Modes of Political Participation
I. Theoretical overview:
• Civic decline or evolution in political activism?

II. Evidence
1. Trends in party membership & civic activism
2. Rise of protest and cause-oriented politics
3. Generational patterns of activism

III. Conclusions
• Causes & consequences of trends?
Research on political activism compares the ways that citizens participate, the processes that lead them to do so, and the consequences of these acts.

Readings:
- Dalton Ch 3
- Norris ‘Political activism’ online chapter
Classics

- Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba’s *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (1963),
- Sidney Verba and Norman Nie’s *Participation in America* (1972),
- Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim’s *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison* (1978), and
- Samuel Barnes and Max Kaase’s *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (1979).

Democratic Phoenix
Newer themes

(i) Growing recognition of the importance of the institutional context of formal rules & multilevel analysis eg for electoral turnout;

(ii) Widespread erosion of party membership in established democracies;

(iii) Revived interest in voluntary associations and social trust spurred by theories of social capital; and

(iv) The expansion of diverse forms of cause-oriented forms of activism, including the spread of demonstrations and protests, consumer politics, professional interest groups, and more diffuse new social movements and transnational advocacy networks.

Democratic Phoenix
The civic decline thesis

- Half-empty ballot box? (Wattenberg)
- Desertion of party members? (Dalton, Mair)
- Partisan dealignment?
- Hemorrhaging union rolls?
- Emptying church pews?
- Anemic voluntary organizations? (Putnam)
- Rising political cynicism? (Nye et al)
Figure 1: Typology of the evolution of political action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENCIES</th>
<th>REPETOIRIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional voluntary associations, including churches, unions and political parties</td>
<td>Citizen-oriented repertoires, including voting, party work and contact activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New social movements and advocacy networks, including environmental and humanitarian organizations</td>
<td>Cause-oriented repertoires, including consumer politics, demonstrations and petitions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Older generation

Younger generation
If participation is changing...

Causes?

- Long-term processes of societal modernization?
  - Growing educational & civic skills
  - Decline of deferential loyalty to hierarchical institutions
  - Gradual ‘bottom up’ generational shift in ‘critical citizens’

- Result of changing institutions of representative democracy?
  - ‘Top down’ explanations
  - Globalization, decentralization & role of nation state
  - Growth of cross-cutting issues not accommodated by parties
  - Rational response to context of choices and channels of influence
If participation is changing... 

Consequences?

1. Social inequality?
   » Greater civic skills, more demanding acts?
   » Who participates by class, income, education, gender, ethnicity

2. Quality of deliberative democracy
   » F-to-f interaction, on-going co-operation, social trust?
   » Rise of more demanding citizens?

3. For governance?
   » Stability and violence?
   » Fragmentation of policy process?
Evidence: civic activism
US Turnout 1932-2000
(Presidential Vote/VAP)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1932-1996.

US Turnout: 59.5% in 2000, 63.8% in 2004 (Vote/VAP)
Source: US Census Bureau www.census.gov
## Trends official party members

Table 6.1 Phoenix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>% Change (i)</th>
<th>Change in Numbers of Members</th>
<th>Change in Numbers as Percentage of Original Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1978-1999</td>
<td>-3.48</td>
<td>-1,122,128</td>
<td>-64.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1980-1998</td>
<td>-5.61</td>
<td>-2,091,887</td>
<td>-51.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1980-1997</td>
<td>-8.04</td>
<td>-218,891</td>
<td>-47.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1980-1998</td>
<td>-6.09</td>
<td>-206,646</td>
<td>-34.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1980-1999</td>
<td>-10.82</td>
<td>-446,209</td>
<td>-30.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1980-1998</td>
<td>-2.87</td>
<td>-142,533</td>
<td>-28.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1980-1998</td>
<td>-2.16</td>
<td>-70,385</td>
<td>-25.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1980-1999</td>
<td>-1.59</td>
<td>-174,967</td>
<td>-8.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>+0.04</td>
<td>+8,300</td>
<td>+5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1980-2000</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>+50,381</td>
<td>+17.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1994-2000</td>
<td>+0.82</td>
<td>+37,777</td>
<td>+29.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1980-1998</td>
<td>+3.58</td>
<td>+375,000</td>
<td>+166.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1980-2000</td>
<td>+2.22</td>
<td>+808,705</td>
<td>+250.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALL ABOVE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Party membership

