

EXAMINING THE PARENT-CHILD POLITICAL  
RELATIONSHIP

By

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EXAMINING THE PARENT-CHILD POLITICAL  
RELATIONSHIP

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed explanation of the ability of parents to transmit political attitudes to their children. While there is an abundance of previous research on political socialization and the role of parents in this process, this study's incorporation of novel variables allows a different and contemporary exploration of the political development of youth. Using a survey of 955 college students, I am able to provide evidence that the political influence of parents is strong, level of parental involvement is highly important, and mothers are slightly more influential than fathers, but not as much as previously accepted.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

While there are many agents of political socialization --- family, peers, school, and religious organizations --- likely one of these agents, the family, has received the most attention from researchers. There is good reason for this focus. While there are many agents which have the ability to exert political influence, normally the family is the first social group to which a child is introduced. Therefore, this paper's emphasis will be on the role of parents. This study seeks to examine the role of the parents in the political socialization process and to provide a contemporary analysis of the transmission of political attitudes from parents to children.

While the topic of political socialization, particularly the role of parents in this process, has been addressed since the 1950s, the recent evolution of social norms has warranted a reexamination. For example, the number of women in the workforce has risen dramatically over the past several decades, while the concept of stay-at-home dads, while still rather modern, is no longer a foreign notion. Further, the husband and wife relationship in the modern home is more likely to resemble an equal partnership than one

in which the husband is the senior partner, which was the case historically. Stereotypical parental roles may no longer apply. Consequently, the findings in this study will remain valid only as long as family roles remain constant; as modern trends arise, new studies must be undertaken. If results from this study stand in stark contrast to other studies, it will illustrate a need to continually revisit the issue of the political power of parents.

While there is still debate as to when political preferences and attitudes sufficiently stabilize for reliable scientific study, most political socialization research indicates that the family, particularly parents, always will exert some level of political influence on their children. Some theories state that political attitudes are shaped during childhood or adolescence, while other theories hold that individual political preferences evolve over time. This distinction seems more a matter of degree than kind, for the influence of the parent can be seen in college-aged children no matter the particular theory (Tyler, Schuller 1991; Peterson, Somit 1982; Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, Keeter 2003).

This study does not intend to address the validity of different theories of political socialization, rather this study should be compatible with most if not all theories of political socialization. By examining college students in this study, many of whom are freshmen, parental political influence should be the strongest of any other demographic. It is theorized that parental influence has a very considerable impact on college-aged children, particularly freshmen and sophomores. While this is strictly speculative, students fitting this category might have a greater opportunity to know the political leanings of their parents and better understand their parents' political cues than younger children. Further, juniors and seniors might be more distant from their parents because

the political influence of their parents might have dissipated. Additionally, older students have had more new experiences and have been presented with more new information, which could further counter the political influence of their parents.

Neither does this study intend to state that the family is the only or even the most important agent of socialization. I recognize that many factors are at play during the political socialization process, including different agents, environmental factors, and genetic factors (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, Keeter 2003; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003; Peterson, Somit 1982; Hatemi, McDermott 2011; Settle, Dawes, Fowler 2009; Hibbing, Smith, Alford 2014). Therefore, in this paper I will attempt to provide a snapshot of the current relationship between parent and child political agreement or disagreement.

In addition to simply observing the similarities or differences in political preferences between parents and their children, I will explore the factors that contribute to this transmission. This study also will evaluate the relationship between parental involvement in children's lives, the relationship of similar interest/hobbies between parent and child, the transmission of political preferences, and their effects on political transmission. Examining these types of relationships, along with others, should offer a modest explanation for the role of the parent in contemporary American political society.

By re-examining the subject of parent-child political transmission and the influence of the parent during the political socialization of their children, the academic community and general public might better understand the degree of parental power over their children's political views. If parents become more aware of the fact of their political influence on their children's political interests, parents might be more motivated actually

to talk to their children about political matters. It is believed that most people recognize that increased political attentiveness and political involvement would have a positive impact on our democracy. People often choose political apathy because they think they have no power to affect political change; however, if they believe that they are not powerless, they might become interested and politically active. Conversely, this study's findings might support the proposition that parents are limited in their political influence and are themselves largely a product of the time in which they live. In other words, if there is a great discrepancy between the political preferences of parents and their children, their influence might wane over time. Further, if the father is the more influential parent in contemporary society, the mother's previous advantage might have been the result of something occurring outside of her control or affected by environmental or historical, time-specific factors.

The study will be organized as follows. First, literature pertinent to the topic of the parents' role in the political socialization process will be examined. Second, the methodology, including data and variables, will be discussed. Then the results and analysis discussion will follow. Finally, a brief conclusion will summarize what the study's findings mean to our understanding of the political power of parents.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many recognized agents of political socialization, including family, school, peers, and religious organizations (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, Keeter 2003; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003). Although interest in the subject has ebbed and flowed over the years, the study of the role of the family has been reviewed extensively since the inception of political socialization research in the latter half of the twentieth-century (Langton 1969; Greenberg 1970; Jennings, Niemi 1968; Niemi 1973; Thomas 1971; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003). As a result, while the family generally has been considered exceptionally important in the political socialization process (Hyman 1959; Dawson, Prewitt 1969; Langton 1969; Greenberg 1970; Acock, Bengston 1978), researchers disagree as to the *relative* impact of the family on the process.

