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THE SOCIAL BASIS OF POLITICAL PROTEST:
THE WALLACE VOTE IN DISTRICTS OUTSIDE THE SOUTH*

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In 1968 the United States saw the development of a political movement which provided hope for millions of people, while instilling fear in as many others. George C. Wallace, populist governor of Alabama, was challenging an old American institution--the two-party system. Theodore Roosevelt, Eugene Debs, Norman Thomas, Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond had all failed at the same endeavor, but Wallace convinced much of the nation that he had a good chance to tie up the electoral college and wring political concessions from both major parties.

The Wallace vote in the South could be explained as the very practical attempt to gain bargaining power for a region struggling to maintain its political foothold. It is harder to explain why many non-Southerners were willing to bolt the two-party system and waste their vote on someone who had no chance of winning their state's electoral votes, or the election. The Wallace voter outside the South could only hope for an indirect effect in the unspecified future by enticing the major parties to pay him more attention. Whether motivated by rational deferred gratification or self-expression for its own sake, these voters were acting more as protesters than as participants in the conventional political system. In a sense, voting for Wallace in Illinois is more of a protest than voting Communist in Italy or France, where the Communist parties are well-woven into the political fabric and where such parties participate in coalitions.

Political protest is usually treated in one of three

ways: (1) voting within the political party system for the party of change, (2) nonparticipation in politics, and (3) participating in political-oriented violence. Our concern here is with something that fits into none of these categories, namely voting within the established electoral system for a candidate outside of the established party system.

Taking after Durkheim, much of political sociology has conceived of society as an organism which is sometimes diseased. The general hypothesis is that large-scale social changes lead to strains in society which find expression in political protest. This is how Parsons explained the rise of the fascist movement in Germany (Parsons, 1942), the McCarthy movement of the fifties (1964a), and the radical right in the early sixties (1964b). He failed to specify the mechanisms by which this occurs, and his approach is somewhat mysterious for that reason. Fortunately, some of his followers are more specific (see Smelser, 1963).

Theorists have focused on many different societal changes as sources of social strain, including change per se (Hoffer, 1951); differentiation (Eisenstadt, 1966:31); increased communication and alienation from the means of production (Marx, 1959, especially p. 18); rationalization (Parsons, 1942); affluence (Schumpeter, 1962; Inglehart, 1971; Segal and Felson, 1970); technological change (Ogburn, 1922); and urbanization--particularly size, density and heterogeneity of the population (Wirth, 1938). Social historians have supplied a list of catchy terms for these changes--the industrial revolution,

technological revolution, vital revolution, capitalist revolution, etc. Recently, Hauser (1969) merged the Ogburn and Wirth perspectives into what he called the "social morphological revolution."

Social scientists have also been somewhat creative, if less sloganistic, in discussing intermediate variables between social change and political protest. Some have emphasized the ways in which societal changes cause individuals to suffer psychological strains (Hoffer, 1951; Johnson, 1966). Others have treated the social stratification system as the locus of social strain: social change either deprives men of some crucial social reward, or catalyzes cleavages for which the potential has always existed. Segal and Felson (1970) suggest that affluence enhances conflict because it places greater resources in the hands of conflict groups. Following Tocqueville (1955), Gurr (1968) concludes that social change engenders rising expectations, relative deprivation, hence revolution. Eisenstadt (1966:22, 122) reasons that the increasing interdependence of groups arising from differentiation intensifies their impingement on each other, thereby contributing to political protest. In a similar vein, Bell (1964) attributes the growth of the American radical right in the early sixties to the displacement of old elites by new ones, while Tilly (1969) explains collective violence as the result of competition among groups gaining, maintaining, or losing their position in the polity. Marx (1959) attributes the demise of capitalism partly to the restructuring of social contacts and communication in

capitalist society, which leads the proletariat to discover its objective interest and to organize. On the other hand, Trotsky (1959:9) suggests that deracinated peasants who become urban workers are more likely to break with the past than the established proletariat. Hauser asserts that the social-morphological revolution leads to "the chaotic society" by enhancing ecological competition (from Park, 1936), and by intensifying moral density (from Durkheim, 1964).

