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Patterns of Support for George Wallace: Implications for Racial Change

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Evidence to support the argument that George Wallace's popularity is a product of rising antiblack sentiment is examined with a focus on the evaluation of Wallace by northern whites across a number of national surveys. Demographic characteristics of supporters are examined and the link between racial attitudes and pro-Wallace tendencies is explored. It is concluded that the role of racial prejudice in Wallace's northern support has been exaggerated, that the Wallace phenomenon is a symptom not a cause of structural changes in the political system, and that party leaders are overreacting to myths about the extent of Wallace's influence.

In three consecutive presidential campaigns, George Wallace has surprised political analysts by attracting large numbers of northern voters. Each time his success is interpreted as demonstrating that white racial antagonism is increasing. Unless elected officials alter their pro-civil rights policies, goes the argument, serious repercussions will follow (Philips, 1969; Scammon &

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Wattenberg, 1969). Indeed, as early as the mid-1960s, "white backlash" gained popular acceptance as an all-encompassing explanation for this apparent increment in white resentment against federal civil rights initiatives.

The direct connection between racial prejudice and the Wallace phenomenon is more explicit in many social science interpretations. Although these explanations do not rely exclusively on the political ramifications of racial tensions, Wallace support is typically viewed as the product of rising antiblack sentiment fueled by militant protest actions and the fear of racial change (McEvoy, 1971). Lipset and Raab (1970), for example, trace the historical continuity between right-wing extremism and contemporary backlash politics represented by the Wallace phenomenon. They view this alleged backlash as the politics of desperation, led by groups displaced by structural changes in society who seek unsuccessfully to reverse the direction of social change through political means.

Though these arguments appear intuitively obvious, this paper attempts to assess critically the social-psychological evidence supporting them. We will focus on the more problematic northern white vote for Wallace, for his southern vote blends the strains of racism, populism, fundamentalism, and regional nationalism that have long made southern politics distinctive. Our measure of pro-Wallace tendencies, however, is not based upon voting preferences in the 1968 election. Instead, we employ a more general evaluation of Wallace (the Gallup "scalometer") across a large number of national surveys. This extensive set of survey data allows over-time analysis of trends in Wallace support, using the same question in comparable cross-sectional populations. The demographic characteristics of Wallace's supporters in the North will be examined with a large set of pooled surveys and the link between racial attitudes and pro-Wallace tendencies will be explored.

Indicators of Wallace Support

Our principal indicator is a rating scale which the Gallup organization has repeatedly used[1] to measure favorability toward Wallace:

[1]American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO) surveys #696 (August 4, 1964), 744 (April 17, 1967), 753 (October 25, 1967), 761 (April 30, 1968), 765 (July 16, 1968), 767 (August 30, 1968), 770 (October 15, 1968), 776 (March 10, 1969), 785 (July 22, 1969), 792 (October 28, 1969), 797 (January 13, 1970), 809 (June 16, 1970), and 815 (October 1970).

> Here is an interesting experiment. [*Hand respondent scalometer.*] You notice that 10 boxes on this card go from the highest position of plus 5—or someone or something you like very much—all the way down to the lowest position of minus 5—or someone or something you dislike very much. Please tell me how far up the scale or how far down the scale you would rate the following: George Wallace.

The scalometer rating has an important advantage in that it yields a better distribution of Wallace support than the 10% to 20% marginals obtained from the typical voting preference item. This allows the separation of strong anti-Wallace feeling from mere indifference, the hard-core Wallace strength from his more moderate support.

The validity of the scalometer rests in part on its strong relationship to voting preferences of Republicans and Democrats as well as Independents. The Republican percentage at each rating, however, is considerably below that of the other two groups, which raises the question of the importance of Wallace's rating relative to the ratings of other candidates. Table 1 demonstrates that voting choice is more closely related to relative than to absolute candidate ratings. The important fact for voting is not whether Wallace received a +5 or +4 scalometer rating but whether his rating was higher than that of the other candidates. Thus, among

TABLE 1
VOTING PREFERENCES
(Percentages)

			Rep.	Ind.	Dem.
Wallace rating higher than Nixon or Humphrey	+3	Wallace	66.7	86.8	77.0
		Others	12.5	9.5	17.6
			(24)	(53)	(74)
	+2	Wallace	66.7	70.0	60.4
		Others	33.3	22.0	28.3
			(21)	(50)	(53)
	+1	Wallace	62.5	73.8	49.1
		Others	31.3	18.5	43.6
			(32)	(65)	(55)
Wallace rating equal to Nixon or Humphrey		Wallace	20.0	30.6	21.9
		Nixon	67.1	33.3	13.5
		Humphrey	51.4	19.4	45.8
			(70)	(108)	(96)
Wallace rating lower than Nixon or Humphrey		Wallace	1.3	2.4	1.7
		Nixon	90.7	54.7	17.0
		Humphrey	5.5	32.1	74.5
			(1210)	(695)	(1111)

Note. *N*s in parentheses. Table based upon the combined data from AIPO surveys #761, 765, 767, 770.

those northern respondents who ranked Wallace highest, 69% planned to vote for him; among those who gave Wallace a tied ranking with another candidate, only 24% planned to vote for him; and just 1.7% of those who rated Nixon or Humphrey higher actually planned to vote for Wallace. (The same trend holds for the South: 86%, 43%, and 4%.) Table 1 shows that this sharp relationship holds for all three political party groups.

