

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION ON  
THE POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION OF WEST GERMAN YOUTH

by

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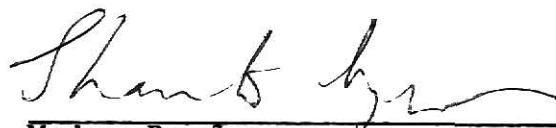
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	iv
Chapter	
I. THE PROBLEM . . . . .	1
Introduction	
Theory	
Social Stratification and Political	
Culture in West Germany	
Hypotheses	
II. METHODOLOGY . . . . .	28
The Sample	
Operationalization	
Technique of Analysis	
III. HYPOTHESIS TESTING . . . . .	36
Measuring Association through Gamma	
Observation of Mean Scores	
Multiple Regression	
IV. CONCLUSION . . . . .	57
Suggestion for further research	
APPENDIX . . . . .	73
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	79

## LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
1. Background of German Cabinet Members 1890-1960 (in percentages) . . . . .	12
2. Mean Scores for Political Efficacy, System Proximity, System Commitment and System Satisfaction by 3 Status Factors in West Germany . . . . .	14
3. Mean Political participation Scores by Education, Income and Occupation in West Germany . . . . .	15
4. Mean Political Participation Scores by Sex and Education in West Germany . . . . .	16
5. Anticipated Political Participation in West Germany by Social Class (in percentages) . . . . .	20
6. Political Efficacy, by Social Class (in percentages) . . . . .	21
7. Gamma Coefficients between Social Class, Sex and Age with Five Political Attitudes . . . . .	37
8. Political Participation Cross Tabulated with Social Class (in percentages) . . . . .	38
9. Political Interest Cross Tabulated with Social Class (in percentages). . . . .	40
10. Willingness to Dissent Cross Tabulated with Social Class (in percentages) . . . . .	43
11. Support for Democratic Norms Cross Tabulated with Social Class (in percentages) . . . . .	45
12. Trust in Government Cross Tabulated with Social Class (in percentages) . . . . .	47
13. Mean Scores for Participation, Interest, Dissent, Support and Trust by Social Class, Sex and Age . . . . .	50
14. Mean Scores for Participation, Interest, Dissent, Support and Trust broken down by Sex, controlling for Social Class . . . . .	51

15.	Mean Scores for Participation, Interest, Dissent, Support and Trust by Age, controlling for Social Class . . . . .	52
16.	Multiple Regression for Political Participation . . . . .	54
17.	Multiple Regression and Political Interest . . . . .	77
18.	Multiple Regression and Willingness to Dissent . . . . .	77
19.	Multiple Regression and Support for Democratic Norms . . . . .	77
20.	Multiple Regression for Trust . . . . .	78



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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

According to Ralf Dahrendorf, all societies display two types of inequality. One of these he describes as productive inequality. Productive inequality gives rise to the formation of classes and to class struggle. The other inequality, which arises from productive inequality, is distributive. This is primarily concerned with social rewards, such as income, prestige, education and power. The social system of distributive inequality is known as social stratification.<sup>1</sup>

Social stratification plays a vital role in the creation of a society's political culture. Dimensions of political culture include among others, the level of support that people have for their political systems, how they view their political authorities, the amount of political participation in which they engage and how they perceive their political influence.<sup>2</sup>

The socio-economic stratum into which one is born often regulates the development of the above attitudes. The upper socio-economic stratum in most western societies generally identifies more with its political system, due to the fact that the political system can generate rewards which will favor the upper class. Political authorities

are also seen in a different perspective among social classes. The upper socio-economic class views the political authorities as individuals who represent their interests. This attitude is fostered by the fact that political authorities are usually themselves from the upper stratum of society. The people of the lower stratum often feel alienated from the political authorities, due to a large socio-economic gap that exists between the two classes.

In terms of political participation, the upper social class is always more participant, and therefore political outputs benefit the upper class to a much greater extent. Closely related to political participation is the perceived efficacy of a social class. Again, the upper socio-economic class, due to the tangible results of their political participation, will also feel more politically efficacious than the lower social class.

Therefore, membership within a particular social class, be it high or low, will tend to create a homogeneous set of political beliefs. These political beliefs eventually lead to a pattern of collective political behavior which naturally differs between the social classes. Members of the upper social class tend to be political participant, whereas, members at the lower class are usually less active in political affairs. Specifically, the political consequences of a socially stratified society include a self-perpetuating upper class political elite. A political elite

may be defined as those who exercise a predominant role in determining political outcomes. This has been the case in most industrialized societies, although the social division between elites and the mass is most obvious among Western European nations.

This particular research project is designed to examine the extent to which social class influences political attitudes in one Western European nation, i.e., West Germany. The research will investigate the impact of social stratification on the political socialization of West German children. By studying the socialization process, one is able to predict whether or not political behavior in Germany will continue to be affected by social stratification.

### Theory

Various theories have been proposed which aid in explaining the linkage between social class and political participation. Theories of this sort may be utilized to deduce hypotheses for this particular study. These theories have been formulated by Seymour Lipset, William Kornhauser and Neil Smelser.<sup>3</sup>

Lipset's theory rests on the assumption that a group will tend to participate more if "its interests are very strongly affected by government policies, if it has access to information about the relevance of the political decisions to its interests, if it is exposed to social

pressures demanding participation and if it is not pressed to vote for different political parties."<sup>4</sup>

From the first criterion, Lipset deduces that the groups most likely to participate are governmental employees and businessmen, for it is their occupations which are most effected by government policy. Based on the second criterion, Lipset explains that groups with higher social position will enhance their ability to perceive the outcomes of policies. Groups of higher social class are apt to be more politically organized and politically aware. From this, they will be able to perceive the outcome of a political decision. Lower socio-economic groups are less organized and less educated, which indicates that they are less aware. For criterion three, participation due to social pressure, Lipset's argument is that the role one occupies in life will determine whether or not he or she will participate in politics. The higher social role one occupies, the greater is the demand for political participation. Higher social groups are traditionally more participant due to the rewards they reap from the system, and it is group pressure that encourages one to conform with an activist orientation. For the four criterion, lack of pressure to vote for different political parties, Lipset believes that higher social groups, because of their solidarity, are more apt to be anchored to a political party which secures their social status. Therefore, they will participate more within their chosen party in order to preserve their way of life.

Lower socio-economic groups are less homogeneous and less educated. Therefore, they can be easily manipulated by the media or several of the political parties. The end result is a very marginal attachment to a political party. This, of course, produces little political participation. Although the Lipset theory is based primarily on voting, it can indeed be extended to other avenues of political participation, i.e., campaigning, running for political office and electioneering.

Kornhauser's theory views participation as a product of three factors: Motivation, competence and opportunity. These three factors determine whether or not one partakes in political participation. Social class is clearly related to the level of these three factors. Motivation is related to efficacy, which is usually a trait of the upper social class. An upper socio-economic position in life will increase a feeling of effectiveness and will thus foster motivation to participate in politics. Competence is related to the actual resources and skills that one may possess. These resources and skills include political information, easy access to the political arena and actual political experience. Again, the upper class is more participant. Opportunity to participate is also closely related to social class:

Free time leisure and independent wealth are decisive here. Professional politics was, and to some extent still is, the domain of men of means and leisure; these two factors are just as important for non-professional

participation by the ordinary citizen as they are for professional politics.<sup>5</sup>

Smelser's theory revolves around the effects of facilities, motivations and norms on political participation. Facilities, meaning the instruments that allow political participation, have always been in the hands of the upper class. These facilities have legally discriminated against the lower socio-economic class. An example of such a facility would be voting laws. Although voting laws do not discriminate in the Federal Republic of Germany, it is accurate to say that such facilities in the German case would include an acutely stratified educational system which does in fact determine the level of accessibility one will have to the political arena. Motivation stems from accessibility and class pressure will create the norms of participation.<sup>6</sup>

#### Social Stratification and Political Culture in West Germany

Social stratification in West Germany resembles the Western European pattern in that social classes are distinct and individuals within each class have specific roles to perform. These roles are varied and include occupational aspirations as well as the functions the individual performs in the political arena.

Role specification is maintained through the inter-generational transmission of political norms from parent

to child, i.e., the political socialization process. The child, from the beginning, learns what roles are expected of him or her in the future. The social class that the child is born into will determine what roles his parents prepare for him. Parents from the upper socio-economic class will prepare their children for an upper class role, while parents of the lower social class prepare their offspring for lower social class roles. It is the transmission of these class related roles that are responsible for the persistence of social stratification in West Germany. Lewis Edinger, discussing the persistence of role maintenance put it this way:

...The social background of elite members differs sharply from that of the general citizenry, as it does in other industrialized societies. Most of the German leaders come from upper class and upper middle class families willing and able to let their sons spend a decade or more acquiring a secondary and often, a university education in preparation for elite careers.<sup>7</sup>

Several scholars have attempted to construct a model of social stratification in West Germany. According to Ralf Dahrendorf, West German society is stratified into three barriers:

In the German case, these are, first, the borderline between the elites and the adjoining reaches of service, class and middle class; and second, the boundary between the lower class and the adjoining lower ranks of the working class and the false middle class.<sup>8</sup>

This type of stratification can be found in most modern



societies. However, Dahrendorf also describes a third barrier, which makes West Germany unique from other modern societies:

It divides an Above from a Below - namely approximately the upper third of the edifice of stratification from the lower two thirds - and it runs (to remain within the spatial metaphore) from the lower end of the service class along the line between the working class and the middle class.<sup>9</sup>

Dahrendorf points out that social mobility occurs within the upper and lower strata; however, no one crosses the others boundary.

