



Efficacy and concern: A new model for political engagement

Bradley Allsop

Supervised by: Amar Cherchar

April 2015

## Efficacy and concern: A new model for political engagement

**Abstract**

Voting turn-out has been in overall gradual decline in the general UK population since the early 90's, but nowhere is this more pronounced than in young people. This study sought to explore the relationship between political efficacy and political engagement. Political efficacy was broken down into internal (belief in one's ability to act in the political realm) and external (one's belief that the political system is amenable to change). A measure of political engagement that incorporates political activities, both formal and informal, was created for the present study, along with a measure of concern over political issues. The focus on this combination of variables redresses aspects neglected in the previous research. A 6 part questionnaire was administered, all parts of which had good internal reliability. Age and perception of ones parent's political engagement was also incorporated into the analysis. A multiple regression analysis was conducted. Internal political efficacy (Beta= .56 P = <0.01) and age (Beta= .26 ,p= 0.01) were both significantly positively correlated with formal political efficacy, and internal political efficacy (Beta= .35 P = 0.01) and age (Beta= .30 ,p= 0.05) were both significantly correlated with informal political efficacy. Only internal political efficacy was significantly correlated with general political engagement (Beta= .56 P = <0.01). The models used in each case were found to be able to significantly predict all types of engagement. Internal efficacy was found to be a stronger predictor than external political efficacy or concern over issues, and when factor analysis was conducted on internal and external political efficacy scale items 4 clear factors instead of 2 emerged. The wider impact of these findings, possible improvements to the study and lines of future research are discussed.

KEY WORDS:	POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT	INTERNAL POLITICAL EFFICACY	EXTERNAL POLITICAL EFFICACY
------------	-------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

## Introduction

As Bandura (1997) points out in his introduction to political efficacy, political engagement not only affects individuals but can have knock-on effects for the whole of society. If too many citizens are unwilling to engage with the political system it will be difficult for politicians to get potentially unpopular but necessary legislation through that could alleviate social ills. A more engaged populace is able to hold a government to account more effectively, and political engagement has been shown to also have links to social cohesion (Putnam, 2000). As Finkel (1985) points out, there is often the overlooked aspect of what consequences engagement can have on an individual, many of which he believes to be positive, including a greater sense of control and satisfaction. Those that do not engage are, of course, also losing their chance to have a say in who governs them. As ancient Rome's Pericles once claimed: "*Just because you do not take an interest in politics, does not mean politics will not take an interest in you*".

Politics has perhaps always to some extent been viewed cynically. We have never had a time before when so many countries extended the vote to so much of their

population, yet many feel that democracy in the West, in the UK in particular, is in crisis. We shall start by examining this claim.

### **Declining Turnouts**

Voting turnout in the UK has been in an overall, gradual decline since its peak in 1950, with the 2001 general election seeing the lowest voting turnout since universal suffrage: a mere 59% (EC report, 2002). Whilst subsequent general elections (2005 and 2010) have seen a rise from 2001, turnout is still well below 20<sup>th</sup> century levels. Notably, between the 1992 and 1997 elections, and then the 1997 to 2001 elections, decline in turn-out was particularly pronounced. The alarming trend since the 1990's has been correlated with various economic and societal changes, such as neoliberal hegemony and subsequent market liberalisation of which there has been a strong focus on within the field (Hay, 2007; Solt, 1998; Katz, 2001).

Most concerning of all however, is the turn-out of the 18-24 age group. For every single election on record they have voted significantly less than other age-groups in the UK. The 2001 general election saw less than 40% of 18-24 year olds turn out to vote, with this figure only rising slightly in 2005 and 2010. The UK also has one of the worst youth election turn-outs in the developed world (Democratic Audit, 2014). With only roughly half of eligible young people estimated to be registered for the 2015 general election, it seems unlikely that turn out in the next election will improve: indeed, many fear it will decline still further. Changes to electoral registration, such as the move to individual rather than household registration, has exacerbated these fears.

Political party membership is also falling, with the Conservative Party having dropped from over 3 million to now less than 200,000, and the Labour Party dropping from over 1 million to a similar number. This means that “ *the combined membership of British political parties is a little over two-thirds of the membership of the largest UK interest group, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds*” (O'Toole, 2003, p.1). Trade Union membership, a typical vehicle of political expression, has also been on the decline for several decades, although not for as long nor as steeply as is the case with political parties. There are notable exceptions to this with many 'fringe' parties, including the Scottish National Party, The Green Party, and UK Independence Party, seeing significant rises during 2014/15.

The knock-on effect of having a vastly reduced activist pool is a severe limit on the ability of political parties to campaign. This leads to 'target to win' wards, where only thin slices of the electorate get a chance for real engagement with political parties during election time, which could of course result in even lower voter turnout and party membership. This may, to an extent, be offset by greater use of technological innovations, primarily social media, but this also comes with its own host of problems (impersonality) that brings into question whether it is really an adequate compromise.

There is limited research into whether informal political engagement is overall increasing or decreasing, perhaps partly because of the more difficult nature of measuring informal trends over formal. Informal political engagement is defined as political behaviour that takes place outside of the formal sphere of formal political institutions (O'toole, 2003). By their nature formal engagement behaviours require an interaction with a formal, usually governmental body, which is quite likely to keep

records of some kind. This is not the case with informal political engagement and is therefore much harder to measure national trends in.

Whether there has been a rise in recent years of boycotted products is hard to tell, however, there is a large list of boycotted companies available suggesting that it is still at least a thriving form of engagement (Ethical Consumer, 2014). Again, good data on number of demonstrations and those attending them is hard to come by, but there have been a series of large demonstrations in the UK over the past decade, notably the Stop the War Coalition march against Iraq and the NUS march against the tuition fee rises, suggesting that this is at least still a form of engagement utilised by many (The Guardian, 2011).

Research by Franklin (2004) has shown that choosing to vote the first time you can, you're much more likely to do so in subsequent elections throughout your life. Many commentators appear happy to dismiss poor youth turnout as inevitable, and they suggest that the young are not experienced enough to know or care about what they want. However, this research places a level of urgency on youth engagement. If choosing to vote (or not to) your first time determines what you will choose in future elections, we'll be feeling declining youth turnout for decades to come in the general population's turnout too. However, the flipside is also true: if we find ways to politically engage young people early on, then our democracy could be feeling the benefits for decades to come.

