Trust, Efficacy, and Political Reform Behavior: A Study of Voters in Seven Pennsylvania Municipalities

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TRUST, EFFICACY, AND POLITICAL REFORM
BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF VOTERS IN SEVEN
PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES

by

Seyed Alaeddin Tolouie

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
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Seyed Alaeddin Tolouie
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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Political reform behavior is an important problem in the study of political sociology, because reformist behavior is viewed as important in social change by both the political left and right. A reformist is basically one who expects and promotes modest change in political and social structure while retaining a commitment to the organization of society and the distribution of goods and services within it. We may distinguish between reformist attitudes and actions designed to put these attitudes into practice, reformist behavior.

The purpose of this thesis is to test the following hypothesis proposed by Schwartz in his book Political Alienation and Political Behavior:

An individual who perceives a salient value conflict between his political values and those represented by the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically efficacious to obtain desired change, is likely to adopt reformist attitudes and engage in reformist behavior.¹

In Schwartz's view, the forces of estrangement and alienation

in combination with high efficacy are able to push individuals toward reformist attitudes and reformist behavior. Besides, Schwartz distinguishes reformist attitude and reformist behavior from radical activity. He suggests that salient value conflict, in the absence of perceived political efficacy, will produce radical or revolutionary orientations in a person placing high value on political participation. That is, threat from value conflict (TVC) + system inefficacy (SI) + personal inefficacy (PI) + high value on political participation yields radical activity. Generally he divides the consequences of political alienation into three kinds of behavioral orientation—withdrawal, reformism, and revolutionary action. These are based on the function of system inefficacy and personal inefficacy, political efficacy, and high value on political participation respectively.

Following the above discussion, Schwartz stresses that a reformist is one who "is motivated to political behavior by desire to reduce the threat from value conflict." In this regard an individual perceiving high efficacy will tend toward a reformist orientation instead of modifying his fundamental values. On the other hand, an individual who is likely to support radical or revolutionary groups is under the condition which gives no hope of reforming the system.

\[1\] Ibid.
from within or reducing the threat from value conflict. Schwartz feels that alienated reformists place a high value on political participation and "will find that withdrawal of self-identification contravenes their own values." Therefore they are likely to reinvest their self-identifications with radical or revolutionary groups.

Schwartz stresses the importance of social background plus personality variables and the relation of an individual to the political environment of his society. As we noted, Schwartz stresses the importance of political alienation. In his view, TVC (threat from value conflict) + PI (personal inefficacy) + SI (system inefficacy) yields alienation. The first aspect of Schwartz's expression, political alienation, is not of primary interest to us. The next stage is, however, of major interest to us. That is, TVC (threat from value conflict) + PE (political efficacy) yields reformist attitudes and reformist behavior. In Schwartz's view, the important factor in this stage is political efficacy. Political alienation is an outcome of value conflict; however, with the addition of political efficacy, we can expect reformist behavior and attitudes to develop.

For a general statement considering reformist or revolutionary attitude and behavior as a response to political alienation, we can also refer to Marx's discussion. Marx stresses that "industrial

\[1\] Ibid., p. 97.
workers would inevitably be alienated by their lack of control of the work process.\textsuperscript{1} Dissatisfaction with the process of work and its environment should lead to political alienation. In general, Marx proposes that alienation from the socio-political system could be a precondition to desiring to change that system.\textsuperscript{2} But this statement is an extensive and wide hypothesis which has to be considered in relation to the concept of class consciousness. This has been stressed in Marx's theory, "where alienation from work is seen as a fundamental cause of the class consciousness which drives his processes of alienation and revolution."\textsuperscript{3} Schwartz's hypothesis, stated above, may be seen as a refined statement of Marx's idea.

Since a major problem in this paper is the consideration of political reform behavior as a response to political attitudes including alienation, efficacy, and trust, we will focus on the attitude responses to them. The quality of alienation has been discussed frequently by social scientists. Merton in his analysis of the social structure and culture of society refers to alienation as "anomie."\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1}\textit{Encyclopedia of Sociology} (Guilford, Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., 1974), p. 9.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
By anomie he refers to the societal situation in which an individual "lives on the thin line of sensation between no future and no past."¹ And again, "anomie is a state of mind in which the individual's sense of social cohesion--the mainspring of his morale is broken or fatally weakened."² Marx and Durkheim pointed out that first alienation represents one important interface between certain aspects of social structure and then the characteristic responses at the individual level.

In addition to Marx, Merton, or Durkheim, others have considered alienation in general. But it should be understood that the only and small part of all these discussions focus on political alienation--one facet of alienation.

