracy as but one set of rules for the regular, institutionalized exchange of political authorities. It characterized the existing system of political institutions as outdated and identified the quest for more political and social participatory rights as the core problem of political order in western democracies for many years to come.

By the time of the first study we realized that individuals must be regarded as parts of social networks and contexts which shape and change individual attitudes and behaviors in a fashion that appears random only if their contextual properties are overlooked (e.g., Huckfeldt, 1986). Taking into account this theoretical background, the choice for a true panel represents one element in the 1979-1981 study which goes beyond the 1974 conceptualization of *Political Action*. Unconventional political participation is now more clearly recognized as action embedded in a process of political mobilization, a process that involves individual and corporate actors on various levels of the sociopolitical system. Furthermore, this view moves unconventional political partici-

1 The author gratefully acknowledges the support of Edeltraud Roller in performing the data analyses for this chapter.

pation closer to other theoretical approaches for the explanation of uninstitutionalized action, most notably the resource mobilization and network theories of collective action which were developed to understand better the conditions for the emergence of (new) social movements.

One consequence of this development in our analytical perspective is that this chapter will not be restricted to individual-level patterns of attitudes towards and engagement in conventional and unconventional political behavior. This shift reflects the theoretical understanding that there do exist societal structures—institutions, communication networks and personal networks, intermediary organizations—which in a macrotheoretical view provide overall stability and at the same time permit individual changes of a systematic or even idiosyncratic nature.

The continuity in concepts, operationalizations, and data analysis procedures used in this chapter is a prerequisite for the reliable analysis of stability and change over time. But five to seven years between the two study waves and only two measurements will surely not be enough to capture the precise nature of the processes of social and political change in the postindustrial democratic societies of the west after World War II. (For a broader view on those changes see the introductory chapter.) We will, however, be able to assess to what extent one of the most important conclusions in *Political Action*—that these societies by the early 1970s had undergone a substantial and lasting change in political action repertoires of their citizens—was well-grounded. Furthermore, this chapter can also be regarded as an independent test of the propositions developed in *Political Action*. For these two purposes, we will mainly use the 1974 and 1979-81 cross-sections and panel data. In the West German case, some additional information is also derived from a study performed in 1985/86² (Kaase, et al., 1987a and 1987b).

- 2 The author was principal investigator in a study on welfare aspirations which was conducted in West Germany with a representative sample of the voting-age population from November, 1985 through February, 1986. Because the emphasis of this study was on the aspirations of citizens vis à vis the state, it was not possible to include all of the *Political Action* study batteries used in West Germany in 1974 and 1980. The items on conventional political participation were fully replicated and therefore permit longitudinal analyses, but the unconventional participation items were severely curtailed. The approval dimension was completely removed from the questionnaire and the set of activities was limited to signing petitions, joining a citizen

Theoretical Foundations

We maintained almost a decade ago that a micro theory alone could not account for the emergence of direct, uninstitutionalized forms of political participation in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Factors like the spectacular rise in economic well-being, the increase in levels of educational attainment, the growing physical and cognitive distance to World War II, and the spread of electronic mass communication systems, particularly television (see Kaase, 1986b), are all important macro-societal conditions for changes in political involvement by many citizens in western democracies³. These changes could not, of course, be systematically, empirically related to the micro data that were collected. Nevertheless, the analyses in *Political Action* (p. 43) followed a theoretical model spelled out in Figure 1.

This model clearly entails the dynamic multi-level properties needed to understand all forms of political participation as a result of individual predispositions and beliefs, involvement in personal networks as well as in organizational memberships, and a set of institutional conditions ranging from electoral laws to the availability of plebiscitary political channels. Obviously, the model is weak in specifying the developmental perspective and the concrete interactions between the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of the system bringing about individual action.

Although a full test of the complete model was not achieved in *Political Action*, thus giving the model more of the character of a heuristic device for guiding analyses and interpretations, it is worthwhile to briefly spell out the concepts and operationalizations of the measures and some of the most pertinent findings for the 1974 data point of the study.