### **Formal and Informal**

The main distinction between formal and informal political engagement is the focus of the activity. Formal engagement focuses on official channels of governance, be it local councils, national governments, or international bodies such as the European Parliament. Informal engagement, however, does not have this focus, and is often defined by very deliberately avoiding to engage with formal processes, instead often opting to focus on single issues. Typical examples of the former are: voting, joining a political party, and standing in an election, whereas examples of the latter are: boycotting products, attending demonstrations and signing e-petitions.

This study focuses on both informal and formal forms of political engagement. In constructing a scale for this purpose, it became clear that this dichotomy is not always as simple as it appears, as many activities fall into somewhat of a grey area. This study uses 3 separate measures for engagement- formal, informal, and general engagement. This highlights just how rich and varied political engagement can be, a point largely absent from the literature.

As Hay (2007) argues, there are many of those who disengage from 'formal' politics but still engage in more 'informal' modes such as protests and petitions. Indeed, many even see choosing not to vote as a political act in itself. Research by O'toole (2003) confirms this, with her study finding those young people that did not engage with the formal political system were more likely to engage in informal means. This is a distinction in political behaviour that has been ignored in large parts of the research. McClurg (2003) argues that a significant determinant of political behaviour is the informal social interactions and discussions individuals have with their family and friends, behaviours that are often neglected by engagement measurements.

There are times when legitimate acts of political expression exhibited by young people can be met with hostility by political officials, the mainstream media, the wider public and sometimes leading those taking part to a deepening sense of disengagement from the formal process of politics. Examples of this can include protests and demonstrations that are curtailed by the police, attacked by the media, and denounced by political leaders, when all the young people involved wanted to do was highlight a political issue important to them. For some, protests seem to be the only effective way of doing so, and to shut them down and criticize them serves only to alienate such individuals further and stifle what little expression they are displaying.

Hay (2007) discusses the broad dichotomy that exists between political engagement theories- those that lay the blame with the electorate, and those that determine that systems or politicians are to blame. Hay is very suspicious of theories that lay the blame at the feet of the electorate, sensing a convenient excuse for politicians to abuse. If we can simply shrug our shoulders in despair at an apathetic, uncaring populace, then there's little incentive or optimism for things to change. Jackman and Miller (1995) agree, concluding that the answer must lie in institutional and electoral issues.

Whilst it is correct that it is dangerous to 'blame' the electorate, this does not mean that the electorate are not where our research should be focused. Whatever the root cause of disengagement, it will have left clues and hints in the psychology of individual voters. For example, one of the variables this study attempts to explore is internal political efficacy, the extent to which an individual feels that they are competent enough to act in the political realm. This is a psychological trait, and if it is found that this trait is lacking in a number of individuals, and that it correlates with engagement, then we have our first clue. A large percentage of our sample feeling like they do not have the ability to act in the political world points towards issues such as political education in schools, acquiring the skills needed for politics, and how politics is represented to the general public. Thus we are not apportioning blame to individual voters, merely using their attitudes to sign post our way.

### **Political Efficacy**

Perceived political efficacy is the belief one has that one is able to make a difference within a political system, that they can influence it (Bandura, 1997). It is a specific dimension of the broader concept of self-efficacy developed by Albert Bandura. As evidenced by Wiegman et al (1992), the more a group believes that they can effectively stage a form of protest, the more likely they are to actually do it. This shows just how powerful and important our beliefs around our own competencies and the opportunities the system affords to us are.

Bandura stresses that measuring specifically political efficacy, rather than a 'globalised' notion of self-efficacy or locus of control is important. Wollman & Stouder (1991) found this to be true, finding that specific measures of political efficacy were the best predictors of political behaviour, over and above more generalised measures. Bandura (1997) also stresses that it is beliefs, not behaviours that is crucial here. Pointing to Zurich & Monts (1972) who attempted to assess efficacy by the behaviours participants exhibited, Bandura argued that they are actually measuring the wrong thing. The reason it is so crucial to distinguish between the two

is because, when levels of each are combined in different ways, a variety of political behaviours can emerge.

As Niemi et al (1988) point out it is a concept that has been notoriously difficult to measure since its inception. The important point to note regarding self-efficacy is that how good someone is at a task, or how much they really know about it does not matter- it is how good they believe they are that is key.

Bandura & Wood (1989) found that those who held negative views of their own abilities usually affected little change, even in a system that provided them plenty of opportunities to do so. Hay (2007) highlights the increasing belief of the lack of power of national governments. Whilst providing excellent rebuttals to this belief he notes that it is not important whether such beliefs are grounded in reality or not- a substantial section of the population thinking that they are is all that is needed for their impact to be felt. Whether it be through globalisation, increasingly similar parties, or privatisation of previously state controlled industries, there are multiple reasons to envisage the state's power as being slowly eroded away. Hay believes that this lies behind increasing abandonment of formal political processes.

### **Internal and External: the Two Dimensions**

Caprara et al (2009), in their overview of the history of measuring political efficacy, highlight an important distinction that was eventually made by researchers of what they term 'internal' and 'external' political efficacy. Traditionally many scales confused the two, asking questions that related to internal efficacy beliefs as well as beliefs about the flexibility of governmental change. Internal political efficacy is the extent to which you believe in your own abilities and competence to act in the political world, whereas external political efficacy measures to what extent individuals perceive external structures (i.e governmental institutions, public officials, political party processes) allow you to act as you would wish in the political realm and to what extent they are open to change.

Research by Madsen (1987) and Huebner & Lipsey (1981) shows that there are quite clearly two dimensions to political efficacy (internal and external) by studying the opinions of activists after successful and unsuccessful campaigns. It is clear from the responses of the activists that their beliefs in the ability of the system to change and their beliefs in their own abilities are quite distinct factors. Their belief in the system being able to change was dependant on the outcome of the campaign, but their belief in their own abilities remained unchanged regardless of the campaign success.

Caprara et al (2009) highlight that the internal dimension has numerous studies linking it to "perceived competence and several indicators of civic engagement" whereas the external dimension links more to trust issues surrounding formal institutions. Morrell (2003) argues that a standard measure for these concepts is vital for an understanding of political engagement to emerge and supports the scale for internal political efficacy used in this study. Numerous studies have displayed evidence for the concept of internal political efficacy and the interactions it has with other psychological factors; Morrell (2005) found it had a significant relationship with confidence in decision making and Shingles (1981) described it as the 'missing link' in differing levels of engagement in ethnic minority groups. Finkel (1985) found that external political efficacy had a significant impact on engagement in electoral and

campaign based engagement and Pollock III (1983) claims that it can explain engagement with political systems when trust in politicians is low.

