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marlbeth dwyer • news editor

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WORK HABITS, VOTING BEHAVIOR,
SIMILAR AMONG GENERATIONS
ACCORDING TO UM RESEARCHER

MISSOULA--

The generation of people born between 1946 and 1964, often called the postwar baby boom, does not significantly differ from previous generations in terms of work habits and voting behavior, according to a University of Montana economist.

Paul E. Polzin, research associate at the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, compared labor force participation and voting habits of the postwar baby boom to previous generations in the autumn issue of the Montana Business Quarterly.

"One of the persistent stereotypes of the postwar generations is that they lack the traditional American work ethic," Polzin said. However, based on national statistics for males aged 18 to 34, Polzin said there has been little change in labor force participation since 1950.

Polzin said there has been a definite increase in the number of women working, but he points out that it has not been just young women who have entered the labor force. For example, he said the participation for women aged 25 to 34 increased from 36 percent in 1960 to 45 percent in 1970 -- well before the postwar babies entered this age group.

To show the voting behavior of the postwar generation, Polzin cited percentages for groups of people aged 18 and over who registered to vote and voted during election years from 1968 to 1978. He said that although the postwar generation was often predicted to be more politically active than other generations, voting statistics for this time period do not show increased political participation by young people.

"The trend in voting behavior for 21 to 24 year olds, an age category which was dominated by the postwar baby crop after 1970, was not significantly different from that of the other age groups," he said.