



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Dutch-American comparisons of the 'sense of political efficacy': some remarks on cross-cultural 'robustness'

Mokken, R.J.

Citation

Mokken, R. J. (1969). Dutch-American comparisons of the 'sense of political efficacy': some remarks on cross-cultural 'robustness'. *Acta Politica*, 4: 1968/1969(4), 425-448. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3451161>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3451161>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

opinion for the Court three more countervailing considerations to the general rule of separability are suggested. Here, as in matters of retroactivity, the Court seems to reserve for itself considerable power of adjudication on an *ad hoc* basis,¹⁴⁵ and refuses to be bound in advance by self-imposed rigid rules. In the light of past experience this is probably wise, but it makes it impossible to arrive at any definite conclusions as to this aspect of the effect of an unconstitutional statute.

¹⁴⁵ 'But we see none of the countervailing considerations suggested by these examples, or any other countervailing consideration, as warranting the District Court's action here in considering the constitutionality of the Act in applications not before it', *U.S. v. Raines*, 362 U.S. 17, 23 (1960), (Italics supplied).

DUTCH-AMERICAN COMPARISONS OF THE 'SENSE OF POLITICAL EFFICACY': SOME REMARKS ON CROSS-CULTURAL 'ROBUSTNESS' OF SCALES¹

by R. J. Mokken

1 INTRODUCTION

In cross-national research two approaches may be perceived. In the first place a direct approach has prevailed. By this researchers seek the answers to their substantial problems through a direct comparison of the answers to questions, or scores on indices and other variables, which they gather in different national or cultural contexts. This rather straightforward strategy is often chosen in full consciousness and in spite of the risks hidden in the fact that sometimes widely different cultural systems are compared.

The problem of translation highlights these risks in disciplines that depend on culture-laden language as a carrier of observational information, because of their reliance on verbal techniques of observation. Even in the case of intranational comparison across cultural sub-systems the researcher may encounter pitfalls of this nature.

These difficulties have led to the proposal to seek the basis of cross-national comparison in a second, more indirect way: to compare the structural relation of sets of variables. Almond and Verba remark in the introduction to their five nations study:

'The fact that a particular indicator has to be interpreted to some extent in terms of its context has led those interested in cross-national comparisons to stress, not direct comparisons of variables cross-nationally, but cross-national comparisons of the *pattern* of relations among variables.' (Almond and Verba, 1963, 70)

As a special case of this second procedure we may mention the comparison of data structures or data models (Stouthard, 1965), that are used for the operational definition of variables. Those structures may be used to define and measure multidimensional variables. Their application in cross-cultural research requires a positive answer to the more basic question of the general existence of these structures in the set of cultures compared. A well-known example of this type of comparison is the work of Osgood and his associates concerning the generality of his factor-analytically defined semantic space. (Osgood, 1960; Jakobovits, 1966). On the other hand, essentially the same structure may be discerned in different communities as operationalizations of entirely

¹ Paper read at the Conference on Comparative Electoral Research, 5-8 April 1967, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

different concepts. In a factor-analysis of ratings of readership interest concerning types of newspaper content, the author found in a Dutch city a structure strongly akin to those found independently by two researchers in different American communities. Each of the authors, however, labeled these structures as entirely different concepts.

The same approach can be applied to variables that are defined by unidimensional scale models. In 1962 a survey was held concerning the relation of religiosity and personality characteristics in the populations of two new communities, that were created by our land-reclaiming program. The study showed that, according to a scaling procedure which we had devised, a scale of conformity in religious behavior could be found for two religious groupings. In a third, orthodox Protestant group, however, no such clear pattern could be found. (Smolenaars, 1963).

Almond and Verba refer in their study to a Guttman type scale of 'subjective political competence', as valid across the nations involved, although according to linguistic difficulties one item apparently broke down in Mexico (Almond and Verba, 1963, 131-6).

In this paper we will investigate a special case of this problem whether such operational structures, in terms of which our variables have been defined, have the property that they are alike in several cultural or national settings.

We may characterize this property with some appropriate terminology. The use of the word 'invariance' seems less preferable to describe the special type of cross-cultural equivalence which we are considering. It carries a meaning of (mathematical) strictness that no researcher will be prepared to apply in his evaluation of such equivalence of the factor-analytic or scale structures he is comparing in such different settings.

He may be satisfied if they are approximately alike. In this paper I shall for that reason use the less strict term of 'robustness' of a scale: a scale (or a factor structure) is *robust* for a set of cultures or nations, when its structure is approximately the same in the cultures or nations concerned.

What may be the utility of the investigation of the cross-cultural robustness of a scale? We may mention two ways in which such efforts may prove fruitful.

(a) The establishment of cross-national robustness of scales and other constructs may be considered as evidence of a more general *validity* of these constructs. The variables concerned therefore seem to be more 'fundamental' and appear to provide a more reasonable basis of comparison within the region of their robustness.

(b) When a scale has proved to be cross-culturally robust within a nation there may be some prospects that it will prove to be robust in a broader cross-national context also. From the standpoint of international comparison this may add some *instrumental* value to *intranational*

analyses of robustness of data structures.

In this paper I hope to illuminate these points with some research findings concerning a well-known scale, related to the Almond-Verba scale mentioned above. It measures the 'sense of political efficacy'.

2 POLITICAL EFFICACY: CONCEPT AND SCALE

The concept of 'sense of political efficacy' was introduced in 1954 by a research team from the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan in a study reporting a nation-wide survey covering voting behavior in the 1952 presidential election (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954, 187-94). It was designed as a measure of subjective sense of integration in the political system and was derived from the responses to five statements (items) with dichotomous response categories. The items were the following:

- 1 - 'Voting is the only way that people like me can have any say about how the government runs things.' (Voting only way.)
Positive alternative: 'disagree'.
- 2 - 'Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.' (Politics complicated.)
Positive alternative: 'disagree'.
- 3 - 'I don't think public officials care much what people like me think.' (Officials don't care.)
Positive alternative: 'disagree'.
- 4 - 'People like me don't have any say about what the government does.' (Don't have say.)
Positive alternative: 'disagree'.
- 5 - 'The way people vote is the main thing that decides how things are run in this country.' (Vote main thing.)
Positive alternative: 'agree'.

Because repeated reference to these items in the sequel calls for some abbreviation I have tried to label them (as indicated in parentheses) in a way that suggests their content.

