



Why Social Movement Sympathizers Don't Participate: Erosion and Nonconversion of Support

Author(s): Dirk Oegema and Bert Klandermans

Source: *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59, No. 5 (Oct., 1994), pp. 703-722

Published by: [American Sociological Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2096444>

Accessed: 10/10/2013 12:22

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



American Sociological Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *American Sociological Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

WHY SOCIAL MOVEMENT SYMPATHIZERS DON'T PARTICIPATE: EROSION AND NONCONVERSION OF SUPPORT*

DIRK OEGEMA

Free University, Amsterdam

BERT KLANDERMANS

Free University, Amsterdam

Social movement organizations face the challenge of converting action preparedness into action participation, and accordingly, they must deal with factors that lead to nonparticipation. We identify two routes to nonparticipation—"nonconversion" and "erosion." Nonconversion refers to a movement's failure to transform sympathizers into active participants. Erosion refers to the loss of sympathizers. We provide a theoretical framework for explaining nonconversion and erosion and apply it to a longitudinal study of a mobilization campaign of the Dutch Peace Movement: the People's Petition against cruise missiles. Data came from telephone interviews we conducted among random samples (N = 224) from the populations of four communities before and after the campaign (in May and November 1985). We use binomial logistic regression analyses to test several explanations of nonconversion and erosion. Factors that led to erosion were moderate action preparedness at the beginning of the campaign, declining preparedness during the campaign, and a social environment perceived by participants as becoming less and less supportive. Factors that led to nonconversion were moderate but stable action preparedness combined with the presence of barriers to action and an indifferent social environment. Results are discussed and related to social movement literature.

Activating individuals who are already sympathetic to a movement—or, in Klandermans's (1984) words, action mobilization—is more difficult than one might imagine. Movement participation, we have previously argued, evolves in four steps: (1) one becomes a sympathizer of the movement, then (2) a target of mobilization attempts; next (3) one becomes motivated to participate, and finally, (4) one overcomes the barriers to participation (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). Action mobilization involves the last three steps of this sequence. Our analysis of a large peace demonstration in the Netherlands reveals what every organizer knows from experience: There is a big difference between being a sympathizer and becoming an active participant, and many a sympathizer fails to become active.

There is every reason to assume that the proportion of sympathizers that potentially can be activated varies over time, by the situation, and by the activity. For instance, Klandermans (1984) observed that, within a single union, union members varied considerably in their willingness to participate in union action depending on the specific action proposed. Moreover, in different companies the proportion of the union membership willing to participate in industrial action also varied considerably. Studies of many social movements record a similar variability in participation. To cite only a few examples: Walsh (1988) observed different levels of participation in the various communities surrounding Three Mile Island; Henig (1982) found variation among different neighborhoods in Boston during the anti-busing protests; and Briët, Klandermans, and Kroon (1987), in a study of the women's movement, found substantial differences in levels of participation, depending on the particular activity, among a population of women in a Dutch town. Such differences in levels of participation within (or between subsets of) the same population

* Direct all correspondence to Dirk Oegema, Dept. of Political Science, Free University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. We thank the Editor and reviewers of *ASR* for their useful comments on previous versions of this paper. [Reviewers acknowledged by the authors include Benigno Aguirre, Robert Kleidman, Nelson Pichardo, Suzanne Staggenborg. —ED.]

can originate at each transition point in the four-step model of movement participation, and the relative contribution of each step to the final number of participants points to the strengths and weaknesses of a mobilization campaign.

In this paper we depart from the usual approach to studying movement campaigns and focus on a campaign's *failure* to activate sympathizers. The literature on social movements offers little information on nonparticipation in response to action mobilization campaigns. Mass mobilizations have generally been studied in terms of what they achieve rather than what they fail to achieve. Consequently, we know more about participants than about nonparticipants (see McAdam 1986 for a similar criticism). There might be a methodological reason for this neglect of the dynamics of nonparticipation—a lack of proper quantitative longitudinal data. Without such data, which help us map preexisting levels of sympathy, it is difficult to make valid estimates of the proportion of movement sympathizers who actually end up being inactive.

We propose two terms to identify two different forms that nonparticipation can take. First, a campaign can fail to transform sympathizers into active participants, an outcome we call *nonconversion*. Second, people who initially support the movement may change their minds and become unwilling to become active. In this case, the problem isn't that sympathy is not converted into action, but rather that sympathy disappears—hence our use of the term *erosion*. Nonconversion and erosion of support are two measures of a mobilization campaign's effectiveness or ineffectiveness. From the standpoint of movement organizers, of course, neither is desirable: Organizers must convert support into action.

We assume that rates of nonconversion and erosion vary over time and across movements, movement organizations, campaigns, actions, communities, and subsets of populations. We elaborate here on these assumptions and offer explanations for this variation. We test these explanations on data we collected from a study of participation in the Dutch peace movement.

THEORY

Generalized Action Preparedness, Specific Action Preparedness, and Action Participation

To further define and explain nonconversion and erosion, we distinguish and describe three stages in the mobilization process: generalized action preparedness, specific action preparedness, and action participation. *Generalized action preparedness* describes an individual's expressed willingness to support a movement, to take part in different types of collective action the movement might stage. Adherents of the movement possess this disposition to a greater or lesser degree. A movement's mobilization potential in a society can be thought of as the proportion of individuals within that society that is inclined to support the movement (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). This proportion is relatively stable over time and defines the participation limits of mobilization campaigns. The mobilization potential of a movement, then, theoretically encompasses those individuals with a generalized action preparedness greater than zero.

Generalized action preparedness *for a particular movement* can be seen as a function of the existence and magnitude of grievances and the existence and appeal of a movement addressing these grievances (Oegema and Klandermans 1992). The more individuals who believe that a specific movement can effectively mobilize to redress shared grievances, and the more serious these grievances are, the higher the generalized action preparedness for this movement (Schwartz and Paul 1992).

But ideological commitment alone does not guarantee participation in concrete action: Action mobilization campaigns must transform generalized action preparedness into actual participation. In successful mobilization campaigns, generalized action preparedness is successfully converted into the preparedness to participate in specific actions, and this *specific action preparedness* materializes as actual action participation.¹ If

¹ Although our tripartite distinction is related to McCarthy and Zald's (1976) distinction between movement adherents and movement con-

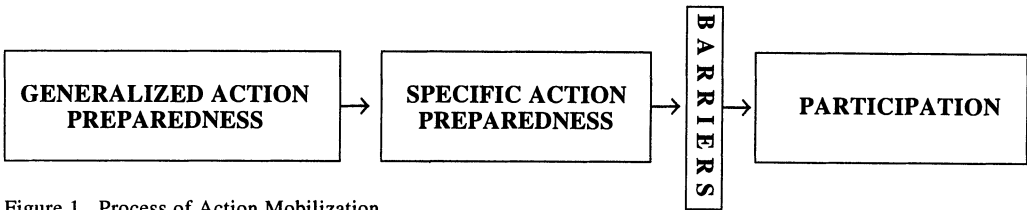


Figure 1. Process of Action Mobilization

individuals are not being targeted by mobilization attempts, however, it is unlikely that they will participate (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). Incentives contingent on the particular action and the circumstances of the individual further influence an individual's motivation to participate. For any individual, the lower the perceived costs of participation and the higher the benefits, the more motivated he or she will be to participate (Klandermans 1984; Opp 1989a). Whether motivation—that is, specific action preparedness—is converted into actual participation depends on the presence of barriers, for example sickness or lack of transportation (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). The more barriers that exist, the less likely it is that an individual will participate. The process of action mobilization is represented by the simple schema shown in Figure 1.

