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## **Spiritual Capital: The Relationship With Civic Engagement Among Faith-Based Leaders**

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SPIRITUAL CAPITAL: THE RELATIONSHIP  
WITH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG  
FAITH-BASED LEADERS

by

Sylvia W. Burgess

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: School of Education  
Major: Leadership Studies  
Major Professor: Dr. Forrest Toms

North Carolina A&T State University  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
2011

## **ABSTRACT**

**Burgess, Sylvia W.** SPIRITUAL CAPITAL: THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG FAITH-BASED LEADERS. (Major Advisor: Dr. Forrest Toms), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

The current status of America in relationship to civic engagement is one of steady decline. The available research examines the decline from the viewpoint of the role religion plays in engagement, the role of volunteerism, and voting, social networking, and memberships.

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between spiritual capital, civic participation, and civic engagement. An in depth analysis of relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement was investigated.

The research sample included faith-based leaders from five churches in North Carolina and Virginia who were identified by the senior pastors as leaders in the ministries. The participants were administered the Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire, which measures engagement and the Spiritual Capital Index, which measures self-reported levels of spiritual capital.

The findings suggest that there is no relationship between spiritual capital and specific types of engagement activities. However, there is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement, a positive relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation, and a positive relationship between types and levels of engagement activities and faith-based leaders' participation.

School of Graduate Studies  
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This is to certify that the Doctoral Dissertation of

Sylvia W. Burgess

has met the dissertation requirements of  
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Greensboro, North Carolina  
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2011

## **DEDICATION**

Jeremiah 29:11

I would like to dedicate my dissertation to my daughter, Avigayil. Avigayil, I thank you for your unconditional love. Thank you for the sacrifices you have made with me during this journey. The time together that we have sacrificed will be regain and thank God for a good grandmother. I pray wisdom and knowledge for your life's journey. I know the blessings of God will always follow you. I love you forever.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Sylvia Willie Burgess was born September 4, 1960, in Windsor, North Carolina. She is currently the Director, Client Services at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina. Sylvia graduated from the University of North Carolina Greensboro with a Bachelor's of Art in Speech and Language Pathology in 1982. She completed a Master's degree in Public Administration in 1995 from University of North Carolina Greensboro. She received her Six Sigma Green Belt certification from Villanova University in 2003. Sylvia is a candidate for the Ph.D. in the Leadership Studies at North Carolina Agriculture and Technical State University.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction**

This study focused on exploring the challenges that exist with civic engagement. These challenges are (a) a reported decline in civic engagement, and (b) understanding the impact of spiritual capital and civic engagement. Specifically, this study examined the relationship between spiritual capital and the reported decline in civic engagement. The study investigated through an in-depth analysis the impact that spiritual capital has on types and levels of civic engagement among faith-based leaders. Civic engagement is defined as people's connection with the life of their communities inclusive of politics (Putnam, 1995). The current study framed spiritual capital as the use of power, influence, and attitudes of organizations or people based on spiritual beliefs, knowledge, and practice (Liu, 2004).

The research was studied within the theoretical framework of the transformational leadership theory. This theory was developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as leadership that forms necessary optimistic positive change in followers as leaders work to develop their followers into leaders. Transformational leaders are engaged in helping others, building teams where people look out for one another, and supporting organizational goals and objectives. In relationship to this study, leaders must transform their behavior and influence the way their followers think if they are going to alter the current practice of participation.

Historically, faith-based organizations and their leaders have played a significant

role in assisting communities where the citizens are oppressed or marginalized.

According to Goulding (2009), such movements as civil rights, boycotts, and the right to participate in politics have their basis in religious organizations. However, recent research is indicating that faith-based leaders and their organizations are less engaged. This decline is an indication of a weakening in the United States society in communities. There is a noticeable absence of American participation in voluntary organizations as well as reduction in political engagement (Putnam, 2000).

In other related research, Driskell, Lyon, and Embry (2008) explored the impact on civic engagement from the vantage point of different religious traditions and religious activities. Utilizing 1,721 completed surveys from “The Baylor Religion Survey” a national survey administered by the Gallup Organization, they reviewed the results of adults 18 years and older. This research indicates that there is a decline in civic engagement.

Bellah (1996) suggested that due to the rise of individual greed, selfishness, and self-concern, the sense of responsibility in communities has perpetuated the decline in engagement. Bellah supported the need for participation in the neighborhood, noting that an increase in participation will reduce community alienation and allow people to contribute to their communities and neighborhoods.

On the other hand, Wuthnow (1998) suggested engagement in terms of participation may not be decreasing; it appears to be shifting from traditional organizations and customary religious denominations to less constraining or difficult type of groups. In a study utilizing interviews and national survey results, he posits that there

is a general trend towards more intermittent and short term types of civic engagement.

In recent times, the restrictions and opportunities for civic engagement have altered the general pattern of participation. This has led to changes in the usual forms and organizations in which people participate. Although many long-term relationships of participation have declined, civic participants have found new ways to engage both spiritually and emotionally (Wuthnow, 1998). In *Loose Connections: Joining Together in America's Fragmented Communities*, Wuthnow noted that these "loose connections" may serve to increase the possibility for Americans to form new relationships and enhance the capacity for participation (p. 207). This shift in civic participation can create a continuous process by which relationships can be cultivated within the communities of activity. This type of participation is referred to as project-based participation or issue-specific participation. These types of participation will not necessarily generate the same stable citizen networks or the creation of broad-based associations that have previously been associated with civic participation in communities (Wuthnow, 1998).

Further, Wuthnow (1998) concluded that people are still connected despite the decline in traditional engagement. The connection is occurring in a different way. While organizational memberships may not be decreasing, they are shifting from traditional volunteer groups to new types of groups. There is a rise in support groups and lobbying groups. However, these groups are becoming a poor substitute for traditional community engagement.

Reportedly, civic engagement may be waning or it may be transforming. The current study is based on the premise that civic engagement is declining and that it is



important to the success of communities. In terms of this study, it is important to understand the various perspectives of spiritual capital noted to date. Zohar and Marshall (2004) noted that spiritual capital is the answer to capitalism. From this perspective, leaders would have the opportunity to act from a value-based culture which is reportedly more sustainable than materialism. Spiritual capital provides a long-term type of wealth that meets the basic human needs. Much like Abraham Maslow's noted hierarchy of needs, spiritual capital influences one to respond from a higher level of motivation and service. Spiritual capital improves the society and provides more than material needs and allows for a greater connection between people and the organizations. In addition, spiritual capital is reported to correlate with physical and spiritual well-being. Further, Lloyd (2010) introduces spiritual capital with a different definition which connects to relationship and trust among leaders. She describes spiritual capital as follows: "This is not a religious construct, but a relational connection that transcends the logical and contractual, dependent upon faith in the individual" (p.11). This perspective creates an environment where individuals build trust based on faith in one another that pushes beyond people just working together to complete a task. This is a foundation for engagement that is repeatable and sustainable.

Relatedly, the question that this research sought to answer: "Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement among faith-based leaders?" This study used the reported decline in civic engagement and the spiritual capital of the faith-based leader as the frame for addressing the issues of engagement in communities in churches located in North Carolina and Virginia.

Relatedly, the question might arise, why the church? The idea of community is deeply ingrained in the fabric of core beliefs of Americans. Historically, many events have strategically been launched from the church and community. Traditionally, the church is seen as the backdrop of many communities, especially in areas where resources are limited or the citizens are marginalized. Civic engagement for many communities started in churches because there was a need for the community to rally together and react (Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper, 2006). Churches as organizations have been deeply rooted in civic activities in their communities and their leaders have been out front in civic matters that impact local communities (Carlton-LaNey, 2007).

### **Challenge with Civic Engagement**

There is a notion that civic engagement appears to be declining in America. The decline is not just in public engagement, but has extended to civic life. Researchers are reporting a steady decline in civic engagement, especially among the young adult population (Clevenger & Cadge, 2010; Flanagan, Levine, & Settersten, 2007; Galston, 2007). However, there are no clear or consistent studies to prove how or why civic engagement is declining or changing and the debate is ongoing. The reported decline is seen in the areas of organizational membership, volunteering, giving, religious participation, and reciprocal feelings of trust (Driskell et al., 2008). Putnam (2000) states that “For the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, a powerful tide bore Americans into a deeper engagement in the life of their communities, but a few decades ago—silently, without warning—that tide reversed and we were overtaken by a treacherous rip

current” (p. 27). He backs up his claim with data that documented the evidence of Americans absenteeism in voluntary organizations and other reductions in patterns of participation. This research data was retrieved from reviewing surveys from the General Social Survey (GSS), National Election Studies (NES), and DBB Needham Life Style (DBB) which included 2000 persons of voting age and 3500-4000 respondents in the DBB.

According to Markham (2009), a decline of participation exists in the religious arena. However, civic engagement still has its strongest representation through religious organizations. In this study, data was reviewed from the European Values Survey which investigated engagement in the United Kingdom. The findings suggest, more people participate in church than politics. However, 66% of the population participates in nothing. It is important for faith-based leaders to understand the spiritual motivation that causes people to engage, thus tapping into this motivation to increase engagement.

Religion and its impact and decline continue to be a debated topic. Even though the debates continue it is clear that religion does influence civic engagement. What is unclear is what particular facets of religion have the greatest influence on civic engagement. To date there has not been comprehensive research of the types of religious activities that have the most impact on civic engagement (Driskell et al., 2008). There is recognition of the vast size and strength of American religion as an ally to restructure the declining civic thinking and democracy and to help replace the gaps in welfare reform. Religion is seen as having cohesive potential as opposed to divisiveness (Putnam, 2000).

Interest in civic engagement has moved forward in recent years primarily because of researchers such as Putnam (2000), who emphasized how important civic engagement is to the process of democracy. He stated that politically active people who are involved in political conversations, and who maintain memberships in voluntary organizations would ordinarily be democracy supporters. Young Americans as our future are “vastly more secular” than their predecessors (p. 283). If this be true, a more intentional approach for faith-based communities to continue to impact civic engagement is required. The conclusion is that the church provides a critical incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment. The church, more than any other American institution, is able to facilitate more participation in civic organizations (Putnam, 2000). Based on his conclusion, this is an indicator that more research is required in the area of civic engagement.

The current study expands and builds on previous work in civic engagement, as past research shows a lack of consensus in previous efforts. Civic engagement in past studies has not been measured consistently. Foremost, volunteering is the variable most commonly used for measuring civic engagement. Other research shows that civic engagement has been measured by participation, using attendance at religious services as the primary variable (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006). Beyerlein and Hipp conducted a study utilizing the American Citizen Participation Study (CPS) data which involved adults ages 18 and older. The final sample size was 2,429 participants. The conclusion suggests that while there are some positive correlations between religious participation and civic engagement, there are no resounding results that show that this is the right variable to

enable generalization on results across communities. Instead their findings suggest that activities outside of the congregational arena yields more positive association with bridging civic engagement.

One reason that churches are so important to the idea of participation is that churches are distributors of resources in a very egalitarian way. In contrast, most social institutions provide means for those who are already prospering. The church has taken on the role of provider for those who are most often impoverished (Cavendish, 1997). Historically, in general churches are considered responsible for building communities which provide social acceptance, moral, cultural, and monetary support all associated with the experience of worship. This is especially true in the Black church (Littlefield, 2005).

The problem with civic engagement in the Black Church focuses on the lack of civic participation and the deficiency in relevant skills among leaders in these organizations to promote civic engagement. The denominational Black churches do not possess the facility to empower the people or engage the community for salvation or liberation (Tribble, 2005). During the onset of the twentieth century, W.E.B. DuBois (1968) stated that his vision of pastoral ministry was framed around the prominent role that Black Christian pastors needed in mobilizing people for public mission as well as developing their congregations. He proclaimed:

The Negro minister needs to know and do more than preach and pray. He must be possessed of public spirit and have the capacity to cooperate in educational and other social movements which promise present as well as prospective salvation.

He must fit himself to preach and also practice the scripture that hath the promise of the life that now is as well as that which is to come. (p. 194)

Interestingly, the decline in civic engagement has not been studied or researched extensively to provide empirical or qualitative support for the decline, but the decline is widely accepted by writers and scholars in the United States. The primary reason given for this decline is the excessiveness of individualism, alienation, and the reduction in socio-economic resources, and the quality of life for people living in these communities (Bateman & Lyon, 2000).

In summary, as a result of this accepted decline it is important to continue research on how faith-based leaders within the communities through their spiritual capital impact civic participation and thus improve the quality of life in the communities in which they represent. One of the key players in this change is the leadership of the Black church and the connecting of spiritual capital within these communities with the intent of impacting levels and types of civic engagement. Much of the research that has been conducted has focused on religion and its connection to civic engagement (Smidt, den Dulk, Penning, Monsma, & Koopman, 2008) and volunteerism (Lopez, Pratap, & Conner, 2007; Driskell et al., 2008).

Thus, it is important to better understand the role that faith-based leadership plays in civic engagement when faith-based leaders build spiritual capital. If spiritual capital is deemed as an important component of leadership which leads to higher levels of civic engagement, then the framework for increasing civic participation can focus on connecting spiritual capital for community leaders with engagement. This study

addresses the gap that is found in the research that does not focus on the leadership of community leaders or the spiritual capital available to influence civic participation for faith-based leaders within their communities.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. An in-depth analysis of the relationship of spiritual capital and civic engagement was investigated to determine the relationship between types and levels of engagement practices by faith-based leaders.

This study utilized the transformational leadership theory as the theoretical framework for the research. Leaders who are transformational engage in helping others, getting others to look out for one another, and supporting their organizations as a whole. Burns developed this theory in his research on political leadership.

The research sample in this current study included 104 faith-based leaders from five churches in North Carolina and Virginia. The faith-based leaders completed the Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire-Modified (LCEQ-M) on civic engagement and the Spiritual Capital Index (SCI) for measuring spiritual capital.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

This study is designed to examine the relationship between civic engagement and spiritual capital. The close bonds between the individual and one single institution such

as church and work organizations are long gone. According to de Roest (2008), the notion of strong community is said to be a shrinking phenomenon with the so-called “decline of long-term commitment” (p. 209) in today’s society. Within the faith-based community there has to be alternative ways to get people reengaged. This process begins with leadership. Leaders themselves must transform both their behavior and influence the thinking of their congregants if they are to influence the noticeable decline in civic engagement.

In addition, spiritual capital is a relatively new term that arises from current research on social capital and is an emerging concept for social science. The focus is on religion as an important facet in building trust and social networks (Spiritual Capital Project, 2003). Spiritual capital is the idea of “power, influence, and dispositions shaped by people or organization’s spiritual belief, knowledge and practice” (Liu, 2004). Further, it is the building of trust through faith in other individuals to influence civic engagement (Lloyd, 2010).

According to Zohar and Marshall (2004), spiritual capital is an alternative to capitalism. Because capitalism is not sustainable, another approach is required. Spiritual capital is a means by which leaders can act from a value-based culture; instead of focusing on material wealth, the focus will shift to the common good and sustainability of the organizations supporting it.

**Research Question 1:** Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement by faith-based leaders?

**Research Question 2:** Is there a relationship between types and levels of engagement



and faith-based leaders' participation?

**Research Question 3:** Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation?

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation.

### **Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this research, the dependent variable is civic engagement and it is defined as people's connections with the life of their communities including political activities (Putnam, 1995). These organizations include entities such as school boards, city councils, county commissions, and interaction with public agencies such as health departments.

Other researchers, such as Kirlin (2003), defined civic engagement as the skill to work and collaborate with others that have different viewpoints and be able to gain agreement on issues. Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) describe skills in civic behavior as part of a bigger image, which are based on knowledge and motivation with a connection to networks to engage other people and resources. Lichterman (2008) further defines civic engagement as voluntary and free from direct coercion from family, or the state, public, formal, and informal.

In other research, the Metanexus Institute defined spiritual capital in terms of

spiritual and religious practices, beliefs, and networks that impact people, communities, and societies. The Metanexus research indicated that spiritual capital is the use of power, influence, and attitudes of organizations or people based on spiritual beliefs, knowledge, and practice (Liu, 2004). This research utilized Liu's and Lloyd's (2010) respective definitions for spiritual capital.

In addition, for the purpose of this research study, faith-based leaders are leaders connected to an organized faith community. Faith-based leaders are associated with organizations with a religious mission statement that receives support from religious organizations (Wuthnow, 2002). A significant portion of the research was obtained from the black church. For the purposes of this study, the black church is defined by Douglas and Hopson (2001) as “a multitudinous community of churches, which are diversified by origin, denomination, doctrine, worshipping culture, spiritual expression, class, size, and other less obvious factors” (p. 96).

### **Significance of Study**

This study is significant and timely because the debate continues about whether organizations are more or less engaged. This study supports the necessity of faith-based leaders understanding their influence in civic arenas. As researchers are declaring that civic engagement is declining, the challenge is how to determine what factors impact the waning of civic engagement especially in communities where citizens are oppressed or marginalized. This research proposed that spiritual capital will significantly influence faith-based leaders' continuous civic engagement in their communities.

