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Review

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*Protest and Political Consciousness*. By Alan Marsh. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1977. Pp. 272. \$14.00 (cloth); \$6.95 (paper).

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In *Protest and Political Consciousness*, Alan Marsh sets out to demonstrate that widespread citizen deference to political authority is not an adequate explanation of British political stability. Marsh conducted a major social survey—the first of an eight-nation series of national surveys on the sources of protest in advanced industrial systems—during 1973 and 1974 with a representative sample of the British electorate. The study, in focusing on the social-psychological aspects of protest behavior, investigates the major sets of psychological variables, including measures of deference, which may interpret the connection between social structure and behavior.

The basic dependent variable is a measure of protest potential which is constructed from respondent attitudes toward various examples of unconventional political behavior. In chapter 2, Marsh is able to demonstrate broad approval for, and verbal willingness to engage in, unorthodox activities ranging from petitioning to unlawful demonstrations. This finding does indeed challenge G. Almond and S. Verba's emphasis on deference as a key to British political life. In terms of the data the author presents in chapters 5 and 9, the fact that there are relatively few respondents who combine political trust with political sophistication and efficacy justifies the conclusion (pp. 221–24) that only a small portion of the British population may be characterized as passive, deferential participants in orthodox political processes.

There are some clear limits to this type of analysis. The final measure of protest potential excludes the extreme items on damage and violence because so few respondents endorse them (p. 50), indicating important reservations about unorthodox political behavior. The emergence of a first "proestablishment" factor in a factor analysis of major political attitudes (pp. 97–100), which Marsh does not gloss over, suggests the existence of further constraints on protest activities. There are also some perennial questions and criticisms regarding the connection between dispositional measures and actual behavior. On this last problem, Marsh argues persuasively that the real issue concerns the "parameters of behavioral license" (p. 18) within which protest may occur, not the direct prediction of behavior.

Marsh subsequently develops a solid accounting model which assesses the relative significance of various psychological measures for an explanation of protest potential. In chapters 4, 6, and 7, he shows that ideological position, relative deprivation, and personal values, respectively, have only a modest capacity to account for protest potential. In the crucial fifth chapter, Marsh argues that the relatively nonpartisan measures of political

sophistication, efficacy, and trust are the major determinants of protest potential. In particular, the combination of political sophistication and efficacy with a distrust of political authority leads to increased protest potential (pp. 121–31). The eighth chapter examines the somewhat different dynamics of protest among students.

The quantitative analysis is well done. Marsh employs a wide variety of techniques, ranging from cross-tabulations to factor and regression analysis, to explore the data. He demonstrates a good deal of sensitivity to the significance of the nonlinear relationships, particularly in the central chapter on political conceptualization, efficacy, and trust. However, the schematic final model presented in the concluding chapter would probably have benefited from more complex regression procedures that handle indirect and interaction effects. Marsh also provides readable explanations of the various techniques in the body of the text and includes an informative appendix on index construction.

Despite the considerable accomplishments of this volume, there are some problems. The theoretical structure of the study is not sufficiently integrated. Several chapters are organized around relatively weak social psychological notions, such as the “dissatisfaction → protest model” (p. 134), which have only indirect links to major positions in the collective behavior literature. There are also some limitations inherent in the study design which create theoretical difficulties. First, the survey is a cross-sectional one, and it is difficult to make strong statements concerning trends in deference levels. Contrary to the author’s assurances (p. 9), he is indeed pushed in the direction of making claims of this order. For example, he states at one point that “the general theme of this study” is “that deference is *no longer* a force in British political culture but has *given way* to a concern for influence in the decisions of the political community” (p. 117; my italics). Second, and most important, the study cannot, by itself, address the basic comparative questions which Almond and Verba have raised regarding deference with the same range of data they had. Perhaps with the completion of other studies in the series, Marsh will be able to match, or even surpass, the comparative basis of previous work.

The book is poorly produced. In addition to numerous typographical errors and instances of awkward constructions, there are references, particularly to some important questionnaire wordings (p. 44), which are missing. Some of the analysis in the text is difficult to assess because the complex tabulations have not been included; some descriptive tables, or schematic diagrams of simple correlations, might have easily been replaced by tables concerning more important relationships (pp. 86, 120–21). There is no index, and the binding of the paperback version disintegrated under the gentle impact of two careful readings.