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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

Faculty of Social and Human Sciences

Social Statistics

**Exploring Political Non-Participation; Conceptualising, Distinguishing and
Explaining Political Apathy**

by

Emma Thompson

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCE

Social Statistics

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**EXPLORING POLITICAL NON-PARTICIPATION; CONCEPTUALISING,
DISTINGUISHING AND EXPLAINING POLITICAL APATHY**

Emma Louise Thompson

Political Apathy is customary in the language of the political scientist, though the use of the term has too often wrongly been conflated with issues relating more broadly to disengagement. This study aims to establish the significance of disentangling apathy from alternative terms by providing a thorough reconceptualisation of the notion and subsequently demonstrates sound empirical evidence of it as a distinct form of political non-behaviour. It begins by problematising non-participation with a defence of politics and civic engagement, which is reinforced through the review of existing literature showing the health of UK democracy to be far from the optimum described by key thinkers. The central purpose of the piece sees the multilevel formation of the concept of engagement, of which apathy is an important component. Quite what apathy indeed constitutes forms not only a crucial part of the conceptualisation, but also of its application to data. This study uses the entire Hansard Society's Audit of Political Engagement from 2003-2012 to test the validity of the concept, using Latent Class Analysis, amongst others, as its primary method of assessment. It finds, in line with the conceptualisation, that there are four types of citizen; apathetic, latent, critical and engaged. The apathetic individuals, of central focus, are characterised by a lack of confidence and indifference which distinguishes them from their interested, yet disappointed, disengaged counterparts.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I,[please print name]

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

EXPLORING POLITICAL NON-PARTICIPATION; CONCEPTUALISING, DISTINGUISHING AND EXPLAINING POLITICAL APATHY

I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
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Date:

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Definitions and Abbreviations

A	Social Class A (see 5.2.2 for definition)
AIC	Akaike Information Criterion
APE	Audit of Political Engagement
B	Social Class B (see 5.2.2 for definition)
BIC	Bayesian Information Criterion
BME	Black, Minority and Ethnic
BVR	Bivariate Residual
C1	Social Class C1 (see 5.2.2 for definition)
C2	Social Class C2 (see 5.2.2 for definition)
D	Social Class D (see 5.2.2 for definition)
E	Social Class E (see 5.2.2 for definition)
EC	Expert Citizen
EM	Everyday Maker
ENSID	Empathetic non self-interested decision maker
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LCA	Latent Class Analysis
MP	Member of Parliament
n	Sample Size
NI	National Insurance
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education

PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SES	Socio-economic Status
UK	United Kingdom

Chapter 1: Introduction

The political science literature of the UK, amongst others, has been overrun in recent decades with investigations into the changing levels and nature of civic engagement. This has been sparked, in a large part, to the seeming rejection of the most basic and fundamental democratic right – the vote. Coupled, most notably, with declining membership of other UK civic strongholds, the Political Party and the Trade Union, the citizenry has increasingly come to be labelled, in academia as well as popular media, apathetic and disengaged. Several studies and media commentary have attempted to capture the extent of the problem, exploring over time how citizens engagement with democratic politics has altered. They have found on the whole that participation in general has seen a decline. Subsequently many theories have been advanced to explain the phenomenon of non-participation. These explanations offer a combination of cultural theories, which suggest why citizens no longer demand politics in the same way, alongside supply side arguments which focus more closely on the provision and coverage of politics. What they in effect attempt to do is prove why the citizen is disengaged or ‘apathetic’, which they do indeed do to a reasonable level.

What they also do is fail to adequately consider that apathy, or disinterest is considerably different to being disengaged or disillusioned. To be either one of the latter implies that you must have been enlightened and engaged at some point previously an assumption not necessarily always the case. To amalgamate terms such as these under the vast umbrella of non-participation risks the possibility of failing to understand a potentially significant proportion of the citizen body. One might question why this matters, for you cannot further alienate somebody who is unaware or does not care. This is indeed true, but by failing to acknowledge apathy and the reasons that underpin it risks the potential for it to manifest into further sections of the citizenry. The prospect of this might thus be a further undermining of democracy, leaving it open to all manner of challenge.

The purpose of this thesis then is to unpick the notion of non-participation, to explore the differences between ‘disengagement’ and ‘apathy’ which are often too readily conflated. It provides a more appropriate conceptualisation of apathy than has been previously seen. The theory not only hypothesises the position of the apathetic but also those differentially active counterparts that make up the rest of the population. Empirical study forms the basis of the test of the theory and seeks to establish that we have so far been missing a trick; that apathy is distinct, prevalent and enduring. It then moves onto not only prove the existence of the apathetic but distinguish how they are very different from any other group in a way that explains the motivations of each. Ultimately the apathetic citizen is found to be, at best, lacking in

confidence and expressing indifference towards politics and, at worst, dismissively negative without the relevant experience, knowledge or inclination.

Of course no study would merit worth without first establishing the value of its premise. This is the purpose to which Chapter 2: The Importance of Politics and the Issue of Non-Participation is tasked. It explores a number of positions which address the concern about how much non-participation is viable or even how much is desirable. They vary from seeing a certain amount of non-participation as necessary to ensure a stable democratic balance, to non-participation being seen as the perpetuation of political inequality, an inequality that transcends further into the social status of individuals. The chapter considers four key positions; the liberal conception of democracy espoused through the work of Almond and Verba in *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (1963); the civic republican tradition honed amongst others by Crick in his *In Defence of Politics* (1982). This is followed up neatly by the third position, supplied in the form of Flinders' *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the 21st Century* (2012). The final position is provided by a number of academics in their assertions that political participation must be fair and equal, beyond just the opportunity of participation in order for social equality to prevail.

What the chapter aims to do is set out the extent to which politics, and in turn participation, is valued. As such it provides a commentary as to the range of competing conditions upon which non-participation is and is not seen to be problematic. This commentary provides not only the rationale for the study, but also acts as one of the bases for reflection in the concluding chapters. It allows us to assess whether or not the nature and extent of the apathy we discover represents a situation which is out of balance to the degree that it is seen to be problematic.

The third chapter; Chapter 3: Exploring Participation and Non-Participation in part begins this reflective process by highlighting the current state of civic engagement. This sheds a new perspective upon some of the positions in chapter 2 which were written a number of years ago. The first section of the chapter consults the largely empirical work of some notable academics in order to show some of the trends over time and exactly how politics should be perceived in the present day. Stoker's (2006) *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work* contributes in part to this précis and it is his work that I offer an update to by replicating some of the findings he presents using a newer release of the European Social Survey data.

In addition to painting a picture of participation the chapter also explores the many different theories proposed to explain the scenario of a declining civic culture. The various arguments are explicated under the structure of two broad, competing, though inextricably linked themes. These encompass cultural theories which examine reasons behind the inclination of citizens to engage with politics. This is very much focussed, and to coin Hay's (2007) and Norris' (2011)

(amongst others) demarcation, on the demand side explanations. What has changed in society to affect the way people demand politics? The counter point of this is the supply side explanation which looks at the way politics is provided to citizens via a combination of politicians and the media. On the demand side we explore the social capital thesis, the generational and modernisation accounts, the notion of a consumerist culture, in addition to a micro level understanding of some personal, individual factors which might impact upon citizens' desire for politics. On the converse side, from the supply angle, the network governance, performance and process angles are employed. In addition to this we look not only at how politics is *actually* supplied but also how it is perceived to be supplied judging by account from politicians and the media.

The final section of the chapter looks at what the supply and demand arguments say about apathy. Although they do not say much that is specific about apathy the tenets of these theories say something quite implicit. From each of the account we can derive what they perceive to be the default position of humans – active or apathetic. The chapter ultimately paves the way for more concrete study and reconceptualisation of apathy, which is the subject of Chapter 4:

Conceptualising Political Apathy.

Chapter 4 seeks to reconceptualise the notion of political apathy, amongst a broader conceptualisation of political activity. It consults with two different types of literature. The first provides guidance to the budding concept builder about the ways in which one should structure and develop their concept. It considers first Sartori's *Ladder of Abstraction*, thinking about what the different levels (or rungs) should contain and represent within the framework of a concept. Goertz provides the second account, which serves as a critical update to the work of Sartori. He too proposes a three-level, multidimensional approach to concept formation and encourages the reader to think of a concept as a continuous rather than dichotomous continuum between two positions; a positive and a negative 'pole'. He also suggests an alternative to Sartori's assumed position regarding the necessary and sufficient condition "AND", instead introducing the family resemblance condition "OR" which avoids the problems associated with conceptual stretching. Collectively their work provides a set of important considerations for developing my own conceptualisation.

The conceptual framework would however be nothing without substance, and a review of the existing work as to what participation and non-participation can constitute and how participatory behaviours can be categorised offers support in this regard. It first looks at the ways in which participation and non-participation have been defined previously, before moving onto see the sophisticated ways in which political behaviours have been typified. It includes most notably a review of the work of, amongst others, Ekman and Amnå (2012) and Kaase and

Marsh, (1979) in their typologies of participation. Unlike many authors, in each of their classifications they do indeed identify 'inactive' people to greater or lesser extents. Kaase and Marsh quite simply identify the *inactives* whereas Ekman and Amnå's work provides the best typology to date in distinguishing between the 'apolitical' and the 'antipolitical'. However, they lump the two groups of people under the heading 'disengaged' which I argue is wrong.

The final review in this section looks at the work of DeLuca (1995) who provides the only account that directly talks about apathy. DeLuca's (1995) *Two Faces of Political Apathy* draws upon Lukes's (1974) three dimensions of power in conceiving of two types of apathy; the first for which the individual is responsible, the second for which they are not. His matrix that explains this also delineates between those who are either free or unfree to break away from their apathy. His work provides an interesting distinction but is inherently flawed.

The chapter thus goes on to explore how conceptually different apathy is from disengagement; in the same way that non-participation should not necessarily imply apathy, it should also not merely imply disengagement. My marrying of the two literatures reviewed in this chapter serves to re-conceptualise apathy in a way that looks to better distinguish and say more about the apathetic group. I provide a thorough understanding of the broad structure of political activity, identifying four different groups of people on the continuum between those who are active and those who are inactive. It explores the behaviours, attitudes and attributes that are characteristic of the *apathetic* group, the *latent* group, the *critical* group, and lastly the *engaged* group.

The existence, prevalence and descriptions of each form the hypotheses for the study that will be tested through the use of data and methods outlined in the following chapter and presented in chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 5: Data and Methods outlines the measures by which the study seeks to test the hypotheses laid out in the conceptualisation of the previous chapter. It details the suitability of the Hansard Society's ten year Audit of Political Engagement data in achieving these ends. The Audit provides a wealth of interesting responses to the check on the health of the UK democracy, and appropriate variables from within these are selected and detailed in this chapter. These encompass a number of response and explanatory variables. The response variables give a range of acts of political participation that are deliberately selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which you can be active. They combine formal political acts with more informal and easily accessible options to ensure no respondents interests are neglected. The explanatory variables are split between those which reflect the attitudes of the target population and those that consider instead their attributes. For the most part the ten years are entirely comparable, with one notable exception, the final data set. Each of the years is considered individually and collectively for the first nine years of data, but the tenth year is

always reflected upon separately. Changes to the final year of the Audit's questionnaire provide some vastly different insights. These are not incompatible with the earlier data, in fact the new range of alternative variables very much complements the work of the audit and allows for deeper investigation into the reasons for differential levels of political engagement. In addition to further explanatory variables the final data set also provides not only response variables which examine the political activity that has been undertaken by the sample population, but also those acts which they might be willing to engage with in the future should they feel especially motivated.

The chapter then goes on to outline, justify and explain the methods for analysis. These include the use of Latent Class Analysis and some exploratory data analysis techniques. Latent Class Analysis provides an approach that balances statistical goodness of fit with a theory led approach that allows us to test whether or not the idea of a four class, four citizen model is appropriately robust. It uses the relationships between the responses to the activity, or manifest variables to provide a series of probabilities from which it is possible to allocate individuals to one of the latent classes. The results of this Latent Class Analysis form the basis of the sixth chapter. Having used this method to identify the presence of the four groups, exploratory data analysis techniques are then employed on those models to distinguish the attitudes and attributes that are characteristic of each of the group. This forms the basis for the seventh chapter.

Chapter 6: Distinguishing Political Apathy presents the results of the Latent Class Analysis detailed in the previous chapter. It initially explores the value of defining the apathetic citizen from all the others by just the use of response variables before judging the inclusion of one explanatory variable essential in securing the distinctions. The chapter provides three finalised models; one from the merging of the first nine audits of data; the second and third from the two different types of response variables found within the final audit.

The results demonstrate clear support for the four class latent model and thus the conceptualisation; there is evidence that there are apathetic, latent, critical and engaged groups of people. The results demonstrate how the apathetic group, if they do act, prefer to vote, discuss politics and political news with other people or sign petitions, over any other. When they do act they do not act in significant proportions, except for voting in a general election. These results are largely reflective of the latent individual who also prefers the same kinds of political activity. They engage, however, at a higher rate. The critical citizen is found to be much more active than either of the first two, though again more so in those three popular acts. The profile of the critical citizen is one that is active but extremely non-partisan. The engaged individuals on the other hand are not; they are active in all forms of political participation sampled. Though they engage less with party politics than all other modes of engagement, they

still do so at a rate which would judge them partisan individuals, content to work within the system.

The conceptualisation is found to hold true beyond just the responses of *undertaken* activity to those which also examine *prospective* political activity. With the latter model similar findings are replicated.

Chapter 7: Explaining Political Apathy uses the results from the previous chapter and explores further. The probabilities of being in any one of the latent classes provides the option to allocate individual respondents to a class on the basis of the highest probability. The results of this chapter demonstrate the cross tabulation of the assignment to latent class with the range of explanatory variables outlined in the data and methods chapter which help to explain the position of each of the four groups. The three finalised models depicted in the previous chapter provide three possible allocations to latent class and thus the description of each of the classes reflects a similar three-fold approach.

Often the most common response of the apathetic citizen, if not negative towards politics, is indecisive and indifferent. They demonstrate a combination of the apathy we might expect and a lack of confidence on occasions. Equally, beyond apathy they display disregard and a lack of commitment. They are the most distinctly different group. The latent citizen is, on the whole, second most dissatisfied, also displaying symptoms of uncertainty and a lack of real interest in the goings on of politics. The critical individuals conversely are much more positive, though critically so and in particular reflect a pro-active approach to any dissatisfaction they harbour. The engaged citizen is also markedly different to the others in being extremely positive, willing to commit time and energy to a system they endorse.

The chapter finds the same trends emerge from each of the three allocations to class. However, the three allocations and the patterns with which they respond to explanatory variables within these allow us to see, particularly with reference to the last data set, exactly how the groups shift when they consider future activity rather than that which has already been undertaken. In the tenth year of data we see that those individuals who are allocated to the latent class based upon that activity that they have completed disperse into some of the other groups. There is a small but not insignificant proportion that report they would want to be less involved, but many more of them do want to increase their activity. This is reflected in the growth of the critical and engaged groups when it comes to allocation to class by prospective activity. However, this does reveal something telling about the apathetic group – they do not change; they are apathetic and they plan to stay that way, unless of course we get to the root of the problem.

The final chapter, Chapter 8: Discussions and Conclusions, provides a series of reflections *from* and implications *of* the research. It considers in turn each of the theoretical positions explored in chapters 2, 3 and 4 in light of the empirical findings. As the second chapter conveys four different theories of the importance of participation and non-participation I reflect upon how the authors of those pieces would perceive the findings and where this leaves the sentiment of their work. I then go onto discuss the themes explored in the third chapter, commenting where the results of this study fit in with the existing literature on the state of non-participation in the UK. The second part of this section then assesses how well the explanations for the typology developed correspond with what we currently understand explains political non-participation. Arguably the conceptualisation of apathy is the most important contribution this research offers to the field, alongside the use of interesting methodology, and so it is important to reflect on the fourth chapter in particular. It does this, not only by considering the success of the concept by reviewing how it compares to others' work, but by highlighting the new information we have gleaned. I do this by presenting a very clear profile of each of the latent classes identified in a way that provides significant contribution of the *Tertiary Level* of the structural framework. The overall framework is also redrawn in light of the results chapters.

As with every study one must also reflect upon the validity of the method in seeking to address the purpose of the thesis. I conclude that although, as with most methods, it is not always perfect and additional methodology may well provide useful in the future, the use in particular of Latent Class Analysis has been instrumental in this work. The concept at hand is intrinsically difficult to measure and an approach that draws patterns on the condition of an unobserved latent variable is still the best I believe to use. This section of the chapter neatly sums up the necessary reflections.

The following section identifies instead what some of the implications of the thesis might be. It considers three key areas; firstly how well the findings can travel beyond the UK and exactly how they sit with international evidence. I judge the results to be applicable beyond the UK setting, particularly in comparable states such as those democracies closely resembling ours - in Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia. However, I concede that some of the international context is such that there is little comparability particularly in areas where democracy is lacking or currently underdeveloped. Secondly I engage in a discussion of how this research fits in with wider debates in political science and how it sits within contemporary society. In particular I consider the role of political science in secondary citizenship education, asserting that political science and Higher Education institutions should be leading the way in this respect, providing outreach for students and continuing professional development for teachers as citizenship education suffers from a dearth of qualified and interested staff. Beyond

this, as a discipline I believe we have a responsibility to more proactively coordinate research with colleagues in educational research.

The final part of this chapter and indeed the thesis thus offers suggestions for how I would like to develop this line of research further, but also the development of my profile as a researcher. Given my interest in this field and subsequent educational concern I would very much like to focus my research efforts in the area I have suggested we ought to have more collaboration. Beyond this I would be interested in pursuing two other areas; namely developing further, with improved understanding from this work, the conceptualisation of apathy and secondly to research how populist movements have been so successful, particularly through their use of social media, in acting as a response to the disengagement myself and others have discussed.

Chapter 2: The Importance of Politics and the Issue of Non-Participation

Any study which seeks to examine the incidence and extent of a concept as specific as apathy requires a detailed justification of why it is relevant and thus worthy of investigation. The most basic and observable expression of political apathy is through non-participation in and subsequent rejection of the political culture. Political apathy also constitutes one component of non-participation so any understanding of apathy would be incomplete without first identifying why this is of utmost importance.

The exact, complex nature of apathy and why it is especially significant is the subject of later, conceptual chapters and subsequent empirical work. For now we will take a step back and fully establish the extent to which non-participation in the context of a democracy such as the UK is seen to be problematic in part by highlighting the importance of politics. This chapter aims to do this by exploring exactly how one might view politics and citizens' role within it, in a manner that demonstrates support not only for the polity itself but for ideal of democracy as well. It consults four key positions to do this. Firstly it addresses the liberal understanding of a civic culture most notably espoused by Almond and Verba in their seminal work *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (1963). Despite the various criticisms levelled at this work, ranging from the theoretical to the empirical, it often remains the first conceptual port of call for any political scientist seeking to understand the behaviour of a nation and its citizens; and this study is no different. Their work embraces the ideal 'culture' they describe, largely based on the model of 1960s America, whereby a certain amount of political non-participation is deemed appropriate and harmonious. The second area of consideration consults that most closely associated with the republican citizenship tradition advocated by Crick, amongst others, in his *In Defence of Politics* (1982). It is a document which takes a much less liberal slant in calling for greater confidence in politics and thus arguing that the citizen has a responsibility to engage not only to avoid a failure of politics and the freedoms it secures us, but also a failure of the citizens of themselves. Flinders' *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the 21st Century* (2012) provides the third position of interest. His argument flows seamlessly from that which Crick started, as he asserts the issues that Crick raised are more pertinent now than they were originally (Flinders, 2010, p309). Flinders puts forward a defence of politics which centres on the emergence of the marketization of political interaction which posits the citizen as a consumer with unrealistic demands. These demands betray a lack of understanding of what democratic politics is, how well it already works and what the less satisfactory alternatives might be; the product of consumerisation which could serve to

undermine the system of democracy. He therefore calls for a clearer definition of “baseline civic virtues” (Flinders, 2012, p87). The final area of interest is one which considers the problem of unequal participation, proposed by a number of commentators. Whilst some theories value a certain degree of non-participation, so long as it does not reach a level at which there is no longer the necessary balance to secure the optimum civic culture or adequately defend and protect politics, this body of literature does not. It highlights the fact where non-participation occurs it does not happen equally across society. It echoes some of the sentiment of Flinders’ work in exemplifying how those who do participate speak only for themselves. Unless participation is equal political equality will never be fully achieved.

It is to each of these perspectives that we now turn in attempting to establish whether politics, and engagement with it, really matters.

2.1 A Failed Civic Culture?

Almond and Verba (1963) introduce the notion of a ‘political culture’ and employ the term for specific reasons. The ‘political’ is used in order to differentiate “between political and non-political attitudes and developmental patterns” in that it refers “...to the specifically political orientations – attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system” (p13). They talk about a ‘culture’ because it allows them to utilise conceptual frameworks, from an anthropological, sociological or psychological perspective. Ultimately, they make use exclusively of the psychological approach to culture in that they examine only the “psychological orientation toward social objects” (p14). The study of the political culture is therefore one which focuses upon the psychological political orientations of a population. They define such political orientations as a combination of knowledge of, feelings toward, and judgements and opinions of the political system (p15).

They use this framework to describe three scenarios of political culture, each based upon the citizen orientation toward their polity (Stoker 2011). The first, the *Parochial Political Culture*, very much founded upon the example of African tribal societies and autonomous local communities whereby political roles are associated more closely with religious and social standing. They describe an environment where the ordinary person, the *parochial*, expects little or nothing from the political system, where also, “...the specialized agencies [minimal] of central government might hardly touch the consciousness of townsmen, villagers, and tribesmen” (Almond & Verba, 1963, p18)

The second culture they describe is the *Subject Political Culture* in which they characterise the French royalist and to some extent the 1960s Briton. Here, unlike in the parochial culture, there

exists some citizen orientations, be them positive or negative, but only really ever related to the outputs of the political system and rarely, if at all, to the inputs and their role within influencing said outputs (p19). The authors imagine a culture that reflects passivity and a lack of participation; citizens may watch and pass judgement, but do not necessarily act on this basis.

The third and final culture advanced is that of the opposite to both the parochial and the subject; the *Participant Political Culture*. It is a culture whereby the members of society are not only concerned with (i.e. oriented towards) the outputs of the political system but also the inputs. These orientations may again take on either a favourable or unfavourable stance, but citizens do take on a more keen role; “They tend to be oriented toward an “activist” role of the self in the polity, though their feelings and evaluations of such a role may vary from acceptance to rejection” (p19).

Now as these ‘cultures’ reflect orientations towards politics, these classifications, taken separately, are not designed to wholly reflect an entire political culture or even necessarily an individual. Instead, “The ‘citizen’ is a particular mix of participant, subject and parochial orientations, and the civic culture is a particular mix of citizens, subjects and parochials” (p20). As such, Almond and Verba describe entirely possible scenarios which encompass a mix of cultures; the *Parochial-Subject Culture*, the *Subject-Participant Culture* and the *Parochial-Participant Culture*. Ultimately though, they envisage the ideal culture as one that they call *The Civic Culture: A Mixed Political Culture*. Here the reality is far from the prescriptive descriptions of how citizens “ought” to act, rationally (and not emotionally) within a democracy that they say is prevalent in numerous other texts. In this situation the civic culture is instead an “allegiant”, participant one where political orientations are not only a combination of input as well as output but those inputs are concerned also and specifically with the structures and processes of the political system (p31). Crucially, the civic culture is one in which subject and parochial orientations can live entirely harmoniously and congruently with those participant tendencies. They say that the participant characteristics of an individual are mediated, and counter-balanced by those which are subject and parochial in nature. The example they highlight shows that although the participant attitudes towards the political system, having individuals engage highly within it are essential at points, so too are more general and non-political attitudes like trust in others and social involvement (p32). They essentially conclude by stating: “The maintenance of these more traditional attitudes *and their fusion* with the participant orientations lead to a balanced political culture in which political activity, involvement, and rationality exist but are balanced by passivity, traditionality, and commitment to parochial values” (p32).

Responses from Britain and specifically America (with America arguably much more participant in nature) demonstrated later on in the tome that there existed such a balanced approach which allowed a positive citizenship to emerge (Stoker, 2011).

For Almond and Verba then some degree of non-participation is not seen as inherently problematic, quite the opposite in fact. Non-participation as the result of some subject and parochial orientations acts to a certain extent as a check on, or balance to, any overly exuberant participant tendencies making for the more balanced civic society that they depict and their empiricism corroborates.

However, does the World still exist in the same way and does, therefore, their conceptualisation of the civic culture still hold relevance in a modern context? Stoker (2011, p15) suggests that it is a state that is all but gone, replaced instead perhaps with the “undermining of political citizenship: displaying more alienated parochials, dissatisfied subjects and frustrated participants”, vastly different to the ideal Almond and Verba describe. Stoker qualifies this statement though in highlighting how the process of globalisation or at the very least, regionalisation, has brought about an increase in the extent to which parochials dominate society at the cost of the participant rather than subject culture. Whilst the civic culture does not necessarily endure, the conceptual framework does.

Though their work recognises a certain value to non-participation their ideal culture is one that is inherently participant in nature and any balance which tips toward a rise in subject and parochial orientations should be seen as problematic. The balance of parochial, subject and participant cultures and subsequent levels of non-participation present in the early 1960s was not seen as problematic. However, the rise of said non-participation, has, as we shall see in detail in later chapters, increased at a rate and form which has prompted a defence of politics and a call for equality of participation; the non-participation of today no longer fits the model of the balanced civic culture that Almond and Verba described. Non-participation is at a level which would be deemed problematic by these authors.

2.2 In Defence of Politics

Crick's *In Defence of Politics* originally written in 1962 sought to defend politics from a range of notions; ideology (specifically totalitarianism), democracy, nationalism, technology and ‘false friends’ whom he outlines as the *non-political conservative*, the *a-political liberal* and the *anti-political socialist*. It is a document that first and foremost outlines these perceived threats to politics and details exactly how and why they should be mediated against. It is a piece of work though that goes beyond the structure of defending politics merely as an entity which is to be

preferred over the anarchic or totalitarian alternatives. The theme which additionally runs through the book is that politics transcends more than that; it is an essential, natural, civilising human experience. The person who is able to live without politics is “either acting the beast or aping the god” (p25). It is a statement that is made explicitly in parts of his work, but also nuanced in some of the defences he describes.

I will consider first then some of the defences Crick proposes before addressing how the value of politics can be perceived beyond its practical existence. In doing so I hope to highlight the various reasons for and importance of consenting to, and engaging with, the political realm. It is prudent to begin with his definition of what politics is, for it is what he does not stipulate within it that are crucial in explaining one particular defence; a defence of politics against democracy.

Crick defines politics very simply as “the activity by which different interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share in power in proportion to their importance to the welfare and the survival of the whole community...a political system is that type of government where politics proves successful in ensuring reasonable stability and order” (Crick, 1982, p21).

Though one might assume such a definition colloquially implies democracy, the politics that Crick seeks to provide a defence of is not specifically one that relates to democratic politics; politics, he suggests, is bigger than democracy or any principle of government or ideology alone. Politics and a political order is instead the mark of freedom. It is the acceptance and recognition that government functions best in light of shared differences and competing interests that depicts politics as the free actions of free men (p18). A free state is not necessarily a democratic one nor can every rightful democracy legitimately claim to be free.

Crick does not deny that democracy is important, but argues that it is to be appreciated as a political principle and not as a principle of government. Democracy should be an element of government but not it's whole. A defence against democracy might initially appear counter-intuitive to many, but the basis for such a claim lies in his argument that without democracy there would be oligarchy or despotism, but with democracy alone “the result is anarchy – the opportunity of demagogues to become despots” (p71). Democracy as an intellectual rather than political principle is arguably dangerous according to Crick. To extend the notion that all individuals are equal beyond the political realm (and perhaps others), he says, can be devastating to the preservation of order. In a state where everybody believes they have been equally afforded the appropriate “skill and judgement” and have both the right and duty to act upon that it is easy to see how the anarchy he predicts may come to light (p71). Education he argues must therefore not reflect the blanketing of democratic principles and processes but rather that people should learn that democracy and authority go hand-in-hand. Learning about

the differentially allocated rewards and interests is a vital part of education and it should therefore make aware limitations as “Political democracy does not imply intellectual democracy; intellectual democracy can make political democracy all but unworkable” (p72) Democracy is the element and not the whole.

Where the defence against democracy, before it is qualified, may seem odd, a defence of politics against ideology, specifically totalitarianism, seems intuitively more reasonable. Crick notes how the philosophical foundations of totalitarianism is rooted in the sociology of knowledge both of which he argues underestimates the clashes and complexities of community (p46-47). It is the competing claims and different ideologies present within any state, “delightful” in existence which politics comes about as a response to. Crick argues no one “unified social theory”, least of all totalitarianism in its intolerance of diversity, needs be created before a political order may be justified (p47). Furthermore, and he talks with reference to the oppression and the attempted nullifying of individuals within Nazi concentration camps, the totalitarian ideology cannot, nor should not, prevail “while there is the slightest spark of absolute personality alive in its actual or potential opponents” (p53). Totalitarianism he argues can only triumph when social identity has dwindled which is impossible, for individuals are never entirely dependent of society. A strong government is instead one where strong opposition is prevalent; a strong government is a free government and not a totalitarian one (p71). Therefore, spirit, engagement and opposition are what makes politics and ought to not only be defended but perpetuated.

Whilst Crick is also critical of other ideologies in his defence of politics against “false friends”, as previously defined, he is not as reproachful of these as totalitarianism, understandably. He claims that whilst these alternative ideologies in many ways aim to lessen opposition they do not ultimately want to snuff it out, unlike totalitarianism (p139).

So, Crick seeks to protect opposition and the delightful nature of difference but also mediate against the dangerous polar opposites of politics and civilisation; anarchy and totalitarianism. He does it though not just for the preservation of the political system and what it *does* but also because of what politics *is* and why it should be not only defended but praised. He describes politics as an *activity* and a civilising one (p25 & p140). This is a view upheld not only by Crick. Plamenatz, (1973) echoes the sentiment in claiming participation has an encouraging and educative function whereas Faber, (2011, p311) highlights the positive, informative purpose of engaging in politics beyond that of just the ballot box. Politics does not just exist, it must instead be “brought to life”. Crick compares the act of politics to the other most essential of all human acts, likening politics with sexuality. Whilst the latter is necessarily more widespread, the act of both is vital for the preservation and continuation of community. It is however greater than this,

for it is more than just a means to an end; an enjoyable experience even. Politics, like sexuality must be carried on, as part of the human condition therefore. To abandon either is to do “oneself unnatural injury” and misogamy and celibacy are akin to anarchy and totalitarianism (Crick, 1982, p 26). Crick sums up his point in saying that “Politics and love are the only forms of constraint possible between free people” (p26). He concludes then that politics may be seen as an enjoyable, moral activity which serves to help in most situations and protect against the ideology he discussed, though ultimately “...it does not claim to settle every problem or to make every sad heart glad” (p141).

However, whilst Crick’s work necessarily implies participation with politics he does not condemn apathy per se; “Politics does not need to defend itself against the anarchy and irresponsibility of the artist and the lover; it does not need even to claim that it is necessary for everyone to be involved in and to support politics. (It can withstand a lot of apathy; indeed when the normally apathetic person suddenly becomes greatly interested in political questions it is often a sign of danger.)” (p152).

The question in all of this is how much apathy can politics really withstand? How much non-participation is reasonable? Crick is ambiguous about the extent to which involvement beyond a defence of politics is required. However there must surely come a point where apathy or non-participation more broadly becomes a threat to politics. At what point must we develop a defence of politics against apathy and what will this defence constitute? The work of Flinders, to which we now turn, arguably gives us part of that in providing a defence of politics against the market and calling for greater definition of civic values. He perceives the current level of apathy to have reached a point that is no longer healthy (Flinders, 2010, p312).

2.3 Defence Against the Market

Flinders’ work goes further than Crick does by talking more specifically of the defence of *democratic politics*, rather than providing a defence of politics against the ideal. Flinders acknowledges the unpopularity of his all too accurate stance, but does so in an endeavour to restore confidence in politics and reconnect the citizen with their politicians because, he argues, politics “on the whole...delivers” (Flinders, 2010, p314).

Flinders’ *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the Twenty-First Century* (2012a) rejuvenates the arguments Crick put forward, claiming that they are ever-present issues in a modern context. As such his work deliberately mirrors that of Crick’s *In Defence of Politics* updating the seven chapters accordingly. *Defending Politics* thus consists of the nature of political rule and a praise of politics in addition to chapters which provide a defence of politics

against itself, the market, denial (and in earlier iterations of his model, depoliticization), crises and the media. Though the structure is specific, the theme that runs throughout is that which is explicated in the third chapter; the defence of politics against the market. It follows that citizens now expect more than is realistic of politics due to the high standards they have come to expect from the consumerist private sector they engage with and its passage into the political realm. It is a standard that is perpetuated by the media, the talk of crises and to some extent also politicians in their reaction. Their conceding to raising the bar of supply of politics rather than managing the expectations of those that they govern and failing to defend the difficulties and rigour of their own profession serves to undermine politics further.

Flinders first suggests that a defence of politics against itself is crucial. The crux of this argument is that there needs to be a realistic management of expectations and an abandonment of the “bad faith” model of politics (Flinders 2012). The idea that there can be one common notion of “the people” and the “public interest” is one that needs to be rejected and a more accurate understanding that the beauty of politics is actually in differing opinions should be developed (Flinders, 2010, p315). Part of this involves the rejection of specific interests as much as it is about satisfying demands. Politicians must make clear the realities of government in showing how governing capacities do not always practically match up to the theoretical ideal of democracy (p315). They have so far failed in doing this, which has sought to only further increase the apathy and disengagement with political affairs. Flinders considers David Miliband’s idea of managing an “expectations gap”, which he suggests consists of three alternatives; reducing the demand of citizens, increasing the supply of politics or seeking a successful combination of the two (p316). Both options are very difficult; we have been living in an unpredictable economic climate where resources are limited which makes increasing the supply of politics and everything it can promise to offer almost impossible. Equally challenging is trying to reduce the demand of citizens – a terribly sensitive and unpopular tactic which has the potential to lose votes and thus control of power. Subsequently politicians have not chosen to adopt the most difficult alternative and have instead opted to increase supply which mirrors market principles (p316).

The issue surrounding market principles in politics is what forms the central tenet of Flinders’ point. He claims that the adoption of a political “market” has damaged public confidence in politics in five different ways. These include failing to recognise (or report) the basic “collective essence of democratic politics”, conveying a limited understanding of what motivates humans (i.e. political self-interest), advocating a thin model of democracy, “hollowing out our capacity to make moral arguments and judgements” and by encouraging too high expectations of what politics can offer (Flinders, 2012a, p65).

Democracy, Flinders argues, "...does not mean the reign of the limitless desire of individuals, and a focus on material possessions and individual affluence arguably grates against the logic of democratic governance" (p68). Such a focus on the wants of individuals has left us in a situation where people think first (if not only) about themselves and what political realities they want to realise rather thinking for the greater good of society. The result being that we have a situation of, and to coin an 'economic sounding' term, "*un*-diminishing demands" (p71) which serves to create a set of unrealistic expectations, the break-down of society and severe disenchantment or even apathy with politics (p73-5). To treat individuals as consumers rather than democratic citizens "risks inculcating a set of values which are anathema to democratic politics" (p77).

This is a state which is not just fuelled by the greediness of citizens but perpetuated by other factors within the political environment. The delegation of responsibility, depoliticisation, serves not to show that politics is being done in the best possible way but actually to undermine the work and abilities of politicians themselves. "Political outsourcing" is not the key to improving confidence in politics, quite the opposite (Flinders, 2010, p319). Politicians are not alone in their undoing, for the media, Flinders argues, is also entirely complicit. Though we have the advent of 24-hour media and the possibilities this creates for debate and thus a sense of positivity in politics the reality is something more negative and quite unhealthy (p320). An impression of political incompetence is one that is further powered through the rhetoric of crisis; political scandals or issues are escalated to the language of crises. The notorious expenses scandal of 2009 was interpreted as a crisis of political honesty and portrayed in no small part by the media through both their content and method in a way that validated this perception.

Flinders' work is not intended to be merely an explanation of why public disengagement is the way that it is (the subject of the next chapter), nor necessarily a condemnation of the consumerist citizen, the mendacious media or the protectively passive politician, it is quite more than that. It is a call for a more open, honest and realistic discussion about politics, which ultimately seeks to defend it. Flinders' motives are very closely aligned with those of Crick in attempting to remind people of the value of what we have over that which it mediates against. Acknowledging the unpopularity of his point Flinders is bold enough to suggest that citizens have become complacent in understanding the true value of democratic politics as it stands, implying that perhaps those who lived through the World Wars are more keenly aware of the cost of the alternative. If Flinders is correct it is crucial that this discussion must happen sooner rather than later as with the inevitable passing of time the trend with which (and not wishing to echo too readily the work of Putnam (2000) democratic satisfaction is replaced with unawareness and complacency looks set to continue. Flinders echoes Crick's work again by identifying not only the defence of politics as a system but also the defence of politics as a virtue. He too describes politics as, at its root, a civilizing activity (Flinders, 2012a, p86) and

thus there is a need to define what we expect of citizens within it. He suggests we need to ask how we want individuals to engage with the political culture, the kinds of human nature we want to nurture and the World we want to create for ourselves and our generations yet to come (p87).

Though, similar to Crick, Flinders is equivocal about exactly what the outcome of this conversation might be what is clear is that we do not need the replication and maintenance of the status quo. The marketization and creation of the consumer citizen, disaffected by and apathetic towards politics in a way that serves to undermine and even threaten politics cannot persist. Confidence in the system and a realignment of the governed with their governors is essential and the only way this can be assured is, as Crick notes, through consent. Such consent can only occur in the re-evaluation of political expectations and standards that sees value in a reasonably good system which ought not be rallied against. Participation, is thus important. Its counter, non-participation, is, to some degree, problematic.

2.4 Political Equality

The previous three sections of this chapter have outlined, at a reasonably 'high' level, why politics must be defended and a certain balance of engagement with the political culture ought to be maintained. Reasons for this range from the protection of the political system (and in most instances refer to the democratic system specifically) to the engagement of politics being seen as a civilising experience essential to human life and community. The final section of this chapter explores instead the idea that full participation, not just a vague understanding of an appropriate balance of participation and non-participation, is crucial. This is a justification for participation that is based on an individualistic level, and the argument is one that states participation must be equal in order for those different and competing interests and opinions to be adequately represented and fully consented to.

Numerous studies, including the work from Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, in *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics* (1995) comment on how rarely equal participation is achieved. Their thorough study considers the distribution of resources that are necessary for participation, namely time, money and civic skills (fostered through various different kinds of social and religious institutions) and, as a consequence, who is more or less likely to participate. They also investigate the extent to which any inequality in participation genuinely affects the representation of those individuals who do not engage.

Their data shows very clearly that the active population does not 'match' the profile of the general public and that there is a clear relationship between participation and Socio Economic

Status (SES) that could make this a problematic finding (p213). Several studies including Verba et al's have consistently found that participation, in any form or level is highest amongst those people with higher SES and lowest amongst those people with lower SES. Additionally, having high socioeconomic status has a positive cumulative effect on participation, because people have the resources to further improve their participation (though they also have less time the higher their SES). This follows that higher SES allows them to enter the type of employment and social circles where they will have greater opportunity to act politically and better opportunities to hone the skills necessary for participation. Verba and co also talk of the differences across race, ethnicity and gender which may produce inequalities. They note though that this is not as keen an issue as that of SES.

It may be argued that such differentiation in circumstance would render those who are increasingly wealthy and better educated less able, or indeed less *inclined*, to represent the interests of those less wealthy and informed citizens who do not engage to the same, or even any, degree. Arguably it is probably these people who are most in need of adequate representation.

Of course these apparent disparities may not necessarily imply that the active individuals do not represent the issues central to the inactive population as well as they would do their own. However, Verba and colleagues argue that these characteristic disparities *do* matter if they bring about participatory distortion, which ultimately they agree they do. Even though it is entirely possible, theoretically, for the active public to represent the general public in spite of their differences, participatory distortion is still likely to abound. Furthermore, as Flinders' work suggested previously, people are increasingly more concerned with their own desires than those of the community it seems likely that people who do not engage will not have their views heard.

Even if we do concede that the active population can and does represent the interests of those who choose to opt out of politics it is also the case that "stories about basic human needs sound different to policy makers when told by those who are in need" (p223). With some situations it is only the person who is affected that can adequately portray the depth of concern. Success of having your viewpoint considered is dependent upon you being able and choosing to express it. They, amongst others unsurprisingly find that this is not always the case; how can you understand my path if you do not walk it in my shoes? Nobody can accurately represent the interests of somebody else for they are not so keenly felt.

Participation is therefore important for all, but unfortunately as Verba and colleagues note, those who make the most noise are those who are heard. They conclude therefore, that participatory democracy in its current formulation does not adequately produce what democracy ought:

“We stated at the outset that meaningful democratic participation requires that the voices of citizens in politics be clear loud and equal...Our analysis of voluntary activity in American politics suggests that the public’s voice is often loud, sometimes clear, but rarely equal” (p509)

They, and others too, end on an increasingly dismal note claiming that if the inequalities of wealth and education are to persist, so too will the cumulative value these have upon the inequality of participation (p532-3). Those who are currently very engaged are likely to become more engaged and those who are not look set to be more disengaged, perhaps even apathetic.

This chapter has sought to provide a series of overviews of different positions relating to the importance of politics and the necessary engagement of citizens within it. It has mapped out the extent to which different theories posit non-participation as problematic. Arguably the strength of any social, political theory is when its foundations are rooted in truth. If a theory does not come to light in reality it is contested. These positions at the very least all show the participant culture to be preferable and non-participation to be troubling. Although, the extent to which they agree it is a concern varies or is unclear. However, these theories will be reflected upon in two ways in the concluding chapter. It will take consideration of the existing literature, but also of the empirical work from this study to reveal how well each theory holds true in light of a twenty-first century context and investigation into the incidence and explanations for political apathy.

The following chapter consults the existing literature and explores what it says about political non-participation and specifically (or not) apathy. The chapter is divided in two – the first section depicting the current picture of engagement, or lack of, followed by a variety of different competing and complementary explanations of why we see what we do.

Chapter 3: Exploring the Explanations of Participation and Non-Participation

There is a vast body of literature relating to political non-participation and it is one that has been growing since the mid-twentieth century, out of concern for the seemingly ever increasing rejection of democratic means. There are competing understandings within the field of research as to exactly what politics, participation, non-participation, disengagement and apathy even constitute. As such the literature comprises a series of often contradictory reports documenting the varied interpretations of the health of democracy. These initial commentaries often act as a precursor to explaining the phenomenon we perceive; a model which is largely followed in this work also.

The first part of this chapter explores some of this existing work to gauge a sense of the current state of political non-participation and how we have arrived at that over a period of time. The second part examines the theories that have been developed as an explanatory response to this. There are numerous hypotheses and in order to achieve a full understanding of the breadth of the body of literature they have been broken down into two broad themes however inextricably linked some of the nuances of the arguments might be. The first reflects how it might be something specific to the individual or agent that reflects how people interact, or to use Hay's (Hay 2007) demarcation, how they *demand* politics. The second assesses some of the more structural responses and how they may prevent political involvement or how there is something inherent about the *supply* of politics that turns people off.

What the existing literature does is to give a report of why participation has changed in the way that it has and why certain people participate more than others. What it fails to do, however, is to adequately consider the issue of apathy; it does not reflect on how or why it is possible that some people are completely unmotivated politically. In the absence of detailed examination of apathy per se, the third and final section of this chapter offers an interpretation of each of the accounts and what they implicitly say about the concept; is it the apathetic or the engaged citizen who represents the human default?

Ultimately the chapter seeks to highlight that apathy is not discussed at any length within the existing literature, or where it is referred to it is a term bound up in the broader discussion surrounding the issue of anti-politics. This effectively implies you must know you dislike politics if you are to be considered apathetic and this is simply inadequate; we are missing something crucial if we wholly accept this premise. The chapter paves the way for more detailed analysis of apathetic specific work in providing further justification of the need for a

comprehensive conceptualisation of the term and subsequent study to realise it. This is the subject of Chapter 4 and those which succeed it.

3.1 The State of Political Non-participation

As stated out the outset, the literature relating to political non-participation is vast and its findings and explanations complex and often contradictory. There is, however, the commonly held notion upon which most notable studies are agreed; that by the measurement of conventional, formal politics, civic participation is in decline. Falls in the levels of electoral turnout and party and union membership, amongst other measures, are symptomatic of such a decline, in nearly all advanced industrialised democratic nations. This is not to say that all participation or political interest has declined necessarily, for equally numerous reports portray the evolution of participation through increased engagement in less formal means, such as signing petitions or boycotting products. Consequently, there is much debate as to the extent of a participatory decline, and as the last chapter sought to show, even to what point this ‘decline’ should be seen as a problem.

As outlined in chapter 2 Almond and Verba’s work is largely seen to be the most significant forerunner to the wave of literature that has followed and taken off in the last twenty or so years. Parry, Moyser, and Day's (1992) seminal work *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain* looked specifically and in detail at the British example. They found using data collected in 1984 and 1985 that Britain followed a similar pattern to several other democracies including West Germany, Austria and Japan in that voting at election was the most prolific of activities (p42). Although at the time they were writing America had witnessed a significant decline in voter turnout it was still the case that voting was the most popular activity.

They highlight however that the democratic strength is not found alone in electoral participation. Alongside voting there is party campaigning, group activities, contacting various relevant political outlets and protesting included within their operational definition of activity. The figures they present show reasonably small percentages of people doing these activities with the exception of voting, signing a petition and some group and contacting activities (Table 3.1 p44). However, the authors are satisfied that they are not out of line with similar democratic states, they are more active than American citizens and on par with their European counterparts (p45).

They also found that the concentration of activity was not particularly high, with, on the basis of 23 items of political participation the median result being one which showed the average citizen having only engaged with approximately four acts of participation (p47-49). When voting of

any kind and signing petitions was taken out of the equation the median fell to only one activity. Clearly at the time of survey the average citizen engaged in only one activity beyond voting and signing petitions.

Stoker also looks at a similarly broad and thus inclusive operationalization of the definition of politics in his book *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work* (2006). Stoker reports for the UK General Elections that between the high of 1950 and the low of 2001 there was a decline in electoral turnout of 24.5 percentage points, from 83.9% to 59.4% also noting that the steepest part of this decline has been since the election of 1992 where there was still a relative high of 77.7% (18.3 percentage points of the original 24.5 occurring in 9 years) (p33). Also, significantly, 12% of this decline was in the four years from 1997 to 2001 (Phelps, 2004, p238). Similar reports are provided for the levels of trade union and political party membership; party membership experiencing highs of 3 million members party-wide in the 1960s, dwindling to approximately 800,000 in the 1990s (Stoker, 2006: p34) reducing to 300,000 in the twenty-first century (O'Toole, Lister, Marsh, Jones, & McDonagh, 2003, p45).

Stoker's analysis was not limited simply to the UK context but also looked at the decline of civic engagement across Europe, seeing how they engaged in a number of different ways. He, like Parry and colleagues, found the same overwhelming popularity of signing a petition particularly amongst Western European countries and the Nordics (2006, p90-91). This was not quite the case in Eastern Europe however. The data that these findings were produced from was collected in 2002 from the European Social Survey, approximately seventeen or eighteen years after Parry et al's study. Even amongst UK citizens the act of signing a petition (the UK second only to Sweden) had fallen dramatically in that time from the 63.3% take up in the mid-1980s down to 40%. However, contacting an elected official had increased, and so too had boycotting products for political reasons, quite considerably.

The following tables offer an update to these findings using the European Social Survey of 2008 and incorporate a greater number of countries sampled.

Table 3-1 Political Participation in Europe 2008 (Source European Social Survey 2008)

Activity	Per Cent of Involvement												
	Belgium	Bulgaria	Switzerland	Cyprus	Czech Republic	Germany	Denmark	Estonia	Spain	Finland			
Contacted politician or government official, last 12 months	15.3	4.8	11.7	19.3	14.9	16.9	18.7	11.1	10.1	21.1			
Worked in political party of action group, last 12 months	4.3	3.6	5.1	7.8	2.5	3.7	4.5	3.0	3.1	4.1			
Worked in another organisation or association, last 12 months	2.1	1.7	13.1	7.1	8.7	25.4	24.7	5.3	10.2	34.1			
Wom or displayed campaign badge/sticker, last 12 months	7.0	2.5	6.8	7.6	3.7	4.9	10.6	5.3	4.8	15.3			
Signed petition, last 12 months	27.5	6.2	38.3	5.6	14.8	31.2	33.9	8.0	17.6	32.3			
Taken part in lawful public demonstration, last 12 months	7.4	3.6	7.5	2.3	4.2	8.0	9.3	2.1	15.9	2.5			
Boycotted certain products, last 12 months	11.1	3.1	25.8	5.8	7.8	28.7	21.5	5.6	8.0	30.3			
Member of political party	4.8	6.5	6.1	12.7	4.2	3.1	9.0	5.4	1.3	6.7			
Activity	Per Cent of Involvement												
	France	UK	Greece	Croatia	Hungary	Ireland	Israel	Latvia	Netherlands	Norway			
Contacted politician or government official, last 12 months	15.5	17.6	10.0	6.2	8.6	22.7	7.9	12.1	14.2	21.5			
Worked in political party of action group, last 12 months	3.8	2.4	3.9	4.8	0.9	4.3	4.8	1.2	3.2	6.1			
Worked in another organisation or association, last 12 months	15.0	6.9	3.9	8.5	5.2	15.6	4.6	3.0	24.7	27.9			
Wom or displayed campaign badge/sticker, last 12 months	10.6	5.7	3.1	5.6	0.8	8.6	5.4	4.4	4.7	26.0			
Signed petition, last 12 months	33.1	37.3	4.8	22.2	7.2	23.0	10.8	5.6	23.4	37.8			
Taken part in lawful public demonstration, last 12 months	14.6	3.9	5.9	7.5	2.2	9.2	6.8	6.9	3.3	7.2			
Boycotted certain products, last 12 months	27.7	24.4	15.2	16.1	6.5	13.2	6.0	5.2	9.6	22.5			
Member of political party	2.2	2.9	7.5	10.6	0.7	4.7	4.7	1.2	5.0	7.2			
Activity	Per Cent of Involvement												
	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Russian Federation	Sweden	Slovenia	Slovakia	Turkey	Ukraine	Total			
Contacted politician or government official, last 12 months	7.3	6.4	10.8	6.3	14.8	11.4	8.9	6.0	10.6	12.3			
Worked in political party of action group, last 12 months	2.7	1.4	5.4	3.1	4.4	3.3	2.1	2.8	3.0	3.6			
Worked in another organisation or association, last 12 months	6.2	3.0	2.7	3.8	27.0	1.6	6.3	1.9	2.1	11.0			
Wom or displayed campaign badge/sticker, last 12 months	4.5	2.7	3.4	2.6	18.4	3.7	2.6	3.2	3.9	6.3			
Signed petition, last 12 months	7.7	5.0	3.0	5.9	47.2	8.7	18.5	6.0	4.3	18.1			
Taken part in lawful public demonstration, last 12 months	1.6	3.7	3.7	5.3	6.4	1.6	1.8	4.4	4.5	5.8			
Boycotted certain products, last 12 months	4.8	3.1	2.9	4.1	37.3	5.1	6.8	7.1	0.7	12.8			
Member of political party	1.1	2.6	5.8	3.6	6.7	4.7	2.3	4.3	4.1	4.6			

In Table 3-1 we can see a most comprehensive account of the picture of participation, excluding voting, across Europe, according to the European Social Survey's operational definition. Whilst all the information is no doubt interesting I will draw out only the most relevant findings. The picture of the UK has worsened in the space of the six years between the data collection points with all but the percentage of people being a member of a political party seeing a decline in engagement. The overall picture is no different. The average for Europe has seen a similar decrease in activity, with only being a member of a political party increasing.

