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Determining What Factors Create an Active Citizen in Helena, Montana

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Determining What Factors Create an Active Citizen in Helena, Montana

A thesis submitted to the Carroll College Department of Sociology in candidacy for graduation with honors.

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1

Picking Out a Ball

"Cultivating a dense civic culture is important if we are to avoid living in an “all against all” social milieu where self-interests trump our altruistic impulses.”

-Jerome P. Baggett, Habitat for Humanity-

"Many Americans continue to claim that we are “members” of various organizations, but most Americans no longer spend much time in community organizations—we’ve stopped doing committee work, stopped serving as officers, and stopped going to meetings" (Putnam 2000). The realm of participation stretches from the church pew to the school ground to the business office. Civic participation has become a rapidly pressing issue and needs to be addressed now. Otherwise, we may find ourselves living in the individualistic social milieu Baggett feared.

We must start by defining concepts that are out of the ordinary to many so as to remain on common ground. The significance of this project must also be examined to answer the famous question of “Why”. If we do not stop to care, then we should be prepared for the fallout that will follow. Finally, we can discuss what goals we hope to achieve by studying this social change in our communities.

A. Definitions

In order to be clear throughout the project, there are several concepts that should be clearly defined to avoid any confusion as to my intent or focus. Social capital theory
states that there is value to be found in the social networks of society (Putnam 2000). A network is a system of interconnectedness individuals become part of by forming and joining groups. These groups often have a common denominator from gender to hobbies to political causes. By belonging to a group of individuals similar to oneself, there comes a feeling of mutual obligation to one another (Putnam 1993). This is known as mutual reciprocity. The community most often referred to in this project is that of the Helena area, but it is also a common term to describe a close group within a network (e.g. the Girl Scouts community). Finally, civic participation is the idea that individuals are active participants within those networks.

B. Significance

Robert Putnam (2000) compiles data from six studies to conclude that “The single most common finding from a half century’s research on the correlation of life satisfaction, not only in the United states but around the world, is that happiness is best predicted by the breadth and depth of one’s social connections.” This comment suggests that selfishness is good a reason to get involved in the community. Robert Wuthnow examines this claim in a self-reported study of people who tried to explain their motivations to him in Acts of Compassion (1991). He struggles to understand the often selfish nature of selfless acts. In the end, he is only able to conclude that perhaps the motivation is not as important as the act itself. “[Compassion] holds forth a vision of what a good society can be, provides us with concrete examples of caring that we can emulate, and locates us as members of the diffuse networks of which our society is woven” (Wuthnow 1991).

De Tocqueville wrote “Nothing, in my view, more deserves attention than the
intellectual and moral associations in America” (1956). One hundred and sixty years ago, even a foreign visitor to this newly founded country sensed the importance of networks of groups that would be heavily dependant on generosity of personal time and money. It is rightly so that we begin by examining the importance of non-profit organizations and voluntary associations.

As each community loses its active citizens, the groups with the greatest loss will start to slowly decay. “The downward trend . . . has been more or less uninterrupted for more than a quarter century, and if the current rate of decline were to continue, clubs would become extinct in America within less than twenty years” (Putnam 2000). These deaths affect other groups, active or not, and destroy essential resources necessary for their survival. They too die out. Currently there are 1.1 million non-profit organizations, which fall under categories including religious organizations, human service agencies, civic/social/fraternal organizations, and foundations operating in the United States (Baggett 2001). As a society, we can not afford to lose this infrastructure.

We must realize that active citizens affect many realms of public life. They run our local, county, and state government. Parents who drive car pool, women who read books together, and men who gather in lodges to tell stories all contribute to a group. That group is only a small part of the larger network. Each group plays a part in keeping the network growing and expanding. As individuals fade away, so do the groups. “Between 1985 and 1994, active involvement in community organizations in this country fell by forty-five percent” (Putnam 2000).

Even here in Montana we can find the issue of civic involvement of interest. In
Aiding Putnam to conduct his “Civic Engagement in America” study, the Montana Community Foundation helped issue a survey to communities in Montana. These communities would then end up as part of the 40 total communities found in 29 states that studied factors that influenced civic behavior (Johnson 2001). A related story was also reported in the Independent Record by the Associated Press. Its central theme was a report of the overall findings from the previously mentioned study. It found that areas where residents had high civic involvement were happier than those with more wealth but less community participation” (Associated Press 2001). When Putnam was interviewed he added, “If you had to choose between a place rich in money and rich in social capital, I’d pick the place that had more social capital” (Associated Press 2001).

C. Goals

We are now faced with the picture of a nation in crises. Its social institutions are decaying from aging out, time spent money-making, sprawl, and television. With the seriousness of this knowledge at hand, we can begin to examine previous research in the areas of demographic generalizations, media influence, philanthropic attitudes, views of human nature, personal motivations, and ways to measure involvement.

We can now look at the research that has been done in the field of civil society and participation to determine what has already been done and the results it produced. Then we can turn to the findings from the survey issued to active citizens in Helena, Montana. Finally, for better or for worse, we can understand how Helena differs from other communities.
Chapter 2

**Stranded in a 7-10 Split**

"Year after year, fewer and fewer of us took part in the everyday deliberations that constitute grassroots democracy. More than a third of America’s infrastructure simply evaporated between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s."

- Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*

Before one can build a house, they must first learn how. Then, they must start by building a solid foundation. The foundation created for this research project was that of previous research conducted by other sociologists in the field of civic participation and civil society. A historical perspective is offered by Alexis De Tocqueville. Robert Bellah and Robert Wuthnow both give qualitative accounts of civic people and the motivations for those citizens becoming active in their communities. Paul Lichterman provides a twist that suggests personal characteristics can determine an individual’s civic-minded disposition. Jerome Baggett uses a case study of the organization Habitat for Humanity to discover the link between religion and civil society. The key theorist used is Robert Putnam. Using two separate works based in two unique countries, his research into the heart of civic participation fuels the Helena Survey findings. He does so by turning over the stones of television watching and bowling that no other researcher has ever turned over before. This blend of qualitative and quantitative research creates an environment perfect for conducting a case study in Helena, Montana.
A. Alexis De Tocqueville

Democracy in America could be considered the first study in the realm of political sociology. Completed by a Frenchman in 1832, it lends a sense of why a democratic situation promotes a civic community and the benefits that then arise from living in such a community.

Alexis De Tocqueville originally saw the need for creating associations to protect an over bearing state authority. Fear of the European monarchs left many wanting a type of government that was controlled by the people. Tocqueville’s primary concern then became the tyranny of the majority. He seemed confident that freedom to speak and associate as individuals would protect against it. The founding fathers of this country must have shared a similar view, because they protected those same freedoms in the First Amendment.

Tocqueville found the need for associations to promote a better society. People form groups to provide entertainment, help others, and to build public institutions. Tocqueville also maintained that only in an equal society and political structure can people truly be kind to one another. “Men attend to the interests of the public, first by necessity, afterwards by choice . . . and by dint of working for the good of one’s fellow-citizens, the habit and the taste for serving them is at length acquired” (Tocqueville 1956). Only when they are equal, do men quit competing long enough to help one another. Then, after they have lived in that type of reciprocal environment long enough it becomes, as Tocqueville suggested, habit.
As many of the other authors will show, mutual reciprocity is a key element to binding a community together. It is a civic value that grows the more it is exercised. Tocqueville found that even in the early 1800's, associations were the best means for building and spreading this value. “The heart is enlarged and the human mind is developed, only by the reciprocal influence of men upon each other . . . and this can only be accomplished by associations” (1956).

