Chapter 13

GENERATION SPECIFIC EFFECTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC DEPRIVATION ON AUTHORITARIANISM, ANOMIE, AND POLITICAL APATHY: THE DUTCH CASE 1985

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13.1. Introduction

Until recently, social research neglected the phenomenon of political apathy among social classes that were hit most severely by the social and political consequences of the economic stagnation of the eighties. In a previous study, we attempted to fill this gap by addressing the issue (Van Snippenburg, Scheepers 1988; Scheepers, Van Snippenburg 1989). We formulated and tested a model to explain the political apathy among lower class people in the Netherlands during the mid-eighties. The results revealed that being a member of a deprived socioeconomic class increases the likelihood of developing authoritarian and anomic attitudes. These attitudes in their turn promote political apathy. In addition, being a member of a deprived class also directly encourages political apathy.

In the present study we will try to elaborate and improve this apathy study, since it was inadequate to a certain extent. A first flaw was that the deprived classes were only constituted by those in manual and routine non-manual labor. A more adequate operationalization of the deprived classes ought to include the inactives who are dependent on social security benefits (unemployed and invalided people) as well. Second, the study did not differentiate between generations. This may be a flaw because it is to be expected that different generations will react differently to changing economic circumstances. Thus the generation that entered the labor-market for the first time in the thirties, during the period of the Great Depression, may have reacted very differently to the economic stagnation of the eighties from the generation that entered the
labor-market just before and during the economically expansive years of the late fifties and sixties.

In this study we will try to overcome these two shortcomings in the previous apathy study. We will include a class of benefit-dependents in the analysis, as well as a conceptually well elaborated working class/middle class distinction derived from Vanneman and Cannon (1987). Furthermore, we will differentiate the explanatory model according to four generations discerned in a new generational classificatory scheme developed by Becker (1985, 1987). In the next section we will present a description of the original apathy model of Van Snippenburg and Scheepers (1988). In the following section we will elaborate the three classes (benefit-dependents, working class, middle class) and their inclusion in the apathy model. Then we will present Becker's classification of generations, while at the same time deliberating on the consequences it may have for the transformation of the general apathy model into four generation-specific apathy models. After having operationalized the main concepts, we will test the fourfold model by means of a LISREL multi-group analysis to see if it is indeed empirically meaningful to discern distinct models for the separate generations. Finally we will discuss the results and come to conclusions.

13.2. The apathy model

The theoretical model of Van Snippenburg and Scheepers is actually an elaboration of a combination of two classical hypotheses on the relation between class and political apathy, and one recently formulated conceptual model on relations between class, authoritarianism and anomie. The first of the two hypotheses stems from critics of the marxian thesis of "Verelendung" (Marx and Engels 1985/1848) which states that under (relatively) deteriorating socioeconomic and political conditions, for example as inequality increases or oppression of rulers becomes unbearable, the have-nots or the oppressed will turn to political revolt. The critics have emphasized that history has shown that political activity generally disappears under circumstances of deprivation. Instead, collective apathy often manifests itself among deprived groups (Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel 1933). In this way, the critics of the Verelendungs thesis have hypothesized that belonging to a deprived class has a direct positive (rather than negative) effect on political apathy. We will refer to this hypothesis as the "simple materialistic thesis".
More elaborated arguments against the Verelendungs thesis were raised by members of the so-called "Frankfurter Schule", among others Fromm (1983/1929, 1936) and Adorno et al. (1982/1950). They had observed that during the Great Depression of the thirties, the workers and have-nots in Germany, who had to bear the burden of the fast deteriorating economic situation, remained outside of the political scenery. Parts of the middle class, on the other hand, actively engaged in politics, as did the cultural and economic elites (Kater 1983). In the light of these facts, the Frankfurters criticized the marxian Verelendungs thesis. In their view, belonging to a deprived group promotes the development of an authoritarian personality. Such a personality usually has great respect for strong political leaders, to whom he is willing to submit himself unconditionally. He is characterized by rigid conformism to conventional norms, as well as by aggressive predispositions towards trespassers of these norms. A further characteristic of this personality is a cynical outlook on human affairs (Fromm 1983/1929, Adorno et al. 1982/1950, Bonss 1983/1929). Authoritarian people are not expected to oppose the existing state of political affairs, or to stand up against authorities. Conversely, they submit themselves to authorities, and remain aloof from the political field of force (Von Freyhold 1971).

Taking into account the historical situation at the time of the formulation of this so-called "authoritarianism-thesis", Van Snippenburg and Scheepers assume that it also holds for the period of economic stagnation in the eighties. The circumstances were similar in several respects: as during the thirties, the lower classes again had to bear an uneven share of the burden of the economic stagnation, and had to face the harshest consequences of retrenchment policies.