In the past, the empirical study of political participation cross-nationally has shown relatively consistent and cumulative results (Milbrath, 1965; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba, Nie, and

initiative, joining a boycott, and joining a lawful protest demonstration. Since the citizen initiative-item was first included in 1980, direct comparisons between 1974, 1980 and 1985/86 are only possible on the three remaining activities.

- 3 For a more detailed presentation of these considerations see *Political Action*, pp. 27-35. Furthermore, see Dalton, Beck, and Flanagan, 1984; and chapter 1 of the present volume.

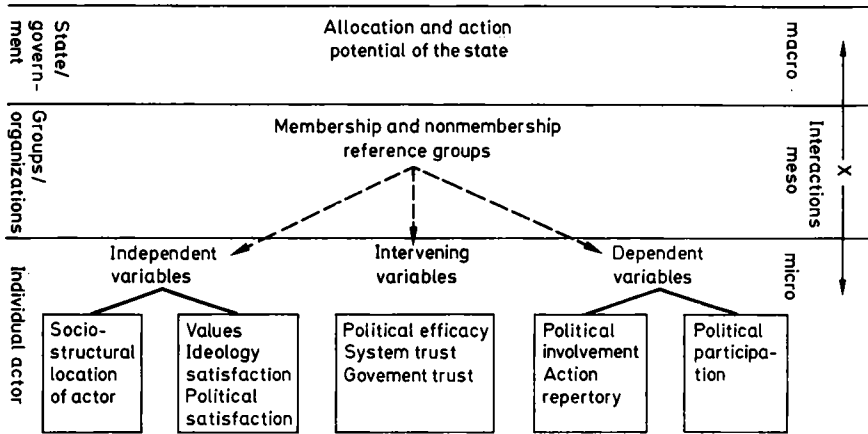


Figure 1: A Theoretical Model for Political Action.

Source: *Political Action*, p. 43.

Kim, 1978). Still, up to our own research, non-institutionalized, non-electoral modes of political involvement—an *individual* property assessable by standardized personal interviews—had not been systematically studied as a property or propensity of national populations. In *Political Action* (p. 60), the property space constituting what there was called “parameters of license for protest” was thought to consist of:

- conventional, mostly electorally oriented political participation (like engaging in election campaigns),
- unconventional, uninstitutionalized political participation (like joining in demonstrations), and
- the potential for political repression, i.e. the willingness of the populace to accept or tolerate repressive actions by the state against direct action politics.⁴

4 While our instruments measuring conventional political participation dwelled heavily on previous research (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978), both the measures of protest potential and repression potential were newly conceptualized, operationalized, and tested. For details of the operationalizations see *Political Action*, pp. 537-592. Note that the Time₂ scales and other measures were constructed following exactly the same procedures as those applied for the 1974 data, with the following exception. Because “painting slogans on walls” did not become part of the scales developed in the first survey, it was not included in the second survey. However, the

There is no need to discuss here in any greater detail the rationale behind the construction of the measures (see *Political Action*, pp. 57-96, 152-157). It is sufficient to mention first that the protest potential scale and the conventional political participation scale were conceptualized as one-dimensional cumulative (i.e., Guttman) scales. Second, the scales are not all equally behavioral in content. The conventional political participation scale is fully behavioral in that it relies on information as to how frequently a given individual has in the past performed any one of the given seven acts in question. Unlike Verba and Nie (1972), we had excluded in *Political Action* (p. 86) "voting" from that list because of its highly institutionalized character and because of its dependency on nation-specific institutional arrangements. By contrast, the protest potential scale contains both attitudinal and behavioral elements. The relative scarceness of actual involvement in acts of uninstitutionalized political participation, compared with favorable attitudes towards such acts, means that the attitudinal component in 1974 and in 1979-1981 has a stronger impact on the overall scale than does the behavioral component.

The main finding obtained with these instruments was that conventional participation in the late 1960s and early 1970s had been supplemented by a second, direct-action related dimension of unconventional participation. We demonstrated that while the concrete incidents of such behavior were still relatively scarce, there was a substantial willingness in the populace of the eight nations ultimately studied to engage in acts of unconventional political participation *under specific circumstances*. This willingness was heavily concentrated on the cluster of issue-specific, legal, unconventional participation, whereas affinity with the subdimension of civil disobedience was limited to a small part of the citizenry.