Whiteley, (2012) is able to update the picture with reference to electoral turnout showing how the UK general election of 2010 saw a further increase from 2005. The turnout improved from 61.2% in 2005 up to 65.1% in 2010 (p37). Although this is an improvement on the figures Stoker presented it is still a far cry from the electoral turnout of 82.5% reported in the work of Parry et al. Whiteley also considers voting by a number of different socio-demographic characteristics in 2005 in order to demonstrate some of the inequality of participation across a range of demographics (p41) There is very clearly a bias by age when it comes to voting, a relationship between ethnicity and voting, with white British individuals more inclined to vote than any 'other' ethnicity. Property owners, salarieds and people within the East and South of the country are also more likely to vote.

These are findings which were additionally found within Verba, Scholzman and Brady's (1995) study into the state and future of participatory and political equality, which extended beyond just that of voting.

Any review of the participatory literature can very quickly turn into a repetition or duplication of similar findings as a number of academics have looked into this with varying different angles. Probably the most significant message to take from this literature is that participation in almost every understanding of the notion has declined during the latter half of the twenty-first century and appears to continue to do so in the twenty-first. It seems Stoker was indeed correct in stating that the world Almond and Verba found in the 1960s is "all but gone". We may have a situation where politics is at threat and certainly one where inequality of participation is all too prevalent.

3.2 Explanations of Political Non-participation

The extent to which political non-participation is prevalent and an inherent problem will always be one of great debate, as too will what causes it. As such, a number of theories have been provided to offer explanation for the rise in seemingly less civically connected, more cynical and openly critical citizens.

As outlined from the outset, the various theories are broadly split into two explanatory categories; the demand of politics by actors and the supply of politics to those actors. The demand-side explanations focus on how individuals choose, either consciously or perhaps even subconsciously, how they want to interact with or demand politics. A demand side argument therefore encompasses both societal and choice based accounts. Conversely, supply-side explanations concentrate on the provision of politics, which include structural accounts and assessments of the political system. Is there something intrinsic about the way that politics is supplied which either turns people off or prevents engagement with it?

This section will first demonstrate the ways in which the concepts on either side are connected, before elaborating on their substance. It will explore, on the demand-side, the social capital thesis, focussing on the work of Putnam, followed by the generational account advanced by Franklin. It will also include an overview of the theory of modernisation resulting in the creation of an ever critical citizenry discussed most notably by Inglehart and Norris. It also considers that which was touched upon in the second chapter; Flinders' notion of the consumerist citizen culture. Finally it looks at the myriad of personal factors which impact upon particular types of people or the characteristics they hold and how that affects their desire to engage.

Looking from the alternative, supply perspective where the overarching theme is one that concerns the issue of political trust, the section will reflect upon the impact of network governance, covered, in part, by Bang, followed by an assessment of the performance argument considered more recently by Norris. In addition to this, the ideas of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse will be taken into account, which in a similar vein to both the network governance literature and the performance argument, considers the impact of lobbyists and issue groups on the democratic functioning of governments and the consequent incentives to participate. It looks also at the way that politics is not only supplied but how it is perceived to be supplied by rhetoric from the politicians themselves but also, crucially the media. It is therefore an argument which is heavily based on the idea that the process of politics must be found to be satisfactory.

3.2.1 The Interaction of Supply and Demand

Demand side explanations centre primarily on the demand that exists for political goods – the enthusiasm that is shown for the mechanisms of politics and the uptake of opportunities to participate. It is largely assumed within theories that reflect this thinking that the provision of these political goods has remained constant (Hay, 2007, p40). If the supply of politics has not changed, but the engagement with it has declined, it seems reasonable to assume that there has been a change elsewhere. Examinations of society and the choices that people make are the result of such assumption.

A change in the social capital of society is explored most notably by Putnam, in a bid to explain the downturn in participation and civic-mindedness that we have witnessed over the last few decades. Franklin also, seeks to use the extension of the franchise to explain the participatory change within society. On a similar note, a number of theorists, including Inglehart and Norris, have interpreted the change in society as being linked to the progression from agrarian, to industrial to post-industrial society. The alteration to the means of production has sought to transform the outlook of citizens. It is such adjustments to society that has in part affected the way in which people go about making choices. All these changes to society affect the choice process in a way that is detrimental to political participation; declining social capital makes people engage less both socially and consequently politically it is argued; generations of eighteen year olds feel too socially polarised to vote and; the increase of a modern, and even post-modern lifestyle leaves citizens in industrialised democracies increasingly critical, challenging and demanding.

Assessing how society may have become less conducive to its members choice to be politically active forms a fundamental part of demand-based theory.

Supply side explanations on the contrary focus on the supply of political goods – the way in which politics is conducted and made available to citizens. Supply based accounts challenge the thought that nothing has changed in the provision of political goods, as the demand side would have us believe. These explanations offer instead reasoning based on the inadequacies of the political system itself and not its consumers. They do not dispute that societies have changed, but also posit that any explanation that only includes societal change, to the exclusion of political change, is deficient.

The political system is a factor of supply side theory and in a similar way to choice being affected by the changes in society; the negative alterations to the political system may affect structure. Where societal change may affect the decisions of citizens, the change of the political system could affect citizens' opportunities to even make a choice or feel able to. For example, if the performance of government was so poor (Norris, 2011), or the processes so questionable (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002), it deterred or prevented people from entering the political arena, then this is an issue of structural exclusion.

Anyone with a basic knowledge of economics would instantly note the paradox of using 'supply' and 'demand' as terms distinct from one another for they are after all indistinguishable; you simply cannot have supply without demand, nor demand without supply. However, they are useful both in making it clear which driver came first. There may be instances where the supply of politics has come about as a direct result of the change in the demand of politics, but also I believe more crucially, where the level of demand for politics has been affected by the way that

politics is supplied. The ensuing discussion attempts to draw out both explicitly and implicitly the distinctions between the two but also the ways in which they interact in providing explanation for the trends that we see.

3.2.2 The Politics of “Demand”

3.2.2.1 Social Capital

Social capital refers to the norms, networks of association and levels of trust we experience within society. Voluntary associations and social networks are the vehicles for social trust; they act as forums for deliberation and serve to inculcate democratic habits and build up a sense of reciprocity and trust. It is through such regular interaction where ‘the social’ meets ‘the political’ that Putnam sees social trust translated into political trust. He found that those who were part of a community organisation were found to be far more likely to participate politically, and to vote (p339). Without social capital then, political capital may falter. If bonds of social trust and a sense of reciprocity do not exist we are increasingly tempted to ‘free-ride’ on the political efforts of others, shying away from political participation ourselves, choosing instead to benefit (or not) from the outcome of others’ participation. Such non-participation and a lack of social and civic engagement, for Putnam are seen as particularly worrying trends in need of remedying.

Putnam uses this rationale to explain the civic downturn experienced in America in the latter half of the twentieth century; he blames the breakdown of associations and networks and subsequent decline in social capital for the changes that have been witnessed. Whereas at one point societies were characterised by the tight social bonds necessary as a result of the war years, the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century societies experiences no such cohesion. Whilst Putnam (2000) would in no way advocate that we return to a time of war like that experienced during the First and Second World Wars, he frames today as a period in which we need to search for the “moral equivalent of war” (p279).

Putnam (2000) blames several factors for the decline in social capital that he talks about; time and monetary pressures; the issue of suburbanisation, commuter culture and increasing sprawl; the improvements in electronic entertainment; in particular, the television; and lastly, and most importantly, generational change (p283-4). He also considers the impact of the breakdown of the traditional family unit and says it may well have important associated consequences, but does not see it as being directly linked to a reduction in social capital in a way that affects civic disengagement (p279).

Time and monetary pressures relate to the fact that during the last century there became ever-increasing demands on our time, and desires to improve family income. This proves a problem Putnam claims, particularly for parents of families who both have jobs or careers, because it limits the amount of free time that they might otherwise have spent on social and community involvement. This is a problem that has developed during this time period specifically, crucially because of the increased level of women's education and subsequent employability. Whereas once women would have been the homemakers "with enough free time to organise civic activity, plan dinner parties" this is no longer the case (p203). Although not the greatest cause of the decline in social capital, Putnam still asserts that this is an important consideration, estimating that it may account for ten per cent of the total decline (p283). Whether the development of women should be seen as a negative in any way is unclear however, and requires a much more detailed investigation surrounding the role an individual's sex plays upon their engagement with politics and society.

Irrespective of location mobility, sprawl and the consequent commuter culture are seen to be problematic for social capital for a number of reasons. Americans have always been a largely mobile nation, with individuals failing to put down roots and establish community ties, with communities that experience high mobility, suffering from a lack of civic culture. This high level of mobility, Putnam says, is not a new phenomenon and therefore cannot adequately explain the change America has experienced within the last fifty years (p205). Whilst mobility in general isn't a new enough problem to offer an explanation, suburbanisation, or 'urban sprawl' is. The increasing sprawl of people out of cities results in a range of problems. Firstly, it means that there are large numbers of homogenous people living together but in distinct locations to other groups of people (p210). This not only decreases social cohesion between different groups of people but also remarkably fails to bring about any civic benefits within such societies (p210). Not only does suburbanisation cause a lack of proximity to other people, it also causes a lack of proximity to services and employment, resulting in greater reliance upon the automobile (p212). Such is the impact of having to commute that Putnam suggests the average American spends more time per day in the car than they do cooking or the time a parent spends with their children (p212). He estimates that "...each additional ten minutes in daily commuting time cuts involvement in community affairs by 10 per cent – fewer public meetings attended, fewer committees chaired, fewer petitions signed, fewer church services attended, less volunteering and so on" (p213). Although an important factor in reducing social capital, again Putnam claims that this factor is only attributable to a small extent (p215). It should also be subject to investigation as to whether the individuals spending that extra time commuting perceive it a burden on their civic engagement.

The argument about technology relates to the isolation it causes. Quite simply, electronic entertainment, particularly the use of the television, creates a culture of people cut off from social associations. People are more content spending time on their own or within their families instead of socialising with friends or engaging in community activity. Putnam is careful to note that we cannot be sure that without the invention of television that the state of affairs would be any better, but suggests that it is certainly complicit (p246).

The final, most compelling reason according to Putnam, for the breakdown of social capital, is the generational change. He claims there has been a change in social habit and value formation across the generations (p275). Putnam describes it as the process by which the ‘grim reaper’ replaces generations that were much more civic-minded and embedded within community life than their children and grand-children.

It is for a combination of these reasons then that Putnam claims the networks of association and bonds of reciprocity have broken down; the result being that people are less civic-minded.

Putnam’s work is convincing in many ways, and a number of his arguments ring true in the modern and ever evolving world that we live in. However, it has been heavily criticised, partly for its founding assumptions, but also for its lack of comparability to countries other than America (Hay, 2007). Even Putnam himself concedes in later work that the wind of change in terms of social capital depicted in *Bowling Alone* has not happened with the same gusto in all modern democracies (Putnam 2004). Critics also question the extent to which social capital necessarily translates into political capital. To some extent it is also very one-dimensional in that it does only consider a very narrow, demand-based analysis. As we shall see later there are much better offerings that provide more comprehensive explanation. However, for now, it is important to continue to explore this section of the literature, moving on to a related explanation – the generational account.

3.2.2.2 The Generational Argument

Franklin's (2004) work is somewhat different, but in essence relies on the founding principles of the social capital thesis. His explanation for the decline in activity is based on the idea that by lowering the age at which people can vote to 18 in most industrialised democracies, we have effectively excluded a generation of voters. Franklin, in line with Putnam’s reasoning, argues that eighteen year olds are the most atomised in society – they lack the social capital which makes them bond with the rest of society, and as such do not feel connected enough to vote. His argument is based upon the disputed understanding that you learn the habit of participating by doing just that. He says: “The transition between unengaged and established appears to happen during the first three elections that people are exposed to as voting-age adults” (Franklin, 2004,

p204). If they do not learn the habit of voting within that time, it is unlikely that they will ever vote, he argues, as people become set in their ways. He estimates that this extension of the franchise to these young individuals has cost just under 3% of turnout so far, and will eventually cost at least 4% by the time that the previous cohorts who did not experience voting at eighteen have left the electorate (p211). Franklin even contends that any other age between fifteen and twenty-five would be more appropriate for enfranchisement than eighteen. As it would be impossible to limit the franchise to people aged between eighteen and twenty-five having already extended it to them, he suggests offering it to teenagers; the necessity to be well informed, enough to vote, would then become part of their formal education (p213).

Franklin's notion is supported in theory by Green and Shachar's (2003) work on habit formation and political behaviour which follows a similar analysis of voter turnout. They look specifically at evidence from Presidential elections, but also find support, using experimental and non-experimental methods, for the notion that the act of voting prompts participation at the next election (p568).

It is certainly an extremely interesting and innovative point of view, which as Hay (2007) notes has been meticulously researched and developed. However, there are several questions that remain unanswered by his theory. Firstly, with its foundations rooted in social capital theory it is subject to the same level of concern as Putnam's work is. Secondly, the idea that habit formation comes from engaging with a particular habit is currently disputed, it may well come from a range of contributing factors also. Franklin himself notes himself the constraint to his argument concerning the causality he implies; "Science cannot confirm theories; it can only fail to prove them wrong" (Franklin, 2004, p211). Although he contends that nothing has sought to prove this theory wrong, the work of David Easton does dispute this, as he claims quite the opposite; that you do not learn how to do something simply by doing it (Easton, 1953). Third, and lastly of all, even if Franklin is entirely correct, his analysis only relates specifically to voting. It is always dangerous to extrapolate; his theory will never go far enough in explaining non-activity because it is only one plausible explanation to one form of participatory decline.

3.2.2.3 The Modernisation Argument; The growth of the "Critical Citizen"

Inglehart's work centres on the concept of societal modernisation and human development linked to the change from agrarian society, to industrial and later post-industrial society. It is this change which has resulted in "...the growth of 'post-materialist' and 'self-expressionist' values in post-industrial societies, including rising levels of tolerance and trust, direct forms of political activism, and demands for personal and political freedoms...the cultural conditions

under which democratic institutions are most likely to spread and flourish” (Norris, 2011, p119). The circumstances that have been brought about as a consequence of such modernisation (and post-modernisation) are ones in which the principles that democracy is based upon, are valued strongly, combined with a subsequent and pervasive decline in deference to authority (Inglehart 1999, p237). A focus on individual autonomy and the pursuit of individual subjective well-being are common among these types of society (p238). In all of his work Inglehart describes this type of society as being one that encourages a more challenging approach. He describes a far from apathetic citizenry but one which is ‘elite challenging’ as opposed to being ‘elite directed’ (Inglehart 1977; 1999). The sources of this change he sees as being a combination of technological innovation, changes in occupational structure, increases in personal incomes, the expansion of education, development of mass communications and distinctive cohort experiences (Inglehart, 1977, p6-11).

Such a view encapsulates the idea that the non-participation we see in formal measures is of less consequence for the notion of democracy than the crisis of democracy literature might have us believe, a thought which is echoed by Norris (1999; 2011) in her work ‘critical citizens’ or so-called ‘dissatisfied democrats’. Her edited volume depicts the view that the trends that we see may indeed be a cause for concern, but no proof of crisis. Her work espouses the sentiment expressed previously that participation is evolving rather than declining; the criticism we see as a result of such evolution does not imply disengagement or apathy per se, and as such is a rather positive alternative to the deference of the pre-war years, as opposed to being a cause for undue concern. This is particularly true in light of the finding of all contributors, that democracy is still seen as the best form of government.

Klingemann’s chapter reiterates this point, claiming instead that people are simply discontented with the functioning of their democratic regimes and as such reform is required (Klingemann 1999). Furthermore, Dalton expresses that democracies need to adapt to the participatory change, by evolving in a way that encourages citizens to take control and make an impact on their own lives (Dalton 1999, p77). He supports Norris’ conclusion with the caveat that as long as there are ‘reservoirs’ of diffuse support (which he additionally argues there are within most industrialised democracies still) then the ideal of democracy can weather the storm of low levels of specific support (p59). By this he means that so long as there is support for democracy as a form of government it can survive periods where there is less support for political institutions and actors, which are common in all democratic regimes – the ‘trendless fluctuations’ that Norris routinely comments upon.

Newton’s contribution within this volume continues in a similar vein, but serves to undermine the principles of Putnam’s argument in a much more direct way. His empirical findings lead him

to conclude that social and political trust are not perhaps related in the way that Putnam uses to underpin his argument. He comments that “...social capital is not necessarily translated into political capital and political capital seems not to be dependent on social capital”; that political trust or distrust is not a product of social or economic trust or distrust (Newton 1999, p182-6 quote p185-6). This leads Norris to conclude that it would be better to focus on instigating an improvement in political interest as opposed to trust (1999, p261). Newton also finds that, unsurprisingly the ‘winners’ in society are more trusting than the ‘losers’ and this may affect the satisfaction that they express (Newton, 1999, p180-1) a point that Norris continues to emphasise in her updated tome (Norris, 2011). This follows the idea that the people who are better off in terms of income, education and general life-satisfaction show higher levels of trust than those who are not so well off in these respects. The terms ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ also refer to the people whose vote has translated, or conversely has not, into their preferred party being in government. The longer the ‘losers’ are disappointed by these results, the greater their trust and satisfaction are lowered.

3.2.2.4 The Consumerist Culture

Flinders’ (2012a) defence of politics against the market has already been outlined in reasonable detail within chapter 2 which sought to illustrate the importance of politics and thus engagement with said politics. It is however not only an argument which highlights why politics is important it also forms an explanation of the changing ‘demand’ of citizens for politics. It is perhaps unfortunate that an argument which criticises the marketization of politics sits so neatly within the demand and supply economic paradigm. Nevertheless, Flinders’ work offers one very interesting part of these cultural explanations.

Without wishing to repeat that which has already been stated this is a position which details how the notion of market citizenship has pervaded the world of democratic citizenship. Citizens have come to see themselves not as a citizen within a wider community but as consumers of public services (p72) and as such look only for what they can get and not what they can contribute (p74).

In an era where there is an increased focus on obtaining feedback and adhering to monitoring and evaluation principles not only within the private sector but increasingly within the public sector; the NHS, universities etc. it seems likely that Flinders does indeed have a valid point. When we are encouraged to give feedback, be it good or bad, and irrespective of whether there is the capacity to better that experience we do give it, and firmly commit to the role of the consumer. It implies that the person who experiences something in some way knows better than

anyone else how it should work. It stands to reason then, that we would reflect upon our experiences of politics in the same way for after all politics does afford the provision of a number of factors in our life and experiences we go through.

This market culture does affect the way that we approach politics. Unfortunately for politics it does not always happen by the means of a complaints procedure that remains within the confidence of the parties involved. The complaints procedure is one that is played out in the media in a very public forum. In many ways citizens may think they are looking out for the good of everyone and not just themselves but what they fail to realise is that politics is much more vulnerable than any corporation. A refund here and there would not hurt a large company but conceding to wrong doing within the public and political sector is communicated more widely and talk of scandal and crises begins.

However, this is not to say that politics does not play its own part in the discontent of the consumerist citizen; provision may indeed be below par regardless of the approach we now generally take. It is to this that we will turn to following a micro-level look at factors that influence citizens' demand of politics.

3.2.2.5 The Myriad of “The Personal” – The Micro Factors

The idea of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ within society introduces the concept of particularised demand, as an alternative to more broad, macro accounts of societal change. There have also been countless studies which have sought to examine factors on the micro level and any review of the literature would be incomplete without paying heed to them. They explore explanatory options which include, but are not exclusive to the impact of personal resources, otherwise known as Socio Economic Status (SES) which includes factors like education, financial constraints, familial backgrounds or social class. Analysis also encompasses the effects of personality or psychological factors, faith, immigration status and gender/sex.

3.2.2.5.1 Socio Economic Status (SES)

The impact of SES upon individuals' levels of political participation has long been considered vital (Verba et al. 1995; Brady et al. 1995). Education, occupation and wealth provide a set of resources and skills which are considered vital in preparing one for civic duty. They are undoubtedly interlinked though often the effects of each are studied separately.

Verba et al (1995) and Milbrath, (1965) note in particular the positive effect longer and higher levels of education have upon active participation. The incongruence exists when we consider that education is seen to be improving and students staying longer in education across the developed world, a fact which is juxtaposed against the decline in civic engagement. As such,

more recent research has sought to discover “whether years of education is a direct *cause* for political participation or merely works as a *proxy* for other factors” (Persson, 2012, p199). Does education bring about the skills that make one a ‘good’ citizen? Or is it instead a self-selecting process whereby those with greater inclination towards politics (for whatever reason) are also more inclined towards political activity? In his work investigating the Swedish education system Persson investigates the effect not only of length of education but also that of type of education. The hypothesis is that an ‘academic’ education is more likely to lead to engagement with politics than one that follows a more vocational route (p198). However, as with many of the other studies he and others cite, the impact of education is not one which implies causality (p214). Instead the drivers for the academic/vocational differentiation are those beyond education, and thus family SES and political discussion within the home are seen as a more likely cause.

Ultimately, a quote from Milbrath determines the position on SES pretty well:

“Social-position variables... do not “cause” any specific behaviour in the sense that they are requisites for, or the immediate antecedents of, given acts. Social conditions, however, do form personalities, beliefs, and attitudes which, in turn, do “cause” (are requisite to) specific acts such as participation in politics”

This is a position which is heavily investigated by a number of studies and this investigation of apathy is no different.

3.2.2.5.2 Personality/Psychology

The influence of personality upon political behaviour and political participation was reasonably understudied until relatively recently (Mondak & Halperin, 2008, p335) but it is something that has gained momentum as much newer research emerges. It allows for the study of psychology and political science to interact quite neatly.

Several commentators discuss the impact of ‘the Big Five lexical model’ whereby the biggest five personality factors are considered in relation to the formation of political attitudes and behaviours (Cooper et al. 2013; Gallego & Oberski 2011; Ha et al. 2013; Mondak & Halperin 2008). They investigate personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, emotional stability and agreeableness.

For Mondak & Halperin all are found to be significant factors in influencing political attitudes, but for the purposes of this piece the most significant finding relate to the impact on political participation. Here, their most significant hypothesis is one which discovers the role of extroversion in influencing political action. Based on the idea that most forms of participation

‘almost always entails some form of social interaction’ (p355) having a more extroverted personality is one which predisposes a person to political engagement. They find, however, that openness to experience, conscientiousness and emotional stability ‘show no consistent link to political participation’ (p355).

Cooper and his colleagues (Cooper et al. 2013) examine more recently the same five factors, testing them on the basis of two forms of political activity; being registered to vote and discussing politics with friends or family. Based upon hypotheses developed from the earlier work of Mondak & Halperin they too find that higher levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness make respondents more likely to be registered to vote. Crucially, also, they find that people who have a greater openness to new experiences and display traits characteristic of an extrovert are more likely to talk about politics to their friends.

Equally, Ha et al’s 2013 study using evidence from South Korea produces results more specifically focussed on participation rather than attitudes. It finds that those who have high openness scores will be more likely to participate in general, whereas those more closely involved with political processes will register highly on agreeableness scores (p520). Those who lack agreeableness, as one could safely predict, show an inclination towards non-electoral participation forms (p520). Extroversion is consistently found once more to be positively associated with all kinds of political engagement (p525). On the whole, they find, however, that no one personality factor is positively associated with electoral turnout.

Gallego and Oberski, (2011) note entirely similar conclusions, but highlight that although personality factors should be seen as important, they do not affect participation directly. The indirect effect that they have is one which is inextricably linked with other attitudinal factors, such as those SES influences described in the previous section.

3.2.2.5.3 Faith

The issue of faith and its impact on political participation is a much lesser known area of the field of research than most. The impact of religion features somewhat within theories surrounding the notion of social capital, like Putnam’s, where largely attendance at worship was seen to have a positive impact on social and political action. Engagement with religion is seen to foster some of the social capital, trust that brings about political capital. Driskell et al’s study (Driskell et al. 2008) contests the limits of such theories in seeking to demonstrate the influence is beyond that of simply turning up to worship. They find instead that the positive effect of religion upon political participation has more to do with beliefs than it does religious behaviour (p309). They also report that it is the presence of religious beliefs in general, or what they call

‘macro beliefs’ that have ‘macro’ outcomes in the forms of improving turnout in national elections.

Clearly faith and religion have an important, positive impact upon levels of political participation based upon a combination of both belief and behaviour. The extent to which they are directly responsible for bringing about a difference is still in question, and it is reasonable to suspect that very much like personality and education, faith plays more of an indirect role in such value formation, the result of which is a greater propensity to be active.

3.2.2.5.4 Immigration Status

The role of immigrants in the political sphere, is, similar to the study of faith and politics (beyond encompassing it into a broader theory of socialisation) in that there is relatively little existing work out there in comparison to those all-encompassing theories.

de Rooij, (2011) is critical of the limited studies that do exist in highlighting how they only implement a one-dimensional approach in trying to distinguish between participation and non-participation. They effectively only count the number of activities immigrants engage with rather than measure patterns between the acts, which de Rooij says misses a lot of interesting and potentially explanatory information (p456). She instead seeks to explore whether there is a relationship between the patterns of non-Western immigrant participation that is distinct from Western majority populations. She finds that there is a stronger association between forms of political activity amongst those non-Western immigrants than the majority members, but that on the whole it is those majority members who are likely to have engaged with more activities than the immigrants (p469). The strong association between some forms of participation and not others for those immigrants cannot, she asserts, cannot be explained by their lowered resources; there is something specific about being a non-Western immigrant that results in higher levels of non-participation.

3.2.2.5.5 Sex/Gender

Gender, or the effect of differences in sex as I prefer to refer to it, is not an area of the research that has been under-investigated within the broader theories of participation and non-participation, but is worth drawing out more specifically, nevertheless. It is usually considered within any account, but to varying degrees of success and significance.

Initial studies suggested that women were less likely than men to take an active part in political life, but were subsequently found to be inherently flawed; “...the disparity between men and

women in political activity was overstated, exaggerating the importance of small – and, sometimes, not statistically significant – differences.” (Verba et al., 1995, p252). However, Verba and colleagues find that when looking at an overall scale of participation that such a finding is indeed replicated. The difference they say, though significant, is small (p254). Even breaking down participation act by act they find, for every activity except protesting, that men are very slightly more inclined to be active than women.

Ondercin and Jones-White, (2011) show this difference between men and women’s levels of participation to be explained in light of the fact that participation is positively associated with political knowledge (p687). They report that enhanced political knowledge is positive for men and women alike, but the effect is greater among women. However, women are found to be less knowledgeable than men (p688) meaning that such a lack of knowledge actually “depresses the political participation of women more than it does the participation of men” (p688).

The general pattern is one that emerges from a young age, where adolescents’ community involvement, political interest and subsequent participation are also seen to be higher amongst males than females (Cicognani, Zani, Fournier, Gavray, & Born, 2012, p572)

3.2.3 The Politics of “Supply”

The social capital, generational, modernisation and the plethora of ‘micro’ arguments constitute the demand-side, culture based explanations for the state of participation as it is. Many aspects of these arguments are indeed persuasive and will no doubt play a role within the analysis that I conduct. However, as Hay (2007) notes, there is a criticism that is levelled at all of these theories and that is that their demand-side and overly agent-based focus leaves them fundamentally flawed. How is it possible that we can give an accurate explanation of political participation if we only consider one element of the political interaction? Of course politics happens when people demand it and engage with it, but it does not exist in isolation. To repeat a point made earlier on; it has to be supplied. Politics and consequently political participation happens when it is wanted and provided. We cannot hope to know why political participation is the way it is if we only look at one side of the exchange. There should not just be a focus on why people don’t get involved in politics; there should be a lengthy consideration of why they should even want to in the first place, by looking at the political system itself. It is to this line of argument that we now turn – by looking at the supply-side, structural arguments; network governance, performance and stealth democracy literatures.

3.2.3.1 Network Governance; The Expert Citizen and The Everyday Maker

Bang's (2004) work, in a way, incorporates much of the critical citizens thesis, but adds the required additional dimension; acknowledging that there is a vast divide within society with regard to being active civically. He notes how factors of supply and demand have indeed brought about a change in the activity of citizens; it is true that people have become more critical and vary in the extent to which they are active. However, contrary to Putnam, he sees this not as being a problem of free-riding as much as it is one of exclusion; "the crucial problem of contemporary politics and policy is not free-riding but rather political exclusion, in denial of the right to and the possibility for people to exercise their differences equally" (Bang 2004, p4). It is not a problem of people making the choice not to participate and accepting the consequences of their non-participation, it is rather that people do not have this choice and the consequences are instead imposed upon them. This threat becomes real by the advent of what he terms 'Expert Citizens' (ECs) and 'Everyday Makers' (EMs), through a process of 'uncoupling' laypeople from political elites. ECs come about as a result of a lack of efficiency and logic that political systems require, caused by out-dated governing models (p8). ECs are the new 'sub-elite', often professionals within voluntary associations and non-governmental organisations. They are informed individuals with a 'do it yourself' attitude to politics, willing to work within the parameters of the system because they have to, in a way that is much less 'grass-roots' than activism was once before. Their motivation arises out of a sense of ideology, duty and the enjoyment derived from their engagement.

EMs come about as a response to ECs. They are much more reflexive, individualistic and issue oriented; choosing to dip in and out of politics when they feel like it; echoing a 'politics is not for life, just for today' sentiment. They are also much more "pleasure oriented and fun-seeking than is usually associated with being civilly engaged" (p18). They represent neither the passive in society nor the profile of the active citizen.

The problem of differential engagement arises out of the exclusivity of the EC culture; to be involved such culture, you must become an EC (p22). They are more than welcoming and include other ECs within their networks, but subsequently exclude those who are not willing or capable of exerting themselves as these strong, ever critical and involved citizens (p7 and 16). Without the correct expertise to participate within these networks of knowledge and control, one cannot hope to be anything more than a layperson, embodied in Bang's notion of the Everyday Maker.

It is through these distinctions and subsequent exclusion of EMs from elite and sub-elite networks that Bang argues the need for a new participatory model; "...we need to explore how

these new discursive arenas of collaborating elites and sub-elites open for new conceptions of ordinary citizenship beyond civil society and the state” (2004, p18).

The inadequacies of the political system as it is conventionally understood have created an environment where networks of governance have developed as a direct response. It is the emergence of such networks that has then served, as has been illustrated, to create such divisions between different types of people with respect to participation. It seems to be that it is a certain type of person who becomes active in this type of system and then serves to restrict others from entering their exclusive culture because they do not have the appropriate characteristics.

The network governance explanation serves to provide a largely supply-based account by exploring how and why certain people are excluded. There is an element of demand by actors for politics within the argument but such demand is explained by an understanding of structure. It therefore appears to offer a much fuller account of political participation by combining both elements. This is true also of the following two arguments.

3.2.3.2 The Performance Argument

Although in many ways Norris’ (2011) work reiterates many of the core themes of her Critical Citizens Thesis in pressing the point that we are not facing a crisis of democracy, she is also keen “to update and expand the evidence, reframe the analysis, and refine the diagnosis” (p5). Where Hay, (2007) among others, was critical of her previous work for being too demand-centred, she has responded by updating her analysis to fully incorporate supply-side considerations into the explanation. Norris introduces the concept of the democratic deficit to this debate borrowing from its original application to the democratic functioning of the European Union (EU) in that the core decision-making institutions of the EU fall short of the precautionary standards that each member state adheres to (p5). In the context of this literature she then extends the concept by exploring the idea that the way in which governments, public bodies or even supranational governing bodies, fails to meet the expectations of citizens.

This work posits four core claims which state that, from the findings, we do not see a consistent, worldwide decline in the support for democracy as a form of government, but that we should be aware that reduced satisfaction of some kind does indeed seem likely (p4). The second core claim reflects this, asserting that satisfaction with the performance of many democratic systems is incongruent with public expectation (p4). Combined then, these two claims represent not public opposition to the ideal of democracy, but rather to its implementation. The third regards

the explanation of the size of the so-called democratic deficit, asserting that: “The most plausible potential explanations for the democratic deficit suggest that this phenomenon arises from some combination of growing public expectations, negative news, and/or failing government performance” (p5). In this statement Norris demonstrates how her updated analysis incorporates a combination of her previously advocated demand side explanations, ‘intermediary accounts’ which centre on the importance of political communication and importantly, supply-side theory. Whilst she sees the demand-side theories of Inglehart as useful in furnishing a complete explanation of political participation, she has a more keen appreciation now of supply-based accounts. This is reflected in the fourth and final core claim that the deficit matters because it has “important consequences – including for political activism, for allegiant forms of political behaviour and rule of law, and ultimately for processes of democratisation” (p8). We must be very aware therefore of the performance argument which explains how such dissatisfaction occurs and the seriousness of the subsequent consequences.

Norris presents results which appear to confirm rational choice theory relating to satisfaction. Rational choice theory suggests that the better the quality of governance, the happier citizens will be with the way that democracy works. Norris’ findings substantiate this line of work, illustrating a direct, positive correlation between citizens’ reported satisfaction with democracy and democratic performance adjudged by indicators of good governance stipulated by freedom house experts (p191). Contrary to some of the alternative theories advanced previously in this chapter, Norris contends that in light of this we should learn that democratic satisfaction does not come through participation in that democracy necessarily; performance is too much of a factor for this to resonate.

Further to the point made in *Critical Citizens* (1999), it was also found that the ‘winners’ in life are more satisfied than the ‘losers’; that those who were more satisfied with their lives, in terms of their health, happiness and general well-being, were also found to be more satisfied with democracy, indicating that subjective well-being is an important consideration too, beyond the role of performance (2011, p207-8). ‘Winners’ and ‘losers’ were also previously defined as being those people whose vote had translated into that party being in government, and the same result is true of them too, once again. On a related note, systems of government described as consensual (‘consociational’ or power-sharing), where the number of ‘winners’ are maximised much more than in majoritarian (Westminster or power-concentrating) systems, are those where citizens again reported increased satisfaction (p212-3).

Norris essentially and directly interacts with the demand and supply paradigm, investigating also the impact of the ‘news media as the intermediary channel of information between citizens and the state’ i.e. the linchpin between the supply and demand arguments (p243). She concludes

that cultural theories have a limited role in explaining the so-called democratic deficit; that “democratic aspirations were not found to be associated with processes of human development nor with age effects” (p243) but education *was* seen to widen the democratic deficit. There is a murkier picture, however, when it comes to the role of communication theories where Norris concludes that more research needs to be conducted as to how the media can be seen to publicise the supply of politics to those who demand it (p244). Overall she concludes that “closing the democratic deficit is therefore largely about strengthening processes of democracy and the actual quality of governance so that the performance meets rising citizen expectations” (p245).

So, however strongly Norris emphasises the importance of performance, it is with a cautionary note; that reports of democratic satisfaction/dissatisfaction may be based on more subjective factors than just accurate reports of performance. Nevertheless, it is still an important consideration that as Norris concludes, must form part of any adequate explanation of political participation in conjunction with demand-side and intermediary accounts.

Norris does not talk directly to the issue of participation or non-participation by focussing instead upon the feeling of support for democracy more broadly; the effects of which for engagement are left somewhat implicit. She sees the existing literature as one which too readily accepts a negative position, noting in her conclusions ‘perhaps the most important simple message’ of the work:

“...public support for the political system has not eroded consistently in established democracies, not across a wide range of countries around the world. The ‘crisis’ myth, while fashionable, exaggerates the extent of political disaffection and too often falls into the dangers of fact-free hyperbole” (p241)

It seems the indirect message is one that suggests that the literature showing a decline in civic-mindedness expressed through a variety of forms is one that implies a rejection of democracy. Whilst she notes that the performance of governmental institutions has an impact upon the decline in participation that she does not specifically dispute, Norris is keen to highlight that it has not resulted in democratic populations bereft of support for it as a model of governance. She reports instead that the instabilities presented in the past are those which represent ‘trendless fluctuations in system support’ the idea of which additionally supports the notion of Bang’s Everyday Maker, the individual who dips in and out of politics as they so choose.

3.2.3.3 Stealth Democracy

The stealth democracy work of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) relates in many ways to aspects of both the network governance and performance literatures, as they display evidence of citizens being dissatisfied with democratic processes, and also problems with certain groups, having too much power.

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse argue that, although well intentioned, theorists encouraging increased participation fail to understand quite what citizens actually want. Their point rests very much upon the idea that people are disengaged from the political system and it is foolish to try and make them participate in a world which they find distasteful. They question why there should be such an assumption that increasing participation would improve the situation: "...why should getting people to do something they do not want to do make them feel the system is more legitimate? Why should it make them happier people? And why should it make for better policy decisions?" (p5). They argue that none of this happens. They argue instead that what people want is a form of 'stealth democracy' which, much like stealth bombers, you don't really see them, but you know that they are there, working away (p2). People want their government to act properly in the first place, and that at present they only feel like they should get involved because there exists a 'need' to be involved, rather than any real desire on their part (p227).

Central to their point is their discussion about policy versus process. Whilst many commentators have suggested that issues of policy are most pertinent in bringing about a sense of dissatisfaction, in the same way that Norris talks about 'winners' and 'losers', Hibbing and Theiss-Morse suggest the alternative; that process is a much bigger bone of contention. From their findings they claim "Dissatisfaction usually stems from perceptions of how government goes about its business, not what the government does" (p35). They find that in most instances people would prefer a change in process even if it didn't bring about any change in the policy outcome (p39). This follows, they say, as another of their findings shows that the majority of their respondents' policy preferences match policy taken by government, but the same is not true of processes, and it is this dissatisfaction with processes which overrides any positive opinions of government that they may have had as a result of policy decisions (p48 and 81).

The problem the majority of their respondents see with regards to process is that so-called special interests or interest groups have too much influence over government. This they see as being at the heart of the political system's problems (p98) with "...two-thirds of American adults believing interest groups have too much power" (p101). It is interest groups that have the highest proportion of people believing they have too much power, with the federal government and political parties coming a close second (p101). In a similar vein to an earlier point, they find that although the American public are unhappy with many of the institutions of government,

instead of wanting to do away with them, they would prefer that they worked properly in the first place, without any need for them to be involved (p105). However, because the public perceive that, currently, elected officials have been compromised by interest groups, they advocate more power to the people – a step they are averse to taking (p105). Unrepresentative interest groups are seen to have ‘hijacked the political process’ in a way that ordinary American’s feel isolated by (p105).

The authors are careful to note a point that relates back to the performance argument, and it is that of subjectivity. In the same way that Norris talks about a lack of objectivity of the performance of government on the part of citizens who have not had their political desires fulfilled, the same is true of both processes and interest groups. Although policy preferences match government policy in a way that process preferences do not, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse also make reference to the possibility that those who are happiest about policy outcomes are also those who are most content with the process (p49). This is not however, necessarily something they accept. Similarly, they do state that although many Americans are primarily concerned with interest groups, a number of these people often see a ‘special interest’ as being anything that they don’t particularly agree with (p222). As a result, they comment that citizens ought to be more realistic in their approach to political ends, much in the same way as we teach children that “I want, doesn’t necessarily get”, and that disagreement and deliberation can instead be a good thing (p223).

To summarise then, the position that Hibbing and Theiss-Morse take is one that provides supply-based evidence for explaining why people may have become disengaged from formal politics, but one which does not seek to increase participation in the way that many commentators do. They instead advocate not an increase in any form of participation, but rather aim to promote a political system whereby specific forms of participation are beneficial. They envisage an optimal situation whereby government is made up of so-called ENSIDs – empathetic, non-self-interested decision makers, governing over citizens who are aware of their political differences and realistic about what they should hope to take out of politics. However, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse do acknowledge the unlikelihood of such a scenario, but endorse it to counter proposals for deliberative democracy based on the results of their findings, which indicate that such a move would not necessarily ease the problems of the existing system (p228).

What is interesting then, is that, much in the same way as Norris provides a combined demand, intermediary and supply based account, so too do Hibbing and Theiss-Morse. Although they largely identify problems with process as a form of supply being the most prominent factor in

dissatisfying citizens, they also point to the problem of actors' demands. In so doing they create an explanation that combines both elements of supply and demand.

As we have seen then, various explanations have been offered as to why participation is the way that it is. Cultural explanations have suggested how the changes in society have changed the attitudes of people and affected the way in which they are seen to demand politics. These accounts are useful and certainly largely valid, but are limited because they only tell us how people see politics given the change *in people*. It seems incomplete to not include some notion of how people see politics given the change, or lack thereof, *in politics*. This is what the supply based alternatives seek to do, with a number of theorists using structural reasons to additionally help explain demand, often concluding that the best report is one which takes into account both forms of argument. In so doing, they certainly create a more comprehensive look at participation. That is not to say that they are not yet without question.

3.2.3.4 Media Influence

Poor governance, performance and processes may all indeed contribute to a sense of disengagement expressed through non-participation. However, how does the disengaged citizen manage to hear about the failings of the political system? Arguably almost entirely through a variety of different media, be that social, visual or printed information. As such the media as a whole have a very important role to play within politics.

There are several studies that have sought to investigate the so-called "mediatisation" of politics (Papadopoulous 2013) that look at the commentary of politics that is provided currently by the media (Mair 2005; Street 2011). I have already commented briefly, following the work of Flinders (2010) that in the advent of 24 hour news media there is the potential for really engaging political discussion and observation, but it simply has not materialised. A healthy conversation about politics within the media is not what "sells" and with greater pressures to attract viewers and buyers (Hallin & Mancini 2004) what we get instead is a much less comprehensive and unhealthy picture. This in turn reduces politics to mere spin and sound bites with only the very basics of complex issues covered (Mazzonleni 2008). It may be easier to understand things from a black and white perspective, but the detail and quite often the beauty is in the grey matter.

Flinders, (2012a) takes an increasingly hard line upon the media, echoing most of the accounts indicated above, but explicitly stating the "destructive" nature (p168) of the media which ought

to be kept in check. His criticism lies strongly in the sensationalism that the media purport which results in a too narrow focus on issues of the day rather than the bigger picture. The content of tomorrow's chip papers should not detract from the wider issues at stake which could further threaten democratic politics as we know it.

3.3 What do Demand and Supply Say about Apathy?

The final aim of this chapter is to discuss how the participation literature may provide a commentary for political apathy. Though very few areas of the literature talk specifically, or accurately, about apathy, the assumptions that are implicit within their writing serve as implications for the thought and study of it.

The majority of accounts – the social capital thesis; generational explanation; modernisation theory; and network governance argument all take participation to be the norm, and apathy to be irregular. The social capital thesis in its explanation of the decline in a civic-minded society firmly sees participation as the default. By comparing the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century and the apparent civic deficiencies of this time against a more cohesive war time society for which we need to find a 'moral equivalent' of, Putnam not only posits apathy as being deviant behaviour, but inherently problematic also.

Similarly, the generational account, with its foundations set partly in social capital, perceives apathy to be deviating from the norm. By explaining that extending the franchise to a younger group of people, the most 'atomised' in society, results in a generation of people who do not feel involved enough within society to be compelled to vote, Franklin makes a comparison between them and their more involved elders who were not enfranchised at eighteen, in a way that, again, implies that participation is the default setting, and apathy unusual. Further, that apathy is a learned behaviour rather than a natural habit; Franklin estimated that it takes three consecutive elections where individuals do not vote for this to become an established trend. If this pattern had not been instigated by the move to reduce the voting age the alternative would be the high levels of participation that were once previously experienced. However, as with his explanation in general, Franklin's account only provides implications for the apathy of voting and cannot explain trends beyond this.

Whilst the modernisation theory sees reduced participation in a much more positive light than either Putnam or Franklin do, in fact regarding it as preferable to the deference of the pre-war years, it nevertheless makes similar assumptions about apathy. Again, by making a comparison between a time of high participation and explaining how a change in values has brought about a more challenging, less conventionally participatory society, Inglehart, Norris et al infer that

participation, at least at one point was the norm. Furthermore, the fact that in spite of their recognition that there has been a traditional participatory change, they still choose to focus on how people are active in their dissatisfaction, or at the very least expressive, ignoring those who are neither active nor critical. In their negligence they yet again reveal assumptions about their approach to apathy – participation is (and to a certain extent should be) the default and apathy, the people who do not participate in any way, are still in the minority.

The Network Governance literature, although perhaps less obviously, also reveals that apathy is not seen as the default position within this particular body of work. That there are networks of governance and the active and often voluntary nature of them demonstrates how participation is seen as being customary. Even Bang's vision of the Everyday Maker, juxtaposed against his Expert Citizen, reveals apathy unusual. Although admittedly their political behaviour is more ad hoc and infrequent than that of the Expert Citizen they are nevertheless seen as participatory creatures choosing to dip in and out of politics when it suits them, but far from apathetic. Similarly, that total apathy is not even considered within this line of thought is further suggestive of it being seen as rare phenomenon.

Conversely, both the performance literature explored by Norris (2011) and the stealth democracy work of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse see apathy as being the default, or at the very least that participation should not be seen as the default in the way that the previous literatures do. In addition neither account sees this as inherently problematic in the way Putnam, in particular, does.

Firstly, Norris' work, in the way that it reflects many of the aspects of rational choice theory suggests that for many people democratic satisfaction is not derived from being active within that democracy necessarily. The conditions upon which citizens would want to act comes before their desire to act. Arguably though, given she also combines a demand side element within her work perhaps her position on apathy is one that reflect it both being a natural and unnatural act. However, that still depends on circumstance suggesting apathy is perhaps the default after all.

The stealth democracy literature is very clear when it comes to thinking about apathy. Apathy is quite clearly the default in this case, following the notion that people only feel like they should participate because there is a real need to. This need they suggest is due to the inadequacies of process of the governing body. They argue that what people want is not to be involved in a world they do not, and do not want to have to, understand. Instead, they want government to do its job properly, working like a stealth bomber where you cannot see it, but know it exists, which enables them to revert to their default, apathetic position. Further, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse do not wish to encourage people to break their default position and aimlessly participate

simply for the sake of participating, contrary to the implications of many other writers. They claim this would be counter-productive and instead urge encouragement of the right kind of participation; that which would be beneficial to the citizenry.

The mediatisation of politics and marketization of citizenship also seem to posit the individual's default position being one of apathy. The marketization of citizenship account demonstrates increasingly how we have become a culture of self-serving individuals for whom apathy is the default unless there is personal gain. Work that seeks to criticise the media also acts in a similar way by effectively portraying the citizen as simplistic in their approach to gathering political knowledge and all too ready to jump on the "attack the politician" bandwagon. It implies that they are disinterested in seeking out the truth and quick to judge based upon the first piece of 'information' they come across. Citizens increasingly do not look for fact but what suits them-materially and from an entertainment perspective.

It is perhaps not a surprise nor coincidence that nearly all the demand-based accounts perceive participation to be the default, and nearly all of the supply-based accounts consider the alternative. In explaining that there has been a decline in the demand of politics by actors these authors are making comparisons between what they see as the state of play now, and the natural order. Regardless of whether they perceive the present to be favourable or not, this is nevertheless the position they report. With the exception somewhat of the network governance argument, the supply-based accounts consider less what has changed about people and instead are concerned with flaws in the processes, performance and perceptions of politics in order for citizens to even contemplate wanting to engage. The assumption is that citizens would not naturally wish to act unless the provision of politics was suitable.

This chapter has aimed to show that there is an abundance of literature which explores the extent of non-participation and details the various explanations for it. These explanations however only really talk to the decline in civic engagement and relay why people may have become increasingly 'disengaged'. What they do not do is explicitly outline if and why there may be a group of people who were never engaged in the first place. They do not describe an apathetic citizen in any way that is different from the disengaged. They miss out therefore on knowing why some people do not care. Whilst some of the literature might claim apathy is no bad thing, for it would not be ideal if individuals who have no interest became involved in politics, it is not right that we should not try to understand it. For the protection of politics and those individuals themselves we must attempt to distinguish and explain or at the very least,

understand how political apathy occurs. To do this we must establish how apathy is distinct from being disengaged and this involves a reconceptualization of apathy and a theory as to whom and how they are different. This is the subject of Chapter 4: Conceptualising Political Apathy.

Chapter 4: Conceptualising Political Apathy

Much of the previous chapter demonstrated that in almost all considerations of change in civic engagement, apathy is not considered an adequate explanation of the current trend. Where it on occasion has been, the term is simply synonymous with the wider sense of disengagement, expounded by both elements of ‘supply’ and ‘demand’. Perhaps this is because apathy has not yet been readily or adequately conceptualised in political science as a state or position of being. In the existing literature the structure of most work follows a pattern whereby the authors consider the competing components of political participation, before making a theoretical judgement (or to be cynical, a data-led one) as to the definition they will then employ throughout the remainder of that piece. By only adequately defining participation, as many studies do, non-participation is simply posited as it’s opposite and very rarely delved into further. Non-participation is seen in most instances as merely not having done those activities that are said to constitute participation. Where non-participation is not specifically developed it is often, and wrongly, assumed an expression of mere disengagement, whereby one is either turned off by politics or alternatively is seen as using their non-act as an act of protest, rather than as the result of a lack of political consciousness.

However, some studies have undoubtedly gone further than these simple definitions and assumptions, and very successfully so, in producing typologies of participation. Notably, Ekman & Amnå, (2012) produced a typology of participation and civic engagement which distinguished between involvement and civic engagement as forms of civil, latent and manifest political participation broken down into formal political participation and activism, be that legal or illegal activity (p292). Kaase & Marsh, (1979) also distinguished between, and to use their exact terms, *Inactives, Conformists, Reformists, Activists and Protesters* (p172). These pieces are explored in greater depth further on in the chapter, but suffice to say for the moment, that although they consider inaction, they do not develop it to the extent I believe necessary.

Whilst elements of some of the hypothesised characters within the existing literature will no doubt feature within my own broader conceptualisation of political activity they will be balanced with the introduction of a thoroughly conceived of apathetic group. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to seek to challenge this narrow, often two-dimensional conceptualisation by rethinking exactly what comprises participation and non-participation and in so doing establishes apathy as a concept in its own right and as an integral part of our wider sense of what engagement means.

The chapter first consults the work of notable academics profound in the area of concept building, considering the various concerns that befall the political scientist when thinking in this respect. It also

takes into account the steps every good concept builder might want to take. Collectively these accounts provide a method and framework from which my own conceptualisation can be realised.

Whilst the literature regarding concept formation can provide the all-important structure, further acknowledgement of participation specific research allows for the development of substance. It is from this literature, that one can add flesh to the bones of this structurally appropriate conceptualisation. The crucial part of this endeavour is not just to more sensibly reorder what has been discovered before, but to add my own understanding of apathy and its difference where the literature is currently deficient. Ultimately, the purpose of the chapter is to provide a solid and thorough conceptualisation of apathy, detailed enough that we can fully understand it and how it interacts with its counterparts as well as providing scope for its operationalization which is the task of the following chapter.

4.1 The problems and principles of Concept formation

(Sartori 1970) and (Goertz 2006) provide formative guidance for the novice concept builder in not only highlighting the importance of good concept formation, but by providing thorough understanding of some of the issues one might face, alongside offering direction as to how one should approach such an undertaking.

Sartori, writing in 1970, was keen to stress the value of properly ordering research tasks. For Sartori concept formation must surely come before any level of quantification; “We cannot measure unless we know first what it is that we are measuring” (p1038). His point is so logical and obvious here that it barely needs justification. However, thirty six years later, Goertz (2006) has to re-state his sentiment, commenting that whilst political scientists might comprehend the principle, they are not always guided by it; “...it is often the case that that the cart is leading the horse” (p2). His purpose he claims is therefore to bridge the disconnect between the seemingly competing priorities of the qualitative and quantitative researcher in making possible the union between ‘substantively valid concepts’ and ‘good numerical measures’ (p2).

The role of concept building and its place within research is especially pertinent for political science. Sartori introduces the notion of ‘conceptual stretching’ which he says we have resorted to in the face of an ever increasing attention to ‘world-wide, cross-area comparisons’, particularly problematic given (in 1970) the growing number of political states to be measured (p1034). Put simply, Sartori highlights the problematic nature of fixing upon concepts that are applicable across the globe and not just to one nation state or region. The process of conceptual stretching provides political scientists with the tools

they require to ‘travel’ i.e. we can extend the meaning of the concept in order for it to be more widely applicable. However, the process of increasing the extension (or empirical range) of the concept serves, Sartori says, to reduce the intension (the conceptual meaning) (Goertz, 2006, p69). Sartori is ultimately concerned that “...the net result of conceptual straining is that our gains in extensional coverage tend to be matched by losses in connotative precision. It appears we can cover more – in travelling terms – only by saying less, and by saying less in a far less precise manner.” (Sartori, 1970, p1035).

