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LIQUOR REFERENDUM

INTEREST GROUP ACTIVITIES AND THE PUBLIC OPINION PROCESS: A CASE STUDY OF A LIQUOR REFERENDUM

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present some interpretations of the public opinion process based upon our examination of a recent liquor referendum in South Carolina. While our observations are of interest in their own right, we consider them more important in terms of the revisions which they require of existing ideas about the relationship between public opinion and social change.

Killian suggested recently that students of social movements have viewed those collective enterprises as the products and not the producers of social change. He contends that sociologists "have looked to social, or more specifically, to cultural forces in the search for the dynamics of change, not to the actions and the interactions of men."¹ This same perspective has characterized the public opinion-social change nexus wherein public opinion has most frequently been viewed as a reaction to or a reflection of social change. In this area of human behavior, as in so many others, sociologists have failed to attend to what human acting units do to and with one another. In the remarks which follow we wish to suggest, and to illustrate, that the expressed opinions of publics are

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1. KILLIAN, *Social Movements*, in HANDBOOK OF MODERN SOCIOLOGY 426 (R. Faris ed. 1964).

of significant consequence in affecting patterns of human behavior.

II. THE SETTING

The 1966 referendum marked the third time South Carolinians have expressed a position on liquor laws by means of referendum in this century. The laws governing liquor behavior in this state have followed a varied pattern across this period of time. In 1895 the laws regulating the hours within which liquor could be sold (sunrise to sunset), the quantity in which liquor could be sold (no less than one-half pint), and the place where liquor could be consumed (off the seller's premises), were all made a part of the state constitution.² While the state reserved the right to sell liquor by the drink or to engage in the wholesale and retail package liquor business, it could only license private individuals to engage in wholesale and retail package liquor sales. The constitution prevented the state from licensing private individuals to sell liquor by the drink under the three provisions listed above. From 1895 to the time of national prohibition, the state operated retail package liquor stores. After prohibition, in 1934, an advisory referendum was held and the electorate voted to have the legislature license private wholesalers and retailers of package liquor. That advice was followed by the legislature.³ In 1940, another advisory referendum was held and the electorate recommended, by a three-to-two margin, that the legislature enact total prohibition in the state. This advice was not heeded by the legislature. From 1934 to 1966, then, the system of liquor activities in the state included the legal sale of package liquor.⁴ In addition, the illegal sale of liquor by the drink existed in private clubs, and in restaurant, hotel and motel bars in several regions of the state.

In 1966 a referendum was held to determine whether or not the electorate would allow the legislature to rewrite those portions of the constitution pertaining to the time of liquor sales, the quantity of liquor sold, and the place of liquor consumption. Passage of all three provisions of the referendum would clearly have permitted, though it would

2. S.C. CONST. art. VIII, § 11.

3. XXXIX S.C. STATS. AT LARGE 325 (No. 232, 1935).

4. See generally Hibbard, *A History of South Carolina Liquor Regulation*, 19 S.C.L. REV. 157, 173 (1967).

not have required, the legalized sale of liquor by the drink. The legal issue at stake in the referendum was one of permitting or not permitting the possibility of rewriting portions of the constitution concerning the sale of liquor. The issue which developed in the weeks preceding the referendum, however, was one of allowing or defeating the sale of liquor by the drink. The electorate defeated the referendum by a three-to-two margin, perpetuating the system of legal package liquor sales and illegal sales of liquor by the drink.

III. COMPETING INTERPRETATIONS

Sociologists have traditionally attempted to account for the presence or absence of social change in terms of social and cultural trends or forces. One such set of variables, often given attention, consists of demographic composition and growth patterns. An examination of these patterns in relation to changes in liquor behaviors in South Carolina is more puzzling than instructive. In both the 1940 and 1966 referenda, liquor law liberalization was defeated by a three-to-two margin.⁵ Further, approximately the same number of persons voted on these two referenda despite a net population increase in the state of better than 25 percent during this period of time.⁶ The nature of the change in population composition accompanying this growth would suggest an increase in liquor activities and therefore increased support for passage of the 1966 referendum. This is clearly illustrated by examining selected demographic characteristics for the top growth counties in the state for the 1950-1960 decade preceding the last referendum. From 1950 to 1960 South Carolina experienced a 12.5 percent net population increase. Ten counties exceeded this average considerably and accounted for the majority of the state's net population growth.⁷ An examination of these 10 counties in the following table reveals

5. That is, prohibition was recommended by a three-to-two margin in 1940, and the possibility of the sale of liquor by the drink was defeated by a three-to-two margin in 1966.

