A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF POLITICAL ALIENATION
AND VOTING BEHAVIOR IN THREE SUBURBAN COMMUNITIES

by

Kenneth Janda

INTRODUCTION

The term "alienation," which has a long history of usage in the traditional sociological literature, has enjoyed a new popularity in research reported in recent sociology journals. Although the concept has not had the same history of usage in political science literature, "alienation" has begun to draw the attention of students of politics, particularly students of community politics. Political scientists probably first became interested in the concept through the disclosure of relationships between alienation and forms of political behavior reported in sociology journals. But with the appearance of Murray Levin's The Alienated Voter the concept of alienation has been brought to the attention of political scientists unfamiliar with the sociological literature on the subject.

It seems likely that the political science journals will soon begin to publish research articles on alienation as a political behavior variable. This in itself is no cause for alarm, but there is always the danger that new variables, like new methodological techniques, may become utilized in research because they are "fashionable" with little thought of their analytical utility or theoretical relevance. This essay is not intended to discourage investigations into the relationship between alienation and political behavior but it is intended to encourage a close examination of conceptual, operational, and theoretical aspects of political alienation by those who do choose to conduct research on the subject. Data will be presented to support the argument that while the concept of alienation does demonstrate some explanatory utility for certain types of political behavior, enough questions arise in its use to cause concern over its value or place in political science research.

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL ALIENATION

The sociological literature on alienation is the appropriate place to begin an inquiry into the concept, for as Helvin Seeman states:

In one form or another, the concept of alienation dominates both the contemporary literature and the history of sociological thought. It is a central theme in the classics of Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, and in contemporary work, the consequences that have been said to flow from the fact of alienation have been diverse, indeed.

As to what "diverse consequences" have been attributed to alienation, Dwight G. Dean lists such hypothesized correlates as "Apathy, Authoritarianism, Conformity, Cynicism, Hedonism, Political Apathy, Political Hyperactivity or Personalization in Politics, Prejudice, Privatization, Psychosis, Regression and Suicide." That so many seemingly different phenomena are associated with the same variable leads one to suspect that the label "alienation" has
been applied to different concepts. Gwynn Netter's caution, "The idea of 'alienation' has a long history but a recent vogue and, as with any such familiar concept refurbished for scholarly purposes, its adopters are using it variably."

But great strides have been made within the sociological literature to clarify the concept of alienation. Netter has indicated the importance of separating "alienation" from "anomie" and "personal disorganization." He suggests that "anomie" be considered as a social condition of relative normlessness; "personal disorganization" as a psychological state of maladjustment. "Alienation," he argues should also be considered as a psychological state but one of estrangement from society and popular culture. Further he suggests that those who are alienated from mass society and popular culture are likely to be "politically disenchanted" with a "strong proclivity for 'voting against' rather than 'voting for'."

In his thoughtful investigation into the meanings of alienation, Seeman accepts Netter's view of alienation as a social-psychological variable but proceeds to distinguish five logically independent meanings of alienation. One of the five is Netter's "estrangement," which Seeman re-labels "isolation." Seeman identifies the other meanings of alienation as "meaninglessness" (the inability to determine what rewards or punishments will follow one's behavior), "normlessness" (the knowledge that socially unapproved behavior is required to achieve goals), "self-estrangement" (roughly, an individual's disapproval of certain aspects of his own behavior), and "powerlessness" (the feeling that one's own behavior cannot produce the outcomes he desires). Seeman indicates that the powerlessness meaning of alienation is the one most frequently employed in the recent literature and that the "meaninglessness" and "self-estrangement" usages are the least developed conceptually.

Drawing heavily from Seeman's analysis, Dean devised attitude scales to measure each of the three most common meanings of alienation: powerlessness, normlessness, and social isolation. Although Seeman did not suggest that the concept of alienation involved any combination of these distinguishable attitudes, Dean combined the three scales into one "general" alienation scale. Dean's failure to find satisfactory relationships among these scales and different measures of political participation caused him to raise the question "as to whether Alienation is a generic 'trait,' or whether it must be considered as a situationally-related variable. It might be profitable to develop--instead of a general Alienation scale--scales to be specifically applied to various institutional areas of social life." This is the same point made by John P. Clark, who argued that the utility of "alienation" as a behavioral variable is likely to increase if attention is given to the investigation of the concept within specific social systems or institutions.

In view of the suggestions about the relationship of alienation to political behavior, it is not surprising that scholars began to conduct research on the existence and consequences of citizen alienation from political institutions. Sociologists found it appropriate to combine two quite different attitudinal components into a measure of political alienation. The first is the familiar attitude of "powerlessness" in political affairs. The concept of powerlessness in politics appears to be the inverse of the well-known concept of "political efficacy" developed by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center. In a number of studies made of voting behavior in national elections, political efficacy has been shown to be strongly related to voting participation but substantially unrelated to partisan choice.

