

# Political Participation in an Action-Theory Model of Personality: Theory and Empirical Evidence

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*The application of an action-theory model of personality (AMP) to analyses of political participation is presented theoretically as well as empirically. AMP establishes missing links between action theory (especially expectancy-value theories) and selected personality variables (self-concept of own competence, control orientations, trust, subjective knowledge, and value orientations), which have proved to be significant in the prediction of political activity. Thus, AMP integrates (a) situation- and action-specific expectancy-value (i.e., "situational") approaches and (b) personality (i.e., "traitist") approaches to political participation. With reference to person-situation interactions, it is postulated in AMP, that the predictive value of situation-specific person variables and that of more or less generalized personality variables is a function of the quality of the cognitive structuring of the action situation under question (i.e., the political life situation). With reference to data from 100 West German young adults, empirical evidence is presented for the deduced hypotheses (1) that conventional political participation is predicted best by situation- and action-specific variables and (2) that the exposed political participation of political activists can be predicted best by situation-/action-specific motivational variables and that of political non-activists can be predicted best by domain-specific personality variables.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Apparently, recent empirical analyses of political participation and political attitudes follow two different approaches or traditions. The first approach can be

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characterized as the search for those personality variables which are consistently related to the amount, quality and/or intensity of political activities or to political attitudes. The second approach is characterized by the application of action-theory models—mainly variants of expectancy-value theory—to analyses of political actions and political attitudes in specific life or action situations.

Research in the first tradition has shown that from the large number of personality variables only a few are rather consistent and effective correlates of political participation. A review of the literature indicates that Knutson's (1973) listing is the most comprehensive, showing political activity and political attitudes to be related to such personality variables as (1) self-efficacy, competence, and self-concept; (2) authoritarianism and value orientations; (3) anomia, alienation, and locus of control; (4) power, effectance or control motivation as well as (5) dogmatism and (other) cognitive style variables—at least, when these personality variables are measured with reference to the domain of political behavior and political life (see, e.g., Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Burn and Konrad, 1987; Huebner and Lipsey, 1981; Marsh, 1977; Milbrath, 1986; Sears, 1987; Watanabe and Milburn, 1988). However, besides studies that have concentrated on assessing behavior and attitudes specific to the political domain, research can be characterized up to now as a search for the connection between purely additive combinations of personality variables and various indicators of political actions and/or attitudes. A consistent taxonomy of those variables that are relevant in participation research is, however, still missing.

In contrast to this first tradition, the second research tradition on political participation and attitudes is founded on a model of political action and participation as the result of a decision process (see, e.g., Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Smith, 1968). Such a decision- and action-theory approach to political participation refers mainly to the different psychological expectancy-value theories, which view action as predictable by subjective goal values and subjective expectancies about goal attainment (see, e.g., Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Feather, 1982; Mitchell and Biglan, 1971). In political psychology, empirical investigations founded on expectancy-value models have focused on (1) voting behavior (see, e.g., Downs, 1957; Fishbein and Ajzen, 1981; Himmelweit *et al.*, 1981) (2) the analysis of attitudes toward different types of political participation (see, e.g., Muller, 1978, 1982; Uhlaner, 1986; Wolfsfeld, 1986), and (3) the prediction of exposed (unconventional) political action (Krampen, 1986a, 1987a; Krampen and Wünsche, 1985; Opp *et al.*, 1981, 1984). Results show that political activities and attitudes can be reconstructed in terms of valences and expectations, thus demonstrating the usefulness of the expectancy-value approach for attitude and participation research in political psychology. However, in contrast to the personality approach, the expectancy-value approach remains highly situational. This means that valences and expectations are measured (1) for specific

actions or action intentions, (2) for specific situations, and (3) for specific points in time without reference to the personality of the individuals under investigation. Although expectancy-value theories stem from general psychology and imply differential predictions, they ignore, on the other hand, personality variables in such predictions of actions and attitudes (see, e.g., Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Feather, 1982; Mitchell and Biglan, 1971).

In sum, the first (personality-oriented) approach seems to overestimate the influence of relatively stable personal characteristics and to underestimate the influence of the situation on behavior and attitudes; the second (expectancy-value approach) seems to overestimate the influence of situations and to underestimate that of personal characteristics which are relatively stable over time and situations. These problems are discussed in detail in personality research (see, e.g., Pervin, 1984, 1985), and there is broad consensus in the demand for an interactionistic personality theory, which includes not only relatively stable personality variables as well as situational person variables, but also their dynamic interaction in action and life situations.

It can be concluded that in research on political participation and political attitudes, we have two rather distinct approaches, which—each in itself—explains a considerable degree of variance in political participation and political attitudes. However, theoretical, conceptual, and methodological links between the two approaches are missing. In the following, a possibility for integrating both approaches in an interactionistic model is presented, which considers not only relatively stable personality variables and situational person variables but also accounts for the dynamic interaction between situations and individuals. After an overview on the application and use of the general action-theory model of personality (AMP) for analyses of political participation, a research demonstration will be given, in which one of the core assumptions of the model is tested in an analysis of the political participation of young West German adults.

## **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTION-THEORY MODEL OF PERSONALITY**

The action-theory model of personality (AMP; Krampen, 1987b, 1988a) is a consequent further development of Rotter's (1955, 1982) social learning theory of personality, which is the only expectancy-value approach in psychology which includes both situational person variables (i.e., subjective reinforcement values and expectancies) as well as a list of personality variables of generalized expectancies. However, the starting point of AMP is an extended, more differentiated expectancy-value model, in which significant differentiations of the basic expectancy-value constructs developed over the last three decades are considered.

Further, AMP differentiates Rotter's social learning theory by logically connecting personality variables to the basic expectancy-value variables (while Rotter's model is restricted to a simple listing of personality variables).