Much of the early research of political socialization focused on children and adolescents. My study focuses on college students. Some researchers have criticized previous demographic approaches on the grounds that children or adolescents either are

not cognitively receptive to political matters or are completely apathetic to them (Greenberg 1970; Valentino, Sears 1998; Sapiro 2004). However, it should be noted that even if this objection has some allure, I believe that parents clearly have the ability to influence a child's political views without the child even being aware that he or she is being influenced; such is the strong influence of osmotic or sub-conscious development. Parents, even without themselves being aware of it, might instill particular inchoate general attitudes and perceptions in their child which will develop later into definable political values (Dawson, Prewitt 1969; Almond, Verba 1966; Peterson, Somit 1982; Sears 1980). Thus, the political socialization flowing from parent to child is more than simply overt parental teaching of party and ideological preferences; the process begins with communicating to the child certain worldviews and general principles, such as, for example, that one should defer to authority. These worldviews and general principles lay dormant until maturity and awareness cause them to mature and take definite political form (Almond, Verba 1966; Greenberg 1970; Dawson Prewitt 1969).

One of the most common themes in political science is that the easiest way to predict an individual's political party preference is to know the political party of the parents (Levin 1961; Langton 1969; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003; Settle, Dawes, Fowler 2009 Geer, Schiller, Segal, Glencross 2010). Although this statement was not accepted at the beginning of political socialization research (Greenberg 1970), the development of the theme of the consistency of political party preferences has validated it, and this premise is now as close to being a definitive truth in the field of political science as one can get (Valentino, Sears 1998). Marten Levin mentioned this premise in a 1961 study which found that the children of Republican parents identified themselves

as Republican ninety-three percent of the time, and that the children of Democrat parents claimed to be Democrat seventy-five percent of the time (Levin 1961). Langton (1969) found that when parents identify as Republican, there is a sixty-eight percent chance their children will do so as well. For the children of Democrat parents, the figure is even higher at eighty-five percent. The point here, of course, is not the percentage differences between Republicans and Democrats in the two studies, rather it is the high consistency of adolescents choosing the political party of their parents as their own, whatever the party identification.

Understanding the transmission of political party identification from parent to child becomes more difficult when the parents do not identify with the same political party. One of the early assumptions in political socialization research was that fathers would dominate over the mother in politically influencing the child. The underlying reasoning for this assumption was that wives/mothers themselves would subscribe to the politics of the husbands/fathers (Langton 1969). Considering the fact that these early studies were conducted in a time when men generally were viewed as the unquestioned “head of the household,” this assumption of male dominance seems reasonable, even though there was little scholarly support for it. In fact, there is abundant support for the opposite proposition: women exert more political influence over the children than the father (Langton 1969; Thomas 1971). There are myriad factors and several possible explanations for the proposition of the dominance of the *mother* in the process of political party identification.

Langton addresses the issue of households with politically distant parents. After recalling two studies which found that college-age students and young adults were more

likely to adopt the political party of the mother, Langton conducted his own study to test that conclusion. His results mirrored the previous findings. In almost every situation involving party affiliation differences --- independent mother and partisan father, partisan mother and independent father, and Republican father and Democrat mother --- children were more likely to align with the party of the mother. The only exception was in the case of a Democrat father and Republican mother, where the number of Independent children greatly increased; while the father might have a small advantage of influence in such situations, many children drifted away from the father and toward political independence. Overall, children moved closer to the party affiliation of the mother (Langton 1969).

While generally children tend to agree more with the mother than the father, there is a distinction to be made when there is a difference in gender. Regardless of the political difference between mother and father, the daughter is more likely to follow the mother. However, when only the son is involved, he follows the father slightly more often when there is a partisan-independent divide among the parents. Further, when the parents are completely politically distant, the son is likely to side with the father. In regard to political attitudes beyond party preference, there is evidence that suggests that the influence of fathers over sons might be greater than other studies have shown (Thomas 1971). Nevertheless, the numbers generally are extremely strong in favor of the greater influence of the mother (Langton 1969). Thus, mothers do indeed appear to exercise more political influence over their children than do fathers.

A partial explanation for why mothers have greater influence than formerly thought might be that children tend to have stronger relationships with their mothers (Langton 1969). This is likely because the mother is the more nurturing figure, and she is

the parent with more interaction time with the couple's children. In fact, these factors have been discussed as possible explanations in previous research (Dawson, Prewitt 1969; Acock, Bengston 1973). There is even evidence to suggest that whichever parent a child feels closer to, that is the parent who has the stronger political influence over the child. According to Langton (1969), the stronger the bond between child and mother, the greater is the political influence. Further, the closer the relationship between father and son, the greater the amount of political influence (Langton 1969). When considering this explanation in contemporary studies, however, one needs to take into account the recent evolution of social norms. If interaction time were the primary reason for the greater influence of mothers in the 1960s and 1970s, it must be wondered whether this result holds true today, since many more women have entered the workforce, since their entrance into the workforce may have an adverse impact on interaction time with their children.