A third foundation of this apathy model of Snippenburg and Scheepers was derived from a theoretical model of Felling, Peters and Scheepers (1986), who had adjusted, and added some elements to, the authoritarianism-thesis of the Frankfurters. Felling at al. acknowledged that modern societies are 'achieving societies', in which achievement motivation and related traditional bourgeois values have high priority. People derive prestige and self-esteem from the realization of these values. Socioeconomic frustration and status-anxiety follow a lack of success, e.g. if people fail to reach the social status they aspire to. Even the threat of unemployment or of a reduction of salaries may have these consequences. Felling et al. state that feelings of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration are especially strong within the deprived classes.
According to Felling et al., socioeconomic frustration and status-anxiety are generally followed by two kinds of psychic reactions. First, they bring about the repression of spontaneous impulses which may subsequently lead to authoritarianism (Fromm 1936). Second, they generate dissonance-reduction processes (Festinger 1957) which concern the psychic anticipations of the (threatening) discrepancy between aspirations and actual achievements. These dissonance-reduction processes are likely to result in an anomie mental state. Anomie is characterized by feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness and social isolation. Both authoritarianism and anomie refer to social resignation, and lack of a willingness to stand up against authorities. This may eventually lead to political apathy. Felling et al. do not hypothesize a direct effect of class on authoritarianism and anomie. Their model is in this respect a denial of the authoritarianism thesis. They also deny a direct effect of class on political apathy, as was put forward by the simple materialistic thesis. They state that status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration intermediate the relations between social class on the one hand and authoritarianism, anomie and political apathy on the other hand.

To summarize: taking as points of departure the simple materialistic thesis (derived from the critics of the Verelendungs-thesis), the authoritarianism-thesis of the Frankfurters, and the modifications of it by Felling et al., Van Snippenburg and Scheepers formulated an extended model to explain political apathy in the Netherlands during the eighties. Having tested this model with data of the Netherlands in 1985, they came to the following conclusive model (see figure 1, see also appendix 1).

Anomie and authoritarianism appeared to have significant direct effects on political apathy. The effect of the former is thereby far stronger than the effect of the latter. Both anomie and authoritarianism are influenced by feelings of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration. The most salient direct effect on anomie and authoritarianism, as well as on political apathy, stems from social class. Thus, no argument could be found in the results to reject, as Felling et al. had done, the simple materialistic thesis of a direct link between social class on the one hand and attitudes (authoritarianism, anomie) and political behavior (apathy) on the other hand. The general conclusion of Van Snippenburg and Scheepers was that the economic stagnation, and the ensuing retrenchment policy of the Dutch government in the eighties, had far-reaching consequences for the subjective experience of socioeconomic, and political life, as well as for
the political behavior of Dutch citizens: members of the (relatively) deprived occupational classes, mainly those in manual labor and routine white-collar employees, were inclined to turn their backs on politics. These classes were characterized by a higher level of political apathy.

Figure 1. Empirical model to explain political apathy (standardized coefficients).

13.3. Deprived classes

Van Snippenburg and Schèepers utilized a ten-category occupational classification of Erikson, Goldthorpe, and Portocarero (1983), adjusted by Ganzbeoom et al. (1987) to the Dutch situation, as a class variable in their apathy model. They did not discern a category of unemployed and invalidated people, dependent on social security benefits, as a separate class (inactive class). This is an omission, since this class of inactives was also relatively deprived in the eighties. They were severely hit by the retrenchments in social security benefits and by the deteriorating conditions on the labor-market. We decided to include this class of inactives in the present study.
We also modified the class scheme in another way. Vanneman and Cannon (1987), taking as a starting-point studies on the class division in modern societies of the political scientist Poulantzas (1974), suggest a new theoretically highly relevant and empirically fruitful class distinction that, in an slightly adapted form, fits our research purpose well. This distinction diverges from the classical distinction between manual and non-manual labor (between blue-collar and white-collar workers) in that it draws the division on a somewhat higher level. Vanneman and Cannon argue that many white-collar workers, notably the routine white-collar workers (e.g. white-collar positions in clerical and retail sales), have no control in their labor situation. They are dominated in the same way as blue-collar workers and actually belong, regarding this submittance/dominance dimension, to the same class as blue-collar workers. Manual workers and lower-status employees are not only dominated by the managers and professionals in their own working organization (plant, shop, bureau, etcetera), but also by those outside of that organization. The personnel officer, the engineer, the labor relations specialist, and even the firm’s doctor have a say in the how, if, and when of labor of others. They all have a stake in analyzing, designing, structuring, organizing and planning the labor of others, while members of the working class have not. In addition, all members of the working class see these managers, professionals, etcetera, as representatives of a dominant class. These arguments, as well as the supporting empirical findings of Vanneman and Cannon (see Vanneman and Cannon 1988: 53-110, for details), together with empirical findings of Van Snippenburg and Scheepers (1988) -see for details section 13.5, persuaded us to make a distinction between a class of workers that comprises unskilled- and skilled manual work as well as routine white-collar workers on the one hand and, on the other hand, a middle class that comprises the self-employed, higher employees, professionals, and managers.

