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*Polity*, Vol. 1, No. 4. (Summer, 1969), pp. 479-500.

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# Alienation and Support for Demagogues

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*Is the alienated nonvoter (that popular object of attention in recent years) a person who can be drawn to the polls by an extremist demagogue? The answer has profound implications for the stability of democratic government. Professors Mason and Jaros here tackle the question with considerable methodological sophistication. As might be expected of such a pioneering effort, some might feel that the results do not match the time and effort; nevertheless one can hardly cavil at an attempt to answer questions of such considerable significance, and if the results are not definitive they are at least indicative. Whether demagoguery is very different from simple charisma in its effects on voting may be a question worth consideration.*

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THE CONDITIONS OF STABILITY of political regimes have fascinated thinkers for centuries.\* Only recently, however, has systematic empirical research addressed itself to this problem. From the standpoint of the viability of modern, liberal, democratic regimes, rather discouraging findings have been unearthed by scholars of contemporary mass societies.<sup>1</sup> Human life in today's bureaucratized, industrialized state involves a great number of impersonal relationships. Social decisions seem to involve titanic, complex, remote questions which are beyond the comprehension of the individual. Man believes himself dwarfed, powerless, subject to forces beyond his control.<sup>2</sup> Although citizens possess political choices in democratic states, such choices seem meaningless and involve no sense of the power to participate in authoritative decisions. Mass man is, therefore, inarticulate and nonparticipatory. The political process is seen as a sham. Politics is regarded with "suspicion, distrust, hostility, and cynicism. These people believe that political office holders are corrupt . . . that the whole political process is a fraud."<sup>3</sup> In short, the individual in mass society is alienated.<sup>4</sup>

However, a widespread condition of alienation, in addition to its implications for mass rejection of political participation, may be fraught with other important political consequences. Many notable scholars suggest that the alienated person is particularly likely to "engage in extreme behavior" when activated by appropriate political leadership.<sup>5</sup> The "reservoir of discontent" which alienation begets may easily be tapped by a radical demagogue who promises simple solutions, who "proposes to clean the Augean stables and to establish a new order."<sup>6</sup> Students of contemporary totalitarian movements, especially commentators on the Nazi experience in Germany, observe the

\* We wish gratefully to acknowledge the Kentucky Research Foundation for support of the research upon which this article is based.

<sup>1</sup> William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1959), pp. 227-238.

<sup>2</sup> Hadley Cantril, *The Politics of Despair* (New York: Basic Books, 1958); Robert Nisbet, *Community and Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962); David Reisman, *The Lonely Crowd* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953).

<sup>3</sup> Angus Campbell, "The Passive Citizen," *Acta Sociologica*, vi (fascia 1-2), p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," *American Sociological Review*, xxiv (December, 1959), pp. 783-791.

<sup>5</sup> Kornhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 32; see also Richard Hofsteder, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 71; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1960), Chapter 5.

<sup>6</sup> Reinhard Bendix, "Social Stratification and Political Power," in Reinhard

dependence of these mass movements on widespread popular alienation from democratic processes.<sup>7</sup> These mass-society theorists suggest that democratic government in the modern world rests on the acquiescence and inactivity of the alienated; democracy survives only on the condition that the reservoir of discontent, always present, is not activated.<sup>8</sup>

Empirical research on alienation, however, only partially supports the general mass-society hypothesis. Most prominently, persons who score highly on any number of alienation indices are repeatedly shown to shun voting and other forms of "normal" democratic political activity.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that alienation may partially explain the well-known inverse relationship between social class and level of education on the one hand and political participation on the other.<sup>10</sup> Alienation may indeed be a key intervening variable between non-participation and many of its antecedents.

There apparently are conditions, however, under which the alienated will participate in extraordinary political activity. It is to be observed

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Bendix and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Class, Status, and Power* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957), pp. 606-607.

<sup>7</sup> Bendix, loc. cit.; Eric Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt, 1941); Lipset, op. cit., pp. 138-152.

<sup>8</sup> Other observers of democratic processes view the great, inarticulate masses far more optimistically. For example, students of what might be called "pluralist democracy" assert that democratic politics belongs to the organized few. Large, unorganized "inattentive publics" may be regarded as not discontented at all, but satisfied. The inactivity, sort of a public torpor, is highly conducive to stability. Radicalism of any kind, it is thus alleged, will find no fertile ground in societies which so de-emphasize politics, but generate satisfying policies. Works which contribute to this point of view are: Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 321-323; V. O. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), pp. 552-553; David B. Truman, *The Political Process* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), pp. 501-535; and Harmon Zeigler, *Interest Groups in American Society* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), Chapter 8.

<sup>9</sup> Campbell, "The Passive Citizen," op. cit.; Morris Rosenberg, "Some Determinants of Political Apathy," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, xviii (Winter, 1955), pp. 349-366; Frederic Templeton, "Alienation and Political Participation: Some Research Findings," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, xxx (Summer, 1966), pp. 254-256.