In the Michigan study this set of items was subjected to a scale analysis after the Guttman model with some modifications as proposed by Jackson (Jackson, 1949). The procedure required the identification for each item of that response alternative, considered to be positive on the dimension being scaled. These alternatives have also been indicated above. As a result of the analysis item 5 (Vote main thing) was rejected as not fitting the scaling-model. The remaining four items showed a satisfactory scale structure according to the criteria used at the time and defined the scale of 'sense of political efficacy.' It was apparently used unaltered for the next Michigan study 'The American Voter' in which a voting study of the presidential elections of 1956 was reported (Camp-

bell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1960, 103–5).

The concept almost immediately proved its usefulness in electoral research. Janowitz and Marvick, analyzing the same data of the 1952 Michigan Study, used the concept under a different name (political self-confidence) and based it on items 2 (Politics complicated), 3 (Officials don't care), and 4 (Don't have say) in addition to another item which was used in the Michigan Study for a scale measuring 'sense of citizen duty' (Campbell, *et al.*, 1954, 194–9). The wording of this item, the sixth in this paper, is as follows:

6 — 'So many other people vote in the national elections that it doesn't matter much to me whether I vote or not.' (So many voters.)

Positive alternative: 'disagree'.

Item 1 (Voting only way) and 5 (Vote main thing) were used by Janowitz and Marvick together with two other items for an index of 'self-interest in elections' (Janowitz and Marvick, 1956, 114–7). They don't report any operational reasons why they eliminated not only item 5, the one rejected by Campbell *et al.*, but also item 1. The addition of item 6 to their index also is not explained. Apparently they based their indices on purely intuitive considerations. The original Michigan-scale (our items 1, 2, 3 and 4) proved useful elsewhere and has been widely utilized in later years, although sometimes under different names.

As 'sense of political futility' the concept was used by Kornhauser *et al.* (Kornhauser, Sheppard and Mayer, 1956, 155–66). Lane refers to the scale as measuring 'political effectiveness' (Lane, 1959, 149–55). Farris introduces the concept as 'political anomie' (Farris, 1960), whereas Agger *et al.* prefer the more virile name of 'political potency' (Agger, Goldstein and Pearl, 1961; Agger, Goldrich and Swanson, 1964, 755). In all these cases the Michigan four-item scale has been used. Douvan and Walker used a related concept, which they also called 'political effectiveness' or 'competence' (Douvan and Walker, 1956). Eldersveld mentions experiments with six items. He finally used three items virtually the same as our items 2, 3 and 4, referring to them as a basic dimension called 'personal optimism' or 'political pessimism' (Eldersveld, 1964, 498, 570–1). Although he does not scale the items, the fact that he does not use items 1 and 5 is interesting, as we shall see later in this paper. Dahl cites the scale under its original name of 'political efficacy' referring to it as a widely used and well-tested scale (Dahl, 1961, 286–91). Milbrath gives a review of research findings concerning the relation of political efficacy to a number of other concepts used in political research (Milbrath, 1965, 56–60, 156–57). For a recent review see Easton and Dennis (1967).

In view of the apparent theoretical importance of the concept and the widespread use of the scale it seemed appropriate to spend some efforts

on its operationalization for use in Dutch electoral research as planned at the Institute for Political Science of the University of Amsterdam.

3 A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICACY ITEMS: DUTCH-AMERICAN COMPARISONS

In 1965 Daudt and Stapel undertook an exploratory survey of political attitudes on a national sample of Dutch adults (Daudt and Stapel, 1965). The questionnaire of this survey, conducted by the Netherlands Institute of Public Opinion (NIPO), contained a number of variables that were inspired by analogous studies in American voting research. Among them were the six items.

As is well known, the American and Dutch political structures differ strongly. The latter has its roots in a society, which has been organized around religious denominational groupings. Its political correlate consists of a multi-party system and a parliament chosen by proportional representation. The result has been a sequence of coalitions in which either a left-wing socialist party or a right-wing liberal party joins a semi-permanent Christian block with the Catholic People's Party in the center. (Daalder, 1955; Daalder, 1966, 188–236; Goudsblom, 1967, 71–127; Lijphart, 1968).

These differences and the translation problems involved, caused the researchers in the case of the efficacy items not to restrict themselves to the sheer adoption of the original scale, but to rescale the larger set of items of the Michigan Study of 1952. At the time of that 1952 study the method of scale analysis, proposed by Guttman, had reached widespread acknowledgement. The full discussion about some drawbacks of the method or, more specifically, the choice of an adequate coefficient of scalability, had only just started. Since then more recent insights in unidimensional scaling methods and the formulation and definition of the Guttman-model made the application of some improvements possible. Since 1962 the author of this paper has developed a version of scale analysis that has also been used for the construction of a Dutch version of the efficacy-scale, starting with the items of the Daudt-Stapel Study.

In order to facilitate an understanding and the interpretation of the research reported in this paper, some guidance concerning the definition and the nature of the procedure may be given here. (See appendix for a more detailed explanation.)

For a scale we consider a set of statement (items) with dichotomized response categories. For every item in the set we define a coefficient of scalability (H_i), reflecting its relation to the other items in the set. H_i should assume values larger than zero and has a maximum value of one. This allows us to formulate our operational definition of a scale. A scale

is a set of items with the property that every item scalability (H_i) is larger than a given constant. The value of this constant, .30 as we use it, gives a lower bound for the scalability of the scale itself, as expressed by a well-known coefficient of scalability (H). The values taken by H_i , which has a similar range of variation as the coefficients H_i , enable us to suggest a characterization of the scales according to their overall scalability features:

- a. $.50 \cong H$: a strong scale;
- b. $.40 \cong H < .50$: a medium scale;
- c. $.30 \cong H < .40$: a weak scale.

The notion of a strong scale covers the original strong requirements of the deterministic Guttman-model; the last two concepts seem warranted and useful in the light of scaling theory stemming from the consideration of stochastic response models (See appendix).

In the case of random, haphazard answers of the respondents to a set of items, the expected value of the coefficients would be zero. For relatively small samples of respondents one may wonder whether the values of the coefficients which are to be observed, are statistically much better than those expected under the nullhypothesis of random response behavior. As a check the observed values of all coefficients can be tested against this nullhypothesis by a transformation to standard-normally distributed scores ('z-scores'). All these tests have been performed and references to them have been indicated in the tables we present.

Two procedures were used in our analysis. The first one amounts to an examination of a set of items as a whole. Coefficients and tests are computed to enable us to evaluate the whole set as a scale. This more conventional approach has been used in most analyses reported here.