We further argued that the interaction of stable economic growth and extension of higher education created—as Inglehart maintained all

Germans added the activity of "citizen initiative" and the Dutch added "signature action," "notice of objection," and "public hearing." It was concluded that "signature action" is a better indicator in the Netherlands of the underlying concept than is "signing a petition." Therefore, the new item replaced "signing a petition" in the construction of scales involving protest. Otherwise, the construction of the scales are identical across the two investigations. Since the concept of repression potential refers to the action potential of the state, it is not further discussed in this chapter.

along—a potential for new, postmaterialist values, including the desire for more political participation as it affects one's life. This value change also resulted, particularly among special subgroups of the population, in the emergence of new issue priorities, in the “new politics” as they were called by Hildebrandt and Dalton (1978). On these grounds it seemed plausible and could be empirically validated that young, well-educated persons were the main carriers not only of preferences for postmaterialist issues but also of positive attitudes towards unconventional political participation (see ch. 3). The finding that the strong statistical relationship with age considerably weakened the closer one moved to *actual* unconventional participation (*Political Action*, p. 148), hinted not only at the importance of intervening factors in the process of mobilization to action, but also at the special impact of the existing pro-participatory *Zeitgeist* on the educated young (see also Allerbeck, 1976).

One of the most important topics discussed in *Political Action* was the question of the relationship between conventional and unconventional participation. Not knowing then what we know now, one might have expected—especially under the protest perspective—a negative correlation between the two, indicating that the formal and informal sectors of political participation were drifting further apart. What we found instead was a positive, though modest correlation between the two relevant scales.⁵ This result lead us to conclude that we were witnessing an expansion of the political repertory of the general citizenry in the western democracies in the post-World War II period;⁶ the dimension of unconventional participation was being *added* to the conventional, electorally-oriented dimension which itself had been fully established in those countries only in the 1920s and 1930s. As a consequence, we combined the two dimensions, resulting in the typology of the political

5 The correlations (Pearson's r) between the conventional political participation scale and the protest potential scale in the first wave are : the Netherlands = .23, West Germany = .17, and the United States = .28. In the 1979-81 study these figures are, respectively, .24, .16, and .27.

6 In *Political Action* (p. 151) we had already cited supportive additional evidence for this positive correlation from the literature. Very impressive findings along the same lines can be found in the data from the three-wave parent-child socialization panel of high school graduates begun in 1965 and ended in 1982 by Jennings and Niemi. See especially Jennings (1987b, pp. 83-86) for proof of the extent to which in 1973 as well as in 1982 protestors also used conventional modes of political participation.

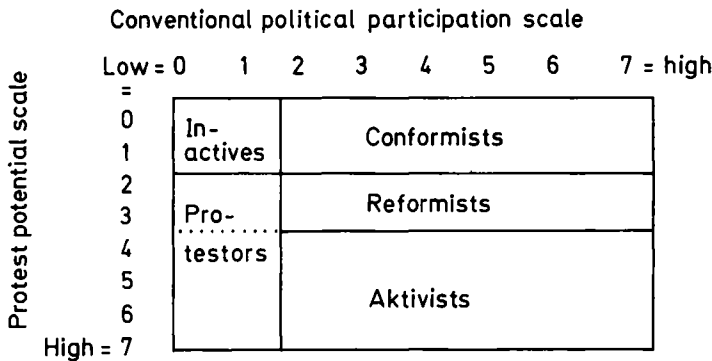


Figure 2: The Political Action Repertory.

Source: *Political Action*, p. 154.

action repertory shown in Figure 2. The findings with respect to this typology gave rise to a warning that the dimension of unconventional political participation contained a very problematic mix of instrumental and expressive political orientations. This led us to sympathize with Huntington's (1974) skeptical reflections on the future of democratic politics.

