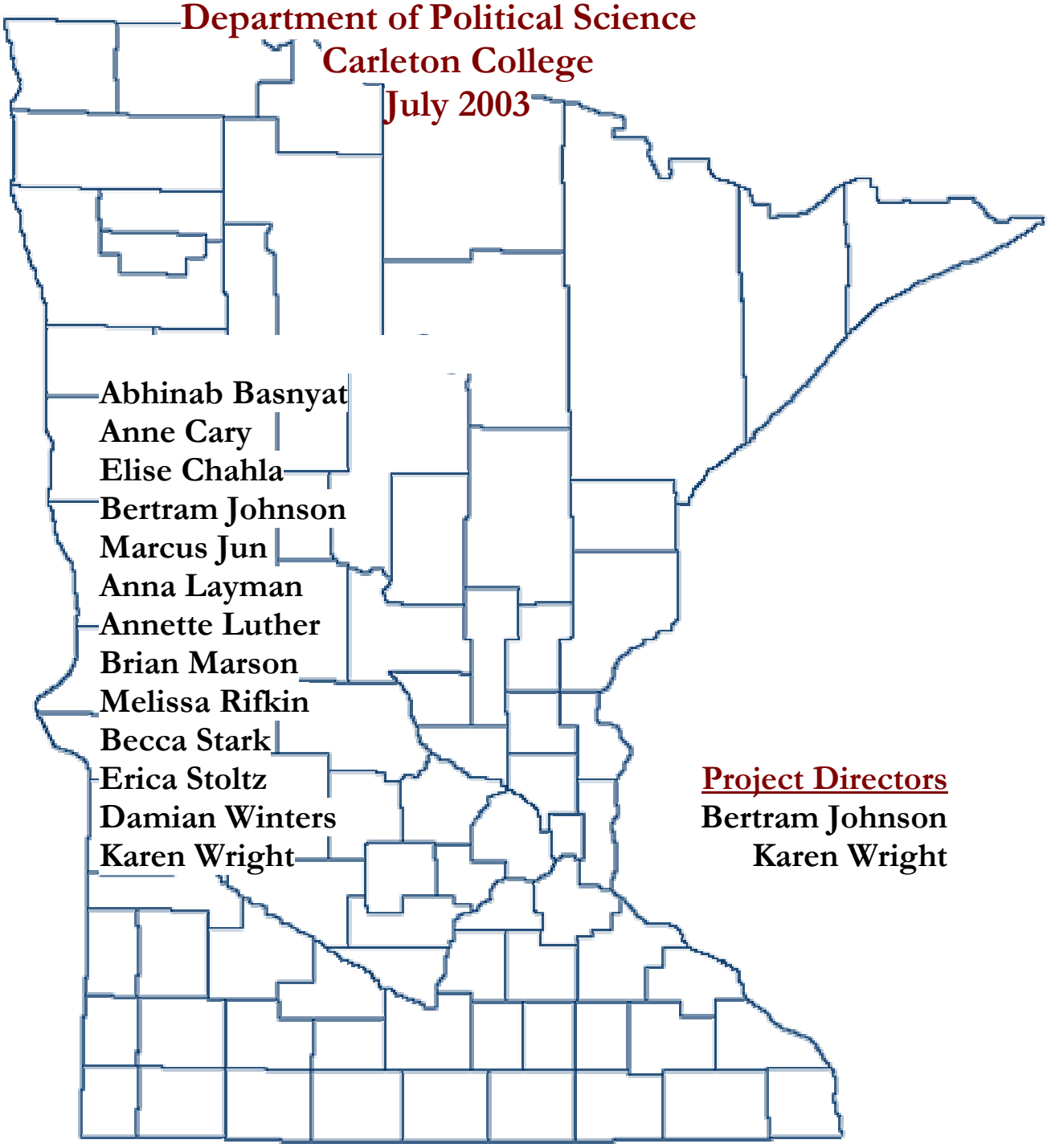
THE SOCIAL STATE?

REPORT OF THE MINNESOTA SOCIAL CAPITAL RESEARCH PROJECT

Department of Political Science
Carleton College
July 2003



Abhinab Basnyat
Anne Cary
Elise Chahla
Bertram Johnson
Marcus Jun
Anna Layman
Annette Luther
Brian Marson
Melissa Rifkin
Becca Stark
Erica Stoltz
Damian Winters
Karen Wright

Project Directors
Bertram Johnson
Karen Wright

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was inspired by Paul Wellstone and Mike Casper, who taught countless Carleton students that their work could have an impact on public policy. Thanks to Steven Schier and the Carleton political science department for supporting this unique collaborative effort. Many others have provided invaluable assistance and encouragement along the way, including Elizabeth Ciner, Paula Lackie, Michael Moore, Tricia Peterson, and the Carleton offices of Information Technology and Media Services. Thank you all for helping to make this report possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Minnesota: The Social State?

Karen Wright

"It is their mores, then, that make Americans… capable of maintaining the rule of democracy; and it is mores again that make the various Anglo-American democracies more or less orderly and prosperous."
– Alexis de Tocqueville

"In many ways, Minnesota is the 'social capital' of social capital."
– Robert Putnam

INTRODUCTION

What is the state of society in Minnesota, and is Minnesota still 'the social state?"[1] Tocqueville, Aristotle before him, and more recently Robert Putnam have all been convinced that social connections and mores are critical to the effective functioning of society and democracy. Putnam is widely known for his work (1995, 2000) arguing that levels of 'social capital' – interpersonal connections and levels of general social trust - have been declining in America since the post-World War II period.

Recent research has linked high levels of social capital to better economic performance, educational attainment, public health, opportunities for women, tolerance, and political participation – as well as to lower levels of violent crime, inequality, and social alienation.

Robert Putnam has characterized Minnesota as 'the social capital of social capital.' A place with strong overlapping networks and widespread trust, it has had an active civic and voluntary culture with exceptional rates of political participation and voting, extensive volunteering and some of the very highest rates of charitable giving among corporations and individuals in the U.S. It has been a place where 'community' is taken seriously, both in policy and in practice. Possible explanations include strong traditions of social and political engagement, relative cultural homogeneity, and the significant percentage of the population of Scandinavian heritage, which has been linked by Putnam (2000) and others to high social capital.

But there are growing concerns that this portrait may no longer be accurate, and that established traditions have eroded in recent years. Changing demographic and lifestyle patterns, as well as increasing pressures of time and mobility, raise questions about whether the strength of the state's social capital has been sustained.

Because of Minnesota's status as an exemplar of high levels of social capital, it is also of interest to a worldwide body of social science researchers and policy makers who are concerned about the effects on community and cohesion of an increasingly digitalized, diverse, and globalized world. Carleton's Minnesota Social Capital Research Project set out to investigate these concerns, with an eye to public policy implications.

THE MINNESOTA SOCIAL CAPITAL RESEARCH PROJECT

The Minnesota Social Capital Research Project is a collaborative student research effort completed during the 2003 spring term. Twelve Carleton political science students and two professors investigated the nature and state of social connection, trust and other components of social capital in Minnesota. Students designed relevant individual investigations based on their interests, receiving credit either as part of

Karen Wright, Visiting Instructor in Political Science, taught the seminar 'Social Capital: Critical and Cross-Cultural Perspectives' during the 2003 Winter term.

[1] In using the term 'social state' we consciously misappropriate a term from Alexis de Tocqueville, who defined the social state as the general status of society.

existing class or as independent study option. The project was coordinated by Bert Johnson and Karen Wright and based in the Department of Political Science at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.

Project researchers used a range of methods including interviews, informal surveys, focus groups, and statistical analysis of existing data sets. Their research examines the relationship of political ideology and social capital, patterns of networks and trust in the Somali and Hmong immigrant communities, women's experiences of connection and trust in their lives, religious affiliation and attendance and social capital, perceptions of politicians on changing forms of political participation, and other topics. A number of the studies compare Minnesota data with national and international sources.

We do not claim that this research is definitive. Instead, we view this project as an effort to explore some of the relevant information available about Minnesota, to see whether theories developed for the nation as a whole can plausibly be applied locally, and to generate new theories and insights that may be further tested in the future.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Interest in social capital among politicians, policy makers, and political scientists has recently exploded as it is perceived to be the necessary underpinning for a broad range of economic and civic aims. Worldwide, it is being given an important role in education, health, corrections, and development policy.

The term was originated in the 1960s and has been used in somewhat different ways by leading sociologists. However as popularized and operationalized for political science by Robert Putnam, social capital has two major components: social networks and social norms, especially general social trust. Social trust is not a matter of calculated confidence in someone's actions, but rather a general belief that most people can be trusted.

A critical distinction exists between 'bonding' social capital – connections with others 'like us' – and 'bridging' social capital – connections with those 'not like us' (Gittell and Vidal 1998, p. 8; Putnam 2000, p. 22). Both are important, serving somewhat different individual and social purposes. Far from being mutually exclusive, bonding and bridging ties often interact. Bonding ties provide identity, practical and emotional support, comfort in a strange land – or a strange setting - while bridging ties knit society together into a workable whole.

Difficult 'second generation' research and policy questions are now being raised about social capital. Many of these questions were explored by members of the Project:

Diversity. Does strong social capital rely on cultural homogeneity? What are the effects of increasing immigration and ethnic diversity? Do different immigrant groups possess distinct patterns and levels of social capital? *Anna Layman and Abhinab Basnyat investigate this issue on page 12.*

Inequality and distribution Is social capital widely and evenly spread or concentrated in certain groups? Are others 'left out' and if so, what are the implications? Does economic inequality affect levels of social capital? *Damian Winters and Erica Stoltz address these questions on page 43 and page 46.*

Gender. Have women served as the mainstay of social connections at local levels, and does increasing female participation in the workforce threaten those connections? What are the different patterns of connection to work, community, and family experienced by women working full time, part time, and in the home? *Elise Chahla addresses these issues on page 18.*

Public perceptions. Do Minnesotans think levels of trust and connection have changed? If so, how and why? *Brian Marson explores this question on page 5.*

Causal relationships: religion and ideology. Do all religious faiths and practices generate social trust and participation in similar ways, or are there significant differences? Do liberals and conservatives possess equal levels of social capital? *Anne Cary and Becca Stark address these questions on page36 and page 27.*

Government policy. How important is public sector policy and financial support to the creation of social capital? Does public support for 'community' vary between suburban and

rural areas? What can Minnesota learn from other countries? *Melissa Rifkin, Marcus Jun,and Damian Winters address these issues on page 51, page 63, and page 43.*

Politics. What is the relationship between social capital and electoral politics? Do changing patterns of social capital effect electoral outcomes, and if so how? Are Minnesota's politicians perceiving changes in levels of civic participation and trust, and does this affect their campaign strategies? *Bert Johnson and Annette Luther address these questions on page 67 and page 57.*

KEY FINDINGS

The findings of the Project research team paint a picture of changing patterns of social connection and social capital. They explore the interconnectedness of social capital with economic dynamism, civic participation, income equality, education, religious faith, political ideology, and public policy. They also find that governments vary in their commitment to policies supporting social capital and that changes in the patterns of social capital may be re-configuring politics.

Each study in the Project is described individually in the following chapters. However, key findings from all are listed below, grouped by broad topic areas.

Patterns of Trust and Association

- Minnesotans surveyed generally believe levels of social capital have changed in recent years, and the majority believes it has deteriorated. Most striking is the overwhelming impression that trust in others has declined. (Brian Marson)
- Women who work part-time exhibit the highest overall levels of participation and social capital. However full-time workers have somewhat higher levels of trust than part-timers, as do women working in the home. (Elise Chahla)
- Immigrant groups differ from both mainstream Minnesota and each other in their patterns of social capital. Somali and Hmong immigrant communities experience very distinct patterns of networks and trust shaped by language , cultural heritage, and shared religious and family ties. The relative importance of bonding and bridging ties also differs. (Abhinab Baysnat and Anna Layman)

Predictors of Social Capital

- Income and education have a strong relationship with civic engagement, but this relationship is not direct, occurring instead largely via social trust, group membership, and social networks.(Erica Stoltz)
- The much-touted relationship between religious involvement and civic participation is far from uniform, varying by religious denomination. in both strength and direction (Anne Cary)
- Political ideology correlates with social capital, with liberals reporting higher levels of social capital. Minnesota is statistically more liberal than the national average, and one explanation for its high levels of social capital may be its political ideology. (Becca Stark)

Public Policy

- 'Virtuous' and 'vicious' cycles may link levels of social capital in cities to economic vibrancy, educational attainment, and lower rates of poverty. (Damian Winters)
- Local government programs to 'build community' are more common among cities with larger tax bases, and a council-manager type of government. They are slightly more prevalent among suburban governments than rural ones. [Urban areas were not included in the study.] (Melissa Rifkin)
- There is increasing evidence worldwide that government policy and support is important in the creation and maintenance of social capital. Governments can both create an environment in which social capital can flourish as well as directly support activities building trust and association. (Marcus Jun)

Political Participation

- Prominent Minnesota political figures generally perceive a long term decline in

civic participation as well as trust in government and politicians. An exception to this trend is found in suburban areas. (Annette Luther)

- In the 2002 election social capital in growing suburban areas translated into notably high rates of political participation, decisively shifting policy priorities and election outcomes. (Bert Johnson)

CONCLUSIONS

Three overarching themes draw together the findings of the Minnesota Social Capital Research Project. They are sketched below, along with policy implications.

Social Capital is Important to Minnesota

Minnesotans are concerned that social capital in general – and social trust in particular – are in decline. A number of Project contributions support the thesis that social capital is linked to economic development and sustained growth, as well as to civic participation. Creating and maintaining the conditions necessary for social capital to flourish should be a policy and planning priority for those concerned about Minnesota's health and success.

Patterns of Social Capital are Diverse and Changing

Most current assessments of Minnesota's social capital treat the state's population as a largely homogenous whole, some suggesting that the state's high levels of social capital are the result of that homogeneity. Instead our research indicates that rather than or in addition to a single framework of trust and connections based on associations, Minnesota has many distinct patterns of social capital rooted in culture, religion, gender, language, and ideology. Moreover these patterns are increasingly in flux.

Suburban Areas are Increasingly Pivotal

The growth of suburban arenas and the shrinking of urban populations means that the arenas for creation of social linkages and trust are shifting. Metro-wide bridging ties appear to be loosening, replaced by increasingly strong ties within suburbs. Suburban areas are investing in their own social capital, and reaping their rewards in economic growth and civic participation. The outcomes of state elections are increasingly being decided by suburban districts.

The nature of the 'social state' in Minnesota is clearly changing. Both suburbanization and growing diversity tend to foster more bonded ties. A critical policy concern is the balance between patterns bonding similar groups together, and those bridging differences among people The key question is whether these changes will undermine the broader affiliations and perspectives required to sustain Minnesota's communitarian ethos and policies, or whether the nature of its social and political cultures will undergo fundamental change.

Social capital has powerful and pervasive implications for public policy and for politics itself. Further investigation is needed into the changes in Minnesota's social fabric, and in particular the relationships of growing suburbanization, diversity, inequality, and workplace policies with social capital, as well as into the effects of particular policies on it. Public policies and private practices both shape Minnesota's social state, and both necessary to sustain its vitality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elazar, Daniel J., Virginia Gray., and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics and Government.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Gittell, Ross and Avis Vidal. *Community Organizing: Building Social Capital as a Development Strategy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998.

Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Putnam, Robert. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy*, 6:1 (January 1995), pp. 65-78.

de Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America*. Translated and Edited by George Lawrence and J.P Mayer: Harper Perennial, 1988 [1835, 1840].

Public Perceptions and Expectations of Social Capital Issues

Brian Marson

ABSTRACT

Through survey research and group membership data, political scientists have taken great steps towards identifying measurable levels of social capital in various communities, but the empirical reality that people live in is often quite disconnected with their understanding of the situation. I conducted an unscientific survey of Minnesotans in public places to get a sense of their impressions about social capital in the state. A significant majority of people surveyed believe that the current state of social capital in their communities is different today than it was in the past, and they expect it to continue to change in the future. Minnesotans seem to have given real thought to issues pertaining to social capital and are generally pessimistic about the trends regarding social capital in their communities.

BACKGROUND

Robert Putnam has made social capital a popular topic for study among today's political scientists. Social capital is a measure of community behavior, including social trust, networks, and norms, that impacts communal life in a number of ways. Putnam sees a decline in social capital levels across the country, but he points to Minnesota as on of the few social capital-rich states remaining. Consequently, I decided to ask Minnesotans themselves what they thought about their own communities.

This study is not an effort to ascertain the empirical state of social capital in Minnesota – other studies have done a good job of this.[1]

Instead it is an attempt to determine what Minnesotans *believe* about social capital, in terms of social trust, networks, and norms. By obtaining information regarding the public's perception of past changes, current conditions, and expectations for the future, it will be easier to compare popular beliefs with empirical evidence about how communities are changing.

KEY FINDINGS

- Minnesotans believe that social capital levels are different now than in the past and they generally feel that things have changed for the worse.
- Four factors comprise 45% of all perceived causes of changes in social capital (increasing lifestyle diversity, the effects of the media, community change, and decreased social interaction).
- Those who think social capital has deteriorated most often blame increasing lifestyle diversity and decreased interaction.
- Those who think social capital has improved credit increasing lifestyle diversity and increased communication for the improvement.
- Older people tend to have a more negative view of changes in social capital while better educated individuals have a more favorable view of social capital change, but there is very little difference in perception of social capital among other social groupings.
- While 9/11 was significant in some measures, single events comprise only 6% of all responses about causes of social capital change. It is likely therefore that 9/11 will decrease in significance just as Watergate and Vietnam did.
- There were some conspicuous absences from the responses including class warfare, prejudice, education, young versus old, etc.
- People generally concur about the current levels of social capital components but they tend to disagree on how the current state of social capital differs from the past.

[1] See Anne Cary's and Becca Stark's analyses of the Social Capital Community Benchmark Study in this report.

Brian Marson, Carleton class of 2004, is a political science major.

METHOD AND RESULTS

I used a field survey to obtain my data. The survey was comprised of three sections: first, a background information section to gather individual demographic information, second, a selection of questions from the Integrated Questionnaire for the Measurement of Social Capital produced by the World Bank Group, intended to acclimate the respondent to the concepts and vocabulary of social capital issues and components, and third, impressions and trends section designed to extract ideas regarding the past, present, and future of social capital in Minnesota.

The survey was administered to Minnesotan volunteers between the ages of 18 and 65 with the exception of students at Carleton College. Survey administration occurred on 4 separate occasions: at the Burnsville Center, at Carleton College during Parent's Weekend, at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport, and at the Mall of America. In total there were 62 respondents.

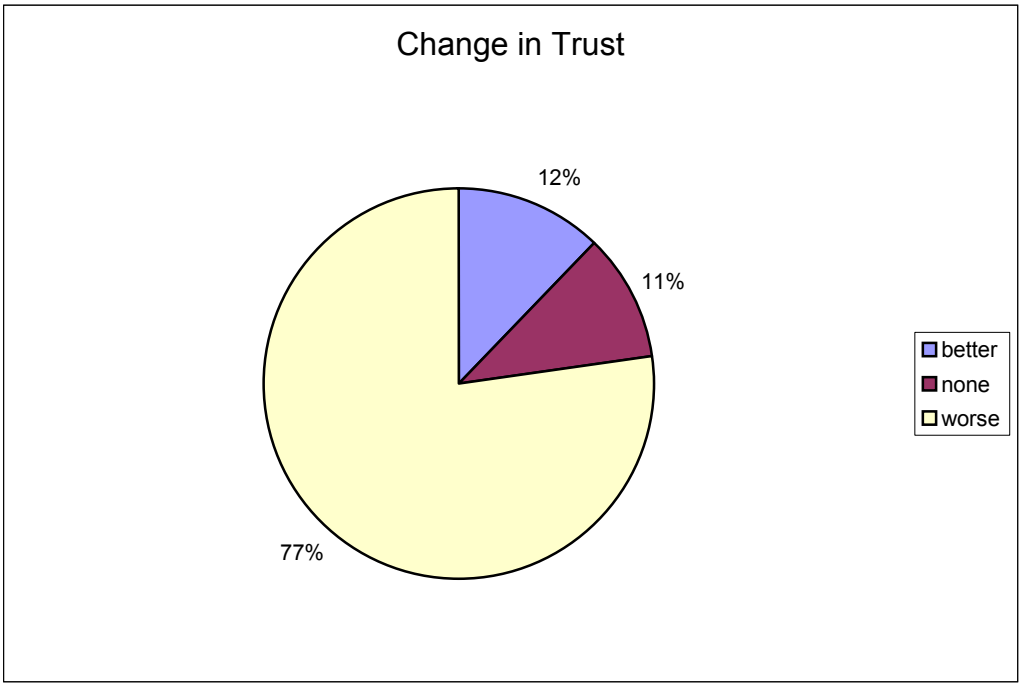
All of the responses for section 3 required coding due to the open-ended nature of the questions.

In no way did the respondents constitute a random sample. My respondents were likely to be financially secure with discretionary money to shop, travel, or pay tuition. Since no incentives were provided respondents may have been more outgoing than average. The length of the survey was prohibitively long for busy individuals as well. Additionally, the high level of self reporting (e.g. rural, urban, or suburban) may have caused technical inaccuracies due to misperceptions or lack of knowledge. Because of these biases, broad generalizations cannot be drawn from this survey. It can, however, bring to light patterns and concepts that may profitably guide future inquiry.

Has social capital changed?

Seventy seven percent of people surveyed felt that the state of social trust in their community is currently worse than in the past, while only 12 percent felt that it had improved, as Figure 1 shows.

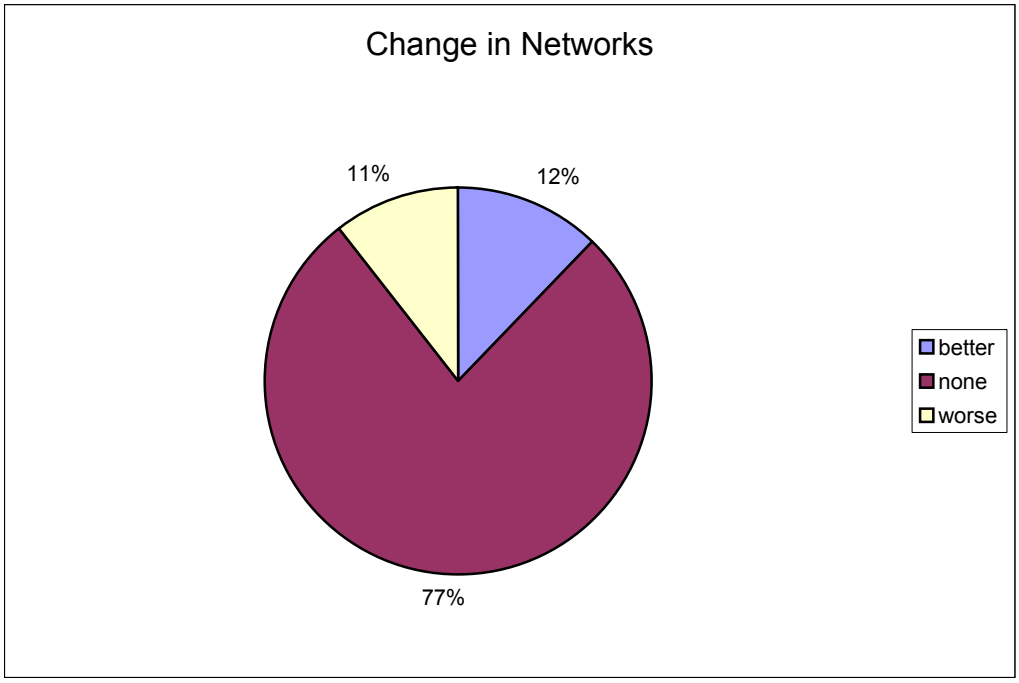
Figure 1: Impressions about Change in Trust over Time



On the other hand, 77 percent of people surveyed did not see a difference between social networks and levels of civic engagement between the current state and the past, as Figure 2 shows. Though people have noticed a decline in trust, therefore, they do not seem to notice a decline in networks. This finding appears to contrast with Putnam's observation that networks have indeed declined over the years. One explanation for this discrepancy may be that people give trust a high priority, while they do not believe networks are very important.

