

**GENERAL SOCIAL TRUST AND POLITICAL TRUST WITHIN SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL GROUPS: A CASE STUDY**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Political Science
in the College of Sciences
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Fall Term
2006

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ABSTRACT

People in society with high levels of generalized social trust and political trust are more likely to engage in civic activism and participation. Therefore, people involved in social and political groups will likely have higher levels of generalized social and political trust than the general public. What lacks in this realm of scholarship is a solid comparison of trust among people involved in social and political groups. This case-study analysis of generalized social trust and political trust among social and political groups shows the trust that is not only generated within each group, but also which types of groups are more effective at developing citizens that participate in society.

Using a researcher-designed survey instrument, two social groups and two political groups have been evaluated and compared to demonstrate members' propensity to trust others in society and those in political office at all levels of government. Sample size is 115 respondents. Among other demographic data analyzed and compared to a larger population data set in the World Values Survey, six hypotheses have been tested. Typical analysis shows demographic data or group membership as the independent variable with trust values acting as the dependent variable.

Graphic and cross-tabular data show that social groups recorded higher levels of political trust than political groups. This is probably due to the ideological leanings of the political groups. Political groups showed higher levels of generalized social trust than social groups. Political group members probably feel that their actions are benefiting the greater good. Additionally, participation variables showed that not only are political group members more interested in politics than social group members, but they also have

higher levels of registering to vote and to participate in the voting process. They are probably seeking to make significant change in the political system through their actions.

The research conducted does not seek to provide a comprehensive analysis of trust among members of social and political groups. However, it is intended to promote the analysis of trust among people in society that have a predisposition to trust as they have shown through the act of participating in a social or political group. As foci for the development of trust, analysis of social and political groups provides a shortcut for scholars interested in the development and proliferation of trust in society. This research provides analysis of four case-study groups at one point in time. Further research using larger sample sizes and time-series analysis could advance trust analysis among social and political groups.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Philip Pollock for all of his invaluable help throughout the writing process. His patience, guidance, advice, and encouragement have helped me in my endeavor to locate the motivation for civic activism. I would also like to thank Dr. Bernadette Jungblut for her help with methodology and for her consistent optimism. Finally, Dr. Jonathan Knuckey has provided significant inspiration to find the source of the American spirit of democracy.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

PTA	Parent Teacher Association
GSTI	Generalized Social Trust Index
PTI	Political Trust Index
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VADS	Voluntary Association Data Set
WVS	World Values Survey

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Political scientists and sociologists have dedicated much time and effort to the study of the decline in general social trust, political trust, and the repercussions on the representative democratic system that we hold dear in the United States. The concern is that “civic participation-whether voting, membership in voluntary associations, giving to charity, or volunteering time-has fallen in the past two and a half decades. So has interpersonal trust.” (Uslaner, 1999: 135.) Interpersonal trust or generalized trust in others transcends all societal relationships. “Trust is a key concept that plays an important role in many social situations ranging from interpersonal relationships to economic exchange.” (Miller, 2003: 62.) A person with high levels of general social trust will expect that others in society will reciprocate that trust and give him a sense of purpose in the community. That person will be more motivated to make the community better for himself and essentially all members of the community. They may volunteer time to help others, they may join social or political groups, or they may donate to worthy causes. A person who trusts others in society will also be accepting of others’ decisions in the political system. Even when a person disagrees with the result of an election, a trusting person will realize that others in society are capable of choosing the result that is best for the society. Additionally, the health effect of trust on societies is note-worthy. As a scholar of social capital, Robert Putnam commented on the importance of trust in

daily life explaining that it “may also help explain why students of public health find that life expectancy itself is enhanced in more trustful communities.” (Putnam, 2000: 135.)

Social and political group activism has long been touted as a source of trust-building. “Relations of trust are generated through participation in social networks.” (Herreros, 2004: 14). Trust developed in social and political groups not only plays a role in decisions about politics but also in day-to-day activities like trust in strangers and neighbors, generalized trust. People who have high levels of generalized trust will be more involved in their community, participate more in politics, have more positive feelings about the role of government, and feel better about their own personal lives. As Lee Hamilton wrote, “participation is the best antidote to cynicism.” (Trattner 2002: 36.) People who are actively involved in their communities live happier lives and play a positive role in the promotion of further civic participation and optimism. “Optimism leads to generalized trust, which promotes civic activism, which creates a more prosperous community, leading to increasing optimism.” (Uslaner, 1999: 138.) This cycle of participation benefits all members of the community.

Objective

Research in Political Science and Sociology has focused much attention on participation in the democratic process, trust in the political system, and generalized trust in society. However, within these social sciences little attention has been given to trust within groups. Dietland Stolle found that through a self-selection bias, people who have a propensity to trust will tend to be the people who join political and social groups.

“People who trust more might be more easily drawn to membership in associations, whereas people who trust less might not join in the first place.” (Stolle, 2003: 25.) This research will focus on trust among people that have already demonstrated the potential to trust by participating in social and political groups. Participation in both political and social groups helps to form social networks that produce citizens with a greater potential to trust, be civically active, and participatory in the political process. However, the two main groupings of people will produce varying levels of trust. Research by Francisco Herreros suggests that political groups will have higher levels of social trust. His explanation is that “the transformation of beliefs into social trust seems more likely if the content of the discussion is political.” (Herreros 2004: 56.) The members of groups that discuss political issues feel as if they are impacting a larger group beyond themselves. They feel that the decisions they are making and the discussions they are having will affect society beyond the group setting.

The objective of my research is to test the theory that members of political groups have higher levels of trust than members of social groups. Through the process of political and social group interaction, do political groups develop higher levels of social trust than general social groups? Additionally, does political trust have more of a chance of developing in political groups than social groups? Finally, what are the effects of age, income, and education on the development of trust within political and social groups? I have compared trust levels among members of political groups and social groups with varying age, income, levels of participation, and education levels. I have demonstrated the effects of these demographic factors on social and political trust. Using a survey

instrument, this research shows trust as one of several dependent variables analyzed among four case study groups. Two of the groups are general social groups while two are political groups.

Concepts

The matter of political trust should be of considerable concern for public policy-makers. Marc Hetherington noted, political trust is “the degree to which people perceive that the government is producing outcomes consistent with their expectations” (Hetherington, 2005: 9.) Absent the trust of their constituency, representatives carry out their own will in the lawmaking process. Furthermore, when constituents do not perceive their representatives as producing “outcomes consistent with their expectations” they will find a candidate that will produce the desired outcome to ensure that elected officials are truly representative.

Social trust sometimes referred to as generalized trust or general trust underlies all modern human interactions. Social trust is “trust in unknown people.” (Herrerros, 2004: 13.) The ramifications of social trust run the gamut from borrowing a cup of sugar from a neighbor to the development of ethical standards and morality. This generalized trust may become the spirit of volunteering and charity or it may become ethical standards that guide individuals. People with significant levels of social trust may even help redistribute resources to help others in the community who are not as fortunate. “Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate.” (Simmel, 2004: 175.) Additionally, social trust contributes to the development of

political trust. As Eric Ulaner found in his analysis of the World Values Survey, “Trusting societies have less corruption.” (Uslaner, 2004: 76.) The implication here is that societies with high levels of generalized social trust will be more cooperative and participatory in the political system as well as increased political efficiency.

In a group setting, people with generalized trust rely on the concept of reciprocity. That is, group members may feel that they will eventually receive some kind of repayment or reward for participating and developing trust (Putnam, 2000:134). Participation in a social or political group involves some sort of trustworthiness. A participant may perceive that a reputation of trustworthiness will pay-off in the future or he may seek a direct repayment in the form of calling in a favor. The idea of reciprocity is fundamental to civilized life and underlies moral behavior that guides much human interaction. (Putnam, 2000: 21.) Members of a community or organization internalize reciprocity and develop moral codes and ethical standards that help to advance the group. Fukuyama points to reciprocity being more significant to the success of a society than rules and regulations. The belief is that successful communities and associations are those “formed not on the basis of explicit rules and regulation but out of a set of ethical habits and reciprocal moral obligations internalized by each of the community’s members” (Fukuyama, 1995: 9.)

Trust and reciprocity are only two of the many variables in the commonly studied field of social capital. While the study of social capital as a discipline is not my focus, it is nonetheless considered a byproduct of membership in associations and trust and I would be derelict for not considering it in this study. “Social capital refers to connections

among individuals-social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000: 19.) Social capital, like physical or human capital, can provide investment opportunities. A member of a community invests his trust in others, volunteers in service projects, or helps a member of the community in-need in hopes of gaining a reputation of trustworthiness, making connections that can help him in the future, or receiving support from the community when he is in-need. A member of a group may utilize the connections made within the group to attain a good or service he may not have otherwise obtained. The groups that I examined exhibit much propensity to develop social capital through deliberations, civic activism, and, to some extent, solving problems in the community and society.

The groups I examined can be put into two distinct categories with regard to their goals, activities, or production of public or private goods. In a social group, members focus much attention on “the interconnection of lives of people outside the government institutions” (Walsh, 2004: 203.) These groups do not officially deliberate political issues. Informally, members may discuss politics as may happen in many informal circumstances but this is not a goal of the group. These groups may participate in charitable works, meet to share common interests, or work to generate benefits to the members of the group. These groups produce private goods that may be shared among members but the benefits of the group do not directly transcend to the wider public. A sports league could be considered a social group because members do not have discussion or deliberation of political issues as a stated goal. Additionally, the group produces a private good. The activities undertaken by the group benefit the members and

do not directly impact nonmembers. Members of a sports league associate with the purpose of meeting others with similar interests or for entertainment. While the group may do volunteer work that affects nonmembers, the benefits of group actions go to members, friends or relations of members, or business connections.

A political group, or association, openly deliberates issues that involve government institutions, elections, and public policy. Political group discussions generally refer to “the common good of the wider community and not only to the interests of the members of the associations” (Herrerros, 2004: 60.) These groups might discuss political issues of the day, have candidate forums, develop campaign strategies, or organize political rallies or demonstrations. Political groups work to benefit the members and the public beyond the group. A political group may have explicit goals that relate to improving society through the political process.

Limitations

My study does not only provide insight into the specific groups examined but it also has implications beyond the groups themselves. I compared my findings with World Values Survey results and show that small group interactions generate trust that permeates throughout society. This research uses data obtained from small numbers of survey respondents in both social and political groups. While I expect that my small sample size will have variation from the general population and even the World Values Survey results, my research will show that the trust-building interactions among group members in both types of groups can develop trust that affects the larger population.

Further research into trust-building in social and political groups, using larger sample sizes and possibly time-series data, could yield results with less variation from the general population and give more details about the affect of age, income, and education on trust within groups.

Implications

Participation in associations can provide people with a tool to judge whether unknown people are trustworthy. Through group interactions, people can gain insight into the workings of people unfamiliar to them and ultimately trust people who are not members of the group. A person trusts unknown people because he has positive experiences with co-members of his association and considers that these co-members are a representative sample of society at large. Participation in groups and trust in others is imperative for the democratic process.

The quality of democratic politics in modern societies is dependent upon the performance of organization such as interest groups, intermediary associations, civic associations, social movements and voluntary associations (Van Deth, 1998: 1.) Trust in others legitimizes the political process. If a person disagrees with the political system and has some degree of trust in his fellow citizens, he will accept the judgment of others and work toward the next election in the hopes of persuading others to support his views. Without this trust, he may rebel against the system, he may not accept political decisions, and he may not feel he has a purpose in society. Large portions of the population with similar beliefs could jeopardize the democratic process. Political trust is necessary to

ensure that those in society who are less fortunate can receive necessary support and representation. When trust in government declines, support for government programs will decline, usually in the welfare category. “Even though almost all Americans would like to rid the country of poverty and achieve greater racial equality, many do not trust the government enough to support the programs designed to realize these goals.” (Hetherington, 2005: 139.) Through social and political group activism, trust in government and in others throughout society grows and support of programs to help the disadvantaged members of society grows.

This research will delve into the issues of trust among social and political groups. Chapter II will address previous research into political socialization of the populace, the subsequent research into social capital, and the current trends in trust analysis. Scholarship by David Easton, Robert Putnam, Eric Uslaner, and Francisco Ferreros highlight the Literature Review. Chapter III focuses on the methodology of the research. This research includes an original data set called the Voluntary Association Data Set created from a researcher-created survey instrument. Additionally, a Generalized Social Trust Index and a Political Trust Index were created for this research using survey responses. These indexes seek to evaluate trust among different types of groups and among people with various demographic characteristics. Six hypotheses will be evaluated. Chapter IV covers the data analysis. While the data set reveals many interesting relationships, the primary focus is trust analysis among group participants. Cross-tabulations and graphs demonstrate the relationships among the dependent and independent variables. Independent variables will typically be general demographic

characteristics of the members of the social and political groups. Dependent variables are trust and participation measures. Chapter V explains the implications of this research and provides suggestions for further research and analysis.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Why Trust?

“A trusting society is a civic society, and a civic society is a civil society.” (Uslaner, 2000: 569.) Absent trust, and one is simply “placing valued outcomes at risk to others’ malfeasance, mistakes, or failures.” (Tilly, 2005: 12.) The multitude of interpersonal exchanges between people requires that they have a willingness to trust and to be trusted. Agreements made between two or more people must have a potential to be fulfilled. All people in a given society have interests. Since most “actors” in the society are not fully in control of all aspects of their interests, they must be able to cooperate with others. They must be able to trust that others in the society will fulfill their end of the transaction. (Coleman, 1990: 29.)

The society created by social interactions requires rules and trust in others that the rules of the society will not be broken. Trust is “the need in complex society for individuals to rely on rules that are accepted by many people and that guide both interpersonal exchanges- the institutions. Without such consensual rules and trust in them, societal functioning would cease.” (Lin, 2001: 148.) Each member of society that trusts others must also have some concept of reciprocity. People who trust feel that the trust they instilled in their fellow citizen will some day be instilled in them or that some benefit will be obtained from exhibiting trusting behavior. “Generalized trusters are more likely to engage in: voting, using the presidential campaign fund checkoff on

federal income tax forms, working on community problems, giving to charity, volunteering time, and being willing to serve on a jury.” (Uslaner, 1999: 128.) People who trust are more active in their community and are more productive citizens than their untrusting counterparts in society.

Trust in others is essential in a modern society. The characteristics of trust are instilled in citizens at an early age. David Easton wrote of the how members of society are socialized, or “politicized”, into the population in his “An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems”. Through the process of politicization “a person learns to play his political roles, which include the absorption of the proper political attitudes.” (1957: 397.) This process provides for the development of trust and the analysis of trustworthiness in others. The role of organizations in this politicization process also did not go unnoticed. “The decisive links in this chain of transmission are parents, siblings, peers, teachers, organizations, and social leaders.” (1957: 399.) The implication is that organizations and other parts of society are critical in the political socialization of new members of the society. Through the interactions with these parts of society, a new member learns behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge which are important to help the society function in a cooperative way. Easton laid the groundwork for the analysis of many realms of political science including the study of social capital, trust, and the role of associations in the political sphere of society. Easton also addressed the idea of reciprocity when he said “For conforming we are made to feel worthy, wanted and respected and often obtain material advantages such as wealth, influence, improved opportunities. For deviating beyond the permissible range, we are made to feel

unworthy, rejected, dishonored, and often suffer material losses.” (1957: 398.) The concept of reciprocity later became a focus of Robert D. Putnam in his work on the decline of the civic life in America and elsewhere.