Consequently, we introduce to our model a class variable with three categories: middle class (e.g. professionals, managers, self-employed), working class (with the inclusion of routine white-collar workers, e.g. lower employees in clerical and retail sales), and the class of inactives.

13.4. Generations

In the previous study on political apathy, the research population was assumed to be homogeneous regarding different (socio-)historical generations and age-
Generation specific effects

This may be a flaw, since it is to be expected that the deprived classes of different generations did not react in exactly the same way to the deteriorating socioeconomic circumstances of the eighties. An example of such a difference in reaction has already been mentioned in the introduction. In this study we will specify the explanatory model separately for the four generations that, according to Becker (1985, 1987), are ideal-typically to be discerned within the Dutch population in the eighties. Becker labelled these generations as follows: 1) the pre-war generation, born between 1910 and 1930, 2) the silent generation, born between 1930 and 1940, 3) the protest-generation, born between 1940 and 1955, and 4) the lost generation, born after 1955. These dates should be considered as gross approximations of generation boundaries.

Becker took Mannheim’s famous essay on the problem of generations (1972/1928) as a frame of reference for his quadruple classification. Mannheim defines generations as configurations of ‘formative’ cohorts which are specifically moulded by their simultaneous experience of critical sociohistorical events. The word ‘formative’ means that the cohort members experienced these critical events during the formative years of their life cycle, which are assumed to extend over the late-adolescent and post-adolescent years (nowadays from about 15 to 25 years of age). People are supposed to be very sensitive to critical socioeconomic and political events (e.g. economic depression, or war) during that age-period, in which the transition from childhood to adulthood takes place and definite preparations for the first entry into the labor-market are made. During the formative years, people broaden their socioeconomic and political horizon to a considerable extent. These years are of crucial importance to the formation of foundations on which, and thus for the ways in which, people generate attitudes and opinions in the fields of labor, politics, social justice, and so on, in later life. So, we may expect that to the extent that generations have undergone their formative experiences in different sociohistorical contexts, they will differ in the way their attitudes and their opinions are generated.

Characteristics of the four generations discerned by Becker, and the critical sociohistorical events that led to their emergence can be summarized as follows.

For the pre-war generation, those born between 1910 and 1930, the first pervasive collective experience was the economic crisis of the thirties (Becker 1987:10). On entering the labor-market, a scarcity of jobs and low salaries awaited the members of this generation, of whom only a few had had a
secondary education. Often unemployment, poverty, and the dole were their share. Criticism of the bad labor conditions was avoided because those who had a job could so easily lose it. Society as a whole was not really permissive, authority was both strong and respected at that time. During the fifties, members of the pre-war generation had to bear the heaviest burden of the socioeconomic reconstruction following World War II. However, they eventually reached satisfactory levels of affluence once the reconstruction had been completed. When at the end of the sixties a generation emerged that challenged established authority, and materialistic and bourgeois values, it especially shook the convictions of the pre-war generation. Their experiences of scarcity in the thirties and forties had ingrained in them an industrious spirit and high levels of achievement motivation. They considered law and order, and economic progress necessary in order to avoid social chaos and security risks.

For the silent generation, born in the thirties, the socio-economic reconstruction after World War II constituted a highly significant formative experience. Recovery from war damage, improvement of the educational system - although academic studies still remained largely the prerogative of higher socioeconomic classes, and an expanding labor-market were characteristic of the period of their transition to the adult world. Members of this generation had also undergone experiences of scarcity and crisis, during World War II and in the early post-war period. However, their entry on the labor-market was far more favorable than that of the previous generation. Like the pre-war generation, this generation was brought up to hold conventional norms. They were socialized in a cultural climate of high esteem for traditional bourgeois values, i.e. for family-life, career achievement, and law and order.

The protest-generation. The cohorts born between about 1940 and 1955 did not experience the hardships of the Great Depression and World War II. On the contrary, they knew only affluence and lasting peace during their formative years. The growing demand for well educated and trained employees, the increasing prosperity, as well as the post-war 'baby-boom' caused the educational system to expand rapidly. Schools turned into massive, impersonal institutions that no longer seemed to fit the needs of students of the time. The young of the sixties and early seventies, who took this newly acquired economic affluence for granted, began to attack the dominant bourgeois values. They rejected the meritocratic orientations that were so characteristic for previous
generations. They had other priorities, like redistribution of wealth, sharing of political power, and the abolition of racial and gender discrimination.

The labor-market still offered reasonable job opportunities for those entering it for the first time. The period of expanding career prospects, however, seemed to have waned by the end of the sixties. Naturally, there was some frustration at these first (mild) obstructions to the rising occupational expectations of young adults. This may have been one of the catalysts of the wide-spread support for youth protest of that time (Van Snippenburg 1988).