The important element for emergence of political alienation is value conflict. The concept of value conflict means that the political values of an individual are not the same as the values held by the political system. The concept of value conflict has been expressed by Gamson as the amount of trust (high-low) by individuals and the generalization of it toward the political system. He stresses that if the outcome of the political system or political institutions doesn't

² Ibid.
fit with the expectations and desires of individuals within a given society, the amount of the individual's trust toward that political system will be lower. Value conflict, in combination with political efficacy, also is important in the emergence of a political reform attitude and reform behavior.

The next important variable in consideration of our major hypothesis is political efficacy: "The efficacy dimension of political alienation refers to people's perception of their ability to influence." Thus an individual has high political efficacy if he believes he can be politically effective as a supporter for some political activity.

In examining political alienation and political behavior, Schwartz's major purpose is to examine the relationship of alienation to political behavior. The reformist orientation is only one of a number of basic behavioral orientations which Schwartz examines. In Schwartz's view other basic behavioral orientations contain conformity, ritualism, retreatism, and rebelliousness. These concepts are adapted from Merton's earlier discussion. In Merton's view they are individual responses to the normlessness or anomie. Based on Merton's discussion it is possible to create more hypotheses than the major hypothesis of this study. This can be done by


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conceptualizing value conflict as low trust and political efficacy as a variable that comes in different degrees. It should be clear that this manner of conceptualization about value conflict as low trust can also be utilized for the major hypothesis of this study. Therefore, the major hypothesis of this study can be considered as:

An individual who has low trust toward the political system and also perceives himself to be politically efficacious is likely to adopt reformist attitudes and behavior.

Significance of the Problem

The study of reformist behavior is important for two major reasons. First, it is important because of a relationship to democracy. The existence of reformative behavior may be an indication of a real democracy. Lipset has stressed that "the stability of any given democracy depends not only on economic development but also upon the effectiveness and the legitimacy of its political system."1 He has also stressed that real democracy involves a balance between forces of conflict and consensus. Reform behavior with its emphasis on gradual change may be viewed as an attempt to achieve this balance. In adopting this view, I have rejected Marx's position that conflict and consensus are alternatives that cannot be

balanced.

Second, reformative processes may be conceived as an elementary condition for revolution and thus have relevance to social change. Reformative processes may also prevent spurious revolution--destructive movements under the slogan of revolution. One of the basic elements for any revolution and social movement is demand for change and desire for new social order. Therefore, movements that involve reformist attitudes and reformist behavior or more precisely, as Hopper stresses, "reform efforts on the part of the government"\(^1\) is one of the preliminary stages for revolution.

Based on the above discussion we can propose that an understanding of the exact characteristics or conditions which would cause reformist attitudes and reformist behavior may on one hand be an alarm bell of revolution, or on the other hand be an alternative to destructiveness movements.

Of course in some cases reform has been utilized to keep oppressed classes down. This consequence of reform has been utilized by the ruling class in order to deal with alienated classes who are developing class consciousness without changing the main

cause of their alienation. Nevertheless, even in this case gradual changes or reform can display a significant function to accomplish the final step of real revolution. In fact, real revolution results "when small improvements generate rising aspirations and decrease tolerance for long-existing injustices."\(^1\) Therefore, the reform can show to people that things can improve and move them directly and unceasingly toward the goal. Furthermore, "revolution does not occur when things get bad enough but when things get better."\(^2\)

\(^1\)Philip Slater, *The Pursuit of Loneliness: American Culture at the Breaking Point* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 120.

\(^2\)Ibid.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The major hypothesis of this thesis relates trust and efficacy to political reform behavior. Therefore, in this section we will focus on some research which has examined the relationship of these variables. I will also examine political alienation as a major or important causal variable in the emergence of political behavior.

Based on a conception of political alienation as "estrangement" from the political system, Schwartz analyzed the attitudinal and behavioral orientation of individuals toward the system. In this treatment estrangement means a perception where the individual does not identify with the political system. Schwartz's work illuminates the cause and behavioral consequences of the single attitude of political alienation. Schwartz tried to make clear the function of political alienation in bringing about reformist attitudes and reformist behavior. Political alienation is always the independent variable and Schwartz examined its consequences in the emergence of reformist attitudes and reformist behavior.

Schwartz stresses that alienation is the product of three perceptions or attitudes: (1) a sense of threat arising from the perception of basic conflict between what the polity is doing and what a
person wants it to do (value conflict), (2) a sense of one's own political inefficacy or personal inefficacy which means one who perceives himself to be unable, by his own behavior, to determine or control desired outcomes, and (3) a feeling that the system is not responsive (system inefficacy).