### **A Differentiated Expectancy-Value Model**

Relevant differentiations of the basic expectancy-value constructs developed by different authors are included in the differentiated expectancy-value model presented in the inner part of Fig. 1. The distinction between competence and contingency expectancies can be found in the models of Bandura (1977, 1986), Weisz (1983), and Skinner (1985). Outcome-consequence expectancies/ instrumentalities as well as the temporal structuring of expectations, outcomes, and consequences on different (temporal) levels are extensively described in instrumentality theories (e.g., Mitchell and Biglan, 1971; Vroom, 1964). Outcome expectations which are not related to one's own actions (situational expectancies) were first established in cognitive approaches to achievement motivation (e.g., Heckhausen, 1977). Taken together, these various expectancy constructs constitute, in combination with the valences of outcomes/events and of their consequences, an elaborated reconstructive and predictive model for action motivation and action realization. However—as stated above—all constructs are defined in a very narrow situation- and action-specific manner, which is true for most social-cognitive approaches to personality and behavior (see, e.g., Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Canter and Kihlstrom, 1982; Mischel, 1973, 1982; Vroom, 1964).

It should be mentioned that differentiated expectancy-value models such as the AMP model (1) are not purely rational models focusing on cognitive aspects of actions alone because they consider emotions (subjective valences) as well and because expectations can be totally irrational; (2) are not *a priori* hedonistic models because the subjective value of outcomes and consequences must not follow the criteria of personal utility; (3) are dynamic models because they can describe the temporal organization of different levels of actions hierarchically (a fact, which is, of course, neglected in their graphic presentation); and (4) can consider social cognitions as well in the reconstruction and prediction of actions.

### **Taxonomy of Action-Theory Personality Variables Relevant in the Study of Political Participation**

Constitutive for the action-theory model of personality (Krampen, 1987b, 1988a) are the personality variables described in the outer part of Fig. 1. It is assumed that each situation- and action-specific variable of the differentiated expectancy-value model (in the inner part of Fig. 1) is generalized on the basis of

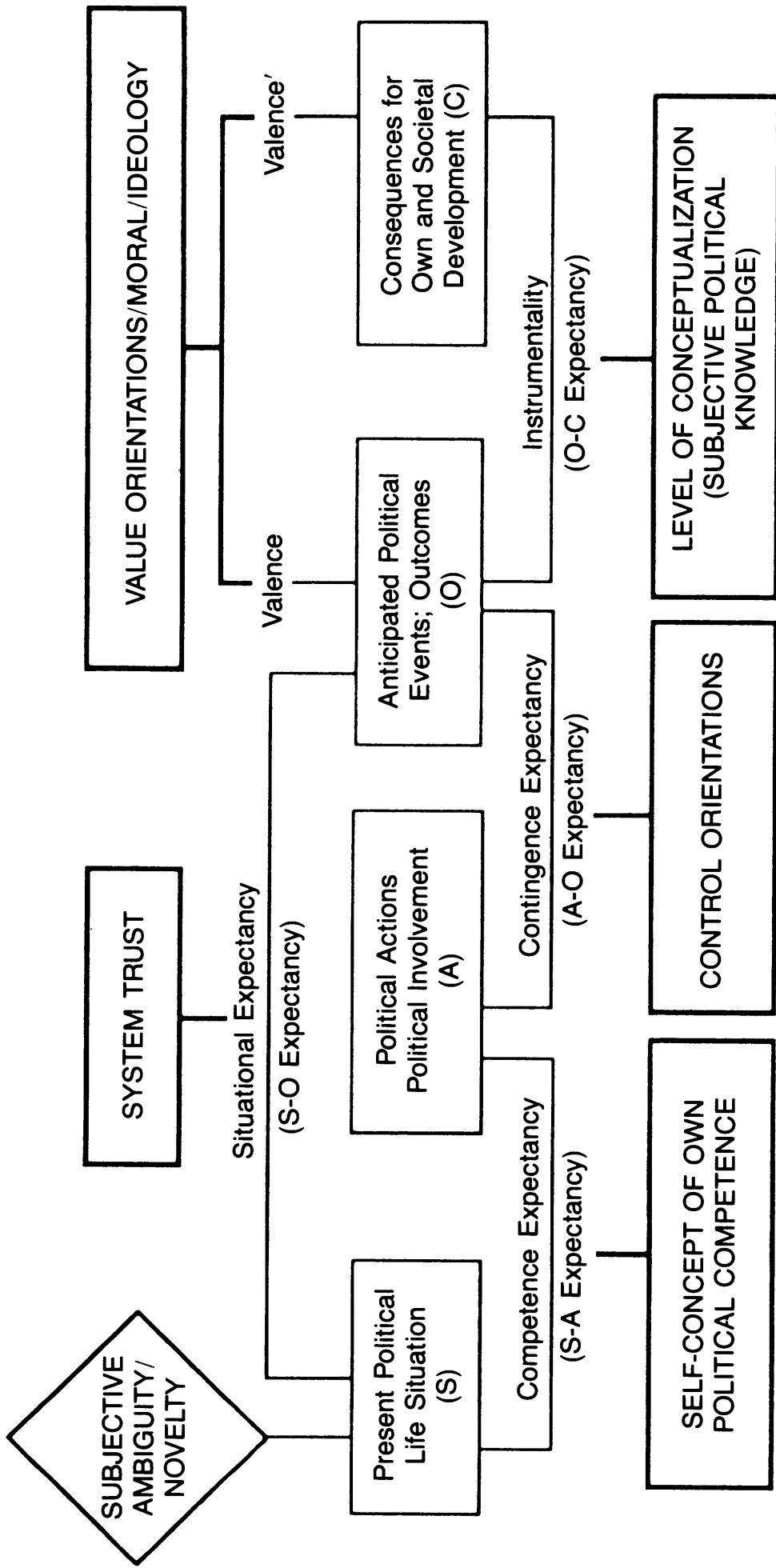


Fig. 1. Heuristics for the analysis of political participation in an action-theory model of personality.

individual person-situation interactions over time and across situations. These generalizations result both in domain-specific and generalized personality variables, which can be used for the description of individuals and interindividual differences as well as for the prediction of action. These personality variables for the domain of political participation are described in the following in more detail.

