I’m delighted to be involved in this workshop because it is covering the topic that is most central to my scholarly interests, which is political action. I understand that one must pay one’s own way in an ECPR workshop and do so by contributing. We must all sing for our supper, so to speak, and I am happy to do so. At the present time I am particularly interested in associational membership, conventional participation and protest approval in the post-communist democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. I am currently working with a great data set on those countries, but they are not appropriate to this workshop on advanced industrial democracies, which, in fact, remain my primary long-term intellectual interest. Therefore, as an alternative to presenting a paper on empirical research, I am glad to have the opportunity today to talk about my long-standing concern with political action. I am greatly impressed by the quantity and quality of research being carried out on this topic at the present time, especially on Europe, both East and West. This workshop is an encouraging example of cutting-edge research on emerging forms of political action, and that is why I am delighted to be here and to learn about new forms of political action. After years of institution building and far too little research, I am here to replenish that most fragile of capital stock, intellectual capital. I am here to learn about these new forms. I fear I have little to contribute to that topic. Instead, I seek to place new developments in the context of patterns of political involvement that have dominated political life in the past and that continue to be important for most of the world today.

My talk is entitled “Perspectives on Political Action: A Review 25 Years Later.” There is a *double-entendre* in the title, as I want to talk both about the book Political Action and the developments in our understanding of political action. It would be foolhardy to try to cover all of the developments in the study of participation in politics since the publication of the first volume of the Political Action research program in 1979 (Barnes, Kaase, et
al.). Instead, I want to focus today on some of the themes that are of wide concern and that I consider fundamental in the study of political action. These are meta-research concerns, and I will race through a number of topics in a short period. I apologize in advance for leaping so quickly from one topic to another.

But given this bully pulpit of introducing the subject, I want also to say a few words about the Political Action project itself and its publications, of which the first was entitled Political Action (Barnes, Kaase, et al. 1979). Some of you may not be familiar with the book and project, and few of you could have known about the way the project worked. It was a substantial cross-national attempt to understand the nature of political participation in advanced industrial democracies in the 1970s. The original Political Action project started with representative national samples of citizens sixteen and older in five countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria. The completed interviews ranged from 1200 in The Netherlands to 2300 in Germany. The completion rate ranged from 77% in The United Kingdom to 64% in Austria—times were better then for field work. The British fieldwork started in November 1973 and was completed by February of 1974. All of the other countries’ fieldwork was in 1974.

To facilitate the analysis of socialization influences, “when a youth sixteen through twenty fell into the sample a parent was interviewed, and when a parent of a youth of that age group fell into the sample the youth was interviewed as well” (Barnes, Kaase, et al.: 23). French colleagues from Sciences Po were involved in the project from the start and actually carried out a pretest in France; unfortunately, we were unable to secure financing for the French national survey. The Political Action project was truly collaborative in numerous ways. We call it the “equal partners format.” Each country team secured its own financing, and over the entire project, there were more than twenty meetings of the group over the decade, almost all attended by all principal members of every country group. The most significant of these meetings was a three-week long “data-confrontation seminar” held in Mannheim in 1975, which was much like the ECPR workshops, except it was for three weeks with everyone working on the same data set. All members of the
country groups participated in this data-confrontation seminar, which is a great way to do complicated cross-national analysis. We reached agreement on theoretical perspectives and—equally important—constructed several batteries of scales and indices. We also reached agreement on the operationalization of all of the variables used in the analyses. Information on these batteries is presented in an appendix to Political Action.