Without doubt this is a concern for any political scientist (or indeed any social scientist), but why particularly so for the purposes of this piece of work? The answer is precisely because Sartori specifically identifies ‘political participation’ as a concept that has undergone conceptual stretching (p1050-1051). His particular concern in 1970 was with the conflation of participation and mobilisation and the ‘drastic losses of specificity’ this brought about, which he says is as a direct result of conceptual straining (p1051). No doubt as time and political science have progressed since this point, with many a keen eye on patterns of political participation across the World, the concept will have been stretched even further and certainly beyond all recognition of its original conception and meaning. This is particularly so where researchers fail to properly acknowledge the role of good concept building, a fact that is not lost on either Sartori or Goertz.

Both offer remedies which they assert will negate the problems conceptual stretching poses. Sartori’s solution comes in the form of *The Ladder of Abstraction*, and for Goertz in his three-level, multidimensional approach which in many ways mirrors Sartori’s work. Crucially though, it challenges a core assumption he makes about concept building, in a way that reflects a more “ontological, realist and causal” approach (Goertz, 2006, p27). Though Goertz’s work offers an update and appraisal of Sartori’s, it is worth considering each in turn, for both provide useful instruction for the purposes of my own concept building.

4.1.1 Sartori’s Ladder of Abstraction

Sartori’s ladder of abstraction follows, what he calls, seemingly simple rules whereby one can climb and descend along the continuum of a concept; “we make a concept more abstract and more general by lessening its properties or attributes”, but, to avoid conceptual stretching, without loss of precision because those properties or attributes that remain do remain specific (Sartori, 1970, p1041). Within this ladder there are differing levels of abstraction; *high level categories, medium level categories and low level categories* (p1041-44). *High Level Categories* obtain universal conceptualizations (p1041) because they allow for large area, or global, even heterogeneous, cross-comparisons. The result of

categories such as these is the maximisation of extension (the range) combined however with minimal intension whereby definition is applied by negation (see Table 1, p1044). The next level, *Medium Level Categories* sees less universal and more ‘general conceptualisations’ whereby comparisons are made between more homogenous, smaller areas and contexts. The result here being a much better balance between the intension and extension of the concept, and one where applicability is determined by detailed analysis (p1044). The final level; *Low Level Categories* where configurative conceptualisations are key, sees more individual, country level analysis, meaning that although the concepts will not ‘travel’ so far, the minimal extension is countered by maximum intension, resulting in greater contextual definition (p1044). Ultimately though, those *Low level Categories* still allow you to say a reasonable amount about one country, which may of course be one’s focus or particular interest.

It is certainly at the lower levels of the ladder of abstraction that degrees of applicability and context can be applied. From my perspective, this is where the distinctions of detailed levels of engagement, including ‘the apathetic’, are most relevant. Clearly my own broader conceptualisation of political activity in order to distinguish this apathetic conception, will have elements more closely attuned to the *High* and *Medium* level conceptualisations which should allow for more cross-comparison outside of the UK context. However, scrutiny of the apathetic group within society will likely feature at *Low level* categorisation, being more country and context specific. This is not to say however that it would not potentially have applicability beyond the UK.

Sartori remains clear throughout his explanation of the *Ladder of Abstraction* that at no level does he refer to a variable or indicator; that operationalization is a very different and secondary undertaking to conceptualisation (p1045). He also notes that although the *Ladder of Abstraction* that he presents has the minimum of three ‘required slices’ (for logical analysis) the exact number required very much depends on the individual research context (p1042). For my purposes then, it seems plausible that the next level below the *Low Level Categories* might contain further detail which would then allow for the development of a much clearer operationalization and thus application of the concept to the data.

It seems therefore that Sartori’s *Ladder of Abstraction* provides a mechanism by which one can develop their own concept, but also that there is still room to adapt the framework for a more detailed or alternative purpose. It is not, however, a method without flawed assumption; Goertz’s modifications, to which we now turn, aim to challenge this, and in so doing solve a larger problem. Goertz introduces the notion of ‘family resemblance’ which offers an alternative to the necessary and sufficient condition and in turn negates the issue of a loss of intension with the maximisation of extension, the ultimate consequence of conceptual stretching.

4.1.2 Goertz's Three-level Multidimensional Method

Goertz identifies his structuring and theorizing of concepts as an approach that is different to Sartori's "definitional and semantic" style in that it is instead "ontological, realist and causal"; "To develop a concept is more than providing a definition: it is deciding what is important about an entity" (Goertz, 2006, p27). The first way in which their approaches differ is that although the idea of how to structure a framework in concept building is intuitively integral to Sartori's work there is no recognition of how this structure may otherwise be realised (p28). Goertz notes how Sartori is not alone in his assumption, that the necessary and sufficient condition must always be applied in concept building, commenting how up until the middle of the last century it had never been challenged, and even today remains the dominant approach (p32-33). For Sartori, indeed it is an approach that is so entrenched within the practice that it only ever remains implicit within his work. By following this line of concept formation, the concept builder is guided by the necessary and sufficient condition "AND" which implies that, for example, a concept is constituted of $x \text{ AND } y \text{ AND } z$. Inevitably as Sartori rightly points out, when we wish the concept to travel further and a concept undergoes conceptual stretching, a number of the necessary conditions are removed (p72). Whilst this has the effect no doubt of increasing the extension it also diminishes the intension and quite often the extent of the meaning.

Goertz points out, however, that this effect of conceptual stretching happens only because of the reliance upon the necessary and sufficient condition (p72). He suggests instead that within the concept formation we might consider using the "family resemblance" approach. Goertz defines this as follows: "The family resemblance structure can be seen as the opposite of the necessary and sufficient condition one because it contains no necessary conditions. All one needs is enough resemblance on secondary-level dimensions to be part of the family" (p7). If one instead uses the family resemblance "OR" condition rather than "AND" (depending on the appropriate circumstance) a concept is then constituted of $x \text{ OR } y \text{ OR } z$. By using the principle of OR the extension can be increased as the intension is; no longer is the extension amplified at the expense of the intension, quite the opposite (p72-74).

This is certainly one way in which we can overcome the problem of conceptual stretching and likely has a place within certain levels of my own concept formation, particularly at the lower levels of abstraction or hierarchy. It is this principle that Goertz adopts as he proposes his own multidimensional conceptual structure.

Goertz too suggests a multidimensional three-level approach to concept building, but uses slightly different terminology and approach to the levels he develops. He even provides a checklist for the budding concept builder at each stage in the process. Where Sartori describes *High Level Categories*,

Goertz uses instead the idea of *The Basic Level*. It is here where he claims “almost always *one* concept lies at the top of the pyramid” (p30). He considers that there are three different considerations that must be made at *The Basic Level*. These focus on the idea that though there might be one concept at the top of the conceptual pyramid that concept has a positive and a negative pole and both should be defined, as too should the underlying continuum between them (p31). He further asserts that one should consider whether the continuum between these poles has either a dichotomous or continuous nature (p30). He suggests one treats all concepts as continuous, and only ever dichotomous in special instances, because by treating them as such allows us to assess the ‘grey zone’ that exists between the positive and negative poles; if we understand and allow for ‘borderline cases’ in theory we can perceive them in reality (p34).

At the next level, or secondary level in Goertz’s terminology, one now has the basis for developing, in all likelihood, the concept of the positive pole. However, as Goertz notes, one must also take account of the negative pole: “In each case it is important that, in addition to the positive dimension linking up with the positive basic-level concept, the negative ends of the secondary-level dimensions make sense as well” (pp35-36). This is especially important for my purposes as apathy will always be likely considered, on whatever level it resides, as part of the negative pole of the concept of political activity. It will therefore be part of the negative pole of the wider framework where my conceptual work will be most effective and relevant. It is also at this level where the idea of necessary and sufficient vs. family resemblance becomes pertinent, as well as at the next level. In Goertz’s summary of this stage in the concept building process he highlights how one should not just proceed to list dimensions of the concept, but flesh them out, stipulating where there are necessary conditions (if any), or where there may simply be some that are sufficient (p39). He also points out that the audience should be made aware of the structure (e.g. family resemblance) that the concept builder has imposed (p39).

The third and final level, *The Indicator Level* allows for Goertz to achieve his objective of ‘bridging the chasm’ between qualitative and quantitative scholars when it comes to concept building. *The Indicator Level*, or data level, is what allows for the more theoretical levels (basic and secondary) to be more closely linked to empirical data (p62). He is keen to recommend that in concept building the relationship between the indicator level and the basic and secondary levels should remain noncausal (p62). This final level of conceptualisation sees Goertz consider the theorising of substitutability between dimensions on the continuum, and also how these dimensions should be weighted accordingly (pp39-50). In so doing he toys between fuzzy logic and set theory and the relationship each of these has with the necessary and sufficient “AND” condition and the family resemblance “OR” condition. In this element of his framework building there is the greatest flexibility and a variety of alternatives for the concept builder to choose between should they so wish.

Collectively Sartori and Goertz provide the concept builder with two similar approaches, yet with a number of nuanced alternatives to choose between. The next section outlines how I plan to adopt and adapt their theory, alongside the review of existing literature, for the purpose of my own concept building of political activity, and most importantly, apathy.

4.2 Conceptualising Political Activity; Conceptualising Political Apathy

The second section in this chapter uses the guidance provided from the review of the two notable academics included in the first section to construct the conceptualisation of political activity and then to specifically theorise the component of it that I am interested in; apathy. Whilst the framework is of crucial importance to the overall concept, one cannot say much about it without eventually making a claim about the content of the concept and exactly what constitutes each component of it. The first part of this second section therefore provides a review of the existing literature with reference to how notable works define or conceptualise elements of political activity, its polar opposite, political inactivity and any further comments on the continuum between them. It serves not only to provide assistance in terms of fleshing out the framework, but also as justification for the way in which that framework is constructed. The final part of the chapter sees the matching of content either identified in the literature review, or developed as a result of it lacking, with the appropriate conceptual structure. This will be developed by balancing the guidance in concept formation with this second body of political participation content-based literature. In so doing it provides comprehensive conceptual categories of political engagement which set out the expected characteristics of certain types of citizens.

4.2.1 Literature Review

The latter half of the twentieth century saw a real focus on the notion of political participation – what it *means* to be politically active, to what extent people *are* active and *why* people choose to act, or not, in the ways that they do. Whether or not the concept has been appropriately built most political scientists will at the very least give you a definition or operationalised view of what they will be examining. A glance at some of these theories across time certainly shows political activity as being an evolving concept. Whether this is as a result of us trying to travel further and stretch the concept, or whether it accurately reflects the changes in society, remains to be seen.

Similarly, if the repertoire and domains of political participation have developed, so too can our understanding of differential participatory patterns of behaviour and how they have been labelled. As my endeavour is to offer something new to that labelling process it is therefore incumbent upon me to consider the ways in which these areas have been explored previously, to identify the point that we have reached and to understand quite how we have reached it. Whilst it is important to consider all the levels within which people can be differentially active, my focus remains greatest on those least active, as per the justification of the initial chapter.

Some of the earliest or most commonly used definitions of political participation very much centre on actions that seek to affect governmental decision making, either through contributing to the composition of government or by taking a stance, in whatever shape or form, that puts pressure on governmental decision making (Almond & Verba 1963; Barnes et al. 1979; Verba et al. 1995; Parry et al. 1992). (van Deth 2001) highlights how these collective definitions focus on four key areas of understanding; that political participation is done *by citizens*, is an *action* (rather than feeling or inclination), of a *voluntary* nature and relates to *government and politics* (p5).

van Deth's, (2001) *Studying Political Participation: Towards a Theory of Everything* very simply highlights the way in which the perception of political participation has changed over time. Whilst originally, a number of definitions had a very clear and similar focus, the more people have researched in this field, the more inclusive our understanding of political participation has rightly become. van Deth ultimately makes the claim that it has come to be everything and anything; the very epitome of conceptual stretching, but reflective of the increasing "...*politicisation* of private, cultural and other spheres of life" beyond just the political (p10). So all-encompassing is political participation that he broadly defines it by saying "Political participation can be loosely defined as citizens' activities aimed at influencing political decisions" (p4).

van Deth's work demonstrates how both the repertoire (types of) and domains (arenas for) of political participation have developed over a period of years. Using the works of those whom he recognises as the most prominent in the field he identifies seventy possible acts of political participation from those commonly understood forms like voting, party and trade union membership to blocking traffic or being a member of a political, social or environmental group (p15-16).

In response to the ever expanding number of political acts, demonstrated by van Deth's claims, researchers have sought to find labels to best describe the types of activities people do and in what forums. Distinctions that have been made include between those conventional and non-conventional forms of political engagement (Barnes et al. 1979); institutional and non-institutional (Marien et al. 2010); duty-based electoral and direct individual non-electoral forms (Dalton 2008); and formal and informal acts of participation as early as Almond & Verba, (1963).

Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, (2007) move a little further than most in providing a typology of activity, with five key dimensions; *Electoral participation*, *Consumer participation*, *Party activity*, *Protest Activity* and *Contact Activity*, which serves to break down the 70 different types of political participation into more manageable categories, whilst losing none of the richness of reality (the family resemblance approach to concept building, clearly). Berger, (2009) equally laments the loss of connotative meaning from the umbrella term “civic engagement”, of which a number of the 70 acts van Deth mentions forms a meaningless mixture. To be more clear he encourages the use of four different conceptions; *Political Engagement*, *Social Engagement*, *Moral Engagement* and *Civil Engagement*. In so doing he has stripped away social membership from political engagement, commenting that most social interaction does not have a political motivation and so should therefore not be included within the political realm. Equally, he has removed “...activity relating to, moral codes or moral reasoning” (p342) from what it means to act politically and in so doing made each of the terms he uses distinct from one another whilst positing their place within the over-arching theme of civic engagement.

Most political scientists have tended to centre their attention on typifying the active rather than the inactive, and for some the focus is very much on those who would otherwise be described as activists; the type of activities that require a very high level of commitment. Many too have been puzzled by the lack of engagement in modern democracies, though by contrast very few have settled upon investigating the apathetic rather than disengaged. Amongst their typology Kaase & Marsh, (1979b) demonstrate this by identifying (through empirical enquiry rather than by theory) five substantive groups *The Inactives*, *The Conformists*, *The Reformists*, *The Activists* and *The Protesters* but say very little about the essence of their first two groups. They describe *The Inactives* in the following manner: “At most they will read about politics in the newspapers and perhaps sign a petition if asked” (p155). They say similarly very little about the next group, which by all accounts cannot be described as ‘active’: “The *Conformists* will go further along the route of conventional participation. Some of them even participate in campaigns. But they will not embrace direct political action.” (p155). *The Reformists* tend to participate ‘conventionally’ but may also engage in legal protest, whereas *The Activists* will additionally engage in illegal protest as well as some of the more conventional methods. It is *The Protesters* who shy away entirely from conventional activity and prefer to only use unconventional methods like demonstrating, striking and occupy buildings (p155). Kaase and Marsh certainly provide interesting categories backed up by solid empirical evidence, elements of which will feature more thoroughly in my concept building, in different formats and under alternative headings.

It is perhaps Ekman & Amnå, (2012) who provide the most comprehensive typology to date in their article *Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a New Typology*. Not only do they differentiate very clearly between those who are active, separating latent civil participation from

manifest political participation, but they also distinguish some of the differences within non-participation. Whilst I would disagree with the use of the umbrella term 'disengagement' to refer to non-participation they do acknowledge the fact that there are active and passive forms of non-participation which illustrate the existence of an 'apolitical' individual (p294-5). It is worth highlighting the substance of some of the different groups they theorise in order to fully develop my own conceptualisation and illustrate where the focus of my typology differs and offers real contribution to the literature.

Manifest political participation reflects 'formal' political acts and is defined as "...actual 'political participation' ...quite simply all actions directed towards influencing governmental decisions and political outcomes. It is goal oriented or *rational*, if you will" (p289). The types of activities that might be undertaken by individuals who fit this profile are likely to include voting (positively or otherwise), contacting methods, running for office, donating money to parties or organisations, party political membership and activity within a party or organisation (p295).

Ekman and Amnå's more unconventionally politically active individuals are characterised as extra-parliamentary activist types. Their types of activity are broken down further in the categorisation and the distinction is made between those who engaged in either legal or illegal activity. The legal activists are likely to engage in acts such as boycotting or 'buycotting', signing petitions, handing out political information, engagement in new social movements, demonstrating either by strike or protest action (p295).

As they bridge the gap between those who are politically active and those who are not, they use the term 'civil participation' as the broad heading, breaking it down into two further categories of social involvement (attention) and civic engagement (action). The former typically suggests an individual who has an interest in political life and society, understanding that it is important. They may also belong to a social group and potentially adhere to a particular ideology which guides their lifestyle choices (p295). The latter group moves away from this latent form of activity and more towards the political, in that they are liable to contact media, give money to charity, discuss politics, read newspapers, watch political television and recycle. Collectively they are characterised as volunteers usually in social, charity, faith or community ventures. Whilst they do more 'acts' than the social movement group, their acts are not necessarily politically motivated in the same way that someone who is identified within the manifest political participation group.

The final group that Ekman and Amnå consider, and the one that I am most interested in, is the non-participant, disengaged group of people. As alluded to briefly before, they distinguish between active and passive forms of non-participation which they describe as either 'antipolitical' or 'apolitical'. The

antipolitical, or those I would consider the truly disaffected in the sense that they have somehow been turned off by, and from, politics are likely not to vote, avoid newspapers or political television, avoid discussing politics and perceive politics as completely distasteful. As a collective entity they may *choose* deliberately “non-political lifestyles e.g. hedonism, consumerism” (p295) and potentially may engage in random acts of violence, such as rioting, which like the example of the London riots of 2011, relayed a sense of “frustration, alienation or social exclusion” (p295). The key point that differentiates their illegal activity to that of those considered as extra-parliamentary activists is that it is random and in no way politically motivated even if it is reported or claimed retrospectively as that. Crucially the group that I am most interested in is the group that the authors say the least about – probably because it simply is difficult to find them and report their characteristics; how do you encourage the apolitical to talk to you about politics? What they do say is that they are typified as non-voters, have non-political lifestyles which sees total political passivity and the perception that politics is not of interest or importance: “Citizens with this orientation do not feel any particular need to make their voices heard, and politics is simply left to others. They do not follow political and civic affairs, and typically hold no strong opinions about politics” (p294). Ekman and Amnå concede they leave exploration of this group lacking and choose to assert that the explanations that suit the disillusioned or antipolitical group would suit this group, according to the work of others (p294). I contend that this was a mistake and that they have not fully described or explained this apathetic group.

Political science and the many wonderful typologies of participation that have vastly improved our understandings of participatory behaviour have unfortunately left us with very little information about apathy, beyond just describing some likely characteristics. However, it isn't a term that has been neglected entirely within the broader political literature, and it is to this work that we now pay special attention.

DeLuca, (1995) provides the main account which speaks directly to apathy as a distinct notion. He finds, as I do, in deducing definitions of apathy through the unpicking of a number of accounts of nonparticipation, that the expressions are all too often only conceived in and of each other; that nonparticipation presupposes “apathy” as disengagement, rather than it being a statement in its own right. Many accounts, he comments, only conceive of nonparticipation in a one-dimensional sense and that the notion is “too easily seen as a function of political apathy endemic to human nature” (p95).

This section considers the positive contribution that De Luca's work has made in thinking about apathy, distinct from both participation and nonparticipation, but also strongly acknowledges its limitations, and paves the way for offering a less complicated, yet more robust and intuitively simple alternative framework.

De Luca's work explores the idea of *two* faces of political apathy, using Steven Lukes' three dimensions of power as the framework for such depiction. He makes some useful distinctions, which help clarify the mapping of these contested concepts for the purpose of this chapter. The first face of apathy incorporates two schools of thought. The first school includes theorists such as Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee, Huntington, Robert Dahl (in earlier works) and William Riker and is said to relate most to Luke's first dimension of power. Lukes defines the first, and one-dimensional view of power as involving:

“...a focus on *behaviour* in the making of *decisions* on *issues* over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation.” (Lukes, 1974, p15)

Following this school of thought, nonparticipation is seen as an expression *of* apathy reflecting the disinterest or contentment with politics (p12).

The second school is said to largely employ the second dimension of power, whereby the rejection of politics, for failing to meet the needs of the individual, is expressed *through* nonparticipation, though crucially, not apathy per se (p13). The second dimension of power is defined as:

“...a *qualified critique* of the *behavioural* focus of the first view...it allows for consideration of the ways in which *decisions* are prevented from being taken on *potential issues* over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as embodied in express policy preferences and sub-political grievances.” (Lukes, 1974, p20)

This school incorporates the works, for De Luca, of E. E. Schattschneider and (early works of) Peter Bachrach. The first face of apathy concerns, then, nonparticipation as a product of, arguably (though never stated by De Luca), a certain element of choice. Whether this is because people are satisfied or *dissatisfied* is irrelevant; this face of apathy is, I consider, to a certain extent, a chosen act of inaction.

The second face of apathy, relating to Lukes' final dimension of power which considers:

“...a *thoroughgoing critique* of the *behavioural focus* of the first two views as too individualistic and allows for consideration of the many ways in which *potential issues* are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions.” (Lukes, 1974, p24-5)

De Luca borrows from Wright Mills and Herbert Marcuse for his second face of apathy, which concerns an arguably more worrying theory of nonparticipation. It provides an account that represents the opposite of choice, relating to the conditions of political life whereby individuals become ever more depoliticised which, in its bleakest form, may reflect a “political-psychological condition one may even be said to have” (p191).

The problem De Luca says we have in the study of apathy is that we can never be sure which face we are looking into (p191). Though we may ‘choose’ not to participate, to what extent is such choosing our objective choice? To what extent are we responsible for our apathy when our apathy may be the product of various, limiting factors? To what extent are we able to break free of apathy?

De Luca uses the matrix illustrated by Figure 4-1 (adapted from p192) to distinguish between the types of apathy he perceives. ‘A1’ represents a person responsible for their own apathy, someone able to break free of it. ‘A2’ is the polar opposite; someone who is not responsible for their own apathy, with no ability to break free. Whether this is as a result of, as others have characterised, demand or supply factors or, perhaps even a psychological element, is unclear. De Luca attempts to distinguish between the two, describing firstly ‘A2’ as the result of political causes, i.e. the supply factors, calling such a state ‘political subordination or objective political alienation’. ‘A2NP’ on the other hand relates more to demand side factors, those factors such as political psychology or persistent familial behaviours which preclude the individual from acting but cannot reasonably be judged to be the fault of neither the individual nor the political system. ‘A2F’ represents the person who is not responsible for their own apathy, but is likely to have the support, personal or political, to break free. In light of such support, if apathy is to persist we might claim that that individual really should be ‘A1’; i.e. that if they can break free from apathy, and they don’t, then they are freely apathetic. Similarly, if the person who was once responsible for their own apathy represented by the ‘A1U’ bracket, but does not have access to the support to bring them out of such apathy, it is not clear whether they should transfer into the A2 or A2NP bracket; i.e. that their apathy is no longer their fault nor something they can escape from.

Figure 4-1 The Two Faces of Political Apathy (adapted from de Luca, 1995, p192)

	1st Face Responsible	2nd Face Not Responsible
Able to break free	Free political apathy - personal A1	Free political subordination A2F
Unable to break free	Unfree political apathy - personal A1U	Unfree political subordination or objective political alienation - A2 or Unfree political subordination or alienation - nonpolitical A2NP

De Luca's apathy matrix is certainly useful in helping one think about the different types of nonparticipation, breaking down the reasoning behind each face of apathy, and considering whether these can be overcome or not. Whilst a useful tool in considering how one should go about conceptualising apathy, De Luca's analysis is crucially flawed in a number of ways.

Firstly, his use of the three dimensions of power in framing apathy is problematic and unclear. Though De Luca himself would not go as far as to say his conception of the two faces of apathy reflect the two sides of a 'choice coin' I argue that this is what the conceptualisation amounts to. His link to the first dimension of power is untenable for his conceptualisation, as power, in this context refers to a conflicted decision making process, a conflict of interests. As such this presupposes some level of choice on the part of the actor, one way or the other.

Not only is there a concern over De Luca's use of Lukes' dimensions of power as a framework, there are fundamental problems of not only theoretical, but also practical application. A number of questions are raised, which De Luca seems to have no obvious answer to, the result being that his work offers little more for progression in the literature than a dead-end, exemplified by the relative obscurity of the work within the wider literature.

From a theoretical standpoint how is it possible for someone who is on the one hand said to be responsible for their own apathy, not able to break free from it? It is an illogical position. Similarly, how can someone who is able to break free from their apathy fail to be responsible for it? Put practically, if we cannot be sure which face of political apathy we are looking into, how are we realistically able to say anything meaningful about apathy? If people who are persistently 'A1U' or 'A2F' ought really to be somewhere else within the matrix what are we actually learning? The matrix he presents only shows a snapshot of where individuals *might* be at one point in time – even if his position held any real weight, if it is not clear in which bracket they should truly lie after an unspecified length of time, (and we *cannot* establish with whom the responsibility for their position should lie) how can one reasonably use this as a basis from which to explain the problem in a way that presupposes any meaningful solutions?

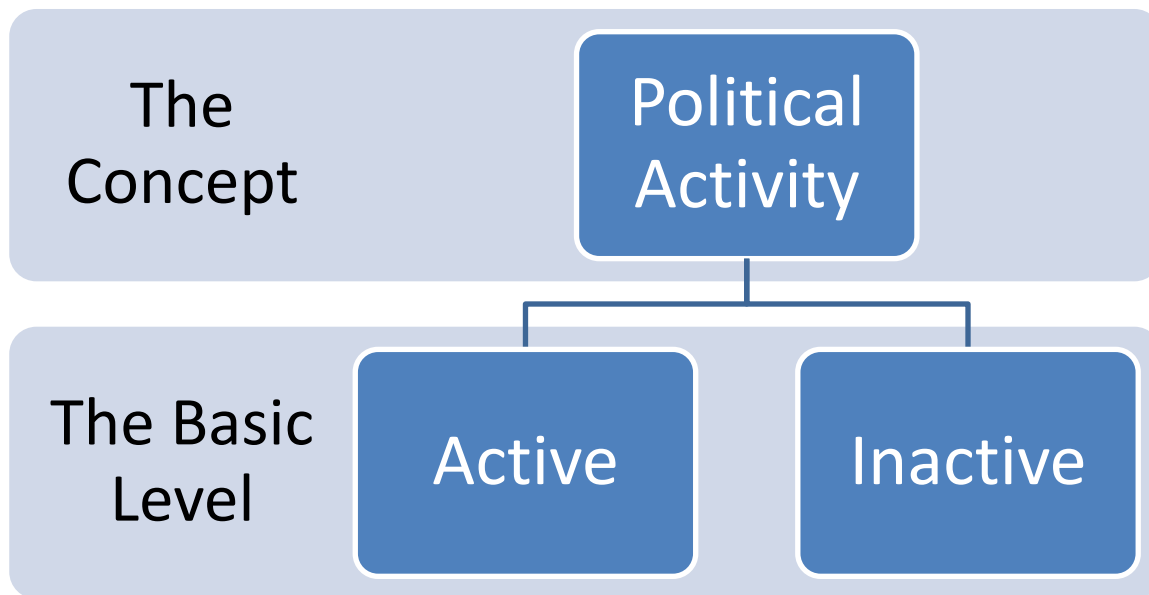
Though my reading of De Luca is largely critical, he nevertheless provides an interesting and useful contribution from which my own approach has been informed. The final part of this chapter then takes the conceptual guidance from the first section and matches it against some of the substantive explanations and typologies of the last, combined with my own interpretation.

4.2.2 Framework

Like both Sartori and Goertz I will be adopting a three level, multidimensional conceptual framework, utilising Goertz's terminology of *The Basic Level*, *The Secondary Level* but adapting *The Indicator Level* to *The Tertiary Level* whilst also making some other simple alterations.

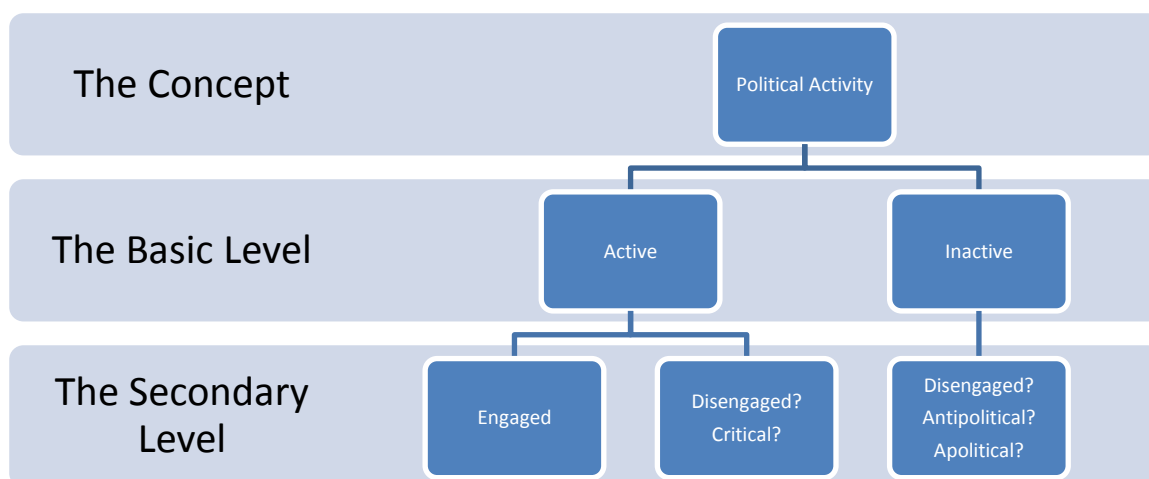
To use Goertz's language, at 'the top of my pyramid' will be *The Concept Level* which simply states the title of the concept, i.e. political activity. I then use *The Basic Level* not just for depicting the positive pole, from which I could then *describe* the negative pole and the continuum that exists between them, but to actually *include* the negative pole within the specified framework. For my purposes, the negative pole of political activity is at the centre of interest. *The Concept* and *Basic Level* structure is therefore represented by Figure 4-2. The positive pole of political activity is intuitively 'the active' group and the polar opposite represented by 'the inactives'. The continuum that exists between them, and the way that is broken down is demonstrated by the next level in the conceptual hierarchy, and we learn quite what it means to be active or inactive. From the outset though I will be clear; to be politically active refers to activities, by whatever method, undertaken that seek to affect a change to government and governmental decision making. However, this will not extend to include the first half of Ekman and Amnå's 'civil participation' – the 'Social involvement' group where membership and lifestyle choices are recognised. Instead civic engagement will be subsumed into a different category of political participation, guiding what being politically active can mean. Whilst one can be clear on what activities must have been undertaken to constitute participative action, it cannot simply be a case of not having undertaken those activities or undertaken them to a lesser extent. The exact nature of the inactive will be explored more deeply in *The Tertiary Level* and again throughout the empirical study and conclusion.

Figure 4-2 The concept and basic level



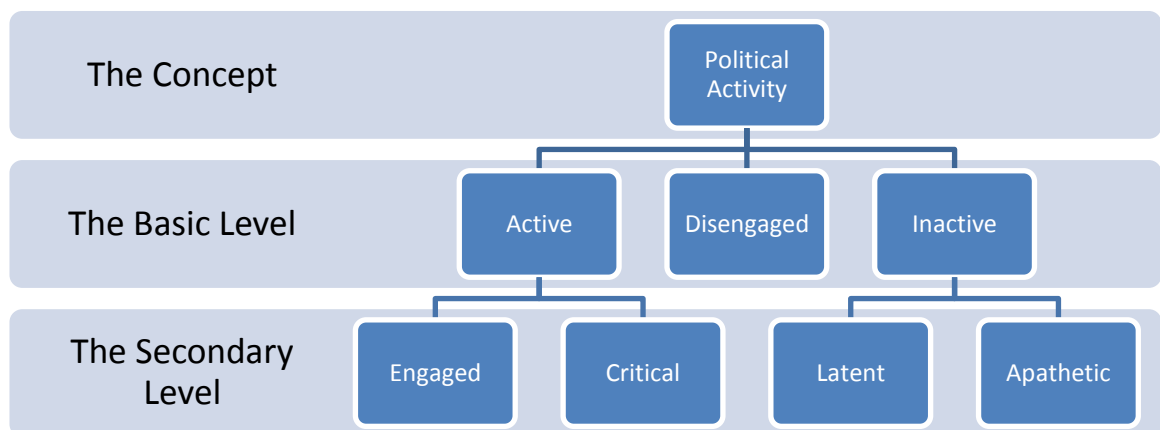
As this and the previous chapter showed, much of the explanation of participation and non-participation largely accounted for the presence of those who are indeed very active, those who are perhaps disengaged but critical and therefore still active and those who are disengaged and have turned off from politics entirely. If that evidence alone were to be included within my framework it would be illustrated by Figure 4-3, where these further elements were included with the addition of *The Secondary Level*.

Figure 4-3 The concept, basic and secondary level (literature review)



However, as I have argued throughout this piece, by identifying ‘the inactives’ only as disengaged and not developing properly those developed by Ekman and Amnå as ‘apolitical’ makes the assumption that they were perhaps once engaged and can somehow be brought back into the political realm. It is for these reasons then that I suggest *The Secondary Level* conceptualisation needs to have a further element included in the shape of the apathetic group. It should also be noted that we need to be clearer that although there can be very active individuals they too may feel a sense of disengagement; the motivations for action need not necessarily be as a result of support or satisfaction with the political system. As such, ‘disengagement’ should sit within *The Basic Level* in between the active and the inactive, as both of these groups can experience it to varying extents. The disengaged in *The Basic Level* represents the ‘grey zone’ that Goertz describes. Whilst there may indeed be people who match the completely active or inactive profile they will be rare, and the disengaged categorisation serves as the descriptive filling within the continuum that traverses one pole to the other. The continuum can therefore very much be seen in the way Goertz suggests we do – as continuous rather than dichotomous. *The Secondary Level* then serves to clarify the continuum a little further. This change is depicted by Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4 The concept, basic and secondary levels



The terms fixed upon in Figure 4-4 are designed to reflect the fact that this typology is intended to say more than just what the types of political activity each group is engaged in are, but also to incorporate some of the likely attitudes towards politics and attributes of each group. Where other accounts have been more specific about the style of engagement this typology will have an improved focus on the “why” with particular emphasis on the “why not”.

The next level of the conceptual structure allows for the development, explanation and justification of each of the groups identified in Figure 4-4. Illustratively this part of the concept building is represented

by Figure 4-5. *The Tertiary Level* allows for the nature of each group to be fully explored, which in turns provides the basis for each level of the concept to be operationalised in the next chapter. This is in line with what Sartori says about conceptualisation; quantification and even operationalisation are very different endeavours to conceptualisation and must be treated separately. This goes against Goertz’s contribution, but the eventual operationalisation of will serve as an additional ‘slice’, by Sartori’s terms, to the understanding.

The results chapters will reflect upon the success of the method used and the existence of the concept in the way that it has been structured, and the concluding chapter will allow for reflection and potential redevelopment of the concept substance as described herewith. The concluding part of this chapter will seek to fully develop *The Tertiary Level* demonstrated by the crude example in Figure 4-5. Ultimately the first purpose of the empirical enquiry will be to test the robustness of the overall structure demonstrated by Figure 4-6, hereafter known as the *Political Activity Spectrum* as well as acknowledging the distribution of individuals along that continuum as it increases from least active (apathetic) steadily up to the most active (engaged). It is Figure 4-6 that will act as the testable hypothesis. The second task is that of testing the validity of the assumptions made for each of the groups, as described here.

Figure 4-5 The concept, basic, secondary and tertiary levels

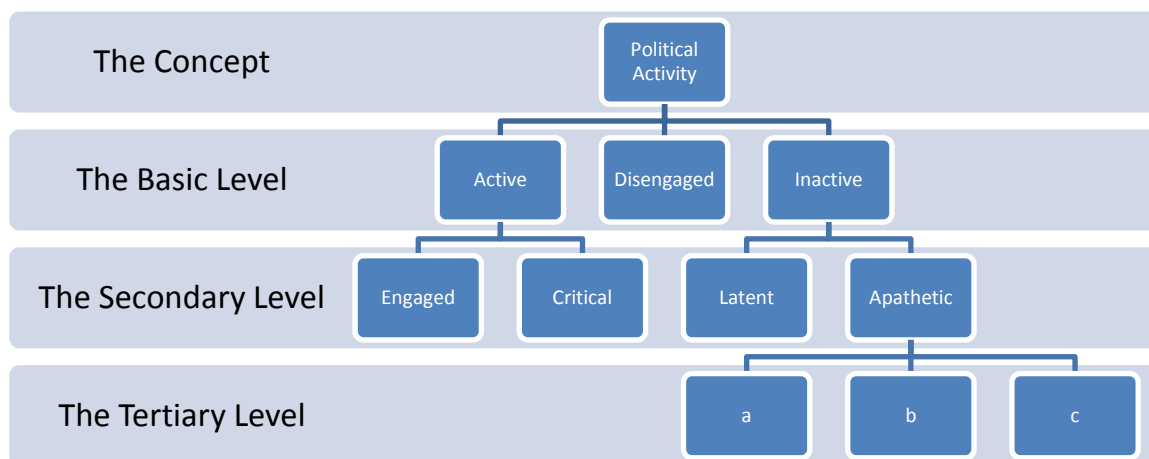
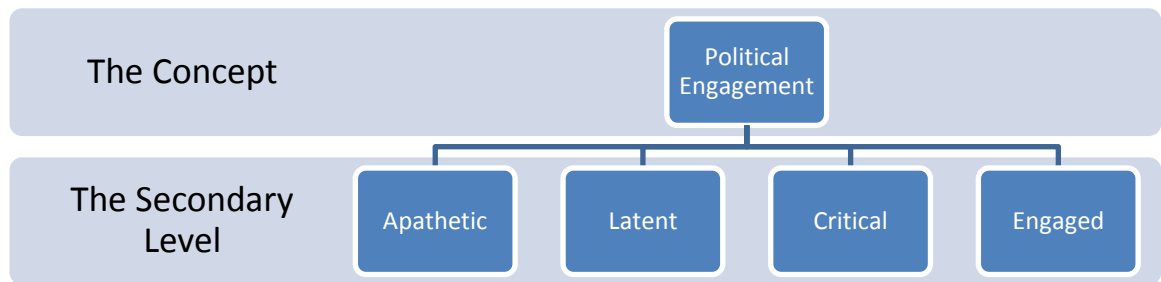


Figure 4-6 The Political Activity Spectrum



The Political Activity Spectrum is broadly split between those who are active or inactive, but disengagement or a sense of disillusion can characterise certain individuals on both sides of this spectrum.

The *engaged* individuals here are certainly outside the realm of disengagement though as they are truly active and largely satisfied with politics, which along with their sense of political duty is one of the key motivations for their action. They are likely to be active in everything that has been seen to constitute political activity in previous works; from voting, to taking part in campaigns, party political membership, donating money, boycotting, signing petitions, contacting media or representatives of government and potentially even demonstrating. Engaged people may be involved in both legal and illegal acts of political participation, but given they are reasonably satisfied individuals their action is most likely to be within the legal realm. Though they are not in any way attempting to usurp the flaws of the system, (they are happy to work within it, unlike the critical group) they are not just resigned to conventional or formal kinds of activity; they get involved on many different levels because they have a very real passion for politics. The sentiment of politics being as Crick suggests, a ‘civilising experience’, is something that is likely to resonate strongly with this group of people.

The most active group is likely to have a high level of reported interest and knowledge in politics as well as claiming reasonable satisfaction in the political system and their place within it. As most studies have highlighted previously, not only will their attitudes towards politics be positive, but also some of their attributes fortuitous. For example, they may have high levels of income and education and be overrepresented by people from a ‘higher’ social class.

The next most active group, the *critical* group, also represents the largely active citizen and certainly more active than either of the apathetic or latent individuals. They are different however to the engaged group in that some of their motivations are altered. Though they are likely to feel a sense of duty, the compulsion to act does not come out of an inherent love of politics and participation necessarily, quite the opposite in fact. It is their dissatisfaction, disillusion and disengagement with the political status quo

(the supply of it) that really fuels their sense that participation is crucial. They are likely to be the kind of people who though reasonably disgruntled, are confident in their ability to act and through that action make a difference. Whilst they are active in both conventional and unconventional methods they do not necessarily prefer to work within the system quite as well as the *engaged* group. As such, though they have almost as high levels of engagement in most activities, they are less keen on some of the ‘parliamentary’ types of activity. Being a member of a political party, running for office, taking an active part in a political campaign or donating money to political parties are not popular activities for this group, particularly in comparison to the *engaged* group. However, they are perhaps still more likely to engage in them than those categorised as being ‘inactive’.

Finally, this group is also likely to report high levels of political interest and knowledge in the same way as the *engaged* group. Whilst they may be characterised by reasonably high socio-economic status it is to a lesser extent than the previous group and they certainly will not have the same over-representation of ‘higher’ social classes. As this group have been said to be characterised not by a love of politics, but quite often a sense of disengagement, their levels of satisfaction are likely to be lower than the most active group, but this probably isn’t matched by the feeling of lacking efficacy.

As we move onto look at the latent citizen I want to explain my justification of the term ‘latent’ and how it is slightly different to the way Ekman and Amnå use the term. Whereas the latent individual within their matrix does take a reasonable interest in politics, seeing it as important and thus choosing to identify with ideology and social membership, my latent individual is one who is conversely largely inactive. They are instead latent in the respect that although they are mostly inactive, they can be prevailed upon to act when something particularly riles them. However, they are not motivated by interest or ideology necessarily but, should they act, like the *critical* group, they are moved by their disenchantment. Ekman and Amnå would instead put this group under the heading of ‘antipolitical’ – that they are, but they have the desire to act in some instances and are therefore *latent*.

The *latent* individuals are reasonably inactive, but not the most inactive. They are likely to partake in activities that require low level input; they may vote, are likely to sign petitions, boycott products, and probably discuss politics with friends or relatives if they do actually decide to engage. However, activities that involve higher levels of commitment are likely to be shunned. This includes but is not limited to; party political membership, taking an active part in political campaigns, going on demonstration and donating money. In what they do they are very much like Ekman and Amnå’s antipolitical, but with a greater propensity to be active than they give them credit.

This is a group of individuals who are disengaged, and are therefore likely to be reasonably critical of the political system, unlikely to show trust or satisfaction in it, to a similar or perhaps even greater

extent than the *critical* citizens. However, despite low levels of satisfaction, they are likely to have reasonably low level knowledge of politics, nor particularly high expression of interest. The crucial thing that marks the *latent* individuals different from the *apathetic* is that they at the very least hold opinions – whether their reported levels of knowledge suggest their opinions are accurate or not. This is a group that it is probable will be over-represented in terms of low socioeconomic status and class, which makes it a very different group to either of those described before. However, the difference is not quite as marked as it is for the *apathetic* group.

The final group, the *apathetic* group is the least active of all. Where they do act they are likely only to engage in activities where there is minimum input. They may possibly vote, discuss politics or sign petitions, but they will not do this at any great rate and there will be a significant proportion of individuals who fall within this group who simply do none of these activities at all, let alone any others requiring more commitment. I suspect that Ekman and Amnå were indeed correct in part of their assertion; that this apathetic group don't feel like they "need to make their voices heard, and politics is simply left to others" (p294). However, I wish to go further with this group than they did; they say that this type of person does not perceive politics as interesting. Whilst this is likely true if tested I would suggest in fact they don't perceive politics at all – they do not think it interesting nor disinteresting because it is not something that even forms part of their consciousness. These are individuals for whom politics has never penetrated their conscious worlds; they are not disengaged because their level of awareness is not that acute. Apathy is not considered a derogatory term because it simply states here a position of being, nor would it be perceived as negative by those individuals, because they simply would not perceive it. As such, they are unlikely to express high levels of dissatisfaction, though admittedly not high levels of satisfaction either. They perhaps don't feel like their actions could be effective, but equally likely is that they do not know. This is a group of individuals who in a political sense are characterised by the 'don't know' response; they do not necessarily have an interest either way, as their interest and knowledge in politics is much lower than any other group. As with the *latent* group they are likely to have less education, perhaps a lower income and 'lower' social classes will be over-represented within this group of people. The extent to which this is the case is much more stark even than the next closest group, the *latents*.

To pay final heed to Goertz, I must stress that I have chosen to adopt at *The Tertiary Level* the family resemblance principle, whereby none of the factors I have described are considered *necessary* as such, but that in relation to their political activity, or lack thereof, if there is more than a 50% 'family resemblance' then they are part of that family. Equally, one must not forget Sartori, in noting that whilst his levels referred often to states of comparability, mine do not share that capacity. Though *the Tertiary Level* is likely to have resonance with particular contexts more than others, I doubt it will be restricted to just one nation, something that will be considered within the concluding chapter.

To summarise; whilst great attention has been paid to most of the three most active groups conceived of in this typology, as has been highlight, the *apathetic* group has not. It is for the reasons outlined in previous chapters and exemplified through the review and conceptualisation here that focuses my attention towards this group. The remainder of this piece will seek to prove or disprove this conceptualisation. The data and methods I will employ to do this are depicted within Chapter 5 and the results of these are presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 5: Data and Methods

The primary research aim of this thesis is to test the conceptualisation of apathy, as outlined in the previous chapter, in order to provide a clear definition of it and a distinction from similar concepts of non-participation. A second aim is to assess possible explanations for such apathy and to compare these findings against reasons for disengagement outlined in the second half of chapter 3, in order to gauge the similarity between *disengaged* (or any other form of) non-participation and *apathetic* non-participation.

This chapter outlines the data and methods employed to explore these research areas. It details the collection, sampling and weighting process of the data in question and also considers the appropriateness of the data for the stipulated research aims. It then goes on to identify the response and explanatory variables of interest, and their suitability for purpose, before sketching out the methods used for analysis. This includes an acknowledgement of advantages, disadvantages and possible alternative methods, encompassing therefore, a justification of those employed.

5.1 Data Source

5.1.1 Hansard Society's Audit of Political Engagement

The Hansard Society is an “independent, non-partisan political research and education society devoted to promoting democracy and strengthening parliaments” (Hansard Society 2014b). The Society produces what it calls an “annual health check” on our democracy (Hansard Society 2014a), through a yearly Audit of Political Engagement, running since 2003. It is a unique piece of research that provides a longitudinal data source for the investigation of political feeling within Great Britain. The Audit came about in response to concern over lower voter turnout and aims to give an accurate picture of political engagement, public opinion about politics, the functioning, and health of our democracy (Hansard Society 2014a). To assess this, the Audit focuses on three key areas; knowledge and interest, action and participation and efficacy and satisfaction (Hansard Society 2014a).

Knowledge and interest in politics are tested through both self-reporting and questions which assess political knowledge, perhaps having to name their local Member of Parliament. Action and participation are operationalised in the questioning of respondents about their political activity and engagement. Respondents are asked whether they have been involved in anywhere up to 20 acts of political participation. These acts represent both traditional and modern forms of participation, enough I argue later on, to satisfy the numerous competing definitions of the

term within the existing literature. The final audit incorporates a slightly different operationalised understanding of action. This is complimented in the final audit (10) with, through negotiation with the Hansard Society, questions of willingness, rather than completion, of the same acts of political participation. This makes comparison between the majority of Audits and the final one more complex, but allows for additional analysis and scope for future research. Efficacy and satisfaction are examined through asking respondents their level of satisfaction with democracy in the UK, the performance of the governing party in addition to whether they feel their actions are of positive consequence or not.

In addition to these themes, the Audits also take note of usual demographic characteristics including sex, age, ethnicity, location, social class, education and income. Most are included in all iterations of the audit, though some variables, like education and income do not appear in all and so on occasion are regrettably excluded from the analysis.

Due to some of the inconsistencies in relation to the variables contained within each of the data sets, all ten data sets are considered separately in some cases. Where the inclusion of variables and format of analysis dictates, there is also consideration of *merged* data. As the section in this chapter relating to the selection of variables and methodologies used explains in more detail audits 1-9 are not only considered individually but also collectively. It is only audit 10 which is only analysed on its own.

5.1.2 Fieldwork Procedures and Data Collection

The first four audits were collected in the whole of the United Kingdom, which included Northern Ireland. The remaining six were collected only in Great Britain, to the exclusion therefore of Northern Ireland.

The data for Audits 1-8 was collected by Ipsos MORI and the remaining two audits conducted by TNS BMRB. The change in the company conducting the survey could represent potential problems for comparison if there are resulting differences in any of the variables. However, for my purposes such a difference only occurs for one variable of consideration, social class. I talk about how there will be no detrimental effect to the study later on in this chapter when I outline the explanatory variables to be examined.

Adults aged 18+, the Audit's target population, were interviewed face-to-face in their homes in either November or December of the years surveyed. In most instances throughout this

document the year stated refers to the year of publication (unless otherwise noted), as opposed to the year in which the data was collected, particularly when referring to the report for each of the audits. However, in the results section, the year of data collection is added alongside the audit number in order to act as a contextual reference point. The notes for the data collection process were given as follows:

Table 5-1 Hansard Society Research Notes

Audit of Political Engagement (APE)	Sample Size	Sample Definition	Fieldwork Dates	Notes
APE1	1,913	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	11-17 December 2003	
APE2	2,003	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	2-6 December 2004	
APE3	1,142	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	1-5 December 2005	
APE4	1,282	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	23-28 November 2006	Respondents in Northern Ireland who were interviewed in APE1-4 are not included in the reported data.
APE5	1,073	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	29 November – 7 December 2007	
APE6	1,051	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	11-17 December 2008	
APE7	1,156	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	13-19 November 2009	
APE8	1,197	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	3-9 December 2010	Reported data for Scotland includes an additional 98 interviews conducted 7-13 January 2011, providing a total of 197 adults in Scotland.
APE9	1,163	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	7-13 December 2011	Reported data for some questions in APE9 is derived from fieldwork with 1,235 adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain, conducted 11-15 January 2012

APE10	1,128	Adults aged 18 or above in Great Britain	14-18 December 2012	
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Source: (Hansard Society 2013, pp107-108)

5.1.3 Sampling and Weighting

The Audit is based upon a representative quota sample of the adult population of Great Britain. It aims to ensure that the number of women, men, full-time, part-time or unemployed is exactly representative of the target population. It does not, however, claim that it is always necessarily accurate on this score, particularly in regard to the number of young people or full-time employed people (Hansard Society 2013, pp103-104). The nature of the face-to-face household data collection method requires respondents to be at home during working hours, thus why these two groups may be under-represented in the data collection.

The Audit also aims to ensure that there is a large enough sample of respondents from Wales and Scotland and also from BME backgrounds to produce statistically significant and reliable findings. Therefore they sample respondents from these groups and areas in greater numbers than is proportionately representative.

Given the potential bias such over and under representation may have, the data have been weighted according to the known profile of Great Britain at the time of collection. This effectively means that less weight is given to the responses of people over-represented. It also means that the 'effective sample size' becomes lower than it previously was, but that enough people were sampled from various groups to ensure statistical significance of the findings.

Even after weighting has been calculated for, it is still not possible that the data can be entirely representative of the population. However, the Hansard Society nevertheless report that they can be 95% confident that, were the survey to be replicated once again they would obtain similar results, within appropriately specified ranges (Hansard Society 2013, p103).

5.1.4 Suitability

The Audit of Political Engagement is ideally suited for the research purposes of this thesis. It is as representative of the total UK adult population as it possibly can be and therefore provides an excellent sample population of my target population. The content, sample size and geographical breadth, combined with its representative element make this dataset, over the course of 10 years the most appropriate I could use for my purposes and also time and financial restraints.