As a similar study which uses different terminology, we can introduce Gamson's work. The similarity of Gamson's work and his hypothesis to Schwartz's hypothesis can be seen in the following:

A combination of high sense of political efficacy and low political trust is the optimum combination for mobilization—a belief that influence is both possible and necessary.1

An additional aspect which Gamson notes is that "Trust also is related to the means of political action chosen."2 As we will see, he stresses that the "action chosen" will make the result of his hypothesis more "explosive." Means of influence or "action chosen" can be categorized according to the way in which the belief of an individual or the preferred outcome has been specified. Individuals with "confidence" (high trust) will rely on "persuasion" as a means of influence toward the system. In this case persuasion involves

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1 William A. Gamson, Power and Discontent, p. 48.


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making the authorities prefer the same outcomes that the influencer prefers without adding any new advantages or disadvantages to the situation. ¹ Individuals with "neutrality" (moderate trust) will rely on "inducements." Inducements can be defined as the addition of new advantages to the situation. In this regard the concept of "neutrality" notes that the individual believes that the political system is moderately competent and efficient. Finally, an "alienated" individual has very low trust toward the political system and will use "constraints" (the addition of new disadvantages to the situation). The concept of constraints in view of an alienated group is that "only force is understood by the successful use of constraints."² Otherwise it is "the capacity to create trouble if their needs are not met."³

With respect to the purpose of this study and the concept of alienation, Merton's and Durkheim's descriptions as "normlessness or confusion of norms in the culture,"⁴ are of interest to us. In this case, Merton describes the response of man to this social condition

¹William A. Gamson, _Power and Discontent_, p. 79.
²Ibid., p. 173.
³Ibid., p. 170.
⁴David C. Schwartz, _Political Alienation_, p. 5.
as "reformism, rebelliousness, and conformity--as adaptation to anomie." Since these behavioral orientations are the same concepts used in Schwartz's study, Merton's work will be considered briefly. Moreover, we realize the concept "confusion of norms" is very similar to one of our important variables, value conflict.

Briefly, Merton's work can be viewed in a framework which contains and considers the relation between cultural goal and norms for a given society. With respect to this discussion, we can claim that anomie in this situation can be conceived of as an independent variable when we consider the kind of responses as adaptation to it. Because, in Merton's view, the result of outcome of anomie is the various kinds of behavior which contrasts with conformity, he calls them aberrant behavior.

Aberrant behavior has been conceptualized "as a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realizing these aspirations." In this case Merton has considered one type of dissociation that exists in a "society in which there is an exceptionally strong emphasis upon specific goals without a corresponding emphasis upon institutional

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1 Ibid.

2 Robert K. Merton, Social Theory, p. 134.
procedures." Therefore, his major focus is on the normal reactions of normal people to abnormal conditions. In this regard, there is some similarity to one aspect of Marx's work, for the purpose of both is to make the system itself to blame for deviation rather than the individual. One of the weaknesses of Merton's work is that he never tested his hypothesis. Furthermore, as Schwartz stresses: "He does not consistently distinguish between attitudinal and behavioral responses" to anomie.

As another study which can be related to our main purpose, Gurr's work is useful in respects. Gurr, in proposing the concept of "pattern of relative deprivation," intended to consider the value structure of society. In doing so, his main purpose becomes a consideration of the quality and function of two factors which he calls "value expectation" and "value capabilities." In his view relative deprivation is defined as the "perceived discrepancy between value expectation and value capabilities." 1

Based on the above discussion about Gurr's work we can conceptualize the concept of value expectation as value conflict or

1Ibid.

2David C. Schwartz, Political Alienation, p. 6-7.

low trust and the concept of value capabilities as political efficacy or inefficacy based on the amount of it. Value expectations "are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled." Therefore, it is easy to understand that if an individual in a society couldn't obtain the values he expected, he is in a condition which can be named value conflict with the political system. Value capability can be conceptualized as political efficacy as aforementioned. Gurr stresses that "value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining." 

Based on the above definition of variables Gurr propounds the concept of aspirational deprivation. In our view aspirational deprivation implies the same concept as Gamson’s and Schwartz’s hypothesis. Because Gurr stresses that aspirational deprivation is the case in which a group of value expectations begins to increase (low trust) and its value capabilities remain relatively constant. In this case he depicts the result of this situation to be any kind of mobilizing or violent action against the political system.

