

STRIKES, POWER, AND POLITICS IN THE WESTERN NATIONS, 1900–1976*

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Over the years, the interest of social scientists in industrial conflict has waxed and waned. Probably as a reflection of the increase in strike activity in several countries in the past decade, interest in this area has increased in recent years (e.g., Shorter and Tilly, 1974; Barkin, 1975; Crouch and Pizzorno, 1978; Snyder, 1975; and Hibbs, 1976, 1978). In our opinion industrial conflict is a significant manifestation of the nature of and changes in the relationships between the most important classes in industrial, capitalist societies. The availability of relatively good data over long time periods—most industrial nations have statistical series on strikes and lockouts dating back to at least the beginning of the

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century—makes the study of industrial conflict a potentially fruitful area for comparative research on the development and functioning of these societies. The significance of this area of study is enhanced by the fact that earlier expectations of the “withering away” of the strike (Ross and Hartman, 1960) have not been fulfilled. While strikes have indeed withered away in some Western countries during the postwar period, in other countries they have soared to new heights. The variation between different countries in the level of strikes, therefore, has become much greater than it was during the first four decades of this century, something which makes the cross-national dimension of comparison highly interesting.

This paper attempts to describe and explain some of the differences between, as well as the changes in the pattern of industrial conflict during the past century in the eighteen major democratic capitalist nations: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Changes over time and differences between countries in the pattern of industrial conflict will be analyzed in relation to different and competing theoretical approaches.

1. APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT

In contemporary social science, four different approaches to the study of industrial conflict can be discerned. The first one is based on the dominant “pluralistic industrialism” body of thought, which sees industrial technology and the demands it places on the labor force as the prime factors behind societal change (e.g., Kerr et al., 1960). This approach views industrial conflict primarily as a result of the malfunctioning of social institutions. It has been and remains the prevalent one among economists, political scientists, and sociologists, as well as in the field of industrial relations.

In the second approach, common primarily among economists, industrial conflict has been analyzed in terms of the bargaining process between labor and management. This approach has been focused on the micro-level and often tends to see industrial conflict primarily as the result of “faulty negotiations” (e.g., Hicks, 1957). This tradition also considers the ways in which the state of the economy impinges on the bargaining process leading to strikes and lockouts (e.g., Ashenfelter and Johnson, 1969). Explicitly or implicitly, the bargaining approach shares basic assumptions with the pluralistic industrialism body of thought, among them the stress on the importance of bargaining institutions for conflict resolu-

tion and the view that industrial conflict is essentially an economic phenomenon.

The above approaches have dominated the study of industrial conflict in the postwar period. Recently, however, their dominance has been challenged from two different, but not opposite, directions. Sociologists have argued that industrial conflict should be regarded as a form of collective action, where collectivities of citizens clash over the distribution of scarce resources. Basic to this third approach is the view that industrial conflict must be seen essentially as part of a broader political contest (Shorter and Tilly, 1974). The fourth approach, finally, is the Marxian one, which in recent years has experienced a minor revival in the study of industrial conflict and industrial relations generally (e.g., Hyman, 1972 and 1975). In this approach industrial conflict is seen as generated by the conflicts of interest between the sellers and buyers of labor power, who form the two most important classes in a capitalist industrial society. Also in this approach, industrial conflict is seen as closely related to political conflict. In the following section we will review the most widely used approach to the study of industrial conflict, the pluralistic industrialism body of thought, and then contrast it with an approach which takes its fundamental starting points from the Marxian tradition.

2. THE MAINSTREAM VIEW

Several major themes of general, postwar social science literature—the end of ideology, the dissolution and embourgeoisement of the manual working class, and the interpretation of conflict as socially functional—have found their way into the pluralistic industrialism perspective on industrial conflict. The pluralistic industrialism body of thought has one of its intellectual roots in a Weberian approach to class and stratification theory, which takes differences in what people have to offer on the markets as the key factor for the development of collectivities and conflict groups in society. The essential message of this school of thought is that in the evolution toward a “post-capitalist” or “post-industrial” society, class conflict has been neutralized, if not altogether eliminated, that this has occurred against a background of equalization of the power resources of workers and employers, and that the adoption of mutually advantageous regulatory procedures has permanently tamed and limited the manifestation of industrial conflict.¹

In the view of pluralistic industrialism this evolution is basically generated by changes in industrial technology, which place new requirements on the labor force and thereby alter the social structure of industrializing societies. Indirectly technological change, therefore, influences the social

institutions of these societies. With the development of industrial society, new institutions have emerged which make it possible to regulate and sublimate conflict. Political democracy and universal suffrage constituted one key part of the emerging institutional order. An equally important development was the growth of trade unions and institutions for collective bargaining, which has given the workers industrial citizenship in the same way that political democracy gave them political citizenship. Thereby the workers have become integrated into a hitherto alien body politic and have acquired means with which they can legitimately mount opposition to economic inequalities. By giving legitimacy to such opposition, industrial citizenship has favored the organized regulation of conflict and has thereby diminished the intensity of its overt expression.

In addition to the growth of regulatory institutions, from the pluralist perspective another crucial development has been what Dahrendorf (1959) called the "institutional isolation" of political and economic conflict. When the workers have been granted industrial as well as political citizenship, conflicts in these two areas are no longer fused into a single front but tend instead to be fought out separately. This institutional isolation of industrial and political conflict reflects, as well as contributes to, a fragmentation of the social bases of discontent, thereby reducing the severity and potential consequences of conflict. In the pluralistic world of postcapitalist society, individuals have a multiplicity of interests and pledge allegiance to a multiplicity of competing—rather than mutually reinforcing—collectivities. Trade unions are thereby converted from social movements with broad goals and constituencies to limited-purpose associations capable of effectively checking the hitherto unilateral power of employers in the employment sphere. Industrial conflict can no longer be considered an expression of class conflict, but is rather in the nature of a well-organized bargaining game between limited-purpose interest groups.

One key assumption in the pluralistic industrialism school of thought is, thus, that this institutional sublimation of conflicts in Western societies is not based on domination by one interest group over others but, instead, on a relatively equal distribution of power resources between a multitude of competing groups. The assumption of a rough balance of power is implicit, for instance, in the stress on the role of trade unions in extending "industrial citizenship" to the workers, something which equates collective bargaining with political democracy. The countervailing sanctions available to workers under collective bargaining are assumed to equalize the balance of power resources between labor and capital, or at least to render it unproblematic to the social integration of the working class. By assuming or implying a rough equilibrium in the distribution of power resources between different collectivities, this stream of thought has thus

come to largely neglect the variable of power, which was fundamental in the thought of Weber.

3. CONFLICT AND THE ORGANIZATION OF PRODUCTION

In developing an alternative set of hypotheses to account for conflict in democratic, capitalist societies, we find it fruitful to start from assumptions which are basically different from those central to the pluralistic industrialism perspective. In the Marxian tradition, we assume that the sphere of production, rather than the market, is of pre-eminent importance for the long-term development of society and that the ways in which people are related to each other in the sphere of production are fundamental for the development of societal collectivities and classes. From this viewpoint the economic organization of production rather than industrial technology becomes basic for understanding social change. The cleavage between sellers and buyers of labor power is seen as the basic rift in capitalist societies, a rift the consequences of which can be modified but never made to disappear through societal institutions and mechanisms for conflict regulation. A key assumption in our approach is that differences in power resources between classes play a crucial role in shaping social institutions as well as in determining the manner and the extent in which the conflicts of interest between sellers and buyers of labor power become manifest. The concept *power resources* here refers to the ability of actors to reward and to punish other actors. The relative distribution of power resources between contending collectivities or classes determines their capacity to realize their interests. A focus on the distribution of power resources between capital and labor thus concerns the material underpinnings of their interaction in the conflict of interest between them.²

An approach to societal conflict via the sphere of production draws attention to the inequality in the distribution of power resources in society. On the labor market, the sellers and buyers of labor power appear as formally equal parties. Since labor power cannot be separated from its owner, however, its sale also involves the person of the seller. Once the sale—that is, the employment contract—is concluded, in the sphere of production and during working time the seller is factually as well as legally subordinated to the buyer. Since we can assume that most people would prefer not to be subordinated, the fact that in the sphere of production this normally occurs points to the unequal distribution of power resources between wage earners and employers within the wider society. This inequality in power resources is partly self-reinforcing since it affects the ways in which the fruits of production are distributed.