### *System Trust*

System trust refers to the individual's trust in the political system (defining the present political life situation) as well as trust in the politicians and political parties. System trust results from the generalized (S-O) expectancy (see Fig. 1) that subjectively positive-valued events, outcomes, and consequences for both personal and societal development will occur without one's own political activity. System distrust results from the generalized expectancy that such positively valued events, outcomes, and consequences will not occur without one's own political involvement, and/or that subjectively negative-valued events, outcomes, and consequences will occur with a high probability if the individual does not personally engage in attempts to prevent them. As one can see, this definition of domain-specific trust versus distrust is not only related to a generalization of situational expectancies, but to the subjective valences of (anticipated) events, outcomes, and consequences as well as to the instrumentality of events and outcomes for consequences (see Fig. 1).

Political trust and distrust were first conceptualized in political psychology by Rosenberg (1956) within sociological analyses of political ideologies, misanthropology and political participation. Milbrath and Goel (1977) list system distrust as one of the "personal factors" influencing political participation and political attitudes. Lotsof and Grot (1973) as well as Wright and Arbuthnot (1974) confirmed empirically strong relations between interpersonal trust and political attitudes referring to either the acceptance of the *Walker Report on Democratic Convention Disorders* in 1968 or the perception of the Watergate affair. However, relations between system trust and political protest behavior as well as protest potential were first studied in 1977 (Marsh, 1977; see also Barnes *et al.*, 1979). The findings of these studies indicate that system trust is related negatively to political protest and protest potential. System trust hinders (exposed) political activity, while system distrust promotes exposed political participation. These relations are especially marked when distrust is accompanied by self-perceptions of social deprivation. Apparently, this is related to the satisfaction versus dissatisfaction with a given political system—a variable often considered in political surveys (see e.g., Hyman, 1973). It is worth noting that dissatisfaction with a political system results from perceived discrepancies between personal values and the values promoted by the politicians or the political system (Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Crawford and Naditch, 1977; Marsh, 1977). Thus,

(dis-)satisfaction can be reconceptualized—like political trust versus distrust—within AMP in terms of situational expectancies, valences of events/outcomes, valences of consequences, and instrumentalities.

### *Self-Concept of One's Own Political Competence*

The self-concept of one's own political competence refers to the generalization of situation-action expectancies, that is, the experience and expectancy of one's own action competence in political life situations. If an individual believes he/she has multiple action alternatives in political situations, the self-concept of his or her own political competence is high. The self-concept is low if the individual does not know what to do in such situations. Thus, this personality variable refers to self-perceptions of the quantity ("action fluency"), quality or distinctiveness ("action flexibility"), and situative fitness ("situation-action goodness of fit") of action possibilities and action intentions in the political life domain (see Fig. 1) without direct reference to the expected outcome(s) of the action alternatives. Bandura (1977, 1986) differentiates in his model of personal self-efficacy between such efficacy expectancies (competence expectancies) and outcome expectancies (contingence expectancies) as well.

However, beliefs about personal efficacy have been studied in political psychology before Bandura (1977, 1986). The empirical results of Balch (1974), Guest (1974), Crawford and Naditch (1977), Marsh (1977), and Barnes *et al.* (1979) confirmed consistently that political participation is associated with a strong sense of personal efficacy and high self-esteem. These variables related to the self-concept of one's own political competence are indeed those personality variables for which the most and most consistent results for relations to political activity are present (see Knutson, 1973; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Sears, 1987). However, political efficacy is defined and operationalized ambiguously in those studies. Efficacy and outcome expectancies are confounded on the conceptual level as well as in their measurement. Findings from other areas of research point toward the fruitfulness and utility of the consideration of this kind of construct differentiation in operationalizations (e.g., Bandura, 1977, 1986; Krampen, 1987b), which should be considered in research in political psychology as well. The core assumption is that competence expectancies (Resp the self-concept of one's own political competence) is a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition of personal control.

### *Political Control Orientations*

Control orientations in the political life domain are generalized from situation- and action-specific contingence expectancies, in which subjective beliefs about political action-outcome contingencies are represented. Thus, experiences

of the influence of one's own political action on the (political) behavior of others, on political events or outcomes are generalized to beliefs about one's own political control. Within the differentiated expectancy-value model, it is assumed that control orientations presuppose at least a minimally "high" self-concept of one's own political competence, that is, at least one political action possibility must be subjectively seen. Of course, the AMP construct of control orientations is related closely to concepts like internal-external locus of control, alienation, anomia, powerlessness, and effectance motivation/need for personal control—variables mentioned in the literature as being relevant personality correlates of political participation (see, e.g., Knutson, 1973; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Renshon, 1979; Yinger, 1973). While all these concepts tend to confound the differentiated expectancy-value constructs of competence (efficacy) and contingency (outcome) expectancies, research on locus of control of reinforcement (Rotter, 1966, 1982) has led in political psychology to the most significant construct differentiations and results.

Although findings on the association between internal locus of control and different indicators of political participation remain inconsistent [for an overview see Klandermans (1983)], this inconsistency led early to (1) various construct differentiations and (2) attempts to measure locus of control domain-specifically. Conceptual and empirical differentiations of Rotter's (1966) unidimensional concept of internal versus external locus of control, which are of special relevance for participation research, were presented by Mirels (1970), Gurin *et al.* (1978), and Levenson (1974, 1975). Mirels (1970) as well as Gurin *et al.* (1978) point toward the fact that personal control beliefs must be differentiated from control ideologies perceived by an individual for a particular society, culture or sub-culture. Personal control refers to the perception of control an individual has in his/her own life; ideological control refers to the perception of generalized societal control that people in general possess. Perceived personal and ideological control must not be consistent, rather their differences are significant in the prediction of political involvement (see Gurin *et al.*, 1978; Krampen, 1987c; Trimble and Richardson, 1982). Levenson (1974, 1975) restricted herself to the differentiation of three aspects of personal control. She distinguishes internality, powerful others control (social externality), and chance control (fatalistic externality), for which specific relations to different indicators of political involvement are confirmed empirically (see, e.g., Huebner and Lipsey, 1981; Kumea, 1976; Levenson, 1975; Levenson and Miller, 1976).