In fact, it is a combination of fairly moderate efficacy plus low trust or high value conflict. In this regard we can claim that

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1Ibid., p. 13.

2Ibid.
the concept of relative deprivation more than anything else can be similar to anomie or discontent.

According to Merton, the significance of this subject is clear because at the beginning of this study we stressed the possibility of setting up some new hypotheses. As we said these hypotheses can be propounded in addition to the major hypothesis of this study and are directly related to Merton's proposed concepts. Our attention to these hypotheses has resulted from the point which Schwartz propounds his hypothesis. In this case he considers the combination of low trust plus high efficacy. Therefore he has omitted other possible combinations, or at least he hasn't tested them. Such a neglect is even true in Merton's work although he has propounded those concepts and analyzed them in a theoretical way. But he has never tested his hypotheses in empirical research.

It should be clear, we are aware, that Merton's study is basically different from our study because he has never considered the combination of trust and efficacy as a response to political alienation. Nevertheless, we have used his concepts to set up the possible combinations of trust and efficacy as hypotheses. As we know, Schwartz's hypothesis has been taken from Merton's ideas.

Other possible hypotheses in addition to the major hypothesis of this study are suggested by the following scheme:
As we can realize from the above scheme, individuals in the "high trust" cells do not desire change. High trust shows high allegiance toward the system even though it may be combined with low efficacy. This situation, as Lipset\textsuperscript{1} points out, is common in some traditional monarchial system. The cell combining low trust with low efficacy contains individuals who have a reason to desire change but who don't feel their action would have any effect.

We do not intend to test any combination of trust and efficacy as hypotheses except low trust and high efficacy. Since this study is a secondary analysis of data which was intended for another study, we are not able to develop any measurements of conformity, retreatist, and ritualistic behavior as dependent variables. However, we should point out that, based on Merton's concept of behavioral orientation, a number of possible combinations of trust and efficacy (hypotheses) will be discussed. These we believe to be proper objects for further studies.

\textsuperscript{1}Seymour M. Lipset, \textit{Political Man}, pp. 67-70.
Suggested Hypotheses

Merton depicts an individual who accepted collective cultural goals and perceives that these can be achieved by institutionalized means as conformists. In such a condition an individual should not have value conflict with the social system or necessarily the political system and would also have political efficacy. Hence, we hypothesize:

An individual who has high trust (low value conflict) toward the political system and also perceives himself to be politically efficacious is likely to adopt conformist behavior.

Paige¹ in consideration of four kinds of combinations of trust and efficacy stresses that a high trust, high efficacy orientation is allegiance and proposes that it is characteristic of democratic political systems.

Another possible hypothesis which we can set up is the combination of high trust plus low efficacy. This condition is characteristic of a traditional society or as Paige² points out, a paternalistic society. However, with conceptualization of Merton's hypothesis

¹Jeffery M. Paige, "Collective Violence and the Culture of Subordination" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1968)

with regard to our major independent variables, the quality of
ritualism has been chosen as an appropriate concept for the above
combination. In Merton's view, ritualism "involves the abandoning
or scaling down of the lofty cultural goals of great pecuniary success
and rapid social mobility to the point where one's aspiration can be
satisfied."¹ In fact, this kind of response refers to conditions
where the goals are abandoned but conformity to the mores
(institutionalize means) persists.

Hence, we hypothesize:

An individual who perceives no value conflict
(high trust) between his fundamental political values
and those represented by the political system, and
who also perceives himself to be politically ineffica-
cious, is likely to adopt ritualistic behavior.

Furthermore, we can stress that "high trust in authorities implies
some lack of necessity for influencing them."² As an implication
we should say that this kind of response is dependent on the social
class of individuals. In fact, former studies suggest: "lower-
middle-class Americans tend to be heavily represented among those
making adaptation III, ritualism."³

¹Robert K. Merton, Social Theory, p. 149.
²William A. Gamson, Power and Discontent, p. 46.
³Robert K. Merton, Social Theory, p. 151.
In setting up the third hypothesis with the combination of low trust and low efficacy, it seems at first glance that we might expect alienation. But on close examination it can be found that the possibility of alienation being the stage between ritualism and retreatism is not so improbable.\(^1\) Moreover, the major purpose of this thesis is consideration of any behavioral orientation with regard to political alienation. Therefore, we should pay attention to any behavior orientation which occurs after alienation. In this case, "retreatism seems to occur in response to acute anomie,"\(^2\) and anomie in our view is somehow the same as political alienation. In order to make clear the quality of retreatists we can refer to Merton's expression: "retreatists are even more reluctant to enter into new social relations with others than are those described as 'alienated,' with the result that they tend to continue in their apathetic condition."\(^3\) In sum, a retreatist is one who has already been alienated and does not even try to obtain values with illegal means. So it is a stage which is sharper than alienation. Thus based on foregoing discussion we hypothesize:

An individual who perceives a salient value conflict (low trust) between his fundamental political values

\(^1\)David C. Schwartz, Political Alienation, p. 8.