As a political science researcher, the entire dataset is fascinating and could indeed facilitate a number of foci for both this work and future work. However, the primary function of this data for me is to be able to distinguish, through differences in level of activity, feeling and circumstance, how apathy is a very distinct concept, and also how it may be explained. As such, I have selected several response and explanatory variables to act as the basis of the analysis. Those which have been selected are intended to provide an extensive picture of the phenomenon, though it must be noted the dataset will not be exhausted. There will be elements of the dataset, such as newspaper readership and media engagement which I will not analyse, but leave for future investigation in order to do them the justice they require.

5.2 Variables

This section outlines the response and explanatory variables of interest within the data. Exactly how these are used within each method is detailed within the explanation of the methodology. All are designed for use in operationalising the components of this study as stipulated by the findings in the literature review and conceptualisation of apathy.

5.2.1 Response Variables

The response variables that I am interested in are those which assess the levels of political participation, so that one can build a picture of the nature and extent of political engagement. These are primarily used within the next chapter which aims to distinguish the concept of apathy and go some way to creating a typology of participation.

The Audits give the option for respondents to answer whether they have engaged with up to 20 acts of political participation. The audit asks this in the format of two questions relating to respondent's political activity; the first offering 10 options which remain constant throughout the first nine published audits; the second giving a range of participatory options which alternates minimally throughout the course of the first nine published audits. Audit 10 instead asks one question of political activity undertaken, with 13 options included, but it also asks a question about willingness of activity, should respondents feel particularly motivated, again with the same 13 response options. Nevertheless, questions have remained largely consistent throughout the lifespan of the Audits, and those of focus for *comparison* are those that are wholly consistent and analogous. Therefore where the results of the entire Audit are considered,

Audit 10 is excluded from comparison. However, due to the interesting nature of those changes to Audit 10, analysis from it is included separately.

The first of the response, activity questions asks “Which, if any, of the things on the list have you done in the last two or three years?” and provides the following consistent options, with a yes or no alternative:

- Contacted/presented my views to a local councillor/MP/MSP/WAM.
- Written a letter to an editor.
- Urged someone outside of my family to vote.
- Urged someone to get in touch with a local councillor/MP/MSP/WAM.
- Made a speech before an organised group.
- Been an officer/office holder of an organisation or club.
- Stood for public office.
- Taken an active part in a political campaign.
- Helped on fundraising drives.
- Voted in the last general election.

The second of the activity questions asks, as a follow on, “And which of these, if any, have you done in the last two or three years” and provides these consistent options, with a yes or no alternative:

- Voted in the last council election.
- Discussed politics or political news with someone else.
- Signed a petition.
- Donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation.
- Done voluntary work.
- Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons.
- Expressed my political opinions online. (Audits 5-8)
- Been to any political meeting.
- Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party.
- Taken part in a demonstration, picket or march.
- Helped organise a charity event (Audits 1-4 – seemingly replaced by “Expressed my political opinions online”).

Taken together these 20 questions provide a thorough range for the reporting of political participation, with a number of traditional and non-traditional activities considered. They encompass all understandings of what it might mean to be politically active, and also what it is like to experience ‘the political’. This serves to fully incorporate definitions of participation and

non-participation in previous chapters, as much as is sensibly and reasonably possible for a single representative data set.

As outlined, Audit 10 has the greatest variation compared to Audits 1-9. The nature of the change to this question is three-fold. Firstly, the wording has changed; in previous years the Audit gauged activity over the last two to three years, which has been changed to a more focussed 12 months. Secondly, the questions have been condensed into one, rather than two and incorporate a much smaller number of response options – from 20 down to 13. Lastly, the nature of some of those questions has changed.

Personal conversations with senior researcher, Matt Korris, from the Hansard Society go some way to explaining these changes. In terms of the wording of the question, and thus the imposed time frame upon respondents, it was understandably deemed that 12 months was a more sensible period of time for respondents to recall their activity. Given the relatively large time frame imposed upon respondents in the first nine Audits, there is an increased risk of problems with recall. Respondents are perhaps likely to forget activities they might have engaged with, because they mistakenly believe it was longer ago than three years, or more likely, that they know they have done it once, regardless of how long ago and want to claim that it was within the given time frame. This also ties in with the problem of socially desirable responses; given that political participation is generally considered a social ‘good’ (regardless of whether people who agree with the sentiment engage with politics or not) it seems reasonable that if an individual has done an activity at least once, they are likely to want to over-report it (De Vaus 2002). This bears out in the data, for when we look at questions where it has not been physically possible to complete an activity within the last two to three years, there are often still ‘yes’ responses. The obvious example is where the Audit asks the question “Have you voted in a *General Election* in the last two to three years?” For audits 2, 6 and 7 collected in November or December of 2004, 2008 and 2009 it is not accurate to report that any UK citizen could have voted in a General Election in the last two or three years, because there had only been General Elections in the Springs of 2001 and 2005. Nevertheless, as Figure 5-1 illustrates there were still significant proportions of respondents claiming that they had completed this activity within the given time frame. Whilst this effect seems to diminish across time it is not clear whether that is because people have become wiser to the question or simply that less people are voting in general elections.

Figure 5-1 Mis-reported Data

		Which, if any, of the things on the list have you done in the last two or three years? 'Voted in the last general election'	
Audit	Year Collected	Yes (%)	No (%)
2	2004	62.7	37.3
6	2008	56.9	43.1
7	2009	49.7	50.3

Source: Audit of Political Engagement Data 2004, 2008,2009

Researchers note that this is a historic problem with the data, and the changes to the questionnaire are in part explained by this. My concerns with this particular example are reflected and rectified in Audit 10, with a change in the wording to that response option. It asks respondents instead to indicate whether they have voted in any election, as opposed to specifically asking about a General Election. Though this is a flaw within the earlier data, it does not detract from the aims of the analysis, particularly if we assume that for Audit’s 1-9 people’s responses are likely to simply relate to the last General Election in which they were eligible to vote. The time reference for most respondents for this question will be anywhere up to five years therefore.

The change to both the number and nature of the options available to the activity response question relates to the concern that the list of political activities in previous Audits that one could have engaged with is largely ‘pre-digital’. Thus the reduction of activities and an update to others reflects a desire be more relevant to the population. As outlined before, this represented a potential problem to *my* research in terms of the scope for comparability, though it is not to the research field in general. As such, this is why the decision has been made to include Audit 10 separately from the rest of the data, but not to exclude it from the study entirely. Therefore, the activity questions that it asks are still of interest.

It asks two questions: 1. In the last 12 months have you done any of the following to influence decisions, laws or policies? 2. Which of the following would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly enough about an issue? In both instances the following 13 options were available for respondents to provide a yes or no answer to:

- Contact a local councillor or MP/MSP/Welsh Assembly Member.
- Contact the media.
- Take an active part in a campaign.

- Create or sign a paper petition.
- Create or sign an e-petition.
- Donate money or pay a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation.
- Boycott products for political, ethical or environmental reasons.
- Attend political meetings.
- Donate or pay a membership fee to a political party.
- Take part in a demonstration, picket or march.
- Vote in an election.
- Contribute to a discussion or campaign online or on social media.
- Take part in a public consultation.

The results presented show the analysis from individual years of the audit initially. However, as a direct result of the analysis undertaken for Chapter 6: Defining Political Apathy, I also chose to merge the datasets. The Hansard Society offers a complete dataset which comprises all 10 years of the data. However, due to the significance of the change to the variables in the final year's Audit that I use, I chose to merge the first nine Audits myself. This required lengthy and meticulous recoding and matching of variables. Despite the arduous process I have managed to produce a nine year dataset which is *entirely* comparable. As such, this has meant that some variables have been lost, though enough for the purposes of satisfying the research aims.

Audits 1-9 are individually included in only Chapter 6. The results of parts of that analysis show that the merged dataset is more appropriate for taking the investigation forwards. Therefore only Audits 1-9 as a merged dataset and APE 10 as an individual dataset will be included within the analysis presented in Chapter 7, to which explanatory variables are most relevant.

5.2.2 Explanatory Variables

The Audit provides a number of attitudinal explanatory variables for people's political activity, such as how they feel about the way that government or democracy works. It also provides explanatory variables that reflect people's attributes which in addition to those attitudinal variables may also explicate why individuals *act* in a particular way, as well as offering an interpretation about why individuals might *feel* a particular way about politics.

One of these provides useful in distinguishing apathy from disengagement and is therefore used within Chapter 6. The majority however, become of greater use in Chapter 7 as I attempt to explain some of the causes for political apathy among the population of Great Britain.

5.2.2.1 Attitudinal Variables

APE 1-9, due to the merging of the data does not contain as many explanatory variables as APE 10. APE 10 in particular asked a lot of new attitudinal variables. The first part of this section contains details of those attitudinal variables included within both APE 1-9 and APE 10. The second part details only those found within APE 10 and thus those which will only be considered in the separate analysis of APE 10 in the second and third sections of chapter 7.

Interest

The audit asks respondents exactly how interested they are in politics. It is not tested in any way, merely self-reported as with the activity variables. Respondents are asked to rank their interest using the following scale; 'very interested', 'fairly interested', 'not very interested', 'not at all interested' and 'don't know'. This is the one explanatory variable used within the first method and presented in the first of the results chapters; Chapter 6.

Opinion

Other attitudinal variables of interest include a question which asks respondents to report whether they feel 'people like me can really make a difference' which has a five-point agreement scale; 'strongly agree', 'tend to agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'tend to disagree', 'disagree strongly' and an additional 'don't know'. This variable goes some way to test the level of efficacy that people feel, a potentially important outcome to explain all levels of political engagement.

The idea of government performance and the effect this has upon interest and engagement was highlighted strongly within the review of the literature and thus is important within this study too. As such, I am interested in trying to determine what people think of, as the Audit asks 'the current system of governing'. The responses to this may indeed be based upon one of two, or perhaps both, possible understandings of the question. It could be perceived that this is a question which asks the respondents' opinions on the system of democracy, but potentially also upon the performance of the current government. This is not inherently problematic, and can be reflected upon accordingly in the analysis of results and ensuing discussion chapters.

APE 10 only Attitudinal Variables

APE 10 asked many more attitudinal, opinion based questions of respondents than the Audit had ever done before. It came as a response from contributors to have a wider set of variables included within the data set. Therefore, in addition to those indicated above it also asked the following questions which I have deemed of interest for Chapter 7:

It asks questions of how satisfied respondents are to a range of options, having them note whether they are 'very satisfied', 'fairly satisfied', 'neither satisfied or dissatisfied', 'fairly dissatisfied', 'very dissatisfied' or that they 'don't know':

- How satisfied are you with the working of Parliament?
- How satisfied are you with the way MPs in general are doing their job?
- How satisfied are you with the way your MP is doing his/her job?

The audit then also asks them to indicate the extent to which they agree with a number of statements, related to how they perceive politics and the way that it functions. It has them report whether they 'strongly agree', 'tend to agree', 'neither agree or disagree', 'tend to disagree', 'strongly disagree' or 'do not know':

- Politics is a waste of time.
- The only way to be really informed about politics is to get involved.
- Participating in politics is not much fun.
- I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community.
- A person like me could do a good job as a local councillor.
- A person like me could do a good job as a local MP.
- Every citizen should get involved in politics if democracy is to work properly.
- If a person is dissatisfied with political decisions he/she has a duty to do something about it.
- I don't have enough time to get involved in politics.
- The UK Parliament holds the government to account.
- The UK Parliament encourages public involvement in politics.
- The UK Parliament is essential to our democracy.
- The UK Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me.

The audit also seeks to assess individuals' sense of influence over decision making and asks them to report if they feel 'a great deal of influence', 'some influence', 'not very much influence', 'no influence at all' or 'don't know':

- How much influence do you feel you have over decision making in your local area?
- How much influence do you feel you have over decision making in the country as a whole?

The survey goes on to investigate not only how they feel about politics and the way it functions but how they feel about it from more of a personal standpoint. They are asked to rate their agreement using the same scale as before, but this time with the ‘don’t know’ option removed:

- When people argue about politics I feel uncomfortable
- Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on
- I usually find it easy to see political issues from other people’s point of view
- I do not take it personally when someone disagrees with my political views
- When I’m in a group I often go along with what the majority decides is best even if it is not what I want personally

Finally, and rather interestingly, the audit asks respondents to comment upon their level of interest in getting involved in politics if said politics were either MORE or LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests. The scale that the audit uses is ‘definitely more interested’, ‘probably more interested’, ‘probably less interested’ ‘definitely less interested’ and ‘don’t know’:

- If politics were MORE influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics?
- If politics were LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics?

5.2.2.2 Attribute/Demographic Variables

As with any study, demographic, or attribute variables, are often particularly useful. Given that within the literature review there is a focus on a number of these; most notably the role of Socio Economic Status, in addition to sex, age, knowledge and region means this study is no different. Therefore, a range of these variables are included to complement the existing literature.

Sex/Gender

‘Sex’ or in some studies, ‘gender’, has had differing and inconclusive outcomes in relation to the effect it has upon participation. Therefore I feel it important to test within this study whether I find it has an impact upon apathy or any other level of engagement within the conceptual spectrum. The stipulated response options are either ‘male’ or ‘female’, with currently no ‘transgender’ response available.

Social Class

Social Class has been a significant determinant of the overall label of ‘Socio Economic Status’, SES, within the literature. Given the impact this appears to have had within previous studies looking at non-participation, and the implications of such findings for legitimate functioning of democracy it is also of crucial importance within this study. The Audit asks respondents once again to self-report their social status giving the six following categories; ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C1’, ‘C2’, ‘D’ and ‘E’. These class descriptors are those stipulated by Ipsos Mori in the years in which they undertook the data collection, and remained consistent throughout that period of time, as indicated by the individual audit reports (Hansard Society 2004; Hansard Society 2005; Hansard Society 2006; Hansard Society 2007; Hansard Society 2008; Hansard Society 2009; Hansard Society 2010; Hansard Society 2011)

They prepare respondents by defining the criteria as follows:

‘Class A’ - Professionals such as doctors, surgeons, solicitors or dentists; chartered people like architects; fully qualified people with a large degree of responsibility such as senior editors, senior civil servants, town clerks, senior business executives and managers, and high ranking grades of the Services.

‘Class B’ - People with very responsible jobs such as university lecturers, hospital matrons, heads of local government departments, middle management in business, qualified scientists, bank managers, police inspectors, and upper grades of the Services.

‘Class C1’ - All others doing non-manual jobs; nurses, technicians, pharmacists, salesmen, publicans, people in clerical positions, police sergeants/constables, and middle ranks of the Services.

‘Class C2’ - Skilled manual workers/craftsmen who have served apprenticeships; foremen, manual workers with special qualifications such as long distance lorry drivers, security officers, and lower grades of the Services.

‘Class D’ - Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, including labourers and mates of occupations in the C2 grade and people serving apprenticeships; machine minders, farm labourers, bus and railway conductors, laboratory assistants, postmen, door-to-door salesmen.

‘Class E’ - Those on lowest levels of subsistence including pensioners, casual workers, and others with minimum levels of income.

As TNS-BMRB took over the data collection process from Ipsos Mori in 2011 for Audit 9 published in 2012, they chose to adopt those definitions adopted by the European Society for Opinion and Market Research which are quoted as follows (Hansard Society 2012; Hansard Society 2013):

‘Classes A/B’ – Labelled ‘Managers and professionals’, specifically:

‘Class A’ – Well-educated top to middle level managers with responsibility for extensive personnel; well-educated independent or self-employed professional people.

‘Class B’ – Well-educated smaller middle-level managers or slightly less well-educated top managers with fewer personnel responsibilities.

‘Class C1’ – Labelled ‘Well-educated non manual and skilled workers’, specifically: Clerical employees (junior managerial, junior administrative, junior professional), supervisors and small business owners.

‘Class C2’ – Labelled ‘Skilled-workers and non-manual employees’, specifically: Supervisors or skilled manual workers, generally having served an apprenticeship; moderately well-educated non-manual employees.

‘Classes D/E’ – Labelled ‘Unskilled manual workers and other less well-educated workers or employees’, specifically:

‘Class D’ – Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers; poorly-educated managers or small business owners.

‘Class E’ – Poorly-educated manual workers, unskilled workers, and employees working in other non-clerical settings; all others subsisting with minimum levels of income.

Given that these definitions of class are quite different depending on the survey company implementing them one might see a potential conflict for making comparison of class across more than one dataset. However, this can be reflected upon in the analysis if there is a

substantial change in the results that the definitions produce. Also, with the exception of APE 10, APE 9, and any anomalies that variable produces is subsumed in the merged dataset APE 1-9 so any unusual effect evened out. It is only really if there are any differences relating to social class that occur between APE1-9 and APE10 that the results need to be considered in more depth.

Income

In addition to SES being dependent upon the outcome of social class variables, education and income are also important. Income, unfortunately, is a variable that was inconsistently used throughout the process of the 10 year data collection. As such I have regrettably made the decision to exclude it from the analysis of the first nine audits; there were simply too many years where income was excluded for it to make relevant insights. However, given the final data set, APE 10, is analysed separately and the income variable is included within this, it has been considered as part of the analysis of that data set.

Education

Educational qualification was a variable that was consistently included in the first nine audits. In some years the specific detail of the educational qualification was much vaster than in other years. Due to not being able to extrapolate from the narrower distinctions of education, when merging the data, I have chosen to recode all data to the much reduced, though arguably simpler categorisation as follows:

GCSE/O Level/CSE, NVQ1+2 or equivalent, NVQ3 or equivalent, Degree or equivalent, Masters/PhD or equivalent, other, none, still studying or don't know.

Educational qualification was not contained within the data set for APE 10 and thus the separate analysis for this does not make reference to the impact of education.

Region

Geographical location can also have an impact, again as with many a study, on the nature and frequency of political engagement; different regions represent different opportunities for and history of political action. Therefore, the variable 'region' is of interest. The first four Audits included Northern Ireland, so the first four sets of data include Northern Ireland as a region for

that particular variable, as does the merged dataset. (N.B. Table 5.1 only notes that the data is excluded from the official reports rather than the datasets themselves). It must be noted that in the merged dataset Northern Ireland will always be poorly underrepresented in any of the citizen groups that it is relevant to. Therefore, it will largely be excluded from any analytical comment.

Other regions include, and remain consistent throughout the Audits: Scotland, North East, North West, York and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, Wales, South West, Eastern, London, Merseyside and South East.

Age

No study of political apathy would be complete without having some sort of focus on age. The issue of age and participation, particularly that of youth political participation, forms an entirely separate subset of the broader debate about declining civic-mindedness. Thus in attempting to distinguish apathy and explain it, age must not be excluded. The age categories are as follows:

- 16-17
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+

The first age category of 16-17 is largely irrelevant given the demographic the Audit stipulates it interviews, which is adults aged 18+. However, through either error in reporting (either by that of the respondent or interviewer or mis-recording) there are a couple of rare instances where there appears to be respondents from within this age group.

Knowledge

Gauging respondents' knowledge about politics is carried out in a similar way, by asking them to report what they think their knowledge of politics is, on the following scale; 'a great deal', 'a fair amount', 'not very much', 'nothing at all' and 'don't know'. I have chosen to focus upon respondents' self-reported knowledge rather than any question designed to test their knowledge in a particular area, as I deem these questions too simplistic and arbitrary a measure and inconsistent within the data across the time-scale.

In order to fully comprehend the effect of any of these demographic variables one must know the distribution (with the exception of knowledge) of them in each of the data sets. Therefore the following tables represent these and can be reflected upon within the analysis chapters where appropriate. The first are for the lie of the merged data set and the second for APE 10 alone.

5.2.2.2.1 Demographic Frequencies for APE 1-9

Table 5-2 Sex APE1-9

Sex		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	6073	47.9
Female	6610	52.1
Total	12683	100.0

Table 5-3 Social Class APE1-9

Social Class		
	Frequency	Percent
A	346	2.7
B	2325	18.3
C1	3632	28.6
C2	2593	20.4
D	1868	14.7
E	1919	15.1
Total	12683	100.0

Table 5-4 Region APE1-9

Region		
	Frequency	Percent
Scotland	1379	10.9
North East	541	4.3
North West	1177	9.3
Yorks & Humberside	1057	8.3
East Midlands	833	6.6
West Midlands	1091	8.6
Wales	898	7.1
South West	1039	8.2
Eastern	1053	8.3
London	1484	11.7
Merseyside	175	1.4
South East	1552	12.2
Northern Ireland	404	3.2
Total	12683	100.0

Table 5-5 Age APE1-9

Age		
	Frequency	Percent
16-17	133	1.0
18-24	1459	11.5
25-34	2038	16.1
35-44	2221	17.5
45-54	1902	15.0
55-64	2023	16.0
65-74	1841	14.5
75+	1066	8.4
Total	12683	100.0

Table 5-6 Educational Qualification APE1-9

Educational Qualification		
	Frequency	Percent
GCSE/O-Level/CSE	2431	19.2
Vocational Qualifications (NVQ1+2)	1003	7.9
A Level or equivalent (NVQ3)	1793	14.1
Bachelor Degree or equivalent (NVQ4)	1998	15.8
Masters/PhD or equivalent	570	4.5
Other	1242	9.8
No formal qualifications	3153	24.9
Still studying	376	3.0
Dont know	53	.4
Sub Total	12619	99.5
System	64	.5
Total	12683	100.0

5.2.2.2.2 Demographic Frequencies for APE 10**Table 5-7 Sex APE 10**

Sex		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	533	47.3
Female	595	52.7
Total	1128	100.0

Table 5-8 Age APE 10

Age		
	Frequency	Percent
18-24	167	14.8
25-34	217	19.2
35-44	198	17.6
45-54	196	17.4
55-64	138	12.2
65-74	114	10.1
75+	98	8.7
Total	1128	100.0

Table 5-9 Social Class APE 10

Social Class		
	Frequency	Percent
A	29	2.6
B	147	13.0
C1	293	26.0
C2	255	22.6
D	198	17.6
E	206	18.3
Total	1128	100.0

Table 5-10 Region APE 10

Region		
	Frequency	Percent
North East	42	3.7
North West	100	8.9
Yorkshire & Humber	69	6.1
East Midlands	64	5.7
West Midlands	76	6.7
East of England	102	9.0
London	184	16.3
South East	150	13.3
South West	73	6.5
Wales	89	7.9
Scotland	179	15.9
Total	1128	100.0

Table 5-11 Ethnicity APE 10

Ethnicity		
	Frequency	Percent
White	867	76.9
BME	252	22.3
Sub Total	1119	99.2
System	9	.8
Total	1128	100.0

Table 5-12 Annual Household Income APE 10

Annual Household Income		
	Frequency	Percent
Less than £86 / Up to £4,499	38	3.4
£87 - £124 / £4,500 - £6,499	38	3.4
£125 - £144 / £6,500 - £7,499	35	3.1
£145 - £182 / £7,500 - £9,499	42	3.7
£183 - £221 / £9,500 - £11,499	55	4.9
£222 - £259 / £11,500 - £13,499	49	4.3
£260 - £298 / £13,500 - £15,499	46	4.1
£299 - £336 / £15,500 - £17,499	45	4.0
£337 - £480 / £17,500 - £24,999	92	8.2
£481 - £576 / £25,000 - £29,999	69	6.1
£577 - £769 / £30,000 - £39,999	77	6.8
£770 - £961 / £40,000 - £49,999	58	5.1
£962 - £1442 / £50,000 - £74,999	67	5.9
£1443 - £1923 / £75,000 - £99,999	23	2.0
£1924 or more / £100,000 or more	17	1.5
Don't know	154	13.7
Refused	223	19.8
Total	1128	100.0

5.3 Methods for Analysis

This section will outline the various different methods for analysis, including justification of methods chosen. Latent Class Analysis is used within Chapter 6: Defining Political Apathy and descriptive analysis in the form of cross tabulations are utilised using the results from this chapter for Chapter 7: Explaining Political Apathy.

5.3.1 Latent Class Analysis (LCA)

In the social sciences it is not often possible to adequately measure the concept we seek to explore. The apathy (or indeed, perhaps, any of the conceptualised states outlined in chapter 4) of citizens are clear examples of this problem. It is very easy for people to state what they have done, and to a lesser extent, easy for them to state what they have not done, supposing they are aware of what they have not acted in and understand their motivation behind their 'non' act. However, particularly in the case of the apathy I am trying to pinpoint, it may be difficult or indeed impossible for people to state what they have not done if they have no real awareness of what it is that they could have done and thus no conscious 'motivation' either way. In much the same way that as a social scientist I have no awareness of the intricacies of particular aspects of theoretical physics, not that I would *not* be interested should I know what they are, but because I do not know why I *might* be interested in them. For some, as I have described, when it comes to politics, ignorance simply is bliss and people opt for that. How does one go about reading between these lines and making clear distinctions between the different types of people as laid out theoretically in the previous chapter?

The answer is that there are a number of ways – factor, discriminant or even cluster analyses are popular and offer suitable methods by which one can go about determining and classifying such a typology (Hagenaars & Halman 1989, p81). Latent Class Analysis (LCA) is a much less utilised tool, particularly in political research of this kind, though as the statistical inadequacies of its initial application have been rectified over a period of years (Hagenaars and Halman, 1989, p81), its use is becoming more commonplace.

LCA was initially conceived of by Lazarsfeld & Henry, (1968) as a way of observing latent, or unobservable attitudes implicit in the responses to dichotomous or polytomous survey questions (Vermunt & Magidson 2004, p175). It allows us to assess whether relationships that exist between variables may be explained by another, explanatory variable, unobservable or otherwise (Goodman 2002, p4). In the case of apathy then, LCA enables one to judge whether the relationship between the response that is given to, for example, the question 'have you

voted?’ and the response to a second question ‘have you discussed politics with anyone else?’, or a third, fourth or fifth... can be explained by something unobserved, perhaps apathy, that we cannot definitively measure otherwise.

The latter half of the twentieth century saw the mathematical development of latent class models, with the practical application of the technique becoming a realistic possibility for social scientists in the last quarter of the century as a variety of statistical packages became readily available (Goodman, 2002, p5). It has become commonplace in certain areas of the social sciences such as criminology and sociology and even in psychology or biomedical sciences but even now much less so in social or political research (Oser et al. 2012, p9). However, examples of LCA’s application in this kind of work do exist, some of which are particularly pertinent to this research. Oser et al’s (2012) recent article is just one such example, as they conduct a LCA of participation types and their stratification in order to assess whether patterns of traditional, offline participation are replicated in the profile of online participation. Another, similar application includes Breen's (2000) LCA of the underestimation of survey data in demonstrating the support for so-called extreme political parties.

Why is LCA more appropriate for my purposes than either factor, discriminant or cluster analysis? Factor analysis is, in many respects, very similar to LCA in that it tries to determine what factors (i.e. latent variables) can account for relationships that we might witness between variables. It posits that individuals have a certain level or score of that latent variable and this determines their response to the observed variables and that the similarities one sees between the observed variables is as a result of the correlation that exists between each of these and the latent variable(s) (Hagenaars and Halman, 1989, p82). The problem that one encounters here is that the ‘factors’ are deemed to be continuous, infinite, in terms of the possibility of categories and thus types of people. There is no strict way of determining robust distinctions, unlike in LCA where one can use both theoretical judgement and goodness-of-fit statistics to determine a finite number of groups and thus the appropriate model (ibid, p82; Oser et al, 2012, p4). Furthermore, it is more common that typologies, like mine, are based, like the variables I am concerned with, on a *nominal scale*, with a non-linear relationship whereas in factor analysis there is the assumption that the latent factor and the observed variables are considered on the interval scale and have linear relationships (ibid, p82-83). LCA in contrast, is more akin to the study of social and political behaviour that I am conducting as it uses categorical and binary variables measured on a *nominal scale* and thus does not presuppose linearity (McCutcheon 1987).

Discriminant analysis goes some way in addressing the first problem posed by factor analysis in that in this type of analysis there are only a few discrete categories rather than the infinite prospect in factor analysis. This reflects more closely the aim that I have of establishing a finite number of categories of people along the activity spectrum. There could of course then be possible alternative problems such as that the categories are no longer determined on the latent variable. Rather they are defined by the observed, manifest variables. Also, in discriminant analysis, as in factor analysis, the variables are measured at the interval, rather than nominal level. It holds then, that the same problem exists; these analyses presuppose linearity, which is arguably less compatible with the relationships I am seeking to explain (ibid, p83).

There are fewer issues with cluster analysis which is a more inclusive method, and seeks to cluster individuals, based on their responses, into groups where there is the most similarity *within* the groups but the greatest difference *between* the groups (ibid, p83). Cluster analysis refers, unlike factor analysis, to the closeness of people's responses *on* the manifest variables, rather than looking at the relationships *between* the variables. Whilst the potential problems that might occur with both factor and discriminant analysis cannot be levelled at cluster analysis one does encounter a new realm of practical and theoretical considerations. Firstly, unlike, as we will see with LCA, it is not obvious how many clusters one should choose in the first place. Secondly, the numerous cluster analysis techniques can result in different outcomes and still show no clear way of determining how many clusters one should have. Thirdly, it can often be the case that one might have clusters where there is similarity between two on one issue, but similarity between a different two on another issue and there exists no feasible way in cluster analysis of solving this contradiction (ibid, p83).

Whilst LCA in no way provides an exact solution to the problems of these methods, it is perhaps preferable. Whereas in the other methods the latent classes are *determined* by the relationships between the manifest variables and the latent, unobserved, variable, LCA relies on *probabilities*; it is *probabilistic*, not *deterministic* and as such the language used in analysing the results reflects that. As Hagenaaars and Halman (1989, p84) describe it:

“...the fact that one belongs to a particular latent class instead of to another enhances or diminishes the probability of obtaining a particular scoring pattern on the manifest variables but does not absolutely determine this pattern.”

The clear suitability for this method in my research context over any other provides justification for its use here. This is not to diminish the value of any of the other methods I have considered, even for the purposes of establishing my conceptualisation, it is merely that I consider it to be

the most appropriate in this instance. Latent Class Analysis will therefore form the basis for the results of chapter 6.

The latent class model estimates two sets of parameters; the conditional response probabilities and the latent class prevalences, from the responses given to the observable variable (Stuart & Hinde 2010, p29). These conditional response probabilities demonstrate the likelihood of a person selected at random, within a particular latent class, to give a particular response to the chosen variable (ibid, p29). These probabilities allow us to compare the differences between the latent classes. In my example, one might compare the probability of people within two given classes to respond ‘yes’ to having voted at the last general election or having said ‘yes’ to discussing politics with someone. The class that has the lowest probability of the two will be the least active group. Obviously it is likely that there will be more than two classes, and thus there will be a scale of probabilities that reflects a scale of activity/apathy. If for any variable there is little differentiation between the classes this would indicate that this variable lacks significance in explaining the distinctions between the groups. The second set of parameters demonstrates the lie of the data – the proportions of the sample population that are placed into each of the latent classes.

The probability of belonging to each latent class and of obtaining conditional response probabilities can be expressed as follows (as in my model where there are 7 manifest variables A, B, C, D, E, F and G) (adapted from Vermunt & Magidson, 2004 and Stuart & Hinde, 2010):

$$\pi_{ijklmnoqt} = \pi_t^X \pi_{it}^{A|X} \pi_{jt}^{B|X} \pi_{kt}^{C|X} \pi_{lt}^{D|X} \pi_{mt}^{E|X} \pi_{nt}^{F|X} \pi_{qt}^{G|X}$$

where π_t^X denotes the probability of being in latent class $t=1,2,\dots,T$ of latent variable X ; $\pi_{it}^{A|X}$ denotes the conditional probability of obtaining the response i to A, from members of class t , $i=1,2,\dots,I$ and $\pi_{jt}^{B|X}, \pi_{kt}^{C|X}, \pi_{lt}^{D|X}, \pi_{mt}^{E|X}, \pi_{nt}^{F|X}, \pi_{qt}^{G|X}$, $j=1,2,\dots,J, k=1,2,\dots,K, l=1,2,\dots,L, m=1,2,\dots,M, n=1,2,\dots,N, q=1,2,\dots,Q$, denote the corresponding probabilities for B, C, D, E, F and G respectively.

The LCA in this work will be calculated using the statistical package Latent GOLD, with the two sets of parameters being obtained using maximum likelihood estimates (Vermunt & Magidson, 2004, p176).

The objective of latent class analysis is to ascertain the most parsimonious model that adequately explains the relationship between the manifest variables in question – in other words

to find the model with the fewest number of latent classes whilst sufficiently explaining the relationship patterns that we witness (Vermunt & Magidson, 2004, p176). As the aim of LCA is to find homogenous groups as per the latent variable, the model may well be improved, in a statistical sense, by increasing the number of latent classes (Stuart & Hinde, 2010). However, it is possible that this method of model selection alone can reduce the theoretical interpretability. As such model selection is a work of theoretical and statistical exploratory art. A researcher might wish to impose an 'x' class model if he or she has theoretical underpinnings as to why an 'x' class model might be appropriate. For example, given that my theory assumes there are 4 types of people on the political activity spectrum, I may wish to stipulate a 4-class model. However, I begin by estimating models with 1, 2, 3 and 4 classes, assessing the level of statistical goodness-of-fit by using the likelihood ratio chi-squared statistic L^2 , comparing the models by the difference in this statistic. Alternative approaches include using Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) or the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) as tests of both goodness-of-fit and parsimony. Given that Latent GOLD produces these statistics also, I use these in addition to the L^2 statistic, whilst also taking into account the bivariate residual (BVR) statistic, as per the suggested instruction (Vermunt & Magidson, 2004; Vermunt & Magidson 2002). In nearly all instances, as the results below will demonstrate, the 4-class model is better than 3-class model. Where the 3-class model is better than the 4-class model I have carefully selected the model using a theoretically interpretive approach. Similarly, where the 4-class model is the best model statistically, I have also calculated a 5-class model to test if it is better statistically (and 6, 7, 8 or 9-class model where statistical goodness-of-fit dictates). In most cases the 5-class model is no logical improvement on the 4-class model, even if it is statistically. In nearly all instances where the 5, 6, 7... class models provide a statistically better fit, when approached from a theoretical standpoint, the 4-class model makes the most interpretive sense.

In terms of model selection therefore, I have adopted a threefold approach; one which balances statistical goodness-of-fit, parsimony and theoretical interpretability and the results thus reflect this.

5.3.1.1 Indicators

'Indicators', as used in the Latent GOLD program, represent the manifest variables within the data, as discussed. It is the relationship between responses to these indicators which latent class analysis seeks to explain; it aims to demonstrate that the relationship is conditional on the presence of a latent, unobserved variable.

Latent class analysis seeks to explain, using the latent, unobserved variable, the relationship between responses of *several* indicators from within the data. The indicators I have chosen to explore include a number of the activity variables outlined previously. Whilst it would be ideal if in the instance of the first nine Audits that I could include all 20 variables, or 13 for Audit 10, computationally a more selective set of indicators works better with LCA. Therefore, I have limited myself to seven in the case of Audits one to nine and only six due to the changes made to these variables in Audit 10. I have, as always in accordance with the literature, sought to strike a balance between a wide range of traditional and non-traditional types of political activity that are taken up in great enough numbers for the analysis to work statistically. I have tried to use variables that provide a comprehensive list of activities which are broad and accessible enough to be applicable to most respondents. As such the following seven variables were chosen for Audits one to nine from the question “Which, if any, of the things on this list have you done in the last two or three years?”:

- Urged someone outside my family to vote.
- Taken an active part in a political campaign.
- Voted in the last general election.
- Boycotted products for political, ethical or environmental reasons.
- Discussed politics or political news with someone else.
- Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party.
- Signed a petition.

In Audit 10, given the introduction of the question which assesses both willingness to act, in addition to reported action, models have been produced for these also. In this latest round of data the option to have urged somebody outside one’s family to vote has been removed. Two response options have also changed, to more modern acts; discussed politics or political news with someone else and signed a petition. Others have nuanced changes. Therefore the following variables form the basis for indicators within their respective models from responses to “In the last 12 months have you done any of the following to influence decisions, laws or policies?” and “Which of the following would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly enough about an issue?”

- Taken an active part in a campaign.
- Voted in an election.
- Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons.
- Contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media.

- Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party.
- Created or signed an e-petition

Indicators represent only one mechanism within latent class analysis for producing interesting results. Initial figures presented in Chapter 6 show the results of the estimation of the model with indicators alone. Following this preliminary analysis, it was determined that the introduction of covariates into the model provides a fascinating and compelling picture.

5.3.1.2 Covariates

One of the extensions of the basic latent class model is the inclusion of covariates which aim to describe or predict the latent variable and assess the difference this has on the relationship between the indicators. Given the latent variable in question is activity, or it's polar opposite apathy, it seems reasonable to include respondents' levels of interest as a covariate. Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, (1995, p344) highlight the value of including it within the analysis: "Presumably, being politically interested, knowledgeable, or efficacious enhances the likelihood that an individual will be active."

Of course, any of the other explanatory variables previously outlined, or those that they also highlight, could well act as possible covariates, for example; political knowledge, opinion of the individuals' efficacy of the system of governing, age, gender, educational level or social class. However, the purpose here with latent class analysis is not to *explain* the latent classes in any detail, but merely to demonstrate their presence in seeking to establish empirical support for my typology. As such, only the most logical and fundamental drivers for apathy will be considered; the most basic factors without which any additional reasoning would make sense. For example, whilst it might be reasonable that any one of those explanatory variables, particularly knowledge, could potentially predict the latent variable 'apathy', interest is the only underlying factor. Whilst being knowledgeable and feeling efficacious are necessary for participation they in turn have interest as prerequisite. Also, whilst knowledge and a sense of efficacy can distinguish engagement, interest is the most basic determinant of even low level participation and as such, a lack of interest is the key determinant of apathy. As outlined in the conceptual chapter, interest, or lack thereof, underpins the apathetic category; latent, critical or engaged citizens must have some level of interest. For the latent or critical citizen who may well feel disgruntled and possibly report dissatisfaction with governing or their feelings of efficacy, still feel *something*, rather than nothing, and this is conditional upon their interest in politics.

This is not to diminish the importance in interpreting apathy of any other explanatory variable, particularly those structural factors, nor to underestimate the impact they might have upon interest itself. It is merely to point out that whilst they might be *necessary* points to consider, they would never provide a *sufficient* account of apathy without ‘interest’ accompanying them. Therefore, as far as covariates and latent class analysis go, only interest in politics will be considered in an explanatory context at this stage. Other methods of analysis will provide adequate for the exploration of those outlined explanatory variables.

Latent class analysis is used to obtain models for each individual year of data, based upon the indicators and covariates highlighted. It is also used upon the merged dataset for audits one to nine.

5.3.2 Other Methods of Analysis

Once an appropriate model has been selected, Latent GOLD operates a function which allows the probabilities for each respondent of being in a particular latent class to be saved as new variables back into the original data set, matching them by their original case ID. It also produces a variable which assigns each respondent to a particular latent class according to the highest probability of being in that class. This then allows for descriptive statistics in the form of cross tabulations to be calculated in order to perceive if there is any relationship between assignment to a class on the basis of the strongest possibility and any of the explanatory variables.

All analysis of this kind, to be used for the basis of Chapter 7: Explaining Political Apathy, is performed using the package IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20.

Pearson Chi-Squared tests are conducted using this program to assess the level of connection or independence between categorical variables (Diamond & Jefferies 2001). What the Pearson Chi-Squared test does is compare “...the frequencies you observe in certain categories to the frequencies you might expect to get in those categories by chance” (Field 2009, p688). The test statistics for this is given as:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{observed}_{ij} - \text{model}_{ij})^2}{\text{model}_{ij}} \quad (\text{Field 2009, p688}).$$

This holds where *i* demonstrates the rows and *j* the columns. The expected frequencies are calculated using the following formula:

$$model_{ij} = E_{ij} = \frac{row\ total_i \times column\ total_j}{n} \quad (\text{Field 2009, p689}).$$

Where n is the total number of observations.

The statistic produced can be compared against the Chi-Squared distribution. To be able to do that one needs to obtain the degrees of freedom, done by hand using the calculation $(r - 1)(c - 1)$ whereby r is the number of rows and c is the number of columns. Depending upon the degrees of freedom and the p -value to be used there will be a critical value that the test statistic must be higher than for it to be significant at the level one chooses. In IBM SPSS Statistics the program "...will simply produce an estimate of the precise probability of obtaining a chi-square statistic at least as big as [the test statistic] if there were no association in the population between the variables." (Field 2009, p689).

One of the problems that is levelled at the Chi-Square statistic is that there is only an *approximate* chi-square distribution to the sampling distribution of the test statistic (ibid, p689). This is problematic for smaller surveys where it makes the significance tests incorrect, but is not a concern for larger surveys. Given the sample size of the Audit data, particularly that the chi-square test statistics are only calculated for the nine year merged dataset and the final data set, APE 10, this approximation is not an issue with my data and therefore there is no need for any, more precise statistical tests of significance.

These additional methods of analysis are applied to the merged dataset, APE 1-9 and the latest data, APE 10, both of which contain the probabilities and distribution of respondents to each of the latent classes obtained from the latent class models selected as a result of the analysis in the next chapter; Chapter 6: Defining Political Apathy.

Chapter 6: Distinguishing Political Apathy

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the latent class analysis set out in the data and methods chapter, in order to test the research questions and hypotheses outlined following the detailed literature review in Chapter 3 and subsequent conceptualisation of apathy in Chapter 4.

All tables in this chapter show the *profile* of political activity (and interest in politics where covariates are included within the models) for each of the classes reported – it shows the proportion of the class in question who have done a particular activity or the proportion who have reported a certain level of political interest.

The *overall* probability of being in a particular class, dependent on whether respondents have undertaken an act or not, is an interesting, though less relevant finding for my purposes. It has therefore not been included in this report of the results. However, the probabilities for each *individual* respondent of being in a particular class, dependent upon all of their responses, is an extremely interesting and important finding, particularly when one considers those individuals' backgrounds. This is included within the analysis in Chapter 7.

Tables 6-1 – 6-9 demonstrate the results of the latent class analysis for the Audits of Political Engagement 1-9. They represent the best models possible based upon the three-fold criteria of statistical goodness-of-fit, parsimony and theoretical interpretability as stipulated in the description of model selection for this method in the previous chapter. They are the models selected from only entering the seven indicator variables.

Tables 6-10 – 6-18 demonstrate the outcome of model selection when 'interest in politics' has been included as a covariate, in addition to the original seven indicator variables.

Given the largely analogous findings across the first nine audits, Table 6-19 shows the results of latent class analysis performed upon the merged dataset of these nine years. This model includes both the seven indicator variables and also 'interest in politics' as the only covariate.

The data collected in Audit 10 was released after the original latent class analysis had been conducted on the individual and merged datasets for audits one to nine. As these results had already established the importance of including a covariate variable in the model, the model which excludes covariates was not tested for the Audit 10 data as it had been for all the previous years. Table 6-20 is illustrative of this and presents the findings of latent class analysis for the question assessing respondents' reported activity, with the six indicator variables mentioned in the previous chapter, and interest in politics as a covariate.

Similarly, Table 6-21 contains the results for the question which asks respondents to comment upon their willingness for future political activity should the occasion arise. This model contains the same six indicators and one covariate.

6.1 Results

Figure 6-1 demonstrates the relevance of the colour coding throughout the presentation of results in order to aid the illustration of the findings; in each instance, the levels of activity per indicator has been coded across the classes. The colour coding is designed to be reasonably intuitive and follows the order of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green and (on one occasion) blue. The figures highlighted in red denote the class with the lowest level of activity per indicator, orange the second lowest, yellow the third lowest, green the fourth lowest (in most models this colour represents the *most active*) and blue the fifth lowest.

Such coding allows the demonstration of very consistent patterns across nearly all years surveyed. Following the model selection process outlined, all models show the four-class model to be the most appropriate model with only two exceptions; APE6 and APE8.

Figure 6-1 Key to Activity Colour Spectrum

Least Active
2nd Least Active
3rd Least Active
4th Least Active
5th Least Active

6.1.1 Models including indicators (APE1-9) for reported undertaken activity

Table 6-1 LCA model for APE 1

APE 1 (Collected 2003)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0069	0.2004	0.3590	0.8171
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0035	0.0135	0.0422	0.7638
Voted in the last general election	0.4473	0.8768	0.8135	0.8070
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0122	0.1673	0.5750	0.8871
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.1181	0.3951	0.9918	0.9376
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0056	0.1025	0.0454	0.5205
Signed a petition	0.1749	0.5127	0.7767	0.8268
Cluster Size	0.5623	0.2382	0.1797	0.0199

Table 6-2 LCA Model for APE 2

APE 2 (Collected 2004)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0454	0.1175	0.5605	0.6279
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0045	0.0130	0.0620	0.8714
Voted in the last general election	0.4788	0.7105	0.8745	0.8079
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0063	0.1935	0.7218	0.6053
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0792	0.5350	0.8793	0.9028
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0231	0.0424	0.1225	0.7757
Signed a petition	0.1288	0.6253	0.9067	0.6504
Cluster Size	0.4762	0.3378	0.1571	0.0289

Table 6-3 LCA Model for APE 3

APE 3 (Collected 2005)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0082	0.1693	0.3371	0.6986
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0040	0.0034	0.0289	0.2137
Voted in the last general election	0.5045	0.6859	0.8689	0.9250
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0065	0.7643	0.0435	0.7670
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0115	0.4073	0.7513	0.9805
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0009	0.0610	0.1736	0.4615
Signed a petition	0.0581	0.4331	0.7423	0.9456
Cluster Size	0.3503	0.2855	0.2461	0.1181

Table 6-4 LCA Model for APE 4

APE 4 (Collected 2006)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0149	0.1324	0.2863	0.6164
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0066	0.0000	0.0002	0.7212
Voted in the last general election	0.4343	0.7921	0.8370	0.9506
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0035	0.0905	0.7319	0.6619
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0130	0.4692	0.8807	0.9966
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0013	0.0473	0.0552	0.4979
Signed a petition	0.1247	0.5460	0.9166	0.8157
Cluster Size	0.4109	0.3928	0.1564	0.0399

Table 6-5 LCA Model for APE 5

APE 5 (Collected 2007)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0113	0.1646	0.4807	0.3203
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0048	0.0054	0.1094	0.4632
Voted in the last general election	0.4605	0.7572	0.8848	0.9125
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0094	0.1764	0.7564	0.5435
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0491	0.5669	0.9923	0.9143
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0111	0.0326	0.0021	0.8957
Signed a petition	0.1204	0.4708	0.8928	0.9439
Cluster Size	0.4777	0.3635	0.1304	0.0284

Table 6-6 LCA Model for APE 6

APE 6 (Collected 2008)			
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0177	0.2495	0.6510
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0104	0.0002	0.6639
Voted in the last general election	0.4581	0.7532	0.8773
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0087	0.3911	0.8057
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.1095	0.7857	0.9918
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0032	0.0339	0.4184
Signed a petition	0.1828	0.5966	0.9376
Cluster Size	0.6400	0.3228	0.0372

Table 6-7 LCA Model for APE 7

APE 7 (Collected 2009)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0081	0.2219	0.6774	0.0259
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0000	0.0222	0.1974	0.0012
Voted in the last general election	0.3187	0.6994	0.8172	0.4832
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0266	0.0472	0.6404	0.7158
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0657	0.5892	0.9090	0.8739
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0016	0.0676	0.1933	0.0008
Signed a petition	0.1540	0.3736	0.8621	0.7841
Cluster Size	0.534	0.2609	0.1367	0.0685

Table 6-8 LCA Model for APE 8

APE 8 (Collected 2010)					
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0218	0.1814	0.5571	0.1073	0.7902
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0002	0.0006	0.1002	0.0531	0.5687
Voted in the last general election	0.4120	0.9880	0.9070	0.5286	0.7998
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0004	0.0024	0.5869	0.1430	0.3619
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0703	0.4689	0.8988	0.4618	0.9947
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0000	0.0153	0.0003	0.0236	0.9175
Signed a petition	0.0911	0.2367	0.8020	0.6145	0.7431
Cluster Size	0.4757	0.1766	0.1705	0.1497	0.0276

Table 6-9 LCA Model for APE 9

APE 9 (Collected 2011)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0146	0.1696	0.4313	0.7216
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0008	0.0124	0.0001	0.5017
Voted in the last general election	0.3145	0.7286	0.7906	0.9968
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0080	0.0085	0.3678	0.6378
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0140	0.5186	0.8441	0.9953
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0024	0.0354	0.0001	0.4800
Signed a petition	0.0997	0.1104	0.7808	0.9418
Cluster Size	0.4877	0.2837	0.1879	0.0408

For the most part, in tables 6-1 to 6-9 Class 1 consistently represents the least active, the ‘apathetic citizen’, Class 2 the second least active, the ‘latent citizen’, Class 3 the third least

active, the 'critical citizen' and class 4 the fourth least active, the 'active citizen'. With the exception of APE 6 and APE 8 the characteristics of the four class model are replicated time and time again.

Class 1 represents those individuals I identified previously as the 'apathetic citizen' with all types of activity being taken up least often by this group. The activities in which they participate most include voting in the general election, discussing politics or political news with someone else and signing petitions, though uptake even in these forms of activity is not extraordinary, particularly so in comparison with any of the other classes. The activity based characteristics of this class persist year on year. In most instances this class represents a relatively high proportion of the population sample, with anywhere between 35% and 64% of the sample being included within this group, averaging somewhere in the mid to late 40s percentage wise.

In many ways class 2 demonstrates similar patterns of behaviour to class 1, though they participate in much higher proportions. Individuals within this group prefer to vote, discuss politics and sign petitions over any other activity in the same way that people in class 1 do also. This is perhaps not surprising given these are the activities which are most popular across all groups. However, the significant difference between this class and the first is that the proportion that votes at general elections is considerably higher and demonstrates behaviour, which, for this particular indicator, more closely resembles that of classes 3 and 4. This seems to be a much smaller group than the first, however – with anywhere between 17% and 39% of the sample population appearing within this group. In all years it is clear that the majority of the sample population laid either in Classes 1 or 2 based on these results. The greatest difference between the latent and apathetic classes is that around 40% or more of the latent class discuss politics with others, whereas the apathetic class only approximately 10% discuss politics.

Class 3 is where we begin to witness more variation in levels of activity. Whilst yet again the most popular activities amongst this group are voting, discussing politics or political news with someone else or signing a petition, people within this class do so in *much* greater proportions than Class 2 and certainly Class 1. The one exception to this rule relates to the indicator 'donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party' where people in Class 3 participate in similar ways to Classes 1 and 2. In some instances the proportions for having donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party are lower for Class 3 than for Classes 1 and 2. These results indicate that these individuals are very active politically but are seemingly deliberately non-partisan and disengaged from the formal political process, a finding which is in no way inconsistent with the typology for this group. This is a much smaller group than either Class 1 and 2, with the percentage of the sample population generally being in the early teens. It is interesting that the size of this class appears to increase in the years following a

general election – perhaps a small proportion of people shift to being in the more active, though equally critical citizen group in the wake of a hubbub of political activity.

Class 4 represents people who can be described not only as active, but extremely active in comparison to the rest of the sample population. They participate in all forms of activity at proportions that are much higher than both Classes 1 and 2 and for the most part than Class 3 (though not in all instances). The distinction between this Class and Class 3 is that they not only seem *interested* in politics by the types of activities they are involved in, but also engaged at quite a substantial systematic level, with much higher proportions of people within this group claiming to having taken part in a political campaign or donated money or a membership fee to a political party, as well as any of the other activities. However, the proportion of people even within this group who donate money or a membership fee to a political party is much lower than any other activity. In spite of this we might still conclude that they are reasonably partisan.

This is certainly a group that is most clearly distinct from all others. Unsurprisingly then perhaps, it is a particularly small group in size, with only a small percentage (1-5%) of the sample population in most years being within this group. There is one exception to this rule, in that in APE 3, where the data was collected at the end of 2005, a general election year, there is a large increase in this percentage to nearly 12%. However, this is not a finding that is replicated in APE 8, a year in which the 2010 election took place.

Of course, as outlined in the data and methods chapter, there will always be a certain amount of variation in answers to the question ‘did you vote in the last general election’, given that it is impossible for respondents to have correctly answered yes in audits 2, 6 and 7 and yet as figure 5-1 in the data and methods chapter shows there is still a significant proportion of people who claimed they had done that activity in the last two or three years. However, the amount of variation for this variable amongst each of the classes is minimal. Clearly people use the last general election as their reference point in providing a response to the question.