### **The Bigger Picture**

It is the belief of the current researcher that political efficacy can be advanced as the psychological trait underpinning many of the proposed political engagement theories. It is what many theories are hinting at, what binds many good ideas together, yet this has escaped the attention of many researchers.

When Lazarsfield et al (1944) carried out their post-election US surveys in the 1940's, they found that many voters were still fairly disinterested and uninformed when it came to political issues. These are two commonly cited explanations for low voter turn-out now, particularly amongst younger generations and yet there is a sharp contrast between the turn-out then and now. Himmelweit et al (1993) argue that what mattered in the 1940's (and possibly today) was that voting was part of a wider psychosocial system in which vote choice was heavily influenced by social group identifications. Seeing a vote as part of a voting block of a wider social group is one of the most common explanations regarding the 'rational voter' paradox- why vote when your vote is so unlikely to actually make a difference? Quite apart from the obvious fact that humans simply do not always act rationally, especially when it comes to politics (Wilson, 2003), this placing of an individual vote within a wider social context can lead to a higher likelihood of actually voting.

Work by Putnam (2000) suggests that falling political engagement is a symptom of a wider loss of a sense of community across all sections of American society. Putnam's theory has been questioned as the political panacea some have heralded it to be, as his American-centric study has struggled to be replicated elsewhere. Uhlaner et al (1989) found that those ethnic minority groups that displayed the strongest group associations were the most likely to vote, and Jackman (1972) found that those that engaged in social organisations were moderately more likely to vote as well. This is also supported by the aforementioned work by McClurg (2003) that highlights the importance of informal social interaction in determining political behaviour.

Whilst Putnam's work may have been disparaged as a diagnosis for political engagement, it may help point us in the right direction. Whilst declines in community engagement and social cohesion may not be directly linked to political engagement in all countries, they could be a specific sign of a more general problem. Placing ones vote within a wider voting block and drawing support and reinforcement for political behaviour from a social group could help bolster both internal and external senses of political efficacy. Indeed, findings from Lassen & Serritzlew (2011) suggest that the smaller the size of a group an individual is placed in the higher their sense of internal political efficacy.

Hill (2006), in his book on American voter turn-out, presents the average turn out of various countries contrasted with the sort of electoral system they have. Plurality/majority systems (that aim to give the party with the most votes the power) tend to have, on average, lower turnout than countries with Proportional Representational systems (systems that focus on giving all parties voted for a representation). Indeed, turn-out differs between different PR systems as well, with those most proportional seeing the highest turn-outs (Jackman, 1987). It is important



to note that it is not simply a matter of choice at play here, as the number of parties running in an election is actually negatively correlated with voter turn-out (Jackman, 1987). Rather, it is the degree to which voters feel like their vote will count that has the impact on engagement, something that has far more to do with how responsive the electoral system is. This speaks directly to feelings of external political efficacy-people are unlikely to have high external political efficacy if they feel like there is a chance that their vote may be 'wasted' for the party they like the most.

The research in 'Citizens and Consumers' (Lewis et al, 2005) has the underlying theme of internal political efficacy: media portrayal of politics and the average voter reduces the ability and belief individuals have in themselves and warps the role they believe they are meant to play. They found that the media subtly but energetically promotes the idea to its readers and watchers that they are passive 'consumers' rather than active and engaged 'citizens'. They point to how the media rarely asks for or promotes novel suggestions from the public: the vast majority of the time the public are reacting to something a politician has done or said. As perceived political efficacy is what is key, the message that the public receive from the media is incredibly important in determining how they view their relationship with government and how likely they feel they are to be able to change things. Indeed, Penderson (2012) found through rigorous empirical studies that when the media focuses on politics as a 'game', namely political self-interest and strategy, as opposed to political issues, it leads to reduced feelings of internal political efficacy in participants.

The possibility emerges that from within a variety of disparate research findings an underlying psychological mechanism is at play: political efficacy. By exploring and better understanding this mechanism and its manifestations (namely internal and external), a quantifiable measure can emerge that may begin to be able to predict political behaviour.

### **Concern over issues**

There are two main reasons concern over issues has been included as a study variable. Firstly, it seems logical that once someone feels competent enough to act, and that there is high internal and external efficacy, that they will then have to *want* to engage, that they will have to have some *motivation*. In the realm of politics this motivation naturally takes the form of caring about certain issues.

The second reason is linked to the first- the logical step is often taken much further by politicians and assumed that those that do not engage simply do not care at all. This is an assumption often made about non-voters, particularly young people. This study aims to explore whether this assumption has any merit to it, and to see how levels of concern interacts with a variety of variables.

### **Aims**

The first aim of this study is to investigate a broader range of political activity than is usual in research on political engagement. This is particularly pertinent for the age group of interest here (18-30 year olds), as they are more likely than other age groups to engage in alternative means of engagement. This means that any study that aims to discover what lies at the heart of political engagement must distinguish and cover both formal and informal political engagement, thus avoiding mistaking informal political engagement for an absence of engagement. Whilst there is a

wealth of research available correlating declining voter turn-out or anger at politicians with various factors, there is comparatively little that investigates formal and informal engagement as separate dimensions.

An understanding of the complex nature of both engagement and political efficacy and their interactions is needed, and quantifiable and reliable measures are needed in order to begin to predict, and therefore begin to *improve* political engagement. This is the second aim of this study.

The final aim of this study is to what is the strongest predictor of engagement for all types of political engagement: what most determines whether someone will engage or not?

It is predicted that internal and external political efficacy along with concern over issues will form a model that is a significant predictor of all types of political engagement. It is also predicted that external political efficacy will be a stronger predictor for formal engagement than it is for informal political engagement.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The study used an opportunity sample made up of university students recruited through the university's participant pool and participants recruited through social media platforms, with 79 respondents in total, 76 from social media and 3 from the participant pool.

With the exception of age (between 16-30 years) no other criteria was applied. The majority of respondents appeared to be clumped in the lower 20's as would be expected from recruitment that took mainly through university channels, but there were some participants in their late 20's too.