These findings of the dominance of parental influence, however, have not gone unchallenged. Jennings and Niemi (1965) have devoted much research to the topic of political socialization, and they reached different results from previous studies concerning the importance of the family as an agent of political socialization. Although their 1965 research found the political relationship between parents and children to be a positive relationship, the findings were weaker than expected. Further, when these researchers evaluated their data from their panel study in 1973, they suggested that political parental influence over their children in general had weakened. The findings implied that certain political attachments were fluid and subject to change over time

regardless of parental influence (Jennings, Niemi 1981). Thus, not all research on this topic is in agreement as to the lasting effects of parental political influence.

Influence of the types of households and the levels of parental politicization on children have also been reviewed by past literature. If we continue the reasoning that children are more receptive to the political views of the parent with whom there is a stronger personal relationship, and that closeness to a parent matters, it might be supposed that children will reject the political preferences of the parent with whom there is a poor personal relationship. There is evidence to support this assumption. Middleton and Putney (1963) showed that students who have a weak or negative relationship with their parents were more likely to develop political preferences different from their parents (Dawson, Prewitt 1969). In strict, authoritative households, children are more likely to differ politically from their parents and to choose a different political party (Langton 1969; Macoby, Matthews, Morton 1954). Conversely, more lenient parents have a greater ability to engender partisan compatibility in their children (Langton 1969). Further, McClosky and Dahlgreen (1959) concluded that one of the reasons for party consistency in a family is affection among family members (Dawson, Prewitt 1969; McClosky, Dahlgreen 1959). Thus, inter-personal family relationships exert great influence over the transmission of political preferences.

Even the *composition* of the family may play a role in the transmission of political attitudes and political participation as well. Males raised in a home with only a mother were very politically uninterested when compared to males who were raised in a family with both a father and mother (Langton 1969 Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003). Interestingly, this effect was not seen in the case of females. When both parents are

present, males are more politically ambivalent when the mother is the more visible leader (Langton 1969). When the father is viewed as the less strong parent, children are more likely to adopt politically apathetic attitudes (Greenberg 1970); this situation seems to have a lesser effect on females (Langton 1969).

Research in this field also provides examples of how the politicization of parents affects the political development of children. When parents were more politically sophisticated, more politically consistent, and politically unambiguous, their children were more likely to share the parents' political views (Dawson, Prewitt 1969; Jennings, Stoker, Bowers 2009; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003). When parents' political views were not clear, the children's attachment to any political party was weak. In short, politically unaware parents seem to lead to politically unaware children (Dawson, Prewitt 1969).

Additionally, parents have significant influence over their children's political involvement and civic participation. Politically-involved parents usually translate into politically-involved children (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, Keeter 2003). Without parental political communication and political signaling, children are more susceptible to outside influences (Jennings, Niemi 1968). Simple communication of political preferences or political involvement has the same strong effect on a child's future political behavior, resulting in an increased likelihood of voting and volunteering (Mcintosh, Hart, Youniss 2007). Children in families who discuss politics on a regular basis are twice as likely to vote as children in homes where politics is largely ignored as a topic of conversation (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, Keeter 2003). Recently, Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers found that the best way to predict whether an individual will vote is to learn whether his or her

parents voted in the last election immediately preceding the child's voting eligibility (Jennings, Stoker, Bowers 2009).

Overall, the research here indicates a strong role for parents in the political socialization process. Although research interest on this topic has waned over the years, there is still wide acceptance that parents matter. Herbert Hyman, one of the first researchers on the topic of political socialization, stated, "Foremost among agencies into politics is the family" (Hyman 1959).

With nominal exceptions, and perhaps surprisingly, political socialization research has shifted from focusing on the family and parental political differences to examining the relative effect of family only in combination with other factors. In addition to the lost interest on this topic, there are two serious shortcomings of political socialization research concerning the role of parents. First, as was previously discussed, interest in this topic has waned over the years, even though there has been an evolution in social norms, such as the explosion of women in the workforce, which might make the results in a contemporary study differ markedly from past studies. Second, previous research did not explore in depth all the factors that contribute to a parent's transmission of political beliefs. While closeness to a parent was examined, the level of interaction between parent and child, similar interests and hobbies between parent and child, and parental involvement in school activities were not. By accounting for past missteps and employing these factors, this study should offer a comprehensive picture of the parent-child political relationship.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter will begin by offering general theoretical expectations which will lead into the study's five hypotheses. An outline of the methodology for data collection will follow. Finally, there will be a discussion concerning the variables used in the study.

Political science literature is replete with evidence supporting the notion that parents, whether consciously or sub-consciously, are generally likely to transmit their political preferences to their children. The best way to predict an individual's political party allegiance is to determine his parents' preferred political party (Levin 1961; Langton 1969; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003; Settle, Dawes, Fowler 2009; Geer, Schiller, Segal, Glencross 2010) This finding has been very consistent since the beginning of political socialization and political party research; indeed, I have found no evidence to cause me to call this proposition into question, and, therefore, I expect it will continue to hold true.