B. Robert Bellah

*Habits of the Heart* discusses the paradox of living an individual life and being a part of a community. Using personal accounts of active citizens, Robert Bellah tries to understand the utilitarian aspect of giving time and money. He tries to discover what use donating and volunteering have in creating a better society as well as a better individual. He also suggests the importance of religion in our lives.

“Religion is one of the most important of the many ways in which Americans “get involved” in the life of their community and society. Some 40 percent of Americans attend religious services at least once a week and religious membership is around 60 percent of the total population” (Bellah 1985). Through an established meeting time and place, people of all different backgrounds can come together under one common umbrella. Once there, the different groups that each individual belongs to follows them, and networks are easily expanded. Bellah (1985) also expands on how the values and authority of religion contributed to the legitimacy and success of the voluntary sector. Religious teachings of doing good for thy fellow neighbor and Christian love are the
values that promote and maintain the giving spirit that allows us to donate our time and
money. The longevity of the institution, its teachings, and its leadership are what created
the legitimacy of starting new groups that were less associated with the church itself.

C. Robert Wuthnow

Acts of Compassion is an attempt at qualifying the motivation citizens have for
becoming active in their communities. In conducting a series of personal interviews,
Robert Wuthnow had trouble getting respondents to understand his questions. Thus, he
spent much time on issues of language and definitions. “When I talk about “acts of
compassion” . . . I mean the languages we use to make sense of such behaviors, the
cultural understandings that transform them from physical motions into human actions”
(Wuthnow 1991).

Justification of motivations was also a major concern for Wuthnow. He found that
people felt our society placed more value on certain reasons than others. A student
seeking college credit is of less value than a person volunteering to provide children with
higher nutrition alone. He also found that motivations usually fell into one of six
categories of reasoning. This included getting something for yourself, paying a debt to
society, desire to feel worthwhile, guilt, religious upbringing to show compassion, and
responsibility (Wuthnow 1991). Whatever the case may be, it seems that by giving a gift
of ourselves, we will almost undoubtedly get something in return. It may be the credits
we were after or it may be a smile from a hungry child. Wuthnow refers to this as the
norm of reciprocity which states that “ . . . giving creates an asymmetry or imbalance in
social relationships that people feel compelled in some way to rectify” (1991). Fulfillment
is then the fuel from which a person can continue to give freely of themselves. In the end,
he is able to conclude from his respondents that it is not so much what we do as the spirit
in which it is done.

Fairytale images of heros and saviors often accompany that of the volunteer. They
provide images of hope and the vision of a better society. In order to help others, we
must find good in them or else we would not continue to give of our precious time and
money. “Compassion symbolizes... a commitment to those who may not be able to
reciprocate, an acknowledgment of our essential identities as human beings, and a
devotion to the value of caring itself” (Wuthnow 1991). It is only then that our societal
networks can flourish.

Compassion is a worthwhile goal because it contributes to the well-being and
wholeness of our society (Wuthnow 1991). We must overlook cynical commentary and
segregated communities to better enhance our own lives as well as the lives of those
around us. By building bigger and better networks, we build a bigger and better society.

D. Robert Putnam, Part I

Robert D. Putnam concluded Making Democracy Work quite elegantly by stating
that “Building social capital will not be easy, but it is the key to making democracy work”
(1993). Studying social capital, civic communities, and effective institutions were the
goals of his Italian case study. His measures of civic participation discussed below are
unique to the field. He also concentrates on the issue of mutual reciprocity.
The thoroughness of Putnam's methodology was of great interest and use. Whenever data is used to draw conclusions, the validity of that data can often be measured by the quality of the tool used to collect that information. He used numerous resources to create solid and legitimate information. In-depth interviews, surveys, experiments, and unobtrusive measures in the form of historical analysis and case studies, all added to the credibility of his findings. The core time frame of the study was 1970 to 1990. Since institutional change is something that takes place over decades, significant results can only be achieved through this type of longitudinal study. He was also very thorough in discussing challenges to his findings before they were even asked. One such example is in comparing the influence of civic involvement and socioeconomic development. This technique added an even greater legitimacy to his study, because it showed that he attempted to find other factors that may explain, in this case, institutional performance.

Putnam's measures of civic participation were quite interesting. Using the vibrancy of associational life, electoral turnout, preference voting, and incidence of newspaper readership, he found consistent results in the regions he described as highly civic. A fifth predictability factor of civic participation appeared to be life satisfaction. "Happiness is living in a civic community" (Putnam 1993).

"Any society . . . is characterized by networks of interpersonal communication and exchange, both formal and informal" (Putnam 1993). This follows the model of exchange theory. Informally stated, people need other people to survive in a community setting, thus making them an essential part of social capital. Associations create bonds and
obligations to society. They also promote the flow of information to individual members. Interconnected and literate citizens are desirable to promote effective political institutions and high social capital.

Like other social scientists before him, Putnam used mutual reciprocity as a key factor in developing the concept of social capital. He described resources whose supply increased through use and decreased if not used. This is contrary to the idea of natural resources. Overuse will deplete such things as oil and coal. Trust is an example of a reciprocal resource. The more two people trust each other, the more safe they feel, and they become more willing to trust the other person. "Trust is an essential component of social capital" (Putnam 1993). If I have no trust in my partner, then they will have no reason to put trust in me. Social norms and networks are other examples of such reciprocal resources. The more they are used, the more they will grow.

E. Paul Lichterman

Paul Lichterman argues that a person's character heavily influences the commitment they make to their community in The Search for Political Community. He does this by examining the concepts of personalism and life-ways. While he primarily uses examples of environmentalists, his overall conclusions still suggest a pattern of demographic variables key to "predicting" an active citizen.

"Personalism supposes that one's own individuality has inherent value, apart from one's material or social achievements" (Lichterman 1996). In drawing a historical picture of grassroots movements, he suggests that the importance of personal differences have
been crucial factors in creating change and forwarding movements. He specifically addresses the influence of feminism into political movements. Eco-feminism was a direct result of this new gender perspective.

Life-ways are “an overall pattern of public and private involvements” (Lichterman 1996). They are derived from culture and history. Demographics also play a role in life-ways. Educational background often dictates opportunity in both life experiences and career choice. Occupational status is a key factor in developing participation and commitment level. Spare time, unused income, and things taken-for-granted increase as do educational status and career generated wealth. The culture associated with such an ideology can stretch so far as television viewing habits, consumption culture, and party talk. Lichterman measured all three of these variables and found notable differences between those considered active verses non-active.

It is the different life-ways that Lichterman suggests create different levels of commitment to the community, as well as conflict between public and private lives. He defines commitment as a means of practicing obligations in daily life (Lichterman 1996). He wants readers to also be aware of the fact that it is not the type of social movement i.e. environmental, equal rights, feminist, that determines the level of commitment. Personalism and life-ways have a much greater effect. Inclusive participation, identification with other political, religious, or social movements, community values, and individual beliefs are personal aspects of commitment.
F. Robert Putnam, Part II

After realizing the significance and strength of his findings in Italy, Robert Putnam decided to try them out in the United States. He began by examining different types of social groups. These included political, civic, religious, workplace, and informal associations. He then discussed four culprits that have unilaterally contributed to the decline of civic participation. Finally, he examines the importance of our perceptions in human nature in becoming an active citizen.