Yet the fact that only 69% of the northern respondents who liked Wallace best planned on voting for him seems low. One might attribute this one-third defection to voters who did not wish to waste their ballot on a candidate with little chance of winning. But this popular explanation ignores the critical role of party loyalty. Among those who rated Wallace highest, there were fewer defectors among Independents (23%) than among Republicans and Democrats (35%). In the aggregate, of course, Wallace suffered more from the effects of party loyalty since many more of his supporters faced conflicting party loyalties. Nor could the southern governor command any party loyalty of his own. Yet once party identification is controlled, Wallace's defection rate is no greater than Humphrey's and only slightly larger than Nixon's. These results suggest that the Alabamian suffered no special burden as a third-party nominee unlikely to triumph in the final election.

Changes during the campaign itself were a second important factor in translating a high Wallace rating into a voting preference. The four surveys of Table 1 contained both the scalometer and the voting preference question and were conducted during April, July, August, and October of 1968. In each succeeding sampling, there was a greater likelihood that high Wallace ratings were linked to Wallace voting intentions. In April, only 55% of those giving the governor a +5 rating intended to vote for him. This percentage increased to 64%, to 71% and by October to 83%. This sharp increment over the course of the campaign is not reduced by controls for party identification.

Interestingly, there was no similar change over time for Nixon and Humphrey. This suggests that Wallace initially suffered from a lack of legitimacy as a real candidate, but that he effectively neutralized this deficit during the campaign. The extensive media coverage and the published survey results may well have transformed Wallace into an apparent contender. The October figure of 83% in the North compares favorably with the 86% conversion figure in the South where Wallace was a dominant candidate. Indeed, even in the South the campaign raised the convertibility

to top Wallace ratings into voting preferences from 80% in April to 92% in October.

A direct test of whether voters were inhibited from voting for Wallace because of his slim chance of victory is provided by a 1968 election survey of the Michigan Survey Research Center. The SRC survey included two questions that asked the respondent to estimate Wallace's chances of winning in the nation and in the respondent's home state. Neither question has a significant relationship to the convertibility of high Wallace rating to actual Wallace votes in the North (though they did in the South). The SRC data are not strictly comparable with the Gallup preelection data, since they were collected immediately after the 1968 election, but both suggest that, at least by November, northern voters who rated Wallace above Nixon and Humphrey were not especially influenced by their favorite's chances of winning.

To sum up, the scalometer favorability rating provides a better distribution of Wallace support than voting questions, though the two indicators are highly related—particularly if scalometer ratings of Wallace are expressed relative to those assigned to the other major candidates. The close relation between relative ratings and voting preferences in 1968 was apparently not seriously affected by Wallace's third-party status and actually grew stronger as the presidential campaign progressed. Since we are primarily interested in Wallace's general appeal among white northerners, we shall utilize the scalometer measure as our principal indicator.

Over-Time Changes in Wallace Support

The ratings given to Wallace by white northern respondents in thirteen Gallup surveys indicate that his support was relatively stable over the six-year period, 1964–1970. Between 1967 and 1970 his mean rating was generally confined to a relatively narrow range (−.5 to −1.5). This should not obscure the fact that between the late fall of 1967 and the end of August 1968 his mean rating increased by 1.38 points. These gains, however, had just as quickly dissipated by March 1969, a few months after the election (AIPO #776). Nevertheless, Wallace managed once again to improve his image in the fall of 1969 (AIPO #792), but it drifted lower in the following year and remained at the −1.0 level during 1970.

The mean score can obscure particular patterns of ratings which reflect the intensity of support and opposition. Thus, the distributions of Wallace's ratings in each survey indicate that a

larger percentage of respondents harbored strong anti-Wallace sentiments (−4 and −5 ratings) than for any other political figure. The strong pro-Wallace sentiment (+4 and +5 ratings) nevertheless demonstrated a consistent increase from 3.7% of the sample in 1964 to 14.1% in late August 1968 (AIPO #767). The latter figure represents Wallace's maximum electoral potential in any election where one of the major parties has offered a reasonably attractive candidate. After the 1968 election, strong commitment to Wallace declined, leaving him with a small minority (6% to 9%) of relatively consistent solid supporters. Nevertheless, in situations such as a Democratic primary when the other contestants are viewed negatively by many voters, ratings of +3 or +2 and even +1 are sufficient to produce a Wallace vote. Thus, a Wallace vote of 40% is possible in any such primary without necessarily demonstrating a large pro-Wallace shift in individual attitudes.