As I mentioned earlier, strong familial relationships can help to ensure the transmission of political values from parent to child (Langton 1969; Dawson, Prewitt

1969, McClosky, Dahlgreen 1959). Langton (1969) examined a variable similar to the involvement of parents when he observed the degree of closeness of parent and child. He found that closeness matters, and that the overwhelming majority of children felt closer to their mothers. Because much time has passed since that study, this idea will be framed more broadly: the *opportunity* to influence or the level of personal involvement with one's children.

The more time students spend with their parents, the stronger is the possibility that they will adopt their parents' political preferences. While previous studies have examined the different effects that permissive households and authoritarian households have on the parents' influence on children's political affinities, the approach of my study differs. I will be studying the degree to which similar interests and time spent between parent and child affects parent-child political transmission. I expect that parents who are more involved in school activities and share similar interests with their children have a greater likelihood of transmitting their political attitudes to their children; likewise, it seems that the opposite is true, that less involved parents are less likely to influence their children politically. Presumably, parents who share interests with their children have a stronger inter-personal relationship with them.

I expect a student, if he or she has an involved parent, to identify politically with that parent. While I did not have a variable to address this proposition directly, there is a possibility that if one parent shares similar interests and spends more time with his or her child, the student will view that parent more favorably. Presumably, students will be more receptive to the political attitudes of the more interactive parent, if for no other reason than the fact that the more attentive parent has more time to influence the thinking

of his child generally. Similarly, if a student has similar interests in academic subjects, sports, or other hobbies with a particular parent, it is likely that similarities in other and varied areas, including politics, will exist.

Interaction time between a parent and child might have an impact on the child's recognition or adoption of parental political preferences. Indeed, there is literature which identifies interaction time as a possible explanation for the transmission of political values from parent to child (Acock, Bengston 1973; Langton 1969). Previous studies have identified the mother as the more politically influential parent in the household.

The first factor is that many more women have entered the workforce since the beginning of political socialization research. Thus, if the proposition that mothers wield more political influence over their children due to more interaction time is true, it is proper to question whether working mothers still hold the greater political influence that more interaction time provided in the past. From 1950 to 2000, women increased their numbers in the American workforce from eighteen million to sixty-six million. This was an increase from thirty percent to forty-seven percent of the total workforce (Toossi 2002). With fewer women staying at home, and presumably spending less time with their children, and the relative amount of time mothers and fathers spend with their children approaching equality, the mother's influence advantage in this particular area of the parent-child relationship might be less than in the past. Whether the mother works or does not work outside the home, the critical factor remains the quantity and quality of interaction time between mother and child. Although I expect that modern societal shifts and norms to mitigate the influence of the mother, I nevertheless expect that the natural emotional attachment between mother and child will ensure the mother's overall

traditional advantage. This expectation is based on the theory of earlier studies which held that the natural attachment argument as a possible explanation of mothers' political advantage over fathers.

The work schedules of the parents also might play a role in the political socialization process. Just as interaction time could be the result of similar interests and hobbies, so, too, might work schedules. Parents who work from home might have more time to spend with their children than parents who work outside of the home. Continuing the discussion of societal trends, it has become much more common for individuals to work from home. Also, while still relatively rare, today more fathers stay at home to care for their children. While the number of fathers who work from home is most likely small, the more significant number of *parents* who work from home might present an interesting additional component to this study. Perhaps as many as twenty-percent of the population falls into this category (Kelly, Williams 2015). Thus, the work schedules of parents might very well play a role in the political socialization process.

If the premise that interaction time is an important aspect of political socialization is accepted, then we might also discover that the parent who works from home exerts more influence than the parent who works outside of the home. Working from home, of course, might not translate directly into greater interaction time between parent and child. Indeed, a parent working outside of home still might have more interaction time with the child than a parent who works from home. This is, of course, only one aspect of interaction time and will be examined in relation to other factors.

I have discussed earlier literature which supports the thesis that the political behavior of parents affects the voting behavior of their children (Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, Keeter 2003). Kent Jennings and others have demonstrated that students are more likely to vote if their parents had voted in the election immediately preceding the student's eighteenth birthday (Jennings, Stoker, Bowers, 2009). Based upon this finding, I further postulate that parents who stressed the importance of voting are more likely to have children who vote. Just as parental encouragement of voting should positively influence children to vote, the political activity of parents should have a positive effect on the patterns of political activity of their children. In fact, because most young people are disengaged from all things political, it might seem anomalous for students without politically engaged parents to develop a greater interest in politics than students with politically active parents (Carpini 2000).

This study will look at parents' political influence on their children with a variety of updated variables. Since previous studies examined only closeness to parent as a factor, my measurement of level of parental involvement is needed. The level of involvement will include parent-child interaction time, parental participation in school activities, and similar interests and hobbies between parent and child. While it is reasonable to assume that there might be some discrepancies in the results of this study and the results of previous studies due to the passing of time and shifts in societal trends, there is one key previous finding I expect to remain constant: the relative political influence of the mother. While the influence of other particular institutions that influence the family might change over time, this study concerns primarily evidence as to *which*

parent in today's society exerts more political influence over the couple's child and which factors are important in the process of political transmission.

