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The meaning of engagement: An exploration of generativity in the domain of politics

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The Meaning of Engagement: An Exploration of Generativity in the Domain of Politics

by

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Abstract

Survey research has raised concerns over recent declines in political participation (Putnam, 2000). However, there has yet to be much research examining reasons for this from a narrative, life history perspective. In the current study, we examined intensive interviews of 94 midlife adults from the MacArthur Foundation Study on Successful Midlife Development, for levels of generative concern using the Loyola Generativity Scale, as well as political behaviours, values and beliefs using measures developed by the authors. This exploratory analysis focused on the accounts that men and women gave of political involvement, as well as predictors of these patterns. Generativity was found to be differentially predictive of traditional political engagement in males and females. More specifically, generativity was found to be predictive of engagement only in women, as mediated through a sense of civic obligation. Differences were also found in how men and women relate to traditional politics, in that women overall had more desire to engage, but felt less a part of the political process than did men. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to acknowledge the time and support of my advisor Dr Michael Pratt. His suggestions and guidance added an essential pillar of experience in generativity research to this project. Dr. Pratt is not only an expert in the study of how people express care and concern for the next generation, but also models these values on a day-to-day basis through interactions with his students. I would also like to thank Dr. Anne Wilson , Dr. Eileen Wood and Dr. Serge Desmarais for their thoughtful reviews of this project.

I am indebted to Dr. Anne Colby, Dr. Erin Phelps and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Successful Midlife Development (MIDMAC), for compiling and coding this data, and for their assistance in interpreting it.

Finally, although I know not their identities, I wish to give heartfelt thanks to those participants who took part in the MIDUS and MIDMAC projects from which this study was based. Without these dedicated participants willing to allow researchers an opportunity to learn from their experiences, we would not have been able to complete this project.

Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

Appendices

Civic engagement and political participation in America have shown unprecedented decline in recent decades (Andrews, 1991; Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1991; Putnam, 2000). This trend is not particularly alarming unless one considers the interdependent nature of a democratic society and the necessity of community involvement to the maintenance of this. Bellah et al. (1985) and Bellah et al. (1991) argue that increasing individualism threatens to erode our social fabric. Bellah et al. (1991) go on to expose the fallacy of Lockean individualism, whereby individuals in society see themselves as autonomous and self-serving, and believe that if everyone were like this somehow a democratic process would be born. In fact, the cohesion of a democratic society requires that collective trust exist enough to facilitate vital civic activities such as political engagement, volunteerism, reciprocal relations and the limitation of self-seeking motivation. Regardless of people's perceived autonomy in North America, they will eventually come to depend upon their society for a myriad of reasons, such as: social support, health care, education, law enforcement and social assistance.

Giving of oneself to others, and trusting one's community, are arguably the most basic requirements for a functioning democratic process. It is this consideration that raises powerful concerns about decreases in civic and political engagement in our society, and what this will do to the social fabric upon which we all depend. Although the arguments made by Bellah et al. (1991) and the trends documented by Putnam (2000) are convincing, one must also consider that many people continue to be highly engaged in politics and civic activities, despite the overall trends. An obvious question that has not yet been answered in research is, why are some people involved, and others not? Little

research has been conducted to answer this question. By examining the individual reasons that people give for political engagement, as well as the value they assign to relationships they have with their government, one can help understand and ultimately perhaps foster this vital social responsibility.

This study examined how midlife adults identify themselves in relation to politics and political involvement in the United States, and how this can be viewed as a type of generative narration. Although generativity as a construct has been widely studied recently (e.g., McAdams, 2001), its relation to political involvement has not. Our research examined the implications of political involvement in midlife, as well as how this is incorporated into the personal narratives of people's lives. In 1995-1996, the McArthur Foundation funded an extensive study on midlife referred to as the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS). This data set contains large volumes of both quantitative and qualitative data on several thousand people, as well as intensive interviews with ninety-four of them, organized by Anne Colby. These interviews and demographic data were examined in our study, in an exploratory way, to assess the value and meaning people attribute to their personal involvement in politics. Using these types of intensive narratives allowed for a more personalized examination of this important social activity. It is hoped that this research has contributed to gaining a better understanding of the recent downward trends of political engagement identified by Bellah et al. (1991) and Putnam (2000).

As the MIDUS Life Story Interviews used probes which focused on traditional political involvement, this was basis of the current study's definition of political activity. During the political section of the interviews, participants were probed about political

behaviours (e.g., voting, campaign volunteering, financial contributions) and political

beliefs (e.g., optimism, party affiliation, reasons for involvement). These components

were used to define personal political involvement (see Appendix A). Although many

quasi-political activities (e.g., activism on specific social issues) are arguably important

for political changes, they were only incorporated into the current study if participants

personally identify these as political action within the politics section of the interview.

    To lay the foundation for this research, some background on generativity will be

discussed, and how this is expressed across various life domains. As our study utilized

life narratives from ninety-four participants, the nature and value of using such narratives

will also be discussed in relation to the expression of generativity and civic participation.

As political participation encompassed the foundation of this study, the meaning of

political involvement and civic engagement will be explored, along with their potential

relationship to generativity.

Generativity in Midlife

    Erikson (1963) described generativity as "the concern in establishing and guiding

the next generation" (Erikson, 1963, p.267). As the seventh of eight stages in Erikson's

theory, this stage of psychosocial development tends to peak in midlife, as one expresses

the desire to bestow a legacy of oneself on the next generation (McAdams, 2001).

Although Erikson (1963) identified caring for children as a key generative action, he also

stated that not all people would express generativity through this domain "because of

special and genuine gifts in other directions" (Erikson, 1963; p.267). Erikson (1969) later

went on to give a bona fide example of this in *Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant*

Non-violence, where he examined the irony of Gandhi being a spiritual father to many,

but neglectful to his own offspring. It is traditionally thought that generativity plays a significant role in defining one's contribution to children, family, community, work, politics and social responsibility, although one might not be generative in all domains, as the example of Gandhi suggests (Colby, Sippola & Phelps, 2001; Hart, McAdams, Hirsh & Bauer, 2001; MacDermid, Heilbrun & DeHaan, 1997).

Kotre (1984) differentiated four different types of generativity: cultural, biological, parental and technical. He further defined these as expressed through two different styles: communal and agentic. Communal generativity can be expressed through care and nurturing of others (e.g. in parenting), whereas agentic generativity is expressed through creativity or power, which is seen as an extension of the self (e.g., leadership; Kotre, 1984). McAdams and de. St. Aubin (1992) developed a more comprehensive model of generativity encompassing seven interrelated components: inner desire, cultural demand, concern for the next generation, belief in the species, generative commitment, generative action and narration. They also proposed that both agentic and communal desires are present in the fullest forms of generativity (McAdams, 2001).

Researchers have traditionally found gender to be a contributing factor in generativity scores. For instance, women have repeatedly shown higher generativity scores than men in research using various generativity measures (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; McAdams, de St. Aubin & Logan, 1993; Pratt, Norris, Arnold & Filyer, 1999). McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) also found an interaction between gender and parenting with regards to generativity, in that women's generativity scores were not significantly different for parents versus non-parents, but men who were parents scored higher on this measure than men who were not.

Demographic correlates have also been shown to predict civic obligation. For instance, education has been shown to have a positive correlation with civic responsibility (Keyes & Ryff, 1998; MacAdams, Hart & Maruna, 1998). Further to this, Keyes and Ryff (1998) found an interaction effect between education and age. This interaction showed that higher education predicted increased amounts of civic obligation in midlife, but not among younger adults.

Expression of Generativity Through Various Life Domains

Traditionally, studies in generativity have used global measures, such as the Loyola Generativity Scale (LGS) or the Generative Behaviour Checklist (GBC) (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). These scales have shown good validity and reliability over the past ten years of use, and are now considered standard measures of generativity. Recently, however, researchers have also begun to examine the expression of generativity within specific life domains, in addition to global measures. For example, MacDermid et al. (1997) compared two cohorts of women who all had taken on the roles of working, being mothers, and wives. This study examined how women in various roles evaluated their experiences in these roles, through measures of perceived competence and satisfaction. It was found that women's satisfaction in one particular role or domain in life (e.g., worker or parent), was related to generativity in that particular role, but not necessarily to generativity in other roles (e.g., spouse).

The MacDermid et al. (1997) study gives strong support for the examination of role-specific generativity measures versus global measures. A global measure in this study would not have identified the role-specific moderation effect and its relation to role

satisfaction. This study also concluded that women might have more discontinuous roles than men with regards to the expression of generativity. The previous example of Gandhi, given by Erikson (1969), illustrates how one can be highly generative in one life domain, and low in another. Similarly, the research underscored the notion that one's generative desire may not necessarily match the ability to express this in certain roles (e.g., a teacher who is also a mother may find it easier to express generative acts than a business woman who does not have children). In addition to this, not all people may have easy access to express generativity in all life domains (e.g., an unemployed person will have difficulty expressing generativity through work). In support of this, Peterson and Stewart (1996) found that highly generative women found more gratification in a domain that was more readily available to them (career or parenting), depending on the pattern of life investment. Using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and a Q-Sort measure of generativity, this study examined context and domain-specific predictors of generativity in a 20-year longitudinal study of educated women. The TAT examined generative themes in ten categories, arising in stories told about ambiguous pictures, whereas the Q-Sort measure asked participants for ratings of psychological wishes over the next ten years, and scored these for generative themes. If only a global measure of generativity had been used (one not considering independent domains), these trends to express generativity differently might not have been revealed. Rossi (2001) states that one must examine all domains in a person's life for a complete and accurate depiction of her social contributions. Parallel to this, Rossi (2001) found low correlations between the expressions of different social responsibility themes in different domains, in the MIDUS sample of several thousand midlife adults. As noted, the most widely used measures of

generativity are the LGS and GBC, but these have rarely been examined in domain-specific contexts as identified by MacDermid et al. (1997) and Rossi (2001).

Although the use of the LGS and GBC are indeed valuable, and these scales have shown good internal and external reliability, they may not be sensitive to generativity in all life domains when used exclusively. Through the examination of personal narratives in addition to the LGS, one might better examine personal expressions of generativity and the subsequent rationales given for these expressions.

Use of Narratives to Examine Generativity

In the McAdams et al. (1998) model, generative narration is the final and fusing element of generativity (see Figure 1). This narration is proposed to incorporate all other elements of generativity, as people create and follow personal autobiographies of their place in the world (McAdams, 2001). These narrations are used as both a map for personal endeavours, as well as a teaching mechanism for the next generation. The internalisation of this life narration becomes a key element in the person's identity (McAdams, 2001). It is for this reason that many researchers see life story narratives as a rich element of a person's identity and purpose. It is possible that these narratives contain depth and value richness that may not be tapped by traditional measures, such as self-report questionnaires.
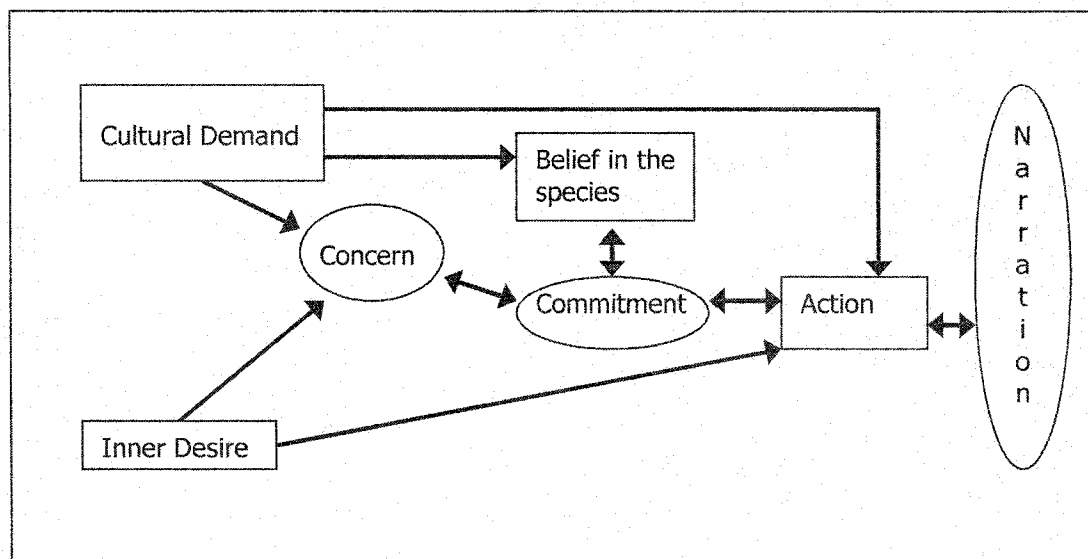
Figure 1. McAdams' model of generativity. Taken from McAdams' et al. (1998)

Many researchers (e.g., McAdams, 1992) have sought to use personal narratives to examine generative motivation and behaviours. The use of these types of measures allows more individual flexibility compared with questionnaire and self-report measures such as the LGS. For instance, a narrative examination ensures that people's own ideas of generativity are captured, rather than the pre-defined categories of measurement that may be used on standard questionnaires. Additionally, the use of narratives allows for elaboration and clarification of the meaning of generative behaviours or motivation. Although qualitative exploration of narratives has been criticized for being less reliable than more standardized measures, McAdams, Diamond, de St. Aubin and Mansfield (1997) state that the use of narratives to study generativity is not significantly different from other measurement approaches in the social sciences (e.g., self-report questionnaires), other than that it allows for an examination of both quantitative and

qualitative features, something that most self-report measures can not do. Their

development of the Life Story Interview showed how the use of interviews and

subsequent narratives is a valid and reliable way of measuring several components of

generativity (McAdams et al., 1997).