<sup>10</sup> Robert E. Agger, Marshall Goldstein, and Stanley Pearl, "Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning," *Journal of Politics*, xxiii (August, 1961), pp. 477-506.

in the form of "protest voting" and in the rejection of referendum questions. Persons who live in communities dominated by entrenched political machines are very dramatically confronted with the futility of political action and thus are especially likely to become alienated.<sup>11</sup> However, occasionally there occurs a wave of popular revulsion which rises up, drawing heavily from the ranks of normal nonvoters, and "throws the rascals out" in a dramatic election.<sup>12</sup> The precise nature of the conditions which stimulate this type of protest at the polls is not known, although apparently the presence of a figure who is associated with dramatic change is necessary,<sup>13</sup> one who is totally dissociated from the alienating political establishment.<sup>14</sup>

In many areas, the mass-society alienated person gets an occasional opportunity to express directly his rejection of the political order. Specific policy proposals are sometimes presented for referendum action. Since most referendum proposals are initiated by officials of the extant political order, resentment toward and alienation from that order could manifest itself in rejection of these proposals at the polls. Although of course the alienated person is a nonparticipant in what is to him a "fraudulent" regular electoral process, he finds the referendum an excellent way of "preventing an ill-defined 'them' from putting 'this' over on 'us.'"<sup>15</sup> Many careful studies reveal a strong relationship between feelings of alienation or other kinds of political estrangement and rejection of referendum propositions.<sup>16</sup>

Again the question of what activates the alienated is raised. In

<sup>11</sup> Edgar Litt, "Political Cynicism and Political Futility," *Journal of Politics*, xxv (May, 1963), pp. 312-323.

<sup>12</sup> Murray B. Levin, *The Alienated Voter* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962), Chapters 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>14</sup> A similar kind of protest is the vote for Communist parties in western European countries. We are told that there are segments of the population (generally in the working class) that are thoroughly disillusioned and politically alienated because policies fall far short of expectations and perceived potentials. But unlike the case for citizens who live under the domination of a machine, these Europeans constantly have available a vehicle for expression of their alienation: the Communist Party always provides candidates for whom they can vote. See Cantril, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>15</sup> Wayne E. Thompson and John E. Horton, "Political Alienation as a Force in Political Action," *Social Forces*, xxxviii (Spring, 1960), p. 191.

<sup>16</sup> James S. Coleman, *Community Conflict* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957), p. 19; John E. Horton and Wayne E. Thompson, "Powerlessness and Political Negativism: A Study of Defeated Local Referendums," *American Journal of Sociology*, lxxvii (March, 1962), pp. 485-493; Edward L. McDill and Jean

some referenda they follow their usual nonparticipatory pattern, allowing the nonalienated to carry the proposal in a low-turnout affair. What moves them into the lists? The best answer so far advanced appears to be the "tone of the campaign." Stone finds that the alienation-rejection hypothesis appears to hold only when opposition leadership is vigorous, voluble, and from decidedly outside the power structure. When "distrust of experts and of the powerful generally, allegations of conspiracy or of behind-the-scenes maneuvering for personal gain, unrestrained personal attacks . . . characterize the opposition campaign,"<sup>17</sup> the spillage of the reservoir of discontent will inundate the referendum proposal.

Most of this extraordinary political activity to which alienation may lead seems relatively mild; its threat to the stability of democratic regimes is ostensibly of rather minor dimensions. However, in each case we observe a catalyst—an agent advocating a strong, rejective course of action. It is exactly the same kind of agent—a demagogue if you will—which is involved in movements that are seriously disruptive of regime stability. Perhaps the same alienation underlies the latter phenomenon as well as it demonstrably does the less serious kinds of protest. If so, the prognoses of the mass-society theorists are essentially correct. But there is relatively little direct evidence on the antecedents of attraction to demagogues or of acceptance of their programs. To be sure, there is some evidence that nonvoters, probably alienated, express a greater preference for demagogic politicians who have appeared on the American scene than for the usual candidates,<sup>18</sup> but there is also evidence that support for these persons has come prominently from classes that are the least likely to be alienated.<sup>19</sup> At best the evidence is ambiguous. It is entirely possible that

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Clare Ridley, "Status, Anomia, Political Alienation, and Political Participation," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXVIII (September, 1962), pp. 205-213; Maurice Pinard, "Structural Attachments and Political Support in Urban Politics: The Case of Fluoridation Referendums," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXVII (March, 1963), pp. 513-526.

<sup>17</sup> Clarence N. Stone, "Local Referendums: An Alternative to the Alienated-Voter Model," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXIX (Summer, 1965), p. 217.

<sup>18</sup> Philip K. Hastings, "The Voter and the Non-Voter," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXII (November, 1956), p. 305.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Rogin, "Wallace and the Middle Class: The White Backlash in Wisconsin," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, XXX (Spring, 1966), pp. 98-108; Martin Trow, "Small Businessmen, Political Intolerance, and Support for McCarthy," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIV (November, 1958), pp. 270-281.

the typical alienated person—who was not immune to regime-level socialization when an impressionable child—has internalized powerful norms which will not allow him to support demagogic, potentially disruptive personalities despite the fact that he can be jarred out of his usual lethargy into certain kinds of extraordinary activity. Certainly it is unjustified, on the basis of what is now known, to anticipate horrendously disruptive political outbursts even if alienation is widespread.