The second attitudinal component involves political alienation as a feeling of mistrust of governmental officials. The mistrust component appears in Seeman's five-category discussion of the concept of alienation, but it probably comes closest to the idea of "political mistrust" which has been studied in the political science literature. It is important to note that not all political mistrust seems to be the same as the mistrust of professional politicians and the deepseated feeling that one is "politically powerless." It is one thing to conceptualize a variable like political mistrust, but empirical operations for identifying the concept have lagged behind in both social and political science literature. Development of research operations in political science literature is easier than in the social science literature. The political scientists' efforts will be more important for what it did not do. Is there a relationship between mistrust and political efficacy? Is mistrust of officials predicting changes in political efficacy? Levin proposes to examine the effects of political mistrust on political participation in national elections.
Levin also finds the basis of alienation in "the profound cynicism of the electorate toward professional politicians and the deepest feeling that the voters are politically powerless." 14 It is one thing to conceptualize a variable and another to develop some replicable operations for identifying who is alienated and who is not. Most commonly, sociologists have developed such operations for the concept of alienation by presenting statements to respondents during interviews and recording expressions of agreement or disagreement with the statements. Different researchers, however, seldom utilize identical attitude statements in their studies, and the resultant findings resist, if not defy, attempts at comparison. Herein lies much of the difficulty in researching the relationships between political alienation and political behavior. The conceptualization of the variable has advanced to a point where two major components have been identified, but the development of replicable operations for the variable has lagged behind in both sociology and political science. Development of research operations for the isolation of alienation in political science literature is easier to follow than those in sociology, and the political scientists' efforts will be examined first. The situation in political science is easier to follow simply because political scientists have not yet really produced the requisite operations. Levin's The Alienated Voter must be regarded as the most influential work on the subject in political science, but, from the standpoint of the sociology of knowledge, Levin's work is more important for what it did not do rather than for what it did. Levin proposes to examine the effects of alienation on political behavior by analyzing five hundred interviews collected immediately after the nonpartisan Boston mayoralty election of 1959, in which John F. Collins, a little known register of probate (with practically no endorsements from important public figures and a small campaign fund) defeated the well-known and influential politician, John L. Powers. Through an analysis of the reasons voters gave for choosing between Powers and Collins, Levin concludes that the reaction
of the alienated voters against Powers' influence in politics lost him the election.

Levin's data, however, are inconclusive in the establishment of a relationship between alienation and voting against Powers, for he does not present an independent research operations for alienation. He cannot say, therefore, what percentage of the voting population was alienated or what percentage of the alienated citizens voted against Powers. Levin does not disclose any replicable procedure for identifying an alienated voter in Boston or in any other community. In short, he failed to make operational the concept of alienation, both in the book and in a later article which described "Political Strategy for the Alienated Voter."

Two other articles published in political science journals have developed procedures for identifying the concepts of political powerlessness and political mistrust, but, for some reason, did not combine these scales into a single measure of political alienation. In the first article, Robert Agger, Marshall N. Goldstein, and Stanley A. Pearl utilized scaling techniques to develop measures of political "cynicism" (mistrust) and political "potency" (the inverse of powerlessness). Although these authors quote Levin's work, they do not discuss their research in the context of alienation but treat powerlessness and mistrust as separate variables which, however, were found to be negatively correlated. A later article by Edgar Litt utilized identical measures of powerlessness and mistrust but still failed to combine the two into one index of political alienation, although Litt specifically concerns himself with the problem of alienation in voting behavior.

In contrast to the situation in political science, research articles published in sociology journals invariably refer to attitude scales specifically designed to identify the political alienated. But at least two operational problems trouble sociological research in political alienation. One problem is that the mistrust and powerlessness components are not always kept separate so that their interrelationships can be disclosed. McMill and Ridley, for example, used as a measure of political alienation a five item scale which includes three items on powerlessness and two on mistrust. But unfortunately, these authors did not describe the relationship between mistrust and powerlessness, and, as the studies by Litt and by Agger, Goldstein, and Pearl have shown, the relationship between attitudes of mistrust and feelings of powerlessness does vary among different communities.

The first article on political alienation by Thompson and Horton also fails to report on the relationship between powerlessness and mistrust. The authors construct an index of alienation from responses to an item designed to tap feelings of powerlessness and from responses to a set of four attitude statements dealing with mistrust of government officials, but they do not correlate the two sets of responses. Although the authors do indicate a positive relationship between the two attitudes in their second article, they then give evidence of the second problem in making operational the concept of alienation: the lack of comparability between operational measures.