\(^2\)Robert K. Merton, Social Theory, p. 188.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 189.
and those represented by the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically inefficacious to obtain desired change, is likely to adopt retreatist behavior.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the collection of the data, measurement of the variables, and data analysis.

Data

The data were originally collected in order to study local government regime change in Pennsylvania municipalities with respect to the home rule and optional plans law. Interviews by telephone were used to obtain the desired information from randomly selected samples of registered voters within seven Pennsylvania municipalities. The data were collected in the seven municipalities during 1972-1974. A combined cross sectional and panel design was utilized in the original research. Since it was possible that respondents would be changed in their political attitudes or behaviors by the interview process, the necessity of a sample that was not reinterviewed was clear.

The data collection consisted of interviews of random samples of registered voters. The first interview was held during the two weeks preceding the November, 1972, election. These interviews were conducted in McKeesport, Penn Hills Township, State College,
Allegheny County, and Ferguson Township, all in Pennsylvania.
The number of cases for each one of these municipalities respec-
vively are as follows: 178, 195, 210, 283, and 224. The second
wave of interviews were held just before November, 1973, or in the
spring of 1974. Interviews were also held in November, 1973, or
the spring of 1974 in Bellefonte and O'Hara Township; the number of
cases being 90 and 87 respectively. The total number of cases
available for analysis is 1,262. Often only a portion of these 1,262
cases can be used, however. The reason for this limitation is that
some of our measures were not used in all interview waves.

Operationalization of Dependent Variables

Reformist attitude

The first dependent variable is reformist attitude. In this
study the index of reformist attitudes is based on the question which
evaluates the favorable and unfavorable attitudes and attention of
registered voters toward home rule. The first measure of reform-
ist attitude is the desire for some kind of improvement in munici-
palities. The second measure is the interest of voters in a
possible television program about home rule. Willingness to make
an effort to watch such programs is the indicator of high reformist
attitude. The wording of the questionnaire items used to measure
reformist attitudes is as follows:

1. Are there specific local governmental services that you think need improvement?

2. If a few one-half hour discussions of local governmental home rule were presented on television, do you think that you ( ) PROBABLY WOULD NOT WATCH ONE OF THESE PROGRAMS, ( ) PROBABLY WOULD WATCH IF YOU TUNED INTO IT, OR ( ) PROBABLY WOULD MAKE AN EffORT TO WATCH AT LEAST ONE OF THE PROGRAMS.

Since the first measure of reformist attitude is an open-ended question, responses which suggest a needed improvement will be used as an indicator of reformist attitude. The second question is evaluated as follows: the responses "probably not watch" and "watch if tuned into it" were scored as low reformist attitude. The response "probably would make an effort to watch at least one of the programs" was scored as high reformist attitude and the rest of the responses were omitted.

Reformist behavior

The measure of reformist behavior in this study is positive practical response to request for change. Reformist behavior is an action designed to put reformist attitudes into practice. Therefore, reformist behavior will be measured by responses to questions which ask how respondents plan to vote on the various home rule elections. In this regard, yes votes for the establishment of the
home rule process will be used as an indicator of high reformist behavior and no votes will be used as an indicator of low reformist behavior.

Three questions in the interviews dealt with the quality of the voting of respondents about the establishment of home rule from different points of view. These questions were as follows:

1. (1972) There is another item on the November ballot. I would like to know how you would vote on it if you were in the voting booth now. This item reads as follows:

   Shall a government study commission of ____ members be elected to study the government of ____ and to recommend whether or not a home rule charter should be adopted?

   Would you vote ____YES  ____NO

2. (1972) The members of the study commission are to serve without pay. The commission is to study ____ government in ____ and to recommend either how it might be improved or to leave things as they are. A majority of the voters in ____ would have to vote in favor of this commission's recommendation before any change would be made in borough government.