Demagogues certainly do appear in modern political life. Likewise, alienation is a current phenomenon. Even though there are strong theoretical grounds for believing that the two are intimately related, the paucity of direct data on the proposition leaves us with an important vacuum. This paper provides some new evidence by attempting to assess the impact of alienation to the appeals of demagogic political candidates.

### I. Method

Data were gathered from 847 residents of the Lexington, Kentucky, metropolitan area. A random cluster sample of all housing units in the area was drawn. Several standard instruments and modes of soliciting data were employed to provide information on alienation and extent of "normal" participation. Alienation was measured by the Survey Research Center's political efficacy scale.<sup>20</sup> Political activity was measured by noting whether the respondent voted in the 1966 Congress-

<sup>20</sup> Angus Campbell, et al., *The Voter Decides* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1954), pp. 187-194. One could argue over definitions of alienation, the "dimensions" that it contains, and whether a given instrument measures the variable adequately. Suffice it to say that feelings of powerlessness, which the Political Efficacy Scale measures, figure prominently if not exclusively in many scholars' conceptions of alienation: Horton and Thompson, op. cit.; Melvin Seeman, "Powerlessness and Knowledge: A Comparative Study of Alienation and Learning," *Sociometry*, xxx (June, 1967), pp. 105-123; McDill and Ridley, op. cit. Some of them acknowledge the similarity of their instruments to the Political Efficacy Scale (Seeman, McDill, and Ridley), while others, accepting the scale as a perfectly valid measure of alienation, declare that it is inconsequential in terms of research results which of a number of currently available alienation measures is used: Templeton, op. cit., p. 252. However, see Kenneth Janda, "A Comparative Study of Political Alienation and Voting Behavior in Three Suburban Communities," in *Studies in History and the Social Sciences—Essays in Honor of John A. Kinneman* (Normal: Illinois State University, 1965), pp. 53-68.

sional election and by the Campaign Activity Index discussed by Milbrath.<sup>21</sup> Data were also gathered on participation in a recent referendum—on state constitutional revision—in which the “tone of the campaign” was quite scurrilous. Standard demographic information was also collected.

Attraction to demagogues is very difficult to measure; it is hard to determine just who is a demagogue. Responsible persons will disagree on the merits and demerits of different political personalities. Even if agreement could be had on the identity of demagogues, they do not appear at convenient intervals from the standpoint of scholarship. It is unlikely that one could anticipate such an apparition with a carefully constructed research design. Further, access to persons who had been exposed to the demagogue might well be difficult. But were these conditions met, methodological difficulties would yet plague us. Suppose a group of supporters of the demagogue could be isolated. We still do not know whether they find demagoguery attractive, for the object of the attraction may possess other qualities of political appeal. The demagogue may have the proper party affiliation,<sup>22</sup> espouse the proper policies, or have noninstrumental personal characteristics, for example. To say the least, operationalizing the concept *demagoguery* is no simple task. It is undoubtedly for this reason that there are so few empirical attempts to test general statements about it.

Our attempt to operationalize demagoguery proceed in the following manner. A pool of “extreme” programmatic statements, such as might be uttered in a campaign, was assembled by the authors. The items referred to four issue areas, the Viet Nam War, internal Communist subversion, federal centralization of government prerogatives, and civil rights or racial conflict. Most of the statements were adaptations of remarks made by figures who have at one time or another, justly or unjustly, been called demagogues. These statements were then submitted to a panel of experts, the members of the political science department of the University of Kentucky, who were asked in light of *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* definition, to rank the statements on a five-point scale for their degree of demagogic content. Those statements in each of the four issue areas which received the highest cumulative scores were accepted for use in the instrument.

<sup>21</sup> Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1965), pp. 50–53, 155–156.

<sup>22</sup> Nelson W. Polsby, “Toward an Explanation of McCarthyism,” in Nelson W. Polsby, Robert A. Dentler, and Paul A. Smith, eds., *Politics and Social Life* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1963), pp. 808–824.

Respondents were subsequently presented with these statements, which were attributed to a candidate for Congress. Their choice of this candidate over others is regarded as evidence of attraction to demagoguery. Admittedly, this scheme does not tap all of what seems to be involved in the notion of demagoguery. Here we have only the content of an appeal. Certainly demagoguery does not flourish only because of the words used. The way they are said, the intensity and frequency of their presentation, the appearance of the presenter, and possibly the nature of available sanctions, may all play a role in demagoguery. However, few observers of the phenomenon exclude content,<sup>23</sup> and thus it would be a denial of considerable consensus to do so. We are measuring at least one aspect of the phenomenon, and perhaps the one most amenable to systematic observation.