In research on political participation, these approaches to differentiating the construct of locus of control coincide with attempts to measure control orientations specifically for the domain of political actions (Huebner and Lipsey, 1981; Krampen, 1987c; Preiser, 1982). The combination of both trends—domain-specific measurement and construct differentiation—represents best the concept of (political) control orientations within the AMP approach to political participation.



*Level of Conceptualization (Political Knowledge)*

Level of conceptualization or subjective political knowledge is defined as the individual's generalized expectancy that more or less complex political processes are understood and can be (subjectively) predicted. Subjective assumptions about the relations between political events or action outcomes and their (multiple) consequences for personal and societal development (e.g., changes in the present political and private life situation) can be diffuse, uncertain and vague (low level of conceptualization) versus distinct, clear-sighted and reflexive (high level of conceptualization). The lowest level of (subjective) political knowledge is represented by the individual who does not see any instrumentalities of political events for personal or societal development.

It is worth noting that the AMP personality variable of level of conceptualization is defined with reference to subjective outcome-consequence expectancies and not with reference to "objective" political knowledge and information. Of course, political information and knowledge as well as intelligence and variables of cognitive style will be associated with the subjective level of conceptualization. However, given a high level of conceptualization, both subjective political knowledge and information may be wrong but nevertheless simultaneously affect the political participation of the person.

While there are some results concerning the association of intelligence (Bay, 1967; Kerpelman, 1969) and cognitive style variables (Knutson, 1973) with political participation and political attitudes, systematic findings about objective political knowledge (see e.g., Hyman and Sheatsley, 1947; Sears, 1969) and the subjective political conceptualizations of individuals (see e.g., Marsh, 1977; Sidanius and Lau, 1989; Tetlock, 1986) and their impact on political involvement are rare. However, these few results indicate that objective political knowledge (intelligence as well as higher levels of conceptualization) are associated with political activity and attitudes.

*Value Orientations*

The domain-specific and generalized value orientations of an individual are related to action goals, the valences of events or outcomes, and the valences of consequences. With reference to the distinction of (anticipated) political events and outcomes within the differentiated expectancy-value model, political value orientations can be defined with regard to (1) subjective valuations of political ideologies, parties, and events and (2) the developmental goals or terminal values of the individual. However, more abstract categories of the structure and level of moral judgment can be applied to this AMP concept of value orientations, too.

Social and political values are often considered in analyses of the personality correlates of political attitudes and political participation (Knutson, 1973;

Sears, 1987). Implicitly this is done in analyses of variables like conservatism, liberalism, authoritarianism, conventionalism, traditionalism; the content of political and social values becomes more distinct in investigations about materialistic and postmaterialistic values (e.g., Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Inglehart, 1977). The same is true in analyses of the relations of instrumental and terminal values to political involvement (Rokeach, 1973; Schneider, 1983) as well as for the relations between subjective developmental goals and political participation (Krampen, 1986a). Less distinct are the findings about the relationship between moral reasoning and political attitudes and political participation. While the results of Elmer *et al.* (1983) as well as Ganser (1983) confirm rather strong relations between moral reasoning and political (action) orientations, Briechle (1985) failed to replicate these findings in an adolescent sample. Moral reasoning may be a rather abstract and generalized personality variable of "ideological content" (rather than structural complexity; Elmer *et al.*, 1983, p. 79) which is settled on a higher (not domain-specific) level of generalization in the AMP.

### **Analyses of Political Participation**

Until recently, the application of the action-theory model of personality to political participation resulted in a taxonomy of person and personality variables which are relevant for analyses of political action and political attitudes. Besides this structural approach to person-situation interactions within personality theory, AMP implies (functionalistic) hypotheses about the relative predictive significance of those variables. These hypotheses will be applied in the following to reconstructions and predictions of different types of political participation founded on person-situation interactions. Instead of using rather complicated, time- and system-related typologies of political participation (see e.g., Barnes *et al.*, 1979; Milbrath and Goel, 1977; Uehlinger, 1984), a rather simple, but distinct differentiation is employed in the first application of the action-theory model of personality to analyses of political participation. It distinguishes between the types of (1) popular, conventional types of political participation (e.g., voting, political information) presupposing none or only small personal involvement and (2) exposed (unconventional) types of political participation (e.g., actively working for political party or movement, running for a political office, political protest activities) presupposing personal involvement and engagement, which exceeds the social norms and the culturally usual.

In the prediction of behavior and experience, the following hypothesis is of central importance: the predictive value of situation-specific person variables and (more or less) generalized personality variables is a direct function of the quality of the cognitive representation of the life or action situation under question (see Krampen, 1987b, 1988a; Rotter, 1955, 1982). It is assumed that the predictive value of situation- and action-specific person variables (inner part of Figure 1)

will be high in strong, subjectively well-defined situations. Well-defined, well-known situations can be (subjectively) anticipated and involve (subjectively) sufficient information for action. Person-situation interactions result in cognitive structures, which imply specific expectations and action goals adequate for (a) habitual behavior (automatisms) or (b) for reflexive action (autonomisms). The predictive value of domain-specific and generalized personality variables will be low for such well-known, unambiguous, strong action and life situations, because the situation-specific expectations and goals “will carry the action” (Knutson, 1973, p. 45).

For weak situations, it is assumed in AMP that the predictive value of domain-specific and generalized personality variables will be high and that of situation- and action-specific person variables, which are not sufficiently established, will be low. Such weak situations are subjectively novel, ill-defined, or ambiguous. The individual has no adequate cognitive representations of the situation at his/her disposal and the only possibilities for action result from generalizations of experiences which are manifested in trust or mistrust, low/high self-concept of competences, control orientations, subjective knowledge, and value orientations.

Thus the subjective ambiguity and subjective novelty of an action or life situation (see Figure 1), which results from the dynamic interaction of situational and person factors, is of crucial importance for the prediction of behavior and experience within AMP. Therefore it is worth noting that the proposed action-theory model of personality does not claim to be a comprehensive personality model (like factor-analytically derived models). Instead, it is hypothesized that AMP supplements those models at the level of personality variables in cases where human actions and action-related cognitions, emotions, and motivations are involved. By this, AMP makes personality theory somewhat more action-theoretical and extends (situational) action theory by personality variables.