There is one important distinction between Classes 1 and 2 and Classes 3 and 4 that must be noted. For the first two classes, voting in a general election is by far and away the most common form of participation that they engage with. It is still an activity that is highly popular amongst Classes 3 and 4, but most often comes second to discussing politics and political news with other people. This is a crucial difference between the classes, indicative of the latent apathy of the two least active classes. Yet it seems there is still the capacity for them to be mobilised to vote; a perhaps worrying indictment of democracy in Great Britain, that propensity to vote is much higher than discussing, debating and challenging politics with another individual is.

These described characteristics, of each of the classes, are played out throughout *most* of the models selected, with the exception of APE 6, APE 7 and APE 8, whereby the 4-class model does not fit or the clarity of the selected model is poorer than any of the other years.

For example, in 2008 the 3-class model was the most appropriate. Though the same pattern persists that class 1 is less active than class 2 and class 2 less active than class 3, some of the particularities that were identified in the four-class model have been lost. The least active, apathetic group has largely remained the same, albeit with slightly higher proportions of those having said they have done the range of activities and a bigger than average proportionate class size. The same appears true for the most active group, but the differences between the latent and critical groups of citizens appear to have been subsumed within the middle class, class 2. So, for example, it means that the lack of donation of money or membership fee to political parties by the third most active group, which was depicted in most of the four class models, is a distinction which is not made in the three class model. This is a particularly interesting characteristic of that group that has been lost, given how it usually compares in political activity to the other groups and its highly participatory features.

For APE 7 and APE 8 the patterns are somewhat less clear in either the four or five class model that have been selected as the most appropriate. In APE 7 however the differences are reasonably small and so the overall pattern still holds.

APE 8 is the only year for which a five class model is appropriate according to the model selection process. Class 1 has the same characteristics as it does in all other models, with voting being the most popular form of activity over any other variable included. Class 5 largely represents the most active in this instance and Class 4 the next most. There are a couple of exceptions – notably that the most active, when it comes to voting at a general election, falls to Class 2, which is generally one of the least active groups. Again, the second most active group seem to abandon ties to political parties – the standard Class 3 appears to have shifted to Class 4. There is a more ambiguous picture for the remaining classes 2 and 3, with some significant, and others marginal, differences. Where there are larger differences Class 3 is more active on the whole, witnessed in the rate of activity for taking an active part in a political campaign, boycotting and signing petitions. It seems that the 5 Class model has resulted in Class 2 from the four class model being split in two. This is not only reflected in how these groups are seen to behave, but also in the fact that the size of those groups (17.66% and 14.97% of the sample population Class 2 and Class 3 respectively) represents the average size of Class 2 under a four class model. Whilst this means that there is greater differentiation between the classes, which is important when going from a three class model to a four class model, the five class model offers very little substance beyond that of the four class model. Though the five class model was the

one that made most statistical and intuitive sense in terms of model selection, it does not add anything to the conceptualisation of apathy.

Though the four class model is the most appropriate when it comes to APE 9, as it was most logical in all senses of model selection, the story it tells is less clear than in some of the other models. Class 4 is as consistent as it was in most of the other models in representing the most active. Class 3 however, demonstrates further its indifference to party politics by becoming the least active not only in donating money or a membership fee to a political party but also in taking an active part in a political campaign. In these activities, Class 2 becomes the second most active, then followed by Class 1. It is clear that party politics is something quite distasteful to members of Class 3, those who are the most critical, perhaps unsurprisingly.

It is crucial to note, in spite of any deviations to the strict 4 Class model, there is one thing that remains constant throughout all models, and that is the least active, the apathetic people. It seems that whatever the context, whatever the political participation that might exist, we can always be sure of an apathetic group and how they are likely to behave. In all models the activity of this group is consistently low and the characteristics identified previously, persistent. The one problem with the analysis presented here so far is that Class 1 in all years represents a reasonably high majority of the sample population. Throughout this work, I have argued there is the existence of an apathetic group, distinct from those who are disillusioned. However, as the majority of the literature points to, a lot of the nonparticipation is due to the latter notion so one should not expect to find pure apathy in such high proportions. It seems likely that the truly apathetic haven't been absolutely identified through a model which only incorporates indicators rather than covariates. It is here then, that the introduction of the variable 'interest in politics' becomes necessary as a covariate.

6.1.2 Models including indicators and covariates (APE1-9) for reported undertaken activity

Tables 6-10 to 6-18 show the results of latent class analysis using the seven activity variables as indicators and additionally including interest in politics as a covariate.

Here we find similar patterns occur across the years as they did in the initial analysis, though considerably more concrete. In this round of analysis only the four class model has been selected in any of the years sampled. APE 9, as it did previously offers the least clear picture, though the five class model is no longer the most appropriate, therefore perhaps offering a little more clarity. In spite of this anomaly, these models are much more clearly defined with the introduction of the covariate. As before, the least active group is Class 1, the second least active

group is Class 2, the second most active is Class 3 and the most active group is shown to be Class 4.

The exact same characteristics of each of the classes, from the initial analysis, are replicated in tables 6-10 – 6-18. For Class 1 the most popular activity is still having voted in a General election, followed by having discussed politics with someone else and signing a petition. However, there are some notable differences to this group compared to the initial latent class analysis. Firstly, the size of Class 1 is considerably smaller across all years, highlighting that the apathetic group has been narrowed much more by the introduction of the interest covariate. With the exception of APE 9, where patterns are much less clear, the apathetic group represents no more than 34% of the sample population. Equally, at its smallest, Class 1 still counts for 25% of the sample population. Though this is also reasonably high, when compared to the range of 35% - 64% sample population size of the initial analysis, we can see the impact of filtering the model using reported interest in politics upon the model. Seemingly this model selection process has gone some way to achieve reaching people who are truly apathetic.

Secondly, amongst this group the proportion that reports having voted at the last general election has decreased significantly. Previously it was the case that this value only fluctuated slightly year on year and did not seem to be particularly affected by the occurrence of a general election in either 2005 or 2010. This is no longer so, for in Class 1, (though crucially it must be noted no other class is significantly affected) people have reported much higher turnout in the year of an election, and that which follows it, than any other year. Clearly this apathetic group votes less than the apathetic group in the initial analysis, but this activity is more prone to change in light of an election when considering these models.

Class 2 remains largely the same as it did in the first round of analysis in that people within it, like Class 1, favour voting, discussing politics and signing petitions. This group ranges in size from a low of 21% of the sample population up to 47%, with the average lying in the early 40s. This is in comparison to a range of 17% to 39% in the initial analysis. Where the size of Class 1 has decreased, a proportion of the loss has been subsumed into Class 2, though not all, as the size of Class 3 has also increased with a range of 19% to 39% of the sample population being within that group. This is also significantly higher than it was previously, where we could expect to see the size of the group being in the early teens as a proportionate figure. The people in Class 2 in the latest model selections participate in their preferred activities far less than before. It would appear that the reduction in the size of Class 1 has shifted some of the less active people across to Class 2, which has resulted in that group becoming bigger. The other resultant feature is that some of the more active people from the original Class 2 have moved into Class 3 and also made that group bigger. The introduction of the covariate seems to have

redefined these groups slightly, a redefinition which supports not only the existing literature, regarding the number of people who are disengaged, latent or critical citizens, but also my conceptualisation that there is still a core of people who are apathetic.

Class 4 remains largely unchanged, with very small proportions of the sample population residing within this group. They are highly active in nearly all of the indicator variables included. The activity which they participate in the least is donating money or a membership fee to a political party. This is all true of the first Class 4 as well. The size of this group has also changed very little in comparison to the previous models. It is possible that they are too specific a group of people for interest to have had an effect upon the composition of this group.

The level of interest reported by class reflects perhaps no more than one might expect. The interest amongst class 1 is very low in all years with a very high majority of people in this group reporting themselves as either not very interested or not at all interested. It is in this latter bracket that most of the people in Class 1 fall. At the other end of the spectrum, for those people in Class 4, most are very interested and if they are not very interested they claim to be fairly interested. For Class 3 the majority of people report themselves as fairly interested in politics, and if not fairly interested in politics, they are very interested. People in Class 2 are roughly split somewhere between being fairly interested and not very interested in politics, though with the balance lying for the most part in favour with being fairly interested in politics.

Unusually, the 'don't know' response to the question about interest plays a curious part within this analysis. On most occasions the 'don't know' answer tells us very little about respondents, however, in this instance it is quite revealing. The highest proportion of people who claim they do not know what their level of interest in politics lies for the majority of years with Class 1, the apathetic group (with the exception of APE 2 and APE 9, the latter for which there was either no response option of 'don't know' or no results for it). This is entirely consistent with the characteristics of this group within both the results so far and the initial conceptualisation; not only are they least interested and engaged, they have the least awareness about politics.

What is notable from the introduction of this covariate is the obvious difference between the interest levels of Classes 2, 3 and 4 in comparison to Class 1. It is quite clearly the level of interest which marks this class out as distinct from any of the others; people in Classes 2, 3 and 4 all largely report being interested at least at some level, whereas people in Class 1 report very little or no interest whatsoever in or cognizance of politics. Their interest bears out their level of activity, though their activity still appears much higher than their level of interest, particularly in relation to voting, signing petitions and discussing. This means that for the most part the proportion of that group that is voting is not necessarily interested in politics.

Table 6-10 LCA Model for APE 1 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 1 (Collected 2003)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0004	0.0628	0.3478	0.8114
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0000	0.0075	0.0346	0.7516
Voted in the last general election	0.2396	0.7172	0.8360	0.7836
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0108	0.0479	0.5019	0.8902
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0365	0.2285	0.8919	0.9876
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0023	0.0371	0.0746	0.4595
Signed a petition	0.1124	0.3184	0.7289	0.8428
Cluster Size	0.2622	0.4706	0.2460	0.0211
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0151	0.0360	0.2578	0.8845
Fairly interested	0.0636	0.4448	0.6137	0.1148
Not very interested	0.2901	0.4517	0.1256	0.0006
Not at all interested	0.6207	0.0651	0.0028	0.0001
Don't Know	0.0106	0.0024	0.0000	0.0000

Table 6-11 LCA Model for APE 2 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 2 (Collected 2004)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0207	0.0848	0.3850	0.6333
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0000	0.0079	0.0183	0.5328
Voted in the last general election	0.3366	0.6871	0.8199	0.8474
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0093	0.0836	0.5412	0.6539
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0248	0.2881	0.8937	0.8459
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0165	0.0351	0.0459	0.5803
Signed a petition	0.1509	0.3535	0.8636	0.7496
Cluster Size	0.2784	0.4393	0.2186	0.0637
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0052	0.0978	0.2155	0.6825
Fairly interested	0.0854	0.4938	0.6508	0.3152
Not very interested	0.3879	0.3379	0.1292	0.0021
Not at all interested	0.5185	0.0705	0.0005	0.0002
Don't Know	0.0031	0.0000	0.0040	0.0001

Table 6-12 LCA Model for APE 3 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 3 (Collected 2005)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0006	0.0188	0.3867	0.6057
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0041	0.0004	0.0109	0.3025
Voted in the last general election	0.4836	0.5624	0.8671	0.9234
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0047	0.5418	0.3584	0.6495
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0019	0.2199	0.6973	0.9943
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0012	0.0420	0.1303	0.5589
Signed a petition	0.0103	0.4306	0.6356	0.9405
Cluster Size	0.2928	0.2121	0.3989	0.0962
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0335	0.0512	0.1484	0.5630
Fairly interested	0.2078	0.3128	0.6380	0.4343
Not very interested	0.4003	0.4397	0.1892	0.0023
Not at all interested	0.3556	0.1961	0.0223	0.0003
Don't Know	0.0028	0.0001	0.0020	0.0002

Table 6-13 LCA Model for APE 4 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 4 (Collected 2006)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0033	0.0944	0.2497	0.5889
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0061	0.0019	0.0003	0.5653
Voted in the last general election	0.3450	0.8010	0.8349	0.9243
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0159	0.0283	0.5045	0.6739
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0238	0.2749	0.8350	0.9954
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0083	0.0284	0.0413	0.4800
Signed a petition	0.1720	0.3579	0.8467	0.8245
Cluster Size	0.3452	0.3498	0.2542	0.0507
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0113	0.0853	0.2215	0.7144
Fairly interested	0.1012	0.5066	0.6092	0.2673
Not very interested	0.3172	0.4045	0.1360	0.0182
Not at all interested	0.5627	0.0034	0.0333	0.0001
Don't Know	0.0075	0.0002	0.0000	0.0000

Table 6-14 LCA Model for APE 5 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 5 (Collected 2007)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0002	0.0680	0.3423	0.4443
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0040	0.0059	0.0001	0.5237
Voted in the last general election	0.2668	0.7170	0.8293	0.9040
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0118	0.0519	0.4952	0.6800
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0261	0.2446	0.9010	0.9554
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0122	0.0201	0.0365	0.4104
Signed a petition	0.0891	0.2689	0.7464	0.9043
Cluster Size	0.2614	0.4422	0.2430	0.0534
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0108	0.0701	0.2385	0.6042
Fairly interested	0.0031	0.4269	0.6784	0.2924
Not very interested	0.2630	0.4478	0.0722	0.1028
Not at all interested	0.6983	0.0551	0.0071	0.0003
Don't Know	0.0247	0.0001	0.0038	0.0003

Table 6-15 LCA Model for APE 6 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 6 (Collected 2008)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0004	0.0481	0.2820	0.7525
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0001	0.0139	0.0218	0.7859
Voted in the last general election	0.2348	0.6268	0.7625	0.9050
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0002	0.0437	0.4504	0.8497
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0365	0.2102	0.8643	0.9932
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0000	0.0071	0.0422	0.5700
Signed a petition	0.0989	0.2716	0.6488	0.9194
Cluster Size	0.2580	0.4483	0.2691	0.0245
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0166	0.0413	0.2545	0.9005
Fairly interested	0.0026	0.5041	0.6018	0.0987
Not very interested	0.3084	0.4163	0.1243	0.0002
Not at all interested	0.6626	0.0368	0.0174	0.0005
Don't Know	0.0098	0.0016	0.0021	0.0000

Table 6-16 LCA Model for APE 7 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 7 (Collected 2009)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0012	0.0960	0.4562	0.6819
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0000	0.0092	0.0339	0.5680
Voted in the last general election	0.1947	0.5926	0.7577	0.7413
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0097	0.0619	0.5642	0.5703
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0301	0.3417	0.9306	0.9033
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0023	0.0333	0.0457	0.5331
Signed a petition	0.1052	0.3094	0.7608	0.9014
Cluster Size	0.3335	0.4352	0.1920	0.0393
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0210	0.0507	0.3241	0.7619
Fairly interested	0.1416	0.4966	0.5630	0.2345
Not very interested	0.3432	0.3867	0.1122	0.0032
Not at all interested	0.4761	0.0659	0.0007	0.0004
Don't Know	0.0181	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000

Table 6-17 LCA Model for APE 8 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 8 (Collected 2010)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0097	0.0962	0.4870	0.8040
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0001	0.0145	0.0852	0.6244
Voted in the last general election	0.3269	0.7005	0.8811	0.8061
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0130	0.0194	0.4886	0.3324
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0131	0.3068	0.8997	0.9938
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0000	0.0117	0.0170	0.9314
Signed a petition	0.1163	0.2440	0.7609	0.7691
Cluster Size	0.3157	0.4318	0.2281	0.0244
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0188	0.0777	0.3778	0.8697
Fairly interested	0.0804	0.5735	0.5191	0.0990
Not very interested	0.2792	0.3459	0.0826	0.0313
Not at all interested	0.6126	0.0006	0.0205	0.0000
Don't Know	0.0090	0.0023	0.0000	0.0000

Table 6-18 LCA Model for APE 9 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 9 (Collected 2011)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged someone outside my family to vote	0.0093	0.1238	0.3516	0.6730
Taken an active part in a political campaign	0.0014	0.0071	0.0002	0.3057
Voted in the last general election	0.2395	0.7046	0.7861	0.9333
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0076	0.0003	0.2324	0.6731
Discussed politics or political news with someone else	0.0135	0.3405	0.7981	0.9911
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0018	0.0317	0.0005	0.2871
Signed a petition	0.1001	0.0867	0.6110	0.9168
Cluster Size	0.4069	0.3047	0.2177	0.0707
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0020	0.0719	0.0929	0.6160
Fairly interested	0.1187	0.4174	0.7601	0.3282
Not very interested	0.3628	0.4716	0.1423	0.0389
Not at all interested	0.5166	0.0391	0.0047	0.0169
Don't Know				

6.1.3 Model including indicators and covariates (APE 1-9 merged) for reported undertaken activity

Table 6-19 LCA Model for APE 1-9 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE1-9 (Collected 2003-2011)				
Variable	Cluster 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Urged Someone Outside of My Family to Vote	0.0024	0.0683	0.3811	0.7290
Taken an Active Part in a Political Campaign	0.0013	0.0089	0.0313	0.6707
Voted at the last General Election	0.2431	0.6663	0.8298	0.8683
Boycotted Products for Political, Environmental or Ethical Reasons	0.0138	0.0682	0.4755	0.7473
Discussed Politics or Political News with Someone Else	0.0210	0.2553	0.8772	0.9713
Donated Money to a Political Party	0.0054	0.0234	0.0784	0.5417
Signed a Petition	0.1118	0.2859	0.7447	0.8894
Cluster Size	0.2472	0.4419	0.2797	0.0312
Interest in Politics:				
Very Interested	0.0134	0.0517	0.2546	0.8325
Fairly Interested	0.0355	0.4767	0.6225	0.1565
Not Very Interested	0.3243	0.4114	0.1123	0.0087
Not At All Interested	0.6170	0.0592	0.0094	0.0022
Don't Know	0.0099	0.0010	0.0013	0.0000

Given the almost universal results from each individual year of the audit, the data were merged to produce one overall model for this time frame. Table 6-19 represents this culmination of data from the first nine audits where the data were merged on the basis of comparable and relevant variables. Table 6-19 shows the results from latent class analysis of this merged dataset using the same seven indicator variables and interest in politics as the only covariate.

It is perhaps unsurprising to find that the latent class model selected using the merged data is a four class one, reflecting those models in each individual year. The amalgamation has actually strengthened the patterns we previously saw, with fewer fluctuations between the classes, reinforcing the strength of the results so far and the conceptualisation with a solid nine year base.

As the colour coding demonstrates, Class 1 is the least active, the apathetic citizen, followed in increasing engagement by Classes 2, 3 and 4, as we have come to expect. As always Class 1 participates in very few activities at any significant rate. The most popular activity as always is voting at a general election, followed by signing a petition, discussing politics with someone else and boycotting a product for political, ethical or environmental reasons. Interestingly though, the merging of the data has sought to narrow this group even further than the covariate, interest, did in each of the individual years. Class 1 now represents 24.72% of the sample population rather than the much larger ranges of 25-34% and 34-64% as per the results demonstrated in the previous two sections of this chapter. It appears that taking the nine years of data together, as well as including interest in politics as a covariate factor, has more firmly established the membership of this group. It seems entirely reasonable, following the existing

literature and conceptualisation chapter that this group be this size. In previous models Class 1 was largely misrepresented in size, with the consequence being that the truly apathetic had not been adequately identified. This is perhaps exemplified in the reduction in the proportion of people within this group claiming to have voted at the last general election, in comparison to a number of the previous years. However, the proportions of those participating in other forms of political activity have largely remained the same when looking at Tables 6-10 – 6-18 despite the reduction in the size of this class in the nine year dataset.

Interest amongst this group also reflects that which was found previously, with more than 93% of the group having reported little or no interest whatsoever in politics. Roughly 32% of people claim that they are ‘not very interested’ in politics and a further 61.7% say they are ‘not at all interested’ in politics. Furthermore, though it does represent a small proportion of the group, this group still has the largest proportion of people claiming to not know their level of interest in politics (a proportion of 0.0099).

Class 2 in the merged model again reflects what we might have come to expect, with individuals likely to be within this group participating at proportions much higher than Class 1 across all activities, but less than either Classes 3 or 4. Having voted in a general election is by far the most popular activity, though the proportion of individuals in the class within this model is slightly lower than some of the individual years, though there was considerable fluctuation across the years in previous models. This is followed, almost in equal part by signing a petition and discussing politics with someone else. There is a notable difference between this group and Class 1 in that people within Class 2 are much more likely to have boycotted products for political, ethical or environmental reasons, or to have urged somebody outside of their family to vote. They are still very unlikely to have donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party, and even less likely to have taken an active part in a political campaign.

Unlike Class 1 where the size of the class was smaller than the range of any of the individual years, the size of Class 2 fits exactly within the range from previous models, very closely matching the average for the size of the Class, as we would probably expect. It seems that a fair majority of the sample size resides within this latent, largely inactive (except voting) and reasonably interested group.

Just over 50% of this group claim to be interested in politics at some level, the very clear majority of them reporting that they are ‘fairly interested’. As such, just under 50% of this group conversely are not interested in politics, though the majority say they are ‘not very interested’ in politics. This is in stark contrast to Class 1, however, where over 61% of people reported being ‘not at all interested’ in politics. A very small proportion of people claimed that they did not know what their level of interest was, but this was lower than that for Class 1, and even in Class

3. Even with the increased sample size of the merged dataset (n=11980) this still only represents approximately 5 people, compared to 29 people from Class 1.

Class 3 is where real differences begin to emerge between this group (and Class 4 also) and the previous two classes. Class 3 is distinctly more politically active than either of the first groups discussed. This is true across the board of political activity, with the exception of, as perhaps predictable given previous models, donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party and taking an active part in a political campaign. The fundamental feature of this class is that although they are highly politically active they are not *party* political, unlike class 4. However, one interesting point to make is that these two activities are still undertaken by higher proportions of people within the groups than either of the previous two classes discussed. This is perhaps slightly surprising given that in some of the previous models (both with and without the covariate) this was the group least likely to engage with these two forms of political action. In this model not only are they more likely than Classes 1 and 2 to undertake political party action more readily, it is action of notable difference. It is also the first group in this model more likely to have discussed politics or political news with someone else than having voted in the last general election. Urging somebody outside their family to vote, boycotting a product and signing a petition is considerably higher for this group than for the previous two groups. It is clear in terms of their increased activity that there is an obvious divide between this class and Class 4 and Classes 1 and 2, which I believe reflects a fundamental difference in individuals' approaches to politics within these groups.

In terms of size, Class 3 is a little bigger than we might have expected given the average size of this group within the previous models (with the exception of the anomaly of APE 3). This may go some way to explaining why the apathetic group, Class 1 is a little smaller than we might have anticipated.

Not only has there been a shift in the level of activity in comparison to the first two classes, but a similar shift is true of interest in politics. A combined proportion of 0.1217 within this group claim they are not interested in politics in varying degrees, with more people aligning themselves to being 'not very interested' as opposed to being 'not at all interested'. The remaining 87.71% of this group are interested on some level, with 62.25% people reporting their interest as 'fair'. Whilst they are considerably more interested than either of the classes discussed initially, there is still a stark difference in the level of interest of this group and that of Class 4, where a very large majority (83.25%) are very interested and 98.9% (approximately) are interested overall.

For class 4, having donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party is the activity noticeably lower in take up, even though more than half of the group have indeed participated. As with Class 3 they are most likely to have discussed politics or political news with someone else before any other kind of activity. This is closely followed by signing a petition and having voted in the last general election being relegated to the third most popular activity amongst members of this group. Boycotting political products and urging people outside their family to vote are the activities which follow this. Even amongst the most active it seems that party politics is not their primary concern (though admittedly still very common) with taking an active part in a general election or donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party the least popular activities for that group. In spite of this, given the uptake in these activities I believe we can still conclude again that this is a partisan group.

The distinct nature of this group is perhaps reflected in its size, with only 3.13% of the sample size residing within this group (approximately 375 people). To find such high levels of engagement across all different types of activity is rare indeed. This is perhaps exemplified by the aforementioned interest in politics amongst this group. It also reinforces the justification made for distinguishing activity by interest to identify the strength of apathy/engagement as the latent variable.

The classifications uncovered in the models depicted in Tables 6-10 – 6-18 and the behaviours of the individuals within these have been fortified by the merge of data. The results of latent class analysis on the merged, nine year dataset have provided much clearer support than ever for the conceptualisation of apathy, and its counterparts, underpinning the increased action on the political activity spectrum. The larger data suggests no deviations to the conceptualisation based upon those seven participatory activities selected.

6.1.4 Model including indicators and covariates (APE 10) for reported undertaken activity

Table 6-20 LCA Model for APE 10 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 10 (Collected 2012)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Taken an active part in a campaign	0.0000	0.0078	0.2237	0.5762
Voted in an election	0.1082	0.4554	0.5658	0.9768
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0046	0.0708	0.5687	0.9207
Contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media	0.0000	0.0317	0.3843	0.4122
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0033	0.0144	0.0001	0.5036
Created or signed an e-petition	0.0177	0.1174	0.9488	0.1442
Cluster Size	0.5629	0.3896	0.0368	0.0107
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0083	0.1744	0.4584	0.9966
Fairly interested	0.1089	0.6098	0.4996	0.0027
Not very interested	0.4251	0.2141	0.0417	0.0005
Not at all interested	0.4534	0.0015	0.0003	0.0003
Don't know	0.0043	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000

Table 6-20 illustrates the results of latent class analysis performed upon the latest (at time of writing) Audit of political engagement data, using the closest six variables to those used throughout the previous analysis.

The results again reflect several similarities to the data sets by individual year and also to the merged data set. Class 1 is by far the least engaged of all the groups, followed in increasing activity by Classes 2, 3 and 4. Also, as with some of the results for individual years the least active when it comes to donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party is Class 3, typically the second most active group.

Despite these similarities, there are some stark differences here, with some, though not limited to, the change in the variables used. Firstly, though having voted in an election is still the activity which people within Class 1 are most likely to have done, it is at a much reduced rate, even by the least active's standards. Similarly, boycotting a product for political, ethical or environmental reasons has taken a remarkable drop in uptake. Only donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party has remained the same kind of level, of the same variables entered into the model. There are also a couple of activities – taking an active part in a campaign or contributing to a discussion or campaign online or on social media for which nobody within Class 1 has undertaken. Creating or having signed an e-petition is one of the new variables to be entered into the model in this instance, as a near comparable to having signed a petition, but it seems to have had an interesting impact upon Class 1. Whilst having signed a petition was one of the more popular activities for Class 1 in all of the previous models, here,

although still reasonably favourable for this group, it is an activity which has taken a significant hit.

This downturn in all activities for this group comes at the same time as it has increased in size, from under a quarter of the sample population to up to over half of the sample population. It could be seen that the apathetic group, Class 1, growing so dramatically in size, yet decreasing its political participation even further, is as a result of a clear apathetic shift in the wider population. Whilst this is a possibility, the downturn in political activity from this group must be seen in the context of decreased activity amongst all other groups, with the slight exception of Class 4 and a change to the terms of the question. As the question now asks respondents to specify whether their activity has happened within the last 12 months rather than a period of two to three years, we can hardly expect anything less, particularly of Class 1. It may well be the case that the question no longer really allows us to measure one's inclination to act politically but rather reflects the opportunity to have participated. This is especially true when it comes to the option of having voted in an election – it is not every year that we are called to the polls.

The results for Class 2 reflect a number of similarities to Class 1 with voting, as expected, seeing a much lower take up. So too is the case for creating or signing an e-petition. However, boycotting a product for political, ethical or environmental reasons has remained largely the same, if not with a slight increase compared to a number of the previous years and models. All other participatory indicators have remained fairly low. What is also interesting is that, in spite of Class 1 dramatically increasing in size, Class 2 has remained of a similar size. It seems that this particular year, or the changes to the questions, has resulted in considerably larger numbers of the sample population residing within the relatively inactive first two classes, the latent and apathetic citizens.

Class 3 again shows reduced activity when it comes to voting. Despite this though, activity seems to have increased on the whole within this group. Having boycotted a product is still high, even higher than in some of the previous models. There has also been a dramatic increase in having taken an active part in a campaign in comparison to any of the previous models. It may well be that this reflects more a change in the wording of the response than it does a change in the political philosophy of this group. In the previous audits the question specified 'taking an active part in a *political* campaign, whereas APE 10 removes the 'political' stipulation. It is quite possible that previously a 'political campaign' could have been seen as a party or election campaign by respondents, whilst a 'campaign' might be taken more broadly as any form of political or societal action.

Another difference that is notable here is the increased uptake in having created or signed an e-petition amongst Class 3. In fact they are the group with the highest likely activity in this area.

Why this is, is somewhat unclear, though perhaps the stipulation of 'e-petition' over that of the printed petition has sparked better recall of their activity.

The size of class 3 has been dramatically reduced in this iteration of the model. Given the subsequent increases in the size of the apathetic group, Class 1 and the latent group, Class 2, it seems that the changes that have been made to the questions asked have resulted in a large majority of Class 3 being subsumed into the first two classes.

Class 4 is the group that has remained most consistent with the previous models, with having voted in an election remaining high. Having boycotted a product is even higher for this group than in most years, and having taken an active part in a campaign, and having donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party has remained largely the same. The greatest difference perhaps is seen through what might be interpreted as preference for offline as opposed to online activity. Whilst it is still the group that is most likely to have contributed to a discussion online or on social media, it is not much further ahead of Class 3. Certainly, where it comes to the issue of petitions, this group is much less likely than Class 3 to have created or signed an e-petition, and only very slightly more likely than Class 2 to have done this activity. Given comparison to previous models where Class 4 was almost always more likely than any other to have signed a petition it seems either the stipulation of it being an 'e-petition' rather than a printed one, or the time span imposed, has resulted in much lower engagement with this activity amongst Class 4.

Like Class 3, Class 4 has also seen a slight drop in its size. However, as the size of this group in all previous models was not large to start off with it isn't a particularly significant drop in size. It does though demonstrate further how in this year and with the changes to the wording of the question and possible responses more people have shifted to being in either the latent or apathetic groups.

There appears to be a similar, but slightly different picture when it comes to the covariate, interest in politics. As per all the previous models the apathetic group, Class 1 is the least interested in politics, with more people being in the 'not at all interested' category than any other. Similarly this is followed in interest by Classes 2, 3 and 4. However, the differences are that although Class 1 seemingly remains the least interested, it is a group that is far more interested than in most of the previous models. Whereas in the nine-year model over 93% of people within Class 1 in the sample were not interested, with a 61.7% majority being 'not at all interested', the data from APE 10 shows a more positive picture with just over 87% of people within the same class not interested, with a much reduced 45% being 'not at all interested'. This

is perhaps as a result of the size of the class increasing, being joined by people who were previously in other classes in some of the other models which demonstrated greater interest in politics. Not only has this class seen an increase in interest amongst this group, it has also witnessed a drop in the proportion of people who do not know what their level of interest is. This is a fact common across all of the classes. Perhaps in this year a greater proportion of people have a greater awareness of what they feel about politics.

Going hand in hand with this change in interest for Class 1, is a mirrored change for Class 2. The interest profile of this group has also increased, with over 77% (compared to just over 52% in the last model) claiming to be interested in politics, on some level. The proportion who have said they are 'very interested' has increased, as too has the proportion who claim they are 'fairly interested' in politics.

Interest in politics doesn't just seem to have increased for the first two classes, but also for Classes 3 and 4. A proportion of 0.958 in Class 3 reported themselves either 'fairly interested' or 'very interested', with only a slightly higher proportion (0.4996) of that being in the 'fairly interested' bracket. This is compared to the previous model where Class 3 was highly interested, but only to the extent that a proportion of 0.8771 were either 'fairly' or 'very' interested in politics. Class 4, consistently has been the most interested of all the classes, reflected in their highly participatory stance, but they too have seen an increase in their level of interest in this particular year. Whilst the results of the nine year data set reveal that a proportion of 0.989 are either 'fairly' or 'very satisfied' (0.8325 very and 0.1565 fairly), APE 10 shows near complete interest, with proportions of 0.9966 being 'very interested' and 0.0027 'fairly interested' (0.9993 in total).

It seems interesting that levels of engagement for this year have taken a slight dip, across most of the classes, when interest has increased across all of them. Whilst the nature of the activity indicator variables chosen has changed between APE 10 and all of the previous nine years, and can in part explain the changes to the profiles of each of the classes, interest in politics is not conditional upon anything. It seems therefore that there was an increase in APE 10 of interest in politics compared to the average interest of the previous nine years.

6.1.5 Model including indicators and covariates (APE 10) for reported prospective activity

Table 6-21 LCA Model for APE 1 Including Interest as a Covariate (Prospective Activity)

APE 10 (Collected 2012)				
Variable	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Take an active part in a campaign	0.0536	0.0504	0.5591	0.9460
Vote in an election	0.1410	0.8066	0.7878	0.9706
Boycott certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0134	0.1712	0.4067	0.9567
Contribute to a discussion or campaign online or on social media	0.0180	0.0150	0.3591	0.6925
Donate money or pay a membership fee to a political party	0.0101	0.0365	0.0003	0.4999
Create or sign an e-petition	0.0833	0.2831	0.9576	0.8001
Cluster Size	0.5874	0.2800	0.0726	0.0600
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0559	0.0932	0.1209	0.5371
Fairly interested	0.1874	0.5133	0.5930	0.3420
Not very interested	0.3488	0.3561	0.2179	0.0657
Not at all interested	0.4058	0.0373	0.0512	0.0552
Don't know	0.0021	0.0000	0.0170	0.0000

The figures presented in Table 6-21 show the outcome of latent class analysis on a new question and variable added to the Audit of Political Engagement, introduced in the latest round of data. This new question allows insight not only into what people have done in the way of political activity but also that which they would be prepared to do; “Which of the following would you be prepared to do if you felt strongly enough about an issue?” Given that the question is new, no equal comparison can be made between this model and any other year in terms of an analysis over time. However, it will be compared against all previous models to provide an account of the difference between the people’s reported activity and their prospective activity, and the changes this creates, if any, to the structure of the latent classes previously stipulated.

As can be seen from a glance, there is a slightly different picture when it comes to the latent class model for this variable. However, through explanation one finds an almost congruent pattern to the previous models, with the first class demonstrating prospectively apathetic qualities, the second latent ones, the third highly critical (particularly of party politics and traditional mechanisms of democratic action) and the fourth the most active and engaged of all.

Class 1 prepares to remain the least engaged when it comes to placing a vote, boycotting products for political, ethical and environmental reasons and creating or signing an e-petition. Though they are not the least likely to have considered taking an active part in a campaign, or contributing to a discussion or campaign online or on social media, the proportionate difference between them and Class 2 in the likelihood of them taking part in these activities is negligible. There is such little difference when it comes to these two activities, whereas when Class 2 is willing to engage at a higher level than Class 1 it is usually much more significantly different.

The other activity where Class 1 is not the least willing to engage is donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party, where yet again we find that Class 3, the active yet non-partisan group has the lowest likelihood of being willing to participate. This is a finding that is by no means unusual following the rest of the analysis.

As one might presume, the proportions of people within Class 1 who would be willing to engage in all those six activities is much higher than the proportions of those who have reported having done them. In fact this is a finding which is almost universally replicated across all the classes, with a couple of exceptions, discussed further on. This greater political willingness over action may reflect a number of important considerations; perhaps a greater inclination towards future political activity born out of a sense of elevated duty for or interest in politics or simply a lack of previous opportunity to engage which they would choose to rectify if such an opportunity was presented to them.

In most respects, then, Class 1 reflects the findings of the merged nine year dataset and particularly to the model selected from APE10 data. This is especially true when we look at the size of this class. It most closely replicates the size of Class 1 in the APE10 data compared to any of the other individual years or the merged data set. Given the tendency towards a higher propensity to be willing to engage, rather than having actually engaged, it would be reasonable to assume that the apathetic group might be smaller in size than ever before. However, the latent class model finds the apathetic Class 1 to be marginally bigger in size, compared to the 'have done' model for the same year and also any models for any other year before it (when interest in politics is also included within the model).

Class 2 in this iteration has a slightly more mixed picture than in any of the existing analysis. For being willing to take an active part in a campaign, or contributing to a discussion or campaign online or on social media it seems to be the least prospectively active. As discussed though, the difference between this and Class 1 is minor, so as not inconsistent with the conceptualisation or previous findings. When it comes to the prospect of boycotting a product or creating or signing an e-petition, Class 2 represents the second least likely to engage in that activity, with reasonably significant differences between this class and the others. With two potential activities; voting in an election and donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party Class 2 is the second most likely to be prepared to act, even more so than Class 3 which is typically the second most active. However, the difference between Class 2 and 3 when it comes to voting is very small. Equally, where Class 2 is more willing to donate money or pay membership fees to political parties it is hardly a surprise given previous analysis. Where Class 3 is less willing than Class 2 to engage in activities in the future it reflects no more than their

seemingly non-partisan stance and critical approach to elections, findings which are consistent with the suggested characteristics of such ‘critical citizens’.

Class 2 sees an even bigger difference between its undertaken activity and its prospective engagement than Class 1 did. Almost double the proportion of people within this group would be willing to vote in an election compared to those who actually had. Given that voting is an activity whereby the opportunity to engage is somewhat out of their control (i.e. an election must be held for them to act), it is not necessarily surprising to see such an increase in willing uptake. However, it still remains the greatest increase from actually doing, to being willing to do, present within the models.

When we look at the comparison between both APE 10 models and the APE 1-9 model the same trend appears; that for all the comparable variables, the propensity to participate is much higher when looking at potential activity rather than actual activity.

Given the ‘latent’ label of this class it would seem reasonable that there should be disparity between their reported activity and their prospective activity; they tend not to act in great proportions, but this is not to say they lack the capacity or inclination to. In fact, Class 2 is more willing to engage with nearly all activities than the proportions suggesting they have acted, with one exception however; contributing to a discussion or campaign online or on social media, where they seem less willing to act – so much so that they slip to being the least likely to be willing to engage in that type of activity. They are not alone in being less willing to act in the future than they were in the past or present when it comes to contributing to online political discussion; the same is also true for Class 3. Perhaps there is something negative about this form of activity or members of these classes have had adverse experiences when it comes to expressing their political opinions online which would deter some from doing it again in the future.

The difference in the size of this class, between this latest model and the other for the same year, and even that produced from the merged dataset, is that it has increasingly reduced in proportionate size. Whereas in APE 1-9 Class 2 was the majority class amongst the sample population (with a cluster size of 0.4419) it was not in the first APE 10 model (cluster size 0.3896), and it is even less so in this latest model (0.2800).

There are some interesting differences when it comes to Class 3, with some activities seeing an increase in potential uptake, where others have witnessed an unusual and uncharacteristic fall. This is a class which seems much more willing to take an active part in a campaign than its reported activity would suggest, with the proportion willing to do it in the future much higher (a

proportion of 0.2237 up to 0.5591). They are also more likely to be prepared to vote in an election and donate money or pay a membership fee to a political party. Though they are not the second most likely to want to vote in an election, which following the evidence of previous models they might be, the difference between Class 2 and Class 3 in this instance is very small indeed. Also, as commented in relation to other classes, the jump between having voted in an election within the last 12 months and being prepared to vote in an election should one come up, might well be explained by a lack of opportunity to vote in an election for a number of respondents. However, although this class is more willing to vote in an election than the proportion that had, this is still a figure lower than reported activity amongst this class in the nine year data.

Also, although there is an increase between the proportion who have donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party and those who said they would be prepared to, the difference is minute. Given it is such a small proportion, and the lowest proportion of all the classes in both instances, just goes to show how unpopular a method of political participation this is amongst Class 3. Again, when comparing it against the nine year model, this willingness is still far short of reported activity for the variable in question.

There is also a small increase in the proportion who claimed they would be prepared to create or sign an e-petition amongst this class (a rise from 0.9488 to 0.9576). This also meant that they remained the most likely to be willing to do this, of all the classes, in addition to having been the most likely to complete this activity. Given the overwhelming 'monopoly' as a class, that they seemed to have on this activity, it is perhaps not surprising. It is very clear that this is an activity which they take part in readily and want to undertake again, more than any other that has been included in the model.

The size of this class has increased as well, in fact it has virtually doubled in size in comparison to the model which represents completed activity for the same year. It has not, however, returned to the size of the 'critical citizen' group presented in the nine year model. It is possible that this reasonably active, yet arguably still selective group, in terms of the kinds of activities people within it are found and willing to be engaged with, increases in size when we think about willingness precisely because people are naturally more inclined towards engagement than not. Such an account might explain behaviours of a critical, largely active mass of people, but it does not explain the existence of a large group of relatively inactive, disinterested people whose willingness to engage is not much more than completed activity.

Interestingly, though, in spite of the increase in the size of this group, its maintained interest in creating or signing e-petitions and a number of other activities, when it comes to some activities this class has bucked the trend that sees willingness to engage with activities higher than

reported engagement. This is true of boycotting products for political, ethical or environmental reasons and contributing to a discussion or campaign online or on social media, which have both seen decreases between this and the previous model for APE 10 (from 0.5687 down to 0.4067 and from 0.3843 down to 0.3591 for the two activities respectively). When comparing this to the APE1-9 data, willingness to boycott products also compares badly. Though in APE10 people within Class 3 were more likely to have boycotted than in APE1-9, those figures for reported boycotting within those nine years is still much higher than the willingness for this activity suggested in APE10. Possible explanation for this contradiction to the trend could range from that particular class not finding the activity to be efficacious and thus not wishing to bother with it again to it being a reflection of the size of the group and having more people from Class 2 finding themselves within Class 3 in the 'willingness' model. The proportions of people having undertaken these two activities within Class 2, in the previous model were low, so this is certainly plausible.

In this latest model Class 4 behaves predictably in terms of both its class pattern and the trend between these two models, with ever increasing proportions of people wishing to engage much more in activities in the future than they have in the past. Given the high proportions of people within this group already having chosen to vote in an election in the past twelve months and boycott products for political, ethical or environmental reasons there was little room for them to become any more engaged, so the increases here are relatively small. However, when it comes to creating or signing an e-petition and taking an active part in a campaign, there are significant increases (from 0.1442 up to 0.8001 and from 0.5762 up to 0.9460 for those variables respectively). The same is true to a lesser extent of the activity variable contributing to a discussion or campaign online or on social media. The only activity not to have seen an increase between action and willingness to act was donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party, which saw a slight decrease. Even amongst the most active group it is a reasonably unpopular activity. Though these activities remain the least popular amongst this group, it is a class which is still more likely to have engaged in them than any other.

When looking at those variables which are most closely comparable to the models from APE 1-9 nearly all see a more favourable trend towards being willing to act than having acted. The only two exceptions to this rule are donating money or paying a membership fee to a political party and signing a petition. In both instances the proportionate uptake for Class 4 was higher in APE 1-9 than it was when looking at the willingness to act variable in APE10. Though the petition variable cannot necessarily be directly comparable, given the 'new' variable refers to signing or creating an e-petition, it is arguably a much more easily accessible means of participation. However, it does by the very nature of it also imply respondents need access to the Internet to be able to engage.

This group was so small in size in the previous model for this point in time and really for any other of the years in question that it quite clearly had the potential to increase. That it indeed did, growing from 0.0107 in the last model up to 0.0600 in this particular model, a figure which is also bigger for this Class than in the merged nine year data set. Nevertheless, even when one considers the potential for engagement Class 4, a highly active and involved group, it is clear that it is very much a class in the minority within the British citizenry.

In terms of the distribution of political interest amongst the four classes, when considering the prospect of political participation, there is a slightly altered pattern. Though respondents' interest will never change, regardless of their responses to either of the activity variables I have considered, the composition of interest amongst those classes changes when the structure of the classes is on the basis of different manifest variables. The changes therefore reflect this. In the latest model, the patterns between the four classes remains the same in that, on the whole, Class 1 is the least interested, followed in increasing interest by Class 2, then Class 3 and finally Class 4. However, the spread of interest amongst the classes is much less distinctive than in previous models; there is less differentiation between them. Class 1 for example, though it is the least interested in politics, is seemingly much more interested than any model before has indicated. Where the classes were defined on the basis of the variable 'have you done...' Class 1 only reported interest of 0.0489 (very interested and fairly interested combined) in APE 1-9 and 0.1172 in APE 10. Where the classes were defined instead upon the basis of 'would you do...' question Class 1 reflects a more interested group of people with a proportion of 0.2433 claiming they are interested on some level. The difference between this and the APE 1-9 model could be explained by the difference in size; it is reasonable to assume that given the increase in size of Class 1 in the latest model, that it is a class that has been joined by a number of people clearly more interested in politics than the majority was before. However, this does not explain the difference between the levels of interest between the 'have done' and 'would do' questions when looking at APE10. This small difference in size of the class, but large increase in interest has clearly illustrated something distinct between the two lines of questioning when it comes to this apathetic group. It seems that the question which asks people to report what they have done, rather than what they might do, is *the* most appropriate way of identifying the least active, and least interested, individuals within the sample and arguably society more generally. There is something so distinct about the combination of interest and completed activity responses that allows for the latent 'apathy' to be drawn from data.

Naturally then, there must be a change in the interest by class of some, if not all of the other classes. Class 2 sees less reported interest of some level amongst the people likely to be found within in it (0.6065) in this model than in the previous for APE 10 (0.7842), but still more than was found for Class 2 in the APE 1-9 iteration (0.5284). The model showing the propensity to

act also sees more people who have reported that they are very interested, and also fairly interested in comparison to APE 1-9. This is not the case when looking at the alternative model for the same year.

Like Class 2 was still more interested in politics than the class preceding it, Class 3 is also more interested in politics than Class 2, but not to the same extent that people within Class 4 are interested in politics. However, yet again, the gap between the level of interest has diminished somewhat. A proportion of 0.7139 demonstrates interest on some level amongst this group. This is down considerably from the 0.958 that claimed their interest in politics when undertaken activities were the manifest variables the relationships were predicated upon. It also illustrates a proportion lower than that for Class 3 in the APE 1-9 data (0.8771). On the whole, there seems to have been a large reduction in the proportion who are very interested in this class, but a much lower reduction in the number who report that they are fairly interested. This is true for comparison between this current model and the previous two for APE 10 and APE 1-9.

Class 4 is where we see perhaps the greatest difference of all. Whilst a large majority (0.8791) of the sample population within this class are either very interested or fairly interested, which makes them still the most interested group of all, this has decreased in comparison to the previous two models. In the nine year dataset interest was reported as a proportion of 0.989, and in the APE 10 model for undertaken activity it was a similar figure of 0.9993. There has also been a real drop in the proportion claiming they are very interested. In the APE 1-9 model, Class 4 were very interested with a proportion of 0.8325, and even more so in the APE 10 model for completed acts, a proportion of 0.9966. This proportion has been more evenly spread between very interested and fairly interested when it comes to considering potential forms of participation with now only 0.5371 reporting that they are very interested, compared to 0.3420 who are fairly interested.

It seems clear that there is further evidence that the model considering latent classes, dependent upon the relationship between prospective activities as the manifest variables, provides less distinction between the classes than that which focuses on activity already conducted. Whilst the latest model therefore provides an interesting alternative, it perhaps does not identify the most apathetic people. One might have expected a question that looks at people's willingness to be involved to reveal some of the most truly apathetic, as it would seem reasonable to claim that those individuals who show no inclination towards politics in addition to no previous activity are indeed apathetic. However, either the question allows room for protest towards politics too much or indeed the method and quantitative analysis cannot accurately define the inactive group I am seeking to find. Nevertheless, latent class analysis remains a very useful tool in identifying classes on the basis of undertaken activity.

Discussion

The results of latent class analysis of the entire Audit of Political Engagement data demonstrate clear support for the hypothesis that there are broadly four groups of people across the political activity spectrum. In all models individuals in Class 1 represent the ‘apathetic citizen’, Class 2 the ‘latent citizen’, Class 3 the ‘critical citizen’ and Class 4 the ‘engaged citizen’. The decision to merge the nine years of data has proved exceptionally useful as there is a very clear distinction of the four classes as a result.

The characteristics that have been highlighted by the results show that the apathetic citizen is very different from any of the other types of citizen. Though all groups have similar preferred activities in voting, discussing politics and signing petitions, this is unsurprising as these are arguably the three most accessible forms of political activity sampled. The same is true in spite of the introduction of new variables in APE 10 data. What makes the apathetic citizen very different from any other, empirically, is that they are so much less active than any other group, even the next most active group. This group is also particularly distinct when interest in politics is included in the model; it is the only group where consistently eighty per cent of people or more report either no interest at all in politics or only very little. The only exception to this rule is when the composition of the classes is based upon responses to a question which asks about willingness rather than action.

In most instances the proportion of people within this apathetic group who do report having some level of interest in politics is smaller than the proportion who are active in the three most preferable forms of political activity; the aforementioned voting at general election, discussing politics or political news with someone else and signing a petition. It seems somewhat illogical that people within this group act at all when their interest is so low, begging a number of questions to be asked. Do people within this group only act out of a sense of duty i.e. in the case of why they vote in a general election? Do they act only when other people draw them in i.e. in the case of when other people engage them in political discussion or encourage them to sign a petition?

Indeed, what is it that causes people to act at the, albeit low, level that they do when their level of interest in no way reflects political intention? Furthermore, what is it that causes people to have such a low level of interest and political intention? Who are these people who are so apathetic? Do they have characteristics which set them apart from the other types of citizens? It is to these questions that the future work will seek to answer.

Since the conceptualisation of apathy formulated above has been proved to be empirically robust there is also now the question of what one can do with it, and how one might use it,

explain it and develop it. Having established the apathetic citizen class I use exploratory data analysis to seek some explanation for the existence of this group. Through such analysis one can offer an extension to the picture of the political activity spectrum by adding subsequent levels to it. Instead of inadequately attempting to identify the apathetic citizen whilst *simultaneously* trying to explain the intricacies of the term, as De Luca does, I aim to demonstrate how it is more appropriate, more straight forward even, to instead identify if there is an apathetic group of people, who they are, and then *subsequently* look at their characteristics, thoughts and opinions. This chapter has sought to successfully identify that group, and the next will demonstrate the results of their characteristics. It will look at the attributes of the individuals identified through the process of model selection for the three most significant models within this analysis; APE 1-9 model which looks at undertaken activity and the two APE 10 models where classes are defined on the basis of both completed and prospective activity.

Chapter 7: Explaining Political Apathy

The analysis in the previous chapter demonstrated that for all years, and activity variables sampled, the “four class” latent class analysis model, which included a covariate in the form of the variable ‘interest in politics’, was the most appropriate and statistically significant. Having established such a method which allows one to distinguish a largely immeasurable, latent difference between citizens, based on their responses to this range of political activity questions, and the probability of respondents to fall within these groups, this chapter will seek to explore characteristics of these different citizens.

Through the use of descriptive statistics, as outlined in Chapter 5, this chapter seeks to illustrate the associations between the different latent classes and various different attitudinal variables and attribute variables – or demographics. Individual respondents were allocated to a particular latent class according to the highest probability of them being in any one of classes. This variable was then cross tabulated with the range of explanatory variables outlined in Chapter 5. The output that was produced forms the basis of the results in this chapter. In each instance the figures relate to percentages – either of row percentages or column percentages, whichever is most appropriate for the association in question. This means that either the figures represent the percentages of people within a particular class and how they have responded to a question, or that they represent the spread of the classes, by percentage, of a certain type of response. For the most part row percentages are used, unless indicated differently. Also, the chi-squared test statistic is always statistically significant unless explicitly stated otherwise.

The results are broken down into three sub-sections. The first looks at the relationships that corresponds to the latent class model selected for the nine year merged data set APE 1-9, as described in the previous chapter. This model is based upon the patterns between response variables to reported *undertaken* activity in the two or three years preceding the data collection. This section is divided between the relationship of the dependent variable ‘being allocated to a particular latent class’ and attitudinal and attribute explanatory variables. The second section similarly looks at the associations between explanatory variables and the model which demonstrates latent class analysis of political activity undertaken in the 12 months preceding the data collection for APE 10. Due to there being considerably more attitudinal variables to consider, this section has been broken down further than the first. It looks at the attitudinal variables by the satisfaction they feel for government and the current Parliament, the role they feel they do and should play within politics, the strength of the UK Parliament, the influence they feel they can have, how politics makes them feel on an individual and personal level and finally a theoretical ‘what if’ question. It then goes onto consider the impact of the variables that

measure more demographic characteristics as well as knowledge. The third section of this results chapter looks again at data from APE 10, but instead for the final model established from the latent class analysis – that which depicts classes based upon the patterns between response variables for *prospective* political activity. This section is broken down the same way as the second section is.