Because of the difficulties in attempting to measure demagoguery in a field situation, experimental design was necessitated. Here we attempted to control many of the troublesome variables likely to surround the study of attraction to demagoguery through presenting hypothetical election schema to respondents. The basic experimental design is as follows: (1) all respondents were forced to choose one of the four issue areas as most salient; (2) the direction of the respondent's policy preference within the selected issue area was ascertained; (3) with the appropriate policy preference reflected in the content of some of the alternatives offered, the respondent was asked in which of four hypothetical elections he would most likely participate; and (4) he was asked how he would vote in that election. Hence, each respondent was given printed information about eight candidates—opposed pairs in four hypothetical elections. The elections were characterized in the following way: *Election I*, candidates of differing personal characteristics (one "attractive" and the other "unattractive"); *Election II*, candidates opposed in that one was "demagogic" in what he said while his opponent's only known characteristic was that he disagreed with the demagogue; *Election III*, candidates who take opposed but moderate stances on issues; and *Election IV*, candidates of different parties.<sup>24</sup> Information about these candidates was rigidly controlled. Respondents knew nothing about the candidates in *Election I*

<sup>23</sup> Ernst Kris and Nathan Leites, "Democratic and Totalitarian Propaganda," in Leonard Fein, ed., *American Democracy: Essays on Image and Realities* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), pp. 55-60; Lipset, op. cit., pp. 124-126; Allan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), especially pp. 43-46.

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix for an example of hypothetical election information which was presented to respondents.

except their personal characteristics; nothing about the candidates in *Election III* except their issue stances, and so on. There was no information about the candidates to which our subjects could respond except the designated features. Names were not even attached for fear of activating an ethnic loyalty. In *Elections II* and *III* candidates addressed themselves to a policy area (one of four) previously ascertained to be of most concern to the respondent. Moreover, in *Election II* the demagogic candidate's remarks were always in the *direction* that the respondent's preferences had been determined to lie. That is, "liberal" respondents were given left-wing demagogues, while "conservative" respondents were given right-wing demagogues. To reduce the possibility that the instrument itself would affect the choice, the information about each of the eight candidates occupied about the same number of printed lines. Interviewers read the information about each candidate aloud with the respondent to insure that all alternative choices had been called to his attention.

Although this device controls many potentially contaminating variables and allows considerable manipulation, it has certain liabilities. Obviously the respondents are not actually politically supporting demagogues by their hypothetical voting choices; they are participating in an experimental situation. This, however, is not an overpowering defect. A great deal about the dynamics of human behavior has been learned in experimental situations in psychology laboratories. Moreover, political scientists have used such approaches with much success.<sup>25</sup> The advantages of being able to abstract a concept for research—especially such an interesting but yet uninvestigated one as demagoguery—outweigh the consideration that we are not directly observing overt participation in the political process. This attempt to generate and selectively expose respondents to at least one aspect of demagoguery under tightly controlled circumstances is more likely to be productive of knowledge than waiting for a demagogue, perhaps surrounded by a fog of ambiguity and a plethora of unknown variables, to appear in the real political world. Theory development certainly cannot wait upon such appearances.

<sup>25</sup> Theodore Becker, *Political Behavioralism and Modern Jurisprudence* (Chicago: Rand-McNally, 1964), Chapter 5; Leon J. Kamin, "Ethnic and Party Affiliations of Candidates as Determinants of Voting," *Canadian Journal of Psychology*, xii (March, 1958), pp. 205-213; J. A. Laponce, "An Experimental Method to Measure the Tendency to Equibalance in a Political System," *American Political Science Review*, lx (December, 1966), pp. 982-993; William Riker, *Theory of Political Coalition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

## II. Findings

Findings are presented in three parts: those bearing on standard, accepted hypotheses about the political behavioral consequences of alienation, those which bear on the validity of the experimental instrumentation used in this study, and those which relate attraction to demagogues and alienation.

*Accepted Hypotheses:* This study attempts an extension of our knowledge about the political consequences of alienation. The validity of many standard hypotheses was not only assumed, but these hypotheses underlay the entire design of this effort. Accordingly, it is well to demonstrate that the data on which new investigation is based also corroborate the notions which underpin it. It is possible that our sample generated grossly atypical data vis-à-vis alienation. If the standard hypotheses do not hold here, any new statements about alienation derived from these results would be of dubious utility.

As noted above, alienation has frequently been an observed antecedent to nonparticipation in electoral processes. Respondents were asked about their participation in the Congressional election of November, 1966, and were also measured on the Campaign Activity Index. We thus have data on the question of whether alienation affects voting and/or other election-related participation. As Table 1 shows, alienation has a decided negative impact on voting. Not only does this confirm a frequently observed result, but imposing controls for education and income, variables known to be prominently related to participation, effects only slight changes in the magnitude of the relationship. Partial  $\tau_{au_c}$ 's controlling for education and income are  $-.12$  and  $-.14$ , respectively.<sup>26</sup>

A similar result is observed with respect to alienation and Campaign Activity Index scores. These variables are negatively related to the extent that  $\tau_{au_c} = -.18$ . Alienation thus inhibits not only voting but other election related activity. Partialling for education and income, which are both positively related to Index scores ( $\tau_{au_c} = .18$  and  $.17$ , respectively), has only a slight effect; for education, partial  $\tau_{au_c} = -.12$ ; for income, partial  $\tau_{au_c} = -.12$ .

