

Active and Passive Aspects of Student Alienation in Iran¹

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Abstract

This paper probes the different adjustment patterns of Iranian university students to the contemporary social and political scene and the degree to which they accept or reject the dominant cultural mores, traditional values, and the institutionalized authority of the society. Two patterns of adjustment are distinguished: the alienated activist who is politically and socially active, and the passive retreatist who is not likely to participate in social and political activities. The paper further examines two groups of active and passive students to highlight their differences and similarities. A total of 243 subjects have been drawn from university students in Tehran through a disproportionately stratified sampling. Using structured interviews and focused group discussions, detailed information about social, economic, and demographic backgrounds as well as information on the attitudes, ideations and behaviors of respondents has been collected. In order to measure different psychosocial dimensions of the subjects' behaviors and attitudes related to alienation and activism, 24 scales are utilized. Two-tailed Student's t-Test for continuous variables and chi-square analysis for categorical variables are used to compare the two groups. Results indicate that the two groups do not differ by age, marital status, level of education, and the degree of social and political alienation. However, the groups significantly differ in terms of several background variables and some attitudinal and behavioral characteristics. The activists and passive retreatist differed by gender, socioeconomic status, residency, field of study, employment rate, grade point average, membership in organizations, degree of exposure to mass media, and group size. The difference between the two groups was also statistically significant in terms of political ideology, family structure, self-efficacy, need to achievement, self-estrangement, reformism, rebelliousness,

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altruism, egoism, optimism, pessimism, value isolation, conventional religiosity, moral values, intellectualism, romanticism, and humanitarianism.

Keywords

alienation, activism, passive retreatism, political apathy, value isolation, political ideology of radical reform

Introduction

Using alienation as a theoretical perspective and/or a paradigm for sociological and social psychological research is by no means a new idea. For at least one hundred fifty years scholars have recognized the relationship between estrangement and revolution (Marx 1959), and that between anomie and suicide (Durkheim 1951). The concept of alienation has not only become a dominant theme in both the contemporary literature and the history of sociological thought, but has been used extensively to characterize certain types of reaction to social stress and strain. It has been used to condemn the dissenters who refuse to support the values and structures of the society in which they live, and conformists who follow the socially prescribed behavioral norms with no personal meaning of fulfillment.

A number of scholars (Flacks 1967, Keniston 1968, Feuerlicht 1978, Jennings 1987, Yoshizaki 1998) have identified the youth and particularly the student population as the largest alienated segment of the society. Further, students have become the loudest spokespersons for social change and leading catalysts for political transformation. Whereas a vast literature exists on the subject in Europe and North America, the causes, patterns, and behavioral outcomes of student alienation and activism in developing societies are understudied. Further, several features shared by the present scales of student alienation and activism raise questions about their measurement value in comparative empirical research:

- Almost all have only been developed and tested in European and North American societies.
- Item differences raise the question of whether the scales are truly equivalent. To what extent do scales of alienation and activism measure a common construct rather than different ones for each scale?
- There is little evidence that the scales of alienation and activism are reasonably valid and reliable. To evaluate the meaningfulness and validity of scales, it may be beneficial to test them in a different context and thereby develop reasonable equivalent, valid and reliable scales of student alienation and activism.

Having the above in mind, this paper probes various aspects of student alienation and activism in Iran. Based on existing typologies of adjustment patterns of youth to the contemporary social and political scene developed by Flacks (1967), Keniston (1968), Block, et al (1968), Feuerlicht (1978), Astin (1979), Marwell (1987), and Yoshizaki (1998), it identifies different adjustment patterns of Iranian students to the contemporary social and political scene to show the degree to which they accept or reject the dominate cultural mores, traditional values, and the institutionalized authority of the society. The article further compares and contrasts two groups of alienated students: the alienated activists who are politically and socially active, and the passive retreatist who are not likely to participate in social and political activities. In order to depict the differences and similarities between these two groups, several propositions about the characteristics and behaviors of activist/constructivist and alienated/retreatist youths are tested by examination students' socioeconomic status (SES), family backgrounds, academic achievements, basic value commitments, political outlooks and attitudes, social and political participation, organizational memberships, and media exposure.