Differential Changes: The 1968 Campaign

Were segments of the northern white electorate differentially responsive to the Wallace campaign during 1968? The most important changes involve the two key demographic variables of sex and education (both the education × time and sex × time interactions are significant, $p < .04$). The first large change was manifested by college-educated respondents in July, but the increase in pro-Wallace rating represented only a change by college males. By August, the less educated individuals—especially male high school graduates—showed similar increases in pro-Wallace ratings. By October, all sex and education groups dropped back in their ratings and male high school graduates remained the only group where Wallace had a positive average rating. Only college-educated females, the most anti-Wallace group in 1967, remained immune to the Wallace campaign rhetoric throughout this period.

These findings reflect key aspects inherent in the dynamics of the Wallace phenomenon that have not been evident from analyses of the voting preference questions. The responsiveness of better educated males to the Wallace campaign and the consistent tendency for males to give higher ratings to Wallace than females are important patterns that require a more detailed look at demographic factors.

Demographic Correlates

Various studies have emphasized different correlates of support for Wallace based upon voting preference questions. Many

of these inferences about the effect of a particular variable are rendered questionable by the failure to consider other factors. While Roman Catholics, for example, were reportedly more likely than Protestants to vote for Wallace in the North (Lipset & Raab, 1970), the fact that Catholics have lower levels of educational attainment and tend to be Democrats may prove sufficient to eliminate the religious association. Therefore, we will identify the relative importance of background characteristics that make an independent contribution to pro-Wallace sentiments in the North.

In the following analyses, we utilize analysis of variance techniques based upon an unweighted means solution for unequal cell sizes in order to control for several independent variables, a procedure somewhat more conservative than procedures based upon multiple regression techniques (Kerlinger & Pedhazur, 1973). Given the large sample size when 13 surveys are combined, however, statistical significance is a relatively unimportant criterion. Although significance levels are reported, the relative importance of each independent variable should be evaluated in terms of the mean differences between group relative to North-South differences (2.11), the standard deviation for white northern respondents (3.10 for the post-1968 election surveys), the effect of other variables, and the relative importance attributed to each variable in other studies.

Age and Party

These two background characteristics are not the most important determinants of pro-Wallace attitudes, but they have been widely emphasized in the literature. The size of the Wallace vote in the under-30 generation was one of the most unanticipated findings to many political analysts (Lipset & Raab, 1970; Converse, Miller, Rusk, & Wolfe, 1969; McEvoy, 1971). Moreover, if the lower level of education among older age groups is considered, the results are even more striking. But increasing age is also directly related to partisan commitment, and the support for Wallace among Independents has been well established (Lipset & Raab, 1970; Crespi, 1971). Converse et al. (1969) and Crespi (1971) report that the effect of age is eliminated when party identification is controlled.

Our analysis of the Wallace rating, using the Gallup scalometer, shows that age is inversely related to pro-Wallace sentiments ($p < .001$) when both party identification and education are controlled (Table 2). In the four age groups for both sexes, the Wallace rating decreases slightly as age increases. This trend is

stronger for males (age × sex interaction, $p < .03$) and high school graduates (education × age interaction, $p < .01$).

As expected, Independents manifest higher pro-Wallace scores than either Republicans or Democrats ($p < .001$), but this effect is contingent upon sex (party × sex interaction, $p < .01$). Thus, only among males do we find Independents more pro-Wallace than party identifiers. Moreover, male Republicans give Wallace a more positive rating than Democrats, except among the oldest respondents. In contrast, among females (Table 2) there are relatively minor differences between Republicans and Independents, and Democrats seem the most anti-Wallace.

TABLE 2
WALLACE RATING: AGE, PARTY, AND SEX

	Age			
	Under 30	31–45	46–60	Over 60
MALE				
Republican	−.379	−.450	−.917	−1.375
Independent	+.037	−.224	−.463	−.5880
Democrat	−.779	−.798	−1.120	−1.240
FEMALE				
Republican	−1.296	−1.320	−1.373	−1.203
Independent	−1.342	−.973	−1.449	−1.413
Democrat	−1.242	−1.671	−1.410	−1.773

Note. *N*s for individual cell entries range from 166 to 816. Data are for white northerners and are averaged across educational levels.

The relatively consistent but small difference between Republicans and Democrats in favorable ratings of Wallace is a finding that has not emerged from voting preferences research. Crespi (1971) reports much greater Wallace voting preference among Democrats compared to Republicans at all educational levels in the East and Midwest. Lipset and Raab (1970) show only a 1% difference. The previous analysis of candidate rankings and voting preference indicated how such contrasting findings can result from the relative ranking of the three candidates in each party. Clearly, inferences drawn about Democratic susceptibility to Wallace's political rhetoric based upon voting preferences alone can be misleading.