<sup>26</sup> Though alienation clearly has an independent impact, it does not seem to be the case, as some have suggested, that education and income depend upon the intervention of alienation in their effect on participation.  $\tau_{au_c}$  between education and participation in Congressional election =  $.21$ ; partialling for alienation reduces this coefficient to  $.15$ . Similar treatment of the relationship between income and participation ( $\tau_{au_c} = .21$ ) effects a reduction to  $.16$ . All three variables independently affect participation.

TABLE I  
*Alienation and Voting Participation*

	ALIENATION SCORE					TOTAL RE- SPOND- ING (N=818)	NOT RE- SPOND- ING (N=29)
	0 (N=102)	1 (N=201)	2 (N=216)	3 (N=178)	4 (N=121)		
Percent voting in Congres- sional election	59	60	52	41	36	50	

[ $\tau_{1c} = -.19^*$ ]

\*Voting is considered to be a more participatory act than nonvoting. Thus, voting and nonvoting constitute ordinal ranked categories and ordinal statistics are employed.

The alienated persons in our sample, like their counterparts elsewhere, tend to shun political participation. Do they, in addition, engage in rejective political actions if circumstances induce their participation? Do they engage in protest voting or referendum rejection? We have no data on protest voting, but fortunately state constitutional revision was the subject of a referendum in the November, 1966, election. As noted above, the "tone of the campaign" was undoubtedly conducive to activation of discontent of alienates. Table II shows that the alienated again duplicated their counterparts studied elsewhere. The alienated are less likely to participate in the referendum, but if they do, they are more likely to reject the proposal.<sup>27</sup> Even though education and income are positively related to referendum participation and negatively related to referendum rejection, partialling for these variables once again does not greatly reduce the magnitude of the coefficients in Table II.

The rate of nonresponse with respect to participation in the referendum was very high. Only 55% of the respondents would tell us whether they had participated. Since nonresponse did not characterize other items in the questionnaire (for example, nonresponse rate to item on participation in Congressional election is less than 4%), we attribute this to the emotionally charged nature of the campaign which surrounded the referendum. It may be that many of the nonrespond-

<sup>27</sup> See findings that are exactly parallel in McDill and Ridley, op. cit.

TABLE II  
*Alienation and Referendum Behavior*

	ALIENATION SCORES					TOTAL INDI- CATING WHETHER THEY HAD PAR- TICI- PATED	NOT RE- SPOND- ING
	0 (N=67)	1 (N=133)	2 (N=127)	3 (N=84)	4 (N=52)	(N=463)	(N=384)
Percent Voting on Con- stitutional Revision Refer- endum	84	82	79	68	65	77	
	[ $\tau_{uc} = -.14$ ]						

	ALIENATION SCORES					TOTAL INDI- CATING DIREC- TION OF VOTE	NOT RE- SPOND- ING
	0 (N=52)	1 (N=102)	2 (N=98)	3 (N=53)	4 (N=53)	(N=338)	(N=509)
Percent Reject- ing Refer- endum	44	55	62	72	64	59	
	[ $\tau_{uc} = .17$ ]						

ents, who come disproportionately from the alienated subjects, in fact voted and voted against the proposal, but this cannot be determined from these data.<sup>28</sup> Despite this, the expected negative relationship between alienation and participation and the expected positive relationship between alienation and rejection of the referendum emerge in the data on those who did respond.

Thus, alienation affects the political behavior of the citizens in this study as it has been reported to affect that of other citizens. Alien-

<sup>28</sup> Supporting this contention, actual records show that the referendum was rejected in this county by a margin of 65%, not 59% as in the sample.

TABLE III  
*Distribution of Candidate Choices  
 in Experimental Electoral Situation (N = 847)*

CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENT
Personal features	27
Demagogue	6
Demagogue opponent	5
Issue position	48
Party affiliation	10
No response	4
Total	100

ates tend to shun regular electoral activity, but apparently they can be activated under certain conditions to rejective kinds of behavior, at least to the extent of voting down a referendum proposal. The responses of this sample, then, can validly be used in an attempt to extend knowledge about the effects of alienation beyond the standard, accepted hypotheses.

*The Validity of the Instrument:* As we have observed, a major problem of this mode of research is whether respondents' behavior in the experimental electoral situation is in any way related to actual political responses. Specifically, does selection of a demagogic candidate in an abstracted environment reflect actual political propensities? Obviously there is no direct way of validating this against data on reactions to real demagogues; in fact, it is the absence of and difficulty of access to such data that necessitates this research. But we can inquire as to whether other behavior in the experimental situation, behavior which has easily accessible parallels in the real world, conforms to known generalizations about real-world behavior. We can ask whether there is any evidence that respondents treated the array of hypothetical candidates capriciously from a political point of view.