First, this study filled a significant gap that exists in the literature around the leadership of faith-based leaders and their impact on types and levels of civic engagement, utilizing a theoretical framework. Secondly, this study contributed by enhancing our knowledge of the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. Third, faith-based leaders can utilize the findings in this study to work towards facilitating and connecting their available spiritual capital to participation. The intent for faith-based leaders is to focus on spiritual capital as a means of influencing civic engagement. Lastly, this research can serve as a guiding point to assist funders of civic engagement projects with identifying groups/churches that demonstrate a readiness for civic engagement.

### **Delimitations of Study**

The delimitations of this study included the fact that the research is only focused on several churches in North Carolina and Virginia and their leadership. Replication of the research utilizing multiple churches will likely yield more significant results.

### **Organization of the Study**

This research is organized around five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the research study, problem statement which is organized around decline in civic engagement and the influence of spiritual capital, the purpose and significance of the study, the research questions, key definitions, and delimitations. Chapter 2 reviewed the literature

that is important to the study and introduced the theoretical framework in detail. The third chapter discussed the methodology that was utilized, and the tools used to collect and analyze the data. Chapter 4 explains the results of the research and the last chapter discusses the results and the implications for future studies.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review**

This study was designed to explore the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement and civic participation as related to the reported decline in civic engagement. The study investigated through an in-depth analysis the impact of spiritual capital on types and levels of civic engagement among faith-based leaders.

Chapter 1 introduced the research focus—the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement among faith-based leaders. This chapter included the theoretical framework and reviewed the literature from a historical perspective, as much of the literature occurred more than ten years ago. Further, this chapter included the role of the church, specifically the role of the African-American church, religion, faith-based leadership, spiritual capital, and civic engagement. It was important to the development of this investigation for the literature to reflect the multiplicity of viewpoints that are relative to the discussion of civic engagement.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study utilized the Transformational Leadership Theory. In 1978, James MacGregor Burns developed the Transformational Leadership Theory. As noted in Chapter 1, Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as leadership that forms valuable and positive change in followers as leaders work towards the goal of developing

followers into leaders. Leaders who are transformational engage in helping others, getting others to look out for one another, and supporting their organizations as a whole. Burns developed this theory in his research on political leadership.

Later, Bass (1985) enhanced Burn's theory by explaining how transformational leadership can be measured. He researched how it affects the motivation of followers and their work performance. According to Burns (1978), this theory promotes the role of the leader as enhancing the motivation, morale, and performance of followers through a variety of methods. The ultimate goal is to have followers identify with a positive sense of self toward the mission and to collectively create change. Also, spiritual capital is stated to support the needs of society and is not focused so much on material needs or selfish individualism (Spiritual Capital Project, 2003). In addition, spiritual capital fits into the transformational leadership framework as described by Stark and Finke (2000) in that religious organizations and their leadership play a major role in establishing how spiritual capital is acquired and used effectively with congregants.

As applied to this study, the transformational leadership theory supports that faith-based leadership will influence civic engagement because as faith-based leaders transform their behavior towards civic engagement, their congregations will change their behavior towards civic engagement, becoming more engaged. According to Burns (1978), being transformational helps leaders and followers to help each other. This creates a higher level of motivation for both the leaders and followers. Bass (1990) suggested that transformational leadership positively impacts citizenship behavior. He stated that transformational leadership should cause more engagement, more devotion,

and less focus on self; including having followers perform beyond expectations. A positive correlation between transformational leadership and behaviors of followers can be seen in several other studies that have addressed this relationship (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Rich, 2001).

### **Literature Review**

Deeply rooted in the structure of American history is the idea of community. For centuries the church has been built around community and neighborhoods. Traditionally, the church is seen as the backdrop of many communities, especially in the areas where resources are limited or the citizens are marginalized. For many communities, civic engagement began in the church because of the need for communities to rally and react to a situation. Such historical events as boycotts and sit-ins are examples of successful community engagement events which began in the church. Oftentimes, civic engagement has been only linked to church involvement (Bruning et al., 2006). Civic engagement in this context is defined as people's connection with the life of their communities (Putnam, 1995).

However, an in-depth review of the literature revealed that much of the research has focused on church participation, attendance, and volunteerism as primary indicators of civic engagement. The research has not been approached from a systematic framework or reviewed in relationship to a consistent theoretical viewpoint. There is a segment of literature dedicated to understanding denominational impact on civic engagement. Past research has been conducted in a somewhat silo approach in which

researchers have focused primarily on their own discipline leaving out much of the work that has been done by fellow researchers in other disciplines. In addition, much of the research was conducted well over ten years ago.

**Historical review of civic engagement.** Historically, many analysts and scholars have made the connection of religion with civic engagement. One of the earliest accounts is from the great theorist Alexis de Tocqueville (1969) who argued that religious life and institutions created the primary components of American civil society making crucial connections to political life. He indicated that religious values were why so many people were willing to put self-interest aside in favor of “communitarian” thoughts that lead them to get involved in their communities. Smidt (1999) stated that many other analysts, like Tocqueville, contend that religious associations and structures of civil society create social capital. Social capital is viewed as making a significant connection between individuals and community organizations both secular and non-secular. This research evolved from a telephone survey including 3,000 Americans and 3,000 Canadians. The study was conducted by the Angus Reid Corporation in 1996.

As early as the 1900’s with the ground breaking work of Durkheim (1912), the role of religion and its impact on society has been studied. His research focused on the religious rituals and how they created unity within social groups. Following his work a number of scholars have researched civic engagement. The previous research primarily focused on church attendance. Barth (1960), a twentieth-century theologian, asserted that “it is quite impossible for the Christian to adopt an attitude of complete indifference to politics” and there can be no such things as “non-political Christianity” (p. 162).



Later in the historical research, it was noted that there was great decline in participation related to voting and other political activities. The lack of engagement was described as the result of too much emphasis on individualism and a weak commitment to community. As Americans have become more greedy, selfish, and individualistic; the participation in civic matters has declined (Bellah, 1996).

Bellah (1992) in the *Good Society* indicated that it is our moral responsibility to self-deny excessive pleasures in material things and refocus our attention on civic concerns. This work focused on Christian ideology and the well-loved community of the past. However, this work did not measure religion empirically.

Putnam (1995) sided with Bellah in his research. He stated in *Bowling Alone* that there is a decline in the legacy of civic engagement. This decline has weakened the American society and the notion of community. The research was supported by empirical data investigating the involvement in voluntary organizations and the reduction in civic participation. The data were collected from the General Social Survey, a scientific study which has been repeated 14 times in the past 10 years. The most common participates were from church related organizations. The findings suggest that participation in religious organizations represents the highest levels of civic participation. Nevertheless, the conclusion is that there is a decline in civic engagement and that social capital is eroding.

Wuthnow (1998) indicated a different variation of Putnam's theme of erosion. He stated that erosion is occurring in community-mindedness and that civic engagement is shifting from club like engagements to a looser connection to these organizations. The

connection still exists, but just in different ways. This research is based more on popular support than on empirical findings.

Historically and to present day, most of the research has been focused on religious participation as the variable most likely to impact community engagement (Hodgkinson, Weitzman, & Kirsch, 1990; Wilson & Musick, 1997). The other most likely variable is church membership (Becker & Dingha, 2001; Hodgkinson, 2003; Wilson & Janoski, 1995) and its impact on civic engagement.

**Challenge with civic engagement.** According to Putnam (2000), the U.S. society has weakened because of the decline in civic engagement traditions. He noted that there is an obvious absence of Americans' participation in voluntary associations and in political activities. Social capital is continuing to erode because Americans are less trusting than in the past. Adding further to the notion of decline, Bellah (1996) stated that isolation, alienation, and individualism have created a decline in neighborhood communities. The weak commitments to neighborhoods are a result of too many ills in society. As greed and individualism increases, civic engagement and a sense of responsibility to community have declined.

In addition, Schwadel's (2005) research indicated that lower levels of civic engagement lead to disadvantages politically. His study focused on congregants from a conservative Christian climate and the results indicated they were less engaged in civic activities. As a result, their political power and presentation were limited. Finally, the observation was that whatever is preached in the church and discussed among the congregants will influence how members participate in church and outside activities.

**Church and civic engagement.** In the United States, faith-based organizations have been heavily involved in their role in raising levels of civic engagement for years. In a study utilizing the spatial model the focus was on how faith-based organizations act and not focused on individual behavior. The different religious cultures vary by religious preference and create competition. The faith-based organizations are noted for diversity of religious beliefs and the active role they play in civic engagement. Church involvement created an arena for people to come and learn about more than religious information (DeBartolo, 2009). Participating in church service and other religious activities helped in the development of civic skills and motivated people to become more politically active (Brown, McKenzie, & Taylor, 2003).

For instance, churches have for decades served as a protected platform for the development of civic skills. These churches have allowed their members the opportunities to develop skills that they might not otherwise gain. Religion has tended to promote political engagement and civic skills in all areas of life that range from respecting the law to building interpersonal trust (Smidt et al., 2008). In addition, the relationship between church and civic skills in relation to political participation is multifaceted. A study utilized data from the Citizen Participation Study (CPS) in 1990 to assess the relationship between religious institutions and political engagement. The results suggested that church participation may impact civic skills but culture and influence of the religious organization will affect whether people actually participate. This is an important role played by the church (Djupe & Grant, 2001).

Further, the role of the church is important as members cannot readily practice

relevant political behavior without encouragement or an outlet. The church served in such a capacity due to the likelihood of small group homogeneity. Group membership can exert considerable positive effects on practicing civic skills. A study was conducted that involved mailing 1999 surveys to 60 congregations which included 1,050 Evangelical Lutherans and 550 Episcopalians randomly selected from the membership. The survey consisted of questions about civic skills, members, and clergy. Findings suggest that it takes the collective effort of clergy, formal church groups, and participant activities to produce a contextual environment for participation (Djupe & Gilbert, 2006).

Moreover, there has been a history of the separation of church and state which has allowed a great degree of political and religious freedom. The church has played a role in utilizing its resources to effectively engage in the process of civic responsibility (Johnson, 2005). Houston, Freeman, and Feldman (2008) added that religious organizations have a long history of being active in providing services and provisions in the United States. The data in their research came from the General Social Survey (GSS) which was conducted in 1998. Through random sampling the survey was administered to 1,322 participants. The outcome suggests that during the 1980s when the United States government reduced their role in social services provision, the church became more important in supporting and benefiting the community. The churches also benefited by being able to apply for federal funding to help support their programs to provide social services.

Thus, these benefits allow for a common threshold for the exchange of ideas, the church is allowed to be flexible in expressing world views that are in opposition to the

popular opinion, provides a vocal outlet for a large, often underrepresented ideation of the moral and spiritual direction of the nation, and it creates another participatory group from a social and political viewpoint of what the nation will be known. These benefits all stemmed from the connection with the church in adopting means for improving the plight and sustaining local communities. The religious community has the incredible potential to greatly influence or deeply undermine the success of civic engagement. Civic engagement can either strengthen or weaken the concept of community. This concept of community has long been ingrained within the framework of American history (Johnson, 2005).

For years the church has served as a focal point of activity and a communication venue in communities. All community business occurred within the church, particularly for underserved populations. The church served as the strategic planning location for movements such as boycotts and sit-ins (Swain, 2008). The importance of engaging with the community is a key component to empowering, educating, and sustaining communities in the decision making processes that directly impact them. Today it appears that the church has lost its connection with the community. According to Goulding (2009), much of the literature addressing the motives driving engagement consists of the need to “try to overcome citizen’s sense of disconnection, cynicism, and distrust of government, and to encourage community involvement in policy development” (p. 38).

Thus, citizens need to grasp the roles that churches play in American politics and civic engagement. The church is a good place for people to gain the necessary skills

needed for participation. People tend to function better in smaller homogenous groups due to cohesiveness. Small groups tend to enhance group efficacy and group output. This may be in part due to favorable identification in small groups or more access to roles in leadership (Djupe & Gilbert, 2006).

Interestingly, there is a mandate for Christians to be engaged in civic activities. The world and the churches are demanding it. In an unpublished thesis, data collected through a study of three important community figures involved in local civic community activities, suggested that some churches specialize in responding to social crises. They do this by imposing scripture induced conviction. Yet other churches take advantage of the opportunity to create programs that assist those that are not cared for by their families or by the government (Johnson, 2005). Moreover, religious congregations marshaled church members to become civically engaged by (a) formal encouragement, (b) informal encouragement, (c) exposure to important information about civic engagement, (d) cultivation of opportunities for participation through internal leadership opportunities, and (e) opportunities through external activities (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006).

However, church involvement does not guarantee engagement, but the social networking within small groups can help structure who is able to engage in civic leadership activities. Littlefield (2005) noted that while the church does not dictate political alignment it does lead to the suggestion that churches engage the public area more effectively when they practice social and political homogeneity. Further, he proposed that there are a number of factors that contribute to the level of church involvement in community activities. These factors include the size of the church and the

availability of resources which helps the church meet its community needs. Another factor is the churches that make their facilities available to the community tend to be more engaged. These churches also create environments that are acceptable for learning various skills associated with civic engagement.

Whereas other research proposed that activities such as writing letters, participating in meetings, debating issues, and speaking in public are learned social and civic behaviors that support engagement. In an empirical examination by Djupe and Gilbert (2006) it is indicated that local citizens need to develop better civic skills. This is a critical resource for people to participate in civic activities. Most people do not attend church to learn how to become politically involved. Often skill development comes as a result of a faith-based organization's attempt to fulfill some other need.

Importantly, church members' involvement beyond worship does not necessarily guarantee skill development. However, when members feel disengaged from the existing community they tend to gravitate towards the church. The unintended consequence of this is that it forces members into a situation whereby they gain political skills necessary for participation (Djupe & Gilbert, 2006). Religious organizations have a unique and special role in organizations that form civil society, by providing opportunities for development of civic skills to those you might not otherwise engage (Brown, 2006). People who may not find these opportunities in other venues can in church. Verba and colleagues (1995) stated that this is a unique role played by churches which is profoundly democratic.

In addition, congregations are able to influence their members' political behavior

by providing opportunities for them to become engaged in social and political activities and to increase their civic skills. This idea is based on the suggestion that when resources are available to church congregations' participation can increase. When there are more resources available for organizations to use, the greater the likelihood of participation by members. This statement is based on a study of the differences between black and white congregations' participation in politics based on resource availability. The data utilized for this study was collected from the National Congregational Study (NCS) in 1998. NCS collected the data through telephone in 60 minute interviews. The representative sample of data used in this study came from predominantly black and predominantly white congregations totaling 1,020 participants (Brown, 2006).

Accordingly, community organizations such as churches can come together to generate social capital which is valuable to a democratic society. Community organizations are both relational and inclusive. Churches and other community organizations can truly be effective in building trust among people divided by class, culture, and ideology. These organizations can promote unity among the members. Community organizations can be instrumental in facilitating political education and providing insight into civic concerns. Historically, community organizations have been quite successful in addressing these divisive issues (Borgos & Douglas, 1996).

Further, churches have played a significant role in galvanizing communities around issues. Few community organizations can match churches in providing support to people. Like other community organizations they have a transformative effect on individuals and the communities in which they live. Through effective organization,



people move from a state of passivity to leadership and from inactivity to engagement (Borgos & Douglas, 1996). In other findings, it is noted that churches can facilitate political protest by creating a politicized church environment. These results were from all black households in the United States who had telephones. This resulted in a sample size of 1,206 Black Americans ranging in age from 18 to 88. The results indicate that members who hear political speeches at church from their leaders or invited guests and/or been encouraged by faith-based leaders to get involved in civic activities are more likely to be involved than those who are not exposed to political messaging (Fitzgerald & Spohn, 2005).

These same authors added another level of complexity to church influence on participation. They noted that the church serves as an important environment for the dissemination of political messages and exposure to opportunities for engagement. This created an opportunity for integrating civic engagement into other areas of an individual's life (Fitzgerald & Spohn, 2005). Adding further support to Fitzgerald and Spohn's work, Scheie and Kari (2003) stated that faith-based civic engagement is unique for integrating personal growth with civic engagement. Faith-based leaders indicated that the civic work in which they engaged allows for alignment of their outer lives with their inner lives. They believe that they grow closer to God while engaging in public activity. These faith-based leaders believed that they are more empowered and that their skills can be carried over into other areas of their life.

Furthermore, religion offers skills for faith-based leaders that are powerful tools for effective civic engagement. Faith groups tend to use ritual, music, and stories to

create meaning and build community. Thus, religious faith and religious organizations are important components for increasing and sustaining civic engagement. They create an important framework for working through churches (Scheie & Kari, 2003). These same researchers indicated that there are some shared assumptions about why working through faith-based institutions strengthens civic engagement. These assumptions include the following: (a) faith-based organizations are locations where people gather; (b) faith-based organizations encourage values that are the foundation for civic engagement; (c) faith-based organizations offer tangible methods for people to act on their faith through community engagement; and (d) faith-based organizations are a rich source of social capital and a setting where people can gain skills for public life (Scheie & Kari, 2003).