In describing reciprocity as the “touchstone of social capital,” Robert Putnam puts the concept of reciprocity at a critical juncture in societal relations. (Putnam, 2000: 134.) The concept is easiest understood using the social group perspective. Members of a bowling league regularly come into contact. One member has a plumbing problem in his home. Another is a plumber. Through regular discussions, the plumbing problem is revealed. The plumber offers to look at the problem and eventually fixes it. He charges no fee. This transaction was not completed with total altruism. The plumber may one day call upon the other group member to do a favor for him. Additionally, the plumber gains a reputation as a good person and subsequent business could result. This discussion, and eventual benefit to both members, would not have evolved without the bowling league as a catalyst of social capital. The relationships developed within the group bring about relations of trust.

Citizens participating in associations are exposed to various types of people, people with which an individual may not otherwise come into contact. This exposure in a positive environment reinforces positive attributes and helps to build trust. When “strangers” join a group, the members of the group come to realize, through the association, that unknown people can be trusted. As Robert Putnam wrote in Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, “Internally, associations instill in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritedness.” (1993: 89.)

The example of a mostly Caucasian Parent Teacher Association can help to illustrate. After moving to the area, parents of an African-American student see the opportunity of joining the PTA as a chance to stay involved in their child's education. Initial contact with the group is met with suspicion from the veteran members about an outsider joining the group. After many meetings and positive experiences, a sense of trust is developed toward strangers and African-Americans. This experience can be transferred not only to other group settings but also to other societal relations that the members may encounter. Eventually, generalized trust in others is generated.

People with generalized trust help to develop a sense of community through their actions of trust and reciprocity. A generalized truster may help someone in need without the desire to have a repayment for their actions. They will become better members of the society or community through participation in the society's functions. Generalized trusters will "give blood more frequently, comply more fully with their tax obligations, are more tolerant of minority views, and display many other forms of civic virtue." (Putnam, 2000: 137.) These members of society not only perform these duties out of a sense of civic obligation but they also serve as an example and help in the politicization to which David Easton referred.

Research by David Easton in his analysis of the politicization of the populace and subsequent research into the social capital paradigm has evolved into the analysis of trust as a measure of social capital. Leading the way in the field of trust is Francisco Ferreros. His analysis of trust among group members has provided critical insight into the development of the hypotheses researched herein. In The Problem of Forming Social

Capital: Why Trust? by Francisco Ferreros, the author points to obligations of reciprocity among group members to show why trust proliferates among group members.

“Membership to social networks, as voluntary associations, for example, generates relations based on trust. This means that if you cooperate with a comember of your association, this cooperation is based to a great extent in your trustful expectation about the probability that your comember will reciprocate your cooperative behavior.” (2004: 9.) As a member of a group, you expect that other members of your group have similar beliefs as you. If a group member asks a favor of you. You trust that if you assist, they will eventually return the favor. Trust among group members will increase.

Trust “is generated through participation in social networks” (Ferreros, 2004: 16). This concept sounds good in practice but the problem addressed by Margaret Levi in her article “Social and Unsocial Capital: A Review Essay of Robert Putnam’s Making Democracy Work,” is the link between participation in social networks and the development of trust (Levi, 1996: 47-48). Essentially, how does the act of participating in a group create trust? In The Problem of Forming Social Capital: Why Trust? by Francisco Ferreros, the author seeks to provide the link between the role of association membership and the development of trust.

Herreros’ first point is that a person trusts unknown people because he has had positive experiences with other members of the group. (2004:51.) The idea is that members of the PTA will trust unknown people because there have been positive experiences with the newest member of the group. Through the group process, the members of the group grow to trust the new member and will assume that the new

member is a representative sample of society. Future contacts made with unknown people in society may be treated as similar to the experiences of the group. If the new member had publicly condemned the education system during the meeting and developed a pattern of distrust between members, future interactions with unknown people may be met with distrust by group members.

Herreros' second argument for group membership contributing to building trust is the concept that membership educates people about the characteristics of trustworthy people. (2004: 51.) Public deliberation among group members may hinder the actions and behaviors of members. Participating in a public forum may keep outspoken members from speaking with an untrusting tone. Issues typically associated with distrust may never see the light of day in a public setting. Also, members could associate specific actions of the group with trusting behavior. For example, members of the local Democratic Party meet monthly. New members might note that all of the members seem to be very trustworthy. Additionally, the members all arrive on time for the meetings. A new member might associate people who arrive to functions on-time with being trustworthy. Additionally, members might say the Pledge of Allegiance prior to every meeting. Because a new member associates this behavior with security and trustworthiness, he might interpret that the group can be trusted.

The third link of group membership to building trust put forth by Herreros is that people learn about unknown people through deliberations within a group. (2004: 55.) The discussion among unknown people created in a group setting are naturally more withdrawn and subdued due to the fact that people are going to be more cautious about

their topic selection among people they do not know. While they may not learn specific in-depth information about new members, group members see a more reserved personality. Through the socialization process, new members learn appropriate behaviors and expectations. Also, preconceived ideas about certain ethnic or cultural groups may be overcome through the deliberations within a group about various types of issues. An agrarian community formed a community association so that some local farmers can get together regularly, discuss farming techniques, and socialize. Most members are Caucasian and have developed a sense of trust among them. When several new farmers immigrate to the area from Latin America and attend the group's meetings, they are not welcomed at first. Through several meetings and much deliberation about farming techniques, the new members become part of the group deliberations, share new farming techniques, and earn trust from group members. The cultural and racial differences are removed as a basis for judging the new member's trustworthiness and a sense of trust in the member is established based on the new input to the group through deliberations. The trust developed within the group will also transcend to societal relations when the original farmers come into contact with other Latin Americans in the community.

A fourth point of consideration that I wish to advance for Herreros is the idea that deliberations in particular types of groups will more likely lead to higher levels of generalized or social trust. Specifically, members belonging to political groups will develop more generalized trust than members of civic or social groups. (2004: 60.) Through group deliberations, members of political groups develop a sense that they are impacting a larger group beyond themselves. Their objectives are centered more around

making a change in society through the political system rather than deliberating in more of a social sense. Herreros believes that “the transformation of beliefs into social trust seems more likely if the content of the discussion is political.” (2004: 56.) Deliberations within a political group involve making improvements for all members in society including strangers, foreigners, as well as neighbors. The members of the group see themselves as working for the benefit of all members of society through the group process. On the other hand, members of civic associations and social groups deliberate ways to improve the lives of the specific members of the group. They may be associating to advance personal goals or simply to socialize. Members of these groups may also work on volunteer projects that benefit others but these projects are selective and benefit specific members of society not the common good.

The final point that Herreros makes is “that the higher the number of associations, the greater the probability of trusting unknown people.” (2004: 58.) He is not alone in his remark. Bo Rothstein also notes that “the more organizations people are members of, the more likely are they to trust others.” (Rothstein, 2002: 322.) However, Herreros notes that beyond a certain number of association memberships, trust in unknown people actually decreases. The critical number of association memberships is three. Trust will increase with additional memberships beyond the primary group and will be highest if a member has three group memberships. However, it will begin to decline beyond three memberships. The author states: “membership of three associations is related to the maximum point in social trust and this relation decreases in the case of membership of four associations.” (2004: 63.) Multiple group memberships require a commitment of

time on the part of the individual. Time, as an expendable resource, necessitates economic security for the member. An individual with little economic resources may find that they must dedicate much time to the acquisition of resources, working multiple jobs to make ends meet and thereby having little time to devote to group membership. Thus, low income individuals may have less trust in others due to the fact that they have less time to devote to trust-building activities. This sets up a double-edged sword for low income individuals. They will be less likely to trust others and if they decide to wrongfully trust unknown people, the cost to them is proportionally more significant.

Promoting civic virtue is the focus of “Democracy and Social Capital” by Eric Uslaner. He points out that trust is one of the significant factors in promoting civic virtue and thus advancing democracy. “People who trust others are more likely to participate in civic life, so fewer trusters means fewer participants.” (Uslaner, 1999: 132.)

Additionally, people who trust the government to do what is “right” are also the people who trust generally. As Robert E. Lane put it in his Political Life, “if one cannot trust other people generally, one can certainly not trust those under the temptations of and with the powers which come with political office.” (1969: 164.) The trust that people have in others throughout society helps them to establish trust in government officials and particular members of their group.

Particularized trust would be trust among people that have similar interests and those that seek to promote similar agendas in the political sphere. “Particularized trust tends to be attached to the kinds of group identities that are solidified against outsiders, which in turn increases factionalization and decreases chances that conflicts can be

negotiated by democratic means.” (Warren, 1999: 9.) Only particular people would be granted access to the trust generated within the group. Uslaner points to particularized trust as a deterrence from civic life. “Particularized trust mostly leads people to withdraw from civic life.” (Uslaner, 1999: 129.) Particularized trust doesn’t always serve the public good as exemplified by the Ku Klux Klan, militia groups, and gangs. They do all of the things that civic associations do but their activities are not considered “socially desirable.” (Uslaner, 1999: 125.) The generalized trusters are more beneficial to the community and society. “Communities with civic activism and moral behavior, where people give others their due, are more prosperous.” (Uslaner, 1999: 122.) The role of generalized trust in promoting civic activism and awareness is evident but not so clear may be the role of particularized trust in civic activism.

Gone are the days of Greek democracy when citizens directly participated in the ruling process. The representative democracy of modern society requires citizens to trust that their representatives will produce “outcomes consistent with their expectations.” (Hetherington, 2005: 9.) In Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism by Marc J. Hetherington, the author places significant importance on the role of political trust in society. Hetherington calls political trust “a pragmatic running tally of how people think the government is doing at a given point in time.” (2005: 9.) Political trust may vary according to the individual’s beliefs about the political system. It could vary according to the individual in a particular office of government. It could vary according to changing political policies that the government may or may not be enacting. Political trust may vary according to the level of

government studied (i.e. national, state, or local.) “Americans generally trust their state and local governments significantly more than they trust the national government because they view them as more responsive and efficient.” (2005: 10.) Additionally, individual levels of political trust at the national level may vary according to partisanship and responsiveness of national leaders.

Political trust is important to ensure that all interests in society are not only considered but also represented. Citizens need to trust that their representatives are seeking the “greatest good.” If minority interests believe that representatives are not seeking the “greatest good,” there is no reason to continue to abide by policies or laws guided by such “representatives.” Therefore, trust in government, or political trust, is essential to maintain order and sustain the democratic system. Low political trust would indicate “that something in the political system- politicians or political institutions, or both- is thought to be functioning poorly.” (Newton, 2001: 205.) Additionally, it should be considered that a government in which trust was instilled would do a better job than a government in which trust from the public was lacking. (Hetherington, 2005: 13.) Consider a representative that has lost his/her constituents’ trust through illegal or immoral acts. That representative will have a difficult time generating resources and support for policies he/she may wish to pursue. He/she would also have a difficult attempt at reelection. A representative with the full trust of their constituents will find it much easier to raise funds and support for policies. “Even though almost all Americans would like to rid the country of poverty and achieve greater racial equality, many do not trust the government enough to support the programs designed to realize these goals.”

(Hetherington, 2005: 139) The trust instilled in others and in public officials does not appear to be an innate characteristic of all humans. There are mechanisms that promote trust within society and help to reinforce the trust developed through other avenues of socialization. One of the most significant ways to build trust is through associations with other people in the community or society.

The Role of Groups

“Membership in civic organizations, leads people to trust each other.” (Uslaner, 2000: 570.) Participation in a group, like living in a family unit, helps to develop socialization skills necessary to cooperate with others. Group members learn methods and rules, informal and formal, for communicating amid large numbers of people. Members learn which types of discussions and behaviors are appropriate among particular types of people. The development of these skills will help an individual to understand the complex processes involved in the market economy, education, and politics as they involve various members of a society. Participation in associations, whether social or political groups, can provide people with a tool to judge whether unknown people are trustworthy or not, and in this sense, can promote the development of social trust. During group deliberations, members learn about other members’ private lives and establish a rapport with others that they may not otherwise seek out beyond the group setting. Through the deliberation process, a member may also refrain from embarrassing comments that would be inappropriate in a group setting. Group members may subject such inappropriate comments to scrutiny and develop a sense that the member making the

comments in not trustworthy. Consistent positive deliberations help to build trust and may change preconceptions, or preferences, about new members. Additionally, the quality of democratic politics in modern societies is dependent upon the performance of organizations such as interest groups, intermediary associations, civic associations, social movements, and voluntary associations (Van Deth, 1998: 1). Groups, whether social or political, involve members that are active in many other roles in society. Since these are the people who trust, they will tend to the ones working to advance democratic principles and help others in need. They will actively promote democratic ideals. They will ultimately set an example for others in society.

The Role of Income

Trusting unknown people involves risk. An individual places resources of social capital and personal assets in jeopardy when he/she trusts an unknown person. The individual cannot be sure that the unknown person will not try to cheat him/her or steal from him/her. People with fewer resources stand to lose proportionately more from being cheated than a person with more resources. Therefore, it stands to reason that an individual in a group with higher income will trust unknown people more readily than an individual with low income. Herreros put this concept in terms of risk-aversion stating that “higher income levels mean higher resources, less risk aversion and, thus, a higher probability of trusting the comembers of your association.” (2004: 62.) This “particularized-trust” increases with income. People with more resources are less risk-averse because the cost of trusting erroneously is less. (2004: 43.) Additionally, the

income variable transcends from particularized trust to generalized trust, or trust in nonmembers. People with higher income levels will not only trust members of their groups more than those with less economic resources but also have more trust in strangers. (2004: 61.)

The rationale that members of society with less financial assets will tend to not participate in the workings of their community is important to group behavior. In his analysis of the General Social Survey, Robert Putnam found that “people with lower incomes and those who feel financially strapped are much less engaged in all forms of social and community life than those who are better off.” (2000: 193.) A family that is concerned about how the next meal will be provided does not have the time to worry about how the local social group is advancing its goals. It can be noted that the bottom fifth income group in America (those making less than \$15,000/year) “are about three-fifths as likely to vote, only half as likely to go to a protest or to get in touch with a government official, only one-third as likely to engage in informal activity within the community—and only one-tenth as likely to make a campaign donation.” (Verba, et al., 1997.)

The expense of time on the lower income individual joining a group, and possibly money in the form of dues, increases stress and reduces the probability that they will join a group. A local political group may not require regular dues to be paid but the opportunity cost of attending meetings and participating in the group process determines that a lower income person will likely forgo attending group functions. Additionally, research and analysis by Paul Dekker using the Dutch Civil Society and Volunteering

Survey from 1997 revealed that people in the highest income bracket not only measured high trust values but also high civic participation. Comparatively, the next lower income group scored high in trust yet passive in civic participation. (Dekker, 2004: 99.) This data indicates that income and economic prosperity on the part of the individual can affect participation in social and political groups and, as discussed earlier, lead to trust. This finding was reproduced by Francisco Herreros in his analysis of the United States using the 1991 World Values Survey. He found that members of the working class poor were less likely to join associations than members of higher income groups. (2004: 97.) Income is attained in most instances through educational attainment. It follows that members of groups with high levels of education may also have high income and therefore higher levels of social trust. (Rothstein, 2002: 61.)