6. In 1940, of the 319,727 persons voting, 189,361 voted for prohibition and 130,366 voted against it. In 1966, an average of 314,097 voted on the three questions in the referendum. An average of 189,859 persons voted against the three questions, and an average of 124,238 persons voted for the three questions. There was no significant variation in the number of votes cast on the three questions. Therefore, we computed an average vote across the three questions.

7. The top six of these ten counties have extensive industrial, military and/or governmental facilities which have developed considerably over this time period. That development, in turn, has attracted new workers to these, as well as related service industries.

TABLE
DEMOGRAPHIC, EDUCATION AND VOTING CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE TEN COUNTIES
IN SOUTH CAROLINA WITH THE GREATEST 1950-1960 NET POPULATION INCREASE.

COUNTY	COLUMN A		COLUMN B		COLUMN C		COLUMN D		COLUMN E	
	% and Rank, 1950-1960 Population Increase ^a	% and Rank, 1960 Population Born out of state ^b	% and Rank, 1960 Population Living out of state in 1955 ^c	% and Rank, 1960 Population Living out of state in 1955 ^c	Median Years Education Attained by persons 25 yrs. & older, in 1960 ^d	Yrs. Rank	% Rank	% and Rank Voting For 1966 Liquor Referenda ^e	% Rank	
Beaufort	63.7 (1)	46.7 (1)	42.8 (1)	42.8 (1)	9.9 (3)	9.9 (3)	58.1 (2)			
Aiken	52.5 (2)	28.0 (2)	8.6 (7)	8.6 (7)	9.5 (5)	9.5 (5)	50.2 (4)			
Richland	40.4 (3)	25.5 (3)	17.4 (2)	17.4 (2)	10.9 (1)	10.9 (1)	57.6 (3)			
Lexington	37.1 (4)	10.7 (10)	5.5 (10)	5.5 (10)	9.3 (6.5)	9.3 (6.5)	40.9 (6)			
Charleston	31.3 (5)	25.4 (4)	15.8 (3)	15.8 (3)	10.1 (2)	10.1 (2)	60.3 (1)			
Sumter	30.0 (6)	20.2 (6)	14.8 (4)	14.8 (4)	9.3 (6.5)	9.3 (6.5)	33.8 (9)			
Berkeley	26.3 (7)	14.2 (8)	7.9 (8)	7.9 (8)	7.7 (10)	7.7 (10)	45.0 (8)			
Greenville	24.8 (8)	20.7 (5)	9.8 (6)	9.8 (6)	9.8 (4)	9.8 (4)	35.5 (7)			
Pickens	14.9 (9)	12.7 (9)	5.6 (9)	5.6 (9)	8.5 (9)	8.5 (9)	26.5 (10)			
Horry	14.9 (10)	16.8 (7)	11.4 (5)	11.4 (5)	8.7 (8)	8.7 (8)	49.0 (5)			
State Average	12.5	15.3	8.0	8.0	8.8	8.8	40			

^aJ. PETTY, TWENTIETH CENTURY CHANGES IN SOUTH CAROLINA POPULATION, at 14, table 6 (1962).

^b*Id.* at 179, figure 69.

^c*Id.* at 199, figure 86.

^d*Id.* at 131, constructed from table 72.

an expected relationship between relevant demographic variables and the outcome of the 1966 liquor referendum.⁸

The correlation between net population increase and percent of the electorate voting for the 1966 liquor referendum is $r_s = .61$.⁹ Some of this population increase is attributable to migration into the state's urban areas from other states. The correlation between these counties' net population increase and the percent of their 1960 population born outside the state is $r_s = .66$. The correlation between the percent of their 1960 population born outside the state and the percent of their electorate voting for the 1966 referendum is $r_s = .71$. A clearer picture of the influence of migration from other states is obtained by examining the relationship between the percent of 1960 population living outside the state in 1955 and the percent of their electorate voting for the 1966 referendum: $r_s = .65$. Finally, we find that the majority of these 10 counties had a higher than average increase in education level from 1950 to 1960. A 1963 survey of the United States adult population indicated that the higher the level of education completed, the more likely persons were to drink alcoholic beverages.¹⁰ In these 10 counties, the correlation between median years of education completed and the percent of electorate voting for the 1966 referendum is $r_s = .73$. An examination of these selected demographic variables in the top 10 growth counties reveals a pattern which should have led to the passage of the 1966 referendum, but the referendum was defeated by a three-to-two margin.