The primary political action which Putnam monitored is one of the simplest and easiest ways a person can be active in their community; voting. He found that voting trends, since peaking in the 1910's, have steadily fallen, with the exception of two upswings; one during World War II and the second during the civil rights movement. Voter turnout has continued to decline since the 1960's. Explanations for this downswing include public cynicism and distrust of government along with feelings of apathy and helplessness. Unfortunately, it is still too difficult to determine if voter turnout leads to active community participation, or if active people tend to vote more than non-active people.

In the realm of civic participation, Putnam found that group members were considered active simply by dropping a check in the mail as a donation or a membership fee. He calls these “tertiary associations” (Putnam 2000). When group building occurs by being in the same room with one another at least once a month, it is easy to see how a group could fall apart through the post office. At the same time, political grassroots
organizations that have long mailing lists are the most feared lobby groups in Washington DC. While the members may have never met each other before, they still share a common interest and can be mobilized to send letters or email to congressmen to support that common bond. Unfortunately, those people have not broadened their networks or gained any new connections.

Religious organizations are any entity in and of themselves. "Nearly half of all associational memberships in America are church related, half of all personal philanthropy is religious in character, and half of all volunteering occurs in religious context" (Putnam 2000). These are the groups that have been the least affected over the dramatic dip in participation in the past thirty years. Churches, as buildings, provide a common meeting ground, with weekly services setting routine times for those gatherings. While remaining the most untarnished by the drop in active participation, Putnam still found that religious involvement has fallen one-third since the 1960's, mirroring the drop in every other form of civic activity in the United States (2000).

Connections in the workplace are the fourth type of association which Putnam discussed. It seems only logical to consider the people we see every day in our quest to make money as resources for building our own personal networks. "Many people form rewarding friendships at work, feel a sense of community among co-workers, and enjoy norms of mutual help and reciprocity on the job" (Putnam 2000). While it seems that these time efficient and low maintenance relationships would be ample to motivate and keep people involved, Putnam found that there were three important caveats to the
success of workplace connections. The first is that he could find no substantiated increase in workplace socializing. Secondly, it appeared that co-workers only account for 10 percent of our friends seen socially. Finally, it appears that workplace ties may have actually damaged outside networks (Putnam 2000). Worker anxiety and job mobility do not allow for the type of bonds generated in the 1960's. Once again, we see the past three decades playing an important role on the death of civic participation.

The final group Putnam examined is that of informal social connections. He breaks society down into two types of people; machers and schmoozers (2000). Machers are those who make things happen in the community by volunteering in many areas and often. Schmoozers are those who act more informally and spend many hours in conversation. While it seems that the schmoozers would not be an asset to a community, Putnam finds that they are. By visiting informally with friends, eating out often, playing card games at lunch, or watching a sporting event with a group of people they are helping to build the informal connection that often links to the more formal connections of machers (Putnam 2000). Informal connections also tend to be the easiest and the most fun. Unfortunately, they too are dying out.

Putnam then discusses four culprits in the bankruptcy of our social capital. They are generational succession, time invested in money-making, the mobility and sprawl of our communities, and the progression of technology (2000). By understanding what has gone wrong, then perhaps we can gain the insight into which tools are necessary to apprehend the suspects and get them into custody before it is too late.
Generational succession is a logical place to begin our understanding of civic decline. It is a phenomenon which affects many aspects of society. It is the concept that as each new generation of citizens come to the age of adulthood, it brings with it its own set of values and expectations. This is a separate concept from the life cycle that describes how our values and expectations change as we age. Putnam studies this issue over a longitudinal study where he compares The Long Civic Generation (born 1920-1945) with Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) with Generation Xers (born 1965-1980). He examined several forms of civic behaviors and recorded the increases and decreases in the reported activities (2000). In every example, the active citizens remained those who were getting older. It generally concluded that those respondents who were part of The Long Civic Generation were the most active in their youth and remained just as active while they aged, whereas the Gen Xers were never very active and did not seem to be getting any more so. Putnam (2000) relates this to the fact that they are “... visually oriented, perpetual surfers, multitaskers, interactive media specialists.” Their personalities are generally uncommitted to any one thing; no specific web site, television show, or community organization.

The second suspect in destroying civic participation is the loss of free time to money making. Findings from a national survey conducted by Independent Sector (1996) found that “The surveys have consistently shown that respondents who worried about having enough money in the future gave less as a percentage of household than those who did not worry”. While this seems a logical conclusion, Putnam (2000) found that
economic prosperity continued to go up and down, but participation only went down. This problem, therefore appears to be one of attitude as much as income. The physical time spent making money is also a dualistic issue. Time spent in the office is obviously not time spent volunteering with a community organization. At the same time, the work place appears to be one of the most rapidly developing social networks (Putnam 2000). That makes it a great source for making heterogeneous connections to other groups.

Mobility and sprawl, as with the distribution of time, is multifaceted. As we have become a more geographically distributed society, our homes have become farther from our offices which are farther from our recreation and shopping. This again, takes up our time. Surprisingly though, Putnam (2000) discovered that "Increased commuting time among the residents of a community lowers average levels of civic involvement even among non-commuters." Sprawl also affects our relationships with our neighbors. These neighbors become increasingly homogeneous which appears to reduce incentives for civic involvement and community boundedness (Putnam 2000). If we feel no connection to one another, our networks are unable to flourish, often dying out. Giving and Volunteering in the United States reported that "In 1996, forty-three percent of respondents reported that they were asked to volunteer in the past year and an astounding eighty-five percent of those asked actually did volunteer in 1995" (1996). This suggests that we must be close enough in geography and approachability to be asked. When asked, most citizens will say "yes".
"Nothing-not low education, not full-time work, not long commutes in urban agglomerations, not poverty or financial distress-is more broadly associated with civic disengagement and social disconnection than is dependence on television for entertainment" (Putnam 2000). This astounding discovery is the highest concern with technology. Putnam (2000) drew this conclusion in several ways. He demonstrated how television privatizes leisure time by having subjects keep time diaries describing the use of their time over a period of days. Dinner with friends and a night at the movies have been replaced with reality television and zany sitcoms. He also conducted historical analysis using the introduction of the television into the home in 1950 through 1998 as an independent variable. He compared it with the dependant variable, being the average daily household viewing. As it rose, participation declined. He also developed a second dependant variable; sets per household and households with VCRs, PCs, and Internet. Again, as he saw an increase in each of these new media forms, he saw a decrease in civic participation.

Besides discussing the different ways in which we make connections and the factors that are destroying our social networks, Putnam also discusses our perceptions of human nature as a means of determining our civic disposition.

Issues of trust, honesty, morality, and willingness to share reflect how we feel about others. It is then logical to conclude that if we look poorly upon those around us that we would be less likely to give freely of our time and money. On the other hand, when we have a more positive and optimistic outlook on our fellow human beings, we are more likely to contribute to their well being. Putnam found evidence which supports this
logical conclusion. “People who trust their fellow citizens volunteer more often, contribute more to charity, participate more often in politics and community organizations and display many other forms of civic virtue” (Putnam 2000). The declining trust rate of Americans reflects the diminishing civic participation of the past three decades. Putnam contributes this to generational succession. It seems that as each cohort ages out, so does a certain level of trust. Each generation that then follows has appeared to maintain a level of trust, but that level of trust will never be as high as the cohort prior to it.