Since the sale of labor power leads to the personal subordination of the

sellers to the buyers during working time and takes place within the context of a power relationship, it generates not only economic but potentially also political conflict between employers and employees. This political dimension of conflict becomes evident in issues related to control at the place of work but can also involve basic issues concerning the organization of production. According to our approach, economic and political conflict in Western societies can therefore be expected to be closely connected.

Taken individually, the power resources of the sellers of labor power are much smaller than the power resources of employers. Through combination and collective action, however, the sellers can considerably enhance their power resources. Consequently organizations for collective action among the wage earners, the most important of them being trade unions and political parties, come into being. The extent and forms of organization for collective action among the wage earners largely determine their power resources relative to that of other collectivities in society. The coordination of the collective actions of wage earners is a complicated process, however. Structural factors, which vary between societies, affect both the forms and the extent of collective action. In this context we must recognize that although the relationships to the means of production in the long run give rise to the most important conflict groups or classes in capitalist societies, a multitude of other cleavages can and often do provide bases for conflict in them. The most important of these other cleavages appear along the lines of occupation, religion, race, ethnicity, language, and region. Such cleavages can, to a varying extent, "cross-cut" and divide the wage earners, thereby hindering their propensity to act collectively. Immigration is also of importance here since it tends to impede collective action, in part by introducing ethnic heterogeneity among workers. In addition, immigrants initially tend to adopt a short-term perspective on their stay in the new country, something which counteracts a long-term commitment to collective action.

In this context, not only the level of organization among the wage earners but also its basis is of importance. Occupation is often an important base for unionism. But craft unionism may generate dissension between different categories of wage earners. The more broadly based industrial unions tend, instead, to unify workers along class lines. Further, where unions are split along religious or political lines, their ability to concentrate the power resources of the workers becomes limited. The extent of organization among salaried employees and the relationship of their organizations to those of the manual workers is also of relevance in this context. In the political arena, the extent of working class voting and the electoral strength of the left parties as well as the extent to which the parties on the left are divided contributes to the

relative strength of the working class. The closeness of the relationship between unions and the political parties on the left also affects the power resources of the working class.

The above discussion indicates that we expect the power resources of the wage earners to be enhanced to the extent that they are organized on the basis of class in both the industrial and the political spheres. This implies characteristics such as a high level of union organization, industrial rather than craft unionism, cooperation between blue-collar and white-collar unions, a strong union central which coordinates the actions of different unions, and close cooperation between this central confederation and a party that clearly dominates on the left. Where one or more of these characteristics are absent, the power resources of the working class in relationship to other collectivities in society are assumed to be lower.

4. POWER, POLITICS, AND CONFLICT

Although the distribution of power resources between sellers and buyers of labor power is everywhere unequal, it is clear that the *degree* of inequality will vary, both between countries and over time. We view this variation in the difference in power resources between sellers and buyers of labor power as a crucial determinant of the extent to and forms in which industrial and political conflict between them become manifest.

As a part of an analysis of industrial conflict, Korpi (1974 and 1978: Chapter 2) has developed a power difference model of conflict which combines central aspects of the two leading contemporary approaches to collective protest, namely the predominant "expectation-achievement" approach (Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970) and the more recent "political process" approach (Snyder and Tilly, 1972). In the power difference model of conflict, the difference between the power resources of the contending collectivities is taken as the key independent variable, which influences the terms of exchange between the parties and their social consciousness as well as the level and pattern of manifest conflict between them. In contrast to most of the writing on relative deprivation, this model thus assumes that over the long run, the expectations of the parties will be affected by the difference in power resources between them. The structure of power is therefore critical to the social consciousness—including levels of aspiration and relative deprivation—of the citizens. The power difference model of conflict holds that where the difference in power resources between parties is great, exchange between them takes place on highly unequal terms. Although the exchange relationship thus is largely exploitative, manifest conflict is nevertheless low, since a great disadvantage in power resources makes successful action by the weaker party unlikely. As differences in power resources decrease, however, the prob-

ability of successful action by the weaker party increases. An improved power position also affects the social consciousness of the weaker party, especially in terms of what it regards as reasonable aspirations and realistic goals. A decreasing power difference therefore is expected to increase manifest conflict, since the weaker party will attempt to change the unequal terms of exchange and the stronger party to maintain them.

The power difference model of conflict has obvious application to the analysis of manifestations of conflict between sellers and buyers of labor power, since although the sellers have less power resources than the buyers, the degree of this inequality will vary with the extent and forms of collective organization among the sellers. The distribution of power resources further affects the range and number of alternative courses of action which are open to societal collectivities. If their power resources improve, new courses of action and thereby new strategies of conflict become open to the sellers of labor power. Of particular interest in this context is that with an improving power position, labor can more effectively utilize political means to affect the distribution of the fruits of production.

In the industrial arena, the wage earners are both factually and formally subordinated to the employers.³ Despite the important influences from the economy on the political processes in Western societies, the difference in power resources between employers and employees can be assumed to be smaller in the political than in the industrial arena. In democratic capitalist societies it is therefore generally advantageous for the sellers of labor power to move the manifestations of their conflicts of interest with the employers from the industrial to the political arena.⁴ The successful wresting of universal suffrage from bourgeois society was the first important step in this process. Beyond that stage, the extent to which the labor movement achieves such political support among the citizens that it can decisively influence the actions of the legislature and the government becomes an important determinant of the strategies of conflict of labor and capital. Our leading hypothesis is that to the extent that the working class through its organizations for collective action is able to achieve strong and stable control over the executive, the conflicts of interest between labor and capital will increasingly be fought out in the political arena and industrial conflict will decline.⁵

In contrast to the pluralistic industrialism body of thought, we see the institutions of industrial relations primarily as "intervening variables" between, on the one hand, the relative power resources of labor and capital and, on the other hand, political and economic outcomes such as the terms of exchange on the labor market. Such institutions can be seen as the residue of past social conflict, and as reflecting attempts by the parties to routinize exchange relations and to economize on power re-

sources. Their existence indicates that the parties have "accepted" the terms and forms in which conflicts of interest between them can be resolved. However, this acceptance is typically conditional and pragmatic in nature, and may in part be engineered by the stronger party. The forms and functions of such institutions, therefore, basically depend on the underlying difference in power resources and the changes which it undergoes. Once in existence, however, institutions of industrial relations may acquire some significance for the form and extent of industrial conflict.

The strategies of conflict which the sellers and buyers of labor power and their organizations come to follow in societal conflicts can also be expected to depend on the context in which the conflicts take place. One important aspect of this context is the economic performance of the country, which determines the size of the "pie" under contention by the parties. Other things being equal, in a context of a low level of economic growth, the conflict between the parties easily assumes a zero-sum character, which limits the alternative strategies open to the contenders. Under conditions of economic growth, however, the possibilities for positive-sum conflict strategies are increased. Another aspect of importance is the international environment in which the conflicts take place. Where the continuity and independence of the national system, and thereby also the relationship between the classes, is threatened in partly unpredictable ways by foreign powers, this is likely to influence the strategies of conflict which the parties choose to follow.

5. TRENDS IN INDUSTRIAL CONFLICT, 1900-1976

Although industrial conflict can take different forms, its collective and organized expression in the form of strikes and lockouts is clearly of central interest for the discussion of class conflict. We will now review the main trends in the development of industrial conflict during the present century in the eighteen countries in our study. When analyzing long-term changes in the incidence of industrial conflict we can focus on several different aspects of the phenomenon of strikes (which here is used as a summary term for strikes and lockouts). The statistical information readily available for each country is limited to annual aggregate data concerning the frequency of strikes (F), the number of workers involved (I), and the number of man-days idle or the volume of strikes (V). From these basic data we can derive measures of the size of strikes (S), i.e., the average number of strikers per strike ($S = I/F$), and the duration of strikes (D), i.e., the number of man-days of idleness per striker ($D = V/I$). The choice between these indicators is important since they are conceptually different and are only moderately correlated. The volume of strikes is useful as a summary measure but is clearly unsatisfactory as a single

indicator since it is the product of the three dimensions of strikes (frequency, size, and duration) and thus obscures changes in the "shape" of strikes. For our purpose we have focused primarily on involvement in strikes, which reflects the number of workers mobilized in collective conflict and therefore has obvious sociological and political significance. We will also consider the duration of strikes as well as their volume, which is of course the product of involvement and duration. In comparing countries we will look at the incidence of strikes in relation to the size of the nonagricultural labor force—e.g., Relative Involvement refers to the number of "strikers" relative to the nonagricultural labor force. (For more detailed information on data and sources for these and later variables, see Appendix 1.)