Morris Janowitz has constructed a model which consists of four strata. The upper middle class, which accounts for 4.6 percent of the population, includes the professions, leading white collar workers, the high civil servants and wealthy businessmen. The lower middle class is composed of clerical workers, middle and lower echelon state employees, independent small businessmen, craftsmen and peasants. This class accounts for 38.6 percent of the population. The upper lower class, 13.3 percent, consists of skilled workers and craftsmen in dependent positions. In the lower lower class, Janowitz places the semiskilled, unskilled and agricultural laborers. This class accounts for 38.6 percent of the population.<sup>10</sup>

Another stratification scheme, and the one Dahrendorf feels is the most precise, is presented by E.K. Scheuch. Scheuch utilizes occupational, economic and cultural criterion to construct a 7 level model of stratification.

According to Scheuch, there is an upper class (2.6 percent), upper middle class (9.9 percent), middle middle class (18.9 percent), lower middle class (23.3 percent), upper lower class (33.6 percent), middle lower class (10.2 percent), and a lower lower class (6 percent).<sup>11</sup>

As one can see, there is no one exact model of West German social stratification. However, the main point is that West Germany politics is clearly affected by this social stratification. Political participation, which entails such activities as campaigning, running for political office and actually holding political office, is dominated by members of the upper stratum. Most Germans accept the notion that politics is an upper class function. Almond and Verba, in their classic cross-cultural survey of five nations, found that only twenty-two percent of German adults felt the ordinary citizen should take an active part in the political process.<sup>12</sup> Edinger described it in this manner:

...Most Germans feel that political participation is something to be left to the 'experts,' professional players who are well versed in the rules of the game and highly skilled in its performance. They accept their limited and intermittent role assignments in the participation structure and agree that there is no room for amateurs in the political arena, nor for actors who violate the rules of the game.<sup>13</sup>

It must be stressed that this non-egalitarian feature of German society meets with little protest. Those who surrender the role of active participation do so with the

notion that their needs are best served in this manner.

As Edinger states:

The bulk of the citizenry neither does nor wants to interfere with the rules, not knowing them in all their complexities, but accepts the situation because it seems to meet popular role and goal expectations.<sup>14</sup>

Although over eighty percent of the German electorate vote, it was found that less than ten percent engage in active political participation, or as Edinger says, have "multiple political input roles." Edinger classifies the political participants into three major groupings; middle range participants, upper middle range participants and the policy bearing stratum.<sup>15</sup> Middle range participants are usually those individuals who partake in a limited and often "sporadic" amount of politics. An example would be participation in a local political meeting of some sort. These individuals are often recruited from interest groups representing business, farms, skilled industrial workers and the professions.<sup>16</sup>

Above the middle range participants, lie the upper middle range participants. These individuals are more active in politics and usually engaged in an occupation that is somewhat involved in policy decisions. An example of this occupation would be a civil servant.<sup>17</sup> Although the upper middle range participants are more active than the middle range participants, they still are unable to obtain a position which actually involves policy making.

The policy makers, whom Edinger refers to as the policy bearing stratum, are the real decision makers in Germany. These are the top political elite, who by nature of their former occupation, skills, wealth and popularity, occupy important decision making positions. These individuals, as well as their occupations are set quite apart from the rest of German society.<sup>18</sup>

The upper class in West Germany not only dominate the political system, but they are also quite cynical about mass participation in the political process. This cynicism can be attributed to a memory of the unconditional mass support given to irresponsible anti-democratic regimes of the past. According to Edinger:

Traditionalist conservatives prefer to keep the masses completely out of the affairs of state, and liberal democrats believe that mass participation needs to be carefully controlled, at least until the present regime has gained stronger roots among the general public.<sup>19</sup>

An empirical examination of the backgrounds of West German Cabinet members clearly documents that the class bias in political recruitment has persisted from 1890 to 1960. (See Table 1)

Civil service, Law and Business dominate the nonpolitical occupational backgrounds of Cabinet members. A university education dominates all four periods and the fathers of Cabinet members were primarily engaged in the same occupations as that of their sons. Although this project is not

TABLE 1\*

Background of German Cabinet Members 1890-1960  
(in percentages)

Classification	Empire	Weimar Republic	Third Reich	Federal Republic
Occupational back- ground (nonpolitical)				
Civil Service	64.5	48.4	48.4	27.2
Law	40.7	31.1	15.2	21.9
Business	1.3	16.4	27.3	21.9
Educational back- ground				
Primary (to 14 yrs)	1.3	12.3	3.0	9.0
Secondary (to 18 yrs)	21.1	12.4	21.2	11.4
University	59.2	70.4	75.8	79.5
Father's occupation				
Civil Service	23.6	4.9	12.1	20.4
Business	10.4	18.9	18.2	22.3
Worker, artisan	1.3	11.5	3.0	18.2

Source: Lewis Edinger, Politics in Germany (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 183. Extracted from Table VI.4.

concerned with elite recruitment, the data in Table 1 is important, for it clearly substantiates the expert society theory, i.e., politics in West Germany is an upper class function.

Further evidence concerning this upper class bias is provided by Giuseppe Di Palma, in a cross cultural survey of four nations: United States, England, Italy and Germany. Di Palma shows that positive orientations to the political system exist more among the upper stratum of society than

among the lower. This he attributes to the "strategic position," that is occupied by the upper social class. A higher social class is more apt to give an individual more accessibility to the political process. Through this accessibility, one learns to identify with the political norms. Di Palma quotes Milbraths "center-periphery," concept in order to explain the link between status and political behavior.

Persons close to the center occupy an environmental position which naturally link them into the communications network involved in policy decisions for the society. They become identified with the body politic. They receive from and send more communications to other persons near the center. They have a higher rate of social interaction, and they are active in more groups than persons on the periphery. This central position increases the likelihood that they will develop personality traits, beliefs and attitudes which facilitate participation in politics.<sup>20</sup>

Di Palma utilized three indicators of social status to demonstrate the impact of these variables on the development of supportive political orientations. The following table represents the mean scores. Political efficacy is computed from a nineteen point scale, system proximity is measured using a seven point scale, system commitment through a 13 point scale and system satisfaction through a nine point scale. The higher the score the more supportive the orientations.

The findings in Table 2 are clear and unambiguous. Political efficacy, system proximity, system commitment

TABLE 2

Mean Scores for Political Efficacy, System Proximity,  
System Commitment and System Satisfaction by 3  
Status Factors in West Germany

	Political Efficacy	System Proximity	System Commitment	System Satis- faction
<u>Education</u>	mean	mean	mean	mean
Elementary	11.0	3.8	6.9	6.6
High School	13.4	4.5	8.6	7.0
College	13.6	5.1	9.2	7.3
Total	11.4	4.0	7.2	6.7
<u>Occupation</u>				
Unskilled and Farming	9.8	3.5	6.2	6.6
Skilled	11.2	3.9	7.2	6.5
Small business White Collar	12.3	4.2	7.8	6.7
Professional and Managerial	13.1	4.5	8.4	7.2
Total	11.4	4.0	7.3	6.7
<u>Income</u>				
Low	10.1	3.3	6.4	6.6
Middle-Low	9.7	3.4	6.3	6.3
Middle	11.0	3.7	7.2	6.7
Middle-High	11.3	3.9	7.8	6.6
High	12.4	4.3	7.8	7.0
Total	11.5	4.0	7.3	6.7

Source: Giuseppe Di Palma, Apathy and Participation (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 78-81. Extracted from Tables 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4.

and system satisfaction all increase with social status.

It appears, then, that a college education, a professional occupation and a high income will all lead one to support

the democratic form of government in West Germany. The system will be seen as a legitimate form of government if one is within the upper socio-economic class. Di Palma also performed a multiple regression analysis on his data and found that income had the least effect on the four political orientations when the other indicators of status were controlled. Education, he found, had the most influence.<sup>21</sup>

Concerning political participation, Di Palma found that it increased with a higher income, a higher occupational status and a higher education. The mean scores in Table 3 range from 0 to 12, higher scores represent higher participation. The results for Germany are as follows:

TABLE 3

Mean Political Participation Scores by Education,  
Income and Occupation in West Germany

Education	Mean Partici- pation	Income	Mean Partici- pation	Occupation	Mean Parti- cipation
Elementary or less	6.9	Low	5.2	Unskilled & Farming	6.1
Secondary	9.2		5.8	Skilled &	7.1
Some College	11.0		6.7	Semi-skilled	
Total	7.3		7.5	Small Business	7.9
Pearson's r	.28	High	8.1	& White Collar	
		Total	8.8	Professional &	9.6
		Pearson's r	.26	Managerial	
				Total	7.5
				Pearson's r	.29

Source: Giuseppe Di Palma, Apathy and Participation (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 143-144. Extracted from Tables 7-8, 7-9 and 7-10.



The results of Di Palma's data are clear. One's social class in Germany definitely determines the amount of political participation that he or she will partake in. The higher the social class, the higher the political participation. A point of concern, however, is the magnitude of the correlation (Pearson's  $r$ ) that was found between participation and the three status factors. The highest correlation coefficient is .29 which is quite weak. These coefficients demonstrate that the three status factors are not strongly associated with political participation. However, the point to be stressed is that a higher social status is associated with higher political participation.

Di Palma also found sex and age to be determinants of political participation. Table 4 demonstrates the effect of sex and education on the level of political participation.

TABLE 4  
Mean Political Participation Scores by Sex  
and Education in West Germany

	Primary or Less	Secondary or More	Total
Female	5.8	8.7	6.1
Male	8.3	10.0	8.6

Source: Giuseppe Di Palma, Apathy and Participation (New York: The Free Press, 1970), pp. 79-80. Extracted from Table 7-1.

From the previous table, one observes that males are more participant than females and that participation increases with education. The question one is faced with is why males are more participant than females, even if they have the same level of education. Di Palma explains that in a country such as Germany, a tremendous gap in opportunities and skills has continued to exist between the sexes. This gap perpetuates male dominance in politics.<sup>22</sup> However, Di Palma did find that political participation among women increased with age, but only if the women were educated.