Here is what I expect to find when I update the analysis of parental influence in the ways described above. My hypotheses are as follows:

*H1: Students will retain the political preferences of their parents, but they will align more closely with their mothers' political preferences.*

*H2: Parents who work outside of home will have less political influence on their children.*

*H3: The greater the level of involvement of the parent, the closer their children will be to the parent's political preferences.*

*H4: The more politically engaged the parent, the greater is his or her political influence.*

*H5: The greater the parental encouragement to vote, the more important voting will be to the student.*

This study does not intend to challenge the major findings of previous studies, but to determine whether their findings of political socialization research have been affected by time. With the consideration of societal changes, the incorporation of novel variables such as shared interests and hobbies, and parental involvement in school activities, I intend no more than to tweak existing theory on the topic of political socialization. My findings in this study would be less surprising and have more solidity if they more or less replicated rather than contradicted the results of previous studies. If, however, there are

differences between this study and the results of decades-old studies, those differences should be the results of the effect of time and, most notably, shifting societal trends. By shifting the focus from the relationship between authoritative and permissive households to the amount of time parents spend with their children, as well as their shared interests, I might be better able to demonstrate whether political transmission can be attributed more to the similarity between parent and student and involvement of the parent than to the strictness or leniency of the household which was the focus of past research. In conclusion, while I expect to state several similar findings that are consistent with past research, such as the dominance of the mother and the relationship between engaged parents and engaged students, I believe that the inclusion of new factors will better explain the political socialization process between parent and student.

### Data and Methods

In order to test these hypotheses, I conducted a survey. The thirty-nine question survey was administered to students in an introductory course on American government at Oklahoma State University. All students who attend a public college or university in Oklahoma are required to complete this course. While many students elect to take and complete this course during their freshmen year, some students delay taking the course until they are further along in their collegiate careers. The survey was administered by instructors for American Government courses and discussion sections. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, and this condition of voluntariness, in addition to

being read aloud, was written in a note at the top of the survey. A total of 955 surveys were completed and available to use for my analysis.

While Oklahoma State University might be considered a more conservative campus than many others across the United States, this should not undermine the results of this study. Ideology is not really relevant to this study, rather the subject matter is the transmission of political preferences, whatever they are, from parent to student. If findings here illustrate that eighty percent of the student body identified themselves and their parents as conservative, we should expect to find the same correlation at a more liberal institution where eighty percent of the student body identified themselves and their parents as liberal. Representation of ideology is not important here, rather influence is the important feature.

The questions in the survey (see appendix two) range from issue-specific questions regarding political stances to questions about interaction time and political similarities between students and parents. There were some boilerplate questions concerning abortion and gay marriage. There were also general questions concerning the respondents' ideology and the ideology of their parents. Still, these types of questions were not the main focus of this study. Since much of my theory is based on the *opportunity to influence or level of parental political influence*, I asked questions relating to the amount of time the students spent with their parents as well as similarities of interests and hobbies. Further, because I wanted to examine the relationship between work schedule and political transmission, I asked questions wherein students were asked to recall the work patterns of their parents. There were also questions identifying class (i.e., freshmen, sophomore, junior, or senior) and questions about where the students

were from. Of the 955 respondents, 490 were female, 460 were male, and the remaining respondents chose not to answer. The vast majority of respondents were from Oklahoma and Texas, 577 and 202, respectively. Also, the vast majority were freshmen or sophomores. These classes accounted for 848 of all respondents. None of the findings in this study is intended either to confirm or to disavow any particular political point of view.

There are several specific reasons why I chose to administer my survey to students in an introductory course in American government. First, as a teaching assistant in this course I had easy access to the students and to the other teaching assistants who led weekly class discussions for these students on Fridays. Second, and this might be the most important, all students enrolled at Oklahoma State University are required to take an introductory course in American Government. Thus, the problem of observing only those students who self-selected to be in a political science course is eliminated. Indeed, these classes have students from every major available at Oklahoma State. Since this is the case, the results of this study can be generalized to the entire student population and not limited merely to a particular group within the student body. The third reason I selected such a course was compatibility with different theories of political socialization. Some theories stress the importance of what is learned early in life or young adulthood, other theories describe the ways in which different stages in life determine political attitudes, and still other theories state that political attitudes are malleable throughout an individual's life. By examining college students, many of whom are freshmen, I have selected the group of individuals who are most affected by their parents' political beliefs and behavior; the influence of parents is most evident in younger college students

because, typically, younger students have not been exposed to different political points of view which might challenge their callow opinions. Even if this study shows that parents exert great influence on their child's political thinking, it does not necessarily confirm those theories which postulate that political views are cemented early in life or young adulthood. What the political preferences of these students will be in ten, twenty, or forty years from now is unknown and irrelevant, as my primary concern is the influence of the parents on younger college students.