We can now define nonconversion and erosion in terms of these concepts. *Nonconversion* is the nonparticipation of individuals who are prepared to participate but somehow fail to convert their preparedness into actual participation. *Erosion* is the nonparticipation of individuals who, though once prepared to participate, have changed their minds and lost their preparedness to take action.

We hypothesize that nonconversion occurs when individuals have not been targeted by mobilization attempts, and/or they find that the ratio of costs to benefits is unfavorable, and/or barriers prevent them from participating. Erosion, we hypothesize, occurs when

individuals perceive the ratio of costs to benefits as *becoming* less favorable over time, and/or their grievances are no longer pressing, and/or their sympathy for the movement wanes.

The Antecedents of Nonconversion and Erosion

Nonconversion, then, seems to be related to circumstantial factors that make the conversion of action preparedness (general or specific) into actual participation less likely. Mobilization attempts, incentives, and barriers do not occur randomly throughout a population, but coincide with characteristics of political opportunity structures, characteristics of movement organizations, campaign characteristics, specific actions, characteristics of individual communities, and social categories. The more favorable the political opportunity structures, the more likely it is that action preparedness will be converted into participation (Duyvendak forthcoming; Koopmans forthcoming). The more extensive a movement's networks, the more likely it is that individuals will be targeted (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson 1980). Sophisticated mobilization techniques increase the likelihood of conversion (Oliver and Marwell 1992). Strategic choices of specific actions influence the balance of costs and benefits (Oberschall 1973; McAdam 1986). Characteristics of communities, such as their social and political composition, help determine incentives for participation (Opp 1988, 1989b). And persons from different social categories—such as male versus female or young versus old—traditionally differ in their action participation (Barnes and Kaase 1979).

Erosion depends on changing circumstances that undermine existing action preparedness, be it general or specific. Although erosion of support occurs not only in the context of action mobilization—other contexts might

stituents, the two distinctions are not identical: The latter concerns attitudinal support, whereas generalized action preparedness, specific action preparedness, and actual participation all concern action *participation*, be it preparedness to act or actual participation, and the three stages combined can be conceived of as a funneling process in which sympathizers face increasingly intense demands.

be movement decline, changes in public opinion, and issue attention cycles—we limit our inquiry to the erosion of support during action mobilization campaigns. We hypothesize that action mobilization can backfire and produce a reverse effect because it generally polarizes a population—cognitively and socially. *Cognitive* polarization takes place because, in the context of action mobilization, the mobilizing organization's features become especially distinct: Goals and means become pronounced, rhetoric changes, and interactions with opponents become confrontational. Opposing parties argue, previously mild debates sharpen, and latitudes of indifference become smaller and smaller. Opponents and countermovement organizations are often extremely skilled in creating caricatures of the movement and sowing doubt in the hearts of halfhearted sympathizers (Conover and Gray 1983; Mansbridge 1986). Often a movement organization bears within itself the ammunition for a countercampaign (Chafetz and Dworkin 1987).

In other words, action mobilization forces a shift in public discourse: In the media and in informal conversations among citizens, public discourse becomes increasingly focused on campaign issues. As a result, individual citizens and societal actors are forced to take sides.

Action mobilization thus implies *social* polarization, for it splits multi-organizational fields (Klandermans 1989; Rucht and Della Porta forthcoming) into the movement organization's alliance and conflict systems. An individual's social environment becomes rearranged into proponents and opponents of the movement. Most individuals live in a fairly homogeneous social environment and will find themselves unambiguously in one camp or the other, but some may discover that groups, organizations, or parties with which they identify are suddenly in their enemy's camp or that groups and people with whom they feel little affinity have become allies. If they don't like the social identity implied by these new arrangements, they may choose to detach themselves from the movement. In the context of election campaigns, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1948:56–64) referred to this process of conflicting identifications as "cross pressure" (see also Lane 1964:197–203).

DATA AND METHODS

The data come from a longitudinal study of the mobilization campaign for the People's Petition against cruise missiles, organized in 1985 by the Dutch peace movement. The People's Petition was the final act of a campaign that had lasted almost 10 years and was able to orchestrate the two largest demonstrations the Netherlands had ever experienced (Oegema 1991; Rochon 1988). The Petition was an attempt to demonstrate once again the movement's maximum strength. In the months preceding November 1, 1985—the day the Dutch government had committed itself to decide on deployment—the movement tried to have a petition against deployment signed by as large a proportion of its constituency as possible. Its organizers estimated—and the polls indicated—that they would be able to win the support of close to 50 percent of the Dutch population 15 years old and older. If they could achieve this goal, the government would be in trouble because a large proportion of its own constituency would be among the signers.

To realize a maximum response, organizers chose an action that made it easy for even marginal sympathizers to support the movement: signing a petition directed at the parliament. Assuming that merely signing a petition required little or no effort, the organizers supposed that all they had to do was to reach everybody who was prepared to support the peace movement. Accordingly, they invested a great deal of effort in a campaign designed to guarantee that no potential supporter would be overlooked. They mailed signature cards to every postal address in the country and made sure that as many homes as possible were visited by activists collecting the cards. A single card could carry up to five signatures. Signed cards could be mailed in or handed to the collectors going from door to door. Five-and-one-half million signature cards were distributed, and an estimated 50,000 volunteers were involved in door-to-door card collection (this number, by the way, was 30,000 short of what the movement had calculated would be necessary [Kriesi and Van Praag 1988]). The campaign proper started on August 31, but from May onward local peace groups were involved in organizing. In many communities these

groups made use of the canvassing experience of local political party activists.

In the course of the campaign, the cruise missile issue was hotly debated within and between political parties. The government—composed of the Conservatives and the Christian Democrats—feverishly attempted to formulate a compromise. During the campaign it became clear that, over the preceding two to three years, the peace movement had become an antigovernment coalition, welcoming everyone opposed to the government and the parties in office. As we will see, this development had a significant impact on sympathizers who identified with one of those parties. Meanwhile the movement became more controversial and, occasionally, countermobilization occurred.

Eventually, 3.75 million people signed signature cards. This number constituted 30 percent of the Dutch population 15 years old and older. Although this was an impressive percentage that was possible only because of sophisticated organizing, it was a disappointment to the movement. Thirty percent was too far below their initial goal and also was too low a turnout to unsettle the government. On November 1, 1985 the government did indeed decide to deploy cruise missiles in the Netherlands.

Samples

Between May 23 and June 13, 1985 (at the start of the campaign) we conducted telephone surveys among random samples of the population in four communities from different parts of the Netherlands (sample 1).²

² We applied the same interview strategy we had used in previous studies (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). In the regions where we conducted our field work, telephone density was above 95 percent, so we did not risk much bias by restricting ourselves to addresses that could be reached by phone. To increase response rates, we adopted a strategy suggested by Frey (1983): We sent an introductory letter informing respondents that they would be contacted for an interview. Because we needed the combination of telephone numbers and addresses for this strategy, we used telephone books to determine our samples. This approach had the disadvantage of missing people with unlisted numbers, but the advantage that private numbers could be distinguished from business numbers.

Those people who in May and June stated that they would sign the petition were interviewed for a second time between November 9 and November 28 (after the campaign was over) so we could ascertain whether they did in fact sign. Unless otherwise specified, all analyses are based on sample 1. However, we also selected a second sample that consisted of individuals who were interviewed *only* in November (sample 2). We use this second sample occasionally to control for the effects of repeated measurement.