Another interpretation of the outcome of the 1966 referendum might be referred to as attitudinal or sub-cultural; that is, the defeat of the 1966 liquor referendum simply indicates that South Carolinians are, by virtue of their peculiar sub-cultural or attitudinal predispositions, temperate people. The records of the State Tax Commission, however, belie this suggestion. From 1950 to 1966, for example, South Carolina's net population increase was approximately 18 percent. For that same period of time, the wholesale liquor

8. All demographic data are based upon United States Census information for South Carolina as compiled in J. PETTY, TWENTIETH CENTURY CHANGES IN SOUTH CAROLINA POPULATION (1962).

9. All correlations are Spearman Rank Correlations and are significant at the .05 level or less. We employed the computation formulas presented in S. SIEGEL, NONPARAMETRIC STATISTICS 202-13 (1956).

10. Mulford, *Drinking and Deviant Drinking in the U.S.A.*, 25 Q.J. STUDIES ON ALCOHOL 634, 640-41 (1964).

volume increased nearly 100 percent.¹¹ If we divide the number of persons voting for the 1966 liquor referendum into the number of cases of wholesale liquor sold during the 1965-1966 fiscal year, it amounts to about 10 cases per year per person voting for the referendum. This is the equivalent of approximately 40 gallons of liquor per year or 1 gallon every 4 days for every person voting for the referendum. We feel reasonably safe in our interpretation that all of the South Carolinians who imbibe did not vote on the 1966 liquor referendum or, if they did vote, they did not vote in favor of the referendum.

The demographic patterns suggest that the 1966 liquor referendum should have passed. The increased volume of wholesale liquor across the last 15 years indicates a pattern of behavior that is inconsistent with the outcome of the referendum. How then are we to account for this curious pattern of social change? We suggest that an examination of the actions and interaction of acting units regarding the referendum is of more consequence than demographic or sub-cultural variables in accounting for the outcome of that referendum. Scrutinization of the development of the public opinion process and the activities of publics therein provide an arena within which to pursue that examination.

IV. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Professor Herbert Blumer calls attention to the fact that public opinion acquires its shape and form from the societal framework within which it is produced.¹² We would add that the expressed opinions of publics can play a significant role in shaping certain aspects of the framework. We agree with Blumer's view that society is constituted by the different activities of individual and collective acting units and their ordered relationship to one another. We suggest, in line with this, that these activities and relationships are maintained as long as they are not interrupted or made problematic by some deflecting activity. Both John Dewey and George H. Mead suggested that deflection of the ongoing activity of an individual acting unit creates an indetermi-

11. The South Carolina Tax Commission data indicate that 621,911 cases of liquor were reported sold by the wholesalers in the state for the fiscal year of 1965-66.

12. Blumer, *Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling*, 13 AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV. 542 (1948).

nate situation.¹³ This results in problem solving activity on the part of the acting unit toward the end of getting the activity on course again. The parallel between this process and the public opinion process was drawn by Foote and Hart¹⁴ and has been noted by Friedson.¹⁵ A public emerges in relation to some problematic issue which becomes the focus for a collective decision making process. We define an issue as the object which is created by deflecting the ongoing activities and relationships of individual and collective acting units. We define public as those acting units who are involved in interaction and discussion of an issue but who are divided as to the resolution of that issue.¹⁶ We suggest that the composition and size of the public involved is a function of the range of activities and relationships deflected. Thus, the greater the number and range of ongoing activities and relationships deflected, the greater the number and range of acting units implicated in a discussion and attempted resolution of the issue.