   If you had known these things, would you have voted YES on the question of setting up the study commission?  ____YES  ____NO

3. (1973, 1974) There is an item on the ballot which involves the recommendation of your local government study commission. I would like to know how you would vote on it if you were in the voting booth right now. This item reads as follows:

   Shall the Home Rule Charter contained in the report dated ____ of the Government
Study Commission prepared in accordance with the Home Rule Charter and Optional Plans Law be adopted by _____.

Would you vote ____YES or ____NO on this item?

The response "yes" shows that the person agrees with changes and can be utilized as a measure of high reformist behavior in this study. Therefore, the percentage of yes votes were used as measures of high reformist behavior. Otherwise, the no votes were used as a measure of low reformist behavior. Since these three items were asked at different times during the interview waves, they are kept separate in the data analysis.

Operationalization of Independent Variables

Trust

The degree of political trust, the independent variable, refers to a kind of "diffuse support" which "forms a reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effect which they see as damaging their wants."¹ Based on this definition, political trust toward national government will be measured by the following item:

How much do you think we can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

____ almost never
____ some of the time
____ most of the time
____ just about always

In this item both "just about always" and "most of the time" were scored as high trust. The "some of the time" and "almost never" responses were scored as low trust.

Efficacy

The efficacy dimension of political alienation, as we pointed out earlier, refers to people's perception of their ability to influence. In this study, the registered voters' perceived sense of efficacy refers to their belief that they can shape or determine the occurrence of political outcomes that they desire. One of the items evaluated the level of political efficacy by asking respondents if wealthy people play a dominant role in the process of decision making. Since an earlier study utilizing this data was examined and did not show significant variation, the item has been eliminated from consideration here. The following is the measure of political efficacy:

"I don't think city officials care much about people like me."

____ agree strongly
____ agree
____ disagree
____ disagree strongly
In this case "agree strongly" and "agree" will be considered as low efficacy and the responses "disagree strongly" and "disagree" were treated as high efficacy.

**Operationalization of Control Variables**

**Education**

In order to measure the level of education, the number of years of formal schooling was used. Therefore, the level of education will be measured by the following item:

How many years of education have you had?

In this case, the response choices are divided into three levels: high school graduates or less, at least some college, and 16 years of education or more.

**Income**

This item would be considered from the point of annual family income. Therefore, it is measured by the following question:

What was your approximate family income for the past year--before taxes?

( ) Less than $5,000  ( ) Over $15,000
( ) Over $5,000    ( ) Over $20,000
( ) Over $10,000  ( ) Over $25,000

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Religion

Religion is the church preference of respondents: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or no preference. This item will be measured by the following question:

Do you have a religious preference?

( ) YES ( ) NO

If yes, specify _______________________

Organization membership

In this regard, the total number of organization memberships is used without considering the kind of organization. The response choices are divided into three levels: (1) no organization membership, (2) one organization membership, and (3) two or more organization memberships.

Method of Data Analysis

In this study the basic statistical procedure which was used was the examination of percentage differences. Since each hypothesis involved three variables, tables were constructed which cross-classified the two independent variables; the cell entries were the percentage of cases in each cell which showed reformism, either attitude or behavior. Since the percentage which appears in a cell
is based on the number of cases which show a particular combination of trust and efficacy, the percentage for rows or columns of the entire table do not total 100 percent.

The contingency control technique was used to control for certain variables. Thus, separate tables were created for each category of the control variables.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

As previously stated, this study is concerned with the processes of reformist attitude and reformist behavior. The hypothesis of this study predicts the direction of the relationship between two independent and two dependent variables. These four specific variables with which the hypothesis deal directly are as follows: (1) political trust as an independent variable, (2) political efficacy as an independent variable, (3) reformist attitude as a dependent variable, and (4) reformist behavior as a dependent variable. In order to make clear the predicted direction of the major hypothesis with the combination of the above variables, we repeat the hypothesis proposed by Schwartz:

An individual who perceives a salient value conflict between his fundamental political values and those represented by the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically efficacious to obtain desired change, is likely to adopt reformist attitudes and engage in reformist behavior. ¹

This chapter will present data relevant to the major hypothesis as well as an interpretation and discussion of these data.

¹David C. Schwartz, Political Alienation, p. 95.
Contingency tables are used for the most part in presenting the data. In this case tables will present the interactive relationship of two independent variables with each of two dependent variables: reformist attitude and reformist behavior. Thus, two questions are raised:

1. Is the relationship between political trust, political efficacy, and reformist attitude the same as predicted in Schwartz's hypothesis?

2. Is the relationship between political trust, political efficacy, and reformist behavior the same as predicted in Schwartz's hypothesis?