Further the researchers suggested that there are three main reasons why people are drawn into public life. Two of the reasons are well grounded in civic engagement literature. The third reason is faith-based. The first reason is that issues draw people into public life. Secondly, relationships and the desire for community draw people into public life. The third reason is based on people's belief systems and faith identities that draw and keep people engaged in civic engagement (Scheie & Kari, 2003).

For instance, the idea of religion and politics became an important study during the Bush era. Religion and politics took on a new personality with the election of George W. Bush in 2000. The Bush administration saw religious institutions as important resources to aid the federal government in providing social welfare programs for the general public. During his tenure, Bush signed executive orders which established faith-

based programs in community religious organizations, thus giving them greater responsibility for their communities. These actions have expanded the role of church to include other faith-based organizations (Chin, Warber, & Hardy, 2005).

**The role of the black church in civic engagement.** The Black Church is defined as a multitude of community churches which are distinguished by a variety of origins, sizes, denominations, expressions of spirituality, and varying worship experiences (Douglas & Hopson, 2001). Historically, Blacks were excluded from most civic engagement activities, so the church provided an arena for Blacks to express their concerns politically and to engage in other civic activities. The Black church has encouraged community activism and will continue to promote community engagement (Swain, 2008). Specifically, the Black church operates as a real resource that may allow lower status Blacks to move beyond the lack of resources required for individual civic engagement. Churches that are highly politicized make a difference and can promote social and community engagement activities; especially encouraging Blacks to join community based organizations. The Black church has stood the test of time and has remained viable in the Black community and there is no reason to believe that it will stop being a primary facilitator of community engagement (Swain, 2008).

Further, Black churches have been the main sponsors for political leadership in black communities. They have a long history of commitment to political engagement activities. Black church congregants tend to provide members with communication networks. These networks have been used in the past to promote social and political activities in Black communities, thus providing a greater opportunity for engagement

(Hoffman & Appiah, 2008).

To this end, Black ministers more often place importance on the fact that participation is a civic duty and part of being a Christian, in terms of having the Christian voice heard (Greenberg, 2000). Hoffman and Appiah (2008) suggested that Blacks with a high level of church participation are more likely to participate in civic activities than non-church going Blacks. This idea came from data collected by the Saguaro Center at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. These data were collected in the form a telephone survey conducted nationally and in 41 local communities. The survey included 500 to 1,500 interviews for the local communities involving 2,942 Blacks and 17,115 Whites nationally. Black churchgoers participate more often than their White counterparts, whether they attend church regularly or not.

Further, the skills that are learned in the Black church and the political communication that exist tend to promote greater levels of participation than in White churches. Due to the previous history of oppression, Blacks tend to use the church as a vehicle for civic engagement more often than Whites (Hoffman & Appiah, 2008). Similarly, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Black churches were the forerunners in presupposing the multifaceted roles and purpose in serving the needs of Blacks. No area of life has been excluded from the movement of the Black churches. They created schools, colleges, hospitals, banks, and other social institutions. More importantly, these churches institutionalized the core moral tenets of the Black community. They established the philosophy for social order, cohesion, and provided Black role models for leadership. The Black churches played a role in all facets of a person's life. During the

past two centuries the Black churches have taken ownership for laying the foundation for social organizations in Black communities. This has led to many efforts in the pursuit of racial justice. The Black church continues to flourish from one generation to the next. This is thought to be because of the focus and commitment they have for the well-being of Blacks (Paris, 2008).

In an essay written by Franklin (2001) he stated that Black religious communities have always been and will continue to be involved in politics. It is a social fact that the Black church is the wealthiest and most significant institution of power in Black America. This is especially true in urban and rural communities. Black churches purport their mission as being providers of communal spiritual uplifting, racial pride, financial independence, and social transformation. Black churches have always bridged the gap between religious belief and political action. They are often seen as organizers and a place for political mobilization. Black churches have historically been at the center of community participation. Black churches more than White churches have an extensive history of engaging in political issues such as voting and installing clergy into political office (Hoffman & Appiah, 2008).

Likewise, Cavendish's (1997) research suggests that there is a sharp contrast between the Black church and the White church. The data for the study included a population sample of 1,883 Catholic parishes utilizing a multi-level survey of U.S. Catholic parishes. The data were originally collected by Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life (CPL) in 1984. Building from the analysis of this data it is suggested that Black churches are more likely than White churches to get involved in social service and

social action activities. The activities outside of religion are more deeply ingrained in Black institutions than White. In this latest century, Black churches have acted as centers for political socialization, provided skills for many inner-city blacks, offered resources, and made available the necessary avenues to address civic problems.

Subsequently, these changes in civic participation which occurred in the twenty-first century were related to the relocation of businesses to suburbs, the exodus of middle class African Americans to more affluent neighborhoods, the lack of re-investment capital, and the decline in social institutions (i.e. schools, churches, stores). These changes have created the loss of channels by which to address problems that are pervasive in their communities. On the other hand, many of the remaining urban institutions are still showing strength in attempting to revitalize predominantly Black communities. Many urban churches and their pastoral leaders are acting as mediators between the communities and the civil society. These actions are in an effort for Black church leaders to maintain some level of community stability (Cavendish, 1997).

Historically, Blacks have used the church as a foundation for civic and community engagement. Civic engagement has always been a critical component of the Black church. An article which outlined a review of the role of African American elders in local community engagement noted that the elders are an essential part of many community's civic engagement activities. The elders play an important role in influencing civic participation in their local communities. They have provided a foundational leadership for Blacks (Carlton-LaNey, 2007).

Furthermore, there are no other churches or denomination more important to

social and community activities than the Black church. A review of the data from the 1996 National Black Election Studies (NBES) indicated that today the Black church continues to play a significant role in community activism. This is especially true for highly politicized Black churches. This data was collected by telephone surveys including African Americans age 18 years and older. Electoral behavior and political attitudes were the impetus of the survey. The initial population included 1,216 Blacks interviewed between July and November 1996. The final participants were 854 who were selected for follow-up after the presidential election. It is likely that this trend by the Black church will continue as a primary facilitator of community and social civic engagement (Swain, 2008). Black churches provide an ideal location for politicians and others who are rallying support for their causes. Many times the clergy of Black churches become aligned with the politics in their communities. In past decades, African American religion was held in high esteem in the community because its ultimate goal was to serve the basic needs of the community and provide outlets for the people (Paris, 2008).

According to Harris (1999), Black congregations have often provided congregants with networks for communication as well as the coordination for social and political engagement. He noted that Blacks learned about politics through religious networks and they are inspired to engage in politics through church. The exposure to political activities increased participation by Blacks in civic activities. Civic engagement is often preached from the pulpit in Black churches. Clergy's involvement with politics has led many researchers to the conclusion that Black churches are critical to civic engagement. Active

Black church attendees are closely involved in creating communities for their members. Further, community in conjunction with religion share a powerful bond and thus leads to an increase in social capital (Hoffman & Appiah, 2008). In addition, the church is responsible for creating community for its members through social acceptance, moral, cultural, and monetary support all as part of the worship experience. In the Black church all of the above is true. Moreover, it is also a place of freedom and a place for historical liberation (Littlefield, 2005).

According to Littlefield (2005), political liberation has always been included in the religious worship experience for Black churches. Liberation is at the root of the Black worship experience. The Black church represents its communities and crosses all class and geographic lines and is part of the deep-rooted traditions of social reform, community activism, and renewal in one's spiritual life. It is a known fact that the church played a major role in the civil rights movement. The protest activities, sit-ins, and marches are at the foundation of the Black church. The church served as the spokesperson during the civil rights movement. Religion and politics created a connection that was central to the racial progress of Blacks. Comparatively, an enthusiastic response through civic engagement was necessary to respond to the exclusion of Blacks from private and governmental social programs. Civic engagement in the Black community cannot be held to any narrow or traditional designation. There were so many issues of importance to be dealt with that various tactics for civic engagement had to be employed (Carlton-LaNey, 2007).

In addition, the various aspects of civic engagement have changed in the Black



community throughout the years. New opportunities for civic engagement have become available as people in the communities have become more educated, moved to different neighborhoods, and cities in both the North and South and have made gains in economic, political, and social influence. Even though circumstances have changed for many Blacks the basic principles for engagement have remained intact. The church continues to play an important role in engagement. This role is important to the stability of the Black church (Carlton-LaNey, 2007).

Importantly, in Black communities civic engagement represented a sense of racial uplift and mutual aid which came into focus because of religious devotion and the need to survive. Blacks have aspired to engage in civil society partly because of their commitment to the church and its mission. The Black church continues to maintain its leadership in providing chances for participation in civic engagement by its members. Civic engagement is a community legacy that continues today as it has always existed both formally and informally in the Black church community. Gaining a better understanding of this legacy will provide for additional opportunities in civic engagement. The role of religion in creating change in communities such as economic development and political change is important based on the number of unaddressed needs within the Black community. Blacks are in continuous need of tools and methodologies that support engagement (Carlton-LaNey, 2007).

To this end, the cultural tools available in the Black church impacts community activism. In data collected from five Black denominations totaling 1,863 Black congregations, a sampling was taken for this research, utilizing 37 questions which were

asked in 16-minute interviews, revealing that tools such as gospel music, prayer, and scripture are important elements of the Black church that have help shape and impact community action. These resource tools have been instrumental in supporting activities such as slave escapes, sit-ins, revolts, lynching, beatings, job terminations, and voting drives. These culture symbols of the African American church have impacted civic actions regardless of the church or the pastor. Therefore, these cultural tools of the Black church have been linked in the past to group harmony, freedom, racial dynamics, and social justice. These have resulted in the Black church's involvement in socio-political community activities (Barnes, 2005).

However, there is an opposing view as to the exact role that the Black church has played in the political arena. Reed (1986) noted that the role of the Black church in politics is surrounded by myth. During the civil rights era much of the literature accounts indicated a significant linkage with the church and politics. Further, this linkage was not based on a systematic plan by the churches, but by default. It seems that the churches' involvement was unintentional as Blacks were not allowed to be a part of the political arena. The Blacks then tended to migrate towards the church where they were free to choose their church elected officials. The role of the church was oppositional to the political framework of the nation. Thus, making the church less of an arena for political freedom for Blacks as has been proposed by much of the literature. It seemed that the role of the church as a political haven for Blacks was based on the acceptance by Blacks of the world's position about their role in society. This mythical perception of the Black church cast the church into a role of political participation and leadership. The in depth

analysis of the role of the Black church, led to the implication that it is an anti-political institution rather than an integrated solution for disposed Blacks from polity.

**Religion and civic engagement.** Smidt et al. (2008) indicated that there has been a great deal of discussion about religion and its connection to American social and political life. Religion has been observed as a foundation for American democracy and been fostered in the public square. Their research suggests that religion in America is a “crucial building block” (p. 16) for civil society. The research maintains that

religion serves to connect people across various social and cultural divides, assists and helps those in need through volunteering or charitable contributions, imparts important civic skills, and fosters important virtues, such as law-abidingness, honesty, and trustworthiness. (p. 16)

They also argue that religion in America has contributed to all parts of American civil society. According to Smidt et al. (2008), Americans who are religious are more likely to join civic organizations and not just church ones than their non-religious counterparts. Religious Americans give more time and money to both religious and non-religious charities, and do impact their communities. However, other groups contribute to the civil society in America as well.

For instance, religion has served as a path to help those who have selectively embraced American civic and political life. This work was based on studying immigrants in Boston metropolitan communities. The 247 individuals included Pakistanian Muslims, Hindus from India, Brazilian Protestants, and Irish Catholics. Further interviews were conducted with family members and friends of the same communities. The results

suggest that when immigrants became invested in faith communities they were encouraged to engage in political activities. This research suggests that people, regardless of nationality, who participate in communities of faith, are encouraged to engage in civic activities and they learn political skills in the process (Levitt, 2008).

Consequently, religious life creates an atmosphere for social connectedness as church life draws individuals together fostering associations. In the context of church the social contacts and the organizational skills necessary for participation can be found. Religious life can cultivate some civic skills and church can provide an opportunity to practice those skills that can be utilized in political life. Religious life promotes civic behavior both inside of the church as well as within the institution. The activities connected with church often flows over into other areas of life including community (Smidt & College, 2006).

Traditionally, religious groups have played a major role in forming communities. Today, religious tenets are still a key measure that bonds people together in community. The United States is noted for religious communities serving as foundational for American civil society. Church structures are at the root of many social organizations. As a result churches are often regarded as social institutions. In this research, Bulgaria was reviewed as an example of how the historic role of the church and religion supported virtually all community life in this location. This is an example of religion acting from a grass-roots level to create social change. These religious communities took a look at the needs of the larger communities in which they are situated and sought to shape them (Sivovi, 2008).

However in another study, the research indicated that religious characteristics can shape the way people interact socially, outside their religious groups and how they engage in public life. Data in this study were presented from surveys drawn from Roper Social and Political Trends Data conducted from 1973-1994. The sample population consisted of a database of more than 400,000 respondents collected over time. The results indicate that religion can also shape the way people view the role of state and its responsibilities of public life. Religion may even shape the civic and political motivation, the goals of engagement, and how these are accomplished (Smidt & College, 2006).

Nonetheless, religions all over the nation have encouraged followers to perform service in their faith communities or larger global communities. Utilizing data from the Civic and Political Health of the Nation Survey (CPHS) in 2006, the conclusion drawn is religion rivals education as the most powerful form of civic engagement where they often address social causes by volunteering, voting, petitioning, and boycotting. Religious institutions have historically been a central venue for organizing many national social movements, such as suffrage, abolition, and civil rights (Lopez et al., 2007). Thus, people from all types of religious backgrounds have applied their theological principles and moral wisdom to their political life. They have attempted to bring their faith from within the churches, synagogues, and mosques into public life. Understanding and negotiating the correct role for religious beliefs into public life is difficult and controversial. This may contribute to the argument that civic engagement is declining (Wilson, 2007).

Specifically, there is something beyond the typical measures of religion and civic engagement that impact the level of engagement. A research study concluded that measuring religious participation is a better measure of civic engagement than church attendance. The study was based on The Baylor Religion Survey which is conducted by Gallup Organization in partnership with Baylor University. These data included 1,721 self-surveys administered to adults 18 years and older revealing that in fact, church attendance actually is negatively aligned with civic engagement. In addition, the impact of religious activities and the level of involvement in church not only reduced the effects of church attendance, but actually had the opposite effect of reversing church attendance. Scholars have ignored the significance of religious participation outside of attending church as a measure of civic engagement. It is important to look beyond the factors of religious participation and denomination even though they may have some bearing on civic engagement, it goes past these variables. The key is to understand what factors create motivation for engagement (Bateman Driskell & Embry, 2007).

Interestingly, religious Americans are more likely to engage in their community than non-religious Americans. Religious Americans are more inclined to work on community projects, participate in voluntary associations, engage in community meetings, vote, and attend protests and rallies. This article suggested that the connection between religion and civic activism is typically causal because they observed that people who had not been engaged previously became more engaged after they joined a church. The increase in civic engagement is based on the relationships that people make in their churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques. These relationships cause them to get

involved in community activism (Putnam & Campbell, 2009).

Putnam and Campbell (2009) further identify these relationships as supercharged and the more of these friendships that are forged the greater the participation in civic activities. However, these relationships tend to be dwindling according to statistics regarding religious membership and the pews are not being refilled by younger Americans. As such, civic engagement still represents an opportunity to influence and manage in the spiritual. Faith-based leaders should be civically engaged. The world in which we live demands a higher level of engagement and faith-based leaders will need to continue with a strong evangelical influence on public policy to meet this challenge.

**Faith-based leadership.** For the purposes of this current research, faith-based leaders, clergy, pastors, and spiritual leaders are used interchangeably. Faith-based leaders are not identified as only clergy, but as leaders with a connection to organized faith communities and organizations with a religious mission statement (Wuthnow, 2002). Crawford and Olson (2001) defined spiritual leaders as the men and women called by God within the framework of their faith communities to guide God's people in pastoral ministry. Faith-based leaders are involved in one of the most powerful social institutions, organized religion. This puts them in a unique position of influence in the communities in which they are located. They can engage in more outright controversial politics such as coalitions and protest. Clergy often engage in more subtle political activities, such as forming partnerships with police and other nonprofits to foster social reform in communities. More often clergy are taking on the challenge of civic participation, especially in urban neighborhoods.

Similarly, faith-based leaders are responsible for helping others live out their callings in all areas of life. The people called as spiritual leaders have a unique connection to the big picture of God and his agenda. The faith-based leaders lead with faith for both themselves and their followers while creating community (Jackman, 2005). Faith communities' primary purpose is to transform lives. While faith communities do reach out to help, this is not their primary goal. The faith communities transform the individuals who in turn can positively impact society. This is true no matter the religious tradition or denomination (Winseman, 2002).

Consequently, there is an emergence of evangelicals on the political scene. Data using two strategies produced this finding. The first was the utilization of National Election Studies (NES) to merge data on individual voting described in a religious context. The second set of data came from the Glenmary Research Center's Religious Congregations and Membership in the United States in 2006. This data indicated that the emergence of evangelicals required an understanding of their political and social demeanors. This has been evident particularly in terms of presidential elections. This is not different from earlier times when faith-based leaders were at the helm of movements like civil rights (Campbell, 2006).