G. Jerome Baggett

In a case study of a popular organization, Jerome Baggett uncovers the importance of the voluntary sector and the significant role that religion plays in civic involvement in Habitat for Humanity: Building Private Homes, Building Public Religion. By conducting interviews with volunteers at build sites and founder Millard Fuller, he gets a qualitative grasp on what motivates people to participate. He also participated in the builds himself, creating a rapport that lends a high quality to his work.

“Voluntary associations can contribute to an expanded notion of obligation to others by carving out a social niche for such practices as open discussion, shared responsibility, community leadership, and even personal sacrifice” (Baggett 2001). Here again we see the importance of the notion of reciprocity and the benefits that come to both individuals and society from joining. It is also important to be able to freely, or voluntarily, enter into these groups. It becomes another way in which we can demonstrate our freedom and express our individuality.

Religion helps the voluntary sector infiltrate society in many other ways other than
church attendance. Baggett finds that one-third of child care agencies are church based and many medical institutions were founded by religious groups. He also found that prominent social service organizations including YMCA, Big Brothers and Sisters, the Salvation Army, the United Way, and Habitat for Humanity would have never come to exist without the support of religious inspiration (2001).

It appears that American citizens are aware of the importance of religion in building communities. Two-thirds of Americans currently active in social movements describe their motivations as being primarily religious (Baggett 2001). If nothing else, churches are able to provide a local meeting place and time as already discussed, but can also act as a place to acquire skills and gather information. Church bulletin boards and weekly announcements are a way for word to get out about where volunteers are needed most, allowing patrons the chance to get out and help.

Baggett also spends time discussing the importance of citizenship and the responsibilities that come along with it in contemporary society. “Citizenship entails an obligation to participate actively in promoting the good of the community” (2001). Unfortunately, it seems “activity” has dwindled to encompassing only casting ballots and contributing money. This inadequate involvement leaves many aspects of the voluntary sector incomplete and contributes to a high level of cynicism. Those who do find it within themselves to express their civic virtues and are active outside the boundaries of writing checks “... have long corrected some of the most glaring abuses of the capitalist economy and, consequently, contributed to its continued viability” (Baggett 2001).
Now that we have looked at the research that has been done in the field, we can move into the study of Montana’s capitol city. The Helena findings reported many different things from upholding these theories to completely reversing them. In the next chapter, we can look at the Helena area as a whole, the sample population in the study, and what the results mean for Montana’s capitol city.
Chapter 3

From Gutter Balls to Strikes

"In 1996, 43 percent of respondents reported that they were asked to volunteer in the past year, and an astounding 85 percent of those asked actually did volunteer in 1995."

- Giving and Volunteering in the United States, 1996-

"I believe the motivation to serve is a product of world-view, not necessarily religious, but certainly with a mind toward "I am the other," that is, the inter-dependence of all life on earth."

- Respondent 77 from the survey -

What began as an independent study of political sociology in January of 2000, turned into a summer of reading and a four page survey. This next section is a documentation and summary of what that survey taught me about citizens in Helena Montana. It provides an explanation of the methodology used as well as the limits to this research. Since the survey was so large and so broad, only the most crucial elements and the most interesting findings are reported. In the area of demographics age, gender, religion, marital status, number of children living in the home, level of educational attainment, employment status, and total annual household income were addressed. Media influence, charitable giving, and perceptions of human nature were also examined. The release of results from a nationwide study (Johnson 2001), in which Montana came out on top, helped bring the significance of this timely problem home to Helena.
A. Helena, Montana

Before diving into the results of the Helena survey, we should first create a demographic profile of the general population. This will be done using 1990 census data (US Census Bureau 2001). Since the census breaks states down only as far as counties, this data reflects the entirety of Lewis and Clark County. However, since this survey expanded out to Montana City, Clancy, and East Helena, it still remains accurate. The overall population is 47,495 with 23,179 being male (48.8 percent) and 24,316 being female (51.2 percent). The diversity of the area is limited with 96.8 percent reporting white. The next largest race represented is American Indian at 2 percent. Age was broken down into the same cohorts used by Putnam. The largest group represented was that of 0-20 with 15,089 or 31.8 percent. The next largest group was the Baby Boomers at 28.9 percent. The Gen Xers ranked third at 19.9 percent. The Long Civic generation had 8,031 or 16.8 percent. Finally, the Over 81 cohort reported 1,261 members representing 2.6 percent of the general population. There were 2.46 people per household.

When it comes to education and income, the picture is somewhat average compared to the nation as a whole. In the United States, 43.8 percent of the population have graduated from high school. A slightly higher 49 percent of the general population in Helena is a high school graduate. Nationally, 11.8 percent of citizens have graduated from college. In Helena, 15.6 percent of the population have graduated from college. Still, this high school based education is reflected in the median household income of Helenans of only $36,409.
B. Methodology

1. The Survey

A snowball sample survey\(^1\) was issued to active citizens in Helena. Snowball surveying is a method of sampling in which sample elements are selected as they are identified by successive respondents (Schutt 1999). This method was appropriate for this project, because it sought out a sample of active citizens. If respondents were chosen randomly, the profile would simply depict citizens in Helena, whether they were active or not.

Seventeen people were chosen randomly from community organizations including students and faculty at Carroll, members of the Helena Jaycees organization, Girl Scout Service Leaders, and members of political campaign staffs to start the sample. The final sample population also contains doctors, lawyers, politicians, homemakers, business owners, and laborers to name a few. Each participant was asked to nominate up to five contact people whom they considered to be active citizens. This was done to enlarge the survey. The snowball sample method suggests that a saturation point would be reached, in which certain people would continue to appear through these nominations (Schutt 1999). One hundred and forty-two nominees were mentioned two or more times. Nine of those received six or more nominations, with two having received as many as twelve. The significance of receiving a six or higher is that, on the assumption each of these nominees nominated five people then in turn nominated those same people back, it

\(^1\) See Appendix A
would be easy to receive as high as a five. Thus, those receiving a six or higher were likely to be well known in several areas.

Each survey received was then given a respondent number for confidentiality and a “score” based on each of the indices found within the survey. These indices measured two things. The first, called The Level of Joining Index, measured the amount of joining by asking if the respondent belonged to any of fourteen different types of associations. One point was given for each answer “yes”. The second index, called The Intensity of Participation Index, measured intensity of participation by asking fifteen “action” questions from “Are you registered to vote?” to “Have you ever run for or held a political office?” Again, one point was given for each answer “yes”. Questions for both indices were adapted from the work of Putnam and a national survey issued in 1996 called Giving and Volunteering. These two indices were then used to define an active person. The scores could then be crossed with the independent variables of demographics, philanthropy, human nature, and media influence. For purposes of narrowing the amount of research gathered, only The Intensity of Participation Index score was used as a means of correlation.

Data results were then filed into a spreadsheet to keep track of the generation and saturation level. Seeing no terminology to describe this process, the term generations was created to reflect the way in which the name was received. A first generation would be a respondent randomly chosen from a city organization. A second generation respondent would be one that was nominated by a first generation respondent. This continued in the same fashion. Statistical analysis was then done using SPSS. Several bar graphs, pie
charts, frequency tables, and crosstabulations were then produced.

C. Findings

February 25, 2001 was the deadline for inputting new surveys. While more have continued to come in, it was necessary to implement a deadline to create a stable set of data to analyze. As of the above date, 270 surveys had been mailed out. Two hundred and three surveys were received back. This is a return rate of 75 percent. Such an unexpectedly high response rate is addressed in the limits section below. Adding the seventeen first generation surveys issued, there were 220 respondents to work with.