One salient feature of the over-time changes in strikes is their great variation from year to year and the occurrence of "peak years" when strike incidence has been exceptionally high. This rich variation is lost in the description of long-term changes in averages. In order to cancel out enough of the year-to-year variation in Relative Involvement to bring out the long-term trends, we have here logged the figures on involvement and computed weighted five-year moving averages. The resulting graphs are depicted in *Figure 1*, which arithmetic and geometric means for three periods (1900–1913, 1919–1938, 1946–1976) are given in *Table 1*. Geometric means have been included because, like the logarithmic transformations in the graphs, they have the effect of decreasing the effects of extreme peaks in strike activity.

In nearly all countries where records are available back to the turn of

Figure 1. Relative strike involvement in 18 industrial capitalist societies, 1870–1976.

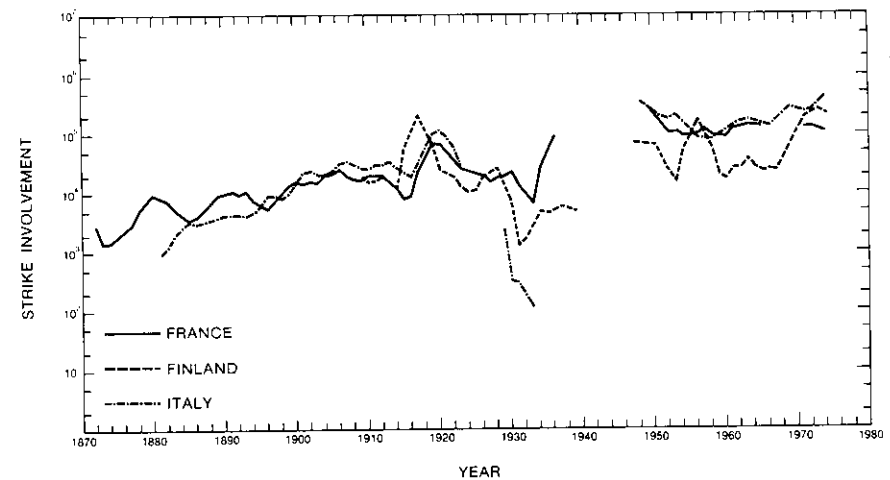
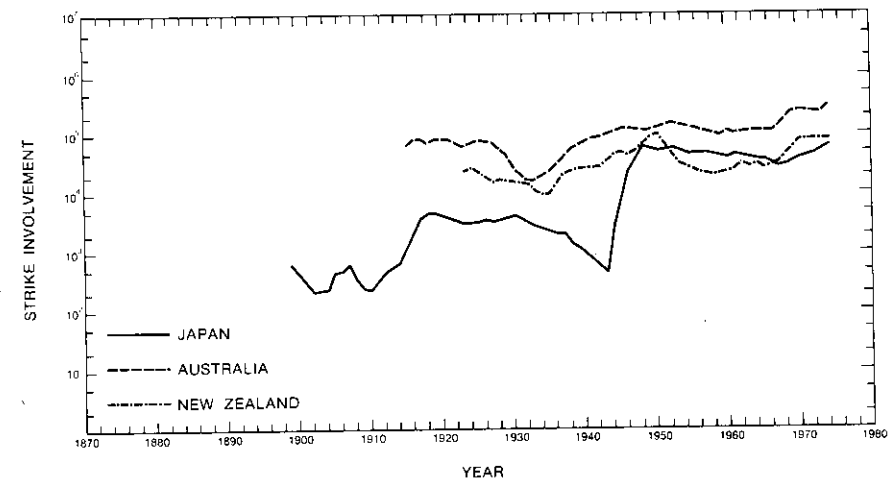
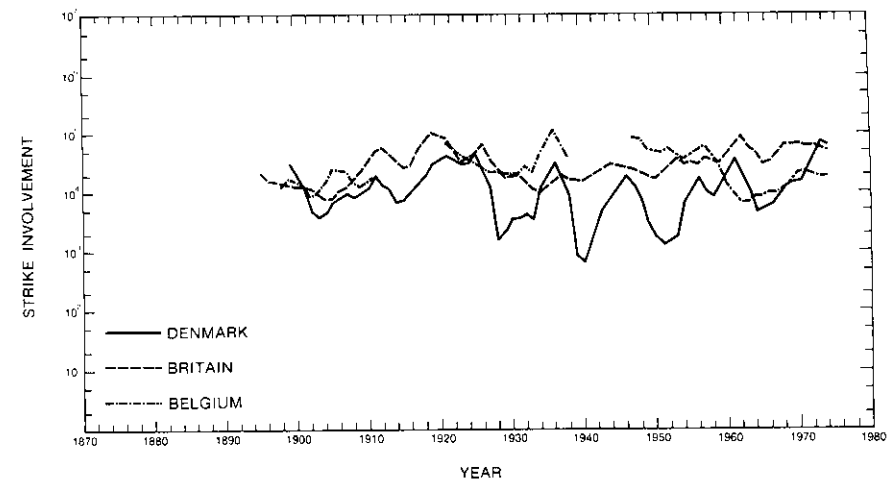
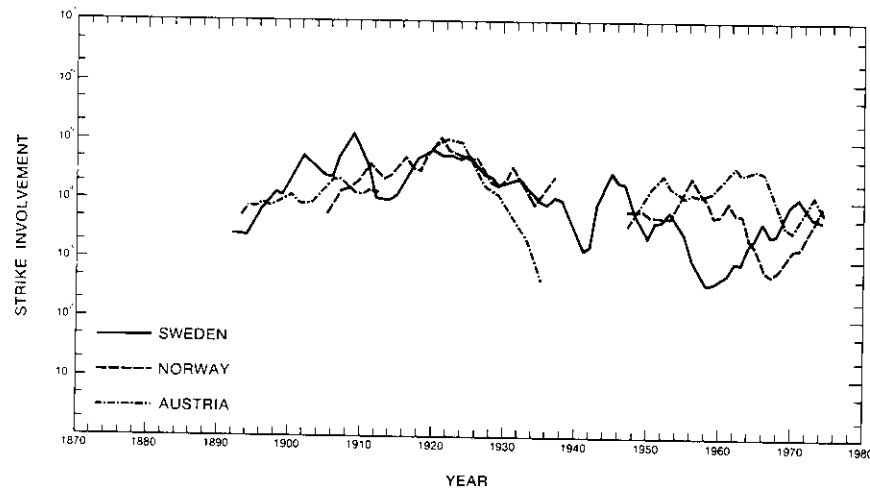
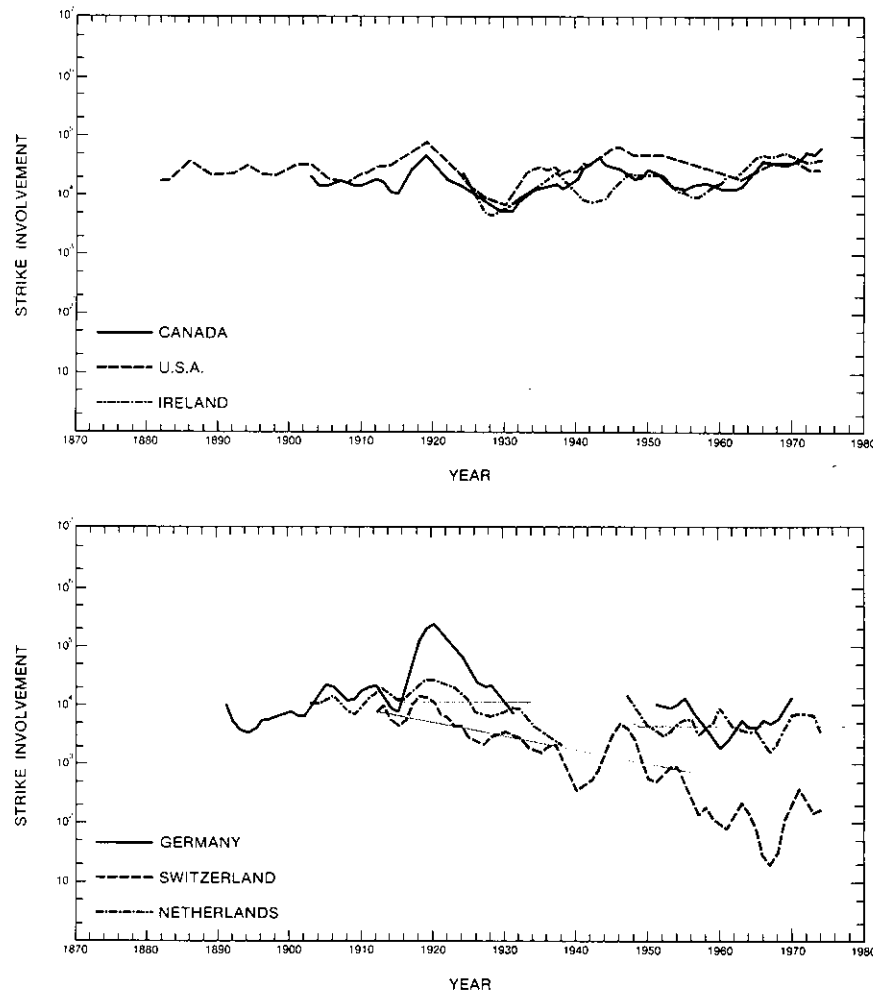