In past decades, pastors and churches have had to deal with the social problems of their time, particularly in the 1960's when social activism was of most importance in many churches. Pastors and other theologians united together to promote civil rights and deal with the injustices of poverty and hunger. Faith-based leaders and their church members have sorted through various issues that affect human life as they work in the



church, community, and in missions. Thus, many faith-based leaders feel obligated to teach and preach about the issues that impact their church communities. It is challenging for faith-based leaders to deal with all the community issues and to motivate people who have become passive in community engagement. On the other hand, it is difficult for members when their faith-based leaders exhibit passivity during times when they need direction. This is often a result of the lack of skill development which creates a great need for promoting civic engagement skills (Throop, 2008).

Specifically, clergy has a role in promoting skill development in their congregants. The role of faith-based leaders is important in skill development in order to gain more opportunities for civic and community engagement both personally and for congregants. Clergy are the most noted and important figures in the church, their role is critical in promoting skill development for civic participation. Yet today these roles seem weak and indirect. Clergy should encourage more church activity and politically relevant skills to enhance civic engagement. Basically, faith-based leaders can create the conditions under which social influence operates, but they have little influence over the actual political involvement of the church members or the resources that drive their participation (Djupe & Gilbert, 2006).

Moreover, the current changes in today's society calls for skills that may or may not currently exist among faith-based leaders. Participation requires the public to act through channels available to them. However, not all people have resources, interest, or invitations necessary to do so. There is some agreement in the literature that indicates that pastors play a significant role in bridging the gaps between those who have access

and those who do not (Djupe & Gilbert, 2006). Consequently, there are a variety of ways in which pastors can influence political attitudes and participation. Faith-based leaders have access to important resources which can be utilized effectively within the political arena. They also have institutional resources such as facilities, transportation, and volunteers which can impact engagement. The most important aspect is that the faith-based leaders have consistent access to receptive congregants (Penning & Smidt, 2002).

Moreover, even though faith-based leaders may possess the skills and have the access they may still choose not to exercise their civic power. This could be because of their congregation, their own personality and political skill level, or the political framework from which they operate. Other important factors to consider in why clergy choose to engage or not to engage are based on the size of their communities and where their congregation is located. Urban settings tend to draw more faith-based leaders into the political arena. Also, when faith-based leaders have an understanding and sharing of the congregation's views, they are more likely to engage in civic activities and feel less disenfranchised (Penning & Smidt, 2002).

Interestingly, past community programs and processes have tended to leave individuals feeling disengaged and disenfranchised. It is important to reinforce to faith-based leaders that building appropriate skills will provide greater capacity for people in their communities to intentionally engage, locally and regionally with elected officials and agencies around policy and political issues that will enhance the communities as a whole. These religious communities are instrumental for providing skill training for political engagement (Driskell et al., 2008). Thus the research suggested that faith-based

leaders have learned political skills by participating in religious communities. Even when religious organizations did not have a specific civic agenda, people involved learned skills for civic engagement. The behavior of these faith-based leaders set the foundation for their members to be more inclined to follow them and engage civically (Levitt, 2008).

Other research indicated that clergy can individually become involved in politics, but they have a responsibility to shape the way that others might engage. Since the colonial days clergy has played key roles in American politics in spite of the separation of church and state in the United States. Clergy have taken the lead roles in opposition of social movements and spoken out on many political topics and political candidates. They have also played significant roles in social services for their communities. Faith-based leaders do not engage in civic and political activities without risk (Crawford & Olson, 2001). Tocqueville (1969) explained that clergy could engage in politics, but needed to avoid direct affiliation with political parties because such involvement might risk erosion of clergy power. Pastors need to take time to reflect on their political decisions as the impact can be far reaching.

Interestingly, if clergy pursues political activities it is because their congregations support the initiative of engagement by the leader. In one research initiative, a two-staged study was conducted in an Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. A total of 2,440 clergy were surveyed and asked about their beliefs, political activities, and their thoughts on activism and politics. The results indicate that these scholars view clergy as entrepreneurs involved with members through a benefit

exchange. Clergy provides the members with things they can only get through the church organization in exchange for the tacit agreement for clergy's engagement in civic activities. These researchers described this as a byproduct theory explaining the relationship between faith-based leaders and their congregants (Djupe & Gilbert, 2008).

In summary, how a pastor behaves in her or his public responsibilities with the congregation is critical to how the congregation responds. Negative behavior may cause congregants to disengage with their clergy. In so much as, positive behavior will cause the opposite reaction. It is important for pastoral leaders to utilize their private time to gain clarity about her or his role in public life. This time will provide an opportunity for reflection which will better prepare them in dealing with their congregation in relationship to community engagement (Farris, 2008).

**Spiritual capital.** Spiritual capital is a new concept for social science that is slowly emerging. There are challenges with defining and measuring spiritual capital. Most people have some type of unique spiritual qualities. These qualities often arise from their experiences and gained knowledge. How these qualities are used helps to create an individual's spiritual capital (Liu, 2004).

Again, Liu (2004) relates spiritual capital to the use of power, influence, and attitudes of organizations or people based on spiritual beliefs, knowledge, and practice. Another definition that is given to spiritual capital is the experiences that come from one's religious knowledge, connecting to church tenets and doctrines along with fellowship and worship. These create spiritual resources that are considered valuable and support the religious behavior of individuals (Iannaccone, 1990). However, spiritual

capital is gaining momentum because there is recognition that in social science and economics that religion is not a passing phenomenon. Further, religion is not fading in importance in this century. More emphasis is being attributed to the importance and impact that trust, behavior, and religion are having on the economy in politics and in social arenas (Finke, 2003).

Finke (2003) also stated that religious capital is more than the knowledge of familiarity in religion associated by an emotional attachment. It included an expertise or mastery of attachment to a religious culture. The attachments to a particular religious culture are inherent to a person's biography. The associated activities such as prayers, blessings, and scriptural knowledge are built over a lifetime are strengthened by the emotional ties. The emotional attachments and the mastery of the religious rituals over time build spiritual capital.

According to Voas (2005), spiritual capital encompassed a wide range of aspects of human and social capital. These aspects are related to organized religion, spirituality, mysticism, and non-naturalistic beliefs. Spiritual capital took into account individual worldviews, lifestyles, physical and mental resources, and cultural tenets. Further, it encapsulated relational assets gained from family ties, group memberships, community activities, and other social connections. As spiritual capital increases it can impact society and thus society may promote or reject investing in capital building.

Furthermore, the ideology of spiritual capital took into account the psychological, moral, and spiritual knowledge. It does not require a connection with any specific belief system or with spirituality. It played an important role in guiding organizations and

societies through change initiatives. High levels of spiritual capital allowed organizations an opportunity to innovate new ideas into the culture without causing friction. Spiritual capital supports the needs of society but is not focused on material needs (Spiritual Capital Project, 2003). In addition, spiritual capital is described as an earned type of wealth that serves the basic human needs. It cannot be confused with social capital or capitalism because they are not sustainable. Spiritual capital is value-based and raises the common good to a level that it is sustainable (Zohar & Marshall, 2004). Another viewpoint presented by Lloyd (2010) views spiritual capital through the lens of trust and faith between individuals. These individuals in turn build partnerships which enable them to collaborate collectively to form sustainable engagement practices. The leaders in these partnerships allow trust for one another to support the willingness to take the risks that are a natural component of establishing new relationships. Based on this ethnographic study with 150 African-American faith-based leaders from rural North Carolina, spiritual capital is important to creating the sustainable relationships required for successful engagement.

Moreover, spiritual capital is referred to as a type of wealth by Zohar and Marshall (2004) that serves as the glue that binds us together. It allows us to work within a moral and motivated framework that gives us spirit and enriches both material capital and social capital. They do not define wealth in terms of physical and material assets. This is a kind of wealth that comes from health, relations with family, good spiritual and emotional health, community connections, and other non-physical forms of wealth. Thus, spiritual capital provides a different type of power and advantage that is set apart

from money or property. Also, intellect and a sense of personal calling are encompassed in the idea of spiritual capital. They add that personal values and beliefs often give us a different advantage in situations where money cannot. Lastly, religious organizations play a significant role in establishing how spiritual capital is acquired and how effectively it is utilized. The idea is that as members of religious organizations reinforce their individual beliefs and they participate in the emotional rituals creating a collective experience, spiritual capital is enhanced (Stark & Finke, 2000).

**Civic and community engagement.** Disparate fields are all doing important work around civic engagement with a great deal of overlap in findings and observations. It does appear that they are oblivious to the work of others in informing their own work. The exception to this is the citation of Putnam, Verba and colleagues, and Alexis de Tocqueville as experts in the field of political engagement and religion (Kirlin, 2003). However, civic engagement has a history of being the glue that cements the nation together for centuries. Citizens have involved themselves in society and created a political landscape like no other nation (Johnson, 2005).

Further, Centra and McDonald's (1997) research study which focused on the community engagement process in health-related decision-making indicated that managing community engagement activities is important. It is the responsibility of all organizational leaders. This study included eight case studies with different organizations in different cities to examine their actual process for civic engagement. The results indicate that the community engagement process involves working with and through constituents to reach the intended goal. Community engagement requires that all

the participants communicate with leaders and others from different backgrounds, values, concerns, and priorities.

As such, more Americans do spend more time in religious organizations and the role of these organizations has significant implications for civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). People generally are selective about which aspects of civil society they choose to engage with. Religion has often been the mechanism that has afforded a path to engagement. Faith-based organizations are equipped with great resources and tools to encourage civic engagement. These organizations can help bridge the gap between the engaged and disengaged (Levitt, 2008).

Moreover, religious communities provide a central place where Americans form civic identities. Many Americans link with one another through their religious community affiliations. Approximately 90% of Americans believe in God and 40% attend some type of weekly worship service. In a study conducted utilizing the 2000 SCCBS, which is a publicly accessible database, a sample of 711 Asian-Americans made up the population. The study suggests that participating in congregations provides a network for like-minded people to gain religious teachings which promote community participation (Ecklund & Park, 2007). According to Alexis de Tocqueville (1969), for Americans “religious communities impart visions of the common good that supports democratic participation” (p. 513). In this study, the researcher studied the Korean society in America to form a perspective on how demographics changes can influence the relationship that religion has on social and political processes in the United States. Many other studies focus primarily on attendance in church as an indicator of the level of



engagement.

Furthermore, there are two factors that are typically seen as indicators of civic engagement. These two indicators are church participation and the low levels of secular participation among conservative or evangelical Christians. Conservative churches tend to be less engaged in civic activities. The data for this research include 5,123 church members from 62 congregations across 11 denominations in Indiana and Illinois. The participants' sample included between 14 and 222 members from each congregation. The results suggest that church members who are more active in church are active in civic activities. What is heard from the pulpit and discussed in the pews have an influence on church members' activities, both inside and outside of the church. This is a different perspective than the general notion that engagement is primarily connected to attending religious services (Schwadel, 2005).

Further, like Beyerlein and Hipp (2006), many scholars focused their study of civic engagement on attendance at religious services or church denominations. Other research suggested that civic engagement has focused on belonging, contributing, volunteering, and leading within social organizations. Volunteering is the variable most commonly used as proxy for civic engagement (Driskell et al., 2008). Hill and Matsubayashi (2008) found that there is a wide array of observations that support the premise that involvement in religious organizations is considered the most common form of civic engagement in America. This research used data collected by Verba and Nie (1972) involving 64 randomly chosen communities in America in 1967. The data included interviews from political and community leaders. Consequently, the empirical

data confirms that participating in religious services is different from belonging or participating in local communities. Research conducted utilizing multiple sources of data included the UN's Human Development Report, Freedom House Report, World Christian Encyclopedia Data, University of Maryland's State Failure Task Force data, the A.T. Kearney Index of Foreign Policy, U.S. State Department's list of Communist and World Values Survey (WVS). The sample came from 46 nations totaling 72,251 individual surveys which revealed that participating is focused on creating cohesion to pursue or engage in a common cause (Meyer, Tope, & Price, 2008). At the center of strong communities and organizations is its fundamental source of cohesion---the determination is that it offers its members the unique opportunity and mechanisms for exercising and developing their capacity as citizens (Borgos & Douglas, 1996).

In addition, Centra and McDonald (1997) suggest that there are several principles that are important when attempting to engage in civic activities. These principles include (a) having clarity of purpose for engaging, (b) understanding the conditions of the community both political and economic, (c) establishing and building relationships with leaders and members in the community, (d) empowering rather than prescribing for the community, (e) building partnerships in the community, (f) respecting diversity, (g) identifying and mobilizing community assets, (h) showing flexibility when working in the community, and (i) engaging in long-term commitment. Many of these principles can be learned while participating in religious organizations. Religious organizations play an important role in creating a venue for citizen participation.

Also, there is research which theorized that in the democratic polity active

citizenship is engrained in political participation and citizenship. Organized religion has historically played an important role in shaping the democratic citizenship in the United States. It started with mobilizing citizens to abolish slavery, protest civil rights, integrate schools, and support international debt relief (Crawford & Olson, 2001). Further, research stated that it is commonly observed that participation in religious organizations is the most common form of civic engagement in America. The more engaged people are in the church the more likely they are to participate in civic engagement activities (Hill & Matsubayashi, 2008).

The two main factors that contribute to shaping the relationship between church participation and involvement in civic engagement are the type of activities in the congregation and the context in which the activities occur (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006). Another important factor is worldview when studying civic engagement. The research indicated that the main element that shapes a person's approach to the political realm is how they view the world. If the worldview is focused on absolute authority of scripture and the idea that salvation only comes through Jesus Christ, it is a Christian worldview. However, the approach is more progressive and works to enlarge one's faith view and their values tend to lead them away from the Christian view. The worldview dilemma is based on how one defines justice which will define the way they approach engagement. The way that Christians view the world will influence how they become civically engaged (Johnson, 2005).

Thus, engagement can be facilitated in a number of ways. First there can be a formal encouragement for civic actions in communities when clergy and other leaders

express the importance of the issue at hand. Second, church congregations provide opportunities for civic engagement through networking opportunities. Third, church groups expose people to information about civic opportunities. Fourth, church congregations can cultivate skills that can be transitioned to civic efforts outside of the church (Beyerlein & Hipp, 2006).

Incidentally, following a logical chain of thought leads to the idea that America's civic challenges require a more constructive use of civic engagement. This logic indicates that there is a methodical relationship between the level and complexity of the civic challenges in America, the lack of response from current norms to these challenges, the negative results of these norms, and the parallel reduction of social capital. If democracy needs more effective civic norms in order to create engagement, the above cycle has to be reversed. Where the norms do not already exist, the outlook for shared action seems dismal (Chrislip, 2002).

## **Conclusion**

In summary, according to this literature review, a theme of decline in civic engagement has emerged. There is not substantial research that indicates the depth or degree of the actual level of decline. However, among social scientists and other researchers, the decline in civic engagement is widely accepted (Bateman & Lyon, 2000). There are four major concepts in this study which focused on civic engagement. These concepts are the church, religion, faith-based leadership and spiritual capital.

First, the role of the church is significant and a primary focus throughout the

literature in terms of key areas of interest in civic engagement. In particular, the role of the Black church is noted throughout the literature as a vital entity in civic engagement. Historically, the Black church has been a central arena for civic engagement, especially in communities where citizens are oppressed or at a minimal marginalized (Bruning et al., 2006). Second, religion has created an atmosphere for connecting individuals together. The social structure of the church is an important context for civic engagement. Religion has and continues to provide a venue for civic behavior both inside and outside of the church and other institutions (Smidt & College, 2006). Third, the role of faith-based leadership is critical for the success of civic participation. For decades faith-based leaders have dealt with social problems and sorted through different issues that have impacted communities (Throop, 2008). Djupe and Gilbert (2006) promoted the idea that it is the role of faith-based leaders to promote civic skills among their congregants. Lastly, it is noted that spiritual capital is a new concept to the field of social science, thus there is currently limited literature available on spiritual capital, thus making this area of study important. Further, research on spiritual capital will aid in filling an emerging gap in the literature in terms of the relationship with civic engagement.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Methodology**

This chapter is focused on the details of the research methodology including a discussion of site and participant selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis utilized for this study. Chapter 3 concludes with a reflection of the study's limitations, the ethical considerations, and assumptions posed by this research.

This research is focused on the relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement. More specifically, this study is centered on spiritual capital and the relationship with faith-based leadership's civic engagement, when viewed through the lens of the Transformational Leadership Theory.

This study utilized a mixed methods approach. A mixed methods approach incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Creswell (2009), the primary purpose for using the mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data, is to strengthen the study. The history of the mixed method approach began in the 1950s with Campbell and Fiske (1959) when they advocated for collecting multiple forms of quantitative data. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), in the 1970s to 1980s researchers were looking for a combination of research processes to better understand data analysis. They further indicated that at the turn of the millennium, many researchers were advocating for the mixed methods approach as a standalone research method.

The mixed method approach has been used for many different types of studies.