1. The Intensity of Participation Index

Using the Intensity of Participation Index score to determine who was active, crosstabulations were then run with variables including demographics, media influence, philanthropy, and human nature. The index score ranged from 0 to 152. For purposes of evaluating the findings, a line of significance was needed at a certain level. Recognizing that the score of an eight would represent half of the possible scores, it was determined that the score of eight or above would be considered very active. To receive an eight or above also demonstrated a high level of active participation based upon the 15 questions that at least 8 would have had to been answered “yes”. Thus, when the most active portion of the sample was examined, it refers to only that specific cross-section. For purposes of evaluating the success of my methodology, the sample population as a whole was also examined. If the survey worked as planned, the population as a whole would

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2 See Figure 1.1
also demonstrate the significance found in the most active half of the sample.

2. Demographics

The first place to begin analysis is demographics. Needing to discover what type of people were scoring high in civic participation, characteristics of age, gender, religion, marital status, status of children in the home, level of educational attainment, employment status, occupation, and total annual household income were examined. Before continuing on to analyze each of these, there is one of these that can easily be dismissed due to the community setting. Of 220 respondents, there was only one respondent who was not Caucasian, but rather Native American. The other 219 answered Caucasian or chose not to answer at all. The variable of occupation became too unmanageable, because it was an open-ended question. There was too much variation to be able to collapse the category into a useable form.

Age\(^3\) had similar problems, because it was also an open-ended question. This one was much easier to condense by using Putnam’s age cohorts: the Long Civic Generation (ages: 56-81), Baby Boomers (ages: 37-55), and Generation X (ages: 21-36). There was also a need for one category more recent than the Xers, to be called The Contemporaries (ages: 0-20), and one prior to the Long Civic Generation to be named Older than 81 (ages: 82+). The largest group in the sample was the Baby Boomers, representing 47 percent of respondents. The Long Civic Generation came in second with 32 percent of the overall sample population with the Gen Xers recording 17 percent. When examining the high

\(^3\) See Figure 2.1
scoring cross section, the older age cohorts increased from the sample population in activeness, while the Generation X cohort showed a 7 percent decrease in activity from the sample population. These results demonstrated the affects of generational succession, with 81 percent of respondents reporting ages over 36 years old. As these members die off, our communities are left in the hands of younger, less active generations.

Historical gender statistics tend to favor women as being more civically active. Putnam (2000) found that this was based upon women being more active with their children as stay-at-home moms. The stay-at-home status also suggests that they have the free time to be more active than their spouses. Times are definitely changing. Of the 149 very active respondents, 92 were men, while only 57 were women. Since the overall sample was 58 percent men and 42 percent women, the results do not simply mimic the overall sample make-up but rather suggest that men in Helena are more active than women at a 2 to 1 ratio. This is interesting since the general population of Helena is 3 percent more female than male (US Census Bureau 2001). Perhaps what we are seeing here is the impact of less stay-at-home moms primarily do to divorce and unplanned pregnancies. As the sole parent providing for their families, they may be forced to work more or have more jobs, leaving less time for women to become active in the community.

In chapter two, several authors suggested the importance of religion including Bellah, Putnam, and Baggett. For demographic purposes, denomination is examined here and issues of religiosity are left for the section on philanthropy. Only 31.8 percent of the

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See Figure 2.2
sample was reportedly Catholic. The highest representation was the Protestant denomination, scoring 45.6 percent. When this demographic was examined through its highly civic cross section, there were no significant changes in percentage representations.

Marital status is closely related to community involvement for an obvious reason. By getting married, an individual automatically doubles his or her networks by taking a partner (Putnam 2000). Marriage also tends to produce children which in turn creates more connections to the community. While the overall sample was 78.5 percent married, that number rises to 83 percent when the most active citizens are asked. One hundred thirty nine of 168 who scored 8 or above on the index are currently married. Those who are currently married and scored below an 8 still fell very closely with 19 of the 36 (53%) scoring a 6 or 7. It does seem that either due to added connections or perhaps the company of a mate to participate with, marriage does increase the likelihood of being an active citizen.

As stated above, the status of children in the home under the age of eighteen can affect a person’s commitment level. They often have their own network of activities that the parents naturally become involved in. Differentiation between full and part-time children was necessary for those families that have step children and joint custody arrangements. There was no need to analyze the findings for part-time children, because only 11 of 219 (5%) respondents answered “yes” to this question. This was not a significant enough group to examine. As for those with full-time children, the findings were startling. In the overall sample, 65.2 percent had no children. This contradicts Putnam’s findings that children increase the likelihood of community participation. At the
same time, we must remember that 180 of those 219, 82 percent, were over the age of 36. Almost half of those were over the age of 56. Still, in Helena, lack of children in the home does not necessarily mean less community participation.

"Education is an important variable stimulating participation in both political and non-political groups" (Milbrath 1974). Of the 167 high scoring respondents, 158 have attended at least some amount of college: 94.6 percent. Seventy-seven respondents (46%) went on to finish college and 97 (58%) went beyond that. These numbers reflect the overall sample in which 209 of 222 respondents, 94 percent, completed at least some college. While education is often linked with socioeconomic status, it has been found to correlate across all statuses and occupations. Milbrath (1974) report that this is possibly due to the amount of information higher educated people have and greater opportunity for subjection to multiple opinions and open forums for discussion.

Generally speaking though, the level of educational attainment will lead to the level of income earned. Income affects ability to participate by providing the security of not having to work multiple jobs or long hours to make ends meet (Putnam 2000). The top four income levels were used to discuss how Helena citizens measured up. Of the 163 high scoring respondents 54 percent had a total household income of $60,000 or more. When the next highest income bracket of $45,000-$60,000 was added, the percentage jumps a dramatic 21 percent to 75 percent. Previous demographics of family size suggest

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5 See Figure 2.3

6 See Figure 2.4
that $45,000 is a liveable income for these respondents.

Income is also logically affected by the number of hours worked per week. Employment status\(^7\) can affect the level of time a person has in the day to commit to “other” activities. These can include socializing with friends, volunteering with a child’s classroom activity, or attending group meetings. Putnam (2000) found that those with part-time jobs were likely to develop good connections in the workplace necessary to maintain and expand networks the same as full-time employees. The benefit to being part time is that they also get the extra hours in the day to spare that full time people do not have.

Helena seems to be quite the opposite. Of the 164 most active respondents 60 percent of them had full or more than full time commitments to a job. Only 14 percent held part-time jobs. Interestingly enough, while there are many full or more than full-time employees who scored below an eight, there are only three part-time employees who scored below an eight. The other group of citizens that have the connections already built, some financial security, and time to spare are those who are retired. Nineteen percent of the most active respondents are retired. Half of the low scoring retired respondents scored a six or seven. While it seems that a person with a full-time career would not have the time to commit to extra community activities, citizens in Helena make time.

3. Media Influence

Putnam’s suggestion that “Nothing . . . is more broadly associated with civic

\(^7\) See Figure 2.5
disengagement and social disconnection than is dependence on television for entertainment” (2000). In order to draw direct correlations with Putnam’s findings, the exact same question and response choices were given. Respondents were asked to rate the statement “TV is my primary form of entertainment”\(^8\). They were given six choices gradually ranging from “Definitely Disagree” to “Definitely Agree”. In order to create greater significance, the three “Disagree” choices needed to be grouped into a single variable, and the same was true with the “Agree” choices. Of the 164 high scoring respondents, 113 disagreed that TV was their primary form of entertainment. That is 69 percent. This is slightly higher than the overall sample response in which 65 percent disagreed.