Figure 1 (continued)



the century or before, the secular trend in Relative Involvement was an upward one until about 1920.⁶ The years around 1920 saw the outbreak of an international strike wave. The long-term increase in strike involvement up to the years following World War I can be readily interpreted in terms of the power difference model of conflict—it was an outcome of the decreasing differences in power resources between capital and labor resulting from the gradual building up of organizations for collective action among the wage earners, that is of unions and political parties. This decrease in the difference in power resources also led to institutional

Table 1. Relative Strike Involvement in 18 Industrial, Capitalistic Societies, 1900–1976.

	Arithmetic means			Geometric means		
	1900–1913	1919–1938	1946–1976	1900–1913	1919–1938	1946–1976
Italy	270	394	2313	248	60	1869
Australia*	—	517	1589	—	426	1425
France	184	388	1367	172	221	1137
Finland	223	120	835	188	59	410
New Zealand	—	180	523	—	162	415
Japan	3	32	450	3	29	414
United Kingdom*	237	396	432	169	238	357
United States	259	277	354	238	193	327
Belgium	168	468	331	135	312	223
Canada	173	151	314	161	117	243
Ireland	—	161	293	—	118	238
Denmark	94	203	183	69	55	70
Austria	177	343	145	154	72	74
Germany	151	775	92	126	264	53
Norway	165	384	64	99	207	29
Netherlands	122	115	57	102	81	30
Sweden	397	295	36	186	194	11
Switzerland	79	42	8	63	29	2

* Alternative series which exclude mining strikes have been constructed for these countries. Period averages for these series indicate a much larger interwar-postwar increase, especially in Australia.

changes in society, the most important of them being the gradual acceptance of collective bargaining and extension of the suffrage until universal manhood suffrage had been introduced in all of our countries (except Japan) by the end of the First World War.⁷

Shorter and Tilly (1974:316) interpret this increase in the use of strikes up to around 1920 as “a means of *pression ouvrier* for political representation.” While political democracy was one of the important goals on the agenda of the labor movements in most countries, only very few strikes were explicitly directed toward political ends. In this period and ever since, the overwhelming majority of strikes have been concerned with economic workplace issues. While in some countries strikes have often been used to draw the attention of political decision-makers to the grievances of the workers, we think that the great majority of all strikes must be seen as defensive reactions of workers to issues in the industrial arena rather than as attempts at a political offensive. It is therefore more fruitful to view both the institutional changes and the increase in overt conflict as outcomes of the decreasing class differences in power resources, which made it possible for labor to challenge the existing patterns of distribution and which also generated institutional change.

In all of our countries the post-World War I peak in industrial conflict

was followed by a decrease in the 1920s. This decrease can also be at least partly interpreted in terms of changes in the difference in power resources between labor and capital. The prolonged economic crises of the twenties decreased the bargaining power and leverage of the workers. The splits in most labor movements between social democrats and communists resulting from the creation of the Third International further contributed to the weakness of labor. The flexing of labor's muscles in the strike waves and in the revolutionary unrest in the years around the end of World War I undoubtedly prompted forceful reactions from capital.

During the latter part of the 1930s, our countries begin to diverge in the pattern of strike involvement. In about half of them strikes tend to decrease, partly in connection with political changes like the emergence of fascism in Germany and Austria or the emergence of a social democratic government supported by a majority of the electorate in Sweden. In the other half of the countries, however, strikes tended to increase in the latter part of the 1930s once the depths of the Great Depression had been passed.

The period immediately following World War II once again saw the emergence of an international strike wave. The social dislocations and economic frustrations resulting from the war have sometimes been cited as explanations of such strike waves. In our view, however, the extreme tightness of wartime labor markets, occurring for the first time in most countries, was more important since it improved the power position of labor and thereby contributed to the increased level of conflict. The strike waves can also be seen as reflecting a struggle between labor and capital for a favorable postwar realignment of class forces—labor attempting to retain and capital to nullify the industrial and political footholds of control which labor had gained during the war.

It is in the period after World War II that the great differences in strike involvement between our countries become apparent. In six cases—Sweden, Norway, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, and Switzerland—involvement in industrial conflict has fallen to very low levels. In the Netherlands and Switzerland, however, involvement was relatively low already in the period between the wars, having begun to decrease after the post-World War I peaks. Austria and Germany, which had high levels of industrial conflict before the emergence of fascism, have had very low levels in the postwar period. In Norway the level of involvement was much lower when record keeping was resumed after the Nazi occupation, while Sweden exhibits an even more remarkable pattern of change. From having had by far the highest level of involvement in the world before World War I, it moved to the lowest level of all after World War II. There, however, strikes did not decline in a gradual fashion as the "withering

away" thesis suggests. Instead, the strike experienced a rather sudden death in the middle of the 1930s.

In six of our countries—Italy, Australia, France, Finland, New Zealand, and Japan—strike involvement has markedly increased from the years between the wars to the post-World War II period. In the first three of these countries, involvement was already at rather high levels in the period between the wars. However, in both Finland and Japan, strong fascist forces had held down involvement in strikes during the 1930s. This group of six countries has had the highest levels of relative involvement of all the Western nations during the postwar period. In another group—the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, the United States, Canada, and Ireland—the level of involvement has been relatively stable and at middling levels since the period between the wars.

Another salient change in the pattern of industrial conflict in the Western countries is that the duration of strikes has decreased dramatically over the years. From an average of twenty-two man-days idle per striker in the period before World War II, duration has declined to about nine days in the postwar period. In several countries the decline has been drastic and duration has dropped to about one-third of the pre-World War II level.⁸ However, three of the countries with relatively high involvement—the United States, Canada, and Ireland—have seen a much smaller decrease and exhibit durations of about twice the international average. Because of their protracted disputes, these three countries have had a very large volume of strikes. They join Italy, Finland, and France as the six countries with the highest relative volume in the postwar period. The six countries with the lowest strike involvement mentioned above have also had the lowest volume of strikes in this period.

The decline in the average duration of strikes in the postwar period does not signal the emergence of short strikes as a new phenomenon, but reflects instead a tendency toward the disappearance of protracted strikes. This development indicates that the role of strikes in the political economy of the Western nations has changed. It can be noted that the decline in strike duration occurs roughly parallel to the increasing rates of inflation since the prewar period. In the earlier periods, long strikes were tests of economic strength between the parties on the labor market and were of decisive importance for the distribution of the fruits of production. In the postwar years strikes have generally acquired more of the character of demonstrations. In the Western nations, where the ability of the large firms to pass on costs to their customers has increased, collectively bargained wage agreements no longer have the same importance in determining the distribution of the economic "pie." It is therefore no longer vital for the parties to engage in protracted warfare on the indus-

trial arena as they once had to do. The increasing role of governments in the management of the economy has also contributed to changing the role of strikes.