### *Conventional Political Participation*

We will first view conventional, popular political actions, about which Knutson (1973, p. 45) stated that “social and cultural norms often ‘carry the action.’” As with Knutson (1973), it is assumed in AMP that the influence of personality will be low for those social and culturally guided political behaviors. However, such political actions (like voting, political information, media consumption patterns, etc.) can be reconstructed with the help of the situation- and action-specific elements of AMP (see, e.g., Fishbein and Ajzen, 1981; Himmelweit *et al.*, 1981; Krampen, 1986a).

A very successful research example, which used multiattribute utility theory (MAUT)—a variant of expectancy-value theory—is the analysis of voting behavior realized by Himmelweit *et al.* (1981). MAUT reconstructions and predictions

of voting are superior to predictions and reconstructions including voting history or political attitudes (i.e., personality variables). This result is a direct confirmation of the hypothesis that personality variables are only weak predictors of conventional political activities like voting. However, Himmelweit *et al.* (1981, p. 128) in summary say that “the success of the MAUT predictions depend crucially on being able to apply them within an appropriate structural representation of the way individuals formed the basis for their voting decision.” Special care must be taken in the selection of the appropriate political issues, that is, political events, outcomes, and their consequences for personal and societal development. These are the crucial variables for which valences and expectations are measured with reference to the conventional political activity (e.g., voting) under investigation.

AMP provides an elaborated network of situation- and action-specific variables (see inner part of Fig. 1), which exceeds the MAUT variables considered by Himmelweit *et al.* (1981) as well as the variables considered by Fishbein and Ajzen (1981) in degree of differentiation and number. AMP analyses start with the definition of the political action (e.g., voting) in the context of the individual's present political life situation. With reference to voting, information about the situational expectancies and valences associated with this political action must be gathered from the individual, which in turn can be used to predict or to reconstruct reflexive actions, e.g., voting decisions. However, these variables can also be used for analyses and reconstructions of nonreflexive, habitual (conventional) political behaviors, i.e., action automatisms. Of special importance is this capacity of the differentiated expectancy-value model to analyze and reconstruct conscious, reflexive as well as nonreflexive, “unconscious” decisions of individuals not to engage in popular, conventional political activities, i.e., political inactivity. In a study about the instrumentality of popular, conventional political activities for the attainment of personal developmental goals (Krampen, 1986a), political inactivity was strongly related to reduced contingency or outcome expectancies (i.e., the individual perceives no or only weak contingencies between those actions and the attainment of personal goals). No differences between persons who engage in conventional political activities and those who do not were, however, found in the evaluations of the developmental goals. This result points toward the special importance of the various expectancy variables of the differentiated expectancy-value model for analyses of political inactivity and political apathy.

### *Exposed Political Participation*

Whereas up to now analyses and predictions of unconventional political participation were founded either on personality variables (see Barnes *et al.*, 1979;

Knutson, 1973) or on situational expectancy-value models (see Krampen and Wünsche, 1985; Muller, 1978, 1982; Opp *et al.*, 1981, 1984), AMP integrates both research traditions by additionally considering subjective ambiguity of an individual's present political life situation. AMP, therefore, results in a two-step procedure in analyses of exposed political activities, which considers first the subjective perception of the present political life situation and second the level of generalized person/personality variables necessary for the prediction of exposed political participation.

As described above, well-defined, well-known, "strong" political life situations can be subjectively anticipated and involve subjectively sufficient information for reflexive exposed political participation. The individual has specific expectancies and goals at his/her disposal. Thus, the predictive value of situational variables will be high for exposed political participation, and that of (domain-specific) personality variables will be low.

On the contrary, subjectively ill-defined, novel, ambiguous, "weak" political life situations do not result in adequate cognitive representations for exposed political participation. The individual has no sufficient expectancies and goals at his/her disposal and the only possibilities for acting result from generalized experiences (e.g., system trust, self-concept of own political competence, etc.). Predictions of exposed political participation of individuals, who dispose of such ambiguous perceptions of their political life situation, therefore must refer to these domain-specific personality variables. In the following a research demonstration is given, in which this hypothesis is studied empirically.

## A RESEARCH DEMONSTRATION

The empirical study presented in the following focuses on popular, conventional political participation and exposed (unconventional) political activity of 100 young West German adults. First, the hypothesis deduced from the action-theory model of personality is tested that conventional participation is predicted best by situation- and action-specific expectancies and valences concerning anticipated political events and own political action. Second, the hypothesis deduced more specifically from AMP is tested; that is, the amount of exposed political action of political activists can be predicted better with situation- and action-specific expectancy-value variables and that of political nonactivists can be predicted better with more generalized personality variables. Indeed, three predictor sets are considered which refer to (1) situation- and action-specific person variables, (2) domain-specific personality variables, and (3) generalized personality variables.

## Methods

The analyses reported below are based on questionnaire and interview data obtained from 100 young West German adults with college or university education (mean age:  $M = 24.9$ ,  $SD = 3.03$  years; range: 18 to 33 years, 50 women and 50 men). Half of this sample was engaged as an active member in a political party, organization or movement for at least 2 years previously. The other half of the sample had never been engaged in a political organization. Both subsamples (the activists and the nonactivists) were matched for age, sex, education, and political orientation (i.e., party preference).

Besides interviews and questionnaires for the measurement of the predictor variables (see below), checklists for popular, conventional as well as exposed political activities (Krampen and Wünsche, 1984) were applied (Guttman coefficient of reproducibility for each scale: 0.90). Out of eight popular, conventional political activities (e.g., voting, visiting election meetings, signing a petition, writing a letter to politician/newspaper) listed in this checklist, the activists assent on average to 6.5 activities (range: 5 to 8), the nonactivists assent on average to 5.9 activities (range: 4 to 8). Thus, there is no significant difference in conventional political participation between the two groups ( $t(98) = 1.13$ ). Out of 16 exposed political activities (e.g., engaging in public political discussion, joining legal and illegal public street demonstrations, attending protest meetings, organizing a petition, boycotting taxes, running for a political office, holding a political office, occupying houses/places, rioting against things, rioting against persons) listed in this questionnaire, the activists assent on average to 9.8 activities (range: 6 to 15), the nonactivists assent on average to 3.3 activities (range: 0 to 5); this group difference is highly significant ( $t(98) = 8.79$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; effect size:  $d = 1.86$ ) and confirms the grouping of the sample in exposed political activists and nonactivists, who, of course, both are engaged in popular, conventional political activities. Thus the sample does not include politically inactive (and apathetic) persons.