Role of Education

It has been established that members of associations have higher levels of trust (political and social trust) than people who do not participate in associations. However, the role of education also figures into the analysis of trust and membership in associations. Specifically, higher education produces people who engage in activities that build trust. “As the level of formal education rises from primary through secondary to university level, voluntary group membership and particularly protest participation and political involvement also increase.” (Andrain, 2006: 69.) Through the educational process, people learn the skills needed to trust others like methods of communication, organization, social knowledge, and political knowledge. Educated people also have

credibility that comes with higher education. As Robert Putnam put it, “highly educated people are much more likely to be joiners and trusters partly because they are better off economically, but mostly because of the skills, resources and inclinations that were imparted to them at home and in school.” (Putnam, 1995: 667.) Cooperation with peers is not only essential in education but sometimes mandated. The educational system familiarizes people with the political system and that will help people to understand the political process and be more likely to trust those who hold political office. “Education displays a relatively volatile causal relationship with political trust.” (Cole, 1973: 814.) Additionally, skills needed to work in groups are learned through education. Years invested in the educational system yields people who trust and are likely to join groups.

The effect of education on trust, specifically political trust, were the focus of a survey conducted in 1959 using 1,230 survey participants by Robert E. Agger, Marshall N. Goldstein, and Stanley A. Pearl. Their conclusions are often cited in political trust research. They concluded that “the acquisition of formal education tends to produce political trust regardless of social class background.” (Agger, 1961: 488.) The highly educated have experienced knowledge that gives them insight that is often used in their evaluation of the political system relative to the lack of knowledge of their lesser educated counterparts. Agger et al. found that as society increases its accessibility to education, levels of trust also increase among the populace. “The increasingly widespread distribution of secondary and higher education in society generates a higher level of political trust in the polity.” (1961: 499.)

Their study found that at all levels of income, among blacks and whites, and at all age levels education is a significant factor in political trust. “The highly educated are much more politically trusting than the least educated.” (Agger, 1961: 484.) The study also revealed a special sample that evaluated members of political groups in the Eugene, Oregon area. The researchers found that within Democratic and Republican groups, activists that were highly educated were less cynical and more trusting. While there was variation among the two partisan groups in their levels of cynicism, their ultimate finding was that education breeds trust. (1961: 486.) Their findings also revealed that between the income and education variables, “educational attainment is more strongly related to political cynicism than is income.” (1961: 487.) The study by Agger et al. sought to measure what affect social characteristics like income, education, and age have on political trust. They showed clear evidence that income and education play key roles in the development of political trust. They also showed that age is significant in the development of trust noting that while education is becoming more accessible to the population, people are also living longer.

Role of Age

The concept that people are more engaged in trust-building activities, like social and political groups, in later adult years is not difficult to grasp. Young adults, working their way up the corporate ladder, are limited in the time they have available to dedicate to group activism and other trust building activities. Pressures of starting a family, establishing a career, and saving money provide a substantial hurdle to civic engagement.

Mature adults have established careers, set up security with regard to retirement, and raised a family. These people are more available to participate in trust-building activities. The data analyzed by Robert Putnam determined that “age is second only to education as a predictor of all forms of civic engagement and trust.” (Putnam, 1995: 673.)

In addition to other trust building activities, older people demonstrated more trust than younger age groups responding to trust-value questions like “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that one cannot be too careful in dealing with people?” Putnam controlled for education and still found that the generation born in the 1920’s was much more trusting than their younger counterparts born in the 1960’s. He found that “the grandparents are more than twice as likely to trust other people as the grandchildren are (50 percent vs. 20 percent).” (Putnam, 2000: 254.) Additionally, Putnam found that the generation that became adults in the 1990’s was less civically active as a whole than older generations. This age cohort was less likely to attend public meetings, work with others on community projects, contact public officials, attend church, and contribute to church or political causes. They were also less interested in politics and less informed about current events. (Putnam, 2000: 261.)

Why Trust And What Do Groups Have To Do With It?

A society with rules and social mores relies on the concept of trust in others. That trust could be in the form of obeying rules established by people in political power or relying on a neighbor to watch your child while he plays in the front yard. James Coleman relayed a scenario of a Jewish mother leaving her home in Detroit, Michigan

due to a lack of trust in others around her to find a place where she can trust others. The mother chose to move to Jerusalem where she knows very few people but felt she could trust that her children would be safe. The mother knew that the trust that permeated the neighborhood in Jerusalem and the idea that others could be trusted to keep watch over her children while they played allowed for peace-of-mind that she could not have in her crime-ridden neighborhood in Detroit. (Coleman, 1990: 303.) Generalized trust puts people at ease among people with which they are not familiar. Generalized trust allows for open communication without fear of shame or ill effects. Generalized trust motivates people to participate in society and in the political process. This trust is a prerequisite to political trust. Without trust in a fellow citizen, one cannot be expected to trust a governmental organization to look out for the welfare of the citizens. Absent political trust and government programs designed to help the needy lose support and funding from the population. Without trust in their abilities, people in public office are powerless to make meaningful policy and may turn to corrupt practices to accomplish their selfish goals.

Research by sociologist Pamela Paxton reported in her article “Social Capital and Democracy: An Interdependent Relationship” how group activism can cultivate social and political trust and lead to a more efficient democracy. “Associations teach tolerance, promote compromise, stimulate political participation, and train leaders—all of which contribute to a healthy democracy.” (2002: 257.) Through group interactions, people learn the characteristics of trustworthy people. Participants are educated on the behaviors that are acceptable in the group setting. They learn that people that are unknown to them

can be trusted. Positive experiences with unknown people will build trust. Participants can potentially come into contact with others in need. The act of helping others can transform into generalized trust. Through consistent interactions with other group members, a member may feel more comfortable to interact with strangers in society. This generalized trust could become civic activism and participation in the political sphere of society. “Through participation in trusting associations, individuals may experience changes in their values, preferences, and their capacity to act. They should participate more in the democratic process, and the quality of their participation should increase.” (2002: 259.)

Social and political groups play many roles in society. Some people will join a bowling league to compete with others. Others will join simply to associate with friends. Through this activity, group members learn the behaviors that are acceptable in the group setting. Additionally, members will meet others who were previously unknown to them. The positive setting combined with the social experience with others creates trust among the members which they carry away into the rest of society. Political groups involve similar socialization experiences combined with political deliberations and contact with public figures that increases the trust-building experience. Members of these groups develop a sense that they are working for the greater good and are making a positive impact on society. Their generalized trust potential increases. However, the political groups have a disadvantage over social groups in their development of political trust. Partisan leanings will affect the group’s trust in the incumbent political party. The local

Republican Party will have a more favorable trust score toward Republican elected officials as compared to the local Democratic Party.

My analysis of social and political groups seeks to show general demographic characteristics and their affect on generalized trust and political trust. Additionally, I have analyzed the variation in trust among the different types of groups. I have analyzed two local social groups and two political groups. I will show the affect of various demographic and group characteristics and their affect on the development of generalized trust and political trust.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Data Set

This research contains an original data set. The data collected for this research was derived from analysis of four associations. The data set is called Voluntary Association Data Set (VADS). The data was compiled from responses to a researcher-created survey. The four groups were surveyed during their regularly scheduled meeting times and at their regular meeting places from August, 2005 to August, 2006. Permission was obtained from the group leadership to address each group at the conclusion of each meeting to obtain respondents to the survey. Survey respondents each read and signed an Informed Consent Document (Appendix A) verifying that they were willing participants in the survey. The title and/or purpose of the study were not revealed to the groups until the respondents were orally read the Survey Participant Debriefing Form (Appendix B) after the survey was taken. This was due to the idea that if the respondents knew they were being surveyed to obtain trust data, they might attempt to over-exaggerate their trust beliefs.

Each group was administered the same thirty question trust survey (See Appendix C). Questions were drawn from various social and political surveys used throughout the United States and the World which measure trust. Several questions were used for the specific purpose of making comparisons to a larger population. For example, if people of a certain age who are involved in groups have a specific level of interest in political issues, how does this age group compare to people the same age who are not involved in

groups? Survey data has been compared to data collected by the World Values Survey. All survey data was tabulated, coded, categorized according to the desired goal of the question, and finally entered into a spreadsheet format for calculation and data analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences or SPSS. The data was labeled Voluntary Association Data Set (2006) for identification in circumstances where multiple data sets were compared.

Significant portions of the survey were dedicated to analysis of generalized social trust and to political trust. Trust has been used as the dependent variable in most cases. Some of the questions from the survey have been analyzed individually and compared to the World Values Survey. However, the Generalized Social Trust Index and the Political Trust Index was created to measure trust using a wide variety of trust questions. Many social and political surveys use one specific question to measure trust (question 14 from Appendix C.) The question states: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that one cannot be too careful in dealing with people?” One general question measuring a broad issue like general social trust seems to oversimplify the topic of trust. Miller and Mitamura issued a warning to those involved in the analysis of trust “about drawing conclusions based on a single survey question.” (Miller, 2003: 69.) The GSTI and the PTI were created using several types of trust questions because “studies of trust should use multiple indicators. After all, the purpose of multiple-indicator models is to attenuate measurement and conceptual problems associated with a single variable.” (Miller, 2003: 69.) Seven generalized social trust questions (numbers 9, 10, 11, all 3 parts of number 12, and 14 from Appendix C) were compiled to form a Generalized

Social Trust Index (GSTI) which was created to evaluate the respondent's general social trust and ranges in value from zero to ten. Questions query a person's belief in the trustworthiness of others in society from a stranger to a foreigner. These questions are commonly used in political and social surveys to measure generalized social trust. This research combines these questions to form the GSTI and evaluates a person's overall generalized social trust rather than evaluate a respondent's trust in specific groups of people. Questions may arise about the validity of combining the seven questions to form the GSTI. Bivariate Correlation of all seven questions reveals an average correlation coefficient of 0.74. The questions in the index have a generally strong relationship to one another.

Questions 9, 11, and 14 ask about a person's personal belief in other people's trustworthiness. They seek to measure whether or not a person feels that others in society will try to take advantage of them if given the chance. Question 10 seeks to measure if the respondent feels that others in society will help someone in need. Question 12 has the respondent rank order their amount of trust in foreigners, strangers, and fellow citizens from "a lot" to "not at all" with four interval responses. The index was developed using seven multiple-choice questions. Four questions had two available choices while three questions had four choices. A respondent scoring zero on the GSTI does not trust the typical person that is unknown to them and they are very careful about who can be trusted. A respondent scoring ten on the GSTI will overwhelmingly trust someone they do not know and they are not concerned about others who may be out to cheat them. The respondent was given a point on the index for each answer in which they demonstrated

trust in people unknown to them. If the respondent demonstrated a lack of trust in those who are unknown to them, they remained at their previous spot on the index. The GSTI was coded for a direct GSTI score and for a scale score. Respondents scoring from 0 to 3.99 were in the low trust portion of the GSTI scale. Scores ranging from 4 to 6.99 were rated as medium trust on the GSTI scale. A respondent scoring higher than 7 was placed in the high trust range on the GSTI scale. Figure 1 shows a general view of the scale used for the Generalized Social Trust Index and for the Political Trust Index. This index was used in conjunction with demographic data and group data to evaluate several hypotheses.

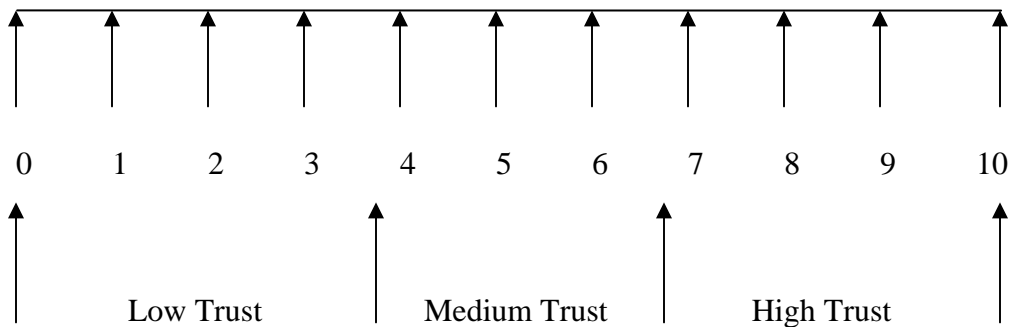


Figure 1: Generalized Social Trust Index and Political Trust Index

I also used six questions in the survey (numbers 18, 19, 20, and all 3 parts of number 21 from Appendix C) to create a Political Trust Index due to the reasoning previously discussed. This index also ranges in value from zero to ten. An index score of zero would indicate that the respondent lacks trust in people who hold public office at the local, state, and national level. An index score of ten would indicate that the respondent has extensive trust in people who hold public office and confidence in their

abilities to carry out their duty in a democratic government. An average bivariate correlation of 0.69 indicated that the questions used in the index had a fairly strong relationship to one another.

Question 18 was used to measure a respondent's belief that the country is run by "a few big interests". Question 19 seeks to measure the respondent's feeling about public official's interest in the problems of the average people. Question 20 has the respondent rank order their belief that government officials at the national level do what is "right". Question 21 has the respondent rank order specific national level offices with respect to the respondent's confidence in that office. These questions are also commonly found on many political and social surveys to measure political trust or trust in government. Like the Generalized Social Trust Index, the respondent moved a point on the index for each answer in which they trusted public officials and/or had confidence in their abilities. Relative to the Generalized Social Trust Index, the Political Trust Index would have a tendency to fluctuate depending on election frequency, current events, and partisan changes. The variability of the Political Trust Index due to political preferences makes the Political Trust Index less reliable as a predictor of trust as compared to the GSTI. For example, a person who identifies with Democratic Party ideology will likely score low on the Political Trust Index while the Republican Party dominates public office and vice versa.

In addition to the demographic data and trust variables used in the survey, I have also used several other types of questions. I have evaluated a question about the number of group memberships (number 5 from Appendix C) to test the hypothesis that trust is

highest among those people who belong to four groups. Beyond and below four group memberships causes trust to decline. I used a question about political interest (number 16 from Appendix C) and two questions about voting (numbers 27 and 28 from Appendix C) to show the affects of trust on these practices.

Group Framework

This research has measured generalized social trust and political trust among two general social groups and two political groups. The two general social groups seek to advance the interests of the members of the groups or meet for socialization purposes. These groups do not seek to provide benefits to people outside the groups. They do not discuss political issues in direct group deliberations. They do not invite elected officials to formal group meetings for candidate forums. They also do not have partisan leanings. Group demographic characteristics may play some role in the measurement of trust. Table 1 shows the group demographics which are also discussed below.

One social group that I have selected for my study is a bowling league. The Kissimmee Bowling League meets once per week at the same location. The mean age for the group is fifty-five years old, the mean income for the group is \$56,000 per year, and the mean level of education completed for the group is high school. It is a local league with national affiliation and is a league like many throughout the nation. There is a board of directors that is elected by the members. The directors' primary duties are to organize the league and process membership dues. Members have come together because of a common interest in associating with others in a social setting. Group members may

discuss politics in an informal way but politics is not a scheduled agenda item nor is it a focus of the group. The group does not set goals and does not seek to impact people that are not members of the group. They are associating for the sole benefit of the members of the group. I selected to include a bowling league in my study because the Robert Putnam book Bowling Alone has made bowling a recognizable symbol of the decline in social capital. He has also contributed valuable research in trust analysis.