While we were working with the five original countries’ data, three other national groups joined the study—Italian, Swiss, and Finnish. Rather than wait for these groups to play catch-up, we decided to go ahead with the original five in the first volume. A second book, entitled People and their Polities (Sánchez et al. 1990), contains analyses based on all eight countries. Three of the countries—Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States—were able to return to the field roughly five years after the original surveys and to re-interview the sample from the first wave, providing a fine panel study, as well as to secure a new cross-sectional sample in each of the three countries. These results are presented in Continuities in Political Action (Jennings, van Deth, et al. 1990), with Kent Jennings and Jan van Deth as the two lead authors. In addition to the works just mentioned, there have been several individual country studies, dissertations, and numerous articles and book chapters based on these data sets. These data sets are available through the International Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Today it seems quite natural for political scientists to study various forms of protest and to consider this a normal and often admirable aspect of politics in democratic societies. That was not the case, at least in the United States at the time that we began to plan the Political Action studies. Let me recall that the empirical study of mass publics, especially those based on the use of samples and surveys, was pioneered in the United States in the 1940s and 1950s. Following the end of the Second World War, the United States was a very tranquil country. Except for some violence associated with industrial relations, most political action was of a conventional nature, involving those actions that are now incorporated in the scale of “conventional” activities. Remember that this period in the US, perhaps the most tranquil country in a tranquil era, provided the baseline data for most early social science studies of mass behavior. That is, our assumptions about
political behavior, our baseline measures, were from a country that, for the times, may have been an outlier. The motivation of the American scholars in the Political Action project was to understand the wide range of protest activities that emerged in the 1960s with the Vietnam War and peace movements, the civil rights movement and what was then called the “Women’s Liberation Movement.” And the other countries in the project were experiencing comparable episodes of often violent protest. Only after getting into our data did we—and most other scholars—begin to realize that most, though not all, of the protest activities that we had targeted were in fact by that time viewed as quite conventional by large numbers of people and sometimes by strong majorities of the population. What is considered normal, conventional, even acceptable forms of political behavior is thus variable.

What turns out to be a bit surprising is the similarities that we found in the countries we were studying. At this point I will switch my focus from the Political Action project itself to several of the larger themes that, in my opinion, have affected the evolution of political action in the advanced democracies. I begin with our attempts in Political Action to understand country similarities and differences. Two topics are especially relevant in the present discussion. One is the importance of the search for similar patterns in different countries. The second is our frustration at the lingering differences in the political behavior of countries. Political science seeks to unravel and explain patterns of political behavior. It is especially fortuitous when we find similarities in the patterns of different countries. My orientation in the Political Action research was influenced by a remarkable little book that laid out “The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry,” which is the title of the book. A generation ago, Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune argued that the goal of comparative politics should be to explain political behavior without reference to the name of the country (1970). This was to be accomplished by “replacing proper names [such as countries] with the names of variables.” If variables interacted in a similar manner in two political systems, then the name of the system is not needed to explain why things happen as they do any more than you need to use the name of Spain in order to explain why people feel warm in the summer sun. But after a generation of attempts by comparativists to do this, as Jan van Deth says, “country” is still the single most
important explanatory variable in comparative politics (1995). That is, on many dimensions of political behavior there is still a large percentage of the variance that is accounted for by its taking place, for example, in Spain rather than by individual level variables such as gender, income, education, or attitudinal variables. This is indeed a troublesome result for the ambitions of comparativists seeking general explanations rather than focusing on the study of individual countries. Why countries are often so different in patterns of behavior despite great similarities in socioeconomic structure, history and general culture remains an important question for comparative scholars.

Some progress has been made over the past generation in understanding why country remains so important despite similarities. This conceptual advance is largely based on the development of an understanding of path dependence, a concept of great utility for comparative politics, and why it reinforces the importance of institutions. Traces of the past linger long beyond the age in which they originate. Contemporary political systems retain features that cannot be explained solely in terms of present socioeconomic systems and cultural understandings. The institutional arrangements of any political system soon take on a life of their own, with the result that participants acquire an interest in doing things in the usual way because they have vested a great deal of time, effort, and other resources in the existing system. There are many decision points or forks in the path of new institutions. Choosing one path, one way of doing things, usually makes a different one less likely to emerge in the future even if it would be more rational or sensible than present practices. This “path dependence” goes far in explaining why countries seem to be so different in many ways despite our efforts to find universal explanations (see Paul Pierson 2000). The longer an institution or practice has existed, the more likely it is that people acting in the system have come to terms with it, that is, have adjusted their behaviors in such a way as to maximize their ability to prosper in what seems to be a well-established and perhaps rewarding way of doing things. Please note that I am not equating path analysis with any kind of determinism, especially the historical determinism associated with Putnam’s analysis of North-South differences in Italy (1993). But time is an important and I believe neglected variable in comparative politics.
Before getting to the evolution of forms of political action let me mention that many basic forms of political action seem to be eternal, including some of the “unconventional” forms too. While we seek out new forms of political action, those from the past continue, if in muted and less obvious and effective forms. And most of the earlier forms involved hierarchy and vertical linkages rather than the horizontal ties that seem so important to the functioning of democracy. Most people most of the time have acted politically as their culture dictated, especially when cultural expectations were backed up by patterns of socialization, social and economic pressure, and real or threatened use of force. Choice in political matters has historically been limited; it is still restricted even in democracies by uneven distributions of human, social and economic capital. It is even more restricted by dictatorships, poverty, and ignorance, a trinity often found together.