The Concept of Alienation

Numerous definitions for the term have been cited in the vast literature on alienation, many of them conflicting. Most social psychological definitions of the term are derived from Durkheim's conception of anomia. According to Durkheim (1933:209-10), alienation (individual anomia) is "states of mind which accompany social disintegration: feelings of normlessness, powerlessness, meaninglessness—feeling that frequently lead to suicide". Merton (1957:62) has defined alienation as "the state when social and cultural structures are in conflict or when the individual is in conflict with the proscription or prescriptions of the structure". Fromm (1955:120) defines the term as "...a mode of existence in which the person experiences himself as an alien...estranged from himself". Keniston's (1965:204) definition is a "response to major collective estrangements, social strains, and historical losses in our society, which first predispose certain individuals to reject their society, and later shape the particular ways they do so." Mitchell (1988) explanation for alienation is "a sociopsychological condition of the individual which involves his estrangement from certain aspects of his social existence". Yet for other scholars (Sampson, 1967, Josephson 1962, Feuerlicht 1978, Marwell 1987, Andrain and Apter 1991, Coser 1986, Alwin, et al 1991) alienation is an individual feeling or state of disassociation from self, from others and from the world at large.

Observing these various definitions, Kon (1987:507) has suggested that to make the term operational, one should ask the following questions: "Who is

alienated? From what is he alienated? How is the alienation manifested?”. Similarly, Feuerlicht (1978), Jennings (1987), Schwartz (1973), Keniston (1965), and Gamson (1986) have argued that the concept of alienation requires specification in at least four respects: “(1) Focus: Alienation from what? (2) Replacement: What replaces the old relationship? (3) Mode: how is the alienation manifest? (4) Agent: What is the agent of alienation?”.

Student Alienation and its Behavioral Forms, Patterns and Characteristics

Theorists of alienation (e.g., Keniston 1965, Flacks 1967, Schwartz 1973, Astin 1979, Halleck 1983, Fishman and Solomon 1975, Feuerlicht 1978, Marwell 1987, Gundelach 1998) have defined student alienation as a pattern of behavior or attitude freely chosen by young students who explicitly reject what they perceive as the dominant values or norms of the society. A common distinction is often made in the literature between a pattern of behavior which is activist and one which is non-activist. A conceptual definition of the two varieties of alienation must be emphasized if one is to adequately offer an in-depth analysis of the activism and passivism as well as an examination of their different origins.

The defining feature of the “alienated activist”, as presented by Flacks (1967), Keniston (1968), Osgood (1991), DeGraaf (1996) and others, is participation in a demonstration or group activity that concerns itself with some political, social, or ethical principle. Being highly committed to some social or political cause, the activist believes that the traditional social and political institutions in his society have failed and must be replaced by new participatory and decentralized institutions. He is a politically optimistic protestor with a program, purpose, or coherent ideology of radical reform and revolution. Being interested in socio-political reforms and reconstruction, the activist attempts to transform his society. His movement, according to Feuerlicht (1978:105), has several key elements: (a) relatively long lasting large groups, (b) spontaneity, (c) a clear program or purpose. (d) aiming to correct, supplement, overthrow or in some manner influence the social order, and (e) formulated as a collective effort to solve a problem that many people feel they have in common.

The behavior of the committed or politically active alienated students is more altruistic than egoistic or personal. They are active not because they see their own interests threatened, but rather because they see others as victims of social injustice. They may be sensitized to the wounds of anonymous others, and are therefore more altruistic (Alwin, et al 1991:153).

The defining characteristics of the “alienated non-activist” and/or “psychologically alienated pessimist” according to a number of alienation theorists (e.g., Keniston 1965, Bay 1967, Flacks 1967, Schwartz 1973, Fishman

and Solomon 1975, Marwell 1987, Gundelach 1998) are withdrawal from and rejection of traditional social values, norms, and institutions. Philosophically, this type of student is too pessimistic and unconcerned to engage in any kind of organized protests. His demonstrations of dissent are private through nonconformity of life-style, behavior and ideology, experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs, or efforts to enhance his own subjective experience. Lacking a program, purpose, or coherent ideology of action and radical reform, the alienated passive student has undergone a regressive self-transformation that leaves his society relatively unaffected. He shows his disapproval of and disinterest in politics and social reconstruction, is convinced that the society is beyond restoration, and considers dropping out the only alternative solution.