6. PATTERNS OF WORKING CLASS MOBILIZATION AND POLITICAL CONTROL

In attempting to explain the divergent patterns of industrial conflict in the Western countries in the postwar period, our theoretical approach leads us to focus upon the distribution of power resources within these nations and on the changes in this distribution. We have assumed above that the strength of organizations for collective action among wage earners—unions and political parties—is the major factor accounting for variation between countries in this respect, and that it is in the interest of working class organizations to attempt to move the center of gravity of class conflict from the industrial to the political arena. To describe and analyze the differences between our eighteen countries, we have computed averages for certain empirical measures of these variables over the period 1946–1976 (*Table 2*).

The level of working class power resources as reflected in its industrial and political mobilization is described by two indicators, union membership as a percentage of the nonagricultural labor force, and the number of valid votes in parliamentary elections going to the left parties, expressed as a percentage of the total number of eligible voters (weighted by the amount of time which elapses between elections). As “left” parties we have included the social democratic parties and the parties to their left; while parties to the right of the social democrats, including their rightwing splinter groups, have been excluded. Since we regard the extent of electoral participation as being in itself an important aspect of the political mobilization of the working class, we have here chosen to look at the proportion of the electorate voting for left parties. On the basis of their combined ranks on unionization and left share of the electorate, we have divided our countries into three groups having low, medium, and high levels of working class mobilization.

While mobilization in the above sense is an important aspect of the entry of the working class into the political arena, the extent to which it has actually been able to exercise political power through parliamentary channels has varied greatly during the postwar period. We consider two aspects of this exercise of political power. One issue of importance is the amount of control over the government which the left parties have been able to exert. We have measured this by an index of “weighted cabinet share,” where the proportion of seats in each cabinet which are held by left parties has been weighted by the left’s share of seats in the legislature

*Table 2. Patterns of Working Class Mobilization and Political Control in 18 Industrial Capitalist Societies, 1946–1976.**

Pattern	Country	Percent unionization	Left votes as percentage of electorate	Working class mobilization	Weighted cabinet share	Proportion of time with left representation in cabinet	Splits within the labor movement: Parties	Unions
High mobilization, stable control	Sweden	71	43	High	High	High		
	Austria	55	45	High	Medium	High		
	Norway	46	41	High	High	High		Minor
High mobilization, occasional control	Denmark	49	39	High	Medium	Medium		
	New Zealand	42	41	High	Medium	Medium		
	United Kingdom	44	35	High	Medium	Medium		
	Belgium	47	32	High	Medium	Medium		Minor
Medium-high mobilization,	Australia	50	44	High	Medium	Low		Political, religious
	Finland	39	37	Medium	Medium	Medium		Major
low control	France	25	32	Medium	Low	Low		Major
	Italy	23	34	Medium	Low	Medium		Major
Low mobilization, exclusion	Japan	27	28	Medium	Low	Low		
	Ireland	36	9	Low	Low	Low		
	Canada	26	11	Low	Low	Low		
Low-medium mobilization, partial participation	United States	27	1	Low	Low	Low		
	Germany	35	31	Medium	Low	Medium		
	Netherlands	30	31	Medium	Low	Medium		Minor
	Switzerland	23	18	Low	Low	High		Religious

* For description of variables, see Appendix 1

and by the time which the cabinet lasted. This weighted cabinet share can be interpreted as an indicator of working class political power resources. Another aspect of left control over the government, which is of importance for the strategies of class conflict, is the stability of this control. Where political control is stable, we can assume that it tends not only to reflect but also to generate conflict strategies that differ from those in countries where left control over the government has been intermittent or sporadic.

An additional qualitative aspect of the mobilization and political power resources of the workers is the extent of splits and internal conflicts within the organized working class. Those countries of Western Europe that have sizable Catholic populations generally exhibit splits in the labor movement, with Catholic unions and parties competing with the socialistic ones. In three of these countries, France, Italy, and Finland, the labor movement has also been seriously split between communist and social democratic factions.

An analysis of the extent of working class mobilization and the pattern of left party participation in government indicates that the eighteen countries included in our study can be grouped into five fairly distinct categories. (For a classification of these countries from a different point of view, see Korpi and Shalev, 1979.) Among the countries with a high level of mobilization, Sweden, Norway, and Austria have had a pattern of strong and stable left participation in government. In Sweden and Norway, the social democratic parties took control of the executive and enjoyed electoral majorities as early as the 1930s, and this control continued through most of the postwar period. In the second Austrian republic, the Social Democrats have been one of the two major parties throughout the postwar period. They participated in coalition governments from 1945 to 1966, and since 1970 they have alone formed the cabinet.

In contrast to the above countries, which are characterized by relatively stable control over the government by the left parties, we have a group of four nations in which the level of working class mobilization has been almost as high but where the parties of the left have had only occasional control over the executive, having been represented in government for between one-fourth to three-fourths of the postwar period. Thus in Britain and New Zealand, the Labour parties have intermittently formed one-party governments. In Denmark and Belgium, the Social Democratic and Socialist parties have periodically entered into coalition governments or formed minority governments.

In five of our countries the mobilization of the working class has been relatively high and the left has been a contender for government control, but largely unsuccessfully. In spite of a strong union movement and a

large share of the electorate, the Australian Labour party has been excluded from postwar governments except for two brief periods. From time to time the social democratic parties in Finland, Italy, and France have been represented in cabinets, which have taken the form of coalition or minority governments. However, because of the splits within the labor movements in these countries, the social democrats in the cabinets generally have not been able to count on the support of communist and other left parties in the legislature. Japan, finally, has had a split labor movement with minority left party representation in the government for only two years in the late 1940s.

In a fourth group consisting of three countries, the level of union organization has been relatively low, and the left parties generally have been outsiders in the political decision-making processes. This group includes the two North American nations and Ireland. While the Irish Labour party has had minority representation in the government for some time, in Canada, as well as in the United States, left parties in the European sense have been weak or nonexistent.

There remains then a fifth group of countries, where working class mobilization has attained only low or medium levels but where the left parties have been integrated into the polity to a considerable extent and have participated in the government, although in differing ways, throughout a sizable portion of the postwar period. In Switzerland the Social Democratic party was admitted into the Federal Council, a nonparliamentary type of executive, in the 1940s and has remained there since then with the exception of a brief exodus in the 1960s. The Netherlands has had intermittent social democratic representation in coalition or minority governments during about half of the postwar period. In Germany, on the other hand, the Social Democratic party was excluded from the government up to 1966, when it entered into an all-party coalition government. Since 1969 it has been the dominant party in a coalition government. These three countries constitute the religiously split European nations, where Catholics and Protestants are of about equal strength, and large confessional parties have sapped the strength of the social democratic ones.

7. STRIKES, POLITICAL CONTROL, AND STRATEGIES OF CLASS CONFLICT

To what extent can we account for the divergent patterns of industrial conflict in the capitalist democracies of the West during the postwar period in terms of differences in strategies of class conflict generated by differences in working class mobilization and control over government? It would appear that differences between the countries in the respects dis-

cussed above go quite a distance towards explaining the variation in relative strike involvement and volume between the countries (Table 3).⁹

In the three nations with a high level of working class mobilization and relatively stable control over the government by social democratic parties, the level of strike involvement and volume has drastically decreased and has reached very low levels in the postwar years. The decline in strikes in Sweden came rather abruptly when the Social Democrats established a firm hold over the government a few years after the 1932 elections, where the left parties received 50 percent of the vote. In Norway the decline came when the Social Democrats returned to power in 1945, having headed a majority government for only a few years before the war. In Austria, finally, the decline came in the postwar period, when the Social Democrats formed one half of a coalition government for more than two decades and also came to share power on a proportional basis with their opponents in various governmental and quasi-official agencies. The very high incidence of industrial conflict in these countries—which in Sweden and Norway were also of exceptionally long duration—before the Social Democrats came to political power on a stable basis, resulted from clashes between strong and highly organized collectivities.