One criticism levelled against *Political Action* was that it concerned itself not at all or not sufficiently with actual participation (Budge, 1981). This criticism does not, however, do justice to the methodological problem arising from the fact that political participation of individual citizens emerges from a mobilization process which depends on issues, events, and mobilizing actors; in short, on opportunity structures. Therefore, the instrument of national surveys, should it be intelligently employed, requires as much information on concrete (past) behavior as on behavioral intentions. Both types of information are surely equipped with serious shortcomings. Recall of past behavior falls prey to biases of recollection and internal adjustments to achieve cognitive consonance. Potential future behavior lacks the situational and institutional (e.g., with respect to elections) context which closes the gap between behavioral intention and actual behavior.

Analyses of social change have to cover extended periods of time. We feel that there exists no practical alternative to our choice to consider reports of actual past political participation as well as reports on behavioral intentions. Of course, the decision to cover both elements of participatory orientations does not automatically result in the need to combine both elements analytically and empirically as we have done by

constructing the protest potential scale. Having two measurement points in time, as we do, is a first step towards longitudinal analysis, and the average distance of six years between the two points is enough to warrant a middle-range interpretation of the observed aggregate changes.

Stability and Change in Participation Structures

We begin the data analysis by looking at the aggregate changes in the summary participation measures. It should be stressed that the emphasis in this section is mostly descriptive; we shall display the means and changes in the absolute magnitude for the following measures:

- (1) the conventional political participation scale;
- (2) the unconventional political participation scale I; this is a truly behavioral scale since it uses only the "have done" category
- (3) the unconventional political participation scale II, which combines the response categories of "have done" and "would do"; notice that scales 2 and 3 were not used in *Political Action*;
- (4) the protest potential scale, which combines the elements of "approval" and "have done/would do/might do";
- (5) the political action repertory typology, which combines the two dimensions of conventional participation and protest potential, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 1 displays the means of the four participation scales for the cross-section samples in each country at the two time points. These data elicit a couple of comments. First, there are no sensational aggregate changes on any of the scales in the three countries although most of these changes are statistically significant.⁷ Interestingly enough, although the panel data show that there is quite a bit of individual turnover in the four scales, the continuity correlations are mostly of a substantial magnitude. Thus, it can be concluded that all three societies display substantial individual stability over time as well as very high aggregate stability.

7 In this chapter the confidence intervals for mean differences between independent random samples were computed as follows:

Secondly, the three countries consistently show a small decrease in the conventional dimension, a drop which is mostly produced by activity losses in the more demanding items of the scale (particularly "working to solve community problems"). Since this decrease is apparent in each country, it is unlikely that we are just dealing with some fluctuations due to chance or measurement error. Considering the unimpressive magnitude of those losses plus the information that in the German case for 1985/86 there is even a minor increase over the 1974 figure, it seems inadvisable to give the observed changes enough weight to volunteer a strong substantive interpretation. However, the slight drop-off in all three nations is sympathetic with the image of a highly charged political scene in the late 1960s and early 1970s, becoming less so in the later 1970s and early 1980s. It should be noted that the ranking of the three countries with respect to the conventional side of the coin stays unchanged over time: the United States remain the most participatory country, followed by West Germany and then the Netherlands.

A more diverse picture emerges concerning the dimension of unconventional participation. Let us start with the United States. For both unconventional participation scales as well as the protest potential scale, this country displays a statistically significant increase in mean activity/predisposition levels. An inspection of the individual scale items (data not shown) reveals that both the approval and participation elements of the scales contribute to this increase and that, regarding the partici-

$$t_2 = \frac{n_1 n_2}{n} \frac{D^2}{((n_1 - 1)s_1^2 + (n_2 - 1)s_2^2)/(n - 2)}$$

$$t_2 = \frac{n_1 n_2 D^2}{n_1 s_1^2 + n_2 s_2^2}$$

whereby

n_i ($i=1$ or 2): sample size of respective subpopulation

y_{ij} : property of j th person in sample 1

\bar{y}_i : mean of y_{ij} within sample i

D : squared difference of means ($D = \bar{y}_1 - \bar{y}_2$)

S_i^2 : empirical variance of respective property in sample

The hypothesis of no mean differences ($H_0: E(D)=0$) is rejected with large values of the t statistic. The critical t value can be taken from a regular χ^2 table with one degree of freedom.