In each of the sub-sections the first table (Tables 7-1; 7-10; 7-45) shows the latent class models taken from Chapter 6 in order to provide reference for comparison and distinguishing between the results of some of the explanatory variables.

7.1 Analysis for APE 1-9 Latent Class Model relating to undertaken political activity

Table 7-1 LCA Model for APE 1-0 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE1-9 (Collected 2003-2011)				
Variable	Apathetic Citizen	Latent Citizen	Critical Citizen	Engaged Citizen
Urged Someone Outside of My Family to Vote	0.0024	0.0683	0.3811	0.7290
Taken an Active Part in a Political Campaign	0.0013	0.0089	0.0313	0.6707
Voted at the last General Election	0.2431	0.6663	0.8298	0.8683
Boycotted Products for Political, Environmental or Ethical Reasons	0.0138	0.0682	0.4755	0.7473
Discussed Politics or Political News with Someone Else	0.0210	0.2553	0.8772	0.9713
Donated Money to a Political Party	0.0054	0.0234	0.0784	0.5417
Signed a Petition	0.1118	0.2859	0.7447	0.8894
Cluster Size	0.2472	0.4419	0.2797	0.0312
Interest in Politics:				
Very Interested	0.0134	0.0517	0.2546	0.8325
Fairly Interested	0.0355	0.4767	0.6225	0.1565
Not Very Interested	0.3243	0.4114	0.1123	0.0087
Not At All Interested	0.6170	0.0592	0.0094	0.0022
Don't Know	0.0099	0.0010	0.0013	0.0000

7.1.1 Attitudinal Variables

Table 7-2 shows the relationship between being allocated to a particular class and what respondents think of the statement “when people like me get involved in politics we can really make a difference”, i.e. that row rather than column percentages are used here. It seems that 44.5% of apathetic citizens think, to varying extents, that people like them cannot really make a difference. 24.9% neither agree nor disagree, which represents the highest proportion within the latent classes not to have expressed a view either way. Similarly, a high of 9% of them, compared to other groups, have tended to sit on the fence, simply not making a claim as to whether they think or know that they, or others like them, could make a difference. Only 21.5%

of this group agrees they have a chance to make a difference on some level and only 3% of those strongly agree with the sentiment of the statement.

Latent citizens are remarkably more optimistic than the apathetic citizens with 35% feeling like they could have an impact – however, once again only 4.9% of those are likely to feel particularly strong about this fact. A similar, though smaller, number to the apathetic citizens neither agree nor disagree. 41.3% of people within this group disagree on some level that they could make a difference. So whilst this group initially looked more optimistic than the first about their sense of efficacy, they too are almost equally disagreeable to the statement. This is explained away by the fact that fewer of them, in comparison to the apathetic citizen, neither agree nor disagree. Equally, they also have fewer people reporting that do they not know what they feel about the statement.

The critical citizen is marginally more optimistic about being able to make a difference with 43% agreeing on some level that they could make a difference. This is much more optimistic than either of the other two groups talked about before, particularly given that there is a higher proportion of strong agreement. However, 38.7% remain sceptical, which is a figure not much different to either the latent or apathetic citizen. Again this difference in optimism, but relative remain in scepticism, can be explained by less indifference than the other two groups – they are more likely to know how they feel or stake a claim either way.

The engaged citizen is the only group which shows a real difference to the other three. 61.2% believe on some level that they can really make a difference. On the other end of the scale only 26.5% are sceptical about the extent to which people like them can make a difference by their political actions. This group is yet again even more convinced of their views, with even fewer people not expressing an opinion either way or claiming not to know. Perhaps this may be explained further on as we look at the relationship between the classification of citizens and the demographics of these different groups and explore the idea that there is something specific or inherent about the people in these groups which marks them out, beyond their attitudes to politics. It is entirely possible that attributes might help explain attitudes and action, though any association between these variables cannot be taken as causation either way.

Table 7-2 People Like Me Can Really Make a Difference (APE 1-9)

People Like Me Can Really Make a Difference						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	3.0	18.5	24.9	24.1	20.4	9.0
Latent Citizen	4.9	30.1	22.4	30.7	9.6	2.2
Critical Citizen	8.2	34.8	17.9	31.3	7.4	0.4
Engaged Citizen	15.5	45.7	11.0	20.3	6.2	1.4

Table 7-3 Views on the Current System of Governing (APE 1-9)

Views on the Current System of Governing					
Latent Class	Works Extremely Well and Could Not Be Improved	Could Be Improved in Small Ways but Mainly Works Well	Could Be Improved Quite a Lot	Needs a Great Deal of Improvement	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.2	20.3	35.5	28.4	13.6
Latent Citizen	2.1	33.0	42.3	20.1	2.5
Critical Citizen	1.3	34.8	43.0	20.5	0.4
Engaged Citizen	2.7	31.3	42.3	23.7	0.0

Here the apathetic group appears to have the least amount of knowledge about the current system of governing that any other group, with over 13% answering that they do not know whether the current system of governing works well or not. All the other groups seem to have a much smaller proportion of people not knowing how they feel about this issue – with that knowledge increasing for the more active groups.

This table demonstrates minimal variation between the groups however. It is the critical citizen who is least likely to agree that it always works well and could not be improved. However, conversely they are also the most likely to think that it could be improved but mainly works well and that it could be improved quite a lot.

The most clear message to take away from this part of the analysis is that the majority of people, irrespective of what latent class they come from, think the current system of governing either needs a great deal of improvement or could be improved quite a lot. Interestingly the only real difference is that the apathetic citizen appears to be the least negative in certain lights than the others, though this is probably explained by the increase in the number who ‘don’t know’ how they feel about it.

7.1.2 Attribute Variables

Table 7-4 The Role of Sex (APE 1-9)

Latent Class	Sex	
	Male	Female
Apathetic Citizen	39.9	60.1
Latent Citizen	49.3	50.7
Critical Citizen	52.5	47.5
Engaged Citizen	56.7	43.3

With reference to the impact of sex it seemed more appropriate to use row percentages rather than column percentages, but to keep in mind the representation of the two sexes within the data set as set out in the data and methods chapter. The apathetic citizen body has a higher probability of being made up predominantly by females, though but there is very little in the way of a gender difference when it comes to the latent citizen group, though females are still more likely to outnumber males within this group. Heading onto the other side of the political activity spectrum we therefore see that the engaged and critical citizen groups are much more likely to be made up of a greater number of men than women. Similarly, and more exaggeratedly so, the difference in the gender gap is widened for the engaged citizen in comparison to the critical and latent citizen.

The greatest difference between the sexes though occurs within the apathetic citizenry lying in the favour of females being the least active.

In table 7-5 we see the difference in the citizen groups by social class, the variable which the literature shows to be the most divisive when it comes to political activity, or lack thereof. Whilst it would have been interesting to see the distribution of each latent class within a particular social class, due to the reasonably small number of people likely to be within the engaged citizen group, even before social class differentiation, it still seemed more sensible to produce row statistics rather than column. Therefore the data shows the proportions in each social class by each latent class. The apathetic citizen is least likely, of all the citizen groups, to be in social class A, B or even C1. They are more likely than any of the other groups to instead be in groups C2, D or E. The spread across classes C1, C2, D and E is reasonably even however. Though there is a greater tendency than for any other latent class group to be in the 'lower' social classes the spread of apathetic individuals across the classes is mixed. There is very little difference between the proportions of people in this latent class who are in social class E than are in social class C1. It is obvious that there is a very clear social class bias when it comes to the apathetic citizenry, potentially bearing out the suggestion for considering some of the attitudinal and attribute variables together, rather than as standalone findings. However, it is also true that potentially anyone from a reasonably wide range of social backgrounds could be in this apathetic group.

The only social group the latent citizens are least likely to be in is social class A. The same is true for the critical citizen, though they are also more likely to be in social class B or C1 and C2 than the latent citizen, but much less likely than either of the previous two citizen groups to be in social classes D or E. The latent citizen, though less likely to be in categories D and E than the apathetic citizen is still more likely than those people probabilistically determined for the critical citizen group. Taking comparisons between the classes to one side we can see clearly that there is a majority of latent citizens in Classes C1 and C2. We are likely to find similar proportions of this group in either B, D or E, with a much smaller likelihood residing within social class A. This again goes to show that, similar to the apathetic group, though there is a majority within a couple of social classes, there's an almost equal likelihood of latent citizens being a B as they are an E. Looking instead at the critical citizens we can see that they are much more likely to be in either B or C1. They have lower numbers of people in classes C2 and further still in classes A, D and E.

The engaged citizen, perhaps unsurprisingly is the most likely to be comprised of a higher proportion of social class A B and even C1. They are the least likely of all to be in social groups

C2, D or E. Whilst comparatively this is true there is still a large majority, like the critical citizens, in either social classes B and C1 and still only a small proportion in the 'top' class, A. However, this may well be due to the fact that the majority of respondents are in those 'middle' classes and that there are significantly fewer people claiming to be within social class A.

What can be taken from this data is that although you are likely to find a reasonable spread across the social classes when it comes to the apathetic citizens, and even the latent citizens, that spread reduces the more active the citizens become, with greater disparities and extremes at either end of the social class scale. This is perhaps no surprise from everything documented within the existing literature, but it is certainly interesting that apathetic citizens could come from almost every class.

If we were to contrast this against the question which asks people to identify whether they believe they have the opportunity to make a difference we might find that 'people like us' refers to people of different social backgrounds. Going on this understanding it seems that people of a 'higher' social class, are the people 'like them' who they feel can have a difference. Conversely it is the apathetic group, of a 'lower' social class who seem to feel less empowered or convinced of their political efficacy. Perhaps then it would have been useful if the data collection had, when asking the questions about whether 'people like me can really have an effect' asked the respondents exactly what they understood 'people like me' to be like and whether this has any connection with social class. It may or may not be the case that people identify themselves through the social class paradigm but had the survey asked them to specify that, the connection between these two variables might have been made somewhat clearer.

Table 7-5 The Role of Social Class (APE 1-9)

	Social Class					
Latent Class	A	B	C1	C2	D	E
Apathetic Citizen	0.7	7.3	20.9	23.5	22.6	25
Latent Citizen	2.1	15.1	29.7	22.4	15.1	15.6
Critical Citizen	5.2	31.7	33.9	15.4	7.5	6.4
Engaged Citizen	9.3	41.6	33.7	7.6	4.5	3.4

Table 7-6 The Role of Region (APE 1-9)

	Region					
Latent Class	Scotland	North East	North West	York & Humberside	East Midlands	West Midlands
Apathetic Citizen	28.4	28.6	29.9	26.7	26.2	26.9
Latent Citizen	48.4	43.2	46.3	42.5	49.5	44.7
Critical Citizen	21.5	26.8	22.2	28.8	22.7	26.4
Engaged Citizen	1.8	1.4	1.6	2.0	1.6	2.0

	Region						
Latent Class	Wales	South West	Eastern	London	Merseyside	South East	Northern Ireland
Apathetic Citizen	28.7	15.8	19.9	32.6	33.1	18.7	30.7
Latent Citizen	43.5	46.7	45.0	44.8	41.9	44.4	49.0
Critical Citizen	25.9	34.4	31.3	19.7	24.3	32.6	18.3
Engaged Citizen	1.9	3.2	3.8	2.9	0.7	4.4	2.0

Table 7-6 looks at the patterns that exist between the latent classes and the different regions of the United Kingdom. Whilst it might have been interesting to see the spread of apathetic citizens across the UK, it seemed more telling to have a look at the spread within a region of all of the classes. So, in this instance column percentages as opposed to row percentages were utilised. This is also where Table 7-1 is useful for reference to be able to gauge whether one region differs from the average as well as from each other.

Given the model shows size of the apathetic class to represent 24.72% of the sample population we can see that several regions either exceed that or have far fewer apathetic citizens. The South West, South East and Eastern regions of the UK all have far fewer apathetic citizens than the model would suggest. Clearly in these areas, for whatever reason, we will find that their citizens are more politically active than others. However, this does not necessarily mean for these areas that they have more of the top most active citizens, in fact, the size of the engaged citizen groups for these areas is approximately similar to the average. People within these regions are much more likely instead to be either latent, but even more so, critical citizens. So, whilst people from these regions are more active on the whole, they are also more likely to be critical and choose to engage in certain forms of activity over others – particularly adopting non-partisan means.

On the other hand we see that the majority of regions actually exceed the average number of apathetic citizens. For places like North York and Humberside, the East Midlands, West Midlands, even Wales, Scotland, the North East and North West this is only marginally bigger than the average. However, for regions like London, Merseyside and Northern Ireland, the proportion of citizens who would be more likely to fit into the apathetic category is considerably higher.

It seems perhaps incongruous that there is a greater probability that there will be more apathetic people within London. Given the context of arguably a vibrant political hotbed at times, it being the loci of government, protest and opportunity it seems strange that there be such a concentration of apathetic people in the capital. However, whilst there is a greater proportion of this group, there are also reasonably similar sized (to the average) engaged citizen and latent citizen groups. London therefore experiences much fewer critical citizens than the norm. Clearly there is disparity in London when it comes to political action, perhaps emphasised by the social, cultural and economic differences.

In contrast to London, Merseyside's abundance of apathetic people is checked by its lower than average proportions of critical and engaged citizenry, but a similar sized latent group. Given the increase in the size of the apathetic, a reduced engaged group is perhaps what we might have expected to find. Northern Ireland also experienced a slightly smaller engaged group of citizens,

but not to the same extent that Merseyside does. It does however also have a larger proportion of people who are latent, and a smaller than average critical group. It seems that people within Northern Ireland have a greater tendency towards low levels of political engagement. Again, this is perhaps strange given the political history of such a region.

For the most part, those regions which had reasonably similar levels of apathetic citizens to the average depicted in the model summary also had near enough similar proportions of critical and latent citizens. They did, however, all have a smaller proportion of engaged citizens within these areas, though given the small proportions and numbers of people this would relate to, this is not necessarily statistically unusual.

What can be taken from this table, on the whole, is that anywhere north of the South and the East (with the exception of London) is going to experience increasingly higher proportions of apathetic people than average. It might be that there is an educational or social class composition that gives these results, though it may also be that a political spirit is felt differently across regions even if we controlled for such effects. To try to answer why this may be the case I would be diving into the realms of speculation, so it must be left for future research.

As with the presentation of latent class by region, I draw upon column percentages for looking at age (table 7-7) rather than row percentages, for the very same reason that they draw a more interesting picture of the situation relating to age. A mere glance at the literature would tell you that you would expect young people (particularly 18-24 year olds) to be amongst some of the least active in society, and this data fails to contradict this. Amongst the 16-17 age group (see data and methods chapter for explanation) there are seen to be no critical or engaged citizens. Whilst this is probably due in part to the very small number of people within this age group, even across the entire nine years, it is still quite telling that none of them would appear within the critical or engaged citizen groups. A similar picture is found when we look at the age group more typically understood as 'youth' in political language, the 18-24s. They too have a much larger proportion of apathetic people than the average model suggests (a difference of 20.18%), a slightly smaller proportion of latent citizens in comparison, but the difference is really made up in the smaller numbers of critical and engaged citizens.

The increased proportions of apathetic people, in comparison to the average, are not just contained to the two youngest groups of individuals; it is a pattern that persists into middle age. Up until the age category 45-54, each age group has a larger than average proportion of apathetic people, and less latent citizens as a result. Up until that same age there are fewer engaged citizens than we might have expected, but an around average proportion of critical

citizens for the age groups 25-34 and 35-44. It is almost a mirror image when it comes to activity and age, as when we look at the 45-54 age category and above (with the exception of 75+ where activity has a tendency to drop off once more) it is clear to see that they have below average proportions of apathetic people, but reasonably similar levels of apathetic people. Also, they seem to have more engaged citizens, and up until 65, a higher proportion of critically engaged citizens.

It is very clear that there is a relationship between age and political engagement and activity – that has always been the case and has already been established, but these results shed a little more light still on the situation. There are more apathetic people within age groups 16-17, 18-24, 25-34 and 35-44 than the average, with that proportion decreasing the older you get. People are more likely to be apathetic than they are latent up until that age group. Not only is it the case that the older you get the more likely you are to be active, you are also more likely to be latent, and have the capacity to be mobilised into action. Between the ages of 35 and 64 people are also more likely to be critical citizens than at any other age. Whether this is a generational effect or whether this is the natural transition of age is undetected here and would require further, longitudinal analysis to be undertaken.

Table 7-7 The Role of Age (APE 1-9)

	Age							
Latent Class	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Apathetic Citizen	51.6	44.9	35.7	25.7	20.8	17.3	16.8	19.7
Latent Citizen	41.8	36.9	41.7	44.0	42.1	45.6	54.2	59.5
Critical Citizen	6.6	16.7	21.5	28.3	33.8	33.6	25.6	17.8
Engaged Citizen	0.0	1.5	1.1	2.0	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.0

Table 7-8 The Role of Education (APE 1-9)

	Qualifications								
Latent Class	None	GCSE/O-Level/CSE	Vocational Qualifications (NVQ1+2)	A-Level of equivalent (NVQ3)	Bachelor Degree or equivalent (NVQ4)	Masters/PhD equivalent	Other	Still Studying	Don't know
Apathetic Citizen	35.0	25.0	9.7	11.8	6.6	1.3	6.8	3.3	0.6
Latent Citizen	28.5	18.9	8.8	14.2	13.3	2.9	10.4	2.7	0.4
Critical Citizen	10.5	15.2	5.9	17.0	27.6	9.6	11.4	2.6	0.3
Engaged Citizen	5.9	8.0	3.8	15.3	36.8	17.0	9.0	4.2	0.0

Table 7-8 shows the relationship between educational qualification and the latent classes. Respondents were asked to state which their highest achieved qualification was and not whether they had achieved all of these. Here I reverted to utilising the row percentages. The probability is that the highest proportion of apathetic citizens will have reported having no qualifications whatsoever, followed by having attained qualifications at the equivalent of GCSE level. The same is true, but to a lesser extent of the latent citizen.

The critical citizen, however, has a greater chance of having obtained a bachelor's degree or equivalent, followed by having achieved the equivalent to an A Level, GCSE or an 'other' type of qualification. The engaged citizen lies quite firmly within having achieved a bachelor's degree or equivalent, and then a postgraduate qualification, followed then by having achieved A Level standard qualifications.

Comparatively speaking, there is a very interesting picture which shows a strong relationship between achieving higher level qualifications and increased political activity. The apathetic citizen is much more likely to have obtained no qualifications than any of the other latent classes. This is a pattern which persists as we go up the political activity spectrum, with much fewer proportions within those classes having left education with no recognised qualifications. The same is true where the highest qualification is GCSE – with a higher proportion than for any other group being within the apathetic citizenry. This is a pattern which presents itself again when we look at vocational qualifications and the 'don't know' category. The turning point is with the A Level. A Levels are much more likely to have been achieved by critical citizens, and in order; engaged and latent before apathetic. When we move up to the realms of the bachelor's degree – if you have obtained this you have a higher chance of being in the engaged citizen group than any other, followed as we might expect by the critical citizens, latent and finally apathetic groups. This is certainly replicated once more when it comes to having achieved a Masters or PhD. It is also largely the case for those who have achieved an 'other' qualification (perhaps a professional one, PGCE etc), but the majority of people who achieve this are in either the critical or latent groups, followed by the engaged citizens and lastly the apathetic citizens.

As with age, these findings replicate, in many ways, analysis which has gone before, but again it adds an alternative slant with the delineation of the different latent classes. Traditional patterns relating to the positive association between education and political activity persist, but looking at the classes individually allows us to see that it is quite possible for there to be a reasonable proportion of people who have A levels, bachelor's degrees and even Master's degrees or PhDs who might be very apathetic. It is true that there is a greater likelihood of them being active, but there is the chance that people even with such high levels of qualification feel either critical, disengaged or entirely apathetic about politics and political activity.

Table 7-9 The Role of Knowledge (APE 1-9)

Latent Class	Knowledge				
	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	Nothing At All	Don't Know
Apathetic citizen	0.6	10.0	49.8	38.7	1.0
Latent citizen	2.6	41.4	51.8	4.0	0.2
Critical citizen	9.8	64.4	25.1	0.7	0.1
Engaged citizen	35.4	60.5	4.1	0.0	0.0

This table regarding knowledge indicates that the apathetic citizen, perhaps as we might have expected, appears to report the least amount of knowledge when it comes to politics – with only 0.6% people within that group claiming to know a great deal about politics, and a large majority (88.5%) saying they either knew not very much or nothing at all. This is in stark contrast even to the latent citizen for whom although over 50% claim they know not very much about politics, a much smaller proportion than the apathetic citizen say that they know nothing at all, and a much greater proportion relaying that they have a fair amount of knowledge about the topic.

Where the majority of people within the latent class said they didn't know much about politics, the critical citizens instead claim to know a fair amount, with a larger proportion in comparison to the previous two groups, also saying they thought they had a great deal of political knowledge. The highest proportion of people claiming that they have a great deal of knowledge however is the engaged citizen, and the majority yet again saying they felt they knew a fair amount. A small proportion conceded that they didn't know very much, but nobody from within the most active, engaged citizen group revealed they had no understanding whatsoever.

Unsurprisingly also, the highest likely proportion of 'don't knows' across all of the latent classes resides within that apathetic group – all or nearly all of the other groups are aware of their political knowledge level, whether it be good, bad or indifferent. Interestingly it is the engaged citizen who claims, *considerably more* than any other citizen, even it's 'closest' citizen in classification, the critical citizen, that they have a great deal of knowledge when it comes to politics. However, the difference between any of the groups in relation to the 'don't know response' is still relatively minimal.

Ultimately, it seems that, as with interest and activity rising through the classes, from apathetic up to engaged, knowledge follows the same predictable, steady path. However, the one problem with considering self-reported knowledge as a variable is that it is open to interpretation and mis-reporting. The perception of knowledge of politics very much depends on one's understanding of what politics is. Therefore, it is possible that in some instances knowledge may be either under or over-represented.

Knowledge is one of the most interesting variables to consider because, as with interest, it is perhaps one of the greatest discriminators of political engagement and action. The lack of knowledge, whether it is over or under-represented in any of the classes bears out the idea that, for those apathetic citizens, politics is less meaningful – it doesn't form a great deal of their conscious thought. The greater activity, interest and knowledge amongst the latent or critical citizen, yet not full engagement with politics like the engaged citizen, marks out a clear difference in this apathetic group. The two middle groups still hold some level of interest and

knowledge which means any inactivity represents disillusionment or a reordering of priorities rather than sheer apathy.

7.2 Analysis for APE 10 Latent Class Model relating to undertaken political activity

Table 7-10 LCA Model for APE 10 Including Interest as a Covariate

APE 10 (Collected 2012)				
Variable	Apathetic Citizen	Latent Citizen	Critical Citizen	Engaged Citizen
Taken an active part in a campaign	0.0000	0.0078	0.2237	0.5762
Voted in an election	0.1082	0.4554	0.5658	0.9768
Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0046	0.0708	0.5687	0.9207
Contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media	0.0000	0.0317	0.3843	0.4122
Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party	0.0033	0.0144	0.0001	0.5036
Created or signed an e-petition	0.0177	0.1174	0.9488	0.1442
Cluster Size	0.5629	0.3896	0.0368	0.0107
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0083	0.1744	0.4584	0.9966
Fairly interested	0.1089	0.6098	0.4996	0.0027
Not very interested	0.4251	0.2141	0.0417	0.0005
Not at all interested	0.4534	0.0015	0.0003	0.0003
Don't know	0.0043	0.0001	0.0000	0.0000

Here we have the latent class model obtained on the basis of the data from APE 10 for the response variables relating to six acts of political activity undertaken in the previous 12 months. The tables that follow show the relationship between the latent classes established in this model and a variety of different explanatory variables; a combination of attitudinal and attribute variables.

7.2.1 Attitudinal Variables

7.2.1.1 Governing

The findings largely replicate those found previously for this response variable in that it is the apathetic group who seem to have the least amount of knowledge about the current functioning of government. They are slightly more critical as a group than the APE 1-9 data, but this is true for all groups except the engaged class. This might perhaps be symptomatic of the government in question rather than a permanent shift in opinion. It might also be the case that the engaged citizen group feel more closely aligned to the current system of governing.

Table 7-11 Views on the Current System of Governing (APE 10a)

	Views on the Current System of Governing				
Latent Class	Works Extremely Well and Could Not be Improved	Could be Improved in Small Ways but Mainly Works Well	Could be Improved Quite a Lot	Needs a Great Deal of Improvement	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	1.6	16.0	38.2	33.2	11.0
Latent Citizen	3.0	31.2	43.6	20.6	1.5
Critical Citizen	0.0	39.5	42.1	18.4	0.0
Engaged Citizen	14.3	28.6	57.1	0.0	0.0

Table 7-12 Satisfaction with the Working of Parliament (APE 10a)

	Satisfaction with the working of Parliament					
Latent Class	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	1.6	13.7	44.9	17.1	16.6	6.1
Latent Citizen	2.7	35.0	29.0	22.0	11.0	0.4
Critical Citizen	0.0	42.1	23.7	21.1	13.2	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	28.6	14.3	57.1	0.0	0.0

As with a number of the associations seen before, the 'don't know' response is most common amongst the apathetic group in table 7-12. Also, the greatest proportion within the group claims that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – i.e. they remain indifferent. The most striking feature about this group is this sheer indifference, a finding that is replicated throughout the results. They are also the group that is most likely to express the greatest amount of extreme dissatisfaction, though on the whole seem less dissatisfied on some level than either the critical or engaged citizens.

The latent citizen group tend to be overall more satisfied, or unsure, than they are dissatisfied. This is also true of the engaged citizens, though none expresses that they are very satisfied. This is also the case for the engaged citizen who is much more dissatisfied with the way that Parliament works on some level than all of the other groups.

The next couple of tables depict the relationship between the classes and how they feels MPs in general are doing their job, and also how they feel their local MP is performing. There is a slightly different picture when we look at MPs in general, with fewer people within the apathetic group claiming that they do not know their satisfaction levels, though there is a reasonably similar number who do not seem satisfied or dissatisfied. This is relatively high throughout each of the groups, but decreases as the amount of engagement increases. The apathetic is the most dissatisfied followed then by the rest of the classes.

As with the previous table the apathetic, latent and engaged citizens all seem similarly dissatisfied with the way MPs in general are doing their job, with the critical citizens taking a more marginally strong complaint. The engaged citizens on the other hand who were more likely to be reasonably disparaging about their satisfaction with Parliament are increasingly more satisfied with MPs than their previous response and also the responses of all the other citizen groups in this respect.

It is clear that people are much happier with the performance of the individual MP representing them than they are MPs in general. For the all- important apathetic citizen we can see that they seem to know less about the performance of their MP than they do MPs in general. A higher proportion of this group are also likely to have said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the way their MP was doing their job. This lack of indication one way or another is highest amongst this group than any other. For the most part though, the apathetic group is similar to the rest of the groups in expressing much higher levels of satisfaction, and consequently much lower levels of dissatisfaction in their own MPs performance than for that of MPs in general.

It is curious that individuals have such differing perceptions of MPs, perhaps expressed through a lack of tangibility for MPs beyond their local representative. Why this is the case cannot be explored here but forms again a potentially interesting avenue for further research.

Table 7-13 Satisfaction with the way MPs in general are doing their job (APE 10 a)

	Satisfaction with the way MPs in general are doing their job					
Latent Class	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	1.1	13.0	43.1	18.4	18.9	5.6
Latent Citizen	2.3	30.1	31.1	24.8	11.6	0.2
Critical Citizen	0.0	36.8	28.9	26.3	7.9	0.0
Engaged Citizen	14.3	42.9	14.3	28.6	0.0	0.0

Table 7-14 Satisfaction with the way your MP is doing his/her job (APE 10 a)

	Satisfaction with the way your MP is doing his/her job					
Latent Class	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.2	19.5	48.1	10.1	11.5	8.6
Latent Citizen	9.5	36.2	34.7	10.0	5.7	4.0
Critical Citizen	13.2	36.8	34.2	10.5	2.6	2.6
Engaged Citizen	42.9	42.9	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

7.2.1.2 Citizens' Perceived Role within Politics

The next few tables demonstrate how citizens perceive themselves, and their roles, within politics – whether they could make a difference, whether it's fun and worth getting involved in and really whether it is their duty to play an active part.

The apathetic citizens are those who are most likely to report that they think politics is a waste of time, though the majority of all of the classes tend to disagree with this notion. They are also the group that sees politics as 'not much fun', a finding that puts them in common with their 'latent' counterparts. In spite of this though, all citizen groups, including the apathetic individuals seem to agree that the only way to be really informed about politics is by getting involved. Similarly, all groups recognise the importance of getting involved for the system to work properly, though the apathetic group do not agree to the same extent as the other groups. The implication here is that the apathetic group in particular, although they recognise some of the various different values of participation, simply do not care because they see it as boring and a waste of time.

It is no surprise therefore to find that they are also the group who is least likely to derive enjoyment from collective activity. However, there are two ways of looking at these findings – perhaps it is the case that they are not as active as other people because they do not enjoy community action, find it boring or think it a waste of time. Or, it might be that because they are not as active they haven't had the opportunity to experience the enjoyment and value they may take from it. The same two dimensional approach could be applied to the finding that the apathetic citizen is the least likely to feel it important to act if they are dissatisfied. It might be that they simply are not inclined that way or it may be that they do not know how to air their views even if they were. There is some evidence that this is linked to confidence – in that the apathetic group are also the least likely to think they would make a good job of being a local councillor or MP. However, confidence falters in all of the groups when confronted with the idea of being an MP but still not to the extent of the apathetic group.

However, we might not yet feel so positive about the apathetic group when we also see that they claim in higher proportions than any other group that they do not have the time to get involved in politics. Whilst confidence is clearly an issue so too is inclination towards politics amongst this group.

Table 7-15 When people like me get involved in politics they really can change the way that the UK is run (APE 10 a)

	When people like me get involved in politics they really can change the way that the UK is run					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	8.8	17.8	35.5	18.7	15.7	3.4
Latent Citizen	7.0	31.6	23.9	27.3	9.7	0.6
Critical Citizen	10.5	42.1	18.4	21.1	7.9	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	57.1	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 7-16 Politics is a Waste of Time (APE 10 a)

	Politics is a waste of time					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	15.7	15.7	28.1	24.3	13.7	2.5
Latent Citizen	2.7	8.3	15.5	38.8	34.3	0.4
Critical Citizen	0.0	2.6	2.6	28.9	65.8	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0

Table 7-17 The only way to be really informed about politics is to get involved (APE 10 a)

The only way to be really informed about politics is to get involved						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	12.1	41.8	25.0	12.6	5.9	2.5
Latent Citizen	15.2	44.9	15.3	20.5	3.8	0.4
Critical Citizen	21.1	44.7	13.2	21.1	0.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	42.9	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 7-18 Participating in politics is not much fun (APE 10 a)

Participating in politics is not much fun						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	23.8	34.2	28.1	7.4	3.6	2.9
Latent Citizen	8.9	32.2	27.3	25.9	4.5	1.1
Critical Citizen	5.3	21.1	31.6	26.3	15.8	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	28.6	0.0	57.1	14.3	0.0

Table 7-19 I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community (APE 10 a)

I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	9.2	26.1	37.5	14.8	9.5	2.9
Latent Citizen	17.0	38.4	28.0	13.6	2.1	0.8
Critical Citizen	36.8	34.2	21.1	5.3	2.6	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	42.9	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 7-20 A person like me could do a good job as a local councillor (APE 10 a)

	A person like me could do a good job as a local councillor					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	6.7	14.1	24.7	27.7	23.2	3.6
Latent Citizen	10.6	23.1	22.9	28.2	14.4	0.8
Critical Citizen	15.8	34.2	13.2	28.9	7.9	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	57.1	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0

Table 7-21 A person like me could do a good job as a local MP (APE 10 a)

	A person like me could do a good job as a local MP					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	5.8	12.6	23.1	25.9	29.7	2.9
Latent Citizen	9.3	17.0	22.5	33.0	17.2	0.9
Critical Citizen	13.2	15.8	13.2	44.7	13.2	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	42.9	14.3	0.0	14.3	0.0

Table 7-22 Every citizen should get involved in politics if democracy is to work properly (APE 10 a)

	Every citizen should get involved in politics if democracy is to work properly					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	12.8	35.7	29.2	13.5	6.8	2.0
Latent Citizen	28.6	43.9	14.4	10.4	2.1	0.6
Critical Citizen	39.5	39.5	13.2	5.3	2.6	0.0
Engaged Citizen	85.7	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0

Table 7-23 If a person is dissatisfied with political decisions he/she has a duty to do something about it (APE 10 a)

	If a person is dissatisfied with political decisions he/she has a duty to do something about it					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	14.4	41.4	29.9	8.5	2.7	3.1
Latent Citizen	21.2	50.2	18.4	8.5	1.3	0.4
Critical Citizen	36.8	47.4	13.2	0.0	2.6	0.0
Engaged Citizen	57.1	14.3	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0

Table 7-24 I don't have enough time to get involved in politics (APE 10 a)

	I don't have enough time to get involved in politics					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	30.6	25.8	27.2	8.6	6.1	1.6
Latent Citizen	16.9	34.1	21.2	20.8	6.6	0.4
Critical Citizen	10.5	28.9	23.7	28.9	7.9	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	14.3	14.3	42.9	28.6	0.0

7.2.1.3 UK Parliament

The following four tables examine the relationship between perceived effectiveness of the UK Parliament in a variety of capacities and the latent classes.

In terms of holding the government to account there is a reasonably positive impression and some, but not much variation between each of the latent classes. Certainly within the apathetic class there are still a great deal who neither agree nor disagree or answer that they 'don't know', more so than most other groups. Although there is reasonable variation in the responses of the latent classes with respect to how essential they see the UK Parliament being to our democracy an overwhelming majority in all classes agree with the idea. The apathetic citizen is most different to all of the other classes who feel very strongly about the claim. The apathetic citizen is marked out as distinct in this respect from any of the other classes.

Although it is true that the majority of respondents, irrespective of latent class, feel the UK Parliament is essential for democracy, they are less positive regarding the extent to which it encourages public involvement or debates and makes decisions on matters that are important to them.

In relation to the former the apathetic citizens show the most confusion, indecision or indifference, but not disagreement with the idea that the UK Parliament encourages involvement. It is instead the critical citizen who seems to suggest the UK Parliament is not overly concerned in public involvement in politics. Although the critical citizens live up to their critical nature here, they do recognise that, despite their majority opinion asserting that the UK Parliament does not do enough to encourage political involvement of the public, it does debate and make decisions on issues that are important to them. The engaged citizens agree with this most, followed by the critical then latent citizen. Once more the apathetic citizen is very different from all the others (with a proportionate difference of nearly 30% to the latent group) in being the very lowest to agree on some level that the UK Parliament does think about things that are relevant to them. There are three possible ways of looking at this. The first is that the UK Parliament does not represent the issues of these people and thus they are turned off from politics. The second is that the UK Parliament does not represent the issue of these people because they do not act and therefore politicians do not need to win these individuals over. The third possibility is that the apathetic citizen simply perceives wrongly that the UK Parliament does not consider issues of importance to them.

Table 7-25 The UK Parliament holds government to account (APE 10 a)

The UK Parliament holds government to account						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	9.4	29.7	38.2	10.6	5.0	7.0
Latent Citizen	14.6	42.4	22.2	14.0	4.4	2.5
Critical Citizen	13.2	36.8	26.3	10.5	13.2	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	57.1	42.9	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 7-26 The UK Parliament encourages public involvement in politics (APE 10 a)

The UK Parliament encourages public involvement in politics						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	5.2	21.6	34.4	22.7	9.9	6.1
Latent Citizen	7.4	27.7	25.0	28.0	11.0	0.9
Critical Citizen	7.9	28.9	5.3	47.4	10.5	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	42.9	14.3	42.9	0.0	0.0

Table 7-27 The UK Parliament is essential to our democracy (APE 10 a)

The UK Parliament is essential to our democracy						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	19.6	35.1	30.6	4.9	4.5	5.2
Latent Citizen	39.6	40.7	13.3	4.0	1.7	0.8
Critical Citizen	57.9	26.3	5.3	7.9	2.6	0.0
Engaged Citizen	71.4	14.3	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0

Table 7-28 The UK Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me (APE 10 a)

	The UK Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	8.3	31.2	35.5	13.9	6.5	4.7
Latent Citizen	22.2	46.2	16.9	10.0	4.0	0.8
Critical Citizen	47.4	36.8	7.9	7.9	0.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	42.9	42.9	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

7.2.1.4 Influence

The following two tables examine by the latent classes individuals' approaches to the influence they feel towards decision making at a local and national level. The pattern is one that quite clearly shows feelings of influence increasing the more engaged you are for both the local and national level. The apathetic citizen is least likely to feel very minimal influence on either levels.

What is interesting though is the proportionate difference for the critical and engaged citizens when it comes to the national level. Their feelings of influence plummet when they consider decision making at the country level, much more so than either the apathetic or latent individuals.

This likely reveals something about their motivations for the political action that classifies them the way they have been. The activity variables used as indicators for the latent class analysis are deliberately not specific to either local or national action. However, the fact that even the critical and engaged citizens feel significantly less influential at the national level compared to the local level suggests their activity is likely to be driven towards local action where they are more likely to feel a greater sense of influence and efficacy.

Table 7-29 How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in your local area? (APE 10 a)

How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in your local area?					
Latent Class	A Great Deal of Influence	Some Influence	Not Very Much Influence	No Influence at all	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	1.4	16.0	37.7	42.3	2.5
Latent Citizen	3.8	29.5	41.5	24.1	1.1
Critical Citizen	0.0	47.4	42.1	10.5	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	71.4	28.6	0.0	0.0

Table 7-30 How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in the country as a whole? (APE 10 a)

How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in the country as a whole?					
Latent Class	A Great Deal of Influence	Some Influence	Not Very Much Influence	No Influence at all	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	1.4	11.7	36.8	47.9	2.2
Latent Citizen	2.8	19.3	43.9	33.1	0.8
Critical Citizen	0.0	26.3	60.5	13.2	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	28.6	71.4	0.0	0.0

7.2.1.5 Personal Feelings about Politics

This section of the chapter looks at how citizens feel about politics – not how they feel they should act within the political culture but how they feel very personally about politics and political discussion.

The idea introduced earlier on in this analysis which suggested there might be an element of a lack of confidence for the apathetic group is somewhat replicated here too. Although there is no majority view regardless of latent class who agrees they feel uncomfortable when people argue about politics it is still a view that is most keenly felt amongst the apathetic group. This is also largely true of the latent group, but the apathetic group shows the most indifference also. This group is increasingly seen to be characterised by a mixture of inhibition and unconcern.

This is replicated furthermore when we consider how complicated they feel politics is for someone like them where they are the group with the highest proportion both agreeing with the sentiment but also the highest proportion choosing to sit on the fence with their response. However, this reticence is mirrored in the latent and critical groups to a certain extent, but not amongst the engaged individuals who clearly feel a real sense of confidence.

When it comes to sharing political views the apathetic seem once more to be the group who is most reluctant or reserved as they feel least strongly that they are good at seeing things from different people's perspectives or that they do not take it personally when someone disagrees with their political point of view. However, the engaged citizen is not far behind the apathetic group when it comes to taking things personally. It might seem an initially puzzling finding given their aptitude for political enquiry. Although, it might not be such a surprise as they are group who quite clearly care about politics and as such may feel like they have more of themselves invested in their particular political position. Thus when somebody disagrees with their point of view they are more inclined to take it personally than any of the other classes.

The ability to be more flexible in this manner does on the whole seem to increase as the experience of activity does. Perhaps this is because political conversation is something they are not used to in the less active groups. It also seems reasonable that the apathetic group, with its higher proportion of people who have not stated whether they agree or not, do not know because their disagreement with someone's political view point is less frequent than other classes.

Disagreement is something which seems least common for this group as they have demonstrated in their responses to how readily they would go along with the majority view of a group even if it was not what they wanted. The profile of the apathetic individual is one that wants to be agreeable as difficult as they might find it.

Table 7-31 When people argue about politics I feel uncomfortable (APE 10 a)

	When people argue about politics I feel uncomfortable				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	6.7	17.8	36.6	22.9	16.0
Latent Citizen	5.7	15.3	21.4	30.9	26.7
Critical Citizen	0.0	5.3	7.9	36.8	50.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	0.0	0.0	42.9	57.1

Table 7-32 Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on (APE 10 a)

	Sometimes politics & government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	24.9	37.7	26.8	7.2	3.4
Latent Citizen	12.1	37.7	18.0	21.8	10.4
Critical Citizen	7.9	34.2	5.3	23.7	28.9
Engaged Citizen	0.0	28.6	14.3	28.6	28.6

Table 7-33 I usually find it easy to see political issues from other people’s point of view (APE 10 a)

	I usually find it easy to see political issues from other people's point of view				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	9.2	34.8	40.4	10.5	5.2
Latent Citizen	15.2	44.5	23.7	13.1	3.6
Critical Citizen	21.1	55.3	13.2	10.5	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	42.9	28.6	0.0	0.0

Table 7-34 I do not take it personally when someone disagrees with my political views (APE 10 a)

	I do not take it personally when someone disagrees with my political views				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	23.1	29.9	29.7	9.4	7.9
Latent Citizen	31.6	41.3	15.5	6.6	4.9
Critical Citizen	42.1	44.7	2.6	5.3	5.3
Engaged Citizen	14.3	42.9	14.3	14.3	14.3

Table 7-35 When I'm in a group I often go along with what the majority decides is best even if it is not what I want personally (APE 10 a)

	When I'm in a group I often go along with what the majority decides is best even if it is not what I want personally				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	4.5	15.7	34.1	26.8	18.9
Latent Citizen	4.2	15.0	17.4	33.9	29.5
Critical Citizen	2.6	5.3	15.8	23.7	52.6
Engaged Citizen	0.0	28.6	0.0	14.3	57.1

7.2.1.6 What if Politics was different?

We now turn to look at what the latent classes think of the different options for a ‘different’ politics – it either being MORE or LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests – and how they anticipate this impacting upon their interest in getting involved in politics.

In all groups people were put off more from the idea of an increase in self-serving politicians and special interests rather a decrease. All groups respond positively to a fairer scenario. We can say from this then that people are motivated more not by feeling the need that they have to get involved but by a sense that it would be a more fair playground upon which to play.

The negative option drew out greatest disapproval from the engaged citizen, but closely followed by the apathetic citizen. Although given their high levels of engagement it is possible to imagine how the engaged citizen might be less interested in being involved in politics it is not quite the case with the apathetic group – their interest is already at an extreme low. The critical group were those most motivated by the increased presence of self-serving politicians, which given their profile conceptualised in Chapter 4, is entirely reasonable.

In the alternative scenario we see that the standard pattern emerges whereby such a possibility provokes the most positive response from the engaged group, followed then by the critical and latent citizens and last the apathetic group.

Whilst this apathetic group are admittedly less turned off by the absence of self-serving politicians than they were the increase of them it seems there is no measure relating to the quality of politicians that could be applied which would mean this apathetic group could be prevailed upon to be more interested and engaged in politics.

It strikes me then that this is a group of people who are not largely affected by the performance of politicians or the way that politics is supplied to them, and thus cannot be described as disengaged or disillusioned from politics because it seems no improvement that could be made to politics is something that would appeal to them enough to increase their level of action. Perhaps this is too simplistic a view of the supply of politics, but if we also look back at the tables which looked at the opinions on the functioning of democracy, Parliament and the current system of governing a largely satisfied apathetic group is the picture. In most instances they were either reasonably satisfied, either not satisfied or dissatisfied or not knowing of their response. This is a group whose opinion is not felt hugely one way or another and where an offer of change, either good or bad, it seems cannot prompt these individuals into increased action.

Table 7-36 If politics were MORE influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics? (APE 10 a)

	If politics were MORE influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics?				
Latent Class	Definitely more interested	Probably more interested	Probably less interested	Definitely less interested	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	5.0	23.8	32.6	25.6	13.0
Latent Citizen	8.9	33.9	29.5	21.4	6.2
Critical Citizen	18.4	28.9	34.2	18.4	0.0
Engaged Citizen	14.3	0.0	28.6	42.9	14.3

Table 7-37 If politics were LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics? (APE 10 a)

	If politics were LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics?				
Latent Class	Definitely more interested	Probably more interested	Probably less interested	Definitely less interested	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	5.4	34.2	28.6	16.9	14.8
Latent Citizen	17.6	44.7	23.7	7.6	6.4
Critical Citizen	21.1	55.3	18.4	2.6	2.6
Engaged Citizen	42.9	42.9	0.0	0.0	14.3

7.2.2 Attribute Variables

The next set of tables moves away from the attitudinal variables and instead goes on to look, very much like part 7.1.2 did earlier in the chapter at the certain socio-economic and demographic features of each of the citizen groups.

It begins initially by looking at total annual income, a variable that was not available in all iterations of the APE 1-9 data. The table that has been produced through the result of a cross tabulation function reflects column percentages so that we can see the spread of each of the groups within one particular income bracket. Although no income bracket is going to have a huge proportion of people from the engaged or critical citizen groups as they represent such a small proportion of the overall sample population, it is interesting to see the difference across income. Table 7-10 is useful here for reference against the average distribution of people within the classes.

Table 7-38 Role of Total Annual Income (APE 10 a)

	Total Annual Income (Before tax, NI and pension contributions)					
Latent Class	Up to £4499	£4500 - £6499	£6500 - £7499	£7500 - 9499	£9500 - £11499	£11500 - 13499
Apathetic Citizen	65.8	55.3	40.0	66.7	45.5	44.9
Latent Citizen	31.6	42.1	60.0	33.3	50.9	51.0
Critical Citizen	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.0
Engaged Citizen	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.0

	Total Annual Income (Before tax, NI and pension contributions)					
Latent Class	£13500 - £15499	£15500 - £17499	£17500 - £24999	£25000 - £29999	£30000 - £39999	£40000 - £49999
Apathetic Citizen	45.7	55.6	46.7	49.3	39.0	31.0
Latent Citizen	50.0	40.0	51.1	44.9	51.9	65.5
Critical Citizen	2.2	4.4	2.2	5.8	7.8	1.7
Engaged Citizen	2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.7

	Total Annual Income (Before tax, NI and pension contributions)				
Latent Class	£50000 - £74999	£75000 - £99999	£100000+	Don't Know	Refused
Apathetic Citizen	28.4	30.4	17.6	64.3	54.3
Latent Citizen	59.7	56.5	70.6	33.8	43.9
Critical Citizen	11.9	13.0	5.9	1.9	1.8
Engaged Citizen	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0

Given that the average proportionate size of each of the latent classes is 0.5629 for the apathetic citizens, 0.3896 for the latent citizens, 0.0368 for the critical citizens and 0.0107 for the engaged citizens we can instantly see some disparities in terms of income. The apathetic citizens are over-represented in the up to £4999, £7500 - £9499 per annum and ‘don’t know’ income categories. They are under-represented when we look at all the other income brackets, particularly so from £30,000 per year and above.

The latent citizens are however over-represented in nearly all income brackets except for the ones in which the apathetic citizen was. Interestingly there is no real pattern when it comes to income for this type of citizen, except, oddly where income reaches £9500 or above and especially so from £30000 onwards. The critical citizen seems to be over-represented in most income categories exceeding £25000 a year, and particularly so at the very highest incomes. Due to the small size of the engaged group there is no real pattern and proportions of people within that group are distributed very sporadically throughout the income variable. However, they are still a group which is hugely over-represented in proportionate size amongst those respondents who answered that they earn over £100000 per year.

It seems income is a significant factor for separating the apathetic citizen from all others, as they are the only group under-represented in a number of income categories, particularly those where the income is above average. The apathetic citizens therefore are likely to have the profile of lower earning individuals, and all others, including the latent citizens may have higher incomes. This is an average, however, and does not include the fact that there is representation from most groups among the majority of the income brackets – so it is not to say that all apathetic people are low income earners and all engaged people are high income earners, it merely shows the distribution of the classes amongst the income brackets.

Table 7-39 Role of Sex (APE 10 a)

Latent Class	Sex	
	Male	Female
Apathetic Citizen	44.0	56.0
Latent Citizen	50.8	49.2
Critical Citizen	50.0	50.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	71.4

As in an earlier section of this chapter this table looks at whether there is any association between sex and the different latent classes. It goes back to using row percentages rather than column percentages so the distribution across the sexes can be seen for each of the classes.

As with the APE 1-9 data women are slightly over-represented in this data set, which is reflected partially in the results. The apathetic citizen has a greater presence of females than males it would seem judging by these figures. The same is also true however of the engaged citizen, where the proportion of females outstrips that of males. There seems to be relatively little difference between men and women when it comes to the latent and critical citizens.

The important thing to note here is that there seems to be no statistical association between the sex variable and the latent classes, as the Pearson chi-square test shows a p-value which is not significant. Therefore no real conclusions about a relationship between sex and apathy or any other of the latent groupings can be made.

The relationship between age and the latent classes in the previous round of analysis showed some interesting and not entirely unsurprising results, given that which has been presented within the literature. Table 7-40 shows no sign of extreme deviation from these findings. It takes the column percentages from the cross tabulation of the variable age and the highest likelihood of each respondent being in whichever latent class they are most closely aligned to. Again it is necessary to use the initial model for the APE10 data as reference to the average size of the latent classes.

The only age group for which the apathetic citizen group is over-represented is that of the 18-24 year olds, with a difference of over 10% to the average of the UK adult population. In this group the latent citizen is highly under-represented, but interestingly enough the size of the critical citizen is about right even amongst this age group. The engaged citizen is certainly under-represented also amongst this age category which is to be expected. Whilst most 18-24 year olds are likely still to reside within either the apathetic citizen and latent citizen groups it is more common proportionately for this age group than some others that they are over-represented specifically in the apathetic group. It seems that 18-24 year olds are more likely than most to be very inactive.

The under-representation of the engaged group is not just common to the 18-24 age category, however. It is common to all but the 45-54 and 55-64 age brackets, where they are slightly over-represented in comparison to the original model. It is not uncommon to find this, though again the results for the engaged group may be plagued by the small size.

The latent citizen quite interestingly is over-represented in all but the 18-24 year old age category. It seems where people are likely to be reasonably inactive (i.e. the apathetic and latent

citizen body) they are likely to be least active and have the motivations, or lack thereof, the apathetic group when they are younger, specifically in the 18-24 year olds group. Once that age has passed they are then more likely to be found, if still reasonably inactive, within the latent group. If we accept my premise that the apathetic lacks a political consciousness, it seems that beyond 24 people who are still relatively interested in politics have begun to develop some sort of political awareness which means they have the potential to act.

The critical citizen is under-represented in some age categories (again perhaps as a result of a reasonably small sample population), however it is reasonably adequately represented in the 18-24, 45-54 and 65-74 year old age categories. It is very much over-represented in the 35-44 where there are seemingly far fewer apathetic and engaged citizens. This is not an entirely strange finding given that we know the critical citizen is one for whom politics is important and they act out of a sense of duty and it being an important act, reflected in their engagement with most activities apart from party politics. Certainly within the 35-44 age group there is, as a factor of life and circumstance, a greater likelihood that issues of politics will be more pertinent, and thus it would be reasonable to see more critical citizens at this age point.

Table 7-40 Role of Age (APE 10 a)

	Age						
Latent Class	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Apathetic Citizen	69.5	52.1	44.9	40.3	45.7	36.0	55.1
Latent Citizen	26.3	46.1	48.0	55.1	50.7	60.5	42.9
Critical Citizen	3.6	1.4	7.1	3.1	2.2	3.5	2.0
Engaged Citizen	0.6	0.5	0.0	1.5	1.4	0.0	0.0

Table 7-41 Role of Social Class (APE 10 a)

	Social Class					
Latent Class	A	B	C1	C2	D	E
Apathetic Citizen	0.9	5.4	24.1	25.2	22.0	22.3
Latent Citizen	3.8	19.5	27.3	21.2	13.8	14.4
Critical Citizen	7.9	34.2	34.2	7.9	7.9	7.9
Engaged Citizen	14.3	14.3	28.6	0.0	0.0	42.9

Table 7-41 again takes a look at the role that social class might play in the assignment of latent class, returning to use row percentages for the presentation of results for this cross tabulation.