How blessed advanced democracies are in the varieties of political involvement possible, even if use of them is declining! I will return to these varieties later. Relationships between leaders and followers have historically been characterized much more by the vertical ties of patron-client relationships, bureaucratic forms, patriarchal respect, and charismatic leadership, both secular and religious, than by policy debates, elections, and horizontal associational involvements. It should not surprise us that bureaucracy, clientelism and charisma are still relevant in our age of rule of law and democratic political institutions. Democracies have come a long way in eliminating many aspects of these phenomena, but they still have an impact on citizens’ political action.

I think that patterns of Political Action are changing in the advanced industrial democracies in part because the era in which many of our participatory institutions and patterns of behavior were formed is ending, largely due to the achievements of mass electoral democracy, economic well-being, and improved education. The contemporary nation states of Europe and North America became mass democracies through the efforts of their citizens to achieve equality in voting and legal rights. This was brought about largely through political mobilization that converted numbers into power and served to level the playing field between those higher and lower in inherited status, money, education, and other resources. Esping-Andersen’s *Politics Against Markets* captures this
dynamic quite well (1985). Power, in turn, was used to improve the overall well-being of mass populations through the adoption of various components of the modern welfare state. T. H. Marshall’s formulation still has merit for many countries: organization --> democracy --> power --> welfare state. The welfare state was the goal and it has been largely achieved, especially in Western Europe. Most features of the welfare state remain quite popular with majorities in modern democracies. But it is in trouble and the nature of the new public and collective goals is unclear.

Much of the above sequence of organization --> welfare state has been reversed in the new democracies of Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. Democratic institutions were established following the fall of authoritarian regimes, and they were brought about with little mobilization of their publics. Moreover, the post-communist democracies were already welfare states of a sort under the previous regime, and others such as Spain had some elements of the welfare state, especially job security. The sequence for the new democracies is welfare --> democracy --> power --> organization for political action. Thus the Third Wave democracies were born post-something, with few incentives for mass mobilization. Decades of enforced demobilization and economic systems that were permitted little deviation from patterns dictated by the only existing international economic regime further reduced these incentives. These new democracies lack the incentives for mass mobilization that were characteristic of the earlier countries traveling along the road to mass democracy.

Another aspect of the linkages of citizens to the political system is the bureaucratic nature of many citizen ties to the political system. Democracy postulates that influence should flow upward from citizens to their leaders. Many citizen experiences, however, are with traditional civil and military bureaucracies. Indeed, nation-states were largely the creation of these two bureaucracies. With the rise of large scale industry and the extension of the state bureaucracy into numerous new fields of activity, as well as the modern mass mobilization for warfare, bureaucracy came to be viewed by Max Weber and others as the modal form of organizational structure of the nineteenth century, one that represented the rationalization of life rather than its democratization. Mobilization was up and
down—vertical. Socialist working class organizations tried to develop institutions that were both bureaucratic and democratic, though critics such as Robert Michels pointed out that they usually in fact functioned as authoritarian organizations dominated by permanent professional bureaucrats (Michels 1911). Progressive citizens are still seeking ways to democratize bureaucracy or at least to make it compatible with democracy. Conservatives, at least in the U.S.A., are content to rail against it and attempt to reduce it to irrelevance, to privatize everything.