Examples of such studies include: (a) the study of emerging adult civic and political disengagement (Snell, 2010); and (b) a study of religion and civic engagement, a comparative analysis (Smidt, 1999). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), a mixed methods approach encourages the use of different worldviews and is considered a practical approach to research. This method is important today because of the number of complex issues requiring research and the need to gather multiple types of data for different audiences.

The quantitative segment of the study was implemented by the distribution of two quantitative assessments combined to create one tool for administration purposes. The first assessment was the Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire-LCEQ (Toms, Miller, & Glover, LCEQ, 2007) and the second assessment was the Spiritual Capital Index-SCI (Liu, 2004; see Appendix A). There were four open-ended questions incorporated into the assessment to support the qualitative approach to the study. The purpose of the four open-ended questions was to give a voice to the participants in this study in a way not depicted by quantitative data alone. The open-ended qualitative questions did not carry equal weight with the quantitative questions.

The combined assessment was utilized to attend to the research questions pertaining to spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement. The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

**Research Question 1:** Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement by faith-based leaders?

**Research Question 2:** Is there a relationship between types and levels of engagement

and faith-based leaders' participation?

**Research Question 3:** Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation?

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation.

**Null Hypothesis:**

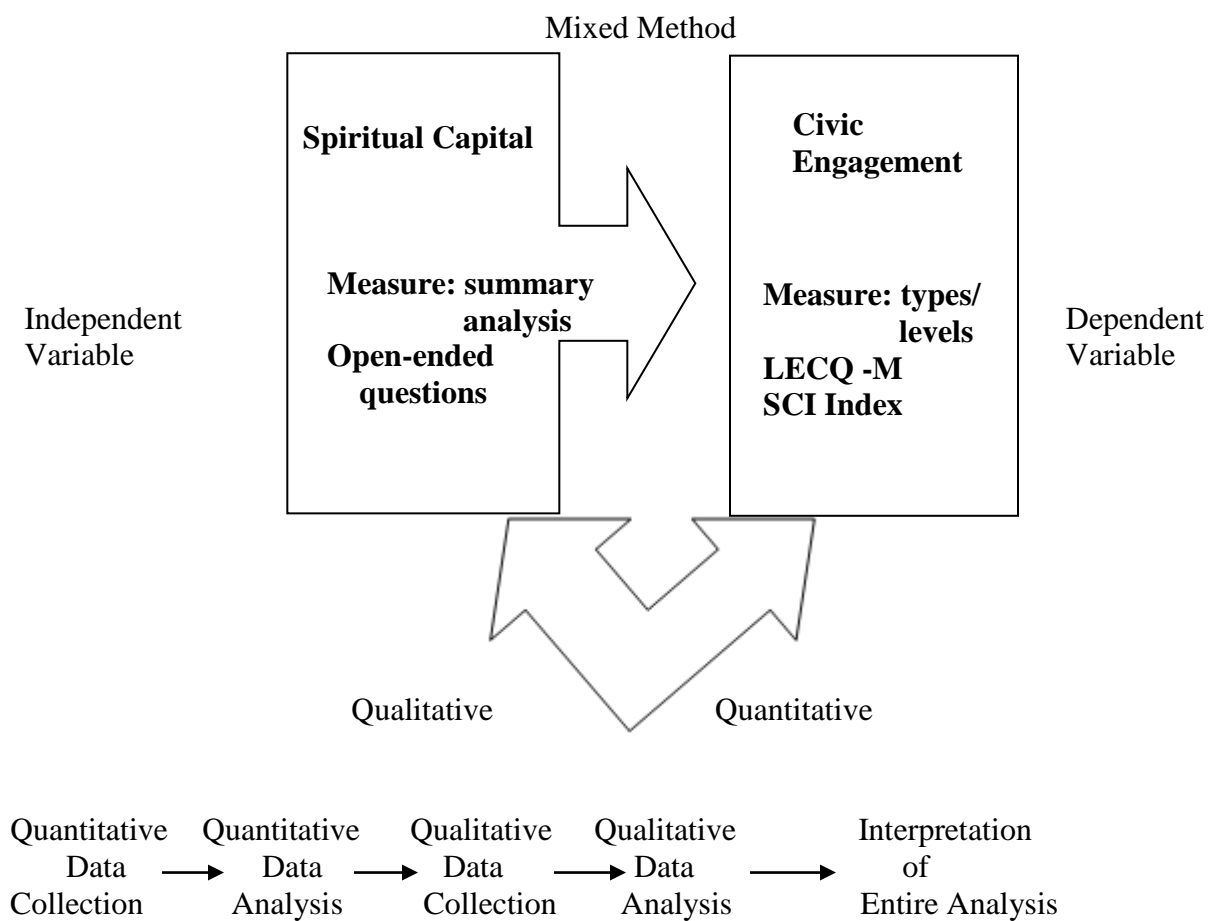
$H_0$  = Spiritual capital has no relationship with faith-based leaders' civic engagement.

### **Research Design**

This study used a sequential methods model designed to assess the relationship between spiritual capital of faith-based leaders and their participation, engagement and types and levels of civic engagement. This research is a single study mixed method design because all the data were collected in one study. The purpose for utilizing both quantitative data and qualitative questions is to better comprehend the challenges that exist with civic engagement and to encourage faith-based leaders to understand how the leadership and membership of the church can become more actively engaged in civic matters. Secondly, the reason for utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data is to explore views of participants with the objective of enhancing the quantitative data with qualitative data.



The sequential explanatory design was selected because the quantitative data carry more weight in this research. The qualitative data support the quantitative data but with a lower priority. The mixing of the data occurs when open-ended questions results inform the quantitative assessment data. See Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1. Sequential Explanatory Design**

There are four important aspects for utilizing mixed method approach (Creswell, 2009). As stated earlier the timing will be a sequential administration of the quantitative and qualitative data. The two quantitative assessments were combined and administered concurrently as one assessment. The quantitative data and the qualitative questions were not weighted equally. By not weighting the quantitative and quantitative data equally, the researcher was able to manage the challenge with the sequential order of the administration, which requires more time. The qualitative questions are designed to give the participants a voice and to support the quantitative data (adapted from Creswell, 2009). The theoretical approach applied was explicit. The theoretical framework is the Transformational Leadership Theory, which provides a lens for understanding the behavior of these faith-based leaders and the impact on their followers in being civically engaged.

### **Challenges with Design**

Using both quantitative and qualitative data was designed to strengthen the study and allowed for explanation of the results with greater depth. The use of both types of data is better than any one of the types used alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This challenge of single phase survey administration was managed by establishing the qualitative questions at a lower priority than the quantitative data. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the mixed method approach provides support that counteracts the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative is weak in the lack of understanding of the context of the participants' feelings. Qualitative is weak because of

the personal interpretations and biases of the researcher.

### **Site and Participant Selection**

There were five research sites chosen for this study. The participants were selected from members of the leadership team at five ministries located in North Carolina and Virginia. To maintain confidentiality the selected churches are referred to as North Church, East Church, West Church, Northeast Church, and Southeast Church. The North Church has a membership of 3,500 active members, East Church has 350 members, West Church has less than 100 members, Northeast Church has 4,000 members, and Southeast Church has 500 members.

These five ministries were initially chosen based on the report of being civically engaged in their local and broader communities. Four of the ministries are predominantly African-American with predominant African-American leadership teams. The fifth church is predominantly Caucasian with Caucasian senior leadership. The North, East and West and Northeast ministries reside in neighborhoods that serve marginalized or underserved populations.

The participants were individuals identified by the senior pastors as members of the church's leadership team. The senior pastors of the five ministries were included as participants in the research. Permission was sought from these leaders to include participants from their ministries. To respect privacy, these pastors were not identifiable by name or ministry. Each pastor received a written communication explaining the research and the requirements for participation. Each of the senior pastors was asked to

provide oral consent for research to be conducted from their ministries.

This sample group consists of 104 faith-based leaders from the different ministries in North Carolina and Virginia. The researcher ensured the application of ethical considerations when recruiting participants. It was the obligation of the researcher to take appropriate steps when determining site and participants for the research study. The researcher had an obligation to insure that participants were voluntarily participating without any feelings of coercion by anyone connected to the study. The principal researcher maintained responsibility for all ethical standards, including informing participants about all phases of the research which could influence the participants (Creswell, 2009). The researcher followed the requirements of the Institutional Review Board of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

### **Instrumentation**

This study utilized the Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire (Toms et al., LCEQ, 2007). The LECQ is a survey designed to assess the perceptions, beliefs and practices of faith-based leaders and institutions regarding leadership and community engagement practices. Further, this assessment measures the relationship between faith-based leaders and their level and types of civic engagement. The questionnaire was first developed in 2007 and utilized in a study of leadership and community engagement in counties identified as Tier I Counties by the State of North Carolina. The authors of this assessment are Dr. Forrest Toms (North Carolina A&T

State University), Dr. Daniel Miller (North Carolina A&T State University), and Sharon Glover (Glover & Associates). Permission to utilize the scales from the LCEQ was granted by the authors through written consent (see Appendix B).

There are six primary scales in the original version of the LCEQ along with several subscales. The six primary scales are: *Impact of Participation*, *Community Engagement Action*, *Types of Engagement*, *Frequency of Engagement Activities*, *Social Capital*, and *Social Trust*. The current research incorporated an approved modified version of the questionnaire utilizing four scales. The modified version of the questionnaire is referred to as the Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire—Modified (Toms et al., LCEQ, 2007). The four scales are made up of 38 questions. The four scales used in this research are *Impact of Participation*, *Frequency of Community Engagement*, *Types of Engagement*, and *Social Capital*. The LCEQ-M has 10 questions on the *Impact of Participation* scale, 12 questions on the *Frequency of Community Engagement* and the *Types of Engagement* scales, and three questions on the *Social Capital* scale.

The second quantitative assessment used in this research is the Spiritual Capital Index (Liu, SCI, 2004). The SCI questionnaire is a 10-question assessment designed to assess from low to high the degree of self-reported spiritual capital. This assessment was created by Dr. Alex Liu (2004). Dr. Liu is a managing director of the Research Methods (RM) Institute, and also a managing director of the Global Education Consortium on Research Methods and Business Analytics. The assessment has been utilized to assess spiritual capital in several planning and research sessions through the Metanexus

Institute. Approval to utilize the SCI questionnaire was granted by Dr. Liu (see Appendix B). There was a modification to the SCI with the removal of question #2. This question was removed because it created an unnecessary bias by asking about one's belief in God. The nine questions were asked using a Likert-scale as opposed to low to high with "yes" or "no" responses. The participants were not asked to provide their names or any distinctly identifiable information.

The Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire-M (LCEQ-M) and the Spiritual Capital Index (SCI) were combined as one survey for administration purposes. At the end of the combined quantitative survey, four open-ended questions were added to obtain spiritual capital comments in order to gather qualitative data to support the quantitative data (see Table 3.1). Five of the original 10 demographic questions from the LCEQ-M were included in the combined survey.

***Table 3.1. Spiritual Capital Open-ended Questions***

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**Questions**

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1. Describe what spiritual capital looks like.
  2. How many people in your life do you share spiritual capital with?
  3. What do you think spiritual capital looks like in community engagement?
  4. What are the barriers to spiritual capital?
-

The assessments and the qualitative questions were administered at the same time. The open-ended questions were secondary to the two quantitative assessments used for this research. The surveys were administered as pencil and paper and later loaded into SPSS for analysis. The open-ended questions were loaded into Excel for analysis. The responses to the questions were captured according to themes for each question. The responses to the questions were analyzed using a summary approach. When the surveys were administered in person at four of the ministries, to avoid researcher bias, the researcher remained at the rear of the room. The survey for the fifth ministry was distributed to the leaders in the ministry by the senior pastor. The participants had 24-72 hours to return the surveys to the senior pastor. The researcher retrieved the surveys from the ministry.

### **Reliability and Validity**

To verify the internal consistency of the survey, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the reliability of the LCEQ-M survey. This study used internal consistency for reliability. Cooper and Schindler (2006) describe Cronbach's alpha as a measure of consistency of the responses to a survey.

The LCEQ survey was utilized in research in Northeastern North Carolina in a community engagement project with Success Dynamics Community Development Corporation. The assessment scales were analyzed for internal reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The alphas were .727, .922, .835, .740, .795, and .823 for the six original scales. The four scales used in the current study were all deemed reliable in the

above mentioned project (Toms, Burgess, & Martin-Jones, manuscript in process). Cronbach's alpha was applied to the four scales of the modified questionnaire to again prove internal consistency reliability in the current study. The Spiritual Capital Index (SCI) reliability was tested using Cronbach's alphas. In terms of validity, it is a noted strength of qualitative research. It is based on making a determination whether the findings are accurate from the researcher's, participants', or audience's perspective (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Validity also involves demonstrating that the scales measure what the researcher desires to measure (Cooper & Schindler, 2006).

Creswell (2009) recommended specific techniques designed to contribute to the reliability and validity of the qualitative data. He states that a minimum of two of the techniques need to be applied together. This research utilized the following two recommendations: (a) the questions were designed as open-ended questions that invite participants to provide their opinions and subjective experiences, and (b) the research was conducted with guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality for their responses. The principal investigator also assured the participants that she was not an expert in civic engagement and wanted to learn from them as well. The participants were urged to share their honest opinions and expertise.

### **Data Collection**

The surveys (SCI and LCEQ-M) were administered in a closed meeting session with the faith-based leaders at four of the participating ministries. In these settings, the participants reviewed the information sheet with the researcher. The principal



investigator reiterated to the participants that their participation was voluntary, anonymous, and that each person had the right to terminate their participation at any time. Participants took approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. Upon completion, the participants were instructed to place the surveys into a packet located at the rear of the room. The principal researcher sat at the rear of the room to respond to questions, but remained unobtrusive to prevent over-familiarity and bias towards participants during the closed sessions. The remaining surveys were distributed at one of the ministries and later collected by the researcher. The information sheets were included with the surveys (see Appendix C). Participants were asked to return the surveys to the senior pastors or designees within 24-72 hours.

The data was collected on the LCEQ-M and SCI utilizing a Likert-scale. In addition to the 38 questions on the LCEQ-M and the 10 questions on the SCI, four open-ended questions were added to which participants were asked to respond based on their perception and experiences. The data on both surveys, including the open-ended questions, were administered as one survey at each church location. Data were collected and coded based on the church location (see Table 3.2). The results were entered into SPSS 16.0 for analysis. The open-ended questions were entered into Excel and analyzed utilizing a summary approach.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were first prepared for analysis, by coding each of the variables for SPSS (see Appendix D) and then determining what analysis to run. The demographic

data were analyzed using frequency for gender, race/ethnicity, education level, and church position. Age was analyzed by mean and standard deviation. Gender was coded 0 for male and 1 for female. Race was coded by six groups: African American = 1, Caucasian = 2, Latino = 3, American Indian = 4, Asian = 5, and Other = 6.

**Table 3.2. Church Locations**

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Church Membership</b>	<b>Location</b>
North Church	3,500	North Carolina
West Church	> 100	North Carolina
East Church	350	North Carolina
Northeast Church	4,000	Virginia
Southeast Church	500 members	North Carolina

The next phase of data preparation was the creation of dependent variables composite scales for the LCEQ-M survey and the SCI. The *Participation Scale* included ten questions coded PART1 – PART10. The *Community Engagement Scale* consisted of twelve questions coded CE1 – CE12. The *Engagement Activities Scale* included nine questions coded ENACT1 – ENACT9. The fourth scale was *Social Capital* and included four questions coded SOCAP1, SOCAP2, SOCAP2a, and SOCAP3. The *Spiritual Capital Scale* included nine questions coded SPC1 – SPC9. The participation and spiritual capital scales were based on a 5-point Likert- scale ranging from Strongly Agree

= 1, Disagree = 2, Somewhat Agree = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5. The *Engagement Activity Scale* was based on how participants engaged in specific activities. The scale ranged from 1 = face to face, 2 = phone calls, 3 = letters, 4 = formal meetings, and 5 = no engagement. The *Civic Engagement Scale* was a Likert-scale ranging from 1 = 0 times, 2 = 1 time, 3 = 2 times, 4 = 3 times, and 5 = 4 or more times.

The final phase of data preparation involved the qualitative data. The responses from the four open-ended questions were loaded into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The open-ended questions were analyzed using a summary analysis approach. The questions were reviewed based on emerging themes in the comments. Each response was captured under the heading of the corresponding open-ended question. Repeat responses were marked for frequency purposes and required a minimum of five responses to be included in the analysis.

The actual data analysis involved the utilization of descriptive statistics to describe the population sample. The analyses used were mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and frequency. Correlation analyses were conducted to determine the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement and between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation. The correlations were conducted on the four scales of the LCEQ-M and the nine questions on the SCI. The alpha levels for significance were set at .05. Reliability tests were conducted on the SCI and LCEQ-M scales to determine internal consistency.

## **Summary**

The focus of the study was based on the relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation, civic engagement, and levels and types of civic engagement. This study utilized the sequential explanatory design including quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative phase used selected scales from the Leadership and Community Engagement Questionnaire-LCEQ-M (Toms et al., LCEQ, 2007) which included several demographic questions and the Spiritual Capital Index (SCI). Inferential statistics were utilized to determine the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. Descriptive analyses were used to describe the population sample and participants' relationship with types and levels of civic engagement and the relationship with spiritual capital. The open-ended questions were analyzed using a summary analysis. The results will not be shared with the participants individually. An overall findings summary will be shared with the senior pastors of each of the ministries.