4. Philanthropy

We return now to the subject of religion. Religiosity is the term that attempts to measure the religiousness in people and what elements create that religious feeling. While there are many elements to determining religiosity, only attendance was used in order to get a handle on the issue. This sample, as a whole did not seem to be very church going.\(^9\) Only 42 percent attended on a weekly or more basis. When the monthly or more category was added, it went up to 59 percent. Analysis of the civic cross section demonstrated a slight increase in the participation level. When running a frequency of the fourteen groups used to determine a joining score, religious groups came in seventh. Only 29 percent of

\(^8\) See Figure 3.1

\(^9\) See Figure 4.1
respondents claimed to be members of a religious organization. Work groups came in first with 57.5 percent claiming some allegiance.

When who contributed to charity in the past month was looked at, there was one skew noticed. Surveying started in September and went through February. This includes extra-charitable months of November (Thanksgiving) and December (Christmas). I felt it only fair to point that out, seeing as how several respondents pointed it out to me. Nevertheless, 209 out of 218, 96 percent, total respondents had contributed to charity. The active cross section demonstrated the same representation.

Calculating the percentage of income donated can be quite hard, so the results of this variable may not be as accurate as possible. When examining the highly active portion, only 37.6 percent donated more than 7 percent of their past year's annual income. When the category was broadened down to 4 percent donated, 72 percent of the cross section had contributed.

5. Human Nature

Four questions were asked that would rate how people felt about their fellow human beings. They questioned morality, trust, honesty, and willingness to share in citizens today. This again, started as an idea of Putnam's (2000). As with the question about television for entertainment, redefinition of the same six choices into two, being "Agree" and "Disagree" in order to achieve greater significance was necessary.

The question that demonstrated the greatest weakness in human nature, displayed that 87 percent of highly active respondents agreed that people today were willing to
When asked if respondents felt that people today live moral lives\textsuperscript{10}, 186 out of 219, 85 percent, total respondents agreed. When analyzed from a very active perspective, the percentage went up four more points to 90 percent. Ninety-four percent of the cross section of high scoring citizens felt that people today are honest\textsuperscript{12}. The highest correlation was that 159 out of 168 very active respondents agreed that people today can be trusted\textsuperscript{13}. This is an overwhelming 95 percent. In general, all four of these questions showed that all citizens in Helena feel pretty good about their fellow human beings, scoring as a group no less than 85 percent and as high as 92 percent. It would then stand to reason that when people feel good about their worth and others around them, they would be more willing to get involved and help out in the community. They give freely of their time and become more active.

D. Limits

1. The Survey

There are many things that could be done differently and expanded. The first problem is in methodology. Due to the nature of a snowball sample, it is dependent upon names being referred to enlarge the sample until a saturation point is reached. The greatest problem in this step was that some people chose not to nominate any names and of those who did nominate names, only about half gave a source of contact as a way to get

\textsuperscript{10} See Figure 5.1

\textsuperscript{11} See Figure 5.2

\textsuperscript{12} See Figure 5.3

\textsuperscript{13} See Figure 5.4
in touch with that person. The phone book became a very useful partner in finding this information, but many women are still only listed under their husbands' names. For reasons of confidentiality, many people also choose not to be listed in the phone book at all. The third type of complication was when there were multiples of the same name listed. These limits are reflected in only 270 out of 478 nominations (57%) having received surveys.

Secondly, this is self-reported data which leaves itself open to respondent bias. Because the survey asked for names, there was no promise of anonymity; only confidentiality. This may have caused some respondents to be hesitant in answering honestly or caused them to skip certain questions. The lack of anonymity may have also decreased the response rate.

A type of researcher bias may have also caused such a high response rate of 75%, due to the fact that I am a student, and this was brought to the attention of all respondents. This may have caused the respondents to feel less threatened about releasing private information. At the same time, the high response rate could be due to the nature of the people in the sample. Active citizens with a positive perspective on human nature would logically be more inclined to help a college student with a project. Finally, there is the time and expense of doing a mail survey. This project would definitely need grant backing for further, more elaborate results.

As for the results themselves, they are probably only generalizable to populations that are similar in demographic makeup to Helena. Active citizens in Los Angeles or Chicago may not have the same factors of predictability as in smaller towns or capitol
cities. Further research would entail a categorization of American towns by population with surveys run in several towns in each category. Generalizations would then be possible either for each category and then perhaps for the nation as a whole.

2. The Cost

Below is an analysis of what was spent on this small of a survey alone. This is a limit, because limited funds decrease the amount of surveys that can be issued. The need for funding is just as great an impediment as is finding the time and people power to conduct this type of research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Each Item</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 sets of 50 surveys copied</td>
<td>$15.00</td>
<td>$90.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 boxes of envelopes</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>$44.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 mailed at 33 cents</td>
<td>66 cents</td>
<td>$92.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 mailed at 34 cents</td>
<td>68 cents</td>
<td>$88.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Spent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$314.80</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using Putnam's framework to examine the findings from the Helena area, we can conclude by pointing out the distinctness of Helena. We can discuss results that previous researches may have expected to find, and why they would be surprised by Helena citizens. Finally, we can discuss the future of civic participation and the important role future generations will play in shaping our society.
Chapter 4

The Tenth and Final Frame

“We see that the compassionate person . . . holds forth a vision of what a good society can be, provides us with concrete examples of caring that we can emulate, and locates us as members of the diffuse networks of which our society is woven.”

-Robert Wuthnow, Acts of Compassion-

The Helena Survey findings suggest that active citizens in Helena, Montana seem to fit the mold cast by previous studies. They are as optimistic about human nature as predicted by Putnam and as religious as Baggett could have hoped. It is also reassuring to see that Helenans do not need to wait to have children, but become active as concerned individuals. Holding down full-time jobs does not take too much time away from being active citizens nor does watching television. The overall results were quite optimistic and the city of Helena does not seem to need much resuscitation from the culprits thought to have killed civic participation in America.

We can examine the distinctness of Helena by using Putnam’s four culprits of destroying civic participation. His concerns over generational succession, pressures of time and money, progression of technology, and mobility and sprawl can be addressed here in Montana’s capitol city. We also must examine the areas of family structure, education and income, and perspectives of human nature to understand which parts of
Helena’s infrastructure are sound and which may have decayed over the past thirty years. Only then can we discuss our call to action as citizens in our own communities and the research that must continue to stop the bankruptcy of social capitol.

A. Generational Succession

Some argue that it is too hard to predict what a specific age cohort will do in the future. All we can do is record their behavior at a given time and track that cohort as it ages. Only then can external comparisons be made between cohorts. Putnam (2000) argues that as comparisons are made between many cohorts and a pattern appears, it is then reasonable to conclude that the generational pattern will continue over time. Of course, significant period events such as the Great Depression, the Vietnam War, or Watergate could easily affect all people living during that period regardless of their age. As of yet, there has not been such an event to alter the predictions of Generation X or the Contemporaries. Thus, the pattern set forth by the older cohorts along with the “multitasking” characteristics described by Putnam (2000), suggest a decrease in active participation by that cohort. While they may continue to become more active as they age, at their most active moment, they will never be as active as the cohort before them.