Urbanism

Wallace's appeal as a ring-wing candidate should be linked to basic patterns of opposition to the dominant cosmopolitanism

of an urban-industrial society (Lipset & Raab, 1970). Yet the salience of racial issues in northern cities suggests that strong Wallace support should be concentrated in urban areas where most northern blacks reside. Indeed, both the Lipset and Raab (1970) and the Crespi (1971) studies show a curvilinear pattern, with the lowest percentage of Wallace voters in medium-size cities.

Our findings (Table 3), once education, sex, party, age, and income are controlled, are more complex. To be sure, there is a definite curvilinear pattern for both sexes, especially among the poorly educated males (city size, $p < .001$). But there is also a sharp drop-off in pro-Wallace sentiment in urban areas with

TABLE 3
WALLACE RATING: CITY SIZE AND EDUCATION
(Males Only)

Males Education	City Size Under 2,500	Under 10,000	10,000–99,999	100,000–499,999	500,000 1,000,000	Over 1 million
0–11 Years	+.061	−.438	−.596	+.146	+.119	−.737
High School Graduate	−.315	−.335	−.801	−.625	−.068	−.657
College	−1.520	−.876	−1.288	−1.507	−1.550	−1.493
Averaged across Education						
Males	−.591	−.550	−.895	−.662	−.470	−.962
Females	−1.069	−1.137	−1.835	−1.299	−1.476	−1.553

Note. *N*s for individual cell entries range from 161 to 596. Data are for white northerners averaged across party, with covariate adjustment for age and income.

populations of over a million people. Since these are the very areas where black populations in the North are most concentrated, this finding raises questions as to the adequacy of racial backlash explanations of the Wallace phenomenon.

Religion

The political and racial attitudes of Roman Catholic ethnic groups have been fertile ground for journalists searching for a white backlash (Brink & Harris, 1967). Pro-Wallace sentiment, therefore, is usually expected to be strong in working-class ethnic enclaves. But several studies have found that lower-class Catholics are actually more favorably predisposed toward integration and federal initiatives in civil rights than comparable Protestants in the urban North (Greely & Sheatsley, 1971; Ross, 1973).

Lipset and Raab (1970) report that Wallace secured more electoral support from Catholics than from Protestants, but our findings with the favorability ratings for the urban North suggest the opposite (religion, $p < .001$) when education and party are controlled. The least educated Catholic Democrats, relative to comparable Protestants, did not demonstrate any strong attraction to Wallace. Indeed, save for the college-educated Catholic Republicans, Protestants are consistently more pro-Wallace than Catholics. However, these religious differences become smaller as education increases (religion × education interaction, $p < .02$).

The concentration of Catholics in the more liberal East Coast states might be a spurious factor responsible for these findings. When region within the North is controlled, religious differences in urban areas are only slightly reduced. Moreover, among Democrats, Catholics (−1.437) are less pro-Wallace than Protestants (−.920) in every region. Only East and West Coast Catholic Republicans are slightly more pro-Wallace than comparable Protestants. Conventional speculation about the responsiveness of working-class Catholic Democrats to Wallace's racial appeal does not find empirical support in our analysis.

Class

Social class has been a central theme in many explanations of the Wallace phenomenon (Lipset & Raab, 1970; Converse et al., 1969; Crespi, 1971). In particular, these studies have emphasized the Alabama governor's strength in the strata most threatened by black economic progress in the 1960s. But Hamilton (1972) has argued that there was no difference between manual and nonmanual voting preferences for Wallace. And a number of studies have suggested that the relationship between social class and Wallace voting is actually curvilinear, with his strongest support located in the lower-middle class, i.e., some high school and $7500 to$10,000 income, or skilled blue-collar workers (Burnham, 1970; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972; Wirt, Walter, Rabinowitz, & Hensler, 1972). Our finding that at certain points in time male high school graduates are often more pro-Wallace than respondents with some high school lends indirect evidence for this curvilinear hypothesis.

Table 4 reports how occupational status affects males in the urban North when education is controlled and indicates that its effect is curvilinear (occupation, $p < .001$), with skilled workers yielding the highest pro-Wallace ratings. Nevertheless, the effect of occupation is in part contingent upon a person's educational

TABLE 4
WALLACE RATING: OCCUPATION AND EDUCATION
(Males Only)

Males Education	Unskilled	Skilled	Clerical/ Sales	Professional
0–11 Years	−.209	+.099	−.840	−.739
High School Graduate	+.068	−.431	−1.114	−.884
College	−1.457	−.476	−1.091	−1.682
Averaged across Education				
Males	−.533	−.269	−1.024	−1.182
Females	−1.282	−1.134	−1.451	−1.855

Note. *Ns* for individual cell entries range from 66 to 652. Data are for urban northerners 25–60 years old, with covariate adjustment for age, party, income, and religion.

achievement. Note how high school graduates holding unskilled positions match the intensity of pro-Wallace feeling shown by less educated but skilled blue-collar workers. White-collar workers are more anti-Wallace, and increasing education has no influence on the male clerical-sales work force. It is the college-educated managerial-professional who is the most anti-Wallace.