The lost generation. Becker attaches the term 'lost' to the generation born after about 1955. Its members came into first contact with society at large, and had their basic formative experiences within the wider social and political sphere in the seventies and eighties. They witnessed mainly a socioeconomic climate of stagnation, a political right-wing backlash, as well as 'no-nonsense' policies and heavy retrenchment measures. Despite of their generally high educational levels, they could hope for at best only moderate career prospects. They had to face the risk of long-term unemployment, low wages at the start of their career, and often only part-time or temporary appointments. Their situation was in several respects similar to that at the time the pre-war generation entered the labor-market and had to face the ruptures of the Great Depression and the socioeconomic consequences of World War II. Because of the bad socioeconomic conditions, prosperity could no longer be taken for granted by members of the lost generation. As a consequence, materialistic values and achievement motivation regained some cultural dominance among them. An industrious spirit and high achievement motivation are again characteristic for this generation. Its members generally consider economic progress and some law and order necessary to avoid social chaos, and even authority is once again respected.

We have so far presented a brief description of Becker’s generations, and added some minor interpretations of our own. Substantial differences between the four generations that may bear upon the apathy model are the following.

- Traditional achievement values acquired higher priority in the pre-war, silent and lost generations than in the protest-generation. Members of this latter generation therefore derive prestige and self-esteem from the realization of these values to a lesser extent than members of the other generations. If, for instance, they fail to climb the socioeconomic ladder or are threatened by
unemployment, reduction of salaries, and so on, they are less likely to suffer from status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration. As a consequence, we expect the differences in levels of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration between the inactive and working class on the one hand, and the middle class on the other hand, to be smaller in the protest-generation than in the other generations during the recent period of socioeconomic stagnation in the eighties.

Members of the protest-generation experienced material affluence and a permissive society during their formative years. As a consequence, we believe them to be less inclined to repress spontaneous impulses, even under conditions of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration. We therefore expect the effects of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration on authoritarianism to be relatively weak in this generation. We also assume these relations to be relatively weak in the pre-war and silent generation, but for vastly different reasons. Members of these two generations directly experienced the ferocious consequences of nazism and the authoritarianism on which it was constituted. We expect this experience to hinder the development of authoritarian attitudes among them in later life. In other words, even if they feel status-anxious and socioeconomically frustrated, the transformation of these mental states into authoritarianism will be tempered as a consequence of their earlier frightful experiences. Members of the lost generation, however, lack these experiences. We therefore expect status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration to be more easily translated into authoritarianism among that group. This may be one of the reasons why fascism and racism could emerge during the eighties among minorities of young people in the Netherlands.

A main formative event for members of the silent generation was the socioeconomic and political post-war reconstruction. The modern welfare state emerged early in their occupational careers. They witnessed the success of well directed policy efforts, and therefore acquired a belief in the possibility to structure and change society. The protest-generation, socialized in such a constructive and optimistic climate, took for granted the manageability of the political and economic structure. The affluence and the permissiveness they experienced in their formative years even made them prone to overestimate the chances of structure society, leading to the wide-spread youth protest at the end of the sixties and first half of the seventies. These formative experiences preclude members of the silent and the protest-generation from allowing feelings of anomie (powerlessness, senselessness and social isolation) to descend upon them, even when they are status-anxious or socioeconomically frustrated. The pre-war and lost generations, however, had their formative experiences at
a time of worsening socioeconomic conditions, in times when society seemed far less manageable, and when a political ideology of retreat from interference in societal matters dominated. Consequently, they may be more prone to feelings of anomie under conditions of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration. We therefore expect the effects of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration on anomie to be weaker in the silent and the protest-generation than in the pre-war and the lost generation.

As we have already stated in the previous part of this section, the silent and the protest-generation had positive experiences of policy-efforts, and believed in the possibility of restructuring society. It was therefore less likely that they would fall subject to resignation processes and become politically apathetic as a consequence of authoritarian, and anomic attitudes, than the pre-war and the lost generation, which lacked these positive experiences. Of the pre-war and lost generation we actually expect the pre-war generation to be still more liable to resignation processes, since members of that group received far less education on average, and had their formative experiences in a less participatory cultural climate. To conclude, we expect the effects of authoritarianism and anomie on political apathy to be stronger in the lost generation than in the silent and protest-generation, and we expect these relations to be even stronger in the pre-war generation.

In summary. Arguments derived from Becker's ideal-typical generation model led us to the formulation of the following four generation-specific hypotheses applicable to the Dutch population during the economic stagnation of the eighties:

1. The differences in levels of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration between the inactive and the working class on the one hand, and the middle class on the other hand, are smaller in the protest-generation than in the other three generations.

2. The effects of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration on authoritarianism are stronger in the lost generation than in the other three generations.