Our second procedure seeks stepwise to extract a scale from a larger set of items by the stepwise collection of items that fit best in the sense of our criteria. Firstly, the best pair of items is chosen from all possible pairs, then a third item is selected that fits best with that pair, a fourth is added, etc. The procedure stops when no more items answering our criteria can be found. This second procedure has been used for the construction of an extended version of the efficacy scale as reported in Section 7. The whole set of procedures has been programmed in ALGOL-60 for the Dutch Electrologica X-8 computer of the Mathematical Centre at Amsterdam; with the aid of that computer all analyses reported here have been performed.²

In the Daudt-Stapel study¹ the first procedure was applied to the Dutch

² We are indebted to Dr. T. J. Dekker and programmer Douwe de Jong, both of the Mathematical Centre at Amsterdam, for their kind assistance.

³ The NIPO Survey was based on a sample of Dutch households resulting in 786 interviews. The survey was held in the Spring of 1965.

equivalents of the items indicated in this paper as items 1 (Voting only way), 2 (Politics complicated, 3 (Officials don't care), 4 (Don't have say) and 5 (Vote main thing). These five items, as we saw above, were the ones that were scale analyzed in the Michigan study of 1952. It would not seem practical to reproduce them here in their exact Dutch wording, but for the sequel the reader should be aware that they were freely translated and formulated in such a way as to convey their original meaning within the context of Dutch political culture.

Table 1

	Netherlands 1965 (786)		United States 1952 (1799)	
	coeff.	z-score ¹⁾	coeff.	z-score ¹⁾
Scale	H .18	11.50	.27	19.46
	Rep-B .88	12.81	.92	23.43
Items				
1 Voting only way	H ₁ .01	.37	.00	.09
2 Politics complicated	H ₂ .21	9.38	.37	15.52
3 Officials don't care	H ₃ .27	12.03	.37	19.69
4 Don't have say	H ₄ .27	11.96	.38	20.15
5 Vote main thing	H ₅ .05	1.88	.08	3.44

¹⁾ Standard normal deviate. Critical value (one-sided) at significance level .01 : $z = 2.33$

The scale analysis offers some surprising results. Table 1 summarizes these results. For those readers familiar with the coefficient of reproducibility, an old timer in scale analysis, we computed Green's version (Green, 1956), Rep-B, also.) They indicate, that in the Netherlands the set of five items did not meet our standards for a scale. Item 5 (Vote main thing) scales badly and should be rejected as it was rejected by Campbell *et al.* in 1952. It has a low item scalability ($H_5 = .05$) which under the nullhypothesis of random response stays short of reasonable statistical significance as indicated in the column 'z-score' (1.88). But another item, which was one of the items in the original four item Michigan-scale of political efficacy, performed even worse: item 1 (Voting only way) has an item scalability of .01 of no statistical significance whatever (z-score: .37). Understandably the coefficient of scalability for the whole set of five items ($H = .18$) was below standard. As a result of our analysis it was decided that not only item 5 but also item 1 should be rejected from the scale leaving only the set of items 2 (Politics complicated), 3 (Officials don't care) and 4 (Don't have say) as a possible basis for that scale.

From the standpoint of cross-national comparison, these findings, which seemed at odds with the American scaling results, invited a further in-

vestigation of the cross-national robustness of the scale. As a preliminary question one might ask how the original 1952 data would scale according to our procedure. For the purpose of that secondary analysis the author could obtain the necessary data from the archives of the Survey Research Center, The University of Michigan, as part of the Data Repository of the Inter-University Consortium for Political Research.⁴ The data concern the full pre-election sample from the 1952 SRC-Study.⁵

The results of the re-analysis of our five items again are interesting (see Table 1). Our scaling procedure confirms the bad scaling qualities of item 5 (Vote main thing) that led to the rejection of that item in the original study. Its item scalability (.08) is low, although, due to the sample size, it reaches significance at the .001 level. But item 1 (Voting only way) scales even worse: $H_1 = .00$ and does not even reach statistical significance (z-score: .09). The overall coefficient H (.27) is also below our standards.

Now, despite the negative results, these findings bolster our hopes for the construction of a cross-culturally robust scale. The striking similarity of the outcomes for the two countries cannot be denied. Across thirteen years and in two vastly different, Western political cultures the way the scale analyses break down in exactly the same way by rejecting the very same items, certainly may be counted as a positive result from the comparative point of view.

Thus far we have analyzed the whole set of five items that were considered originally for the 1952 Michigan-scale. Let us now subject the four items that formed the final scale of political efficacy to a re-analysis based on our criteria.

4 THE ORIGINAL SCALE RE-ANALYZED CROSS-CULTURALLY

The results of our tests, as applied to the original four efficacy-items, are given in Table 2. As could be expected from our evidence exposed in the last section, they do not scale very well. For the Netherlands the set does not meet our standards by far. Item 1 (Voting only way) has too low an item scalability of .09 thus depressing the scalability of the other items below the lower bound of .30. The overall coefficient of scalability ($H = .25$) also is below standard.

The U.S. data, although better than in the former section, do not show a really good scaling structure, due to a too low value of the scalability of item 1 ($H_1 = .16$), although the overall coefficient H (.39) is not unsatisfactory in itself. The slight differences between the Netherlands

⁴ Thanks are due to Professor Warren E. Miller and his staff who made the Consortium data available to us.

⁵ For the analysis we considered the full pre-election sample of the 1952 study, corrected for West overload. This sample consisted of 1,799 interviews. For details see Campbell *et al.* (1954, 229-30).

Table 2, Original Scale

		Netherlands 1965 (786)		United States 1952 (1799)		
		coeff.	z-score ¹⁾	coeff.	z-score ¹⁾	
Scale	H	.25	13.63	.39	21.92	
	Rep-B	.89	11.30	.94	21.59	
Items						
1	Voting only way	H ₁	.09	3.07	.16	5.52
2	Politics complicated	H ₂	.28	11.69	.43	16.92
3	Officials don't care	H ₃	.29	12.08	.44	19.40
4	Don't have say	H ₄	.28	11.01	.44	18.75

¹⁾ Standard normal deviate. Critical value (one-sided) at significance level .01 : $z = 2.33$

and the United States as suggested by the data, invite an inquiry into the cross-cultural robustness of this set of items within the U.S. population. The author therefore decided to select some subgroups of the sample of the 1952 study that may be considered as indicative of certain different sub-cultures. These subgroups and their definitions and sizes in the 1952 sample are the following.