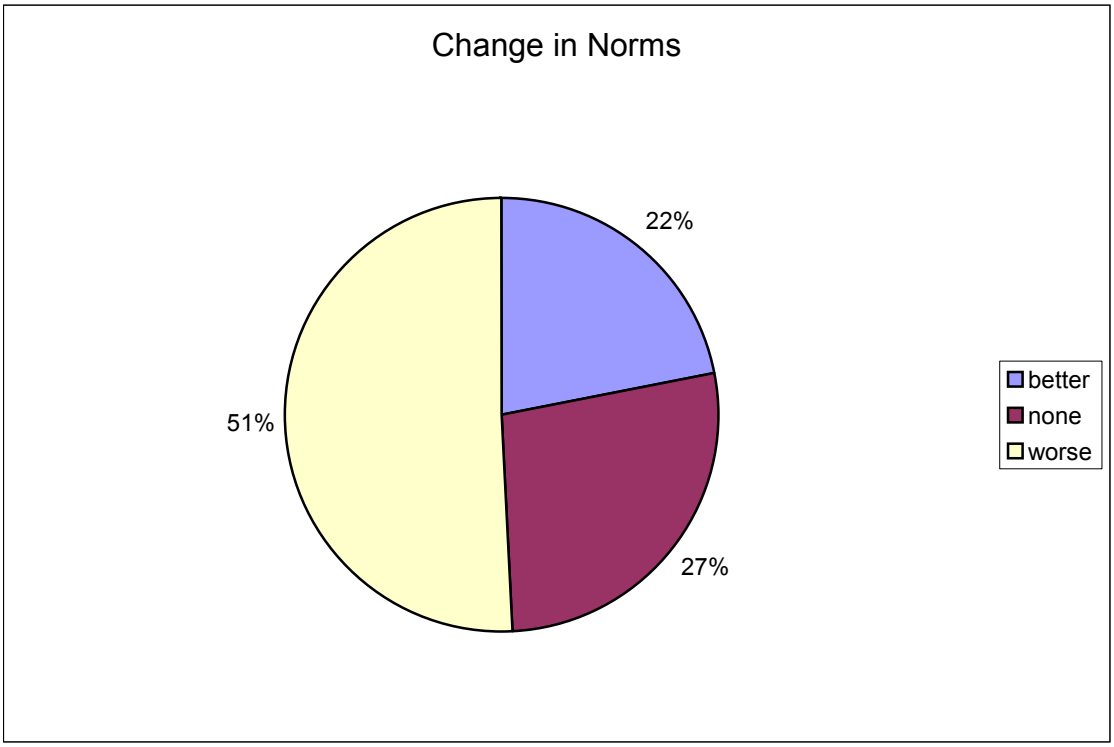
Finally, as Figure 3 indicates, more than half of people surveyed feel that social norms are now worse than they once were, while only 22 percent respond that social norms have improved

Figure 2: Impressions of Changes in Networks over Time



.

Figure 3: Impressions of Change in Norms over Time



What caused the change?
In the survey, I asked respondents to comment separately on what they saw as the causes of changes in levels of social trust, networks, and norms.

The most significant causes of change in levels of trust, according to the respondents, are negative politics (16%), community change (14%), decreased interaction with others (12%), and crime (10%). The high number of people who cite negative politics as important is interesting in light of the fact that Minnesota politicians tend to say similar things, as Annette Luther finds elsewhere in this report.

The most significant causes of change in networks include increased levels of communication (31%), decreased interaction (15%), increasing lifestyle diversity (15%), and more sources of information (15%). This corresponds to the earlier hypothesis that Minnesotans may see networks as less important than trust. If new communications technology is making life easier, people may see less need for networks.

The primary causes of change in social norms were increasing lifestyle diversity (38%) and decreased interaction with others (10%). The effects of the media, negative politics, community change, and increased communication were all submitted by 8% of the respondents.

Though they often cited diversity as a source of change, Minnesotans also often see diversity as a positive thing. Among those who saw improvement in trust, 42 percent credited diversity. Among those who saw improvements in networks, increased communication and information sources were the main factors cited.

Interestingly, the 9/11 terrorist attacks were most often cited by those who saw an improvement in social norms (43%).

Expectations for the Future
When asked to speculate about the future of social capital in Minnesota, respondents seemed to believe that many of the same factors would continue to influence community interaction in years to come.

Negative politics (13%) and decreased interaction (13%) are the two most expected instigators of future changes in the level of trust followed by increasing lifestyle diversity (11%) and crime (11%).

The expected causes of change for networks include decreased interaction (18%), increased communication (14%), lifestyle diversity (12%), and community change (12%).

Finally, expected causes of changes in social norms include increasing lifestyle diversity (31%), decreased interaction (13%), community change (11%), and effects of the media (11%).

Who thinks what?

There were only two notable relationships between the demographic information I collected and people's perceptions of social capital.

First, there appears to be a relationship between age and perceived changes in social norms: The older the individual the more negatively they tend to view changes in social norms. Figure 4 illustrates this relationship. The x-axis displays the age of respondents, while the y-axis codes perceptions of change, with higher numbers indicating more negative perceptions.

Second, there appears to be a relationship between education level and both current impression of norms and perceived change in norms. The better educated an individual is the more likely that he or she has a favorable impression of both today's social norms and the changes that have occurred to norms in the past. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate this.

Figure 4: Age and Perceived Change in Norms

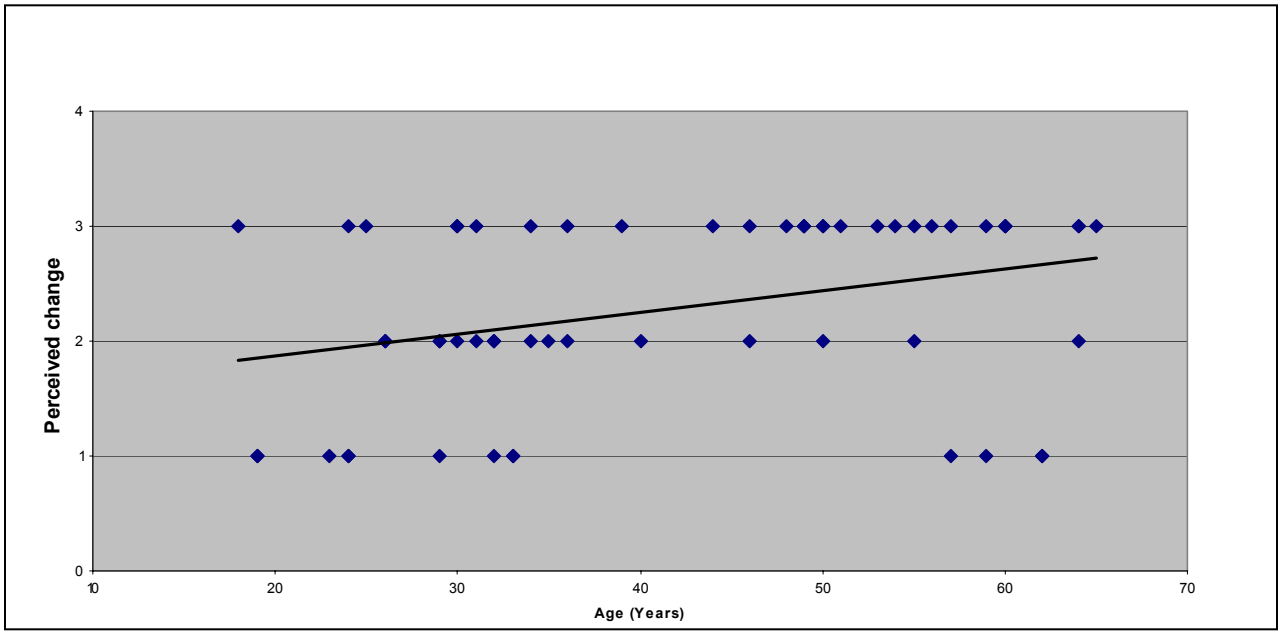


Figure 5: Current Impression of Norms by Education Level

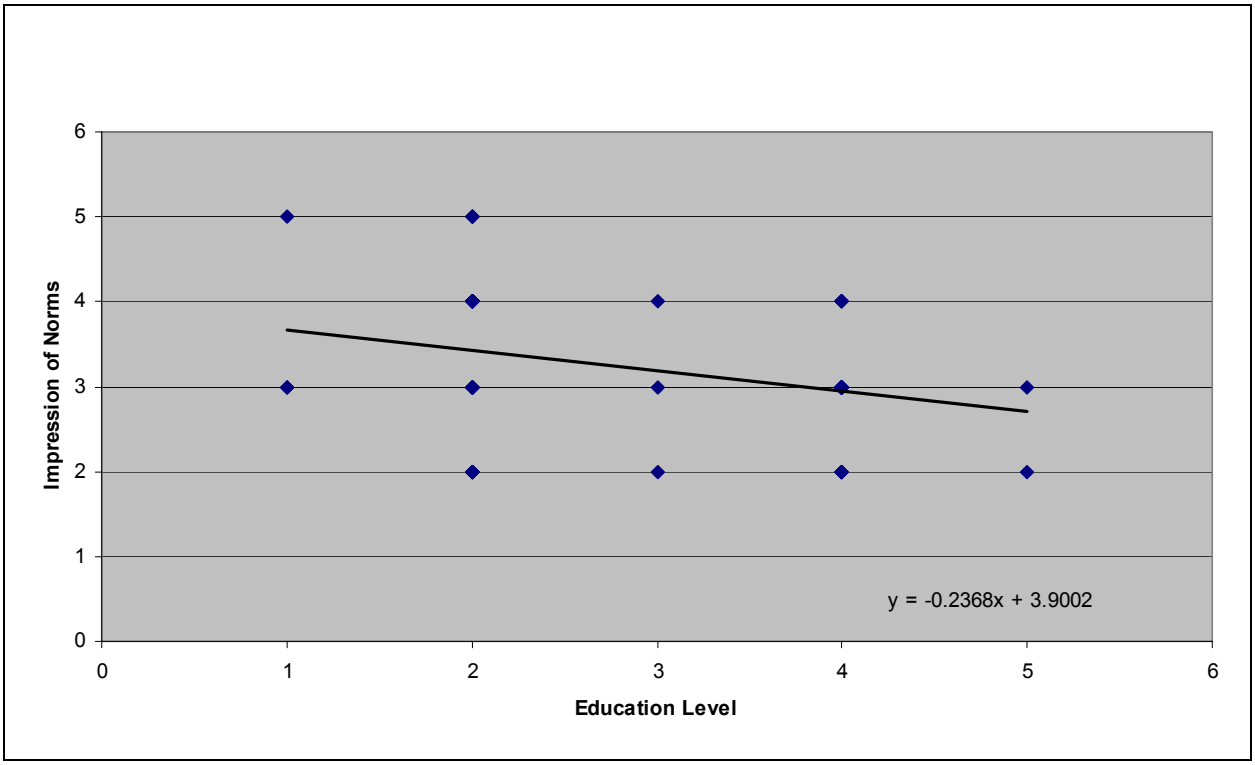
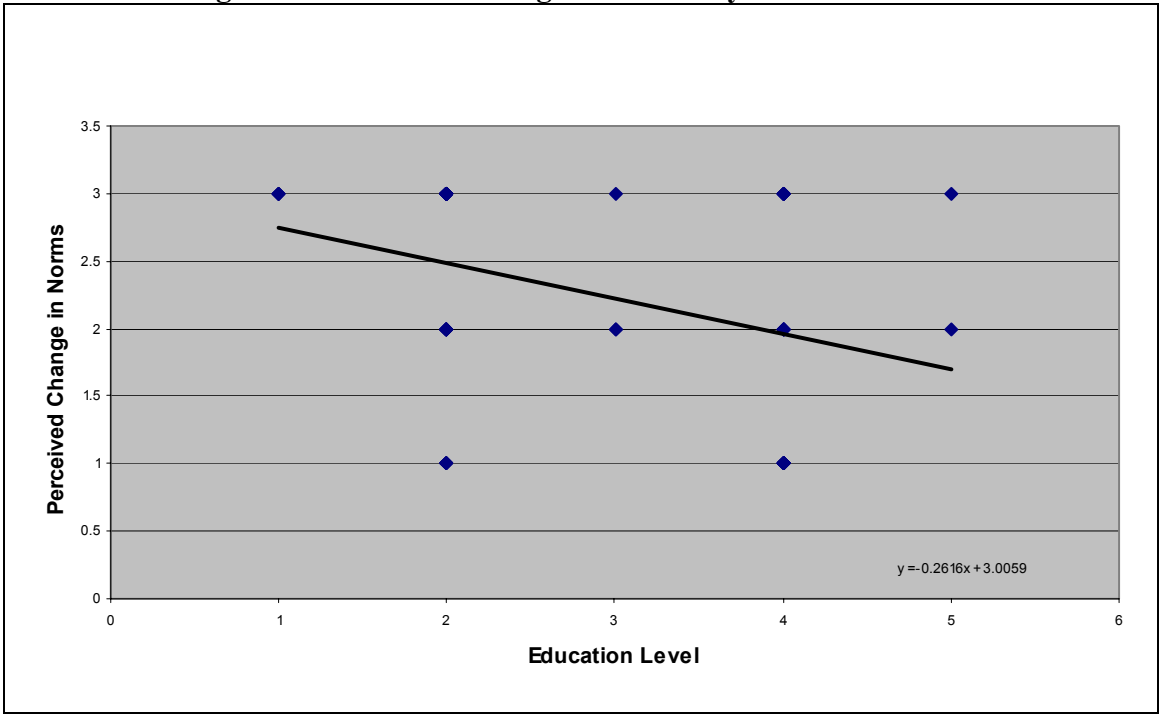


Figure 6: Perceived Change in Norms by Education Level



DISCUSSION

Once again, this is not a representative sample, so it would be foolish to draw sweeping generalizations based on this analysis. Nevertheless, there are several discoveries here that shed new light on the social capital issue in Minnesota. First, Minnesotans surveyed are not apathetic to this issue even if they have not heard the term 'social capital.' Second, they seem to be generally pessimistic about the trends regarding social capital in their communities. Third, there are a few select factors that the public perceive to be quite significant and they expect those factors to continue to be significant. I think that these general findings are real and can be used as a foundation for further research.

Minnesotans seem to have a clear ordered preference of social capital concerns and, while they mention a wide variety of causes for social capital change, they point to negative politics, diversity, and improvements in communication technology most often. This suggests that these trends ought to be the focus of future research on public perceptions of social capital.

Social Capital of the Somali and Hmong Communities In Minneapolis-Saint Paul

Anna Layman and Abhinab Basnyat

ABSTRACT

Minnesota has traditionally been regarded as a state with unusually high levels of trust, community engagement, and social networks. We were curious whether new immigrant communities living in predominantly white Minnesota would acquire the strong networks, social ties, and high levels of trust for which Minnesota has been known. We examined these dynamics and their impacts by discussing issues of networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust with focus groups in two immigrant communities: Somali and Hmong. We found that, as one might expect, an inability to speak English is a significant barrier for people in immigrant communities. Language can serve as a force that strengthens ties within a cultural community but that can prevent significant interactions with people who speak only English. Limited in their networking options by the language barrier, Somali immigrants have not only transformed weak ties within the Somali community into strong ties, but they have been encouraged or forced to adopt trust itself as a social norm. Somalis view Minnesota as a state with unusually high levels of general trust. The Hmong group members, however, most of whom have lived in Minnesota for eight years or longer, indicated that their priorities are different from immigrants in the Somali community. For them, family is the dominant social structure, and much more emphasis is placed on individualism than on maintaining a tightly knit cultural community. Thus, there was less reliance on the Hmong cultural community as base for networks, trust and, norms of reciprocity.

BACKGROUND

Theories of so-called 'political culture' in U.S. states have explained variation in political participation and attitudes by examining immigration patterns (Elazar 1966). Scholars continue to find evidence that 19th century immigrants passed their cultures and values down from generation to generation. For example, Robert Putnam points out that the size of a state's population of Scandinavian ancestry is a "surprisingly strong predictor" of state social capital levels in the 1990s (Putnam 2000, p. 294).

Minnesota is, of course, the quintessential Scandinavian state. In 2000, over 27 percent of Minnesotans claimed Swedish or Norwegian ancestry (U.S. Census 2003).[1] But the state is changing. In 2000, over five percent of Minnesotans had been born outside the United States. Of this group, over 13 percent were born in Africa, and 40 percent were born in Asia (U.S. Census 2003).

In light of influence of historical patterns of immigration, this recent influx of immigrants appears to have the potential to significantly affect Minnesota community life. The way in which members of each immigrant group interact with each other, as well as the way in which they interact with other Minnesotans, is therefore a topic of great importance.

Anna Layman, Carleton Class of 2004, is a Political Science/International relations major.
Abhinab Basnyat, Carleton Class of 2006, is from Kathmandu, Nepal. He is highly interested in the area of social capital as it pertains to ethnic groups.

[1] Thirty-seven percent of Minnesotans claimed German ancestry in 2000. Although German-Americans are more common in Minnesota than Scandinavians, those with German heritage are even more dominant in the adjacent states of Wisconsin (43 percent) and North Dakota (44 percent) (U.S. Census, 2003). Elazar, Gray and Spano argue that 19th century German and Scandinavian immigrants to Minnesota shared a commitment to the "communitarian ethic" (Elazar, Gray, and Spano 1999, p. 10).

Among the most significant new immigrant groups in Minnesota are the Somali and Hmong populations. The majority of Somali Minnesotans immigrated in the mid-to-late-1990s, while a majority of Hmong arrived in the U.S. much earlier, in the 1970s and 1980s. These growing immigrant communities might be expected to affect the surrounding community in a variety of ways, including effects on peoples' connections with one another, the social networks people create, the exchange of social norms, and the levels of generalized trust.

The way in which Minnesotans respond to different cultural groups will have a tremendous effect on Minnesota's social and political environment. At the same time, these new cultural groups can affect the larger community. All groups, whether Somali and Hmong or Scandinavian and German, have opportunities to adopt norms or reject them, while making their own contribution to the general culture.

Policy makers should be aware of the relationships that communities' residents have with each other and with the community at large. The level of involvement immigrants have in the political process, the ease with which they move through the public service bureaucracy, and the success they have in general in American society depend greatly on their ability to navigate through social networks, identify norms that resonate with them, adopt new norms, and trust other people and groups.

KEY FINDINGS

- The language barrier constitutes a key obstacle for non-English speakers who attempt to navigate day to day life in Minnesota. This presents more of an obstacle for newly-arrived Somalis than for the Hmong, who have typically been in the United States longer.
- Members of the Somali group had less interaction with the outside community than members of the Hmong group.
- The Somali focus group saw Minnesota as a place with a strong work ethic and generally high levels of trust. Most members of the Hmong group, on the other hand, did not see Minnesotans as unusually trustworthy.
- For predominantly Muslim Somalis, religion serves as a means of both strengthening bonds within the Somali community and building ties with non-Somali Muslims.

METHOD AND RESULTS

Much of the existing research on immigrant groups in the United States consists of survey research and case studies of political activism (Mattessich 2000, Chang 2001, Jones-Correa 2001). We decided to take a different approach to the subject, conducting focus groups among Hmong and Somali students in English as a Second Language classes in the Twin Cities.[2] These focus groups allowed us to ask questions pertaining to social capital (questions about trust, norms, networks, and community engagement), in a collective setting in which participants could discuss and consider their responses. In this way, we gain insights that would be unlikely to appear in the answers to survey questions or in case study research.[3]

Although the participants in these focus groups cannot be representative of the entire population of Somalis or Hmong living in the Twin Cities, they provide insight and important perspectives on the issues addressed. The focus group discussions provide us with valuable information on networks, norms of reciprocity, and trust among immigrant communities in Minneapolis and St. Paul. To ensure that we would obtain most accurate and instructive information from our discussions, prior to conducting the focus groups, we discussed our proposed questions with Somali and Hmong students from Carleton College. These students provided valuable perspective into the cultural relevance of the questions' contents and

[2] We held the Somali focus group in an ESL class in Minneapolis, and the Hmong focus group in an ESL class in St. Paul.

[3] One textbook on research methodology outlines the advantages of focus groups as follows: "they *may* provide more accurate insights into what people actually think than do other techniques that involve more influence from the researcher; they can produce results that reflect social realities more accurately than methods that ask people to act in isolation; and they give us the ability to study *group dynamics* in ways that other techniques do not" (Manheim, Rich, & Willnat 2002, p. 354, emphasis in original).

wording, while also improving our understanding issues of concern to Somali and Hmong Minnesotans.

Having a Somali translator, a Carleton student from the Twin Cities, was also crucial when communicating with the Somali focus group, since the English language skills of the group members were minimal. We were able to obtain deeper, more detailed information with the help of the translator. Because the English language skills of participants in the Hmong group were more advanced than those of the Somali participants, a translator was not necessary.

Language, however, was one caveat that had to be overcome, as were the general differences between our cultures and those of people in the focus groups. While the participants expressed their appreciation for being able to have a discussion about these issues, they were initially reticent in many cases.[4]

Somali Focus Group

As members of a newer immigrant community in the Twin Cities, seven out of twelve of the Somali group participants had lived in Minnesota for three years, and one person had lived in Minneapolis for just two years. Two group members had lived in Minneapolis for the longest length of time, six years, and the other two had lived in Minnesota for four years.

One of the most important, if not the most obvious, findings from this research was the enormous barrier that speaking a different language is for networking with the wider Minnesotan community. All participants indicated that they speak Somali both inside and outside their homes. They use English only when it is necessary, such as when they go to a store that is not in the Somali community or when they are at work. Even then, English seems to be used minimally; it is confined to broken sentences, so extensive conversations with the non-Somali community, which are crucial to forming and maintaining social ties, is not yet possible.

The participants were very vocal about the Somali traditions that they maintain and the activities in which they participate. This seemed to indicate that these activities were, in a sense, exclusive, unlike more inclusive activities such as state fairs, where everyone is welcome and few cultural norms are enforced. The interviewees also mentioned that they felt more comfortable speaking in English to other people struggling to learn the language, whether they were Somali, or not. This allowed them to learn at their own pace and increased the likelihood that they would become conversant in the language.

The Somali participants said that their levels of generalized trust were very high, and ensuing responses to specific questions on trust varied. Some respondents indicated that it doesn't matter what race or group a person belongs to; no matter what, they should be accorded equal amounts of trust. Another woman stated that "sometimes you can't even trust your brother," a comment that was slanted with sarcasm or cynicism but nonetheless, was illustrative of the concept that one must treat all people equally. The participants also indicated that they trust people on a person-by-person basis, giving people trust based on how they are known and how much they seem to deserve.

All of the Somali participants indicated that they live in neighborhoods with many other Somalis. When people can do all of their shopping, working, and socializing within their own community, it becomes easier to maintain a common culture. In this socially and culturally close-knit setting, traditional norms can also effectively be maintained, and the group expressed that they made it a priority to maintain their culture's customs. While seemingly enthusiastic about their culture and its norms, they did, nonetheless, convey eagerness to succeed at being American and Minnesotan.

When asked about their identity, the participants agreed that they perceived themselves to be Somali but also American, and seemed to see no problem with being both. While discussing Minnesotan traits that they identified with, one woman commented that she saw Minnesota as a place with a lot of trust and

[4] One aspect of our research design that heightened suspicion in several cases was our use of consent forms. These included assurances of anonymity, but the very existence of such forms seemed to make participants more wary.

a good work ethic, and the other participants agreed. The group may have highlighted the norms of 'trust' and 'good work ethic' because the concepts resonated with their own culture, or because adopting these two norms allowed them to function well in Minnesota. The Somali participants thought that adopting these norms would make relationships easier, helping to avoid being judged based on cultural prejudices. Practicing norms that highlight qualities like conscientious behavior and an optimistic attitude served to improve their prospects for employment and their interactions with people in the wider community.

The mosque is a central institution in the life of the Somali immigrants. Spending many hours there every week, they stated that they go to the mosque in groups, mix with people from many ethnic backgrounds while they are there, and then return home. This type of experience makes the mosque a place where networks are both bonded and bridged. By going as a group with members of one's community, the chances of bonding with people, and transforming weak ties into strong ones, are enhanced. At the same time the mosque acts as a place where one can build new networks with other groups and individuals, creating weak ties (Grannovetter 1973).

This phenomenon is particularly interesting because it constitutes one important circumstance in which Somalis have a great degree of interaction with the larger community, particularly strengthening ties to Muslims who are not Somali. This also contrasts with the pattern of 19th century Scandinavian and German Minnesotans, who attended separate churches "tinged with distinct national or regional histories in Europe" (Chapman 2000, p. 164).

Hmong Focus Group

Three out of the eight Hmong group members, all first-generation Americans, had lived someplace else in the United States before moving to Minnesota. Although these participants had lived in Minnesota for fewer years than the other Hmong group members, they all had lived in the United States for an extended period of time, one as long as twenty-five years. One young woman had just come to Minnesota from Laos eight months prior to the focus group, but a majority had lived in Minneapolis for between eight and thirteen years.

The Hmong group members were much more comfortable speaking with us in English, which suggested that they were likely to speak English in their daily lives more frequently than the Somali group members. Our participants told us that they use English to speak with people who are not Hmong in the community and, if employed, people at their jobs. The Hmong participants also were more likely to speak in English to their children. The parents in our group described the situations of their English-speaking, college-attending children to be drastically different from their own more isolated experiences.

While they were able to understand us, the group members stated that they have had trouble communicating and learning to read and write, and they told us that they feel ashamed about the trouble they have with the language.

Their lack of English fluency made it difficult for them to get a high school degree. Lacking a degree, their employment prospects are limited, and the language barrier prevents them from fully utilizing their networks or building new ones to reach their objectives. The Wilder Research Center in St. Paul researched this issue as a part of their 2000 survey of Hispanic, Hmong, Russian, and Somali immigrants in the Twin Cities. They found that almost half the workers in their survey (44 percent) held "unskilled labor or service jobs, compared to 24 percent in the general Twin Cities workforce" (Mattessich 2000, pp. 3-18). The Hmong participants in our study are at a point where they have the desire and see the opportunities for pursuing their personal objectives, but they are unable to attain their ultimate goals. Perhaps in light of their difficulties in the job market, group members seemed to be more concerned with success in employment and in supporting their families than with developing or maintaining community ties.