Data on event-specific motivation for political action, self-concept of own political competence, political control orientations, and moral judgment (value orientations) were gathered with questionnaires and with a structured interview technique. With reference to the level of generalization in AMP these data belong to the following three predictor sets:

### *(1) Predictor Set A (Situation- and Action-Specific Level)*

With reference to 10 political events, which may occur within the next 2 years and which should be anticipated by the individual, and to the realization of one's own political activities, situational expectancies, competence expectancies,

contingence expectancies, instrumentalities, valences of the political events, and valences of the personal consequences of the political events were gathered on 7-point rating scales (including subjective absolute 0 points) within structured interviews. The questions (short forms) were (a) "What is the probability that this event will occur in the present political situation?" (situational expectancy), (b) "Do you have any action possibilities with reference to this political event?" (competence expectancy), (c) "Do you expect that your political activity will influence the (non-)occurrence of the event?" (contingence expectancy), (d) "What relevance would the occurrence of this event have for your personal interests, needs, and goals?" (instrumentality), (e) "How would you value the occurrence of this event?" (valence of the event), and (f) "How would you value the personal consequences of this event?" (valence of the consequences). The list of the political events employed is presented in Table II. They represent a wide spectrum of political issues under discussion in West Germany at the time of data collection. From these basic action- and event-specific expectancy-value variables ten action- and event-specific indicators of motivation for political action were constructed. This aggregation of basic variables followed expectancy-value theory, that is, the hypothesis of multiplicative relations between expectancies and valences as well as the hypothesis that situational valences must be subtracted from action valences (see, e.g., Heckhausen, 1977; Krampen and Wünsche, 1985). The internal consistencies of these ten specific indicators of political action motivation exceeds  $r(tt) = 0.72$ .

### (2) Predictor Set B (Domain-Specific Personality Variables)

Out of the domain-specific personality variables measured in the study, 7 survived in checks of reliability. They refer to questionnaires measuring (a) the self-concept of own political competence (SKP Scale; 8 items;  $r(tt) = 0.86$ ; Krampen, 1986b), (b) three aspects of personal control orientations in the political domain of life (internal, powerful others and chance control beliefs; IPC-I\*P\* Scales; 6 items per scale;  $r(tt) > 0.67$ ; Krampen, 1987c), and (c) three aspects of control ideologies perceived for people in general in West Germany (internal, powerful others and chance control ideology; IPC-I\*P\* Scales; 6 items per scale;  $r(tt) > 0.65$ ; Krampen, 1987c). The IPC-I\*P\* Scales were constructed by combining the construct differentiations from Levenson (1974), who distinguishes between internality (I), powerful others (P), and chance control (C), and from Gurin *et al.* (1978), who distinguish between control ideology (I\*) and personal control beliefs (P\*). All item contents of the SKP and IPC-I\*P\* Scales refer directly to political life situations and political action possibilities (SKP Scales; item example: "It is easy for me to participate in political discussions") or to the contingence of political actions and outcomes either in personal (IPC-P\* Scales;

e.g., “Frequently I succeed in convincing others of my political opinion”) or in impersonal formulations (IPC-I\* Scales; e.g., “Many political problems are solved by chance”).

### (3) Predictor Set C (Generalized Personality Variables)

With reference to the theory of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1964), six indicators for the different levels of moral judgment were measured with the “Moral Judgement Test” (“MUT”; Lind, 1980) within structured interviews (operating with the so-called moral dilemma stories). These variables are considered here as rather abstract and generalized personality variables of value orientations. Internal consistencies of these variables exceed  $r(tt) = 0.74$  (testing across situations presented in the MUT).

In addition to these three predictor sets, the individuals were asked specifically, for each of the 10 anticipated political events/issues, “how much are you informed about it?” and “how much are you actively engaged in searching for such information?” (7-point rating scales). These ratings were added up and represent an indicator of the subjective degree of political information ( $r(tt) = 0.94$ ).

## RESULTS

First, it is worth noting that the correlative relationships (1) within the predictor sets (mean  $r < 0.25$ ) and (2) between the predictor sets (canonical correlation of predictor set A and B:  $R(c) = 0.79$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; between A and C:  $R(c) = 0.64$ ; between B and C:  $R(c) = 0.62$ ) point neither toward high correlations within nor between the sets. While the first results (correlations within the sets) are—in connection with the reliabilities of the variables—a confirmation of the reliability of the differences of the variables measured within each predictor set, the second findings confirm the hierarchical relations (see Krampen, 1987b, 1988a) of situation-/action-specific and domain-specific AMP variables (relation between set A and B) and the weak relation of the considered generalized personality variables (levels of moral reasoning) to action- and situation-specific variables as well as to domain-specific personality variables. This is confirmed by confirmatory factor analyses computed separately for the two groups. The three-factor solutions, which are very similar for both the exposed political activists as well as the nonactivists (similarity coefficients:  $SC > 0.91$ ), confirm a high factor equivalence across both groups of respondents. To sum up, the correlative structures within and between the three predictor sets show that multivariate analyses of the data and their statistical comparisons are possible.



First, the hypothesis was tested that popular, conventional political participation of exposed political activists as well as of the nonactivists can be predicted by the ten event- and action-specific indicators of political action motivation (predictor set A). Multiple regression analysis of these ten predictor variables for the criterion of conventional participation results in a multiple correlation of  $R = 0.53$  for the activists and  $R = 0.55$  for the nonactivists (for both:  $p < 0.01$ ). These findings confirm the hypothesis for both subsamples. In addition, it is worth noting that neither the inclusion of the seven domain-specific personality variables (predictor set B;  $F(7/32) < 0.83$ ) nor the inclusion of the six indicators of generalized moral reasoning (predictor set C;  $F(7/32) < 0.30$ ) results in a significant increase in the multiple correlation coefficients. It is worth noting as well that popular, conventional political participation is neither predicted by the domain-specific ( $R = 0.21$ ) nor the generalized personality variables ( $R = 0.08$ ) alone or by their combination ( $R = 0.23$ ). Only the inclusion of the event- and action-specific indicators of political action motivation results in a significant prediction. Thus, as expected in the action-theory model of personality, the popular, conventional participation of exposed political activists as well as of nonactivists is predicted best by the situation- and action-specific variables of the differentiated expectancy-value model.