Block, et al (1968), Astin (1979), Lipset (1986), Reinehart (1994), and Shaffer (2000) have differentiated five patterns of adjustment of youth to the contemporary social scene in order to show the degree of student involvement with political and social issues and the degree to which the individual accepts or rejects the traditional values and the institutionalized authority of the society: (1) political apathetic youths—characterized by their low level of the status quo; (2) alienated youths—who have rejected traditional societal values by rebelling against the institutionalized structure of authority but are uninvolved in political and social issues; (3) individualistic youths—who are involved in political matters while generally accepting the status quo; (4) activist youth—who are involved politically and socially but have rejected the traditional values and structures of authority; (5) constructivist youth—who are described as somewhat similar to the activists in their degree of involvement in social and political matters but unlike activists seek to work within the existing framework of the society to induce change.

Flacks (1967), Keniston (1968), Schwartz (1973), Marwell (1987), and Yoshizaki (1998) have identified two forms of youth behavior: (1) a passive retreatist response, the defining features of which is withdrawal from and rejection of traditional social values, norms, and institutions (e.g., hippie sub-cultures); and (2) a more active radical response, the defining characteristics of which is participation in a demonstration or group activity that concerns itself with some political, social or ethical principle (e.g., student political movements).

The alienated activists' perceptions of the system are similar to those of the alienated non-activists. However, activists are unwilling to accept their situation without trying to do something about it. They may be temporarily willing to participate in the game within the very systems from which they are alienated (e.g., voting and peaceful demonstrations). In spite of this marginal or pro-system behavior, they frequently belong to a movement, party, or group which is ultimately dedicated to changing the system. Outside and against the system, they may engage in violence, illegal strikes, etc.—in fact, anything to achieve

their ultimate goal (Mohseni-Tabrizi 1984:96).

Whereas alienated activists have a program, purpose or coherent ideology of radical reform and revolution, alienated non-activists lack a coherent ideology of action. Moreover, activists and non-activists differ in the way their rejections of the norms and values of their society are expressed. Activists actively attempt to transform their society whereas non-activists have undergone a regressive self-transformation that leaves their society relatively unaffected. Cooperation between the two groups is relatively rare. Activists accuse non-activists of irresponsibility, while non-activists are convinced that activists are moralistic, uptight, and un-cool (Mohseni-Tabrizi 1984:96-7).

In the rest of this article, different adjustment patterns of Iranian students to the contemporary social and political scene in Iran are discussed. An attempt is made to test several propositions about the characteristics of the two groups of alienated students with the goal to find out whether there are significant differences between them in terms of socioeconomic status, family background, academic achievement, basic value commitments, political attitudes, social and political participation, and membership in organizations, and media exposure.

Methodology

Subjects

A total of 243 subjects were drawn through a disproportionately stratified sampling. The sample was recruited from university students in the city of Tehran (of a total population of 91,605 male and female undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in 25 fields of study during the 2001-2002 academic year).

Instrument for Data Collection

Two principal techniques of data collection were used: (a) structured interview schedule (SIS); and (b) focused group discussion (FGD). Detailed information on social, economic, demographic and other background variables was collected through the interview schedule. The schedule provided a useful and reliable data base for detailed analysis when combined with qualitative information collected through a focus group discussion on various aspects of alienation and activism. Twenty four scales were utilized in order to measure different psychosocial dimensions of subjects' ideations, attitudes, and behaviors related to alienation and activism. These include:

1. "Political Alienation" scale: consisted of three items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.83$)
2. "Social Alienation" scale: consisted of five items with internal consistencies

($\alpha=0.76$)

3. "Activism" scale: consisted of 7 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.81$)

4. "Self-Estrangement" scale: consisted of five items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.76$)

5. "Value Isolation" scale: consisted of five items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.79$)

6. "Depressive Personality" scale: consisted of 12 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.81$)

7. "SES" (Socioeconomic Status): consisted of 3 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha= 0.78$)

8. "Optimism" scale : Consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.83$)

9. "Pessimism" scale: Consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=.79$)

10. "Need to Achievement" scale: consisted of 9 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.81$)

11. "Achievement Goals" scale: consisted of 7 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha= 0.74$)

12. "Altruism" scale: consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.80$)

13. "Self-Efficacy" scale: consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.76$)

14. "Media Exposure" scale: consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.83$)

15. "Egoism" scale: consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha= 0.76$)

16. "Family Structure" scale: consisted of 6 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.81$)

17. "Romanticism" scale: consisted of 6 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.81$)

18. "Intellectualism" scale: consisted of 8 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.79$)

19. "Humanitarianism" scale: consisted of 4 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.85$)

20. "Moralism" scale: consisted of 4 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.74$)

21. "Ideology of Radical Reform" scale: consisted of 6 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.83$)
22. "Conventional Religiosity" scale: consisted of 6 items with internal Consistencies ($\alpha=0.79$)
23. "Rebelliousness" scale: consisted of 4 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.76$)
24. "Reformism" scale: consisted of 5 items with internal consistencies ($\alpha=0.81$).