Analysis

Research Hypothesis I: *An individual who has low trust toward the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically efficacious, is likely to adopt reformist attitudes.* Thus this hypothesis predicts that the highest level of reformist attitudes will occur with the combination of low degree of political trust and high degree of political efficacy.

Table 1 shows the percent of those who are high in reformist attitude with various combinations of political trust and political efficacy. The data indicate no support for the hypothesis; the combination of low trust and high efficacy did not show the highest level of reformist attitude. The cell with the highest percentage of those who would make an effort to watch television programs about
home rule (high reformist attitude) is the combination of low political trust and low political efficacy.

Table 1

Percent Willing to Make Effort to Watch Television Programs About Home Rule by Trust and Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>78.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(76)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(80)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further test of research hypothesis I can be carried out by examining the relationship between trust and perceived political efficacy with the second measure of reformist attitude: desire for improvement of local government services. Table 2 indicates the same pattern in the case of the cell with the highest percentage. That is, the cell with the highest percentage of those who are desiring improvement of local governmental services (high reformist attitude) is the combination of low political efficacy and low political trust. Therefore, the research hypothesis is not supported
for the second time.

Table 2

Percent Desiring Improvement of Local Governmental Services (High Reformist Attitude) by Trust and Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Hypothesis II: *An individual who has low trust toward the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically efficacious, is likely to adopt reformist behavior.* Thus, the combinations of low political trust and high political efficacy will produce the highest degree of reformist behavior.

Table 3 fails to support the hypothesis. The highest percentage of those favoring home rule was among respondents with the combination of low trust and low efficacy.
Table 3

Percent Favoring Home Rule (High Reformist Behavior) by Trust and Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>(69)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>(79)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspection of data in Table 4 shows that again the percentage distribution was not in the predicted direction. The highest percentage of those voting yes on the election of local government study commission (high reformist behavior) is found in the cell with the combination of high political trust and low political efficacy.
Table 4

Percent Giving Yes Vote on the Election of a Local Government Study Commission (High Reformist Behavior) by Trust and Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>(27)</td>
<td>92.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>(56)</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Percent Giving Yes Vote on the Recommendation of Government Study Commission (High Reformist Behavior) by Trust and Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>(131)</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>(213)</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 5 show that again the relationship was not in the predicted direction. The largest percentage (82.6) of people who voted yes on the recommendation of the government study commission (high reformist behavior) appears in the cell with the combination of high efficacy and high trust. This is the only case within our findings in which political efficacy has a positive effect on reformism in combination with either low or high trust. Contradictory to the hypotheses, low political efficacy generally (Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4) appears to increase reformist attitude and reformist behavior when in combination with low political trust. When the trust level is high, the effect of efficacy is not clear. When only individuals with a high level of trust are examined, efficacy shows both a negative (Tables 1 and 4) and a positive (Tables 2 and 3) effect on reformism.

In the analysis we tested the effect of religion, income, education, and organizational membership as control variables. Income and education were used as controls because they are indicators of social class and are generally associated with participation. Organizational membership and religion are employed as controls in this analysis since their importance have been stressed in earlier studies of political participation. However, inspection of the data revealed that these four control variables did not have a consistent effect. In only two cases did any of the control variables have a large effect.
When we controlled for religion, one measure for the dependent variable showed the pattern predicted in the hypothesis. Among Catholics the highest percentage of those who reported a willingness to make an effort to watch a television program on home rule was found among respondents who revealed a combination of high efficacy and low trust. While 71.4% of all respondents who showed high efficacy and low trust were willing to make an effort to watch a home rule program, 93.5% of Catholics with the combination of high efficacy and low trust were willing to make an effort to watch such a television program.

Controlling for organizational membership also produced an effect. Among those who had only one organization membership, the percentage of those desiring improvement of local government services was sharply reduced. While 57.1% of all high efficacy, low trust respondents desired improvement of local government services, only 15.3% of those with a single organization membership and who showed the combination of high efficacy and low trust desired such change.

As was mentioned before, the preceding two associations were the only cases in which control variables had a large effect. They should not, however, be treated as conclusive results for purposes of generalization. Sample size was quite small once controls were used and thus these findings, while interesting, should be
viewed with caution.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to test a hypothesis proposed by Schwartz which relates threat from value conflict and efficacy to reformist attitudes and behavior. Gamson's work on determinants of political participation was used as a basis for reconceptualizing Schwartz's work. The hypotheses tested in this thesis were:

1. An individual who has low trust toward the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically efficacious, is likely to adopt reformist attitudes.