After the surveys were administered and collected, it was found that there were 955 surveys that could be used for analysis. Some surveys were excluded for a variety of reasons. I chose to discard surveys where not all questions were answered as well as those where the respondents provided two answers to one question. I wanted to use only the surveys where the respondents understood and fully complied with the survey instructions. Also, a small number of students chose not to participate or were absent at the time the survey was administered. Due to guidelines from the research board, any student under the age of eighteen was not allowed to participate. Since there were approximately 1100 students enrolled in the introductory course, and I was able to use 955 surveys, the number of students considered is statistically reliable. Finally, students did not receive any kind of remuneration, monetary or otherwise, for their participation. Hopefully they were glad to make a contribution to science and research.

I should note here that the questions concerned only a mother and a father. Students who consider themselves as having two mothers or two fathers would have been hard-pressed to answer the survey questions. However, I would expect that the percentage of this type of family would have been too small to be statistically significant

anyway. Also, students with multiple parents, such as students raised in foster homes or by grandparents, would have had an equally difficult time responding to my survey; such family circumstances were not addressed in this study. Again, I expect that the number of such families would be so small as to be statistically insignificant. In the future, such family situations might become sufficiently numerous to be included in similar studies.

### Variables

The variables will be discussed in the order they are used, beginning with hypothesis one. The dependent variable for this hypothesis, the political preferences of the respondents, was measured in three ways: the political attitudes of the respondents, the respondents' ideologies, and the respondents' party affiliations.

Political attitudes are determined by taking an average of the students' stances on two economic issues --- taxes and the government's general involvement in the economy; their positions on two social issues --- same-sex marriage and the restriction of access to abortion; and an overall rating of President Barack Obama's job performance. Ideology and party affiliation are determined according to the respondents' statements as to which one best describes their association.<sup>1</sup> The independent variable --- the political preferences of parents --- is measured in the same way as the respondents' preferences.

For hypotheses two, three, and four, the dependent variable --- political similarity between parent and student --- was measured in three ways. The first was the distance of

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<sup>1</sup> This study is not necessarily concerned with a respondent's ability to correctly associate specific-issue stances to a certain ideology or political party. Rather, the concern is to identify a parent-child political connection, and the belief of political similarity still demonstrates such a political connection.

the student's political preferences from the preferences of his or her mother and father. The political distance between student and mother and student and father were determined by taking the average of the respondents' scores on issue-specific questions and subtracting that number from the scores of the mothers and the scores of the fathers. This method placed the student on a nine-point scale from -4 to 4, with the higher negative scores indicating that the student is more liberal than his or her parents, and the higher positive scores indicating that the student is more conservative than the parent. Since there was interest in determining only distance and not whether the student was far more conservative or far more liberal, I then took the absolute distance score which gave the scale a range from 0-4. Zero would represent no distance between parent and student and thus would be a perfect relationship respecting political attitudes on issue-specific questions. A score of four would indicate complete distance.

The second and third measures of political similarity were shared political party identification between student and parent, and shared political ideology between student and parent. These were dichotomous and coded as 1 if they were shared, and 0 if they were not shared.

There were three independent variables for these three hypotheses: work schedule of the parent, level of the parent's personal involvement with the child, and the level of parental political engagement. Work schedule was coded as 1 if the parent worked from home, and 0 for any other work routine. The level of involvement consisted of responses to three survey questions: stated interaction time between student and parent, parental participation in school activities such as homework, and shared interests and hobbies. These scores were all based on a scale from 1-5, with 5 indicating strong agreement and 1

indicating strong disagreement. Finally, political engagement was determined by using two survey questions concerning the political attentiveness of parents and parental encouragement to participate in civic activities like voting. These, too, were based on the same 1-5 scale.

The last hypothesis, hypothesis 5, will have only one dependent variable and one independent variable. The dependent variable will be the respondents' intent to participate in civic activities like voting. The independent variable will be the level of parental encouragement to participate in such activities. Both of these variables are based on the same 1-5 scale as previously stated, with 5 indicating strong agreement and 1 indicating strong disagreement.

The only control variable used in this study was the political engagement of the respondent, and it was used on all hypotheses except hypothesis one. This was done in order to account for any difference between politically engaged students versus politically unengaged students. A less politically engaged student might have different responses to his or her parents' political preferences than a respondent who is more politically sophisticated.

Additionally, using different measures to determine parent-student political similarity, not focusing solely on ideology or party identification, and including multiple survey questions to comprise a single variable, should allow for a more encompassing result.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

Beginning with the results for hypothesis one, students were more liberal than their mothers and fathers, fathers were more conservative than mothers, and students fell to the left of both. However, the distance between child, mother, and father was not great, and, thus, the political attitude averages of all three were very closely related. As expected, children were politically closer to their mothers than to their fathers. Based on a range of 1-5 on issue-specific questions, where 1 was very liberal and 5 was very conservative, the students' average was 3.1, the mothers' average was 3.3, and the fathers' average was 3.5. Also, according to the correlation scores, there were very strong positive relationships between student and parent political attitudes (see Table 1).<sup>2</sup>

[Table 1 here]

[Figure 1 here]

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<sup>2</sup> Tables and figures are located in appendix one.