As before, the apathetic class are almost equally split between social classes C1, C2, D and E, and with the exception of the anomaly presented in the engaged citizen group, the apathetic class has the highest proportion of people likely to be in classes C2, D and E in comparison to both the latent and critical citizens.

The latent citizen has reasonably high proportions of people within C1 and C2, and even to a lesser extent social class B. They are much less likely to see people within this group in either social classes D or E and very unlikely to see anybody within social class A.

The critical citizen in contrast has a much higher proportion of people within it who might associate themselves with being in social class A, but as a majority it sees more people from social classes B and C1. To an equal and lesser extent classes C2, D and E are less likely to represent this latent class. This is the same figure for being in social class A – highlighting once more part of the problem with having such a small number of this latent class choosing to respond to this question.

As I alluded to above, the same problem exists for the engaged citizen where there is a much less clear picture when it comes to social class. It seems obvious not only from this analysis, but that which has preceded it that more can be drawn from a larger sample. This is something which can be addressed in the future, but could not be within this analysis for the APE 1-9 data simply did not have the extent of explanatory variables to explore as APE 10 did.

Table 7-42 Role of Region (APE 10 a)

	Region					
Latent Class	North East	North West	Yorkshire & Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England
Apathetic Citizen	50.0	55.0	50.7	42.2	48.7	45.1
Latent Citizen	40.5	42.0	47.8	53.1	43.4	50.0
Critical Citizen	9.5	2.0	1.4	3.1	6.6	2.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.6	1.3	2.9

	Region				
Latent Class	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland
Apathetic Citizen	50.0	49.3	52.1	51.7	46.9
Latent Citizen	48.9	45.3	46.6	47.2	46.9
Critical Citizen	1.1	4.7	1.4	1.1	6.1
Engaged Citizen	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0

This table takes another look, from the perspective of APE 10 data, at the relationship between regions of the country and the distribution of latent classes. As such it takes into account the column, rather than row percentages.

When looking at the regions it seems a number of them are likely to have a majority of apathetic citizens, as is the norm for the country as a whole. However, there are variations of that majority and some places where latent citizens might be more likely. This is true of the East Midlands, and the East of England.

The most common finding is that for those respondents who have chosen to give their region there is an under-representation of apathetic people across all regions, and in all instances this is made up by an over-representation of latent citizens. The North-East, West Midlands and the South East have an over-representation of critical citizens also. There seems to be sporadic patterns too with the engaged citizen, again largely due to the small size of the group. This extends also to the critical group.

Why exactly the apathetic citizens are consistently under-represented and the latent citizens over-represented throughout this explanation of region is unclear, but may be due to a problem of missing data. This is a cross tabulation, which, like sex, also lacks statistical significance given the p-value. As such it is difficult to conclude anything concrete about region in this instance.

Table 7-43 Role of Ethnicity (APE 10 a)

Latent Class	Ethnicity	
	White	BME
Apathetic Citizen	50.4	46.0
Latent Citizen	45.3	50.8
Critical Citizen	3.6	2.8
Engaged Citizen	0.7	0.4

This table considers the relationship between the latent classes and ethnicity as categorised by the audit, again using row percentages. Like the last table looking at the impact of region it uses column percentages to examine the difference between the latent classes.

When looking at the white respondents they seem to reasonably match the make-up found in the original model, with some very slight differences, most notably the increase in the proportion of latent citizens and the decrease in the proportion of apathetic citizens.

Looking at the black, minority and ethnic backgrounds' responses it seems a slightly different picture emerges, whereby if people are going to be reasonably inactive, they are likely to be latent rather than apathetic. They are also less likely to be engaged or critical with regards to politics.

However, the association is not found to be significant so how much this is replicated in the actual target population is disputed.

Table 7-44 represents our final look at the characteristics of the latent classes for APE 10 data based upon model selection using *undertaken* political acts as the key indicator variables. Interest in politics was judged to be a good covariate for the model as ultimately a basic interest underpins any form of action and politics is no different. Knowledge of politics was also judged to be an additional and alternative covariate for the model selection, but made no statistically significant improvement to the model. This combined with the fact that knowledge was a self-reported measure, conditional most likely on a number of other factors such as interest, perhaps education or even sex, it was not used as a covariate within the model. However, it is still an important factor to consider in creating an understanding of the different types of citizens we have within our democracy. Therefore it has been included within this collection of exploratory data analysis. For this example I have reverted to using row percentages once more.

It is clear to see even from a glance that the apathetic citizen is the least likely to express that they have a great deal of knowledge about politics – in fact it is less than 1%. This is in comparison to the latent citizen at 6.8%. Much higher still is the 'great deal' of knowledge that both the critical and engaged citizens claim to have. At 26.3% and 28.6% respectively, very little separates these two at the higher end of knowledge.

The same pattern is replicated once more when we look at respondents' claims of having a 'fair amount' of knowledge. There is however much greater disparity when we include a fair knowledge between the apathetic group and all the other classes. Collectively speaking, only 18% of apathetic respondents claim to have political knowledge of any sort, whereas the latent citizens have 64.6% of people with at least some knowledge. For the critical and engaged citizens this is even higher with figures of 86.8% and 100% respectively. There seems to not only be a vast difference in the level of interest in politics amongst apathetic people and everyone else, but also a disparity in their reported knowledge also. Where the latent, critical and engaged groups concede to no good level of knowledge they are also more likely to say that they have 'not very much' knowledge than nothing at all. Although the majority of apathetic citizens say they do not have very much knowledge, there is still a reasonable proportion (with

31.2% of people) claiming that they know nothing at all, compared to the closest group the latent citizens where only 1.5% register having no knowledge whatsoever.

It seems entirely congruent that individuals who have such little knowledge – or at the very least, confidence in their knowledge and understanding of politics, are those who engage least frequently in it, and those who perceive they have the most feel comfortable in contributing.

Table 7-44 Role of Knowledge (APE 10 a)

Latent Class	Knowledge				
	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	Nothing At All	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	0.9	17.1	50.6	31.2	0.2
Latent Citizen	6.8	58.0	33.7	1.5	0.0
Critical Citizen	26.3	60.5	13.2	0.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	28.6	71.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

7.3 Analysis for APE 10 Latent Class Model relating to prospective political activity

This section goes onto look at the same set of explanatory variables, both attitudinal and demographic as the preceding section has. It is instead on the basis of cross tabulations of those variables, with the variable representing the highest likelihood of being assigned to a particular class according to the latent class model where *prospective* political action from APE 10 is taken into account. Given there were some slight differences in the two models for this dataset it is expected that a lot of the analysis will largely reflect that of section 7.2, but there might be some alternative results. It is hoped that this section will further reveal characteristics particularly of the apathetic group, as those within it are likely apathetic not only in action but also in mind for future activity.

Table 7-45 shows the original model for this data and variable selection, as presented in Chapter 6, useful for reference throughout.

Table 7-45 LCA Model for APE 10 Including Interest as a Covariate (Prospective Activity)

APE 10 (Collected 2012)				
Variable	Apathetic Citizen	Latent Citizen	Critical Citizen	Engaged Citizen
Take an active part in a campaign	0.0536	0.0504	0.5591	0.9460
Vote in an election	0.1410	0.8066	0.7878	0.9706
Boycott certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons	0.0134	0.1712	0.4067	0.9567
Contribute to a discussion or campaign online or on social media	0.0180	0.0150	0.3591	0.6925
Donate money or pay a membership fee to a political party	0.0101	0.0365	0.0003	0.4999
Create or sign an e-petition	0.0833	0.2831	0.9576	0.8001
Cluster Size	0.5874	0.2800	0.0726	0.0600
Interest in Politics:				
Very interested	0.0559	0.0932	0.1209	0.5371
Fairly interested	0.1874	0.5133	0.5930	0.3420
Not very interested	0.3488	0.3561	0.2179	0.0657
Not at all interested	0.4058	0.0373	0.0512	0.0552
Don't know	0.0021	0.0000	0.0170	0.0000

7.3.1 Attitudinal Variables

7.3.1.1 Governing

As with some of the previous tables the prospectively apathetic individual is the one most likely to think the current system of governing needs to be improved and also the least 'knowing'. It seems somewhat puzzling though that those with the most negative views about the status quo

are also those who imagine themselves less willing to engage with politics and to do something about it.

This lackadaisical approach extends as we look at what the apathetic group thinks of the working of Parliament. They are not particularly satisfied, but equally not that dissatisfied either. The common characteristic has appeared once more; they are predominantly neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Combined with the proportion who report that they 'don't know' speaks volumes about their disinterest or at best a lack of awareness.

In the previous analysis there was a clear split between what people thought of the way MPs in general are doing their jobs and what they thought of the performance of their local MP. There were much greater levels of satisfaction for the local MP than there was for MPs in general. The same is exactly true here. Overall satisfaction is higher for the work of the local MP than MPs in general and in both instances satisfaction is lowest amongst the apathetic group. Interestingly though, there is also a great deal more uncertainty amongst all citizen groups when reflecting upon the performance of one's own MP, rather than the profession as a whole. It seems again that people are more likely to have an opinion one way or another, and usually negative, about MPs in general but either recognise or merely have the opportunity to see the best in their own. It might also be the case that people hold an opinion because such opinions are more readily communicated within the citizenry, by the media and even politicians in a 'Punch and Judy' style of politics.

Table 7-46 Views on the Current System of Governing (APE 10 b)

	Views on the Current System of Governing				
Latent Class	Works Extremely Well and Could Not be	Could be Improved in Small Ways but Mainly	Could be Improved Quite a Lot	Needs a Great Deal of Improvement	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.4	19.6	39.1	30.1	8.8
Latent Citizen	2.7	29.0	45.2	21.0	2.1
Critical Citizen	0.0	33.3	40.0	25.0	1.7
Engaged Citizen	1.8	37.5	39.3	19.6	1.8

Table 7-47 Satisfaction with the working of Parliament (APE 10 b)

	Satisfaction with the working of Parliament					
Latent Class	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.7	18.6	39.4	18.4	15.6	5.3
Latent Citizen	1.2	33.5	34.7	20.4	10.2	0.0
Critical Citizen	0.0	30.0	31.7	25.0	13.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	1.8	41.1	17.9	26.8	12.5	0.0

Table 7-48 Satisfaction with the way MPs in general are doing their job (APE 10 b)

Satisfaction with the way MPs in general are doing their job						
Latent Class	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	1.6	17.4	39.1	19.8	17.6	4.6
Latent Citizen	1.2	30.2	31.7	24.9	11.7	0.3
Critical Citizen	1.7	21.7	41.7	25.0	10.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	5.4	28.6	33.9	23.2	8.9	0.0

Table 7-49 Satisfaction with the way your MP is doing his/her job (APE 10 b)

Satisfaction with the way your MP is doing his/her job						
Latent Class	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	4.9	23.6	43.4	9.9	10.5	7.8
Latent Citizen	7.5	35.6	36.8	9.9	6.0	4.2
Critical Citizen	6.7	31.7	43.3	15.0	1.7	1.7
Engaged Citizen	14.3	32.1	37.5	7.1	5.4	3.6

7.3.1.2 Citizens' Perceived Role within Politics

As before, this section turns away from the impression of governing and looks at what the different latent classes think of politics and how they might interact with it. The relationships that we found when the allocation to the latent classes was based upon undertaken activity have also largely translated within this model too, but with a couple of notable differences.

For the most part the engaged citizen is still the most positive when it comes to what they think of politics, the time they have for it, the importance of it, how much fun or enjoyment they derive from it and how good they think they might be at it. The apathetic citizen at the other end of the spectrum is still the most negative, indifferent or unsure. All the patterns persist from section 7.2.

However, the main difference is that the extremes in views have been toned down. The prospectively apathetic individual though still the least positive is *more* positive than before and some of the other groups less positive than they were previously. It might initially seem odd that people who report their willingness to engage in the future at a level so low that they would be characterised apathetic actually hold views which in some cases indicate how important they perceive politics to be. Equally, it seems strange that people who want to be more active in the future are not necessarily optimistic about the scope of politics, how much time they have for it and what they might derive from it.

It becomes all the more clear when we look at the change in the size of the latent classes in each of the models and how this corresponds to the change in the attitudes of each of the citizens. To summarise these few tables (and no doubt this may apply to many others also) we can see that in comparison to the analysis presented in 7.2 the engaged citizen remains largely the same, with perhaps a little reduction in the strength of their feeling towards these issues. The critical citizen is much less positive about politics in all these instances than they were before. The same is largely true of the latent citizen but not to quite the same extent. It is only the prospectively apathetic citizen who is less indecisive and negative than their classification by action, rather than promise, would suggest.

If we look at the change in the profile of the latent classes we can see that the apathetic group has increased in size by just over 2%, the critical citizen by almost 4% and the engaged group by around 5%. The loss therefore of around 11% of its sample population size has come from the latent group. Given the change in the views according to these models combined with the change in the profile sizes it seems to be reasonable to suggest that some of the previously latent individuals have shifted across into the apathetic group which explains their increase in positivity. A number of them may have also shifted across into the critical and engaged groups.

However, it is not clear if there is simultaneous shift from the critical group into the engaged group as well meaning that there is a much heavier shift from latent to critical than is obvious. What we certainly can infer is that a number of the previously latent individuals have less interest in future action than before but this is offset against a greater number who want to be more active. However, this does seek to create a bigger gap in terms of actions across the political activity spectrum even if the difference in views has been mediated somewhat.

Of course a great deal more could be said about the individual tables but the overall picture is most important.

Table 7-50 When people like me get involved in politics they really can change the way that the UK is run (APE 10 b)

When people like me get involved in politics they really can change the way that the UK is run						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	8.8	21.5	32.0	20.4	14.2	3.1
Latent Citizen	5.4	31.7	26.6	26.6	9.6	0.0
Critical Citizen	8.3	28.3	21.7	28.3	13.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	16.1	30.4	21.4	21.4	8.9	1.8

Table 7-51 Politics is a waste of time (APE 10 b)

Politics is a waste of time						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	12.8	12.8	25.2	27.3	19.5	2.4
Latent Citizen	3.6	10.2	18.0	37.7	30.5	0.0
Critical Citizen	3.3	13.3	10.0	40.0	33.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	5.4	3.6	28.6	62.5	0.0

Table 7-52 The only way to be really informed about politics is to get involved (APE 10 b)

The only way to be really informed about politics is to get involved						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	11.9	40.0	24.6	15.3	5.8	2.4
Latent Citizen	16.5	49.4	13.5	17.1	3.6	0.0
Critical Citizen	16.7	53.3	8.3	21.7	0.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	19.6	37.5	17.9	21.4	3.6	0.0

Table 7-53 Participating in politics is not much fun (APE 10 b)

	Participating in politics is not much fun					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	19.2	32.6	29.4	11.2	5.0	2.7
Latent Citizen	13.8	33.2	24.3	24.9	3.3	0.6
Critical Citizen	5.0	41.7	28.3	21.7	3.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	3.6	23.2	26.8	35.7	7.1	3.6

Table 7-54 I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community (APE 10 b)

	I enjoy working with other people on common problems in our community					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	12.2	30.7	33.8	13.6	6.9	2.8
Latent Citizen	13.5	32.3	32.6	17.1	4.2	0.3
Critical Citizen	13.3	48.3	28.3	8.3	1.7	0.0
Engaged Citizen	37.5	33.9	19.6	3.6	5.4	0.0

Table 7-55 A person like me could do a good job as a local councillor (APE 10 b)

	A person like me could do a good job as a local councillor					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	8.6	17.0	26.0	25.2	19.8	3.5
Latent Citizen	9.0	19.8	18.9	35.0	17.4	0.0
Critical Citizen	5.0	28.3	26.7	30.0	10.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	17.9	33.9	14.3	14.3	19.6	0.0

Table 7-56 A person like me could do a good job as a local MP (APE 10 b)

	A person like me could do a good job as a local MP					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	7.4	15.2	24.2	25.2	24.9	3.1
Latent Citizen	8.1	12.6	19.5	37.7	22.2	0.0
Critical Citizen	5.0	21.7	21.7	35.0	16.7	0.0
Engaged Citizen	14.3	19.6	19.6	30.4	16.1	0.0

Table 7-57 Every citizen should get involved in politics if democracy is to work properly (APE 10 b)

	Every citizen should get involved in politics if democracy is to work properly					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	16.4	36.0	26.4	14.0	5.3	1.9
Latent Citizen	26.9	46.7	14.4	8.4	3.6	0.0
Critical Citizen	33.3	46.7	11.7	5.0	3.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	39.3	30.4	16.1	12.5	0.0	1.8

Table 7-58 If a person is dissatisfied with political decisions he/she has a duty to do something about it (APE 10 b)

	If a person is dissatisfied with political decisions he/she has a duty to do something about it					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	16.4	41.3	28.6	8.3	2.7	2.8
Latent Citizen	19.8	53.0	18.3	7.8	1.2	0.0
Critical Citizen	20.0	58.3	10.0	11.7	0.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	37.5	39.3	12.5	8.9	1.8	0.0

Table 7-59 I don't have enough time to get involved in politics (APE 10 b)

	I don't have enough time to get involved in politics					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	25.4	28.0	26.8	12.1	6.0	1.6
Latent Citizen	20.1	35.6	21.0	16.8	6.6	0.0
Critical Citizen	28.3	16.7	21.7	28.3	5.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	12.5	28.6	14.3	30.4	14.3	0.0

7.3.1.3 UK Parliament

Here once more we begin to look at respondents' perceptions of the UK Parliament according to their allocation to latent class based on their willingness to engage in future political activity.

Several findings are replicated to those within section 7.2, but also in line with those found within this section.

We find that there is very little difference at all when it comes to holding the government to account. The apathetic citizen is the least likely to think the UK Parliament does this well, followed by the latent, critical and engaged citizens. They are also the most likely to sit on the fence or to respond that they 'don't know' to the question. This is remarkably similar to that of the last section. This indicates that whilst belief in the ability of the UK Parliament in holding the government to account does vary slightly across the individual latent classes the extent of these feelings do not have any bearing on prospective willingness to act.

The same is true of the extent to which individuals believe the UK Parliament encourages active involvement of people within politics in that there is little change between the models showing that this is a variable which has a limited impact on future activity. It finds that the apathetic is the most confused or nonchalant about the question meaning that they do not agree with it. There is very little difference between this group and the latent and critical citizens even, but it is in this instant the engaged citizen who is more distinct believing quite strongly that the UK Parliament does perform this function.

When we look at how relevant people find the UK Parliament for our democracy we can see that the apathetic individuals *still* have a vastly different opinion to any of the other groups in being the least likely to see the value. However, it is still a majority that do and a larger majority than in the previous section. It might seem a shame that there is a group who are likely to be inactive who do believe to a certain extent in the democratic value of our Parliament but it is not a surprising finding given the changes to the latent classes as outlined in 7.3.1.2. This same pattern is presented when we look at what the new citizen groups think of whether the Parliament debates and makes decisions on issues that matter to them.

Table 7-60 The UK Parliament holds government to account (APE 10 b)

The UK Parliament holds government to account						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	10.9	31.7	34.4	12.1	4.7	6.2
Latent Citizen	13.5	42.8	26.0	11.4	3.6	2.7
Critical Citizen	5.0	45.0	18.3	20.0	10.0	1.7
Engaged Citizen	21.4	39.3	19.6	8.9	10.7	0.0

Table 7-61 The UK Parliament encourages public involvement in politics (APE 10 b)

The UK Parliament encourages public involvement in politics						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	6.3	23.6	33.5	21.7	9.9	5.0
Latent Citizen	6.0	28.1	23.1	32.3	9.6	0.9
Critical Citizen	3.3	25.0	15.0	35.0	20.0	1.7
Engaged Citizen	10.7	19.6	23.2	33.9	10.7	1.8

Table 7-62 The UK Parliament is essential to our democracy (APE 10 b)

The UK Parliament is essential to our democracy						
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	22.9	36.1	27.9	4.7	3.8	4.6
Latent Citizen	40.7	39.5	12.9	4.5	1.8	0.6
Critical Citizen	31.7	51.7	11.7	1.7	3.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	62.5	23.2	5.4	7.1	1.8	0.0

Table 7-63 The UK Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me (APE 10 b)

	The UK Parliament debates and makes decisions about issues that matter to me					
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	11.4	33.6	31.9	13.1	6.2	3.8
Latent Citizen	21.0	47.6	17.1	9.6	3.9	0.9
Critical Citizen	18.3	48.3	18.3	13.3	1.7	0.0
Engaged Citizen	46.4	32.1	10.7	7.1	1.8	1.8

7.3.1.4 Influence

Table 7-64 How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in your local area? (APE 10 b)

	How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in your local area?				
Latent Class	A Great Deal of Influence	Some Influence	Not Very Much Influence	No Influence at all	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.5	19.8	37.9	37.0	2.8
Latent Citizen	3.0	27.2	40.4	29.0	0.3
Critical Citizen	1.7	31.7	55.0	11.7	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	42.9	37.5	19.6	0.0

Table 7-65 How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in the country as a whole? (APE 10 b)

Latent Class	How much influence, if any, do you feel you have over decision making in the country as a whole?				
	A Great Deal of Influence	Some Influence	Not Very Much Influence	No Influence at all	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.4	14.3	37.2	44.0	2.2
Latent Citizen	1.8	17.4	44.6	35.9	0.3
Critical Citizen	1.7	15.0	60.0	23.3	0.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	26.8	48.2	25.0	0.0

As we move away from looking at feelings about the UK Parliament, back towards those relating to individual influence we see some slight differences between these tables and their equivalents, from the previous analysis, although all groups still feel a greater sense of influence over local rather than national politics.

In terms of local politics other patterns remain largely the same also, in that it is the engaged citizen who feels like they have most influence in comparison to any of the others. This is followed in order by the critical, latent and apathetic citizens. Whilst this common trend is replicated again, the differences *between* the proportions of the responses are once more less disparate than in the previous section.

The apathetic citizen feels like they have more influence than they did before, in contrast to all the other citizen groups where the proportions of those who feel some or a great deal of influence has reduced, quite dramatically in some instances. The latent citizen has dropped a couple of percentage points in feeling influential, whereas the critical citizen has seen a drop of approximately 15% and the engaged citizen almost double that.

It seems that perhaps those prospective latent, critical and engaged citizens have been joined in this model by people who were previously in the apathetic group, which has resulted in a decrease in their feelings of influence. Conversely, it might also be the case that people who were reasonably active, and still positive about the influence that they have on local decision making, are less concerned with being active in the future. This appears incongruent, but it may be that their feelings of influence for local politics have no bearing on how they would respond to being asked if they would take part in the six activity variables included within the model.

As for looking at influence in national politics there is an alternative finding in that although the engaged and apathetic citizens take their usual place at the opposite ends of the spectrum, it is actually the latent citizens who feel more influence over politics at the national level than the critical citizens. It would appear then that the willingness to be a critical citizen is not conditional upon holding a particularly strong sense of significance when it comes to national politics. This also holds true with what we have come to know about the critical citizens – they are turned off by formal, party political actions which may well be seen to characterise national politics. It is not surprising therefore to find that they are more inclined towards local politics.

7.3.1.5 Personal Feelings about Politics

The results demonstrate that there is almost reasonably little difference here between the apathetic, latent and critical citizens, in terms of the proportions either strongly or tending to agree that they feel uncomfortable when people argue about politics. The only significant difference is between that of the engaged citizen and the rest. The engaged citizen group has a very small proportion of individuals who agree with the idea. This is in contrast to the others where between a quarter and a fifth of people admit some sense of unease about political argument.

As always, the apathetic citizen, followed in turn by all the others, is the most likely to sit on the fence, leaving much higher proportions of the latent, critical and engaged citizens (in that order) disagreeing with the statement. This is to the extent that the majority of all other groups disagree on some level with the idea that they feel uncomfortable about people discussing politics to the level they believe is argument.

Though there are differences to the exact proportions found within the previous table, the pattern of responses remains entirely the same. The strength of feeling, in terms of disagreement, has been diluted in this latest model, particularly amongst the engaged and critical citizens.

Given that the size of the apathetic group increased very slightly, as did the critical and engaged citizens, resulting in the significant decrease of the latent group, it would seem that a lot of the differences to the responses in the top two groups might again be explained by an influx of previously latent citizens. Those citizens for whom political action hasn't featured much, experiencing reasonably low political confidence as a result, but combined with a willingness to be more active in the future has brought about their reclassification as prospective critical or even engaged citizens.

Continuing with the theme of how people feel about themselves from a political perspective we see that all groups, with the exception of the engaged citizens, have a majority of people who agree on some level, yet again, that politics is too complicated to be able to fully understand what is going on. This is expressed most amongst the latent citizen, apathetic citizen and finally the critical citizen. It is only the engaged citizen who is more inclined to reveal that they have adequate understanding of government and politics with 53.5% of them either tending to or strongly disagreeing with the statement in question.

Whilst the apathetic citizen is in this instance not the most likely to agree with the statement, due to a large proportion of them neither agreeing nor disagreeing they are though the least

likely of all the groups to disagree with the statement. With respect to disagreement alone, all of the groups, based upon prospective political activity, follow the trend we have seen previously in that the latent citizen follows the apathetic and so on.

As with some of the other tables, the changes in the profiles of the groups has resulted in the apathetic group being more positive in this respect. There seems to be little new difference between the groups, at willingness and action stages, than has been identified in some of the preceding analysis; the prospectively critical and engaged groups are likely to be made up of individuals who have been identified as latent in action.

A very clear picture emerges from table 7-68 whereby the apathetic citizens are those least likely to agree that they usually find it easy to see political issues from other people's points of view. Even amongst the lowest support for this statement it is still a majority view for this group. It is only the engaged citizens who are markedly different from most of the other groups. They, more than any other group, believe overwhelmingly that they are good at seeing issues from different perspectives. Equally, though the apathetic citizens are the least likely to agree, again due to a large proportion of individuals citing that they neither agree nor disagree, they are not the most likely to disagree. This instead falls to the latent citizen.

In the same way that the apathetic citizen was the least likely to agree that they can easily see political issues from different points of view they are also the group which is least likely to agree that they do not take it personally when someone disagrees with their political views. Despite the fact that they are also the most likely group to be indecisive, they are ultimately the most likely to disagree with the statement.

The other groups again perceive they have greater personal tolerance for political disagreement than the apathetic group. The critical and engaged citizens have very little to distinguish them from each other though; both groups have high proportions agreeing on some level with the idea. Due to the engaged individuals not answering that they neither agree nor disagree at any significant rate, there is a reasonable proportion compared to the critical group who tend or strongly disagree. Clearly the prospectively critical group are those who are most welcome to political challenge than any of the others.

As with other findings, the apathetic citizen now seems very slightly more inclined to not take political disagreement personally and the latent citizen much more so. The same is true of the critical citizen. Interestingly therefore the engaged citizens are much more likely to agree on some level to this notion. This is perhaps because it is a group that is increasingly made up of previously latent and critical individuals and therefore they do not have so much of themselves vested within their actions.

Also, in terms of agreeableness the apathetic citizen is no longer the most agreeable though they are still the least committed to responding one way or another. Instead, the latent citizen is the most likely on the whole to agree that they would go along with the majority decision. This is closely followed by the apathetic group. The critical citizen is a little further behind them in agreement, and the engaged group further still.

The majority view for all groups though is that they disagree on some level, and are clearly willing to speak up for their own interests, it is merely a case of the extent to which they do this that distinguishes the groups from one another. The differences between these findings and those from the previous section mirror that found throughout this section, caused by the change in the make-up of the classes.

Table 7-66 When people argue about politics I feel uncomfortable (APE 10 b)

	When people argue about politics I feel uncomfortable				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	6.5	16.1	34.7	24.8	18.0
Latent Citizen	6.3	17.7	20.4	29.3	26.3
Critical Citizen	0.0	20.0	16.7	33.3	30.0
Engaged Citizen	3.6	3.6	10.7	37.5	44.6

Table 7-67 Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on (APE 10 b)

	Sometimes politics & government seem so complicated that a person like me cannot really understand what is going on				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	20.8	35.0	27.6	10.3	6.3
Latent Citizen	16.8	42.5	14.4	18.9	7.5
Critical Citizen	5.0	46.7	11.7	23.3	13.3
Engaged Citizen	8.9	28.6	8.9	33.9	19.6

Table 7-68 I usually find it easy to see political issues from other people's point of view (APE 10 b)

	I usually find it easy to see political issues from other people's point of view				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	10.6	34.7	38.8	10.6	5.3
Latent Citizen	13.8	46.4	21.3	15.6	3.0
Critical Citizen	18.3	46.7	26.7	6.7	1.7
Engaged Citizen	21.4	60.7	10.7	5.4	1.8

Table 7-69 I do not take it personally when someone disagrees with my political views (APE 10 b)

	I do not take it personally when someone disagrees with my political views				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	23.3	30.5	29.9	8.8	7.4
Latent Citizen	33.2	42.8	10.2	8.1	5.7
Critical Citizen	40.0	43.3	15.0	1.7	0.0
Engaged Citizen	33.9	50.0	5.4	3.6	7.1

Table 7-70 When I'm in a group I often go along with what the majority decides is best even if it is not what I want personally (APE 10 b)

	When I'm in a group I often go along with what the majority decides is best even if it is not what I want personally				
Latent Class	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Apathetic Citizen	4.7	15.2	33.5	25.2	21.4
Latent Citizen	4.5	16.8	14.7	39.2	24.9
Critical Citizen	1.7	11.7	10.0	36.7	40.0
Engaged Citizen	0.0	7.1	8.9	25.0	58.9

7.3.1.6 What if Politics was different?

Table 7-71 If politics were MORE influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interest do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics? (APE 10 b)

	If politics were MORE influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics?				
Latent Class	Definitely more interested	Probably more interested	Probably less interested	Definitely less interested	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	6.9	25.2	31.0	24.3	12.5
Latent Citizen	5.4	34.4	34.4	21.0	4.8
Critical Citizen	11.7	35.0	21.7	25.0	6.7
Engaged Citizen	19.6	26.8	25.0	26.8	1.8

The variables which are the subject of tables 7-71 and 7-72 were particularly interesting in the last section, highlighting how, for all groups, the idea of a political system *less* influenced by self-serving politicians was more of a motivating factor than one that was *more* influenced by such individuals. We saw clearly that people in the UK are not necessarily placid when they are satisfied and radical when they are not. The presence of self-serving politicians does not make people more inclined to act, it has the opposite effect, or certainly seemed to when it came to cross tabulating undertaken activity by these variables. These variables are extremely important when we think about which is more likely to have a motivating factor for future activity. We would look to see perhaps an increase in being more interested amongst the more active citizen groups if either of the variables were to be seen as motivating factors. Similarly to see these as demotivating or depoliticising issues we might expect to see a decrease in interest in politics for the active, or all groups compared to the previous tables.

To look therefore at table 7-71 then, we see row percentages of the cross tabulation between the two variables (as we do with table 7-72 also).

Here we see, taking interest as a whole, that the majority view is one that suggests all groups would be still less motivated by the increased influence of self-serving politicians. The apathetic citizen is the least motivated, followed by the latent citizen and then finally the critical and engaged citizens are almost equally motivated by such a scenario.

How this compares to the tables derived from the previous model highlights what we have seen already; that the new composition of the group reflects movement from latent citizens to being apathetic, some latent towards critical and perhaps engaged also (though there may well have been a shift from latent to critical and then critical to engaged). This is demonstrated through the fact that, taking 'more interested' as whole, the apathetic group are more motivated by the increase in self-serving politicians than they were before, the latent down by 3 percentage points, the critical group remaining largely same and the prospectively engaged citizens showing a lot more interest than before (14.4% up to 46.4%). There is clearly much less variation between the groups when we look at their prospective activity than judging by that which they have already undertaken. The important thing to note is that on the whole the prospect of a political system that was *more* influenced by selfish politicians is more of a motivating factor, generally speaking, when considering prospective future activity over undertaken acts of political participation.

As we move onto look at table 7-72 a similar picture is uncovered. It is one that shows all groups to again be more interested in a politics which had fewer self-serving politicians than one which has more. Due to the apathetic group still having a reasonable proportion of

individuals who reported not knowing how they felt, we can confidently say that politics being less influenced by self-serving politicians is a *majority* view for all groups.

The main difference between the two tables is that where the idea of more self-serving politicians is more of a motivating factor when we consider prospective activity over undertaken, the opposite is true of a politics less influenced by selfish politicians. So whilst it is still more of an incentive than the alternative it has more of an impact on the activities that have already been undertaken by the respondents than those they are planning to be involved in.

This of course differs across the individual latent classes. There is now an apathetic body made up of people who would be more interested by politics if there were fewer self-serving politicians than before. The opposite is true for all the other classes though taking being more interested on some level as a collective response. It seems people are contented more by the prospect of fewer narcissistic individuals in politics than they are motivated when thinking about being within more of an active group in the future.

Table 7-72 If politics were LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interest do you think you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics? (APE 10 b)

If politics were LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and powerful special interests do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics?					
Latent Class	Definitely more interested	Probably more interested	Probably less interested	Definitely less interested	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	9.7	34.2	26.8	15.3	13.9
Latent Citizen	12.6	47.9	25.4	9.0	5.1
Critical Citizen	11.7	56.7	25.0	0.0	6.7
Engaged Citizen	33.9	42.9	16.1	1.8	5.4

7.3.2 Attribute Variables

Table 7-73 Role of Total Annual Income (APE 10 b)

Total Annual Income (Before tax, NI and pension contributions)						
Latent Class	Up to £4499	£4500 - £6499	£6500 - £7499	£7500 - 9499	£9500 - £11499	£11500 - 13499
Apathetic Citizen	81.6	63.2	60.0	71.4	72.7	59.2
Latent Citizen	5.3	28.9	25.7	23.8	25.5	32.7
Critical Citizen	7.9	2.6	8.6	2.4	0.0	0.0
Engaged Citizen	5.3	5.3	5.7	2.4	1.8	8.2

Total Annual Income (Before tax, NI and pension contributions)						
Latent Class	£13500 - £15499	£15500 - £17499	£17500 - £24999	£25000 - £29999	£30000 - £39999	£40000 - £49999
Apathetic Citizen	58.7	64.4	52.2	60.9	49.4	39.7
Latent Citizen	32.6	26.7	39.1	27.5	33.8	50.0
Critical Citizen	4.3	4.4	7.6	5.8	11.7	5.2
Engaged Citizen	4.3	4.4	1.1	5.8	5.2	5.2

Total Annual Income (Before tax, NI and pension contributions)					
Latent Class	£50000 - £74999	£75000 - £99999	£100000+	Don't Know	Refused
Apathetic Citizen	44.8	30.4	35.3	64.3	69.1
Latent Citizen	29.9	43.5	35.3	30.5	23.3
Critical Citizen	10.4	8.7	11.8	1.9	4.9
Engaged Citizen	14.9	17.4	17.6	3.2	2.7

As per the analysis for the previous two models, we move on to look at how some of the attribute variables correspond with the latent classes and look to see if there is any real difference between these when they related to the previous APE 10 model.

The tables under 7-73 show the relationship between the prospective latent classes and total household annual income. The results of the cross tabulation are demonstrated using the column percentages produced, so that we may see where certain classes have a proportionately higher number of individuals representing the class in a particular income bracket. As such it is useful to use table 7-45 as reference for the overall size of the classes in the original model.

What this table tells us is that the proportions of apathetic people are higher than we might expect them to be in nearly all income brackets under £30,000 per annum, and the “don’t know” and refused categories. The one exception to this rule is the £17500-£24999 income bracket where the latent citizens are instead very heavily over-represented.

The general trend is also one which sees the critical and engaged citizens unevenly distributed amongst any income above £50000 (but also from £30000 and above for the critical citizens). However, there are also some other, smaller income groups where they are also, with no real pattern, over-represented. The pattern, or indeed lack of, for the latent citizens is a great deal more unclear. They are generally speaking over-represented in all income groups above £30000, but also a number under that. The individual who prepares to be active in a way which would characterise them latent could well come from a number of different income categories. A person’s income seems to dictate if they are going to be in the apathetic, critical or engaged citizen groups, but not necessarily the latent group.

This compares reasonably similarly with the relationship between annual household income and the latent classes determined in the first of the APE 10 latent class models. The main difference is that the apathetic citizens were often over-represented at much lower levels of income when latent class was determined by undertaken political participation – anywhere above £17500 there were fewer proportions of apathetic individuals than we might have expected, but especially so like this latest analysis, above £30000 per year. Also, the latent citizens were oddly over-represented in a number of income brackets, across the broad. The latent citizens, whether we are talking in terms of reported activity or even potential action seem unaffected by the income variable – large numbers of latent citizens could be found at any income point.

The small numbers of engaged citizens in the previous model make it difficult to compare the two income tables, but it is possible to say something about the critical citizens. In both tables it is clear that they are over-represented compared the model in any income bracket above £30000.

Taking these two tables as a whole it seems there is little difference between the effect income has upon political activity and the allocation of latent classes, whether that allocation is based upon responses to undertaken activity or prospective activity. Individuals within the apathetic class are much more likely to have a lower income – lower than £17500 in real terms, and lower than £30000 in prospective terms. This is in comparison to both the critical and engaged citizens for whom they will be found predominantly anywhere above £30000 per year. The latent group almost act as a bridge and latent individuals may have income of any amount.

What this might suggest about the apathetic group specifically is that although people earning closer to £30000 per year might consider low levels of or zero political action in the future, in actuality it is more likely that people earning £17500 or below would be those who would fail to act or perform very few and simple forms of political action.

Table 7-74 Role of Sex (APE 10 b)

Latent Class	Sex	
	Male	Female
Apathetic Citizen	47.2	52.8
Latent Citizen	47.0	53.0
Critical Citizen	51.7	48.3
Engaged Citizen	44.6	55.4

For table 7-74 we return to using row percentages to examine the relationship once more between sex and the latent classes.

Here we see once more a slightly strange association in that the apathetic, latent and engaged groups all have a higher proportion of females than males. It is only the critical citizen where males are very slightly more highly represented. This is explained perhaps in the fact that the numbers of women in the survey are higher than the males sampled. Ultimately there is very little difference between the groups, exemplified by the lack of statistical significance for this association.

Comparing this to the previous table, table 7-39, however, there does seem to be some differences between the association that is calculated on the basis of completed political activity and that which respondents purport to do in the future. Females are less likely than they were before to be in the apathetic group but also less likely to be in the critical and latent groups. Consequently they are more likely to be in the latent group where the proportion of men has decreased and now women form a small majority.

What this seems to suggest is that where there were greater disparities between the sexes when it came to having done certain activities, the outlook of men and women is much the same – that men and women have similar political aspirations. Whether these ever materialise is, like any of the analysis, something which would need to be the subject of further study and a continuous panel of respondents over time.

Given the lack of statistical significance though any trends we see are not entirely replicable to the larger target population.

In table 7-75, in looking at the distribution of the latent classes amongst the various different age brackets, I have returned to utilising the column percentages of the cross tabulation of the two variables. Again table 7-45 may prove useful for reference to the model, and table 7-40 for comparison between this analysis and the previous for the APE 10 data.

There are some interesting findings here, in that there is a slightly more positive picture of age and politics than we have witnessed either in the previous analysis of this thesis or indeed in any other published work. The apathetic citizen is clearly over-represented compared to the norm for the 18-24 year olds, and to a lesser extent 25-34 year olds, where additionally the latent, critical and engaged citizens all over-represented. Despite this, the pattern is no longer one which shows the proportion of the apathetic group slowly decreasing as age increases. Instead we see that, rather unusually the 35-44 age group is also one that has a higher proportion than normal for people preparing to be ‘apathetic’, as I would classify them in latent class analysis. The same is true for 55-64 year olds and the 75+. It is only the 45-54 year olds, and especially the 65-74 year olds where they prepare in greater proportions to be politically active, above a level which would have me classifying them apathetic.

The latent citizens are found in proportions higher than the model might suggest in age categories 25-34, 45-54, 65-74 and 75+. Despite some of these findings highlighting a less disparate profile of citizens by age when they think about possible future activity, some of the more traditional patterns are found. It is well documented that participation is high amongst the ‘middle ages’ where political decisions are perhaps more keenly felt, usually as a result of circumstance brought about by one’s age. Therefore, it is perhaps no surprise to find that the critical citizens are only over-represented in the 35-44 age group, and the engaged citizen for ages 45-54 and 55-64. Whilst there is a greater age distribution of the apathetic in mind at least clearly the most engaged are going to be those crucial years between the age of 35 and 64.

The comparison between the relationship between these two variables in the previous model, and this model varies. For the 18-24 age group there is virtually no shift between the classes.

They are equally as likely to be apathetic in the future as they are in the present, slightly less likely to be latent, however, and more likely to be both critical and engaged. So, despite the apathetic not changing their minds there are latent individuals who would like to be more active moving forwards.

Interestingly, whilst the next age group, the 25-34 year olds are more likely to be both critical and engaged, there are some from the latent group that have shifted across to being apathetic for the future. Perhaps the activity that they undertook as young adults and in their mid-twenties has turned them off much future action.

The same pattern appears to be true also for all other age groups as well, except for the 75+ who plan in the future to be much less active, not only with higher proportions of apathetic individuals but also with lower proportions seen to be registering as either critical or engaged than they were before.

What this analysis seems to show is that whilst there might be a more positive picture in terms of there being less disparity between the ages as they think about how they might like to get involved in politics in the future, it is not as positive as we might like. Clearly for most age groups, apart from the 18-24 year olds, there are likely to be higher proportions of apathetic individuals. This is countered by the fact that for most of these age groups there will also be more active and involved people. This particular table and analysis shows more clearly than ever that the currently latent citizens will go one of two ways in the future – either to being more active or indeed less active. This could be potentially quite concerning as it appears to suggest that the gap between the most and least active will increase in the future. This is certainly something for policy makers to be considering.

Table 7-75 Role of Age (APE 10 b)

	Age						
Latent Class	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Apathetic Citizen	69.5	59.4	62.6	56.6	59.4	47.4	63.3
Latent Citizen	21.6	31.8	23.7	30.6	27.5	43.9	34.7
Critical Citizen	4.2	6.5	8.1	6.1	4.3	3.5	1.0
Engaged Citizen	4.8	2.3	5.6	6.6	8.7	5.3	1.0

Table 7-76 Role of Social Class (APE 10 b)

	Social Class					
Latent Class	A	B	C1	C2	D	E
Apathetic Citizen	1.6	9.4	23.2	24.5	20.9	20.4
Latent Citizen	3.6	15.6	31.7	20.1	14.1	15.0
Critical Citizen	5.0	25.0	30.0	26.7	5.0	8.3
Engaged Citizen	5.4	28.6	21.4	10.7	10.7	23.2

Very similar to age, social class has always been found to have a big impact on levels of political participation. Similar findings are displayed here in relation to delineating apathy. This table looks at the row percentages from the cross tabulation between the latent classes in this formulation of the model and the social class variable.

The apathetic class is almost evenly split predominantly between social classes C1, C2, D and E. There is only a very small proportion of individuals from the apathetic group who are likely to be in social classes A or B. This could be (judging by the social demographics of the data demonstrated in the data and methods chapter – check) that there are comparatively very few people responding to the survey who are in social classes A and B, so it is important to look at the difference between the latent classes when considering the impact of social class. Latent citizens in comparison are more evenly distributed across the social classes, with a higher proportion in C1, C2 and even B. This is followed closely by similar proportions in classes D and E. There is still only relatively few people from the prospectively latent group likely to be in social class A.

The social class profile for the critical citizens is not that different from the latent individuals in that they are mainly located within classes B, C1 and C2. However, there are fewer people from D and E and more from A than the latent class is likely to have. The engaged citizens are slightly different still, with a similar proportion coming from social class A as the critical citizens have, but the highest proportion of all the latent classes to have individuals from social class E. There will also be more respondents from B in this group and many fewer individuals from social classes C1, C2 and D than any of the other latent classes. It is interesting that there is such a high proportion of social class E within the prospectively engaged group, when otherwise they are most likely to be found within the apathetic group. Clearly this is a social class which has the capacity to be either very active or very inactive and for different reasons and motivations.

How has this relationship with social class differed at all across the two models? Though the patterns very much mirror each other in many ways, the disparities between the social classes do seem to even out a little when people are thinking about how they might like to be active in the future. Due to there being a larger number of people allocated to the engaged group this time, the results are probably more accurate but demonstrate that it is not a group so heavily made up by social classes A, B, C1 and even E. The greatest change to the apathetic group is that in this latest table there is slightly greater representation from classes A and B – but only very slightly. This is the group that has changed the least in terms of their social profile.

The latent group has a higher proportion of people from C1, but little else has really altered. It is the critical citizens who have changed most according to this model, with a greater evening out

between social classes B, C1 and C2. They do however, remain small in proportion from social classes A, D and E.

It seems social cleavages remain present, if lessened, when we are looking at the assignment to latent classes in the future as well as in the past and present.

As in the previous section of analysis, to assess the associations which might exist between the latent classes and the variable region, I have used the column percentages from the cross tabulation produced. So, much like the age and income brackets before, we can see the breakdown of the latent classes for each particular area. However, like the previous results the association with region was not statistically significant.

What we can take from this table is that there is an abundance of apathetic individuals within the North West, the East Midlands, London, the South East and the South West. For the latent citizens unsurprisingly they are over-represented in most areas other than these, except for one, the South West where again there are more apathetic and latent citizens than we might have expected from the overall model. Otherwise they are seen to be over-represented in areas like the North East, Yorkshire and Humber, the West Midlands, Wales and Scotland. It seems the South West has particularly low levels of prospective political enquiry given their higher than average latent and apathetic groups and subsequently smaller critical and engaged groups.

As we move on to consider those critical and engaged groups we can see that there are larger than average proportions of those in the East of England, the South East and for the engaged group alone also the East Midlands and West Midlands. It seems in terms of willingness the East of England and the South East are more likely to have individuals engaging in high levels of political activity. As too are the East Midlands and West Midlands, but that is countered somewhat by the larger than average proportion of apathetic and latent citizens too. These latter two areas are clearly those with the greatest gaps between active and inactive, when they are preparing to act.

Comparing this to table 7-42 we can see some strong similarities, particularly with the regions where there's a higher proportion of active people. These also include the East and West Midlands, and the South East. However, in action there isn't such a great disparity as there is in prospect for in the East and West Midlands there was not such high levels of apathetic individuals – but instead many more latent citizens.

Table 7-77 Role of Region (APE 10 b)

	Region					
Latent Class	North East	North West	Yorkshire & Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East of England
Apathetic Citizen	47.6	63.0	47.8	60.9	53.9	57.8
Latent Citizen	40.5	28.0	43.5	26.6	34.2	27.5
Critical Citizen	7.1	5.0	4.3	3.1	3.9	7.8
Engaged Citizen	4.8	4.0	4.3	9.4	7.9	6.9

	Region				
Latent Class	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland
Apathetic Citizen	70.1	67.3	60.3	53.9	56.4
Latent Citizen	25.0	18.0	30.1	39.3	32.4
Critical Citizen	3.8	8.0	4.1	2.2	6.7
Engaged Citizen	1.1	6.7	5.5	4.5	4.5

Table 7-78 Role of Ethnicity (APE 10 b)

Latent Class	Ethnicity	
	White	BME
Apathetic Citizen	57.7	67.9
Latent Citizen	30.6	26.6
Critical Citizen	6.0	3.2
Engaged Citizen	5.8	2.4

Table 7-78 looks again at the relationship between the latent classes and the ethnicity variable, using column percentages from the cross tabulation – i.e. that we can compare the profile of both white and black minority and ethnic respondents and the distribution of the latent classes compared to the model depicted in the previous chapter and table 7-45. In the previous section of analysis this was a variable which was statistically significant. However, in this analysis the association is found to be statistically significant, though to a lesser extent than most of the others.

We see that the white respondents very closely match the original model, with slightly fewer apathetic citizens, more latent citizens by two percentage points, and slightly lower proportions of critical and engaged citizens. The black minority and ethnic respondents have a very different prospective profile however. They are much more likely to have a significantly higher proportion of apathetic citizens, slightly lower in terms of latent citizens, but proportionately a lot fewer critical and engaged citizens.

This compares rather unfavourably to the previous table, table 7-43 where, according to undertaken activity, there was no such disparity between white respondents and those from a black, minority or ethnic background. In fact, the BME respondents were under-represented in the apathetic group compared to white individuals.

It would appear that the BME respondents feel less positive about politics as expressed by their willingness to engage in political participation in the future. Considering this is set against activity which matches the profile of the norm, it might be that their experience of politics has turned them off politics – particularly for those who are ‘planning’ to be prospectively apathetic.

Table 7-79, the final table from this analysis chapter looks again at the relationship between self-reported political knowledge and the latent classes. It goes back to looking at the row percentages to do this.

We can see that the individual who, based upon their answers to how they will act politically, is likely to be classified apathetic, is most likely to report having not very much knowledge or no political knowledge at all. No other latent class has a majority of such little knowledge. For all the other classes of citizen there is an overwhelming majority where they either believe they have a great deal or a fair amount of knowledge. The proportion that report that they have either a great deal of knowledge, or a fair amount, also increase as the proposed level of activity does. There is a very clear distinction between the apathetic group and the rest when it comes to their expression of political knowledge.

This corresponds very well with that which was found in table 7-44. The main difference between the tables is in the extent of the difference between the classes. In prospective terms although there is a 'knowledge gap' between the apathetic individuals and the rest of the citizen groups, it is not as great as it was in 'actual' terms. It could be seen that this is a positive thing, because knowledge is ever so slightly more equally distributed among the latent classes. However, it could be taken to be a negative thing – that there are increasing numbers of people with less knowledge wanting to get involved more than they have been in a political world that they do not fully comprehend.

Table 7-79 Role of Knowledge (APE 10 b)

Latent Class	Knowledge				
	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	Nothing At All	Don't Know
Apathetic Citizen	2.8	29.4	42.9	24.8	0.1
Latent Citizen	5.4	48.2	43.4	3.0	0.0
Critical Citizen	8.3	53.3	36.7	1.7	0.0
Engaged Citizen	19.6	66.1	10.7	3.6	0.0

What this analysis chapter has sought to do is to draw out any associations between a number of attitudinal and demographic characteristics and the latent classes as stipulated in the three models described in Chapter 6. This is in order to be able to say more about each of the classes, and in particular the apathetic group.

The purpose of the following chapter is to draw all these findings together and produce clear descriptions, based upon these two analysis chapters, of each of the classes in order to establish a comprehensive typology of political activity, so that there might be scope for both future research and policy implications.

Chapter 8: Discussions and Conclusions

The final chapter of this thesis seeks to provide conclusion by way of a series of reflections *on* the study and consideration of the various implications *of* it. In light of the findings in chapters 6 and 7, it begins by reflecting upon some of the themes of each of the preceding chapters. It first reviews the four key arguments highlighted in the second chapter: *The Importance of Politics and the Issue of Non-Participation*, thinking about the position of each of the authors in response to the findings. It then moves onto consider some of the content in the third chapter: *Exploring the Explanations of Participation and Non-Participation*. It looks at how the results of the empirical enquiry speak to the supply and demand explanations provided in previous work. This section of the chapter also contemplates how this thesis has positively contributed to new understanding in the respect of explaining participation and non-participation, with the focus as always being on apathetic individuals.

Perhaps one of the most important reflections comes in reviewing the success and validity of the conceptualisation of political activity and the developed understanding of apathy as established in the fourth chapter: *Conceptualising Political Apathy*. This was after all the main purpose of the thesis and where the greatest contribution to the literature would lie, as well as the use of the methodology. I consider how appropriate the structure I hypothesised was as well as the validity of the descriptions of each of the categories I chose to identify and flesh out, along the conceptual continuum.