The second social group included in my study is a School Advisory Committee from a local public school. The HMS School Advisory Committee group meets once per month in the same location. The mean age for the group is forty-nine, the mean income for the group is \$52,700 per year, and the mean level of education completed for the group is two years of college or technical school. The School Advisory Committee functions much like a Parent Teacher Organization in that parents and community members collaborate with school officials to make decisions for the improvement of the school. The Committee has elected officers who perform administrative duties and organize the meetings. The Committee has stated goals toward the advancement or improvement of the school. Members are typically parents of students who attend the school, teachers and staff of the school, or, more rarely, concerned members of the community. The group has set agendas and uses Robert's Rules of Order to conduct the meetings. All group deliberations involve advancing goals set by the committee for the improvement of the school. Political discussion is not common except as may happen in any social situation prior to or after the meetings. The group does not seek to impact people who are unaffiliated with the school except as may happen when a school affects

local property values or through the standard impact of a school producing productive citizens in society. I selected a school advisory committee for my study because civic participation is a goal of the individual members and yet the political system is not involved.

The two political groups I studied seek to advance the interests of members and nonmembers directly. Both groups have goals of improving the lives of members and nonmembers through the political process. Both groups have candidate forums in which local public officials and those seeking public office attend regularly to discuss issues. Deliberations within these groups primarily focuses on political issues and may even have official agendas with political issues stated. While one political group has a stated partisan leaning, the other has no such official partisanship.

The first political group I studied is a group with Democratic Party leanings. The Democracy for America group is not officially affiliated with the Democratic Party but the group is made up almost exclusively of Democrats. While partisanship was not part of my study, the group has established goals of promoting the advancement of Democratic Party candidates and the Democratic Party. The group meets once per month in various locations. The mean age for the group is fifty-five years old, the mean income for the group is \$47,800 per year, and the mean level of education completed for the group is four years of college. The group has elected officers who carry out administrative functions for the group. The group has set agendas which include a candidate forum at most meetings. The group is directly and actively involved in the local, state, and national political campaigns. The group seeks to advance the interests of

the group members and the interests of nonmembers interested in the principles of the Democratic Party. Discussion rarely gets off the stated agenda or beyond the political realm. I selected this group because its established goals were clearly political.

The second political group I studied is a community action group. The Tangerine Improvement Society meets once per month in the same location. The group has a mean age of sixty-eight, the mean income for the group is \$34,210 per year, and the mean level of education completed for the group is two years of college or technical school. The group has established goals of advancing the interests of the members of the community. The group has members who are elected and perform administrative functions like scheduling meetings, setting agendas, and inviting public officials. Members and nonmembers benefit from the actions of the group. The group is involved in local political activity specifically at the county government level. Members frequently attend county government meetings and bring community concerns to the attention of public officials. Business meeting deliberation is frequently focused on the agenda but social discussions are common before and after the group meetings. This group is unique to the four groups in that it also sets social agendas and functions. The group has a monthly social meeting where discussions are informal and centered on socialization and meeting new community members. I selected this group because it is a small community organization with a political focus.

Table 1: Social and Political Group Demographics: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

Group Name	Number of Members	Mean Age of Members	Mean Income of Members	Mean Level of Education of Members
Kissimmee Bowling League	50	55	\$56,000/yr	High School
HMS School Advisory Committee	23	49	\$52,700/yr	2-yrs College
Democracy for America	20	55	\$47,800/yr	4-yrs College
Tangerine Improvement Society	22	68	\$34,210/yr	2-yrs College

Trust as a Concept

Political scientists and sociologists have analyzed the development of trust and the affect of trust on the democratic process throughout the world. A prevailing concept that is continually revisited is the idea that trust has more of a chance of proliferating in certain circumstances. Specific demographic characteristics like education, age, and income play a role in trust.

Education is the single most important predictor of trust among individuals. (Putnam, 1995: 673.) The idea is that, all other things being equal, those with higher education will trust more. Well educated people have experienced more trust-building opportunities than lesser educated individuals. As previously stated, age is the second most significant predictor of trust. Simply stated, older cohorts trust others and the

government more than their younger counterparts. They have more interest in politics and are more likely to participate in terms of voting. Income also plays a vital role in the measurement of trust. Because trusting unknown people involves risk, measuring trust among those who have a lot to lose is important. As I have shown, research suggests that higher income individuals are less risk averse and will trust fellow group members more. This particularized trust can also lead to higher generalized trust measurements. Additionally, higher income people have more civic participation. They have more time and resources to dedicate to group and political activities than individuals with less income.

This demographic data has been analyzed by many who are interested in trust analysis. What lacks in trust analysis is the measurement of trust within groups. Certainly people with specific demographic characteristics will join groups, but once they have joined groups, which types of groups trust more? One would think that political groups would have more political trust than general social groups. However, if the political group has a partisan leaning, political trust could vary with the incumbent political party. This could result in the opposite effect. The political group, having opposing views to the incumbent party, may have lower political trust than social groups. Additionally, generalized trust is a more valuable predictor of participation in society and the political process than political trust (Uslaner, 1999: 128). The focus of my research is to show which types of group exhibit more of a propensity to trust others in society and those in political office.

Hypotheses

The analysis of trust by scholars throughout the world elicits many grandiose conclusions for the general population. The objective of my research is to test these hypotheses directly among a case-study population that has demonstrated a propensity to be civically active and possibly more trusting. While I have made many observations of the sample population, I have tested the following hypotheses using survey data collected from two social and two political groups:

- Individuals involved in political groups will have higher mean levels of generalized social trust as measured by the Generalized Social Trust Index than individuals involved in social groups.
- Individuals involved in social groups have higher mean political trust as measured by the Political Trust Index than individuals involved in political groups.
- Among individuals involved in social and political groups, those with higher levels of education and income will have higher mean levels of trust as measured by the GSTI and PTI.
- Among individuals involved in social and political groups, members in higher income groups will be more likely to register to vote and to vote.
- Among individuals involved in social and political groups, those involved in political groups will have more of an interest in political issues than those individuals involved in social groups.

- Among individuals involved in social and political groups, social and political trust indexes will increase with increasing group memberships up to the four group membership level, at which point social and political trust will decrease.

The trust indices are used as a dependent variable in most analyses. The independent variables are typically general demographic data and group membership data that were specific to each case-study group. The data is displayed using cross-tabulations and graphic representations to assist with interpretation in Chapter IV.

Trust Analysis in Perspective

To offset the limitations of the Voluntary Association Data Set, mainly small survey sample size, I have compared and analyzed some of the data to a larger population sample. The World Values Survey maintains data samples that extensively measure trust. I have compared my analysis of trust with measures obtained by the World Values Survey in their 1999 data series analysis of the United States. In addition to demographic data, the World Values Survey collects information about civic participation, social trust, political trust, and political interest. The World Values Survey has a sample size of 1,200 people.

The comparisons made are from questions that are either identical or very similar. Every attempt was made to eliminate comparisons to questions that were unrelated or similar and yet not seeking to evaluate my particular hypotheses. The comparisons made seek to evaluate the trust of people who are members of voluntary associations in the

case-study groups with trust in the general population as measured by the World Values Survey.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the four case-study groups was tabulated and coded to form the Voluntary Association Data Set (2006) which evaluates several concepts. Beyond the analysis of the primary hypotheses, the data collected also reveal the affects of several demographic factors on trust. This data was collected for comparison to a larger population sample. The World Values Survey conducts extensive data regarding trust, political interest, and participation throughout the world as well as in the United States. The Voluntary Association Data Set was created from groups exclusively in the United States so the data set is being compared to the United States subset of the World Values Survey.

Demographic Data and the World Values Survey

Analysis of demographic data in the Voluntary Association Data Set (VADS) found interesting results in the generalized social trust realm of the case study. Using a question that is commonly used in social surveys to measure generalized social trust: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?”, comparison can be made using responses recorded in the Voluntary Association Data Set and the World Values Survey data compiled from the United States in 1999 (Inglehart, et al., 2004). The tables reveal interesting effects of education and decade of birth on social trust.

The Voluntary Association Data Set data in Table 1 reveals that at all education levels; an individual is more likely to respond to the question with the response “one

cannot be too careful.” Table 1 shows similar results to the data that Francisco Herreros found in his analysis of the Barometer of Andalusian Public Opinion of 2000. He shows that more educated people tend to trust less (2004: 41-42.) The Voluntary Association Data Set shows that both of the higher education groups responded less frequently to the question with “most people can be trusted” than the lower education group. The data reveals that, of the 112 respondents to the question, 62.5% are leery of trusting others. The largest group of respondents that would claim that “most people can be trusted” actually occurs in the low education group, those with a high school education or less. This group had 48.5% of the respondents feeling trust toward other people. The middle education group, those with two years of college, recorded the highest percentage of respondents, 70%, who responded that “one cannot be too careful.” One issue that remains unresolved is the concern about education helping to predict a person’s willingness to trust others.

**Table 2: Cross tabulation for “Most people can be trusted,” by Education level:
Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)**

		Education 3 levels			Total
		Lower	Middle	Upper	
Most people can be trusted	Count	16	12	14	42
	% within Education 3 levels	48.5%	30.0%	35.9%	37.5%
One cannot be too careful	Count	17	28	25	70
	% within Education 3 levels	51.5%	70.0%	64.1%	62.5%
Total	Count	33	40	39	112
	% within Education 3 levels	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

Table 2 shows World Values Survey data for the same question. Respondents that answered that “most people can be trusted” showed the expected disparity among the three education levels but it also shows the same cautionary outlook among the respondents that the Voluntary Association Data Set shows. Similar responses were recorded with 64.1% responding that “One can’t be too careful” while only 35.9% thought “Most people can be trusted.” Additionally, those individuals in the “Upper” education level responded more frequently to the idea that “Most people can be trusted”, with 42.3% of respondents. Individuals in the “Lower” education group had 24.1% of the respondents saying that “most people can be trusted.” This could indicate a positive relationship in the general population between education and response to the idea that

“most people can be trusted.” The data displayed in Table 1 from the Voluntary Association Data Set does not show such a clearly defined disparity among the educational levels as does the World Values Survey. This is possibly due to the smaller sample size and the selection of cases for the case study analysis. The Voluntary Association Data Set does show a slightly higher percentage of respondents in the “Total” column for “most people can be trusted” than the World Values Survey. This could be due to the fact that all of the respondents in the Voluntary Association Data Set are group members who tend to have higher trust than the general population.

Table 3: Cross-Tabulation for “Most people can be trusted” by Education level: World Values Survey (USA, 1999)

	Lower	Middle	Upper	Total
Most people can be trusted	56 24.1%	114 32.7%	255 42.3%	425 35.9%
Can't be too careful	176 75.9%	236 67.3%	348 57.7%	760 64.1%
Total	232 100%	350 100%	602 100%	1189 100%

(Source: WVS United States, 1999.)

Table 3 shows the effects of age on trust. Using the same general trust survey question, the table shows a cross tabulation with the respondent’s decade of birth. The data shows that even among group members, respondents generally feel that one cannot be too careful in dealing with others. However, comparison to table 4 shows that group members are slightly more trusting than respondents in the World Values Survey which includes non-group members. It is noteworthy that the youngest age cohort in the VADS

is significantly wearier of trusting others than the youngest respondents to the WVS.

Also, the age cohort born between 1950 and 1969 is more trusting of others than other age cohorts in the VADS. This group is also more trusting than the similar age cohort in the WVS data set.

**Table 4: Cross-tabulation for “Most people can be trusted,” by Decade of Birth:
Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)**

	Decade of Birth: Age Cohort			Total
	1900-1949	1950-1969	1970-1989	
One cannot be too careful	23 59.0%	33 57.9%	13 81.3%	69 61.6%
Most people can be trusted	16 41.0%	24 42.1%	3 18.8%	43 38.4%
Total	39 100.0%	57 100.0%	16 100.0%	112 100.0%

(Source: VADS 2006.)

Data from the World Values Survey, shown in Table 4, shows a more clearly defined trend for the affect of age on trust. Using the same trust question, the World Values Survey data shows that older respondents are increasingly more trusting than their younger counterparts. The most trusting age cohort is the respondents who are fifty years of age or older. While the general trend is one of distrust, it appears that the gap between respondents who trust and those who are leery of others would close among the oldest members of society.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation for “Most people can be trusted,” by Age Cohort: World Values Survey (USA, 1999)

	50+	30-49	15-29	Total
One cannot be too careful	196 53.4%	328 64.6%	239 75.9%	763 64.2%
Most people can be trusted	171 46.6%	179 35.4%	76 24.1%	426 35.8%
Total	367 100%	508 100%	315 100%	1189 100%

(Source: WVS United States, 1999.)

The Voluntary Association Data Set also reveals higher levels of political interest compared to the World Values Survey. As members of social and political groups, one would expect this to be the case. All respondents have demonstrated an interest in community involvement and this could potentially be translated into interest in what goes on around them. While a comparison of political interest among different types of group members will be demonstrated later in the analysis of the hypotheses, a comparison with a larger population includes members and nonmembers of society.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of respondents who are very interested in politics from the Voluntary Association Data Set. The graph shows the highest percentage of people who are very interested in politics is among those respondents born in the decade of the 1940’s. This age cohort recorded fifty five percent of respondents being very interested in politics compared to only 38.6 percent of respondents in the highest percentage group of the World Values Survey.

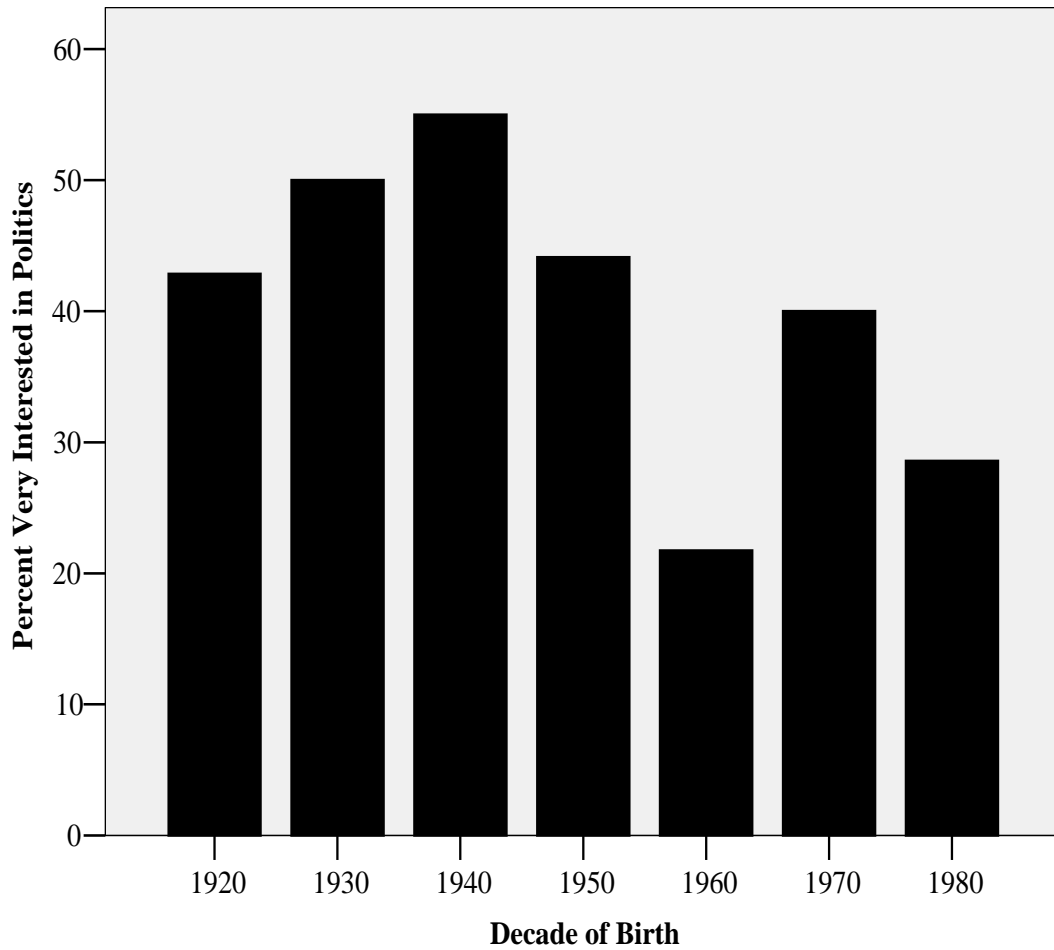


Figure 2: Percent Very Interested by Decade of Birth: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

Figure 3 shows the World Values Survey Data for Interest in Politics among various age cohorts. The graph shows that the group born in the 1920's has the highest percentage of respondents who are "Very Interested" in politics with 38.6 percent. Comparatively, the VADS has only two age cohorts with levels lower than the highest

level of interest in the WVS. A comparison of the lowest percentage of respondents reveals that the VADS age cohort born in the 1960's is significantly higher than the lowest WVS age cohort born in the 1950's.