For both samples 1 and 2, 100 addresses were randomly drawn from the most recent telephone directories for each of the four selected communities. A letter was mailed to each address explaining that the residents would be contacted by telephone for an interview regarding peace, disarmament, and the peace movement. As it turned out, 16 cases in sample 1 (May/November) and 9 in sample 2 (November only) no longer belonged to the population (they had moved to another town or their phone had been disconnected); thus our net sample sizes were 384 and 391 respectively. We achieved response rates of 58 percent (224 cases) and 61 percent (231 cases) respectively for the two samples; for both samples we could not arrange interviews for 160 addresses. Of these, 11 percent in the first sample (8 percent in the second) proved impossible to contact. We were able to reach the remaining 89 percent (92 percent), but for various reasons they were not able or willing to be interviewed: 17 percent (15 percent) were not in good health or were too old; 12 percent (12 percent) had no time; 11 percent (11 percent) were opposed to interviews in general; 4 percent (15 percent) disliked the topic; 30 percent (20 percent) mentioned some other reason; and 15 percent (19 percent) refused without giving any clear reason. The resulting samples are, of course, not random samples of the entire Dutch population. But we were interested, not in assessing the extent of popular support of the peace movement in the Netherlands (see Oegema 1991; and Rochon 1988 for such estimates), but in the rate of petition-signing among supporters of the movement and in opinion changes that occurred over time among supporters. A comparison of the two resulting samples revealed that they did not differ significantly in terms of

such variables as age, level of education, and party identification. There was, however, a significant difference in gender composition (49 percent male in May, 59 percent in November, $F = 4.84$, $p = .03$). We adjusted our repeated measurement tests for this sample bias.

The interviews took place between 6:30 P.M. and 10:00 P.M. At each address the interviewer asked to speak to the person whose birthday was closest to the interview date and who was older than 17 years. If necessary, the interviewer made an appointment to call again later. If no contact was established after four attempts, the address was given up. Interviews lasted 20 minutes on average, and we followed a structured questionnaire format.

The 154 respondents from sample 1 who in May/June announced that they planned to sign the petition were approached again in November for a follow-up interview. Eighty-six percent (132) responded. In 22 cases a second interview could not be arranged; 12 of the subjects could not be reached; 10 refused. The nonrespondents did not differ from the respondents on any of the key variables.

Variables

The following sets of variables were included in our analyses:

Participation. (1) *May/June preparedness* to sign a petition against the deployment of cruise missiles. Two groups were distinguished: (a) individuals who were not prepared to sign, and (b) individuals who said they were prepared to sign. (2) *Signing behavior* in November. Here we distinguished three groups: (a) individuals who did not sign and had indicated that they had not wanted to sign, (b) individuals who did not sign but emphasized that they had wanted to sign, (c) individuals who did sign.

Generalized action preparedness. (1) Adapting Barnes and Kaase's (1979) action potential scale, we constructed a measure of generalized preparedness to participate in peace movement activities. Unlike Barnes and Kaase, however, we employed partial credit modeling (Masters 1982) rather than Guttman-scaling to construct a *generalized action preparedness scale* (GAP-scale) for the peace movement (Prins 1990). The GAP-

scale indicates an individual's willingness to participate in peace movement activities on a continuum from modest action (signing a petition) to violent action (sabotage). (2) As noted earlier, theoretically, generalized action preparedness is a function of grievances and the individual's evaluation of the movement. In the case of the peace movement, *concerns about the nuclear arms race* rather than firsthand experiences or instances of personal harm generated the grievances the movement wanted to redress. Therefore we included a scale to measure concerns about the nuclear arms race constructed from three statements about nuclear armament: "Nuclear arms are needed to guarantee peace"; "I am really concerned about the arms race"; "Would you favor a decision to deploy cruise missiles?" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$). (3) The individual's *evaluation of the peace movement* was measured by a scale consisting of four questions, (a) about the movement ("I have a very positive attitude toward the peace movement"); (b) the movement's goals ("I have a very positive attitude toward the goals of the peace movement"); (c) the movement's activities ("I am fully endorsing the activities of the peace movement"); and (d) the people in the movement ("I feel strongly akin to the people in the peace movement") (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$).

Specific action preparedness. From Klanters's (1984) participation model we inferred the following variables related to preparedness to sign the People's Petition: (1) *agreement with the petition's goal* (preventing deployment of cruise missiles); the reaction of significant others—(2) in May/June, the *expected reactions* if one were to sign ("How would people who are important to you, such as members of your family and friends, respond if you signed the petition?" [positive, negative, indifferent]), and (3) in November, the *experienced reactions* to one's signing or not signing ("How did people who are important to you, such as members of your family and friends, respond to your signing of the petition?" [positive, negative, indifferent]).

The presence of barriers. In each community, organizers offered the population a number of opportunities to sign the petition. Signature cards were distributed by mail, cards were available at stands in shopping

areas, a card collector could call at the door, and so on. If by chance none of these opportunities were available (the person was not a target of the mobilization attempt), a person had no choice but to try to find his or her own way to sign. In a campaign that required as modest an effort as signing a petition, this was the only barrier we could think of.

Perceived social environment. Although the characteristics of one's social environment are reflected in the expected and experienced reactions of significant others, we included three additional perceived characteristics in our analyses, as it was our assumption that characteristics of the environment and changes in the environment are important factors in nonconversion and erosion. These three characteristics are: (1) the *perceived opinion of the peace movement* among people in one's environment, (2) the *expected number of one's acquaintances who would sign* (in May/June), and the *perceived number of acquaintances who did sign* (in November),³ and (3) the extent to which *cruise missiles were discussed within one's environment* by others and by oneself.

Left party identification. In the Netherlands the political parties can be placed on a left-right continuum. For our analyses we have combined the small rightist and leftist parties in two clusters. The result is the following continuum (from the political right to the political left): radical rightist parties, Conservatives (VVD), Christian Democrats (CDA), Centre Democrats (D'66), Social Democrats (PVDA), and radical leftist parties. In some analyses the first two parties are combined into "right-wing parties" and the last three are combined into "left-wing parties." All political parties had clear opinions on the cruise issue (right-wing and Christian

Democrats favored deployment, the left-wing opposed it).

Demographic variables. Demographic measures included *age*, level of *education*, and *sex*.

Controlling for Repeated Measurement

Because our research question concerned changes over time it was crucial that we eliminate repeated measurement as an alternative explanation for observed differences between May and November (Campbell and Stanley 1963). We did this by comparing samples 1 and 2. None of our tests suggested any effect of repeated measurement: Levels of signing were virtually the same in the two samples, and those individuals in the May sample who signed did not differ from the signers in the November-only sample with respect to any of the key variables; similar proportions of the two samples indicated their intention to sign, and those from the May sample who had wanted to sign did not differ from those who had wanted to sign in the November sample with respect to any of the key variables. Moreover, logistic regression analyses of the November correlates to signing and nonsigning revealed identical determinants in the May sample and November sample. We thus concluded that repeated measurement could be ruled out as an alternative explanation for any of our findings. Accordingly, we could safely conduct our study of nonconversion and erosion using the interviews in May/June and November using sample 1 alone.

RESULTS

We present our results from two different angles. First, we describe the respondents' preparedness to sign in May/June and their subsequent reports of signing in November and try to distinguish erosion from nonconversion. Next we explain why some of those individuals who in May/June said they would sign ultimately failed to do so.

Preparedness to Sign and Actual Signing

Figure 2 presents the basic parameters of our results. In May/June, at the start of the campaign, over 68.7 percent of our respondents

³ The question about the number of acquaintances who signed produced a high proportion of "don't knows" (28.6 percent). Because SPSS logistic regression analysis works with listwise deletion of missing values, we were forced to relate the "don't knows" to our scale from 0 = nobody through 4 = almost everybody, rather than eliminate these respondents. Assigning them to 0 = nobody seriously influenced the outcomes of the analyses. Therefore we chose a more conservative strategy by giving them the mean of those who did know how many in their environment signed.