This unique Life Story Interview asks participants to divide their lives into

chapters of significant events to tell as a story. This method is proposed to elicit

significant experiences in the life of the participant that have been identified as being

important enough to be "in the story". These intensive interviews usually last 1-2 hours,

and thus leave researchers with a wealth of insight into the lives of the persons being

interviewed.   Coding of the interviews has shown concurrent validity in correlating well

with the LGS and GBC, but allows for a more complex examination of the construct, and

the examination of several sub-factors, such as generativity in various domains, and the

values attributed to these. Theorists of moral development have proposed that story

telling may also be a crucial element in moral socialization and be used to convey values

and beliefs to the next generation (Pratt, Arnold & Hilbers, 1998; Pratt et al. 1999). With

this in mind, one can see that what people narrate about their own lives can also serve as

the basis for lessons they wish to pass on to others. Our study examines the value and

meaning individuals give to political engagement, during a modified Life Story

Interview.

Meaning of Political Involvement

Recent declines in all forms of political participation (voting, writing letters to

officials, signing petitions, attendance at political rallies, etc.) have spawned a wave of

concern about the future of democracy in North America (Bellah et al., 1991; Putnam, 2000). Although much has been talked about with regards to political participation, more research is certainly needed in this area (Andrews, 1991). Bellah et al. (1991) laid a foundation for concern over limited political activity in their examination of cynicism in North American politics. Putnam (2000) painted a similarly bleak picture of declining political activity in recent decades. Although this phenomenon has been clearly identified as a significant social concern, little research has been conducted as to the personal and individual reasons that people attribute for this. Putnam (2000) expressed further concern, in that not only is political participation on the decline, but trends in how people participate are also changing. More recently, people are said to be beginning to see financial contribution as their primary political involvement (Putnam, 2000). This raises genuine concerns for true democracy, as political parties become increasingly focused on wealthy individuals and corporations for financial support. Only a small and wealthy portion of the population will be able to engage in this type of political involvement.

Bellah et al. (1991) emphasized the deep interdependence of our society and the threat that Lockean individualism poses in eroding our political structure: "Thus politics became an extension of the Lockean system in which individuals as well as industries, localities and other interests ask of their representatives "what have you done for us lately?" (p.131). Without a substantial percentage of the population participating in the political process, a small but powerful portion of society has the potential to control resources and decisions. Equally concerning is the continued illusion of the democratic process remaining simply because one has the right to vote, even though many do not exercise it. It could be argued, that the illusion that all citizens equally contribute and

express their voices through politics, paints a dangerous façade that could be used by persons in power to rationalize the continuation of inequity. An example of this façade is in the persistent media portrayal of Americans as proud of their democratic rights and citizenship, but expressing apathy and disenfranchisement towards politics when asked individually about it. If individuals think that the majority of citizens are content with the current political system as a result of a media presentation of this patriotic façade, then they may be less likely to think that there is a significant problem with it; and thus, they may be less motivated to change it.

Political involvement has not been extensively linked to generativity in research, although the two are quite likely related. As generativity involves passing on a legacy of care and concern to the next generation, this may eventually entail one's civic duty of ensuring that a responsible government is maintained. For instance, a highly generative person may wish to pass on a legacy of the self by instilling a government that shares similar care and concern for others. For example, Peterson, Smirles and Wentworth (1997) found that highly generative adults contributed more to politics and scored higher on "openness to experience" as a personality trait from the Big Five scales. Peterson et al. (1997) also found that generative people were equally likely to identify themselves with conservative or liberal politics, whereas people scoring high in authoritarianism showed less political involvement and a stronger affiliation with more conservative parties. This may indicate that the "openness to experience" factor allows more generative people to affiliate with a broader range of political issues, and have a greater range of acceptance for differing perspectives and ideas. Unfortunately, the Peterson et al. (1997) study only

used one question to examine current political beliefs, so relationships between generativity and political engagement in this study must be examined cautiously.

Most research in the area of political involvement examines only political behaviours, and fails to answer the question, "*why* are people involved or uninvolved?". Andrews (1991) critiques the work of the reductionist approach to studying politics that has been present over recent decades. For example, although considered a pillar of research in the area of civic engagement, Putnam (2000), like many researchers, reduces political involvement to a series of independent, distinct voluntary behaviours. Indeed these behaviours are important in examining political involvement, but one loses some of the meaning of these without consideration of the motives, purposes or values behind these behaviours. As Andrews (1991) explains from a Gestalt perspective, the mere sum of a person's political behaviours does not tell why a person is or is not engaged. One must not only examine behaviours, but also the personal values assigned to those behaviours to truly understand these phenomena.

Andrews (1991) describes involvement in politics as a prioritization of various voluntary group affiliations. When one affiliates strongly with a political group, that person will likely prioritize activities supporting that group (e.g., volunteering for a campaign). In considering this, it is conceivable that the reduction in political engagement identified by Putnam (2000) is linked in some way to how people affiliate themselves with the government. It is likely that this affiliation with the government stems from individualized experiences in dealing with it or its officials. For instance, it is probable that a person who has recently been denied unemployment insurance or perhaps been audited for taxes might have a weaker affiliation with the government than do

others. Such individuals may subsequently come to see themselves as more separate

from governing bodies, rather than seeing themselves as part of them, as the philosophy

of democracy suggests. These personal experiences with the government, and how they

might come to affect an individual's decision to engage in political activities, were key

points of interest in our study.

As Putnam (2000) identified, political participation falls under the broader label

of civic participation. These broad ranges of behaviours are interrelated and usually

identified by researchers as social activities that foster community development and

caring for others. They are arguably vital to the creation and maintenance of healthy and

stable communities, which offer safe and comforting environments for their inhabitants.

As Colby et al. (2001) showed, generativity is clearly a predictive factor for social

responsibility and civic engagement in the domain of work, and thus an important

consideration when examining it. A similar pattern was predicted in the domain of

politics.

Civic Engagement and Generativity

When one thinks of care and concern for the next generation, civic engagement

does not immediately come to mind. Although this domain is certainly a less traditional

form of generative action, it is very plausibly an important one. Imagine the society we

would leave for our children if we did not have concern as to who made decisions about

pollution, human rights, standards of living or corporate control. Our interest in these

areas is usually not merely for self-benefit, but also for the betterment of society and the

next generation. Certainly concerns about reducing pollution, the greenhouse effect and

non-renewable resources are if anything more focussed on those who will inherit the

earth, rather than those who currently inhabit it. These motivations to leave a viable

society and government for the next generation can be considered communal or agentic

forms of generativity, depending on the intrinsic motivations behind them. In a study

completed by Alice Rossi (2001), generativity was found to be a significant predictor of

providing time and money to both family and community. Embedded within this pattern

of findings was an interaction, showing that women gave more volunteer time to their

community, and hands-on care giving, whereas men gave significantly more financial

contributions. Both of these endeavours can be considered generative, though their social

implications are significantly different. Parenting and hands-on care giving can be seen as

a more direct, and arguably more personal and salient form of generativity, than donating

money to someone or to a cause. This perspective makes sense, as men have traditionally

shown lower scores on generative concern. Alternatively though, donating money may

constitute a more powerful means to institute change within an organization becoming

increasingly dependent upon financial contributions than hands-on volunteering.

Examining the McAdams' (2001) model of generativity, it is arguable that civic

participation can take both communal and agentic forms. For instance, political

involvement that is motivated by a concern for the well being of the next generation

might be considered moderately communal, and certainly running for office or becoming

directly involved with politics would be seen as agentic, as it can be a powerful extension

of the self.

A study conducted by Peterson and Stewart (1996) on generative commitments in

women, found a significant positive relationship between generativity and political

activity, in that highly generative women, as measured by the TAT and Q-Sort measures,

were found to have a longer and richer history of political involvement from age 18 to age 48, as measured by self report and retrospective political history scales. Furthermore, this study also showed that generativity in midlife was significantly predicted by earlier political activity in college. This study exposes the close relationship that civic engagement and generativity have, and the importance of considering both when studying possible causes for decreased levels of political involvement.

Bellah et al. (1991) discuss a growing trend in US politics that feeds self-serving behaviours rather than generative motivation. This trend includes a centralization of political power from communities to Washington, Federal mandates that do not necessarily meet small community needs, power lobbyists swaying political decisions and a growing dependency of politicians on large donations and short term decision making (Bellah et al. 1991; Putnam, 2000). This trend undermines the notion of generativity as a predictor of political engagement, as it associates self-serving behaviours rather than care and concern for others with motivation to be involved in politics. The current study allows for some comparison with Putnam, as it uses a US sample similar to those reviewed by Putnam, which was taken during the same time frame.

It should finally be noted that not all forms of generativity or political involvement are necessarily a positive contribution to society. Kotre (1984) reminded us that highly generative people are not necessarily always motivated to accomplish what most would consider good. Generativity can be used to bestow misguided legacies on the next generation. For instance, one's desire to bestow a legacy of the self on the next generation may in fact be harmful to others, as was the case with Hitler in Nazi Germany.

Although most people scoring high in generative concern would be seen as bestowing a positive legacy on the next generation, this is not necessarily so.

Purpose and Hypotheses

This study explored the personal rationales that people give for their political involvement. This type of exploration has seldom been conducted, although significant research has shown declining levels of political participation to be a growing concern. Through the examination and analysis of personal narratives taken in semi-structured interviews, we hoped to shed some light on this decline. For an example of political narratives used in this study, see Appendix B. It was our expectation that generativity would be intrinsically woven within the principles and values guiding decisions to engage or not engage in politics. Five hypotheses, as well as an exploratory examination of the types of personal meaning people place in political engagement, were identified.

Gender was predicted to be a significant predictor of political engagement. More specifically, men were expected to have significantly higher political engagement score overall than women. This hypothesis was based largely on the unbalanced representation that exists by gender in elected officials, and that perhaps, this trend of male dominance of politics extends to the citizen level, where women may be less engaged as well.

As previously identified, generativity is clearly a potential predictive factor in civic engagement, and thus was predicted to be significantly related to political participation. It was hypothesized that participants scoring higher in generativity on an LGS based measure would also show higher levels of political behaviours. However, it is also possible that participants might show lower levels of political involvement, but high levels of generative concern. It was plausible that participant might not see political

involvement as a particularly generative action, or that they are invested in other domains in life, as a way to express their generative concern.

It was also predicted that an interaction effect might occur between generativity and gender with regards to political participation. Although females have frequently shown significantly higher generativity scores than men, it was predicted that this would not be the case within the domain of political involvement. Although political involvement can be viewed as a generative action, it was predicted that due to changing ways in which people are participating in politics, as well as due to the traditional power men have had over the current political domain, we would not see higher levels of generativity in women translating to parallel higher levels of political involvement. More likely, men were predicted to still have higher levels of political involvement even with lower levels of generative concern than women. For instance, Rossi (2001) has shown that men tend to use financial contributions as the most common form of community involvement, and Putnam (2000) shows that this form is best supported by the current political structure, as political campaigns have increased dependence on these types of contributions. Furthermore, because politics is still primarily controlled by upper and middle class white men, it was predicted that women do not have access to its central activities as readily, and thus would not have as much desire to be engaged, and consequently report less affiliation to the political process.

Perceived discrimination was also predicted to have significant effects on the level of political involvement of participants. Specific negative life experiences with governing bodies can create a sense of disenfranchisement or lowered efficacy, which might leave one feeling helpless, and thus not wishing to engage in politics.

It was also predicted that education would be related to levels of political contribution, and to levels of generativity, as this has been documented in past studies (Keyes & Ryff, 1998). More specifically, education was predicted to have a positive correlation with civic engagement, political contribution level and generativity. Education was also predicted to have positive relationships to people's perceptions of connectedness to politics. It is plausible that feelings of political efficacy may be lower in participants with lower education and socio-economic levels, as a result of a sense of disenfranchisement and alienation. The fact that politicians have more education than the majority of people whom they represent also can arguably be a factor leading to less connectedness between politicians and many citizens who have lower levels of education.

Related to these trends in education, it was also predicted that socio-economic status as measured by annual income brackets, would predict levels of involvement in politics and affiliation to the traditional political system as measured by affiliation with politics, and relation to self (see Appendix A). As political parties are increasingly dependent on financial rather than hands-on support, people who have more ability to contribute financially may be seen as more valuable to the campaigns and endeavours of today's politicians (Putnam, 2000). It is also plausible that a lowered sense of efficacy is present in less financially secure individuals, and this limited efficacy may be related to lowered levels of political involvement. This may be the case because people who cannot contribute to politics in the way that Putnam (2000) identifies as most valuable to politicians (financial contributions), may not feel as empowered to engage.

It was also predicted that a significant positive relationship would exist between age of participants and political involvement and political affiliation. Putnam (2000)

reports increased involvement in political protest and civic engagement with age, so one might predict a similar trend in political views and subsequent participation also across middle adulthood (from age 35-65).

Rationales for Involvement

A large contribution of this research was an exploratory analysis of political involvement, and people's reasons for high and low levels of involvement. Examination of narratives about personal political history and experiences allowed for a more in-depth exploration of participants' rationales for their social behaviours. Very little research has been conducted on *why* people do or do not actively involve themselves in politics, although this is an increasing concern. As a component of the Life Story interviews, participants were asked, "Do you consider yourself a politically involved person?", and then probed about their answer to this. Several rationales for higher levels of involvement and lower levels of involvement were coded (See Appendix A). Other rationales not listed were also recorded, as it was difficult to predict a priori what participants would say about their levels of political involvement. Based on an examination of narratives, it was expected that participants could fall into one or more of the following clusters of rationales for lower levels of political involvement:

Alienation/Disenfranchisement

It was expected that many participants would have low levels of identification with political structures. Reason for this may lie in a sense of alienation from government and political activities. It was expected that more women will feel a sense of alienation from political structures, as these are dominated by men, and depend heavily on financial

contributions, behaviour previously identified as occurring more frequently in men than women (Colby et al., 2001).