If reflecting on the of the success of the concept is all important, so too is looking at how prosperous the method, primarily Latent Class Analysis, has been in identifying the patterns I projected we would see from the survey responses examined. This part of the chapter looks closely at any possible limitations not only of the data and methods, but of the whole study in general. Ultimately these initial reflections conclude that the conceptualisation of apathy and the methods used to test them have been largely successful, in spite of any shortcomings. They suggest therefore, that overall, the study has indeed made a positive contribution to the field of research.

Once the reflections are complete the second half of the chapter then considers what some of the possible implications of the thesis might be. These focus on three areas in particular; how the concept is applicable outside of the UK – the extent to which it can travel; how the study fits in with some of the current debates about the role of political science and contemporary politics in modern society; and finally the potential options for further research.

The chapter shows that when contextualising the findings outside of the UK there is evidence suggesting some similarities and therefore applicability of the concept beyond the UK setting. However, it is clear that this is unlikely to extend much further than other parts of Europe or at the outset other established westernised democracies like the USA, Canada and Australia. The context in countries without democracy or with only a relatively short history of democracy is often different to that of the UK, and thus it is difficult to see how this typology is entirely relevant in those instances.

In the penultimate section of the chapter I then consider the broader external relevance of this research, linking it particularly to wider debates relating to political science and contemporary politics. I examine the understood and evolving place of political science within society and suggest that political science and Higher Education collectively have a role to play in particular within secondary citizenship education. I assert that research such as this plays a crucial part of this endeavour and that we should, as a discipline, not only be encouraging but engaging with outreach methods and teacher's continuing professional development in this regard. I also recommend that there should be better cooperation and coordination of multidisciplinary research, connecting political science with education research.

This provides the perfect segue to the final section of the chapter which outlines how one of the implications of this research is, unsurprisingly, further research! Here I describe the ways in which I would like to develop this research area further, but also how I would like to develop my profile of research. I outline three key routes for such growth; to improve the conceptualisation of apathy further with more detailed study of these individuals, to look at the rise in populist movements rising to prominence in light of disengagement and apathy. I am particularly interested in their effective use of social media in shaping their agendas. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, I demonstrate how I would like to approach the suggested endeavour of bringing together political science and educational research.

8.1 Reflections

8.1.1 Chapter 2: The importance of Politics and the Issue of Non-Participation

The second chapter identified four key positions relating to civic engagement. The purpose of this section is to reflect upon them in light of what has been discovered both through the re-conceptualisation of apathy and the empirical study.

Almond and Verba's (1963) position was one that welcomed a certain amount of non-participation. It stipulated that a largely participant culture balanced with an appropriate amount

of subject and parochial orientation was the optimum for the civic culture. Its foundation was rooted in their findings of 1960s America and to a lesser, more subject focussed, Great Britain. Since that wrote many studies of political participation in the same five countries they sampled, and beyond, have rendered their position out of date. The work that has been done here is no different in that respect; it merely emphasises the point. The balance that they deem essential is out of kilter. This is expressed in the size of the citizen groups found in this study. If we concede that the critical citizens, regardless of their quite often dissatisfaction, should, along with the engaged group constitute Almond and Verba's *Participant* orientation, the amalgamated picture is still not as positive as they would hope. We could then say that the latent citizens could represent the *subject* orientation and the apathetic the *parochial*.

Even if we take the most optimistic results from the arguably more robust data set of APE 1-9 the *participant culture* (engaged and critical groups) only represents just over 28% of the sample population, meaning that the *subject culture* is at a staggering 44% and the *parochial culture* alarming at almost a quarter of the sample population. Further still, if we were to look at APE 10 data, and unwisely extrapolate that, based on citizens' own project activity, suggesting this is the direction in which the latent classes are heading, we would see that *participant culture* at only just over 13%. More worryingly still is the fact that *subject culture* would appear lower at 28% exactly, whereas the *parochial culture* then represents more than 58% of the population. Either way one approaches the results, the *subject* and *parochial* orientations represented by the apathetic and latent groups are greater populated than the suitable for the ideal civic culture. With respect to this position then, I conclude that the level of non-participation is more serious for democracy than they initially envisaged.

Crick's defence of politics was one that emphasised the value of engaging with politics beyond just protection of the system against the notorious alternatives, in calling politics a civilising experience. The engagement with politics is a natural, even essential human activity according to Crick. He did not however stress the importance of apathy, quite the opposite, in asserting that the political system could actually withstand a great deal of apathy. He saw the uptake of politics amongst this group as more concerning than positive. The role of this work is not to necessarily dispute this stance; unless the circumstances that surround the apathetic individual are altered indeed a sudden surge of political activity might be unwelcome. With the low levels of interest and knowledge in politics reported by this group it might be argued that their contribution would be less than instructive, though given my motivations for undertaking this study that is not a point I would labour.

However, in spite of Crick's reasonably positive position towards apathy this is not to say that the level of apathy that we now face would be lacking of concern to Crick nor the study of it

unjustified. I suspect the combined levels of apathy and disengagement (for Crick is also unclear on the distinction) illustrated by this study would be seen as problematic, as I have already demonstrated it might be for Almond and Verba. For such a high proportion of individuals to be missing out on the beautiful experience of politics is incomprehensible; there simply cannot be this many reckless artists and lovers within a politics that can surely be defended from the alternatives. Crick, however, might not altogether be dismayed by the finding that based on undertaken activity only approximately 25% of the population would fit the apathetic profile I have described. The fact that the remaining 75% of the population are either active to a great extent, critical but committed, or can be seen to be prevailed upon to act should they need to, might act as reasonable comfort. Because Crick was never clear on the extent to which apathy could be a problem it is possible that having 75% of the population who could be brought in to defend politics is indeed enough of a defence.

With less fervour for the naturalistic qualities of politics than Crick, Flinders similarly argues in defence of politics. Rather than defending politics against ideology per se Flinders seeks to defend politics from itself, denial, the media, talks of crises and ultimately the marketization of citizenship. The aim of this defence is to protect democratic politics from the most relevant challenges Flinders sees it facing. In so doing he calls for an open and honest discussion whereby a very clear baseline set of civic virtues are laid out to be abided by. I suspect Flinders' position in light of the findings of this thesis would already confirm his suspicions relating to apathy and disengagement and the general disregard for politics that exists. However I anticipate that this will only concern him further and drive through the need for this conversation he calls for, to happen sooner rather than later. If the causes of apathy and a latent status continue to pervade society we may be at risk of exposure to threats which we have seemingly forgotten about as a generation and population less exposed to war that sought to remove our freedoms.

However, given Flinders' aversion to the talk of crises, as it seeks to further undermine politics, like Crick it is possible that he would perceive the findings as less alarming than some. For example, although it has been found that there is an apathetic population of around 25%, the remaining 75% though largely unsupportive of MPs in general still hold reasonably positive views on the virtue, and for some, the functioning of democracy in this country. He may then use findings such as these to demonstrate that there is not necessarily a crisis of democracy, nor indeed politics. Flinders may also be heartened by the fact that although across the sample population there was general disdain for politicians as a species, that feeling melted somewhat when respondents considered their own MP; where they had the knowledge to report upon the performance of their own MP (rather than the standard apathetic "don't know" response) people were broadly supportive, and much more so than MPs in general.

Though the main attack on politics in the twenty-first century – the marketization of citizenship – has not been quelled by this study, other elements of it might show there is still a reasonable defence for politics in pockets of the population.

The final position that was laid out in chapter 2 was that which looked at the inequality of non-participation and how it very much mirrors some of the inequalities present within society, if not perpetuates them. Its unequivocal stance was one that posed non-participation as a real and very significant problem regardless of any theorised optimal balance and stability that it might provide for a civic culture as explicated by both Almond & Verba and Crick.

The findings here very much support sentiment of that work; most notably by Verba, Schlozman and Brady. The typology that I have produced here is one that highlights, irrespective of the *type* of political action one includes, that there is inequality in terms of education, income, social class and age between those who are most and least active. The most active group is without doubt disproportionately represented by people who identify themselves as either social class A or B and you will find far fewer people than one might expect (demographically speaking) from other social classes. It is also true that this group has the highest levels of education and income and is likely to be a slightly older group of individuals. Even the next most active group, the critical citizens, are still reasonably endowed in terms of socio-economic status. They too are not a young group of people, overly represented by the white, employed, middle-aged, middle class population of the UK.

Conversely, the inactive (to varying extents), are very different indeed, particularly the least active. The least active group profile, in the shape of the apathetics, is one that reflects the inequality Verba and colleagues expressed concern about. It has been very clear from the findings that this is a group that is very distinct, even from its closest group in the typology. The fact that the apathetic group are disproportionately from 'lower' social classes, likely to have lower levels of education and income, and characterised as a particularly youthful group shows not only that Verba et al's findings have been perpetuated over the last twenty years, but they have been magnified. The fact only confirms the validity of this position and the very real concern contained within it.

Non-participation clearly does matter and apathy as a feature of it matters too. The levels as demonstrated here are too significant for it to be ignored within any wider discussion about the health of our democracy and the balance of equality within our modern society.

8.1.2 Chapter 3: Exploring the Explanations of Participation and Non-Participation

The purpose of the next section of the chapter is to establish how two of the aims of the thesis, distinguishing and explaining political apathy match up to previous studies that investigate the extent of and explanations for the more broad notion of political non-participation.

As the review of the literature did, I begin with the consideration of the state of political apathy and how this corresponds to the state of participation and non-participation explored in section 3.1. In many ways the results have emphasised what we already knew from previous work; voting and signing petitions are amongst the most popular forms of activity across all of the hypothesised groups, even the apathetic citizens though admittedly to a much lesser extent than the other groups and some of the previous literature. Interestingly the only group that did not express such interest in signing a petition were the engaged respondents who seemed to prefer more formal and traditional methods of participation.

This study also considered more closely the importance of discussing politics or political news with someone else which most surveys have not in the past. It was revealing that this was an act undertaken by large proportions of all groups, but worryingly for the apathetic and latent individuals, at a lower rate than voting.

The key distinction between this piece of work and those that have gone before it is that it does not just replicate what we have found before, it adds to it. In distinguishing the truly apathetic from all other forms of non-participation, we have been able to see quite how stark the differences are between those for whom politics does not feature on their radar and those who have simply turned away from it. We knew that amongst 'non-participants' participation was obviously low, but by having probed a level further, we can see that participatory tendencies are even lower amongst some groups than we had previously realised. For example, though some of the latest data from the European Social Survey (Table 3-1) showed a fall to 37.3% of people in the UK signing a petition in 2008, that figure is an average for the whole country. The results of the Latent Class Analysis show in the amalgamated dataset (APE1-9) however, that figure is much lower for some groups within the population. For example, though signing a petition is one of the more popular activities for the least active, they nevertheless are likely only to take it up at a rate of just over 11%. Equally, even the next group, the latent citizens, are only likely to have 28% of the group population engaging in that level of activity. It is clearly the, albeit slightly smaller active groups, who are so readily willing to sign a petition (at 75% and 89% respectively for the critical and engaged groups) who pull up the average for the UK.

It is clear then that although many of the findings in this thesis do indeed confirm what we already suspected about political non-participation, the value of this work is in the fact that it

contextualises these blanket figures for the UK. We can therefore understand not only some of the levels of non-participation for the UK as a whole, but also the different levels for each of the groups I have conceptualised, which without doubt gives us an enhanced understanding.

How then does each of the *explanations* stand up in light of these findings? As in the third chapter, I begin by considering the politics of “demand”. These accounts collectively demonstrated how it is the result of change within citizens attitudes and lifestyles that have predominantly explained the downwards trends in political participation that we have seen over the last sixty years or so. The question is here then; to what extent do the results of this empirical enquiry support this explanation, with particular reference to political apathy? It is certainly clear that some of the various positions outlined in the demand side explanation do indeed persist. However, it is difficult using only a ten year time point to fully test the assumptions of either Putnam’s social capital account or Franklin’s argument of a generational impact. Indeed partly because of the specific focus on political rather than more broad civil participation their exact positions haven’t been thoroughly tested. Nevertheless, given the fact that fewer people, particularly within the least active groups are even talking about politics with friends, family or neighbours does give rise to the notion that a change in civic behaviour is explaining their disengagement. Furthermore, the lower levels of voting amongst the least active groups, which are typically characterised by being reasonably youthful, combined with their lack of engagement in other areas, does suggest there is some weight to Franklin’s position.

There is also evidence to support both the modernisation and emergence of a critical citizen, depicted most notably by the characteristics of the individual I have opted to call “critical”. The fact that there is a reasonably aware and engaged group of people who have chosen to turn away from ‘parliamentary’ forms of political participation and a high level of dissatisfaction and disdain for politicians suggests that there has indeed been a shift in citizen thinking. Though given their broad support still for democracy and their eagerness to be knowledgeable and engaged in other areas suggests this type of behaviour is not necessarily problematic. Equally it would seem reasonable to suggest that there is foundation within this study for the idea of an increasingly consumerist society. It was disappointing to find not only that there was such an abundance of apathetic individuals but also that when they were not showing signs of disinterest, indifference and a lack of knowledge they were responding negatively to the politics that does not seem to really feature within their lives, which one might argue is unfair to politics. However, the point is that it does echo the increasingly negative, market forces prevalent within twenty-first century citizenship. The same is also true of the myriad of personal factors that affects how individuals demand politics. The personal differences that have seen inequality in non-participation are testament to the validity of these accounts. In particular, this work has shown how the effects socioeconomic status and age in particular have had on

participation is as the literature suggested. This is especially true for the apathetic group; we knew that low socioeconomic status and low age were predictors of non-participation, but not quite to the extent that this study has revealed. The apathetic group are even more marked in socioeconomic and age inequality than figures for non-participants suggested.

This study also examined the role of personality in explaining the trends in the typology. Questions that asked people about how politics made them feel and what they thought about disagreeing with people in political conversation were in part used to test the idea explored in the literature that personality traits have an effect on political efficacy and engagement. The literature outlined five key personality traits and their relationship with political nonparticipation. The findings here certainly support the idea that the more confident, extroverted and content with the nature of political discussion people were the more likely they were to participate and in a wider range of political activities.

Moving now onto the validity of the supply based accounts covered in chapter three we can see support and contradiction in equal degrees. The supply-side explanations broadly explained that the trends in non-participation came about as a result of the way in which politics has been supplied to us; that it has increasingly become distasteful.

Though the network governance account was not specifically addressed within the course of this study, the overarching idea that it is certain types of people over others who choose to be the dominant participant, which then serves to alienate and exclude others, may indeed have merit. The differentiation between the groups shows that there are stereotypes within the most active groups. This may well have a further impact of turning people off from politics.

Similarly, though the explanation of the role of the media on nonparticipation was not thoroughly tested within this study there also may be foundation to the idea. The notion that the media's often negative portrayal of politics makes citizens feel increasingly negative about it was not tested in any specific operational sense. However, the difference in support for local MPs versus MPs in general is indicative of the argument. Whilst local MPs have the opportunity to demonstrate through action which is more keenly felt or readily seen, the positive nature of their role most people learn about the work of MPs as a breed through the media – be it printed, televisual or otherwise. This certainly may explain why there is such a negative view of MPs on the whole, but not on individual MPs in the respondent's constituency.

The process and performance based arguments were certainly considered in much greater depth than either of these other supply-side explanations. The performance argument which asserts how the perceived effectiveness of government can have an effect on political engagement was tested through a number of variables. Questions that asked respondents of their levels of

satisfaction with respect to the working of Parliament, their individual MPs and MPs in general served to test this account. These questions showed very clearly that there was greater dissatisfaction reported in questions relating to performance than there were those that looked at processes, as I have highlighted already in this discussion.

The process based account exemplified in the work of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse in *Stealth Democracy* highlighted how for many people issues of process were more instrumental in their opinions of the supply of politics than performance. However, this argument did not seem to hold such weight in the UK context. This was a position that was tested by questions that asked respondents to comment on whether they agreed the UK Parliament works well in encouraging public involvement, holding the government to account and debating issue that matter. It was also tested by asking people whether they thought the UK Parliament was essential to our democracy. For the most part the processes of government were upheld as important and in many cases seen as satisfactory, but overall engagement remained low. Certainly the performance of government seemed a more important factor in this instance than government processes. Perhaps this is a reflection of studying a different country at a different time to that which was depicted in Hibbing & Theiss-Morse's (2002) investigation. It may well indicate that though I would wish for this typology to be applicable beyond the UK context, it may not have the reach for otherwise similar democracies.

On the whole there is clear evidence to support a combination of both supply and demand accounts upon reflection of this study. It has not only sought to complement this literature but also included an interesting new dimension, which I believe has been in a way that is valuable.

8.1.3 Chapter 4: Conceptualising Political Apathy

The fourth chapter sought to provide, following a review of concept building literature and the existing examples of participatory typologies, a re-conceptualisation of political activity in a way that fully identified the role of the apathetic individual. It outlined a framework described as the *Political Activity Spectrum*. At the *Secondary Level* it depicted four types of citizens with the *Tertiary Level* outlining the nature of their political behaviour and likely attitudinal and demographic characteristics. The framework and its content provided the hypotheses which the empirical enquiry sought to test.

Now the testing of this conceptual framework is complete, I can update the *Political Activity Spectrum* and in particular the *Tertiary Level* Content before reflecting on the overall success of the concept. To reflect the colour coding used in the results chapters, the *Political Activity*

Spectrum is now represented in full by Figure 8-1 and the *Tertiary Level* content summarised in Figures 8-2 – 8-5:

Figure 8-1 The Political Activity Spectrum

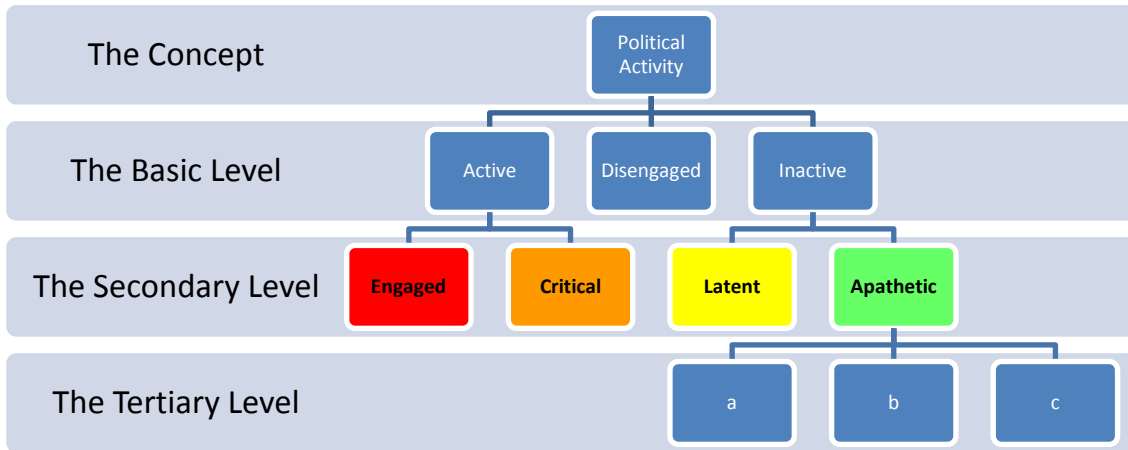


Figure 8-2 The Apathetic Citizen

The Apathetic Citizen

- Least politically active.
- They vote, discuss politics or political news with other people and sign petitions if they are active, but only in small proportions.
- Consistent in their inaction.
- More influenced than any other group by an election year.
- Least interested in politics by a considerable amount.
- Least self-reported knowledge about politics.
- Characterised by the 'don't know', 'do not agree nor disagree' and 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' responses in addition to least positive responses about politics.
- Over-represented amongst young people (18-24). Not exclusive to young people however; the apathetic group is disproportionately represented in any age group up until aged 45.
- Over-represented in London, Merseyside and Northern Ireland.
- Most likely to have no formal qualifications or GCSEs. However, that is not to say there are not people with A Levels, Bachelor's degrees or postgraduate qualifications within this citizen group.
- Most likely to be found in social classes C2, D and E.
- Least reported feeling of political efficacy.
- Least knowledge about the current system and functioning of government.
- Lacking in political confidence and competence.
- Most dissatisfied with the UK Parliament and government on the whole.
- Most likely to see politics a waste of time and not fun.
- Majority believe the only way to be informed about politics is by getting involved.
- Does not report much enjoyment from community activity.
- Does not express strongly the need for acting if dissatisfied.
- Most likely to claim they do not have enough time for politics.
- Least likely to report any real sense of influence felt.
- Most likely to report that they feel uncomfortable when people argue about politics, or when somebody disagrees with their political point of view and find it more difficult to see things from other people's perspectives.
- Most likely to be agreeable in a group situation.
- Most likely to report difficulty in understanding government and politics.
- Majority could not be motivated by either MORE or LESS self-serving politicians and special interests.
- 25% of population sample in APE1-9 and 56-58% in APE10.

Figure 8-3 The Latent Citizen

The Latent Citizen

- Second least active in politics.
- They vote, discuss politics or political news with other people and sign petitions if they are active, in small, but not insignificant proportions – more so than the apathetic group.
- Over-represented in age groups from 55+
- Over-represented in Scotland, the North West, East Midlands, West Midlands, South West, South East, Eastern, London and Northern Ireland.
- Most likely to have no formal qualifications, GCSEs or some with A Levels.
- Most likely to be found in social classes B, C1 and C2.
- Feels more efficacy than the apathetic group but less than the others.
- Second least knowledge about the current system and functioning of government.
- Lacks political confidence somewhat.
- Second most likely to see politics a waste of time and not fun.
- A large majority believe the only way to be informed about politics is by getting involved, more so than the apathetic group.
- Reports some enjoyment from community activity.
- Believes to a certain extent in the need for acting if dissatisfied.
- Second most likely to claim they do not have enough time for politics.
- Second likely to report any real sense of influence felt.
- Second most likely to report that they feel uncomfortable when people argue about politics, or when somebody disagrees with their political point of view and find it more difficult to see things from other people's perspectives, but less so than the apathetic group.
- Second most likely to be agreeable in a group situation.
- Second most likely to report difficulty in understanding government and politics.
- Majority would not be motivated by the thought of politics being MORE influenced by self-serving politicians and special interests.
- Majority would be motivated by the thought of politics being LESS influenced by self-serving politicians and special interests.
- 44% of population sample in APE1-9 and 28-38% in APE10.

Figure 8-4 The Critical Citizen

The Critical Citizen

- Second most active in politics.
- They engage in all forms of activity at a reasonable level. However, voting, discussing politics or political news with other people and signing petitions are also the most popular acts for this group.
- Active but non-partisan and prefers informal political engagement.
- Over-represented in age groups between 35 and 64.
- Over-represented in York and Humberside, the South West, South East and Eastern areas.
- Most likely to have a Bachelor's degree or A Levels.
- Most likely to be found in social classes B and C1.
- Second most confident in feelings of political efficacy.
- Second most knowledge about the current system and functioning of government.
- Demonstrates political confidence, competence and cynicism.
- Second least likely to see politics a waste of time and not fun.
- A healthy majority believe the only way to be informed about politics is by getting involved.
- Reports enjoyment from community activity.
- Strongly expresses the need for acting if dissatisfied, more so than any other group.
- Second most likely to claim they do have enough time for politics.
- Second most likely to report feeling a real sense of influence.
- Second least likely to report that they feel uncomfortable when people argue about politics. The least likely to take it personally when somebody disagrees with their political point of view and does not find it difficult to see things from other people's perspectives.
- Second least likely to be agreeable in a group situation.
- Unlikely to report difficulty in understanding government and politics.
- Majority could not be motivated by MORE self-serving politicians and special interests influencing politics, but more so than any of the other groups.
- Majority could be motivated by LESS self-serving politicians and special interests influencing politics.
- 27% of population sample in APE1-9 and 3-7% in APE10.

Figure 8-5 The Engaged Citizen

The Engaged Citizen

- Most active in politics
- They are active in all forms of politics at very high levels of uptake.
- Although they engage to a lesser extent in formal and partisan political activities they are still comfortable with both and engage at very good levels in both.
- Over-represented in age groups 45-74.
- Over-represented in the South West, South East and Eastern regions.
- Most likely to have a bachelor's degree or postgraduate qualification.
- Most likely to be found in social classes A, B and C1.
- Reports a strong sense of political efficacy.
- Most knowledge about the current system and functioning of government.
- Demonstrates strong political confidence and competence.
- Reasonably satisfied with the UK Parliament and government on the whole.
- Least likely to see politics a waste of time and not fun.
- A vast majority believe the only way to be informed about politics is by getting involved.
- Reports a great deal of enjoyment from community activity.
- Expresses the need to act if feeling dissatisfied more than the apathetic and latent groups but not to the same extent as the critical citizen. More content to go along with the outcome of formal politics than the critical citizens are.
- Most likely to claim they do have enough time for politics.
- Most likely to report feeling a real sense of influence.
- Does not feel uncomfortable when people argue about politics, but does feel more uncomfortable when somebody disagrees with their political point of view than some of the other groups. They do not find it more difficult to see things from other people's perspectives though.
- Least likely to be agreeable in a group situation.
- Least likely to report difficulty in understanding government and politics.
- Majority could not be motivated by MORE self-serving politicians and special interests influencing politics.
- Majority could be motivated by LESS self-serving politicians and special interests influencing politics.
- 3% of population sample in APE1-9 and 1-6% in APE10.

The ability to draw such clear pictures of differing participatory groups - the apathetic, latent, critical and engaged citizens - from the analysis that has been conducted is testament not only to the strength of those results but also to the method and validity of the theory which underpinned them. The study finds quite clearly that there are these types of individuals present within the UK citizen body and have been for a period of ten years, perhaps more. The results are very closely aligned with that of the conceptualisation with a couple of differences. It is perhaps worth taking each citizen group in turn.

The apathetic citizen did indeed fit the profile in the conceptualisation extremely well, with it being depicted as the least active in all the activities sampled. Similarly a number of the suggested attitudinal and demographic characteristics were found to make sense also. One way in which the results showed difference to the hypothesised conceptualisation was that the apathetic group was not as youthful a profile as I had anticipated. Indeed whilst the youngest group sampled (18-24 year olds) were disproportionately included within this group, the same was true, if to a lesser extent for all the age groups up until the age of 45. This shows the clear relationship that persists between age and activity (or lack of).

Also, some of the attitudinal variables chosen through the operationalisation process provide more contextual detail that one could have imagined in conceptualising this group. Notable examples include the variables that look at how this group responds to criticism of their political viewpoint (should they actually express one) and interaction with others about political issues (again, only if this is relevant).

Perhaps one of the most surprising findings was actually how disagreeable the apathetic group found politics. Though they are without doubt characterised in many instances by their 'don't know' or 'neither agree nor disagree' responses, they do show higher levels of dissatisfaction than one might expect, given their knowledge of the system and interest in it is lower than all the other groups. Perhaps this is as a product of being asked the survey question rather than something they have legitimately taken time to think in detail about.

As with the position described in the conceptual chapter, the latent citizen is very much as expected, in the same way that the apathetic individuals were shown from the data analysis. Here again the operationalisation allows for some excellent additional understanding which very much contributes not only to the development of this group as a conceptual entity but to the field of research more broadly; the way this typology has been tested really does offer new insights. One way in which the results deviated from

expectation was in the level of education. Although it was anticipated that this group would be characterised by having lower educational levels than either the critical or engaged groups (but higher than the apathetic) their likely educational level really does highlight the difference between the 'actives' and 'inactives'. It is university level education that really separates these different groups. Where the latent group are at best only likely to have achieved A Levels, this is the standard for the critical group, where actually *they* are more likely to have gone onto study at university. The role of university level education on political activity can be perceived further by the fact that the engaged citizen really is most likely to have either a first, second or third degree.

As will all the groups, the critical citizen performs as expected by the conceptualisation during the empirical enquiry. Though it was expected that this group would turn away from parliamentary types of activity, the rate to which they will engage is much less than I even envisaged, to the point where in some of the individual years' engagement with this form of politics was lowest for this group than any other. It seems that even the apathetic citizen may be mobilised more by party politics than the critical citizen. However, as alluded to previously, given their proclivity to act in other respects, this is not necessarily problematic for this group, just a factor of their behaviour and opinion.

The engaged citizen appears to be exactly as described within the conceptualisation, having been most active in all the types of activities included within the model, whilst also possessing most of the characteristics one might anticipate from previous work on those who are most active and engaged in society. Perhaps the only surprise was actually quite how small this group showed up to be from the method, which begs for further reflection in the next section.

If the conceptualisation reasonably stands up in light of its testing, the next question would be, quite how does it compare to some of the previous typologies of participation reviewed within the third chapter? As Ekman and Amnå's typology is perhaps the closest in substance and structure to this, and the only one that really conceptualises anything but the disengaged on any level it is the only literature worth comparing it to. In many ways the concept performed similarly to the different headings comparable within their work. However, the development of my apathetic group or their 'apolitical' citizen really does add to the suggestions they began to make. We can say much more than that they reflect a sense of political passivity and a lack of interest in politics. We can say who they are likely to be, where in the UK they are likely to be more greatly populated as well as many of the belief patterns they hold. By identifying all of these underlying, latent factors, it certainly gives us scope not only for knowing more about them but also being able to find out more about them in future research.

8.1.4 Chapter 5: Data and Methods

As with any study one should reflect upon the success of the data and methods chosen, considering whether it has achieved its purpose well enough. Equally it is important to identify any possible areas for improvement.

Given my previous study in this area of political science I had an understanding, which supported by the literature review I conducted, provided much of the thinking around the conceptual development. However, the conceptualisation developed fully through some of the tentative data analysis that was completed in the process of this thesis. Equally, as we have seen in this concluding chapter already, the very detailed content of the conceptualisation (the *Tertiary Level* of the conceptual framework) came from the empiricism which not only tested a theory but facilitated further discovery. As such, in many ways this research has adopted an inductive approach as well as one that is conceptually driven and these different styles should be appropriately evaluated.

On the whole, both this inductive approach and the Latent Class Analysis have been very successful in identifying patterns in survey responses. Given that a state of apathy is generally something people aren't necessarily aware of, or would wrongly conceive of, an inductive approach is certainly a necessary one to take. An inductive approach generally "...involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through a series of hypotheses" (Bernard 2011, p7). LCA without doubt provides one such method, and the following relevant instances are evidential of this why we need to proceed in this way. When one talks about political apathy (which inevitably you do when people ask the dreaded question "So what is it you *actually* do studying for a PhD?") the majority of people comment "Oh that's me! I'm totally apathetic!", before proceeding to tell me how they are frustrated with the political system, why they vote a particular way and why they have signed numerous petitions. I reply that actually they sound much more like a critical citizen or, at worst latent, which seems to leave them feeling much more satisfied about politics than when we started the conversation. Conversely, the other tendency of a politics student is not to talk about apathy but to talk about participation and when the question is posed "Are you going to vote in the referendum today?" and you receive a response of "...um...vote in the what now, when?" you know you are talking to a different individual altogether. The crucial point here in describing the rather unsophisticated conversations I have with some friends is that neither of these individuals would be aware of how to reflect accurately upon this unknown, latent quantity, apathy. We therefore need a method that can accurately derive this, and I still conclude that LCA offers us the best possibilities.

Hagenaars & Halman (1989) identified how useful LCA could be in producing typologies for the political domain (p86-89) and Oser et al's 2012 study demonstrates successful use of the method in distinguishing between online and offline forms of political participation. Clearly it has been seen to contribute already to elements of political science in a positive sense. It has had fruitful responses in other areas of social science though as well and has even started to be used outside of this broader discipline. Notable examples include the works of (in the social sciences): Francis et al. (2004) in *Identifying Patterns and pathways of Offending Behaviour: A New Approach to Typologies of Crime*, Huh et al.(2011) in *Identifying Patterns of Eating and Physical Activity in Children: A Latent Class Analysis of Obesity Risk* and Stuart & Hinde (2010) in *Identifying Individuals Engaging in Risky Sexual Behaviour for Chlamydia Infection in the UK: A Latent Class Approach*. In the natural sciences: Morey et al. (2006) with *Using Angler Characteristics and Attitudinal Data to Identify Environmental Preference Classes: A Latent-Class Model*.

The latter example in particular is very favourable towards the method, highlighting how it “allows the researcher to identify and characterise various preference [participation] groups” in a way that means the results are easily explained to policy makers and the public (p92). In the same way as Hagenaars & Halman prefer it to similar alternative methods, (as demonstrated in Chapter 5: 5.3.1) these authors also favour LCA over factor and cluster analysis for the purpose that I have described.

However, though many studies profess the virtue of the LCA method, it is not without criticism. The most common complaint about LCA is the lack of a hard and fast method for model selection, a point which is made to varying to degrees by several authors (Francis et al. 2004; Yang 2006; Nylund et al. 2007). They are very much divided over which statistical test is best to prove the most sound model and they are divided between whether to use the difference in the L^2 statistic, the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) or the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC). However, I explained in Chapter 5 that I combined a balance of all three measures along with a theoretically interpretative approach, which all authors agree is still the best method in the current circumstances.

Even if we can agree that LCA has an inductive purpose which in theory supports the purpose and aims of the research and we can forgive the lack of rigid model selection process inherent to the method, the question is still in the air; does LCA serve its stated purpose in reality? The answer I believe to this question is emphatically that it does.

The fact that I have been able to distinguish relatively easily and *consistently* across ten different datasets and time points, four groups of citizens all largely demonstrating the same patterns throughout, without having to ‘impose’ a particular number of classes on the dataset is

evidence of its overwhelming success; the purpose, the concept, method and the data fit incredibly well under LCA and I would not choose to necessarily deviate from this approach should I have the opportunity to turn back time. That is not however to say that I would not test the validity of the results by analysing the data using some of the other methods discussed in Chapter 5. One of the criticisms that I would level at the work is that although I have uncovered an apathetic group, I still think there could be an even more extremely underactive group who have yet to be discovered by conventional survey or quantitative analyses.

Equally, nor would I consider this the only method to include if I were to *enhance* this study further. A second criticism that I would concede is that, like many studies, it has been incredibly quantitative in nature and approach. It could be interpreted that the numerical assignment to latent class on the basis of the strongest probabilities is too arbitrary. The study could of course be improved therefore by the introduction of a qualitative method which would draw out richer data and offer additional explanation to apathy beyond just an increase in the emphasis of similar findings for the disengaged, latent citizens. However, I have no qualms in strongly defending the quantitative methodological approach I have taken here. I have used a method which allows for theoretical input matched with statistical significance that produces responses that are not only intuitive but representative of the wider target population given the data utilised. The method has produced results which are indicative of a typology that offers a significant contribution to a reasonably underexplored section of the literature.

8.2 Implications

There are three main implications that I want to draw from the research undertaken here; the first being how the findings sit within the international context, comparing not only the similarities and differences but also commenting upon which settings it would be possible for this typology to make sense. Ultimately I conclude that it would work reasonably well within Europe and perhaps in other similar democracies, but not where there is an absence so far of strong democratic history. The second issue I want to draw upon is a more broad discussion of where this research sits beyond just a venture of political science, which necessarily brings into question what the role of political science is in contemporary society. I suggest that it has an important part to play in educating in light of the findings that are produced – beyond educating each other, from within journals and those lucky enough to undertake university level study. It should be used to inform at the very least secondary level citizenship education, supporting

through a variety of measures both students and teachers alike. Improved interdisciplinary research with colleagues from the field of education would also serve to support this aim. The final implication from this work leads nicely on from this point and it relates to the future research that stems from what has been discovered here. This section will not only demonstrate how I would like to develop this existing research further, but also how I would like to develop as a researcher. There are first and foremost ways in which I intend to improve upon and clarify the apathetic citizen further, using a different suite of methodological tools. Secondly I would like to engage in the cooperative research with educational colleagues to develop the kind of multidisciplinary research I urge. Thirdly, as we face an upcoming General Election in the UK I have become concerned about the rise of so-called populist movements and in particular the popularity many divisive groups have gained through their effective use of social media. I would be intrigued to investigate the extent to which these groups have exploited for their own agendas the current levels of political disenchantment, assessing in particular whether they have been able to mobilise the apathetic rather than just the latent type.

8.2.1 Beyond the United Kingdom

It is worth situating the findings of this research beyond the UK, as it is important to understand how well a conceptualisation can travel and be applicable in a less narrow context. I have broken down this consideration into a few key areas.

8.2.1.1 Europe

As in the UK there has been an intense focus on the health of democracy in Europe, as broadly similar results of non-participation have been replicated. Stoker's *Why Politics Matters* showed in Chapter 3 that many of the countries of Europe showed not dissimilar levels of disengagement in voting, discussing politics, signing petitions and the such like. Furthermore, many more recent studies have pursued a similar endeavour of exploring more closely the different types of political non-participation and the issues that surround this debate (Goodliffe 2012; Hooghe & Marien 2013; Makarovic & Rek 2014; Sloam 2014; van Biezen et al. 2012)

Goodliffe (2012) finds that the disengagement prevalent in France and Germany has been propelled by economic liberalisation which has sought to remove the social contract once in place and served to enhance feelings of exclusion amongst some groups. It is this that the author claims has sparked their political radicalism in the shape of populist movements. As mentioned later in section 8.2.3.3 I discuss the possibility of research of this nature in the UK context, with reference to movements such as Britain First, UKIP and Occupy.

Hooghe and Marien (2013) discuss instead the relationship that exists between political trust and the types of political participation citizens are willing to engage in. They use the 2006 European Social Survey to look at this with reference to 25 European countries. They conclude that “political trust seems to boost institutionalised participation and voting in particular but reduces non-institutionalised participation” (p145). If we think about that in relation to some of the findings of this research we can certainly see some similarity. All citizens, pretty much excluding the engaged group have low levels of trust and satisfaction for most elements of politics and the political system and we can see that their propensity to vote is not as high (with the exception of the critical group). Clearly, where the engaged are more satisfied this improves their willingness to vote. Though they are generally active in all senses, it is more of those ‘institutionalised’ forms that Hooghe and Marien talk about that the engaged are *very* willing to do (vote, take an active part in campaigns, donate to political parties).

The ‘youngest’ and least educated groups in my typology – the apathetics and latents – very clearly demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between these factors and significant levels of political participation. These findings assimilate very well with the work of Sloam (2014) in his study which looks at the civic and political engagement of young people in the United States and Europe. However, rather than labelling them apathetic (and thus not testing apathy per se) he suggests they are very engaged, just in different ways and by undertaking different types of acts. I suspect in this way there could be room for further investigation of any very inactive individuals that his study has neglected, in a similar approach to this research.

Lastly for Europe, van Biezen and her colleagues identify a very clear decline in party political membership across a range of European countries when comparing membership rates from the early 1980s to the time of publication. They find consistently that there has been a downturn of party political popularity. Whilst membership of political parties was not tested by my model, the reduced levels of activity relating to political parties and the negative perceptions of MPs bears out their findings.

It seems reasonable to suggest therefore that Europe, in general, is very similar to the context of the UK. It may well be possible then that not only the *Secondary Level* but also *Tertiary Level* of my conceptual framework could be applicable to European countries.

8.2.1.2 Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe presents an interesting picture and I have chosen to address it separately due in many instances to its much shorter experience of democracy than either the UK or Western Europe. Ceka (2012); Greenberg (2010) and Loveless (2013) all provide interesting reading in this respect.

The first two articles highlight the problematic nature of the disconnect between democratic expectations and reality. Ceka (2012) highlights especially how, in spite of, what they term, ‘quality democratic institutions’ there is still severe political distrust and a lack of participation. They conclude that the history of European countries is such that where they are used to having only one political party, the advent of democracy and party political competition has demonstrated a level of rivalry that many citizens find distasteful. It is this that they concede has damaged hopes of real trust in parties, institutions and the general value of political participation.

Loveless (2013) focuses on a slightly different area, though still related to the topic of disengagement. He instead looks at the issue of social inequality (in terms of SES) and the role this plays in contributing to low political satisfaction. Rather than looking necessarily at the causal role one might expect, he focuses on *perceptions* of inequality and how this undermines political trust and efficacy.

Clearly whilst the issues of disengagement expressed through low political trust and participation are similar to what I have found in the UK, the exact democratic context is not entirely comparable. It is possible that my typology could work well in the Eastern European context, but it might be that elements of the structure, if not content, would need to be adapted to be fully applicable to these new democracies.

8.2.1.3 USA, Canada and Australia

Like much of Europe and to a certain extent Eastern Europe, the examples of the USA, Canada and Australia reflect a similar picture to the UK. As with Europe there has been ongoing research over a similar period of time to examine levels of democratic disengagement. This research is still ongoing and many similar findings and issues arise as in the UK (Bastedo 2015; Battin 2008; Lanning 2008; Martin 2012; Martin 2013). It is especially interesting that Australia is so very similar when they have a compulsory element to their political system, which one might assume might encourage interest and knowledge.

Battin’s work in particular highlights many of the similarities between Australia and the UK, in that initially the disengagement and apathy of citizens was blamed on the citizens themselves (demand) with virtually no acceptance that more supply-side factors could be at play. Australian politicians were not willing to look inwardly at the role they and the system they work within played upon civic disengagement. Battin in particular highlights the success of the right-wing parties in perceiving this discontent and using it to their advantage, something which I comment on later on in the section about future research. Seemingly from this article similar patterns persist as in the UK and the explanations for these patterns are broadly comparable. I

would suggest therefore that this research is contextual certainly within the study of Australia, but also in Canada and the US.

8.2.1.4 Other Countries

There are countries outside the UK for whom my results will never be entirely comparable nor the conceptualisation relevant. One clear example is in China where the history and tradition of politics renders the profiles I describe entirely inappropriate. Academic enquiry of China's relationship with participation is limited and Ash (2013) provides a more journalistic piece which examines the issue. Through interviews with Chinese nationals he concludes that there are four main reasons why people in China seem to care very little for politics both past and present. He identifies these as firstly that politics is boring; secondly, dangerous; thirdly that it simply isn't a priority (education and employment take centre stage) and lastly that it is hopeless (p43). One of the interviewees commented: "People born in a democratic country talk about this more, because they are born with that right. We aren't, so we don't think about it... it doesn't have anything to do with them [young people]. It's what affects them that interests them. [Beyond] that level they don't care" (p43).

It seems that although we don't have comparable political systems and we lack the ability to directly compare profiles of citizens using the typologies based on political *action*, there are the same issues of being frustrated about politics that prevail in the democratic world. Therefore, there may well be scope in the future to examine the extent of this discontent.

Latin America is a further example where the history of democracy is limited. Goodman and Hiskey look at the specific example of Mexico whereas Kiel examines Latin American society more broadly (Goodman & Hiskey 2008; Kiel 2012). The first authors examine the relationship between political disengagement in areas where there is high migration in Mexico, finding almost a "brain drain" effect where those who are most politically inclined are likely to have been the individuals who have migrated, thus draining the country of the most engaged.

Kiel considers the impact of the history of bureaucratic authoritarianism on the functioning of new democracies across Latin America. Whilst a number of these countries are likely to engage in acts of mass political participation, they are less civic-minded, which is perhaps a contradiction to the UK and European context. Also, those countries where they experienced higher levels of control and censorship are less inclined to have broken free from past behaviours and demonstrate lower comparable levels still of civic and political engagement.

Though there is clearly a problem of disenchantment world-wide, it is not entirely comparable to the UK setting. The findings of this research do not correspond to the same problems within

South America and therefore the tools I have used to measure the concerns we have here simply relevant.

Nevertheless, this section highlights how this study does indeed have much contextual relevance beyond the UK.

8.2.2 Debates in Political Science and Contemporary Politics

Given throughout this work I have utilised Crick's *In Defence of Politics* and Flinders' *Defending Politics: Why Democracy Matters in the Twenty-First Century* it seems only reasonable to continue in a similar vein in considering Stoker's (2012) *In Defence of Political Science*. Stoker defines the role of political science as one that "...is not so much to provide daily commentary on politics or always deal with current issues in politics, but rather it is to focus on the fundamental features of how politics works" (p677). Defending the role of political science in society he says takes place in three steps; to, as political scientists "embrace relevance rather than fear it" and encourage others to indeed also embrace the relevance our work provides (p677). Secondly he highlights that not only do we need to continue Crick's defence of politics, but also thirdly that we should look to provide solutions that contribute to that aim.

Stoker's argument highlights the ongoing issue in particular of 'relevance' as a discipline, noting how, as an example, we have long known about the inequalities that pervade politics, which indeed this study corroborates, but have done very little about it (p679). Perhaps this is because the wider relevance of our work has not been taken seriously enough beyond the walls of the academy. However, as an early career researcher I understand all too keenly the perils of pushing those boundaries; to create a successful career in political science is not to pursue policy objectives necessarily, but to publish in good journals and build a research reputation both nationally and internationally within the field of political science (p680). He asserts however that there need not be such a paradox existing between the two aims and argues that we can not only improve political science, but also the reputation of it, by creating a 'design arm' where "...political science...is more explicitly solution-seeking" (p681). He claims that "It should be possible for many political scientists to shift their orientation towards design mode without a great deal of difficulty" and that ultimately "Our expertise should be at the service of democracy, not above it" (p683). The fact that the emphasis in the latest round of the Research Excellence Framework has been on 'impact' and in new academic contracts (certainly at the University of Southampton) there is a responsibility for public engagement shows steps towards us being able to meet our combined objectives.

He concludes by effectively saying that if we perceive such disengagement and dissatisfaction with politics as we do (and this work also does) then we are failing our fellow citizen, nor have

we done enough, if we do not follow it up and seek to improve politics; we cannot necessarily expect politicians do to this with “an open mind” (683).

Within my recruitment and outreach role at the University of Southampton I take the themes of this research and have students question solutions for the levels of disengagement that I have measured. They may consider what the impact of electoral reform, compulsory voting, competency testing and lowering the voting age might have on our sense of political engagement. In nearly all instances, every 16-18 year old independently comments that regardless of any formal measure we take it should be preceded by a more comprehensive citizenship education programme. This is not just a point that is made by budding politics students, but political scientists alike. Burton & May (2015) highlight the importance of citizenship education and the fact that in England it suffers numerous problems, most notably with the delivery, status and content of the programme, not to mention the fact that it is often taught by teachers who have little interest in the subject and insufficient training to do it adequately. Other researchers also note some of the existing problems with citizenship education across the UK and search towards a better, more common and transformative framework for the teaching of citizenship (Kisby & Sloam 2011; Johnson & Morris 2010; Banks 2008). The Centre for Higher Education Research and Information report *Higher Education and society in Changing Times: looking back and looking forward* also highlights the responsibility that Higher Education has in this regard.

If we agree with Stoker that political science has a responsibility to provide solutions to the problems it finds and we also concede that citizenship education, which could act as a remedy to these problems if taught well, is currently substandard, there is a very obvious opportunity for political science to step in. The most obvious way in which political science can contribute without asking too much is through research. It is not unreasonable for solution building to be incorporated into the objectives of research. For example, through methodology – In his work on antipolitics Stoker (Hay and the Hansard Society also) has already fulfilled a level of public engagement by conversing with numerous groups of people, asking them to talk about how politics grates on them, but by also encouraging them to come up with solutions in a way that empowers them and makes them feel somewhat consulted. Equally, improving citizenship education could be done through a change in the focus of political science research by including it as an outcome of the research and as evidence of impact. Battistoni (2013) praises two notable works in this area but laments the general lack of research that sees political science engage with civic education on a research level.

Not only do I argue that we should design solutions through our research focus and design, but also in the way that we disseminate our findings. As researchers it should also be our task to

discover alternative ways in which we can do this. I assert that one of the best ways in which this can be managed is in a mutually beneficial endeavour; recruitment as outreach. Programmes such as the one I coordinate (Learn with US Transition Programme) not only disseminates the findings of political science research to an important audience (16-18 year olds of not only politically minded students) but does so in a way that encourages Higher Education study. Education and recruitment of students is not the only important endeavour, however, and I believe there is a role for political science to play in supporting secondary teaching staff in this regard. Establishing and maintaining networks whereby local citizenship teachers can be informed by new and current research would be a simple but worthwhile project. If it can improve the reputation of an institution, and the approachability of the academy in general, so much the better.

8.2.3 Future research

As stated in the introduction to this chapter this section outlines, following this research, how I would like my work to develop but also how I would like to develop as a researcher. I consider the following three areas as excellent opportunities to move forwards.

8.2.3.1 Political Apathy

Given some of the limitations of the method that I outlined in 8.1.4 I would be keen to further develop the conceptualisation of apathetic individuals I have identified in this study. One of the hardest tasks in distinguishing the apathetic is physically finding them in the first place, and although I believe I have identified a proportion of them, I anticipate that the true extent of apathy has not yet been entirely revealed. Whilst I would again use Latent Class Analysis as a possible method (or the alternatives I favoured it over) if I were to refine my quantitative approach further, I would be eager also to do some qualitative analysis as well. I feel the explanation and nature of this group would be really brought out by the richness of detailed conversations, however difficult that might be; I am tenacious!

8.2.3.2 Political Science and Citizenship Education

In my recruitment and outreach role for the University of Southampton, I have the opportunity to engage with thousands of 16-18 year olds each year. In the last eighteen months I have been testing my conceptualisation of engagement out on groups of young people and they have happily assigned themselves to each one of the groups outlined in this work. What is interesting is not that the theory seems to work beyond the statistical analysis but indeed the unintentional finding that was produced.

The format for the interaction is a 45 minute taster lecture. I begin by introducing the idea of politics and attempting first to gauge their level of interest and engagement (by polling them using TurningPoint technology which is highly interactive and popular) based upon simplified descriptions of the citizen positions. I then conduct a high-level citizenship lecture which encourages the students to think about the value of participation, its role within their lives and their subsequent political activity. At the end of the lecture I then poll them once more, asking the same question about interest and activity that I asked at the beginning.

The beauty of this is not just that the theory works it is that they consistently change their point of view in light of the lecture. The majority of students assign themselves to the apathetic or latent groups at the outset. Following the lecture their view is altered and they feel much more empowered, interested and active. As such the final view is that the majority then put themselves within the critical (overwhelmingly) and engaged groups. In some instances the apathetic outlook has been eliminated entirely, but for others it has solidified their apathy; perhaps I was having a bad day!

This role provides the opportunity not only for engaging with young students and disseminating political science research which I have stressed is so important, but also to develop my research portfolio. The findings I have made in the last eighteen months have already been welcomed at conferences. Equally I believe there is scope to work with colleagues in education to use the sessions as evidence of students' existing citizenship knowledge and propose solutions to this in the manner that Stoker has suggested. Also, the role enables me to have developed good relationships with schools and colleges should I wish to implement my broader aim of supporting citizenship teachers' continuing professional development. This network should also enable me to continue working with these schools and colleges, conducting research should I choose to move on from this existing role. This is an avenue which very much reflects my personal, professional and research passions. I hope to work on research in the future that combines politics with education and looks to support both literatures as well as providing a rich civic education that is in the spirit of defending politics.

8.2.3.3 Political Apathy and Populist Movements

Finally, as the integrity of my existing role demands that I maintain a current research portfolio I have recently become interested in the role of populist parties and their effective use of social media platforms. Perturbed somewhat by the seeming popularity on FaceBook of groups like Britain First and to a lesser, but no insignificant extent, the United Kingdom Independence Party, I would be keen to examine their success. I anticipate some of that popularity to have emerged from the negativity towards MPs and political parties that this study has corroborated, with ever frustrated citizens looking for a political movement that (at least claims) to defend the

interests of them and people like them. I would therefore like to examine the profile of people who ‘like’ populist movements (of all kinds, not just the right wing examples I have cited) on FaceBook or ‘follow’ them on Twitter. I would firstly like to test whether they realise they appear to have identified with that particular political ideology before assessing the extent to which they truly do, and if they do, the characteristics that are common to each of the followings. These characteristics would include not only demographics but also attitudes towards politics in general, so that one could perceive whether the antipolitics sentiment was prevalent or not.

8.3 Final Thoughts

This concludes the final part of this chapter, but also the thesis. I hope to have provided clarified understanding of the apathetic citizen, reflecting on the previous literature in light of the discoveries of this thesis. I also believe I have demonstrated that there are some serious, and positive, implications from this work; for the ‘travelling’ of the concept, the development of the field of research, but also for the role of political science within society more broadly.

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