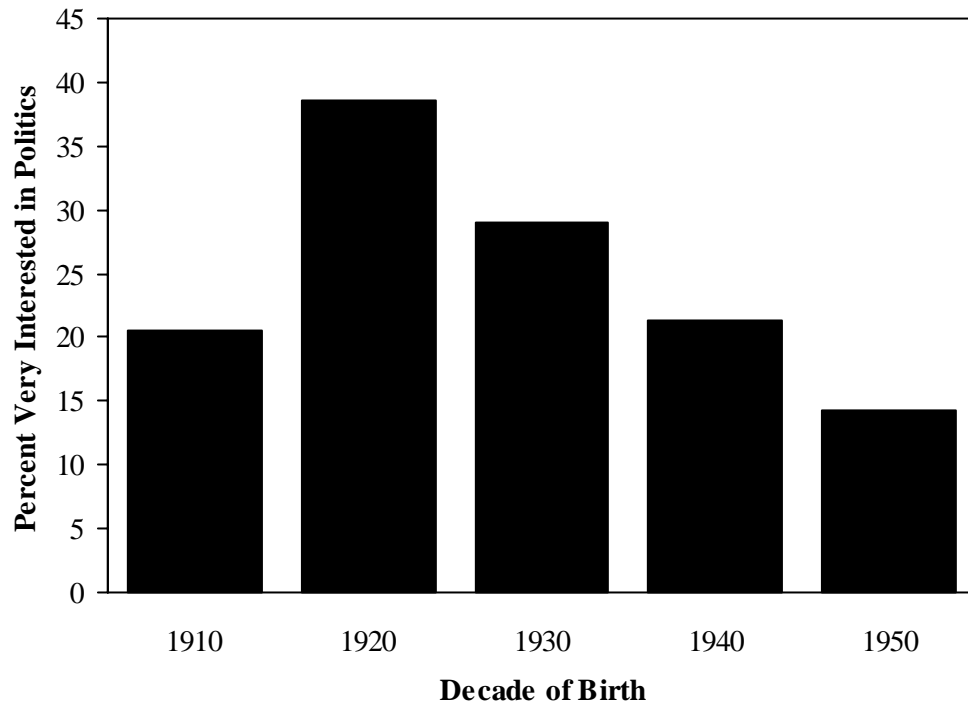


Figure 3: Percent Very Interested by Decade of Birth: World Values Survey

(USA, 1999)

(Source: WVS, 1999.)

The World Values Survey analysis evaluates the age cohorts beginning with the group born in the decade beginning in 1911. The Voluntary Association Data Set evaluates age cohorts beginning with the group born after 1920. Both data sets evaluate the groups up to 1960 but the Voluntary Association Data Set continues the age cohort analysis ending with the group that was born in the 1980's. The VADS allows for more extensive

analysis of various ages including the group most recently socialized in the 1980's and 1990's. The analysis shows that the members of the VADS have a significantly higher percentage of respondents who are "Very Interested" in politics than respondents of the World Values Survey.

Analysis of Hypotheses

The data collected from the four groups was tabulated and coded with six primary hypotheses to be tested. The first hypothesis maintains that individuals involved in political groups will have higher mean levels of generalized social trust than people involved in general social groups as measured by the various social trust questions combined to form the Generalized Social Trust Index. Surveys conducted among the two types of groups, coded and tabulated have revealed the data in Table 5.

Table 5 shows a cross-tabulation for all four groups with their respective Generalized Social Trust Index scores coded for high, medium, and low. A high score was coded 3 and was greater than 7 on the GSTI. A medium score was coded 2 and was from 4 to 6.99 on the GSTI. A low score was coded 1 and was from 0 to 3.99 on the GSTI. The first social group, Kissimmee Bowling League, is represented with 24 percent of the cases falling in the low generalized social trust level and 76 percent of the cases in the medium to high generalized social trust level. The second social group, HMS School Advisory Council, had similar results showing 21.7 percent of the cases in the low generalized social trust level and 78.3 percent of the cases in the medium to high generalized social trust level. The first political group, Tangerine Improvement Society,

had a slightly different situation with only 9.1 percent of the cases falling in the low generalized social trust level and 91 percent of the cases in the medium to high generalized social trust level. The second political group, Democracy for America, had similar results to the first political group showing no cases in the low generalized social trust level and 100 percent of the cases in the medium to high generalized social trust level. The two political groups recorded significantly higher generalized social trust scores than the two social groups as hypothesized.

**Table 6: Cross tabulation for Generalized Social Trust by Group Identification:
Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)**

	Group Identification				Total
	Kissimmee Bowling League	HMS School Advisory Committee	Tangerine Improvement Society	Democracy for America	
Low Trust	12 24.0%	5 21.7%	2 9.1%	0 .0%	19 16.5%
Medium Trust	23 46.0%	12 52.2%	10 45.5%	10 50.0%	55 47.8%
High Trust	15 30.0%	6 26.1%	10 45.5%	10 50.0%	41 35.7%
Total	50 100.0%	23 100.0%	22 100.0%	20 100.0%	115 100%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

Mean Generalized Social Trust Index scores were calculated for all four groups revealing similar findings in Figure 2. The two social groups, Kissimmee Bowling

League and HMS School Advisory Committee, had mean scores of 5.22 and 5.54 on the Generalized Social Trust Index respectively. The mean scores for the two political groups, Tangerine Improvement Society and Democracy for America, were marginally higher with 6.45 and 6.62 on the Generalized Social Trust Index respectively. The two sets of analysis, while using small sample sizes, reveal the hypothesized result that was originally posed by Francisco Ferreros when he said that the probability of trusting unknown people would be higher “if the individual is a member of a political rather than a civil association.” (2004: 60.)

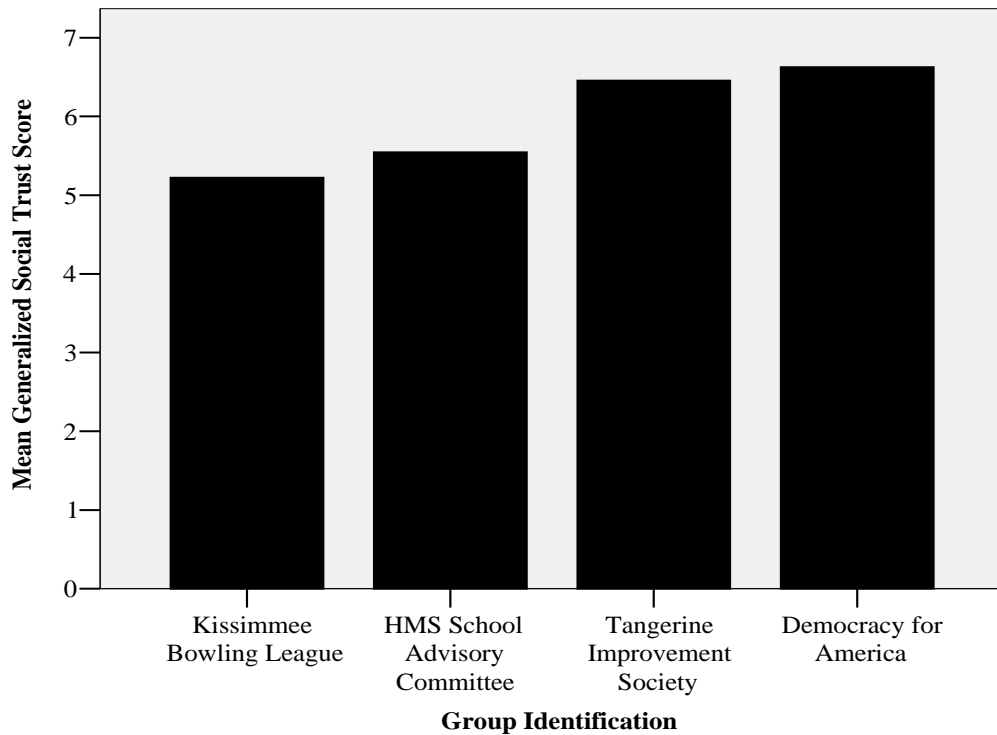


Figure 4: Mean Generalized Social Trust Score for All Groups

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The second hypothesis is centered on the idea that social groups will have higher political trust than political groups. While this seems counterintuitive, skewed results are a result of ideology, partisanship, and incumbency. The current political situation and the selection of cases have affected the results to reflect a large disparity that would probably not be present if the two political groups had a centrist ideological disposition. While the Democracy for America group has overt Democratic Party leanings, the Tangerine Improvement Society also appears to have some distrust for the incumbent public officials at the local, state, and national level. This data set could benefit from time series evaluation tracking individual political trust feelings as administration as administrations change and public opinion fluctuates. Further research involving more case studies, including centrist or conservative leaning political groups could also yield results that could support the null hypothesis. The two social groups were coded into one group label “Social Group” and the two political groups were coded into one group labeled “Political Group” for testing the hypothesis. Figure 3 displays the results showing that the combined social groups have a mean political trust score of 4.97. The combined political groups have a mean political trust score of 3.71.

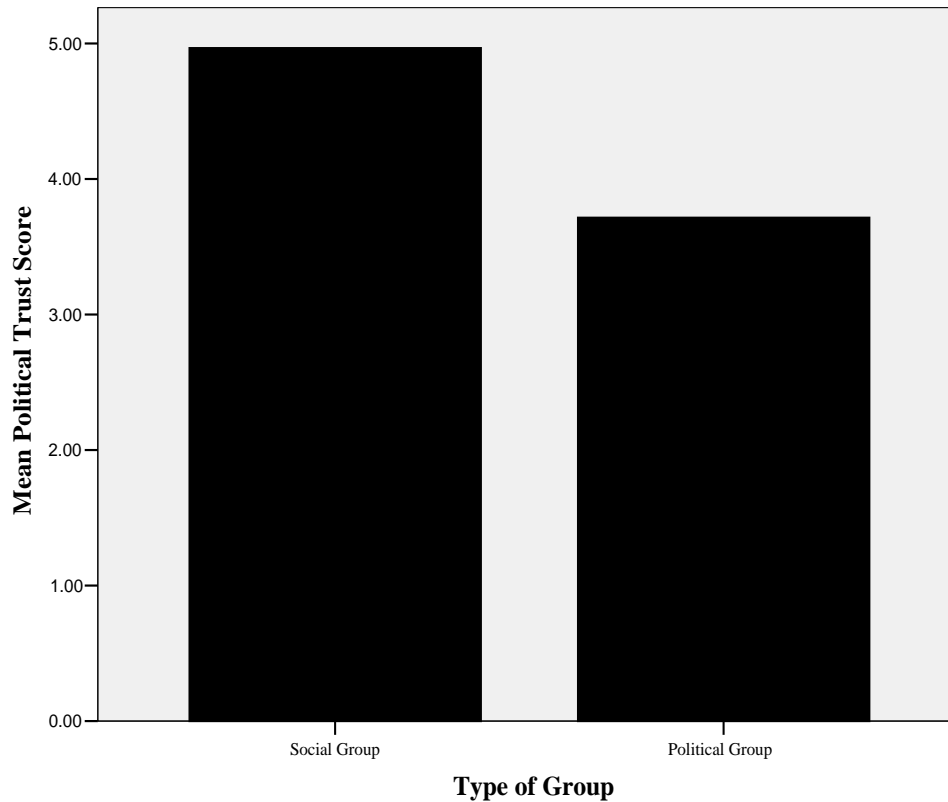


Figure 5: Mean Political Trust Scores for Type of Group

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The third hypothesis seeks to test the idea that education and income have a positive role in the development of both generalized social trust and political trust. Using the Voluntary Association Data Set, Figure 4 shows the affect of education level on mean Generalized Social Trust scores. The graph shows the expected outcome of trust scores increasing with increasing education. The individuals with higher levels of education, ranging from less than high school to more than four years of college, score higher on the trust scale in a progressive manner, yet peaking at the four years of college level. The

data shows that individuals with more than four years of college have a slightly lower level of mean generalized social trust

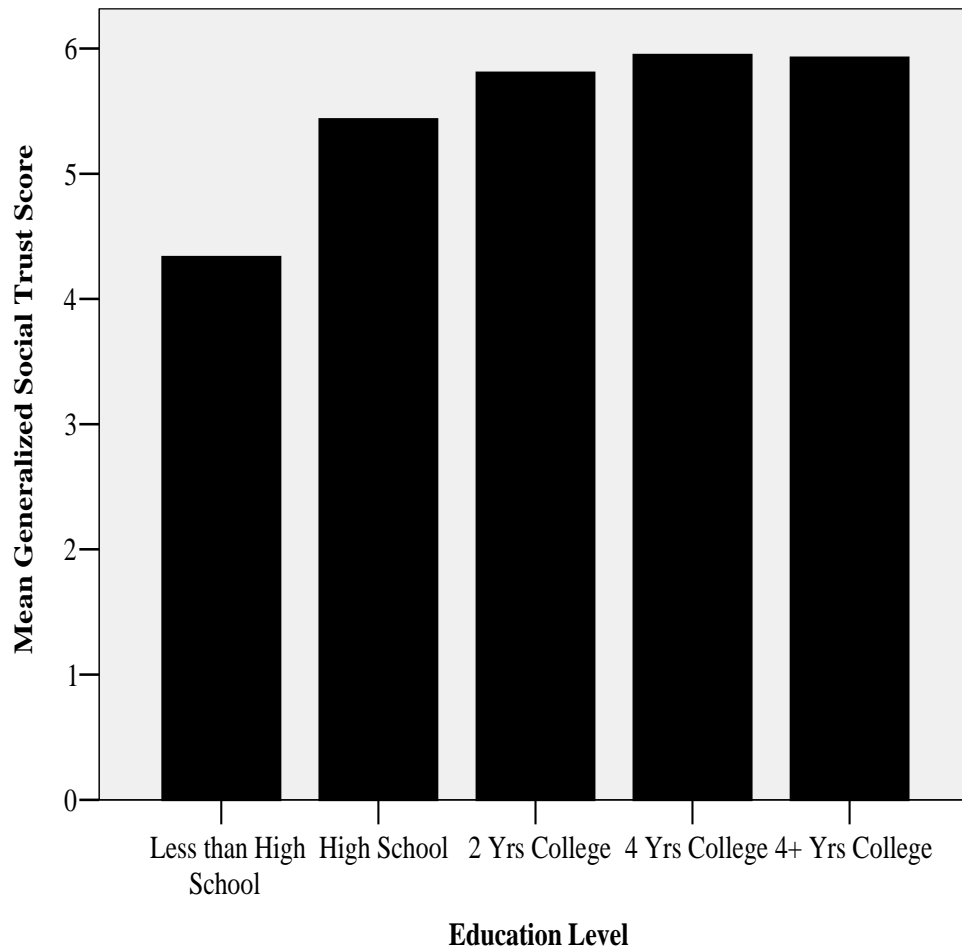


Figure 6: Mean Generalized Social Trust Scores with Education Bar Graph

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

However, Figure 5 shows that, among individuals involved in the four case-study groups, political trust increases as education increases to the 2 years of college level. Beyond 2 years of college, individuals in these groups have less mean political trust. This would

indicate that beyond the 2 years of college level, education plays a negative role in the development of political trust. This could also indicate some distrust of the current administration among the politically savvy educated elite. This also reaffirms the findings of Aggers, Goldstein, and Pearl that educational attainment leads to political cynicism. (Agger et al., 1961: 487.)

