

Political Action

The entity that has organized the survey and is responsible for data collection - as well as key data on the entity's membership, governance arrangements, source of funding etc.

The survey was organized by Samuel H. Barnes, Max Kaase,, M. Kent Jennings, Jan W. van Deth, and others.

The first round was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK); Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Germany); Tilburg University (Netherlands); Austrian Science Fund; the US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health; Consiglio Nazionale della Ricerche; Fonds National Suisse de la Recherche Scientifique (Switzerland); Academy of Finland, Social Science Research Council; US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

The second round was funded by the National Science Foundation; the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft; Tilburg University; and Volkswagen Stiftung.

A historical sketch of the initiation and origin of the survey

This study came about because the "quite years" of democratic reconstruction after the Second World War were followed by civil protests that occasionally spilled into violent conflict in the mid- to late 1960s in the USA and Western Europe. The protest period of the late 1960s and early 1970s made it interesting to study cross-nationally conventional and unconventional forms of political participation (Kaase 2010).

Internet links to the website of the responsible organization

There is no website. The Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), University of Michigan, provides some information where they host the data:

[Political Action I](#)

[Political Action II](#)

The frequency or repetitions of the survey. Possible explanation of this.

Political Action I: 1973-76

Political Action II: 1979-81

A description of the survey's content, i.e. both focused rotational and / or core modules of the survey

As mentioned, the survey's content revolves around conventional and unconventional forms of political participation, and factors that might affect these behaviours. These include but are not limited to: personal and political attitudes, happiness with life, materialist/post-materialist values, voting behaviour, social class, demographic data, and so on.

An outline of the type of sample used

Political Action I: National multistage probability samples were used. The target population was national inhabitants aged 16 and over. In addition to this sample, interviews were carried out to provide information on parent-child pairs. For details, please refer to [the codebook](#) of PA I.

Political Action II: National multistage probability samples. For details, please refer to [the codebook](#) of PA II. Please note that there are two samples. One is a panel wave of re-interviews with respondents from PA I. The other is a new cross-section sample.

An outline of the main data collection methods employed.

Face-to-face interviews.

An account of availability of the data to researchers, restrictions on access, etc.

Data may be downloaded at ICPSR given that one is associated with an ICPSR member institution. Please refer to the links provided under "Internet links".

Questionnaires, English version

Please refer to the codebooks previously linked to in order to access the questionnaires.

The countries included in the different rounds

Political Action I: Austria, Finland, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland, and the US.

Political Action II: Respondents to PA I, and new cross-section samples from Germany, Netherlands, and the US.

Cumulative file

No cumulative file appears to exist.

Publications based on data

Main publications Political Action I:

Barnes, Samuel H, Max Kaase et al. (1979): *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Sänkiao, Risto et al. (1990): *People and Their Polity*. Jyväskylä: The Finnish Political Science Association

For other publications, see [PA I publications](#)

Main publication Political Action II:

M. Kent Jennings, Jan W. van Deth et al. (1990): *Continuities in Political Action: A Longitudinal Study of Political Orientations in Three Western Democracies*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

For other publications, see [PA II publications](#) (scroll down to “Related Publications”)

Analytical summary

The PA study was a reaction to claims by parts of the political science community that the surge of protests in Western democracies starting in the Sixties was a reflection of challenges to pluralist democratic governance and its legitimacy. PA was the first comparative survey study which dealt with these claims based on a theoretical multilevel model. The main findings of PA I were that these claims were not empirically warranted but that rather an extension of the repertory of political actions by the citizenry could be observed which broadened the legitimacy of pluralist democratic politics. This change in political action repertories could be attributed, among other things, to the educational revolution, an emerging shift from materialist to postmaterialist values and an increasing politicisation of the electorate. These findings were corroborated by PA II and laid the ground for a series of innovative studies on political participation.

Sources

Kaase, Max (2010): “Democracy and Political Action”, *International Political Science Review* 51 (5): 539-551.

Unless otherwise noted, information is extracted from the ICPSR.