As a sub-set of this sense of alienation, it was expected that some participants would feel a sense of distrust towards politicians or the political process. Participants could see the political process, and those involved in it, as self-serving such as Lockean Individualism theory suggests, and thus not wish to affiliate themselves with it (Bellah et al., 1985).

Investment in other domain/s or lack of time

Although it was predicted that generative concern would be related generally to political beliefs and behaviours, previous research has show that generative concern may be discontinuous across various domains in a person's life (MacDermid et al., 1997). It was plausible then, to predict that there would be a cluster of highly generative individuals who were not politically involved, due to investment in other domains (e.g., family, work). It is also plausible that the domain of political involvement would not be the most attractive to highly generative people if they see politics as self-serving, and thus they might choose to give themselves to other areas of their lives. It was predicted that this trend might also prove to be truer for generative women than for men, as a result of disenfranchisement from political structures.

Desire, but lack of access

It was predicted that a certain number of participants would state a desire to be more active in politics, but are not currently so, due to some barrier. Citizenship or discrimination could play key factors in this cluster of individuals. As data on citizenship, and perceived discrimination, were taken as part of the full MIDUS survey, it may be

useful in attempting to understand this cluster of participants. Gender and education level may also play a key role in perceived barriers of participation, as they may be related to perceived efficacy in the domain of politics.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Participants for this study were a sub sample of 94 people (51 men, 43 women) who were included in the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS). The wider MIDUS survey was completed during 1995-1996, in a collaborative effort to study midlife development. The 4,042 participants were recruited through random digit dialling in five metropolitan areas in the United States. The full MIDUS survey included participants who were between the ages of 25 and 74. All participants completed phone interviews and two mail-in questionnaires. The sub-sample used in the current study was given intensive face-to-face interviews about social responsibility and family background. Anne Colby, then at the Henry A. Murray Research Center, Radcliffe College, organized these intensive interviews, and completed some of them. Ages for the sub sample being used in the current study ranged from 34 to 65, with an average age of 48. This range was selected specifically to focus more exclusively on the midlife period. Data analysis for the current study focused on the 94 participants' responses to both the intensive interview, and components of the MIDUS survey. All data on these participants have been made anonymous and no participant can be identified from the interviews. All analyses were based on matching participant numbers, rather than names or other identifying criteria.

The main analyses for this study were conducted by examining responses to the questions that participants were asked about their political involvements and their reasons for these. These narratives comprise a section of the intensive interview completed by all participants (See Appendix B).

Measures

Each of the 94 participants' interviews was coded for levels of political involvement and political beliefs, as discussed below. These coding schemes ranged from a two to four point scoring system, depending on the variable being coded. The coding of political involvement was comprised of behavioural indicators of political involvement, such as voting, writing letters to politicians, working on a campaign, and so on. The coding for political beliefs examined the reasoning and personal values that participants provide for their levels of political involvement, such as: affiliation with political parties, desire for involvement and respect for politics, and so on. Examples of these measures can be viewed in Appendix A. All measures were coded by the author and checked for reliability with an independent coder. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics on main measures used in this study.

Table 1.

Internal reliability of primary measures used in study (n=94).

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Political Engagement Scale (5 items)	10.17	2.67	.79
Loyola Generativity Sub-scale (6 items)	16.75	3.89	.84
Rossi Civic Obligation Scale (4 items)	31.36	8.23	.79
Rossi Altruism Scale (4 items)	20.04	8.24	.75

Loyola Generativity Scale

Created by McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992), the LGS is a 20 item self-report measure on a 4-point Likert style scale. This scale has been widely used and proven to be reliable and valid. The LGS includes examples of generative beliefs (e.g., You feel that other people need you) and generative actions (e.g., Others would say that you've made unique contributions to society). The MIDUS study included 6 high loading items from the LGS to tap generative beliefs. The 6 items used in the current study showed good internal reliability, with $\alpha = .84$ in the present data set. Participants completed the LGS items as part of the overall MIDUS questionnaire. Table 2 shows concurrent validity correlates of this LGS subscale as used in this study.

Table 2.

Concurrent validity correlates of LGS subscale in the current study (n=94)

Item	Pearson R with LGS 6 item scale	Study showing concurrent trends
Openness to experience (from MIDUS)	.487**	Peterson et al., 1997
Education (from MIDUS)	.295**	Keyes & Ryff, 1998
Political Engagement (measure developed by author)	.225*	Peterson and Stewart, 1996

*indicates significance at .05 level   ***indicates significance at the .01 level*

Demographic Measures

Participants completed several hundred questions on demographic and family history information as part of the MIDUS questionnaire. Age, education and income were of primary interest as demographic correlates. Ages for the sample being used in this

study ranged from 34 to 68, with an average age of 48. This range was selected specifically to focus more exclusively on the midlife period. Participants had education levels ranging from "some high school" to "doctoral degrees", with a median education level of a completed bachelor's degree. Individual income for this sample ranged from $0 to $100,000-$149,000 with a median income range of $25,000-$29,999 US Dollars. Men had significantly higher incomes than women in this sample, $t(86) = 2.513$, $p< .01$. In exploring these data, it seems that 6% of participants chose not to answer this question. As this item was taken from the self-report measures, and was not asked again in the interview component of the study, there is no way to verify participants' answers. There were no significant gender differences in age or education in this sample.

Table 3

Demographic Measures

	Mean for Men (n=51)	Mean for Women (n=43)	Standard Deviation for Men (n=51)	Standard Deviation for Women (n=43)
Age	49 years	48 years	9.52	9.80
Income	22.43 ($20,000 US approx.)	17.34 ($15,000 US approx.)	9.59	9.16
Education	8.09 (2 years college graduate approx.)	7.51 (1-2 years college not graduated approx.)	2.44	2.23

Measures of Political Participation

Each of the 94 participants' interviews was coded for levels of political involvement and political beliefs with a coding scheme developed by the author. These coding schemes ranged from a two to four point scoring system. The coding of political

involvement was comprised of behavioural indicators of political involvement, such as

voting, writing letters to politicians, or working on a campaign. Similarly, the coding for

political beliefs examined the reasoning and personal values that participants provided for

their levels of political involvement, such as: affiliation with political parties, desire for

involvement, respect for politics, and so on. Inter-rater agreement for this coding scheme

was 86% overall, with individual items ranging from 72%-94% (see Appendix A).

Elements of the political participation measure that were not clearly mentioned within the

interview were coded as "no judgement possible", and these cases were excluded from

subsequent analyses on this variable.

Fifteen items were coded for levels political engagement (see Appendix A). Five

items of the original fifteen that had significant bivariate correlations with each other

were used to create the overall political measure. Although factor analysis on twelve of

the items (with varimax rotation) showed the five items chosen for the overall scale

loaded well together, this analysis was not fully considered in the scale creation, as

several rules for the use of factor analysis were violated. For instance, Hatcher and

Stephanski (1994) states that at least 100 participants be used for proper interpretation of

factor analysis. Gorsuch (1983) recommends the use of 200 participants, and Hutcheson

and Sofroniou (1999) recommend between 150-300 cases be used. Our number of

participants did not meet any of these established criteria. When the political measures

were analysed together, the five items identified as relating well to each other yielded α =

.79 (see Table 4).

The first item within the overall political measure was Political knowledge –stated levels of keeping up with political issues. An example of someone rated high on this item was:

"I'm not politically involved, except I read about it a lot. I've never missed a major election, very few primaries, I think. You know, it's intriguing to me. I love it. I like to discuss politics, and I certainly read about it and watch the news programs and listen to NPR a lot, so…" (Participant 45281).

The second of the five item measure was "Other political Activities". This items allowed participants to identify their own variations of political activities, and included items such as attending a protest, or signing a petition or writing a letter to a politician. An example of someone rated high on this item was:

"I went to rallies….[later]… so I called my congressman….[later]… so we sat there and I watched them , so it finally got to my bill" (Participant 45413).

The third item of the five item measure was Statement of involvement. This item was tapping participant's responses to the question "Do you consider yourself politically involved?". Participants were rated based on their responses to this question. An example of a highly involved participant was:

"Yes…Especially here lately, but I've always been involved. I went to rallies, I listen, and I try to get an idea, and this is from basically my father, I try to get a idea of what's going on, and what they stand on or what they are against, I try to get it overall, and it takes me a lot longer voting than some people cause I look at the candidates before I vote…[goes on in length]". (Participant 45413)

The fourth item of the political engagement measure was a rating of "optimism and respect for politics". This item was not derived from any particular quote, but more so was identified as an overall perception and feeling towards politics that flowed throughout the narrative. An example of someone who was rated high in this measure was:

"So, instead of just looking at how lucky you are to live in America, to be that fortunate. Because nobody has that viewpoint. They just want more.....[later]... I tell you what, you're offending a very strong constituency here. And these are people who you ran away from at to die for (laughs) their country" (Participant 45530).

The final item of the overall political measure was how much politics relates to the sense of self. This item tapped how much participants felt a part of the political process, and how much this defines who they are as a person. This item was also not taken from any specific quote, but more from the overall theme of the narrative. An example of a participant who was rated as having politics related highly to their sense of self was:

"Yeah. I feel that, for the health of our nation, we've got to rectify... We've got to bring our budget into balance. And it's going to require a sacrifice from all levels. And we all have to be prepared to give something up. And... I mean, the start of that is the recognition that yes, we've got to balance the budget. So I feel it is an imperative that the budget be brought into balance, and that everyone sacrifice as necessary, because we... No one's been willing to sacrifice for so long that we're in that situation today. So everyone should have to sacrifice." (Participant 45613)

Table 4

Items comprising the political engagement measure

1. Political Knowledge -- Stated levels of "keeping up with political issues"
2. Other political activities (e.g., attending protest, signing a petition)
3. Statement of involvement "Do you see yourself as politically involved?"
4. Optimism and respect for politics
5. Relation of politics to self

Measure of civic obligation

As a component of the original MIDUS questionnaire, participants completed the Rossi civic obligation scale. These items asked participants to rate their subjective obligation towards several elements of civic participation such as "I would feel obligated to serve on a jury if called" and "I feel obligated to keep up to date on local and national

news" (see Appendix A). This measure of civic obligation yielded $\alpha = .79$ in the current

sample (see Table 1).

Measure of Altruism

Another component of the original MIDUS questionnaire was an altruism

measure developed by Alice Rossi. This measure contained four items that would be

considered altruistic obligations such as "I would pay more so everyone could have

health care" and "I volunteer for social causes" (see Appendix A). The scale showed

adequate internal reliability in the current sample with $\alpha = .75$ (see Table 1).

Results

Results of this study were considered in relation to the aforementioned

hypotheses. Means and standard deviations of the principal measures can be found in

Table 1. As all measures were continuous variables, and no group assignment occurred,

linear regression and correlation constituted the main approach to analyses. In cases

where group means were examined, simple tests of means were used (e.g., t test or

ANOVA). Face value readings of the political narratives suggested that most participants

showed distrust in their political leaders, and as such, did not define themselves as

particularly engaged in this domain. Quantitative analyses supported this trend, but

showed different trends of personal meaning for men and women. These results will be

discussed below in relation to their pertaining hypotheses. Several key gender differences

in political engagement can be viewed in Table 5; overall men were more engaged than

women. An overall MANOVA was conducted on the seven measures of political

engagement that were used in hypothesis testing (see Table 5). Several of these measures

showed significant gender differences with an overall Wilks' Lamda of $F(1,68)=4.17$,

$p=.001$ (see Table 5 for individual items).

Table 5.

Gender differences in political engagement using MANOVA

Element	Mean for Men	SD for Men	Mean for Women	SD for Women	Significance of Difference
Desire for involvement	2.14	.448	2.34	.480	$F(1,74)=3.185, p=.07$
Other political expressions	1.86	.894	1.70	.802	$F(1,74)=.480, p=$ n.s.
Statement of Involvement	2.24	.428	2.12	.324	$F(1,74)=1.209, p=$n.s.
Passion for major issue	1.67	.474	1.56	.502	$F(1,74)=.684, p=$n.s.
Optimism/Respect for politics	1.91	.775	1.68	.702	$F(1,74)=1.66, p=$n.s.
Keeping up with issues	2.29	.576	1.79	.606	$F(1,74)=16.85, p=.0001$
Relation to self	2.00	.866	1.62	.758	$F(1,74)=3.71, p=.05$

Hypothesis 1: Gender and Political Participation

Hypothesis 1 predicted that men would show higher levels of political

engagement than women. This hypothesis was indeed supported, with men showing

significantly higher political engagement scores on the five item measure than women

with $t(83)=2.471, p=.016$. Gender was also found to be a significant predictor of political

engagement when entered in a linear regression, $t(76) = 2.905, p=.005$, and showed a

significant zero order correlation with political engagement, $r(83)= -.265, p=.016$. Gender

was found to significantly predict political engagement scores in a linear regression more

than generativity, income, education, and civic obligation. As shown in Table 5, although

women showed marginally significant greater desire for involvement than men, they still

had significantly lower total political engagement scores than men, $t(83) = -2.471, p=$

.016. A depiction of this trend is shown in Figure 2, in that numbers of men and women

did not differ significantly for participants who were rated as saying they did not feel like

part of the political process, but significant gender differences arose for those who did

feel part of the process. No significant differences were found between numbers of men

and women who reported that they do not feel part of the political process, but more men

than women reported that they do feel part of this process (37% of men and 16% of

women). This statistic was found to be of marginal significance in a Chi-square test of

gender differences, likely due to small cell sizes of those who define themselves as

engaged, with $X^2(2)= 4.689$, p= .09.
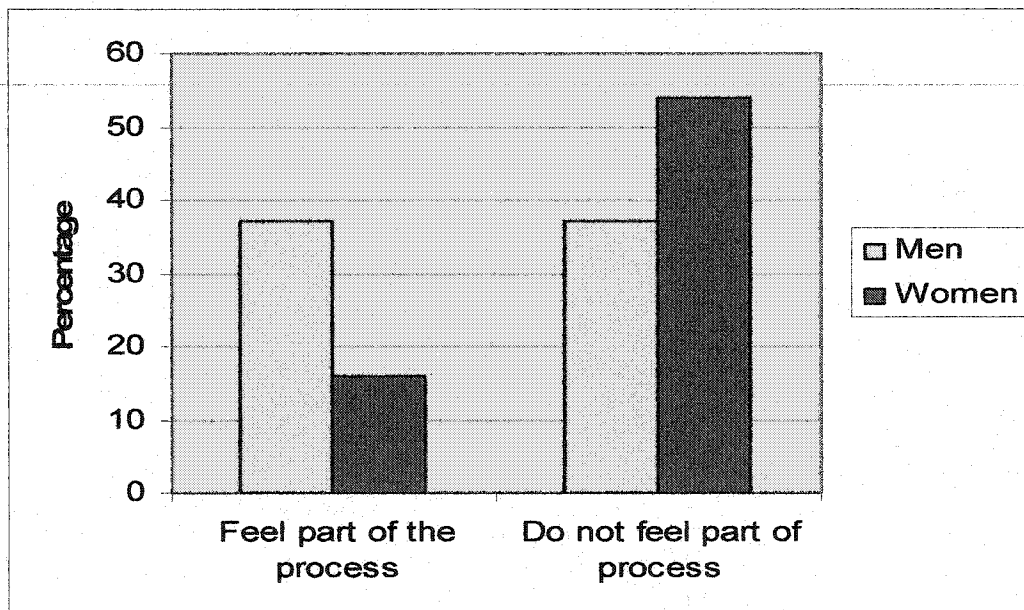
Figure 2. Numbers of men and women that do and do not feel part of the political

process.