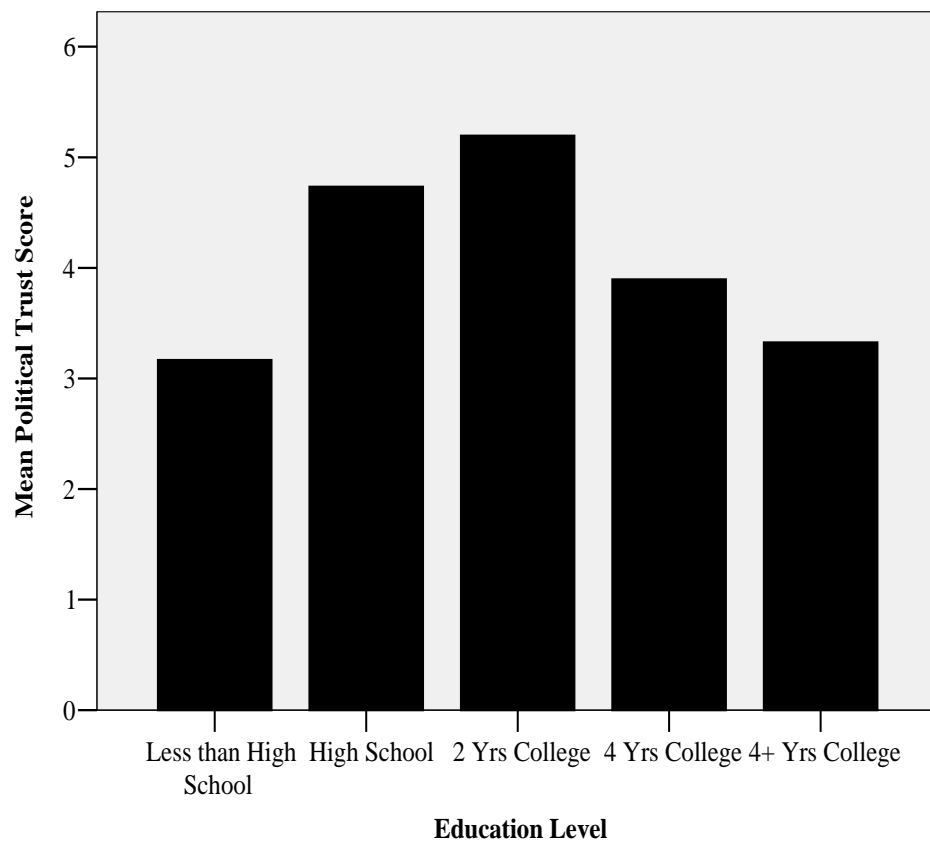


Figure 7: Mean Political Trust Scores with Education Bar Graph

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The effect of income on general social trust has been evaluated by many scholars seeking to demonstrate demographic effects on trust. Table 6 shows a cross tabulation of

general social trust in three categories with respondent's corresponding income level. The hypothesized result is shown especially in the "High Trust" category. The highest income group, those earning more than \$80,000 per year, has the highest percentage of individuals measuring "High Trust" with 47.6%. High trust is considered to be a score greater than 7 on the GSTI. Meanwhile, the lowest income group has only 27.5% of its respondents scoring in the "High Trust" category. The lowest income group also records an astonishingly high score of 60% of the people in that group with "Medium Trust." Medium trust was recorded as between a 4 and 6.99 on the GSTI.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation for Generalized Social Trust by Income level: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

	Income Levels			Total
	\$0-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$79,999	\$80,000+	
Low Trust	5 12.5%	12 26.1%	2 9.5%	19 17.8%
Medium Trust	24 60.0%	18 39.1%	9 42.9%	51 47.7%
High Trust	11 27.5%	16 34.8%	10 47.6%	37 34.6%
Total	40 100.0%	46 100.0%	21 100.0%	107 100.0%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The affect of income on political trust is not as defined as the affect of income on generalized social trust. However, when medium political trust and high political trust

are isolated from low trust, we see the affect of income on political trust more clearly. Figure 6 shows the medium and high trust measurements as they are grouped by income. The figure shows that only 42.5% of the respondents in the lowest income group scored higher than 4 on the Political Trust Index. Meanwhile, 67.39% of the middle income group scored higher than 4 on the PTI. Also, 57.14% of the respondents in the high income group recorded PTI scores higher than 4. This analysis shows that higher income respondents are more likely to record medium to high trust scores as compared to their lower income counterparts within the case-study groups.

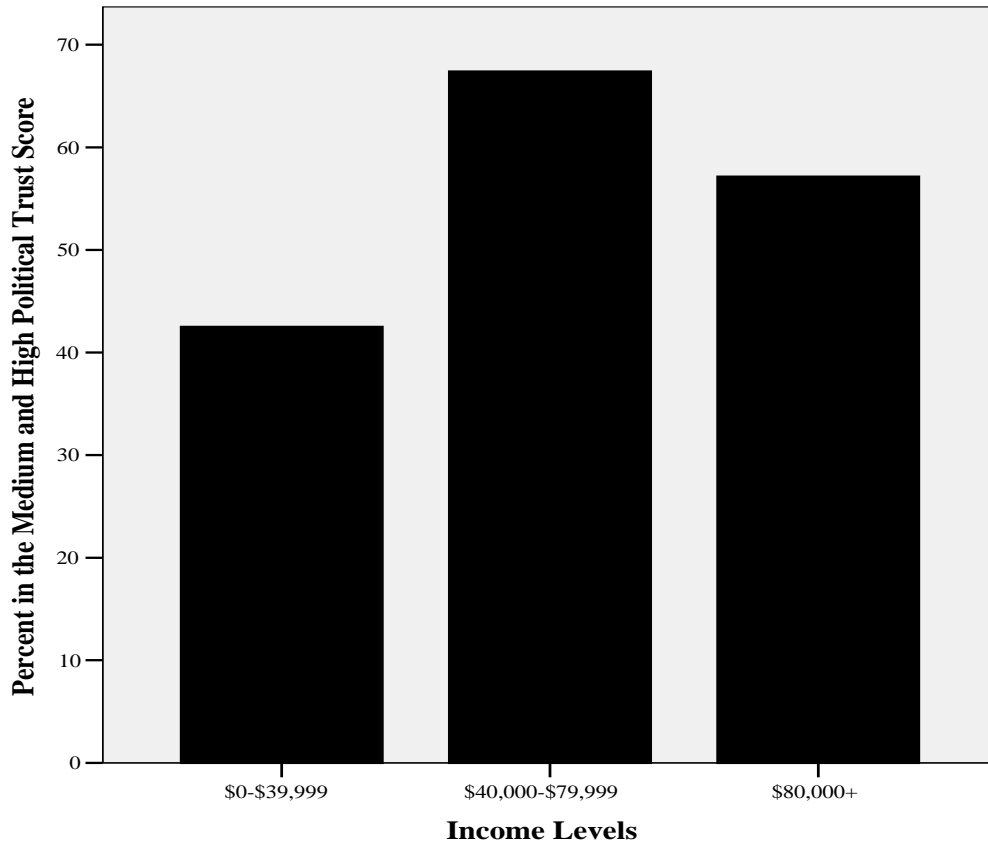


Figure 8: Medium to High Political Trust Scores by Income: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

Table 7 shows income levels cross tabulated with political trust and displays similar results as the generalized social trust results in the “High Trust” row. The highest income group, again, records the highest percentage of individuals in the “High Trust” group with 28.6%. However, among the individuals earning more than \$80,000 per year, individuals with low political trust make up the largest percentage of that income group. This would indicate that there is a lack of political trust among the high income group.

This could probably be a result of the political groups selected. If a group was selected that was ideologically toward the center or if there were time series data taken from one administration to another, there could be a different result. The low income group records an astonishingly high percentage, with 57.5%, in the “Low Trust” category which accords with our expectations of low income groups with low trust in political officials.

Table 8: Cross-tabulation for Political Trust by Income level: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

	Income Levels			Total
	\$0-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$79,999	\$80,000+	
Low Trust	23 57.5%	15 32.6%	9 42.9%	47 43.9%
Medium Trust	6 15.0%	21 45.7%	6 28.6%	33 30.8%
High Trust	11 27.5%	10 21.7%	6 28.6%	27 25.2%
Total	40 100.0%	46 100.0%	21 100.0%	107 100.0%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The income effect on trust levels cannot be confidently ascertained without a control for the type of group. The concern is that higher income respondents could be concentrated into particular types of groups and thus skew political trust results. For example, if only high income respondents were involved in the political groups who, as

we have already ascertained, have a disdain for the current political administration, then our high income respondents could record an overwhelmingly low level of political trust.

Table 8 shows the affect of income on trust while controlling for the type of group in which the respondent belongs. The cross tabulation shows that political groups registered higher percentages of respondents in the low political trust level than social groups at all three income levels. The data also shows that all political group participants who earn over \$80,000 per year had only low levels of political trust. The data also shows that members of the social groups who earn over \$80,000 per year had medium to high levels of political trust with 75% of respondents having trust in local, state, and national level public offices. Also, the social groups recorded the highest percentage of respondents in the high trust category from the highest income group. The political groups recorded no responses in the medium or high trust level from the highest income group. All of the high income respondents responded to the survey with low political trust levels.

Table 9: Cross tabulation for Levels of Political Trust by Income level and Type of Group: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

Type of Group			Income Levels			Total
			\$0-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$79,999	\$80,000+	
Social Group	Political Trust	Low Trust	11 52.4%	9 27.3%	4 25.0%	24 34.3%
		Medium Trust	3 14.3%	17 51.5%	6 37.5%	26 37.1%
		High Trust	7 33.3%	7 21.2%	6 37.5%	20 28.6%
	Total	21 100.0%	33 100.0%	16 100.0%	70 100.0%	
Political Group	Political Trust	Low Trust	12 63.2%	6 46.2%	5 100.0%	23 62.2%
		Medium Trust	3 15.8%	4 30.8%	0 .0%	7 18.9%
		High Trust	4 21.1%	3 23.1%	0 .0%	7 18.9%
	Total	19 100.0%	13 100.0%	5 100.0%	37 100.0%	

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The fourth hypothesis to be tested is the idea that, within social and political groups, individuals involved in higher income groups will be more likely to register to vote and to actually participate in the voting process. As one of the most important predictors of trust and participation, it would be expected that income would play a significant role in registering to vote. The belief is that as income increases, so does the percentage of respondents who actually register to vote in local, state, or national elections. Table 9 shows a cross tabulation of the variable “RegVote” with “Income.”

**Table 10: Cross-tabulation for Individuals Registered to Vote by Income Levels:
Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)**

		Income Levels			Total
		\$0-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$79,999	\$80,000+	
Registered to Vote	No	2 5.0%	1 2.3%	0 .0%	3 2.9%
	Yes	38 95.0%	43 97.7%	21 100.0%	102 97.1%
Total		40 100.0%	44 100.0%	21 100.0%	105 100.0%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

Table 9 shows the hypothesized results. Most people involved in group activity register to vote. The lowest percentage of individuals registered to vote was in the lowest income group with 95%. Those individuals in the highest income group, those making more than \$80,000 per year, are all registered to vote. The only individuals not registered to vote are in the “Middle” and “Low” income groups which makes up only 2.9% of all those surveyed.

The second part of the hypothesis tests the affect of income on actually voting. The most recent national level election, 2004, was used to record all local and state level voters and those that possibly vote only in national level elections. The question text was: “Did you vote in the last US Presidential Election (2004)?” The expected result would have those in the higher income group having a higher probability of voting than those individuals in the lower income groups. Research has shown that those individuals

in the lower income groups are “three-fifths as likely to vote.” (Verba, et al., 1997: 75.)

Table 10 shows the variable “Voted2004” cross tabulated with the variable “Income3levels.”

Table 11: Cross-tabulation for Individuals Who Voted in 2004 by Income levels: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

		Income Levels			Total
		\$0-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$79,999	\$80,000+	
Voted in 2004 Election	No	5 12.5%	3 6.8%	0 .0%	8 7.6%
	Yes	35 87.5%	41 93.2%	21 100.0%	97 92.4%
Total		40 100.0%	44 100.0%	21 100.0%	105 100.0%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The table shows the expected result that all of the people in the “High” income group voted in the 2004 election. Individuals that responded as having not voted in the 2004 election were in the two lower income groups with the percentage of respondents stating that they had not voted in the election increasing as the income groups decreased.

Individual’s probability of voting increased with their income. The higher the income group, the higher the percentage of respondents that responded to having voted in the 2004 election. Of course voter turnout was not a focus of the study. However, as a function of trust in government and participation in groups, the act of voting provides a good indicator of the advantages of group participation.

The fifth hypothesis states that among individuals involved in the two types of groups, those individuals in the political groups should demonstrate a higher level of interest in political issues as determined by the question “How interested would you say you are in political issues (current events, debates, etc.)?” Responses to this question were coded “0” for “Not Interested”, “1” for “Not Very Interested”, “2” for “Somewhat Interest”, and “3” for “Very Interested”. Table 11 shows interest in political issues cross tabulated by the type of group.