The 243 subjects had a mean age of 23.4 years (SD=8, range=18-35), 110 females, 133 males (45.2%, 54.8%), most were undergraduate students (N=202 or 83.12%), single (N=92 or 79.01%) and unemployed (N=157 or 64.6 %). The major fields of study for 58% of them were humanities and art (N=151). The rest (N=92 or 42%) majored in science and engineering.

Results

Two tailed Student's test for continuous variables and chi-square analysis for categorical variables were used to compare the two groups of alienated students (those who are politically and socially active and those who are not likely to participate in political and social activities) on demographic, behavioral, and psychopathological measures. Results are reported as means and standard deviations unless otherwise indicated.

Demographic Comparisons

Of a total of 243 subjects, 85 were alienated activists (N=85 or 34.9%) and 158 were passive retreatist (N=158 or 65.01%). The Two groups of subjects did not differ by age, marital status, or level of education (Table 1). However, they did differ significantly with respect to gender, residency, major field of study, employment, GPA, family socioeconomic status (SES), degree of exposure to mass media, size of group, and membership in organizations.

Among the activists, 83.5 percent were males and 16.5 percent were females. In contrast, a greater number of passive retreatists were females (N=74 or 67.2%) as compared to 32.8 percent males (N=36) ($\chi^2=10.73$, $df=1$, s.). Activists and non-activists were also different in terms of their residency. The activists were mostly from urban families, as compared to passive retreatists who mostly belonged to rural families ($\chi^2=8.32$, $df=1$, s.).

Subjects further differed in terms of major field of study ($\chi^2=11.27$, $df=2$, s.). Among the activists, 73% were enrolled in liberal arts social science. In contrast, around 61 percent (N=97) of retreatists were in engineering, medicine,

natural sciences, and business administration. Differences in terms of employment were also significant ($\chi^2=8.65$, $df=2$, s.). More than 48 percent of the activists were employed on a full or part time basis, as compared to 18 percent of the no-activists.

Findings indicate that activists differed significantly from passive retreatists in terms of GPA ($\chi^2=12.63$, $df=3$, s.). Over 70 percent (N=60) of the activists held GPAs of 3.5 and above, whereas, less than thirty percent of the passive retreatists (N=47, 29.7%) held GPAs of more than 3.5. In terms of socioeconomic status (SES), the two groups did differ also significantly ($\chi^2=2.93$, $df=2$, s.). Activists had higher SES than non-activists (N=53, 62.3% activists; N=50, 31.6% non-activists).

Activists differed markedly from passive retreatists in terms of media exposure ($\chi^2=23.41$, $df=4$, s.). More than half of the activists (N=45, 52.9%) had a reasonable degree of media exposure, as compared to 23 percent non-activists (N=36).

Results indicate that student activism involves a select number of students in a select number of universities (N=80, 94%). In contrast, student passivism is associated with many students in many colleges and universities (N=145.92%). Activists tended differed significantly from passive retreatists in terms of membership in organizations ($\chi^2=17.33$, $df=1$, s.). More than forty percent the activists (N=35, 41.1%) were had membership in political, religious, and educational organizations. In contrast, only around eleven percent of the passive retreatists (N=18, 11.3%) had membership in various types of organizations.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Alienated Activists and Passive Retreatists

Characteristic	Activist (N=85)		Non-activist (N=158)		Analysis		
	Mean	SD	Mean	Sd	t	df	P
Age (years)	24	6.3	22.8	8.1	<1	6	n.s
Gender:	N	%	N	%	χ^2	df	p
Male	71	83.5	62	39	10.73	1	s.
Female	14	16.5	96	61			
Marital Status:					2.32	2	n.s.
Single	58	68	134	85			
Married	25	29	21	13			
Divorced	2	3	3	2			
Residency:					8.32	2	s.
Rural	23	27	91	58			
Urban	62	73	67	42			