Hypothesis 2: Relationship between Generativity and Political Engagement

Hypothesis 2 predicted that generativity would be significantly related to, and

thus predictive of, political participation. This prediction was based on previous literature

suggesting significant relationships might exist between generativity, civic engagement and political involvement (Kotre, 1984; Peterson and Stewart, 1996). To test this hypothesis, zero order correlations were examined between these variables. A significant and positive relationship between LGS scores and total political engagement scores was found $r(82)=.225$, $p=.04$. As a further examination of this relationship, education, gender, income and generativity scores were entered into a simultaneous linear regression to predict political engagement scores. The assumptions of normality, independence and homogeneity of variance were all met in this regression. This regression showed that generativity did not predict political engagement, $t(76) = -1.45$, $p=$ n.s. (beta=.669), but that gender showed significant predictive power, $t(76)= 2.686$, $p=.009$, (beta=1.56).

When gender, generativity and the generativity by gender interaction term were entered into a stepwise regression predicting political engagement, there was found to be a significant interaction between generativity and gender in predictive value for political engagement scores $t(79)=2.344$, $p=.02$, (beta=.676). The interpretation of this interaction is that women's higher levels of political engagement were predicted by LGS scores, and men's political scores were generally independent of LGS scores. As this analysis gave evidence that men and women engage in politics differently, further analyses on political engagement were conducted on men and women separately.

When zero order correlations between LGS scores and total political scores were examined separately for men and women, different trends emerged. For example, in men, this relationship was not found to be significant $r(47)=.123$, $p=$ n.s., whereas this relation was significant in women $r(35)= .379$, $p=.025$ (see Table 6 and 7). The difference between these Pearson r values was found to be less than statistically significant with

$\underline{Z}$=1.14, p=n.s.. This lack of significance is likely due to sample size, but one cannot entirely infer this based on null results.

When the regressions were run on men and women separately (minus the variable of gender), no significantly different patterns emerged. In men, none of the variables entered (income, education and generativity) were found to predict political engagement scores, with $F(3,44)$ = .671, $\underline{p}$= n.s.. Similarly, when the same regression was run on only women, none of the variables were found to be significant predictors of political engagement with $F(3,31)$=1.937, $\underline{p}$= n.s.. As generativity showed a significant bivariate correlation with political engagement in women (see Table 7), it is likely that a significant relationship does exist between generativity and political engagement in women, but that the model used in regression did not have sufficient power to express this. Examination of Tables 6 and 7 clearly shows through correlational analysis that generativity is predictive of several civic engagement measures (political engagement, civic obligation, political optimism, passion for major issues, and altruism) in women, but not in men.

Table 6.

Correlation matrix of main variables in men.

Correlations

		political scores recoded (10=high)	do you vote	keeping up with issues	worked on campaign	other political expressions	statement of involv.	passion for major issue	non traditional political inv.	desire for involv.	optimism and respect	reation to self	affiliation to politics	Education	Own Income	Rossi Civic Obligation Scale	Generativity, Coding Reversed, 4 = "A lot"
political scores recoded (10=high)	Pearson Correlation	1	.277	.608**	.161	.739**	.568**	.386*	-.068	.419**	.788**	.905**	.541**	.172	.161	.352*	.123
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.068	.000	.303	.000	.000	.011	.763	.003	.000	.000	.004	.247	.322	.015	.411
	N	47	44	47	43	47	47	43	12	47	47	47	26	47	45	47	47
do you vote	Pearson Correlation	.277	1	.127	.179	.334*	.214	.030	-.250	.017	.171	.370*	.231	.170	-.074	.492**	-.198
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.068		.397	.256	.022	.149	.849	.486	.908	.268	.011	.267	.253	.627	.000	.181
	N	44	47	47	42	47	47	42	10	47	44	47	25	47	45	47	47
keeping up with issues	Pearson Correlation	.608**	.127	1	-.052	.274	.200	.313*	-.250	.383**	.417**	.535**	.300	.164	-.023	.219	-.074
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.397		.733	.052	.159	.034	.486	.006	.004	.000	.136	.251	.878	.123	.606
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	46	49	26	51	45	51	51
worked on campaign	Pearson Correlation	.161	.179	-.052	1	.378**	.447**	.016	-.729*	-.187	-.155	.088	.097	-.215	.006	.015	.166
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.303	.256	.733		.010	.002	.923	.011	.218	.322	.575	.660	.157	.971	.923	.277
	N	43	42	45	45	45	45	40	11	45	43	45	23	45	43	45	45
other political expressions	Pearson Correlation	.739**	.334*	.274	.378**	1	.503**	.280	-.200	.016	.361*	.505**	.466**	.061	.002	.295*	.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.022	.052	.010		.000	.060	.533	.916	.013	.000	.016	.670	.987	.035	.643
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	46	49	26	51	45	51	51
statement of involv.	Pearson Correlation	.568**	.214	.200	.447**	.503**	1	.281	-.447	.037	.192	.443**	.083	-.175	.254	.180	.183
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.149	.159	.002	.000		.058	.145	.798	.195	.001	.686	.218	.078	.207	.198
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	46	49	26	51	45	51	51
passion for major issue	Pearson Correlation	.386*	.030	.313*	.016	.280	.281	1	-.200	.128	.287	.280	.337	.131	.078	.050	.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011	.849	.034	.923	.060	.058		.533	.397	.062	.066	.115	.387	.614	.739	.590
	N	43	42	46	40	46	46	46	12	46	43	44	23	46	44	46	46
non traditional political inv.	Pearson Correlation	-.068	-.250	-.250	-.729*	-.200	-.447	-.200	1	.135	-.088	-.245	-.154	.121	-.223	-.228	-.501
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.763	.486	.486	.011	.533	.145	.533		.676	.786	.442	.742	.708	.487	.475	.097
	N	12	10	12	11	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	7	12	12	12	12
desire for involv.	Pearson Correlation	.419**	.017	.383**	-.187	.198	.037	.128	.135	1	.458**	.422**	.479*	.079	.007	.149	-.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.908	.006	.218	.165	.798	.397	.676		.001	.003	.013	.583	.962	.296	.954
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	46	49	26	51	45	51	51
optimism and respect	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.171	.417**	-.155	.361*	.192	.287	-.088	.458**	1	.774**	.619**	.257	.108	.297*	.088
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.268	.004	.322	.013	.196	.062	.786	.001		.000	.001	.082	.489	.043	.649
	N	47	44	47	43	47	47	43	12	47	47	47	26	47	45	47	47
reation to self	Pearson Correlation	.905**	.370*	.535**	.088	.505**	.443**	.280	-.245	.422**	.774**	1	.500**	.159	.158	.462**	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.011	.000	.575	.000	.001	.066	.442	.003	.000		.009	.277	.280	.001	.653
	N	47	47	49	45	49	49	44	12	49	47	49	26	49	47	49	49
affiliation to politics	Pearson Correlation	.541**	.231	.300	.097	.466**	.083	.337	-.154	.479*	.619**	.500**	1	.386	-.095	.102	.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.267	.136	.660	.016	.686	.115	.742	.013	.001	.009		.051	.646	.621	.787
	N	26	25	26	23	26	26	23	7	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
Education	Pearson Correlation	.172	.170	.164	-.215	.061	-.175	.131	.121	.079	.257	.159	.386	1	.180	.243	.283*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.247	.253	.251	.157	.670	.218	.387	.708	.583	.082	.277	.051		.215	.086	.044
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	47	49	26	51	45	51	51
Own Income	Pearson Correlation	.161	-.074	-.023	.006	.002	.254	.078	-.223	.007	.108	.158	-.095	.180	1	.009	.284*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.322	.627	.878	.971	.987	.078	.614	.487	.962	.489	.280	.646	.215		.949	.048
	N	45	45	45	43	45	45	44	12	45	45	47	26	45	45	45	45
Rossi Civic Obligation Scale	Pearson Correlation	.352*	.492**	.219	.015	.295*	.180	.050	-.228	.149	.297*	.462**	.102	.243	.009	1	.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.000	.123	.923	.035	.207	.739	.475	.296	.043	.001	.621	.086	.949		.935
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	47	49	26	51	45	51	51
Generativity, Coding Reversed, 4 = "A lot"	Pearson Correlation	.123	-.198	-.074	.166	.096	.183	.082	-.501	-.008	.088	.066	.059	.283*	.284*	.012	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.411	.181	.606	.277	.643	.198	.590	.097	.954	.649	.653	.787	.044	.048	.935	
	N	47	47	51	45	51	51	46	12	51	47	49	26	51	45	51	51

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 7.

## *Correlation matrix of main variables in women.*

Correlations

	Statistic	political scores recoded (10=high)	do you vote	keeping up with issues	worked on campaign	other political expressions	statement of involv.	passion for major issue	non traditional political inv.	desire for involv.	optimism and respect	realtion to self	affiliation to politics	Education	Own income	Rossi Civic Obligation Scale	Generativity, Coding Reversed, 4 = "A lot"
political scores recoded (10=high)	Pearson Correlation	1	.404*	.790**	.095	.683**	.647**	.372*	.603	.545**	.793**	.845**	-.618	.376*	-.060	.521**	.379*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018	.000	.585	.000	.000	.034	.397	.001	.000	.000	.076	.024	.740	.001	.025
	N	36	34	36	36	33	36	36	4	35	35	36	9	36	33	35	35
do you vote	Pearson Correlation	.404*	1	.385*	.081	.332*	.287	.034	-.174	.199	-.049	.323	.019	.218	.067	.490**	.332*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018		.014	.629	.034	.069	.842	.826	.225	.860	.059	.954	.171	.694	.001	.034
	N	34	41	40	38	41	41	37	4	39	36	36	12	41	37	38	41
keeping up with issues	Pearson Correlation	.790**	.385*	1	.348	.521**	.500**	.344*	.522	.342*	.569**	.430**	.019	.321*	.075	.488**	.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.014		.164	.000	.001	.032	.478	.031	.000	.007	.954	.038	.653	.001	.006
	N	36	40	42	39	41	42	41	4	40	38	36	12	42	37	38	41
worked on campaign	Pearson Correlation	.095	.081	.348	1	.043	.225	-.053	a	.123	.183	.005	-.023	.016	-.080	-.207	-.264
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.585	.629	.164		.793	.164	.756		.462	.291	.976	.946	.923	.645	.205	.105
	N	36	38	39	42	40	40	37	4	38	35	35	11	40	36	39	39
other political expressions	Pearson Correlation	.683**	.332*	.521**	.043	1	.413**	.297	.816	.262	.272	.035	-.647*	.131	-.072	.237	.344*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.034	.000	.793		.008	.066	.184	.098	.104	.822	.023	.425	.665	.131	.026
	N	33	41	41	40	43	43	39	4	38	37	40	12	40	36	39	42
statement of involv.	Pearson Correlation	.647**	.287	.500**	.225	.413**	1	.182	.577	.360*	.290	.517**	.001	.212	.136	.226	.409**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.069	.001	.164	.008		.266	.423	.021	.077	.001	.997	.172	.409	.149	.005
	N	36	41	42	40	43	43	39	4	41	38	38	12	43	38	42	42
passion for major issue	Pearson Correlation	.372*	.034	.344*	-.053	.297	.182	1	.203	.417*	.167	.130	-.012	.172	.205	.205	.356*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.842	.032	.756	.066	.266		.223	.011	.339	.460	.940	.409	.217	.217	.028
	N	36	37	41	37	39	39	43	4	36	35	35	12	43	38	42	38
non traditional political inv.	Pearson Correlation	.603	-.174	.522	a	.816	.577	.203	1	.577	.728	.522	0	.728	-.817	.292	.762
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.397	.826	.478		.184	.423	.223		.423	.272	.478	1.000	.272	.391	.708	.238
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
desire for involv.	Pearson Correlation	.545**	.199	.342*	.123	.262	.360*	.417*	.577	1	.417*	.438**	-.336	-.199	-.039	.464**	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.225	.031	.462	.098	.021	.011	.423		.011	.007	.312	.212	.815	.003	.297
	N	35	39	40	38	38	41	36	4	41	36	36	11	41	38	40	40
optimism and respect	Pearson Correlation	.793**	-.049	.569**	.183	.272	.290	.167	.728	.417*	1	.847**	-.182	-.199	-.017	.456**	.359*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.860	.000	.291	.104	.077	.339	.272	.011		.000	.572	.212	.920	.005	.029
	N	35	36	38	35	37	38	35	4	36	38	38	11	38	34	37	37
realtion to self	Pearson Correlation	.845**	.323	.430**	.005	.035	.517**	.130	.522	.438**	.847**	1	-.182	.444**	-.131	.387*	.260
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.059	.007	.976	.822	.001	.460	.478	.007	.000		.572	.005	.462	.028	.126
	N	36	36	36	35	40	38	35	4	36	38	38	10	38	34	36	37
affiliation to politics	Pearson Correlation	-.618	.019	.019	-.023	-.647*	.001	-.012	0	-.336	-.182	-.182	1	-.189	-.438	-.417	-.214
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.076	.954	.954	.946	.023	.997	.940	1.000	.312	.572	.572		.536	.238	.178	.505
	N	9	12	12	11	12	12	12	4	11	11	10	12	12	9	12	12
Education	Pearson Correlation	.376*	.218	.321*	.016	.035	.212	.172	.728	-.199	-.199	.444**	-.189	1	-.017	.250	.302
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.171	.038	.923	.822	.172	.409	.272	.212	.212	.005	.536		.920	.111	.052
	N	36	41	42	40	40	43	43	4	41	38	38	12	43	39	42	42
Own income	Pearson Correlation	-.060	.067	.075	-.080	-.072	.136	.205	-.817	-.039	-.017	-.131	-.438	-.017	1	.056	-.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.740	.694	.653	.645	.665	.409	.217	.391	.815	.920	.462	.238	.920		.738	.885
	N	33	37	37	36	36	38	38	3	38	34	34	9	39	39	38	38
Rossi Civic Obligation Scale	Pearson Correlation	.521**	.490**	.488**	-.207	.237	.226	.205	.292	.464**	.456**	.387*	-.417	.250	.056	1	.548**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001	.001	.205	.131	.149	.217	.708	.003	.005	.028	.178	.111	.738		.000
	N	35	38	38	39	39	42	42	4	40	37	36	12	42	38	42	42
Generativity, Coding Reversed, 4 = "A lot"	Pearson Correlation	.379*	.332*	.421**	-.264	.344*	.409**	.356*	.762	.169	.359*	.260	-.214	.302	-.024	.548**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.034	.006	.105	.026	.005	.028	.238	.297	.029	.126	.505	.052	.885	.000	
	N	35	41	41	39	42	42	38	4	40	37	37	12	42	38	42	42