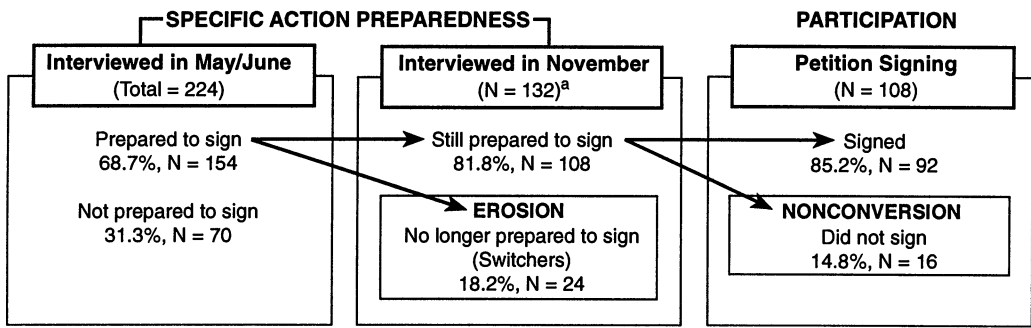


Figure 2. Preparedness to Sign a Petition Against the Deployment of Cruise Missiles and Actual Petition Signing: Respondents to Telephone Interviews, the Netherlands, 1985

^a Of the 154 respondents in May/June, 22 were not available for interviews in November.

($N = 224$) were prepared to sign; among the respondents from this group that were interviewed in November ($N = 132$), 18.2 percent had changed their minds and indicated that they no longer wanted to sign (we refer to these respondents as “switchers”). The other 81.8 percent remained prepared to sign (“nonswitchers”). Of those who maintained their preparedness ($N = 108$), 14.8 percent failed to sign (“nonsigners”); the remaining 85.2 percent did indeed sign (“signers”). In other words, 69.6 percent of those who were prepared to sign in May/June and were later interviewed in November ($N = 132$) did in fact sign the petition. The remaining 30.3 percent, who despite their initial preparedness to sign did not do so, consists of individuals representing the two processes: nonconversion (those who said they wanted to sign but failed to do so—12.1 percent of those prepared to sign and who were re-interviewed in November) and erosion (switchers who deliberately did not sign—18.2 percent).

When we introduced the concepts of erosion and nonconversion we hypothesized that different subpopulations would manifest different rates of erosion and of nonconversion. In Table 1 we compare several subpopulations. As expected, nonsigning in these subpopulations could be attributed to strikingly different factors.

Sex. In May/June the number of male and female respondents who were not prepared to sign was virtually the same, but in the course of the campaign the proportions changed. Had the change been caused only by erosion, more females than males would

have refrained from signing—an outcome that would have been in line with the literature on action participation (Barnes and Kaase 1979). But due to a low level of nonconversion—very few women who wanted to sign failed to do so—the reverse happened: More males than females failed to sign.

Age. Consistent with the general finding that young people are more likely to take part in collective action than are old people (Barnes and Kaase 1979), we found a highly significant correlation between age and preparedness to sign. But because each of the four age cohorts in Table 1 manifested a different pattern of erosion and nonconversion, this correlation did not remain when it came to actual signing. Although among the second group (ages 31 to 39) we found the expected low percentage of nonsigning, the high levels of erosion and nonconversion in the youngest age group, and the very low level of nonconversion in the oldest age group compensated for the differences in preparedness to sign reported in May/June.

Community. The four selected communities followed strikingly different routes to nonsigning. This pattern coincides remarkably well with our knowledge of the local campaigns. The most successful campaign was that in Zuiderstad. An average degree of erosion combined with an extremely low level of nonconversion produced the lowest proportion of nonsigning respondents in any of the four communities. Indeed, Zuiderstad had the highest number of card collectors relative to its population size, a fact that accounts for the very low level of noncon-

Table 1. Not Prepared, Erosion, and Nonconversion: Three Forms of Nonparticipation in Signing Among Respondents to Telephone Interviews, the Netherlands, 1985

Independent Variable	N	Percent						
		Not Prepared	+	Erosion	+	Nonconversion	=	Nonsigning
Total	224	31.2	+	12.5	+	8.3	=	52.0
<i>Sex</i>								
Male	109	30.3	+	10.9	+	13.1	=	54.3
Female	113	31.8	+	14.3	+	4.0	=	50.1
<i>Age</i>								
< 31	51	21.6	+	16.5	+	12.4	=	50.5
31–39	66	18.2	+	12.8	+	7.2	=	38.2
40–56	58	37.9	+	10.4	+	10.3	=	58.6
> 56	48	50.0	+	10.6	+	2.6	=	63.2
<i>Communities</i>								
Zuiderstad	62	24.8	+	12.1	+	2.8	=	39.7
Randstad	63	27.0	+	10.4	+	8.4	=	45.8
Kleinoord	50	30.0	+	16.5	+	12.3	=	58.8
Grootland	49	46.9	+	11.2	+	11.2	=	69.3
<i>Party Identification</i>								
Conservatives	38	69.7	+	12.1	+	9.1	=	90.9
Christian Democrats	49	47.1	+	20.7	+	10.7	=	78.5
Left-wing	93	5.4	+	5.0	+	8.1	=	18.5

Note: For these computations, the 22 respondents who could not be interviewed again are presumed to have the same distributions as those interviewed twice.

version there. Comparing Zuiderstad with Kleinoord is illuminating. In May/June the proportions of the samples in the two communities which were not prepared to sign were similar. In November, however, almost 60 percent of the original sample in Kleinoord did not sign, as compared to 40 percent in Zuiderstad. The low support in Kleinoord was the result of a high level of erosion combined with a relatively high level of nonconversion. The high degree of erosion in Kleinoord is undoubtedly related to the intense countercampaign conducted in that community. In Grootland, the community with the highest proportion of Conservatives and Christian Democrats of the four communities, the number of people not prepared to sign was initially high. In addition, the anti-cruise missile campaign conducted there was relatively weak. Grootland, in fact, had the lowest number of card collectors relative to population size of the four communities. Thus, Grootland had the lowest turnout of

the four communities: Two-thirds of the respondents ended up not signing the petition.

From a theoretical standpoint, these four communities illustrate the separate processes of erosion and nonconversion. First, the proportion of respondents prepared to sign in May/June differed significantly from one community to another, largely because the political composition of the population of the four communities differed. Second, the one community in which a vigorous counter-campaign emerged had the highest degree of erosion. Third, the community with the most sophisticated and elaborate campaign had the lowest level of nonconversion. In other words, different characteristics of the four communities accounted for different effects of the process of action mobilization.

Party identification. As expected, we found widely divergent patterns among the constituencies of the main political currents in the country—the right, the Christian Democrats, and the left. Not surprisingly, the

turnout among the three constituencies varied dramatically: 90 percent of the respondents from the right and more than 75 percent of the Christian Democrats did not sign the petition. Among the respondents on the left, however, fewer than 20 percent failed to sign. Clearly, these results have their origins in the beginning of the campaign: In May, two-thirds of the right, almost one-half of the Christian Democrats, but only one-twentieth of those on the left were not prepared to sign. Then, during the campaign, erosion and nonconversion combined to produce the divergent patterns reflected in the November results. Most striking are the differences in erosion among the constituencies of the three political groups. Twenty-one percent of the Christian Democrats who initially supported the petition withdrew their support, compared to only 5 percent of the left. Proportionally, loss of support due to nonconversion was about equal for all three political groups.

Determinants of Preparedness, Erosion, and Nonconversion

The remainder of our analysis concentrates on three questions: (1) Why were some people prepared to sign the petition while others were not? (2) Why did some of the respondents who, in May, were willing to sign, eventually changed their minds? (3) Why did some of those respondents who in November maintained their willingness to sign the petition ultimately fail to sign it? Thus framed, our research questions are akin to the multiple kinds of events Allison (1985) has discussed as being appropriate for modeling with a sequence of binomial logit analyses.

