

## The Distribution of Political Participation in Norway: Alternative Perspectives on a Problem of Democratic Theory\*

Lawrence E. Rose, University of Virginia

Ragnar Waldahl, University of Oslo

How citizen participation is distributed within the population is one of several fundamental questions of general significance to democratic theorists. This article briefly reviews some of the most salient normative arguments regarding the distribution of democratic citizen participation and then turns to the principal conceptual-methodological issues to be encountered when considering the basic empirical question. Against this background the Norwegian case is discussed in detail, first in light of prior synchronic investigations, then by means of a diachronic analysis of panel study data from the 1965, 1969 and 1973 national election surveys. These analyses document more broadly based citizen participation in Norway than might otherwise be anticipated and discredit the idea of a cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern of political involvement. The article concludes with a discussion of several considerations relating to these findings, all of which suggest the need for greater sensitivity and explicitness among those who would advance claims or comparisons regarding the distribution of citizen participation in modern democracies.

### Introduction

For anyone interested in democracy as a form of social organization, the matter of citizen involvement in political life is a fundamental, inescapable concern. By virtually any formulation of the concept, some element of citizen participation in and control over basic political processes constitutes a minimum condition for the realization of democratic social life. Underlying this relatively straightforward and largely undisputable proposition, however, lies a quagmire of difficult theoretical issues. Three questions stand out in particular: (1) what kinds of citizen participation are necessary and/or sufficient for a democracy to exist; (2) how much citizen participation (i.e., with respect to both rates and frequency of mass-based political involvement) is necessary and/or sufficient for the achievement of democracy; and (3) given certain rates of citizen participa-

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tion, what distribution of this political activity within the population is compatible with democratic forms of social organization?

Answers to these questions vary considerably among scholars and laymen alike, variations not infrequently being due to differences in basic ideological orientations, to alternative perceptions of the practical implications arising from a given response and the potential consequences of yielding to the limitations imposed by pragmatic considerations, or to some combination of these and other reasons.<sup>1</sup> Answers to these questions, moreover, are often interlinked such that the response to one question may depend upon the response to another. The theoretical domain of democratic citizen participation, in short, is not readily traversed by a straight and easy path; it is instead a rugged terrain covered with numerous intellectual thickets, brambles, and potential pitfalls.

In light of this situation, the objective of the present article is intentionally modest. Rather than attempting to undertake a comprehensive discussion and analysis of these three questions and their interlinkages, the article investigates one specific question in the Norwegian context – i.e., what is the distribution of citizen participation in Norway? The purpose here is not to establish and apply an absolute standard for judging how democratic Norway or any other society may be in this regard. The intent is instead to offer some illustrative remarks concerning alternative approaches to the question at hand. Hence, some general theoretical viewpoints together with two basic methodological alternatives are briefly presented and discussed in the next section. In the subsequent section the central empirical issue is addressed by means of evidence drawn from assorted Norwegian cross-section sample surveys. A general concluding section then serves to consider the significance and implications of the empirical findings, and to place them in a broader context.

## The Distribution of Citizen Participation – Theoretical and Analytical Perspectives

In considering the distribution of citizen participation in a political system, the primary question is one of how many people are active. Do all citizens take part in politics or only a few? The answer to this question is important for various reasons. From the micro-level perspective of the individual, for example, at least two lines of reasoning may be advanced based on instrumentalist and developmentalist views of political participation respectively.<sup>2</sup> In the first instance political activity is seen as a

rational means to other ends, whether these ends be the achievement of new goals or the preservation of the status quo. Individual political involvement, in other words, is regarded as a critical mechanism for the promotion and/or protection of specific interests. From this perspective, the lack of participation carries with it a potential for interest neglect or misrepresentation, a risk that increases with the lack of participation over a wider spectrum of activities and over a longer period of time.<sup>3</sup>

In the developmentalist view, by contrast, political participation is seen as an end in its own right. Independent of any ulterior considerations concerning other ends or interests which may be involved, democratic political activity is argued to be of importance in this case due to the beneficial consequences believed to be associated with merely entering the political arena. Such activity is in particular held to facilitate individual self-realization, the achievement of a sense of social responsibility, and thus ultimately genuine human fulfillment. By this view as well, therefore, the distribution of political activity – and especially the prospect of any systematic lack of involvement by specific individuals – represents a source of great concern since politically passive citizens may fail to realize their human potential.<sup>4</sup>

This last argument, to the extent it is valid, is also of relevance for a more macro-level consideration pertaining to the importance of the distribution of citizen participation. For, as many democratic political theorists point out, society as a whole stands to gain or lose in keeping with the composite character and capacities of its individual members. Hence, if political activity does indeed have beneficial consequences for individual citizens in terms of their intellectual, social, and moral capabilities, then it should presumably be in a society's interest to encourage widespread citizen participation. To do otherwise, or to tolerate the limitation of political activity to a restricted segment of the population, carries with it not only a risk that individual interests and personal development may suffer, but that society's interests may therefore suffer in turn.

There is also another reason why the distribution of citizen participation is important from a macro-level political perspective. Thus, a concern of many political theorists has been the political system's capacity to deal effectively with various participatory inputs (cf. Deutsch 1963; Easton 1966; Huntington and Nelson 1976; Schumpeter 1950). In this sense not only is the total number of participatory demands relevant, but equally significant is the relative distribution of these demands among the population as a whole. Certainly it must be acknowledged that even a few activists may be capable of generating 'input overload' under some conditions. Nevertheless, it may be argued in general that if political

activity is concentrated in the hands of a smaller number of activists (especially if the activist group is relatively homogeneous in composition), such participatory input is likely to be more readily managed and require fewer systemic resources than would be the case for a more widely dispersed participatory base. The argument here, in other words, is that everything else being equal, the resources required for processing participatory inputs will in most instances be proportionately related to the sheer number of citizens expressing participatory demands.

While the political system may in this respect enjoy a certain 'benefit of scale' to the extent that political activity is in fact relatively concentrated, the thrust of this argument obviously flies in the face of both instrumentalist and developmentalist tenets favoring more widely spread citizen involvement. This situation is indicative of the intellectual quagmire surrounding democratic political participation noted previously. The object here is not to become enmeshed in such dialectics, but to illustrate and underline the primary importance which may be accorded the distribution of citizen participation from various points of view. In the final analysis, the essence of the matter is, to rephrase the question posed above, to what degree do citizens take part in democratic socio-political life?

As previous research has shown, the answer to this fundamental question is not as straightforward as it might at first appear (cf. Verba and Nie 1972; Kim, et al. 1974; Rose 1976; Martinussen 1977 and 1979; Lafferty 1979 and 1981a). While a response may quite readily be obtained for any given form of political activity, problems arise when several different activities are considered simultaneously. The primary stumbling blocks to be encountered are conceptual-methodological in character and rest on two critical issues: first, what forms of behavior are to be treated as political participation; and, second, what time frame is to be employed in considering these activities?