The above surveys have dealt with German adults. From the previous literature, one may conclude that social stratification does in fact have an impact on West German political culture. Age and sex also appear to be relevant variables in the determination of political attitudes. To assess the persistence of these relationships, it is also necessary to investigate the attitudes of West German children. Various socialization studies have indeed demonstrated similar results for West German children.

A cross national survey of children was conducted by Jack Dennis, Leon Lindberg, Donald McCrone and Rodney Stiefbold in the United States, Britain, Italy and Germany. The purpose of this survey was to measure support for 1) general support for democracy, 2) political efficacy, 3) tolerance of minority dissent and 4) support for a competitive party system. Although this survey dealt with four nations, the responses of the German sample are the

only relevant results for this particular project. The German sample consisted of 498 German children, who were divided into three age groups, young, 9-10, middle 11-13, and old, 14-15.

In the first category, general support for democracy was found to increase with age. Again, findings of this sort correspond to the Di Palma study. Although Di Palma dealt mainly with adults, age continues to be an important variable among children as well. In the second category, a sense of political efficacy was also found to increase with age. In the third category, German children indicated that they did not have a very high level of tolerance for dissent. The proportion of respondents who tolerated dissent was roughly equivalent to those who did not tolerate dissent. This possibly may indicate that the socialization process has not been very effective in developing liberal attitudes. In the fourth category, support for pluralist competition increased with age.<sup>23</sup> There is a degree of ambiguity in these findings, however. As Verba notes regarding political culture: "The tendency in Germany is to seek expert and objective means of resolving conflict rather than allowing the solution to emerge from the competing parties--a tendency to find a nonpolitical rather than a political solution."<sup>24</sup> It is in fact this very concept of German political culture which has persisted throughout the years in Germany. Although the German students support for a competitive party system

increases with age, it is safe to say that they would rather have party competition involving experts, rather than party competition involving the masses.

In short, this particular cross-national survey found that support for democratic norms increases with age. The slight exception is support for dissent. Unfortunately, this particular survey did not control for social class or sex. However, the results suggest that age may be a causal factor for support of democratic norms. As such, the survey is valuable, for it suggests a hypothesis relating age to other political attitudes.

In a survey of 1,534 German students in the city of Cologne, Kendall Baker investigated the relationship between social class and political attitudes of youth.<sup>25</sup> Baker found that social class exerts an important influence on youthful political attitudes. The amount of political participation that students anticipate was definitely found to be related to their socio-economic background. The results of anticipated political activity by social class are shown in Table 5.<sup>26</sup>

By observing the content of Table 5, it is evident that upper middle and upper class students anticipate political participation to a much greater extent than students of the middle and lower classes. Findings such as these demonstrate that political participation is still perceived as an upper class role. This indicates that children in West Germany have been successfully socialized to adhere to

TABLE 5

Anticipated Political Participation in West Germany,  
by Social Class (In percentages)

Political Partici- pation	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	18.8	18.3	19.4	28.6	35.0	38.3	24.5
Medium	40.6	55.7	56.4	58.0	48.8	46.7	54.7
Low	18.8	16.7	15.3	8.1	10.0	13.3	13.0
DK/Na	21.9	9.3	9.0	5.3	6.3	1.7	7.8
Total N	64	246	413	417	160	60	100.0 N-1360

Source: Kendall L. Baker, "Political Participation, Political Efficacy and Socialization in Germany," Comparative Politics 6 (October 1973): 77.

class norms in regard to political participation. When Baker controlled for age and sex, he found that anticipated participation increased with age among the upper class students and decreased with age among the lower middle and lower class. Baker attributed this decline in anticipation to the environs in which working class students serve their apprenticeships. Environments of this sort are composed of working class adults, and it is they who aid in reinforcing the students belief that politics is an upper class affair. When controlling for sex, Baker found that anticipated political participation declined with age for females. From this, Baker concluded that political

participation was still regarded as an upper class male activity. Thus, we see that the norm of upper class dominance in the political sphere has been successfully passed on to German youth, and that political participation is regarded as a male, upper class function.

Surprisingly enough, political efficacy among Baker's respondents did not vary by social class. Baker explains this lack of difference by noting that the lower class students acquire efficacious feelings through classroom participation, whereas upper class students feel efficacious because of their home life. Table 6 reveals the results.

TABLE 6  
Political Efficacy, by Social Class  
(in percentages)

Political Efficacy	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	27.0	28.2	24.6	30.5	27.7	21.7	27.7
Medium	57.1	57.6	54.1	54.9	56.6	63.3	55.4
Low	15.9	14.3	21.2	14.6	15.7	15.0	17.0
Total N	63	245	410	415	159	60	100.0 N-1352

Source: Kendall L. Baker, "Political Participation, Political Efficacy and Socialization in Germany," Comparative Politics 6 (October 1973): 84.

Baker points out that only seventeen percent of his respondents actually scored low on the political efficacy scale,

whereas 39 percent of adults in the Almond and Verba survey scored low on the "subject competence" scale. Thus, we see that the West German students could possibly be more efficacious than their parents. When Baker controlled for age, he found efficacy decreased with age for students of the upper class. Baker speculates that the curriculum of the upper class school (Gymnasium) is responsible for this decline. Students who attend these schools may have a slight feeling of incompetence, due to the stringency of the curriculum.<sup>27</sup> When controlling for sex, Baker found males were slightly more efficacious than females in all of the social classes. When controlling for age and sex, Baker discovered that the youngest girls were more efficacious than boys. However, by age seventeen, the level of efficacy was basically the same. Baker points out the interest surrounding these findings, for political participation was definitely perceived as a male function.<sup>28</sup>

From the Baker survey, one may predict that political participation in West Germany will continue to be a male upper class function: politics will remain in the hands of the "experts" for years to come. However, in terms of efficacy, one observes a deviation from the past. A relatively strong sense of efficacy is apparent in all social classes as well as both sexes. In short, while political participation is a class related phenomenon, efficacy is not.

The previous surveys dealing with West Germany adults

and West German children may be summarized as follows. Active political participation, is dominated by the upper social class in West Germany. The masses favor the fact that politics is handled by the upper class and the higher social stratum agree that they should indeed be the ones who dominate the active political arena. General support for the political system is also higher among the upper socio-economic class. Due to the norms of the German culture, males are more active in politics than females. Controlling for social class, it is the upper class males specifically who demonstrate the most political activity.

The impact of social stratification on German political culture is passed on to succeeding generations. Children are socialized to anticipate the same political roles as that of their parents. Children from the upper stratum anticipate future political participation to a greater extent than children of the lower socio-economic class. Upper class male children in accord with the adult surveys, anticipate the most political participation. Anticipated political participation as well as general support for the political system increases with age as well. The surveys demonstrate that German adults continue to support a political system dominated by experts, i.e., upper class males. The political socialization process is successfully transferring these political attitudes to the children, which will very likely create the persistence of a political culture affected by social stratification.



## Hypotheses

From the examination of previous research, it is obvious that social class is the dominant variable that determines a West German's role in the political system. This suggests the following hypotheses:

1. It is hypothesized that children of the upper stratum will continue to anticipate future political participation.
2. It is hypothesized that political interest will be higher among youths of the upper stratum.
3. It is hypothesized that youths from the upper stratum, because of their perceived involvement in the political process, will be more supportive of the right to dissent.
4. It is hypothesized that upper class youths will be more supportive of basic participant democratic procedures, i.e., voting in the electoral process.
5. It is hypothesized that upper stratum youths will have a higher level of trust in their government than children of the lower socio-economic class.

The last hypothesis should be supported, due to the fact that upper class youths are more apt to perceive the government as a representative of their social class. One is apt to trust a government more if the actors within the government are similar to his or her social standing. This may not be the situation in American society, but in a stratified culture such as Germany it should prove to be the case.

It is quite evident that in all the previous hypotheses, social class has been designated as the independent variable. However, this research will also observe the effects of age

and sex on all the attitudes as well. Based on previous research, it is hypothesized that sex and age will also be associated with political attitudes but not to the degree social class is. When controlling for social class, it is hypothesized that upper class males will anticipate more participation, be more interested in the field of politics, be more supportive of dissent and general democratic procedures and have a higher level of trust in the government than will females and lower class males. These attitudes will all increase with age as well. By including age and sex as predictors, it is possible to adequately test the theory that social class exerts independent effects on the political attitudes of youths in West Germany.

## Chapter 1

## Notes

1. Ralf Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy in Germany (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), p. 79.
2. Austin Ranney, The Governing of Men (Illinois: The Dryden Press, 1975), pp. 84-88.
3. Giuseppe Di Palma, Apathy and Participation (New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 124.
4. Ibid., p. 125.
5. Ibid., p. 128.
6. Ibid., p. 129.
7. Lewis Edinger, Politics in Germany (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1962), p. 180.
8. Ralf Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy in Germany, p. 103.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), p. 169.
13. Lewis Edinger, Politics in Germany, p. 167.
14. Ibid., p. 166.
15. Ibid., pp. 172-174.
16. Ibid., p. 172.
17. Ibid., p. 172.
18. Ibid., p. 174.
19. Ibid., p. 171.
20. Giuseppe Di Palma, Apathy and Participation, pp. 79-80.
21. Ibid., p. 82.
22. Ibid., p. 137.

23. Jack Dennis, et. al., "Political Socialization to Democratic Orientations in Four Western Systems," in Socialization to Politics, ed. Jack Dennis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973), pp. 185-196.

24. Ibid., p. 198.

25. Kendall Baker, "Political Participation, Political Efficacy and Socialization in Germany," Comparative Politics 6 (October 1965): 73-98.