Departing from their initial combination of mistrust and powerlessness into a scale of political alienation, Horton and Thompson use different procedures to analyze sample survey data collected on voting behavior in two New York communities: Corning and Ithaca. The new measure of alienation excluded the mistrust items and combined "into one score powerlessness and consciousness of potentially menacing power." In measuring respondents' "consciousness of potentially menacing power" in Corning (a "company town") the authors asked respondents if they agreed with the statement, "Corning-Glass and Ingersoll-Rand run the show in this area." The counterpart item used in Ithaca (a "university town") was "The University people run the show in Ithaca." Entirely apart from the question of including "consciousness of potentially menacing power" in a measure such specific questions for comparative obvious. Not every community is a "company town" and mistrust researchers would be hard pressed to find measures of alienation. In view of the related variables, such as differential distributions of alienation among the communities, it is clear that the concept of alienation which includes both feelings of powerlessness and mistrust. The findings of the recent research are clear and consistent. Political alienation is negatively related to voting turnover and turnout on local referenda. That is, the alienation of non-alienated, and, if he votes, he tends to vote against the incumbent. These findings have been positively correlated with the dependent variable of the vote. Accepting this conceptualization as at least four questions which deserve the subject.
political science journals have developed political powerlessness and mistrust) and political "potency" these authors quote Levin's work, context of alienation but treat variables which, however, were found in the first article, Robert Agger, and political alienation a five item measure of alienation, disclosed similar relationships for the original data and the data collected on a school bond proposal in a second city. A study by different authors of a referendum for metropolitan government in Davidson county (Nashville) Tennessee, also revealed a negative relationship between alienation and voting turnout and a stronger positive relationship between alienation and tendency to vote against the school bond issue. Their second article, employing a somewhat different measure of alienation, disclosed similar relationships for the original data and the data collected on a school bond proposal in a second city. A study by different authors of a referendum for metropolitan government in Davidson county (Nashville) Tennessee, also revealed a negative relationship between alienation and voting turnout and a stronger positive relationship between alienation and tendency to vote against the proposal for metropolitan government.

Although there seem to be no published research findings on the relationship of alienation to voting choice among candidates in local elections, the findings of negative voting on local referenda might be interpreted as supporting Levin's speculations that alienation leads to voting against candidates who are seen as powerful professional politicians. Because of the fundamental importance of personal attachments to the two national political parties in the voting behavior of the American electorate, political alienation is unlikely to be reflected in voting at local elections involving Democrats and Republicans. But in community elections which are not overtly or covertly contested by the local organizations of the national political parties, it is possible that alienation may influence the choice between candidates. Two types of local election-situations might tap feelings of political alienation. The first exists when a contest occurs between a prominent influential "politician" and a little-known unimportant opponent, as in Boston in 1959. The second exists when a contest occurs between the incumbent official (or incumbent local political party) and an opposition candidate either unconnected with the local administration or affiliated with a local opposition party. In such situations, the politically alienated might express "negative" attitudes by voting against the professional politician or against the incumbent.

UNANSWERED RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The findings of the recent research literature on political alienation are clear and consistent. Political alienation has been found to be somewhat negatively related to voting turnout and positively related to "no" voting on local referenda. That is, the alienated voter is less likely to vote than the non-alienated, and, if he votes, he is more likely to vote against the referendum. These findings have been produced largely with measures of alienation which include both feelings of powerlessness and attitudes of mistrust. Accepting this conceptualization of political alienation, there are at least four questions which deserve top priority in future research on the subject.
1. What effect does the community setting have on the relationship between the powerlessness and mistrust components of alienation?
2. How do these separate components independently relate to political behavior?
3. Is the explanation of political behavior improved by combining the two components into one measure of alienation?
4. What is the utility of choosing alienation as a political behavior variable over other available variables?

This paper is designed to contribute toward an answer for each of these questions.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Data for this study were collected by twenty-four students enrolled in an advanced undergraduate course on "Community Political Processes" at Northwestern University. The students used a highly structured schedule of questions in interviewing residents of Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, and Wilmette, three suburban communities north of Chicago, Illinois. The respondents were selected by means of a systematic random sampling of the names appearing on the lists of registered voters for each community as of October, 1962. The interviews were all obtained within two weeks after the local elections held on April 16, 1963. A total of 161 interviews was obtained in Lincolnwood, 151 in Morton Grove, and 160 in Wilmette.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Relevant demographic data for the communities studied are given in Table 1. As the data indicate, all three suburbs are clearly high-status high-income communities. All possess the basic governmental structure common to Illinois' "villages"—six trustees and a village president elected at large for four-year terms in staggered elections. The term of office for three of the trustees in each village expired in April, 1963, and new elections for the three offices were held in each suburb. The office of village president was not up for election in any of the villages in 1963. Despite these outward similarities there are important differences in the political life and the perceived "power structure" of each community.