While a majority of the Somali group was Muslim, Hmong group members represented a variety of religious practices, including Buddhism, Christianity, and Animism. A

common religious network of trust and norms seemed to be lacking in this heterogeneous community.

The Hmong group was somewhat cautious of allowing marriage outside of their own culture. They were, however, more amenable to the idea than the Somali group. One man, who has lived in the United States for fifteen years and in Minnesota for two, declared that he would like each of his seven sons to marry women from different races. Others raised familiar concerns that people who are not Hmong would not respect the culture or know the traditions. One woman, who has lived in Minnesota for ten years, pointed out that divorce was the norm in America, and she did not want to adopt that norm into her family.

Many more of the Hmong group members have friends who are not Hmong – one woman said one quarter of her friends were not Hmong. There was, however, no consensus on this topic. Some people indicated that they do not even talk to their co-workers. When we asked who they trust most, family members, not friends, were always listed first, and usually singularly.

The Hmong focus group participants were much more skeptical than the Somalis when confronted with the question of generalized trust. All agreed that you cannot readily trust people, in general. We questioned the participants further on this issue, and they proceeded to comment that they trust the government and most of the population, but people must be wary of people who they do not know very well. They were particularly suspicious of salespeople, although they stated that no group in particular had been mean or unkind to them. When those participants who had lived in other places in the United States before moving to Minnesota were asked if they saw a difference between the levels of trust in other places and the levels of trust in Minnesota, none said that they had noticed any significant difference. This directly contradicts statements made by the Somali participants, who see trust as being particularly high in Minnesota.

DISCUSSION

Both Somali and Hmong communities include many people who have fled war-torn and persecuted homelands. Both communities are subdivided into smaller groups: Somali tribes and Hmong clans. That is where most similarities end, however. The disparity between the lengths of time that the groups have lived in the United States appears to be a significant factor in their responses. The two communities also have very different histories and cultures.

We should use caution in generalizing these results to each group as a whole, or to immigrants in general, but the focus groups provide important insights into systems of vital networks, norms, and trust levels. Strong ties do seem to exist within the Somali community, and ties that are initially weak within the community are provided ample opportunities to strengthen through Somali neighborhood activities, attendance at mosques, and language barriers between them and other groups.

Because the Hmong community is not bound together by religion, a central unifying force for Somalis, Hmong ties seem to be limited to ancestry, homeland, and cultural traditions. Although these ties can be very significant, these aspects of group identity do not demand the regular face-to-face meetings that religion does.

There are few opportunities for either Somalis or Hmong to build social connections outside their communities. It seems likely that the language difference prevents interaction between many immigrants and other Minnesotans, so that generally, the two groups have not had many opportunities to form trusting relationships with people from each other's groups.

Trust plays a major role in society, and social capital researchers see it as a critical component of well-functioning communities. The generation of high social capital levels within communities like the Somali community, however, creates the possibility that social capital levels between communities may be unequal. Such disequilibrium, unless overcome by networks that span different cultural communities, can cause groups to be isolated and distrustful of other groups. It is important, therefore, that the norm of trust in the Somali group extends to Minnesotans outside the group. Somalis seem to believe that by accepting a norm of trust that is characteristic of Minnesota as a whole, they can increase their acceptance in

the community and better fit into Minnesotan society.

The Hmong group did not consider generalized trust to be as important as the Somali group did. Fairly content to provide trust on an individual basis, they conveyed a higher level of trust for their families than for any other group. They communicated and understood at a much more fluid level than members of the less experienced Somali group, but the Hmong participants were candid about the frustrations the persistent language barrier creates for them in the job market.

The recent immigration that Minnesota has experienced raises the question of whether a more diverse Minnesota can maintain its high levels of social trust and community engagement. The answer to this question is almost certainly 'yes,' but this will not happen automatically. More research ought to be done on this subject, particularly involving Russian and Mexican immigrants, two groups not covered by our study. Our focus groups suggest that immigrant groups approach other Minnesotans with a degree of cautious optimism. Efforts to build on this optimism could include efforts to bridge the language barrier and to better incorporate immigrants into regular community activities and events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Karen Wright and Bertram Johnson for their guidance in the development of this project. We want to thank Sarah Mechtenberg and Lyle Heikes for facilitating the creation of our two focus groups. Thank you to Muna Noor for translating and to Muna, Choua Vue, Lucie Passus, and Sheena Thao for providing valuable insight into the analysis of social dynamics. Thank you, also, to the participants in our focus groups; your viewpoints are vital for the development of Minnesotan community life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chang, Gordon H., Editor. *Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001.

Chapman, Richard M. "Mixing New and Old Wine in Minnesota: Spirituality, Ecumenism, and Religious Traditions in Ferment," *Daedalus* 129:3 (Summer 2000), pp. 161-190.

Elazar, Daniel J. *American Federalism: A View from the States*. New York: Crowell, 1966.

Elazar, Daniel J., Virginia Gray, and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics and Government*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology*, 78:6 (1973), pp. 1360-1380.

Jones-Correa, Michael, Editor. *Governing American Cities: Interethnic Coalitions, Competition, and Conflict*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2001.

Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Manheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich, and Lars Willnat. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science, 5th Edition*. New York: Longman, 2002.

Mattessich, Paul, Study Director. *Speaking for Themselves: A survey of Hispanic, Hmong, Russian, and Somali immigrants*. St. Paul: Wilder Research Center, 2000.

United States Census, "American Factfinder: Quick tables," Available at www.census.gov, accessed June 28, 2003.

The Effect of Women's Participation in the Formal Workplace On Social Capital

Elise Chahla

ABSTRACT

Using an informal survey of forty-two Minnesota women, I explore the question of whether social capital levels have changed due to increasing female participation in the workforce. I compare levels of social capital across three different areas: the household, the firm and the local community, for women who fall into three categories: unemployed, part-time worker, and full-time worker. The findings suggest that full time workers are less likely to engage in community activities. Women who are unemployed exhibit the highest levels social capital within the home; however, they are less active in their communities than are part-time workers. Part-time workers exhibited high levels of social capital across the board, seemingly benefiting from the balanced exposure to several networks. This supports Robert Putnam's claim that part-time work is a "golden mean."

BACKGROUND

Work has become increasingly important in America. Though some find work an extension of self while others perceive employment solely as a means of paying bills, as "the average working American spends the majority of his or her waking hours on the job" there is no denying its significance (Saguaro Seminar 2000, Chapter 1, "Work and Social Capital," p. 1). Because of its importance, it might be reasonable to believe that the workplace has shaped social capital among women and their communities. Surprisingly little research has been conducted on the effects of the workplace on social capital, however.

This project strives to assess how social capital differs amongst women who are in the workforce (a group further differentiated by the number of hours they work a week) and those women who are not employed in the formal sector. Observed differences might help shed light on historical trends in community engagement, both for Minnesota and the nation as a whole. The women's movement in America has dramatically increased the number of women who are formally employed. However, this shift has been cited as a reason for declining social capital, particularly as respects family-based activities.

Robert Putnam claims the movement of women out of the home and into the workforce has been, at most, a rather modest factor in declining social capital. "[N]either the movement of women into the paid labor force nor the increase in financial distress [that may compel many women to enter the workforce]…can be the main reason for the basic decline in social capital over the last two decades," writes Putnam. "In fact, based on the evidence now available, my best guess is that both factors together account for less than *one tenth* of the total decline" (Putnam 2000, p. 202, emphasis in original).

Others, such as Costa and Kahn, claim the increased number of women in the workforce is a major contributor to declines in social capital. In particular, participation in social capital-producing activities that are centered in the home, such as dinner parties and family meals, appears to have declined most precipitously among women. "Women's growing commitment to careers may therefore play a role in declines in social capital," conclude Costa and Kahn (Costa and Kahn, 2002, p. 28).

This project aims to further investigate these claims. As an informal, non-randomized survey of a small number of women, my method cannot purport to settle the debate. However, it can uncover new possible explanations, and pave the way for future research.

Elise Chahla, Carleton Class of 2005, is a Political Science/International Relations and Economics major from Saint Paul, Minnesota.

I examine female involvement levels generally and across three specific dimensions: the household, the community and the firm. I compare these levels of involvement across three different groups: women who do not work, those who work part time (under forty hours a week), and those who work full time.

KEY FINDINGS

- Full time working women and those who stay at home seem to find their neighborhoods safer and trust people more than part-time workers. Part-time workers exhibit the most initiative in contacting people in their neighborhoods, spending time with them, and volunteering.
- Although household-level social capital shows some declines as work-hours increase (more work translates to fewer meals eaten together as a family and fewer intra-family conversations, for example) these declines appear minimal.
- Women who do not participate in the formal employment sector are more likely to trust their communities and interact more with their families. However, women who work part time exhibit the most balanced, and often the highest overall levels, of social capital.

METHOD AND RESULTS

The data presented here are based on surveys given to forty-two women from the ages of 19 to 60. I distributed this survey to passers-by at urban, suburban, and rural shopping areas in Minnesota. The survey was voluntary and lacked personal identifiers; most respondents are middle class Caucasians from the Midwest.

The survey evaluated each respondent's level of social capital in the home, community, and workplace and in general. Respondents answered a variety of questions, such as "How often do members of your family eat dinner together?" by the circling of a number on a scale of one through five (five represented "Almost Always" –generally seven times a week – while one represented "Never"). I also asked about living arrangements, time spent working, and how long each respondent had been at her current place of employment.

There are several possible sources of bias in these survey responses. As mentioned above, the women in this sample may not be representative of the entire population. In addition, respondents could have perceived the subject matter of the survey as evaluating "kindness" or good citizenship. The natural tendency is probably to exaggerate one's participation. Because of these sources of bias, we cannot make sweeping claims about social capital based on this research. Rather, I aim to generate new questions and stimulate future research on the subject.

Employed vs. Unemployed Women

Tables 1 and 2 report the average differences between employed and unemployed women on a variety of measures of social capital in local communities and the home. As Table 1 shows, employed women seem to interact less with their communities and organize fewer activities at home than unemployed women. Employed women feel less safe in the dark, are less likely to have visited neighbors recently, and are less likely to live in a neighborhood that they see as safe and welcoming. Employed women are also less likely to be members of families that eat dinner together (Table 2), or to have longer conversations with their spouses, if they are married. On the other hand, employed women are more likely to be a member of an 'organization or club', and are more likely to have helped a neighbor recently.

To help us determine whether these differences are due to chance, I use what is known as a 't-test'. This test reports a number that represents the probability that an observed difference occurred by accident. A probability close to zero means that the difference between groups is unlikely to be due to chance.

There are three observed differences that are reasonably close to zero. First, as Table 2 shows, employed women lived in their current neighborhood longer than unemployed women. Second, as Table 1 shows, employed women are less likely to have attended a local community event recently. Finally, employed women are less likely to be in families that eat dinner together. The other differences described in the tables are likely to have occurred by chance.

Table 1: Mean Differences between Employed and Unemployed Women Regarding Local Social Capital

Question wording	Mean Difference (employed mean - unemployed mean) [2-tailed t-test significance]
Do you volunteer in a local group?	.26 [.644]
Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark?	-.17 [.738]
If someone's car breaks down outside your house, do you invite him or her into your home to use your phone?	-.46 [.464]
If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for while, would you ask a neighbor for help?	.17 [.829]
Does your area have a reputation for being a safe place?	-.29 [.463]
Have you visited a neighbor in the past few weeks?	-.23 [.749]
Have you attended a local community event in the past month (examples include church picnics, school concerts and craft exhibitions)?	-1.03 [.150]
Are you an active member of an organization or club (examples include sporting and social clubs)?	.54 [.486]
Does your local community feel like home?	.02 [.970]
In the past 6 months, have you done a favor for a neighbor?	.21 [.771]
Are you on a management committee or organizing committee for any local group or organization?	-.17 [.789]
If a new family moved into your neighborhood would they be welcomed right away?	-.57 [.330]

Table 2: Mean Differences between Employed and Unemployed Women Regarding Family Composition and Social Capital

Question Wording	Mean Difference (employed mean - unemployed mean) [2-tailed t-test significance]
What is your age in years?	2.17 [.673]
How long have you lived in your current neighborhood?	8.346 [.094]
Do members of your household eat dinner together?	-.63 [.196]
Have you ever married?	-.13 [.339]
If yes, have you divorced?	-.06 [.822]
If currently married, how many conversations lasting over 15 minutes do you have with your spouse a day?	-.05 [.935]

Full time vs. Part-Time Workers

The smaller numbers involved in a comparison between full time and part time workers make t-tests less reliable. But there are some differences between part and full time workers that suggest interesting possibilities.

Tables A2 through A4 (in the Appendix) report the individual means of full time and part time working women for various social capital indicators. The results are mixed. Full time and part time workers each seem to have about the same level of connectedness with their coworkers, as Table A2 indicates. Full time workers are more likely to have had more telephone conversations with friends, and to have picked up litter in a public place. Part time workers, on the other hand, are more likely to volunteer in a local group, interact with neighbors, attend local community events, and be active members of local organizations or clubs.

The data suggest that perhaps women who work part time are more connected with their neighborhoods than women who work full time. This is consistent with Costa and Kahn's findings that women who work more are less likely to be involved in local community-building activities such as dinner parties.

DISCUSSION

As the foundation of financial and social welfare, families are crucial sources of social capital. Norms within the family shape children's development and understanding of trust and reciprocity. Consequently, familial relations are of particular importance to a broader understanding of social capital.

Social capital in the home is understood to encourage reciprocity and exchange and foster trust. However, highly connected familial networks may become impenetrable and inescapable. Dense household networks may create barriers that limit family members from participating in external networks. Some postulate, for instance, "high levels of internal trust may generate distrust of non-family members and institutions" (World Bank 2002).

The results of this survey may support such findings. Community involvement is less robust in unemployed women compared to those who worked part-time. This is counter-intuitive as unemployed women spend the most time in their neighborhoods and might be expected to be more engaged with the community. However, women who are not formally employed may intentionally or unintentionally form isolating barriers.

The same hypothesis might explain lowered levels of workplace engagement in women that work the most hours compared to those who work part-time. Although full-time workers are more frequently exposed to their workplace and colleagues, they are less likely to engage in activities than are women who work part-time.

Another plausible hypothesis supported by this data is that women who enter the workforce acquire networking and managerial skills and become more socialized. These skills may then raise their social capital levels across the board. This hypothesis would explain the higher levels of social capital in women who work part-time compared to those who do not work in the formal sector.

However, this theory cannot explain full-time workers who exhibit lower levels of engagement in many cases. Perhaps this theory needs to be amended to account for the stress and lessened levels of leisure time associated with working more hours, factors identified by Robert Putnam as key to declining civic engagement levels.

This study suggests the workplace has a paradoxical effect on social capital. A moderate amount of work (under forty hours a week) seems to increase a woman's social capital by providing a new community of friends and support. However, women at the extremes – those who do not work at all and those who work forty or more hours a week – have lower levels of civic engagement.

Areas for Further Investigation

Labor Mobility

Although the labor mobility of women is economically efficient and a valued liberty, some aspects of the migration of women from the household to the firm may have a negative impact on social capital. In particular, working over forty hours a week may cause a decline in social capital as women leave their original networks in the community for the business

network where social capital is not the natural aim.

Isolation

In contrast, women who do not enter the former labor market may be less likely to assume leadership roles in their community. These women may become isolated in the home, just as full-time workers may be isolated in the workplace. Women who are homemakers exhibit high levels of trust and connectedness but are less likely to involve themselves in formal community networks than part-time workers.

Wealth

This study did not control for different levels of wealth, which may explain many of these findings. Women who work by choice would likely exhibit different patterns from women who work because of economic necessity (Putnam 2000, p. 202). For example, it is possible that the discrepancy in trust between full time and part time workers is due to the fact women who work full time can afford to live in safer neighborhoods. This relationship should be further investigated.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Better Together: report of the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA: 2000). Available online from bettertogether.org.

Costa, Dora and Matthew Kahn "Understanding the American Decline in Social Capital, 1952-1998." <http://web.mit.edu/costa/www/scapital8.pdf> (August 2002).

Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

World Bank Poverty Net. "Social Capital and the Family," Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/sources/fam1.htm> (Accessed October 2002).

APPENDIX: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table A1:

Working Women: Family Composition and Social Capital

	How many hours do you spend working a week?	N	Mean
What is your age in years?	>= 40	27	39.41
	< 40	8	43.63
How long have you lived in your current neighborhood?	>= 40	27	11.560
	< 40	8	10.625
Do you have children? (1=Yes, 2=No)	>= 40	24	1.21
	< 40	6	1.17
How many of your children are too young for school?	>= 40	19	.21
	< 40	5	.40
How many of your children are school age to 18?	>= 40	19	1.26
	< 40	5	1.00
How many of your children are above age 18?	>= 40	19	1.00
	< 40	5	.40
If you have children under 18, do you use childcare services?	>= 40	14	2.36
	< 40	4	1.25
If your children are in school are you a member of the parent teacher association (PTA)?	>= 40	14	1.79
	< 40	3	1.33
Do members of your household eat dinner together?	>= 40	24	3.71
	< 40	6	4.00
Have you ever married?	>= 40	24	1.04
	< 40	6	1.17
If yes, have you divorced?	>= 40	21	1.67
	< 40	5	1.80
If currently married, how many conversations lasting over 15 minutes do you have with your spouse a day?	>= 40	20	3.15
	< 40	5	3.40

Table A2:

Working Women: Firm Social Capital Statistics

	How many hours do you spend working a week?	N	Mean
How long have you been employed at your current job? (In years)	>= 40	27	10.25000
	< 40	8	11.32250
Do you feel like a part of the local geographical community where you work (for example if you work in Uptown, do you feel like a part of the Uptown community)?	>= 40	27	3.56
	< 40	8	3.00
Are your colleagues also your friends?	>= 40	26	3.54
	< 40	8	3.63
Do you feel like a part of a team at work?	>= 40	26	3.88
	< 40	8	4.00
Do you spend time with your co-workers outside of your place of employment?	>= 40	26	3.04
	< 40	8	3.00
At work do you take the initiative to do what needs to be done even if no one asks you to?	>= 40	26	4.42
	< 40	8	27
In the past week at work have you helped a colleague even though it wasn't in your job description?	>= 40	26	4.08
	< 40	8	4.38
In the past 6 months has your place of employment had social gatherings that are not work related (holiday parties for example)?	>= 40	26	3.35
	< 40	8	3.00

Table A3:

Working Women: General Social Capital Statistics

	How many hours do you work a week?	N	Mean
Where do you feel most connected and friendly? (1=neighborhood, 2=workplace)	>= 40	23	1.70
	< 40	7	1.57
Can you get assistance from your friends when you need it?	>= 40	27	4.44
	< 40	8	4.50
In the past week how many telephone conversations have you had with friends?	>= 40	27	4.04
	< 40	8	3.88
Over the weekend do you have lunch/dinner with other people outside your household?	>= 40	27	3.44
	< 40	8	3.25
Do you feel valued by society?	>= 40	27	3.59
	< 40	8	3.50
Have you ever picked up other people's litter in a public place?	>= 40	27	4.22
	< 40	8	3.50
Some believe by helping others you help yourself in the long run. Do you agree?	>= 40	27	4.56
	< 40	8	4.50

Table A4:

Working Women: Local Social Capital Statistics

	How many hours do you spend at working a week (include job-related work done outside your place of employment)?	N	Mean
Do you volunteer in a local group?	>= 40	27	1.85
	< 40	8	2.75
Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark?	>= 40	27	3.96
	< 40	8	3.38
If someone's car breaks down outside your house, do you invite him or her into your home to use your phone?	>= 40	27	2.22
	< 40	8	1.88
If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for while, would you ask a neighbor for help?	>= 40	27	2.85
	< 40	8	3.38
Does your area have a reputation for being a safe place?	>= 40	27	4.41
	< 40	8	4.00
Have you visited a neighbor in the past few weeks?	>= 40	26	2.92
	< 40	8	3.13
Have you attended a local community event in the past month (examples include church picnics and school concerts)?	>= 40	26	2.96
	< 40	8	3.00
Are you an active member of an organization or club (examples include sporting and social clubs)?	>= 40	26	2.50
	< 40	8	3.50
Does your local community feel like home?	>= 40	26	4.04
	< 40	8	3.13
When you go shopping in your local area are you likely to run into friends and acquaintances?	>= 40	26	3.81
	< 40	8	4.38
In the past 6 months, have you done a favor for a neighbor?	>= 40	26	3.04
	< 40	8	3.75
Are you on a management committee or organizing committee for any local group or organization?	>= 40	27	2.00
	< 40	8	3.00
If a new family moved into your neighborhood would they be welcomed right away?	>= 40	27	3.41
	< 40	8	3.50

Table A5: Employed vs. Unemployed Women: Local Social Capital Statistics

Question Wording	How many hours do you spend at working a week (include job-related work done outside your place of employment)?	N	Mean
Do you volunteer in a local group?	>= 1	35	2.06
	< 1	5	1.08
Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark?	>= 1	35	3.83
	< 1	5	4.00
If someone's car breaks down outside your house, do you invite him or her into your home to use your phone?	>= 1	35	2.14
	< 1	5	2.60
If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for while, would you ask a neighbor for help?	>= 1	35	2.97
	< 1	5	2.80
Does your area have a reputation for being a safe place?	>= 1	35	4.31
	< 1	5	4.60
Have you visited a neighbor in the past few weeks?	>= 1	34	2.97
	< 1	5	3.20
Have you attended a local community event in the past month (examples include church picnics and school concerts)?	>= 1	34	2.97
	< 1	5	4.00
Are you an active member of an organization or club (examples include sporting and social clubs)?	>= 1	34	2.74
	< 1	5	2.20
Does your local community feel like home?	>= 1	34	3.82
	< 1	5	3.80
In the past 6 months, have you done a favor for a neighbor?	>= 1	34	3.21
	< 1	5	3.00
Are you on a management committee or organizing committee for any local group or organization?	>= 1	35	2.23
	< 1	5	2.40
If a new family moved into your neighborhood would they be welcomed right away?	>= 1	35	3.43
	< 1	4	4.00

Table A6: Unemployed vs. Working Women: Family Composition and Social Capital

Question Wording	How many hours do you spend working a week?	N	Mean
What is your age in years?	>= 1	35	40.37
	< 1	5	38.20
How long have you lived in your current neighborhood?	>= 1	35	11.346
	< 1	5	3.00
Do members of your household eat dinner together?	>= 1	30	3.77
	< 1	5	4.40
Have you ever married? (1=yes, 2=no)	>= 1	30	1.07
	< 1	5	1.20
If yes, have you divorced? (1=yes, 2=no)	>= 1	26	1.69
	< 1	4	1.75
If currently married, how many conversations lasting over 15 minutes do you have with your spouse a day?	>= 1	25	3.20
	< 1	4	3.25

A Connection between Social Capital and Political Ideology?

Becca Stark

ABSTRACT

Robert Putnam argues that American's civic and political participation have fallen in recent years due to a general decline in social capital. To determine the consequences of this trend, we must first develop a better understanding of the nature and causes of social capital. The following research contributes to such an understanding by examining the connection between social capital levels and political ideology. I compare the nation as a whole to the state of Minnesota, a state traditionally known for high levels of social capital.

The following analysis, which compares national and Minnesota data from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, indicates that political ideology indeed is a factor in social capital levels. When ideology is correlated with four measures of social capital, liberals appear to have higher levels of social capital (defined in terms of social trust, civic participation, organized social involvement, and informal social interaction). Multivariate regressions confirm these results, controlling for race, age, income, political knowledge, education, moderate ideology, church service attendance, and importance of religion in one's life.

BACKGROUND

Minnesota is quite liberal when compared to the nation as a whole. Note the differences in self-reported ideologies in Figures 1 and 2, which depict the ideological makeup of Minnesota and of the nation as a whole. The figures, like the rest of this analysis, employ data from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, directed by Harvard University's Saguaro Seminar and a coalition of non-profit foundations and scholars from across the country.[1] This survey provides an ideal opportunity to study the relationship between social capital and ideology.

Minnesota serves as an interesting case study of any possible relationship between ideology and social capital because of its reputation both for liberalism and for high levels of civic activity.

KEY FINDINGS

- The data indicate there is a correlation between ideology and levels of social capital.
- Liberals report higher levels of social capital than do conservatives. This relationship can be seen both in Minnesota and nationally.
- Minnesota has a population that is more liberal than the national average. Thus, the state's high levels of social capital could be explained by its above average levels of liberalism.

Becca Stark, Carleton Class of 2005, is a Minnesota native. A Political Science/ International Relations major, she is interested in all areas of politics, particularly the international field.

[1] The data are publicly available through the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at: http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/dataacq/scc_bench.html.