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

As Table 7 suggests, the LGS appears strongly related to civic obligation in women which in turn relates to political involvement. As this trend suggested a mediation effect, partial correlations were run between generativity and political engagement while controlling for civic obligation. As expected from the results of the aforementioned regression, generativity was only predictive of political engagement in women through feelings of civic obligation. The Pearson r changed from r =.379, p<.05 to r = .12, p=n.s. when feelings of civic obligation were controlled for in women (see Figure 3). This mediation effect was supported with the Sobel test of mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The Sobel test was significant in women with Z=2.13, p=.032, and not significant in men with Z=.081, p= n.s.
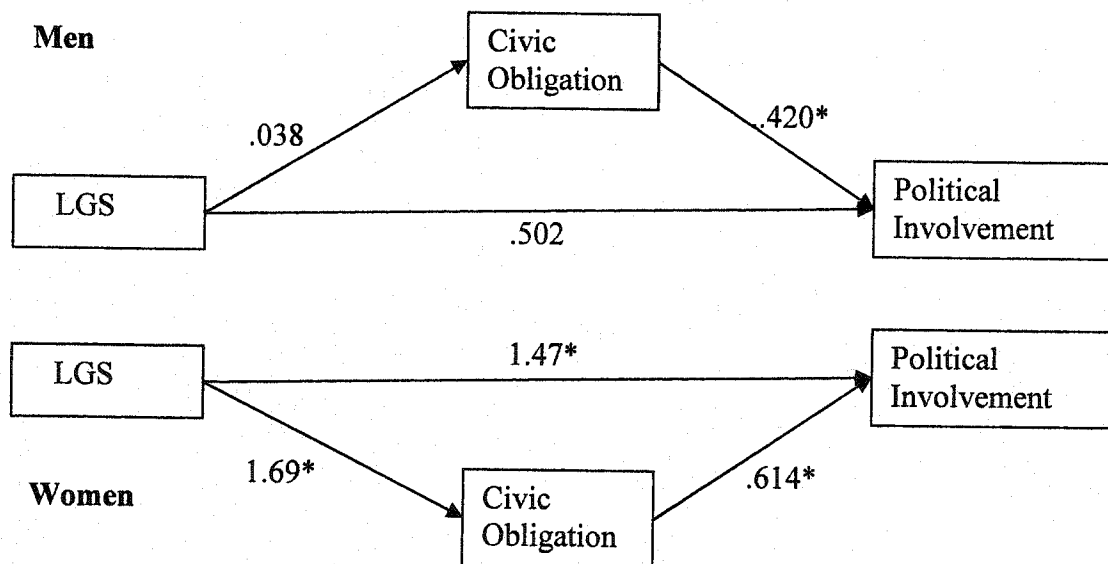
Numbers represent unstandardized beta weights in Sobel mediation test.
* Indicates significant relationship

Figure 3. Mediation of generativity by civic obligation in women but not men.

It was also predicted that, generativity would be higher for women in this sample, but that this would not translate into higher political engagement scores. There was partial support found for this hypothesis, in that indeed men were found to have higher levels of political engagement scores than women, but no significant gender difference was found to exist in LGS scores $t(93)=.503$, p=n.s..

Hypothesis 3: Perceived Discrimination and Political Engagement

Several questions regarding perceived discrimination were asked as part of the original MIDUS survey. These questions probed items such as how many times a person had been discriminated against in their life. It was predicted that the amount of perceived discrimination would be related to political efficacy and, as such, would negatively predict levels of political engagement. The amount of perceived discrimination was not found to be significantly related to overall political engagement in men or women; however, other significant relationships were found. In women, perceived discrimination was significantly (and negatively) related to desire for involvement in politics, $r(24)=$ -.526, p=.008. It is likely that this relationship is closely linked to decreased levels of political efficacy. It seems that as perceived discrimination is higher, women's desire for engagement in politics falls. This relationship was not seen in men, $r(27)=.135$, p=n.s.. The difference between these correlations was though, found to be less than significant with Z=1.49, p=n.s.. A significant (and positive) relationship was found between perceived discrimination and other political expressions in men (such as protesting or signing a petition), $r(27)=.491$, p=.009. These "other political expressions" were found to be marginally negatively related to perceived discrimination in women, $r(26)=-.310$, p= .123. The difference between these correlations was indeed found to be significant with

$\underline{Z}$=2.962, p<.01. This interesting relationship suggests that perceived discrimination may actually motivate some political engagement in men, but not in women. Indeed, significant distrust or disapproval for a government can be a catalyst for engagement, and this seems to be taking place in some of the men in this sample. It may be the case that due to reduced political efficacy, women are more discouraged rather than motivated by societal discrimination to engage in politics. No significant differences were found between men and women in perceived discrimination t(51)=-.651, p=n.s.

Hypothesis 4: Demographics and Political Engagement

    It was predicted that education would be a significant predictor of political engagement in this sample, and show a positive relationship with participant's engagement levels. As examined in the aforementioned linear regressions, education was not found to be predictive of political engagement in the linear regression that was run, $\underline{t}$(76)= -.654, $\underline{p}$= n.s.. However, bivariate correlations showed that a significant positive relationship existed between political engagement and education in women but not in men (see Table 6 and 7). With these mixed results, one can interpret the relationship to be significant, but not strong enough to show significance within the shared variance of the other variables entered into the linear regression model. Furthermore, this gender difference does not simply seem to be a by-product of a significant gender difference in education level, in that men and women in this sample did not differ significantly in education $\underline{t}$(92)=1.206, $\underline{p}$= n.s..

    It was hypothesized that income would be a significant predictor of political engagement scores in both men and women. This hypothesis was not supported, in that a

significant correlation was not found between these two variables (r=.141, p= n.s.). This finding was particularly surprising in that a significant gender difference was found between men and women in income levels, $t(86)$= 2.51, p=.014, with men showing higher income. Although significant gender differences existed in income and political engagement, this did not translate into income predicting political engagement either through a main effect, or through an interaction with gender. When bivariate correlations were examined separately for men and women, income still did not predict political engagement in men or women (see Table 6 and 7).

It was also hypothesized that age during this midlife period would show a significant positive relationship with political engagement, based on Putnam's (2000) assessment that political engagement increases with age. This trend was found for women, $r(36)$=.347, p=.038, but not for men $r(47)$=.059, p=.n.s.. These correlations were not found to be significantly different though with Z =1.37, p= n.s.

Exploratory Examinations

As mentioned in hypothesis 2, generative concern was marginally predictive of political engagement in a linear regression, and showed a significant, positive bivariate correlation with engagement. Even if generally disappointed in politics, it is possible that highly generative people would show more redemptive themes in their stories (e.g., McAdams et al, 1997) and thus focus on more optimistic outcomes. Participants were also rated for several items that were not included in the political engagement score. Of these, several measures were found to have significantly different relationships between generativity in men and women. Optimism and respect for politics for example, was indeed found to be differentially related to generative concern in men and women (see

Table 6 and 7). Although a significant positive relationship was found between these two

variables in women, with $r(37)=.359$, $p=.029$, this was not the case with men $r(47)=.068$,

$p=$ n.s. These correlations were not found to be significantly different though with Z

$=1.35$, $p=$ n.s.

Participants were also rated for the level of passion they showed towards the

political issue they discussed in their interview. These passion ratings were also found to

be differentially related to LGS scores in men and women. In men, no significant

relationship was found between passion for a political issue and LGS scores, with

$r(46)=.082$, $p=$ n.s., whereas this relationship was significant in women, with $r(38)=.356$,

$p=.028$. These correlations were not found to be significantly different though with Z

$=1.29$, $p=$ n.s.

Generativity in women predicted significantly and positively, to higher levels of

passion for a political issue. These results and the mediation effect shown in Figure 3

give support for the notion that generative concern is a significant predictor of political

behaviours and beliefs in women, but has little relationship to these feelings in men. It is

plausible that generativity is related to more redemptive perspectives on politics in

women, and as such, they encourage more optimistic perceptions about the future. As

generativity can be viewed as a sense of duty or motivation, it is not surprising that this is

significantly related to passion for a political issue in women. Men in this sample

apparently have less connection between a sense of duty to help others, and political

passion than do women.

Rationale for political involvement or lack of involvement

In the exploratory examination of rationales that participants gave for involvement, several categories dominated most of the participant responses. For frequencies of rationales given for involvement, see Figure 4. For frequencies of rationales given for lack of involvement, see Figure 5. These graphs clearly show that the predominant reason given for being involved is consistent with generative concern (to help others), and the predominant theme given for not being involved is lack of interest or distrust in the validity of the system. Furthermore, of the participants identified as giving a reason for involvement in Figure 4, only 38% of these are women, but all of these women are in the category "to help others" or "duty to country or community". Men were more likely to mention personal benefit or parental teachings as a rationale for political involvement. In reasons given for not being involved (Figure 5), men and women were relatively balanced.
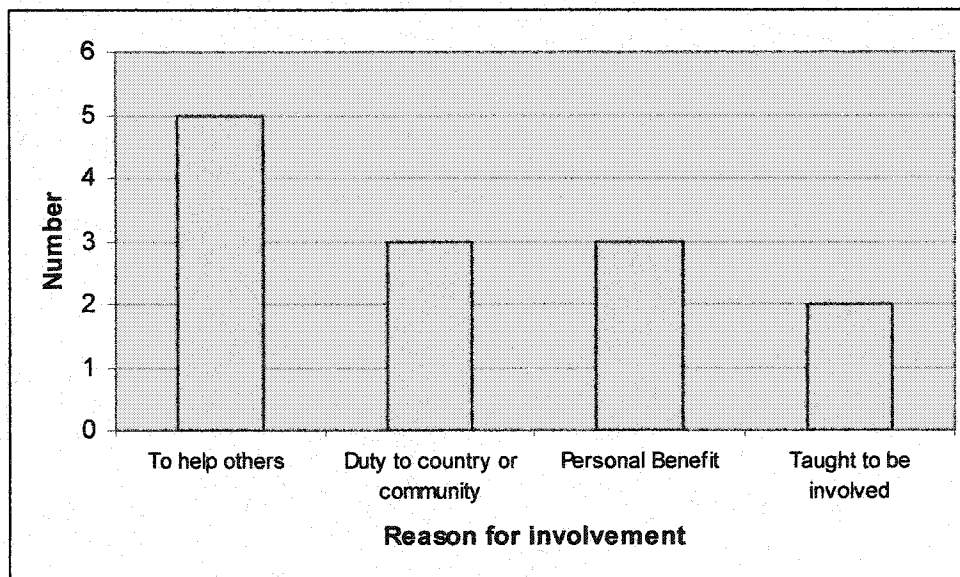
Figure 4. Reasons given for involvement in politics.
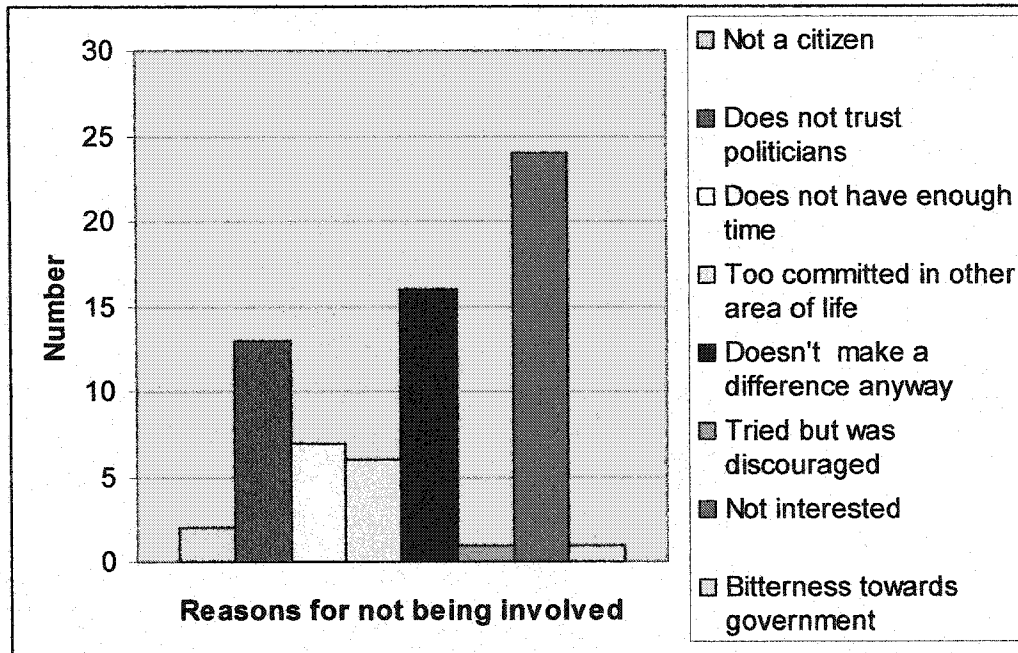
Figure 5. Reasons given for not being involved in politics.