3. The effects of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration on anomie are weaker in the silent and the protest-generation than in the pre-war and the lost generation.

4. The effects of authoritarianism and anomie on political apathy are stronger in the lost generation than in the silent and in the protest-generation. They are even stronger in the pre-war generation.
We could not derive suggestions about differences between the generations in the direct effects of class on authoritarianism, anomie, and political apathy from the theories underlying the apathy model or from Becker's generation-thesis. With regard to these effects we therefore stick tentatively to the results from the analyses of the apathy model for the whole population in the previous study. We will however, check to what extent the present analyses, with the changed definition and operationalization of social class as well as the generation-specific models, lead to comparable conclusions. We therefore formulate the following two non-generation-specific hypotheses as guidance for our research:

5. Belonging to a deprived class (inactive or working class) leads directly to authoritarianism and anomie.

6. Belonging to a deprived class leads directly to political apathy.

13.5. Data and method

Sample

in 1985, a two-stage random sample of Dutch residents was taken. First, the Netherlands was divided into four regional zones: North, East, South and West. Within these zones, municipalities were sampled in proportion to national distributions of urbanization. Second, respondents (18 to 69 years of age) were selected randomly out of these municipalities. The distributions of sample-respondents with respect to sex, age, marital status, as well as the combination of these characteristics, appeared to be an optimal approximation of known national distributions (Felling et al. 1987:9-10). We consider the sample representative of the Dutch population.

Of this sample (N=1799), we selected the respondents who actually worked in 1985, part time or full time, as well as those who were unemployed or (partially) disabled (dependent on social security benefits). Housewives, students, and the retired were excluded. Respondents were deleted listwise for all variables in the apathy model. In this way we reached 1004 units for the analyses.

Measurements

For the operationalization of class we utilized a classification of occupations designed by Erikson, Goldthorpe and Portocarero (1983) for international comparative research. It was adjusted to the Dutch occupational coding system (as coded by the Dutch Office for Statistics, C.B.S.) by Ganzeboom et al.
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(1987). The original classification contains ten nominal categories. We re-classified these categories into two distinct classes according to a criterion formulated by Vanneman and Cannon (1987): whether or not one is involved in occupational tasks regarding the organization, planning, and designing of labor (see section 13.3). Routine non-manual workers, skilled manual workers, semi- and unskilled manual workers, and agricultural workers were considered to constitute the working class, and managers, supervisors, professionals, the self-employed small proprietors, farmers, smallholders and fishermen to constitute the middle class. Next to the theoretical and empirical arguments put forward by Vanneman and Cannon in favor of this distinction (see section 13.3), we can add some research findings indicative of its empirical usefulness. Results of previous analyses of the general apathy model (see appendix 1), on which we actually elaborate in the present study, show that little information will be lost if we reduce the elaborate class scheme. The categories which constitute our so-called 'middle class' are relatively homogeneous with respect to their effects on both intervening and dependent variables in the model; the same is true for the categories which constitute the 'working class'.

In order to operationalize the inactive class, we grouped the unemployed and the disabled in a third category. So, we finished with a threefold objective class variable: the inactive class, the working class, and the middle class.

We operationalized status-anxiety according to a scale construction of Felling et al. (1987). The scale refers to feelings of uncertainty regarding one's future economic position and social prestige. We asked respondents whether they worried about a possible declining status of their neighbourhood, a cut in their household budgets, diminishing luxury for their family, and a drastic change of their contemporary lifestyle. The six items by which these feelings were measured, were converted into a scale by probabilistic scalogram analysis (Mokken 1970). Its reliability (rho) is .76. Its scalability amounts to .39.

The operationalization of socio-economic frustration was also derived from Felling et al. (1987). It was measured by two questions as to whether respondents had recently experienced a financial decline and whether they were (dis-) satisfied with their present financial situation. Although the reliability of this scale is rather low (Cronbach's alpha=.51), we decided to use it because of the lack of other valid measures.
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The operationalization of authoritarianism covers the following nine subsyndromes conceptualized by Adorno et al. (1982/1950): authoritarian submission, authoritarian aggression, conventionalism, concern about sexual matters, projectivity, power and toughness, cynicism and destructiveness, stereotypy, and anti-intraception. Felling et al. (1987) selected an item for each of these subsyndromes. For example, items such as "what this country needs most, more than laws and political programs, is a few courageous, fearless, devoted leaders in whom people can put their faith", and "a person who has bad manners, habits and breeding, can hardly expect to get along with decent people", were submitted to the respondents. A scale was constructed via principal factor analysis (PA2 from SPSSx; Nie 1983). The reliability of the scale is .78 (Cronbach's alpha).

Anomie was operationalized in accordance with the definition given by Srole (1956), referring to feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, general social decline, and social isolation. Felling et al. (1987) selected six items to cover these feelings. The respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with statements like "In spite of what people say, average man's situation is getting worse, not better", and "these days, a person does not really know whom he can count on". Scales were constructed via principal factor analysis (PA2 from SPSSx; Nie 1983). The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of this scale is .76.