Figure 1: Self-Reported Political Ideology, National Sample

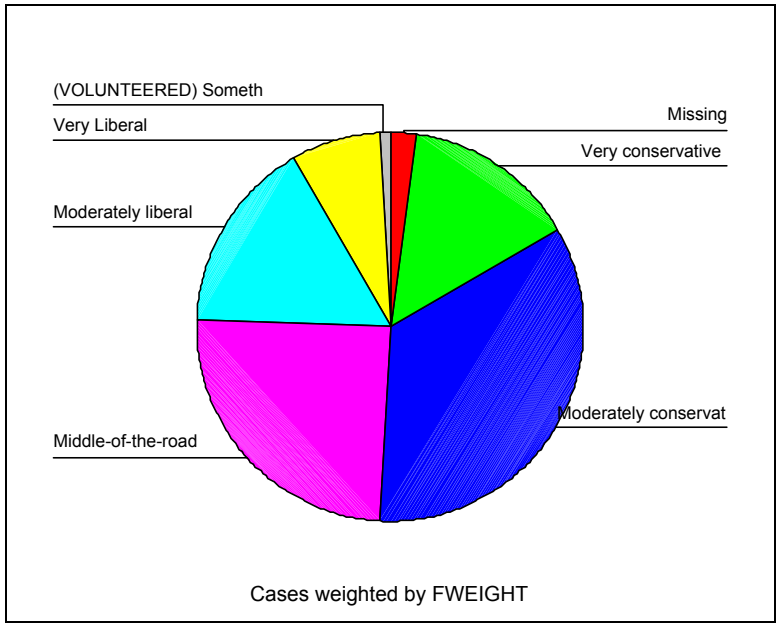
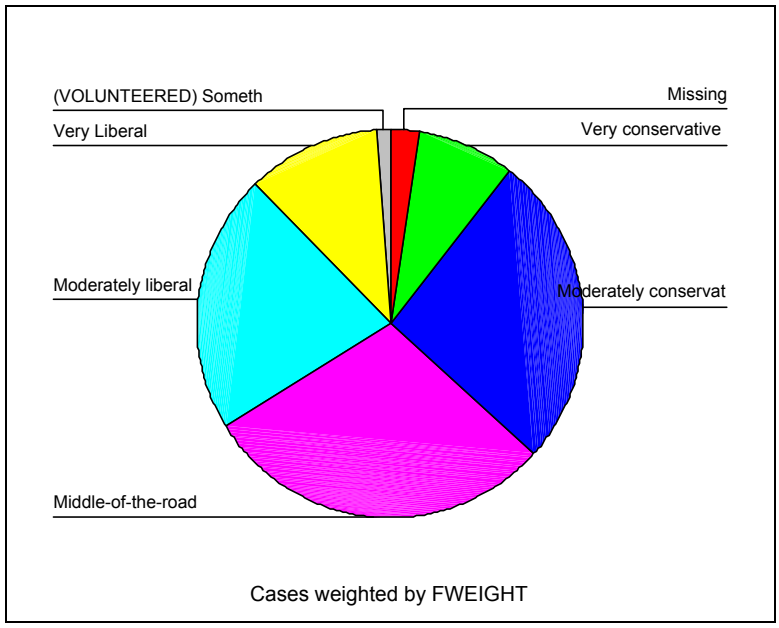


Figure 2: Self-Reported Political Ideology, Minnesota Sample



METHOD AND RESULTS

I use two subsets of the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey dataset in my analysis: the national sample and the Minnesota Sample. The minnesota sample consists of data from Minneapolis, North Minneapolis, and Saint Paul, and thus is not strictly representative of Minnesota as a whole.

I compare the mean values for Minnesota and the nation on the remaining independent variables in Tables 1 and 2. Not only are the Minnesota respondents more liberal on average, they are better-educated and have higher political knowledge than the nation as a whole. However, respondents in the Minnesota sample attend church less than do their national counterparts.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Range: Min/Max	National Mean	National Std. Dev.	Minnesota Mean	Minnesota Std. Dev.
"Religion is very important in my life"	1-5	4.24	1.258	4.06	1.359
Highest Education Completed	1-7	3.30	1.886	3.62	1.827
1999 Total Household Income	0-7	3.11	2.027	3.11	2.017
Political Knowledge Scale	1-5	2.23	1.588	2.91	1.766
Respondent's Age	18-92	44.63	17.243	43.23	17.373
Race	1-5	1.45	1.039	1.48	0.939
Church Service Attendance	0-52	25.60	22.515	23.09	22.219

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Social Capital Measures

Measure of Social Capital	Range: Min/Max	National Mean	National Std. Dev.	Minnesota Mean	Minnesota Std. Dev.
Civic Participation	0-5	1.61	1.246	1.77	1.262
Informal Social Interaction Scale	-.9155-2.1591	-.005222	.6860981	-.016856	.6725293
Organized Social Involvement Scale	-.5381-5.9865	.000423	.7146552	.001782	.6715098
Social Trust Index	-2.49-1.01	-.0014	.70914	-.0009	.72281

For both the Minnesota and national samples, I run bivariate correlations and multivariate regressions for four different measures of social capital and a series of independent variables. Respondents were asked to identify their ideological positions on a scale of 1 to 5: 1=very conservative, 2=moderately conservative, 3=middle-of-the-road, 4=moderately liberal, 5=very liberal. I recoded this categorical variable as a dummy variable in which 1 indicated a moderately or very liberal respondent and 0 indicated anyone else. I created a similar dummy variable called "moderate" to control for individuals who identified themselves as middle-of-the-road.

The dependent variable in each regression reflects social capital, as measured by one of four index variables: social trust, civic participation, organized social involvement, and informal social interaction.[2]

The independent (or explanatory) variables in each regression include ideology, church service attendance, age, political knowledge, 1999 total household income, highest education completed, gender, race, and importance of religion in one's life. While I tried to include variables that were likely to influence social capital levels, it is possible that this list is not comprehensive and that there are other variables that also affect social capital.

To examine the relationship between one's ideology and level of social capital, I first use bivariate correlation to determine whether a relationship exists. The results are summarized below in Table 3. A positive correlation indicates a positive relationship between identifying oneself as a liberal and possessing a high level of social capital. The only variable that has no significant relationship with liberalism, either in Minnesota or the nation as a whole, is the social trust index. However, results are significant and positive for the three other variables in the nation, and two other variables in Minnesota. This indicates a positive (though not necessarily causal) relationship between ideology and civic participation, organized social involvement, and informal social interaction, all standard components of social capital.

The most compelling finding is in the correlations between liberalism and civic participation. Note in Table 3 the correlation between liberalism and civic participation for Minnesota is approximately 2.8 times larger than the correlation between liberalism and civic participation for the national sample. Thus, it appears that liberals in Minnesota participate civically not only more than conservatives, but also more than their national counterparts.

Next I examine the relationship between ideology and social capital through multivariate regression, which enables us to control for other factors likely to influence social capital. Tables 2 through 5 report results from the series of regressions run for each of the four measures of social capital. The first column lists all independent variables included in the regression: age, income, education, political knowledge, church service attendance, gender, identifying oneself as "middle-of-the-road" for ideology, identifying oneself as either liberal or conservative, and response to the statement "religion is very important in my life". The subsequent columns show the regression results for each independent variable, along with levels of significance, when applied to first the national and then the Minnesota sample datasets. As the tables indicate, I ran two to three regressions on each dataset, and eliminated independent variables that did not meet a cutoff significance level of 0.10 with each subsequent regression. At least half of the independent variables are significant when regressed with each of the four measures of social capital for both datasets.

[2] An index variable results from a mathematical process that combines responses to a number of related questions into one overarching measure.

Table 3. Summary of Correlations with Liberalism

Correlated Variables	National Correlation	2-tailed p-value	Minnesota Correlation	2-tailed p-value
Social Trust Index	-.029	.125	.018	.513
Civic Participation	**.072**	**.000**	**.200**	**.000**
Organized Social Involvement	.055	.003	.079	.003
Informal Social Interaction	.055	.003	.044	.102

Table 4. Regression Analysis; Dependent Variable = Social Trust Index

Independent Variables	Nat'l β-value Reg. 1	Nat'l β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 1	MN β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 3
Age	.192	.194	.123	.133	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
1999 total household income	.109	.108	.103	.108	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Race	-.137	-.136	-.248	-.239	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Highest education completed	.133	.134	.189	.180	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Political knowledge scale	.123	.122	.153	.156	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Church service attendance	.135	.136	.166	.160	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Gender	.072	.074	.040		
Significance	.000	.000	.104		
Moderate	.036	.032	.026		
Significance	.061	.073	.353		
Liberal	.011		.004		
Significance	.591		.893		
"Religion is very important in my life"	.006		-.102	-.095	
Significance	.775		.001	.001	

Table 5. Regression Analysis; Dependent Variable = Civic Participation

Independent Variables	Nat'l β-value Reg. 1	Nat'l β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 1	MN β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 3
Age	.070	.073	.019		
Significance	.000	.000	.499		
1999 total household income	.114	.109	.022		
Significance	.000	.000	.458		
Race	-.056	-.056	-.074	-.084	-.087
Significance	.002	.002	.007	.001	.001
Highest education completed	.260	.262	.149	.164	.162
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Political knowledge scale	.178	.175	.228	.229	.224
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Church service attendance	.102	.120	.222	.221	.224
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Gender	.024		.056	.038	
Significance	.181		.030	.118	
Moderate	-.006		-.013		
Significance	.748		.669		
Liberal	.075	.076	.160	.175	.177
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
"Religion is very important in my life"	.029		-.030		
Significance	.178		.328		

Table 6. Regression Analysis; Dependent Variable = Organized Social Involvement Scale

Independent Variables	Nat'l β-value Reg. 1	Nat'l β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 1	MN β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 3
Age	-.141	-.140	-.147	-.149	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
1999 total household income	.099	.098	.110	.115	
Significance	.000	.000	.001	.000	
Race	-.042	-.042	.012		
Significance	.032	.030	.685		
Highest education completed	.095	.097	.122	.139	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Political knowledge scale	.097	.095	.024		
Significance	.000	.000	.451		
Church service attendance	.111	.112	.126	.114	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
Gender	.012		.065	.063	
Significance	.551		.022	.020	
Moderate	.049	.050	.008		
Significance	.015	.015	.807		
Liberal	.073	.074	.047		
Significance	.001	.000	.156		
"Religion is very important in my life"	.043	.044	-.003		
Significance	.063	.055	.923		

Table 7. Regression Analysis; Dependent Variable = Informal Social Interaction Scale

Independent Variables	Nat'l β-value Reg. 1	Nat'l β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 1	MN β-value Reg. 2	MN β-value Reg. 3
Age	-.323	-.319	-.259	-.274	
Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000	
1999 total household income	.084	.080	.093	.070	
Significance	.000	.000	.003	.014	
Race	-.102	-.098	-.074	-.072	
Significance	.000	.000	.013	.013	
Highest education completed	-.075	-.072	-.021		
Significance	.000	.001	.515		
Political knowledge scale	.036	.038	-.032		
Significance	.080	.058	.308		
Church service attendance	.022		-.024		
Significance	.324		.479		
Gender	.048	.050	.032		
Significance	.011	.008	.254		
Moderate	.050	.048	.056	.061	
Significance	.012	.015	.081	.052	
Liberal	.063	.056	.054	.058	
Significance	.002	.005	.099	.067	
"Religion is very important in my life"	.007		-.026		
Significance	.744		.436		

The most striking findings in these multivariate regressions also involve civic participation. Age and income are not significant factors in determining civic participation in Minnesota, while they are in the national sample. Furthermore, the effect of liberal ideology continues to be positive and significant for every dependent variable except social trust. The correlations reported in Table 3 appear to be no fluke.

DISCUSSION

My data suggest that a relationship does indeed exist between social capital and ideology. In both Minnesota and the nation at large, liberals tend to have higher levels

of social capital as measured in this study than do their conservative counterparts.

The larger effect of liberalism in Minnesota is even more interesting in light of the fact that some variables seem to have smaller effects on civic engagement in Minnesota than in the nation as a whole. This is likely to be because of the state's high levels of civic engagement among all groups. For example, age and income have weaker effects on participation in Minnesota than they do nationally, although in most cases the Minnesota effects are still statistically significant.

There are several possible explanations for this relationship. First, perhaps Minnesota has elevated civic participation and social capital because it is so liberal. Alternatively, people in Minnesota may be more likely to engage themselves civically because of the state's relative ideological homogeneity. A third suggestion is that liberals attain greater levels of social capital because of the structure of the particular groups they organize into, such as labor unions.

Finally, the weakness of the Minnesota dataset is that it only sampled the areas of Minneapolis, North Minneapolis, and St. Paul. These tend to be traditionally liberal areas, and it is possible that the conservatives in the sampled areas were less conservative than conservatives in the rest of the state.

These findings clearly merit further investigation into the relationship between political ideology and social capital. Does a causal relationship exist between the two? If so, what is the direction of the causal relationship? The next step is to perform a more in-depth analysis of Minnesota as a whole by using a dataset that represents Minnesota's entire demographic and geographical range.

Praying Together before Bowling Alone: A Study of Religion's Effect on Social Capital

Anne Cary

ABSTRACT

This is a study of how religious affiliation and religious participation affect social capital. My research focuses on the two components of social capital: social trust and civic participation. Using the Social Capital Community Benchmark Study, a major nationwide survey sponsored by a coalition of nonprofit foundations and scholars, I present the results of multivariate regressions for both Minnesota and the United States at large. My research suggests that self-identified members of Christian denominations have low levels of social trust but that they have varied levels of civic participation. With consideration of church attendance, Christians trust and participate at various levels depending on their denominational affiliation. The deciding factor in the civic participation variable seems to be political participation. I find evidence that with participation in fundamentalist denominations comes interest in politics, and that with participation in non-fundamentalist denominations comes distaste for politics.

BACKGROUND

In the Executive Summary of the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey,[1] Robert Putnam, the premier scholar of social capital, claims that the study supports his idea that "…religious communities embody one of the most important sources of social capital and concern for community in America." When I read his claim that "religiously engaged people are more likely than religiously disengaged people to be involved in civic groups of all sorts," I was curious about whether this was true of all Christian denominations. In this report I argue that religious participation strongly affects political involvement.

Scholars have long noted the high level of religious participation in the United States. Interpretation of such an important variable in the largest collected data set on American civic engagement should not be limited to that of Putnam and other Harvard scholars, but should be a priority of political scientists across the nation. Traditionally, political scientists have focused most of their studies on the political implications of easily measured variables such as income and race. However difficult the study and measurement of religion may be, political scientists should recognize and analyze its impact on the realm of politics.

KEY FINDINGS

- Church attendance, not religious affiliation alone, can increase general social trust. But only Catholics and Baptists who attend church have consistently higher trust levels.
- Among Catholics and mainline Protestants, increased church attendance has a negative effect on overall civic participation.
- There is weak evidence to suggest that members of religions whose convictions are more connected to politics, such as Baptists and Missouri Synod Lutherans, are more interested in politics the more they attend church.
- Varied levels of social trust among different religious denominations suggest that cultural explanations for Minnesota's high levels of social capital are incomplete.

Anne Cary, Carleton Class of 2006, is from Northport, Alabama. Her scholarly interests include southern culture and politics, income distribution, race, and religion. She is also a competitive swimmer.

[1] The data are publicly available through the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at: http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/dataacq/scc_bench.html.

METHOD AND RESULTS

All data comes from the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey of nearly 30,000 Americans. My generalizations about Minnesota are based on Benchmark data from three Minnesota cities: St. Paul, Minneapolis, and North Minneapolis. That all Minnesota data was collected from urban areas makes the data not strictly representative of all of Minnesota. In addition, comparisons between urban Minnesota areas and both urban and rural areas in America at large (covered in the national survey) should be interpreted with caution.

I used multivariate regression analysis to control for respondents' race, gender, annual income, age, and education. In the Benchmark Survey, there are no variables concerning religiosity as pertains to specific belief systems. All conclusions about religion, therefore, relate to how either identification as a member of a certain religion or attendance of a certain religion's services (or both) affects social trust and civic participation. This data does not allow us to draw conclusions about the effects of a church's doctrine or ideology, independent of other aspects of the church.

Both dependent variables, social trust and civic participation, are indices. Social trust is a combined measure of how much people trust everyone from their neighbors and co-congregants to people of other races and religions. Civic participation measures activities like volunteerism, socialization with co-workers, and participation in politics. The religions included in the study are Protestants at large, Catholics, and the three largest Protestant denominations in the survey: Evangelical Lutheran, Baptist, and Missouri Synod Lutheran. I have taken the liberty of labeling religions "fundamentalist" or "non-fundamentalist" based on my experiences at various church services within Minnesota and in other parts of the nation.

According to the Benchmark data, without consideration of religion or any other variable, Minnesotans trust people slightly less than Americans at large, but they participate a little bit more. Minnesotans like to say that they live in a friendly state, but this research suggests that civic participation is not necessarily directly related to feelings of fraternity. Perhaps, though, this finding can be attributed to the Minnesota data's concentration in urban areas, which offer residents an abundance of civic activities and which may discourage social trust.

Table 1 reports the results of a multivariate regression predicting levels of social trust in both Minnesota and the nation as a whole. Coefficients are standardized to allow for comparison of the effect sizes of the variables. In parentheses, I report two-tailed p-values, which represent the probability that a variable could have the observed coefficient by chance. If this number is low – less than .10 – it is usually considered to be 'statistically significant.'

As the table shows, with few exceptions, those who label themselves members of Christian denominations have significantly lower levels of social trust than others, other things being equal. But when one takes into account how often a Christian goes to church, one finds that those who regularly attend certain denominations' services have high levels of social trust. For example, a Catholic who never attends church is less likely to trust others – he or she will be lower by .104 on the standardized social trust scale (see Table 1). But once that same Catholic attends church regularly, his or her trust rises by .144, more than making up for this decline. Because majorities of Americans (and larger majorities of religious identifiers) attend church, we can surmise that in general, most religious people are more trusting than non-religious people.

Table 1: Regression results; Dependent Variable = trust of others index
(statistically significant coefficients appear in bold)

	Minnesota Dataset	National Dataset
	(Standardized coefficients, two-tailed p-values in parentheses)	
Protestant	-.009 (.889)	**-.084** **(.025)**
Protestant x church attendance	-.009 (.895)	.057 (.129)
Catholic	**-.108** **(.026)**	-.059 (.102)
Catholic x church attendance	**.134** **(.003)**	**.061** **(.068)**
Baptist	-.087 (.146)	.023 (.593)
Baptist x church attendance	**.153** **(.014)**	.032 (.479)
Lutheran	-.055 (.418)	**-.150** **(.000)**
Lutheran x church attendance	.049 (.494)	**.114** **(.007)**
Missouri Synod Lutheran	**-.103** **(.081)**	-.015 (.687)
Missouri Synod Lutheran x church attendance	.064 (.277)	-.005 (.885)
Household income, 1999	**-.065** **(.024)**	**-.084** **(.000)**
Age	-.012 (.654)	**-.062** **(.001)**
Male	.015 (.554)	-.007 (.709)
White	**-.292** **(.000)**	**-.126** **(.000)**
Education scale	**-.189** **(.000)**	**-.172** **(.000)**
Constant	**--** **(.000)**	**--** **(.000)**

With respect to civic participation, there is no generalized relationship between self-identification as a Christian and level of civic activity. However, for particular denominations, there are significant relationships. The rate at which people attend religious services is generally unrelated to civic participation in multivariate regressions, and for Catholics and Protestants, the relationship is negative (Table 2). The index of civic participation (the dependent variable) indicates whether the respondent engaged in a variety of civic and political activities, including voting, signing a petition, participating in a protest, and working on a community project. Therefore, for Catholics and Protestants it appears that being more actively religious is related to being less actively political.

Table 2: Regression Results; Dependent variable = Civic participation index
(statistically significant coefficients appear in bold)

	Minnesota Dataset	National Dataset
	(Standardized coefficients, two-tailed p-values in parentheses)	
Protestant	**.226 (.000)**	**.105 (.003)**
Protestant x church attendance	**-.193 (.005)**	**-.080 (.022)**
Catholic	**.141 (.005)**	**.124 (.000)**
Catholic x church attendance	**-.154 (.001)**	**-.162 (.000)**
Baptist	-.010 (.879)	.001 (.977)
Baptist x church attendance	-.012 (.855)	.022 (.602)
Lutheran	-.012 (.863)	-.037 (.339)
Lutheran x church attendance	-.057 (.449)	.015 (.712)
Missouri Synod Lutheran	-.076 (.215)	-.038 (.278)
Missouri Synod Lutheran x church attendance	.034 (.585)	.055 (.121)
Household income, 1999	**.063 (.036)**	**.132 (.000)**
Age	**.089 (.002)**	**.113 (.000)**
Male	-.037 (.162)	-.008 (.648)
White	**.087 (.004)**	**.051 (.005)**
Education scale	**.225 (.000)**	**.327 (.000)**
Constant	**-- (.000)**	**-- (.000)**

My next consideration was the cultural determinants of civic mobilization through church. Perhaps the effects of religions are related to the religions' levels of fundamentalism. The religious convictions of fundamentalist congregants may be more likely to generate interest in political issues. Without reference to church attendance, Missouri Synod Lutherans, whose belief system is the most fundamentalist of those included in this study, neither trust (Table 1) nor participate (Table 2) at higher than average rates. Religious fundamentalists may be wary of members of different religions, so this finding seems to make sense.

Juxtaposed with Missouri Synod Lutherans are Catholics, who, without consideration of church attendance, participate (Table 2) more than average despite their lower levels of trust (Table 1). Since Catholics are such a minority around the nation, one might expect them to have low levels of trust. However, their religion

focuses on not only faith, but also good works. So, the finding that self-identified Catholics trust less than average and participate more also makes intuitive sense. But why do Catholics who frequently attend services trust a little more than average (Table 1) and participate less than average (Table 2) in both Minnesota and the entire United States?

One possibility is that the underlying cause of these numbers is the prevalence of political mobilization through religion. Churches in America are increasingly political institutions. They have always touched on political issues, and they encourage types of political engagement that are effective at that time. In the 1960's, African Methodist Episcopal and black Baptist churches were hotbeds of political and social protest in the South. Civil rights were in the interest of their entire congregations, which banded together to protest in ways that had proven successful at that time. The resurgence of Christian fundamentalism has drawn attention away from issues that spur social interaction – issues such as poverty and literacy – and toward moral sociopolitical issues – such as abortion, gay rights, and family values. Fundamentalist congregations are commonly more diverse than are non-fundamentalist congregations, so congregants can bond over the latter issues more easily than they could over the former ones.

The data supports this theory for Minnesota, whose participants in its two large fundamentalist religions, Baptist and Missouri Synod Lutheran, are more interested in politics the more often they attend church (Table 3). (These coefficients fail to reach standard levels of significance, however, so they should be interpreted with caution.) Nevertheless, overall civic participation among Missouri Synod Lutherans and Baptists is strongly inversely related to social trust. Nationally, this relationship is true for Baptists, Missouri Synod Lutherans, and Evangelical Lutherans (who are more fundamentalist in other parts of the nation than in Minnesota). Both nationally and in Minnesota, attendance of fundamentalist services seems to increase interest in politics, while participation in other religions decreases interest in politics.

Table 3: Regression Results; Dependent Variable = interest in politics scale
(statistically significant coefficients appear in bold)

	Minnesota Dataset	National Dataset
	(Standardized coefficients, two-tailed p-values in parentheses)	
Protestant	.055 (.390)	**.166** **(.000)**
Protestant x church attendance	-.103 (.130)	**-.109** **(.002)**
Catholic	.040 (.429)	**.094** **(.006)**
Catholic x church attendance	-.059 (.213)	**-.082** **(.010)**
Baptist	-.054 (.391)	.023 (.574)
Baptist x church attendance	.070 (.284)	-.003 (.946)
Lutheran	.092 (.194)	**-.114** **(.004)**
Lutheran x church attendance	**-.156** **(.037)**	**.096** **(.017)**
Missouri Synod Lutheran	-.045 (.467)	-.021 (.559)
Missouri Synod Lutheran x church attendance	.047 (.444)	.005 (.879)
Household income, 1999	.002 (.941)	**.071** **(.000)**
Age	**.181** **(.000)**	**.231** **(.000)**
Male	.012 (.648)	**.090** **(.000)**
White	**.094** **(.002)**	.011 (.553)
Education scale	**.256** **(.000)**	**.273** **(.000)**
Constant	**--** **(.000)**	**--** **(.000)**

Why participants in non-fundamentalist religions are less interested in politics than average is a difficult question that merits further study. Perhaps non-fundamentalist services satiate people – make them happy with the status quo. After listening to a reassuring sermon about spiritual equality and divine justice, does a person simply cease to care about earthly happenings? Does politics seem mundane to Catholics and high Protestants whose services focus not on political mobilization, but on mysticism? There is no room in a highly structured Catholic or Minnesota Lutheran service for talk of politics. Pragmatic low Protestants, on the other hand, might follow their preachers' suggestion to pick up the Christian Coalition handbook on the way out the door.

My findings shed light on Daniel Elazar's theory that Minnesota's traditional ethnic homogeneity has caused its residents to lead the nation in rates of political participation. The largest waves of immigrants into Minnesota were from Scandinavia and Germany. Scandinavians brought Evangelical Lutheranism

to the state, while Germans introduced Missouri Synod Lutheranism. Combined, these two traditionally Minnesotan religions foster higher than average levels of political participation. However, Elazar credits ethnic homogeneity with having added to social trust, which in turn triggers civic participation.

The case of Missouri Synod Lutherans contradicts this argument. Identification as a Missouri Synod Lutheran yields much lower levels of trust within Minnesota than it does at the national level, despite the religion's concentration in Minnesota (a Minnesotan is 3.25 times as likely as an American at large to be a Missouri Synod Lutheran). However, attendance of MO Synod Lutheran services makes people more likely to take part in politics. So, the inverse relationship between trust and participation undercuts Elazar's theory, which would predict a positive, reinforcing relationship.