### **Materials**

An online questionnaire comprised of 6 sections, each measuring a separate variable, was the only material used- Appendix A. Cronbachs Alpha reliability tests for all scales were undertaken, details of which shall be given in the Results Section (See also Appendix D for full table of Cronbach Alpha scores).

Section1: The scale used for the first sub-group, internal political efficacy, is a measure widely held (and used) as 'the' measure for internal political efficacy. Morell (2003) found that the simple, 4-item index (scored on a strongly disagree to strongly agree scale) used by Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991) was "a reliable and valid measure of internal efficacy". A high score suggests a strong belief in one's own ability to act in the political realm. Examples of items are: 'I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics' and 'I think I am better informed about politics and government than most people'. For a fuller description of the scale see Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991).

Section 2: External political efficacy measures to what extent you perceive external structures (i.e governmental institutions, public officials, political party processes) allowing you to act as you would wish in the political realm. The measure for external political efficacy was a 10 item scale adapted from a study conducted by Henn et al

(2005). Scored on a strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) scale, with slight alterations by the present researcher to include a wider basis than just political parties. These alterations replaced certain items with questions that asked about individual politicians and the wider system as a whole to move the focus from solely political parties, as they parties are not the whole story. A high score on this scale suggests an optimistic attitude towards being able to enact change within the political system. Examples of items include: 'politicians are all the same', 'the political system is amenable to change', and 'some politicians do good for this country'. 4 items on this scale were negatively scored.

Section 3: The choice of topics for concern was based upon an Ipsos Mori poll from January 2014 detailing the 10 most important issues to British public at the time, issues that included 'The economy', 'Immigration', and 'The NHS'. This was scored on a 1- 5 scale, 1 being 'not worried at all', 5 being 'very worried'. High scores on this scale would suggest a high level of concern for various political issues.

Political engagement is defined as individuals acting with a motive to influence or support political processes. Three political engagement scales were constructed- one that measured formal political engagement (section 4), informal engagement (section 5), and one category for 'general political engagement' (section 6)- political activities that could be carried out in formal or informal ways.

The scales were drawn from an adapted version of Caprana et al (2009), adapted to be more relevant to time/culture, and to have a more equal weighting in order to capture a fuller range of formal and informal activities. All 3 were scored on a 'Very often' (5) to 'not at all' (1) scale, with formal political engagement consisting of 9 items, informal political engagement 6 items, and general political engagement 6 items. An example item for: formal political engagement was 'voted', informal political engagement was 'boycotted a product' and general political engagement as 'distributed political leaflets'.

Demographic data such as age and the course being studied (or occupation if not a student) was obtained as well as a question that asked how political the participant perceived their parent as being. This was scored from 'Not at all' (1) to 'Very political'(5).

## **Procedure**

Participants were either contacted directly via social media (76) or saw the study advertised online (via University of Northampton participant pool) (3).

Once they expressed their desire to participate they were sent an email by the researcher containing a link to the study and an individual participant number so they can be identified should they wish to withdraw their data.

Upon opening the link, an information sheet followed by a consent form will be presented to them. Upon ticking all boxes on the confirmation sheet, they will be able to proceed to the next page, which will ask for some basic biographical information such as age, gender etc. and then they can proceed onto the questionnaire. Upon completing all necessary fields they will be presented with a debrief form explaining the study and reminding them they can still withdraw their data. This sheet will also detail the researchers email address.

Item scores were added up to give a total score for each scale for each participant, and then these totals were subjected to a multiple regression analysis. Factor Analysis was also conducted on the items for internal and external political efficacy and the three scales for political engagement.

## **Ethics**

Ethical consent was obtained from the University of Northampton Ethics Committee in line with BPS guidelines.

The questionnaire will be presented to participants in an online format, The first page of the questionnaire will be a cover letter (information sheet describing the nature of the study and carefully detailing what will be expected of the participant. Information about the rights of the participants will be provided (see Appendix B).

Participants will also be provided with a consent form on which they will indicate their consent to participate by ticking a consent box. This will be a required field and the participant will not be able to proceed without having checked the box.

Upon the completion of the questionnaire, participants will then be presented with a debrief form, thanking them for their participation, explaining briefly what will be done with their data, and giving them a brief background on political engagement more specific details about the nature of the study. These specific details were not provided on the information sheet as their inclusion could potentially alter participants' responses (see Appendix B).

Participants will be presented with the researcher's email address should they wish to withdraw their data or ask further questions, and the researcher's supervisor's email address should they have any complaints.

## **Results**

It was predicted that the model of internal and external political efficacy and concern over issues would be a significant predictor of all types of political engagement.

Three separate multiple regression analyses' were conducted to see if internal and external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were predicted level of: a.) formal political engagement, b.) informal political engagement and c.) general political engagement.

There were no specific issues with collinearity as collinearity diagnostics revealed that all of the variables correlated with each other by far less than 0.7 (see Appendix C), although there was a linear relationship between the independent and the dependant variables (see Appendix E). Based upon Q-Q plots and skew scores the data was determined to meet parametric assumptions and so a multiple regression analysis was conducted. These assumptions were met for all 3 regression analysis' conducted.

Cronbach's Alpha test was conducted on all 6 scales in the questionnaire. Only concern over issues and informal political engagement scored below 0.7 (see Appendix D), suggesting that the questionnaire overall had good internal reliability.

Informal political engagement only secured a 0.57 Cronbach Alphas scores. When either the 'Donated money to a single issue cause' item or the 'Volunteered for an NGO item' was removed the Cronbachs Alpha score did increase to 0.6.

A factor analysis with a 'varimax' rotation on internal and external political efficacy items was also conducted (Appendix D) that discovered there were 4 factors that the items correlated to. This is discussed in more detail below.

Table 1- Key to variables names

Appears in table	Variable name
IPE	Internal political efficacy
EPE	External Political Efficacy
Concern	Concern over issues
FPE	Formal political engagement
IFPE	Informal political engagement
GPE	General political engagement
Polparents	How political parents were perceived to be

Table 2 displays the means, standard deviations and skewness levels for all the variables measured in the study.