The contribution of income to pro-Wallace sentiments is difficult to assess because of sample size restrictions. Among the two most typical groups in blue-collar occupations (unskilled with some high school and skilled high school graduates), increasing income is associated with higher Wallace ratings. Still, the skilled worker with only some high school whose family income is between $7000 and $10,000 is the most pro-Wallace (+1.811, $N = 41$). Finally, it should be stressed that education is considerably more important than occupation or income as a determinant of pro-Wallace sentiment (Ross, Note 1). The failure to control for education has consistently produced misleading inferences about how each component of a person's social class affects his racial perspectives (Ross, 1973).

The Pro-Wallace Respondent

The Wallace phenomenon, as viewed from this analysis, matches only part of the conventional portrait of the Wallace supporter who is driven by racial hatred and political alienation. To be sure, there are similarities. Education is negatively correlated with pro-Wallace sentiment, though its effect is weaker among

males. College-educated women, in particular, hold Wallace in low regard in the urban North.

But Wallace's appeal extends much further into the middle class than is widely realized. And the much discussed pro-Wallace tendencies among lower-class Catholic Democrats in large Northern cities are not evident in our results. In general, Wallace was not attractive to Democrats, regardless of education and religion; if he received more votes from this group, it was due in large part to the limited appeal of Humphrey. City size, as an indirect indicator of racial salience or rural nativism, is not a strong correlate of pro-Wallace ratings. Nor did age prove to be a major determinant of Wallace ratings once the effects of education and party affiliation were removed.

In short, the demographic profile of white Northerners who favorably rated Wallace varies considerably from the popular portrait of the Wallace voter. Though demographic patterns offer only an indirect test of a structural displacement theory, our findings lend little support for this explanation. Those demographic clusters most likely to be structurally displaced by change are not uniformly the most pro-Wallace. But what about the more popular backlash theory? Could racial fears and threats be the basic link in accounting for the Alabama governor's northern following?

Racial Attitudes and the Wallace Phenomenon

The 1968 SRC survey (Converse et al., 1969) shows only a modest positive relationship (+.27) between seven civil rights questions and Wallace's rating in the North. But the SRC questions tapped many nonracial issues in their civil rights scale. A racial explanation of Wallace's northern successes implies that simple and unmitigated bigotry is the only significant variable.

Simple Racial Prejudice

The Gallup question, "Would you vote for a well qualified Negro for president if your party nominated one?," asks the person directly whether he would discriminate or not in his voting choice on racial criteria. The percentage of "yes" responses to this question in the North has risen consistently since 1959 and now approaches the level of acceptance that characterized the "Catholic for president" question in 1960.

One might expect that the minority who still say "no" to the "Negro for president" question would be likely recruits for

a candidate such as Wallace. Yet the relationship between a "yes" response to the "Negro for president" question and positive ratings on the Wallace scalometer question from two Gallup surveys combined is not overwhelming when other structural variables are controlled. Entered into a regression equation to predict the Wallace ratings of northern whites along with measures of education, sex, occupation, age, religion, and political party identification, it did relate best of the seven variables—but only slightly better than education. Together the six demographic variables uniquely accounted for almost twice as much of the variance of the Wallace rating (5.6%) as did the "Negro for president" question (3%).

If one compares the mean Wallace ratings given by those respondents who answer "yes" and "no" to this question, controlling for education and party identification, one typically finds a difference of one point in their mean ratings. The largest differences are demonstrated by college-educated Republicans and Democrats and by Independents with only some high school education. An anti-Wallace response is not surprising for people who express acquiescence to liberal-democratic norms; but general social pressures cannot account for the failure of more directly antiblack respondents to manifest the expected support for Wallace. These findings require a reexamination of the complex relationship between racial attitudes and pro-Wallace tendencies.

Such issues are amenable to further investigation, using the Wallace scalometer and race attitude questions (see also Jackman, 1972). In Table 5 we present standarized regression coefficients that compare the relative influence of different variables within each educational group. The results indicate that the attitudinal structure of pro-Wallace sentiment is dependent upon the educational background of the individual. For instance, the "use of force to solve the problem of urban unrest"[2] is the only correlate of favorable Wallace rating among individuals who have not graduated from high school. Thus, in that segment of the northern population where Wallace is most popular, racial issues have no measured and direct influence on Wallace's ratings. The high

[2] The item read: "There is much discussion about the best way to deal with the problems of urban unrest and rioting. Some say it is more important to use all available force to maintain law and order—no matter what results. Others say it is more important to correct the problems of poverty and unemployment that give rise to the disturbances." The respondent was asked to place himself on a seven-point scale between these extremes.