Another way in which social change may lead to political disruption is by increasing status inconsistency of individuals. Assuming that individuals high on one status and low on another status undergo personal strains, they may be more likely to participate in political protest of the left (Lenski, 1954) or of the right (Rush, 1967; Hunt and Cushing, 1971). The concept of status inconsistency has been applied not only to individuals, but also to occupational groups (Hodge, 1962); nations in their international relations (Tanter, 1969); and societies in their aggregate reward systems (Galtung, 1964; Woelfel, 1970; Sorokin, 1947). Galtung theorizes that societies in which education grows faster than the job market for educated people will be plagued by revolution.

One can answer the general hypothesis that some changes lead to political protest with the counter-hypothesis that other changes reduce strain, hence mitigate revolutionary tendencies. Bell (1960) and Lane (1965) have predicted an age of consensus deriving from the equalization of material rewards. Current events have been very unkind to their

prophecy, but it is as yet unclear whether their analytical error was claiming a decline in inequality or assuming that inequality was the prime source of political protest. Some theorists consider the status inconsistency of individuals to be quite conducive to societal stability, because it allows almost everyone to be privileged in some respect, thereby preventing the formation of coherent conflict groups (see Wiley, 1967; Dahrendorf, 1959; Simmel, 1964; Landecker, 1970).

OBJECT OF THIS STUDY

This study cannot directly test any of the broad theories mentioned--if indeed any study could do that. Rather, we will derive from several of these theories some rather concrete hypotheses about one specific type of political protest: the support for George Wallace in the 1968 election. We will not directly measure any of the assertions about the recruitment of specific individuals to protest movements, or about the behavior of total societies in the course of history. Our purpose is much more modest: to study the level of support for one movement at one point in time across several American communities which are presumed to be at different stages of social development. Our inferences from the data must be more limited than the theories reviewed.

We hypothesize that population increase, immigration, affluence, bureaucratization and social inequality will all be positively related to the level of support for Wallace on a district level. We expect that self-employment will be

negatively related to the Wallace vote; in other words, alienation from the means of production should be positively related to political protest. Finally, we expect that those districts whose education outruns income or white-collar employment will generate greater support for Wallace.

The social basis of the Wallace vote has already been studied to some extent by political sociologists. Eitzen (1970) found a relationship between status inconsistency of individuals and support for Wallace. Segal and Schoenberger (1970) found that Southern congressional districts with more Negroes tended to generate more support for Wallace. Our paper will follow their lead in investigating aggregate affects.

THE DATA

We obtained census data on Congressional districts from the Congressional District Data Book (Districts of the 88th Congress) and merged this with the 1968 election returns published in the Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report. Excluded from analysis were all Southern and Border states (among them, Kentucky, Maryland, Oklahoma, Tennessee, West Virginia), leaving only those states which Wallace had no chance of winning. We then excluded all districts which had substantially redistricted since 1960, since stable boundaries were necessary for measuring change.¹ In all, 172 districts were included in our sample.² The mean Wallace vote for the districts studied was 8.2%, with a standard deviation of 5.5%. While our sample from all congressional districts was non-random, our sample is the total population

of stable non-Southern districts, minus a few with missing data cases. We shall consider election day in 172 districts in 1968 to be a random sample from an infinite number of conceivable election days for districts, applying statistical tests accordingly.

Measurement and sampling error aside, a difference of a few percentage points in Wallace vote was important for its psychological impact, which depended on winning a noticeable minority rather than a majority.

DATA ANALYSIS

The most basic hypothesis abstracted from the literature is that societal change leads to political protest. We used two measures of change for each district: (1) the percentage population increase between the 1950 and 1960 censuses, and (2) the percentage of the population in 1960 that had migrated from outside the district since 1955, including immigrants to the United States and migrants from other districts. These changes took place eight years prior to the 1968 election, and were the most recent data available.

As Table 1 shows, population increase and in-migration before 1960 are both related to the Wallace vote in 1968 ($r=.170$ and $.156$ respectively). These findings are in the direction predicted, but quite modest. Regressing the Wallace

Table 1 about here

vote on both of these measures of change explained 3.64% of the variance in district Wallace vote.³ While the data are consistent with the functionalist interpretation of social protest, they do not support the all-embracing determinism which one sometimes finds in the literature.