Prepared to sign versus not prepared. Table 2 presents the results of two logistic regressions of preparedness versus nonpreparedness to sign the petition on two categories of independent variables. Model 1 confirms our previous results.

The respondents who were not prepared to sign were older than those who were prepared to sign. With respect to political affiliation, the further to the right the respondents were, the less inclined they were to want to sign. The fit of the model indicates that on the basis of age and political affiliation alone, we can predict fairly accurately the odds of preparedness and nonpreparedness to

Table 2. Logit Coefficients for Regression of Preparedness to Sign a Petition in May/June on selected Independent Variables: Respondents to Telephone Interviews, the Netherlands, 1985

Independent Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-5.24*** (1.28)	1.94 (2.00)
<i>Demographic Variables</i>		
Female	.02 (.19)	-.18 (.26)
Age	-.04*** (.01)	-.02 (.02)
Education	.07 (.08)	-.08 (.11)
Left Party identification	1.20*** (.23)	.31 (.28)
Generalized action preparedness scale	—	2.07*** (.45)
Agreement with goal	—	1.24*** (.30)
Likelihood ratio	180.73	106.24
Degrees of freedom	214	212
Change in likelihood ratio	90.61	74.49
Degrees of freedom	4	2
P-value of likelihood test	.000	.000
Number of observations	219	219

*** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Preparedness is coded so that positive coefficients indicate that a higher level of the independent variable is associated with increased odds of being prepared to sign.

sign. Model 2, which includes the attitudinal determinants, not only improves the fit considerably but renders both age and party identification insignificant. In other words, age and party identification are related to signing *because* people who were generally prepared to take action on behalf of the peace movement and who were against deployment of cruise missiles were younger and more often identified with the political left. Altogether, the results of the final model are fairly straightforward: People were not willing to sign the petition because they were in general not prepared to take action on behalf of the peace movement and because they were not against the deployment of cruise missiles. Note that attitude toward deployment contributes to the explanation of preparedness independent of generalized action

Table 3. Logit Coefficients for Regression of Nonswitching and Signing on Selected Independent Variables: Respondents to Telephone Interviews, the Netherlands, 1985

Independent Variables	Nonswitching			Signing (Among Nonswitchers)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Constant	-3.71* (1.71)	.75 (2.23)	2.04 (2.82)	-4.97* (2.44)	-3.33 (2.96)	-8.37* (4.22)
<i>Demographic Variables</i>						
Female	.01 (.26)	-.43 (.34)	-.05 (.41)	.65 (.35)	.44 (.37)	1.51* (.67)
Age	.01 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.02 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.05 (.04)
Education	.11 (.11)	-.03 (.15)	.04 (.19)	.16 (.13)	.10 (.16)	.25 (.22)
Party identification (left)	.76*** (.24)	-.14 (.32)	.17 (.41)	.83** (.32)	.49 (.37)	.97 (.52)
<i>May/June</i>						
Generalized action preparedness scale	—	2.32*** (.72)	—	—	.89 (.72)	—
Expected positive reactions of others	—	.80** (.32)	—	—	.30 (.35)	—
Agreement with goals	—	.56 (.43)	—	—	.65 (.50)	—
<i>November</i>						
Generalized action preparedness scale	—	—	2.15* (.90)	—	—	.78 (.72)
Experienced positive reactions of others	—	—	1.52** (.52)	—	—	.77 (.60)
Agreement with goals	—	—	.91 (.55)	—	—	.29 (.84)
Presence of barriers	—	—	-.45 (.82)	—	—	-2.75** (.88)
Likelihood ratio	95.64	66.69	46.84	65.57	60.22	37.19
Degrees of freedom	116	113	112	96	93	92
Change in likelihood ratio	12.86	28.95	19.79	11.97	5.37	22.06
Degrees of freedom	4	3	1	4	3	1
P-value of likelihood test	.01	.000	.000	.02	.15	.000
Number of observations	121	121	121	101	101	101

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Switching and signing are coded so that positive coefficients indicate that a higher level of the independent variable is associated with increased odds of nonswitching or signing.

preparedness. This finding is important because it indicates that it was not just general commitment to a movement that made people willing to sign the petition, but also dedication to a specific cause.

As the campaign was designed to activate sympathizers rather than persuade opponents, the canvassers made no attempt to change peoples' minds. Indeed, only two in-

dividuals who were not prepared to sign in May/June changed their minds and ended up signing.

Switching versus nonswitching. Our next set of logistic analyses explores the determinants of erosion. The first three columns in Table 3 displays the logit coefficients for regression of switching versus nonswitching on the independent variables as measured in

May/June and November. Model 1 indicates that erosion was more likely among people who identified with parties on the right. If we refer to our observations in Table 1, we find that the respondents primarily responsible for this outcome are those who identify with the Christian Democratic Party. Model 2, however, indicates that the differences in generalized action preparedness and the expected reactions of significant others related to party identification account for most of the observed impact of party identification. Model 2 improves on the first model, implying that individuals who indicated a lower level of generalized action preparedness in May/June and also expected less supportive reactions from significant others in May/June were more likely to switch.

In Model 3 the May/June parameters are replaced by the November parameters. This model represents a considerable improvement over Model 2. The basic pattern yielded by the November data is similar to that produced by the data collected in May/June: In terms of generalized action preparedness, switchers and nonswitchers are dispersed, whereas in terms of the reaction of significant others, their experiences fit their May/June expectations. Note that switching is not related to the presence of barriers.

Signing versus nonsigning. Not everyone who was prepared to sign the petition did eventually sign. Nonconversion occurred among 15 percent of those who remained willing to sign. The last three columns in Table 3 examine the determinants of such nonconversion. Model 1 reveals the significance of party identification. The odds of nonconversion were higher among people who identified with parties on the right. Model 2 does not improve the fit; that is, in May/June nonsigners and signers did not differ in terms of generalized action preparedness, expected reactions of significant others, or attitudes toward deployment. Model 3, however, implies a substantial improvement over Model 2. It is theoretically important that neither generalized action preparedness nor attitude toward deployment nor the expected or experienced reactions of significant others affected petition signing. Hence, it is not changing attitudes or environments that produce nonconversion. The most important determinant is whether an individual has

been the target of mobilization attempts, or, by implication, has encountered barriers to participation. Interestingly, when controlling for the other parameters, respondent's sex makes a difference: The degree of nonconversion was lower among women than among men—not, as one might hypothesize, because women were targeted more often than men. Our results indicate that, regardless of whether they were targeted, women who were prepared to sign did so more often than men who said they were prepared to sign. Among male respondents, however, those who were not targeted failed to sign more often than those who were. The effect of gender that we already encountered in Table 1, then, appears to hold in multivariate analysis.

Finally, a comparison of nonswitchers and signing nonswitchers in Table 3 reveals theoretically meaningful differences between the two configurations of determinants. The first three columns display an expanding attitudinal gap between switchers and nonswitchers together with their increasingly divergent perceptions of the social environment. Nothing of the kind is apparent in the second two columns. To be sure, nonconversion was more likely among respondents who identified with right-wing parties, but it was predominantly the lack of mobilization attempts among these groups that determined their nonsigning. This conclusion is supported by two analyses not reported in Table 3. A model (not shown) that included both the May/June and November parameters revealed a fit significantly better than that produced by Model 3 in the case of switching versus nonswitching (change in likelihood ratio = 15.76, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$). The fit, however, does not change in the case of nonsigning versus signing. In other words, the odds of switching—unlike the odds of signing—were affected by changing circumstances between May/June and November.⁴

⁴ Further confirmation is provided by univariate analyses of the changes in these parameters. Whereas the GAP-scale declined for all categories, it dropped most strongly among switchers, and only switchers experienced more reactions from significant others supportive of nonsigning than they had expected. All others experienced more supportive reactions to signing than they had expected.