Table 2

*Descriptive statistics for external political efficacy, internal political efficacy, concern over issues, informal political efficacy, other political engagement, age, how political parents were, and formal political engagement*

	N	Mean	Std.	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Deviation	Statistic	Std. Error
IPEtotal	76	12.01	4.19	-.19	.28
EPEtotal	76	28.34	5.45	-.16	.28
CONCERNtotal	75	39.41	4.78	-.28	.28
FPEtotal	75	15.57	6.61	1.54	.28
IFPEtotal	77	15.47	4.03	.29	.27
GPEtotal	73	13.40	4.87	1.00	.28

Polparents	76	2.95	1.09	-.082	.28
Age	76	21.68	2.64	1.27	.28

### Formal political engagement

Below is the multiple regression output for formal political engagement.

Table 3

*Model Summary for formal political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.63 <sup>a</sup>	.39	.35	5.41

The Model Summary shows what percentage of the variance in formal political engagement is explained by the model used (the collection of variables), with adjusted *R* squared being adjusted for sample size. The association between the criterion and explanatory variables is moderately strong (Multiple *R*= 0.63, see Table 3). Together, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age, and how political parents were account for 35% of the variance recorded (adjusted *R* squared).

Table 4

*ANOVA output for formal political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model	<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1 Regression	5	8.42	< .001
Residual	65		
Total	70		

The ANOVA tables shows us that the regression plane for internal and external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were departs significantly from 0- we *can* predict formal political engagement from these variables. The chances of obtaining this result by chance, assuming the null hypothesis to be true is less than 0.01 (*F*= 8.42) (see Table 4).

Table 5

*Coefficients table for formal political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	1.62	8.52		.19	.85	-15.40	18.64
IPEtotal	.93	.18	.59	5.16	< .001	.57	1.29
EPEtotal	.05	.13	.04	.36	.72	-.21	.30
CONCERNtotal	-.19	.14	-.13	-1.33	.19	-.46	.09
Polparents	-.78	.68	-.13	-1.15	.26	-2.13	.58
Age	.52	.25	.21	2.08	.04	.02	1.01

The coefficients table shows which variables from the model were the best predictors. Internal political efficacy ( $\beta = .59$   $p < .001$ ) and age ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $p = .04$ ) were both significantly positively correlated with formal political efficacy. Since the confidence limits for internal political efficacy and age did not encompass a negative value ( $CI = 0.57 - 1.29$ ), the population regression coefficients for both can be concluded to be positive (IPE-  $t = 5.16$ ,  $p < .001$ , Age-  $t = 2.08$ ,  $p = .04$ , see Table 5).

### Informal political engagement

Below is the multiple regression output for informal political engagement.

Table 6

*Model Summary for informal political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.59 <sup>a</sup>	.35	.30	3.43

The Model Summary shows what percentage of the variance in informal political engagement is explained by the model used (the collection of variables), with adjusted  $R$  squared being adjusted for sample size. The association between the criterion and explanatory variables is moderately strong (Multiple  $R = 0.59$ , see Table 6). Together, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over

issues, age, and how political parents were account for 30% of the variance recorded (adjusted  $R$  squared).

Table 7

*ANOVA for informal political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model		<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	5	7.17	< .001
	Residual	66		
	Total	71		

The ANOVA tables shows us that the regression plane for internal and external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were departs significantly from 0- we *can* predict informal political engagement from these variables. The chances of obtaining this result by chance, assuming the null hypothesis to be true is less than 0.01 ( $F = 7.17$ ) (see Table 7).

Table 8

*Coefficients table for informal political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*



The coefficients table shows which variables from the model were the best predictors. Internal political efficacy ( $\beta = .41$   $p < .001$ ) and age ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $p = .01$ ) were both significantly positively correlated with informal political efficacy. Since the confidence limits for internal political efficacy and age did not encompass a negative

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-4.59	5.39		-.85	.40	-15.34	6.16
IPEtotal	.39	.11	.41	3.47	< .001	.17	.62
EPEtotal	.08	.08	.10	.95	.35	-.08	.23
CONCERNtotal	.07	.09	.08	.82	.42	-.10	.25
Polparents	.44	.43	.12	1.03	.31	-.41	1.30
Age	.42	.16	.28	2.70	.01	.11	.74

value ( $CI = 0.17- 0.62$ ), the population regression coefficients for both can be concluded to be positive (IPE-  $t = 3.47$ ,  $p < .001$ , Age-  $t = 2.70$ ,  $p = .01$ , see Table 8).

### General Political Engagement

Below is the multiple regression output for general political engagement.

Table 9

*Model Summary for transformed general political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.71	.51	.47	3.58

The Model Summary shows what percentage of the variance in general political engagement is explained by the model used (the collection of variables), with adjusted  $R$  squared being adjusted for sample size. The association between the criterion and explanatory variables is moderately strong (Multiple  $R = 0.71$ , see Table 9). Together, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age, and how political parents were account for 47% of the variance recorded (adjusted  $R$  squared).

Table 10

*ANOVA table for general political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model		<i>Df</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1	Regression	5	13.07	< .001
	Residual	63		
	Total	68		

The ANOVA tables shows us that the regression plane for internal and external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were departs significantly from 0- we *can* predict general political engagement from these variables. The chances of obtaining this result by chance, assuming the null hypothesis to be true is less than 0.01 ( $F= 13.1$ ) (see Table 10).

Table 11

*Coefficients table for general political engagement with internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents were*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>T</i>		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	-2.25	5.92		-.38	.71	-14.09	9.58
IPEtotal	.83	.12	.71	6.97	< .001	.59	1.07
EPEtotal	-.03	.08	-.03	-.33	.74	-.20	.14
CONCERNtotal	.03	.01	.03	.28	.78	-.16	.22
Polparents	-.27	.45	-.06	-.59	.56	-1.17	.64
Age	.28	.17	.16	1.70	.09	-.05	.61

The coefficients table shows which variables from the model were the best predictors. Internal political efficacy ( $\beta = .71$   $p < .001$ ) was the only variable significantly positively correlated with general political efficacy. Since the confidence limits for internal political efficacy did not encompass a negative value (95%  $CI = 0.59, 1.07$ ), the population regression coefficients for it can be concluded to be positive (IPE-  $t = 6.97$ ,  $p < .001$ , see Table 11).

## Discussion

Internal and external political efficacy, concern over issues, age and how political parents was a successful model for significantly predicting all types of political engagement. Internal political efficacy and age were the only significant predictors of formal and informal political efficacy, and internal political efficacy the only significant predictor of general political engagement, leading the researcher to reject the null hypothesis.