Most of the early work regarding citizen participation tended to focus on voting and a few other forms of electoral behavior associated with specific election campaigns.<sup>5</sup> When these data were analyzed a recurrent pattern of findings seemed to emerge which was then more or less directly endorsed and advanced by numerous scholars. The most salient features of this pattern were that (1) voting is the only form of political activity undertaken by a majority of citizens, (2) most other forms of political activity are undertaken by a relatively small minority of the population, and (3) there typically appears to be an element of cumulative overlapping among those individuals reporting any political activity beyond voting. On the basis of these findings, one could seemingly posit

the existence of a hierarchy of participatory involvement in which those who reported the least common forms of political activity were virtually certain to report all of the more common forms of participation as well.<sup>6</sup>

The problems inherent in these findings and the data on which they rest have been identified and discussed at length previously (Verba and Nie 1972, 25 – 40; Prewitt and Nie 1971; and Rose 1976, 165 – 170). Briefly, these problems have to do with the range of political activities considered and the restricted chronological frame of reference employed. Regarding the first point, voting and related electoral behavior represent at most two of several basic modes of political participation available to most citizens in democratic societies. Others include what have been variously labeled as cooperative activity, communal activity, organizational activity, interest group activity, direct political action, protest activity, and particularized citizen contacting of public officials.<sup>7</sup> Merely because a citizen is not active in the electoral arena does not necessarily mean that he or she will also refrain from activity by one or more of these other modes of citizen involvement. There is reason to believe, in fact, that many individuals may consciously shun forms of electoral participation other than voting because of the actual or perceived partisan character of these activities.<sup>8</sup> Hence, any attempt to summarize the amount and distribution of political activity in a given setting based on only one or a few of these alternative modes of citizen participation is likely to be incomplete at best.

Equally, if not more important, is the fact that much of the earlier work on political participation commonly employed a relatively narrow time frame in constructing analytical indices. Cross-section sample surveys have typically asked about the respondent's involvement in specific election campaigns or, to the extent that non-electoral forms of political participation have been investigated, other similarly restricted time periods. The appropriateness of such conceptual-methodological decisions can again be questioned, however, particularly insofar as a more comprehensive picture of political participation is desired. Thus, it may be argued – as many have done previously in one variety or another (cf. Downs 1957; Olson 1965; Riker and Ordeshook 1968; Sproule-Jones and Hart 1973) – that what the individual confronts in contemplating political involvement at any given moment is (1) a set of needs or desires, (2) a set of valences or preferences regarding these needs and desires, (3) a set of participatory opportunities, each with its own costs in terms of the individual resources which must be expended if the activity is to be undertaken, and (4) a set of estimates as to the likely consequences (benefits or utility estimates) associated with his or her

specific participatory effort. Since each of these components is likely to vary considerably over time, it is reasonable to suggest that most individuals will reach different conclusions at different points in time in making their participatory decisions – i.e., both in terms of whether they should participate or not and, if so, by what means. If these suppositions are true, in other words, then most citizen participation is likely to be characterized by sporadic or intermittent involvement rather than continuous political activity. Under these circumstances only a more extended time perspective can provide an accurate overview of the actual distribution of citizen participation and the degree to which certain individuals are routinely active or passive.

The brunt of these comments is not to discredit all inquiries which focus on political activity occurring within a limited period of time. Rather, these remarks are intended to highlight the fact that in considering the distribution of citizen participation there are essentially two analytical alternatives available: one consists of a synchronic or 'snapshot' strategy in which the time frame is deliberately restricted to a short period, while the other constitutes a diachronic or 'moving picture' approach in which the time frame is expressly extended. Each alternative has its own clear relevance and merit given certain interests. To date, however, most work on the distribution of citizen participation has tended to be of the former variety. Little effort has been devoted to exploring the latter alternative. In large measure, it would seem, this situation derives from the frequent lack of an appropriate data base and the difficulties associated with developing a comprehensive data base on citizen participation over time. Although limited to a specific sphere of political activity (electoral-representational behavior), the present article draws on one data base for the Norwegian case which explicitly permits a diachronically-oriented view of citizen participation and allows for the presentation of some illustrative findings. It is to the Norwegian case and these two alternative perspectives which we now turn.

### Synchronic and Diachronic Views of Citizen Participation in Norway

Just how is citizen participation distributed in Norway? Seen from a participatory perspective, is Norway an egalitarian society or is it a society beset by political stratification? The best known study of the subject to date is Martinussen's book *The Distant Democracy* (1977). In this analysis of national cross-section sample survey data collected in 1969, Martinussen developed several indices of socio-political activity in



Norway, three of which concerned organizational activity, representational activity (essentially electoral activity), and direct political action. As is commonly the case, a positive intercorrelation was found among these indices, a finding which led Martinussen to conclude that

All in all, . . . the various forms of political participation go together and when we remember that it is only a small minority of voters who are politically active at all, it appears that people do not readily turn to politics as a means of altering the circumstances which shape their lives. (Martinussen 1977, 30)

For Martinussen, this conclusion is further bolstered by a subsequent cross-tabulation of the three indices which reveals that, according to the operational criteria he employs, roughly three percent of the respondents score high on all three types of political activity, slightly more than six percent score high on any two of these indices, and about 17 percent score high on one of the three types of political activity. Even if an additional 14 percent of the respondents who were only found to be active in non-political organizations were added to these figures, approximately 60 percent of the Norwegian population would still appear to be generally inactive. Based on these findings, Martinussen suggests that the Norwegian electorate can be divided into three different groups or strata – the politically active, the politically passive, and the apolitical. In Martinussen's own words,

On the assumption that to qualify as politically active, an individual should be involved in at least two forms of participation, the politically active, i.e. those taking part in political work and attempting to influence political decisions by various means, form a minority of less than 10 percent of Norwegian citizens. Approximately half of the voters are passive and consist of those who keep up with public affairs, discuss political questions in their own circles, and vote in all elections. The remainder of the voters who neither vote regularly, keep up with politics, or discuss political matters, nor attempt to influence political decisions in any way may properly be described as apolitical. (Martinussen 1977, 32)

Given Martinussen's analysis one is left with the impression that most political activity in Norway, especially any activity beyond voting and minimal attention to socio-political affairs, is limited to a relatively select few. In an extensive effort to 'revisit' and reconsider many of Martinussen's findings, however, Lafferty (1977, 1979, and 1981a) has raised a number of questions regarding Martinussen's conclusions. Most significant in the present context is Lafferty's recent work (1981a) using data drawn from a comparative community study in Norway in which he also generates three indices, in this case concerning what he terms interest group activity, electoral activity, and direct political action respectively.<sup>9</sup> When these indices are intercorrelated, they once again



yield positive, although moderate, coefficients (Pearson  $r$ 's in the range of .15 to .32), the strongest being between electoral activity and interest group activity. These findings lead Lafferty to state that 'all in all. . .the modest size of the correlations indicates that there is relatively little overlap across the three sectors. We are dealing, in other words, with three relatively separate channels of potential political influence.' (Lafferty 1981a, 40).

From this point Lafferty continues on to develop a typology of citizen political involvement in Norway. Employing his three indices of political activity, Lafferty isolates seven mutually exclusive citizen activist types or groups. These groups, and their relative sizes, are as follows: electoral activists (10%), interest-group activists (23%), electoral supporters (7%), interest-group supporters (15%), direct-actionists (9%), voters (26%), and the non-involved (10%). This typology, Lafferty argues, is constructed with a conservative bias which, if anything, may underestimate the amount of political activity and the percentage of the population that can legitimately be considered as political activists. Lafferty's conclusion, therefore, is that 'there is considerably more political participation in Norway than that indicated by *The Distant Democracy*,' (Lafferty 1981a, 44).