As illustrated in figure 1, from a total of 955 respondents, 563 shared the political ideology of the mother, while 392 did not. This means that approximately fifty nine percent of students subscribed to the political ideology of the mother. The number was virtually identical for fathers at fifty eight percent. Also, students were less likely to recall the ideology of their father than their mother. Of the 955 respondents, 176 were unsure of their fathers' political ideology, while 144 respondents were unsure of their mothers' ideology. Further, correlation scores also illustrate strong positive relationships between students' and parents' political ideologies (see Table 1).

There was, however, a greater difference when party identification was analyzed. Again, of the 955 respondents, fifty eight percent of respondents adopted the political party of their mothers, while only fifty four percent adopted the political party of their fathers (see Figure 2). These relationships demonstrate weaker correlation than political preferences and ideology, but a moderate positive relationship still exists (see Table 1).

[Figure 2 here]

These numbers indicate that students still were more likely to subscribe to the ideology of their parents, and that the mother has, albeit a small one, an influence advantage over the father. It was surprising that the mother's advantage over the father was only minimal, but this was consistent with previous research.

The focus of hypotheses two, three, and four focused on the effect of work schedule, parents' level of involvement in their child's life, and political engagement. Three dependent variables were tested for hypotheses two, three, and four: political distance between mother and distance between father; shared ideology with mother and with father; and shared party identification with mother and father. All were tested against three independent variables: work schedule, level of parental involvement, and parental political engagement. The political engagement of the respondent was used as a control. An OLS regression, model one, was used to test the distance variables, and, since the shared ideology and shared party identification variables were dichotomous, two logistic regression models were employed.

First, I will discuss the results for the mother-child relationship. The effect of the mother's work schedule did not conform to my hypothesis.<sup>3</sup> According to all three models, the relationship did not approach statistical significance and appeared weak. Further, because of this weak association, work schedule generally has no effect on political similarity between mother and child (see Table 2).

Higher levels of involvement with children did reduce the distance between mother-child political attitudes. Children with mothers who shared similar interests and hobbies with them, who were more involved in their school activities, and who had greater interaction time with them were less politically distant. Thus, the data presented an inverse relationship between parental involvement and political distance from parent.

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<sup>3</sup> The relationship, although weak and not statistically significant, was negative. When measuring distance between parent and child, negative scores indicate less political distance between parent and child.

This relationship was statistically significant at the .001 level for all models, yet substantive significance was lacking (see Table 2).

Political engagement also had an impact, albeit a very weak one, on the child's political distance from the mother. Again, this was an inverse relationship. The more politically engaged the mother, the less was the political distance between her and her children. The relationship was statistically significant for two of the three tests. There was some discrepancy between the models. While the scores from the OLS regression in model one failed to reach statistical significance, models two and three did demonstrate statistical significance (see Table 2). Further, this was the weakest relationship when the mother-child relationship was examined. A shift from no political engagement to full political engagement had only a .25 percent effect on distance from mother and child.

[Table 2 here]

Moving the discussion to fathers, work schedule did not appear to be a factor in the political relationship between father and child. This conflicted with my hypothesis. The relationship was similar to the one between a mother's work schedule and political distance of the student, and, accordingly, is not statistically significant. It also seems to have a weak effect. There appears to be no association between work schedule and father-child political similarity. Thus, work schedule of the father generally does not have an effect on the father's ability to successfully transmit political values to his children (see Table 3).

The father's level of involvement in a child's life had the same effect as involvement did for the mother. The greater the involvement of the father, the less the political distance between him and his child.<sup>4</sup> This relationship demonstrated statistical significance across all three models (see Table 3). It generally can be expected that fathers who are more engaged in their children's lives will have children who are politically similar.

As the level of political engagement between father and child increases, the political distance between them correspondingly decreases. As was the case with the mother, there is an inverse relationship between political engagement and political distance from the father. Fathers who are politically engaged tend to have children who are more politically similar; this relationship, while not very strong, was stronger for fathers than for mothers. All three models exhibited statistical significance. Statistical significance was at the 0.1 level according to the OLS regression analysis, and at the .001 level for the two logistic regressions. This was the weakest relationship, as it was for mothers. A shift from a completely politically disengaged father to one who is fully engaged decreases the political distance between father and child by only 1 percent. Again, this effect was different than it was for mothers, but the political engagement of either parent does not seem especially advantageous for the transmission of political preferences to children. While there is great certainty that a relationship does exist here, it appears to be a weak one (see Table 3).

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4 This relationship was negative: the direction expected. This means that the greater the level of involvement, the less the political distance between father and child.

[Table 3 here]

The question for hypothesis five is that parental encouragement of voting will have a positive effect on the student's decision to vote. The findings suggest that, regardless of the respondents' level of political engagement, parental encouragement had an effect on respondents' expressed intention to participate in civic activities such as voting. The relationships between mother and child and father and child were both statistically significant, at the .001 level, across all three models. Further, this effect appears to be very strong. There is a 25 percent increase for a child to state his or her intent to vote if there is a shift from no encouragement to complete encouragement from either parent. The greater the encouragement, the more likely it is that the child will choose to participate in future civic activities. Thus, on the issue of voting, parents appear to have the ability to exercise a substantial amount of influence over their children. With such a strong positive relationship, encouragement seems not only to matter, but to matter greatly (see Tables 4 and 5).