In discussing the way in which the political power of the labor movement is capable of transforming industrial conflict we can take Sweden as an illustrative case. Weak Social Democratic minority governments during the 1920s did not affect its level of industrial conflict. However, when the social Democrats were able to establish a firm hold over the government, the balance of power in society shifted in a way which forced both

Table 3. Relative Strike Involvement and Volume in Countries with Differing Degrees of Working Class Mobilization and Left Control over the Government, 1946–1976 (arithmetic means)

	Relative Involvement	Relative Volume
High mobilization, stable control (Sweden, Austria, Norway)	82	50
High mobilization, occasional control (Denmark, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Belgium)	368	208
Medium-high mobilization, low control (Australia, Finland, France, Italy, Japan)	1,311	612
Low mobilization, exclusion (Ireland, Canada, United States)	320	512
Low-medium mobilization, partial participation (Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland)	75	25

capital and labor to modify their conflict strategies. The employers could no longer rely on their ultimate weapon, the large lockout, since the positive neutrality of the government was no longer guaranteed. The political power holders were no longer likely to intervene in labor relations on behalf of the employers—on the contrary, intervention in favor of labor could now be expected. For labor, the hold over legislative power opened up new possibilities for the use of economic, fiscal, social, and labor-market policies to affect the distribution of the fruits of production and to achieve a high level of employment. Both labor and capital, however, were forced to recognize that within the foreseeable future, there was to be something relatively close to a standoff in power resources between the parties.

This situation moved the representatives of labor and capital to reconsider their strategies of conflict with a view toward some kind of compromise. In Sweden this compromise came to involve a considerable amount of cooperation between the parties in efforts to achieve economic growth. Employers were assured relative autonomy in the management of the firms. Labor limited itself to use its legislative power to affect the economy in the direction of increased economic growth and a more equal distribution of the results of this growth.¹⁰ In these new strategies of conflict, generated by the change in the power structure which opened up new courses of action for labor and narrowed the action alternatives of capital, the center of gravity of the expressions of class conflict moved from the industrial to the political arena. Strikes and lockouts therefore declined abruptly.

In the Swedish case, we can test our hypothesis that it is strong and stable left control over the government which is the crucial explanatory variable accounting for the decline of the strike against other alternative factors usually offered as explanations for over-time fluctuations in strike levels (e.g., Hibbs, 1976). Our data base consists of annual observations for the period 1895–1976. The dependent variable is Relative Involvement in strikes, logarithmically transformed because of its skewness. Our independent variables are U , the level of unemployment; ΔW , real wage change (constructed as $100 \cdot \ln[W_t/W_{t-1}]$); M , union membership (in logged form); and C , the left proportion of cabinet seats weighted by left proportion of the legislature. Note that the latter variable is set to 0 in the years preceding 1936 and the entrenchment of the Social Democrats in the executive branch. The regression equation to be estimated is:

$$\ln(\text{Relative Involvement}) = a + b_1U + b_2\Delta W + b_3M + b_4C + u$$

Estimation of standardized regression coefficients and t-statistics (in parentheses) yields the following results:

<i>U</i>	ΔW	<i>M</i>	<i>C</i>	No. of observations	R^2	Durbin-Watson statistic
.099 (0.68)	.157 (1.80)	.105 (0.70)	-.710 (-3.99)	82	.467	1.77

Of the four coefficients, only that for left cabinet share is strong and significant. This is clearly congruent with our hypothesis as to the crucial role of strong and stable left political control for the long-run decline in industrial conflict. A wide variety of specifications were tried, and the particular equation and estimates reported here are only intended to be illustrative. Nevertheless, the government-control variable is always the major determinant of strike activity, with the exception that when equations are estimated for the pre-1946 period only, the level of union membership becomes as strong an influence as cabinet membership (but in the opposite direction). Leaving aside the problems raised by the empirical interrelations between working class political power and union membership, this seems a reasonable finding. After the war the unions in Sweden continued to grow, but industrial conflict for the most part remained at a low level. Prior to 1936, however, political exchange was not yet a realistic alternative to strike activity for the labor movement, so unionization had important functions both as a precondition for collective protest (cf Shorter & Tilly, 1974) and as a factor actually precipitating conflict (by altering the power balance in the workers' favor).¹¹

To further assess the significance of power and politics for variations in industrial conflict, we turn now to the other four groups of countries in our sample. In nations characterized by a high level of working class mobilization and occasional or unstable control over the government by the left parties—Denmark, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Belgium—the level of strike involvement has remained relatively stable since the years between the wars or, in the case of New Zealand, experienced some increase. Since the duration of strikes has decreased, however, the volume of strikes, again with New Zealand as an exception, exhibits a marked decline. Yet in these countries, left control over the government has not been strong and stable enough to drastically change the context of the conflicts between labor and capital and thus to generate major changes in their strategies of class conflict.

In the group of countries where the working class is relatively highly mobilized but has been practically excluded from political power in the postwar period—Australia, France, Italy, Japan, and Finland—the level of strike involvement has increased markedly since the war. We interpret this to reflect a situation where a relatively highly mobilized working class is limited to carrying out its conflicts of interest with capital almost

entirely in the industrial arena, with the government generally sympathetic to the viewpoint of capital. The relatively long participation of social democratic parties in the governments of Finland and Italy does not reflect a stable or very important degree of political control, since in these countries the left has been about evenly split between communists and social democrats and the bourgeois parties have dominated in the electorate as well as in the governments.

In our fourth group of countries—the United States, Canada, and Ireland—with a low level of organization of the working class and a marked absence of representation of the organized working class in the institutions of political decision making, strike involvement has remained relatively stable while, as a result of the long strike duration, the volume of strikes is very high. In the United States and Canada, volume has actually increased in this period. In these countries, too, the working class is limited to fighting out its conflicts of interest with capital almost entirely in the industrial arena. Because of the relatively low level of working class organization and power resources, industrial conflict in these countries has retained some of the flavor common in many countries during the earlier part of this century.

The remaining group of three countries—Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Germany—are not easily fitted into our theoretical model. In spite of a relatively low degree of working class organization, their level of industrial conflict is very low, but the social democratic parties in these countries have participated rather extensively in coalition-type governments. In Switzerland and the Netherlands, however, the decline in strike involvement bears no temporal relationship to the social democratic entry into the government. The Netherlands and especially Switzerland have had low levels of industrial conflict since about 1920, and already had the lowest levels of strike activity in Western Europe before the First World War. In Germany, however, the very high level of industrial conflict in the Weimar Republic was followed by “industrial peace” in the Federal Republic.

We can here only make a few tentative suggestions to explain these, from our theoretical point of view, deviant cases.¹² In Switzerland and the Netherlands, religious cleavages have obviously hindered the mobilization of the working class. To the religious cleavages, Switzerland has added linguistic and regional cleavages as well as a large proportion of immigrant workers, something which has contributed to giving it what are probably the weakest and least militant working class organizations among the European democracies. In the postwar period most Swiss unions have apparently not even had strike funds (Siegenthaler, 1975). In spite of an unusually high proportion of the labor force in manufacturing, the working class organizations in Switzerland have not asserted the

separate interests of their constituents in a way which has generated manifest conflicts. The precarious position of Switzerland as a nation, pressed between the two fascist states between the wars, may have contributed to this reluctance. The Swiss working class appears to be integrated into a social structure with a rather high degree of inequality but, on the average, a high standard of living with the large group of immigrant workers forming a distinct underclass. The Netherlands, however, has a relatively equal distribution of income.¹³

Why has Germany had a low level of conflict in the postwar years in spite of the absence of "consociational" devices like the grand coalition in Austria and in spite of being in a relatively similar position to its former ally, Japan, at the end of the war? In Austria the socialist and the bourgeois-Catholic blocks emerged as relatively equal in strength in the first elections after the war. Its government had been recognized by all the occupying powers. If there was any hope for the Austrians to avoid the splitting up of the country in the pattern of Korea and Germany, the socialist block apparently had to be included in the government. It would appear that this consideration must have been of paramount importance in the decision to form the first coalition government after the war.

In Germany, on the other hand, the split between its western and the eastern parts was an established fact very soon after the end of the war, and the Social Democratic party was much weaker than the Catholic block. A major inducement for the Catholic block to enter into a coalition government was therefore absent. The bitter experiences of internal splits during the last years of the Weimar Republic, in combination with the proximity of the Soviet-controlled Communist part of the country, may nevertheless have made a militant strategy on the part of the labor movement appear as dooming it to a permanent minority position.¹⁴ The international situation of the country in combination with the achievement of a low level of unemployment appears to have been important in leading the German labor movement to choose a nonmilitant strategy. In Japan, on the other hand, the labor movement emerged after the end of the war with a very light burden of tradition. It was divided and relatively weak, but the international situation did not press it toward a conciliatory strategy.