The support of the director of the statistics department at the Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen (ZUMA) in Mannheim, Günther Rothe, in helping to set up this test is appreciated.

Table 1: Mean Scale Scores and Continuity Correlations on Participation Scales

Country and type of scale	Mean scale values, continuity correlations, and time of study				
	1974	1979–1981	Absolute difference	Continuity correlations r	tau-b
Netherlands					
Conventional political participation scale	1.66	1.52	–0.14	.56	.49
Unconventional political participation scale I	0.36	0.51	+0.15	.39	.29
Unconventional political participation scale II	2.28	2.07	–0.21	.43	.34
Protest potential scale	2.77	2.50	–0.27	.52	.41
West Germany					
Conventional political participation scale	2.00	1.84	–0.16	.46	.37
Unconventional political participation scale I	0.46	0.25	–0.21	.30	.21
Unconventional political participation scale II	1.66	1.25	–0.41	.37	.25
Protest potential scale	1.97	1.67	–0.30	.39	.29
United States					
Conventional political participation scale	2.61	2.43	–0.18	.56	.44
Unconventional political participation scale I	0.91	1.01	+0.10	.49	.41
Unconventional political participation scale II	1.81	2.14	+0.33	.45	.40
Protest potential scale	2.48	2.86	+0.38	.57	.48

Note: All scales have a range from 0 to 7. Missing data are excluded from calculation. All differences are statistically significant at least at the .05 confidence level.

pation element, it is disproportionately due to the "would do"/"might do" categories of the items. In other words, all scale items are almost equally involved in these changes.

In 1974 the Netherlands held the most favorable and West Germany the least favorable orientations towards unconventional political participation. However, in terms of actual participation (scale I) in 1974 the Americans on the average had been significantly more involved than the West Germans and the Dutch. Both the Netherlands and the United States show a small increase, and the Germans a decrease, by the second survey. The increase in the Netherlands is perhaps surprising considering the fact that in the Dutch survey the time frame in the participation question had been changed from ten to five years.⁸

By 1979 the Netherlands had lost its first rank in favorable direct action orientations to the United States, as shown by the scores on scale II and the protest potential scale. A look at the individual direct action items reveals that this loss is equally due to a reduced inclination to protest and a lessening of favorable attitudes towards all scaled acts of unconventional political participation (data not shown here).

Taking these results as a whole, it is particularly unfortunate that we cannot exclude, at least partially, another methodological factor as being responsible for the above-mentioned changes. There are very substantial numbers of Dutch citizens who approve of and participated in the three direct action modes newly added in 1979 to the Dutch item pool. These included signature action, approval=95%, participation=40%; notice of objection, approval=97%, participation=11%; public hearing procedures (*inspraak*), approval=94%, participation=11%. Thus, it is possible that these items have deflated the number of "positive" reports to the "old" scale items, thereby creating the false impression of the Dutch people as being considerably less direct action-prone in 1979 than in

8 For the second wave of interviews, the United States and West Germany surveys observed the same time constraint of ten years whereas the Dutch survey asked only about the last five years. This change reflected the view of the Dutch investigators that the definition of the time frame had to reconcile itself with the fact that five years had passed between the first and second wave of the Dutch panel. Although the "have done" category is thereby deflated in the Netherlands compared to the two other countries, the impact is small because we know from the follow-up questions that the overwhelming bulk of the actions reported by respondents in the other two countries occurred within a five-year time frame also.

Table 2: Changes in Political Action Repertory Typology (Percentage point differences)

Countries	Inactives	Conformists	Reformists	Activists	Protestors
Netherlands	+ 2	- 1	+5	- 6	0
West Germany	+11	+6	- 6	0	- 10
United States	- 1	- 6	- 3	+6	+ 4

1974. Of course, there is still enough room for the substantive conclusion that the Netherlands has at that point in time indeed lost some of its unconventional participation impetus.