Blumer suggests that a public is made up of two categories of acting units: interest groups and disinterested spectator-arbiters. He notes:

These interest groups have an immediate private concern in the way the issue is met and, therefore, they endeavor to win to their position the support and allegiance of the outside disinterested group. This puts the disinterested group . . . in the position of arbiter and judge. It is their alignment which determines, usually, which of the competing schemes [of the interest groups] is likely to enter most freely into the final action. This strategic and decisive place held by those not identified with the immediate interest groups means that public discussion is carried on primarily among them. The interest groups

13. J. DEWEY, *HOW WE THINK* (1933); G. MEAD, *THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ACT* (1938).

14. Foote & Hart, *Public Opinion and Collective Behavior*, in *GROUP RELATIONS AT THE CROSSROADS* 308 (M. Sherif & M. Wilson eds. 1953).

15. Friedson, *A Prerequisite for Participation in the Public Opinion Process*, 19 *PUB. OPINION Q.* 105, 107 (1955).

16. A public, as defined, is a social relationship and is to be distinguished from a mass. We define a mass as those acting units which are aware of a common issue but who are not interacting with one another in terms of that issue.

endeavor to shape and set the opinions of these relatively disinterested people.¹⁷

We shall refer to the category of "interest groups" as acting publics and to the category of "arbitrating spectators" as the responding public.¹⁸ We define an *acting public* as those acting units who adopt, and act to implement, a resolution of the issue. We define the *responding public* as those acting units who are the focus of the actions of acting publics and who make decisions on the proposed resolutions of the issue under consideration.

In his discussion of the public opinion process, Blumer mentions such decision making units as committees, boards, legislatures, administrations, and executive branches.¹⁹ No mention is made, however, of the electorate who serve as the decision making unit, and thus the responding public, by means of referendum. When a referendum is permitted or required by law to establish the "will" of the people, some other decision making unit may be required to act to initiate the referendum process. Such was the case in the situation we examined. The liquor laws in question are part of the state constitution and thus their removal or revision required a referendum. The initiation of that process must begin in the state legislature. While the electorate decide the outcome of the referendum, the legislature occupies a priority position in the entire process, for it determines whether or not, and in what form, a question or issue of alteration will be put to the people in a referendum. Therefore, the legislature was the initial decision making unit and the target for action by various interest groups concerned with liquor and liquor legislation. In the development of the issue these same interest groups became acting publics who addressed their actions to the electorate (*i.e.*, the responding public) during the weeks preceding the referendum. Thus we observed a continuing issue (liquor laws) which was the focus of the ongoing activities of interest groups (acting

17. Blumer, *Public Opinion*, in *NEW OUTLINE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIOLOGY* 192 (A. Lee ed. 1946).

18. This distinction is one made by several students of the public opinion process. These particular labels of "acting" and "responding" publics are taken from manuscripts. C. Couch, *The Development of Publics & Mass Versus Public*, 1966 (unpublished manuscripts in the sociology department at the University of Iowa).

19. Blumer, *Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling*, 13 *AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV.* 542, 544 (1948).

publics) while the decision making units (responding publics) to which these activities were addressed changed at various points across time.

V. DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISSUE

When the liquor issue was initially presented in the state legislature, the only concern was with the hours within which package liquor could be sold. Retail dealers had voiced complaints about their problems with the variation in the sunrise to sunset business period, and some legislators introduced a bill to standardize the business period. In the course of that bill's history it was expanded to include the quantity of liquor that could be sold as well as the place where purchased liquor could be consumed. The addition of these two features provoked expanded attention and discussion in the legislature and throughout the state. Clearly the passage of all these items by the legislature could serve as the first step toward legalizing the sale of liquor by the drink.

Legislators were divided in their response to the proposed revisions in the liquor laws. Opponents were hesitant about the "hue and cry" which they thought would go up on the part of the church people and other citizens opposed to the possibility of liquor by the drink. Legislative proponents simply cited the current illegal sales of liquor by the drink and advocated liquor legislation that would be enforceable and would thus engender respect by the people. At this point in the process, perhaps fortuitously, a series of raids by local and state law enforcement officers occurred against a number of illegal liquor by the drink establishments around the state. These ranged from Moose and Elk's clubs to country clubs and even to the private clubs in the capitol city patronized by the legislators. The raids were sporadic and less than consequential in their impact on the illegal sale of liquor by the drink. There was no possibility of raiding all of the illegal establishments continuously due to an insufficient number of law enforcement officers in the state. Most establishments were back in business and dispensing drinks within hours after they were raided. The raids accomplished little aside from demonstrating to the citizenry the widespread violation of the law and the difficulty of enforcing the law.

