

Political Alienation in American Society
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Abstract:

Political alienation is a topic of enormous importance to American society. It can inspire protest voting, renunciation of citizenship, and violent protest against the established political system. It also reduces political participation, meaning that the views of the politically alienated are not as well-represented in government as the views of those who are not politically alienated. Despite this, there has been very little research into political alienation in the past two decades. This study attempts to help fill that void in the literature. I analyze pre-election (N=2,322) and post-election (N=2,102) survey data from the 2008 American National Election Survey to find the causes of political alienation on the population as a whole and among men and women separately. Ordinary least squares regression analysis and difference-of-slopes tests are used in this analysis. Results show several causes of political alienation in the population, including a low degree of civic engagement and little or no affiliation with a major political party. Also, a low level of education is found to be a cause of political alienation among women, but not among men. On the basis of these findings, several methods are proposed for the reduction of political alienation in American society.