The findings from the Helena Survey support this predictable decline. The entire sample population consisted of 17 percent Generation Xers, while the cross section of very active citizens was only 10 percent Gen X. Both of these statistics are under represented when we consider that this cohort makes up approximately 20 percent of the Helena area as a whole (US Census Bureau 2001). We then must conclude that active participation in Generation Xers has begun to decline. Perhaps this is because the sample
population is not representative enough of the general population.

B. Pressures of Time and Money

In Helena, it seems, Putnam’s theory on time spent money-making has been debunked. Sixty percent of the very active respondents reported commitments to their job of 40 or more hours per week. Putnam (2000) would say that many connections are made to other networks at the workplace. Yet, there is a significant loss of time to money making. Perhaps the explanation can be found by examining the frequencies run on the different type of groups respondents claimed to belong to in the Helena Survey. Of the 219 respondents reporting, 57.5 percent claimed to be members of work related groups. This made it the number one group respondents reported belonging to. Thus, we can see that in Helena, work and civic participation are closely related.

In one sense, Putnam was right. The workplace is a wonderful place for making new connections (2000). Findings in Helena suggests that he was wrong in another sense, because they did not find a significant loss of time to work. Instead, they were able to make use of the workplace connections to become more active with what free time they did have. We see this in the response rate of those claiming allegiance to work related organizations.

Perhaps we could take this analysis one step further by looking at one of the largest employers in the Helena area: The State. Many people are employed by the state which could entice citizens to become at least more politically active. The number of lobbying groups and politically related organizations found in a capitol city also hold career opportunities which many lead an employee to become more politically active.
These factors make Helena a unique city that falls into a category with only 49 others like it.

C. Progression of Technology

Time spent in front of the television was a unique and strong predictor of civic participation used by Putnam (2000). Citizens in Helena supported his theory that time spent in front of the television was time not spent in society. The very active cross section of the population showed a strong 69 percent who disagreed that television was their primary form of entertainment. The sample population as a whole demonstrated a similar disinterest in media at a close 65 percent. Further studies could be done to determine what type of television programing is being watched by these citizens and how many hours per day or week are being consumed by the television.

D. Mobility and Sprawl

This report did very little in examining this culprit of decreased participation. The Helena area also consists of the outlying cities of East Helena, Montana City, and Clancy. As the census reported (US Census Bureau 2001) we can see that with a combined population of 47,495 spread over such a wide piece of land and diverse enclaves, it would be easy to see many small, unconnected networks. However, based upon home addresses, the sample population included several respondents from each of these outlying areas. Further studies could address the geography of the region and amount of time spent driving between home and work. Logically, time spent in the car is not time spent active in the community. It is also time spent alone rather than as a part of society.
E. Family Structures

While this was not one of Putnam’s four major components that bankrupted social capital, it was the area of greatest diversion from Putnam’s theories in the Helena Survey. While married people do participate more than singles in Helena, the status of children living in the home does not seem to affect an individual’s motivation to participate. There are several explanations for this phenomenon. The majority of respondents, 81 percent, reported being over the age of 37. Almost half of those were over the age of 56. Perhaps a more in depth analysis is needed of those who had children in general, but perhaps were no longer living at home. It should also be pointed out that only 28.1 percent of respondents reported belonging to any type of youth development organization. Overall, this type of organization ranked 8 of 14. This is clearly not a priority for citizens in Helena.

F. Education and Income

These two highly related areas should be examined as a part of the infrastructure in Helena. While census data shows that only 15.6 percent of citizens have graduated from college (US Census Bureau 2001), the Helena Survey reported that 94 percent of the entire sample had completed at least some college with 46 percent completing their bachelor’s degree. These high levels of education tend to lead to higher paying careers. These findings also reflect the Helena area population and the survey appropriately. The median household income in Helena is $36,409 (US Census Bureau 2001). Yet 71 percent of respondents reported a total household income of $45,000 or more.

Both of these findings support the research of not only Putnam, but Milbrath as
well. Those with more education make more money and thus spend less time worrying about or making money. Therefore, they have more time to spend active in their communities. Having both Carroll College and the Helena College of Technology both probably have an impact on a citizen’s ability to advance their education if so desired. This may again be a civic disposition. Those who are inclined to further their education with their spare time are also those who are willing to use their spare time to mentor a child or volunteer in an adult literacy program.

G. Perspectives of Human Nature

One of the most significant findings Putnam and his colleagues have found is that living in a civic society increases happiness (AP 2001). It then stands to reason that a positive outlook on fellow human beings also adds to this happiness. It can also add to the civil environment created. When people have a good feeling about those they may be helping, they are more likely to give freely of their time and money. Helena demonstrated this point exceedingly well. The entire sample scored the four questions about morality, trust, honesty, and willingness to share no less then 85 percent and as high as 92 percent. This means that at least 85 percent of the respondents answered that they agreed with all four statements about human nature. The active cross sample only reaffirmed this theory of a positive outlook of human nature by increasing their percentage of agreement to 90 percent.

The interesting unintended responses received suggested that people were cautious about these feelings of good will. This was reflected in their side note comments written on the survey. Some argued the questions were too broad. Others made cynical remarks
about society today. It was also noticed that while the four questions were all getting at the same notion of whether people today are generally good or bad, respondents could answer three positively and one negatively or vice versa.

In general, Helena seems to have a positive outlook on life. It would be interesting to gather a random sample from the general population and compare their feelings of human nature with the same Intensity of Participation Index. This way, we measure the general consensus of Helena optimism, but we can also continue to measure it against the fact that civic people tend to have a more positive outlook than others.

H. The Call to Action

While Helena seems very high in civic participation, it could always do better. By understanding things like media influence and the informal social networks, we have a starting place for getting more people in the community involved. Research has shown that 85 percent of those asked to volunteer, did (Giving and Volunteering 1996). People who attend church tend to volunteer more, because they are asked more frequently due to the nature of that activity (Putnam 2000). Organizations would be wise to take this information and advertise their group and group’s needs better. Many of us have seen the public service announcements about “The More You Know” where famous entertainers and sports stars promote a mentoring or drug-free organization. After a particularly emotional sitcom or drama, a message may flash across the screen promoting an organization that can help deal with the issues discussed. As a community of researchers, we could promote the benefits of living a socially active life, just as we would provide recent medical breakthroughs and current politically activities.
I. Further Research

Further research could be done in each of the four categories done here: demographics, media influence, philanthropy, and human nature. Each is a topic in and of itself and could be done independent from the other three. The infrastructure of not only Helena, Montana but of all our communities must be understood if we are to learn what is broken and what works. The family structure, education, and income are especially important, because they are the institutions that primarily affect our children.

The culprit of generational succession also has many unanswered questions. The predictability of future generational activity on its best day will be shaky. Yet, it is in our future generations that we must put our trust. They are the ones who will have to break the cycles of their parents and grandparents. Is this something that can happen naturally or is there a need for a dramatic event like the Great Depression or the Vietnam War? Those with a positive outlook on human nature would hope that it would never come to such a catastrophe.

The research has been done. We know the benefits that result. It is time to present it to the people. As with the statistics of volunteering, perhaps then, 85 percent of those who receive this information will do something about it. Our networks will once again flourish, and we can pass on a newly restored tradition to our children.
References

Associated Press. (March 1, 2001). Study: Civic involvement linked to happiness. Independent Record. 5A.