West Germany in 1974 had the second-lowest levels of unconventional participation and by far the lowest levels of approval thereof. These levels had clearly eroded by 1980, and as the supplementary 1985/86 study indicates, they have not returned to the 1974 level later. The pattern of changes, however, is different from that of the Netherlands in that it is the legal cluster of unconventional participation items, legal demonstrations and boycotts, which had to carry most of these losses. Of course, it has to be kept in mind that in West Germany the illegal cluster never was very strong to start with. Scale positions 4-7 on the unconventional political participation scales I and II, respectively, comprised 1% and 10% of the sample in 1974 and less than 1% and 8% in 1980. To a certain extent this loss may reflect a changed opportunity structure, a consideration to which we will return in a moment. However, since not only the participation element, but also the approval element of the dimension is involved, the mean decrease might reflect also, as in the Netherlands, a changing political mood. The extent to which West German citizens approve of (76%), have joined (7%), or are willing to join (71%) the newly emerged citizen initiative groups does, on the other hand, speak to the fact that the above-mentioned changes do not signal a general withdrawal from unconventional political participation altogether.

A good summary statement of the changes in action orientations in the three countries is provided by a documentation of the changes in distribution in the political action repertory typology, as displayed in Table 2.

These results speak to the distinctively different participatory paths the three countries have taken between 1974 and 1979-1981:

- (1) The Netherlands has kept its high action profile but has considerably reduced its preference for illegal protest tactics in favor of the legal cluster of unconventional participation items.
- (2) West Germany has witnessed a very substantial delegitimization of direct action tactics both of the legal and illegal type. As a result, both the categories of inactives and conformists have substantially increased, mostly at the expense of the protestors, that is, the action type with an exclusive orientation in favor of the unconventional political mode.
- (3) The United States has now by far the most balanced preference for both the conventional and the unconventional type of political participation. This relative balance was achieved by a small decrease in conventional political participation and a substantial increase in favorable attitudes towards unconventional political participation.

These descriptive findings hint equally at elements of stability and at elements of change in the participatory culture of the three nations.

We shall conclude this section by briefly asking whether and how these results can be validated. Survey data are often held suspect by some observers because they are reports of activities and attitudes rather than concrete, observable manifestations. There do exist "hard" data on incidents of political protest which can be used to assess to what extent survey data and data created from newspaper archives coincide. We refer here to the Yale Political Data Program and the most recent publication from that program (Taylor and Jodice, 1983). Recalculations based on those data (Kaase, 1988: 130-131), plus an update of that time series to 1982 by the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin in the context of its GLOBUS world model project, give the results shown in Table 3.

This table contains three different time frames. The three five-year intervals are reported to indicate whether there is a developmental trend in the data. The two ten-year periods (one five-year period in the Netherlands) represent the time frame set in the survey instrument, and the two single-year data points refer to the years in which *Political Action's* and this study's surveys were conducted.

Since we lack the basis for establishing a theoretically and empirically well-defined link between the event data and the survey data, the interpretation of the results will be limited to two aspects. First, the rank order of the three countries regarding the number of events having taken place and the survey reports (see Table 1) for political action are

Table 3: Average Number of Demonstrations, Political Strikes, and Riots, 1968–1982

Countries	Time intervals					Year of first study 1974	Year of second study 1979–81
	1968– 1972	1973– 1977	1978– 1982	1965– 1974	1975– 1979 ²⁾		
The Netherlands	1.53	10.30	13.24	9.98	11.77	2.94	2.94
West Germany	18.45	7.13	10.68	37.07	13.62	1.95	.49
United States	47.68	14.82	59.55	96.06	80.12	3.51	21.27

Notes: Data for 1968–1972 and 1973–1977 are taken from Kaase (1987). All other data were kindly supplied by Dieter Fuchs from the Zentralarchiv für Empirische Sozialforschung der Universität zu Köln. The data are standardized according to population size and multiplied by a factor of 10,000. Results were cut off after the second decimal.

Time intervals reflect the time frame set in the individual country studies. The five-year time frame applies only to the Netherlands. The data for West Germany represent the 1971–1980 time period, for the United States the 1972–1981 time period. These periods differ according to the year the second wave of interviews was conducted.

identical in 1974, i.e., the largest number of activities is to be found in the United States, and the lowest in West Germany, with the Netherlands somewhere in between. In the 1979–81 survey, the Netherlands and West Germany have changed rank. Both data sources unambiguously document the higher level of direct action politics in the United States compared with the two other countries.