Discussion

Putnam (2000) identified that in the 1996 elections in the US, voter turnout was significantly less than previous years. Putnam's data states a 50% voter turnout in the presidential election during the same time that the current data was collected. As 64% of the current sample reported voting in all elections, we can assume that the current data represents behaviours and beliefs of people engaged higher than the norm in the US. It is alarming then, to consider that a sample who reports higher voting levels than the national average, are overall not considerably engaged in their politics.

The purpose of this study was to explore the value that people place in political engagement through personal narratives, and to address the concerns raised by recent authors about increased political apathy and subsequent declines in political involvement. Through the examination of intensive life story interviews, we were able to study not

only political behaviours, but also the values and rationales that participants assigned to those behaviours.

Our first hypothesis suggested that gender would play a significant role in predicting political engagement. This hypothesis was supported, and in fact gender was found to be the most significant predictor of political engagement, over and above all other variables entered into regression. Women were significantly less engaged politically than men, and seemed to be engaging through a sense of obligation (civic obligation and generativity), whereas men were apparently not. There were nearly equal numbers of women and men who reported that they did not feel part of the political process, but significantly more men who felt that they were part of the political process.

It is possible that this gender difference is due to systemic gender biases in the political system. With fewer women as politicians, this may not only discourage women from engaging, but also may lead to a sense of lowered efficacy in participation. An examination of the gender of political officials seems to reveal that this is still very much a "boys club". Exploratory examinations of perceived discrimination showed that discrimination was significantly related to less desire for political engagement in women, but not in men. This trend supports the efficacy notion, in that women may have internalized negative experiences with governing bodies, and as such, do not feel empowered to make changes in this system.

Andrews (1991) identifies several barriers which may lead to reduced political efficacy. Andrews (1991) explains how we may have multiple social identities (e.g., feminist, socialist, mother), and that at times, these may be conflicting with each other. Managing the roles of being a "business woman" and "mother" for instance may cause

conflict in that other people may expect (based on role perceptions) certain levels of commitment to both domains (e.g., bosses, husbands, family) that may not be achievable. For instance, Andrews (1991) explains that people may have multiple struggles in their lives in which efficacy is an issue, and as a result, cannot fight all battles. When one faces gender, race and socio-economic discrimination at once, there are essentially three equally difficult and disempowering barriers to overcome. One might argue that all of these could be present within the domain of politics, and thus, pose extraordinary difficulty for many people who wish to participate.

In addition to these multiple struggles, Andrews (1991) addresses the fact that fighting in the political domain, may marginalize other life commitments or social identities. For instance, if a woman is to call herself highly engaged in politics, she may be disconnecting herself from another social identity in her life (feminism) because of the patriarchal nature of traditional politics. Traditional roles might suggest that being a mother or feminist is incompatible with being politically engaged. The following quote from Edwina Currie, a prominent British politician shows this struggle: "I'm a woman, I'm not a conservative" (Campbell, 1987:275). This quote exemplifies the often conflicting struggles that some people may feel in identifying with politics. In doing so, they may marginalize another important (and seemingly incompatible) social identity they hold (e.g., feminism). Andrews (1991) further explains that one will only engage politically if he/she feels that they have a strong sense of control over their environment. It may be then, that due to the marginalization of other (seemingly incompatible) social identities in addition to a sense of reduced efficacy, women engage less in politics. Gender discrimination is particularly difficult for women to fight as it may marginalize

men, which may in turn, compromise the interdependence needed for family (Andrews, 1991). In cases were there are conflicting social roles, in may be that women choose to commit to domains that do not have such high risks involved. For instance, women who commit to the political domain may need to sacrifice social ties in domains that encourage traditional women's roles, as these other commitments may hold differing values and expectations and as such, be socially incompatible.

Although significant gender differences were found in engagement, no significant gender differences were found in generativity. It was predicted that although LGS scores would be higher in women, this would not translate to high political engagement scores for them. This pattern was not fully supported, in that women had lower overall engagement scores as predicted, but did not have higher LGS scores than did men. As most studies do show gender differences in midlife samples (e.g., Pratt et al., 1999), it is possible that this sample has a somewhat higher level of generative men than most others. Although this could be the case, Colby et al. (2001) analysed LGS levels in this interview sub-sample of 94 in comparison to the larger MIDUS sample of 4242 participants and found no significant differences between them.

Our second hypothesis asserted that generativity (as measured by a brief 6 item version of the LGS scale) would be predictive of political engagement. On first blush, this hypothesis did not seem to be supported clearly. Moreover, although the overall bivariate correlation between generativity and engagement was weakly positively and significant, when this relationship was tested separately for men and women, somewhat different patterns appeared. Generativity was significantly related to political engagement in women, but not in men: although a Z test showed this correlation difference to not be

significant, likely due to sample size. Although this relationship was significant in

women, it only showed marginal significance in a linear regression. Generativity in this

study was not predictive of political engagement in men, and was predictive of

engagement in women as mediated through a measure of civic obligation (see Figure 1).

Considering that both generativity and civic obligation can be viewed as a sense of

obligation towards social responsibility, the idea that women are motivated towards

political engagement because of some element of obligation to help others is supported.

Due to the correlational nature of this study, we cannot infer any causation in these

relationships, however.

Surprisingly, generativity was not found to be a significant predictor of political

engagement in men within this sample. Other factors not examined must be the driving

force for men to engage in politics. For instance, perhaps some men are motivated to

engage by more intrinsic or self-serving factors. Another plausible explanation is that

because this sample had relatively generative men, perhaps generativity is predictive of

political engagement for men only at lower levels of these factors.

Our third hypothesis suggested that levels of perceived discrimination might

show a negative relationship with levels of political engagement. Although no significant

relationships were found in overall engagement, this hypothesis was partially supported

in men, but not in women. In fact, evidence was found that perceived discrimination may

significantly motivate men more for "other political expressions" (e.g., signing a petition,

attend a protest etc.), whereas a significantly negative relationship was found with this

variable in women (as perceived discrimination rises, other political expression declines).

As mentioned above, Andrews (1991) identifies that one needs to feel a sense of mastery

or empowerment over their environment in order to engage politically. It may be the case

that men do indeed have this sense of empowerment and "through becoming politically

conscious, individuals begin to develop a theory which explains the underlying reason for

their relatively disadvantaged situation" (Andrews, 1991, p33). It may be then, that the

disadvantaged situation that Andrews (1991) refers to, may be motivating for men to

become politically engaged, but not women. Other or conflicting commitments (as

mentioned above), may decrease the desire or efficacy women may feel to engage in

politics when they are discriminated against.

Education was predicted to be related to levels of political engagement, as well as

levels of generativity. The results of this study showed that although education showed a

significant bivariate correlation with political engagement in women (see Table 7), this

variable was not significantly predictive of engagement when entered into a linear

regression with several other factors. As identified in Colby et al. (2001), the sample of

94 participants being used in the current study had significantly higher education levels

than the full MIDUS sample. These relatively high levels of education may have

weakened the power of tests in relation to political engagement due to restriction of

range. As previously mentioned, even with this potential "wash out" effect, a significant

bivariate correlation was found in women but not men. This trend is likely a result of

heightened efficacy and affiliation with politicians in people with higher education levels;

this trend appeared particularly salient in women. If this trend is indeed true, the current

sample may also be showing overall higher levels of political engagement than the norm,

due to their significantly higher education levels. If this were the case, it would indicate a

rather bleak picture of engagement levels, as even the current sample is quite low in overall levels of political engagement.

Although income levels were significantly different for men and women in this sample (with men showing higher levels), income was not predictive of political engagement. This finding was surprising, in that education was found to be predictive in women. Sampling problems on this factor are unlikely in this sample, as no significant difference existed in income between this sample and the overall MIDUS sample.

As mentioned within the context of hypothesis 2, generative concern was only found to be related to political engagement in women, as mediated through civic obligation. To explore this relationship further, elements of political engagement were assessed for independent relationships with generativity. Interestingly, passion for major issue and optimism/respect for politics were both significantly related to generativity in women (both positively), but not in men, although the difference between these correlations was not significant. It is plausible to consider that the motivation to help others witnessed within most generative people is driving this engagement in politics in women, but not in men. Furthermore, this generative concern may drive heightened passion in one's approach to politics although the direction of these correlational links cannot be established. It is plausible to suggest that the redemptive element that McAdams et al. (1997) identify as part of a generative narration is driving this heightened optimism in women. Although most report a lack of attachment to political structures, they may see some redemptive and positive outcomes stemming from these experiences. Although a person may have endured discrimination and negative experiences, the redemptive nature of generative concern may allow them to learn from this and still see a

potentially positive or optimistic future. Other elements of engagement that were significantly related to LGS scores in women, but not men, included: "voting", "keeping up with the issues", and "other political expressions". Measures of engagement that were not related to LGS scores in women included "worked on a campaign", "non traditional political expressions", "statement of involvement" and "desire for involvement", "relation to self" "and affiliation to politics" (see Tables 6 and 7). Many of these non-significant relationships may be explained through low sample size and power, and restricted variance. For instance, very few women were scored as having worked on a campaign or answered "yes" to their statement of involvement.

In men, it is striking that none of the measures of political engagement were significantly related to LGS scores. As many of the categories had fair distributions and somewhat larger sample size for men, it is unlikely that lack of range or power was the explanation for the lack of significant relationships between LGS and engagement in men in contrast with the patterns for women.

General Trends in Engagement

The exploratory element of this study, focusing on people's accounts and explanations for political engagement or lack of engagement, was perhaps the most telling. We unfortunately found a great deal of disinterest and distrust in politics, supporting Putnam's (2000) claims. Examining Figure 4, we can see that for those who are engaged, they are involved for reasons other than self-interest, which refutes the complete generality of Bellah et al.'s (1999) cynical Lockean individualism theory. This theory generally states that if everyone were to look out for their own good, a democratic process would eventually result. Most people who report being highly engaged (13 of

17), are engaged to help others or out of a sense of duty to their community. These responses did tend to be more common in women as well. These findings must be taken with an element of caution however, as very few of our sample (only about 18%) reported these high levels of engagement.

More telling were the reasons people gave for not being involved. As shown in Figure 5, 57% of people who claimed to not be involved stated they were not involved due to lack of interest, or that it doesn't make a difference anyway. Furthermore, if we add bitterness towards government, distrust in the system, and having been discouraged when engaged in the past (all negative representations of the political process), that number jumps to 79% of those who are not engaged, or 59% of the sample population. This is a striking finding that 59% of the sample presented clearly negative perceptions of the political process in one way or another. When we consider that 82% of the sample answered no to the question, "Do you consider yourself politically involved?", this finding becomes even more alarming.

Supporting the notion of distrust in the political system, a Harris Poll of 1013 American adults found that politicians were rated as the fourth lowest profession that people can trust (Harris Poll, 1998). The only professions falling below politicians were: TV newscasters, journalists and union leaders. Similarly, National Election Studies in the United States reports that in 1964, 79% of respondents reported trusting the federal government "most of the time" or "just about always" (National Election Studies, 2001). This number dropped to only 21% in 1994. Although it has since risen to above 40%, it is still nowhere near where it once was. This overall decline in trust in recent decades also supports the findings of Putnam (2000). Although the cynicism towards politicians seen

in recent years and identified in the current study is arguably damaging to the social fabric of a functioning democratic society, one could argue that blind naiveté is harmful also. For instance, if significant injustices are present and condoned by current political structures (the obvious gender differences in representation among political leaders for example), having naïve trust in politicians can in fact be harmful by maintaining this status quo. Some element of distrust or discontent can in fact be the agent of positive social change under these circumstances. The obvious question is how much distrust towards politicians is healthy? Undoubtedly, opinions would vary on this subject, but most would agree that negative public opinion towards politicians can be one agent of positive social change in a democratic society. It was arguably this very element of cynicism and distrust that stopped the Vietnam War.

Although the vast majority of participants have negative perceptions of the political system, and do not consider themselves politically involved, most are still engaging at least at some level. For example, although 82% said that they were not politically involved, 60% of the participants do vote regularly, and an additional 18% vote periodically. Similarly, 59% of participants report keeping very up to date about political issues, and 17% report keeping somewhat up to date. In summary, although 82% of participants do not consider themselves politically involved, 78% of people reported voting with some regularity, and 76% reported keeping at least somewhat up to date with political issues. Although engagement beyond voting behaviour seems limited, people are still invested enough to follow the issues at hand.