Going even further in the direction of bureaucratization, of rationalizing political mobilization, Lenin converted the Communist party into a special type of bureaucracy, one which was, in theory, democratic, in which each level elected the members who were to dominate at the next highest level but where the practice was the reverse, with the higher authorities dictating choices to the lower. The Leninist party was an impressive social invention, an organizational weapon. Democratic Centralism represented the bureaucratization of mass mobilization. It was a highly effective innovation under certain conditions, and many saw it as the wave of the future. One of these was Benito Mussolini who had the insight that the Leninist structure was not dependent on Marxist ideology but was quite adaptable to any system that sought a means to mobilize a population for a maximum political (and economic) effort. Hitler copied this mobilization system as well, so that modern authoritarianism acquired tools of control and coercion that traditional authoritarians lacked; the old-fashioned authoritarians were content to demobilize their populations to keep them from threatening their rule rather than mobilize them as vehicles of societal transformation. This distinction between traditional and modern authoritarianism is fundamental in its implications for the Third Wave democracies, as it leads to quite different situations in establishing new democracies.

Bureaucracy also remains a problem for democracy in the older democracies. Information is replacing Max Weber’s bureaucracy as the ideal model of the advanced society, yet bureaucracy seems critical to the rule of law and responsible government. Our era is one in which information, unmediated by any authority, is replacing
bureaucracy as the dominating theme, and the implications for political action are immense. It even may be critical to the horizontally oriented associations, but that topic is too complicated to enter now.

Before returning to the information age and cognitive mobilization, I want to bring up another important form of up and down or vertical mobilization: this is clientelism, or patron-clientelism, the cockroach of political evolution. It is perhaps the oldest and most basic of mobilization patterns. It resembles a market system in some ways but differs in a critical respect. The patron controls some resource that is needed by the client, who is always on the lower end of multiple dualisms that the relationship involves. That is, clientelism is always an unequal dyadic relationship in which each provides something the other needs. In politics it is often the exchange of money or material advantage or jobs for votes or favors or special treatment or even just information.

Several points about clientelism are worth attention. One is that the chain of patron-client-patron-client can be quite long, stretching from a small community to the seat of power in the national capital. Another is that it is at bottom a purely instrumental and material exchange relationship. In traditional agricultural societies there was often a facade of mutual respect and reciprocal niceties between patrons and clients. That aspect seems to fade in modern societies. The great weakness of clientelism from the perspective of good government is that decisions about allocation are made on the basis of immediate material payoffs for the two sides rather than on what is good general long-range policy. Clientelism breeds corruption; indeed it requires it. In principle, clients are free to choose their patrons and vice-versa. In practice, the patron controls access to what is needed by the client, who usually finds it difficult or impossible to find alternative patrons, since they are extremely territorial; indeed, patrons must be in control of the area of life in which they operate. Criminal gangs are prime examples of this and Mafia has become an international word for this kind of organizational pattern.
From the point of view of democracy, perhaps the most important—and deplorable—aspect of clientelism is that it makes allies of the patron and client, who represent two levels of the political hierarchy, and makes others in the same stratum natural enemies. For each stratum it is a zero-sum game: the job taken by one unemployed laborer cannot be taken by another; people with similar interests are natural opponents. Collective action for a common good is impossible to achieve with a system that is predominantly clientelist. And because people must operate in a highly individualistic and competitive fashion, clientelism is extremely destructive of interpersonal trust and the civic involvement that we think produces social capital.

There are strong elements of clientelism in contemporary efforts of governments to placate citizens by granting them public money for what might under a rigorous conception be considered private interests. This issue often falls under the heading of interest group liberalism—governments respond to demands and policy outputs are the result of the strength of the inputs. Many aspects of what in the US is called pork barrel politics falls under this heading. We might view the new politics of governmental contacting and public involvement in administrative and judicial processes and several other aspects of the new emerging forms of political action differently if we looked on them as examples of clientelism in modern disguise.

Most of the above patterns focus on vertical relationships. While these are an inevitable aspect of political mobilization, horizontal ties are essential to the functioning of a democratic system. Most empirical studies of the correlates of successful democracy conclude that the single most significant factor is the wide dispersal of power within a polity (see, for example, Vanhanen 1990). Power, of course, is everywhere associated with resources of various kinds. Resources include such factors as disposable income, knowledge or education, societal location and, of course, numbers. Since elites everywhere excel in income, education and position, democracy is associated with numbers, and the democratic need is to convert numbers into power (Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978).
Converting numbers into power is the challenge of democratic mobilization; many of us here think that the development of widely dispersed social capital is a key to meeting this challenge. The concept of social capital is not unambiguous in meaning. Its core elements include the ability to interact effectively with others in the pursuit of both individual and collective goals. Operationally, the important effects of social capital lie in the exercise of human capital—essentially education and knowledge—in situations involving feedback in which individual actions are altered by creative responses to the actions of others. Experience may be as strong a contributor to social capital as is formal education; certainly the well-educated do not possess a monopoly, though they are advantaged.