In sum, for respondents who, at the start of the campaign, intended to sign the petition we registered reports of actual signing among those who still intended to sign at the end of the campaign. Our objective was, of course, to determine the extent to which intentions expressed in May/June could predict actual signing. In the absence of erosion and nonconversion, intentions expressed in May would be perfect predictors of actual signing and other variables measured at later times would fail to improve our models. In fact, our assessment that almost one-third of those who intended to sign in May/June (and who were also interviewed in November; $N = 132$) failed to do so because of erosion or nonconversion (see Figure 2), already implies less than perfect prediction. Indeed, the results demonstrate that determinants measured in May/June *did* predict signing and nonsigning. But, the results reveal also that determinants as measured in May/June are not sufficient predictors of the eventual outcomes—not in the case of erosion and definitely not in the case of nonconversion. Interestingly, erosion and nonconversion each have its own configuration of predictors: for erosion, generalized action preparedness as measured in May/June and November, and expected and experienced reactions of significant others; for nonconversion, respondent's sex and the absence of mobilization attempts. In other words, changes in the determinants of signing during the campaign produced a rate of signing different from what one would have expected given the values of these determinants in May/June.

For switchers the results confirm an interpretation that nonsigning occurred because of erosion of support. A generalized action preparedness that was no more than moderate at the start of the campaign eroded; moreover, these respondents changed their minds in the context of a social environment they perceived as becoming less supportive of signing the petition.

Nonconversion is the most plausible interpretation of nonsigning for those who maintained their willingness to sign. Unlike the switchers, the nonswitchers failed to sign because of an absence of mobilization attempts rather than a change of mind.

Declining Generalized Action Preparedness and Unsupportive Social Environments

A decline in generalized action preparedness and an unsupportive social environment appear to correlate with erosion; for nonconversion, however, the correlate was an absence of mobilization attempts.

Declining generalized action preparedness. The decline in generalized action preparedness is elaborated further in Table 4. Theoretically, generalized action preparedness for a movement is a function of the population's appreciation of the movement and the intensity of the grievances the movement seeks to redress. We translated "grievances" into concern over the nuclear arms race and divided "appreciation for the peace movement" into three elements: appreciation of goals, of activities, and of people. In Table 4, switchers and nonswitchers and signers and nonsigners are once again compared, here in terms of these antecedents of general action preparedness.

These logistic regression analyses confirm our argument and provide some important supplementary details. Even in May/June, switchers were less concerned about the nuclear arms race and less positive about the peace movement than were nonswitchers (Model 1). Interestingly, the sign of the logit for the respondents' appreciation of the people in the movement is negative. Indeed, in May/June switchers and nonswitchers were more alike in their attitudes toward the people in the movement than in their appreciation of any other aspects of the movement. In Model 2 the measures for November are entered in the equation, and they produce a considerable improvement of fit, which can be attributed to concerns over the nuclear arms race and the appreciation of the people in the movement, but this time with a *positive* sign. Apparently, during the campaign the initially relatively positive feelings among switchers toward the people in the movement changed into strongly negative ones: In November they no longer felt any sympathy for the people in the movement. This factor, together with their already less than positive feelings toward other aspects of the peace movement, contributed to their change of mind.

Table 4. Logit Coefficients for Regression of Nonswitching and Signing on Concerns Over Nuclear Arms Race and Four Measures of Appreciation of the Peace Movement: Respondents to Telephone Interviews, the Netherlands, 1985

Independent Variable	Nonswitching		Signing (Among Nonswitchers)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-2.01* (.82)	1.34 (.65)	-.69 (1.17)	.99 (.65)
<i>May/June</i>				
Concerns about nuclear arms	1.42** (.46)	—	1.75** (.55)	—
<i>Evaluation of Peace Movement</i>				
Appreciation of peace movement	1.47 (.50)	—	.77 (.54)	—
of goals	.76 (.42)	—	.07 (.60)	—
of activities	.33 (.33)	—	.47 (.36)	—
of people	-1.08** (.41)	—	-.49 (.40)	—
<i>November</i>				
Concerns about nuclear arms	—	1.13* (.48)	—	1.34* (.58)
<i>Evaluation of Peace Movement</i>				
Appreciation of peace movement	—	.35 (.36)	—	-.38 (.49)
of goals	—	-.20 (.36)	—	-.02 (.43)
of activities	—	-.23 (.34)	—	.66 (.40)
of people	—	1.38** (.47)	—	.02 (.40)
Likelihood ratio	81.67	66.43	62.96	64.69
Degrees of freedom	114	114	92	92
Change in likelihood ratio	32.67	47.91	17.42	-15.42
Degrees of freedom	5	5	5	5
P-value of likelihood test	.000	.000	.004	.01
Number of observations	120	120	98	98

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ (two-tailed tests)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Switching and signing are coded so that positive coefficients indicate that a higher level of the independent variable is associated with increased odds of nonswitching or signing.

The second two columns of Table 4 reveal a completely different picture, which underscores our argument regarding nonconversion. In May/June signers were more concerned about the nuclear arms race than nonsigners, and in November that was still the case. Except for this one difference the two groups are similar in all respects in May/June as well as in November. This finding

underlines the distinction between erosion and nonconversion as two theoretically separate forms of nonparticipation.

Unsupportive social environments. As indicated, unlike nonswitchers, switchers perceived their social environment as increasingly unsupportive. Table 5 refines this observation by specifying particular characteristics of the respondents' social environment:

Table 5. Logit Coefficients for Regression of Nonswitching and Signing on Five Measures of Perceived Social Environment

Independent Variable	Nonswitching		Signing (Among Nonswitchers)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Constant	-23 (1.30)	.83 (1.56)	3.92 (1.69)	-4.35 (1.56)
<i>May/June</i>				
Expected positive reactions of others	.76* (.32)	—	.72 ^a (.37)	—
Perceived positive opinion of peace movement	.36 (.35)	—	-.45 (.42)	—
Expected number of acquaintances who would sign	.62 (.48)	—	-.61 (.56)	—
Cruise missiles discussed in environment	-.22 (.54)	—	.05 (.67)	—
Did discuss cruise missiles recently	.82 (.59)	—	.07 (.59)	—
<i>November</i>				
Expected positive reactions of others	—	1.34* (.50)	—	.11 (.52)
Perceived positive opinion of peace movement	—	.14 (.42)	—	-1.15 (.74)
Number of acquaintances who signed	—	1.03 (.66)	—	2.80** (.93)
Number of acquaintances who signed unknown	—	-1.05 (.80)	—	-2.32 (1.03)
Cruise missiles discussed in environment	—	-.59 (.84)	—	-1.28 (.96)
Did discuss cruise missiles recently	—	1.29 (.84)	—	2.09* (1.10)
Likelihood ratio	92.03	70.05	71.63	49.56
Degrees of freedom	110	109	98	88
Change in likelihood ratio	17.70	38.92	4.22	26.28
Degrees of freedom	5	6	5	6
P-value of likelihood test	.003	.000	.519	.000
Number of observations	116	116	95	95

p* < .05 *p* < .01 ^a.10 > *p* > .05 (two-tailed tests)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. Switching and signing are coded so that positive coefficients indicate that a higher level of the independent variable is associated with increased odds of nonswitching or signing.

perceived opinions in their environment, expected and reported signing by acquaintances, and discussions on cruise missiles with individuals in their environment.