Table 12: Cross-tabulation for Interest in Politics by Type of Group: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

		Type of Group		Total
		Social Group	Political Group	
Interest in Politics	Not Interested	4 5.6%	0 .0%	4 3.5%
	Not Very Interested	16 22.2%	2 4.9%	18 15.9%
	Somewhat Interested	30 41.7%	15 36.6%	45 39.8%
	Very Interested	22 30.6%	24 58.5%	46 40.7%
Total		72 100.0%	41 100.0%	113 100.0%

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The table shows the hypothesized result that individuals in political groups are more likely to be interested in political issues than those individuals in social groups. The

results show that those in political groups are almost twice as likely to be “Very Interested” in politics. Additionally, there are no respondents in the political groups that profess to be “Not Interested” compared to 5.6% of the respondents in the social groups who are “Not Interested”.

The final hypothesis to be evaluated involves trust measurement and the affect of multiple memberships on trust. The hypothesis states that generalized social trust and political trust will increase among members with multiple memberships up to four group memberships. Regardless of the type of group memberships the individual members claim, social and political trust will increase up to four memberships. Beyond the four group membership level, the number of group memberships may actually have a reverse effect decreasing trust. This hypothesized result was derived from a similar hypothesis tested by Francisco Herreros in his analysis of the Barometer of Andalusian Public Opinion 2000. He found that “the probability of trust in unknown people is lower if the individual is a member of one or two associations than if he is a member of four associations.” (Herreros, 2004: 63.) However, he found that the highest measures of trust came from those individuals with three group memberships. He found that the marginal utility of group memberships was maximized at three memberships. Beyond three memberships, trust measurements declined.

The Voluntary Association Data Set survey includes a question about the number of group memberships but the responses were categorized into groups. Responses were coded 1 for group memberships of 1-3, code 2 represents 4-6 group memberships, and code 3 represents 7 or more group memberships. Since the survey responses did not

allow for measurement of specific numbers of group memberships, I hypothesized that the 4-6 membership individuals would have the highest measures of trust while the other two responses would record lower trust scores.

Figure 7 shows the hypothesized result. Individuals involved in 4-6 groups maintain the highest mean levels of generalized social trust. Individuals with only 1-3 group memberships and those with 7 or more memberships both recorded lower levels of social trust. I have also added the type of group as a control for the possibility that the type of group in which an individual is surveyed might affect trust responses. As the table shows trust is highest among individuals in 4-6 groups regardless of the type of group in which the individual was surveyed. The social group pattern duplicates the research by Herreros in that lesser group memberships recorded lesser mean trust values than the individuals with higher numbers of group memberships. The political group members do not show the same pattern but the individuals with 4-6 group memberships have significantly higher mean levels of generalized social trust.

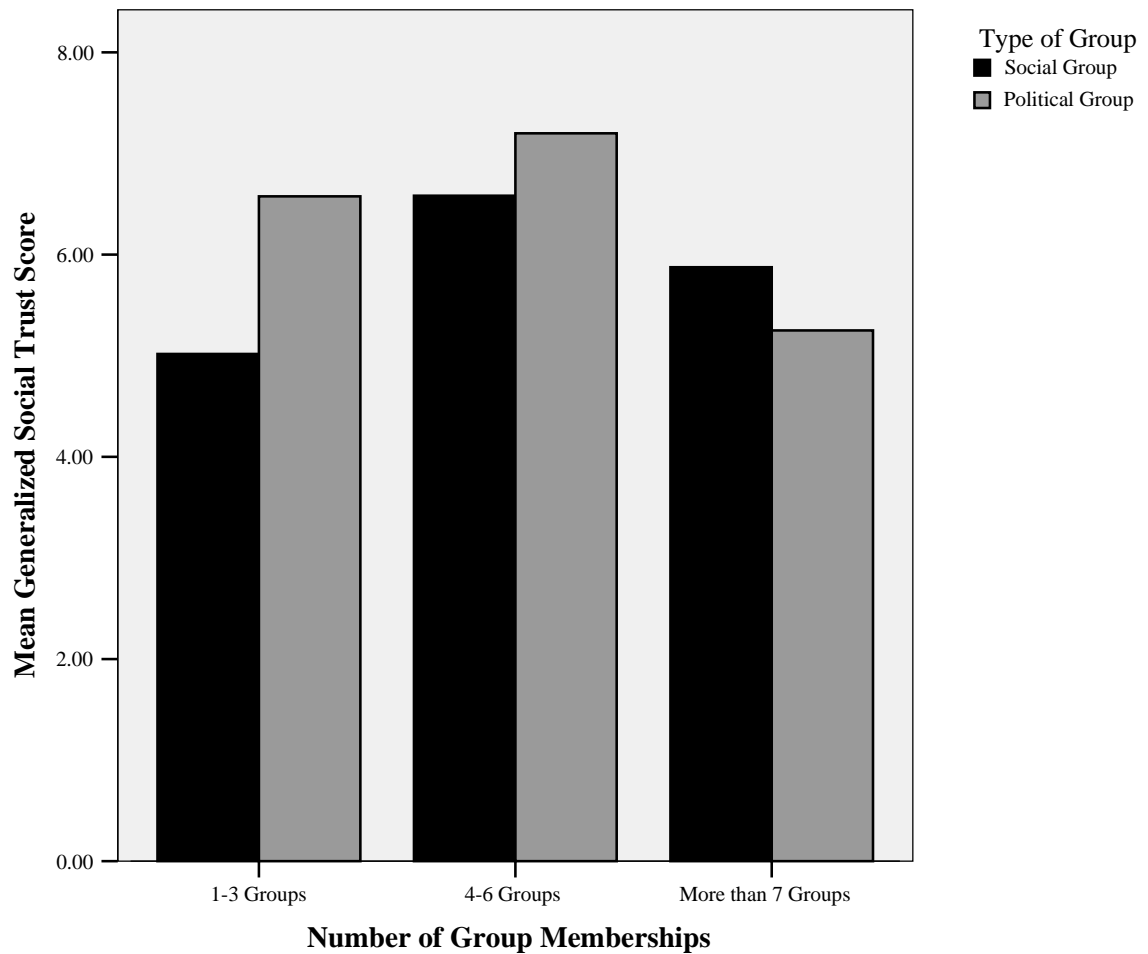


Figure 9: Mean Generalized Social Trust by Number of Group Memberships and Type of Group: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The second part of the hypothesis seeks to show the affect of the number of group memberships on political trust. Figure 8 shows the affect of the number of group memberships on mean political trust controlled for type of group. Again, we see that individuals with 4-6 group memberships have higher mean levels of political trust regardless of the type of group. However, as discussed earlier, individuals in social

groups tend to have higher levels of political trust than members of political groups. This is probably due to selection bias and partisanship effects of both of the political groups under study.

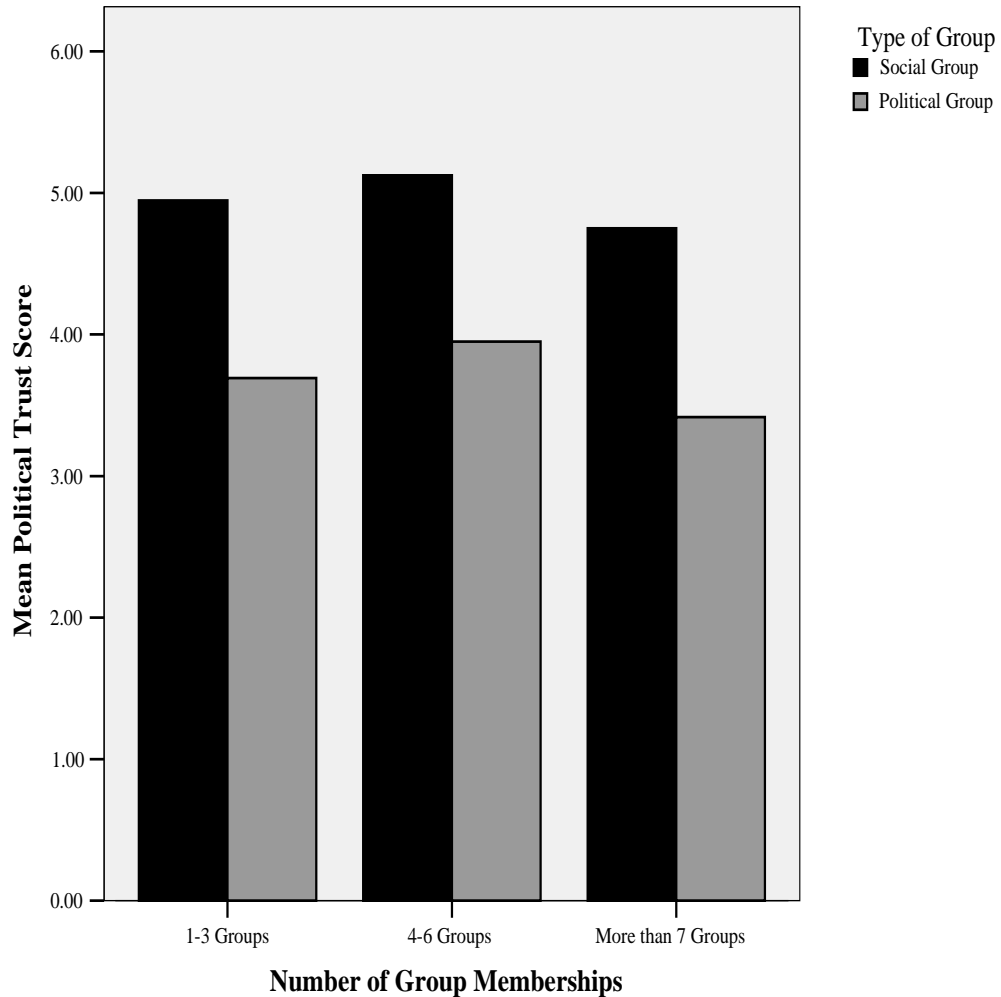


Figure 10: Mean Political Trust by Number of Group Memberships and Type of Group: Voluntary Association Data Set (2006)

(Source: VADS, 2006.)

The four groups involved in the case study are very conscious of their place in their communities with regard to their particular interests. What may not be as obvious to them is the role they play in the larger sphere of politics and trust among their fellow community members. The political trust that these group members have demonstrated may fluctuate from time to time as may happen throughout election cycles but the social trust generated is an ever-present and influential feature in their communities.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Individual members of the four case-study groups made a rational choice to participate in their selected groups. This was a self-interested decision that was probably motivated by a propensity to trust others. Absent this general inclination to trust others and the members would forgo future participation in the groups. While the members participate to advance their own self-interests, they probably do not anticipate the positive ramifications of their actions.

The trust that is propagated within the groups spills over into the general population. The people who have high levels of generalized social trust are also those people in society who are active throughout their community. Their generalized social trust takes the form of helping strangers in need, assisting friends and associates, and even to the realm of political participation. As Robert Putnam noted, “social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated.” (Putnam, 1995: 665.) The people that participate in the four case-study groups can be considered leaders in the participatory arena of the political process. The trust that they demonstrate in members of their group and those who are unknown to them is a general form of the trust that they have in the political sphere of society. As Robert E. Lane said “trust in elected officials is seen to be only a more specific instance of trust in mankind.” (Lane, 1969: 164.) Social trust and political trust are seen by many scholars to be a benchmark in the democratic process and are important to the democratization of otherwise non-democratic nations.

The four groups evaluated meet on a regular basis for various purposes. The two social groups, Kissimmee Bowling League and HMS School Advisory Committee, seek to advance the goals of the members. They do not seek to advance the interests of people beyond the sphere of the group membership. The Kissimmee Bowling League meets for mainly entertainment purposes and yet members may occasionally discuss issues beyond the group as may occur in most social situations. However, group actions do not attempt to advance beyond the group. The HMS School Advisory Committee meets to advance the goals of the school. During group deliberations the group focuses on improving school related issues. Before and after meetings, members may discuss issues beyond the group function but actions do not transcend to the wider society. These two groups seek their self interests and do not attempt to impact the greater community.

The political groups, Tangerine Improvement Society and Democracy for America, meet to advance the goals of the groups as they apply to the larger society. They are attempting to advance their own self interests and the interests of the community-at-large. The Tangerine Improvement Society seeks to improve the Tangerine community and the lives of the citizens whether or not the citizens are members of the group itself. The Democracy for America group seeks to advance the issues of the community as they apply to the democratic process. The group attempts to promote open dialog among government officials and the community through candidate forums and community activism. Non-members receive the benefit of a group advancing the beliefs and concerns of the community through the democratic process.

Measuring generalized social trust using the Voluntary Association Data Set and the World Values survey revealed in both data sets that respondents generally respond to the question: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” most frequently with the response: “One cannot be too careful.” This correlated with previous research by Francisco Herreros. (2004: 41-42.) However, it can be noted that the VADS revealed a slightly higher percentage of respondents who felt that “Most people can be trusted.”

The Voluntary Association Data Set showed a more clear relationship between general trust and age. The World Values Survey analysis of the general population shows that older generations are more trusting of others than younger generations. This runs counter to those involved in the four case-study groups. It appears that among those involved in the four groups younger people may be more trusting. When one considers the mentality of a young person involved in a group, one might consider that at a young age they have already displayed a propensity to trust by joining a group. With this potential for trust already embedded at a young age, one would expect them to respond to the question with a more trusting response than their older counterparts. The older members could have potentially taken decades to develop such trusting levels that inspired them to join a group. This could have significant ramifications for future analysis of group members. If young people involved in groups are significantly more trusting than their non-involved counterparts, this could indicate a trust-building potential in group involvement. Additionally, as these people age, they could carry that trust with

them and further increase mean trust levels among group members providing new young members are as trusting.

My first hypothesis was derived from research by Francisco Herreros. His analysis of a general public opinion poll with more than 14,000 respondents showed that among those individuals involved in associations, there were higher generalized social trust levels among those people involved in political groups than social groups. His theory was that social trust levels would be higher “if the individual is a member of a political rather than a civil association.” (2004: 60.) The Voluntary Association Data Set showed the hypothesized results. The data shows that individuals are generally more trusting of others if they are in a political group. Perhaps these people perceive that they are working for the general population more than those who are in the social groups. It is possible that they perceive that their efforts are aimed at promoting the “greater good.”

The second hypothesis was developed from a similar assumption as the first. The idea is that among individuals involved in the two types of groups, those individuals in social groups would have higher political trust than those involved in political groups. People who are consistently deliberating political issues may become jaded about the political system. This becomes more apparent when the group members already have a partisan affiliation that runs counter to the current administration. The political groups studied had overt political leanings and this led to the expected results showing that the social groups had higher levels of political trust than the political groups. Additionally, the political groups have consistent deliberation about the “politics-of-the-day” and an

influx of knowledge which could lend to the idea of being jaded about the circumstances in the current political arena which seems to be deluged with partisan conflict.

The third analysis of the Voluntary Association Data Set sought to evaluate the affect of education and income on mean levels of generalized social trust and political trust. This was based on research by Bo Rothstein in his analysis of the World Values Survey in that he proposed that individuals with higher education levels would have higher levels of social trust. (Rothstein, 2002: 61.) The analysis of education among participants in the Voluntary Association Data Set showed the expected results that individuals with higher levels of education had higher levels of generalized social trust as measured by the GSTI. One exception was noted when individuals with more than four years of college recorded a slightly lower mean score on the GSTI than those individuals with four years of college. However, this group still had higher mean level GSTI scores than lesser educated responders.