Many scholars think that social capital is developed most effectively through involvement in the associations of civil society. Civil society is another concept that is not unambiguous in meaning and usage. Participants in this workshop are well-acquainted with social capital and civil society as well as the current diverse views about these topics, so I will not lecture you on your specialties. Nor will I review the debate inaugurated by Robert Putnam and his work on Italy and then on the United States (1993, 2000, 2002). Most of us here, however, probably would agree that the topic is very important. Civil society with its horizontal linkages seems to be essential for democracy. It develops human resources that are vital in compensating for the relative lack of resources by mass populations. And it offers one of the few paths to horizontal ties among citizens, as an alternative to the vertical ties that dominate most of politics.

Perhaps the emerging era will require skills that differ from the perhaps romanticized view of parties and civil society in the past. This new era is one of cognitive mobilization. In the construction of contemporary democracies, people were mobilized primarily within broad social categories. People’s identity and vote—when they could vote—was largely as members of the industrial working class, as peasants, as ethnic or linguistic minorities, as part of the emerging bourgeoisie, as land owners. We label this social mobilization.
With social structure becoming more complex and with growing alternatives in ideologies, political parties and movements, citizens reacted to a more complicated set of alternatives by developing loyalties to particular ideologies, parties, and movements—the great “isms” of the later nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. Workers, for example, had choices among many parties and isms that sought to appeal to them, including fascism, Christian democracy, communism, anarchism, and several varieties of socialism. This was a period that has been labeled political mobilization. Citizens acquired guidance in how to think and act politically largely through identification with a particular party or movement. They not only identified with the party because they liked what it stood for; they also learned from the party what they should think about political matters.

The emerging age is one of cognitive mobilization. Mass publics are far better educated than at any time in the past. Moreover, the communications revolution makes information more easily available. There is less need to turn to parties for guidance on public policy, though party identification still provides useful guidelines for many citizens. Issues no longer seem as neatly bundled into party packages as they once did. Citizens have a vast range of causes, civil society associations, solicitations, and the like to deal with. They must pick and choose among them. They do so in terms of their personal interests and passions (Barnes 1997). Note, however, that many people, indeed most people, remain tied into the political system in the older social and political patterns of adherence.

Cognitive mobilization is associated with the changes in values going on in the world today. The research of Ronald Inglehart has been particularly influential in this intellectual domain (1979; 1990; 1997; 2003). He argues—using survey questions that have been posed in scores of countries over the past thirty years—that there has been a strong shift in value priorities away from focusing on material well-being in favor of self-realization or self-actualization. The notion of priorities is very important in this process: it is not that people reject material well-being as a value but that they rank self-realization as higher in priority. Inglehart’s data show that this is a generational phenomenon in all advanced industrial democracies and in many other countries, with each younger cohort
exhibiting higher percentages of what Inglehart labels postmaterialist values. As a result, generational change is producing populations that are ever more concerned with postmaterialist issues than with materialist ones.

At the same time, there has been a growing acceptance of what were once considered to be unconventional forms of political action. The less demanding acts are now accepted as conventional methods of participating in politics by majorities in the advanced democracies. Protest politics is not incompatible with a vigorous civil society but it does not require it. This new protest politics fits easily with social movement patterns of political action and meshes well with the changes in civil society and parties. Russell Dalton notes the increase in forms of participation that are “citizen initiated, less structured, and more policy oriented” (Dalton 2002, 56).