MORTON GROVE: Village elections in Morton Grove have been characterized by vigorous competition between two or more purely local parties whose candidates have appeared on the ballot under the party label. These parties form­ually disbanded and reorganized under slightly different names between elections. All posses the basic governmental structure common to Illinois' "villages"—six trustees and a village president elected at large for four-year terms in staggered elections. The term of office for three of the trustees in each village expired in April, 1963, and new elections for the three offices were held in each suburb. The office of village president was not up for election in any of the villages in 1963. Despite these outward similarities there are important differences in the political life and the perceived "power structure" of each community.

WILMETTE: The Wilmette political situation in the other two villages. Unlike Morton G a village manager and, under Illinois law, printed on the ballots for trustee election, a full slate of three candidates was presented by the incumbent.

The interviews were conducted by: Barbara Keeler, Geoffrey Kelise, Bruce Birch, Hal Brown, Nancy Brunk, Margaret Daly, Ronald DeHaan, Mary Frase, William Freidinger, Wayne Giaclone, Terry Gladman, Marcia Hartman, Juliana Kane, Douglas Kline, Peter Lehman, Harri Lindsay, John Merriman, Florenc Nelson, Sandy Peterson, Harry Romejko, Peter Schellenbach, Merle Sellers, Barry Shanoff, and Alan Wyner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Median Family Income</th>
<th>% of White Collar Workers</th>
<th>Average Home Value</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>$13,2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$34,2</td>
<td>11,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These data are taken from Evelyn K. Kitag, Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Community Inventory, University of Chicago.

"Action-Achievement Party." Opposition was backed by the "United-Civic Party," which was "United Party" and the "Civic Party," both Action-Achievement's predecessor, the "Acti opposition to the Action-Achievement administers a former trustee who sought election to one independent candidate. In subsequent discus Grove, both pro-Colby voting preferences an be lumped together as negative expressions. Although the Action-Achievement Party swept victory was slim: the average vote for the average for the losers around 2,400. Colby races might have even closer if he had .

LINCOLNWOOD: The history of village is sharply from the lively partisan conflict political affairs in Lincolnwood has long been managed by an absence of opposition to the Action-Achievement administration. The Village Administration Party, "whose slate of candidates for trustee capturing approxim $13,2

Average Home Value $34,2

Population 11,7

1. What effect does the community setting have on the relationship between the powerlessness and mistrust components of alienation?
2. How do these separate components independently relate to political behavior?
3. Is the explanation of political behavior improved by combining the two components into one measure of alienation?
4. What is the utility of choosing alienation as a political behavior variable over other available variables?

This paper is designed to contribute toward an answer for each of these questions.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Data for this study were collected by twenty-four students enrolled in an advanced undergraduate course on "Community Political Processes" at Northwestern University. The students used a highly structured schedule of questions in interviewing residents of Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, and Wilmette, three suburban communities north of Chicago, Illinois. The respondents were selected by means of a systematic random sampling of the names appearing on the lists of registered voters for each community as of October, 1962. The interviews were all obtained within two weeks after the local elections held on April 16, 1963. A total of 161 interviews was obtained in Lincolnwood, 151 in Morton Grove, and 160 in Wilmette.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Relevant demographic data for the communities studied are given in Table 1. As the data indicate, all three suburbs are clearly high-status high-income communities. All possess the basic governmental structure common to Illinois' "villages"—six trustees and a village president elected at large for four-year terms in staggered elections. The term of office for three of the trustees in each village expired in April, 1963, and new elections for the three offices were held in each suburb. The office of village president was not up for election in any of the villages in 1963. Despite these outward similarities there are important differences in the political life and the perceived "power structure" of each community.

MORTON GROVE: Village elections in Morton Grove have been characterized by vigorous competition between two or more purely local parties whose candidates have appeared on the ballot under the party label. These parties formally disbanded and reorganized under slightly different names between elections to avoid state regulation as political parties under Illinois law. Under normal circumstances, considerable continuity exists from election to election in the leadership of the local parties. In the April village trustee elections, a full slate of three candidates was presented by the incumbent.

