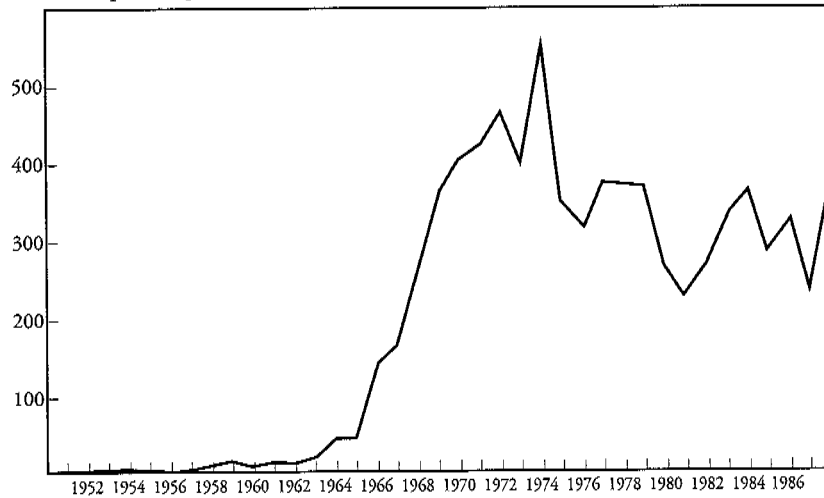


Figure 11-3. *Media Coverage of Poll Results, 1950–88*<sup>a</sup>  
Number of public opinion stories



Source: John Brehm, *The Phantom Respondents* (University of Michigan Press, 1993), p. 4.  
a. Figure shows the number of stories cited under “public opinion” in *The New York Times* index. According to John Brehm, the cited public opinion stories “by and large report poll results, and only rarely reflections on public opinion in the broader sense.”

behind closed doors, when access to the courts and bureaucracy was restricted, and when big business, big labor, and big agriculture dominated the interest group universe.

### *Why Participatory Democracy Makes Americans Unhappy*

“Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right”  
from Stealer’s Wheel, “Stuck in the Middle with You”

There are several reasons why Americans who have more opportunities than ever before to influence the actions of their government trust their government less than before. One explanation—popular two decades ago—is “overload.” Noting the increase in interest group activity and popular participation described above, some democratic theorists expressed their concern that with encompassing organizations such as parties and unions declining, interest-aggregating structures were being over-