Along with the acceptance of unconventional politics there have been great changes in conventional party-and election-oriented politics. The developments in mass communications, especially the universality of television, have encouraged changes in the operation of political parties. Parties remain important institutions for providing alternative groups of leaders to compete for office in democratic elections, but they reach the public in ways different from in the past. Having a large membership base is no longer much of an asset. Parties do not need large numbers of volunteers to canvass neighborhoods and distribute campaign literature. Active members of a party are often troublesome for leaders because of their interference inside the party organization and, since active members are usually more extreme in their views than the general public, also because they complicate the leadership’s efforts to appeal to centrist voters. Television is much more effective, but it is costly. Vast sums are spent on television, especially in the United States. Much advertising is negative, so-called attack ads that do little to inform the public in a meaningful way about issues and candidate positions. Polling and campaign consultants are expensive; elections are increasingly capital intensive rather than labor intensive. Some countries provide public money for political parties, but all political parties seem to need more funds for effective campaigning.
There is increasing emphasis on “selling” the party leader through the manipulation of images guided by opinion polls and focus groups. The costs of elections have resulted in widespread legal scandals or money raising practices that are themselves legal but scandalous, or both. These trends may be more advanced in the United States, but they are visible everywhere.

I will not discuss the debate over the overall rise or decline in participation in general. I’m sure that everyone here has an opinion on this topic. I will note that many of the cognitively mobilized seem not to develop strong partisanship, and do not seem to acquire their political orientations through political parties (Dalton 2002). Many are independents—well informed and interested in politics but not active participants. These are labeled “apartisans” by Dalton (2002) and “spectators” by Van Deth (2000). Their independence fits with the “ad hocism” that seems typical of the cognitively mobilized: they pick and choose their causes based on their interests, creating a personalized package of social, civic, and interest group activities that may leave little room for partisan involvements. This type of activity also fits well with the independence and self-actualization of postmaterialist cohorts. Rather than signing on to a political party or movement with a general program for remaking society, as was often the case in the age of the great “isms” of politics, people today are more likely to have a number of concerns that do not fit well into a single political package.

The role of the leadership has been a contentious issue. Much of the vitality of these new associations and social movements stems from their seemingly horizontal mobilization patterns that emphasize the equality of members, the dominance of the base, and control of spokespersons from below. These qualities often conflict with the need for expertise and experience in the management of complex organizations. Fundraising is very important. In practice, leadership roles provide careers for many of the activists, either as office holders or movement bureaucrats. Their ability to utilize the media to magnify the impact of activities is essential to success; entrepreneurial skills are needed to convert associations into social movements.
One result is the increasing professionalization of civil society associations, often accompanied by increasing bureaucratization. In many countries, this process is accelerated by the open or covert support that associations receive from government as they interact in policy-making. Much association activity involves lobbying and testifying before various legislative and executive bodies. While many associations have active local branches, many do not. “Membership” often means little more than contributing money to those with which one sympathizes and identifies. In the age of cognitive mobilization, one “creates” one’s identity; it is not acquire at birth, or if it is, it can be changed almost at will. You are what you associate with. This process is advanced in the US, and especially in California, which is the bellwether of change. In that state, you are what you drive.

If this is the emerging situation in long-established democracies, what are the implications for the new democracies of Southern and Central and Eastern Europe? There is now a lot of information available on this issue. These populations suffered from forty to seventy years of demobilization and disruption of experience with voluntary participation in democratic politics. Ruth Collier (1999) points out the difference between, for example, the Latin American experience with democracy and authoritarianism, in which periods of democratic governments and elections have alternated with authoritarian regimes over periods of one or two decades, on the one hand, and the long period of the two Iberian dictatorships of Franco and Salazar and of communist domination of Central and Eastern Europe, on the other. In Latin America, the democratic opposition went abroad or kept quiet while maintaining networks within and outside the country, ready to activate them when the opportunity arose. In the long-lasting dictatorships, the cohort of those with experience in pre-authoritarian politics largely died out, along with continuity with the past; foreign contacts were difficult and an entire generation of anti-regime political activists both within and outside the country passed away. The traditional authoritarian regimes were content to frustrate efforts of citizens to get together to pursue collective goals. Three people conversing could constitute a conspiracy. As already mentioned, the modern authoritarian regimes were
not content with demobilization; instead, they set up organizations that paralleled those in
democracies but were compulsory rather than voluntary and were primarily transmission
belts used by the leadership to mobilize populations in the pursuit of party goals.