Yet a third study of political participation in Norway which, like both Martinussen's and Lafferty's, builds on data gathered through a single survey, is that of Rose (1976). In this study, also based on a comparative community design rather than a national cross-section sample, the author sought to tap the broadest possible spectrum of citizen involvement in socio-political affairs. Thus, using a variety of questionnaire probes, many of which intentionally incorporated a longer-term, 'quasi-dia-chronic' frame of reference, a total of 24 different measures of political participation were generated, measures concerning everything from voting and other standard forms of electoral behavior to less commonly surveyed activities such as contacting public officials, writing letters to the mass media, taking part in public protest meetings, demonstrations, or petition drives, and so forth.<sup>10</sup> Overall, anywhere from six to 88 percent of the combined community samples acknowledged undertaking these activities. Most noteworthy, however, was that even in this case, when most of the questionnaire items contained an extended chronological frame of reference which in fact served to 'inflate' the rates of political activity beyond those otherwise commonly found, voting was the only form of citizen participation reported by more than one-half of the respondents. As in previous studies, all of the remaining activities were reported by only a minority of citizens.

Given these data, Rose undertook a detailed investigation of the degree of overlap to be found among Norwegian citizens who acknowledged engaging in different political activities. Methodologically, the primary challenge confronted in such an endeavor is one of establishing significant comparative benchmarks for assessing the relative concentration or dispersion of citizen participation which actually exists. The approach Rose adopted was essentially one of generating three hypothetical frequency distributions, each of which was consistent with a logically possible condition given the marginal response frequencies for the specific forms of political activity considered. In particular, these three hypothetical distributions represented (1) a perfectly cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern reflecting a condition of maximum concentration of political activity (i.e., a pattern in keeping with the model underlying Guttman scaling routines); (2) the opposite extreme in which there is minimal overlap among citizens who report different forms of political activity (i.e., a pattern consistent with maximum dispersion of citizen participation); and (3) a condition in which the overlap observed is comparable to that characterized by principles of random chance (i.e., a pattern of overlap in which involvement in one form of political activity is independent from involvement in other forms of activity).<sup>11</sup> Once these distributions are generated, the actual overlap pattern found among those reporting different activities can then be evaluated by comparison accordingly.

In his investigation, Rose applied this analytical approach to several subsets of activities, finding in each case that the actual degree of overlap among citizen activists fell between the distribution predicted by an assumption of maximum overlap on the one hand and random overlap on the other. In other words a tendency toward some concentration of citizen participation along the lines of a cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern was to be observed, an outcome which was in keeping with the earlier findings. But more important was the fact that for each subset of activities considered, the distribution reflecting the overlap actually existing *more closely resembled* the distribution predicted by an assumption of randomness and independence than it did one predicted by assuming a cumulative hierarchical pattern of citizen participation (Rose 1976, 188 – 201).

The most striking illustration of this finding is reproduced here as Table 1. This table concerns seven 'difficult' forms of political activity – that is, forms of citizen participation which presumably require a relatively high investment of individual political resources and were reported by less than one-fifth of the respondents despite the more

Table 1. Hypothetical and actual distributions of citizens reporting any of seven 'difficult' political activities (in percent)

Number of acts performed	Overlap condition			Actual overlap D
	Maximum overlap A	Minimum overlap B	Random overlap C	
0	83	21	60	63
1	3	79	20	17
2	0	0	8	9
3	2	0	6	5
4	3	0	3	3
5	2	0	2	2
6	1	0	1	1
7	6	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

NOTE:

This table is based on the following forms of participation for which the proportion of respondents actually reporting the activity is as indicated:

1. Have communicated opinions on issues to public officials ..... 17%
2. Have contacted an extra-local official concerning an issue or problem ..... 14%
3. Have actively participated in meetings dealing with a local or national problem 14%
4. Have actively participated in connection with a local problem ..... 12%
5. Have tried to influence a decision of the municipal council, the national parliament, or some other governmental body ..... 9%
6. Have actively participated in connection with a national problem ..... 7%
7. Have written to a newspaper concerning public or political affairs ..... 6%

SOURCE: Rose (1976, 198)

encompassing operational criteria Rose employed. As is evident in Table 1, the actual pattern of overlap (column D) differs only slightly from that predicted by total independence (column C), the variance being in the direction of some minimal concentration of political activity along the lines of a cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern (column A).

These findings are all the more impressive inasmuch as all of the activities on which Table 1 is based appear, on the surface at least, to bear close affinity to one another. For this reason one might quite reasonably have anticipated a fairly high degree of intercorrelation and overlap among citizens reporting these forms of political involvement. Or, to state the point somewhat differently, it is precisely among such a set of difficult and costly political acts that a cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern – signaling the existence of a single group of committed political gladiators – might most readily be expected to obtain. Yet this is not the

case. As much as 37 percent of the citizens had engaged in at least one such difficult activity at one time or another, and none reported having engaged in all seven activities. These figures stand in contrast to six percent who could have been expected to report undertaking all seven acts under an extreme condition of cumulative overlapping, and a total of only 17 percent who would have been predicted to report one or more such activity under this same condition.

These findings do not totally dispel the notion of a more politically active strata of the population. They do, however, serve to undercut the idea that there is a single, narrowly-based participatory elite which, by virtue of greater political resources and a willingness to expend them, exercise control over all forms of political influence. These findings also show that political activity is much more widespread than might otherwise be believed given many earlier studies.<sup>12</sup>

These conclusions are born out by Rose's subsequent analyses, the simplest of which is a cross-tabulation between voting and all other forms of citizen participation. In this case Rose found only three percent of the respondents were totally inactive, that is, were citizens who seldom if ever voted and undertook no other form of political activity. Those who seldom if ever voted but engaged in other forms of citizen participation comprised an equally miniscule segment of the individuals sampled – just under two percent. Of the remaining 95 percent, approximately 15 percent were voters only, while the balance of the citizenry – fully 80 percent – not only voted regularly, but reported undertaking other forms of political activity as well. Political activity beyond voting, moreover, was not concentrated within a highly restricted segment of the population. Almost two-fifths (38 percent) of the respondents reported undertaking ten or more activities beyond voting.<sup>13</sup> Even when more demanding operational criteria were employed such that only repeated or fairly regular political involvement served to qualify individuals as activists for analytical purposes, Rose found the picture did not change dramatically.<sup>14</sup>

Rose's study, while explicitly designed with a longer-term, diachronic view of political activity in mind, nonetheless rests on data collected at a single point in time.<sup>15</sup> For a genuinely diachronic view of how citizen participation is distributed within the population, however, data generated through repeated interviews of the same individuals over time – i.e., by means of a panel study – are required. Fortunately, such a study exists for the Norwegian case. Beginning with the 1965 general election, the Norwegian electoral research program included a panel component which was subsequently carried forward through both the 1969 and

1973 elections.<sup>16</sup> The participatory activities surveyed over time in these studies are primarily election-related, and the same set of activities was not consistently surveyed on each occasion. Despite these limitations, this panel study provides a good opportunity for investigating the distribution of citizen participation over a longer period of time.