Although these numbers seem significant, consider that 16% of this relatively educated sample never votes, and 17% do not keep up to date about political issues.

These are the more concerning numbers that Putnam (2000) identified as rising over the

past few decades. Even the "positive distrust" identified earlier, requires citizens to be

informed about issues around them.

Qualitative examination of the interview transcripts seemed to indicate that many

people felt politicians followed a pre-determined "role" while in office, and that

regardless of who that person was, the role remains the same. Unfortunately, it seems that

perception of this role is generally negative. Consider the following quote from one such

participant:

"You know, you have to be cynical enough of anybody that's running for office if you
don't know 'em, everything they say is tainted by the fact that they want you to vote for
'em. So they become a salesperson. So, while I agree with some candidates as to what
they're saying, that doesn't necessarily mean I'm sure—I'm a hundred percent sure--
they mean it. So if I had a close personal friend that I respected and thought was
qualified, I might get involved. But, other than that, I probably would not." Participant #
45157

This idea that somehow people change when they enter politics, and that this

change is primarily self-serving, was echoed by many participants. It is difficult to

ascertain the validity of these claims, but regardless, this trend is disheartening in that

although most people report voting, they tend to feel that it doesn't make a difference

anyway, because the political script is predefined. This cynicism towards politicians can

possibly stem from many factors such as: alienation from governing bodies, or biased

media coverage of political issues. As was identified in this study, most people extract

their political viewpoints and opinions from media coverage. If the media have been

unbalanced in their presentation of the issues or in glamorizing certain topics, this can

significantly affect people's perceptions of politicians, as this is their only source of

information in many cases. One clear example of this was the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Although this event seems trivial in hind-sight now, it did significantly shape public

opinions of Bill Clinton and was related in time to a temporary decline in trust towards

politicians. The interesting component of this decline is that all of the information people

were getting about this issue was second-hand, and glamorized from the mass media, and

more interestingly, none of the issues had any bearing on the "job" of being a politician.

Even without glamorization, simple exposure can significantly influence public opinion

on issues (as shown by advertising campaigns). This notion that exposure alone can

influence opinion, is intrinsically woven into the sheer volume of advertising we

encounter on a day-to-day basis.

In contrast to this cynicism, the few participants who defined themselves as

politically involved had significantly different perspectives on engagement. The tendency

for these participants was one of high engagement and a tremendous personal value

placed in this. Consider this quote:

"Well, I just think that everything in your life, at some point, has a political impact,
whether it be the amount of times they pick up trash on your street, or whether it be the
fact that you have a job, and your neighbor doesn't. I think that politics is interwoven
into the fabric of life. A lot of people don't want to open their eyes and see this politics,
but it's there. And I'll give you a good example. I have an acquaintance that's an all-right
person. He's running for city council. My brother (calls me all up in arms)---He's really
his friend---"You know, so and so is running for the city council. Isn't that ludicrous?"
This, that, and another. I said, "well"----I call my brother Butch---I said, "Well, Butch,"
I said, "Think of it this way." I said, "God Bless him, whether he wins or loses." I said,
"He's giving it a shot." Participant # 47272

The qualitative exploration of these data seemed to lead to two major conclusions:

firstly that most people see the politician as following a pre-scripted role that is

untrustworthy, and secondly that there seems to be a polarization in perspectives of

political engagement. Those who are engaged, seemed to see this as tremendously

important, and a valued part of who they are as a person.

Unfortunately, due to the small numbers of this sub-set, quantitative assessment of this trend was not possible with any power. This polarization of viewpoints seems to be heavily skewed towards distrust in the system, but for those that are engaged, they see this engagement as not only important to society, but also to them as persons. Another interesting finding is that although most people do indeed vote (78% with at least some frequency), and many were rated as having a high passion for the issue they talked about (56%), this did not necessarily translate into participants defining themselves as particularly involved (only 18%). It seems that some basic level of engagement is quite standard amongst participants (voting behaviour and strong political opinions on particular issues), but that this is not interpreted as being significantly engaged overall in the political process. This level of engagement is seemingly a minimum level of engagement that many participants claimed allowed them the right to complain about politics.

Limitations

As the basis for most analyses in this study were correlational in nature, it is hard to ascertain exactly why certain relationships exist. As the construct of generativity is one that develops throughout the lifetime, it is obviously quite difficult to study this in an experimental context.

Due to the limited number of people who *were* engaged politically, we could not conclusively examine why these people were choosing to do this. Although some evidence has been presented both quantitatively and qualitatively, these data must be considered as having low power due to the very few people who identified themselves as highly engaged. The reasons stated for involvement or lack of involvement must also be

considered within the context of the small numbers of participants in each of these categories. Due to parallel reports in this area by Putnam (2000) and Bellah et al. (1991), it is unlikely that these patterns of participation would change with an increased sample size, but we must consider this as a possibility.

The limitations of the six item generativity measure used here must also be addressed. Although this scale produced high internal reliability ($\alpha = .84$), and this scale showed good concurrent validity with other measured items (see Table 2), one must acknowledge the fact that the six items used in the current study do not constitute the full LGS twenty-item scale.

As previously mentioned, this sample was significantly more educated than the larger MIDUS sample, and as such, may not be fully representative on items that are closely related to education. As these data support the findings of Putnam (2000), Bellah et al. (1991) and the Polled data of Harris (1998) and the National Election Service (2001) however, it is likely that this sample is representative in a broader sense of American perceptions of their politicians. One should also note that perspectives of politicians and political engagement in general are not a static element, and that the trends of engagement in this sample (taken in 1995-1996), may not necessarily reflect a continuous and stable level of commitment. For instance, dramatic events such as the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, or the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003, dramatically affect American perceptions of politics. However, it is likely that these spikes and valleys in political commitment are temporary, and that the findings of this study, and Putnam (2000) are more accurate representations of day-to-day perspectives on politics over longer time spans.

Future Directions

As identified clearly by MacDermid et al. (1997), generativity may be discontinuous across life domains. The current study showed that this construct is important in predicting political engagement in midlife women, but not midlife men. As these data are intensive and value rich, it provides the possibility of examining all life domains in one sample of participants. Colby et al. (2001) examined work obligation, and the current study examined political obligation and participation. Currently, Cameron and Pratt (2003) are exploring how obligations towards the domain of politics may or may not be related to obligations to family, and how generativity might interact in the relationship. It seems plausible that generativity may be more predictive for family obligations than for political obligations in men, as this is a less traditional obligation for men (and thus may need an extra motivational component for high levels of participation). Similarly, although generativity is predictive of political engagement in women, it may not be the case for familial engagement, which is more routinely in the domain of "women's role", although based on findings by Peterson and Stewart (1996); we would expect generativity to also be predictive of family engagement in some women. This family engagement may be parallel to political engagement for men, in that a more traditionally accepted motivation might exist for women. One other explanation might be that perhaps men differentiate their commitments across domains more than women do. It may be that women show continuous generative commitment in several domains of life, whereas men differentiate these commitments more sharply.

As identified by Peterson and Stewart (1996), generative commitments across domains may not be continuous, and may differ based on accessibility to these domains.

For instance, we may expect that women who work full time, may have less commitments to the family domain (and perhaps politics), as their time and resources are more focused on another domain. This suggests the value of exploring multiple role domains simultaneously for both genders in a comprehensive study.

In addition to exploring the domain of familial engagement, it is our intention to incorporate the data compiled by Colby et al. (2001), in order to have a comprehensive examination of obligations towards family, work and politics within the same sample. This integrative examination will allow for the unity of three studies that examined the same data set and participants. Such an intensive examination of the same population is rare, and will be helpful in exploring the aforementioned discontinuity in roles people commit to in midlife, as well as potential continuity.

This study has explored the domain of political engagement in midlife men and women. It has identified significant gender differences in this engagement, as well as gender differences in how much people feel a part of the political process. Interestingly, generativity and civic obligation were related to women's political involvement, but only civic obligation was related to men's involvement. This may be due to some element of "civic motivation", that could be motivating political participation in women. In saying this, it should be noted that generativity is a broader construct than civic obligation, and certainly is not limited to civic obligation. One might argue that civic obligation is a subordinate aspect of generativity. Also predicting political engagement were patterns of perceived discrimination. It is likely that some element of reduced "political efficacy" is present in women through perceived discrimination, the presence of few women in elected positions, and pressure to conform to traditional roles in other domains of life.

The amalgamation of the current study, Cameron and Pratt (2003) and Colby et al., (2001), will allow us to intensively examine the domains of work, family and politics within one sample, and better explore the values and commitments people place in these different areas of life. Understanding these different domain commitments are crucial to understanding and clarifying the alarming trends in civic engagement identified by Putnam (2000).

Appendix A: Measures

<u>Political Behaviour Rating Scale</u>

This coding system involves a checklist of behaviours that are associated with political activity. The components of this scale were created based on standard probes given during in-depth MIDUS interviews. Ratings are scored based on three or four point scales, reflecting what best describes the participant's reflection of their own political behaviours. Each narrative will be scored based on the level of political involvement created from this scale.

Voting

1) State that they vote in all levels, all elections or all the time. This code is given for a person who is very consistent in voting behaviour. (See example 1 below).
2) State that they vote in some, but not all elections, or votes in all levels, but state irregularity in this. This irregularity, or lack of voting in one level must be explicitly stated, otherwise #1 is coded.
3) State that they never vote, or have stopped voting. Assumption should be made that this applies to all levels, or all elections. If it only applies to some, then #2 is coded. (See example #2 below).
9) N/A – No mention made, or no judgement possible due to gaps in narratives.

Keeping up with Political issues

1) Report keeping very up-to-date or informed about political issues. This can be referenced through reading regularly about it, watching TV etc., but must explicitly state that they are well informed about political issues. (See example 3 below)
2) Somewhat knowledgeable, but do not define themselves as "well informed", or "uninformed". Would be seen as paying attention to some, but not all issues, or watching the news whenever they have time, but not regularly. They do not identify a vast knowledge of issues, but also do not see themselves as uninformed. Also fitting this category are those who state that they mainly gain their political information through a relative or friend – rather than first-hand.
3) Does not identify themselves as being up-to-date or knowledgeable about political issues. State that they have very little knowledge of current political issues. This must be explicitly stated or #2 is coded.
9) N/A – No mention made, or no judgement possible due to gaps in narratives.

Worked on a campaign

1) State that they have at some time, worked on more than one campaign in some way. This can be with the same politician more than once, or different politicians. Running for office constitutes working on a campaign. Paid or un-paid positions are both considered. (See example 5 below).
2) State that they have worked on one campaign. No mention of others.

3) State they have never worked on a campaign that they remember. (See Example 6 below).

9) N/A – No mention made, or no judgement possible due to gaps in narratives.

History of Involvement

1) Specifically state a long history of political involvement (more than 5 years), or state that politics has been important to them for this period of time. This must go beyond saying that they "always voted", and this must either encompass politics being important to them, or having been involved in it. Person continues to be highly engaged – if not, code #4. (See example 7 below).

2) Mentions that they have recently (within past 5 years) become involved in politics through deeper interest, or through involvement in campaigns. Must be specifically stated as "recently", "lately" or give a time reference. Must go beyond voting behaviour.

3) Specifically state that they have never been very involved in politics beyond voting behaviour. (See example 8 below).

4) State that they once were involved to a greater extent, but have recently stopped for some reason. They are no longer as involved as they once were.

9) N/A – No mention made, or no judgement possible due to gaps in narratives.

Other Political Expressions

This code is given for informal political activities. These are: writing a letter to a politician, signing or creating a petition, attending or organising a protest or demonstration, promoting a politician or political campaign publicly.

1) Mentions doing at least one of these things twice, or two of them one time each or more frequently than this. Must be reference to them – not just relative or spouse doing it. (See Example 9 below).

2) Mentions only one of these things, and mentions doing it only once.

3) Makes no mention of personally doing any of these activities. No interview probe was specifically given for this, so if no mention at all, code #3.

Non- Traditional Political Involvement

This code is given for participants who express political involvement, which does not fall within the realm of the traditional political structure. Examples of these are: being a member of a school board or community association, holding a position at work (or other domain) in which representation of others is made, or holding any voted position or nominated position. Activities must go beyond simple membership, and must encompass a vested interest in this participation.

1) Mention of commitment to a non-traditional political arena.

2) Mentions they used to have commitment to a non-traditional political arena.
3) No mention made to commitment to a non-traditional political arena.

Statement of Involvement

1) When asked, participant states being politically involved Y/N. If yes, go to "reasons for involvement" if no, go to "reasons for not being involved".
9) Question not asked, or unable to code. If so, code both reasons for involvement and reasons for not being involved.

Reasons for involvement

Can be more than one, but must be explicitly stated.

1) Reason given for involvement is to help others, concern for next generation or concern for family.
2) Reason given for involvement is sense of duty to country or locality.
3) Reason given for involvement stems from having been taught importance of involvement by family member or mentor.
4) Reason given for involvement is environmental concerns (including animals and wildlife).
5) Reason given for involvement is global or federal financial concerns.
6) Reason given for involvement is religious duty.
7) Reason given for involvement is for personal benefit (e.g., fixing up own neighbourhood, lower taxes, increasing social security concerns etc.)
8) No reason given.
9) Unable to code.

Reason for not being involved

Can be more than one, but must be explicitly stated.

1) Is not a citizen, and sees this as a barrier.
2) Does not want to affiliate themselves with politicians.
3) Does not have enough time to commit.
4) Too committed in another area of life.
5) Wouldn't know how to become involved.
6) Doesn't feel it makes a difference anyway.
7) Religious duty to not be involved.

8) Does not trust politicians or political process.
9) Has tried in the past, but was discouraged.
10) Has bitterness towards government or political process due to past experiences.
11) No reason given.
99) Unable to code.