In May/June nonswitchers expected more supportive reactions for signing than did switchers. Similarly, at that time signers expected more supportive reactions than non-signers. As for the other characteristics, the

two groups experienced similar social environments in May/June. Five months later the situation changed. The social environments of switchers and nonswitchers and of non-signers and signers became increasingly disparate. For switchers and nonswitchers the difference materialized in changes in experienced reactions of significant others—they became even less supportive of signing than

had been expected a few months before (means for switchers in May/June was $-.73$ and in November it was -1.05 , as compared to $.12$ and $.24$ for nonswitchers).

Among the nonswitchers, signers and non-signers experienced different changes in their social environments. In November perceived reactions of significant others no longer influenced the individual's actions. The actual signing by acquaintances and awareness of actual signing became more important, as did the extent to which cruise missiles were discussed in one's environment. As for actual signing, signers knew the rate of signing among their acquaintances and reported that most of their acquaintances signed. Non-signers, however, were either not aware of the rate of signing by their acquaintances or reported low rates of signing. As for discussions on cruise missiles, signers more often discussed cruise missiles with people in their environment than did nonsigners. Indeed, if we compare the means, nonsigners were in the only groups that did *not* report an increase in discussions (means for switchers: $.83$ [May/June] and 1.17 [November] for discussions in their environments and $.79$ [May/June] and $.92$ [November] for discuss themselves; means for signers: 1.15 [May/June] and 1.65 [November] and 1.24 [May/June] and 1.65 [November]; means for nonsigners: 1.06 [May/June] and 1.06 [November] and 1.06 [May/June] and $.88$ [November]).

Not included in Table 5 are two additional findings. Among the respondents who signed, two-thirds could cite at least one active member of the peace movement among his or her acquaintances, whereas among those who switched positions the proportion was a little less than and among those who planned to sign but didn't, the proportions was one-third.

Party identification is the last element in the social environment we consider. Three-quarters of those who turned away from the peace movement identified with the Conservatives or Christian Democrats, the two parties that were in office at the time and which constituted a government determined to deploy cruise missiles. It was among supporters of these two parties in particular that initial sympathy for the peace movement eventually evaporated (difference between May/June and November was $-.49$ as compared to

$.13$ for the remaining respondents; $F = 3.52$, $p < .01$).

In summary, erosion occurred predominantly among sympathizers who identified with one of the two political parties in power in the government. These individuals reported that their social environments became less supportive during the antimissile campaign, and because their support was only lukewarm to begin with, the increasingly negative environment undermined their motivation to sign (as shown by lower values on such variables as positive evaluation of the peace movement and rejection of cruise missiles). Interestingly, these individuals reported an increase in the number of their personal conversations about cruise missiles. This increase and the fact that their decision *not* to sign evoked supportive reactions from significant others are evidence of social pressure. We emphasize, however, that it is the *combined* impact of these factors that accounts for erosion. Identification with one of the two parties in government was not in itself sufficient to produce erosion—after all, three-fifths of those who identified with one of the parties had wanted to sign or did indeed sign. Rather, the turnabout from sympathizer to switcher was the result of a combination of factors: identification with one of the two parties; the perception that one's environment did not support the movement; plus, initially, the expectation, and later, the experience, of negative reactions from significant others, which weakened an already halfhearted motivation.

Nonconversion, too, can be linked to characteristics of the individual's social environment, but in a different way. It was not social pressure but the lack of it that was responsible for the failure to sign of "non-converts." These individuals were only moderately supportive throughout the campaign, thus the minor barrier of not having been offered the opportunity to sign sufficed to discourage them from signing. Their social environment was conducive to such an outcome: For instance, only one-third of these individuals could identify one or more movement activists among their acquaintances, and contrary to the general trend they reported a decline in the number of conversations about cruise missiles. They were not affected by the campaign and did little to

put themselves in situations where they would be.

DISCUSSION

Social movement organizations repeatedly face the challenge of converting action preparedness into active participation. But willingness to participate, as we found, is no guarantee of actual involvement: The absence of mobilization attempts, the presence of barriers, and/or an unsupportive social environment may ultimately prevent a person from participating (for similar findings, see Ajzen and Fishbein [1980] and Granberg and Holmberg [1988]).

Patterns of nonconversion and erosion appear to vary across subpopulations. Counter to the general finding that women participate in collective action less often than men (Barnes and Kaase 1979, but see Wallace and Jenkins forthcoming), we found that women signed the peace petition more frequently than men. As the campaign proceeded women seemed to become more sensitive to the controversial tone that gradually marked public discourse, as witnessed by a higher degree of erosion. But, this trend was more than offset by a high degree of conversion among women. In addition, men who were not targeted by the campaign failed more often than women to overcome this barrier. Similarly, the combined impact of erosion and conversion nullified the traditionally negative correlation between age and active participation. And with respect to political party identification, cross pressure (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948) produced high degrees of erosion among adherents of the Christian Democratic Party. Finally, our comparison of four communities emphasizes the differential impact of the intensity of campaigns and countercampaigns: An intense mobilization campaign in one community produced high levels of conversion; an intense countercampaign in another community produced high levels of erosion.

Our results reveal mobilization to be a complicated process in which preexisting levels of action preparedness, characteristics of mobilization campaigns and countercampaigns, and characteristics of the individual's social environment interact to determine movement participation. When preex-

isting levels of preparedness are high, even poor campaigns can be effective. Low levels of action preparedness, however, require elaborate campaigns, because prospective supporters need more incentives to join and are more susceptible to countercampaigns. Effective mobilization campaigns have low rates of nonconversion, especially in the context of a supportive social environment; effective countercampaigns produce high degrees of erosion, and are especially successful in a context of a nonsupportive social environment.

Paradoxically, these conditions make campaigns designed to mobilize low-risk support (Ennis and Schreuer 1987) more vulnerable to erosion than campaigns for high-risk activities. Because the strength of low-risk campaigns is in the potentially high numbers of participants, they must appeal to as large a proportion of the population as possible, and include marginal sympathizers. The fact that only a low-risk, undemanding act of support is requested does not necessarily make erosion less likely, because the public debate can still be intense, as this petition campaign demonstrated.

Generalized action preparedness could account for a considerable proportion of the differences in the probability of nonsigning versus signing even four months later. But by incorporating specific factors we improved our models substantially. This finding may help resolve the classic question of whether movement participation is a function of relatively stable ideological commitment to a movement or the relatively fluctuating incentives associated with a specific activity (Opp 1989a).

Our findings question once again the importance of the free-rider problem. Recent social movement theory argues that the free-rider problem is not, in fact, a major obstacle for movements that mobilize through community networks and rely on purposive commitment and solidarity (Fireman and Gamson 1979; Klandermans 1988; Oliver and Marwell 1992; Ferree 1992). Even in the case of low-risk forms of action, such as signing a peace petition, levels of action preparedness, friendship networks, weak mobilization attempts, and the presence of barriers seem to be more important than free-rider logic. Indeed, shortfalls occur not so much

because sympathizers take a free ride, but because people with moderate levels of action preparedness either lose sympathy for the movement or are embedded in social networks that fail to put their principles into practice (that is, their networks do not impel them to act).

To what extent can we generalize from these findings? Signing a petition is a very minimal act. Although we can expect nonconversion and erosion to occur in most mobilization campaigns, we can assume that different types of action will balance the various factors that lead to nonconversion or erosion in different ways. There was every reason to expect that the petition campaign as a whole would produce extremely low levels of nonconversion. First, it involved a low-risk activity, and one would expect low levels of nonconversion in this case. However, our finding that high expected and experienced rates of signing in an individual's personal environment increased the odds that he or she too would sign is similar to what McAdam (1986) discovered in his study of applicants for the Mississippi Freedom Summer. McAdam explicitly placed his observation in the context of high-risk participation. Our study demonstrates that the same mechanisms work at the opposite end of the scale, in the context of low-risk participation. Second, the petition campaign was extremely well organized and was designed to reach as high a level of conversion as possible. Less well organized campaigns will not reach such high levels, as illustrated by the divergent results of the campaigns in our four communities. Third, the petition campaign was one phase in an extended campaign that had been going on for several years. Consequently, social networks that in other circumstances might have remained indifferent had already been co-opted by the movement. The activity of these networks helped to lower the level of nonconversion.