Table III describes the gross configuration of candidate choices in the experimental electoral situation. Leaving aside for the moment choice of demagogue or demagogue opponent, there is nothing in this array to arouse suspicion. The great preference for issue-oriented candidates would, of course, never be duplicated in the real world,<sup>29</sup> but in this situation the candidates always made statements on issues known to be salient to the respondent and in the direction of the respondent's preferences. Respondents always had a tailor-made can-

<sup>29</sup> Angus Campbell, et al., *The American Voter* (New York: John Wiley, 1960), Chapter 8.

didate, unsullied by any other possibly unattractive features. Moreover, it is certain that respondents cognized this tailor-made candidate; unlike real voters,<sup>30</sup> they *knew* what the candidates stood for. These two conditions dramatically increased the saliency of issues over those in a real campaign, and it is not surprising that respondents should thus select, at an increased rate, on the basis of issue. The opposite side of the same coin is reflected in the relatively small number of respondents who chose candidates on the basis of party affiliation. In a real campaign, this is likely to be vastly larger.<sup>31</sup> But in the real world, party is often the only candidate characteristic of which voters are aware. Party simplifies and organizes a complex political world where information about other criteria for choice is costly. In this situation, information about other choice-making criteria was forced on respondents; party identification thus becomes far less useful in the experimental situation. It is not at all surprising that party should lose much of its saliency in a situation in which choices are clearer, more certain. Perhaps it is testimony to the strength of party identification that better than a fifth of the respondents who had the opportunity<sup>32</sup> chose party despite the availability of much other unambiguous information. That a significant portion chose candidates solely on the basis of personal characteristics is not surprising either. The low nonresponse rate, also decidedly out of accord with reality, is due to the fact that this was a forced-choice situation.

Breakdowns of this distribution reveal additional evidence of the instrument's validity. For example, our two candidates who were depicted by personal characteristics presented a great contrast. One was

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-187.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 136-142.

<sup>32</sup> Only half of the 847 respondents were given the opportunity to choose partisan candidates. For an explanation see the authors' "Party Choice and Support for Demagogues: An Experimental Examination," *American Political Science Review*, LXII (March, 1969). This makes the 10% choosing party candidates in the overall distribution artificially small. Among the 427 respondents who were presented with partisan alternatives, the distribution of choices is as follows:

CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS	(N = 427)
Personal features	23%
Demagogue	4
Demagogue opponent	3
Issue position	47
Party affiliation	21
No response	2
Total	100%

TABLE IV  
*Relationship Between Party Identification  
 and Candidate Choice in Party-Defined Election*

	REPUBLICAN (N = 23)	INDEPENDENT (N = 14)	DEMOCRAT (N = 52)	TOTAL (N = 89)
Percent				
Choosing Democratic Candidate	9	79	96	71

deliberately represented as a somewhat debauched, relative outsider to the community, while the other was rich in familial and civic virtue. We expected relatively few to choose the former, and, in fact, only nine did; while 218 chose the latter. Similarly, the respondent who was not relating his responses at all to public affairs might have indicated an issue position and then subsequently declared in favor of a candidate espousing the opposite position. Although it was not logically necessary for voters in the issue-defined election to choose the candidate on the same side of the issue as themselves (many of these candidates' statements were quite moderate to distinguish them from the demagogues), it is interesting that the overwhelming majority (87%) did so. The relationship between party identification and candidate choice, so prominent in voting studies, is duplicated by our respondents who voted in the party-defined election (Table IV). Among such persons, Republicans overwhelmingly chose the Republican candidate and Democrats the Democratic candidate. The greatly pro-Democratic preferences of the self-styled independents is understandable in the area of traditional Democratic dominance from which our sample was drawn; environment after all, affects partisan choice.<sup>33</sup> It seems that these respondents were indulging their party identification just as they would if voting for a real candidate.

Finally, a series of results dealing with the relationship of education to candidate choice can be stated. The degree of sophistication with which individuals conceptualize political controversy has attracted much interest. The authors of *The American Voter* classify their subjects according to the evaluative posture they take toward political objects; voters are placed on a continuum ranging from "ideology" to "no content."<sup>34</sup> Near the sophisticated end, respondents have "issue

<sup>33</sup> Warren E. Miller, "One Party Politics and the Voter," *American Political Science Review*, 1 (September, 1956), pp. 707-725.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell, et al., *The American Voter*, op. cit., pp. 216-256.

concerns" and are interested in the implications of policies for specific social groups. As one moves toward the unsophisticated end of the continuum, issue content declines and is replaced by conceptualizations in terms of "simple party orientation" and "simple candidate orientation," if there is any content at all. One of the chief determinants of a sophisticated conceptualization is education; the more educated tend to conceptualize in issue-related, "ideological" terms, while the less educated rely at best upon simple, policy-barren notions about candidates or on the party label alone.