The set of participatory activities actually surveyed and the proportion of respondents reporting each form of involvement on specific occasions are presented in Table 2. In this table, two percentages appear for each activity each year, the first pertaining to the entire national cross-section sample, the second to panel respondents only. A comparison of the two columns for any given year reveals that in general panel respondents are as a group slightly more politically involved than the entire cross-section sample. In no case, however, is the difference greater than four percentage points, a difference well within margins of statistical sampling error.<sup>17</sup> Overall, therefore, the panel data offer a representative picture of individual citizen involvement in Norway for any given year and will serve as the sole basis for further analysis.

Table 2. Political activity reported by Norwegian citizens on three occasions (in percent)

Type of political activity	1965		1965		1973	
	total sample	panel sample	total sample	panel sample	total sample	panel sample
Voting	93	96	93	95	90	91
Political discussion	92	91	87	86	85	85
Attempting to persuade others how to vote	12	14	11	12	13	13
Party membership*	16	20	17	21	17	20
Participation in party activities	10	12	10	13	10	12
Attending campaign meetings or rallies	9	11	10	11	10	12
Participation in campaign work	4	5	4	5	4	5
Participation in nomination work	-**	-	4	6	5	6
Holding a position of public trust	7	9	9	11	-	-
Contributing money to a political party	7	6	-	-	-	-
Attempting to influence local government	-	-	10	12	-	-
Attempting to influence national parliament	-	-	4	5	-	-

\* Includes membership by collective affiliation.

\*\* Question not posed for the election study involved.

Before leaving Table 2, several additional remarks are in order. First, one sees once again that voting is the most common form of citizen participation reported on all occasions, more common even than general political discussion, a relatively easily performed activity, which is often argued to represent a qualitatively different form of behavior and therefore excluded from consideration in many analyses of political participation (cf. Verba and Nie 1972; Nie and Verba 1975; Rose 1976). All the other forms of political involvement included in Table 2 are reported by no more than 21 percent of the respondents. Second, and equally noteworthy, the rates of activity observed across the three different elections display remarkable stability. The proportion of respondents reporting any given form of participation in connection with any one of three elections differ with but few exceptions by no more than one or two percentage points. Only voting and rates of political discussion are less stable and even they vary within a range of five to seven percentage points. Third, these forms of citizen participation are positively inter-correlated with one another, both within any given year and across elections.<sup>18</sup> Taken together then, these findings could once again readily lead one to conclude that all political involvement beyond voting and general political discussion in Norway is restricted to a limited segment of the population (about one-fifth at most in the present case), a segment which is consistently active in the same *and apparently overlapping* means of political involvement over a period of time.

To what extent is such a conclusion born out by the actual distribution of citizen participation in Norway, especially when this is considered over time? By now the answer may well be anticipated, but a brief review of some relevant data is nevertheless warranted. Beginning with Table 3, it may be shown that such a conclusion constitutes a narrow and misleading interpretation of the data. This initial table presents in summary fashion the results from a replication of Rose's earlier analyses (1976, 188 – 201). In this case, the analysis treats the same set of four different election-related activities on each of three separate occasions using the national cross-section panel data. For each year, two hypothetical distributions regarding the total number of such activities individual respondents could be expected to report given maximum concentration and random overlap assumptions are displayed together with the distribution actually observed.<sup>19</sup> The pattern of findings seen in Table 3 for each year is much as before: the distribution representing the actual amount of overlap falls in between the two hypothetical distributions, thereby indicating some tendency toward a cumulative hierarchical pattern of concentration. Yet in every case the actual distribution more

closely resembles that predicted by an assumption of independence and random overlap than it does one predicted by strict cumulative hierarchical overlap assumption.

It may be acknowledged that discrepancies between the distributions based on random and actual overlap to be observed in Table 3 are somewhat greater than was the case in Table 1 above. This situation reflects the fact that the four activities analyzed in Table 3 are both conceptually and empirically more intimately interlinked than those considered previously.<sup>20</sup> The important point to be stressed here, however, is that even with a more homogeneous subset of activities of the sort considered in Table 3, the distribution representing a random pattern of activity overlap still offers a better standard for predicting the actual concentration of citizen participation on any given occasion than does a cumulative hierarchical overlap distribution. Thus, given the relevant marginal response frequencies and an assumption of random participatory overlap, slightly more than 30 percent of the panel respondents could be expected to report one or more such election-related activity (rather than only 15 percent under a cumulative hierarchical overlap assumption). In reality, somewhere between 25 and 30 percent of the panel respondents in fact report performing one or more such activity, and the pattern of concentration among these political activists is in each case most nearly akin to that represented by a random overlap distribution.

Before proceeding further, it must be emphasized once again that the argument here is not to be interpreted as suggesting all political participation in Norway is randomly – much less equitably – distributed among the population per se. Political activity is clearly restricted to a more involved subset of the population, the scope of which depends on the activities considered. As just noted, for example, no more than roughly 30 percent of the panel respondents reported performing any combination of the four election-related activities analyzed in Table 3. Given the slightly higher rates of citizen participation among the panel respondents observed previously, moreover, the actual population estimate for this set of activities should probably rest closer to 25 percent, that is, only one citizen in four. Even so, this distribution of individual political involvement represents a dispersion *twice as wide* as would otherwise be anticipated on the basis of conclusions frequently drawn from earlier studies regarding the cumulative hierarchical overlap structure to be observed among various forms of participatory behavior.

While reaffirming Rose's earlier findings, the data presented in Table 3 continue to offer what is essentially a static, year-by-year view of the distribution of citizen participation in Norway. A truly diachronic



Table 3. Hypothetical and actual distributions of citizens reporting any of four election-related political activities on three different occasions (in percent)

Number of activities performed	1965			1969			1973		
	Overlap conditions			Overlap conditions			Overlap conditions		
	Maximum	Random	Actual	Maximum	Random	Actual	Maximum	Random	Actual
0	86	68	72	87	68	73	87	69	74
1	2	24	21	1	24	19	1	22	17
2	1	7	4	1	7	5	0	8	5
3	6	1	2	6	1	2	7	1	3
4	5	0	1	5	0	1	5	0	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

NOTE:

This table is based on the following forms of participation for which the proportion of panel respondents actually reporting the activity each year is as indicated:

	1965	1969	1973
1. Attempting to persuade others how to vote	14%	12%	13%
2. Participation in party activities	12%	13%	12%
3. Attending campaign rallies or meetings	11%	11%	12%
4. Participation in campaign work	5%	5%	5%

perspective is to be found in the results presented in Tables 4 and 5. In these tables the analysis focuses on the frequency with which the same individuals undertake any given type of political activity over a period of years. A respondent in the panel study could, for example, report voting, attempting to persuade others how to vote, or undertaking campaign work in connection with one, two, or three elections during the period considered or, perhaps, never at all. Similarly, respondents could indicate having taken part in nomination proceedings or holding a position of public trust on one or two occasions (these items were not included on all three surveys, thereby reducing the maximum number of positive response possibilities) or, alternatively, never having done so. The question underlying Tables 4 and 5, therefore, is to what extent there is participatory overlap with respect to the same forms of political activity over time. Do the citizens who engage in a specific political act on different occasions comprise a relatively narrow and stable group of political actors who repeatedly perform the same activity or do they instead constitute a somewhat broader, transitory group subject to turnover as individuals enter into and withdraw from the political arena under different circumstances?