The analysis of education on mean levels of political trust, as measured by the PTI, was not as general. The data in Figure 5 showed that mean political trust increased with increasing education levels up to the two years of college level. At that point political trust began to decrease. As noted in Chapter IV, this affirms research by Agger, et al. in that educational attainment leads to political cynicism. It appears that among the members involved in the four case-study groups, education plays a dynamic role in political trust to a point where it begins to have a reverse effect. This could be due to the idea that as individuals increase their education level, they inform themselves about the political system more than their lesser educated counterparts. This increased information

results in lower levels of trust in public officials. While Putnam found that higher educated people engage in civic activities ten to fifteen percent more often than lesser educated people (Putnam, 2000: 46.), this does not apparently lead to higher levels of political trust among the respondents in the Voluntary Association Data Set.

Income may also play a significant role in the measurement of generalized social trust. Data displayed in Table 6 for the Voluntary Association Data Set shows that the highest percentage of individuals measuring high trust scores on the GSTI were in the highest income group. Using the economic concept of risk aversion, one can grasp the concept of trust as a risk that a group member is taking. In deciding to trust unknown persons, especially in the course of group deliberations, a person with many resources in the form of income has proportionately less to lose from being cheated than an individual with fewer economic resources. These high income individuals who are involved in groups are apparently more inclined to trust unknown people than low income individuals in groups. They probably feel that they have less to lose by trusting unknown people.

Using Political Trust Index scores in the analysis of income and political trust provided unclear results due to high variation in responses. However, when medium and high trust scores were isolated from low political trust, the income effect is more defined. The data showed that a higher percentage of individuals recording medium and high levels of political trust came from the two highest income groups. These groups probably feel that they are in a better position to influence the political system due to their status in the higher income groups. Lower income respondents may feel helpless to initiate change and influence policy in the political arena.

Controlling for the type of group provided insight into the potential for future research in this realm. The type of political groups surveyed caused significant variation among political trust measures. If research had been conducted using less partisan groups or more types of political groups, different results may have been obtained. Among those respondents in the high income groups, those who are members of social groups had significantly higher levels of political trust than those who are members of political groups. Additionally, members of political groups who are in the highest income group had no members with medium or high levels of political trust. Using a control for type of group revealed that income is a valuable predictor of political trust.

The Voluntary Association Data Set also reveals impressive results for group members in various income groups and their propensity to register to vote and to participate in the voting process. The data shows an increase in the percentage of registered voters as income increased. Additionally, the data showed that as income increased among group members, so did the percentage of people within the income group who voted. One hundred percent of the highest income group, those earning \$80,000 or more, voted. While voter participation was not the focus of the research, the data reinforces the affect of income on political trust. Those who have trust in the political system will be more inclined to register to vote and to participate in the act of voting in order to let the system work for them. These people probably have very high levels of political efficacy.

The type of group also plays a role on interest in politics. While it would be expected that political groups would have more interest in politics, this was included to

explain the reason why political groups have lower levels of political trust. People in society who take an active interest in political issues and policy debates may be more inclined to spend their spare time associating with others with similar beliefs. Due to a high interest in politics they may be unlikely to spend their spare time participating in non-political activities. Additionally, the two political groups have a higher percentage of people who actually voted in the 2004 Election than the two social groups. The two pieces of information show the affect of partisanship on the measure of political trust among the group members. The two political groups may have lower political trust than the two social groups but through their actions and interest in politics, the political groups are showing that they are working to make a change in the incumbent political party. They are actively voting and through their interest in politics, staying informed about the issues.

Finally, the affect of the number of group memberships on generalized social trust and political trust indicates that, among members of both types of groups, generalized social trust and political trust is highest among those people that have four to six group memberships. Those individuals with less than four memberships or more than six memberships have lower generalized social trust and lower political trust. Members of multiple groups find benefit in these trust relations with regard to reciprocity. They may perceive that group membership has its rewards up to a certain point in the amount of memberships. Beyond that point the benefit of additional group membership has no increase in utility for the member. Therefore, the marginal utility of additional group memberships is negligible.

“Trust in elected officials is seen to be only a more specific instance of trust in mankind.” (Lane, 1969: 164.) This quote by Robert E. Lane emphasizes the importance of generalized social trust. Research into trust-in-government and political trust has its place among the scholars of partisan politics and campaign strategists. The fluctuations of these trust values from region to region, administration to administration, and from decade to decade calls for a larger data set and time series evaluations, both of which are not part of my research. This research has focused on the measurement of generalized social trust and political trust among those individuals in society that have already demonstrated a propensity to trust by joining social or political groups. Through the analysis of social and political groups, scholars can find the foci for both social and political trust. Additionally, these are the individuals in society that have a high probability of voting and becoming generally involved in society. As Herreros said, “participation in associations generates more information about politicians’ behavior and that this, at the same time, favors greater democratic accountability.” (Herreros, 2004: 124.) While measures of trust occur in the larger population and the analysis of the larger population does provide fruitful scholarship, social and political groups concentrate the values used to measure participation throughout society. For the larger population and those in a position to provide funding for associations and their actions, sociologist Pamela Paxton suggested that “if certain types of associations have substantially greater benefits for democracy, or if certain types of organizations are actually harmful to democracy, then agencies that fund NGOs or nonprofit organizations should consider a differentiated funding policy.” (Paxton, 2002: 273.)

This research has provided a peek into the window of trust among four case-study groups. These groups have various political and apolitical goals. Members have a multitude of outlooks for society and their role in society. The scholarship provided herein is a point in time for a small portion of the population. The Generalized Social Trust Index and the Political Trust Index could be adapted using different survey questions or various trust practices to evaluate the measures of generalized social trust and political trust. Further research and scholarly work will provide deeper insight into political and social group behavior and the measures and methods of trust-building that both types of groups incorporate into their practices and values. The four groups under study in this research have provided an invaluable source of data that will help to promote analysis of trust among social and political groups.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Informed Consent Document

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. This survey will be administered to various groups throughout Central Florida. All survey participants must be at least eighteen years old. This survey is being conducted by Weylan Craig as part of a Master's Thesis for the University of Central Florida.

This survey will ask you question about your political beliefs and feelings. However, the results will not be used by any political group or government organization. The survey has thirty multiple choice questions. If you agree to participate, you will read the statements and, using the pencil provided; circle the response that best reflects your thoughts, opinions, or lifestyle. The survey will take approximately five minutes to complete.

There are no risks involved in the survey and you will not be paid for your participation. You may discontinue your participation in the survey at any time and you may omit any questions that you prefer not to answer. There are no direct benefits for survey participation.

Your responses and identity will be kept confidential. The signature portion of the "Informed Consent" document will not be linked with your survey and therefore will not identify you with your survey responses. The survey administrator will maintain a list of participants in the survey for three years and will keep your identity confidential.

If you have any questions about the survey process or questions, fell free to ask the survey administrator. This "Informed Consent Document" is your to keep, so if you have any concerns about the survey in the future, you may contact Weylan Craig at (407)957-0467. The University of Central Florida Faculty Supervisor for this project is Dr. Philip Pollock and he can be reached at (407)823-2084.

Questions or concerns about your rights may be directed to the UCFIRB office, University of Central Florida Office of Research, Orlando Tech Center, 12443 Research Parkway, Suite 207, Orlando, FL 32826. The phone number is (407)823-2901.

Thank you for your participation,
Weylan Craig

I have read the "Informed Consent Document" for the political beliefs survey being conducted by Weylan Craig for his Master's Thesis at the University of Central Florida. I understand the procedures and I am voluntarily participating in this survey. By signing this document, I certify that I am at least eighteen years old. I have received a copy of the "Informed Consent Document".

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Weylan Craig: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B
SURVEY PARTICIPANT DEBRIEFING

When survey participants complete their survey, they will be read a verbal debriefing statement. The verbal debriefing will contain information about the purpose of the survey and will reveal that measures of trust are to be evaluated.

“The survey that you have just taken seeks to measure trust in your fellow citizens and trust in government officials. The responses you have provided will be compiled with the responses of three other groups to compare and contrast trust among the groups. Are there any questions?... Thank you very much for participating in my research project. Have a great day.”

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey instrument was administered between August 8, 2005 and August 7, 2006 to the members of the following groups: Kissimmee Bowling League, HMS School Advisory Committee, Tangerine Improvement Society, and Democracy For America. The following procedure was observed. The author attended the meetings of these groups and requested that members complete the questionnaire. This was an in-person survey protocol. Although some members were unwilling to complete the survey--depending on the group, no more than ten percent refused--response rates were substantially better than the response rates reported by researchers using lower-yield techniques, such as mail or phone (Dillman 1978). Following established procedures for response-choice construction (Groves, et al. 2001; Mondak and Davis 2001; American National Election Study 2004), the questionnaire asked respondents to choose among valenced responses.

Survey

Directions: Using the provided responses, circle the letter of the one that best represents you.

1. During what decade were you born?

- a. 1900-1909 b. 1910-1919 c. 1920-1929 d. 1930-1939
e. 1940-1949 f. 1950-1959 g. 1960-1969 h. 1970-1979
i. 1980-1989

2. Which are you? a. Male b. Female

3. You are currently taking this survey in a group setting. Are you a member of any other groups?

- a. Yes b. No

4. Circle all of the types of groups to which you have membership (**including this group**):

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. fraternal groups
(Elks, Rotary, DAR, etc.) | b. church groups
(choir, study group, etc.) |
| c. school groups
(PTO, SAC, etc.) | d. sports groups
(league, team, etc.) |
| e. labor unions | f. political clubs or groups |
| g. veteran groups | h. hobby groups or clubs
(model trains, book club, etc.) |

5. How many group memberships do you have?

- a. 1-3 groups b. 4-6 groups c. 7+ groups

6. Do you hold any administrative or elective positions in any of the groups to which you belong?

- a. Yes b. No

7. You are taking this survey in a group to which you hold membership. Are you satisfied with the goals that this group has set?

- a. Yes b. No c. Not applicable (this group does not set goals)

8. How long do you estimate that you have been a member of this group?

- a. less than 1 year b. 1-2 years c. 3-4 years d. 5-7 years e. 8+ years

9. In our society, we have to be concerned about constantly being cheated.

- a. True b. False

10. Most people will help a fellow citizen in need.

- a. True b. False

11. If given the chance, most people will take advantage of others.

- a. True b. False

12. In our society, how much do you trust the following groups of people:

A foreigner? a. not at all b. not much c. a little d. a lot

A stranger? a. not at all b. not much c. a little d. a lot

A fellow citizen? a. not at all b. not much c. a little d. a lot

13. Do you think that having many different cultures in this area (Central Florida) makes life better?

- a. Yes b. No

14. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that one cannot be too careful in dealing with people?

- a. Most people can be trusted. b. One cannot be too careful.

15. When was the last time you have talked to a neighbor or someone who is not in your family and lives in your neighborhood?

- a. less than a week ago b. 1-2 weeks ago c. 3-4 weeks ago d. 5 weeks-1 year ago
- e. more than a year ago f. never

16. How interested would you say you are in political issues (current events, debates, etc.)?

- a. Very interested b. Somewhat interested c. Not very interested d. Not at all interested

17. Circle all of the political actions in which you have taken part:

- a. None b. Signed petition c. Joined a boycott d. Attended a demonstration or rally
- e. Campaigned for a candidate f. Worked for a campaign g. Ran for elected office

18. Generally speaking, would you say that this country is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

- a. By a few big interests b. Run for the people

19. Most public officials (people in public office) are not really interested in the problems of the average people.

- a. True b. False

20. How much do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right? Do you trust it almost always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?

- a. Almost always b. Most of the time c. Only some of the time d. Almost never

21. How much confidence do you have in the following government offices:

President? a. a lot b. a little c. not much d. not at all

Congress? a. a lot b. a little c. not much d. not at all

Local Government? a. a lot b. a little c. not much d. not at all

22. What do you estimate to be your average yearly household income?

a. less than \$19,999/year b. \$20,000-\$29,999/year c. \$30,000-\$39, 999/year

d. \$40,000-\$49, 999/year e. \$50,000-\$59, 999/year f. \$60,000-\$69, 999/year

g. \$70,000-\$79, 999/year h. \$80,000-\$89, 999/year i. \$90,000-\$99, 999/year

j. over \$100, 000/year

23. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

a. Less than High School b. High School graduate or equivalent

c. Two years of college or technical school d. Four years of college (Bachelor's Degree or equivalent)

e. More than four years of college

24. What is your current marital status?

a. Married b. Not married (single, widowed, divorced, etc.)

25. What is your race?

a. White/non-Hispanic b. Black/African-American

c. Asian/Asian-American d. Latino/Hispanic

e. Native American f. Pacific Islander

26. How long have you lived in this region of the state (Central Florida)?

a. less than 1 year b. 1-2 years c. 3-5 years d. 6-8 years e. 9-10 years f. 10+ years

27. Are you currently registered to vote (in this country or any country)?

a. Yes b. No

28. Did you vote in the last US Presidential Election (2004)?

a. Yes b. No

29. Do you believe that community/civic service should be a requirement of young people?

a. Yes b. No

30. How often do you access the internet?

a. Never/do not have access b. Daily c. Weekly d. Monthly

APPENDIX D
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM



Office of Research & Commercialization

August 9, 2005

Weylan W. Craig
1123 Creek Woods Circle
St. Cloud, FL 34772

Dear Mr. Craig:

With reference to your protocol #05-2778 entitled, "**Variation in Social Trust and Trust-in-Government among Members of Two Political Groups and Two Apolitical Groups**" I am enclosing for your records the approved, expedited document of the UCFIRB Form you had submitted to our office. **This study was approved by the Chairman on 8/8/05. The expiration date for this study will be 8/7/06.** Should there be a need to extend this study, a Continuing Review form must be submitted to the IRB Office for review by the Chairman or full IRB at least one month prior to the expiration date. This is the responsibility of the investigator. **Please notify the IRB when you have completed this study.**

Please be advised that this approval is given for one year. Should there be any addendums or administrative changes to the already approved protocol, they must also be submitted to the Board through use of the Addendum/Modification Request form. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 407-823-2901.

Please accept our best wishes for the success of your endeavors.

Cordially,

Barbara Ward

Barbara Ward, CIM
IRB Coordinator

Copy: IRB file
Philip Pollock, Ph.D.



THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

IRB Committee Approval Form

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S): Weylan W. Craig; IRB #: 05-2778
Philip Pollock, Ph.D. (Supervisor)

PROJECT TITLE: Variation in Social Trust and Trust-in-Government among Members of Two Political Groups and Two Apolitical Groups

- New project submission
- Continuing review of lapsed project # _____
- Study expires _____
- Initial submission was approved by expedited review
- Initial submission was approved by full board review but continuing review can be expedited
- Suspension of enrollment email sent to PI, entered on spreadsheet, administration notified _____

Chair

Expedited Approval
Dated: 8/8/2005
Cite how qualifies for expedited review: minimal risk and #7

IRB Co-Chairs:

Signed:
Dr. Sophia Dziegielewska

Exempt
Dated: _____
Cite how qualifies for exempt status: minimal risk and _____

Signed: _____
Dr. Jacqueline Byers

Expiration
Date: 8/7/2005

Complete reverse side of expedited or exempt form

- Waiver of documentation of consent approved
- Waiver of consent approved
- Waiver of HIPAA Authorization approved

NOTES FROM IRB CHAIR (IF APPLICABLE): Clarifications needed, First Review August 5, 2005.

Revisions received 8/7/05 and 8/8/05, BW

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