With reference to the action-theory model of personality, the hypotheses were tested that political activists' exposed political participation is predicted best by predictor set A (event- and action-specific political motivation variables), but that the exposed political participation of the nonactivists is predicted best by predictor set B (domain-specific personality variables). Therewith, it is assumed that the political activists possess more adequate cognitive representations of political issues and that they perceive their political life situation in a more differentiated and reflexive manner. Their expectancies and valences concerning political events and political actions are subjectively less ambiguous and diffuse. In contrast, the nonactivists' perceptions of their political life situation are subjectively more ambiguous and ill-defined. These assumptions are confirmed by significant differences in the subjective degree of political information between the groups of activists ( $M = 44.6$ ) and nonactivists ( $M = 29.9$ ;  $t(98) = 6.78$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

The statistical tests of these hypotheses were conducted again by multiple analyses of regression, which were computed for the groups of the activists and the nonactivists separately. The criterion variable in all regression analyses is the number of exposed political activities carried out by an individual. Predictor variables are the variables of the three predictor sets—separately as well as in all four possible combinations. Table I presents in its upper part the resulting multiple correlation coefficients. The findings show that the exposed political participation of the activists can be significantly predicted by (1) predictor set A alone (event- and action-related variables), (2) predictor set A in combination

with B, and (3) all three predictor sets together. In contrast, the exposed political participation of the nonactivists can be significantly predicted by (1) predictor set B (domain-specific personality variables), (2) predictor set B in combination with A, (3) predictor set B in combination with C, and (4) all three predictor sets together. Thus, the findings are at first a confirmation (but a rather rough one) of our hypotheses.

In the lower part of Table I the results of statistical comparisons of the multiple correlation coefficients resulting from the different predictor sets are presented for the two subsamples separately. These results make possible a more differentiated evaluation of the hypotheses because the significance of the resulting *F* values gives direct information about the (additional) predictive value of the predictor set considered in a regression analysis in addition. The results show for the political activists that in all cases in which predictor set A is added to some other predictor set(s), there is a significant increase in the multiple correlation coefficient (*R*). On the other hand, only once was a significant increase of *R* observed for the case that another predictor set is added to predictor set A. Thus,

**Table I.** Comparison of the Multiple Correlations of the Predictor Sets for the Prediction of Exposed Political Participation in the Samples of Political Activists and Political Nonactivists

Predictor Set <sup>a</sup>	Multiple Correlation ( <i>R</i> )		
	Polit. Activists	Polit. Nonactivists	
A	0.66**	.43	
B	0.44	.79**	
C	0.06	.10	
A + B	0.80**	.80**	
A + C	0.68	.44	
B + C	0.49	.82**	
A + B + C	0.82*	.86**	
Comparison <sup>b</sup>	df <sub>1</sub> /df <sub>2</sub>	<i>F</i>	<i>F</i>
A vs <u>A+B</u>	7/32	2.68*	5.96**
A vs <u>A+B+C</u>		1.50	4.42**
A+B vs <u>A+B+C</u>		0.45	1.72
B vs <u>A+B</u>		4.09**	0.15
B vs <u>A+B+C</u>		2.47*	0.75
B+C vs <u>A+B+C</u>		3.56**	0.70
B vs <u>B+C</u>		0.38	0.91

\*\**p* < .01, \**p* < 0.05.

<sup>a</sup>Predictor Set A: 10 situation-specific indicators of political action motivation; Predictor Set B: 7 domain-specific personality variables of political self-concept, control beliefs, and control ideology; Predictor Set C: 6 general personality variables of moral judgment.

<sup>b</sup>The comparisons refer to the additional predictive value of the predictor set(s) underlined.

predictor set A—the 10 situation- and action-specific indicators of political action motivation—have the highest predictive value for the exposed political participation in the group of the actively engaged members of political parties and organizations.

In contrast, the results for the nonactivists point toward the priority of predictor set B—the seven domain-specific personality variables—for the prediction of their exposed political participation (see Table I). The additional consideration of predictor set B in the regression analysis results twice in a significant increase of the resulting multiple correlation, whereas at no time is such a significant increase observed when other predictor set(s) are added to predictor set B. It can be concluded that the domain-specific personality variables (predictor set B) do have an additional predictive value in analyses of exposed political participation of nonactivists, while none of the other predictor sets considered has such an additional predictive value with reference to predictor set B.

It should be mentioned that predictor set C (six indicators of moral reasoning) failed to be a relevant predictor of exposed political participation in the present sample. This conforms to the AMP hypothesis that personality variables measured on a very high level of generalization are hardly confirmed as relevant correlates of specific behaviors. In the analyses presented, such generalized indicators of different levels of moral reasoning do not have any predictive value for political participation.

The discussed differences in the relative importance of the three predictor sets for the two respondent groups proved to be significant in tests of the homogeneity of unstandardized regression coefficients ( $p < 0.05$ ). This is true for predictor set A (event- and action-specific person variables) and predictor set B (domain-specific personality variables) as well as for their combinations with predictor set C (generalized personality variables), but not for predictor set C alone and the combinations of A and B as well as the combination of all three sets ( $p > .10$ ).