Population change, in-migration, education, income and per cent white collar all tend to cluster together, as expected (see Table 1). Similarly, self-employment is negatively related to all of these, save in-migration.

Contrary to Parsons' perspective, no relationship was found between bureaucratization (per cent white collar) and support for Wallace, at the zero-order level. As one would predict from a semi-Marxist perspective, there is more support for Wallace in districts which have greater alienation from the means of production, that is less self-employment ($r=.116$).⁴ As predicted from Schumpeter, Inglehart, as well as Segal and Felson, but contrary to the perspective of Lane and Bell, there is a positive relationship between the 1968 vote for Wallace and the median income of the district ($r=.130$).⁵

The next step is to investigate the functions and dysfunctions of inequality. We measured income inequality by computing the standard deviation by income for each district. However, a standard deviation of \$500 is socially more significant in districts which have a mean income of \$4,000 than in districts with a mean income of \$8,000. Therefore, our index of income inequality was standardized by dividing the standard deviation by the mean, to give us the coefficient of variability for each district.⁶ The same procedure was followed using

years of education to give us a measure of educational inequality for each district. The zero-order relationship between income inequality and the Wallace vote ($r=.089$) is in the opposite direction predicted and is neither statistically significant nor large enough for us to claim a serendipitous discovery. The high negative correlation between income inequality and median income ($-.841$) indicates that increased affluence relates to increased equality. The multicollinearity is too great to regress the Wallace vote on both variables at the same time, but it does appear that income inequality has little relation to the Wallace vote. Contrarywise, educational inequality has a relatively strong zero-order relationship to the Wallace vote ($r=.244$)⁷ which is significant at the .005 level. We find that the more educationally advantaged districts tend to have less educational inequality ($r=-.542$). Regressing Wallace vote on both median education and the inequality index enhances the impact of the latter (standardized beta = .347). It appears that status inequality, but not income inequality, was related to political protest in 1968, in line with Hofstadter's (1964) view that status politics replace class politics in modern industrial society.

So far we have concentrated on the relationship between social change, vertical stratification and the Wallace vote. We will now turn to a brief investigation of status inconsistency on an ecological level. Our data do not tell us how many individuals in a district are status inconsistent. But we can measure whether the average income, occupation, and education

levels are discrepant. The distributions over districts of median years of schooling and median income were divided into quartiles and crosstabulated. A district was coded consistent if it fell in the same quartile on both variables. Two distinct types of inconsistency were coded--that in which income was in a higher quartile than education and that in which education was in a higher quartile than income. The same procedure was followed in coding inconsistencies between level of education and level of white-collar employment. Analysis of variance was performed to uncover differences between consistent and inconsistent districts. Panel A in Table 2 shows a small, statistically significant relationship between Wallace vote and the inconsistency between education and income, with a slightly higher level of Wallace vote in districts where income surpasses education. Panel B shows a slightly higher average Wallace vote in districts where education outruns white-collar employment, but again fails to achieve statistical significance. The data do not establish any clear relationship between macro-status inconsistency and the vote for Wallace.

Table 2 about here

To summarize the findings so far, the level of Wallace support was found to be positively related to population change, in-migration, median income, per cent white collar, and educational inequality; negatively related to per cent self-employed; unrelated to income inequality and to macro-status inconsistency of two types.

We could not partial out the effects of each and every sociological variable because of multicollinearity. However, we were able to partial out the effects of race, education and income. Wallace support is predicted by fewer Negroes ($b^* = -.104$), less education ($b^* = -.141$), and higher income ($b^* = .205$). In all, 3.6% of the variance in Wallace vote is explained by these three independent variables.

Numerous regression equations were computed using various combinations of independent variables. Two variables emerged as the strongest predictors of the Wallace vote, controlling for any and all of the other variables--the per cent population change and the amount of educational inequality. One might think that social change leads to protest through the intervening variable of educational inequality, but most of the measures associated with social change were negatively related to educational inequality. Multiple regression (see Table 3) reveals that one standard deviation in population change yields about one-fourth of a standard deviation in Wallace vote ($b^* = .275$), while one standard deviation in educational inequality yields about one-third of a standard deviation in Wallace vote ($b^* = .332$). These two variables together account for 12.7% of the variance in Wallace vote. None of the other variables either add to or detract from the relationship of population change and inequality to the Wallace vote, as step-wise regression reveals (Table 3).