Long periods of dictatorship are especially striking in their consequences for the
rejuvenation of democratic mobilization. With colleagues Peter McDonough and Antonio
Lopez Pina, I adapted surveys using batteries from the Political Action project for
research in Spain, and these were in turn adapted for research carried out in 1990-91 in
ten countries of Central and Eastern Europe and replicated in fifteen Central and Eastern
European countries, including East and West German in 1998-2000. In the years
immediately following the death of Franco, Spanish involvement in the associations of
civil society was extremely low and in some cases actually declined. In 1978 surveys in
Spain, for example, claimed membership in trade unions was higher than in any of the
later surveys by our group in 1980, 1984, and 1990 (McDonough, Barnes, and Lopez
Pina 1998). And this despite the fact that, at least in my opinion, Francoist Spain was a
traditional dictatorship even though Franco had toyed with fascism while it was a
promising organizational form.

The countries that had been subjected to modern authoritarian regimes were probably
worse off than Spain and Portugal in their ease of transition to democratic associational
life. The post-communist publics claimed extensive memberships in organizations,
especially trade unions, in our first wave of surveys (Barnes 1998). These were, however,
the transmission belt structures of the communist regimes; membership and participation
in them evaporated quickly in the post-communist era. The 1999-2000 surveys showed
the almost total collapse of these associations deriving from the communist era (Barnes
forthcoming). Other studies show similar results (Howard 2003; Wessels 2003; see also

Whatever the causes, there is scholarly agreement that civil society in new democracies
has not blossomed. The World Value Surveys in 1991 and the European Value Survey in
1999 asked about membership in 15 different organizations. Both these sets of surveys show low percentages of membership in the organizations of civil society for the new democracies of Europe similar to those just mentioned, and not only in the formerly communist states. For example, of the 21 countries measured in the value surveys, Spain in the 1991 World Value Survey had the lowest percentage of the European populations East and West claiming membership in at least one association. Spain was lower than Portugal and all of the post-communist countries surveyed. By 1999, Spain had surpassed Portugal as well as four of the post-communist countries. By 1999-2000, although most of the communist era transmission belt type of organizations had disappeared, seven of the post-communist countries exhibited higher levels of involvement than Spain.

There is a positive spin that can be placed on these results from post-authoritarian regimes. That is that perhaps we can learn something from their experiences. Because of their emergence from authoritarian eras, the new European Third-wave democracies were largely born free of the accumulated networks and traditions of civil society that remain highly relevant even if troubled in most of Western Europe and the US. The high levels of organization and membership of much of civil society in Western Europe was the product of a period of mobilization of the have-nots—and of course elites too—in order to convert the democratic institutions of the continent into institutions of mass democracy with universal suffrage. Elite competition for mass support also certainly served to expand the electorate, but the achievement of mass democracy in Europe is inconceivable without the associations of the working class, peasantry, and religious and other groups that helped to convert numbers into political power.

The era dominated by this type of social and political mobilization seems to be coming to an end. A cognitively mobilized population has less need for the democratic tutorial role performed by political parties and the associations of civil society. An advanced capitalist society offers a vast range of opportunities for most of the population. The welfare states of Europe reassure people that they will not fall very far down, regardless
of their original life chances and success in the market. In a political market system, efforts at individual advancement through exit may appear more attractive than voice for increasing numbers of the population, to use the classic Exit, Voice, and Loyalty terms of Hirschman (1970). It is not surprising that large numbers of people find more interesting things to do in their free time than to become involved in politics.

The associations of civil society continue to function, and perhaps not too badly. They just do it with less citizen involvement. The new democracies seem to have most of the associations found in the older democracies, even though they do not have the membership numbers of the old. In the post-communist democracies, extensive financial and organizational assistance from both foreign governments and private associations have assisted in the establishment of association offices and the support of activists. Recent studies of some of these attempts to jump start civil society suggest that many of these organizations have not been successful in raising grass-roots support, and that the seeming growth represented by the proliferation of local branches is largely the result of the subdivision of existing associational units without much net gain in membership (Cellarius and Staddon: 2002; Henderson: 2002). This is not to say that the local units will not grow in the long run, only that expansion seems to be very slow.