The significance of internal political efficacy agrees with the majority of the previous literature (Wiegman et al 1992; Bandura & Wood, 1989; Wollman & Stouder, 1991), however, the finding that external political efficacy was not a significant predictor of

any of the forms of political engagement disagrees with several studies that have found it to be a significant factor and indeed with the study's original hypothesis (Finkel, 1985; Pollock III, 1983). Two possible explanations for this divergence from the literature immediately present themselves: first, it could be that the measures used in this study to measure political engagement depart significantly from the measure used in the previous literature, or secondly it could be because this study focused specifically on under 30's, whereas other studies have not been so selective.

It is important to note, however, that all variables combined were only at best able to account for 35% of the total variance in political engagement, suggesting that there is still much more to be discovered in regards to political engagement.

### **Internal over external?**

The results from this study suggest that internal political efficacy is a stronger predictor of all types of engagement than external political efficacy. This throws up several suggestions surrounding classic explanations of political disengagement, namely by placing the beliefs of the individual concerning their own ability and knowledge at the forefront, and placing lesser importance on how a political system actually works.

Education is seen by many to play a vital role in this respect. Many criticise the current educational system in the UK as failing young people in regards of preparing them to act as engaged and active citizens, granting them little knowledge or skills. Focus in schools on a degree of political knowledge such as the major parties and their key policies, a basic conception of different economic systems, and of how the political system works, as well as teaching students how to think more critically and debate, and how to interpret statistics would all be positive steps that could help young people enter into the political realm with a higher sense of internal political efficacy. Linking to research previously mentioned by Franklin (2004) it could be that those that vote the first time they are able to (and are therefore more likely to continue to do so throughout their life) are given a sense of internal political efficacy by the act of voting for the first time: they've proven to themselves that they are able to act in the political realm. This could also be a powerful argument for lowering the voting age to 16.

One could suggest that the reason external political efficacy didn't appear to have much prediction ability was because it simply didn't vary all that much: maybe people are particularly happy or unhappy with the political system and therefore there wasn't any variance to help determine political engagement. However, external political efficacy actually showed the largest standard deviation of all variables, with an excessively large 5.45 (see Table 2), and scores ranged from 10 to 41 (out of a possible 50), showing a reasonably good spread of data. However, even if external political efficacy scores had been grouped as particularly low or particularly high, this would still be useful data for both the study and society as a whole.

The work by Lewis, Inthorn & Wahl-Jorgensen (2005) in '*Citizens or Consumers*' is particularly salient for these results. It is possible that, through the media and various policies implemented, many of the public have a deeply internalised sense of inadequacy regarding politics, even to the point where they may blame systemic failures on their own lack of ability. This ties in with research into the driving narrative

of Conservative ideology of this government, with a rhetoric that focuses on switching attention from societal or systemic failures to individual moral failings (Honderich, 1991).

### **Concern over issues**

Although the most recent data possible was used, it is possible that the issues selected for the 'concern' variable were not adequate enough to cover all participants: recent events such as the rise of Islamic State in the Middle East have meant that defence/foreign affairs has crept higher on the national agenda (Rogers, 2014), an issue not covered in our scale. This, however, seems unlikely to have massively distorted results, especially as the mean overall score for concern over issues was 39.04 (table 2)- a mid-range score that doesn't suggest disinterest. Perhaps most importantly, concern over issues was not found to be significantly correlated with any type of political engagement, questioning the assumption often espoused that young people simply 'don't care'. The claim that the young are simply apathetic and do not care enough to engage in politics is seriously challenged here, busting one of the most persistent of the myths Hay (2007) warns us against in blaming the electorate rather than the system or officials.

### **Age and the parent effect**

These were two variables that were not predicted to be significant predictors of any type of engagement, nor strongly correlated with any of the variables.

Age was found to be a significant predictor of both formal and informal political engagement, but not general political engagement. Although voting turnout notoriously rises with age, it was unexpected to be a significant predictor within a small age range of young people such as was the sample in this study. This suggests that turnout not only differs between age groups, but within them as well. It would be interesting to see whether political engagement scores vary roughly by the same amount within each age group or not.

Age was found not to be significantly correlated with either internal political efficacy nor concern over issues (see Table 12, Appendix C), which has bearing on another myth often perpetuated by folk psychology regarding political engagement: young people are simply too young to know how to engage or to have built up opinions on political issues. This view often leads to complacency: if true to disengagement amongst young people is not even seen as an issue. Distrusted by many for failing to explain why young voter turn-out continues to decline, the evidence of this study adds further reason to distrust it. If age has no bearing upon how capable people perceive themselves as being, nor over how much they care about political issues, then the argument that young people don't engage because they haven't made up their minds or haven't the competency to is severely challenged, especially in light of the fact that the concern over issues variable was unable to predict any type of political engagement (see above).

How political respondents perceived their parents as being was not a significant predictor of any of the 3 measures of political engagement. It is important to note that this is not necessarily a true reflection of how political the respondents parents actually *are*, only how political the respondents perceived them to be. As already discussed at length in this paper just what counts as 'political' is often hotly disputed,

and so many respondents may simply not consider some behaviours as political whereas others might. Future studies wishing to have a more accurate image of the political nature of participants' parents could potentially get the parents of participants to fill in the same political engagement scales and compare the two. However, the question still provides us with useful information, and there may not necessarily be a large difference between the actual political nature of a parent and to what extent their children perceive them to be political- again a question for future research.

Findings from Berndt (1979) show that the influence that both parents and peers have upon our choices is a complex relationship at best, but with most studies agreeing that direct parental influence appears to decline throughout our teenage years. This does not mean that years of growing up in a decidedly political (or resolutely non-political) household would not have some impact upon levels of engagement with politics in later life. The influence of the level of engagement from peer groups would be an interesting dimension to explore in regards to political engagement, particularly in light of the aforementioned work of Himmelweit (1993) & Putnam (2000) concerning social capital and voting being seen as a social activity and your vote counting as part of a unified social block. Research into the effects of peer group engagement on individual engagement could follow a similar methodology to the one prescribed above for assessing parental impact. It is also important to note, as Greenberg et al (1983) do, that the quality of relationships with parents and peers is also important to measure, something often neglected in research of such a nature: if the respondent does have a strong or healthy relationship with their peers or parents, this is quite likely to have an effect on whether they emulate their political behaviours or not.