The interviews were conducted by: Barbara Keeler, Geoffrey Kelise, Bruce Birch, Hal Brown, Nancy Brunk, Margaret Daly, Ronald DeHaan, Mary Frase, William Freidinger, Wayne Giaclone, Terry Gladman, Marcia Hartman, Juliana Kane, Douglas Kline, Peter Lehman, Harri Lindsay, John Merriman, Florenc Nelson, Sandy Peterson, Harry Romejko, Peter Schellenbach, Merle Sellers, Barry Shanoff, and Alan Wyner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Median Family Income</th>
<th>% of White Collar Workers</th>
<th>Average Home Value</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>$13,2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$34,2</td>
<td>11,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These data are taken from Evelyn K. Kitag, Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Community Inventory, University of Chicago.

"Action-Achievement Party." Opposition was backed by the "United-Civic Party," which was "United Party" and the "Civic Party," both Action-Achievement's predecessor, the "Action-Achievement administration." A former trustee who sought election to one independent candidate. In subsequent discussions Grove, both pro-Colby voting preferences are lumped together as negative expressions. Although the Action-Achievement Party swept victory was slim: the average vote for the average for the losers around 2,400. Colby races might have even closer if he had .

LINCOLNWOOD: The history of Village is sharply from the lively partisan conflict political affairs in Lincolnwood has long been managed by an absence of opposition to the Action-Achievement administration. The Village Administration Party, "whose slate of candidates for trustee capturing approxim $13,2

Average Home Value $34,2

Population 11,7

1. What effect does the community setting have on the relationship between the powerlessness and mistrust components of alienation?
2. How do these separate components independently relate to political behavior?
3. Is the explanation of political behavior improved by combining the two components into one measure of alienation?
4. What is the utility of choosing alienation as a political behavior variable over other available variables?

This paper is designed to contribute toward an answer for each of these questions.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

Data for this study were collected by twenty-four students enrolled in an advanced undergraduate course on "Community Political Processes" at Northwestern University. The students used a highly structured schedule of questions in interviewing residents of Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, and Wilmette, three suburban communities north of Chicago, Illinois. The respondents were selected by means of a systematic random sampling of the names appearing on the lists of registered voters for each community as of October, 1962. The interviews were all obtained within two weeks after the local elections held on April 16, 1963. A total of 161 interviews was obtained in Lincolnwood, 151 in Morton Grove, and 160 in Wilmette.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Relevant demographic data for the communities studied are given in Table 1. As the data indicate, all three suburbs are clearly high-status high-income communities. All possess the basic governmental structure common to Illinois' "villages"—six trustees and a village president elected at large for four-year terms in staggered elections. The term of office for three of the trustees in each village expired in April, 1963, and new elections for the three offices were held in each suburb. The office of village president was not up for election in any of the villages in 1963. Despite these outward similarities there are important differences in the political life and the perceived "power structure" of each community.

MORTON GROVE: Village elections in Morton Grove have been characterized by vigorous competition between two or more purely local parties whose candidates have appeared on the ballot under the party label. These parties formally disbanded and reorganized under slightly different names between elections to avoid state regulation as political parties under Illinois law. Under normal circumstances, considerable continuity exists from election to election in the leadership of the local parties. In the April village trustee elections, a full slate of three candidates was presented by the incumbent.
Policy setting have on the
harshness and mistrust
mental behavior improved by
into one measure of
ing alienation as a
cover other available
ward an answer for each of these

The study was conducted by twenty-four students enrolled in
ity Political Processes" at North-
oolwood, Morton Grove, and Wilmette,
lincolnwood, Morton Grove, and Wilmette,
ics under Illinois law. These parties form-
tively as an independent candidate. In subsequent discussions of voting choice in
grove, both pro-Colby voting preferences and United-Civic preferences will
umped together as negative expressions toward the administration party.
ith the Action-Achievement administration came from Edward Colby,
former trustee who sought election to one of the three openings as an
independent candidate. In subsequent discussions of voting choice in
grove, both pro-Colby voting preferences and United-Civic preferences will
umped together as negative expressions toward the administration party.

...
precinct to consider (and usually endorse) the names of prospective candidates presented to the convention by a Nominating Committee. The Harmony Convention has been operating since 1932 under the slogan "The job seeks the man--not the man seeks the job." Although there was, as usual, a complete lack of competition for the offices of trustee in Wilmette, the same April elections laid two referenda before the voters. One proposed the sale of $170,000 worth of bonds for the construction of an addition to the village field house. The other proposed the sale of $150,000 worth of bonds for the construction of an addition to the ice skating rink. Both proposals were soundly defeated; the first by a 2-1 vote and the second by a 7-2 vote, which was the most overwhelming defeat for any referendum in Wilmette's history.