Table 4 presents basic distributions regarding the actual frequencies with which nine forms of political activity were reported by panel respondents over time. Several features of this table stand out clearly. In keeping with earlier findings, voting and political discussion are once again seen to be the only forms of activity which are consistently undertaken by a preponderant majority of the Norwegian population. As much as 87 and 72 percent of the panel respondents respectively

Table 4. Frequency of citizen participation by the same means of activity over time (in percent)

Type of political activity	Occasions reported			
	0	1	2	3
Voting	1	3	9	87
Political discussion	2	7	19	72
Attempting to persuade others how to vote	73	16	8	3
Party membership	69	12	9	10
Participation in party activities	81	8	6	5
Attending campaign meetings or rallies	77	15	5	3
Participation in campaign work	89	8	2	1
Participation in nomination work	90	8	2	—*
Holding a position of public trust	85	10	5	—

\*Question posed on only two occasions.

indicated they had performed these two activities in connection with all three elections, whereas only one and two percent reported never having engaged in these activities. All of the other activities, by contrast, are reported by no more than 30 percent of the respondents on one or more occasion, and except for party membership, no more than five percent are consistently active on all potential occasions. The special character of party membership – i.e., as a form of behavior which in itself represents something of a more long-term commitment without necessarily implying active involvement on any given occasion – is in fact quite evident in Table 4.<sup>21</sup> It is the only form of less frequently reported political activity for which the percent of repeat performers does not steadily decline in comparison with those who are only intermittently involved. Once the formal commitment to party membership has been made, in other words, this commitment seems to have a greater carry-over effect, being less readily broken or interrupted, than is the case for other forms of involvement. Interestingly enough, this is true for party membership even more so than it is for holding positions of public trust, a form of participation which is often considered to be concentrated among a small cadre of professional political actors who are constantly involved.

The most fundamental point to be made regarding Table 4, however, is that the total percentage of respondents who report undertaking any form of activity on one or more occasion during the three elections considered here consistently exceeds the maximum percentage of respondents reporting the same activity at any one election, and often this is quite dramatically so. Thus, when one compares the sum of the three right-hand columns in Table 4 for any given activity with the corresponding figures of Table 2 for any given year, one finds without fail that more citizens are active over time than is the case for a single election period. With respect to attempting to persuade others how to vote, for example, a maximum of 14 percent reported this activity at any one election (1965), but as many as 27 percent of the panel respondents had engaged in this activity on at least one or more occasions over the entire three-election period. Similar figures for participation in party activities are 13 and 20 percent respectively, for attending campaign meetings or rallies, 12 and 23 percent, and for participating in campaign work, 5 and 11 percent. Figures for the remaining activities exhibit the same pattern, even if not always in such a bold fashion. The pool of active citizens found by using a diachronic perspective, in short, is consistently greater than that discovered by employing a synchronic perspective. Citizen participation is not permanently fixed, nor are political gladiator roles

determined once and for all; rather, political involvement fluctuates substantially, even over relatively short periods, as individuals enter and leave the political arena.<sup>22</sup>

A matter of further interest in this regard is the degree of participatory overlap existing among the citizen activist pool for any given activity over time. The issue here is again the relative concentration among citizens engaging in specific forms of participation over several election periods. This issue is addressed by the data displayed in Table 5 where a logic comparable to that underlying Tables 1 and 3 is employed, although in this setting with respect to each particular form of activity treated diachronically as opposed to multiple forms of activity treated synchronically. For ease of presentation, the minimal overlap condition is again dropped from the table, and the frequencies for each activity have been summarized by the term 'none', 'some', and 'all', depending on whether respondents reported engaging in the activity not at all, on some but not all occasions, or on all occasions for which information was elicited (two or three times as the case may be).<sup>23</sup>

The findings of Table 5 are straightforward. For every form of political activity considered, the overlap found among citizens reporting the same form of political participation over time is more closely akin to a distribution of activity predicted by an assumption of randomness than it is a distribution predicted by an assumption of maximum hierarchical over-

Table 5. Hypothetical and actual distributions of citizens reporting the same means of political activity over time (in percent)

Type of political activity	Frequency of activity under different overlap conditions								
	Maximum overlap			Random overlap			Actual overlap		
	None	Some	All	None	Some	All	None	Some	All
Voting	4	5	91	0	15	85	1	12	87
Political discussion	9	6	85	0	31	69	2	26	72
Attempting to persuade others how to vote	86	2	12	70	29	1	73	24	3
Party membership	79	2	19	60	37	3	69	21	10
Participation in party activities	87	1	12	74	25	1	81	14	5
Attending campaign meetings or rallies	88	1	11	72	27	1	77	20	3
Participation in campaign work	95	0	5	87	13	0	89	10	1
Participation in nomination work	94	0	6	89	11	0	90	8	2
Holding a position of public trust	89	2	9	81	18	1	85	10	5

lapping. Political involvement through party membership, and thereafter holding a position of public trust, show the strongest tendencies toward a perfectly cumulative pattern of participatory overlap over time, but even here the actual distributions for these activities display a stronger resemblance to those of a random overlap pattern. For the other activities the affinity of the actual and random overlap distributions is even greater.

The implications of these findings are obvious, yet nonetheless striking and worthy of additional emphasis inasmuch as they run counter to both prior empirical understandings and some theoretically grounded expectations. Thus, from at least one perspective it is reasonable to suggest that if an individual is willing and able to undertake an activity on one occasion, then he or she should be all the more likely to repeat such an activity on another occasion. The mere fact that a person clears the barriers to political participation initially (psychological barriers in particular, but certainly material and physical barriers as well), in essence, should serve to lower similar barriers for subsequent participation by the same means, and possibly by other means as well.<sup>24</sup> The logic underlying such a suggestion, however, appears to be of limited empirical validity. Political participation by Norwegian citizens on one occasion may indeed imply that repeated involvement in the same form of activity on another occasion is more likely than chance assumptions alone would predict, but this is true in only a very minimal sense. Overall, expectations generated by applying principles of independence and random chance, given basic familiarity with marginal participation frequencies for the population as a whole, yield far more accurate predictions regarding repeated political involvement than do expectations based on any cumulative carry-over argument.

## Conclusion

The general conclusion to be drawn from the analyses presented here should by now be abundantly clear: citizen participation in Norway, while exhibiting some tendencies toward concentration, is more broadly distributed than previous analyses might lead one to believe. In particular, notions of a cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern of political participation represent an erroneous interpretation of reality in the Norwegian case. This conclusion is, of course, largely based on analyses of a somewhat limited set of participatory activities (essentially those of an election-related variety) occurring over three election periods, 1965 – 1973. The remarkable stability and consistency of the analytical results set forth here, however, nevertheless serve to bolster the confidence one can place in these findings.