- 1 Four regional subgroups spanning the whole sample: (For definitions see: Campbell *et al.*, 1954)
 - Northeast (448);
 - Midwest (618);
 - South (509);
 - Far West (224).
- 2 Sex:
 - Male (821);
 - Female (978).
- 3 Race:
 - White (1618);
 - Negro (171).
- 4 Two educational subgroups:
 - 'Highest', college level (262);
 - 'Lowest', grade-school level only (712).
- 5 Two income levels (1952-standards):
 - 'Highest', \$ 5,000 — or more (458);
 - 'Lowest', less than \$ 3,000 (624).

Note that in the last two cases we restricted ourselves to two extreme subgroups. Within every subgroup the four efficacy items were scaled following our first procedure. (An analysis of the set of five items considered in Section 3 gave in all cases the same results as reported in that section.)

Table 3, Original Scale 1, United States 1952

	Region		Sex		Race		Education		Income			
	North-east	Mid-west	South	Far West	Male	Female	White	Negro	High-est	Low-est		
Scale	(448)	(618)	(509)	(224)	(821)	(978)	(1618)	(171)	(262)	(712)	(458)	(624)
H	.35	.37	.42	.33	.40	.36	.36	.43	.32	.35	.38	.30
Rep-B	.93	.94	.94	.94	.94	.94	.93	.95	.94	.94	.93	.93
Items												
1. Voting only way	.18	.08	.25	.04	.21	.11	.15	.06	.16	.04	.29	-.05
2. Politics complicated	.43	.43	.40	.39	.45	.39	.41	.48	.29	.40	.41	.34
3. Officials don't care	.37	.45	.45	.41	.43	.44	.42	.46	.41	.42	.40	.37
4. Don't have say	.37	.43	.50	.42	.46	.42	.42	.48	.44	.41	.40	.39

¹⁾ Coefficients not significant at the .01 level in italics

The findings of our analyses are shown in Table 3. Although the overall coefficients of scalability are not too bad, all surpassing the lower bound of .30, a close scrutiny of the item scalabilities confirms our suspicion of item 1 (Voting only way). In all twelve subgroups its scalability falls below the bound of .30. In addition its wayward behavior over the subgroups is striking. Its performance is really bad for the Midwest ($H_1 = .08$), the Far West (.04), the Negroes (.06), the lowest educational group (.04) and the lowest income group (-.05). On the other hand the scalability of item 1 reaches relatively high values for the male sex (.21), the highest income group (.29) and in the South (.25), where this item concerning the role of voting as sole means of political influence may have other meanings.

We may conclude that the evidence of our cross-cultural analysis supports our inclination to drop item 1 (Voting only way) from the scale. There are, however, other considerations supporting this decision.

5 NONMONOTONY OF ITEM 1 (VOTING ONLY WAY)

There are other, intuitive, reasons for distrusting item 1. Scaling models of the type we consider in this paper, are based on items possessing the property of monotony, i.e. the probability of a 'positive' answer increases with the position of the respondent on the continuum measured. Thus a respondent with a very high position on that continuum (or, for that matter, attitude) should most probably give the positive answer, whereas a respondent with a very low position on that continuum would in all likelihood fail to do so (Torgerson, 1958, 304).

Let us consider the original wording of item 1: 'Voting is the only way that people like me can have any say about how the government runs things,' and the answer 'disagree' as the positive response. That answer should be given by a fairly efficacious person. The relatively high scalability coefficients in efficacious subgroups as the highest income group and the male voters may hint in that direction. On the other hand, we may conceive of a respondent with very low efficacy who will even deny that the act of voting is a way by which he can exercise political influence and who is, therefore, more likely to disagree with the statement as a sign of *low* efficacy. In other words: item 1 may not be a *monotone* item as defined above, but a *point-item*, i.e. an item with a response alternative that will be given with high probability by respondents of either *high* or *low* levels of efficaciousness. In the case of item 1 this may imply that for respondents with the low level of political self-confidence sketched above, *not the answer 'disagree' but the response-alternative 'agree' will be the efficacious alternative.*

To investigate this hypothesis we scaled the original set of four items (1, 2, 3 and 4) for three groupings of well-known low efficaciousness

Table 4, Original Scale (Item 1 'inverted'¹)

		Negro (171)	Education Lowest (712)	Income Lowest (624)
Scale	H	.52	.42	.43
	Rep-B	.95	.95	.94
Items				
1. Voting only way ("inverted" ¹)	H ₁	.46	.24	.31
2. Politics complicated	H ₂	.54	.47	.48
3. Officials don't care	H ₃	.50	.46	.43
4. Don't have say	H ₄	.54	.44	.46

¹) For item 1 the response category "agree" was chosen as positive alternative.

(Campbell *et al.*, 1954, 191-2); the Negroes, the lowest educational group of the lowest income-group, 'inverting' item 1 (Voting only way) by choosing the response alternative 'agree' as the positive answer on the efficacy continuum. Our hypothesis of nonmonotony of item 1 would lead us to expect a somewhat better performance of that item in these cases. The results, as reported in Table 4 certainly do not contradict these expectations. As a matter of fact, they seem to do better than that. For the Negroes the four items form a strong scale, at least according to our criteria, and in the lowest income category they form a medium scale. In the lowest educational group the items do not scale, but the item coefficient of item 1 reaches a fairly high .24.

An application of the same reasoning would predict a deterioration of an 'inverted' item 1 in groupings as 'male' and 'income highest', where its scalability reached the highest values (see Table 3). According to our checks that proved to be true. The scalability of the 'inverse' item 1 was very low for the grouping 'male' (-.09) and for the highest income group (-.08).

6 A CROSS-CULTURALLY ROBUST SCALE

The foregoing re-analysis of the original four item efficacy scale established the doubtful scaling merits of item 1 (Voting only way). Thus we are left with the three items 2 (Politics complicated), 3 (Officials don't care) and 4 (Don't have say). In pursuit of a larger cross-culturally robust scale item 6 (So many voters), the one added by Janowitz and Marvick to the above three items for their index of political self-confidence, seemed worth considering.