TABLE 5
ATTITUDINAL CORRELATES
(Standardized Beta Coefficients)

	Of Wallace Rating			Of Use of Force		
	Some HS	HS Grad	College	Some HS	HS Grad	College
Force to Solve Problems	.352	.172	.359	—	—	—
Role of Federal Gov't in Racial Change		−.193	−.174	−.158		−.118
Pro-Integration		−.238		−.192	−.160	
Civil Rights Protest Acts			−.157		−.135	−.261
Welfare-State Liberalism					−.219	
Party (Rep. or Dem.)					−.124	−.210
Age		−.120	−.149			
Sex			−.108		−.196	−.194
Religion		−.145				
(*N*)	(192)	(217)	(228)	—	—	—

Note. For all entries $p < .05$. Subjects are white urban northerners.

school graduates, in contrast, have a richer set of attitudinal correlates, in which forceful repression is as important as anti-integration beliefs. Opposition to the government's civil rights initiatives is a significant factor, but structural variables such as age have similar beta coefficients. These attitudinal determinants represent the crudest expression of the repressive racism that is typically ascribed to Wallace supporters.

The Wallace appeal among the college-educated brings the use of force back as the strongest determinant. However, reactions to civil rights protest activity and opposition to the government's racial policies are also important correlates. Age and sex also suggest the psychological factors that motivate pro-Wallace support at this level.

Regression analysis, however, can underestimate the independent effect of variables that are highly correlated with stronger predictors (Gordon, 1968). Accordingly, Table 5 also includes the relationship between the "use of force" item and these attitudinal-demographic variables in the three educational groups. As expected, the influence of racial issues on Wallace ratings is in part mediated by dispositions to use force to control urban unrest. While the aggressive aspects are still evident, as indicated by the influence of sex, the combination of objective issue orientation and irrational psychological factors does not correspond to

the conventional stereotypes of the Wallace voter adopted from stereotypical versions of blue-collar ethnics.

Was There a Backlash Vote?

To answer the question of whether racial attitudes affected voting preferences in a significant manner we utilized a Gallup question that captures the more explicit and socially acceptable themes of Wallace's antagonism toward the government's racial policies per se. The frequency of the response "too fast" to the item "Do you think the Johnson Administration is pushing racial integration too fast or not fast enough?" at times exceeded 50% in the urban North and is quite sensitive to the tempo of federal civil rights initiatives (Ross, 1973).

The net gain for Wallace from dissatisfied ("too fast") persons, relative to those who answer "about right," does not indicate widespread defections among Democrats and Independents in the urban North that can be specifically attributed to discontent with the government's racial policies (Table 6). When one compares the net Wallace gain in urban areas with that in rural areas, the Wallace voting preference that can be linked to antiblack hostility produced by conflict and physical proximity to a black concentration is found only among Republicans.

Paradoxically, Nixon seems to have been the chief beneficiary of urban-based racial discontent, particularly among the better educated respondents. A look at the voting choices of urban northern respondents who felt the Johnson administration was pushing integration "too fast" shows that racially discontented voters preferred Nixon over Wallace at the higher education levels.

These findings are not compatible with the arguments presented in Weisberg and Rusk (1970) and in Boyd (1972). From the first prediction in 1963 by advocates of the backlash thesis that Kennedy would suffer at the polls, the influence of racial prejudice on electoral decisions has been overemphasized (Ross, 1973). Likewise, the role of antiblack attitudes in the selection of Wallace, while applicable to the South, has been exaggerated for the North (Lipset & Raab, 1970). This is not to argue that Wallace's well-publicized stands against racial change played no part whatsoever in his popularity in the northern electorate, but the differences on a variety of racial questions between those northerners favorable to Wallace and others are typically not large. Wallace has overtly stood for resistance to racial change, but his northern appeal is based upon a diverse set of policy issues. Elsewhere (Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972) we have shown

TABLE 6
BACKLASH VOTING IN THE 1968 ELECTION

Education	Republican Pro-Wallace	Republican Pro-Nixon	Republican Anti-Humphrey	Independent Pro-Wallace	Independent Pro-Nixon	Independent Anti-Humphrey	Democrat Pro-Wallace	Democrat Pro-Nixon	Democrat Anti-Humphrey
0–11 Years	+7.3% (109)	+44.0%	+51.4%	+17.7% (96)	+25.0%	+42.7%	+10.0% (190)	+10.5%	+20.5%
High School Grad.	+4.3 (200)	+40.5	+47.0	+12.3 (162)	+27.2	+39.5	+ 7.0 (243)	+10.7	+17.7
College	+2.3 (221)	+36.0	+39.4	+ 4.1 (171)	+21.1	+25.1	+ .7 (144)	+ 5.6	+ 6.3

Note. Table based upon data from AIPO surveys #760, 761, 769; white urban northerners only. Entries represent the difference in candidate preference between respondents answering "too fast" and "about right or too slow" to the question: "Do you think the Johnson administration is pushing integration too fast or not fast enough?"

that Wallace's economic populism, though vague, is apparently one of these additional appeals and reflects itself among his northern following as fraternal relative deprivation in class terms. Other studies show that his hawkish position on the Vietnam War was another critical issue that attracted support from intense minorities who felt that the major parties were not sympathetic to their position (Mazmanian, 1974; McEvoy, 1971).