Out of this increased attention to and concern with the liquor laws, interest groups began to address their activities to the legislators. Opponents of the proposed legislation criticized the aforementioned raids as a political play. They wrote, telephoned, or called upon their legislators in person. Several church associations made public statements opposing the pending legislation and forwarded their resolutions, by mail and telegram, to their legislative delegations. While these efforts were neither well organized nor effectively coordinated at this stage, they did constitute the incipient development of an acting public expressing its opinion on this issue to the relevant decision making unit.

Similar efforts characterized those interest groups who supported the pending legislation. The mayor of the capitol city, the state municipal association, and several chambers of commerce expressed their interest in legislation which would correct the existing liquor arrangements. They were joined by the liquor lobbyists in encouraging the legislators to pass the pending legislation which would call for a referendum. These actions represented the expression of opinion by an acting public.

On the last day of the legislative session the proposed legislation was passed and sent to the electorate in the form of a statewide referendum to be acted upon at the next general election.

In summary, the results of the activities during the legislative segment of the process were threefold. (1) The activities made the majority of the citizens of the state aware of the liquor law issue. (2) Acting publics were developed. One acting public consisted of church related associations who opposed change of the current liquor laws. The other acting public was primarily composed of businessmen and civic organizations who advocated change of the current liquor laws. (3) Resolution of the liquor law issue was transferred from the legislature to the electorate with the passage of a bill which proposed revision of the constitution and thus required a referendum. These actions set the stage for the further development of acting publics and cast the electorate in the role of the responding public. We turn now to a consideration of the procedures employed by acting publics to align the responding public with their respective resolutions of the issue.

VI. THE EXPRESSED OPINIONS OF ACTING PUBLICS

The pro and con acting publics differed in their presentation of the issue, the procedures which they employed in that presentation, and the focus of their presentation. As we have noted, the advocates of the referendum stressed the need of revising the laws governing the sale of liquor so as to guarantee enforcement and control. They maintained that the passage of the referendum would facilitate that objective.²⁰ The opponents, on the other hand, maintained that passage of the referendum would make liquor by the drink a possibility and urged the electorate to guard against the dangers that situation would present.²¹

Both pro and con acting publics drew upon existing groups and organizations, both created ad hoc organizations, and both employed the mass media as a means of presenting their positions to the responding public. Beyond that, however, all similarity between the two acting publics ends.

The pro acting public was able to draw upon only a limited number of existing groups for support. The only organizations which took a public stance in favor of the referendum were the state chamber of commerce, some local chambers of commerce, and the restaurant owners' and innkeepers' associations. Their support hardly went beyond issuing a press release favoring passage of the referendum. Altogether, the existing organizations publicly supporting the referendum were less than a dozen in number.

20. The one piece of literature distributed by the pro acting public asserted that revised laws on the sale of alcoholic beverages would: (1) place the sale of all liquor in responsible hands and run irresponsible elements out of business, (2) provide for better enforcement of liquor laws, (3) protect the young people from those who sell illegal liquor, (4) allow the citizens to purchase liquor in smaller quantities, (5) increase the tax revenue, (6) increase tourist trade, and (7) create new and better paying jobs for South Carolinians.

21. The piece of literature receiving greatest distribution by the con acting public urged the responding public to vote against the referendum, emphasizing that its passage would make liquor by the drink a possibility in the state. This admonition was followed with the assertions that "Liquor-By-The-Drink:" (1) means more people will drink and drive, (2) means more crime, (3) means more social pressure on young people to drink, (4) means more alcoholism, (5) means more family problems and costs to the community, and (6) means less profit for the state. These assertions were interspersed with "statistics" and "quotes" from both identified and unidentified sources attesting to their credibility. This use of "statistics" and authorities to establish credibility is similar to that reported by Sherif & Jackman, *Judgments of Truth by Participants in Collective Controversy*, 30 PUB. OPINION Q. 173 (1960).