Secondly, in terms of changes over time, event data and survey data equally mirror the small increase in unconventional participation in the Netherlands and the decrease in West Germany. That West Germany had not returned to its 1968–1972 levels by 1982 is corroborated by the data from the West German 1985/86 study brought in as supplementary evidence.

The two data bases do not agree with respect to the small increase in direct action politics in the United States signalled in the survey data. This might be due to the fact that 1981, the year of the second wave of our study in that country, shows the highest yearly incident of turmoil for the entire 1974–1982 period and may thus have created the impression of an average increase. Nevertheless, the United States displays by

far the highest level of political turmoil among the three countries in the 1972-1981 time period, and this again is quite visible in the survey data.

In sum, the level of agreement between the event data and survey data is such that we feel justified in concluding that the survey reports of unconventional political participation in the three countries at the two points in time give a reasonably valid assessment of the "actual" aggregate situation and are therefore qualified to serve as a reliable basis for the upcoming analyses. After these analyses have been presented we will be in a position to pull the evidence together and to present a theoretically unified interpretation of the results.

Socio-structural Correlates of Participation

When it comes to the analysis of those socio-structural factors most strongly associated with political participation, the socio-economic standard model comes immediately to mind (Verba and Nie, 1972; Verba, Nie, and Kim, 1978). This model claims universal currency and argues that it is the socio-economic resource level of the individual that has the most impact on individual-level political involvement. The main indicators for this resource level are education, sex, and age. *Political Action* demonstrated that the general model is also valid for unconventional, uninstitutionalized modes of political participation. Of course this basic model requires and has received substantial differentiation. These differentiations, with one exception, shall not be discussed here (see *Political Action*, pp. 171-201). Rather, our aim is to permit a quick assessment of the Time₁ and Time₂ socio-structural correlates of political participation and any changes in them. These correlates are presented in Table 4.

These analyses bear two major results. First, from a static perspective education, as an important indicator of the socio-economic resource level, is positively related to both types of political participation, reinforcing the validity of the "standard model." Furthermore, unconventional involvement, other than conventional participation, has been and remains clearly and inversely related to age. Sex differences in political participation were and stay much more pronounced in the conventional than in the unconventional realm, where women in all

Table 4: Correlates of the Conventional Political Participation Scale and the Protest Potential Scale

	Age beta	b	Sex beta	b	Education beta	b	R	R ²
Netherlands								
Conventional political participation scale								
1974 cross section	.11	.01	-.17	-.55	.32	.46	.36	.13
1979 cross section	.07	.01	-.14	-.41	.29	.36	.32	.11
Protest potential scale								
1974 cross section	-.24	-.03	-.11	-.42	.14	.23	.34	.12
1979 cross section	-.30	-.03	-.08	-.28	.08	.12	.34	.12
West Germany								
Conventional political participation scale								
1974 cross section	-.06	-.01	-.29	-1.19	.23	.39	.41	.17
1980 cross section	-.01*	.00*	-.30	-1.09	.23	.33	.41	.17
Protest potential scale								
1974 cross section	-.28	-.03	-.13	-.42	.19	.25	.41	.17
1980 cross section	-.28	-.03	-.06	-.19	.15	.20	.36	.13
United States								
Conventional political participation scale								
1974 cross section	.14	.02	-.15	-.62	.32	.56	.34	.11
1981 cross section	.13	.01	-.09	-.38	.31	.58	.32	.10
Protest potential scale								
1974 cross section	-.35	-.03	-.07	-.24	.21	.30	.47	.22
1981 cross section	-.41	-.04	-.03*	-.10*	.22	.31	.52	.27

Notes: Education is coded in a five-category ranking from 1 (elementary school) to 5 (university).

* Not significant at the .10 level of confidence.

educational groups have considerably lessened the gap between them and men. The small impact of age on conventional participation reflects in part the curvilinear nature of that relationship and in part the important compositional effect of birth cohorts with respect to education in the sense that there exists in all three nations a negative correlation between age and higher levels of educational achievement.