Note, however, that factors that decrease nonconversion do not necessarily produce lower levels of *erosion*. We assumed that erosion results from the sharpening of loosely defined goals, countercampaigns, and polarization. Because these conditions may accompany even highly effective campaigns, some of the factors that reduce nonconversion may well foster erosion.

DIRK OEGEMA is Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at the Free University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He recently completed his dissertation on the decline of the Dutch peace movement. Currently he is conducting research in the field of communication and political participation, more specifically with regard to voting and participation in social movement organizations.

BERT KLANDERMANS is Professor of Applied Social Psychology at the Free University in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. His research focuses on mobilization and participation in social movements. He is currently studying the Farmer's Protest in the Netherlands and Spain, and (with Johan Olivier, University of Pretoria) the responses of movement and countermovement supporters to the social and political transitions in South Africa. He is Editor of *Social Movements, Protest and Contention* (University of Minnesota), a series on social movements. His is author of *Social Construction of Protest: Social Psychological Principles of Movement Participation* (Basil Blackwell, forthcoming), and with Craig Jenkins has edited *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements* (University of Minnesota, forthcoming).

REFERENCES

- Ajzen, Icek and Martin Fishbein. 1980. *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behavior*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Allison, Paul D. 1984. *Event History Analysis: Regression for Longitudinal Event Data*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Barnes, Samuel H. and Max Kaase. 1979. *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*. London, England: Sage.
- Briët, Martien, Bert Klandermans, and Frederike Kroon. 1987. "How Women Become Involved in the Women's Movement." Pp. 44-64 in *The Women's Movements in the U.S. and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity and Public Policy*, edited by M. Katzenstein and C. Mueller. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Campbell, Donald T. and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.
- Chafetz, Janet Saltzman and Anthony Dworkin. 1987. "Action and Reaction: An Integrated, Comparative Perspective on Feminist and Antifeminist Movements." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Aug., Chicago, IL.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston and Virginia Gray. 1983. *Feminism and the New Right. The Conflict Over the American Family*. New York:

- Praeger.
- Duyvendak, Jan Willem. Forthcoming. *The Power of Politics. New Social Movements in an Old Polity, France 1965–1989*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Ennis, James G. and Richard Schreuer. 1987. "Mobilizing Weak Support for Social Movements: The Role of Grievance, Efficacy and Cost." *Social Forces* 66:390–409.
- Ferree, Myra Marx. 1992. "The Political Context of Rationality: Rational Choice Theory and Resource Mobilization." Pp. 29–52 in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, edited by A. Morris and C. Mueller. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fireman, Bruce and William A. Gamson. 1979. "Utilitarian Logic in the Resource Mobilization Perspective." Pp. 8–45 in *The Dynamics of Social Movements*, edited by M. N. Zald and J. D. McCarthy. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.
- Frey, J. H. 1983. *Survey Research by Telephone*. London, England: Sage.
- Granberg, Donald and Sören Holmberg. 1988. *The Political System Matters: Social Psychology and Voting Behavior in Sweden and the United States*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Henig, Jeffrey R. 1982. *Neighborhood Mobilization, Redevelopment and Response*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Klandermans, Bert. 1984. "Mobilization and Participation: Social Psychological Expansions of Resource Mobilization Theory." *American Sociological Review* 49:583–600.
- . 1988. "Union Action and the Free Rider Dilemma." Pp. 77–92 in *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*. Vol. 10: *Social Movements as a Factor of Change in the Contemporary World*, edited by L. Kriesberg and B. Misztal. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- . 1989. "Interorganizational Networks." Pp. 301–15 in *International Social Movement Research*. Vol. 2: *Organizing for Change: Social Movement Organizations in Europe and the United States*, edited by B. Klandermans. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Klandermans, Bert and Dirk Oegema. 1987. "Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers: Steps Toward Participation in Social Movements." *American Sociological Review* 52: 519–31.
- Koopmans, Ruud. Forthcoming. *Democracy From Below and the Political Systems in West Germany*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter and Philip Van Praag, Jr. 1988. "De beweging en haar campagne" (The Movement and Its Campaign). Pp. 13–53 in *Tekenen voor de vrede. Portret van een campagne* (Signing for Peace. Portrait of a Campaign), edited by B. Klandermans. Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum.
- Lane, Robert E. 1964. *Political Life*. New York: Free Press.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul F., Bernard B. Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet. 1948. *The People's Choice*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mansbridge, Jane L. 1986. *Why We Lost the ERA*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Masters, G. N. 1982. "A Rasch Model for Partial Credit Scoring." *Psychometrika* 47: 149–74.
- McAdam, Doug. 1986. "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer." *American Journal of Sociology* 92:64–90.
- McCarthy, John and Mayer Zald. 1976. "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 82:1212–41.
- Oberschall, Anthony. 1973. *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Oegema, Dirk. 1991. "The Dutch Peace Movement, 1977 to 1987." Pp. 93–142 in *International Social Movement Research*. Vol. 3: *Peace Movements in Western Europe and the United States*, edited by B. Klandermans. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Oegema, Dirk and Bert Klandermans. 1992. "The Erosion of Support: Perceived Political Changes and Participation in the Peace Movement in the Netherlands." Paper presented at the First European Conference on Social Movements, 29 Oct.–1 Nov., Berlin, Germany.
- Oliver, Pamela E. and Gerald Marwell. 1992. "Mobilizing Technologies for Collective Action." Pp. 251–73 in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, edited by A. Morris and C. Mueller. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Opp, Karl-Dieter. 1988. "Community Integration and Incentives for Political Protest." Pp. 83–103 in *From Structure to Action: Comparing Movement Participation Across Cultures*, edited by B. Klandermans, H. Kriesi, and S. Tarrow. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- . 1989a. *The Rationality of Political Protest*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- . 1989b. "Social Integration Into Voluntary Associations and Incentives for Legal and Illegal Protest." Pp. 345–63 in *International Social Movement Research*. Vol. 2: *Organizing for Change: Social Movement Organizations in Europe and the United States*, edited by B. Klandermans. Greenwich, CT: JAI.
- Prins, Peter. 1990. "Actie Potentiaal: Ra, Ra?!" (Action Potential: Rah-Rah?!). Masters thesis. Department of Social Psychology, Free University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- Rochon, Thomas R. 1988. *Mobilizing for Peace: The Antinuclear Movements in Western Eu-*

- rope. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rucht, Dieter and Donatella Della Porta. Forthcoming. "Left-Libertarian Movements in Context: A Comparison of Italy and West Germany, 1965–1990." In *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*, edited by J. C. Jenkins and B. Klandermans. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Snow, David A., Louis A. Zurcher and Sheldon Ekland-Olson. 1980. "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment." *American Sociological Review* 45:787–801.
- Schwartz, Michael and Shuva Paul. 1992. "Resource Mobilization Versus the Mobilization of People: Why Consensus Movements Cannot Be Instruments of Social Change." Pp. 205–24 in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, edited by A. Morris and C. Mueller. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Wallace, Michael and J. Craig Jenkins. Forthcoming. "The New Class and the Ideological Bases of Political Protest: A Comparison of Eight Western Democracies." In *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*, edited by J. C. Jenkins and B. Klandermans. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Walsh, Edward J. 1988. *Democracy in the Shadows: Citizen Mobilization in the Wake of the Accident at Three Mile Island*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.