DISCUSSION

In their quest for quantitative explanations for political phenomena, political scientists shy away from areas of society that are difficult to measure – areas such as religion. My research shows that religion, just like income and race, can have complex impacts on political participation. In fact, no comprehensive study of political participation would be complete without the study of religious participation. The idea that regions of the United States foster various political cultures is one that political scientists sometimes dismiss. However, this study suggests that religious characteristics, just one aspect of political culture, can, to a great extent, determine Americans' political behavior.

This research sheds light on existing theories of political culture. For example, my findings are difficult to reconcile with the writings of Daniel Elazar, co-author of *Minnesota Politics and Government*, the definitive text on Minnesota's political culture. This study opens the door for similar research of individual polities with various religion demographics, along with further research of Minnesota and the United States at large.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America. "Social Capital Benchmark Survey Executive Summary." Cambridge, MA: Saguaro Seminar, 2000.

Elazar, Daniel J., Virginia Gray and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics and Government*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Virtuous and Vicious Cycles

Damian Winters

ABSTRACT

Putnam suggests that social capital cycles affect the economic development and social capital of communities. Depending on the amount of economic and social capital, communities form "virtuous" or "vicious" cycles that perpetuate the formation or deconstruction of social capital. These cycles are relevant to policy making. If such cycles exist, then small amounts of initial capital investment should provide self-sustaining growth for communities. Conversely, if a community is sustaining negative growth then it needs to develop its economic or social capacity in order to attain positive growth. I examined four cities in the U.S. to determine if data can support the idea that such cycles exist. I used social capital indicators from 1980 to the present to determine whether these cities were increasing or decreasing in their education levels and economic efficiency. I hypothesized that cities with low social capital would have decreasing or stagnating economic growth while cities with high levels of social capital would have sustained increasing growth. I found that the data supported the plausibility of the existence of such cycles. While there are many other variables that must be taken into account before one draws definitive conclusions, evidence suggests that high levels of social capital increases economic and political efficiency and low levels are connected to stagnation or negative growth.

BACKGROUND

The concept of social capital cycles has appeared in several scholarly articles. In 1990, Elinor Ostrom published a book that addressed her concern about current theories of institutional cooperation. Ostrom argued that "small-scale initial institutions enable a group of individuals to build on the social capital thus created to solve larger problems with larger and more complex institutional arrangements" (Ostrom 1990). She felt that the current theories "do not focus on the incremental self-transformations that frequently are involved in the process of supplying institutions" (Ostrom 1990).

Several years later, Robert Putnam, in his research on communities in Italy, suggested that low economic development as well as low social capital would lead a community into a "vicious" cycle, draining its social capital and transforming it into a less civic community (Putnam 1993). The opposite cycle should also exist. A community with high economic development and high social capital will enter into a "virtuous" cycle, which leads to a productive community (Putnam 1993). This virtuous cycle is self-reinforcing and increases both economic development and social capital levels. The vicious cycle will decrease community involvement and cooperation. Putnam references Albert Hirschman's definition of social capital as a "moral resource … whose supply increases rather than decreases through use and which become depleted if not used" (Putnam 1993).

In a study of upstate New York, Paul Eberts and Cindy Scott find that communities high in social capital are more likely to pursue community development projects. Cities that have low levels of social capital stagnate because such impulses for community development are not present.

A problem in researching social capital cycles is that social capital data before 2000 tends to have been collected nationally. Local communities have not been well studied. Thus my study evaluates social capital indicators from four communities since the 1980s.

Damian Winters, class of 2004, is a Political Science/International Relations major at Carleton College. He is from Concord, Massachusetts. An Environmental and Technology Studies concentrator, he is interested in environmental conflict.

KEY FINDINGS

- Los Angeles has unusually low levels of social capital and economic development.
- Since 1980, Los Angeles has slowed continually in economic development while Minneapolis and St. Paul have increased their economic development.
- Los Angeles has the fewest college graduates per capita, perpetuating the "vicious" cycle.
- St. Paul has slightly higher levels of social capital than does Minneapolis.

METHOD AND RESULTS

I began by looking at the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey's Community Results Matrix.[1] I focused on Minneapolis and St. Paul because both had high levels of social capital and low levels of diversity. I also felt that the close proximity of the two cities might eliminate some confounding variables. I selected Los Angeles for study because in the Benchmark Survey's executive summary, Putnam and his colleagues point out that communities that have high levels of diversity (such as Los Angeles) tend to have less social trust. (Saguaro Seminar 2000) The fourth city I evaluated was Houston because it had the lowest levels of social capital in two of the three Benchmark categories. The categories I focused on were social trust, civic leadership, and conventional politics. These categories best represent the relevant components of social capital.

In order to examine the evidence on cycles, I gathered data from the 1980s for each city that might correspond with each of these categories. I collected information on the number of individuals who are below the poverty level in each community, average per capita income, and the average educational attainment by persons over the age of twenty five. I chose these variables because Eberts and Scott concluded that social capital affected the economic and political efficiency of the community. Education, a key function of local government, can be considered one indicator of political efficiency.

In the case of Los Angeles., the city with the lowest social trust in this study, the data supports the possibility that a social capital cycle exists. The city has low quotients for social trust and conventional politics in the Benchmark Survey, and downward trends in its economic efficiency. Los Angeles has the highest poverty levels and is the only city in this study that did not reduce its poverty rate between 1990 and 2000. Per capita income, while higher in Los Angeles than in Houston, is not increasing as rapidly in Los Angeles. Educational attainment in 2000, as measured by the percent of residents with bachelor's degrees or higher, was lowest in Los Angeles. Therefore, it is reasonable to suspect that when social capital and economic prosperity are low these negative factors seem to perpetuate themselves.

In the cases of Minneapolis and St. Paul the results are mixed. I hypothesized that because St. Paul had higher social capital quotients, it would have higher rates of change towards economic and political efficiency. However, Minneapolis has had increasingly larger changes in its per capita income than St. Paul since 1970.

One possible explanation for this inconsistency comes from a recent book on communities in India. Anirudh Krishna suggests that Putnam assumed that with every social capital "stock" there is a direct and proportionate "flow" (Krishna, 2000). He found that villages in close proximity in India changed their social capital over a short time period to meet organizational needs. This led him to suggest that "social capital can either be created, or its flows harnessed even within the short run" (Krishna, 2000). Therefore, the inconsistent data might be explained by the ability of cities to change their economic or social capital formation in the short run. Both cities were quickly increasing their economic and educational performance in the late twentieth century. Thus, with high levels of social capital, the cities continued to perpetuate their own efficiency.

[1] This summary of the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey's findings is available online at: http://www.cfsv.org/communitysurvey/results_matrix.html

Houston, with the lowest total social capital quotients in the benchmark survey, stagnated in terms of per capita income in the past decade and had the lowest change in educational attainment. There had been small changes in educational attainment since 1980 and, while the poverty rate slightly decreased, the overall poverty level was much higher than in Minneapolis or St. Paul.

Although the data was not completely consistent, the fact that Los Angeles and Houston, with low levels of social capital and economic performance, continued to decline or stagnate in recent years, and St. Paul and Minneapolis, with high levels of social capital continued to increase in efficiency, lends plausibility to the theory of social capital cycles.

DISCUSSION

Such cycles would help policy makers evaluate the means necessary to increase and sustain growth. A city might benefit not only from pumping economic funds into the community, but also by an increase in community development groups. If virtuous cycles are self-reinforcing, policy makers ought to be more willing to spend funds on increasing organizational capacity and economic prosperity for a short period. It may only take a small amount of initial capital investment for sustained growth to occur. On the other hand, if a city is saddled with a low number of organizations and little economic development, this cycle might perpetuate itself unless funds or organizations are built within the city.

One productive avenue for future research might be to gather data on the number of project proposals for each city. Paul Eberts and Mindy Scott from Cornell University noted in a report that in "communities with more social capital in terms of greater number of and participation in local collectivities aiming toward community betterment … the key indicator of community development outcomes was writing project proposals to obtain funding for community projects from non-community agencies" (Eberts 2000). A sizeable database on the number of project proposals in each community might prove to be a valuable resource for social capital researchers.

This study was limited to only four cities and a small number of variables. Nevertheless, it lends plausibility to the concept of social capital cycles – a concept that is deserving of future study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Eberts, Paul R. and Mindy E. Scott. *Social Capital and Community Development*. Cornell University. http://www.cardi.cornell.edu/canal/eberts_scott.pdf

Krishna, Anirudh. "Creating and Harnessing Social Capital." In *Social Capital*. Partha Dasgupta. World Bank. 2000.

Ostrom, Elinor. *Governing the Commons*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K. 1990.

Putnam, Robert. *Making Democracy Work.* Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 1993.

Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America. "Social Capital Benchmark Survey Executive Summary." Cambridge, MA: Saguaro Seminar, 2000.

Do Income and Education Affect Civic Participation through the Components of Social Capital?

Erica Stoltz

ABSTRACT

Income and education are closely related variables that may indirectly influence civic engagement. In this paper, I employ a path analysis to see how education and income affect social trust and group membership, which, in turn, affect levels of civic engagement. Path analysis involves using prior knowledge to generate a complex theoretical framework to explain how individual variables affect each other. Overall, my model had a 93.8 percent fit with the data; this supports the hypothesis that income and education affect levels of civic engagement and participation through intermediary variables. Policy makers should consider the possibility that improving education or raising income alone will not increase civic engagement directly, but that social trust and group membership – two key components of social capital – should be taken into account as well.

BACKGROUND

My initial interest in a project analyzing the factors behind social capital stemmed from an interest in income inequality. Income is so closely tied to education level, however, that I broadened my study to include education. These two variables serve as my starting point for the analysis that follows.

A great deal of research has been conducted on the relationships between voter turnout and socioeconomic status, but detailed causal studies of how income and education levels affect people's participation in civic affairs are less common. In this paper I build a model of how income and education affect civic participation by tracing their effects on the development of different components of social capital, such as group membership and social trust. The relation of income and education to the development of the different elements of social capital could have an effect on the overall level of civic participation.

KEY FINDINGS

- Through path analysis, I find that a model that assumes income and education affect civic engagement through two key components of social capital – trust and group membership – fits the data well.
- Although other variables, such as religious affiliation, hours spent working, time spent watching TV, size of community, and population heterogeneity are not considered, the simple model described here is nonetheless useful.
- Policy makers should recognize the indirect effect of income and education on civic activity.

METHOD AND RESULTS

To trace out the specific connections between individual variables, I use a statistical technique called path analysis. Path analysis first involves constructing a diagram, based on previous research, with arrows connecting variables to show the direction of presumed causation. Previous research indicates that it is reasonable to assume that income and education cause varying levels of civic engagement, rather than the other way around. A simple causal diagram would, therefore, have an arrow pointing from income and education to civic engagement.

Civic engagement has many possible components, so it is important to specify which components are the most important. The research of Robert Putnam, and that of John Brehm and Wendy Rahn, found that

Erica Stoltz, Carleton Class of 2005, is a political science major focusing on American government. While not at Carleton she works on her family's farm in northeast Ohio.

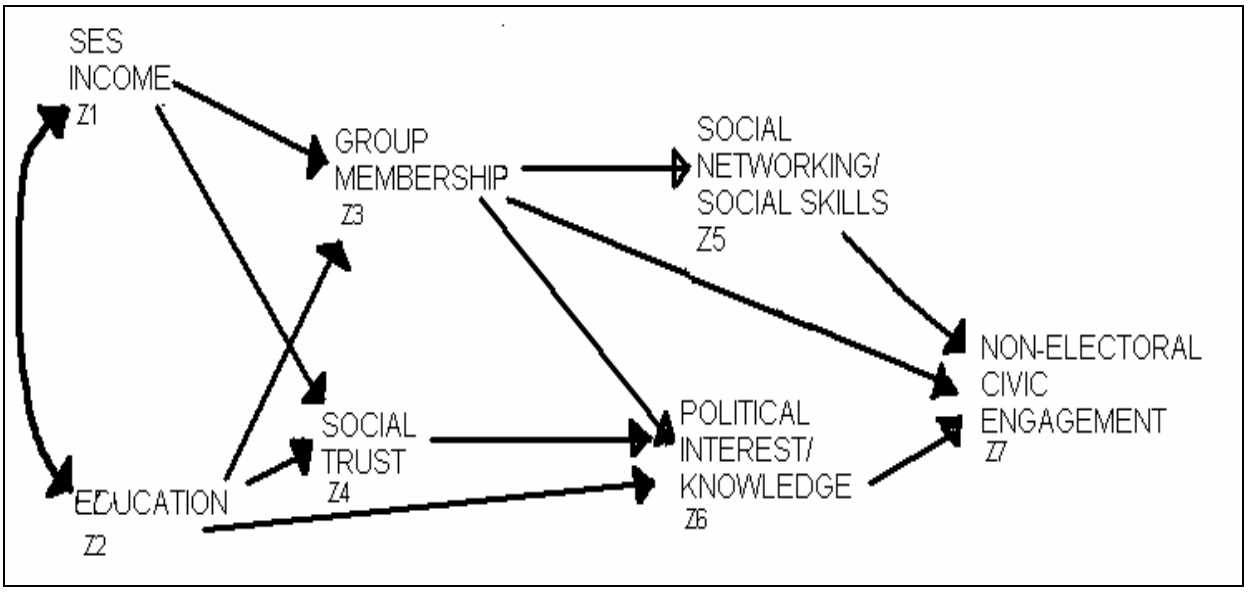
interpersonal trust among citizens is a key element of social capital. (Putnam 1995; Brehm & Rahn 1997) These same researchers also concluded that group membership was essential, though the definitive literature on the topic of group membership comes from Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady. (Verba Schlozman and Brady 1995) Based on these studies, I include social trust and group membership as the third and fourth variables in my model. A second, more accurate diagram would have causal arrows flowing from income and education to social trust and group membership.

The story does not end with social trust and group membership, however. Also important is what people take away or learn from trusting others and belonging to groups. According to Putnam and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, people who belong to groups are more likely to meet people who have similar interests, and to build networks, which can facilitate civic activities. Group membership, then, causes social networking, or improved social skills.

Finally, trust and group membership may also affect one's knowledge of politics. Friends and fellow group members might help each other learn about candidates, and issues. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady stress the importance of knowledge of and interest in politics as a critical component of civic participation. In my model I allow for the fact that knowledge of politics can stem from group membership and trust, as well as from education.

The result of this theoretical model appears in Figure 1. Each arrow represents a causal effect.

Figure 1: A Path Analysis of How Income and Education Affect Civic Engagement



For example, income affects group membership, social trust, and education. Education affects income, group membership, social trust, and political interest. Group membership and social trust do not affect income and education, but do affect social skills and political interest, and so on.

The next step is to test this theoretical framework with data. All variables and indices used in the data analysis come from the national sample of the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. All indices were pre-constructed in the data set. This survey consists of a random sample of 3,000 respondents across the nation, and is part of the largest scientific investigation of civic engagement ever conducted in the United States.

In path analysis once a causal model has been constructed, many multivariate regressions must be run – one for every variable that is caused by other variables – to test whether the predicted arrows in Figure 1 represent reality. For example, researchers must estimate the effect of group membership, social trust, and education on political interest. In a separate analysis, they must estimate that effect of income and education on group membership, and so on.[1]

Each regression model produces reasonably accurate estimates of the probability that each causal variable has no effect. This can be interpreted as the probability that each arrow in Figure 1 does not exist. Based on these estimates, I found that all the paths I had drawn appeared to be accurate.

Finally I conducted a process called path decomposition, which allowed me to judge the extent to which the model accurately predicts observed relationships between the variables. This is a fairly confusing and arduous process, since there is no computer program that will do this. Instead, it must be done by hand calculations.

Ultimately I found that the model fit reality quite accurately. In fact, the model explained 93.8 percent of the observed relationships between variables.

DISCUSSION

Overall, my model had a 93.8 percent fit with the data. This shows that the theoretical account described above and the resulting model in Figure 1 is accurate, and that income and education can change civic engagement through their effect on several components of social capital, including trust and group membership.

This model did not include all factors that could possibly affect civic engagement. Researchers have found that race plays a significant role. There were many more factors that were not included, such as religious affiliation, hours spent working, time spent watching television, urban vs. suburban vs. rural, homogeneous population vs. heterogeneous population; and others. However, the model in Figure 1 is a powerful one, because it is relatively simple and explains most of the variation in the data.

Based on this description of the key causal relationships, it is possible to make tentative policy recommendations for local, state, and national governments regarding education and income. These policies should take into account that simply improving education or raising income will not directly increase civic engagement. Instead, the development of trust and group membership needs to be taken into account as well. Americans who lack access to a good education and cannot raise their income also lack access to social capital. Government policies should focus on the social *distribution* of social capital, instead of its *level* alone. Students' access to good education needs to be as equal as possible across different economic divisions.

Though I used national data for this analysis, there is no reason to believe that the results would not be the same for the state of Minnesota. Putnam suggests that Minnesota has relatively high levels of social capital, which may result from its high levels of income and education. As Elazar, Gray and Spano point out, Minnesota's per capita personal income ranked tenth in the nation in 1997. Minnesota also has a

[1] Multivariate regression is the preferred technique because it allows us to control for other factors. For example, one can determine the effect of education on group membership, holding income constant. This allows us to isolate the effect of each individual variable.

highly educated population, and this is probably related to its high income (as depicted in Figure 1). It was the first state to institute the policy of school choice, and one of the first to start vouchers, post-secondary enrollment, and charter schools. The state also ranks sixth in level of taxation, meaning the government has more money to devote to its educational system than many states do. Other states may want to consider instituting similar policies in the hopes of improving levels of education and income, and, subsequently, levels of trust, group membership, and ultimately civic engagement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Better Together." Report of the Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America. 2000, Available at: www.bettertogether.org/report.php3

Brehm, John, and Wendy Rahn. "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital." *American Journal of Political Science.* Vol. 41, Issue 3 (July 1997).

Elazar, Daniel, Virginia Gray, and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics and Government.* University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Leighley, Jan. "Attitudes, Opportunities and Incentives: A Field Essay of Political Participation." *Political Research Quarterly.* Vol. 48, Issue 1

Mertler, Craig, and Rachel A Vannatta. *Advanced and Multivariate Statistical Methods: Practical Application and Interpretation.* 2nd Ed. Pyrczak Publishers: Los Angeles CA, 2002.

Oliver, J. Eric. "The Effects of Metropolitan Economic Segregation on Local Civic Participation." *American Journal of Political Science.* Vol. 43, Issue 1 (Jan. 1999)

Putnam, Robert. "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America." *PS: Political Science and Politics* Vol. 28, Issue 4 (Dec. 1995)

Rosenstone, Steven. "Economic Adversity and Voter Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science.* Vol. 26, Issue 1 (Feb. 1982)

Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey Codebook. The Saguaro Seminar. Civic Engagement in America. The John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2000.

Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey Executive Summary. The Saguaro Seminar. Civic Engagement in America. The John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2000.

Social Capital Community Benchmark Data Set, National Sample Only. The Saguaro Seminar. Civic Engagement in America. The John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2000.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." *The American Political Science Review.* Vol. 89, Issue 2 (June 2, 1995).

Verba, Sidney, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady. *Voice and Equality; Civic Voluntarism in American Politics.* Cambridge Masschusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995.

APPENDIX: DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF VARIABLES

Note: Z1 through Z7 are identified in Figure 1.
Z1= Socioeconomic Status represented by the variable INCOME.

Z2=Highest Level of Education Completed represented by variable EDUC_ALL.

Z3=Group Membership represented by the index MACHER.

Z4=Social Trust represented by the Social Trust Index SOCTRUST.

Z5=Social Networking, use of Social Skills represented by the variable SCHMOOZ.

Z6=Political Interest/Knowledge represented by the index ELECPOL2.

Z7=Non-electoral Civic Engagement represented by the index PROTEST.

Variable Coding
INCOME-1999 Total Household Income
0-$20,000 or less

1-$20,000>$30,000
2-less than $30,000 unspecified
3-$30,000>$50,000
4-$50,000>$75,000
5-$75,000>$100,000
6-$100,000 or more
7-over $30,000 unspecified

EDUC_ALL- Highest Level of Education completed
1- Less than High School Grad
2- High School Diploma (including GED)
3-Some College
4-Assoc. Degree or Specialized Technical Training
5-Bachelor's Degree
6-Some Graduate Training
7-Graduate or Professional Degree

MACHER-Organizational Activism Factor Score
Consists of the factor score resulting from a principal components analysis of Number of formal group involvements, excluding church membership, Served as an officer or on a committee, Number of: attended a club meeting, and Number of: attended public meeting discussion.

SOCTRUST-Social Trust Index
Consists of variables measuring General interpersonal trust, Trust neighbors, Trust co-workers, Trust fellow congregants, Trust store employees where you shop, Trust local police.

SCHMOOZ-Informal Social Interaction Scale
Consists of variables measuring Having friends visit home, Visiting with relatives, Socializing with co-workers outside of work, Hanging out with friends in public places, Playing cards and board games.

ELECPOL2- Electoral Politics Scale
Index combining Past voting, Voter registration, Interest in politics and national affairs, political knowledge (of US Senators), and Frequency of newspaper reading.

PROTEST- Protest scale.
Index measuring non-electoral forms of political participation, including Signing petitions, Attending political meetings or rallies, Joining in any demonstrations, protests, boycotts, or marches, also Involvement in local reform efforts, Membership in political groups, ethnic, nationality or civil rights groups or labor unions.

'Election Day is Often Like One Large Coffee Party': Minnesota Local Governments and Social Capital

Melissa Rifkin

ABSTRACT

The central topic of this paper is the role of Minnesota's local governments in creating social capital. Based on the e-mail responses of sixty governmental officials from fifty-six of the state's cities, this study finds that most administrators of Minnesota district governments view themselves as potential builders of community. Government should "encourage people to come together in a location to have fun" says one city official from a Minneapolis suburb. Most local governments in Minnesota seem to concur with that statement, as a majority of city administrations throughout the state implement programs to build social capital among their constituencies. They carry out this function using several types of programs. Leisure and civic community activities such as town-wide celebrations, recreation centers, citizen committees and newsletters seem to be staples of local governments in Minnesota. Furthermore, this study finds that many local officials relate involvement in recreational activities with participation in the political system. In addition, I demonstrate that suburban governments have slightly more public activities than rural areas. The final section of this study offers suggestions for policy changes based on these results.

BACKGROUND

In many respects, local governments are on the bottom rung of the American federal system. Far from being autonomous entities, cities are highly subject to the decisions of national and state administrations (Svara 1999). However, despite these hindrances, political science research indicates that local governments can have a significant effect on the quality of life for residents of their districts, including the level of social capital in their areas. Social capital, which may include both social bonding (forming groups among similar minded individuals) and social bridging (connecting different groups of people), can be encouraged – and discouraged – by local policies (Putnam 2000).

In his book *Making Democracy Work* (1993), Robert Putnam, one of the chief proponents of the concept of social capital in political science, describes local governments as capable forces for the building of community. He describes a variety of means by which city governments can increase social interaction and social trust within their districts. Putnam claims that instituting such communal amenities as "sports facilities … libraries … day care centers … [and] meeting rooms" (1993: 201) is highly correlated to the effectiveness of city administrations. Lionel J. Beaulieu and Glenn D. Israel make a similar assertion and claim that local governments in order to be successful should, "encourage people to work together to create healthy communities" (1997: 211). They also emphasize the importance of limiting urban sprawl, maintaining neighborhoods, promoting education and ensuring access to health care.

In this paper, I address the following questions: Which programs of social capital are most common across local governments in Minnesota? How do urban, suburban and rural locations differ with respect to the number and types of governmental community building programs in place? Is town median income or population size related to the number of social capital related programs in place? Does the type of government in a community (mayor/council vs. council/manager) affect the number of community-building programs in place?

Melissa Rifkin is a Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies major from Albany, NY. Her interests include feminist politics and urban politics.

KEY FINDINGS

- The vast majority of town officials feel that building community is a significant component of their jobs, and list a variety of

local policies that encourage social interaction.

- While civic and recreational activities appeared with frequency, few governments listed programs to address basic human needs.
- Suburban governments on average have slightly more programs for community building than do rural governments.
- There is a positive correlation between population size and the number of governmental programs that encourage the formation of social capital. In addition, there is a slight positive correlation between median income and the number of governmental programs concerning social capital. These results suggest that a larger tax base increases governmental efforts at community building.
- There is a positive correlation between a council/manager type of government (vs. a mayor/council type) and the number of governmental programs of social capital.

METHOD AND RESULTS

This study is based on the responses of governmental officials from fifty-six local administrations in Minnesota. There are 223 regional jurisdictions in this state; 190 (85.2 percent of the total) were sent a brief e-mail message asking about community in their areas. I sent most of these messages to general municipal e-mail addresses obtained from the cities' websites. In the cases in which no general address was listed, I sent the message to a city council member, the mayor, or the city manager. I was unable to contact the municipalities who provided no email address, or an incorrect email address, on their websites.