Table 3 about here

If education, prosperity, in-migration and bureaucratization have an effect on the Wallace vote, this happens through the intermediate variables of population change and educational inequality. As the zero-order correlations in Table 1 show, educational inequality falls as education, income, and percent white collar rise ($r = -.542, -.159, -.282$ respectively), an indication that community growth lessens this particular source of social protest. On the other hand, immigration, education, income and bureaucratization are all positively related to population change. It appears that community growth and industrialization mitigate social protest by diminishing social inequality, at the same time exacerbating social protest by some other mechanism, as yet unidentified. The changes which take place in modern society cut both ways in their effects on political protest, at least with respect to the support for George Wallace.

The high intercorrelations among these independent variables and the lack of a clear causal order among them makes it difficult to build a path model with more than a few of them. Figure 1 shows a theoretically reasonable model, assuming that population change measures community growth as well as demographic change. The model is supported by the fact that the correlations which it predicts approximate those observed,⁸ and by the fact that the computed correlation between the residuals (taking education and the Wallace vote as dependent variables) was .052, close to zero.

The path diagram in Figure 1 illustrates the following multivariate theory of social change and political protest: community growth generates a boom in education, which reduces the relative inequality of education in districts. This reduction in inequality leads to a lower level of political protest. On the other hand, community growth itself increases political protest (in Hauser's terms, the "social morphological revolution" leads to "the chaotic society"). Migration to districts has three effects: it escalates population growth, hence protest; it contributes to educational inequality, probably by depositing a new crop of poorly-educated and very well-educated people in the same district; and it contributes to the education boom by increasing community growth, hence mitigating inequality and dissent.

The model shown in Figure 1 implies that different aspects of social change affect society differently, canceling each other out to some extent. While the overall correlation between population change and Wallace vote is positive, its magnitude is not great. One might say that, while some forces heat up the politics of a changing society, other forces cool it down. On the whole there was somewhat more heating up in 1968 than usual, insofar as third-party movements are concerned.

Figure 1 about here

Our investigation has failed to isolate what it is about community growth that increases political protest. In the search for intervening variables, we have eliminated those

factors related to the material position of men in terms of their work (self-employment, median income, white-collar status, income inequality), as well as the educational level of districts. Hoffer's thesis that change itself feeds mass movements, Park's perspective on ecological competition, and Hauser's hypothesis that moral density is related to expression of social strain are all consistent with our findings. Unfortunately our data do not include the ethnic and racial composition of population growth, and it is reasonable to suspect that group conflict along these lines is an important intervening variable. Since much of Wallace's appeal was to race-conscious whites, it is reasonable to expect that population growth helped Wallace by stirring up ecological competition among whites and blacks.

To indirectly measure this, we separated out those ten districts with over 7% Negroes and over 18% population growth. These districts had a mean of 11.09% Wallace votes, 3.03% more than the other districts. The difference of means test, assuming equal variances, revealed that this difference is significantly greater than zero at the .05 level. This statistical interaction indicates that community growth particularly intensifies political protest in districts which have many Negroes. Apparently, the relation between per cent Negro and the Wallace vote which Schoenberger and Segal (1970) observed in the South is true in the rest of the country only when population growth is rapid.

CONCLUSION

Our data indicate that social change has its functions and its dysfunctions--if we take the Wallace vote as an index of dysfunction. On the one hand, community growth lessens status conflict by equalizing education. On the other hand, community growth probably enhances status conflict between blacks and whites, thereby intensifying political protest.