An indication of its cross-cultural robustness within the United States may be given by Table 5 in which the results are reported from scale analyses performed on the set of items 2, 3, 4 and 6 in the twelve sub-

Table 5, Improved Scale of Political Efficacy

		Region		Sex		Race		Education		Income		
		North-east (448)	Mid-west (618)	South (509)	Far West (224)	Male (821)	Female (978)	White (1618)	Negro (171)	High-est (262)	Low-est (712)	High-est (458)
Scale	H	.53	.58	.59	.58	.55	.60	.55	.48	.58	.42	.58
	Rep-B	.95	.96	.95	.96	.95	.95	.95	.97	.95	.95	.95
Items												
2. Politics complicated	H ₂	.57	.60	.53	.54	.55	.59	.56	.53	.52	.45	.53
3. Officials don't care	H ₃	.47	.54	.55	.55	.51	.56	.51	.45	.56	.41	.52
4. Don't have say	H ₄	.49	.56	.58	.59	.55	.57	.53	.46	.55	.43	.57
6. So many voters	H ₆	.70	.67	.68	.74	.67	.72	.66	.55 ¹	.68	.34	.70

¹) Estimation lacks precision because of extreme marginal (260) of item 6.

groups. In all subgroups the items form a scale, again according to our criteria. Except for the highest income and education groups, where the set of items can be rated as 'medium scales', the items form a 'strong scale'. Thus we are not surprised to find in Table 6 the results for the scale analysis over the whole U.S. sample indicating a strong scale. (Not too difficult for scales consisting of four items.)

Table 6, Improved Scale of Political Efficacy

	Netherlands 1965 (786)		United States 1952 (1799)	
	coeff.	z-score ¹⁾	coeff.	z-score ¹⁾
Scale	H .43	19.85	.59	33.05
	Rep-B .91	14.44	.95	27.54
Items				
2. Politics complicated	H ₁ .33	12.39	.58	17.41
3. Officials don't care	H ₃ .42	15.39	.54	25.80
4. Don't have say	H ₄ .43	15.53	.57	26.85
6. So many voters	H ₆ .63	12.74	.71	23.58

¹⁾ Standard normal deviate. Critical value (one-sided) at significance level .01 : z = 2.33

Now, having established a reasonable four-item scale with some prospects of a desirable cross-cultural robustness within the United States, could we expect a reasonable robustness of that scale in a cross-national perspective also?

A positive reply to that question would open some prospects for the utilization in *international* comparative research of scales and other operational constructs of proven *intranational* robustness.

Judging from the results for the Daudt-Stapel study as reported in Table 6, there may be reason for optimism. The Dutch versions of item 2 (Politics complicated), 3 (Officials don't care), 4 (Don't have say) and 6 (So many voters) also form a (medium scale (H = .43).

77 A DUTCH EXTENSION OF THE EFFICACY SCALE

For the purposes of the Daudt-Stapel study the items 2, 3, 4 and 6 formed the basis of the scale enlarged *ad hoc* with two other items that did scale satisfactorily. Because of their content these two items were not considered as desirable components of a definitive Dutch version. It was decided to extend the scale for future use in the long-term research project as planned by Daudt, Van der Maesen and the author. In a study of opinion leadership in a Dutch city the author used eleven items. The same eleven items were used by Van der Maesen in Amster-

dam in a study of the local elections of 1966. For both studies the set of eleven items was subjected to the second procedure of our scale analysis program. As a result a nine item (medium) scale was established. In

Table 7, Dutch Efficacy Scale (9 items)

	Marginals %	H ₁
Scale coefficients: H = .41; Rep-B = .89		
1 Members of Parliament don't care much about the opinions of people like me. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	25	.40
2 Cabinet ministers don't care much about the opinions of people like me. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	27	.41
3 The political parties are only interested in my vote and not in my opinion. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	27	.43
4 People like me don't have any say about what the Government does. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	31	.39
5 Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	35	.33
6 Because I know so little about politics, I shouldn't vote actually. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	63	.47
7 I wouldn't go to the polls, if I weren't obliged to do so. (Positive alternative: "disagree" ¹⁾)	66	.44
8 In the determination of government policy, the votes of people like me are taken into account (Positive alternative: "agree")	66	.32
9 So many other people vote in the national elections that it doesn't matter much to me whether I vote or not. (Positive alternative: "disagree")	80	.49

¹⁾ In the Netherlands all people qualified to vote are obliged by statute to appear at the voting bureau on election day.

Table 7 we present the scale and its coefficients for the sample of Van der Maesen,⁶ (Van der Maesen, 1967). The scale appears to have a good structure (H = .41). Two items were rejected from the scale on the basis of their content and their results in both scale analyses. The

⁶ The data are based on a probability sample from the electoral register of Amsterdam. The survey, held in the Summer of 1966, consisted of 1,513 interviews.

Table 8, Item marginals (% positive answer)¹

	Region				Sex		Race		Education		Income	
	North-east (448) %	Mid-west (618) %	South (509) %	Far West (224) %	Male (821) %	Female (978) %	White (1618) %	Negro (171) %	High-est (262) %	Low-est (712) %	High-est (458) %	Low-est (624) %
1 Voting only way	18 (1)	18 (1)	13 (1)	20 (1)	18 (1)	16 (1)	18 (1)	6 (1)	32 (1)	10 (1)	24 (1)	11 (1)
2 Politics complicated	30 (2)	31 (2)	21 (2)	32 (2)	36 (2)	21 (2)	29 (2)	17 (2)	52 (2)	16 (2)	44 (2)	16 (2)
3 Officials don't care	64 (3)	67 (3)	49 (3)	70 (3)	64 (3)	59 (3)	64 (3)	38 (3)	85 (4)	46 (3)	74 (4)	48 (3)
4 Don't have say	67 (4)	69 (4)	59 (4)	75 (4)	71 (4)	63 (4)	69 (4)	41 (4)	87 (5)	53 (4)	78 (5)	53 (4)
5 Vote main thing	74 (5)	76 (5)	80 (6)	79 (5)	76 (5)	78 (5)	77 (5)	80 (6)	73 (3)	81 (6)	72 (3)	79 (6)
6 So many voters	87 (6)	91 (6)	74 (5)	93 (6)	89 (6)	82 (6)	88 (6)	60 (5)	99 (6)	75 (5)	95 (6)	74 (5)

¹) rank order of items indicated in brackets

items are listed in Table 7 together with their coefficients of scalability. The original Michigan items are given here in their original English wording, except for item 3 (Officials don't care), which has been reformulated in two versions. In the case of the other, new items we translated as literally as possible. A further validation of the scale was carried out by Daudt, Van der Maesen and Mokken (1968).