The assumptions for this study were based on the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. The second assumption was based on the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leader's participation.

The study is limited by the population sample primarily being faith-based leaders in North Carolina churches and one church from Virginia. The researcher followed all ethical standards in site and participation selection and in the administration of the research.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results and Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement and participation among faith-based leaders. The following research questions guided and directed this study: Question 1—Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and levels of civic engagement?; Question 2—Is there a relationship between types and levels of engagement and faith-based leaders' participation?; and Question 3—Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation? The following working definition was used for data categorization and analysis; the use of participant and faith-based leaders are interchangeable in the data as well as civic and community engagement.

Chapter 4 is focused on the statistical results of the data analyses from the research by reporting the findings. The first section details the sample. The second section reports the results of the data analysis. In the results and data analysis sections the reliability data are reported for the four scales on the LCEQ-M and the SCI. Following the reliability data is the correlation analysis, which addresses Hypothesis 1 and 2 and Research Questions 2 and 3. The next analysis is frequency data; examining Research Question 1, 2, and 3. The last quantitative analysis reports frequency data on the *Social Capital Scale*, which was an additional scale on the LCEQ-M survey. These data were not used for the research questions or hypotheses. The final section includes a summary analysis of the four open-ended questions, which provide a qualitative

perspective to the research. The chapter ends with a summary of the data analysis.

### **Population and Sample**

The primary population for this research included faith-based leaders from ministries that are identified as civically engaged within their communities. The sample for this study included 104 participants who were identified as faith-based leaders by the senior pastors of the five chosen ministries (see Table 4.1).

*Table 4.1. Participant Distribution by Ministry*

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<b>Ministry</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b>Ministry Location</b>
North Church	20	North Carolina
East Church	26	North Carolina
West Church	14	North Carolina
Northeast Church	27	Virginia
Southeast Church	17	North Carolina

---

The sample consisted of 48 males and 56 females. The age range was 20 to 79 years. The mean age of the sample was 48 years. The racial/ethnicity totaled 81 African-Americans, 19 Caucasians, 1 Latino, 1 Other, and two missing pieces of data. The educational levels ranged from 1 – High School, 2 – Some College, 3 – Community

College, 4 – College (BA/BS), and 5 – Graduate/Professional Degree. The highest frequency of education was Graduate/Professional Degree. The church positions ranged from 1 – Minister, 2 – Associate/Assistant Minister, 3 – Church Officer, 4 – Ministry Leader, and 5 – Other. The most often held church position for the sample was Ministry Leader (see Table 4.2).

***Table 4.2. Descriptive Analysis of Participant Population Sample***

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	104	0	1	.54	.501
Race/Ethnicity	102	1	6	.640	1.25
Age	90	20	79	48.16	11.442
Education Level	102	1	5	3.06	1.468
Church Position	102	1	5	3.20	1.469

The frequency analysis revealed the primary characteristics of the sample to be African-American, female with at least a college degree and beyond in educational level. This participant most likely held the position of ministry leader in church position (see Tables 4.3-4.6).

**Table 4.3. Frequency Distribution Gender**

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<b>Gender</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Male	48	46
Female	56	54

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**Table 4.4. Frequency Distribution Race/Ethnicity**

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<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
African-American	81	78
Caucasian	19	18
Latino	1	1
Other	1	1
Missing Data	2	2

---

**Table 4.5. Frequency Distribution Educational Level**

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<b>Education</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
High School	19	18
Some College	24	24
Community College	16	16
College (BA/BS)	18	18
Graduate/Professional	25	25

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**Table 4.6. Frequency Distribution Church Position**

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<b>Church Position</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Minister	25	24
Associate/Assistant Minister	8	8
Church Officer	9	9
Ministry Leader	42	40
Other	18	17
Missing Data	2	2

---

### **Data Analysis**

**Reliability.** The reliability scales were retested for the LCEQ-M survey. The *Spiritual Capital Scale* was tested for reliability. Three of the four LCEQ-M scales were all reliable on retest, even with the survey modifications. The reliability of *Social Capital Scale* was .381 in this research and therefore was not a reliable scale. However, the *Social Capital Scale* was not significant to this research in relationship to the research questions or hypotheses. This scale could have been omitted in the modified version of the LCEQ-M. The *Community Engagement, Engagement Activity, and Participation* scales maintained reliability on retest at .820, .842, and .799, respectively (see Table 4.7).

**Hypotheses testing.** Correlation analysis was conducted to test *Hypothesis 1 (There is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement)*, and *Hypothesis 2 (There is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation)*. The correlation tested the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement and the relationship between spiritual capital and civic

**Table 4.7. Scale Reliability Coefficients, Mean, and Standard Deviations**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Community Engagement	1	4	1.82	.708	.820
Engagement Activity	1	5	4.12	.882	.847
Civic Participation	1	4	2.71	.630	.799
Social Capital	2	5	1.85	.279	.381
Spiritual Capital	1	2	4.44	.540	.715

participation. The analysis included the *Spiritual Capital* composite scale, *Community Engagement* composite scale, and the *Civic Participation* composite scale. In the first correlation, community engagement was the dependent variable and spiritual capital was the independent variable. The analysis revealed a positive correlation of .267 at the  $p > .01$  significance level. In the second correlation civic participation was the dependent variable and spiritual capital was the independent variable. The analysis indicated a positive correlation of .235 at the  $p > .05$  significance level (see Table 4.8). Further, this analysis addressed research Question 3: Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation? In addition to the correlations, frequency analyses were conducted for the participation, engagement, and spiritual capital scales. The participation scale asked participants to reflect on how much they agree or disagree that certain community organizations are involved in their community participation.

**Table 4.8. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables**

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Spiritual Capital	4.44	.540	—				
2. Community Engagement	1.82	.708	.267**	—			
3. Engagement Activity	4.12	.882	-.051	-.552**	—		
4. Social Capital	1.85	.279	-.058	-.320**	.379**	—	
5. Civic Participation	2.71	.630	.235*	.413**	-.322**	-.322**	—

Note. \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)  
\**p* < .05.

The results indicate that participants disagree or strongly disagree at the frequency of 83% for boards of health, 81% for county commissioners, and 71% for school boards that they are not involvement in their community participation. Further, city councils and health services were rated at the highest frequencies of 55% and 43%, respectively, for agreement that both play a role in their personal participation (see Table 4.9). The frequency of community engagement indicated that those participating from zero to one time ranged from 55% to 99% in frequency. Engaging three or more times ranged from 1% - 41% for these faith-based leaders (see Table 4.10). Lastly, the frequency of self-reported spiritual capital ranged from 64% to 96% in agreement. Those who reported lower levels of spiritual capital ranged in frequency from 3% to 15%. These leaders

**Table 4.9. Frequency Distribution Participation**

<b>Community Activity</b>	<b>Disagree-Strongly</b>	<b>Agree-Strongly</b>
Health Services	22%	43%
Community Meets Frequently	39%	23%
School Board	71%	16%
City Council	34%	55%
County Commissioners	81%	8%
Community Working Together	35%	23%
Improves Economic Opportunity	27%	38%
Board of Health	83%	7%
Makes a Difference in Public Education	23%	42%
Plans as Group	41%	25%

**Table 4.10. Frequency Distribution Community Engagement**

<b>Participant Activity</b>	<b>0 – 1 Time</b>	<b>3 - 4+ Times</b>
Spoke About Issue at Church	60%	36%
Spoke About Health Issue	69%	15%
Encourage Members to Take Action	55%	41%
Wrote Letter to Public Official	94%	6%
Wrote Letter or Editorial to Media	99%	1%
Visit Public Official	79%	10%
Discuss CDC	87%	7%
Established 501c3	86%	10%
Started 501c3	88%	12%
Offered Service Program	77%	17%
Organized Revitalization	82%	7%
Collaborated With Others to Offer Services	67%	17%

attended spiritual activities including church at 94% indicating daily and/or weekly participation. In addition, participants reported that they have less spiritual capital in sharing with their co-workers reported at 15%. Following co-workers at a frequency of 9% is people disagreed that they adhere to spiritual values (see Table 4.11).

***Table 4.11. Frequency Distribution Spiritual Capital***

<b>Spiritual Value</b>	<b>Disagree – Strongly</b>	<b>Agree - Strongly</b>
Life has a Spiritual Mission	4%	96%
Adhere to Spiritual Values	9%	81%
Makes Decision Requiring Spiritual Values	5%	93%
Discuss Spiritual Values	5%	95%
Comfortable Raising Spiritual Values	5%	86%
Spiritual Connection to Co-workers	15%	64%
Life has Purpose beyond Financial	3%	96%
Sacrifice Short-Term for Spiritual	6%	91%

**Research question testing.** Research Questions 1 and 2 were analyzed utilizing frequency counts to assess the types and levels of engagement. The research was as follows: Research Question 1—Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement? and Research Question 2—Is there a relationship between types and levels of engagement and faith-based leaders’ participation? *The Spiritual Capital Scale* had nine questions utilizing a five point Likert-type scale. The

*Engagement Activity Scale* consisted of 12 responses and was not a continuous scale; therefore frequency analysis was used. The following items were the twelve measures on the *Engagement Activity Scale*: health department, mental health, school system, city-council/mayor, commissioners, law enforcement, community-based organizations, other churches, local black elected officials, black elected officials—non-local, state legislators, and congressional representatives. Across all the items on this scale most participants did not engage in the above activities at the rate of 70%. Participants most often engaged by means of face-to-face with an average frequency of 19%. Formal meetings were the next highest frequency at 8%, phone calls were at 5% and lastly, letters were at 2% (see Table 4.12). In addition, where engagement did occur, it was most often with commissioners, other churches, and community based organizations all in a face-to-face manner.

**Table 4.12. Frequency of Engagement Activity**

Activity	hd	mh	ss	ccm	com	le	cbo	ot	lbe	beo	sl	cr
Face-to-face	9%	8%	24%	7%	45%	24%	26%	37%	20%	14%	3%	5%
Phone Call	12%	5%	8%	7%	2%	2%	6%	5%	1%	4%	7%	5%
Letters	2%	0%	3%	0%	2%	1%	3%	2%	1%	0%	3%	4%
Formal Meeting	3%	11%	15%	7%	3%	9%	17%	18%	11%	0%	4%	4%
No Engagement	74%	87%	49%	80%	88%	64%	47%	37%	67%	76%	84%	83%

Note. hd=health department, mh=mental health, ss=school system, ccm=city council/mayor, com=commissioners, le=law enforcement, cbo=community-based organizations, ot=other churches, lbe=local black elected official, beo=black elected official-non local, sl=state legislator, cr=congressional representative

The data revealed there was no relationship between spiritual capital and the specific types and levels of civic engagement. The analysis revealed a  $-.051$  correlation indicating no relationship. However, there was a relationship between engagement activities and civic participation. The correlation analysis revealed a  $-.322$  relationship indicating a significant negative correlation. Based on the correlation, when engagement activities increased, civic participation decreased or vice-versa when civic participation increased then engagement activities decreased (refer to Table 4.8). The two activities least engaged in by faith-based leaders are with state legislators at the frequency of 3-7% and congressional representatives ranging from 4-5% in frequency of engagement.

**Additional data analysis.** The data revealed a negative correlation between civic participation and engagement activity at  $-.322$  ( $p > .01$ ). The correlation analysis indicated a relationship between engagement activity and community engagement. The correlation was at  $-.522$  ( $p > .0$ ). There was a positive correlation between community engagement and civic participation at  $.413$  ( $p > .01$ ). Another relationship was revealed in the analysis between social capital and engagement activities at  $.378$  ( $p > .01$ ) and between social capital and civic participation at  $-.322$  ( $p > .01$ ).

**Qualitative data analysis.** There were four open-ended questions which were designed to add support to the quantitative data. The first question asked participants to describe what spiritual capital looked like. There were 74 different responses with multiple participants answering the same way. Twenty-eight of the 74 responses had multiple answers. The two most frequent responses were that spiritual capital looked like: *community involvement* and *spiritual values*. Each of these responses was noted 11

times by different participants. The next most often noted response was that spiritual capital looked like *helping others* (see Table 4.13). Many of the responses to Question 1 focused on personal values and self-improvement. The remaining questions supported the quantitative data in reference to what spiritual capital looked like in community engagement (see Table 4.14).

***Table 4.13. Multiple Responses for Spiritual Capital***

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Spiritual Values	11
Community Involvement	11
Helping Others	8
Positive Attitude	7
Doing God’s Will	7
Spiritual Beliefs	5

Question 2 asked how many people in your life you share spiritual capital with. There were 35 different responses to this question. Twenty-two of the answers had multiple responses (see Table 4.15). This question was intended to elicit a numeric response, however most of the participants identified groups with which spiritual capital was shared. The most frequent responses were *everyone, family, and friends*.



***Table 4.14. Responses for Spiritual Capital that Supported Quantitative Data***

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<b>Responses</b>
1. Community involvement
2. Growth of leaders and people
3. Helping others
4. Inspiring others
5. People we influence
6. Working towards a common goal
7. Investing in others
8. Committed to social, economic, and health issues with a heart for the disenfranchised
9. Supporting church ministries and an ability to get people involved
10. Ability to bring about change

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***Table 4.15. Multiple Responses for Number of People Spiritual Capital Shared***

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<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
1. Everyone	23
2. Family	23
3. Friends	23
4. Many	16
5. Co-Workers	8
6. 50	7
7. 3 to 4	5
8. 5	5
9. Students	5

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Question 3 asked what spiritual capital looked like in community engagement. There were 73 different responses to this question with 31 responses having the same answer (see Table 4.16). There were two other responses that were related to the quantitative data. The first response was *spiritual capital reflects improvement in the community for development, sharing resources to improve self-awareness and reflection of culture*. The second response was *church outside the four walls*.

***Table 4.16. Multiple Responses for Spiritual Capital and Community Engagement***

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
1. Standing for a Common Cause	9
2. Church Working Together	6
3. Encouraging the Community	6
4. Don't Know, Not Involved	5
5. Showing Love	5

Finally, question 4 asked participants what were barriers to spiritual capital. There were a total of 78 different responses with 39 having multiple responses (see Table 4.17). There were 12 additional responses relating community to spiritual capital (see Table 4.18).

***Table 4.17. Multiple Responses for Barriers to Spiritual Capital***

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<b>Responses</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
1. Lack of Knowledge	8
2. Time Restraints	8
3. Selfishness	8
4. Lack of Communication	7
5. Sin/Evil	5

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***Table 4.18. Other Barriers Related to Spiritual Capital and Community Engagement***

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<b>Responses</b>
1. No Feedback from the Community
2. Negative attitudes towards plans you are sharing
3. Not applying core values
4. Social Struggles
5. Societal Beliefs and Laws
6. Super Spiritual
7. Community Misinformation
8. Differing opinions on Spirituality in and out of Church
9. Lack of Spirituality
10. Lack of Unity and Cooperation
11. Lacking Spiritual Drive
12. Misplaced Values and Beliefs

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## Summary of Results

The population sample included 104 men and women who were identified as faith-based leaders by the senior pastors of the five chosen ministries. The ministries are located in North Carolina and Virginia. The frequency of males was 46% and females were 54%. The sample included 78% African-American and 18% Caucasians as the primary race groups. Graduate/professional was the highest education level at 25%. The primary position held by the participants was ministry leaders at 40%.

The scales for the assessment were reliable with the exception of the *Social Capital Scale*. The alphas for the scales range from .719 - .847 for reliability. The data supported both Hypothesis 1 and 2 and Research Question 3, revealing that there is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. Secondly, the data suggested that there is a positive relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation. The frequency of agreement in high levels of spiritual capital ranged from 64% to 96%, while the frequency of participation ranged from 7% to 55%. Further, the level of engagement based on how often participation occurred three or more times was low ranging from 1% - 41%. The analysis rejected the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' civic engagement. Further, the data analysis did not support Research Question 1 which indicated a relationship between spiritual capital and specific engagement activities. The frequency analysis of engagement activities revealed the 70% of the sample do not engage in specific activities. This is indicative of the reported decline in civic engagement. However, the analysis did support Research Question 2 revealing a

relationship between types and levels of engagement activities and faith-based leaders' participation.