What is intriguing is that, despite not being correlated with any of the measures of engagement, how political parents were perceived to be was moderately and significantly correlated with internal political efficacy ( $r = .43$   $p < .01$ , see Table 12), a variable that was a significant predictor of all types of engagement. Whilst causation cannot be deduced from correlation, what seems the most likely explanation for the correlation is that people accurately perceived how political their parents were, and that those with the more political parents were exposed to political knowledge and activity from an earlier age and thus grew to develop a stronger sense of internal political efficacy. Another, less likely, explanation could be that those with a strong sense of internal political efficacy, perhaps in searching for an explanation of this, *assume* that their parents are more political than average and so give them a higher score. It would be interesting in future studies to see whether phrasing the question as "compared to the general population, would you say your parents are more or less political than average?" produced significantly different results.

It is also interesting to note that how political parents were perceived to be had no significant correlation with how concerned individuals were over certain issues. The findings from this study, which must be taken cautiously, suggest that whilst how political you perceived your parents as being does impact how much you care about political issues, it may impact how competent you judge yourself to be in doing something about them.

### **Reliability and additional dimensions**

It is perhaps expected that concern over issues would have a lower internal reliability due to the nature of the questions: some individuals will be particularly worried about some issues and not others and therefore attribute quite different scores to different items. This method of analysing overall concern regarding political issues was perhaps not the optimum, and in future research it would be valuable to explore alternate means of measuring this concept. The possible reason for certain items detracting from the reliability of the concern and informal engagement scales as discussed above could be that some participants were unclear what these meant. This only serves to highlight what has already been discussed here: informal political engagement is a difficult concept to measure, something that as a field political psychology should seek to rectify.

A factor analysis was carried out on the items contained within the internal and external political efficacy scales, and then a separate one was carried out on the items within the three types of engagement scales (see Appendix D). There appeared to be 4 overall factors emerging from the internal and external efficacy scores where we would only expect two, one for each scale. All the items for internal political efficacy were grouped, as we would expect, within the first factor, however, a number of items from the external political efficacy scale were joined with them. There also emerged the apparent separation of the items on the external political scale that asked a question about politicians, the items that asked questions about political parties, and the items that asked directly about the system as a whole, each category seemingly falling into separate factors (with items related to politicians matching up more with internal political efficacy items than any other external political efficacy scales).

This is intriguing. What it suggests is that, just as political efficacy was eventually broken down into internal and external political efficacy, external efficacy may actually contain within it more than one factor being measured. The main factors that emerged were the focus on politicians, on political parties, and on the political system as whole. More exploration of these possible distinct factors is needed, but it suggests that these factors may indeed be seen by many individuals as separate, which has wide ranging impacts in how we measure engagements and understand public attitudes. The scale used in this study was an adapted version of one used by Henn et al (2005) that deliberately added in questions about individuals and the system as whole because it is important to note that the formal political system is about more than just what parties get up to. This suggests that maybe external political efficacy is not a unified concept as previous research has suggested, and instead previous research has been actually measuring attitudes towards political parties.

It is quite possible that many individuals may have deep distrust or lack of faith in public officials but still believe in the system as a whole, or vice-versa. 'Trust' in 'politics' has never been particularly high in most societies (Hay, 2007), but trust has usually been a hazy concept at best. Perhaps it is only when trust is low in all of the factors our factor analysis suggested external political efficacy consists of that people chose not to engage formally at all? Lack of faith or trust in politicians may be made up by faith in the system as a whole or vice-versa. It could also be possible that whilst external political efficacy as a whole was not seen as a significant predictor for any type of political engagement here, a relationship may emerge if external political efficacy were broken down into further dimensions.

The factor analysis of all political engagement scale items showed no clear patterns or factors emerging, with considerable cross overs in correlations between factors, again adding weight to the claims presented earlier that political engagement is a far richer, intertwined and ultimately *complicated* process than is usually recognised by politicians and academics alike.

### **Conclusion- moving forward**

It is by looking to some of the research already explored that we may begin to find practical ways of moving forward. View political efficacy as the underlying mechanism that allows us to track and predict political behaviour, and the research by the likes of Lewis et al (2005) and Hill (2006) as practical manifestations that control the levels of political efficacy that public policy can be geared towards tackling. Proportional representation, a reformed media and increased social cohesion- these are policies that, not only being good in themselves, could have real impact on political engagement and senses of both internal and external political efficacy.

A report commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Association in 2000, just before one of the worst turnouts on record in 2001, found some interesting results via qualitative methods. Many of the young people that they interviewed identified a 'lack of opportunities to engage' with politics. The Crick Report of 1999 also recommended that 'citizenship' lessons should constitute at least 5% of the curriculum in order to combat poor youth turnout (O'Toole, 2003). Young people not feeling as if they are being taught what they need to act in the political world are clearly going to be lacking in internal political efficacy, although few researchers term it as such. Again, as it's how their efficacy is perceived by them that matters, young people feeling as if they're not receiving enough information on politics should provide a strong incentive to provide more in the curriculum. There are important lessons to be learnt too, from the work done by organisations like the *League of Young Voters* and *Bite the Ballot*, with their focus on online tools to help young people decide how to vote and big campaigns to push voter registration.

Research into effective ways of measuring national trends in informal political engagement would be hugely beneficial to the field, and would perhaps help many public officials and academics alike to pay more attention to this type of engagement. There is some hope for this with the prevalence of online engagements mediums such as sharing political blogs, signing e-petitions and even the use of political hashtags on social media that could potentially be quantified. Further research into whether the simple dichotomy between internal and external political efficacy is accurate and whether external political efficacy can be broken up into yet more dimensions is also needed, research that could go some way to providing us with a deeper understanding of political behaviour.

The suggestion from this study's findings is that however broken a system is, what matters most is a person's belief that they can change it. With declining turnout most pronounced amongst young people this is perhaps the most important thing we can be teaching them: to believe in themselves and their abilities, and for us to have an educational system that equips and inspires them.

## References

Bandura, A (1997) *Self-Efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H Freeman and Company: US

Bandura, A. (2000). *Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy*. *Current directions in psychological science*, 9(3), 75-78.