Table 1.--Aggregate Stratification Variables, Societal Change and the Wallace Vote
 Zero-order Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and N's
 Data for 172 Congressional Districts

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	Mean	Std. Dev.	N
1. % Population Change		.466*	.589*	.655*	.544*	-.266#	-.226#	-.317*	.170#	18.4	21.4	172
2. % In-Migration and Immigrants	159		.450*	.142#	.258#	.085	.014	.005	.156#	8.9	6.3	159
3. Median Years Schooling	159	157		.564*	.746*	-.268*	-.167#	-.542*	.002	10.8	1.0	159
4. Median Income	164	159	159		.806*	-.043	-.608*	-.159#	.130#	\$5920	\$1020	164
5. % White Collar	172	159	159	164		-.151#	-.413	-.282#	.005	40.3	7.0	172
6. % Negro	169	156	156	161	155		-.339*	.468#	.075	5.1	10.8	169
7. % Self Employed	158	158	158	158	158	155		-.340#	.116#	13.0	7.4	168
8. Educational Inequality	159	159	159	159	159	159	158		.244#	.354	.025	169
9. Wallace Vote	172	159	159	164	172	169	158	159		8.2	5.5	172

Correlations are above the diagonal. Number of cases for each pairwise correlations is found below the diagonal.

* $p < .0005$ one-tailed that the correlation is significantly greater than zero (or less than zero), according to hypotheses derived from the literature.

$p < .05$ one tailed.

Table 2.--Analysis of Variance of District Status
Inconsistency and the Wallace Vote

A. Inconsistency between Education and Income Levels

Category		Mean Wallace Vote	Standard Deviation
Education surpasses Income	24.5	7.123	2.795
Consistent	44.7	8.206	7.845
Income surpasses Education	30.8	8.790	3.067
N=159	100.0	8.120	5.691

F=0.945 not sig.

B. Inconsistency between Education and Occupation Levels

% White Collar surpasses Education	16.4	8.681	2.861
Consistent	52.2	7.417	2.957
Level of Education surpasses % White Collar	31.4	8.996	9.157
N=159	100.0	8.120	5.671

F=1.358 not sig.

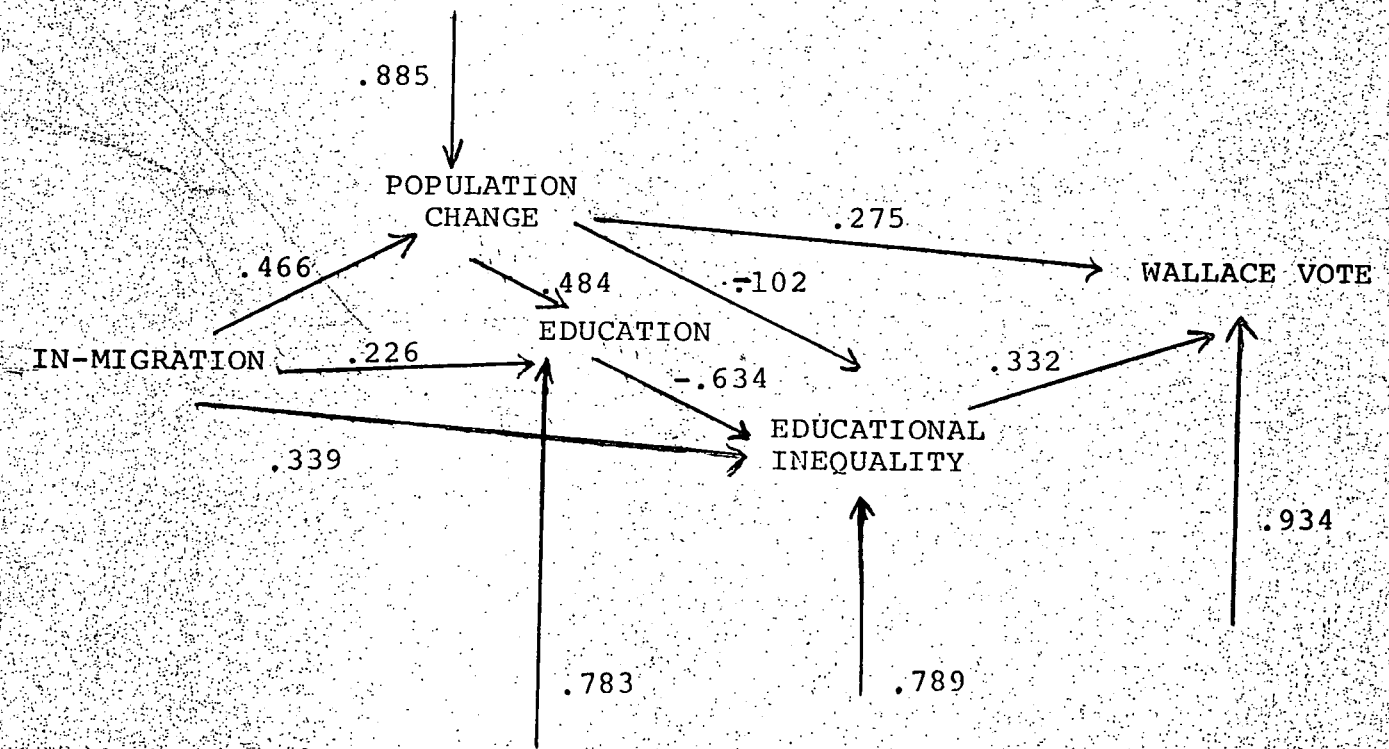
Table 3.--Stepwise Regression of Wallace Vote on Several Independent Variables: Standardized Betas and Multiple Correlations.