26. The indicator of social class in the Baker survey is measured through father's occupation.

27. Ibid., p. 85.

28. Ibid., p. 87.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Sample

The data utilized for this research project is taken from the survey of 1,534 youths in the West German city of Cologne. The survey was conducted by Professor Kendall Baker of the University of Wyoming in 1967. Respondents are representative of the three major post elementary schools that dominate the West German school system. The school types include the Gymnasium, Realschulen and Berufsschulen schools. The Gymnasium school is regarded as the university preparatory school. Only students who complete a Gymnasium curriculum may taken the Abitur examination. One must pass this examination if he or she expects to enter a West German university.

Since presently only approximately 7% of the entire German youth pass this exam, it is clear that the opportunities for a university education are rather limited. More important, the inability of most of the youth to gain admission to the university prevents them from becoming members of the modern German elite, for as other commentators (Edinger, 1968;181) have noted, a university diploma is normally essential if one expects to gain a position of leadership in some segment of German society.<sup>1</sup>

The Berufsschule and Realschule are the vocational schools of West Germany. The youths attending these two

schools are indicative of the future German masses. By including the vocational students within the sample, a comparison of political attitudes between the future German elite and the future German masses is made possible.

The students in the Berufsschule serve as apprentices within their chosen trade while attending school. Upon completion of the Berufsschule curriculum, students will continue working in the same job which they have served as an apprentice. The students of the Realschule usually attend an advanced vocational school upon graduation.<sup>2</sup>

The exact breakdown of the 1,534 respondents is as follows: 528 students are enrolled in the Gymnasium, 464 in the Berufsschule and 542 in the Realschule. Within the Gymnasium, 259 are boys and 268 are girls. Within the Berufsschule, 282 are boys and 181 are girls. The Realschule contains 250 boys and 292 girls. The age span of the respondents is 13 to 20 and 1,280 are between 14 and 16 while 1,424 are between 14 and 17.

### Operationalization

The researcher selected questions from the survey which were indicative of social class and the five political attitudes involved in the hypotheses. The political attitudes are participation, support for democratic procedures, willingness to dissent, political interest and trust in the government.

One indicator of political participation, six indicators

of social class, two indicators of support, four indicators of dissent, four indicators of political interest and four indicators of trust were selected. Thus, a total of five tentative indices were constructed.

The next step in developing the indices was to observe the frequencies for each individual indicator, i.e., the responses to each question. The indicators were divided into scores of 1, 2 and 0. A score of 1 indicated a low social class, low interest, low willingness to dissent, low support and low trust. A score of 2 represented high social class, interest, dissent, support and trust. A score of 0 represented a respondent who did not know the answer to a question or simply did not answer.

The frequencies demonstrated that one indicator of social class (mother's occupation), an indicator of support and two indicator's of interest were unsuitable for index construction. This was due to a high degree of skewness within the frequencies. The indicator of social class had 82.1 percent of the respondents with a score of 0. The removal of this indicator left five indicators in the social class index. One of the indicators of support was also skewed, as 95.4 percent of the respondents received a score of 2.

Instead of a support index, there remained one single item to measure support. One of the indicators of interest was also skewed in a fashion which had 80.1 percent receiving a score of 2, while 83.3 percent received a score

of 1 in the other indicator. Thus, the interest index was reduced to two indicators. The number of indices was thus reduced to four.

In order to assess the reliability of the four indices, a correlation matrix (Pearson's  $r$ ) was obtained for each index. A summary of the matrices is as follows: The five indicators of social class all correlated rather strongly with one another, producing an intercorrelation mean of .28. Two of the four indicators within the dissent index had a negative correlation within the matrix. Therefore, the dissent index had to be reduced to two indicators, which had a rather weak correlation of .10. The two political interest indicators correlated at .16 with one another. One indicator within the trust index had to be removed from the survey, due to a negative correlation, and the trust index was thus reduced to three indicators with a mean correlation of .31.<sup>3</sup>

The anticipation to participate indicator simply asks whether or not the youths expect to participate in future political affairs. Scores for this indicator range from 1, which is low anticipation, through 2 which is medium anticipation, to 3 which is very high anticipation.

The support for democratic procedures indicator asks why the youths vote in class elections. 1 indicates a response not conducive to democratic reasoning and 2 indicates a response which is democratic. This particular indicator deals with motives for voting in class elections.



The individuals who responded that they voted to ensure majoritarian representation received a score of 2. The students who voted to maintain order and quiet received a score of 1. 317 respondents indicated that they favored a "qualified" class spokesman. A response of this sort was ambiguous. However, it did slant toward elitism. A "qualified" spokesman, in the German case, could very well mean an individual from the upper social class, i.e., an expert. Therefore, it was classified as an undemocratic response and given a score of 1.

Social class is measured by a 5 item index. The items within the social class index are: 1) school type, 2) father's occupation, 3) monthly income of the family, 4) father's education, and 5) mother's education. Scores of 1 indicate low social class and scores of 2 represent high social class. Thus, the additive index ranges from 5 to 10. (5 = lower, 6 = upper lower, 7 = lower middle, 8 = middle, 9 = upper middle and 10 = upper)

The two indicators in the political interest index represent whether or not the youths feel campaigning is necessary and if they feel campaigns are interesting. Scores of 1 represent low interest, and scores of 2 represent high political interest. Thus, the additive index ranges from 2 to 4. The two indicators of dissent measure whether or not the youths would challenge their teacher if they disagreed with his/her's explanation of a particular subject, or if they felt the teacher treated them unfairly.

Scores of 1 represent passivity and submission to authority and scores of 2 demonstrate a willingness to dissent. Therefore, the additive index ranges from 2 to 4.

Finally, the three items comprising the trust index are: 1) do the youths feel the government ignores the interests of the majority, 2) do the youths feel the government officials are deceitful, and 3) whether or not the youths trust the Bonn government. Scores of 1 represent low trust, and scores of 2 represent high trust. Thus, the additive index for trust ranges from 3 to 6.<sup>4</sup>

#### Technique of Analysis

In order to test the hypotheses, three methods of analysis will be utilized. The first method of testing the hypotheses will be cross-tabulations in which gamma will be used to assess the level of association between the variables. The dependent variables are often the indicator of participation, the indicator of support, and the indices of dissent, interest and trust. The independent variables are the social class index and the variables of age and sex.

The second method of analysis will be a breakdown of the mean scores for each political attitude by social class, sex and age. Sex and age will also be controlled by social class. The third method of analysis will be multiple regression. Multiple regression is a more stringent technique of analysis for it enables one to observe which

independent variable creates the most change in the dependent variable. This is determined by observing the effects of an independent variable after holding all other independent variables constant. In order to determine the importance of each independent variable on the dependent variable, a common unit of measurement must be obtained for the two variables. This is found by multiplying the partial slopes (the slopes of the regression line) by the standard deviation of the independent variable. This figure is then divided by the standard deviation of the dependent variable. The calculated figure is known as a beta weight.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the beta weight is a standardized partial slope. From this, one can observe how much change occurs in the dependent variable as a result of one standardized change in an independent variable, controlling for all other independent variables.<sup>6</sup>

The multiple regression also allows one to observe a simple correlation coefficient symbolized as  $r$ , the multiple correlation coefficient symbolized as  $R$  and the square of the multiple correlation coefficient symbolized as  $R^2$ . Simple  $r$  is the correlation between one independent variable and one dependent variable.  $R$  represents how all the independent variables combined correlate with the dependent variable.  $R^2$  indicates how much variance is accounted for in the dependent variable by all the independent variables combined.<sup>7</sup>

## Chapter 2

### Notes

1. Kendall Baker, "Political Alienation and German Youth," Comparative Political Studies 3 (April 1970): 119.

2. Ibid., p. 120.

3. Cross tabulations were also conducted to ensure further reliability. The gamma statistic was utilized and the association levels were all very positive.

4. After constructing the indices, the frequencies were observed again and it was discovered there were a substantial number of missing values in each index. To reduce the number of missing values the IF card was utilized. For a detailed description of this procedure one should consult SPSS.

5. Frederick D. Herzon and Michael Hooper, Introduction to Statistics for the Social Sciences (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), pp. 438-439.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

## CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 is exclusively concerned with hypothesis testing. The results of the tests are divided into three sections. Section One is concerned with the level of association between the independent and dependent variables. Association is measured through the gamma statistic. A gamma matrix appears at the beginning of the first section, which enables the reader to observe the associations. The specific gamma statistics are then discussed along with the percentage distributions that were obtained through cross tabulations.

Section Two is concerned with the mean index scores that were calculated for the respondents when measuring their political attitudes. The mean scores are first broken down by social class, sex and age. The mean scores are then broken down by sex, controlling for social class. Finally, the mean scores of the three different age groups are observed when controlling for social class. The range of the index scores are as follows: Participation, 1 = low, 2 = medium or occasional, 3 = high. Interest, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high. Dissent, 2 = low, 3 = medium, 4 = high. Support, 1 = low, 2 = high. Trust, 4 = low, 5 = medium, 6 = high.

The third section is multiple regression. It is in

this section where we will observe which independent variable exerts the most independent influence on the dependent variables.

### Section 1 - Hypothesis Testing Through Association

Table 7 shows the gamma coefficients between the independent and dependent variables. A positive coefficient indicates that an increase in the independent variable is associated with an increase in the dependent variable. A negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship, i.e., as the independent variable increases the dependent variable will decrease. The gamma statistic ranges from +1.0, which is the most positive association that can exist, to -1.0 which is a perfect inverse relationship. A value of zero indicates absolutely no associations. Table 7 displays the associations.