8. POLITICAL POWER, GOVERNMENT POLICY, AND STRIKES

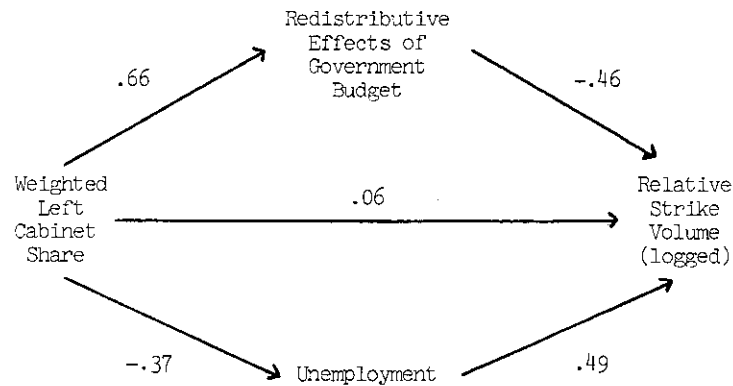
According to the interpretation suggested above, industrial conflict tends to lose its central role in the political economy of the Western nations to the extent that the labor movement achieves access to political power and is thereby able to move the center of gravity of the manifestations of

conflicts of interest between capital and labor from the industrial to the political arena. Needless to say the processes involved in this transformation are complicated and affected by a host of factors, including historical ones, that vary between countries. The difficulties in studying them quantitatively are further compounded by the dearth of relevant and comparable data. Within the scope of this article we can only provide some tentative analyses of relevance for our interpretation. As an indicator of the role of industrial conflict in the political economies of the Western nations, we will use Relative Strikes Volume (1946-1976), which reflects strike duration as well as strike involvement.

Our argument implies that to the extent that left parties achieve control over the government, they will use the government machinery for redistribution. Unlike Hibbs (1978) we thus do not assume that it is the size of the government budget relative to the national product which is of importance in this context but, instead, the redistributive effects of government activity. Redistribution through the public sector thus constitutes one of the necessary payoffs to the working class in the political exchange that can replace a sizable part of industrial conflict. The possibility of redistribution through social democratic governments has been questioned by many social scientists, not the least among those of more-or-less leftist orientations (e.g., Miliband, 1969, and Parkin, 1971; see, however, Stephens, forthcoming). The proportion of the gross national product used for social security expenditures is a traditional, although unsatisfactory, measure of the redistributive effects of government budgets. To correct for one of its shortcomings, Hewitt (1977) suggests that we should also consider the ways in which government revenues are raised through the taxation system. Since direct taxes generally are more progressive than the indirect ones, he proposes an indicator which in effect weights the proportion of GNP going to social security expenditures with the proportion of the total tax revenues coming from income taxation.

The level of unemployment is another factor of great importance for the working class and is, in fact, of major importance for redistribution. It affects the distribution of income and the bargaining power of labor as well as the aspirations and organizational possibilities of the wage earners. Although the level of employment is influenced by many "exogenous" factors, it is also to a considerable extent a result of political choice made by governments, a choice which has been referred to as the unemployment-inflation dilemma. The level of unemployment can therefore be expected to be an expression of the extent to which left parties have been able to use their control over the government to keep unemployment at a low level (Martin, 1975). To the extent that this has been the case, we would expect the volume of strikes to be low. This "developmental" hypothesis thus leads us to expect the opposite relation between

Figure 2. Path Coefficients Indicating Effects of Political Power and Economic Outcomes on Relative Strike Volume in 18 Countries, 1949-76.



long-term changes in levels of unemployment and of strikes than that which is typically found in the analysis of their short-term covariation, where strikes and unemployment tend to be negatively correlated (e.g., Ashenfelter and Johnson, 1969; Hibbs, 1976).

A path analysis of the relationship between left cabinet control, redistribution, unemployment, and strike volume during the postwar period in our eighteen countries gives some support for our interpretation (Figure 2). The analysis indicates that the weighted cabinet share of the left parties has had sizable effects on the more narrowly redistributive consequences of government budgets as well as on the level of unemployment. The direct depressing effect of left cabinet share on the Relative Strike Volume (logged) appears to have been insignificant compared with its indirect effects via redistribution and unemployment. Note however that while logarithmic transformation of the dependent variable yielded path coefficients which best illustrate our theory, the unlogged version was better as a predictor, accounting for over three-quarters of the variance in strike volume.¹⁵ Due to the small sample size and obvious measurement problems, the particular figures presented in Figure 2 should be regarded as merely illustrative of the actual processes at work.

9. CONCLUSIONS

According to the theoretical perspective of pluralistic industrialism, we can expect a secular decline in the level of strike activity in the industrial democracies as their institutions for conflict resolution evolve and their social structures become modified by the changing requirements placed on their labor force by the advance of industrial technology. The de-

velopment of industrial conflict in our eighteen countries over this century has failed to conform to this prediction. There has been no general tendency for strikes to gradually wither away. Moreover, in spite of relatively similar changes in their social structures in response to more or less uniform processes of industrialization, these countries have increasingly come to differ from each other in their levels and patterns of industrial conflict. Great differences can also be found in their institutions for collective bargaining, something which is not congruent with the prediction of relatively uniform developments in all countries undergoing the process of industrialization.

In our opinion the inadequacy of the pluralistic industrialism perspective in explaining the development of industrial conflict in the Western countries arises because two of its basic assumptions are unfounded. The first is the assumption that power resources in Western societies are roughly equally distributed between manifold competing groups; the second is the claim that industrial conflict has lost its character as class conflict and has become isolated from political conflict. We have argued that the divergent patterns of industrial conflict in the postwar period must be understood, instead, in terms of differences in the distribution of power resources between the main classes in the Western societies. Furthermore, the most important factor generating differences in the crucial power distribution variable is the extent to which those who sell their labor power are organized and mobilized through unions and political parties into unified, class-based organizations.

In the initial stages of working class organization, as the collective power resources of the workers increase and as they thereby increase their ability to defend their interests, their involvement in industrial conflict will increase. The forms and functions of societal institutions can also be expected to change in response to changes in the power structure of society. In our view, however, strikes must be regarded primarily as defensive actions by workers, actions which they are more or less forced to take because of the lack of better alternatives. We do not share the view that strikes must generally be seen as expressions of radicalism and class consciousness, something which is often argued with reference of the high level of industrial conflict in countries like France, Italy, and Finland. In this connection it is worth recalling that the volume of strikes is roughly as high in the United States, Canada, and Ireland, the working classes of which few would regard as the avant-gardes of the proletariat.

If the power resources of the working class increase to the point that this class obtains a firm and stable hold over the political power exercised through the legislative and executive branches of government, it becomes possible for labor to act and to take initiatives in the political arena to safeguard its interests in the conflicts with capital. This implies a major

realignment of the distribution of power resources in society and is likely to alter the strategies of class conflict. Because of the advantages of political action, we assume that it is in the interest of labor to attempt to move the center of gravity of the manifestations of its conflict of interest with capital from the industrial to the political arena. To the extent that this is possible, organized industrial conflict is likely to decrease. This transformation takes place through various processes of political bargaining with and through the state where labor, although still the less powerful class, can extract concessions from capital (and vice versa). In some instances, however, the outcomes of the bargaining and compromises may work to decrease the mobilization of the working class. That the processes of political bargaining and compromise are fraught with risks for setbacks in working class mobilization is illustrated by the experiences in some countries, for instance Britain.

The preceding analysis indicates that our model provides a plausible account of the differential development of industrial conflict in the Western nations during the present century. Because of the complicated processes at work and the unique characteristics of each country, as well as the variety of circumstances under which their class relations have developed over time, it is, of course, not possible to expect anything close to full agreement between the predictions of our model and actual developments. A few of the countries, primarily Germany, the Netherlands, and perhaps also Switzerland, appear as more or less deviant cases from the point of view of our model. The experiences in these countries indicate that the processes of political bargaining and compromises may operate to some extent even if labor has not acquired strong and stable control over political power. Nevertheless, the element of political power, and behind it the collective mobilization of the wage earners on a class basis, must be central to any adequate explanation of the development of class relations and conflict in the West.