Major of Study:							
Humanities & Art	62	73	61	39	} 11.27	2	s.
Science & Engineering	23	27	97	61			
Level of Study:							
Undergraduate	71	84	131	83	} 2.11	1	n.s
Graduate	14	16	27	17			
Employment:							
Employed	37	43.5	29	18	} 8.65	2	s.
Unemployed	48	56.5	129	82			
G.P.A.:							
3.5 and above	60	70.5	47	30	} 12.63	3	s.
Less than 3.5	25	29.5	111	70			
Socio-Economic Status:							
Higher SES	53	62	50	32	} 21.33	2	s.
Lower SES	32	38	108	68			
Media Exposure:							
Most often	45	52.9	36	23	} 23.41	4	s.
Seldom	40	57.1	122	77			
Group Size:							
Few	80	94	13	8	} 17.52	2	s.
Many	5	6	145	92			
Organization Membership:							
Yes	35	41	18	11.3	} 17.33	1	s.
No	50	59	145	88.7			

Ideations, Attitudes and Behaviors Related to Students Activism and Retreatism

Table 2 presents information on psychosocial dimensions of alienated activists and passive retreatists in terms of ideations, attitudes, and behaviors. Results obtained from a two-tailed Student's t-Test indicate that activists and passive retreatists did not differ significantly in terms of their social alienation scores ($t < 1$ n.s.). Further, as measured by a 3 item Schwartz alienation scale, there was not a significant difference between the activists and the passive retreatists by comparing in term political alienation scores ($t < 1$ n.s.).

The results show that alienation is associated with both withdrawal and activism as behavior orientations but that withdrawal and activism can be understood as part of the same psycho-political process. Despite the prevalence

of social and political alienation among both types of students, the two groups differed significantly in terms of attitudes, ideologies, outlooks, and behaviors. Political ideology accounted for a substantial difference in activism—comparing the political ideology of radical reform scores ($t=2.45 < 0.02$).

There was a significant difference between activists and passive retreatists in terms of activism scores ($t=2.26 < 0.03$). This implies that psychologically alienated and/or non-activists express their sense of alienation in a passive, retreatist response. In contrast, alienated activists tend to express their sense of alienation in a more active, radical response. Also, there was a significant difference between the two groups by comparing the self estrangement scores ($t=2.19 < 0.04$). Activists unlike passive retreatists showed little self-estrangement.

Findings supported the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of value isolation scores ($t=1.98 < 0.04$). The activists, in contrast to the passive retreatists, were relatively less value isolated. They have learned norms of civic duty and participation that would make withdrawal and distrust of commitment a non-valued option. Further, psychopathology comparisons between the two groups reveal substantial difference between the two groups of students ($t=2.45 < 0.02$). Passive retreatists were more depressed according to their scores on the SCL90 depression scale. Also, activists obtained higher scores on the optimism scale and lower scores on the pessimism scale compared passive retreatists ($t=1.94 < 0.04$; $t=2.38 < 0.02$).

Activists and passive retreatists further differed in terms of need-to-achievement scale—by comparing the N-Ach scores ($t=2.47 < 0.02$). This implies that the activists, in contrast to the non-activists, are more materialistic, or as others have put it “thinking of their own profit and success (Feuerlicht 1978:112)”. Activists also obtained higher scores on the altruism scale and lower scores on the egoism scale than did the passive retreatists ($t=1.75 < 0.05$ and $t=1.83 < 0.04$). The difference was also significant in terms of self-efficacy score ($t=2.17 < 0.04$).

In terms of family structure, the two groups showed a significant difference ($t=2.15 < 0.04$). Findings reveal that, in contrast to the case of passive retreatists, in activist-producing families, it is the father who has a dominant psychological influence on the students’ development. Another difference was revealed in conventional religiosity ($t=1.98 < 0.04$). Results support the hypothesis that whereas activists tend to place greater emphasis on involvement in intellectual and esthetic rather than moral or religious pursuits, passive retreatists tend to show conventional orientations toward morality and religion.

The difference between the two groups was significant in terms of Flack’s “four value patterns” (i.e., moralism, romanticism, intellectualism, humanitarianism) scales ($t=1.75 < 0.07$, $t=2.18 < 0.04$, $t=1.90 < 0.05$, $t=1.83$

<0.07) supporting the hypothesis that activists place greater emphasis on the value patterns than do the non-activists. Reformism and rebelliousness were also significantly different ($t=2.55 <0.02$; $t=2.20 <0.03$), showing that activists have learned the norms of civic duty and participation such that they think of withdrawal as a non-valued option.