TABLE 7

Gamma Coefficients Between Social Class, Sex  
and Age with Five Political Attitudes

	Social Class	Sex	Age
Anticipation to Participate	.19	-.17	.04
Political Interest	-.08	-.06	.06
Willingness to Dissent	-.21	.008	.10
Support for Norms	.009	-.02	-.01
Trust in Government	-.06	.003	-.11

The gamma that appears for social class and participation does not clearly support hypothesis one. As hypothesized, there is a positive association, although it is quite weak. This indicates that social class is only slightly associated with increased political participation. The cross tabulation of political participation with social class is as follows:

TABLE 8

Political Participation Cross Tabulated  
With Social Class (in percentages)

Political Participation	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	21.0	29.3	35.5	35.3	44.0	37.5	27.7
Medium	78.0	69.3	62.6	60.6	53.0	54.2	70.6
Low	1.0	1.2	1.9	4.0	3.0	8.3	1.7
Total N=	510	313	107	99	66	24	100 N=1119

The results in Table 8 demonstrate that West German youths, as a whole, anticipate only an occasional, or medium, amount of political participation. This coincides with the findings in the Almond and Verba survey concerning German adults. However, there is a discernible difference between the social classes in the high participation group. Upper middle and upper class youths anticipate participation to

a greater extent than the lower stratum youths. This differentiation is not great, however, which accounts for the weak gamma.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we can conclude that while social class does exert an influence in developing participant attitudes, the influence is not strong enough to support the hypothesis.

A gamma of  $-.17$  for sex reveals very weak association with participation. The percentage distributions did show males to be more participant oriented, but by a mere six percent. Hence, the hypothesis relating sex to participation is also rejected.

The gamma for age and participation,  $.04$ , reveals no association. This obviously does not support the hypothesis relating age to participation. Note, however, that a gradual increase in participation does occur with age. 27.9 percent of the thirteen and fourteen year old respondents anticipated frequent participation, whereas 34.0 percent of the seventeen to twenty year old respondents expected to participate often.

The gamma between social class and political interest is  $-.08$ , which indicates an inverse association with social class. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. An empirical examination of this startling phenomenon may be observed in the following table (Table 9).

The percentage distributions show that a high level of political interest decreases gradually with a higher social class. This is quite contrary to the hypothesis of



TABLE 9

Political Interest Cross Tabulated with  
Social Class (in percentages)

Political Interest	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	35.2	37.5	32.7	30.2	29.4	29.2	21.9
Medium	45.5	43.0	44.5	36.2	38.2	41.7	43.4
Low	19.4	19.3	22.7	33.3	32.4	29.2	34.7
Total N=	532	325	110	105	68	24	100 N=1164

the results for participation. One would have naturally expected political interest to increase with social class, if political participation increased. Perhaps the upper stratum youths in West Germany are being socialized to perceive political activity as a function mainly designed to preserve their social status. Therefore, political input will occur out of economic motives, rather than actual political interest.

Evidence which lends credence to this assumption may be found by examining responses to a further question in the Baker survey. Baker inquired which aspect of West Germany the youths were most proud of. 23.6 percent, the largest percent, of the Gymnasium students replied that the economic miracle was the aspect they were most proud of. Although the question does not actually measure

political interest, it does suggest that among the upper stratum, the economic system is receiving more interest than politics. This is a rather broad generalization, but the orientation toward economics does seem strong. Of more concern, is the fact that West Germany's future political leaders may not be as interested in politics as their occupation demands.

Sex is not associated with political interest. A  $-.06$  gamma fails to support the hypothesis. The majority of respondents, regardless of sex, expressed only a medium amount of interest in political affairs. However, in the high interest category, males did exceed females by four percentage points.

A gamma of  $.06$  for age and interest also indicates no association between the two variables. However, 34.5 percent of the thirteen year old respondents expressed a high degree of political interest, whereas 43.3 percent of the seventeen to twenty year olds expressed high interest. This does shed some support on the stated hypothesis, but the gamma is much too weak to indicate association. Therefore, neither social class, sex or age have a positive association with political interest.

The gamma for social class and willingness to dissent is  $-.21$ , indicating a moderately strong inverse association. This, of course, is contrary to the hypothesis. The gamma does appear perplexing at first glance, if one thinks in terms of the American case. However, the cause of this

could be due to the school (Gymnasium) in which the upper stratum youths are enrolled. While surveying attitudes of efficacy, Baker discovered that the higher stratum youths were less efficacious than the youths of the lower stratum. This, he attributed to the Gymnasium school which invoked feelings of personal incompetence, due to the stringency of the school's curriculum. A causal explanation of this sort can also be applied to dissent. Perhaps the stringency and competitiveness of the Gymnasium curriculum are discouraging students to express dissent. Students may be finding it wiser to tolerate action by school authorities, rather than dissent and risk the possibility of disciplinary action. Academic punishment could hinder, or even eliminate, the chances of gaining university admission. This would naturally make it difficult, if not impossible, to acquire an upper class occupation. The end result would be a severe loss in status. The following table demonstrates the decline in dissent with social class (Table 10).

The percentage distributions do show a modest decline in dissent with social class. Of great importance are the marginal distributions. 77.8 percent of the respondents received a high score. This is quite impressive, judging from the rather passive nature of German adults.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a major change is occurring in West Germany.

The West German youth of today are acutely aware of the tremendous suppression their parents suffered under Nazism. This suppression was made possible due to a high tolerance and acceptance of authoritarian, political

TABLE 10

Willingness to Dissent Cross Tabulated with  
Social Class (in percentages)

Dissent	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	83.3	79.5	69.6	64.0	66.7	68.8	77.8
Medium	15.4	15.8	29.0	34.3	28.8	25.0	19.6
Low	1.3	4.6	1.4	1.7	4.4	6.2	2.7
Total	306	215	69	64	45	16	100 N=715

principles. Accompanying this acceptance was an extreme level of obedience to superiors. The modern German youth, now aware of German history, may realize that the perils of the past can only be avoided if dissent is expressed. Perhaps, the agents of socialization, i.e., home, media and school are emphasizing the need for dissent in extreme proportions. This could account for the high level of dissent among the youths.

The gamma for dissent and sex is only .008, indicating no association. Males were expected to display the most dissent, but the percentages did not reveal this. 77.8 percent of the males and 78.0 percent of the females were willing to dissent. Again, this suggests the beginning of a cultural change in West Germany. Women in the past have

been generally submissive, or as the German adage states, confined to "das kinder, die kirche und die Kuche."

Perhaps German girls are beginning to break from custom, as are the women of the United States. However, in terms of actual association between sex and dissent, there is none.' This, again, does not support the hypothesis.

Age, judging from the .10 gamma, has an extremely weak association with dissent. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. The major point of interest, concerning age, is that 78 percent of all respondents express a willingness to dissent. This is indeed phenomenal, especially when 76.8 percent of the thirteen and fourteen year olds reveal a strong desire to dissent. This reinforces the previous assumption that the socialization process is instilling dissenting attitudes at a very early age.

No association exists between social class and support for democratic norms. A gamma of .009 fails to support the hypothesis. One would have expected social class to have an association with support, simply because participation was associated to a slight extent. Table 11 displays the results for support by social class.

Although little difference exists between the social classes, the marginals show 40 percent of the respondents rank low on the support scale. This does not necessarily mean those who receive low scores favor a return to authoritarian norms. Over 20 percent of the respondents in this category replied that they engage in the electoral

TABLE 11

Support for Democratic Norms Cross Tabulated  
with Social Class (in percentages)

Support	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	59.1	59.2	61.5	61.0	56.9	66.7	59.6
Low	40.9	40.7	38.5	39.0	43.0	33.3	40.4
Total	479	307	104	100	65	27	100
							N=1082

process in order to elect a qualified spokesman. An answer of this sort tends to have an elitist bias, and therefore it was scored as an undemocratic response. Thus, we can conclude that the majority of West German youths support the democratic process, but a significant portion still have attitudes which favor elitism.

A  $-.02$  gamma indicates that sex is also not a determinant of support. This rejects the stated hypothesis. Males and females were equally supportive of democratic norms. Again, this is surprising, based on the fact that West German males have benefitted from the democratic process to a much greater extent than females. Males are usually the office holders in West Germany.

Age is independent of support ( $\text{gamma} = -.009$ ), which refutes the hypothesis. This is contrary to the findings

of Dennis et. al., who found a 45 percent increase from the youngest to the oldest German youth.<sup>3</sup> The indicator for support in the Dennis survey asked whether or not the youths thought democracy was the best form of government. Support for this project is concerned with the actual motives behind voting. Children in most western societies are socialized to believe that an elected public official should be a direct representative of the masses. This is a very fundamental democratic belief. However, as the child progresses in age he/she develops occupational aspirations. Accompanying these aspirations is a higher level of maturity, knowledge and sophistication. Maturity, knowledge and sophistication tend to make individuals view politics in a more pragmatic sense. They begin to recognize the need for professional leadership. This professional leadership, they come to realize, requires managerial and political expertise. This expertise, they soon discover, cannot be found among the German masses. Therefore, their motives behind voting may have been more elitist oriented rather than democratic.<sup>4</sup>

A  $-.06$  gamma between social class and trust demonstrates a slight inverse relationship. This also does not support the hypothesis. One would have expected the upper middle and upper class to have a higher level of trust in the government. The government officials in West Germany are from the upper stratum and are more socially and economically homogeneous with the upper stratum

youths. The following table reveals the attitudes concerning trust and social class.

TABLE 12  
Trust in Government Cross Tabulated  
with Social Class (in percentages)

Trust	Social Class						Total
	Lower	Upper Lower	Lower Middle	Middle	Upper Middle	Upper	
High	38.4	32.1	26.8	31.6	21.3	52.6	34.2
Medium	31.1	36.2	40.2	36.7	36.6	31.6	34.2
Low	30.5	31.7	32.9	31.6	42.5	15.8	31.5
Total	380	243	82	79	47	19	100 N=850

The marginals show that German youths as a whole are equally divided in their attitudes concerning trust. 31.5 percent of the respondents have low trust, 34.2 percent have a medium amount of trust and 31.5 percent of the respondents have very high trust in the government. Although 31.5 percent score low on the trust scale, it by no means suggests a legitimacy crises for the future. However, future researchers should continue to monitor the percent for low trust.