Political apathy was measured by items that refer to abstention from political participation. Respondents were asked how they had voted at the last national election, if they were members of a political party, active for a political party, discussed politics, tried to convince friends to vote for their party, cooperated with members of the community to solve local problems, attended political meetings, and contacted political officials. People who performed none, or only a few of such political activities, were considered to be politically apathetic. We constructed this scale by means of probabilistic scalogram analysis. Its scalability is .49 and its reliability .75.

Analysis

We utilize path-analysis (multiple regression, ordinary least squares solution) to estimate the direct effects of our model. The following regression equations represent all recursive relations specified in the present study to explain political apathy.
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\[ X_4 = a_4 + b_{4,1}D_1 + b_{4,2}D_2 + b_{4,3}X_2 + b_{4,4}X_3 + e_4 \]

\[ X_5 = a_5 + b_{5,1}D_1 + b_{5,2}D_2 + b_{5,3}X_2 + b_{5,4}X_3 + e_5 \]

\[ X_6 = a_6 + b_{6,1}D_1 + b_{6,2}D_2 + b_{6,3}X_2 + b_{6,4}X_3 + b_{6,5}X_4 + b_{6,6}X_5 + e_6 \]

where:

- \( D_1 \) = working class
- \( D_2 \) = inactive class
- \( X_2 \) = status-anxiety
- \( X_3 \) = socioeconomic frustration
- \( X_4 \) = authoritarianism
- \( X_5 \) = anomic
- \( X_6 \) = political apathy
- \( a_i \) = constant
- \( b_{ij} \) = unstandardized regression coefficient
- \( e_i \) = residual

Class is a nominal variable, which is broken down into dummy-variables. The number of dummy-variables in the regression equation is equal to the number of categories of the original variable minus one. This one serves as a reference category, in our case the middle class. The unstandardized regression coefficients of the dummy-variables represent how much the predicted score of the concerned class-category deviates from the predicted score of the reference category, controlling for other independent variables in the equation.

First, we tested whether the generation-specific models (i.e. models estimated separately for the four generations as specified in section 13.4) differed significantly. This test was executed by means of the multi-sample option of LISREL (LISREL VI: Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1981). We used the covariance matrices, which are presented in appendix 2. The null-hypothesis was that the total model (whole set of unstandardized regression coefficients of the apathy model) in each sub-sample, i.e. in each generation, is identical to that in other sub-samples, i.e. in other generations. This null-hypothesis could be rejected on the basis of conventional statistical criteria (Chi-square=717.03, df=54, p=0.00). This means that the model differs significantly across generations. Because this test is fairly rigorous, we do not yet know which singular effects differ substantially across generations.

13.6. Results

To detect the differences in singular direct effects between the generations, we estimated the coefficients of the regression equations presented above for the separate generations (SPSSx/REGRESSION, Nle 1983).
The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Estimated coefficients of the apathy models for the separate generations.

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<td>.22**</td>
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* significant at .05 level
** significant at .01 level

Legends:
I = pre-war generation
II = silent generation
III = protest-generation
IV = lost generation
D1 = working class
D2 = inactive class
X2 = status-anxiety
X3 = socioeconomic frustration
X4 = authoritarianism
X5 = anomie
X6 = political apathy
In our previous research on political apathy it was found that belonging to a deprived class leads directly to authoritarianism and anomie. First we will check if the present study, with the changed definition and operationalization of class, and the analyses for the separate generations, lead to comparable conclusions. We therefore begin our discussion proceeding from the two non-generation-specific hypotheses (5 and 6) formulated at the end of section 13.4.

Hypothesis 5 predicts that belonging to a deprived class leads directly to authoritarianism and anomie, irrespective of one's generation location. The unstandardized regression coefficients of the class dummies on authoritarianism and anomie (see table 1, below $D_1$ and $D_2$) represent the extent to which the working class and the inactive class differ from the middle class (reference category) regarding authoritarianism and anomie, controlled for other independent variables in the equations. It appears that the working class and the inactive class are generally more authoritarian than the middle class, and that the working class is generally more authoritarian than the inactive class. The pre-war generation is an exception. Its working class is less authoritarian than the middle class and the inactive class. The working class and the inactive class also appear to be generally more anomie than the middle class, except again in the pre-war generation where the working class is less anomie than the middle class (and the inactive class). The working class appears to be more anomie than the inactive class in the protest and the lost generation. We can conclude that the fifth hypothesis, which we derived from theories of the Frankfurters and Felling et al., is generally corroborated by the results. The working class in the pre-war generation is an exception; it is less authoritarian and less anomie than the middle class.