8 THE ITEM MARGINALS IN CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON

Thus far we did not compare or even mention the marginal frequencies for the positive response categories of the items. We had some reason to do so. These item marginals give the proportion (or number) of the respondents that gave the positive answer. As such they are indicators of the location of the items on the continuum (or attitude) being measured. A difficult item, located high on the continuum, will tend to show smaller marginals than those for a more popular (less difficult) item, located lower on the continuum. For these reasons the item marginals are often referred to as 'difficulties' or 'popularities'. Comparison of the marginals for an efficacy item across some cultural groups will teach us at the most something about the level of efficacy in those groups. This, however, can be done better by a comparison of the scores on the scale. After all, the scale is designed for that purpose.

In Table 8 we show the marginal percentages for all six items considered in this paper, as observed in the twelve sub-groups we used for our intra-United States comparison. We are not surprised that a comparison of these marginals as an indication of the level of efficacy in the groupings confirms the findings about these levels in terms of scores on the scale as reported by Campbell *et al.* (1954, 191-2).

In Table 8 non-scale item 5 (Vote main thing) seems to confirm its bad scaling qualities by several changes of its position according to its rank number (South, Negro, Education (highest and lowest) and Income (highest and lowest). This gives rise to the question whether such cross-cultural shifts of the marginals for an item may also be a sign of a lack of robustness. The answer may be that this frequently will be the case, but not necessarily so. The cross-cultural change of the marginal of an item and especially of its relative position in the rank order of the item difficulties may indicate a change of the identity or meaning of the item and its location on the continuum. But while changing and varying its meaning and location cross-culturally, the item may still be measuring the same dimension all the time, so that the change will not disturb the (uni-)dimensionality of the scale. So we may conceive an item that will change cross-culturally its meaning and consequently its position on the continuum (item marginal) without breaking out of the dimension it measures, thus preserving the property of robustness.

These remarks may have some important consequences for the comparison of linguistically strongly different groups. In that case, crucial in cross-national comparison, they lead to a specification of the effects

Table 9, Item marginals (% positive answer)¹

	Netherlands 1965 (786)	United States 1962 (1799)
	%	%
1 Voting only way	20 (1)	17 (1)
2 Politics complicated	34 (3)	28 (2)
3 Officials don't care	34 (2)	62 (3)
4 Don't have say	40 (4)	66 (4)
5 Vote main thing	57 (5)	77 (5)
6 So many voters	78 (6)	86 (6)

¹) Rank order of items indicated in brackets.

of translation. The process of translation, then, will change the nature of the items, so that an immediate comparison of their marginals or, what amounts to the same thing, of their scores will in general lack validity. But under favorable conditions the process of translation maps an item, worded in one language, to another, different, item in another tongue. The marginals (the location on the continuum) can (and generally will) change in the operation. If we are lucky, robustness of the scale nevertheless will indicate that the *dimension* (the continuum) of the items is roughly preserved in the process.

Thus we are led to speculate that in the case of cross-national robustness of scales the effect of the process of translation is mainly restricted to a change of the identity of the items, that is their location (marginals) on the continuum, without affecting the dimension being measured and thus the variable itself.

In Table 9 we give the item marginals for the U.S. 1952 sample and the Dutch data. The behavior of item 3 (Officials don't care) in that table may serve as a possible example of our remarks. The scale scores, of course, will in this model only rank order the respondents along that continuum within their own national area. The relation of that rank order to other variables in that area will provide the basis of comparison between those areas. Thus, citing Almond and Verba again:

'By phrasing the comparison *between* nations in terms of the similarities and differences in the *patterns* of relations *among* variables *within* each country, one controls somewhat for the difference in meaning that these variables may have from one nation to another.' (Almond and Verba, 1963, 70.)

9 APPENDIX

This appendix may give some insight in the model and methods used in this paper. A more detailed exposition will be published elsewhere. The methods are based on the well-known Guttman model (Guttman, 1950, 60-90), a good account of which was given by Torgerson (Torgerson, 1958, 298-338). Therefore only the essential features will be mentioned.

The model relates a set of items to a continuum (e.g. an attitude) in the following way. Each item has a response category that may be considered to be positive, (+), on the continuum. The other alternative (s) are considered to be 'non-positive', (-). Each item is thought to divide the continuum into two segments. Respondents that have a position on that continuum to the right of the item, laying in the right segment, will always give the (+) answer. Respondents located to the left of that item, laying in the left segment, will always give a non-positive (-) answer to the item. The proportion of respondents giving the positive (+) answer marks the difficulty of the item on the continuum. The larger the difficulty of an item, the smaller that proportion. In this very simple, deterministic model these difficulties of the items, the proportions of the respondents giving the (+) answers, i.e. the item marginals, are observable. Therefore an ordering of the items according to their marginals will correspond exactly with their ordering on the continuum. In this section we will always think the items ordered according to their difficulties, the most difficult item being given rank 1, the next most difficult item rank 2, etc. In this model the possible patterns of responses are strongly restricted. Some types of responses are precluded. It is impossible for a respondent to respond (+) to a certain item *i* and (-) to an item *j* that is *less difficult* than item *i*.

Example:

	rank order of items			
	1	2	3	4
pattern 1	-	+	+	+
pattern 2	-	-	+	+
pattern 3	+	-	+	-

In the example preceding the items are supposed to be ordered according to our convention. Pattern 3 cannot be generated by our model, because item 1 is answered (+) and item 2, less difficult than item 1, is answered (-). Patterns 1 and 2 are not excluded. All in all the model admits only five of the sixteen patterns that may be conceived in our example. In terms of a 2 x 2 table the consequences of the model are seen in Figure 1.

i more difficult than j : i < j

Figure 1

		item j:	
		+	-
item i:	+	n ₊₊	0
	-	n ₋₊	n ₋₋

There the cell containing the frequency with which the most difficult item i is answered (+) and the less difficult item j is answered (-) should be zero. Note that for every pair of items, i, j this 'zero' cell is uniquely defined by our ordering of the items.

In reality, of course, this model will never hold. We shall have to make do with some error. We need therefore a reasonable criterion to decide whether total error does not exceed an acceptable level. In the first place we may note that when the data fit the model reasonably well, the ordering of the items on the continuum can be estimated immediately from the *observed* ordering of the item marginals.

Given that ordering we are left with the problem how to count errors. How many errors, for instance, does pattern 3 contain? One may count every pattern that is in contradiction with the model for one error. Other methods count more than one error in a given pattern. According to the method we shall propose in pattern 3 three errors can be counted. So the number of errors counted in a pattern is essentially a matter of definition (Goodman, 1959). Once one has decided which definition to use, one can count for each respondent the number of errors his response pattern contains. Summation over all respondents will then give the total number of errors. Let us denote that total number of errors, counted over all items and all respondents, by E. Then this E should be 'small' for the data to fit the model. One may also define a function of E, called coefficient of scalability, and desire it to be 'large'.