Of more concern, is the fact that upper middle and upper class youths did not reveal more trusting attitudes. The upper stratum youth are the future participants. A



prolonged lack of trust, could possibly reduce upper class participation.

Sex has no association with trust. The percentage distribution among males and females is roughly equivalent. Again, there is an equal distribution among the levels of trust for both sexes. Age has an inverse association with trust,  $-.11$ , which refutes the hypothesis. Perhaps the cognitive development thesis can be applied to this finding. Children are socialized to support authority at a very early age. In the child's eyes, the chief of state, mayor, policeman and other figures of authority are viewed as being very benevolent and benign. However, support for authority is by no means a static phenomena. As age increases the youth begins to realize that the figures of authority are not as benevolent as he/she once perceived them to be. The youth begins to see limitations, deficiencies and negative qualities in the authorities. Hence, the decline in trust.<sup>5</sup>

To summarize this section, of the three independent variables, social class has the strongest association with participant attitudes. However, the association is much too weak to actually support the hypothesis. Sex also has an association with participation, but again is much too small to support the hypothesis. Age, virtually has no association with participation.

Social class has a small inverse relationship with political interest, while sex and age have no association

with interest. Social class has an inverse relationship with dissent, while sex and age have practically no association. Social class, along with sex, do not have an association with support, while age has a very slight inverse relationship. Social class and sex have no association with trust, while age has a slight inverse relationship. In short, not one hypothesis was supported. Neither social class, sex or age have a positive association with any of the five political attitudes.

With the refutation of the existing hypotheses, through the gamma statistic, it can now be surmised that the mean index scores will reveal only miniscule variation between the social classes, the two sexes and the different age groups. Table 13 reveals the slight variations.

The mean scores do not reveal any discernible differences for any of the categories. The hypotheses relating an upper class, males and older age to the various political attitudes remain rejected. Respondents of the three different social class anticipate approximately the same amount of participation, express the same amount of interest, dissent, support and trust. Males and females express similar attitudes and the three age groups are very analogous in their political beliefs.

In order to test whether or not upper class males and upper class, older youths are more positive in their political orientations, one much control for social class.

TABLE 13

Mean Scores for Participation, Interest, Dissent,  
Support and Trust by Social Class, Sex and Age.

	Social Class			Sex		Age		
	High	Middle	Low	Male	Female	13-14	15-16	17-20
Participation	2.40	2.32	2.23	2.28	2.20	2.27	2.22	2.32
Interest	3.08	3.00	3.16	3.16	3.10	3.14	3.11	3.25
Dissent	3.60	3.65	3.79	3.74	3.75	3.73	3.74	3.81
Support	1.66	1.59	1.59	1.60	1.59	1.60	1.60	1.58
Trust	4.97	4.54	4.74	4.70	4.69	4.93	3.65	4.63

Scores are as follows: Participation 1= low, 2= medium, 3= high. Interest 2= low, 3= medium, 4= high. Dissent 2= low, 3= medium, 4= high. Support 1= low, 2= high. Trust 4= low, 5= medium, 6= high.

The hypotheses stated that the upper class males and upper class older youths are the most participant oriented, interested in politics, willing to dissent, supportive of norms and the most trusting in government. The following data in Table 14 displays the mean scores for the two sexes when controlling for social class.

Again, we observe minimal differences in the mean scores. Any detailed analysis would be misleading. Upper class males do not have attitudes which reflect the impact of social stratification. Upper class females also do not deviate to any discernible extent than the females of

TABLE 14

Mean Scores for Participation, Interest, Dissent,  
Support and Trust broken down by Sex, controlling  
for Social Class

	Males			Females		
	Social Class					
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
Participation	2.51	2.45	2.24	2.28	2.20	2.21
Interest	3.06	2.97	3.20	3.10	3.03	3.12
Dissent	3.68	3.63	3.77	3.52	3.67	3.81
Support	1.76	1.60	1.59	1.55	1.58	1.58
Trust	4.89	4.74	4.68	5.08	4.30	4.81

Range of Scores: Participation 1= low, 2= medium, 3= high. Interest 2= low, 3= medium, 4= high. Dissent 2= low, 3= medium, 4= high. Support 1= low, 2= high. Trust 4= low, 5= medium, 6= high.

the mass. We also see a definite similarity between males and females throughout all the mean scores.

The results up to this point do not suggest the persistence of the expert society. The youths, regardless of their sex or social class have very similar political orientations. No meaningful associations were found between the independent and dependent variables. The gammas were much too weak to support the hypotheses. The mean scores revealed little difference in political attitudes among the two classes, the two sexes and the three age groups.

Further tests discovered that minimal differences exists between the two sexes when controlling for social class. In short, all the hypotheses have been unequivocally rejected.

Proceeding ahead, the researcher must now test the hypothesis which stated that the older upper class youths would be more positive in their political orientations. This requires that the three age groups be controlled by social class. Judging from the previous results, no discernible differences are expected. Table 15 confirms this expectation.

TABLE 15

Mean Scores for Participation, Interest, Dissent, Support and Trust by Age, Controlling for Social Class.

	<u>AGE</u>								
	13-14			15-16			17-20		
	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low	High	Middle	Low
Participation	2.33	2.42	2.31	2.36	2.31	2.19	2.62	2.36	2.28
Interest	3.66	3.12	3.14	3.06	2.99	3.15	3.00	3.02	3.50
Dissent	3.00	3.85	3.78	3.63	3.65	3.77	3.60	3.66	3.88
Support	1.50	1.75	1.60	1.65	1.59	1.59	1.75	1.53	1.55
Trust	6.00	5.75	4.93	4.84	4.52	4.66	5.33	4.56	4.68

Range of Scores: Participation 1= low, 2= medium, 3= high. Interest 2= low, 3= medium, 4= high. Dissent 2= low, 3= medium, 4= high. Support 1= low, 2= high. Trust 4= low, 5= medium, 6= high.

The similarity of mean scores clearly refutes the hypothesis. The three different age groups are almost identical in their political attitudes and these attitudes do not vary with social class. There are slight differentiations, but certainly not enough to support the hypotheses. Upper class older youths are by no means the most participant oriented, interested in politics, willing to dissent, supportive of democratic norms or the most trusting in government.

West German youths, regardless of their social stratum, sex or age hold very similar political beliefs. When social class is controlled, we continue to observe similar political attitudes among the sexes and the three age groups. The findings are without a doubt in direct contradiction to the results for previous adult surveys.

Viewed in a different perspective, the results are quite revealing. The socialization process may be failing to act as an effective instrument in maintaining a stratified political culture. However, one of the hypotheses has yet to be tested. We have not observed which independent variable exerts the most independent influence in the development of political attitudes. Based on previous results, the author anticipates that the hypothesis will be rejected. However, in order to test this we must conduct a multiple regression. The results for the multiple regression are as follows.

TABLE 16

## Multiple Regression for Political Participation

	Beta	Simple r	Multiple R
Social Class	.16	.13	.13
Sex	.13	.10	.17
Age	-.12	.06	.20

The beta weights indicate that of the three independent variables, social class exerts the most influence in the development of participant attitudes. An increase in one standardized unit of social class creates a .16 unit increase in political participation. This does support the hypothesis, although the impact of social class is rather slight.

A -.13 beta for sex and participation reveals that being of the male sex is more advantageous for developing participant attitudes. By being a male, participant attitudes will increase by .13 units. Again, we see that the impact of sex is rather slight. A negative beta for age indicates that a one unit increase in age will actually decrease participant attitudes by .12 units. An important point to note, is that the three independent variables taken together account for only 4 percent of the variance. 96 percent of the variance remains unexplained.

The regressions concerning interest, dissent, support and trust continued to reject the hypotheses, for no significant results were found. Social class and sex exert influence on participant attitudes, but even this influence is minimal. The regressions concerning interest, dissent, support and trust may be found in the appendix of this project.

The results of the preceding analysis obviously conflict with previous surveys dealing with German children as well as German adults. This requires a conclusion, to which we now turn.



## CHAPTER 3

## Notes

1. There is a possibility that the small N in the upper class category is responsible for the weak gamma. If the upper class and upper middle categories were combined the gamma may have been stronger.

2. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1965), p. 313.

3. Jack Dennis, et. al., "Political Socialization to Democratic Orientations in Four Western Systems," in Socialization to Politics, ed. Jack Dennis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973), p. 185-196. (It should be pointed out however, that the Dennis et. al., sample included youths from nine to fourteen years old.)

4. Reflecting on the review of literature, the author now believes that a hypothesis relating an upper class and an older age to less support for democratic norms may have been more appropriate. In any event, the hypothesis still would not have been supported.

5. For a discussion of cognitive development, one should consult David Easton and Jack Dennis, "The Child's Image of Government," in Socialization to Politics, ed. Jack Dennis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973), pp. 59-81.

## CHAPTER 4

While reading this conclusion, it should be kept in mind that this survey only dealt with a sample of West German youths in the city of Cologne. The survey was also conducted in a year of political and social unrest. Therefore, the conclusion which is speculation as well as general, is more applicable to the youths of this sample. Furthermore, a survey conducted in a different time period could possibly have yielded different results.

The political socialization process appears to be failing to maintain the traditional political culture in West Germany. Somewhere, in the socialization process, a breakdown is occurring which is creating a transformation in the political culture. Due to the fact that psychological orientations to political objects are acquired through the socialization process, this can be the only logical deduction.

However, the question remains as to exactly where the breakdown or discontinuity is occurring. It is very unlikely that the parents of three children are failing to transmit their political values to their offspring. For instance, why would upper class parents, who are interested in politics, transmit norms which foster disinterest? This would not be the case.