The qualitative analysis gave a participant voice and added support to the quantitative data. The questions revealed responses that indicated a relationship between what participants thought about spiritual capital and civic engagement. The most frequent responses for the first question were that spiritual capital looked like *community involvement* and *spiritual values*. Question 2 was intended to elicit numerical responses, but instead revealed groups identified with whom participants shared spiritual capital. The response most frequent responses were *everyone, family, and friends*. Question 3 asked what spiritual capital looked like with community engagement. The response most frequently noted was *standing for a common cause*, followed by *church working together*, and *encouraging the community*. Finally, Question 4 asked about barriers to spiritual capital. The most frequent responses were *lack of knowledge, time restraints, and selfishness*. In summary, the data analysis did not indicate a relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of engagement activities. Subsequently, the data did reveal a relationship between spiritual capital, civic participation, and community engagement.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Discussion and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. An in-depth analysis of the relationship between spiritual capital, civic engagement and civic participation was investigated to examine the types and levels of engagement practices by faith-based leaders. This chapter includes a discussion of the findings and the implications of the research. The chapter is organized around the three research questions developed for this study: Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of civic engagement by faith-based leaders? Is there a relationship between types and levels of engagement and faith-based leaders' participation? Is there a relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation? The chapter provides a summary recap of the problem on which the study was based. In addition, the findings are discussed in comparison to prior research, the relationship to future research, leadership, policy, and theoretical implications. Finally, the chapter discusses the limitations of the research and final concluding thoughts.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

The current concern with civic engagement is the reported decline in engagement. Driskell et al. (2008) report that the greatest decline is seen in areas of civic membership, charitable giving, volunteerism, and religious participation. According to Putnam (2000),

the decline in civic engagement is weakening the U.S. Society. This weakening is seen primarily in organizational memberships, voting, and volunteering. The results of the current study indicated a 70% frequency of no engagement. This lack of engagement has a negative impact on community change and activities; creating a perceived atmosphere of nonchalance among community members. This research study was designed to determine if the relationship between spiritual capital, civic engagement, civic participation, and types and levels of engagement were significant. The significance creates value for faith-based leaders in terms of intentionally utilizing spiritual capital to develop strategies, activities and methods that will over time create a climate of continuous civic engagement. According to Putnam (2000), American religion can support the restructure of the declining civic-mindedness and the waning of participation in civic matters. Putnam and other researchers who reported a decline in civic engagement gave rise to the notion of the changes faith-based leaders can make that would improve engagement in communities that are marginalized by poverty, homelessness, and unemployment.

### **Discussion of the Results**

The data for this research was collected from a sample which included 104 men and women identified as faith-based leaders by the senior pastors of the five chosen ministries. The overall descriptive analysis of the sample consisted of 46% males and 54% females with a racial mix of 78% African-American and 18% Caucasian of which 40% held the position of ministry leader. The typical participant in this study was a 48

year old African-American female with a graduate/professional education level.

The study was focused to direct attention to the unexplored relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement. The goal was to establish spiritual capital as a resource that can be used to build civic participation in a more deliberate manner. While spiritual capital may not be the only available resource to influence engagement; it is the point of view of this study. To support this premise, the data pointed out that participants report their level of spiritual capital to range from 64% to 96%, yet their frequency of participation with community organizations ranges from 7% to 55% which is less than their total lack of engagement at 70%. As noted in Chapter 4 the findings support a positive relationship between spiritual capital and engagement. Subsequently, these leaders tend to resonate with spiritual capital, and this can be seen an opportunity to alter areas of engagement in support of the relationship between the two. In this study, the frequency of letter writing on the participation scale shows that only 1% of the individuals wrote a letter more than one time. This is one opportunity to practice building capability for engagement as leaders for example, could launch a letter writing campaign in support of a community issue such as education. Creating specific actions that connect faith-based leaders' spiritual capital to specific community challenges can create a conceptual understanding that spiritual capital is a valuable intrinsic resource that can initiate capacity for change when individuals have faith in one another (Lloyd, 2010).

Again, the overall results of the data analysis reveal a statistically significant positive relationship between spiritual capital and community engagement. As spiritual capital changes so does community engagement in a positive direction. While spiritual



capital is not a predictor of community engagement, there is a relationship between the two variables, which warrants exploration. An example to support the need to utilize this relationship, may be informing the participants in this sample that their reported level of spiritual capital is high and because of the relationship between engagement and spiritual capital a training class on how to make appropriate phone calls to civic leaders is being conducted. The expected outcome will be an increase in participation as these leaders make the connection between their spiritual capital and their engagement behavior. Currently, the data shows only 5% frequency of making phone calls for civic reasons. This same conclusion applies to the positive relationship between spiritual capital and civic participation. To this end, emphasizing the relationship of spiritual capital with civic engagement among faith-based leaders is relevant to raising the level of participation and connecting these leaders to appropriate resources and skills to change their current frequency of engagement.

Furthermore, there is an intrinsic component to spiritual capital based on values that faith-based leaders reported as important to them. The instinctiveness of spiritual capital is associated with trust, culture, and deep commitment to building relationships; to better serve society and to satisfy their internal need to serve. These characteristics are all value-based and trust is deemed most essential. Lloyd (2010) captures this notion by noting that trust for these leaders is faith in each other that allows them to go beyond just working together; and is a requirement for their willingness to participate. Further, the degree of trust and honesty among leaders' impact their behavior and the community. This trust is a major component for opening doors for engagement. In as much as

spiritual capital is values based, thus incorporating trust, can play a contributing role in unmasking the process to create participatory environments. The idea of trust becomes even more relevant at the grassroots level. In many instances, citizens at this level are mistrustful because of past actions by leaders that did not yield positive results. The challenge is to create opportunities for these leaders to utilize their spiritual capital as an asset which promotes community growth and change by way of participation. The emphasis on spiritual capital and trust in relationships create the commonality of serving and working together. It is essential however, to note that this is not a religious perspective, but one of relationship building and the purposeful utilization of resources among individuals (Lloyd, 2010, Toms et al., 2011). Therefore, one primary goal of this research is to draw attention to the need of using practical applications (i.e. letter writing, phone calls, media) to educate and train faith-based leaders about how to utilize spiritual capital in an effort to enhance their current participation level.

The first research question in this study posed if there was a relationship between spiritual capital and types and levels of engagement. The findings suggest that there is no relationship between spiritual capital and the specific types and levels of engagement activities. One possible explanation for this finding is that the specific types of engagement are subjective to the LCEQ-M questionnaire. Other types of civic engagement may have been chosen as well. The research examines the types of engagement such as participation with health department, mental health, school systems, congressional representatives, and Black elected officials among others. The primary results of the study noted that 70% of the participants did not engage in most of the stated

engagement activities. Based on Putnam's (2000) work, faith-based leaders and their churches are less engaged. This decline is representative of the weakening in the United States within communities. Spiritual capital while reported at high levels among most participants has no relationship with what activities people choose to engage with. The exception is the relationship between spiritual capital and mental health at .249 at the .05 level. This relationship maybe indicative of the intrinsic personal values associated with both mental health and spiritual capital. Therefore, relative to the findings in this study, the emphasis is not on what activities people engage in; the focus is on the fact that those with high levels of self-reported spiritual capital choose to participate in civic activities. To enumerate, this requires an intentional plan focused on engagement activities. Training and development among leaders about what to engage in and how to engage will lead to a process of building relationships that connect with civic engagement that is more sustainable.

The second research question asked if there was a relationship between types and levels of engagement and faith-based leaders' participation. The data indicated a significant correlation at the .01 level between engagement activities and civic participation by faith-based leaders. The correlation is a negative correlation in that when engagement activities or civic participation increases the other will decrease. The explanation for this finding is likely related to the issue of access to engagement opportunities, such as involvement with congressional representatives and Black elected officials. The focus is not on the particular activities, but, another chance for leaders to become purposeful about their engagement and community participation activities.

Additionally, when engaging, participants most frequently participated in civic activities by means of face-to-face meetings at a 19% frequency, followed by formal meetings at 8% frequency. This finding is an indication that these faith-based leaders are somewhat motivated to engage in civic matters, but the frequency across all levels of activity is low. It also suggest the underutilization of other engagement activities (e.g. letter writing, and public presentations) to governing bodies, which in many cases may be more effective in terms of impact. The results indicate a need to emphasize to faith-based and other leaders the necessity to connect to the communities by gaining the required skills to enable effective engagement with these governing bodies and social agencies. Subsequently, in addition to added skills and knowledge, leaders still need to build relationships within and across their communities to be successful in participation. This raises the question of how to make the connections intentional and focused on building relationships with community members. The ability to answer this question will impact both participation and growth in community relations.

Research Question 3 posed if there was a relationship between spiritual capital and faith-based leaders' participation. The results support both Hypothesis 1 and 2 indicating that there is a positive relationship between these variables. Participants engaging only at a total rate of 30% indicate that there is decline in civic engagement in these communities. Community engagement involves mobilizing communities and their citizens for engaging in public decision-making that deals with community issues. Finding additional tools to support the emerging importance of engagement is essential. The tools to build engagement should focus on knowledge development and providing

skills training to change the rate of participation. Leaders also have a role in accessing training for themselves and their followers. By accessing and participating in such training, these leaders will be more apt to encourage and support their members in developing and participating in engagement. Again, simply building skills and knowledge is not enough. There must also be a deliberate effort to overcome the challenges of access. Many leaders struggle with how to get the attention of their public servants. The issues of access are a result of too few supportive resources from within the communities and the inability to procure additional resources. This is one area where faith-based leaders will require external support from others who are skilled in areas of civic and community engagement practices and skills development. The leaders will need to make an effort to reach out to others for support and continued learning.

In summary, there are five key elements to frame spiritual capital toward civic engagement with the goal of improving participation. These elements include: 1) intentionally viewing spiritual capital as an investment with a return. Investments are made in spiritual capital in terms of resources such as personal sacrifice, giving, and volunteering time in community building activities and programs. It will be more valuable to ensure that faith-based leaders and other leaders understand how to treat spiritual capital as such an investment; and what to expect in return when related to participation. The ideal outcome will be a reduction in the current 70% of non-participation in engagement activities; 2) build leadership capacity in communities among the individuals and organizations for participation. This will involve multiple organizations and structures that engage and empower others, unlike past programs that

may have left people alienated and disengaged. Leaders and their followers will be trained in the use of tools such as letter writing, making phone calls and other education to organize and train citizens for increased capacity; 3) enhance the capacity to plan, develop, implement and create sustainable on-going community engagement endeavors. This involves developing and enhancing the skills of leaders to deliberately engage locally and in the regions with elected officials and government agencies around policy, politics, and programmatic and resource distribution issues in areas of health, education, and economic disparities; 4) to position spiritual capital as a resource. Resources are available to be used to improve or better the conditions associated with it. Highlighting the importance of spiritual capital as a resource may frame the way leaders perceive and use it and other resources in conjunction with specific engagement activities. An example is finding resources and training to improve the frequency of phone calls and letter writing to civic representatives from the current dismal overall frequency of 5% - 8%; and 5) to create planned ways to help leaders connect through trust and relationship building, as these are essential for establishing a platform of positive participation.

Finally, spiritual capital holds the potential through well-defined and planned skill building strategies to help community and faith-based leaders understand the value of engagement and its impact on decision-making, improved communication with civic leaders, and its impact on relationship building and increased engagement. Therefore, opting to change the leaders' behavior about civic engagement will lead to a change in the behavior of their followers and eventually the whole community. In this manner, the reported decline in civic engagement can be approached from a different perspective of

how participation occurs and is managed in the community.

### **Relationship to Prior Research**

Overall, there was no research available that examined the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement or civic participation. Liu (2004) noted that spiritual capital is a newly formed area within social science and just beginning to emerge within the research arena. According to Finke (2003), religious organizations play a major role in how spiritual capital is acquired and used. Thus, the role of religion is discussed a great deal because of its connection to social and political life in America. Further, Smidt and College (2006) indicated that some civic skills are cultivated through religious life. Regardless of the role that religious institutions have played in civic life, the impact has been significant, particularly in the Black church.

Specifically, much of the civic involvement in Black communities has been contributed to the role of the Black church. The Black church has been seen as a place of cultivation for Blacks to get involved with their community politics. Reed (1986) however, argued that the role of the Black church in political engagement is clouded with myths about its exact role in polity. Regardless, the role of the Black church is well-researched in the literature as it relates to civic engagement and the behavior of faith-based leaders. The majority of the participants in this study was African-American and from predominantly Black churches.

The literature further noted that faith-based leaders create community by leading with faith for themselves and their followers (Jackman, 2005). Winseman (2002) further

stated that it is not the job of faith communities to transform the lives of those in their communities. Nevertheless, they do transform individuals who can in turn impact society. Throop (2008) posited that it is a challenge for faith-based leaders to deal with community issues when many people have become passive to engagement. This leads to the idea that if leaders can be motivated or influenced to engage in their communities that their followers will become more active in civic engagement. Analogous to the above ideas about engagement, the role that faith-based leaders play continues to be important. These leaders have always had some form of connection with community engagement. The noted decline in civic engagement can be influenced as faith-based leaders gain a greater understanding of the importance of community engagement. In summary, the research is basically non-existent in relationship to the role of spiritual capital, civic engagement, and civic participation. Therefore, this study fills an existing gap in the current literature which provides implications for future work in this area.

### **Practical Implications**

The primary purpose of this research study was to examine the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement and civic participation. No other studies have attempted to examine this relationship and its implications for leadership. The study results cannot be generalized and focused across the population, because of the small sample of African-American and Caucasian faith-based leaders involved in the study. However, future researchers can utilize this study as a launching pad to further evaluate and refine implications for spiritual capital and engagement.



## **Implications for Leadership**

Based on the reported decline in civic engagement, this research sets the stage for more in depth study of the subject. Additional research will emphasize the role that faith-based leaders, in relationship to their levels of spiritual capital, can play in terms of the impact on civic engagement. Referencing the data in this study, church leadership should take a close look at the levels of spiritual capital and seek ways to help leaders understand the connection with civic engagement and the importance of this connection. For example, spiritual capital is a topic that faith-based leaders may select as a teaching tool during Bible study, conferences, or leadership team meetings. Helping leaders understand that their personal spiritual capital is positively related to civic participation will provide a focus on engagement that has been missing both in the literature and the action of these leaders. Leaders utilizing spiritual capital as a bridge to more engagement will impact the current lack of participation in a positive way. The focus on spiritual capital is relevant to these faith-based leaders and can be used to create motivation for greater participation. To this end, pastoral leadership may seek methods by which to increase spiritual capital among the church leaders in an effort to counteract the notion that these leaders are not engaged. Within the current structure of most religious organizations there is a mission component. Faith-based leaders could utilize this structure as a method of educating its leaders on civic participation and the value of engagement. This is a chance for faith-based and other leaders to help their followers with engagement and participation while working within an existing structure in most ministries.

There is a further viewpoint to consider, spiritual capital is not defined as an individual's religious denomination or religious behavior. As such, leadership outside of the religious arena may opt to give attention to spiritual capital. Spiritual capital when viewed from the idea of intrinsic values, power, and influence, can be applied to leaders outside of faith-based organizations. This supports the notion that all leaders should be allowed to bring their entire self to the organization. Spiritual capital will be an important resource that is not focused on religious behavior or denomination, but allows leaders to have an internal values focus that influences their leadership behavior.

### **Implications for Policy**

An additional area of thought is the changes that are current in relationship to the IRS laws about church and state and the tax implications for faith-based organizations and their leaders. It is essential that church leadership think about the impact that the IRS pressure on 501(c)(3)s to abstain from politics will have on their future. Will this continued pressure require leaders to become more creative in how they are able to engage in their community activities, especially those that may involve polity? Currently, pastors are refraining from speaking politics within their pulpits as it is difficult to judge what is safe to say and what is not. As a result, a continuation of this behavior will push engagement into a state of further decline. However, it is imperative that faith-based leaders learn to utilize their access to their political leaders to alter these restrictions. The impression of visibility is pertinent for leaders to be heard on specific issues that impact their communities.