The robustness of this conclusion is further enhanced by the fact that, as noted earlier, previous studies have revealed partisan-based, election-related activities to constitute one, or at most two, of several general modes of democratic citizen participation, each of which is only modestly related to one another (cf. Verba et al. 1971; Verba and Nie 1972; Rose 1976). There is every reason to believe that comparable findings would emerge from similar diachronic analyses of other activities comprising alternative modes of participation as well. Indeed, to the extent that election-related activities comprise a particularly homogeneous, more closely interconnected set of participatory phenomena than is the case for activities constituting other modes of participation, the dispersion of citizen involvement that could be expected within these other modes would in all likelihood be even greater than that uncovered here. But even if these expectations were to prove false, the modest intercorrelations typically found among different modes of participation would still suggest that analyses treating activities from two or more such modes concomitantly would find citizen participation to be more widely dispersed than any analysis concerning activities from only one mode. In this sense, then, the results reported here represent only the proverbial tip of an iceberg!

At the same time, it must be stressed again that none of these remarks nor the arguments set forth here are intended to convey the impression that all Norwegian citizens are political activists. Even when a more inclusive diachronic approach to citizen participation is adopted, some individuals may still be found who are either totally inactive or who exist and operate at the fringes of the political system. This fact is readily illustrated by the data displayed in Table 6. In this table two distributions are presented concerning the relative utilization by panel respondents of various election-related participatory opportunities over the three election periods considered here. In the first distribution voting and political discussion are included, in the second these two most common forms of participation are excluded. In order to minimize the loss of cases due to missing observations scattered throughout the data set, the rate of activity is expressed as a percentage calculated on the basis of all opportunities for which valid data exist for each individual (a maximum of 25 or 19 opportunities depending on whether voting and political discussion are included or excluded).<sup>25</sup>

The figures in Table 6 are unambiguous on one point. It is only through voting and/or political discussion that a major segment of the Norwegian population gains activist status when viewed in the present context. Once these two activities are removed from the relevant data

Table 6. Distribution of Norwegian citizens according to their relative use of specific participatory opportunities over three elections, 1965 – 1973

Percentage of opportunities used	Percentage of citizens: voting and political discussion included	Percentage of citizens: voting and political discussion excluded
0	– *	45
1 – 10	2	25
11 – 20	23	10
21 – 30	42	8
31 – 40	18	4
41 – 50	6	3
51 – 60	4	2
61 – 70	2	1
71 – 80	1	1
81 – 90	1	1
91 – 100	1	–
Total	100	100

\* Less than 0.5 percent.

base, the percentage of apparently 'inactive' citizens jumps from under one percent to 45 percent of the panel respondents.<sup>26</sup> The inflationary effect of these two activities on any participatory breakdown under the present circumstances is further underlined by the fact that the proportion of respondents utilizing more than 40 percent of the opportunities theoretically available for political involvement drops from 15 to 8 percent when voting and political discussion are excluded. Once these activities are put aside, the bulk of the active citizenry (35 percent of the total sample) engages in only 20 percent or less of the opportunities available to them (as calculated here, this is the equivalent of at most three of 19 participatory opportunities), while only approximately two percent take advantage of 60 to 80 percent of the existing opportunities (the equivalent of 12 to 15 acts out of 19), and only slightly more than one percent avail themselves of 80 percent or more of the existing opportunities (16 or more of 19 total).<sup>27</sup>

These figures might well be interpreted as contradicting a principal theme running throughout this article. They suggest, it might seem, a fair degree of concentration of much election-related citizen participation in Norway – especially for activity beyond voting and political discussion – rather than relative dispersion of such activity as has repeatedly been argued here. Before such a conclusion is reached, however, it must be recalled that on the basis of the marginal distributions for this set of activities initially displayed in Table 2, it was possible to imagine that no more than one-fifth of the Norwegian citizenry would be involved in any form



of activity beyond voting and political discussion. Yet here the actual percentage, when viewed diachronically, is nearly three times that proportion (55 percent), and fully one-fifth of the population reports involvement in more than 20 percent of the participatory opportunities at hand during the three election periods considered.

Any more detailed evaluation and commentary regarding the distributions in Table 6 – especially analyses comparable to those set forth in previous tables involving the generation of hypothetical distributions – are unnecessary at this point. It suffices to note here that these distributions appear on *prima facie* grounds to have more in common with those generated earlier using random overlap assumptions than they do distributions based on presumptions of a cumulative hierarchical overlapping pattern. At this juncture, however, a general observation and cautionary note are in order. Thus, as is true for all data collected through sample survey questionnaires, responses to probes regarding individual political activity are subject to several error factors – e.g., sampling error, response error, recording errors, and so forth. To the extent these error factors affect data sets pertaining to political participation, they may quite reasonably be expected to *increase* the distribution of citizen involvement and the random character of such distributions. Common sample survey error factors, in other words, probably mitigate against a strict cumulative hierarchical overlap of hypotheses concerning citizen participation, and in all likelihood operate instead in the direction of a random overlap pattern. In the absence of firm knowledge about the magnitude of any such error factors for the data sets involved it is impossible to evaluate just how significant such a consideration may be in terms of influencing the results achieved. Yet it is fair to presume in general that the greater the number of measures involved, the greater the probable impact these potential error factors are likely to have and hence the more cautious one should be in interpreting findings of the sort displayed in Table 6.

This observation, together with the findings presented throughout this article, serve to underline a simple, but extremely important point in dealing with citizen participation; that is, any breakdown of the population according to specific participatory types or groupings, and the relative size of such groups which result, are highly contingent upon the operational definitions and analytical methods employed. In the present study, for example, the passive or at best marginally active group of citizens would appear to constitute almost one-half of the population (45 percent), while those who might qualify for an 'electoral activist' label here (those who take part in four or more activities beyond voting and

political discussion) comprise 20 percent of the population. Martinussen, by comparison, identified upwards of 90 percent of the Norwegian citizenry as either marginally active or totally apolitical whereas Lafferty, using different and mutually exclusive criteria for evaluation, suggests the marginally active and non-involved are no more than 35 percent of the Norwegian population, and identifies only 10 percent as electoral activists.

Obviously to attempt such comparisons across these studies is highly misleading if not outright fallacious. Findings in this article, as has been stressed time and again, are primarily based on measures concerning a restricted set of election-related activities, albeit measures which permit a longer-term perspective to be employed. The analyses of Martinussen and Lafferty, by contrast, build on measures of a broader range of participatory acts, although the data tend to be of a shorter-term time perspective. Were the present study to have been expanded to incorporate measures of other forms of democratic political activity (especially those which in the Norwegian case concern organizationally-based corporatist participation and direct citizen action), findings regarding the overall distribution of political activity would undoubtedly have been still different from those reported here, with the percentage of politically passive citizens in all likelihood being even further reduced.

A question can be legitimately raised, of course, as to just how far such a line of reasoning and analysis can properly be pursued. If the range of political activities and/or time frame employed are extended far enough, then virtually all citizens could presumably be found to qualify as political activists in some sense. Some analytical limits are clearly necessary or such a ludicrous conclusion can easily be reached. Once again what this prospect highlights is the need for democratic theorists, normative as well as empirical, to be fastidiously conscientious about specifying the parameters of their positions on the relevant issues involved, something which has not always been the case. Even given a high degree of analytical explicitness, however, claims and comparisons concerning the character and distribution of citizen participation in modern democracies must ultimately be treated with caution for other reasons touched upon above.