In the email, I asked the following questions: "How does local government create community in your area?" and "What programs are in place to increase social interaction among your constituents?" These questions were intentionally phrased to be vague and broad. The lack of specificity allows responses to more accurately reflect the perceptions of local officials regarding what institutions build communities in their areas. Thus, it should be noted that an official's failure to mention a particular institution does not necessarily indicate that such an institution does not exist in his or her area. It simply means, that he or she does not perceive it as one that builds community. For example, although a website exists for every government contacted, only 12 (21.5%) of city officials mentioned town websites as a program to build community. Had more specific questions been asked (i.e. "Is there a town website?"), then responses might be more factually accurate, but they would be less reflective of the opinions of regional officials regarding community and social interaction.

Garnering individuals' perceptions is valuable when studying local governments. For one thing, this allows us to discover which programs city officials see as important and valuable. In addition, a program that operates in one way in one locality may operate quite differently in another. To continue the example of town websites – such a program may serve different functions depending on the level of computer access in an area. In a place where most residents have personal computers, a website can serve to generate community involvement because it can advertise upcoming recreational events and governmental meetings. In an area where few residents own computers, a city website cannot be an effective tool for building community since few residents would be able to view any information posted on it. Thus, depending on the demographics of their city, officials likely have different perceptions of their town websites. These perceptions are therefore often a more accurate indicator of the purpose of a program than an examination of public records might produce.

I next categorized the 233 Minnesota cities as suburban, urban or rural. Categorizations were based on the listing of Metropolitan Statistical Areas provided by the census bureau for the year 2000 (U.S. Census 2003). Six metropolitan areas are located in Minnesota: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester, and Moorhead. These locales were classified as urban. Cities located within the eleven counties labeled by the Census Bureau as surrounding the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro Area (with the exception of Minneapolis and St.

Paul themselves) were classified as suburban. Cities not within these eleven counties and not classified as urban areas were categorized as rural. According to these categorizations, Minnesota's 223 local governments contain 161 suburban administrations, fifty seven rural jurisdictions and six urban governments.

In total, fifty nine local officials representing fifty seven regional governments (30 percent of the 190 surveyed) sent e-mail responses; thirty nine or 68.4 percent of these regions were suburban areas; seventeen or 29.8 percent were rural. Minneapolis was the only urban area to respond, representing one, or 1.8%, of the cases. Since urbanized regions were so under-represented, I dropped Minneapolis and decided to focus exclusively on rural and suburban towns. Thus, fifty six Minnesota cities remained to be studied.

While I attempted to include as many local governments as possible, I was unable to reach many of them. The thirty three governments that did not list a functional email address on their web pages were automatically excluded. Among those who received the survey, responses were strictly voluntary; thus, there was likely a disproportionate representation of officials that feel strongly about their governments' role in building community. Governments with full time staff to answer email questions also were overrepresented.

Governments responding to the survey listed activities that fell into nine categories:

1) *Programs of governmental participation* such as citizen committees, open city council meetings.
"People can come to all government meetings, can participate in committees and voice their concern or request government to make this a better community," says one official from rural Minnesota.

2) *Programs of citizen information* such as newsletters, local television stations.
"Cities can help create a stronger perception of community by communicating with residents about the services that are offered. … As residents receive these communications, they will become more aware of the services offered by the city and make a closer connection with the city," says one respondent from a Minneapolis suburb.

3) *Public events* such as town-wide festivals, or fairs.
According to one suburban official, "All of these events are ways the City promotes opportunities for residents to gather and celebrate or interact together. These types of events are designed in part to establish a particular identity for the residents."

4) *Public spaces,* such as parks, recreation centers, walkways, or bike trails.
These places were labeled by respondents as "gathering spots" and "the means for people to interact by getting [them] out of their cars." Another official said of public spaces, "It's a sneaky way of getting people out of their houses [so they can] get active [and] meet their neighbors. One of our bike trails … is so popular it's a little like a Greek marketplace. It's virtually impossible to use it without seeing someone you know."

5) *Economic development initiatives,* such as downtown revitalization projects.
"The city plays a role in … ensuring economic development so that residents … won't have to leave town to buy groceries or similar needs," says one suburban representative.

6) *Non-governmental associations*, such as churches, Boy and Girl Scouts, or 4-H clubs.
One mayor of rural city says, "The main way the city … creates community is by being involved with the many local service organizations: Lion Club, Chamber of Commerce, Historical Society, Music and Arts Council, Park Board, Local Golf Course Assoc., Pioneer Trail Club, Cover Bridge Historical Society, Covered Bridge Snowmobile Riders Club, Softball Assoc., Women of Today Clubs, Ambulance Assoc., etc. It is mostly by working with these different clubs and organizations that the city … can help create social interaction between its residents."

7) *Surveys.*
A respondent from a suburban area says, "We conducted a community assessment survey last summer to gauge residents' feelings about the community - areas of success and areas for improvement."

8) *Emblems*, such as town signs, or monuments.
"We … put 'Welcome' signs at the major entrances to the city as a way to further reinforce our identity," says a suburban official.

9) *Programs to address issues of diversity.*
A respondent from a rural says, "The City Council created a racial harmony committee to discuss the issues of growth, diversity and racial interaction."

Some of the most common activities that governments encourage are town-wide celebratory events, public parks, recreational programs, youth programs and citizen government committees.

Many officials made a connection between community building and political participation. City officials reasoned that if residents interact with others in their town, they are more likely to learn about local issues and feel motivated to become involved in government. One suburban official said that the town's recreation center "is … where people meet, talk, learn about the events in the community and share their daily lives." Another rural official said that socializing takes place at town events: "It is interaction like this that gets people to get involved in their community."

There is a positive correlation between population size and the number of governmental programs that deal with social capital (see Appendix C). In addition there is a slight positive correlation between median income and the number of governmental programs concerning social capital. These results suggest that a larger tax base increases governmental efforts of community building. There is also a positive correlation between a council/manager type of government (vs. a mayor/council type) and the number of governmental programs of social capital.

DISCUSSION

In general, the picture of local governments in Minnesota appears to be mostly positive. Officials seem to be highly concerned with recreational aspects of community. They are aware of the benefits of high social capital and consider a strong sense of community both achievable and valuable. In addition, it seems as if many of these community programs play a role in increasing political participation. A number of these activities involve citizens directly in the governmental process – providing them with information, asking for their feedback, and allowing them to take leadership roles. Other programs provide venues for residents to gather and speak about public issues like parks and walkways. Local officials from other states can learn from such policies. In Minnesota, government officials have concluded that recreational activities appear to be connected to high levels of citizen involvement in local political affairs.

One significant finding of this study is officials' apparent oversight of the basic human needs elements of social capital. While most officials mentioned recreation and civic programs, no respondent mentioned daycare, and only two referenced community medical facilities. One suburban official echoed this sentiment in his response by saying, "The community is defined by recreation."

One possible explanation for the focus on institutions of leisure rather than of survival is the high incomes and education levels of Minnesotans. Residents of this state have a high socioeconomic status compared to the national average (Elazar, Gray and Spano 1999). Accordingly, there may be less need in Minnesota than in other areas for local governments to provide material goods. Readers should also note that these results do not necessarily indicate that Minnesota's local governments do not provide for the basic needs of their residents. Instead, this study shows that officials simply do not regard these services as means to build community. Finally, if in fact communities are lacking in services for basic needs, this situation can be remedied by actions

of state and federal governments. Such higher administrations can assess which localities need to provide basic services to their constituencies and provide grant money for them to do so.

The noted advantage for suburban governments in creating programs of social capital is important. Such a discrepancy may perpetuate existing inequalities (Oliver 2001). Suburbanites are already better represented in government than those who reside in rural areas. This disparity occurs because a greater proportion of suburban residents vote and are involved in civic organizations. Since social capital is positively correlated to levels of political participation, a system in which suburban governments can create more institutions of community building advantages suburban residents even further. This problem can be rectified by federal and state administrations. To make local governments more equal in their offerings of programs of social capital, outside funding should be provided to rural areas to implement community building institutions.

As demonstrated by the responses of the sixty Minnesota local officials, city governments can play a significant role in building a sense of community. Amenities such as recreation centers, parks, town-wide celebrations, youth programs and newsletters all function to promote social interaction among residents. In addition, they can help raise the quality of life and levels of political participation. Local governments should have equal access to funding to institute programs that encourage community relations. With equal funding, social capital programs can be an equalizing force, lessening the gap in representation between suburban and rural areas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beaulieu, Lionel J. and Glenn D. Israel. "Strengthening Social Capital: The Challenge for Rural Community Sustainability." In Ivonne Audirac, ed., *Rural Sustainable Development in America*, 191-223. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

Elazar Daniel J., Virginia Gray and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics & Government*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Oliver, J. Eric. *Democracy in Suburbia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000..

Putnam, Robert D., and Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Rice, Norman. "Local Initiatives in Support of Families." In Sharon L. Kagan and Bernice Weissbourd, eds., *Putting Families First: America's Family Support Movement and the Challenge of Change*, 321-337. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

Rubin, Herbert J. Community-Based Development Organizations. In Roger L. Kemp, ed., *Economic Development in Local Government: A Handbook for Public Officials and Citizens*, 45-61. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1995.

Svara, James H. "The Embattled Mayors and Local Executives." In Ronald E. Weber and Paul Brace, eds., *American State and Local Politics*, 139-165. New York: Chatham House Publishers, 1998.

Tuttle Kornbluh, Andrea. "Playing with Democracy: Municipal Recreation, Community Organizing, and Citizenship." In Robert B. Fairbanks and Patricia Mooney-Melvin, eds., *Making Sense of the City: Local Government, Civic Culture, and Community Life in Urban America*, 119-137. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001.

U.S. Census. www.census.gov, 2003.

APPENDIX A

Counties of the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro Area

Anoka County, MN
Carver County, MN
Chisago County, MN
Dakota County, MN
Hennepin County, MN
Isanti County, MN
Ramsey County, MN
Scott County, MN
Sherburne County, MN
Washington County, MN

APPENDIX B

Classification of Responses

Suburban

1. Andover
2. Apple Valley
3. Arden Hills
4. Becker
5. Belle Plaine
6. Big Lake
7. Birchwood
8. Brooklyn Park
9. Chisago City
10. Columbia Heights
11. Crystal
12. Eagan
13. East Bethel
14. Farmington
15. Fridley
16. Golden Valley
17. Inver Grove Heights
18. Long Lake
19. Mahtomedi
20. Maple Grove
21. Maplewood
22. Mayer
23. Mendota Heights
24. Minnetonka
25. Mounds View
26. New Hope
27. New Market
28. Oakdale
29. Plymouth
30. Roseville
31. Shakopee
32. Shoreview
33. Shorewood
34. South St. Paul
35. Sunfish Lake
36. Waconia
37. Watertown
38. Woodbury
39. Wyoming

Rural

1. Albany
2. Albert Lea
3. Eveleth
4. Faribault
5. Hibbing
6. Hutchinson
7. International Falls
8. Lake Shore
9. Mankato
10. Mora
11. Owatonna
12. Sauk Centre
13. Sliver Bay
14. Waite Park
15. Wheaton
16. Willow River
17. Zumbrota

APPENDIX C

Results of Bivariate Correlations

Variable	beta	significance
Population	.229	.025
median income	.007	.956
council/manager (vs. mayor)	.212	.116

Social Capital in Minnesota: What the Politicians Say

Annette M. Luther

ABSTRACT

Robert Putnam argues that high levels of social capital can lead to more effective democracy. To shed light on the validity of this proposition, I interviewed four current and former politicians to get their views on the state of civic engagement in Minnesota: Senator Mark Dayton, Congressman Jim Ramstad, former Congressman Bill Luther, and former Vice President and long-time Minnesota politician Walter Mondale. These interviews tend to support the contention that trust and volunteerism is on the decline in Minnesota, but with an important caveat. Declining social capital appears to be a worse problem in non-suburban, Democratic-Farmer-Labor Congressional districts. In suburban, Republican districts, on the other hand, politicians report increases in political volunteering, attendance at town meetings, and respect for elected officials.

BACKGROUND

Robert Putnam argues that high levels of social capital can improve the functioning of democracy (Putnam 2000, Ch. 21). Americans are the most politically active citizens of all the established democracies (except where voting is concerned), and Minnesota has one of the highest rates of participation in America. But Minnesota's political social capital has decreased over the last thirty years. Voting, participation in campaigns, and attendance at town meetings have all declined (Putnam 2000, pp. 32, 39, 43).

Putnam attributes some of this decline to a generation gap between baby boomers and their parents. Pre-boomers have much higher levels of voting and political participation than boomers and post-boomers. Putnam also suggests that "a small fraction" of the decline can be attributed to mobility and urban sprawl, although suburbs have more civic activity than central cities (Putnam 2000, pp. 215, 206).

To investigate these claims in the context of Minnesota politics, I interviewed four of Minnesota's national-level politicians – three in the Democrat-Farmer-Labor Party and one Republican: Senator Mark Dayton (DFL, 18 years in public office), Congressman Jim Ramstad (Republican, 23 years in public office), former Congressman Bill Luther (DFL, 28 years in public office), and former Vice President and long-time Minnesota politician Walter Mondale (DFL, 24 years in public office). I asked them about changes in the levels of volunteerism in their campaigns, as well as changes in their relationships with their constituencies.

KEY FINDINGS

- All three DFLers agreed that social capital in Minnesota has declined to a point that is hurting the DFL. People no longer trust politicians, they say, and have quit volunteering in such numbers that the party is suffering. On the other hand, the Republican said that he has not had any problems with trust or volunteers. Luther and Mondale agreed that Republicans are not suffering from a social capital decline as the Democrats are.
- The majority of campaign volunteers are high school and college students and senior citizens. Luther noted that as people have stopped volunteering, they have increased financial contributions, perhaps in lieu of participation.
- All three Democrats reported a reduction of the trust and respect they receive from constituents, but each offers a different explanation for why this is the case. Luther believes high levels of education make people feel just as intelligent and

Annette Luther, Carleton Class of 2004, is a political science major from Eden Prairie, Minnesota. An avid political volunteer, she anticipates a career in law.

knowledgeable as politicians. Dayton believes people expect too much of government and do not give credit to public servants for their hard work. He also says people lost faith in government after Watergate in the 1970s and the Clinton scandal in the 1990s. Mondale argues that people are increasingly focused on themselves rather than on the community, a trend that leads them be critical of Democrats. He also blames increasingly impersonal campaign strategies and a focus on image rather than on substance.

METHOD AND RESULTS

I interviewed four Minnesota elected officials. Obviously this is in no way a random sample, and it would be foolish to draw firm conclusions from such a small number of cases. Nevertheless, these semi-structured interviews can help us to understand the changes politicians are seeing in social capital. Because keeping track of Minnesota political activity is, in a very real sense, what elected officials do for a living, politicians' impressions of trends in political activism can help social scientists to generate further theories and refine future research projects.

Former Congressman Bill Luther

Luther was elected to the State House in 1974 and State Senate in 1976, served as Senate Assistant Majority Leader from 1982 to 1994, and served as a U.S. House member from 1994 to 2002. Since the beginning of his political career he has noticed a marked decline in trust from his constituents. He said that back in the 1970s and 80s, "I'd even get positive comments about trust and integrity from people who disagreed with me politically."

In recent years he did not receive many of these positive comments. He attributes some of this change to the size of his constituencies. During his years in the Minnesota Senate, his smaller constituency knew him better than did his larger constituency during his stint in the U.S. Congress. He also suggests that some has been a result of a decline in respect and trust for politicians generally.

He encountered more open hostility at public events in recent years, including rude comments from voters and even being squirted with hoses while walking in parades. He attributes this to an increase in cynicism about all politicians due to a growth in population, as well as to events like the Watergate scandal and President Clinton's conduct. "[Voters] do things today that they never would have done thirty years ago."

He believes society today is more confrontational because of the impersonalized nature of the information age, in which people now communicate through computers and impersonal phone calls rather than through personal contact.[1]

Luther believes that increased education and access to information have encouraged people to view themselves as politicians' equals. People no longer defer to those in political offices. He also believes the increase in partisan bickering has added to this increased hostility towards politicians. It is difficult to counter these changes since a larger constituency is harder to contact. Politicians must rely on television to get their message out, rather than face-to-face contact through parades or attending civic meetings.[2]

Luther also noticed a significant decline in volunteerism during his years in public office. He says his best sources for volunteers have been people from labor households, people who don't have as much education but understand how important the government is in their lives. He also gets a lot of student and senior citizen activists. Often he has just a few volunteers who put in a lot of work. He says he had a bigger cross-section of people volunteering in 1974 as

[1] The comments about the information age are interesting in light of Brian Marson's findings in this report. Ordinary citizens say that improved technology had decreased the need for group interaction.

[2] It is important to note that Luther's 2002 election was one of the most contentious in the country. Each of Luther's congressional races was close, and the new district into which he was placed after the 2000 Census left him at a disadvantage, since it was more conservative than his previous district. Because these elections were so competitive there were numerous attack ads and open hostility between candidates. Consequently, Luther may have experienced more hostility than the typical politician.

people from all walks of life volunteered to help out. But now he rarely sees middle-aged adults with families volunteering.

He believes this is because people have less time today than they used to. As more families have both parents working and people become more pressed for time, volunteerism declines. He says, "We're a different society than we were thirty years ago."

In conjunction with this decrease in volunteering, Luther has noticed an increase in donations since the 1970's, he says, because people are more affluent and because many people have less time but still want to help candidates with whom they agree. Luther was skeptical about some donors' motives. He says there are two categories of donors: philosophy contributors, who really believe in the person running for office, and access contributors, who want to network. Those in this second category donate so that their views can be heard and seriously considered. While people are still networking, therefore, more of them are doing it by donating money to campaigns, rather than volunteering and getting to know the politician and his staff personally.

Luther did suggest that declines in trust and volunteerism have been less severe for Republicans than for Democrats. He says that because Republicans have more money, they can produce more TV ads, which are essential in campaigns for districts with large constituencies. He added that Republican volunteers and donors are more disciplined and organized, so they have a better support structure and less decline in volunteerism. The National Election Studies from the last forty-six years support Luther's belief that Republicans have been more successful at mobilization than have Democrats. More people report being contacted by a volunteer for the Republican Party in 2002 than in any previous year for which data is available. Although Democratic Party contacts have also increased in the past decade, they are not increasing as rapidly (National Election Studies 2003, Burns and Kinder 2003).

Senator Mark Dayton

Mark Dayton was first appointed Commissioner of Economic Development in 1978. He served as Minnesota Commissioner of Energy and Economic Development from 1983 to 1987 and as state auditor from 1991 to 1995. He lost the DFL primary for Governor in 1997, and was elected U.S. Senator in 2000.

Dayton also found that social capital appeared to be declining in Minnesota, though perhaps not to the extent that Luther did. Dayton, like Luther, noticed a certain lack of trust from Minnesotans.

He says, "Reliance on government to improve people's lives has dropped precipitously in the last twenty-five years." As people are less reliant on the government, they are also less trusting of it. Like Putnam, Dayton sees a generational explanation for this. While many Americans still rely on Social Security and Medicare, people no longer rely on the GI Bill or many of the New Deal programs. As the country entered World War II, people viewed the government as problem solver that could get rid of Hitler and restore order, peace, and prosperity to the world.

So, Dayton says, the government became "a victim of its own success," as people began to expect more of their government. But wages stopped increasing and the tax burden became a greater concern as economic pressures on families increased. President Ronald Reagan capitalized on these frustrations to successfully promote an image of the government as bad and wasteful, producing mainly taxes and burdens. "The government's gone from being the solution to being the problem to being the enemy."

Government's successes don't get noticed or credited. People care less about who is in power than how the government is affecting them. Clinton's high approval ratings during his sex scandal and subsequent impeachment are a case in point. People may want leaders who are more moral than the average person, but they don't expect it, and they aren't disappointed when they don't see it.

Dayton is not terribly concerned that, in his view, most Minnesotans do not trust him. "I haven't seen a politician in Minnesota in my lifetime who has achieved a level of sustained acclaim [so] that she or he has become widely respected and admired." He says that people approve if things are going well, but there is little approval based on goodwill alone. The

public is fickle. One day it will approve, one day it will disapprove.

Most are not willing to forgive mistakes, even those of public officials who previously did something they favored. When asked why he is not concerned about this decline in trust, Dayton replied, "No politician has any right to someone's trust. You have to earn it and you have to somehow sustain that support. … I don't know if trust is even possible anymore because people are so susceptible [to negative campaigning and negative descriptions of political leaders]."

This distrust of leaders is in many ways what the founders intended, Dayton argues. "That inherent cynicism and distrust may be what's kept our country on an even keel." Thus, while this form of political social capital has declined, Dayton does not see this as a necessarily negative change.

He does, however, regret the difficulty in making personal, face-to-face contact with his constituents. He says that face-to-face contact is crucial in a campaign. He campaigns "anywhere there's people." This includes parades, festivals, meetings, debates, coffee shops, supermarkets, malls, bowling alleys, and the State Fair. With all these time commitments, Dayton is never left with extra time, so he hasn't noticed a decrease in social functions which might indicate a decline in social capital.

Participation in the DFL party as a whole has dwindled, Dayton notes. Fewer people get involved in grassroots organizing. There are fewer people at caucuses (twenty to twenty-five percent fewer than the number of participants twenty years ago – some cannot even fill their slate of delegates), fewer at county and district meetings, fewer at the annual Minnesota DFL Humphrey dinner. Active and personal involvement has lessened. People are leaving the party in what Dayton called a "mass exodus" and the new generation is not refilling the dwindling ranks.

Dayton doesn't blame the young people. He realizes that college students are often strapped for cash and time. They need to spend extra time making money to pay increasing tuitions. He has been impressed by a number of senior citizens who have helped his campaign. Although his office does not actively recruit senior citizens for campaigning activities, there are between six and twelve seniors who are particularly dedicated to his campaigns.

Former Vice President Walter Mondale

Mondale has served twenty-four years in public office. He was Minnesota's Attorney General, a U.S. Senator, Vice President from 1977 to 1981, and the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1984. He agrees with Luther and Dayton that volunteerism and trust are declining across the country, including Minnesota. But he notes that Minnesota has a long history of high levels of social capital and he hopes that Minnesota friendliness will not be lost. "Minnesota has always been … a strong state in working together," he says.

Mondale notes that the decline is not catastrophic, but that we no longer have the high levels of social capital for which Minnesota has been known. He noted that despite this national trend, some states are actually doing a better job of uniting people and working towards the common good. Alabama, for example, recently raised taxes to increase funding for education.

He believes that some people have simply become more "mean-spirited," noting that, "We're not thinking about how we can help each other enough. We're thinking about ourselves." He believes that decline in social capital is linked to a stronger focus on the self, instead of on the community as a whole. "It's not just in politics where people have stopped meeting," he says. It's also in clubs, organizations, and churches. This may be an advantage for the Republicans, he suggests. If people are committed to the market and believe the individual should accomplish everything by himself or herself and not through the community, they will support the party that agrees with them: the Republican party. "It's a Hobbesian world they're producing," he says.

Mondale agrees that there is less trust of politicians now than there was when he was in office. And politics has changed a lot, too. "People who tell you what to say and how to say it have become very central to American politics." He thinks people have become discouraged by big money politics and believe the government is a wasteful bureaucracy. He believes the Republican Party has capitalized on

this lack of one-on-one connections between people by increasing their connections with people, convincing them to vote and become more involved. Republicans have a monetary advantage, but Mondale hopes this advantage can be checked by young people getting involved in politics and volunteering to help Democrats.

He is strongly supportive of the younger generation is getting involved in the system, even if it shakes things up a bit. He says, "The height of the Democrats' greatest successes occurred because there were a lot of young people involved."

Congressman Jim Ramstad

Republican Congressman Jim Ramstad has spent ten years in the State Senate and now thirteen as a member of the U.S. House. Ramstad, unlike Luther, Dayton, and Mondale, has not noticed a marked decline in political and civic participation in his district. In fact, he says if anything he has noticed an increase. He believes his constituents put a lot of trust in him, as evidenced by his landslide victory in the last election, in which he received 214,000 votes, more than any other member of the House of Representatives. In twenty-three years in public office his integrity has never once been questioned. But he does not take his relatively safe seat for granted – he still campaigns and meets with his constituents as often as possible.

Ramstad, like Luther and Dayton, believes face-to-face contact is essential in campaigning. He thinks door-knocking is the most effective form of contact because people feel more connected with him that way. He speaks at and attends Rotary Club meetings, Lions Club meetings, church group functions, PTA meetings, school events, and town meetings. He says that in his district such meetings are more common than they are elsewhere.

He used to attend three or four community functions a week. Now he attends more, and they are better attended. He says many people in his district feel connected and involved with their communities. He also says that the number of people at a town meetings does not seem to be affected by the wealth of that community, since meetings in less affluent suburbs are as well-attended as meetings in the very affluent ones.

He believes the increases he has seen are due to an increase in education levels, not in wealth. According to Ramstad, "People with education build social capital."[3] At the civic meetings he attends, he sees a very diverse group of people, from senior citizens to young professional parents with children in schools, and people of all ages and races. He is very happy about the involvement he sees in his community and has introduced legislation to form a national youth advisory commission, a group of young people who would advise the President. Ramstad spends a lot of time visiting schools in this effort. "We need to get young people more connected to the government," he explains.

He feels it is essential to meet with constituents because, he says, "I am the Federal government for a lot of people." Many have no other connections to the U.S. government, so he always wants to make a favorable impression. Ramstad has never had trouble recruiting volunteers for campaigns. Like Dayton and Luther, the majority of Ramstad's campaign volunteers are senior citizens, as well as high school and college students.