One then wonders whether or not another primary agent of socialization is responsible for this transformation, i.e., the school. "The same schooling agencies which provide the child with the fundamentals of his society's technology also help him acquire the cultural norms and expectations associated with membership."<sup>1</sup> In West Germany, the stratified school system certainly would be expected to maintain class based political beliefs. However, here we do see the beginning of a change. Professor Baker found that only 65 percent of the Gymnasium sample reported to have engaged in political discussion within the school. Apparently the Gymnasium is placing little emphasis on political dialogue. In contrast, 82 percent of the vocational school students reported to have engaged in political discussion within the school. Thus, the Gymnasium may be stifling certain political attitudes, whereas the vocational schools may be developing them. Although this may aid in explaining part of the transformation, it is still unlikely that the school is the primary agent responsible for this.

Therefore, one can surmise that while the home is not the agent responsible for this transformation and that the school may be partially influential, some other agent of socialization may be performing a vital role in this transformation. This other agent of socialization may be the peer group.

Socialization theory is presently predicated on the

belief that peer groups provide cues which reinforce political beliefs formulated in the home. At least this is the case in stable political systems. The peer group does, however, have distinctive characteristics which set this agent apart from the home and the school. Peer groups enable a highly personal and emotionally involved relationship.<sup>2</sup> Katz and Lazarsfeld have pointed this out in Personal Influence. As they put it: "Interpersonal relationships seem to be 'anchorage' points for individual opinions, attitudes, habits and values."<sup>3</sup>

The role of the peer group does, however, appear to be changing, according to David Riesman. Riesman believes that the peer groups in modern, highly industrialized societies is replacing the home and the school as the most important agent of socialization.<sup>4</sup> S. N. Eisenstadt in From Generation to Generation argues the same point:

Unlike primitive societies, modern states are not based on kinship or other personalized arrangements. Because the political and social systems are not based on, or modeled after the family structure, the family is a less suitable training ground for participation in society. Consequently, age homogeneous groups play more significant socializing roles.<sup>5</sup>

It is hard to determine if the peer group in West Germany is serving as a significant socializing agent. If it is, then why would it be transforming the attitudes of the youth, rather than maintaining them? This question is hard to give a concrete answer to, however, it does deserve speculation.

The emergence of new political or social issues in the late sixties may have been instrumental in increasing the socializing role of peer groups. If issues in 1967 were of a controversial nature, then it would be the peer group which would influence how these issues were perceived. Youths would be more influenced by their peers as opposed to their parents or teachers. M. Kent Jennings and Richard Niemi have also come to this conclusion concerning adolescent attitudes in the United States:

Recent movements in the politicization of high school youth offer at least superficial evidence in support of this reasoning. When the political issues involve local issues or national issues of direct youth concern -- such as the draft or the Vietnam war -- the prominence of friendship groups and student groups seems to rise.<sup>6</sup>

Richard Merritt investigated controversial issues of this sort in West Berlin. The issues, which occurred in the late sixties, created a great deal of student unrest. The following are issues which Merritt considered to be the crucial issues.

First, the policy of restoration politics served to initiate an anti-establishment mood among the students. Restoration politics included the reinstallation of pre-Nazi elites and reinstitution of industry and authority patterns which stressed passivity and submissiveness. This was met with great protest, especially among the college students of West Berlin.<sup>7</sup>

According to Merritt, student groups protested

proposed government legislation which gave the executive branch in West Germany greater control in national emergencies. Another factor, which promoted student unrest, was the formation of the "Grand Coalition," in November, 1966. This new form of government, which allied the SPD with the CDU, gave the coalition over 90 percent of the seats in the Bundestag. This, according to Merritt, "caused much nervousness among observers of West German politics."<sup>8</sup> The student groups began to form extraparliamentary opposition, due to the fact that no form of opposition existed within the legislature.

The university also played a significant role in creating student unrest. The faculty at the University of West Berlin instituted a policy which required mandatory expulsion of students who failed to take their comprehensive examinations within a required time frame. The administration justified this action by pointing to the increasing overcrowdedness of the university. However, the students viewed this policy in a different perspective. "Many students, however, felt that the measures were aimed at those who had reduced their work load to participate more actively in politics."<sup>9</sup>

To protest these measures, students resorted to mass demonstrations, sit-ins, seizure of university institutions and even the formation of a "critical university." The "critical university" was a concept modeled after the University of California at Berkeley in which an informal

atmosphere composed of students, teachers and workers conducted workshops which focused on controversial socio-political issues. The university students, according to Merritt, even began to "forge ties" with the working class in West Berlin. The student movement was met with a high degree of hostility by the authorities and several encounters with the police resulted in bloodshed.<sup>10</sup>

This wave of protest and the stressing demand for social reform may have been instrumental in influencing the political attitudes of the West German youth. Controversial issues of this sort would place the peer group in a position to act as a decisive socializing agent.

The West German youth, who has undergone a socializing experience which makes him more supportive of a stratified political culture, begins to see flaws in the political system. In turn his peers assist him in rationalizing and analyzing these flaws. The interaction with peers may be enough to alter many of the beliefs which have been inculcated at a very early age.

One may argue at this point that the peers of the different social classes may perceive the movement in an entirely different perspective. There has been empirical research which demonstrates how peer pressure differs between strata.<sup>11</sup> However, the author of this paper argues that the protest movement may have had enough impact to span across the two social classes. The youths, regardless of their social class, could not have ignored

the issues of the movement. The Gymnasium students would tend to identify with the movement due to the fact that they are in the same social class as the protestors. The vocational school students would identify with the movement because many of the reforms would have possibly increased the opportunities for the mass. Thus, the class based political attitudes begin to merge. Peers from both classes would perceive the issues in a very similar perspective. This, then could account for the remarkable similarity between the two classes.

Alternative hypotheses also exist for this class mergence. Perhaps economic affluence, which is a trait of postwar industrial societies, is responsible for this mergence in attitudes. Paul R. Abramson discusses this hypothesis concerning the reduction in class conflict in Western Europe:

In a prosperous society the differential material rewards which higher and lower strata received are increasingly narrowed. Differences in life style, which in the past were linked with visible signs of status, are reduced. In a growing industrial (perhaps, most industrial) economy, the middle class (which since the time of Aristotle has been associated with temperate politics) tends to expand. Opportunities for intergenerational social mobility rise and further reduce class based antagonisms. Class conflict continues to exist, but it becomes institutionalized. Working class demands are channeled through an increasingly legitimate trade union structure. Working class political parties begin to share power and become both legitimized and conservatized. Political parties abandon their anachronistic ideologies and their class directed appeals.<sup>12</sup>



Abramson utilized this hypothesis when explaining the decline in class based partisanship in Germany. This hypothesis does appear to be valid in terms of partisanship. The SPD has in fact become more "conservatized" and a greater number of white collar workers have left the CDU to join the SPD.<sup>13</sup>

However, the economic miracle hypothesis may not be applicable to the changing attitudes of the German youth. If one is to accept this hypothesis, then one must also accept the notion that the parents of these children are no longer supportive of an expert society. Parents of the mass would tend to believe that they too should exercise "multiple political input roles." Parents of the upper class children would no longer tend to feel that they should dominate decision making functions. Therefore, if the economic miracle hypothesis was accepted then we would also have to conclude that the parents are no longer socializing their children into an acceptance of a political system controlled by experts. Although it is possible, it is highly improbable. The review of literature, which is all post war, certainly does not suggest such a transformation in adult attitudes. Political attitudes still exemplify a high degree of class stratification. Thus, a decline in class based partisanship may correlate with prosperity, but a decline in class based attitudes may not. Therefore, it is doubtful that any radical transformation in the socialization process within the home has occurred

concerning the development of the political attitudes under survey.

Another alternative explanation suggests a life-cycle effect.

A life-cycle explanation maintains that young persons are less affected by their social class than are older persons, since young persons have had less experience in the work force and have had less time than older persons to learn the social and political norms of their social class.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, as one moves into the work force he will adapt to the norms of his social class. The life-cycle explanation is rather hard to justify concerning the emergence of the youths attitudes. Several socialization surveys have clearly demonstrated that political attitudes are instilled in children at a very early age and that the attitudes differ by social class as well.<sup>15</sup> The German youths in this survey range from age thirteen to twenty. Certainly class related attitudes have already been instilled during early socializing experiences. Therefore, the life-cycle hypothesis is rather devoid of any substantive content.

The results also discovered definite similarities in the attitudes of the two sexes. It is doubtful if the issues of the sixties were responsible for this emergence. Perhaps it is here that the economic miracle hypothesis can be applied. The status of women in West Germany is changing to a degree. 39 percent of the working force in

West Germany is now composed of women. The Equal Rights Act of 1957 and the Marshall Plan certainly were instrumental in spawning this change in status. More occupational opportunities are available for women.

Accompanying this change in status may be a basic change in the authority structure of the West German family. The German family may be moving from a patriarchal structure to one where women have an equal role in raising children. Gunter Kloss does discuss this point. "German husbands of the pre-war generation do very little domestic work. The younger generation are more willing to help their wives, and marriage is becoming more of a partnership."<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, one can deduce that girls are not being socialized into the usual subservient role. Instead, they may be encouraged to pursue careers and even engage in politics. Enrollment in German secondary schools has increased tremendously for women.<sup>17</sup> The mothers of the youths in this survey have undoubtedly benefited from this increase in opportunity. Therefore, the youths of this sample are probably the first generation reared in a non-patriarchal home. The theory behind this hypothesis appears to be sound. However, an examination of women's attitudes in the Di Palma survey does not support this hypothesis.