Despite the fundamental importance of these caveats, they should not be allowed to obscure the primary conclusion to be drawn from the analyses presented here as noted previously: i.e., given a chronologically expanded, and what is probably a more realistic perspective of individual political activity in Norway (and by extension in other countries as well), citizen participation is readily found to be more widely distributed than

many previous analyses may have led us to believe. When it comes to rendering final judgments about the distribution of political activity in a given setting, however, a combination of at least two considerations must be kept in mind: (1) the overall distribution of citizen involvement; and (2) the distribution of such involvement among various social groups. The latter matter has not been touched upon at all here. From both vantage points it is possible to argue that the more widely dispersed participation is found to be among the citizens of any country (both in terms of specific forms of political activity and across different forms of activity), then *ceterus paribus* the more likely it is that a laudable democratic society will be achieved, a society which not only realizes the tenets of democratic equality in political representation and citizen control, but which contributes to the human development of its citizens as well.

How the Norwegian society comes out on these various counts is beyond the scope of the present analysis.<sup>28</sup> Our aim here has been to provide some benchmarks and trail markers for further consideration of this issue. Whether we have dealt with the forest or the trees in our encounter with this intellectual thicket is a question which the reader must now decide.

#### NOTES

- \* The authors wish to offer a special word of thanks to Bernt Olav Aardal for his aid in undertaking some of the data processing for this article. Data sets used in this article were collected under a grant (B.48.42.11) to the senior author from the Norwegian Research Council for Science and the Humanities in 1971 and under auspices of the Norwegian electoral research program at the Institute of Social Research directed by Professor Henry Valen. This support, and the generosity of Professor Valen in making the national electoral data available to us, have been greatly appreciated. So have been the support services and congenial environment both authors have repeatedly enjoyed at the Institute of Social Research in Oslo. The senior author would also like to acknowledge the support of a grant from the Norwegian Marshall Fund for the summer of 1981 during which time this article was written. Helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper were offered by William Lafferty, Willy Martinussen, Per Stava, Jörgen Hermansson, and Anders Westholm. As usual, however, final responsibility for the content of the paper rests with the authors alone.
- 1. Exemplary discussions bearing on these considerations and revealing differences of opinion among academicians may be found in Berelson et al. (1954), Dahl and Tufte (1973), Pateman (1970), and Schumpeter (1950).
- 2. For an extended summary discussion of these respective views and the arguments surrounding them, see Parry (1972, 19 – 31). Employing somewhat different terminology and an alternative breakdown of the argumentation, Keim (1975) provides another useful summary discussion of contemporary democratic theory. For a further twist on the formulations of basic normative arguments regarding democratic participation, see Lafferty 1981b, 28 – 32.

3. Some writers, adopting a much more benign view of non-involvement, have suggested that lack of participation may have a more positive side, reflecting a state of individual satisfaction with and support for prevailing political conditions. See, for example, Wahlke (1971, 285 – 286). Almond and Verba's discussion of a 'subject political orientation' (1963) is also of relevance in this regard.
4. Individual development, it may quite reasonably be argued, might well be achieved through other forms of social involvement and personal experience than political participation alone. To the extent this is true, then the import of the democratic developmentalist view would be lessened accordingly. In the view of a number of democratic theorists, however, political participation per se is argued to have fairly unique significance with respect to aspects of human self-realization and the development of certain socio-political orientations (cf. Almond and Verba 1963; Dewey 1961 and 1968; and Pranger 1968). Whether this contention is justified remains an open empirical question at present, although some preliminary findings have begun to appear (e.g., Zurcher 1970).
5. For a review of some of the major early work in the field of citizen participation, especially in the U.S. setting, see Rossi (1959). A review article by Prewitt and Nie (1971) also provides a useful overview of earlier work in the U.S.
6. This view was most explicitly put forth by Lane (1959, 93 – 94) and Milbrath (1965, 16), but it is also to be found implicitly if not explicitly in the works of others as well (e.g., Campbell et al. 1960; Martinussen 1977).
7. For the utilization of these terms and their meanings, see Verba et al. (1971); Verba and Nie (1972); Rose (1976); Martinussen (1977); Lafferty (1981a); Barnes and Kaase (1979).
8. This suggestion is based on the opinion held by some citizens that partisan activity, including running for political office, is a seamy, conflict-ridden, and undignified form of socio-political involvement. For a discussion touching on this point, see Schonfeld (1975, 143, fn. 32).
9. The most noteworthy differences between the content of Lafferty's indices and those of Martinussen are Lafferty's more inclusive concept of organizational interest group activity, one which Lafferty argues is more in keeping with a two-tiered understanding of the Norwegian political system as advanced by Rokkan (1966), and Lafferty's broader operational base for measuring direct political action. For Lafferty's discussion of Martinussen's and his own indices, see Lafferty (1981a, 29 – 30, 34, 37 – 40, and Appendix B).
10. Detailed information on the forms of citizen participation surveyed and the response frequencies reported are found in Rose, Table 4 – 1 (1976, 160 – 161), plus Appendices B and C.
11. The procedures involved can be readily illustrated for a simple case of two activities by using 2 x 2 matrices where the row and column totals represent the marginal response distributions reported by the sample population for each activity. Thus, if two activities were to be reported by 80 and 20 percent of the respondents respectively, the three logical alternatives and the distributions they would generate can be represented by the following three matrices.

The first matrix illustrates the perfectly cumulative hierarchical overlap pattern in which all individuals who engage in the less common form of activity (Act 2) also perform the more common form of activity (Act 1). Under these conditions 20 percent of the population would be expected to report undertaking both activities, 60 percent would be expected to report undertaking only one activity (the more common Act 1), and the remaining 20 percent should report no activity. Matrix 2 illustrates the opposite extreme in which there is minimal overlap (in this case none) and maximum dispersion of citizen participation. In the present case, under these conditions everyone could be expected to report one and only one form of political activity given

Matrix 1

		Act 1		
		Yes	No	
Act 2	Yes	20	0	20
	No	60	20	80
		80	20	100

Matrix 2

		Act 1		
		Yes	No	
Act 2	Yes	0	20	20
	No	80	0	80
		80	20	100

Matrix 3

		Act 1		
		Yes	No	
Act 2	Yes	16	4	20
	No	64	16	80
		80	20	100

the respective marginals involved. Finally, the third matrix illustrates a case of total independence and overlap based on principles of random chance. Here the individual cell entries are the product of the appropriate row and column totals divided by 100 (i.e., they represent an 'expected value'). Under these conditions 16 percent of the population could be expected to report undertaking both activities, an additional 16 percent would be expected to report no activity, and the remaining 68 percent should report undertaking one or the other activity. For alternative diagrammatic representation and discussion of the logic involved, see Rose (1976, 183 – 188), especially Figure 4 – 1.