Population Change 1.	Educational Inequality 2.	In-Migration 3.	Median Income 4.	Median Education 5.	% White Collar 6.	% Self Employ. 7.	R
.275	.332	. .	. .	. .	. .	. .	.357
.257	.326	.035	. .	. .	. .	. .	.359
.272	.331	. .	.004	. .	. .	. .	.357
.257	.347	. .	. .	.039	. .	. .	.358
.317	.322	. .	. .	. .	-.080	. .	.363
.304	.367	. .	. .	. .	. .	.077	.364

Table 4.--Standardized Betas Used as Path Coefficients

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables					Multiple R	Residual
	In-Migration	Popula- tion Change	Educa- tion	Educ. In- equality			
Wallace Vote	. .	.275	. .	.332	.357	.934	
Inequality	.339	-.102	-.634	. .	.615	.789	
Education	.226	.484	. .	. .	.622	.783
Population Change	.466	. .	. .	. .	.466	.885

FIGURE 1



FOOTNOTES

1. The exclusion of districts whose boundaries had substantially changed could have resulted in an under-representation of districts which had undergone substantial population growth. This problem should not be exaggerated since our sample contains enough variance in population change to perform the desired analysis. Between 1950 and 1960, the mean population change of districts was +18.4%, with a standard deviation of 21.4%.
2. While all of Ohio and most of New York and California were lost due to redistricting, several other highly industrialized states were completely represented (among them, Illinois, Michigan, and Pennsylvania).
3. One could attribute the correlation between population change and Wallace vote to the migration of Southerners to non-Southern districts. However, population change is still related to the Wallace vote controlling for per cent in-migrants ($b^* = .124$).
4. We recognize that these data were derived from aggregating data on individuals. Consequently, our aggregate correlations could indicate any number of effects on an individual level. We have no way of testing these individual-level interpretations, though from time to time we will make some reasonable inferences. We acknowledge that controlling for individual-level variables might well wipe out out aggregate correlations. In fact, that would be quite

desirable, as it would help pinpoint the mechanisms by which the aggregate relationships were generated. Our aggregate correlations are not to be interpreted as contextual effects, but rather the summation of individual effects.

5. However, Wallace vote is related to the percentage of males employed as craftsmen and foremen ($r=.298$). This finding is ambiguous since craftsmen and foremen are about in the middle of the occupational and income status hierarchies. One could alternatively claim that this group is proletarian, advantaged, status inconsistent, or middle class. We have chosen to concentrate our effort on less ambiguous findings.
6. The income inequality measure has a mean of .625 and a standard deviation of .061.
7. One could argue that this effect was less related to standard deviation than to skewness. We tested this and found that districts skewed to the left (overloaded with poorly educated people) had slightly more Wallace support and that those skewed to the right had slightly less. The magnitudes of these relationships were too small to undermine the interpretation given in the text.
8. The correlation observed between education and Wallace vote was .002, while the one predicted from the model was -.018. The observed correlation between immigration and Wallace vote was .156, while the computed correlation was .127, certainly in the same order of magnitude.

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