The men and women in Di Palma's survey demonstrated large differences in their attitudes toward political participation. In fact, the women with secondary educations

only surpassed males with primary educations by .4 (8.7 as opposed to 8.4). Even when Di Palma controlled for skills and opportunities, sex continued to affect participation.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the mothers of these children are probably attaining more skills and being presented with more opportunities. However, it remains doubtful that they are acquiring new political attitudes with these skills. The West German family may be becoming less patriarchal, but this does not necessarily infer that girls reared in these homes are undergoing a socializing process similar to boys. They may be socialized into a new occupational role, but not a new political role. Economic and educational equality does not necessarily reduce sex related political roles. Hence, it still remains an open question as to why females resemble males in this particular survey.

The similarity of attitudes between social classes suggest that the attitudinal change is generational in nature. Whether or not the similar attitudes persist into the future remains to be seen. It is possible that the issues will have had only a temporary effect on these youths. The survey was conducted in a year of political and social protest (1967). If the issues do have a prolonged effect on the attitudes of these youths, then the political atmosphere in West Germany is bound to undergo a transformation. Politics will not remain an upper class function. The mergence of attitudes between the social

classes may even begin to decrease the desire for expertise. Multiple input roles will be exercised from all segments of society. The political elite will not necessarily have to have a university degree nor will a stratified school system be instrumental in determining who will achieve expert or elite status. In short, politics in West Germany will be more egalitarian.

### Suggestions for Further Research

It is obvious that further research into the attitudes of West German youth is necessary. A survey conducted in the late seventies would enable one to observe political attitudes during a time of relative political and social tranquility. Therefore, one would be able to test whether or not the breakdown in class related attitudes is permanent, or if it was only temporary.

If class based attitudes exist in the late seventies, then one can conclude that the expert society has persisted in West Germany. Thus, the similarity of attitudes in 1967 were only a temporary phenomena. However, if attitudes are similar between the different social classes, then one can continue to conclude that the expert society has ceased to exist. If this is the case, then it will be the function of the researcher to investigate which agent of socialization is responsible for the demise of the expert society.

One agent of socialization which would require

investigation is the peer group. Would the peer group, in both social classes, continue to be an influential agent in transmitting similar political attitudes during times of tranquility as well as unrest? The West German peer group has been relatively ignored in most of the socialization literature thus far. As such, a systematic survey of the peer group would be a definite contribution to the literature.

The home would also have to be investigated as a source of change. Would parents of different social classes be transmitting similar political attitudes to their offspring? Perhaps the parents would hold similar political attitudes regardless of their social class. Although this was not the case for adults in the Di Palma survey, thirty years of economic prosperity could narrow the gap in political attitudes. Therefore, the parents of both social classes could transmit similar political attitudes to their children.

The impact of the media would also undergo investigation. What influence would the media have in creating a mergence in political attitudes between the different social classes? Could the media transmit an image of political activity in a manner which affects both classes in a similar fashion? For instance, what if politics was portrayed by the media as being dishonest and covert? This could very well discourage an individual from participating in politics, regardless of his/her social

class. In short, several agents of socialization would have to be thoroughly investigated in order to arrive at a sound explanation.

## CHAPTER 4

## Notes

1. Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt, Political Socialization (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1969), pp. 143-144.

2. Ibid., p. 132.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 127.

5. Ibid., p. 128.

6. Suzanne Koprince Sebert; M. Kent Jennings, and Richard G. Niemi, "The Political Texture of Peer Groups," in The Political Character of Adolescence, ed. M. Kent Jennings and Richard Niemi (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 242.

7. Richard L. Merritt, "The Student Protest Movement in West Berlin," Comparative Politics 1 (July 1969): 523.

8. Ibid., p. 524.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Kenneth P. Langton, "Peer Group and School and the Political Socialization Process," American Political Science Review 61 (September 1967): 751-758.

12. Paul R. Abramson, "Social Class and Political Change in Western Europe," Comparative Political Studies 4 (July 1971): 131.

13. Hans D. Klingemann and Franz Urban Pappi, "The 1969 Bundestag Election in the Federal Republic of Germany," Comparative Politics 2 (July 1970): 533.

14. Paul R. Abramson, "Social Class and Political Change in Western Europe," Comparative Political Studies 4 (July 1971): 135.

15. See for example, Edward S. Greenberg, "Black Children and the Political System," in Socialization to Politics, ed. Jack Dennis (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1973), pp. 257-268.



16. Gunter Kloss, West Germany: An Introduction  
(New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1976), p. 157.

17. Giuseppe Di Palma, Apathy and Participation  
(New York: The Free Press, 1970), p. 136.

18. Ibid., pp. 134-135.

## APPENDIX I

## German Youth Study Indicators

Social Class Index

VAR001 School Type  
VAR013 Father's Occupation  
VAR015 Monthly Income of Family  
VAR016 Father's Education  
VAR017 Mother's Education

Sex

VAR002

Age

VAR003

Participation

VAR004  
Looking ahead to the time when you are on your own, will you participate often, occasionally, seldom, or not at all in political and public affairs?

Support for Democratic Norms

VAR007  
When class speaker elections are held, why do you vote in them?

Political Interest Index

VAR005  
Some people feel that campaigning is needed so that the public can judge candidates and issues. Others say that it causes so much bitterness and is so unreliable that we'd be better off without it. What do you think: Is it needed or would we be better off without it?

VAR006  
Do you find election campaigns interesting and exciting or uninteresting and ridiculous?

Willingness to Dissent Index

VAR009  
Suppose you had been treated unfairly, would you feel free to talk to the teacher about it, would you feel a bit uneasy, or would it be better not to talk to the teacher about it?

VAR011

Suppose you did not agree with your teacher's explanation of a particular subject, would you express your opinion about the matter always, sometimes, seldom or never? Why?

Trust in Government Index

VAR021

Some people have so much influence over the way the government is run that the interests of the majority are ignored.

VAR022

There are quite a few people running the government that are a little crooked.

VAR023

It is not too often that you can trust the government in Bonn to do what is right.

## INDEX RELIABILITY

Pearson Correlation Coefficients  
Social Class

VAR013	VAR001			
	.35			
	(1135)			
	S=0.001			
VAR015		VAR013		
	.27	.25		
	(1173)	(893)		
	S=.001	S=.001		
VAR016			VAR015	
	.38	.37	.35	
	(1245)	(1062)	(1018)	
	S=.001	S=.001	S=.001	
VAR017				VAR016
	.23	.20	.22	.42
	(1403)	(1052)	(1113)	(1246)
	S=.001	S=.001	S=.001	S=.001

Political Interest Index

VAR005

VAR006 -.16

(1461)

S=.001

Dissent Index

VAR009

VAR001 -.10

(900)

S=.001

Trust Index

VAR021

VAR022 -.33

(637)

S=.001

VAR022

VAR023 .37

(715)

.26

(607)

S=.001

S=.001

## APPENDIX 2

Table 17

Multiple Regression and Political Interest

	Beta	Simple r	Multiple R
Social Class	-.06	-.06	.06
Sex	-.05	-.05	.07
Age	.01	.01	.08

Table 18

Multiple Regression and Willingness to Dissent

	Beta	Simple r	Multiple R
Social Class	-.19	-.19	.19
Sex	.03	.01	.19
Age	.07	.03	.20

Table 19

Multiple Regression and Support for Democratic Norms

	Beta	Simple r	Multiple R
Social Class	.01	.01	.01
Sex	.02	.02	.02
Age	.004	.00	.02

Table 20  
Multiple Regression for Trust

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	Beta	Simple r	Multiple R
Social Class	-.03	-.05	.05
Sex	-.06	-.03	.06
Age	-.12	-.12	.13

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MEASURING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION ON  
THE POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION OF WEST GERMAN YOUTH

by

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The objective of this Master's Thesis is to measure the impact of social stratification on the political socialization of West German youth. Five political attitudes of youths from different socio-economic classes are observed in order to assess the transmission of class related attitudes through the socialization process. Although one social class in West Germany is designated as the major independent variable in the formation of political attitudes, the impact of sex and age is also observed.

The hypotheses state that youths from the upper socio-economic stratum will anticipate a greater level of political participation, are more interested in political affairs, are more willing to dissent against authority, are more supportive of democratic norms and are more trusting in government. Additional hypotheses state that males will be more positive in their political orientations and that these positive orientations will increase with age.

The data for this thesis has been obtained from Kendall Baker, who conducted a political socialization survey in Cologne, West Germany in the spring of 1967. In order to test the hypotheses, three statistical methods are employed. The first method is through the use of gamma. Gamma measures the association level between the independent and dependent variable. Gamma ranges from -1., which is a perfect inverse relationship, to +1. which is a perfect positive relationship. The second method employed

is the use of mean index scores for each political attitude. The third method, and by far the most stringent of the three, is multiple regression. The multiple regression allows one to observe which independent variable, i.e., social class, sex or age, exerts the most independent influence on the political attitudes under survey.

The results of the hypotheses tests utilizing gamma and the mean index scores did not reveal any discernible differences in political attitudes between the social classes, the two sexes or the different age groups. The results fail to support any of the hypotheses. The multiple regression demonstrates that only one political attitude, political participation, is affected by social class.

The author sets forth several hypotheses to explain the emergence in political attitudes between the different social classes, the two sexes and the different age groups. The first hypothesis, and the one the author favors, concerns the emergence of peer groups as decisive socializing agents. Controversial political and social issues were erupting in West Germany during the late sixties, and it may have been these issues which placed the peer group in a position to act as the primary agent of socialization. Another hypothesis concerns the increase in economic prosperity that occurred in West Germany following World War II. With an increase in prosperity West German society has become less stratified. The gap between the elite and the

mass has narrowed. Therefore, similar political attitudes exist across the different social classes. The last hypothesis concerning this class mergence in attitudes suggests a life cycle effect. Youths, because they have not entered the work force, have not developed norms of their respective social class. The author also sets forth suggestions for further research.