Parties and elections in the new democracies also demonstrate that they are not moving rapidly in the direction of the traditional democracies but rather reflect the newer patterns in them. That is, in quite general terms it can be said that the parties in new democracies have not developed strong organizations and ties with the citizenry. They consist mainly of party leaders who switch parties, spend little effort to develop ties with the public, and campaign largely through television and patronage appeals to specific groups with little attention to policy most of the time. The new democracies of Europe have led the way in the atrophy of patterns of political mobilization of the type that created mass democracy in Europe and America, especially in the mass parties and associated associations of civil society that mobilized the citizenry. With their educated populations, universal television and widespread connection to the web on the part of the new democracies, these older structures are likely to remain largely irrelevant.
Despite the above observations, the post-communist democracies exhibit a relationship between the level of socioeconomic and democratic development of a country and the percentage of the population claiming involvement in civil society associations. That is, those countries closest to Western Europe, including those being admitted to the European Union, have, on average, the highest percentage of those surveyed who claim association memberships. Conventional participation and protest approval patterns are more irregular. Other East-Central European countries such as Romania and Bulgaria and the Baltic states are in a central category on memberships, while the other former Soviet Union states such as Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus are the three countries lowest in claimed memberships (Barnes: forthcoming).

These findings make good sense intuitively, and suggest that conventional explanations such as level of socioeconomic development, length and depth of the experience with communism, and even distance from Vienna are useful in accounting for the differences, suggesting the possibility of convergence as memberships decline—if that is happening—in the advanced countries of Western Europe. But social science is never this simple. There are outliers in both Western Europe and in the East, countries that do not fit expected patterns. Poland, for example, and despite the experience with Solidarity and the continued vitality of the Catholic Church, is near the bottom in association memberships both in the early and in the late 1990s (Barnes forthcoming). And France, one of the most highly developed nation-states, is only higher than Spain and Portugal in associational memberships among Western European publics and is lower than Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and East Germany. France and Poland remind us of the recurring need for idiosyncratic, ad hoc explanations for particular countries despite the existence of common patterns overall.

It is too early in this period of change to visualize the future. Democracies have great resources for reinventing themselves, and there are signs of creative approaches to increasing citizen participation (Hooghe and Stolle 2003). One area that will certainly
be important in the future is the internet. Numerous studies are now emerging that deal with these developments. The American campaign for the Democratic party presidential nomination has demonstrated the salience of the internet for fund raising. It is also evident that the internet is rapidly becoming a major source of advertising as well as information for an increasing percentage of the population in advanced democracies. It also seems to be of increasing importance in authoritarian systems and semi-democratic systems. Some papers at the present workshop are investigating the role of the internet in creative ways. Numerous scholars have written about new forms of participation; reviewing them should be the topic of another session (see in particular, Dalton, Scarrow and Cain 2003; Skocpol and Fiorina, eds. 1999; Hooghe and Stolle, eds. 2003).

It should by now be clear that I believe that great changes are taking place in patterns of political involvement in both old and new democracies. It is exciting to contemplate the new forms emerging. To be able to be among the first to chart these forms of political action and to incorporate them into the systematic body of knowledge that we would all like political science to achieve is why we are here. Thank you for including me.

References


Michels, Robert (1959—original German edition was 1911): Political Parties, New York: Dover.
There's more talk (sometimes irrelevant and repetitive); and more group pressure. The more people there are at a meeting, the longer it may take to reach a decision. The way a committee operates often depends on the style of its leader or chairperson: he or she may control the proceedings very strictly, or let everyone speak whenever they want. An effective chairman should be flexible. In some meetings the members have to take a vote before a decision can be made: formal proposals or "motions" may have to be tabled, seconded and discussed before a vote can be taken. Other meetings may require a consensus of the members - everyone has to agree. Most meetings have an agenda. For a formal meeting, this document must be circulated in advance to all participants.

A good book for children should simply be a good book in its own right." These are the words of Mollie Hunter, a well-known author of books for youngsters. Born and bred near Edinburgh, Mollie has devoted her talents to writing primarily for young people. She firmly believes that there is always and should always be a wider audience for any good book whatever its main market. In Mollie's opinion it is essential to make full use of language and she enjoys telling a story, which is what every writer should be doing: "If you aren't telling a story, you're a ve