CONCLUSION

The Wallace phenomenon has received considerable attention ever since it burst upon the national scene in 1964. In particular, the Alabama governor's proven ability to garner northern votes has led to explanations ranging from racial backlash to structural displacement. But most of this discussion has had, at best, limited connection with the available data. Journalistic speculation has often been completely uninformed by the data; and social science research has typically relied either on voting intentions or aggregate precinct data.

The present paper argues that an understanding of the Wallace phenomenon requires an additional indicator of pro-Wallace tendencies and more systematic analysis of over-time public opinion data. The findings based upon the Gallup scalometer rather than on voting preference suggest that reliance on the latter measure in most studies has obscured aspects of the phenomenon.

During the period when Wallace became a serious presidential contender, high school graduates were the most responsive to his political campaign. Prior to the 1968 election day, he demonstrated a net gain only among this educational group. Likewise, consistently large pro-Wallace tendencies among males (particularly at the college-educated level) during Wallace's political ascendance deserve special emphasis. Sex differences often equal the effect of region and education; and the effects of most demographic factors are contingent upon the respondent's sex.

Our analysis replicated many of the results of earlier voting preference studies, such as the importance of education. But our indicator contrasts with previous findings in showing that the Alabamian's appeal was not a lower-class phenomenon. Republicans liked him far better than was thought to be the case; and lower-class Catholic Democrats in big cities, the group thought by the mass media to be the backbone of Wallace's northern following, evaluated him less positively than widely believed. The

difference here with voting data is caused, we believe, by the differential attractiveness of the rival candidates. Many voters who liked Wallace were even more positively inclined toward Nixon and voted for the Republican candidate.

This demographic profile of those who rated Wallace highly conflicts with the structural displacement explanation of the phenomenon. Those demographic clusters identified by Lipset and Raab as the most likely to be threatened by change are not uniformly the most pro-Wallace. Likewise, our analysis raises serious questions concerning the validity of the popular "white backlash" explanation. From a range of attitudinal survey questions, we conclude that the role of racial prejudice in Wallace's northern support has been exaggerated.

Alternative Explanations

Our findings suggest that a combination of cognitive and psychological factors have influenced positive predispositions toward Wallace. These factors become more salient during periods of political crisis and are activated during an issue-oriented political campaign. The cognitive factors, as indicated by the dominant influence of education, suggest that Wallace's immediate solutions to complex problems were most likely to be accepted by the less sophisticated segments of the population. At the same time, his aggressive attacks against a large number of conspicuous targets (government bureaucrats, antiwar protesters, blacks, etc.) provided a socially acceptable outlet for the psychological tensions among males (particularly the under-30 cohort) that the political situation in the 1960s generated (Wills, 1970).

Wallace's status as a third party candidate and his extreme positions on many issues limited his electoral potential, but at the same time these characteristics were responsible for his appeal to a distinct minority of committed followers. Our analysis indicates that his extreme position on racial issues was neither a major liability nor a major asset in the North. While many middle-class voters were frightened by Wallace's reliance upon the use of force to control political discontent, pro-Wallace sentiment appears motivated by a coherent racist ideology only among his better-educated supporters. His appeal to young, lower-middle-class workers in the North was more dependent upon their economic discontents and unfulfilled job aspirations (Shepard & Herrick, 1972), feelings of relative deprivation based upon class rather than race (Pettigrew, 1971; Vanneman & Pettigrew, 1972), and cognitive-psychological factors.

Analysis and interpretation of 1972 election data has contributed to a similar reassessment of the Wallace phenomenon (Burnham, 1974). It is apparent that the old post-Roosevelt Democratic coalition had started to dissolve prior to 1968. Goldwater's campaign, Wallace's third party movement, and McGovern's nomination played an important role in producing profound issue cleavages that cut across traditional partisan commitments in decisively large minorities of the electorate (Miller, Miller, Raine, & Brown, Note 2; Dawson, 1973). As a consequence, significant minorities that were part of the old Democratic coalition felt that their interests were no longer represented. Over time political disaffection accumulated as different minorities became dissatisfied with the policy alternatives offered by the major parties in various elections. Simultaneously, an ongoing process of party decomposition has reduced the influence of partisan loyalties on electoral behavior, and the growing number of individuals who identify themselves as Independents has contributed to volatile changes in electoral outcomes. Without any new partisan realignment foreseeable in the future, the electorate should continue to respond in a heterogeneous way to a number of issue clusters. Race is only one of many such issues; its importance in any local or national election depends on the short term saliency of racial conflicts in a particular locale and at a specific time. From this perspective, the Wallace phenomenon is only one symptom (rather than a cause) of structural changes in the political system.