Hypothesis 6 predicts that belonging to a deprived class leads directly to political apathy, irrespective of one's generation location. The unstandardized regression coefficients of the working class and the inactive class on political apathy represent the extent to which political apathy in the working class and the inactive class respectively, deviate from political apathy in the middle class, controlled for other independent variables. It appears that both the working class and the inactive class in all generations are more politically apathetic than the middle class. In addition, the working class appears to be more apathetic than the inactive class in all generations, except in the silent generation. This means that the sixth hypothesis, which we derived from the simple materialistic model of the critics of the 'Verelendungs-thesis', is generally corroborated by
the results. In the final section we will discuss the remarkable finding that in most cases the working class is more authoritarian and more politically apathetic than the inactive class (6 out of 8).

| Table 2. Mean scores on status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration of the classes in the distinct generations. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PRE-WAR GENERATION (N=86)** | X2 | X3 |
| DO | 424.47 | 514.36 |
| D1 | 531.40 | 550.34 |
| D2 | 545.32 | 588.28 |
| **SILENT GENERATION (N=173)** | X2 | X3 |
| DO | 486.32 | 493.84 |
| D1 | 504.25 | 500.98 |
| D2 | 553.69 | 615.25 |
| **PROTEST-GENERATION (N=471)** | X2 | X3 |
| DO | 485.45 | 483.88 |
| D1 | 498.87 | 502.87 |
| D2 | 554.43 | 608.17 |
| **LOST GENERATION (N=264)** | X2 | X3 |
| DO | 481.25 | 433.96 |
| D1 | 496.31 | 457.27 |
| D2 | 539.20 | 537.84 |

Legends:
DO = middle class  
D1 = working class  
D2 = inactive class  
X2 = status-anxiety  
X3 = socioeconomic frustration

Now we turn to the generation-specific hypotheses (1 to 4).
Hypothesis 1 predicts that class differences in status-anxiety and socio-economic frustration between the middle class and the working class, as well as the class of inactives, are smaller in the protest-generation than in the other three generations. In order to test this hypothesis we compared the differences in mean scores on status-anxiety and socio-economic frustration of the classes in the distinct generations (see table 2 for these mean scores).

The level of socio-economic frustration and of status-anxiety is higher in every generation of the working and the inactive class than in the middle class. This is in accordance with the notions of Felling et al. included in the apathy model (see section 13.2). The class differences in status-anxiety are largest within the pre-war generation, and those regarding socio-economic frustration are smallest within that generation. The class-differences in the other generations do not diverge substantially from each other. Our expectation that these class-differences would be smallest within the protest-generation is therefore not corroborated. We made no predictions about the levels of socioeconomic frustration and status-anxiety in the distinct generations but, as the results show, the level of status-anxiety is remarkably lower in the middle class of the pre-war generation than in the middle class of the other generations. The level of socioeconomic frustration in all classes of the lost generation is lower than in comparable classes of the other generations. In the final section we will discuss these differences in levels between the generations.

Hypothesis 2 states that direct effects of status-anxiety and socio-economic frustration on authoritarianism (repression processes) are strongest in the lost generation. The unstandardized regression coefficients representing the effect of status-anxiety on authoritarianism (see table 1) indicate that this effect is indeed strongest in the lost generation, but only to a small extent. The effect of socio-economic frustration on authoritarianism is not significant in any generation. A comparison of this effect across the generations indicates that the differences point in the expected direction (strongest in the lost generation), but again not to a convincing extent. We may conclude that the overall results point in the expected direction, but that they are not decisive enough to reject the null-hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 states that direct effects of status-anxiety and socio-economic frustration on anomie (dissonance-reduction processes) are weaker in the silent and the protest-generation than in the pre-war and the lost generation. The unstandardized regression coefficients representing the effects of status-anxiety
and socio-economic frustration on anomie (in table 1) indicate that these effects are, as expected, strongest in the pre-war generation (.31 and .46). But these effects are not really stronger in the lost generation than in the silent and the protest-generation. This means that our hypotheses on the dissonance-reduction-effects is only corroborated for the pre-war generation.

Hypothesis 4 states that the effects of authoritarianism and anomie on political apathy are stronger in the lost generation than in the silent and the protest-generation, and that they are even stronger in the pre-war generation. The unstandardized regression coefficients representing these effects (in table 1) show that the effect of authoritarianism on political apathy is clearly strongest in the pre-war generation (.25), and second strongest in the lost generation (.22). These effects are not even significant within the silent- and the protest-generation. The differences between the generations regarding the effects of anomie on political apathy are only small. Contrary to our expectations, it is weakest (not even significant) within the pre-war generation. This means that hypothesis 4 is corroborated only for the effect of authoritarianism on political apathy.

13.7. Discussion

The varied results presented in the preceding section are hard to summarize and discuss in a few sentences. We will nevertheless try to give an overview and present ex post-facto explanations for some of the most remarkable findings - those that are contrary to our expectations, for example.