By contrast, the con acting public was able to draw upon a vast number of existing groups and organizations in the state. One of the most extensive sets of social relationships upon which they drew consisted of the churches and church related organizations. About 80 percent of the church members in South Carolina are either Southern Baptists or Methodists.²² These two denominations, as well as seven smaller sectarian denominations, took public stances opposing passage of the referendum. There are 46 component associations of the Southern Baptist Convention in the state and 24 of these took public stances urging defeat of the referendum. Seventeen ministerial associations, representing a variety of denominations, publicly urged the defeat of the referendum. A statewide interdenominational Christian social action agency also played an important role in organizing opposition to the referendum. In addition to these groups, numerous individual churches, church laymen's and laywomen's organizations, and the W.C.T.U. publicly opposed the referendum.²³

The pro acting public was almost singularly represented by an ad hoc organization known as the Committee on Tolerable Regulation of Liquor Sales (CONTROLS). CONTROLS was organized less than two months prior to the referendum by hotel and restaurant managers and owners. This group solicited financial aid from all hotel, motel, and restaurant owners plus the industries which service these businesses. CONTROLS emphasized that should the referendum pass, it would seek legislation keeping the sale of liquor by the drink in the hands of responsible innkeepers and restaurateurs. This appeal yielded almost no financial support.²⁴ Other efforts to raise funds met with only limited success. Given its limited finances, CONTROLS concentrated its efforts in the form of newspaper advertisements, literature distribution, and some spot radio advertisements. CONTROLS ran a total of 7,098 square inches of newspaper ad-

22. These figures are based on a survey conducted by the Christian Action Council of South Carolina.

23. The W.C.T.U. made a public statement opposing the referendum but played an insignificant role in the development and operation of the con acting public.

24. Some hotels, motels and restaurants, and many private clubs in the urban and coastal regions of the state were selling liquor by the drink. They refused to support CONTROLS. They argued that it was ridiculous to provide financial support for an effort which, if successful, would require them to buy an expensive license to do what they were now doing without expense or supervision.

vertisements in the 17 daily newspapers which appear in 12 urban areas of the state, distributed about 40,000 pieces of literature in restaurants, hotels and motels in the four largest cities in the state, and ran about three hundred 30-second radio spot advertisements on 10 stations throughout the state.

The con acting public implemented its efforts with the formation of an ad hoc organization during the summer preceding the referendum. The South Carolina Citizens Committee (S.C.C.C.) was created by laymen and ministers from a number of different religious denominations in cooperation with the interdenominational Christian social action organization mentioned above. It involved many of the same individuals and groups who had unsuccessfully lobbied against the legislation which led to the referendum. Two points are noteworthy regarding the strategy employed in organizing this ad hoc group. First, a deliberate effort was made to form a *citizens* interest group so as to dissociate opposition to the liquor referendum from the traditional anti-liquor position taken by the churches these people were associated with. This was a successful effort. They kept the biblical anti-liquor propaganda slogans out of their literature and stressed, instead, the social evils of open bars. Second, an effort was made to encourage the organization and operation of these citizens' groups at the local or county level. The referendum contained a county option clause which would exclude any county with a majority of votes against the referendum from subsequent provisions for liquor by the drink should the majority of the electorate in the state vote for the referendum. The S.C.C.C. took advantage of the county option provision. Grass roots county organizations were formed, and the members were urged to defeat the referendum in their own county. They went about this in a variety of ways, most of which drew upon existing sets of social relationships with the county or local community. They spoke at church and civic organization meetings. They worked through local church memberships, laymen and laywomen's organizations, sunday school classes, and the like to raise funds for newspaper, radio and television advertisements. The state S.C.C.C. organization compiled, printed and distributed more than 318,000 pieces of literature to the county units and in turn to the sets of social relationships mentioned above. There was a concentrated effort to get literature to every church

member and to every voter.²⁵ In the 17 daily newspapers alone, the con acting public ran 5,742 square inches of advertisements opposing passage of the referendum.²⁶ A major league baseball personality made radio and television tapes for the con acting public. The radio tapes were used to saturate the state during the week preceding the referendum. The one-half hour television tape was shown simultaneously on all three television channels in the third largest city in the state on the eve of the referendum.

VII. INTERPRETATION

The preceding description reveals two fundamental differences in the pro and con acting publics. The first has to do with the number and range of individual and collective acting units which they were able to implicate in a discussion and attempted resolution of the issue in question. The second has to do with their respective use of sets of social relationships as a means of implementing their expressed opinions on the issue.