Johnson, Charles S. (March 1, 2001). Montanans a giving group. Independent Record. 5A


Additional Resources


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Appendix A

The Survey and Cover Letter
To whom it may concern:

My name is Elizabeth Johnson. I am senior at Carroll College double majoring in Political Science and Sociology. For my honor’s thesis, I am trying to discover what creates an active citizen in Helena, Montana. I would appreciate a moment of your time in filling out this short survey. Simply fill in the blanks or circle the most applicable answer. All results will be kept confidential and no names will be used. If you have any questions for me I would be glad to answer them. Thank you very much for your time and assistance.

Elizabeth Johnson
ejohnson@ascc.carroll.edu
495-0429
Age: 

Religion: Catholic Protestant Jewish Mormon Hindu Buddhist Islam None Other

How often do you attend religious services: Never Less than monthly Monthly or more Weekly Daily

Gender: M F

Race: Caucasian African-American Native American Hispanic Asian Pacific Islander Other

Are you currently: employed more than full-time (50+ hours) other employed full-time (approx. 40 hours) retired employed part-time (less than 40 hours) not employed

Primary Occupation: ________________________________________

Are you the primary breadwinner for your household: yes no

Total Annual Household Income: $0-15,000 $15,001-30,000 $30,001-45,000 $45,001-60,000 $60,001-75,000 $75,001-90,000 $90,001-105,000 $105,001+

Are you currently: single married divorced separated widowed other

How many children under the age of 18 reside in your home full-time?______ part-time?______

Level of school completed: Some high school High School Tech, Trade, Business School Some college College Graduate Beyond College

Media Influence

How often do you:

1. Read a newspaper/mag: never 1-3 days per week 4-6 days per week 6+ days per week
2. Watch TV: never 1-3 hours per day 4-6 hours per day 6+ hours per day
3. Listen to the radio: never 1-3 hours per day 4-6 hours per day 6+ hours per day
4. Use the Internet: never 1-3 hours per day 4-6 hours per day 6+ hours per day

How much of your information about politics and society do you receive from:

1. The newspaper/mag: None A little bit Some Most All
2. The TV: None A little bit Some Most All
3. The radio: None A little bit Some Most All
4. The Internet: None A little bit Some Most All

Appendix A Page 3
TV is my primary source of entertainment:

- definitely disagree
- generally disagree
- moderately disagree
- moderately agree
- generally agree
- definitely agree

Civic Associations

In the last year, have you belonged to any:

1. Educational groups (PTA, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

2. Religious groups (Christian Coalition, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

3. Recreational/Hobby groups (Quilters Guild, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

4. Youth Development groups (Scouting, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

5. Veteran's group
   - yes
   - no

6. Work/Professional related groups
   - yes
   - no
   (Am. Medical Assoc., etc.)

7. Labor Union
   - yes
   - no

8. Service groups (Red Cross, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

9. Fraternal groups (Knights of Columbus, etc.)
   - yes
   - no

10. Alumni, sorority/fraternity (colleges, etc.)
    - yes
    - no

11. Political organization (lobby group, etc.)
    - yes
    - no

12. Civic Association (neighborhood organization)
    - yes
    - no

13. Self-help/Support groups (AA, etc.)
    - yes
    - no

14. Other (Please list) ________________________________

Philanthropic Involvement

Have you contributed monetarily to charity in the last month?  yes  no

Approximately what percentage of your annual income have you given in the last year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1-3%</th>
<th>4-6%</th>
<th>7-9%</th>
<th>10%+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>21+</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>21+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many times last year did you volunteer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>10-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>21+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

How did you get involved in volunteering:

- church
- friends
- work
- school
- family
- civic groups
- other

Are your friends involved in the same activities as you: yes no
Most people today live moral lives:

- definitely disagree
- generally disagree
- moderately disagree

- moderately agree
- generally agree
- definitely agree

Most people today can be trusted:

- definitely disagree
- generally disagree
- moderately disagree

- moderately agree
- generally agree
- definitely agree

Most people today are honest:

- definitely disagree
- generally disagree
- moderately disagree

- moderately agree
- generally agree
- definitely agree

Most people today are willing to share:

- definitely disagree
- generally disagree
- moderately disagree

- moderately agree
- generally agree
- definitely agree

**Civic/Political/Religious Involvement**

Are you registered to vote

- yes
- no

In the last year, have you:

1. Voted in an election
   - yes
   - no

2. Attended a public meeting
   - yes
   - no

3. Attended a rally or speech
   - yes
   - no

4. Made a public speech
   - yes
   - no

5. Signed a petition
   - yes
   - no

6. Written a congressman or senator
   - yes
   - no

7. Written a letter to the paper
   - yes
   - no

8. Written an article for a magazine or newspaper
   - yes
   - no

9. Worked for a political party
   - yes
   - no

10. Worked for a community organization
    - yes
    - no

11. Volunteered with a political campaign/group
    - yes
    - no

12. Served on a committee for a local organization
    - yes
    - no

13. Served as an officer of a club/organization
    - yes
    - no

14. Held or ran for a political office
    - yes
    - no
In order to further my survey, I would appreciate the nomination of up to five people whom you consider to be an active citizen in Helena. (Source of contact if possible)

1

2

3

4

5

If you would be interested in being considered for a very brief, follow-up interview I would greatly appreciate you filling out some of this final information that will be solely for the purposes of contacting you and will in no way be used in my research or seen by any other people.

Name:______________________________ Phone:______________________________

(h)______________________________

Email:______________________________ Phone:______________________________

(w)______________________________
Appendix B

Illustrations
Figure 1.1
Distribution of Involvement Scores

Figure 2.1
Age Distribution
Sample Population

Over 81
2.2%

Contemporaries
1.3%

Gen Xers
17.0%

Boomers
46.6%

Missing
.9%

Long Civic
31.8%
Figure 2.2
Religious Denominations Distribution
Sample Population

Protestant 44.4%
Catholic 30.9%
Jewish 2.2%
None 9.9%
Other 9.0%
Misc .9%
Missing 2.7%

Figure 2.3
Educational Attainment Distribution
Sample Population

college grad 34.5%
some college 15.7%
beyond college 43.5%
Missing .4%
high school 3.6%
tech, trade, business 2.2%
Figure 2.4
Total Household Income Distribution
Sample Population

- $105,001+: 16.4%
- $90,001-105,000: 9.8%
- $75,001-90,000: 7.9%
- $60,001-75,000: 21.0%
- $0-15,000: 4.7%
- $15,001-30,000: 3.1%
- $30,001-45,000: 16.4%
- $45,001-60,000: 7.9%
- other: 3.1%

Figure 2.5
Employment Status Distribution
Sample Population

- Not employed: 4.5%
- Retired: 17.9%
- Part-time: 11.7%
- More than full time: 30.0%
- Full time: 30.9%
- Missing: 1.8%
Figure 3.1
TV is a Primary Source of Entertainment
Active Respondents Only
agree
31.1%
disagree
68.9%

Figure 4.1
Church Attendance Distribution
Sample Population

Never
19.4%
Daily
.9%
Weekly
41.2%
Less than monthly
21.8%
Monthly or more
16.6%
Figure 5.1
People Today are Willing to Share
Active Respondents Only

agree 87.1%

Figure 5.2
People Today Live Moral Lives
Sample Population

agree 84.9%
Figure 5.3
People Today are Honest
Active Respondents Only

disagree
6.0%
agree
94.0%

Figure 5.4
People Today can be Trusted
Active Respondents Only

disagree
5.4%
agree
94.6%