The effect parameters of the class dummy-variables indicate that, in accordance with the predictions, belonging to a deprived class generally leads directly to authoritarianism, anomie, and political apathy. Regarding this part of the research, however, a major exception and another remarkable finding merit some further attention. Let us turn first to the remarkable finding. The inactive class appeared to be less politically apathetic and less authoritarian than the working class in three of the four generations. The pre-war generation being the exception with regard to authoritarianism, and the silent generation being the exception with regard to political apathy. Although we did not formulate hypotheses on differences in effects between the working class and the inactive class, and although the findings regarding these working class/inactive class differences only point in a certain direction - i.e are not consistent enough to be
Generation specific effects ...

conclusive, they are unexpected. We could have anticipated findings indicating a difference in the opposite direction. For, we considered the inactive class to be still more deprived than the working class; the inactive class seemed to have been hit even more severely than the working class by the deteriorated socioeconomic circumstances of the first half of the eighties. A theory of Kohn (1977, 1981) may offer an interpretation. Kohn states that working class people usually have to obey orders, and to submit to authorities during their working hours, consequently becoming apathetic to their labor situation. Kohn states that they are inclined to stick to such attitudes beyond the labor situation. This might explain why working class people are, on average, more authoritarian and more politically apathetic than the inactives who, generally, do not have to obey orders daily.

Now we turn to the exception to the overall result that belonging to a deprived class leads to authoritarianism and anomie. The working class in the pre-war generation appeared to be less authoritarian and less anomie than the middle class. We do not have an adequate theoretical interpretation for this unexpected finding. The exception was possibly caused by the small number of respondents in the inactive class of the pre-war generation (only 37 respondents).

Our expectation that, during the recent economic stagnation, the differences in levels of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration between the middle class and the deprived classes would be smallest in the protest-generation - because members of this generation were supposed to be less achievement oriented (see section 13.4), is not in accordance with the results. Apparently, the decline in career opportunities, rising unemployment and the threat of a reduced income even infected this generation that was once known for its opposition to material affluence, and lack of achievement motivation.

The level of status-anxiety appeared to be lower in the middle class of the pre-war generation than in the middle class of the other generations. Perhaps many of the middle class members of this oldest generation were hardly touched by the bad consequences of the socioeconomic stagnation of the eighties because, at that time, they had almost finished their occupational careers, reached optimal and permanent standards of living, and had rather secure financial prospects in the form of some acquired wealth and good pension rights. The level of socioeconomic frustration appeared to be lower in all classes of the lost generation than in the comparable classes of the other generations. This
may have been because most members of the lost generation had hardly started their occupational careers. They were accommodated to the deteriorated economic circumstances. They had never had favorable career and income prospects, so socioeconomic frustration could hardly affect them.

The results did not contradict the predictions of the hypotheses regarding the effects of status-anxiety and socioeconomic frustration on authoritarianism and anomie, or of these latter two on political apathy. However, neither did they corroborate them clearly. The differences in effects between the generations pointed generally in the expected directions, but only to a moderate extent. More definitive results may be obtained with data of larger samples.

The indecisiveness of the results did not come as a total surprise. For Becker's generation-thesis is formulated at a high level of abstraction. The research was further hindered by the small numbers of research-units available in some categories of the generation-specific analyses, particularly with regard to the pre-war generation. With a larger sample the results would perhaps have pointed more decisively in certain directions. The presented tentative results and conclusions may nevertheless be of heuristic value for further generation-specific model building with more concretely described generations and more extensive data-files.

NOTE

1. The concept sociohistorical generation refers to sociologically meaningful clusters of birth-cohorts. One remains a member of a generation throughout the life-span. This contrary to age-groups, of which one remains a member only as long as one is of a specific age.
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presented at the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political
Research, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

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**APPENDIX 1**

Unstandardized regression coefficients of the original apathy model (N=1464)

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where:

- X2 = status-anxiety
- X3 = socioeconomic frustration
- X4 = authoritarianism
- X5 = anomie
- X6 = political apathy

- D1 = lower grade professionals, managers in small business and industrial establishments, supervisors of non-manual employees, higher grade technicians
- D2 = routine white-collar employees, other rank-and-file service workers
- D3 = small proprietors with employees
- D4 = small proprietors without employees
- D5 = farmers and smallholders, self-employed fishermen
- D6 = lower grade technicians, supervisors of manual workers
- D7 = skilled manual workers
- D8 = semi- and unskilled manual workers
- D9 = agricultural workers
**Generation specific effects** ...

**APPENDIX 2**

Variances and covariances of the variables of the apathy model for the four generations:

### PRE-WAR GENERATION

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### PROTEST-GENERATION

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### LOST GENERATION

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Chapter 13

legends:
D1 = working class  X4 = authoritarianism
D2 = inactive class  X5 = anomie
X2 = status-anxiety  X6 = political apathy
X3 = socioeconomic frustration