DISCUSSION

Because I interviewed only a handful of politicians, it is impossible to draw sweeping conclusions about the state of political involvement and trust in Minnesota. However, three general patterns stand out in these interviews, and they deserve further analysis.

First, all four of the people interviewed indicated that their volunteers include a disproportionate number of senior citizens. This supports Putnam's argument that there has been a generational element to the recent decline in social capital.

Second, the DFLers interviewed see a marked decline of trust and volunteering in recent years, a pattern that also seems to support Putnam's argument.

Finally, however, the decline of trust and volunteering seems to have affected Republicans

[3] See Erica Stoltz's analysis in this report of how education and income affect social capital.

less, if at all. The DFLers interviewed pointed this out, and Republican Congressman Ramstad confirms that he has seen increased interest in politics among his constituents.

This partisan divide in volunteering and trust has several potential explanations. It may result from disillusionment with Democrats caused by events such as the Clinton scandal. It may be that, as Mondale suggests, an increased focus on the self at the expense of community favors the Republicans. Or it could be a result of the fact that Democrats are elected disproportionately from urban districts, which Putnam finds have less social capital, and that Republicans are elected from suburban districts, which have more social capital.[4] This possibility, if true of the nation as a whole, could be cause for serious concern among Democrats.

These patterns are interesting, but are, of course, only speculations. A more comprehensive study, including a survey of politicians and political activists around the country, would provide a more comprehensive picture of how social capital affects political involvement and whether there is a systemic partisan imbalance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Burns, Nancy and Donald Kinder, Principal Investigators, "NES 2002 Full Release," University of Michigan, 2003 http://www.umich.edu/~nes.

Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

National Election Studies, "The NES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior," University of Michigan, http://www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm, accessed June 13, 2003.

[4] See Melissa Rifkin's chapter and Bertram Johnson's chapter in this report, for further examination of suburban social capital and political involvement.

The Effect of Government Policy on Social Capital

Marcus Jun

ABSTRACT

Based on existing research on social capital in advanced democracies, I identify examples of government policies that enhance social capital. These policies fit into two broad categories. One category is general policy that creates and sustains environments and infrastructures conducive to social capital: education, economic conditions, general social trust, and trust in political institutions. The second is public policy specifically designed to encourage civic participation and support voluntary associations and non-profit organizations.

BACKGROUND

There has been much attention paid to research on social capital levels in various nations. Only recently, however, have scholars begun to examine the effects of government policy on social capital. This research has heretofore been scattered among a number of journal articles and edited volumes. I hope that this review of the literature can serve as a useful guide to non-experts on the policy options available regarding social capital.

KEY FINDINGS

- While some scholars, including Putnam, have argued that high social capital levels can promote effective governance, the reverse may also be true: governments can enhance social capital levels through particular public policies.
- Governments affect social capital in two primary ways: by creating an environment conducive to trust, associations, and volunteerism, and by direct assistance to private organizations.
- Although the effects of economic deprivation and the welfare state on social capital may appear to be straightforward, both factors can have mixed effects on social capital.

METHOD AND RESULTS

I combed the existing literature for examples of government policy in industrialized democracies that affected social capital and hoped to assess their potential as methods of increasing or sustaining social capital.

I examined international academic and policy research on social capital, including review articles and essays. Among the most influential recent publications is a volume edited by Robert Putnam, *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*. In this book, researchers assess the state of social capital in advanced democracies including the United States, Britain, France, Japan, Sweden, Germany, and Australia. In reviewing this research, I paid close attention to examples of government policy designed to affect social capital.

Government policies seemed to naturally group themselves into two categories: first, general policies concerning education, the economy, and social trust; and second, policies that specifically engage and support civic organizations.

General Policy

Education

Education policy is important because people with higher levels of education are more civically engaged and more trusting than those with less education.[1] In Britain, Peter Hall finds that educational reforms that expanded post-secondary education to individuals from diverse backgrounds had a positive effect on civic involvement. The average effect of a post-secondary education is greater today than it was

Marcus Jun, Carleton class of 2005, is a political science major from Cerritos, California.

[1] See Erica Stoltz's chapter in this report.

in the 1950s because more people from diverse backgrounds obtain post-secondary education. "In the 1950s, the experience of post-secondary education increased community involvement, on average about 76 percent… By 1990, however, post-secondary education was associated with an increase in personal community involvement of 110 percent over what could be expected on the basis of a secondary education alone" (Hall 1999, p. 12-13).

Findings from France, however, raise some doubt about the marginal effects of education on civic engagement. In that country "the influence of education on associative social capital has diminished" (Putnam 2002, p. 156).

Despite these divergent findings about trends over time, education remains an important predictor of civic engagement and high levels of interpersonal trust. Accordingly, Robert Putnam proposes specific educational policies designed to improve social capital (Putnam 2000, p. 405). He supports classes that teach students how to participate in their community to enact change, and that instill in students knowledge about politics. Another important program for Putnam is community service that is "meaningful, regular, and woven into the fabric of the school curriculum" (Putnam 2000, p. 405). He believes these programs will develop feelings of efficacy in students by teaching them how to cooperate and interact in groups. Like community service, extracurricular activities also prepare students to be civically responsible and engaged. Finally, community service programs are important because young volunteers are more likely to volunteer as adults than those who do not volunteer at earlier ages.

Sweden's system of government-funded 'study circles' seems to build social networks and therefore increase social capital levels. Study circles involve small groups that meet regularly to learn about a particular subject. Bo Rothstein finds a "positive relationship between participating in study circles and activity in voluntary organizations, voting and having a more civic-minded attitude in general." Furthermore, these study circles attract people with lower educational levels who tend to be less involved in other types of associations. A report on study circles finds that "the study circles maintain a civic network right across all social borders" (Putnam 2002, p. 301).

Economic Policy

Economic conditions also affect social capital. Unemployment tends to cause isolation and decreases levels of trust (Putnam 2002, p. 222). Furthermore, job security allows people to engage in social activities, and positive economic conditions reduce distributional conflict over resources (Putnam 2002, p. 236-7). Inequality and marginalization can also reduce social capital; flat income distributions correlate positively with high trust and civic norms (Putnam 2002, p. 354).

On the other hand, it is possible that a bad economy could also positively affect social capital. In such a situation people may turn to associations for goods, services, and opportunities, while the unemployed create groups that represent their interests (Putnam 2002, p. 237).

Robert Putnam proposes economic and workplace policies designed to maintain and increase social capital (Putnam 2000, p. 406). He advocates tax and regulatory incentives for companies that encourage civic activities such as volunteering. He also proposes that employers increase the availability of part-time jobs. In his research, Putnam found that part-time workers are more civically involved than both full-time employees who have less time, and the unemployed, who tend to be socially isolated (Putnam 2000, p. 407).

Trust

A critical component of social capital is trust in others. Trust in political institutions may be related to this interpersonal trust.

In his classic *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Samuel Huntington emphasizes the role of government in trust, arguing that political institutions are an important component in explaining political stability, social cooperation, and "civic polities." According to Huntington, trust and durable political institutions can unify a society marked by competing, individual interests, and can thus foster long-term, public interests (Huntington 1968).

In describing levels of social capital in the United States, Robert Wuthnow emphasizes the

role of national leaders, finding that those who trust politicians are more willing to believe in the basic goodness of people (Putnam 2002, p. 87). This suggests that more trustworthy leaders might help to increase general social trust. Government policy also fosters trust through the protection of property rights. Finally, trust in government is also influenced by fair, transparent policies and rules necessary for the government to be publicly credible (Levi 1996, p. 51). In sum, trust in government and government actors is important because they relate to general social trust and allow for a more cooperative environment.

Government and Associations

Researchers on social capital in Germany recommend a general framework of cooperation between government and associations. Government policy regarding associations must find a balance between extreme, social interventionism that discourages civic activity and an unregulated, laissez-faire model that results in exclusive benefits and no collective goods (Putnam 2002, p. 240). Restrictive regulations and supervision increase dependence on professionals and consultants to carry out government directives in delivering services. The effect of this professionalization is to reduce volunteering and the civic activity of non-consultants in associations. On the other hand, an unregulated, laissez-faire model may result in associations providing selective benefits only to members and not for the benefit of society.

The case of Sweden also offers a model of the interaction between government and associations. The Swedish system of the 1960s was created to include interest groups in the formation of public policy (Putnam 2002, p. 292). It promotes active involvement of extra-governmental groups in policy making. An important aspect of the Swedish model and similar models in other Scandinavian countries is that the collaboration of the groups with the governments did not decrease the autonomy of the associations (Klauseen & Sells 1996, pp. 99-122).

One example of the incorporation of interest groups in policy is the National Board of Social Affairs, which was created to deal with labor problems. It regulated worker safety and labor exchange, but most importantly it included representatives of the unions in its decision-making process (Putnam 2002, p. 296). This is important not only because it involves unions in the key decisions that affect them, but also because it fosters trust and cooperation between employers and the unions (Rothstein 1991, p. 163-165).

In addition to working with associations to make policy, governments can encourage and support associations and civic organizations through favorable policies and funding. In France, where the state has historically limited voluntary associations, the influence of government policy on associations is apparent. In 1901, the Law of Associations repealed previous limitations on associations. This law resulted in a moderate growth in the number of groups (Putnam 2002, 142). The example in France demonstrates that restrictive government policy can hinder the growth of a civic polity.

In Germany, Offe and Fuchs find that government can support and encourage associations by offering them tax incentives, "favorable legal frameworks," and resources such as meeting areas and professional consultants (Putnam 2002, p. 230).

Another method of supporting associations is through government funds. In Britain, Hall finds that the central and local governments provides about 450 million pounds (US $700 million) which accounts for about 20 percent of the overall income of associations (Hall 1999, p. 17).

The Welfare State

In many countries with a welfare state, there is a fear that it may reduce social capital because recipients depend more on the government than they do on private organizations. But the picture may not be this simple. Other aspects of the welfare state may encourage civic engagement and increase social capital.

In France, Worms finds that the expansion of the welfare state leads to growth of associations and other positive social capital developments (Putnam 2002, p. 144). First, as the welfare state expands, lobbying groups promoting interests and defending rights also increase in response. Second, people respond to new legislation that affects civic activities. For

example a law in 1965 allowed for hunting and fishing associations at the local level. This law promoted such associations, particularly in rural areas that serve as opportunities for civic engagement (Putnam 2002, p. 146). Third, with the expansion of the welfare state, the government uses associations as a means of delivering new social services.

In Sweden, the extensive welfare state creates a situation in which nearly all citizens benefit. Consequently there are no divisions within the public that could create an environment of distrust and wariness of those who might be "cheating the system" (Putnam 2002, p. 323). Instead of dividing the public into welfare recipients and taxpayers, which could reduce social trust, the universal nature of Sweden's welfare state unites the public as both supporters and recipients of social benefits.

DISCUSSION

Research on social capital in advanced democracies demonstrates that government policy does affect social capital. Government policy may not be able to directly control personal motivations such as trust and the behavior of citizens joining associations. However, government policy can create an environment conducive to social capital formation by fostering social trust and trust in government and by supporting associations through resources and funding. Policy can also directly engage voluntary associations in delivering government services.

Minnesota is nationally and internationally noted for its innovative social policies and programs, and therefore may choose to enact one or more of the policies discussed above. Of course, many have argued that Minnesota's political culture already serves as fertile ground for generating high levels of social capital. From the perspective of the 'moralistic' political culture of Minnesota, politics is viewed as "a public activity centered on some notion of the public good and properly devoted to the advancement of the public interest" (Elazar et al., 1999, p. 19). Minnesotans have historically viewed politics as a means to seek the public good, and this increases their willingness to participate and join in associations. Nevertheless, policymakers should not assume that government has no role to play in sustaining or increasing social capital levels in the state. High levels of social capital can lead to effective government, as Putnam and others have argued, but it is also true that governments can promote high levels of social capital.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elazar, Daniel J., Virginia Gray, and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics and Government*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Hall, Peter. "Social Capital in Britain," British Journal of Political Science, 29 (1999).

Huntington, Samuel P. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Klauseen, Kurt Klaudi and Per Sells, 'The Third Sector in Scandinavia,' *Voluntas* 7 (1996).

Levi, Margaret. "Social and Unsocial Capital: A Review Essay on Robert Putnam's Making Democracy Work," Politics and Society, 24:1, 1996).

Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Putnam, Robert, Editor. Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Rothstein, Bo. "State Structures and Variations in Corporatism: The Swedish Case, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 14:2 (1991), pp. 149-171.

'A New Breed of Republicans': The Suburbs and the 2002 Minnesota Governor's Race

Bertram Johnson

ABSTRACT

Recent Republican victories in Minnesota seem to have been based on the growing importance of a suburban constituency. There is evidence that mobilization of this key group of voters, as well as GOP appeals to issues of importance to suburbanites, such as lower taxes and improved transportation, were key components of this victory. In this article, I explore the depth of Tim Pawlenty's support among young, well-educated white collar voters (who disproportionately reside in the suburbs) using a statistical solution to the so-called 'ecological inference problem' developed by Gary King of Harvard University. Because there are no exit polling data available for 2002 races, this technique provides us with a heretofore unseen picture of the Pawlenty coalition. As expected, Pawlenty defeated Democrat-Farmer-Labor candidate Roger Moe among younger voters, college educated voters, and white collar voters – people that are concentrated in suburban areas. These Minnesotans are growing in number and turn out to vote at high rates. They are disproportionately the voters of Minnesota's future.

BACKGROUND[1]

Minnesota appears to have become more conservative lately. A recent analysis by three political scientists points out that "Minnesotans do not necessarily see themselves as liberal…; they have shied away from this label in recent years, just as most Americans have." (Elazar, Gray and Spano 1999, p. 67) The Jesse Ventura election of 1998 and Tim Pawlenty's victory in the 2002 governor's race also suggest that the state that produced Hubert Humphrey and Walter Mondale may be increasingly suspicious of government and more wary of the liberalism of the 1960s and 1970s. Closely linked to these developments has been the growth of the suburbs surrounding the Twin Cities. Ventura focused on the suburban ring during his 1998 campaign and received significantly higher support there than he did in the rest of the state (Lentz 2002, Chapters 2 & 3). Pawlenty hails from a suburb himself, and received large majorities in most suburban counties in the 2002 race.

Elsewhere in this report, Melissa Rifkin finds that Minnesota's suburban governments are more likely to sponsor activities that foster community than rural governments. In a recent influential book, political scientist Eric Oliver similarly argues that suburbanites tend to be "more engaged in community affairs and active in civic life."[2] (Oliver 2001 p. 5) It is no surprise, then, that these highly participatory communities are drawing the attention of

Bertram Johnson is Visiting Instructor in the Political Science Department, Carleton College. In the 2003-2004 academic year, he will be Lecturer, Harvard University.

[1] The title of this chapter comes from Charlie Weaver, as quoted in Lori Surdevant, "A chance for 'new breed' in GOP; Moderate Republicans went AWOL in 1990s. Norm Coleman and Tim Pawlenty succeeded at least in part because they seemed to offer its return," *Star Tribune*, November 7, 2002, p. 35A. Thanks to Steve Schier, Karen Wright, Rich Keiser, Bryan Daves, members of the Minnesota Social Capital Project, and my spring 2003 'Federalism, State and Local Politics' class for insightful discussions that improved this analysis.

[2] Oliver goes on to argue that the racial and economic segregation that suburbs often institutionalize counteracts these beneficial effects. "By shielding residents from political contests over resources or the problems of urban centers, suburbanization demobilizes much of the American citizenry from local politics." (Oliver 2001, p. 188) Thus the metro-wide effect of suburbanization on civic involvement may be negative, even while residents of individual suburbs are highly 'civic.'

politicians. The suburban counties surrounding the Twin Cities now contain nearly a quarter of Minnesota's total population. Add to this the fact that the population of suburban counties grew by an average of 39 percent from 1990 to 2000[3] (versus 12.4 percent growth for the state as a whole), and it is clear that the suburbs will continue to be politically influential in the future.

Not all suburbs are alike, of course. Nevertheless, residents of the communities surrounding Hennepin and Ramsey counties (home of Minneapolis and St. Paul) share several common characteristics: among other things, they tend to be younger, better educated, and are more likely to be employed in a managerial or professional job than other Minnesotans.[4] In this paper, I focus my attention on these three characteristics. I find that in 2002, at least, these disproportionately suburban groups were more likely to vote Republican.

KEY FINDINGS

- In the 2002 gubernatorial election, Republican Tim Pawlenty did significantly better in counties that had the highest voter turnout; DFLer Roger Moe did significantly worse in these counties.
- Pawlenty and Green Party candidate Ken Pentel did better in counties that had grown the most in the last decade; Moe again did significantly worse in these counties.
- Moe defeated Pawlenty among those aged 65 years or more, while Pawlenty beat Moe among younger voters.
- Pawlenty received the plurality of votes among voters with a bachelor's degree or higher, while Moe and Independence Party candidate Tim Penny trailed among this group.
- Among white collar workers, Pawlenty scored an overwhelming victory, outpolling Moe by about 57 percent to about 10 percent. Penny appears to have done better than Moe among white collar voters, securing close to 30 percent of their votes.
- Voter turnout among younger Minnesotans is about equal to that of older Minnesotans, while turnout among better educated and white collar voters exceeds turnout among other groups.

METHOD AND RESULTS

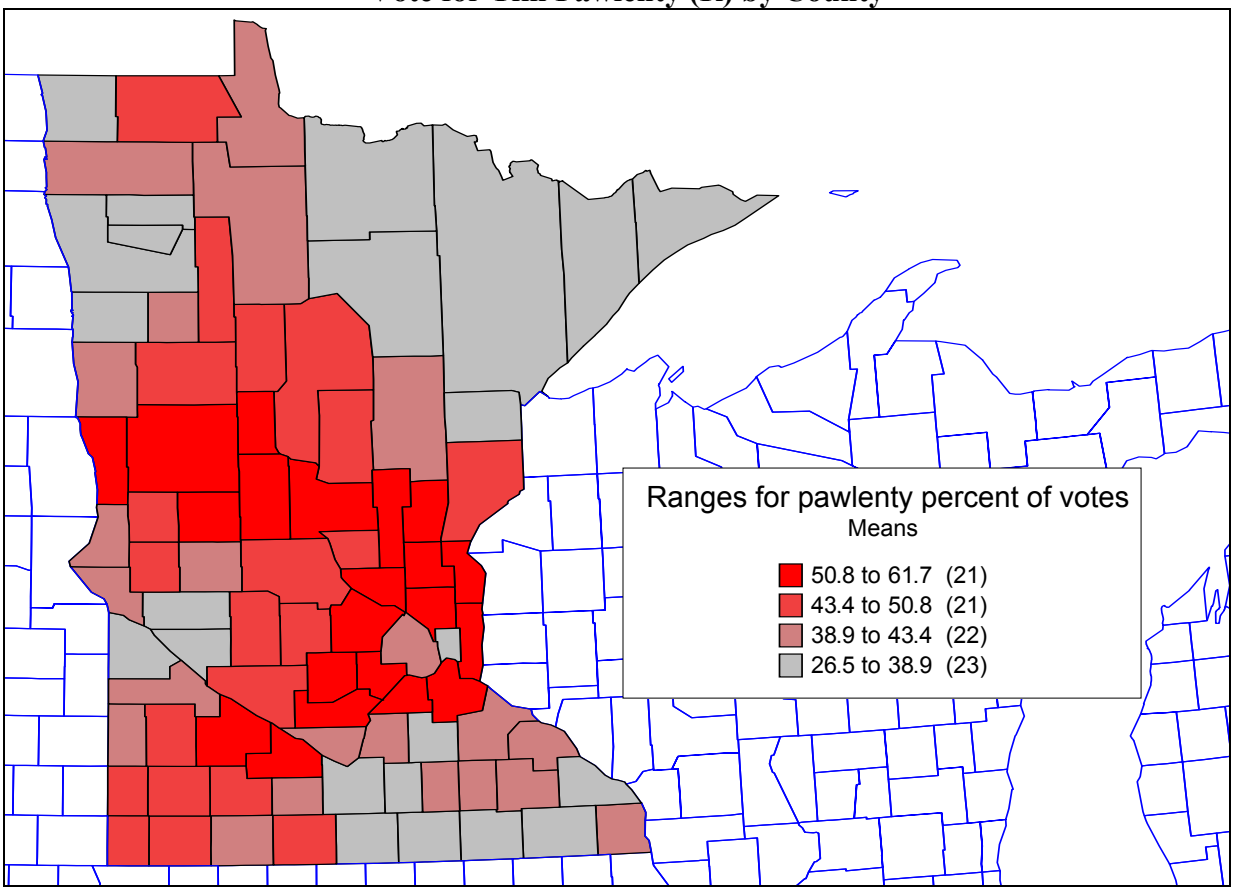
Turnout and Population Change

Figure 1 depicts the county-level percent of the vote for Tim Pawlenty in the 2002 race. As the figure indicates, Pawlenty did best in suburban counties, often receiving 50 to 60 percent of the vote.

[3] Data from the U.S. Census. "Suburban" counties are Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Scott, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright.

[4] See the Minnesota State Demographic Center for more information: www.mnplan.state.mn.us/demography/.

Figure 1: 2002 Minnesota Gubernatorial Election Results:
Vote for Tim Pawlenty (R) by County



Figures 2 and 3 show that these same suburban counties also tend to have the highest turnout, and have been among the fastest growing counties over the last decade. This suggests that Pawlenty did well where voters turned out in great numbers, and in places whose population is on the rise.

Figure 2: 2002 Minnesota Gubernatorial Election:
Voter Turnout by County

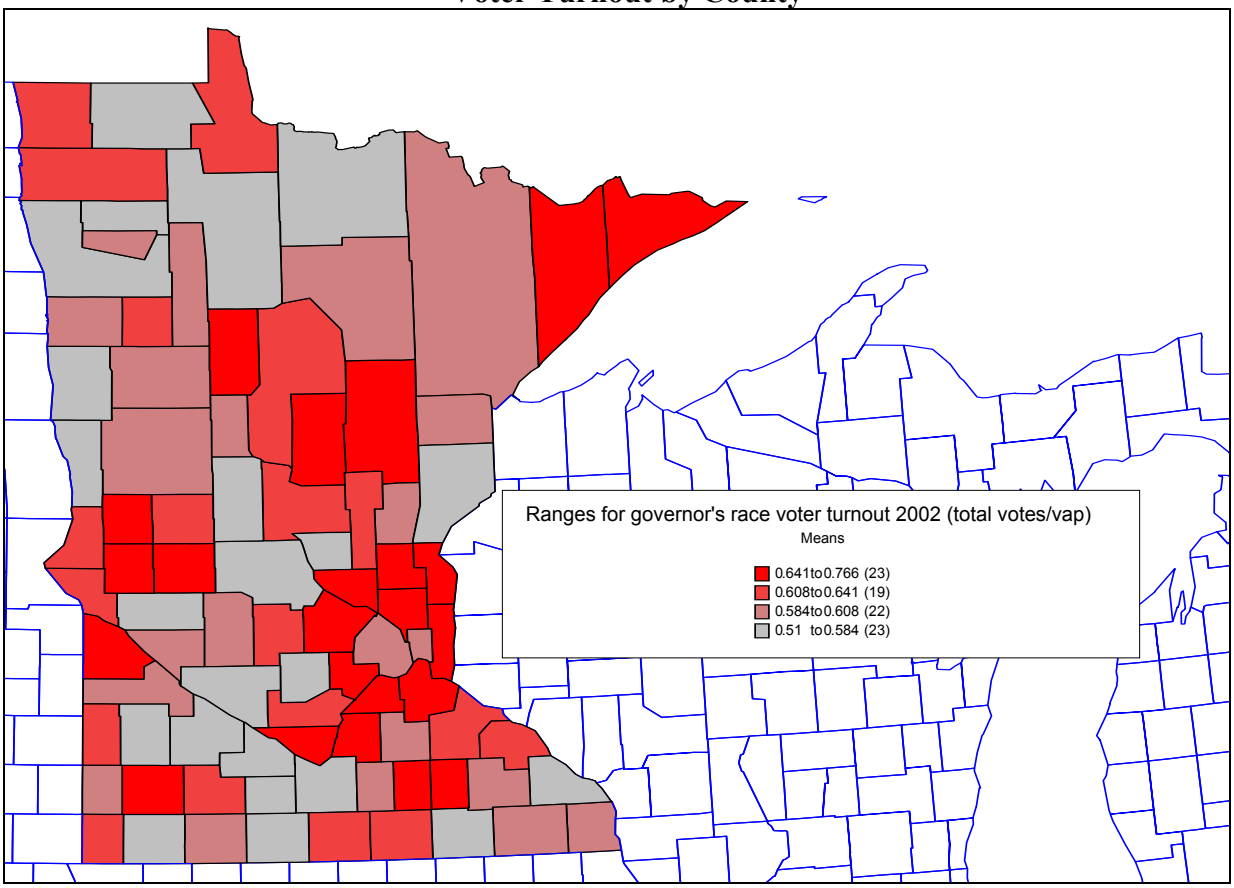
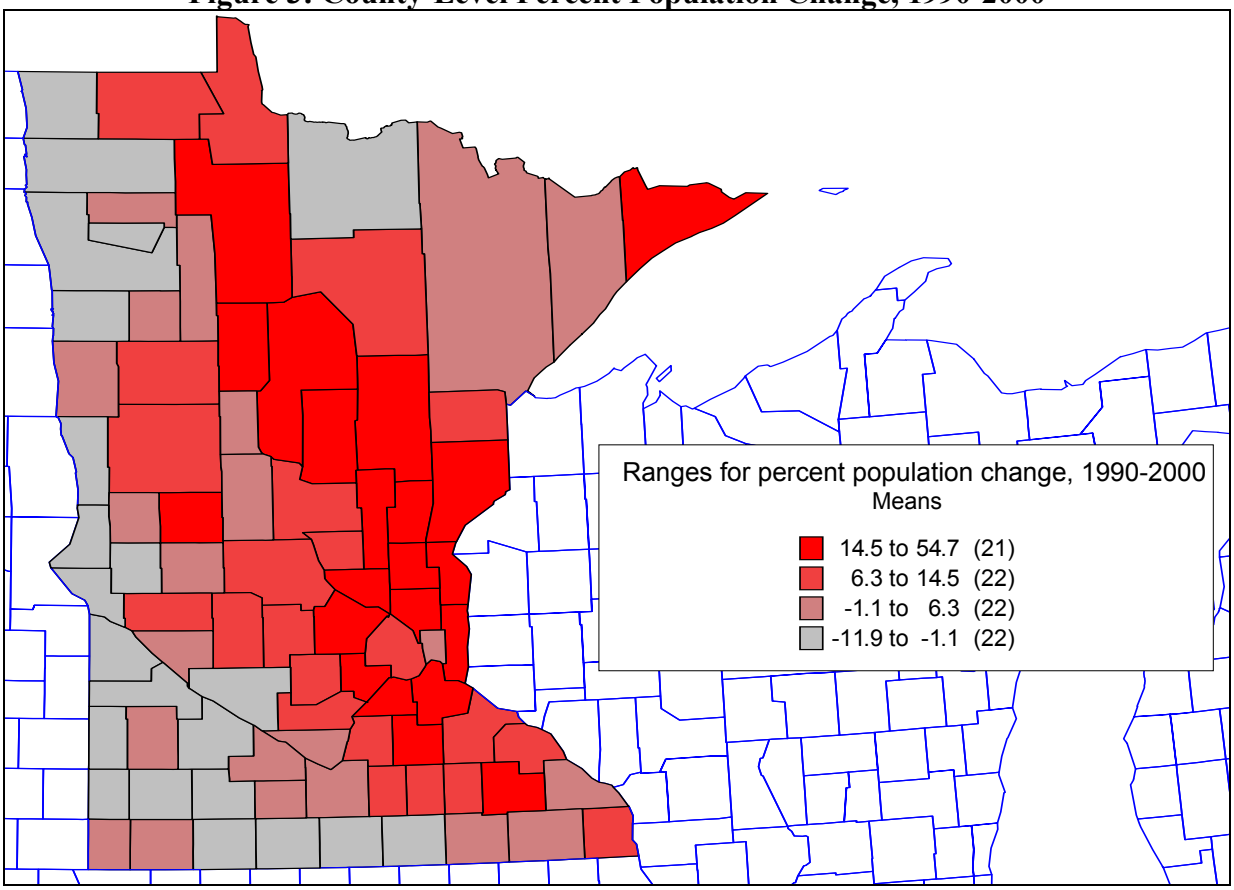