Table 2: Scores on Attitudes, Behaviors and Psychopathological Measures of Alienated Activists and the Passive Retreatists

Scale	Score				Analysis		
	Activists (N=85)		Non Activists (N=158)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	T	Df	P
Social Alienation	42.5	10.2	41.8	10.3	<1	2	n.s.
Political Alienation	45.0	9.8	43.1	10.2	<1	2	n.s.
Political Ideology	18.8	5.1	21.5	5.3	2.45	2	<0.02
Activism	2.6	1.1	2.0	0.8	2.26	2	<0.03
Self-Estrangement	2.3	0.8	1.8	0.6	2.12	2	<0.04
Value Isolation	3.2	1.0	2.4	1.0	1.98	2	<0.04
SCL 90 Depression Scale	24.4	7.2	19.1	9.4	2.45	4	<0.02
Optimism	3.1	1.0	2.4	1.1	1.94	2	<0.04
Pessimism	3.2	1.0	2.7	0.9	2.38	2	<0.02
N-Ach Scale	2.6	1.6	1.8	0.6	2.47	2	<0.02
Altruism	18.1	5.3	21.2	5.6	1.75	2	<0.05
Egoism	12.3	4.1	9.6	5.5	1.83	2	<0.04
Self-Efficacy	3.6	6.6	2.7	0.9	2.17	2	<0.04
Family Structure	1.9	1.0	1.3	0.6	2.15	2	<0.04
Conventional Religiosity	3.1	1.0	2.4	1.0	1.98	2	<0.04
Romanticism	2.6	1.1	2.0	0.8	1.75	2	<0.07
Intellectualism	3.6	0.8	2.4	1.0	2.18	2	<0.04
Humanitarianism	3.2	1.0	2.7	0.9	1.90	2	<0.05
Moralism	2.3	0.8	1.8	0.6	1.83	2	<0.07
Reformism	2.8	1.1	2.3	1.0	2.55	2	<0.02
Rebelliousness	3.5	0.6	2.4	0.9	2.20	2	<0.03

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The empirical evidence presented in this article is more or less consistent with the findings of European and North American studies (e.g.m Keniston 1965, Flacks 1967, Josephson and Josephson 1962, Feuerlicht 1978, Fishman and Solomon 1975, Marwell 1987, Astin 1979, Osgood 1991, Gundelach 1998, Andrain, 1995) and can offer the following conclusions:

1. Social and political alienation bear strong and consistent relationship to activism. Thus withdrawal and activism can be understood as part of the same psycho-political process.
2. Political ideology does account for substantial difference in activism.
3. The level of a student's socioeconomic status (SES) and his basic behavioral orientation toward social and political activities are related in a significant way (predicting especially well the activist's orientation).
4. Activism tends to be significantly associated with a predisposition to seek information from mass media.
5. Field of study accounts for substantial difference in activism. Students in the fields of social science and humanities (academic and non-vocational) are more likely to adopt activist orientations than do non-activists.
6. The level of an individual's activism tends to be significantly associated with a predisposition to seek membership in an organization.
7. The activists did differ in a statistically significant way from the passive retreatists in terms of their commitment to particular beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.
8. The findings supported the hypotheses that there is a significant difference between the two groups in terms of self-estrangement scores, value isolation scores, optimism and pessimism scores, need-to-achievement scores, altruism and egoism scores, self-efficacy scores, conventional religiosity scores, romanticism, intellectualism, humanitarianism and moralism scores, reformism and rebelliousness score, family structure scores, and finally depressive symptoms scores.

What suggestions, then could be made for future research and study. The data permit many additional questions to be raised and propositions analyzed, for example: What other factors besides those included in the current study account for variations in activism? Do other varieties of alienation, in addition to social, political and self-estrangement, bear strong, direct, and consistent relationship to activism? To what extent do the structural properties of societal

institutions exert influence on activist behavior in Iran? Future research may also attempt to examine measures of socialization and current political and institutional identifications of the Iranian student activists. How significantly is alienated activist behavior associated with a willingness to engage in violence in order to achieve social change? Is the value pattern expressed by activists correlated with those of their parents?

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