The core hypothesis that situation- and action-specific expectancy-value variables have a greater predictive value than the domain-specific personality variables for exposed political activity in the activists, and an inverse relationship in the nonactivists, is further confirmed by the regression factor structure coefficients of the multiple regression analyses computed for the groups separately, including the predictor sets A and B (see Table II). While the multiple correlations and multiple determinations of predictor sets A and B together for exposed political activity are the same for the two groups, the structure coefficients point toward relevant differences. The domain-specific personality variables show the relatively highest structure coefficients in the sample of the nonactivists, while the predictive value (structure coefficients) of the indicators of the 10 event-specific political action motivations remain rather low. In contrast, three of those indicators of event- and action-specific motivation show the relatively highest

**Table II.** Structure Coefficients of the Variables of the Predictor Sets A and B for the Prediction of Exposed Political Participation in the Sample of Political Activists and Political Nonactivists

Predictor	Structure coefficients	
	Polit. Activists	Polit. Nonactivists
Political action motivation (EV) stimulated by situation/anticipated event		
Increase in unemployment	0.12	.05
Construction of nuclear waste recycling plants	0.34	.37
Health risk of toxic substances in food	0.24	.30
Tearing down old houses to build new roads and streets	0.05	-.03
Conservative political party wins absolute majority	<u>0.65</u>	.35
Ecological party wins more than 5% of votes in next election	0.21	.30
New laws against alternative political parties and ecological party	<u>0.45</u>	.37
Deployment of new nuclear weapons in FRG	0.29	.31
NATO intervenes in the Middle East to secure oil exports	0.37	.38
Military interventions of U.S.A. in Nicaragua	<u>0.74</u>	.33
Domain-specific personality variables (Set B)		
Internal control beliefs	0.30	<u>0.80</u>
Powerful others control beliefs	-0.14	<u>-0.54</u>
Chance control beliefs	-0.10	<u>-0.54</u>
Internal control ideology	0.12	-0.30
Powerful others control ideology	0.08	-0.12
Chance control ideology	-0.12	-0.03
Self-concept of own polit. competence	0.36	<u>0.80</u>
$R(R')^a$	0.80** (0.67)	0.80** (0.67)
$R^2$	0.64	0.64

\*\* $p < 0.01$ .

<sup>a</sup> $R$  = multiple correlation,  $R'$  = population estimation of  $R$ ,  $R^2$  = multiple determination.

structure coefficients in the sample of the activists, whereas the structure coefficients of the seven domain-specific personality variables are low. These differences in the relative importance of the event-specific and domain-specific variables are confirmed by tests of the homogeneity of the unstandardized regression coefficients of the predictor variables underlined in Table II ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The research demonstration shows how the hypotheses deduced from the application of the action-theory model of personality to analyses of political

participation can be tested empirically. The results are encouraging for AMP, but it must be considered that these findings have the status of a first empirical test. However, the results point toward the relevance of differentiating in analyses of political participation (1) between the different types of political participation and (2) between individuals whose perceptions of the political life situation and whose cognitive structures about political issues are different.

To summarize the findings, the following hypotheses were confirmed: (1) Popular, conventional political participation is predicted best by the various situation- and action-specific variables of the differentiated expectancy-value model. The inclusion of domain-specific and generalized personality variables does not result in significant increases in the prediction of such nonexposed political activities; it is unnecessary and ineffective to assess such variables. This is true for analyses of the conventional political participation of political activists as well as of nonactivists. (2) Exposed political participation, which exceeds the social norms and the culturally usual, is predicted best in political activists by situation- and action-specific variables of expectancy-value theory as well. Activists' cognitive representations of political issues and of their own political life situation are differentiated and include such specific event- or outcome-related expectancies and valences, which are sufficient for reconstructions and predictions of their exposed political activities. (3) In contrast, in the political nonactivists, the person-situation interactions do not result in such a differentiated cognitive structure because they are less informed about political issues and perceive their political life situation as more ambiguous and diffuse. Therefore, their (lower degree of) exposed political participation is predicted best by domain-specific personality variables like the self-concept of their own political competence and political control orientations.

However, it is worth noting that the presented results of the research demonstration cover only a part of the spectrum of the domain-specific personality variables considered as relevant in AMP analyses of political participation. Future research should take into account the other variables (i.e., system trust, level of conceptualization, and political value orientations) as well, since recent research findings (see above) point toward their significance in analyses of political activity and political attitudes. However, up to now these (domain-specific) personality variables were considered individually and in isolated ways in political psychology. The action-theory model of personality includes not only a taxonomy of these variables and a logical description of their theoretical network, but statements about their predictive value, too. For predictive purposes, the situation perceptions of the individuals are crucial. More direct measurements of the subjective ambiguity and novelty of the political life situation are, of course, necessary. The operationalization of this moderator variable applied in the illustrative study presented results in a nominal variable. Thus, tests of the moderator effect had to be computed by separate regression analyses and the evaluation of the corresponding structure coefficients. Ordinal and interval mea-

surements of the moderator variable make more direct tests possible (see, e.g., Zedeck, 1971; Borkenau, 1985).

Thus, the action-theory model of personality represents an approach to political psychology by which missing links between personality-oriented analyses and action-theory analyses of political participation are established. The integration of situation- and action-specific expectancies and valences as well as selected domain-specific personality variables in a single model implies not only perspectives for participation research, but, in addition, for research on political and environmental attitudes (Smith, 1973; Milbrath, 1986), political ideologies (Sniderman and Tetlock, 1986), and political socialization (see Niemi, 1973; Merelman, 1986). Political and environmental attitudes as well as political ideologies are fruitfully analyzed in terms of beliefs (more or less generalized expectancies) and values (action goals and value orientations). Within an action-theory approach to human development (see Lerner and Busch-Rossnagel, 1981) the process of political socialization in adolescence and adulthood is conceptualized as the development of action orientations (i.e., expectancies and valences as well as their generalization) in person-situation interactions, which refer in part to political attitudes and political action structures (Krampen, 1988b). Last but not least, because of frequent misunderstandings of action-theory approaches to human behavior, it is worth noting again that such an approach does not imply a rational model of individuals and individual decision-making. Such models represent theories on subjectively reasoned actions. As stated above, expectancies and their generalizations can be totally irrational; action goals and value orientations can be hedonistic as well as social, altruistic, and/or affective. It is only assumed in such models that the subjective contents of these variables (whether rational or irrational, hedonistic or social) represent the social-cognitive foundations of behavior and experience.

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