We suggested earlier that the issue in a public opinion process is the object created by the deflection of the ongoing activities and relationships of individual and collective acting units. We further suggested that the composition and size of the public forming around that issue is contingent upon the range and number of ongoing activities and relationships deflected. The possibility of legal liquor by the drink was used by the con acting public to deflect the ongoing activities and relationships of an extremely numerous and widespread set of church organizations and to involve them in interaction and discussion of that con acting public's resolution of the issue. By contrast, however, the pro acting public did not

25. An examination of the relationship between the percent of total S.C.C.C. literature distributed in each county and the percent of total registered voters in each county yielded a rank order correlation of $r_s = .71$.

26. The amount of pro and con advertising in newspapers was determined by our examination of the 17 daily newspapers in the state for the three week period preceding the referendum. In addition to the 5,742 square inches of con advertisements in the daily papers, preliminary and partial examination of the weekly papers reveals another 1,458 square inches for a total of 7,200 square inches of con acting public advertisements. This compares with 7,098 square inches of pro acting public advertisements in the daily papers and only 154 square inches in the weekly papers. Thus a complete examination of the dailies and a partial analysis of the weeklies reveals a comparable amount of advertisements on both sides. We suspect that a final analysis of the weekly papers will reveal a greater amount of con than pro advertisements.

use the possibility of legalizing liquor by the drink to deflect the ongoing activities or relationships of individual and collective acting units. Clearly the liquor referendum did not pose the possibility of doing away with all liquor sales. Package liquor sales remained in operation throughout the referendum campaign and the illegal sale of liquor by the drink was never consistently deflected. The issue posed by the referendum and the pro acting public's proposed resolution of the issue were not such that a sufficient number of acting units could be implicated in the pro acting public's discussion and proposed resolution of that issue. Further, the procedures of the pro acting public precluded accomplishing such an objective.

As the preceding description indicates, both pro and con acting publics employed the mass media—specifically, newspaper, radio and television advertisements—to reach a mass audience with their positions on the referendum. It is also clear that the pro acting public employed procedures which enabled them to reach *only* a mass audience. Their appeal was through the mass media to large numbers of disparate persons. They had limited resources in the form of existing sets of social relationships to which they could appeal for financial support, manpower, or discussion and deliberation of their position on the issue.

By contrast, the con acting public was able to draw upon existing sets of ongoing social relationships for finances, for manpower, and for the discussion and deliberation of their position on the issue. Persons who are implicated in such sets of social relationships can not only accomplish discussion of the issue, but can secure commitments to action on the issue. This is not possible with a mass relationship. The pro acting public did not have direct access to existing sets of social relationships nor were there campaign procedures addressed to sets of social relationships. Their activities were addressed to and were relevant to a mass relationship.

Based on the respective procedures of the pro and con acting publics and the subsequent outcome of the referendum, we submit that the greater the utilization of sets of social relationships to present and implement a proposed resolution of an issue, the greater the alignment of the responding public to that resolution of the issue.

VIII. SUMMARY

Our examination of the activities of acting units in a state-wide liquor referendum leads us to suggest two general propositions concerning the development and consequence of public opinion processes. First, the composition and size of a public is a function of the range of activities and relationships deflected. Only those acting units whose ongoing activities and relationships are deflected will become implicated in a discussion and attempted resolution of the issue. The greater the number and range of activities and relationships deflected, the greater the number and range of acting units implicated in the process. Second, the greater the utilization of sets of social relationships to present and implement a proposed resolution of an issue, the greater the alignment of the responding public to that resolution of the issue. Acting publics which employ mass media techniques direct their resolutions to a mass relationship. Individuals in a mass relationship may be aware of a common object or issue and may be aware, in common, of some proposed action toward that object. Disparate individuals, however, do not interact with one another. We submit that it is a fundamental sociological premise that social interaction is of consequence in altering the behavior of human beings. To the extent that acting publics ignore this premise they will have little chance of aligning support with their resolution of the issue.

These two general propositions are the products of examining the activities of acting publics in one referendum. We suggest that they can and should be submitted to further systematic empirical tests on subsequent issues around which the public opinion process develops. A survey of the literature on the public opinion process reveals an almost total lack of attention to what acting units do to and with one another within that process. Our investigation suggests that such attention is necessary in understanding the production, development, and consequence of the public opinion process within the framework of society.