According to Brown et al. (2003), church participation and involvement with religious activities help build the foundation for civic skill building and motivation of people to be politically active. Based on this concept, the church continues to be an ideal platform by which leaders can create community change and have impact. Faith-based leaders should capitalize on these opportunities as often as possible with the goal of reversing the decline in civic engagement. Even though, IRS guidelines are restrictive, leaders of 501(c)(3)s are allowed to promote voter education within these restrictions. Opportunistically, this is one forum where faith-based leaders can maximize their influence on their followers by emphasizing the role that spiritual capital plays in civic engagement while conducting voter education training. Voting is a primary right of civic involvement and promoting this area can impact other areas of participation. In summary, the focus is on the vital need for citizens to be more engaged to create community change.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Based on the transformational leadership theory, the implications from this research support the fundamentals of the theory. For example, if you can alter the behavior of the leader, such that he or she is in turn motivated to influence the behavior of the followers, behavior changes occur. However, for future investigations, other theoretical approaches can be applied to this research. The theoretical approaches of note include Change Theory, Community Organization Theory, and Behavior Change Model. Utilizing the above theoretical approaches will offer a similar or opposing view of the

relationship of spiritual capital and civic engagement which is offered by this research in context of the transformational leadership theory.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study suggests several recommendations for future research. First, the same research can be conducted with a larger population sample to enable generalization of the results across all faith-based leaders and their organizations. Second, the study can be conducted between different religious entities that do not represent Christianity; as spiritual capital is not based on Christian theology. Most of the literature is focused on the role of the Black church. Third, since spiritual capital is relatively new to social science, research can be conducted to create a different scale to measure spiritual capital which incorporates the element of trust and relationship building. Fourth, based on Boykins and Ellison's (1995) research on psychological orientation and socialization of Black youth and its role in preparing them for suitable participation in the fabric of American Society, there seems to be need for further exploration of the relationship between spiritual capital, psychological orientation, and socialization as it relates to participation and civic engagement. Gaining more discernment on the impact of psychological orientation and socialization of faith-based leaders will provide considerable insight for their valuing and practice of spiritual capital as a significant component of civic participation and engagement. Fifth, the Metanexus Institute utilized spiritual capital as a tool for their past research and planning. This current study may be reflective or supportive of their future work. Sixth, it will be vital to conduct research to

build a solid conceptual framework and clear definition for spiritual capital and how it can be used in different forums with different leaders to produce change. Next, focusing research on how spiritual capital impacts leaders outside of faith-based organizations to a more general population of leaders will prove relevant through research. As leaders in corporate arenas are seeking tools for motivation and influence, spiritual capital may well be one of those tools. As spiritual capital in this research is not being linked to religious behavior or denomination, it can serve as a values view that leaders can bring into their workplace, thus allowing them to bring their whole perspective of life to work without worrying about perceptions or repercussions. Finally, a linguistics analysis should be conducted to test the use of the term spiritual capital. The goal is to have acceptable terminology for use across various genres that do not create bias towards different groups or a misuse of language through generalizations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research makes contribution to literature, future research, and leadership implications; however there are limitations to the study. The first is related to the sample size of the study. The population is faith-based leaders from churches identified as civically engaged in their communities. All five ministries in this study operate on the principles of Christianity. Different results may have been yielded if other religious and non-religious groups were included in the research. The actual sample size was small with 104 participants. Had there been a larger sample of participants, the results could be generalized across the faith-based leadership community. A second limitation exists in

the administration process. This limitation occurred with the difference in administration sessions for the surveys. The closed sessions gained 100% participation. The open session with surveys being dispersed, represented only a 36% return. In future research with faith-based leaders, administering the surveys in closed settings, will yield a better return rate. The third limitation is in the open definition of faith-based leaders involved in ministry leadership. The senior pastors of the chosen ministries were asked to include members of leadership within the ministry. The majority of the pastors chose their top leaders to be involved in the survey process. This limited the number of participants. This was particularly the case for the very large ministries. In the future it will be important to define leadership more specifically as well as cite literature with definitions of leadership. Finally, there were approximately 23 surveys that arrived well past the deadline and too late to include in the data for this research. The question for the limitation is whether the additional surveys would have altered the data.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, despite the limitations, the study fills a significant gap in the literature, by providing a foundational backdrop for spiritual capital. Much of the literature focused on reasons such as lack of volunteerism, age differences, and voting as reasons for the decline in civic engagement. However, the literature is lacking in understanding what prevents individuals from participating and how to alter this pattern. As researchers declared that civic engagement is declining, the challenge is how to determine what factors impact the waning of civic engagement especially in communities

where citizens are oppressed or marginalized. This study was significant and timely because of the continued debate about whether organizations are more or less engaged. The goal is to help faith-based leaders understand the necessity of their influence in civic arenas exercising their personal spiritual capital as a resource for participation. Further, the research is intended to offer another avenue, spiritual capital, by which faith-based leaders may connect to other leaders through building trust and exercising their faith among themselves. These relationships will create a platform for enhanced engagement practices.

Based on responses from faith-based leaders they feel that spiritual capital is important and necessary for leaders despite the existing barriers. The primary barriers such as lack of knowledge, time constraints, selfishness, lack of communication and sin/evil can be overcome by educating leaders about barriers. For example, another barrier listed was *no feedback from the community*; training sessions on how to give and receive feedback for these leaders can minimize this barrier. Other such options can be exercised to diminish the barriers to spiritual capital, thus impacting engagement.

In addition, this study reveals that spiritual capital can be related to faith-based leaders' continuous civic engagement in their communities. The aspects of spiritual capital are not the sole reason for lack of participation, but it highlights an opportunity for transforming the behavior of leaders, thus creating participatory mind-sets. Further, the findings of this study are noteworthy because there are currently no empirical research studies that examine the relationship between spiritual capital, civic engagement, and civic participation. While the area of spiritual capital is mostly uncharted territory, it is

important as a mechanism whereby faith-based leaders can use it as a positive resource to connect with their communities as related to participation. Helping faith-based leaders consider the value of spiritual capital and how to use it with specific learning tasks is a necessity.

As a result of this study, spiritual capital is emphasized as an intrinsic value that all faith-based leaders can utilize to create change through building relationships based on trust and faith in one another, thus encouraging greater engagement. The more faith-based leaders resonate with building spiritual capital, the more likely their attention can be refocused on their communities and their level of engagement. Even though this research did not reveal a relationship between spiritual capital and specific types and levels of civic engagement; a focus should be on engagement activities that can be used as a focal point for starting change (i.e. improved letter writing and phone calling skills). Clearly, more research is required to determine if the types and levels of engagement is the critical factor, however finding a tool of emphasis to get more leaders involved in participation is a great first step. The primary next step involves finding ways to create learning environments for these leaders. The focus of these learning environments will be related to spiritual capital, building relationships, and connecting to civic engagement. The ultimate goal is to encourage civic participation through sustainable methodologies and the use of tools designed to assist leaders and their communities.



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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Combined Survey LCEQ-M and SCI**

# **LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE-M (LCEQ-M)**

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**Forrest D. Toms, PhD, Sharon Glover, MHR, Daniel Miller, PhD**  
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## **Spiritual Capital Index**

**Alex Liu, 2004**

The LCEQ-M is a survey designed to assess the perceptions, beliefs and practices of faith-based leaders and institutions regarding leadership and community engagement practices.

The Spiritual Capital Index is a questionnaire designed to assess the degree of self-reported spiritual capital for individuals and organizations.

The information gathered from these surveys will be used for that purpose only. Please answer these questions honestly and accurately. Your honest answers will help us to gain valuable insight into how we can increase faith-based leaders and institutions community engagement activities and understand the impact of spiritual capital on engagement. Thank you for your help. Your answers will remain completely anonymous.

**LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
QUESTIONNAIRE-M (LCEQ-M)**

**PART I**

**A. Background Information** - Please circle the appropriate answer or fill in the blank

<b>Gender</b>	1 M                      2 F
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	1 African American 2 White 3 Latino 4 American Indian 5 Asian 6 Other _____
<b>Age</b>	_____
<b>Education Level</b>	1 Completed High School 2 Some College 3 Community College 4 College (BS, BA) 5 Graduate/Professional Degree
<b>What Church Do You Attend?</b>	_____
<b>Position</b>	1 Minister 2 Associate/Assistant Minister 3 Church Officer 4 Ministry Leader 5 Other _____

## PART II

### B. Impact of Participation

Please circle the appropriate number that most reflect your thoughts.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. My community makes a difference in the quality of and access to health services.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My community makes a difference in improving economic opportunities for our community.	1	2	3	4	5
3. People in my community meet frequently.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I participate in school board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am comfortable participating in city council meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I participate in county commission meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The community I represent work closely together.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I participate in board of health meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My community makes a difference in improving public education.	1	2	3	4	5
10. People in my community make plans together as a group.	1	2	3	4	5

**PART III**

**C. Frequency of Community Engagement**

**In thinking about your responses to local community problems/issues, in which of the following actions did you engage during the past year?**

**Please circle the number which reflects the number of times you engaged in a specific action.**

	<b>0 Times</b>	<b>1 Time</b>	<b>2 Times</b>	<b>3 Times</b>	<b>4 or More Times</b>
1. Spoke about a specific community issues at church	1	2	3	4	5
2. Spoke about specific health issues at church	1	2	3	4	5
3. Encouraged members of the congregation to take action	1	2	3	4	5
4. Wrote letters to public officials	1	2	3	4	5
5. Wrote letters or editorials on health topics for local media	1	2	3	4	5
6. Informal visits with public officials and other community leaders	1	2	3	4	5
7. Held discussions about establishing a Community Development Corporation	1	2	3	4	5
8. Begin necessary steps to establish a 501(c)(3) non-profit	1	2	3	4	5
9. Started or have in place a 501c3 non-profit organization	1	2	3	4	5
10. Offered service programs to community (afterschool, housing, job training, health services, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
11. Helped to organize the community toward revitalization efforts	1	2	3	4	5
12. Collaborated with other churches or community organizations to offer programs and/or services	1	2	3	4	5



**PART IV**

**D. Types of Engagement Activities**

In what way did you engage in the following activities with different agencies or officials during the past year? (If you did not engage select N/A)

Please fill in the appropriate circle to indicate the way you most often engaged.

<b>Types of Engagement Activities</b>	<b>Face To Face</b>	<b>Phone Calls</b>	<b>Letters</b>	<b>Formal Meetings</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Health Department	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mental Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School System	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
City Council/Mayor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commissioners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law enforcement/public safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community based Organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black Elected Officials (local)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Black Elected Officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
State Legislators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Congressional Representatives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**PART V**

**E. Spiritual Capital**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. My life has a mission that is spiritual	1	2	3	4	5
2. When choosing my current profession I considered whether I could adhere to my spiritual values	1	2	3	4	5
3. I can recall decisions I have made in the past three months that required me to consider my spiritual values	1	2	3	4	5
4. In the past month, I have discussed spiritual issues with family members	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am comfortable raising the issue of spiritual values as a factor in decision-making for my work	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel spiritual connection with my co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
7. My family members know that my life has a purpose beyond financial success	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am willing to sacrifice short-term gain in order to continue my path toward my spiritual goal	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>None</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Yearly</b>
9. How often do you participate in spiritual activities including church services (circle one)	1	2	3	4	5



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Permission Letters for Assessment Usage**

Dear Silvia,

Thank you for your email. The attached include my two instruments to measure spiritual capital at both individual and organizational levels. Feel free to use it as long as you can share with me your results.

The impact of spiritual capital on civic engagement is a very important topic, and I will love to read your dissertation whenever it is ready.

I am usually available for phone conversation either late Morning or early afternoon. Perhaps we can talk sometimes on next week.

Best, Alex

--- On **Wed, 8/25/10, Burgess, Sylvia** <[burgesss@ccl.org](mailto:burgesss@ccl.org)> wrote:  
From: Burgess, Sylvia <[burgesss@ccl.org](mailto:burgesss@ccl.org)>  
Subject: Spiritual Capital  
To: "alex@researchmethods.org" <[alex@researchmethods.org](mailto:alex@researchmethods.org)>  
Date: Wednesday, August 25, 2010, 6:49 AM  
Dr. Liu,

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Leadership Studies Program at North Carolina A & T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina. My dissertation research is focused on the impact that spiritual capital has on civic engagement among spiritual leaders.

I am very much interested in your tool and would like more information about the tool. I would be delighted if you had a few minutes for a telephone conversation to help me understand how you utilize the tool and its application for individual and organizational assessment.

Thanks for your time,

Sylvia Burgess  
Director, Client Services  
Center for Creative Leadership  
1 Leadership Place  
Greensboro, NC 27410  
336-544-5126

---

**From:** Burgess, Sylvia [mailto:burgess@ccl.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, November 12, 2010 4:19 PM  
**To:** 'toms\_2@charter.net'  
**Subject:** Permission to Modify and use LCEQ Questionnaire

Dr. Toms,

Please forward this email back to me as the consent to utilize the LCEQ Questionnaire in its modified form.

## Sylvia

Sylvia Burgess | Director, Client Services  
**CENTER FOR CREATIVE LEADERSHIP**  
GREENSBORO CAMPUS  
+ 1 336 544 5126 direct line | +1 336 362 4180 mobile | +1 336 288 5759 facsimile  
burgess@ccl.org • www.ccl.org



Sylvia Burgess has been granted permission to utilize the LCEQ Questionnaire in the approved modified format for purposes of dissertation research.

Thanks

*Forrest D. Toms*

Forrest Toms, Ph.D.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Participant Information Sheet**

## **Study Title: Spiritual Capital: Impact on Civic Engagement among Faith-based Leaders**

You have been asked to participate as a subject in a research project. Research is a study that is done to answer a question. Please take your time to make your decision and ask the person presenting you with this form to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between spiritual capital and civic engagement among faith-based leaders. For the purpose of this research civic engagement is defined as the connection that people have with the life of their communities inclusive of politics. Spiritual capital is defined as the use of power, influence, and attitudes of organizations or people based on spiritual beliefs, knowledge, and practice.

### **SOURCE OF FUNDING**

This project is under the direction of Sylvia Burgess, Ph.D. candidate in the Leadership Studies Program at the North Carolina A & T State University. There is no funding for this project.

### **PROCEDURES**

If you choose to participate in the project, you will be asked to respond to a two-part survey which will assess your level of spiritual capital and the types and levels of civic engagement in which you are involved.

### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

Your participation in the project will involve minimal or no risk.

### **COSTS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS**

There are no costs to you while participating in this study other than your time.

### **COMPENSATION**

You will not be paid for participating in this study.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE**

Efforts, such as coding research records, keeping research records secure and allowing only authorized people to have access to research records, will be made to keep your information safe.



A report of general and combined results from several participants in this project will be prepared for the Dissertation Research at North Carolina A & T State University, and may be submitted to a professional publication or conference at a later time.

Results of this experiment **will** be provided to the senior leadership of the ministry. The leadership will determine the method by which to provide any data related to this study.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY**

The investigator, Sylvia Burgess is available to answer any questions that you have about your involvement in this project. Please contact Sylvia Burgess at 336-543-7091 or by email, [burgesss@ccl.org](mailto:burgesss@ccl.org). You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Forrest Toms at 1-828-638-3369

### **WHAT HAPPENS IN CASE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS**

This study involves minimal risk for injury.

### **RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

Your participation is voluntary. You may end your participation at any time. Refusing to participate or leaving the study at a later time will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide to stop participating in the study we encourage you to talk to the experimenter or study staff first.

The investigators also have the right to stop your participation in the study at any time. Reasons the experimenter may stop your participation in this study will be due to study being canceled.

If you have a question about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Compliance Office at (336) 334-7995.

You will be given a copy of this form.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Survey Code Book**

Part 1 - Demographics

Codes Male = 0 Female = 1  
AA = 1 WH = 2 LAT = 3 AI = 4  
AS = 5 OT = 6  
Age = Number  
HS=1 SC=2 CC= 3 C= 4 GR=5  
NORTH = 1 WEST = 2  
EAST = 3 NORTHEAST - 4  
SOUTHEAST -5  
MN = 1 AM = 2 CO = 3 ML = 4  
OT= 5

**Variable**

GENDER  
RACE  
AGE  
EDUCATION  
CHURCH  
POSITION

**Label**

Gender  
Race/Ethnicity  
Age  
Education Level  
Church Attend  
Church Position

Part 2- Participation

Codes  
Strongly Disagree = 1  
Disagree = 2  
Somewhat Agree = 3  
Agree = 4  
Strongly Agree = 5

PART1  
PART2  
PART3  
PART4  
PART5  
PART6  
PART7  
PART8  
PART9  
PART10

Health Services  
Improve Economic Opportunity  
Meets Frequently  
School Board Meeting  
City Council Meeting  
County Commission Meetings  
Community Works Together  
Board of Health Meetings  
Public Education  
Community Plans as Group

Part 3 - Community Engagement

Codes  
1 = 0 Times  
2 = 1 Time  
3 = 2 Times  
4 = 3 Times  
5 = 4 or More Times

CE1  
CE2  
CE3  
CE4  
CE5  
CE6  
CE7  
CE8  
CE9  
CE10  
CE11  
CE12

Community Issue at Church  
Health Issue at Church  
Congregation Takes Action  
Letter Public Official  
Letter or Editorials  
Visit Public Officials  
Discussion CDC  
Establish 501c3  
Start 501c3  
Offered Service Program  
Organized revitalization  
Collaboration With Others

Part 4 - Engagement Activities

Codes	ENACT1	Health Department
Face to Face = 1	ENACT2	Mental Health
Phone Calls = 2	ENACT3	School System
Letters = 3	ENACT4	City Council-Mayor
Formal Meetings = 4	ENACT5	Commissioners
N/A = 5	ENACT6	Law Enforcement
	ENACT7	Community Based Organizations
	ENACT8	Other Churches
	ENACT9	Local Black Elected Officials
	ENACT10	Black Elected Officials
	ENACT11	State Legislators
	ENACT12	Congressional Representatives

Part 5 - Spiritual Capital

Codes	SPC1	Life Spiritual Mission
Strongly Disagree = 1	SPC2	Adhere Spiritual Values
Disagree = 2	SPC3	Decision Require Spiritual Values
Somewhat Agree = 3	SPC4	Discussed Spiritual Family Issues
		Comfortable Raising Spiritual Values
Agree = 4	SPC5	Spiritual Connection Co-Workers
Strongly Agree = 5	SPC6	Purpose Beyond Financial
	SPC7	Sacrifice Short-Term Goals
	SPC8	

Code

None = 1	SPC9	How Often Participate
Daily = 2		
Weekly = 3		
Monthly = 4		
Yearly = 5		

Part 6 - Social Capital

Code	SOCAP1	Served Public Office
Yes = 1	SOCAP2	Served Boards/Committees
No = 2	SOCAPE2a	Number of Meetings
		Number of Times Community Project
	SOCAP3	