2. An individual who has low trust toward the political system, but who also perceives himself to be politically efficacious, is likely to adopt reformist behavior.

This study made use of data which were originally collected in order to study local government change with respect to home rule in seven Pennsylvania municipalities. Telephone calls were used to interview 1,262 randomly selected registered voters during 1972-1974. A combined cross-sectional and panel design was utilized in the original research. For the purpose of the present study we viewed favorable attitudes toward the support of proposed home rule
changes as indicators of reformist attitudes and reformist behavior.

The data revealed almost no support for the hypotheses. In fact, contradictory to the hypotheses, a low degree of efficacy seems closely connected to reformist attitudes and behavior. That is, when reformist attitude was measured by the percent of those who were willing to make an effort to watch a home rule television program or those who desired improvement of local government services, cells with the combination of low efficacy and low trust contained the highest percentages. Moreover, when high reformist behavior was measured by the percent of those favoring home rule or percent of those giving a yes vote on the election of a local governmental study commission, low efficacy produced the highest percentages when in combination with high or low trust respectively.

In general, the data revealed that the effect of high efficacy is ambiguous when in combination with a high level of trust. Controls for religion produced the predicted pattern for Catholics. As was pointed out earlier, this was the only case which confirmed a hypothesis.

Conclusion

In this present study, neither one of the hypotheses were supported. Perhaps the simplest explanation for the lack of support would be that high efficacy and low trust are, indeed, not associated
with a high level of reformist attitude and behavior. It may be that Gamson and Schwartz have proposed an overly rational-mechanistic-model which ignores "nonrational" variables. Gamson and, to less degree, Schwartz have concentrated on low level of trust in constructing their hypotheses. They expect the efficacious-trustful to participate less than the efficacious-mistrustful. In this regard, Gamson stresses that individuals with a high degree of trust have no reason to get involved since they are confident that the political system will make decisions favorable to them without their participation. This idea seems plausible, but for a variety of "nonrational" reasons individuals with high trust may participate as much as those with low trust.

A related explanation for the lack of support is that some other independent (perhaps intervening) variables have been neglected in the hypotheses. A self-esteem variable such as "sense of duty" may be a good example of a type of psychological motivation which can be added to the hypotheses. Further, another reason for weaknesses of the hypotheses can be sought in Gamson's and Schwartz's conceptual schemes for the variables. That is, they do not seem to have defined or specified the boundaries of the phenomena that they have conceptualized. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the hypotheses may find some empirical support for nontraditional participation. By contrast to traditional participation which

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includes activities acceptable to the system—voting, contribution money, working in campaigns—nontraditional or anti-system participations are activities less acceptable to the system. For example, street protesting or rioting are in this category and might find some association with Gamson's theory. In any case, we should recognize that we have not tested this possibility.

In this thesis value conflict has been conceptualized as low trust. Distrust may, of course, have sources other than value conflict. Citizens may develop distrust of the political process, political institutions, and incumbents for a variety of reasons. In future research it would be helpful to measure value conflict and trust with several distinct measures. Then it would be possible to assess the extent of association between value conflict and different forms of trust. It is possible that the hypotheses would find more support with different measures of trust.

Perhaps a final reason for the lack of support for the hypotheses might be that the use of efficacy was too diffuse and conceptually vague. Neither Gamson nor Schwartz clarify the difference between the belief in popular efficacy (institutional efficacy) and belief in personal political efficacy. In fact, Gamson did not test his hypotheses and, thus, he did not propose any measure for political efficacy and the only place where this measure was used by Schwartz is in the section devoted to revolutionary behavior.
The measure used by Schwartz was: "To what extent do you believe that you could be effective politically as a supporter of the VPL?"

In this present study we had access only to the following measure of political efficacy: "I don't think city officials care much about people like me."

As a scientific exercise I think that the present study, in spite of its limitation, has been worthwhile. This study did not find conclusive support for the proposed hypotheses; nevertheless, in my opinion it has been worthwhile. Schwartz's hypotheses have been reconceptualized based on Gamson's hypotheses and have been tested against the real world. Secondly, we have revealed the conceptual complications of the variables and noted other possible hypotheses. Thus, we have established some new possible directions for future research. Moreover, if we accept that a fundamental goal of the social sciences is to test plausible theories against reality, this thesis could be interpreted as an attempt to do so. Finally it is important to mention that in a society like the United States of America, where most social scientists believe in reform as a balance between conflict and consensus, there have been few studies considering reformism. Clearly the investigation of reformist attitudes and behavior deserve great attention from social scientists, especially sociologists.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