Accordingly, if our respondents are relying on their conceptualizations of political controversy in the experimental electoral situation, we would expect the highly educated to choose candidates on the basis of their announced issue positions while the less-educated would select candidates defined by personal features or party label. Table v presents by education the choices of respondents who were presented all candidate alternatives.<sup>35</sup> It is quite clear that our expectations are met. It appears that respondents are applying in this experimental situation the level of conceptualization that we would expect of them on the basis of their educations.

In sum, much of the behavior exhibited in the contrived electoral environment can be explained in terms of what we know to be true about behavior in the real world. There is no evidence that the respondents treated their choices of hypothetical candidates capriciously. In fact, the data suggest that criteria which individuals are known to employ in actual political life were applied in the same manner here. Since these results appear to be valid, we can have confidence in the other results, namely those about attraction to demagogic candidates.

*Alienation and Attraction to Demagogues:* The alienated do not

<sup>35</sup> For those respondents who did not have the partisan alternatives, the pattern of candidate choice vis-à-vis personal characteristics and issue position by education is similar:

CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS	EDUCATION		
	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (N = 106)	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, SOME COLLEGE (N = 230)	COLLEGE DEGREE (N = 51)
Issue position	45%	52%	63%
Personal features	32	37	18
Other	13	11	19
Total	100%	100%	100%

TABLE V  
*Candidate Choice by Education\**

CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTIC	LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL (N = 121)	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, SOME COLLEGE (N = 211)	COLLEGE DEGREE (N = 86)
Issue position	34%	51%	63%
Personal features	31	23	14
Party affiliation	29	18	15
Other	6	8	8
Total	100%	100%	100%

\*Only respondents who were allowed to choose among all alternatives are included in the table.

TABLE VI  
*Alienation and Demagogic Choice*

	ALIENATION SCORE					TOTAL RE-SPOND-ING (N=813)	TOTAL NOT RE-SPOND-ING (N=34)
	0 (N=106)	1 (N=202)	2 (N=211)	3 (N=172)	4 (N=122)		

Percent choosing demagogic candidate 1 3 7 9 12 6

[ $\tau_{uc} = .08^*$ ]

\*Choosing the demagogic candidate is held to indicate more attraction to demagoguery than choosing some other candidate. Thus so choosing and not so choosing constitute ordinal ranked categories and ordinal statistics are used.

normally participate in democratic politics, but apparently they can be stimulated to rejective kinds of behavior. Will they, as some mass-society theorists have suggested, be attracted to demagogic political personalities who promise extreme, potentially disruptive programs? Who were the persons in this sample who opted for the demagogue? Table VI indicates the relationship of alienation to this mode of choice. It seems quite clear that despite the generally low proportions who do

support the extremist candidates, alienation contributes to this behavior. The monotonic progression is notable. Moreover, the relationship withstands the imposition of controls. Both education and income are negatively related to demagogic choice, but alienation continues to have an impact even when these variables are considered.  $Tau_c$ 's partialling for these variables are .05 and .07, respectively.

A more dramatic indication of the role of alienation in choice of extreme candidates appears when we consider only those respondents who opted to participate in the demagogically defined election, that is, those who either supported the demagogue or who chose specifically to vote against him. Within this election, involving a total of 11% of the respondents, the relationship between alienation and choice of the demagogue is quite pronounced:  $tau_c = .42$ . The imposition of controls for education and income does not notably affect this coefficient.

Nor does this relationship appear entirely to be a function of peculiar conditions surrounding adherents of a particular issue position. Respondents, remember, were asked to select an issue (one of four) that was particularly salient to them, and then to indicate the direction of their preferences on this issue. The hypothetical demagogue presented to each individual spoke to the issue each respondent chose as salient, and the direction of the remarks attributed to him paralleled the direction of the respondent's indicated preference. For most of the eight issue positions, alienation appears to contribute to the choice of demagogues (Table VII).

Thus, our evidence seems to confirm the suspicions of the mass-society theorists. The alienated, in addition to their other characteristic behavior, are more likely to support extreme, politically disruptive candidates. But while the data may generally support the mass-society hypotheses, they certainly do not do so in an unqualified fashion. Despite the indication of the relationship for most issue positions, Table VII does at the same time reveal some interesting differentials. It is difficult to understand, for instance, why the alienated who oppose civil rights should be particularly likely to opt for a candidate who promises radical solution while those favoring involvement in Viet Nam should show virtually no tendency to do so. Perhaps the proximity of civil-rights controversy sets the stage for the activation of alienation through demagoguery, while the more remote nature of the Viet Nam war prevents even a demagogue from engaging the alienated. Although apparently basically sound, the alienation-demagogic choice hypothesis requires modification. It is valid, apparently, only under certain conditions, conditions which though empirically undetermined, surround the civil-rights issue and are not present in the Viet Nam

TABLE VII  
*Alienation and Demagogic Choice by Issue Position*

ISSUE POSITION	TAU <sub>c</sub> BETWEEN ALIENATION AND CHOICE OF DEMAGOGUE	PERCENT CHOOSING ISSUE POSITION (N = 847)
Civil rights movement should be:		
slowed down	.21	12
continued	.07	13
Internal communist subversion is a:		
real danger	.03	15
overemphasized	*	2
Federal assumption of additional government services and functions should be:		
curtailed or cut back	.08	10
continued	*	2
U.S. posture in Viet Nam should be one of:		
involvement	.02	28
withdrawal	.06	15
No response		
Total	.08	100

\*Too few cases for calculation.

issue. We know that alienation leads to extremist behavior under certain conditions, but we do not know what intervening variables are involved.