Political Beliefs

This coding system involves a checklist of beliefs that are expressed with regards to politics, politicians and/or political activity. Standard probes varied for this category, so most responses will be spontaneous. Code the number that best reflects what the participant is trying to say or express. This section is intended to identify how the participant feels about the current state of politics, if it was mentioned.

Desire for involvement

1) State a desire to be more involved in politics than they are, or references an obligation to be more involved. (See Example 10 below).
2) Seem content with current level of involvement, or does not state a desire or obligation for more or less involvement.
3) State that they would like to be (or should be) less involved than they currently are.

Issues Referenced

This section can be coded in more than one category, as they are not mutually exclusive. When asked about political issues of interest, or when brought up spontaneously throughout the political section of the interview, the person makes...

1) Reference to issue that relate directly to personal benefit (e.g. fixing potholes in their neighbourhood, increasing unemployment for someone who is unemployed etc.) (See Example 11 below).
2) Reference of a financial issue, either local or federal finances or spending. (See Example 12 below).
3) Reference to issue of social responsibility, or caring for others rather than the self. Must not be related to any self-benefit, and must specifically relate to others – not a social group including themselves.
4) Reference to issue of morality, such as what is right and wrong, what should and should not be done etc.
5) Reference to environmental issue.
6) Does not mention any particular reference to political issues.
7) Reference to other political issue not listed.

Passion for Issues Referenced

Examining the issues referenced, circle the **one** issue that was seemingly most important or prominent to the participant within the narrative. Once selected, rate the participant for their level engagement or passion for this issue (high or low).

1) Reference to issue that relate directly to personal benefit (e.g. fixing potholes in their neighbourhood, increasing unemployment for someone who is unemployed etc.). Level of Engagement (circle one) High   Low
2) Reference of a financial issue, either local or federal finances or spending. Level of Engagement (circle one) High   Low
3) Reference to issue of social responsibility, or caring for others rather than the self. Level of Engagement (circle one) High   Low
4) Reference to issue of morality, such as what is right and wrong, what should and should not be done etc. Level of Engagement (circle one) High   Low
5) Reference to environmental issue. Level of Engagement (circle one) High   Low
6) Does not mention any particular reference to political issues.
7) Reference to other political issue not listed. Level of Engagement (circle one) High   Low

Optimism and Respect for Politics

1) Seem to have an optimistic or positive view of politics. This is expressed through direct statements, inferences about politicians, or recent political decisions made. (See Example 14 below).
2) Express a mixed response with regards to optimism and respect. Perhaps respecting only some politicians or levels, or having faith in only one level of government.
3) Seem to have a distinctly negative or pessimistic view of politics. This is expressed through direct statements, inferences about politicians, or recent political decisions made. (See Example 15 below).
9) No judgement is possible due to lack of expression about politics, or gaps in narratives.

Relation to Self

1) Sees himself or herself as truly part of the political process. This is integrated into their sense of self. They do not see politics, or politicians as distinctly different than themselves.
2) Present ambivalence in how politics relates to them as citizens, and how they are a part of it. (See Example 16 below).

3) Sees themselves as distinctly different from politicians, or does not relate to the political process. It is not integrated into their sense of self. (See Example 17 below).

Affiliation

1) Specifically identify themselves clearly as a Democrat, Republican, or other political party, and does not mention voting outside of party lines. (See Example 18 below).
2) Mentions voting a particular way the majority of the time (along a party line), but will vote outside of party lines on rare occasions. (See Example 19 below).
3) Clearly state that they vote for individual that will do the best job – regardless of party.
4) Does not mention this.
9) No judgement possible due to gaps in narrative.

Rossi Civic Obligation Scale

Here is a list of hypothetical situations. Please rate how much obligation you would feel if they happened to you using a 0 to10 scale where 0 means "no obligation at all" and 10 means "a very great obligation". If the situation does not apply to you, please think about how much obligation you would feel if you were in this situation.

	None									Very Great
1) To serve on a jury if called	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
2) To keep fully informed about national news and local issues.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
3) To testify in court about an accident you witnessed.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
4) To vote in national and local elections.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10

Rossi Altruism Scale

Here is a list of hypothetical situations. Please rate how much obligation you would feel if they happened to you using a 0 to10 scale where 0 means "no obligation at all" and 10 means "a very great obligation". If the situation does not apply to you, please think about how much obligation you would feel if you were in this situation.

	None									Very Great
1) To pay more for your health care so that everyone had access to health care.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
2) To volunteer time or money to social causes you support.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
3) To collect contributions for heart or cancer research is asked to.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10
4) To vote for a law that would help others off worse than you but would increase your taxes.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10

Loyola Generativity Sub-scale (LGS)

To what extent does each of the following apply to you?

	A Lot	Some	A little	Not at all
a) Others would say that you've made unique contributions to society.	1	2	3	4
b) You have important skills you can pass along to others.	1	2	3	4
c) Many people come to you for advice.	1	2	3	4
d) You feel that other people need you.	1	2	3	4
e) You have a good influence on the lives of many people.	1	2	3	4
f) You like to teach things to people.	1	2	3	4

Appendix B: Sample narrative discussion on politics

Participant #45301

LET'S KEEP GOING, OK? ABOUT POLITICS.. DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF
AS A POLITICALLY INVOLVED PERSON? YOU KNOW YOU SPOKE AT ONE
POINT ABOUT ACTUALLY THINKING ABOUT PURSUING... A POLITICAL
CAREER

Not as much now as I once was. And I, I've become disillusioned with politics and
politicians.

SO THE IDEA OF BEING POLITICALLY INVOLVED USED TO APPEAL TO YOU
MORE AND NOW IT'S LESS..

Absolutely. Absolutely.

IS IT DISILLUSIONMENT FROM KIND OF... EVERYBODY LOOKING OUT FOR
THEIR OWN LITTLE PIECE OF THE PIE? [173] WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT?

Yeah. Well, there are a couple of observations that, that I've made. People become
politicians and change. OK? I, I, I've had two, two experiences to support that. When I
was really out there involved in politics I was working for a campaign for this young lady
who was running for representative. State representative. And she was involved in a run
off, and it was my strategy that brought the votes in the run off that brought about the
victory. And to me maybe it was me, but to me the attitude, there was an attitudinal,
change that took place. I hope it's me. But then again, I, I worked very diligently a
couple years ago in getting this lady elected to city council, and I recognized the same
change. So I said, it's not me. It's something that politics do to people, that make them
change.

WHAT..IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE IT, WHAT DOES IT DO TO THEM THAT,
THAT IS DISILLUSIONING AND WHAT, AND THAT MADE YOU, SOUNDS
LIKE, MADE YOU THINK TWICE...

Yeah. Yeah. The- they, I perceived them to be I don't want to say unreal, but there's
something that takes place within the life of a politician that suggests to me that they,
they, they put themselves on a pedestal and say that maybe, just maybe I'm a little better
than you are, because of the responsibility that I have. They forget. And, they forget
who put them there. And I think as, we have to take responsibility for that. See, there's a
terrible myth in the Black community that if you, if you l-, if you elect officials,
everything's going to be made better, and it's not true. That's a fallacy. It's proven to be a
fallacy. OK? We don't hold our politicians accountable. We elect them and we re-elect
them. Year after year after year, and don't hold them accountable for their actions. That's
the mistake that we made.. and I think that perhaps, perhaps if more citizens decided that:
hey, we're going to, to hold politicians responsible for what they do, then that attitude
perhaps will not exist. [209] Maybe it's me, man, maybe no one in the world has
recognized that but me. But, there, there is something that I, I don't know whether I've

intelligently explained it, but there is something about elected officials once they become elected officials, there's a change that takes place.

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU STILL, DO YOU, DO YOU AT THIS POINT, OBVIOUSLY INTO HE PAST YOU WERE VERY INVOLVED, BUT TO WHAT EXTENT AT THIS POINT DO YOU TRY TO STUDY, COME TO UNDERSTAND POLITICAL ISSUES? DO YOU KEEP ABREAST OF THESE THINGS STILL?

Yeah. Yeah. About the extent of my political involvement is keeping abreast of what's going on. Who's doing what.

DO YOU DO THAT AT A LOCAL LEVEL, ON A NATIONAL, IS IT LOCAL, STATE, NATIONAL...

Primarily local, state, because those are the things that I, I guess impact us the most, in a way of speaking, that you can see that. I mean those are people that you can reach out and touch, and you can call on. You know, that kind of thing, so. I'm concerned about why the grass wasn't cu ton the corner. But yet the grass on the other side of town is always neat and clean, you know. Those kinds of things, why is that street over there paved and this one isn't, in my neighborhood? See if I could live anywhere in this country then I want [221] that I chose to live where I am, not knowing the politics of the community, OK? And I just refuse to allow them not to treat me the same as they would treat someone over on, on the other side of town. I refuse that. You're not going to do me that way. Because in proportion to my property value, I pay the same amount of taxes, and you're gonna provide the same service to me and my community that you provide for the other guy. [232] care who they are.

...AS ATLANTA EXTENDS UP INTO THE NORTH AND...

And you can't treat them any better than you treat me. You know, we're all citizens of the city. And, again, it's a political, it's the politics of it all that sometimes don't make sense.

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN, CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN, IN POLITICAL GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, ORG- GROUPS AROUND LOCAL ISSUES OR POLITICAL ISSUES?

Yeah, a couple of organizations I'm involved in, and we're as we speak formulating another organization that hopefully will grow into a nationwide organization. It's called BEVA (?243).

WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?

It's Black Exhibitors and Vendor Association. We made an interesting discovery in, in doing the trade shows, the promoters don't always have the vendor at heart. And there a lot of things that take place where the vendor does not necessarily benefit. So we're formulate an organization that will address those issues that: hey, mister promoter, we-

we're 100 vendors strong, or we're 15 hundred vendors strong, and we don't like the way you do business, so we're not gonna participate in your show. OK? So without us, you have no show. That, that kind of thing that we're working on bringing together and we're going to have our first meeting in Washington this week. And we're also developing, we've been working on this for the past [256] years, it's a community organization. We have several community organizations all fragmented. Each neighborhood has it's own little organization. You know, you live on this side of the street, you (?259) live on this side of the street, this is mine, this is yours, you know, so, we're coming up with a , an organization that will address the concerns of everyone, not just because you're on that side of the road, you're (?261) on that side of the road.

HAVE YOU EVER, YOU EVER WORKED ON A CAMPAIGN, YOU MENTIONED YOU WORKED FOR THIS WOMEN GETTING OUT THE VOTE AND.... HOW OFTEN OD YOU DO THAT, SORTS OF THINGS THAT YOU'VE DONE, THESE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS THAT YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN?

A number of times, as a matter of fact, I've worked on three campaigns. Very diligently, three campaigns.

AND WHAT GOT YOU INVOLVED IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS?

The belief in the candidate and they want to initiate a change, bring about or to make a difference in the community. And...

THESE WERE ALL LOCAL CAMPAIGNS? LOCAL ELECTIONS?

Local and state, yeah.

AND HAS... OVER TIME, THE COURSE OF TIME WITH YOU INVOLVEMENT WITH THESE POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS AND CANDIDATES, WHAT DID YOU... DID IT GROW AND THEN AFTER THE ELECTION DROP OFF, OR WHAT'S BEEN THE KIND OF HISTORY OF YOUR INVOLVEMENT, IS THERE, IS THERE A PATTERN?

It's grown and then dropped off, and it's grown again and dropped off. Now we're at a drop off point where I don't, I don't know that I will ever get involved on another political campaign.

IS PART OF THAT DROP OFF TOO PART OF THAT ATTITUDINAL CHANGE THAT YOU SEE TAKE PLACE?

Uh huh(?279).

WHAT KIND OF REWARDS DID YOU GET FORM DOING THE POLITICAL ACTIVITY, AND WORKING ON CAMPAIGNS AND, THE SORTS OF THINGS YOU DO POLITICALLY IN THE COMMUNITY?

Self gratification. In that the person I supported I believed will make a difference. And that would bring about positive change within the community. And it, it's, it's for that reason I got involved.

AND SO YOU FIND THE CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY TO BE GRATIFYING TO YOURSELF?

Oh sure, sure. Oh, absolutely.

DOES YOUR, YOUR WIFE AND YOUR, YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUR FRIENDS, THEY SUPPORT YOUR POLITICAL ACTIVITY?

Mm Hmm

IF... CAN YOU THINK OF A POLITICAL ISSUE OVER, THAT'S COME UP OVER SAY THIS PAST YEAR THAT YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT? IT CAN BE EITHER LOCAL OR NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL, SOME ISSUE THAT REALLY YOU FELT VERY STRONGLY ABOUT AND... TELL ME WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT, WHAT YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT THE ISSUE ARE.

One just took place very recently and that's the affirmative action program. I don't think that white America can make decisions based on qualification. I think, I, I think that we should, but I, I just don't think that it, it'll happen where [301] promotions and hiring will be done based on merit and qualifications. I just don't think that, that it can be done. And I think that we need that mechanism in place. I, I totally disagree with affirmative action, it should not be needed, you know. It should not be needed. But I think that society needs those guidelines to, to keep check on, on some of the decisions that they make. Another issue was state rights, whe- where the Republican party is trying to give more rights to the state to make decisions. In my life I can, I can recall, I can recall in the early 50s where states, you know, had state rights and they were not very good, you know, Mississippi and South Carolina and Georgia and (?314) the early 50s, you know, were making decisions based on individual states. And it just won't work. It won't work. There has to be, you know, someone there controlling what happens, otherwise, hey, what's to say that things won't revert back to what they were. I don't think they will, but what's to say. You need certain guidelines in place to keep people in check. Unfortunately, we should not be in a society where that's necessary, but it is. You know, and I speak from experience. It's not so much the upper echelon of.. but it's, it's the local, its' the little guys that are hurt the most by the lack thereof of certain programs.

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