As might be expected from this brief description of the political life in each of these villages, there are sharp differences in the citizens' perceptions of the power structure within each community. Respondents were asked, "Could you tell me the names of any of the people who are influential in community decision-making here in (Lincolnwood, Morton Grove, Wilmette)?" In each instance, the village president was the person most frequently mentioned in response to this question, but there are still clear inter-community differences in the response patterns. More different names were given in Wilmette (93) than in either Morton Grove (51) or Lincolnwood (43). In Wilmette, President Howard Decker was named by only 18% of the respondents compared to the 32% in Morton Grove who mentioned President Robert Schreiber. But in Lincolnwood, Henry Proesel's name was mentioned 68% of the time. The respondents were later asked if they could tell the name of the current president of their village. Only 27% in Wilmette gave correct replies compared to 64% in Morton Grove and 93% in Lincolnwood.

The center of the controversy swirling over the "community power" literature (see Anton, 1963) can be skirted if we regard these data as indicative only of the citizens' perceptions of the power structure in each community. The data indicate that Lincolnwood residents are more likely to perceive a monolithic power structure in their village than are the residents of Morton Grove or Wilmette, where they are most likely to perceive a polythetic power structure. This information will be used in interpreting data presented later in the paper.

MEASURING POLITICAL ALIENATION

This study was initially conceived as a direct replication of the Thompson and Horton studies on political alienation, but it soon was apparent that their operational measures would not permit a complete replication of their work. I did, however, try to follow their initial conceptualization of the variable while using items identical to those they presented in their second study, although I did not combine these items the same way. In accordance with the procedures used in their second article, the powerlessness dimension was made operational as shown in Table 2. The above procedure produced 459 respondents who were classified as "low" (19%), "medium" (60%), or "high" (21%) in powerlessness."

The mistrust dimension was operationalized by asking respondents their attitudes toward the same series of statements used by Horton and Thompson:

1. People who go into public office are usually out for all they can get.

2. Elected officials become too powerful.
3. Local officials soon lose touch with the people.
4. If people knew what was really going on, they would blow the lid on things. The distribution of the responses to all four items are given in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: OPERATIONALIZATION USING DATA FROM 459 RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude expressed toward the question, &quot;People have different ideas of just how they fit into community affairs. Would you say that you are:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A person who contributes to community decisions...
- A person who is active, but not one of the decision makers...
- Just an ordinary person in the community...
- Not part of the community at all...

| Response to the question, "People have different ideas of just how they fit into community affairs. Would you say that you are: |

- A person who contributes to community decisions...
- A person who is active, but not one of the decision makers...
- Just an ordinary person in the community...
- Not part of the community at all...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3: CONSTRUCTION OF 459 DATA FROM THE 459 RESPONDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Disagreed with all the statements...
| Disagreed with three or more of the four and was undecided about a fourth...
| Disagreed with three, agreed with another...
| Disagreed with only two...
| Disagreed with only one...
| Disagreed with none... |

* These data were taken from a course paper, "Power Structures in Suburban Communities," prepared by John Merriman.
the names of prospective candidates & Committee. The Harmony Convention stated "The job seeks the man—not the usual, a complete lack of competence, the same April elections laid the sale of $170,000 worth of to the village field house. The bonds for the construction of an addition were soundly defeated; the 2 vote, which was the most over.
of the 453 individuals categorized according to feelings of mistrust, 41% were rated "low" in mistrust, 25% "medium", and 36% "high."

The final index of alienation was constructed by combining respondents' positions on the powerlessness and mistrust measures as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Construction of the Political Alienation Index Using Data from the Combined Samples, N=440

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powerlessness:</th>
<th>Mistrust: Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 440 individuals who could be assigned an alienation category through this procedure, 44% were considered "low" in alienation (those in the upper left-hand portion of the table), 21% "medium" (in the cells marked on the diagonal) and 35% "high" (in the lower right-hand portion). The correlation between these two variables, as expressed by Kendall's tau coefficient, is .23.

Table 5 contains data on the proportion of respondents in each community who rated "high" on the mistrust, powerlessness, and alienation measures. Information is also presented on respondents' ranking on a simple measure of dissatisfaction with governmental services provided by the village. A list of thirteen different governmental services (school system, fire protection, garbage collection, zoning policies, etc.) was read to the respondents, who were asked to indicate if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with each. Those who reported satisfaction with at least 12 of the 13 services were ranked "low" in dissatisfaction. Those who indicated satisfaction with 11 of the 13 were classified "medium," and those who complained about 3 or more of the services on the list were considered "high" in dissatisfaction. As can be seen by the way in which the responses were categorized, most of the respondents in all three communities expressed dissatisfaction with most of the services in question.