Implications for Racial Change

Whether Wallace will attempt to exploit racial tensions in the future depends upon at least two factors. The first consideration is the ability of Wallace to understand the reasons for his success in the past and at the same time to adapt to the fundamental changes in the political system that have occurred since 1964. An equally important consideration is the response of national leaders to Wallace's electoral potential and the influence on their actions of popular explanations for his success, such as "white backlash."

In order to expand his electoral base in the North, Wallace faces some difficult decisions. Any moderation of his extreme position on a variety of issues could undercut the appeal of his simple apocalyptic solutions. Likewise, he cannot depend on a specific configuration of issues where he alone represents the most extreme position on more than one salient issue. As demonstrated by the success of Nixon's antibusing position in attracting

significant numbers of potential Wallace voters in 1968, the two major parties can shift their policy orientation in a direction that neutralizes his advantage on any particular issue.

Unresolved crises within the Democratic party and the pro-business image of the Republican party grant Wallace considerable latitude in applying his unique style to a variety of issues. His apparent abandonment of his status as a one-man "third party" movement suggests that his past successes may have motivated an attempt to broaden his electoral base through traditional coalition politics within the Democratic party. If this is in fact his 1976 strategy, Wallace may have made a serious mistake in adapting to the structurally changing political system. The Democratic party, in particular, appears to be concerned about regaining the support of former Wallace voters. The response of Democratic party leaders may well be based upon the widely-accepted theories that we have just critically reviewed. Accordingly, we must address the question of why racial issues were and still are the dominant explanation of the Wallace phenomenon when the empirical evidence lends only limited support to these arguments.

A speculative excursion into the "sociology of social science" appears to shed some light on this problem. The Wallace phenomenon, as interpreted by many social scientists, follows the tradition established by pluralist explanations of Joseph McCarthy's appeal in the 1950s. Substituting backlash issues for anticommunism, Wallace is thrust into the same antidemocratic populist context as McCarthy. Thus, both Wallace and McCarthy supposedly exploited popular resentments, attacked political elites, and posed a serious threat to democratic institutions. Many of the deficiencies inherent in this theoretical paradigm, as documented in Rogin's (1967) analysis of McCarthyism and Hamilton's (1972) critique of working-class authoritarianism, are relevant to the Wallace phenomenon. In both cases, the myth and the reality show striking similarities.

Working-class whites in the urban North did not lead the opposition against the civil rights initiatives of the federal government in the 1960s (Ross, 1973) nor did they provide Joseph McCarthy his initial electoral impetus (Rogin, 1967). In neither case did these candidates uproot voters from their traditional partisan loyalties; rather, their basic appeal was linked to established conservative political tendencies. Both Wallace and McCarthy were able to exploit specific domestic issues when a war contributed to an unstable political situation. However, the impor-

tance of these issues developed from mass media coverage of specific events and the statements of political leaders about these events. As a consequence, both the Communist threat and disorder in a rapidly changing urban society emerged as major domestic problems. They in turn generated sufficient anxiety so that many Americans felt compelled to find any solution, without deep consideration to the implications of a particular method. Lower-middle-class individuals were especially responsive to decisive types of actions. But these quasi-legal actions had implicitly been sanctioned by governmental officials in the past. The use of force to control urban unrest in the North was not a policy that was first advocated by Wallace any more than the denial of rights to accused Communists was first advocated by McCarthy.

When Wallace and McCarthy threatened the political power of established political leaders, they were portrayed as a racist and a demagogue, respectively, who posed serious threats to the stability of a democratic society. Wallace was less vulnerable to these counterattacks, given his regional base of support, but the strategy was successful in limiting his ability to make inroads into the ranks of better educated voters in the North. Although many of these voters generally favored the policy positions advocated by Wallace, many felt that a vote for Nixon was a safer choice, or were turned off by Wallace's crude and unconventional political style.

From a pluralist viewpoint, it may be reassuring that blatantly antiblack political movements can only find support outside the normal two-party system. Likewise, the supposed strength of Wallace sentiment among poorly educated individuals still allows some optimism about the limited success of similar movements in the future. Focusing on these aspects of the Wallace phenomenon, however, overlooks two important implications of of the 1968 election: (a) the role of more sophisticated racism in the election of Richard Nixon, and (b) the ability of competitive party pressures to mobilize racial anxieties and provide acceptable ideological justification for antiblack public policies. Indeed, we now witness in the mid-seventies the continuation of these trends in the antibusing rhetoric of President Ford against the racial desegregation of the public schools.

The continued acceptance of myths about the meaning of the Wallace phenomenon by party leaders allows Wallace to have considerable influence on the racial policies of both Republican and Democratic parties in 1976 and on into the future. Competing

for the support of a small minority of Wallace supporters in the North, both parties have come to feel they must oppose the type of civil rights programs that characterized the 1960s.

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