- Decline in many Western nations
- Broader erosion of partisanship
- Yet substantial cross-national variations
- Does erosion of membership matter?
  - For party in government?
  - For party finance and staff?
  - For party or campaign activism?
Trends in Gross Union Density


Note: Net density (Total union membership as a share of the gainfully employed wage and salary earners.)
Interpretation

- No simple decline in union membership across Western Europe
- Substantial cross-national variations worldwide
- Institutional explanations not secular trends
Secularization Trends

% Church attendance Eurobarometer 1970-2000

Belgium
Den
France
GB
Germany
Greece
Ire
Italy
Lux
Neth
NI
Portugal
Spain
Interpretation?

- Evidence of secularization in W. Europe
- Development is linked to secularization
- Political implications?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% ‘Have done’</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss politics</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting turnout</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic activism</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed a petition *</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended demonstrations*</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined in boycott *</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active union member</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined unofficial strike *</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active party member</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied buildings *</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rise of Protest Politics

% ‘Have done’ in 8 postindustrial societies: WVS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mid-1970s</th>
<th>1980s</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>mid-1990s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signed petition</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Boycott</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unofficial Strike</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied buildings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Values Surveys
Protest & econ development

Summary mean protest activity (wvs 2000)

Type of society (classified by Norris based on hdi):
- Postindustrial
- Industrial
- Agrarian


R Squared Linear = 0.574
Generational shifts?
Age differences?

If so three possible causes:

- Generational effects,
- Period effects, and
- Lifecycle effects.

European Social Survey 2002

15 European nations (22)
Type of acts

**Citizen-oriented repertoires**
- Voted
- Contacted a politician or official
- Donated money to political organization
- Party member
- Worked for a political party

**Cause-oriented repertoires**
- Bought products for political reasons
- Signed a petition
- Boycotted certain products
- Lawfully demonstrated
- Took part in illegal protest
## Age profile of activists

### Citizen-oriented repertoires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Younger (i)</th>
<th>Middle-Aged (ii)</th>
<th>Older (iii)</th>
<th>Age Gap (i-iii)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voted</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contacted a politician or official</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donated money to political organization</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party member</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked for a political party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cause-oriented repertoires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>18-29</th>
<th>30-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bought products for political reasons</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signed a petition</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycotted certain products</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawfully demonstrated</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took part in illegal protest</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citizen-oriented acts

Major Region
- Nordic Europe
- Northern Europe
- Mediterranean Europe
- Postcommunist Europe

Cases weighted by DWEIGHT
Citizen-oriented acts by cohort

Czech Republic
Finland
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Israel
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom
Mean age of activists

Note: Whether the respondent did these acts during the previous 12-months

Source: The European Social Survey, 2002
Cause-oriented acts

Mean Cause-oriented activism scale

Major Region
- Nordic Europe
- Northern Europe
- Mediterranean Europe
- Postcommunist Europe

Cohort

Cases weighted by DWEIGHT
Cause-oriented acts by cohort
Age of members

- Sport: 42
- Educational: 43
- All Respondents: 46
- Union: 46
- Environmental: 46
- Hobby: 47
- Professional: 47
- Humanitarian: 48
- Consumer: 49
- Church: 49
- Other: 49
- Party: 52
- Social Club: 54

Average age across all members: 47 years
Membership in associations

Mean Tot. members in voluntary associations

Major Region
- Nordic Europe
- Northern Europe
- Mediterranean Europe
- Postcommunist Europe

Cohort
Cases weighted by DWEIGHT
Conclusions

From the politics of loyalties to the politics of choice?

– Citizen oriented action peak in middle age
– Cause-oriented acts most common among young people
– Associations: Mixed pattern
– Young people not more engaged in new social movements