Table 5: Distribution of Political Attitudes in Three Suburban Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lincolnwood</th>
<th>Morton Grove</th>
<th>Wilmette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Mistrust</td>
<td>41 (151)</td>
<td>37 (139)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Powerlessness</td>
<td>24 (157)</td>
<td>23 (149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Alienation</td>
<td>43 (151)</td>
<td>35 (138)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Dissatisfaction</td>
<td>50 (161)</td>
<td>36 (151)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data presented in Table 5 show a relatively greater mistrust than those in Morton Grove, Lincolnwood less distrustful. But the differences are significant. The political alienation index, a pattern of mistrust. Lincolnwood respondents rank respondents the least. But note also that Lincolnwood and the other two communities are more likely to mistrust than their feelings of powerlessness. This finding is significant in view of the sharp differences in their political power structures. A more monolithic power structure in Wilmette would not be assigning an alienation category through this procedure, 44% were considered "low" in alienation (those in the upper left-hand portion of the table), 21% "medium" (in the cells marked on the diagonal) and 35% "high" (in the lower right-hand portion). The correlation between these two variables, as expressed by Kendall's tau coefficient, is .23.

Table 5 contains data on the proportion of respondents in each community who rated "high" on the mistrust, powerlessness, and alienation measures. Information is also presented on respondents' ranking on a simple measure of dissatisfaction with governmental services provided by the village. A list of thirteen different governmental services (school system, fire protection, garbage collection, zoning policies, etc.) was read to the respondents, who were asked to indicate if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with each. Those who reported satisfaction with at least 12 of the 13 services were ranked "low" in dissatisfaction. Those who indicated satisfaction with 11 of the 13 were classified "medium," and those who complained about 3 or more of the services on the list were considered "high" in dissatisfaction. As can be seen by the way in which the responses were categorized, most of the respondents in all three communities expressed dissatisfaction with most of the services in question.
The data presented in Table 5 show Lincolnwood respondents to rate higher in mistrust than those in Norton Grove, with the Wilmette sample considerably less mistrustful. But the differences among the villages are almost negligible on the powerlessness dimension. When both measures are combined into the political alienation index, a pattern emerges similar to that found for mistrust: Lincolnwood respondents rating the most alienated and Wilmette respondents the least. But note also that the sharpest differences between Lincolnwood and the other two communities appear in the measurement of dissatisfaction: One-half of the Lincolnwood sample is classified as "highly" dissatisfied compared to about one-third in the other villages.

Some hypotheses might now be advanced about the effect of community setting on political alienation and its mistrust and powerlessness components. The community setting seems more likely to affect citizens' attitudes of trust or mistrust than their feelings of powerlessness. This disclosure is especially interesting in view of the sharp differences in the samples' perceptions of their community power structures. Although Lincolnwood respondents clearly perceive a more monolithic power structure than those in Norton Grove and Wilmette, this factor does not seem to be reflected in sample distributions of feelings of powerlessness. This finding conforms to the distinction observed by Agger, Goldstein, and Pearl, who discuss mistrust as an attitudinal variable and powerlessness as a personality variable. Milbrath suggests that attitudinal variables fluctuate more easily in response to environmental conditions than do the more deeply-rooted personality variables. According to this conceptualization, the extent to which a person felt powerful or powerless in political affairs would be attributable largely to the early stages of the socialization process, while the extent to which a person trusted or mistrusted his public officials would depend largely upon his perception of the current political environment.

If this reasoning is valid and if alienation is conceived as a combination of mistrust and powerlessness elements, then community variations in proportions of alienated voters are more likely to be due to differences in attitudes of mistrust than feelings of powerlessness. The greater volatility of attitudes of mistrust along with differences in community setting may account for the variability in the relationships found between mistrust and measures of powerlessness employed in other studies. Litt found no relationship between powerlessness and mistrust in Boston, commonly considered a model laboratory for inquiries into political corruption, but he did find a positive correlation between these dimensions for data from a Boston suburb with "a history of relatively effective and uncorrupted political rule." Agger, Goldstein, and Pearl also reported a positive relationship between the variables for two Oregon communities similarly untarnished by widespread images of corruption. The hypothesis is that feelings of powerlessness and attitudes of mistrust would correlate higher in "normal" political environments than in those which evoked attitudes of mistrust among the citizenry. As feelings of powerlessness remained more or less stable, attitudes of mistrust would arise in those who did not feel powerless, thus reducing the strength of the correlation. This line of reasoning is supported, but only partially so, but tau correlations computed between mistrust and powerlessness for each community. As the hypothesis suggests, the correlation is lowest (.19) for the Lincolnwood sample, which rated highest in mistrust. Contrary to the hypothesis, however, the correlation is higher for Norton Grove (.27) than for Wilmette (.23).