12. Rose summarizes these points in the following manner:  
 . . . these findings do not imply the absence of political gladiators in Norway and equal dispersion of political activity throughout the Norwegian population. On the contrary, there are obvious inequalities in the overall levels of political involvement reported by different individuals. Some citizens clearly qualify as political gladiators while others are politically more passive. What must be underscored. . . however, is that there are many different types of political gladiators, not all of whom specialize in and undertake all of the same activities. And even more importantly, the percentage of the apolitical or politically more passive members of society is smaller than might otherwise be imagined based on the interpretation of simple marginal frequencies and bivariate correlation matrices for various forms of political activity reported in this and previous studies. (Rose 1976, 202 – 203)
13. For an interesting presentation and discussion of citizen participation in the Danish case, with the basis for comparison it may provide, see Damgaard (1980, 210 – 213).
14. When all infrequent political involvement is discounted, Rose found that the totally inactive segment of the sample population still constituted only four percent of the total, and those who engaged in other activities but seldom voted remained steady at slightly less than two percent. The primary change, as noted by Rose, 'is a 10 percent decline in the proportion of respondents who are found to perform other activities in

addition to voting, a decline that is offset by a roughly equivalent increase in the proportion of citizens who are regular voters only. With a more stringent operational definition, in other words, approximately one-quarter of all respondents are voters only, whereas those who do more than vote alone constitute just under 70 percent of the individuals interviewed. Under these conditions, moreover, those who reported undertaking five or more acts in addition to voting still comprise more than one-fifth of the adult population. . . ' (Rose 1976, 204)

15. The limitations of a single shot or one-time survey design when applied to dynamic, over-time phenomena are widely recognized. For a revealing discussion of the problems associated with recall data regarding voting behavior in the Norwegian case, for example, see Waldahl and Aardal (1982).
16. The design and character of results achieved in these electoral studies, including an assessment of the representativeness of the panel component which consists of 972 cases once sample depletion due to various causes has been taken into account, is discussed in Waldahl, Stø, and Martinussen (1974).
17. These differences could be the subject of extensive analysis and commentary in their own right. For the moment, however, it will suffice to note that these differences can probably best be accounted for by two considerations frequently suggested to pertain to individuals who are selected and successfully maintained as members of panel studies concerning political attitudes and involvement. First, the mere ability to track such individuals over a longer period of time often indicates a degree of social stability which may be conducive to political involvement, especially inasmuch as familiarity with local conditions may be a factor of some critical significance. Second, even aside from this initial consideration, selection and maintenance of a person as a panel member may serve to stimulate individual political involvement beyond that which would otherwise be expected. Whether these considerations are pertinent in the present case, however, and if so, what their relative weighting might be as explanatory factors, are matters of pure conjecture at this point.
18. Pearson correlation coefficients for these variables vary in a range extending from roughly zero to .68 (the strongest relation being that existing between party activity and membership in 1969 and 1973), the mean value being about .20.
19. The third hypothetical distribution included in Table 1 – a distribution based on an assumption of minimal overlap and the most equitable possible dispersion of political activity – is of little relevance under the circumstances as has been seen previously and has therefore been dropped from Table 3 for ease of presentation.
20. Rose found similar variations in the magnitude of discrepancies encountered in his earlier analyses depending on the degree of interrelatedness existing among the particular subset of activities involved. See, for example, Table 4 – 4 (Rose 1976, 193) for comparative purposes. For additional analyses and remarks relevant to this point, see chapter 5 of Rose (1976) and the work of Verba et al. (1971) and Verba and Nie (1972).
21. That organizational membership, whether political or non-political, does not necessarily mean organizational activity, and that the difference between passive and active organizational membership can be of substantial significance, has been documented by numerous studies. For illustrative treatments of these points, see Verba and Nie (1972, 184 – 186) and Rose (1976, 314 – 322).
22. On the surface at least these findings would appear to lend support to a rational actor interpretation of citizen participation – i.e., that individuals engage in political activity depending on the conditions pertaining at the time and the individual's assessment of these conditions. Yet in the absence of further inquiry and documentation, other explanatory models – such as those based on a 'random walk' perspective or, alternatively, some variation of a Markov chain process – might well provide an equally plausible explanation of the findings presented here. Although certainly of



- importance and general significance, the question of which one of several causal explanations is appropriate for findings of the present character will not be addressed here. Those interested in such questions and a concise discussion of some of the alternative methodological approaches available for the analyses of change data should find Markus (1979) a useful reference, albeit one formulated primarily in terms of attitudinal rather than behavioral change.
23. For participating in nomination work or holding a position of public trust, in short, 'some' means once while 'all' means twice. For all other activities 'some' means once or twice while 'all' means three times.
  24. The argument here is essentially one based on a learning theory or familiarity and transference perspective. Such a perspective, while not contradicting a rational actor model interpretation of political activity (since initial experiences may quite naturally be expected to influence subsequent assessments pertinent to the cost-benefit calculations of a rational political actor), does stand in marked contrast to a random walk interpretation of citizen participation. Again, however, the question of how specific diachronic results (such as those reported here) can be best interpreted and explained will not be addressed in detail here. For an interesting discussion of a related problem regarding the interaction between political interest and political activity over time, see Hernes and Martinussen (1980, 180 – 183).
  25. It may be argued that for the preponderant majority of such missing data cases the most likely underlying situation is actually one of non-participation. To the extent this is true (which is, of course, unknown to us), then our method of dealing with missing data observations serves to inflate the rates of political activity found. In order to gain some idea of just how substantial such an inflation effect might be for our results, we also endeavored to calculate the percentages reported in Table 6 using a 'worst case' assumption that *all* missing observations were actually instances of non-participation. Under this alternative the results achieved differed only minimally from those reported in Table 6, the primary difference being a movement in the anticipated direction (i.e., toward lower participation rates) of at most four percentage points between the 21 – 30 and 11 – 20 percent categories when voting and political discussion are included, and between the 11 – 20 and 1 – 10 percent categories when these activities are excluded. All other changes were on the order of one percent or less when the data are grouped as they are in Table 6.
  26. Of course, these individuals may have been engaged in *other non-electoral forms* of citizen participation in addition to voting and/or political discussion and therefore far from inactive in a genuine sense. This possibility, however, cannot be explored given the present data base.
  27. These figures, it may be noted, are in all likelihood somewhat depressed from their true values due to the inclusion of holding positions of public trust among the pool of participatory opportunities used in calculating the percentages presented here. Whereas in theory this form of participation is available to all citizens in a democracy, in reality the total number of positions is generally well below the number of citizens. Hence, not all individuals could be involved in this activity simultaneously even if they were so inclined. More accurate population estimates for the overall distribution of political activity could therefore probably be acquired either by removing this form of participation for all individuals before calculating the percentages set forth in Table 6 or, alternatively, by adjusting the denominator used in calculating such percentages according to some independent assessment of the extent to which office holding actually represents a genuine participatory opportunity for each citizen. Again, the former alternative was pursued in order to gain a rough idea of whether our reasoning was justified on this point. Not surprisingly, the results were as expected: in both cases the character of the distributions reported in Table 6 shifted upwards to reflect higher rates of political activity (especially at the low to midrange levels) when holding positions of public trust were removed.



28. We hope to come back to this question in future work. For the time being it is possible to note that whereas Norway would appear to have achieved relatively high democratic participatory standing by cross-national standards, there remains substantial room for further gains.

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28. We hope to come back to this question in future work. For the time being it is possible to note that whereas Norway would appear to have achieved relatively high democratic participatory standing by cross-national standards, there remains substantial room for further gains.

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