For the sequel we suppose that we are considering a set of k items, to which N respondents have answered. The items are ordered according to our convention, rank 1 having been assigned to the most difficult item and rank k to the less difficult one of all. The first class of coefficients, the coefficients of reproducibility, were of the type:

$$(1) \quad S_1 = 1 - \frac{E}{Nk}$$

A value of S_1 larger than .90 used to be one requisite for a good scale. Rep-B is a coefficient of this type (Green, 1956) as was Guttman's coefficient of reproducibility. However, the denominator Nk , as an indicator of the maximum number of errors possible, was too large. For

that reason some of these coefficients had lower limits larger than .50, a circumstance which made the advocated value of .90 questionable. A second generation of coefficients necessitated the calculation of the exact value (E_{max}) of the maximum number of errors possible. The corresponding coefficients were then defined as:

$$(2) \quad S_2 = 1 - \frac{E}{E_{max}}$$

S_2 assumed values between zero and one. The Plus Percentage Ratio, the coefficient used in the SRC Study of 1952 referred to in this paper, was of this type (Jackson, 1949).

These coefficients also had some drawbacks. When respondents answer randomly, these coefficients S_2 might not differ much from the value expected in the case of random response behavior. Therefore, a third class of coefficients was standardized on the basis of the value for random response. Let S be a coefficient of type (1) or (2). Let S_0 be the total number of errors, expected in the case of random response. Then we can define:

$$(3) \quad S_3 = \frac{S - S_0}{1 - S_0} = \frac{E_0 - E}{E_0}$$

as a third type of coefficient.

These coefficients are zero when the set of items does not scale better than in the case of random response, and one in the case of a perfect scale. Green's index of consistency (I) is of that type (Green, 1956) as is the coefficient we use: Loevinger's coefficient of homogeneity (H). (Loevinger, 1947). This coefficient is defined as follows. We saw that, given the ordering of the items, for each pair of items i, j, the 'zero' cell in the corresponding 2 x 2 table was uniquely defined (See Figure 2).

Figure 2

i more difficult than j : i < j; n_i < n_j

		item j:		
		+	-	
item i:	+	n ₊₊	n _{-+ = n_{ij}}	n _i
	-	n ₋₊	n ₋₋	N - n _i
		n _j	N - n _j	N

The number of respondents, counted in that cell, gives the number of 'errors' for the pair i, j. Let that number be n_{ij} . Then H is defined as follows:

$$H = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} \sum_{j=i+1}^k [n_i(N - n_j) - Nn_{ij}]}{\sum_{i=1}^{k-1} \sum_{j=i+1}^k [n_i(N - n_j)]}$$

Here n_i , n_j are the numbers of respondents that respond (+) to respectively items i and j . Note that in the computation of H the errors for all possible pairs of items are taken into account. In the same way we can define a coefficient of scalability for an item i .

$$H_i = \frac{\sum_{j < i} [n_j(N - n_i) - Nn_{ij}] + \sum_{j > i} [n_i(N - n_j) - Nn_{ij}]}{\sum_{j < i} [n_j(N - n_i)] + \sum_{j > i} [n_{ij}(N - n_j)]}$$

Goodman gave methods to test such coefficients against the value zero under the nullhypothesis of random response, (Goodman, 1959) which enabled us to derive tests for the coefficients we used.

A generalization of the deterministic Guttman-model has led to the consideration of probabilistic models (Torgerson, 1958, 360-402), in which each respondent answers the items positively with a probability that increases with the position of the respondent on the continuum and decreases with an increase in the difficulty of the item. Items corresponding to this model are called *monotone*. Such models imply a positive correlation (small 'zero'-cell) for every item pair. The author therefore thought it desirable to introduce as a necessary condition for a scale a good item scalability for every item in the scale. (H_i) The same consideration also led to a slackening of the rather stringent conditions that are traditionally imposed on a scale in terms of the required values of the coefficients. It was thought that once a general interdependence as measured by the item scalabilities was established, the scale should be considered fit for use. Guttman's concept of a quasiscale anticipated this approach already.

We are now able to define a scale in simple terms: *a scale is a set of items all pairs of which are positively correlated and with the property that every item coefficient of scalability (H_i) is larger than a given constant*. The scale coefficient H will assume a value larger than or equal to that constant. According to the value taken by H a typology of scales may be suggested:

- a. $.50 \leq H$: a strong scale;
- b. $.40 \leq H < .50$: a medium scale;
- c. $.30 \leq H < .40$: a weak scale.

The concept of a strong scale covers the original strong requirements for a Guttman-scale. The medium scale may well prove very useful in research, while weak scales still show enough structure (inter-item correlation) that they can convey some information about the dimension measured.

We are now in a position to state the two procedures we used in this paper. The first procedure amounts to the conventional evaluation of a set of items as a scale. For every item in the set, H_i is computed and for the whole set H is calculated. Every coefficient is tested against the nullhypothesis of random response.

The second procedure seeks stepwise to construct one or more scales from a large set of items. A value for the defining constant is chosen (.30 in our case). Then the item pair with the maximum value of H , larger than the constant and significant at a prescribed level is chosen. From all other items a third item is chosen which is best according criteria, then a fourth, etc. In general we can state the process of adding an item to the scale recursively as follows.

- Let a set of $k - 1$ items be selected by our procedure, then from the remaining items a $k - th$ item is added to that set to form a k -item set if:
- 1 - the item scalability (H_i) of that $k - th$ item in the set of k items is larger than the chosen constant;
 - 2 - the item scalability (H_i) of that $k - th$ item in that set of k items differs from zero at a prescribed level of significance;
 - 3 - the H of the set of k items is maximal over all items satisfying conditions 1 and 2.

If no more items satisfying these criteria can be found, the procedure starts searching for another scale among the items that are not yet included in former scales by the procedure. The procedure is directed at a rather straight forward maximization of H . It therefore may be expected to find a reasonable scale if there is one. However, as always in stepwise 'maximization' procedures in multivariate analysis, it does not necessarily produce an *optimal* scale. Nor can the procedure eliminate entirely the need of a final common sense evaluation of scale and items on the basis of their content.