It is now appropriate to examine the effect of these attitudinal variables on political behavior. Because of the wide differences in voting turnout among the samples (79% reported voting in Lincolnwood, 69% in Norton Grove, and only 32% in Wilmette, where the trustee candidates were unopposed),
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This essay began with an inquiry into the conceptual status of political alienation, a popular variable in contemporary research on community politics. An alienated voter was seen to be a citizen who felt politically powerless while harboring attitudes of mistrust toward the activities of governmental officials. Four questions concerning research on political alienation were raised. On the basis of the data gathered from three suburban communities and analyzed in this paper, tentative answers may be offered for each of these questions.

1. What effect does the community setting have on the relationship between the powerless and mistrust components of alienation?

It appears that the correlation between these two components would vary inversely with the incidence of alienation within the population. The hypothesis would be: the higher the proportion of alienated voters, the lower the correlation between mistrust and powerlessness. The dynamics underlying the hypothesis involve the more "basic" nature of powerlessness as a relatively stable personality variable which does not vary as much among communities as attitudes of mistrust toward governmental officials.

2. How do these separate components independently relate to political behavior?

Feelings of powerlessness are strongly related to non-voting, while attitudes of mistrust are strongly related to negativity in the expression of voting preferences.

3. Is the explanation of political behavior improved by combining the two components into one measure of alienation?

According to the operational measures used in this paper, which attempted to replicate the political alienation studies done by Horton and Thompson, there is no improvement in the explanation of voting turnout and voting choice over the use of the appropriate separate component as stated in the answer to the above question. The powerlessness measure relates more strongly to voting turnout than does the alienation index. The mistrust measure relates more strongly to voting choice than does the alienation index.

4. What is the utility of choosing alienation as a political behavior variable over other available variables?

At this stage of research on alienation and in the absence of any general theory of political alienation, there appears to be no special utility in constructing "alienated voters" from responses to powerlessness and mistrust items. Not only do the individual components relate better to voting turnout and voting choice, but an extremely simple measure of dissatisfaction with governmental services rivals both variables in explanatory power.

As in all such studies, there is the possibility that the findings presented here may be attributable to peculiarities of the samples or may simply be artifacts of the particular operational measures employed. There can be no question that additional work remains to be done on the subject of political alienation. But in view of these findings, it would seem that future research ought to adopt a more critical approach to conceptual and operational aspects of alienation lest research on alienation get too far ahead of theories of alienation.
the conceptual status of political research on community politics, a citizen who felt politically trust toward the activities of research on political data gathered from three suburban native answers may be offered for setting have on the less and mistrust these two components would vary within the population. The hypo- of alienated voters, the lower the less. The dynamics underlying the of powerlessness as a relatively vary as much among communities as officials. its independently related to non-voting, while to negativism in the expression is into one measure of used in this paper, which attempt-studies done by Horton and Thompson, of voting turnout and voting rate component as stated in the the measure relates more strongly on index. The mistrust measure does the alienation index. alienation as a other available and in the absence of any general ers to be no special utility in cases to powerlessness and mistrust its relate better to voting turnout measure of dissatisfaction with in explanatory power, possibility that the findings varities of the samples or may rational measures employed. There seems to be done on the subject of conceptual approach to conceptual and much on alienation get too far

NOTES

5. Ibid., 674.
10. Social Forces, XXXVIII (March, 1960), 190-95.
11. Ibid., 190.
13. Ibid., 206-07.
17. Litt, "Political Cynicism and Political Futility."


In 1917 H. S. Gilbertson describes the people elect their board commissioners, hoping through direct appeal to the principles of their party, that the district attorney, the sheriff, the district attorney, the bureau of elections, may set forth upon a plan including, let us say, the superintendent of schools. The county clerk may not run for this office, preferring to run his office in this way. The county clerk may not run for the superintendent of schools, but the superintendent of schools may likewise go their respective rounds of the city, if in the interest of the people. If in the interest of the people, they may run for these offices collectively, for them or not, as they please, as they please, as they please.

Most authorities in the field of government have recognized the deficiencies in the lack of a chief executive as the major factor in the solving of metropolitan problems. The suburban counties, because of migration into the city, would soon become quite insignificant. Unfortunately, this apathy today, even though people are now moving to the fringe area, many counties are still unincorporated. The urban county of today, and the services that include police and fire protection, street lighting, sewage disposal, recreation, hospitals, libraries, museums, control, airports, civil defense, and urban renewal, Los Angeles County services not only the unincorporated cities within the county, it is the major factor in the solving of metropolitan problems. It has been suggested that the major factor in the solving of metropolitan problems, has stated:5