- Bandura, A. (2006). *Guide for constructing self-efficacy scales*. Self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents, 5(307-337).
- Berndt, T. J. (1979). *Developmental changes in conformity to peers and parents*. *Developmental Psychology*, 15(6), 608.
- Berry, R. McDonnell, A. (2015). *Highly educated young people are less likely to vote than older people with much lower levels of attainment*. Retrieved from <http://www.democraticaudit.com/?p=2752>
- Blanchard, E. B., & Scarborough, M. E. (1972). *Locus of control, political attitudes, and voting behavior in a college-age population*. *Psychological reports*, 30(2), 529-530.
- Caprara, G. V., Vecchione, M., Capanna, C., & Mebane, M. (2009). *Perceived political self-efficacy: Theory, assessment, and applications*. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 39(6), 1002-1020.
- Craig, S. C., & Maggiotto, M. A. (1982). *Measuring political efficacy*. *Political Methodology*, 85-109.
- Electoral Commission. (2002). *Voter engagement and young people*. Retrieved from: [http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\\_data/assets/electoral\\_commission\\_pdf\\_file/0019/16093/youngpplvoting\\_6597-6188\\_E\\_N\\_S\\_W\\_.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/electoral_commission_pdf_file/0019/16093/youngpplvoting_6597-6188_E_N_S_W_.pdf)
- Finkel, S. E. (1985). *Reciprocal effects of participation and political efficacy: A panel analysis*. *American Journal of political science*, 891-913.
- Greenberg, M. T., Siegel, J. M., & Leitch, C. J. (1983). *The nature and importance of attachment relationships to parents and peers during adolescence*. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 12(5), 373-386.
- Henn, M., & Foard, N. (2012). *Young people, political participation and trust in Britain*. *Parliamentary affairs*, 65(1), 47-67.
- Henn, M., Weinstein, M., & Forrest, S. (2005). *Uninterested youth? Young people's attitudes towards party politics in Britain*. *Political studies*, 53(3), 556-578.
- Hill, D. (2006) *American Voter Turnout*. Westview Press: Cambridge
- Himmelweit, H. Humphreys, P. Jaeger, M. (1993). *How Voters Decide*. Buckingham: Open University Press
- Honderich, T. (1991). *Conservatism*. St. Ives: Clays Ltd
- Huebner, R. B., & Lipsey, M. W. (1981). *The relationship of three measures of locus of control to environment activism*. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 2(1), 45-58.
- Jackman, R. W. (1987) *Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies*. *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 81, No. 2 , pp. 405-424
- Katz, C. (2001). *On the grounds of globalization: a topography for feminist political engagement*. *Signs*, 1213-1234.

- Lassen, D. D., & Serritzlew, S. (2011). *Jurisdiction size and local democracy: evidence on internal political efficacy from large-scale municipal reform*. *American Political Science Review*, 105(2), 238-258.
- Lewis, J., Inthorn, S., & Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (2005). *Citizens or consumers*. McGraw-Hill International.
- Madsen, D. (1987). *Political self-efficacy tested*. *American Political Science Review*, 81(02), 571-581.
- McClurg, S. D. (2003). *Social networks and political participation: The role of social interaction in explaining political participation*. *Political research quarterly*, 56(4), 449-464.
- Morrell, M. E. (2003). *Survey and experimental evidence for a reliable and valid measure of internal political efficacy*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 589-602.
- Morrell, M. E. (2005). *Deliberation, democratic decision-making and internal political efficacy*. *Political Behavior*, 27(1), 49-69.
- Niemi, R. G., Craig, S. C., & Mattei, F. (1991). *Measuring internal political efficacy in the 1988 National Election Study*. *The American Political Science Review*, 1407-1413.
- O'Toole, T., Lister, M., Marsh, D., Jones, S., & McDonagh, A. (2003). *Tuning out or left out? Participation and non-participation among young people*. *Contemporary politics*, 9(1), 45-61.
- Park, A. (2000) 'The Generation Game', *British Social Attitudes*, Vol.17, Sage, London
- Pedersen, R. T. (2012). *The game frame and political efficacy: Beyond the spiral of cynicism*. *European Journal of Communication*, 27(3), 225-240.
- Pinkleton, B. E., Austin, E. W., & Fortman, K. K. (1998). *Relationships of media use and political disaffection to political efficacy and voting behavior*. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 42(1), 34-49.
- Pollock III, P. H. (1983). *The participatory consequences of internal and external political efficacy: A research note*. *The Western Political Quarterly*, 400-409.
- Rainsford, E. (2013). *What makes young people politically active? Comparing activists in political parties youth factions, youth councils and at demonstrations*.
- Rogers, J (2014). Report on British attitudes to defence, security and the armed forces. Retrieved from <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2014/10/25/report-british-attitudes-defence-security-and-armed-forces/>
- Rogers, S. (2011). Major UK demonstrations and protests listed: which one was biggest? Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/mar/28/demonstrations-protests-uk-list>

Shingles, R. D. (1981). *Black consciousness and political participation: The missing link*. *American Political Science Review*, 75(01), 76-91.

Solt, F. (2008). *Economic inequality and democratic political engagement*. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1), 48-60.

Twenge, J. M., Zhang, L., & Im, C. (2004). *It's beyond my control: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of increasing externality in locus of control, 1960-2002*. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 8(3), 308-319.

Uhlener, C. J., Cain, B. E., & Kiewiet, D. R. (1989). *Political participation of ethnic minorities in the 1980s*. *Political Behavior*, 11(3), 195-231.

Verba, S., Burns, N., & Schlozman, K. L. (1997). *Knowing and caring about politics: Gender and political engagement*. *The Journal of Politics*, 59(04), 1051-1072.

White, C. Bruce, S. Ritchie, J. (2000). *Political interest and engagement among young people*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/political-interest-and-engagement-among-young-people>

Willson, C. (2003). *Why Do People Vote?*.

Wollman, N., & Stouder, R. (1991). *Believed efficacy and political activity: A test of the specificity hypothesis*. *The Journal of social psychology*, 131(4), 557-566.

Wood, R., & Bandura, A. (1989). *Impact of conceptions of ability on self-regulatory mechanisms and complex decision making*. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 56(3), 407.

Zurcher, L., & Monts, J. K. (1972). *Political efficacy, political trust, and anti-pornography crusading: A research note*. *Sociology & Social Research*.

(2014) Ethical Consumer Boycotts List. Retrieved from: <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/boycotts/boycottlist.aspx>