REFERENCES

- 1 Agger, R. E., Goldstein, M. N., and Pearl, S. A. (1961) Political cynicism: measurement and meaning. *Journal of Politics*, 23, 477-505.
- 2 Agger, R. E., Goldrich, D., and Swanson, B. E. (1964) *The Rulers and the Ruled*. New York: Wiley.
- 3 Almond, G. A., and Verba, S. (1963) *The Civic Culture*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

- 4 Campbell, A., Gurin, G., and Miller, W. E. (1954) *The Voter Decides*. Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson.
- 5 Campbell, A., Converse, P. E., Miller, W. E., and Stokes, D. E. (1960) *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- 6 Daalder, H. (1955) Parties and politics in the Netherlands. *Political Studies*, III, 1-16.
- 7 Daalder, H. (1966) The Netherlands: opposition in a segmented society. In Dahl, R. A. et al., *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- 8 Dahl, R. A. (1961) *Who Governs?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- 9 Daudt, H., and Stapel, J. (1966) Parliament, politics and the voter: results of an opinion-survey. (in Dutch). *Acta Politica*, I, 46-76.
- 10 Daudt, H., Van der Maesen, C. E., and Mokken, R. J. (1968) Political efficacy: a further exploration, *Acta Politica*, III, 286-307.
- 11 Douvan, E., and Walker, A. M. (1956) The sense of effectiveness in public affairs. *Psychological Monographs*, 70, no. 32.
- 12 Easton, D., and Dennis, J. (1967) The child's acquisition of regime norms: political efficacy. *The American Political Science Review*, LXI, 25-38.
- 13 Eldersveld, S. J. (1964) *Political Parties*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- 14 Farris, C. D. (1960) Selected attitudes on foreign affairs as correlates of authoritarianism and political anomie. *Journal of Politics*, 22, 50-67.
- 15 Goodman, L. A. (1959) Simple statistical methods for scalogram analysis. *Psychometrika*, 24, 29-43.
- 16 Goudsblom, J. (1967) *Dutch Society*. New York: Random House.
- 17 Green, B. F. (1956) A method of scalogram analysis using summary statistics. *Psychometrika*, 21, 79-88.
- 18 Guttman, L. (1950) The Basis for scalogram analysis. In Stouffer, S. A. et al., *Measurement and Prediction*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.
- 19 Jackson, J. M. (1949) A simple and more rigorous technique for scale analysis. In: *A Manual of Scale Analysis. Part II*. (mimeographed). Montreal: McGill University.
- 20 Jakobovits, L. A. (1966) Comparative psycholinguistics in the study of cultures. *International Journal of Psychology*, 1, 2-37.
- 21 Janowitz, M., and Marvick, D. (1956) *Competitive Pressure and Democratic Consent*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- 22 Kornhauser, A., Sheppard, H. L., and Mayer, A. J. (1956) *When Labor Votes*. New York: University Books.
- 23 Lane, R. (1959) *Political Life*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- 24 Loevinger, J. (1947) A systematic approach to the construction and evaluation of tests of ability. *Psychological Monographs*, 61, No. 4.
- 25 Lijphart, A. (1968) *The Politics of Accommodation*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- 26 Maesen, van der, Constance E. (1967) The angry voter (in Dutch). *Acta Politica*, 2, 169 ff.
- 27 Milbrath, L. W. (1966) *Political Participation*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- 28 Osgood, C. E. (1960) The cross-cultural generality of visual-verbal synesthetic tendencies. *Behavioral Science*, V, 146-61.
- 29 Smolenaars, A. J. (1963) Kerkelijkheid en persoonlijkheidskenmerken in twee Zuiderzeepolders. (in Dutch; mimeographed report). Amsterdam: Stichting voor het bevolkingsonderzoek in de Drooggelegde Zuiderzeepolders.
- 30 Stouthard, P. C. (1965) *Data Modellen*. (in Dutch). Tilburg: Catholic School of Economics.
- 31 Torgerson, W. S. (1958) *Theory and Methods of Scaling*. New York: Wiley.

LINKSE CHRISTENEN EN POLITIEKE ONTWIKKELING IN LATIJNS AMERIKA

door A. E. van Niekerk

De 'ontwikkelings-ideologie' van de linkse christenen in Latijns Amerika is minder links dan hun politieke gedrag (revolutionaire uitspraken, samenwerking met marxisten, clandestiene acties etc.) op het eerste gezicht zou doen vermoeden. Zij bedienen zich van een maatschappelijk ideeën-stelsel dat, hoewel in bepaalde opzichten aan de lokale problematiek van Latijns Amerika aangepast, toch wezenlijk is overgenomen uit Europa. De eventuele bijdrage van deze ideologie aan de politieke ontwikkeling van Latijns Amerika, lijkt twijfelachtig. Dat zijn de voorname stellingen van dit artikel.

Een van de eerste dingen die mij trof toen ik ter plaatse met deze linkse christenen in aanraking kwam, was het feit dat zij zich zelf aanduiden als 'comunitaristas', een benaming die ook in de rest van dit artikel zal worden gebezigd. Deze benaming riep reeds onmiddellijk associaties op — niet ten onrechte zoals later zou blijken — aan Tönnies 'Gemeinschaft', een begrip dat expliciet traditionele connotaties heeft. Dat men de eigen ideologie ook wel aanduidt als 'socialismo comunitario', versterkte mijn gedachte dat deze ideologie een grote mate van ambiguïteit heeft, waarin modernistisch-socialistische ideeën coëxisteren met traditionalistische doelstellingen als de bescherming en de regeneratie van de 'comunidad', zijnde een door primaire relaties bepaalde en personalistisch-georiënteerde sociale structuur.

COMUNITARISTAS EN CHRISTEN DEMOKRATIE

De meeste 'comunitaristas' zijn afkomstig uit — en dus politiek gesocialiseerd geworden door — hetzij de specifieke doel-organisaties van de katholieke kerk (vooral jongeren-groepen e.d.), hetzij de christen-demokratische politieke partijen van Latijns Amerika.

In hun eerste periode (1920—1940) waren deze christen-demokratische partijen, die altijd een sterke Europese invloed hebben ondergaan, voornamelijk confessionele groeperingen. Het is opvallend hoe deze partijen aanvankelijk, hoewel geplaatst in een maatschappij als de Latijns-amerikaanse met geheel andere structuurproblemen, toch in grote lijnen voor dezelfde zaken op de bres stonden als de Europese: de verhouding tussen de zich seculariserende en socialiserende staat en de private sector, de invloed van de kerk op het onderwijs, de bescherming van de intermediaire structuren, waaronder vooral het gezin. In een tweede periode, die vanaf 1935—'40 gemarkeerd wordt door de afsplitsing van de jongere christen-demokraten uit de toenmalige conservatieve partij van