Figure 3: County-Level Percent Population Change, 1990-2000



Tables 1 and 2 confirm this impression. These tables report the simple correlations between the county-level percent of the vote for various candidates, and voter turnout and population change respectively. A correlation of 1 indicates a perfect relationship between two variables – if you know the value of one variable, you can exactly predict the value of the other. A correlation of zero indicates no relationship whatsoever between the variables. In parentheses, I report a two-tailed p-value, which represents the probability that we observe an effect by chance. If the p-value is small (below about .10), an effect is unlikely to be due to chance, and is often said to be 'statistically significant.' In Tables 1 and 2, statistically significant correlations appear in bold.

Table 1: Correlation Coefficients between County-Level Turnout and Various Candidate County-Level Vote Percentages

	Bivariate correlation with turnout (two-tailed p-value)
Pawlenty % of Vote	**+ .27 (.013)**
Moe % of Vote	- .16 (.150)
Penny (IP) % of Vote	- .04 (.719)
Pentel (Green) % of Vote	+ .05 (.662)

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients between County-Level Percent Population Change, 1990-2000 and Various Candidate County-Level Vote Percentages

	Bivariate Correlation with Percent Population Change (two-tailed p-value)
Pawlenty % of Vote	**+ .50 (.000)**
Moe % of Vote	**- .30 (.000)**
Penny (IP) % of Vote	- .07 (.511)
Pentel (Green) % of Vote	**+ .25 (.019)**

Table 2 also confirms the impression that Pawlenty received significantly more support in high-growth counties. The relationship between the Pawlenty vote and percent population change over the last decade is positive and highly unlikely to be due to chance. For Moe, the effect is reversed – the DFLer performed significantly worse in counties that grew the most in the last ten years. This finding is consistent with the argument that traditional DFL areas are shrinking in electoral strength over time relative to suburban areas where Republicans have been more successful.

The data do not indicate that voters in higher-growth areas are necessarily hostile to liberal issues, however. Indeed, Ken Pentel of the Green Party received significantly higher percentages of the vote in high growth areas. Though Pentel's statewide support was under five percent, his relative success with voters in growing counties suggests that not all such voters are necessarily conservative.

Ecological Inference

For years, election-day observers have anxiously awaited the results of exit polls. For the last decade, such polls have been conducted

almost exclusively by Voter News Service (VNS), a consortium of major television networks and the Associated Press. In 2002, however, VNS shut itself down on election day, admitting that trouble with new computer software had caused its confidence it its own figures to falter. Much valuable information on how different groups of voters sorted themselves out appeared to be lost.

Fortunately, aggregate voting data, when combined with demographic data available from the U.S. Census, can allow us to generate reliable estimates of vote breakdowns for different groups of voters. Gary King of Harvard University has developed a sophisticated and reliable method of doing so, as a solution to what is known to social scientists as the 'ecological inference problem.' (King 1997)

An ecological inference problem exists when a researcher would like to be able to characterize individuals, but is saddled with only aggregate data. Consider, for example, a situation in which we would like to know how senior citizens in a particular county voted for Pawlenty in 2002. We know from data available through the Minnesota Secretary of State's office that Pawlenty received 40% of the vote. We know, further, from data available through the U.S. Census Bureau that 40% of the population of the county is 65 years old or over. An incautious scholar might jump to the conclusion that 100% of the senior citizens voted for Pawlenty. But it is also possible that not a single senior citizen voted Republican, and that all of Pawlenty's votes came from the younger voters in the county. Pawlenty's support among seniors could be 0%, or 100%, or anything in between. We seem to be stuck.

King's solution draws on the fact that we often have aggregate data for multiple units – there are 87 counties in Minnesota, for example, and we know voting and demographic data for each of them. Furthermore, these units are likely to be related in some way. Senior citizens in Carver County are unlikely to be radically different from seniors in Scott County. King's method employs a technique called maximum likelihood estimation to borrow information on demographics and voting from all counties simultaneously to produce rough estimates of the quantities of interest – senior citizens voting for Pawlenty – for each individual county.[5] These rough county-level estimates can be aggregated and weighted by population to produce a more precise statewide figure.[6]

One advantage of King's method is that it produces margins of error of the type found in traditional survey research. These margins of error give us valuable information about how certain we are of each finding. Often, the estimates on Minnesota data have error margins that are about as wide, or even smaller than, a typical public opinion poll. At times, these margins are somewhat wider. In each case below I have included information on 95-percent confidence intervals. That is, we can be 95 percent sure that the true number lies somewhere within the range indicated.

[5] One complication in the estimation of vote totals is that one first must estimate voter turnout among each group, then use these estimated voter turnout figures to estimate percentage of the vote for each candidate. Because it is an estimate upon an estimate, an ecological inference estimate of vote choice includes added uncertainty. The 95% confidence intervals reported here take this additional error into account.

[6] I used *EzI*, a freeware package available through King's website that implements his method: http://gking.harvard.edu. The software is also available for use with the statistical package GAUSS.

Figure 4: Ecological Inference Estimates of Percent of Vote for 2002 Governor's Candidates by Age, with 95% Confidence Intervals

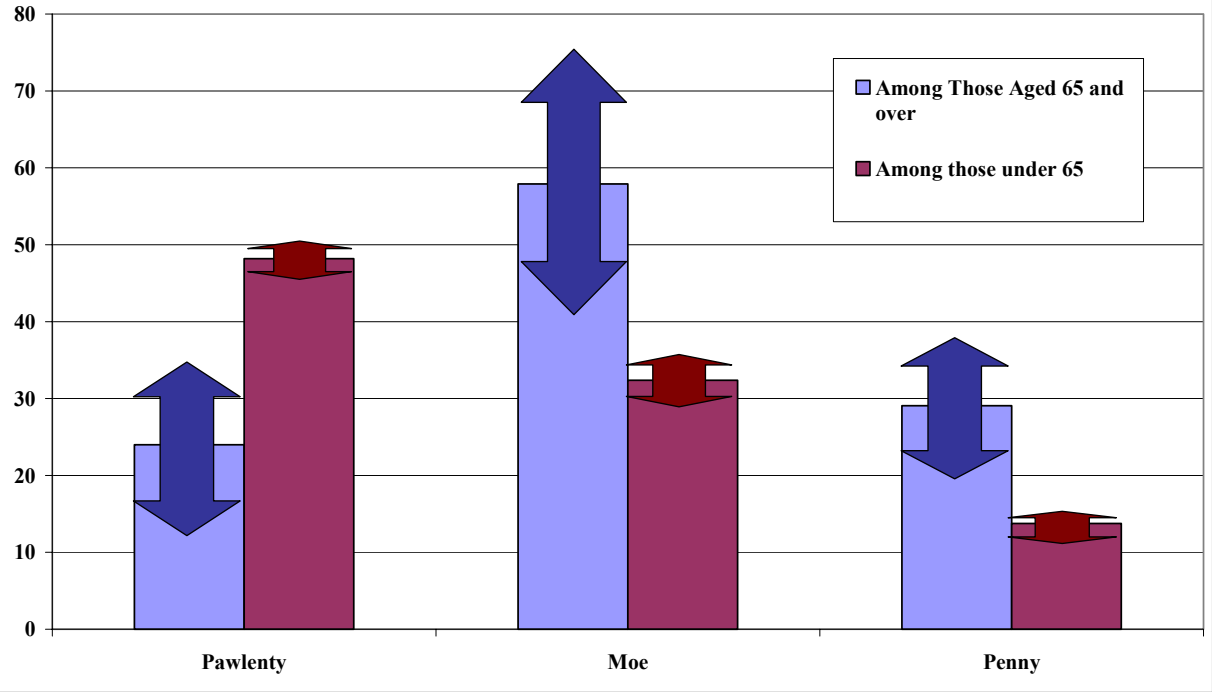


Figure 4 shows ecological inference estimates of the votes for Pawlenty, Moe and Penny among those 65 years or older compared with younger voters. The arrows (from tip to tip) indicate the range of the 95 percent confidence intervals for each estimate; the bars indicate the best guess of the actual value.[7] These estimates of the statewide breakdown of the vote by age support the supposition (outlined above) that Pawlenty received high levels of support from younger voters. Moe soundly defeated Pawlenty among senior citizens, receiving about 58 percent of their votes, but Pawlenty bested Moe among voters under the age of 65. Nearly 50 percent of these voters chose the Republican, versus about 32 percent who chose Moe. This might seem like a wash for the two parties, until one recognizes that less than one eighth of Minnesotans are 65 or older. Winning the younger group secures far more votes for Pawlenty than Moe's victory among older voters gets him.

Independence Party candidate Penny performed better among older voters than among younger voters – a reversal for the party from 1998, when Ventura received disproportionate support from younger voters. (Lentz 2002, p. 68)

[7] See Appendix for precise estimates and confidence intervals.

Figure 5: Ecological Inference Estimates of Percent of Vote for 2002 Governor's Candidates by Education, with 95% Confidence Intervals

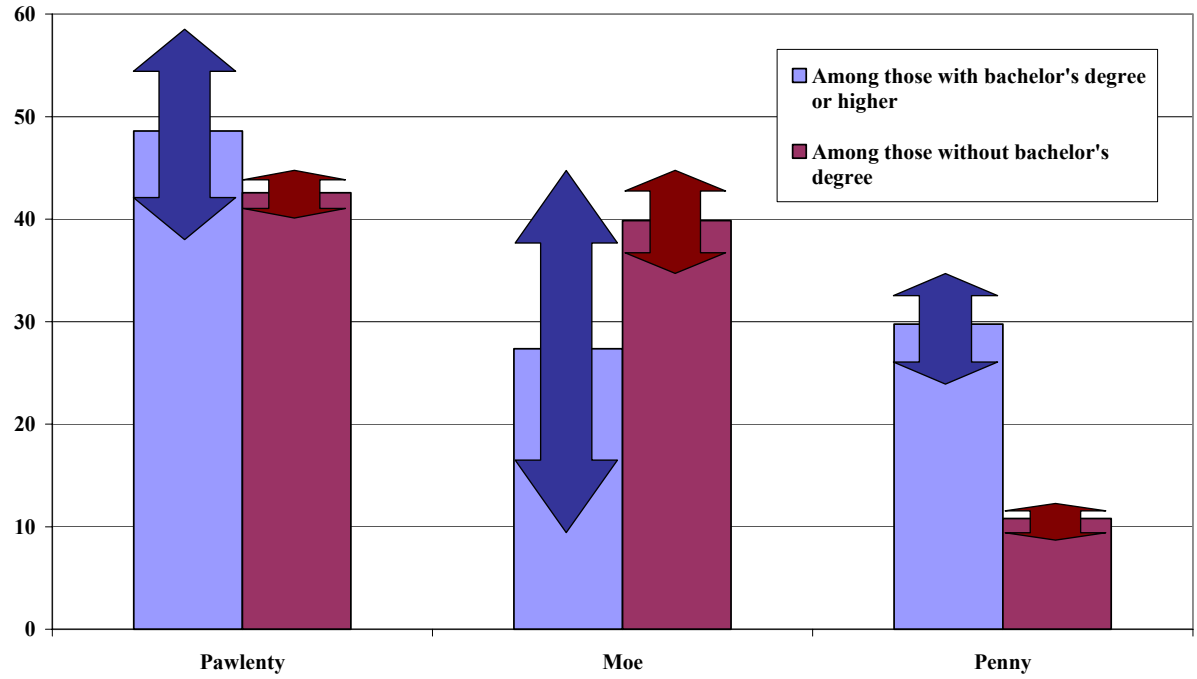


Figure 5 reports ecological inference estimates of the statewide vote breakdown by education. Again, Pawlenty does well with more highly educated voters, who represent about 27 percent of Minnesotans. Interestingly, Moe seems to run third among those with a college education, although the difference between him and Penny is within the margin of error. Pawlenty and Moe run about even among voters without a bachelor's degree.

Figure 6: Ecological Inference Estimates of vote in 2002 Governor's Race by Occupation, with 95% Confidence Intervals

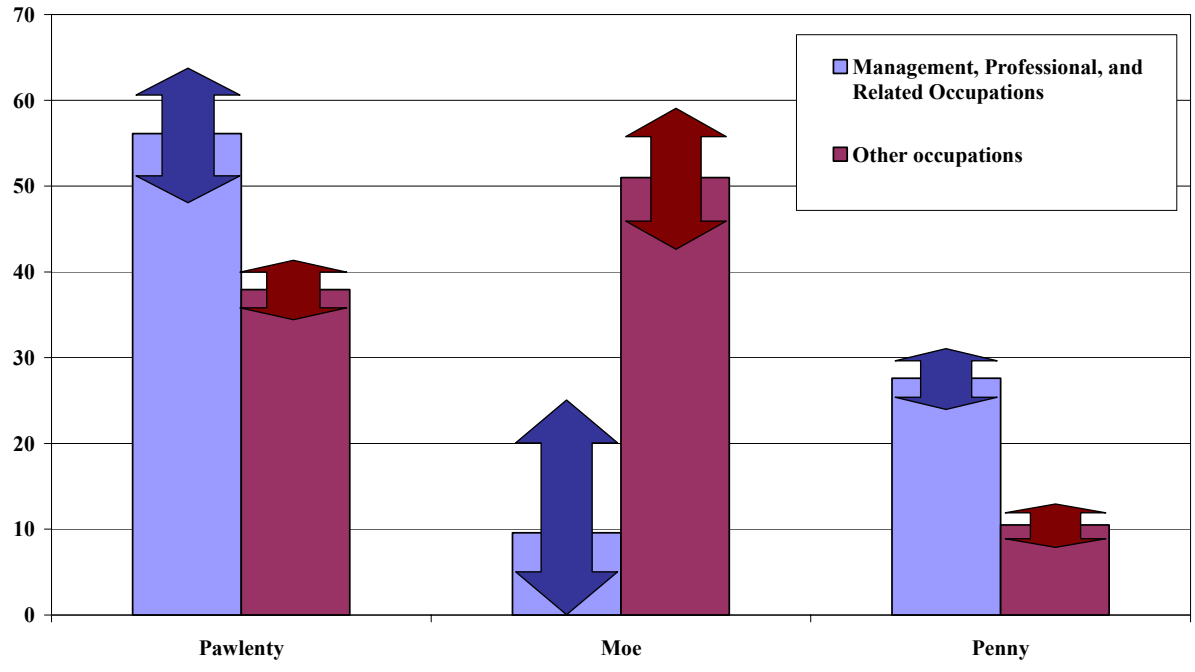


Figure 6 reports estimates of the breakdown of vote by occupation. Those in management, professional, and related occupations make up over 35 percent of the population of Minnesota, and represent a group of large and growing importance in the politics of the state. The difference between Pawlenty and Moe here is striking. While Pawlenty receives about 57 percent of white collar votes, Moe receives under 10 percent. While the margin of error for the Moe estimate is wide, we can be 95 percent sure that the true figure is below 25 percent.

Finally, Table 3 reports the estimated voter turnout for the various groups discussed here.

Table 3: Estimates of Turnout among Selected Groups (95% confidence intervals in Parentheses)

	Estimated Voter Turnout (95% confidence interval)
Aged 65 and over	**59.1%** (47.8% to 70.4%)
Under 65	**62.6%** (60.4% to 64.8%)
Bachelor's degree or higher	**65.9%** (55.3% to 76.5%)
Less than bachelor's degree	**60.5%** (56.5% to 64.5%)
Management, professional, or related occupation	**86.6%** (75.5% to 97.7%)
Other occupation	**53.6%** (49.8% to 57.4%)

As Table 3 shows, well educated and white collar voters turned out at the polls in greater numbers in 2002 than other voters.[8] The high voter turnout among white collar workers – over 86 percent – is particularly striking, especially in light of the fact that these voters overwhelmingly supported Pawlenty.

DISCUSSION

The data analysis above suggests that in 2002 there was a strong Pawlenty vote among younger, better educated, white collar workers who reside predominantly in the suburbs. If the DFL continues to do poorly among these groups, the party will be at a growing disadvantage, since these voters are increasing in number, and turn out at high rates.

The data do not tell us whether suburban voters voted for Pawlenty because of his conservative reputation, because of his youthful, engaging style, or for some other reason. In all likelihood, his success was due to a combination of factors, including Republican voter mobilization and issue based appeals.

Pawlenty's victory may be an indicator of Republican superiority at mobilizing voters. There is reason to believe that grassroots mobilization is becoming more important nationally; the much-discussed "72-hour campaign" conducted by the national Republican party organizations during the final days of the 2002 races was by most accounts an extraordinary success. This flood of door-knocking, telephone calls, and other grassroots effort is part of a broader trend. According to the National Election Studies, conducted by the University of Michigan, the percent of Americans reporting that they were contacted by a political party prior to the election has more than doubled since 1992.[9] While both Democrats and Republicans have been increasing their grassroots efforts, Republicans appear to have contacted more voters in each of the last two elections. The 2002 governor's race may be a local reflection of this Republican advantage – constituencies in which Pawlenty did well turned out to vote at much higher rates than others. On the other hand, better educated,

[8] "Voter turnout" is defined here as the percent of the voting age population in a particular category that casts a vote.

[9] While 20 percent of Americans reported contact in 1992, 44 percent reported contact in 2002. See: The NES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior, University of Michigan, http://www.umich.edu/~nes/nesguide/nesguide.htm, Accessed June 9, 2003, and the NES 2002 Full Release, Nancy Burns and Donald R. Kinder, Principal Investigators, http://www.umich.edu/~nes/announce/newsltr/nes2002full.htm, accessed June 9, 2003.

wealthier voters are more likely to vote regardless of their party affiliation. (Verba, Schlozman & Brady 1995)

In addition, Pawlenty's stances on the issues may have disproportionately appealed to this important suburban constituency. Suburbanites across the country tend to prefer less government spending, a position which might have made Pawlenty's no-tax pledge during the campaign seem particularly appealing. (Gainsborough 2001, Chapter 5). Some of the governor's actions since taking office also seem to appeal to white collar suburban voters, such as a proposal to allow drivers who pay a fee to access SUV lanes even without a passenger, road construction projects totaling $900 million over four years, and a $25 million grant to the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis.[10]

Whatever the reasons, Pawlenty won the votes of most suburbanites in 2002, while the DFL candidate fell short. The data analysis in this report suggests that Pawlenty's success among these better-educated, white collar workers played a significant role in his victory. These voters, who turn out at high rates and may have distinctive political preferences, are likely to be increasingly important in future elections. In 2002, these voters elevated a 'new breed of Republicans' to statewide office – it is an open question whether they themselves are permanently part of this new breed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elazar, Daniel J., Virginia Gray and Wyman Spano. *Minnesota Politics and Government*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Gainsborough, Juliet F. *Fenced Off: The Suburbanization of American Politics*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2001.

King, Gary. *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behavior from Aggregate Data*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Lentz, Jacob. *Electing Jesse Ventura: A Third Party Success Story*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2002.

Oliver, J. Eric. *Democracy in Suburbia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

APPENDIX A – ECOLOGICAL INFERENCE ESTIMATES

Note: 95 percent confidence intervals appear in parentheses.

Ecological Inference Estimates for Election 2002: Age

Estimate of voter turnout among those 65 and over: **59.14**% (47.89 – 70.39)

Estimate of voter turnout among those under 65: **62.57**% (60.37 – 64.77)

Pawlenty Vote

Estimate of Pawlenty vote among those 65 and over: **23.97**% (12.67 – 35.27)

Estimate of Pawlenty vote among those under 65: **48.19**% (46.05 – 50.33)

Moe Vote

Estimate of Moe vote among those 65 and over: **57.91**% (41.13 – 74.69)

Estimate of Moe vote among those under 65: **32.38**% (29.03 – 35.73)

Penny Vote

Estimate of Penny vote among those 65 and over: **29.06**% (20.02 – 38.10)

Estimate of Penny vote among those under 65: **13.74**% (11.92 – 15.56)

[10] I am not arguing that the only possible issue-based appeal to suburbanites comes from the right. While he received few votes statewide, Ken Pentel's relative success in the suburbs suggests that some suburban voters are sympathetic to liberal views, including environmentalism. Perhaps recognizing this possibility, Governor Pawlenty has become a visible proponent of several causes favored by environmental groups. See Dane Smith and Tom Meersman, "Pawlenty turning green? Environmentalists see signs," *Star Tribune*, June 9, 2003.

Ecological Inference Estimates for Election 2002: Education

Estimate of turnout among those with bachelor's degree or higher: **65.92**% (55.32 – 76.52)
Estimate of turnout among those without bachelor's degree: **60.52**% (56.50 – 64.54)

Pawlenty Vote
Estimate of Pawlenty vote among those with bachelor's degree or higher: **48.58**% (38.76 – 58.40)
Estimate of Pawlenty vote among those without bachelor's degree: **42.57**% (38.40 – 46.74)

Moe Vote
Estimate of Moe vote among those with bachelor's degree or higher: **27.36**% (10.11 – 44.61)
Estimate of Moe vote among those without bachelor's degree: **39.86**% (33.49 – 46.23)

Penny Vote
Estimate of Penny vote among those with bachelor's degree or higher: **29.75**% (25.32 – 34.18)
Estimate of Penny vote among those without bachelor's degree: **10.79**% (9.16 – 12.42)

Ecological Inference Estimates for Management, Professional or Related Occupations

Estimate of turnout among those in management, professional, and related occupations: **86.57**%(75.48 – 97.66)
Estimate of turnout among those in other occupations: **53.63**% (49.85 – 57.41)

Pawlenty Vote
Estimate of Pawlenty vote among those in management, professional, and related occupations: **56.12**% (48.40 – 63.84)
Estimate of Pawlenty vote among those in other occupations: **37.95**% (33.54 – 42.36)

Moe Vote
Estimate of Moe vote among those in management, professional, and related occupations: **9.58**% (0 – 25.55)
Estimate of Moe vote among those in other occupations: **50.99**% (43.21 – 58.77)

Penny Vote
Estimate of Penny vote among those in management, professional, and related occupations: **27.60**% (23.52 – 31.68)
Estimate of Penny vote among those in other occupations: **10.49**% (8.51 – 12.47)