One suspects that among the modifying variables are system-relevant as well as issue-relevant ones. Despite the fact that personal factors lead to attraction to demagogues, the process may be inhibited in some kinds of systems. Table III suggests indeed that one such system is that in which the present research was carried out. All respondents were presented with salient demagogues, yet only a relatively small proportion opted for such a candidate; indeed, the number of people rejecting the demagogue (choosing his opponent), despite parallels of direction of issue preferences, is almost as large. What is there about this system that generates revulsion toward demagoguery?

Obviously it is not sufficient to distinguish between mass societies and other types and assert that in the nonmass political systems demagogues are not attractive. We are here dealing with a mass society—indeed, there is no shortage of alienation (see distributions of alienation scores in Tables I, II or VI)—but the demagoguery hypotheses operate only in a most attenuated form. Clearly, other variables are prominently involved. Unfortunately, having no system-comparative data, we are not in a strong position to specify what those variables are.<sup>36</sup>

### III. Conclusion

Mass society supposedly bears within it the seeds of widespread alienation. A major political consequence of this alienation, as its name implies, is nonparticipation in electoral processes. However, under certain circumstances the alienated masses can be induced politically to express their discontent. Rejective behavior, such as protest voting and voting down referendum proposals, for example, have been observed to be strongly related to alienation. These findings are fairly well established and in fact are supported by the results of the present research. Mass society theorists have suggested—although there is much less evidence for this—that the great, alienated reservoir of discontent can be activated into much more disruptive kinds of mass behavior, support of a radical demagogue, for example. The present research sought empirically to investigate support for demagogic political figures and it suggested that such support was indeed related to alienation. A basic mass-society hypothesis finds some support. However, it is also clear from the data that the hypothesis needs some elaboration. The presence of alienated citizens and the appearance of a demagogue do not guarantee mass support for the latter. There are clearly other variables which retard or further the operation of the alienation-support-for-demagogue process. While our data do not allow us to specify them, these variables appear to be both issue-relevant and system-relevant. From both a theoretical and a practical point of view it would seem to be a prime research priority to attempt to specify the conditions under which alienated citizens can be activated to support demagogues.

<sup>36</sup> See, however, the authors' "Party Choice and Support for Demagogues: An Experimental Examination," *op. cit.*, where an attempt is made to deal with this problem.

## APPENDIX

### Sample of Hypothetical Elections as Presented to Respondents

The following configuration of election alternatives was presented to respondents who indicated (1) that Communist subversion was the most salient issue and (2) who felt that "not enough" was being done about the problem. Respondents who chose this policy area but who felt that subversion was being dangerously overemphasized, were presented with a configuration that differed only in that the demagogic candidate ("C") in *Election II* was pictured as a left-wing radical. Respondents who chose one of the other three policy areas were presented election configurations appropriately modified not only with respect to the demagogic candidates, but also with respect to the issue oriented candidates in *Election III*.

#### ELECTION I

Candidate "A" is in his early thirties and has a reputation for energy and drive. He is married, has three children, and is active in his church. He is a lawyer. He recently received an award for distinguished service to his community.

Candidate "B" is a middle-aged bachelor who is employed with a business firm which recently moved to Lexington from Pennsylvania. It is rumored that he is secretly engaged to a woman twenty years younger than himself.

#### ELECTION II

Candidate "C" says: "Communists have already taken over 90% of the government; taking up arms may be the only way to get it back. We cannot rest until there is no Communist left on this earth and decency has been restored."

Candidate "D" says: "One thing about this campaign is clear. My opponent and I are in very great disagreement on almost every point. The voters must choose between two programs. Mine is the most beneficial for all citizens."

#### ELECTION III

Candidate "E" says: "There is no doubt that Communism is a danger inside the United States today. We have laws to control Communists and left-wing ideas, and I would like to see these laws strengthened."

Candidate "F" says: "Our Communist control acts restrict the flow of ideas and free speech. I am opposed to these laws because a free flow of ideas and free speech are necessary for a democratic society.

ELECTION IV

Candidate "G" is a *Democrat*. He has stated that he respects the principles of his party and believes that Democrats can be important influences in achieving excellent government for all citizens.

Candidate "H" is a *Republican*. He has stated that he is impressed with the prospects for his party in the years ahead, and has pledged to make a good image for Republicans in all that he does.

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