FOOTNOTES

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1. Sources of this body of thought include Dahrendorf (1959), Kerr et al. (1960), Moore (1951), Galbraith (1967), Lipset (1960), Parsons (1966), Dubin (1954, 1958), and Dunlop (1958).
2. The importance of the study of the relative power distribution between labor and capital was underlined by Marx (1865, 1935:11) "The *will* of the capitalist is certainly to take as much as possible. What we have to do is not talk about his *will*, but to enquire into his *power*, the *limits of that power*, and the *characteristics of those limits*." We have here made a distinction between power as actually exercised and power resources; that is the

- potential to exercise power. This distinction is important since power resources often have effects on the actions of individuals and collectivities even if power is not actually exercised.
3. This difference in power resources is reflected in a salient but generally overlooked characteristic of industrial conflict, namely the overwhelming preponderance of strikes over lockouts. In the industrial arena, employers have recourse to many alternatives to the lockout and as a rule their decisions stand unless they are challenged by the employees or their organizations.
 4. The relative advantages to labor of political to industrial struggles was observed by Marx, for instance when he noted that limitations of the working day could not be achieved through agreements between the workers and the capitalists but only through legislation. "This very necessity of *general political action* affords the proof that in the purely economic struggle capital is the stronger party" (Marx, 1865, 1935:59).
 5. This hypothesis was originally developed in an analysis of the long-term changes in industrial conflict in Sweden (Korpi, 1975 and 1978). Hibbs (1978) has later expressed partly similar ideas on the role of politics in industrial conflict. For a critique of Hibbs, see Shalev (1978).
 6. In the United States and Canada, however, Relative Involvement was fairly stable in this period.
 7. In the United States, universal manhood suffrage was achieved much earlier than in Europe.
 8. It must be noted, however, that especially in countries with very few strikes, the data on duration of strikes tend to become misleading since the data collection procedures are often biased in favor of relatively long organizational strikes and undercount short unofficial strikes.
 9. Taking the five groups of countries as a basis for a dummy variable regression analysis shows that this categorization of countries can account for 61 percent of the variance in Relative Involvement and 79 percent of the variance in Relative Strike Volume.
 10. Several Social Democratic leaders in Sweden saw the new strategy as increasing political support for a reformist strategy of socialism and as hastening the "maturation" of capitalism. For a "theoretical case study" of Sweden, see Korpi (1978).
 11. Two other observations, less germane to our present concerns, are worth making about our analysis of the Swedish time-series. First, substitution of strike frequency for involvements as the dependent variable improved the fit, which is understandable given that the scale of stoppages is influenced by many factors not included in our model. In particular, focusing on strike decisions (frequency) revealed a significant inverse relationship between strike activity and the level of unemployment in the pre-1946 period. A second noteworthy finding is that, in contrast to published analyses of other countries, the usual negative effect of wage changes and positive effect of price changes on industrial conflict was reversed in all of our Swedish equations. The result was a positive coefficient on real wage change, even when the distributed lags form was used, as proposed by Ashenfelter and Johnson (1969) and others.
 12. Four of the Western European nations, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, have been described as "consociational democracies," where stable democracy in a highly fragmented social structure is achieved through the conscious attempt by a cartel of elites from the opposed and isolated blocks to maintain the system through devices like grand coalitions and proportional representation of important groups in decision-making bodies (e.g., Lijphart, 1975; McRae, 1974). It is questionable to what extent these four cases really satisfy the theoretical requirements of the consociational model (Barry, 1975). Since the model takes the conscious decisions of the elites as its major explanatory variable, it receives a voluntaristic flavor. It would appear, however,

that the concept of consociational democracy is more a description of specific types of decision-making existing in some of these countries during certain periods than an explanation of why these countries have come to use this type of decision making.

13. Sawyer (1976:25) gives data suggesting that the upper 20 percent of the Swiss income distribution has an unusually high share of total income. Switzerland also has a very large proportion of so-called guest workers. In 1971, 36 percent of all employees in manufacturing were foreigners (Siegenthaler, 1975). Sawyer's data indicate that the Netherlands has one of the least unequal income distributions among the Western countries.
14. The persecution of German labor leaders during the Nazi era doubtless also contributed to the weakness of its labor movement at the war's end.
15. Coefficients for the unlogged dependent variable suggested a negative direct effect of cabinet share and strengthened the positive indirect impact of unemployment on strike volume relative to the size of the depressing effect of government redistribution. Nevertheless, the indirect effects of government control by the left were still stronger than its direct effect in reducing volume.

APPENDIX 1

DATA AND SOURCES

Strikes and Union Membership

Union membership as well as strike involvement and volume have been "standardized" by the size of the nonagricultural labor force, as reported in Bairoch (1968) and OECD's *Labour Force Statistics*. While this is obviously an imperfect proxy for the number of potential union members and strikers, more accurate data are not available for most countries over the long period which we are studying. Strikes in agriculture are rare, except in Italy, so for consistency they were excluded from the measures of Italian industrial conflict. Relative Involvement is measured as workers involved in strikes per 10,000 persons in the nonagricultural labor force. Relative Strike Volume is the number of man-days idle per 1,000 persons. The data for Relative Involvement on which Figure 1 is based were partially smoothed by the use of weighted five-year moving averages, with weights of .1, .2, .4, .2, .1. Data on both strikes and union membership were generally derived directly from primary sources, i.e. official documents. Detailed information on sources and definitions will be given in a later publication.

Political Data

We have data on votes, legislative seats, and cabinet seats for all "left" parties, defined as social democratic parties and parties to their left. In our dichotomy we have thus, for instance, excluded the U.S. Democratic

party from the left parties. Also right-wing splinter groups from the main social democratic parties are excluded, for instance the Italian Social Democratic party. The dichotomization of what is essentially a continuous variable implies that considerable variation remains within each pole of the dichotomy. The available information was converted into annual time series, where necessary by distributing subdivisions of years on a proportionate basis.

Figures on cabinet participation were obtained from a data file at the Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota. Our figures refer to the proportion of the partisan members of each cabinet who represented left parties. The "weighted" cabinet measure is the product of this proportional cabinet score and a score for proportional legislative representation. Data on valid votes, size of electorate, and legislative seats are nearly always from Mackie and Rose (1974) and the annual updates by these authors in the *European Journal of Political Research*.

Categories Used in Table 2:

a. Working class Mobilization is based on the combined rank order of percent unionization and left proportion of the electorate. *Weighted Cabinet Share*: Low = .00-.10; Medium = .11-.30; High = .31-.50 *Time with Left Representation in Cabinet*: Low = 0-24 percent; Medium = 25-74 percent; High = 75-100 percent. Splits within the labor movement are those described in standard sources on comparative labor movements. Party splits are defined in terms of the average share of the total left vote held by the largest party in the period 1946-1976. A minor split indicates a share of 90 percent or higher. A major split implies a share of about 50 percent.

Variables Used in Figure 2:

Percent Unemployment: Arithmetic mean for 1959-1976 of several different types of annual data. The most comparable figures come from the series for nine countries published in the U.S. *Handbook of Labor Statistics*. In addition, data for Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Austria were obtained from OECD's *Labour Force Statistics*. For the latter three countries "good" data is only available for recent years, but estimates were made for earlier years using linear regression. OECD also gives national estimates by adjustment of registered unemployment to census results for Ireland and the Netherlands. For three countries, Belgium, Switzerland, and New Zealand, only figures for the registered unemployment are available. (The source was ILO's *Yearbook of Labor Statistics*.) In all countries the total or civilian labor force is used as the denominator.

Redistribution: Social security spending, as defined by the ILO, comprises public expenditures on medical care, cash sickness benefits, and employment injury benefits under social insurance, unemployment insurance, statutory old-age pensions, and family allowances. The construction of the full measure of the redistributive effect of government budgets is described by Hewitt (1977:Table 1). Values for Italy are estimated here.

The Swedish Regression

Percent Unemployment: 1914–1955, union data reported by Bain & Elsheik (1976); 1956–1961, insured unemployed from Sweden's *Statistical Yearbook*: 1962 onward is sample survey data from OECD's *Main Economic Indicators*. Unemployment for 1891–1913 has been estimated from the regression of deviations from exponential trend of real GDP on percent unemployed in the years 1911–1938 ($r = .78$). GDP at constant prices is from *European Historical Statistics*.

Wages: These are hourly earnings in manufacturing—from *European Historical Statistics* for 1891–1913, Bain & Elsheik (1976) for 1914–1970, and *Statistical Yearbook* after 1970. *Prices* were derived by linking the three series reported in *European Historical Statistics* and updating from *Main Economic Indicators*. *Real Wages* = *Wage/Prices*.

Union membership: Series constructed from Hansson (1938), Ross and Hartman (1960), and *Statistical Yearbook*.

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