[Table 4 here]

[Table 5 here]

My results present mainly confirmation of my expectations. When analyzing only the political attitudes, ideologies, and party identifications of students and parents, students are found to be politically similar to both parents, but more similar to their mothers. These findings confirm past studies which provided evidence in support of the mother as the more politically influential parent. Further, the level of personal involvement of parents, as well as their degree of political engagement, matter for both the mother and father; the influence of personal engagement, however, has a much greater effect. While I did not expect work schedule to affect fathers and mother equally, only fathers seem to feel the negative impact of working outside of the home. However, this effect is very weak and generally is not a factor in the political transmission from parent to child.

Further, because multiple models and different measures for parent-child political similarities were used and produced similar results, the findings presented here can be viewed as robust. While there were limited or minor differences as to statistical and substantive significance, all relationships were in the same direction in all three models.

There is evidence provided here which supports the claim that parents, at least in this stage of a child's life, do indeed have the ability to influence their children politically.

### Analysis

The results presented generally support my hypotheses. However, many of the variables examined here had only a weak effect on parent-child political similarity. With that said, children are more likely than not to adopt the political preferences of their

parents, and their political preferences are closer to those of their mothers. Higher levels of parental involvement and parental encouragement to participate in civic activities such as voting tend to create greater political similarity between parents and children. Parental political engagement, although apparently minute, does have an effect on the political distance between parent and child.

There was one area where I did not expect to see different results for fathers and mothers: work schedule. Although work schedule seemed to have different results for mothers than fathers, neither relationship produced statistical significance. Work schedule seemed to matter little in the process of political transmission from parent to child. Thus, although I had anticipated that it would have affected both mothers and fathers equally, it is possible that the sources of parental political power are affected by the gender of the parents.

Now, further discussion focused on each of the findings, beginning with the overall political similarity between parent and child. Based on past research, the finding that children are likely to adopt the political preferences of the parents was expected. Further, since children still are more likely to adopt the political preferences similar to their mothers,' this study is in line with the results of previous studies.<sup>5</sup> Fathers, however, are far from inconsequential; even though mothers appear to hold an edge politically, the results of this study indicate that fathers are far from politically impotent. The

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5 There might be a concern that students only appear to be politically closer to their mothers because both students and women are more likely to be liberal. This is not the case based on two points. First, married women are more likely to identify as Republican. Second, no matter the ideology or party identification of the mother, the level of involvement, the level of political engagement, and encouragement to participate in civic activities such as voting were important. Thus liberal and conservative mothers, and Republican and Democrat mothers, had the same political impact on their children, depending on the level of the aforementioned variables. For example, a highly involved liberal mother was just as likely to produce a politically similar child as a highly involved conservative mother.

percentages of children identifying with their mothers in terms of ideology and political party were greater, but not much greater, than those children who identified with the ideology and political party of their fathers.

It might be that mothers have not been adversely affected by the evolution of social norms. This proposition might lend credence to the theory that there is a strong natural or emotional bond between mother and child, which bond in turn translates into political similarity capable of resisting social transformation. Further, with the continuing evolution of social norms, revisiting this topic in the future would improve the understanding of the role of the parent in the political socialization process.

Parents who are more involved with their children also are better able to transmit their political preferences to their children. With the exception of encouragement of civic participation, these relationships were the strongest of all relationships tested. Both mothers and fathers increase the chances of having politically similar children when they are more involved in their children's lives. Since the level of involvement included factors such as interaction time with parents, similar interests and hobbies with parents, and parental participation in school activities, it easily can be inferred that closeness to parents matters. It seems intuitive that the greater the opportunity to influence children the more likely it is that children will be influenced by parental contact; earlier studies produced similar results. Interaction time between parent and student might have political effects even if the interaction time is completely non-political, for the reason that the child would be expected to assume the views, including the political views, of the parent he or she likes better or with whom there is greater personal identification. For example, consider the number of voters who cast their presidential ballots for Barack Obama based

primarily on his personality and likeability. Thus, the voters' apolitical connection to politicians can translate into political agreement. (Perhaps a future study could pose questions dealing with children's parental preferences and their effects on the transmission of political development.)

I would have supposed that children who have politically engaged parents would view their parents as knowledgeable on political topics and, therefore, likely to take on their parents' political beliefs as their own. Early political socialization research found that the political sophistication of the father mattered more to a child's political development. This study demonstrates that the effect of politically active parents on their children's political preferences does exist, but only to a small extent. One explanation is that youth are so politically ambivalent that they accept political biases from their parents regardless of their parents' political sophistication.

Parents who demonstrated the value of voting and participating in other civic activities have a very influential impact on children. Children are more likely to state their intent to vote if they receive encouragement to participate in civic activities at home. This was true regardless of the political attentiveness of the child. The respondents in this survey, however, might have answered the survey questions according to what they perceived as the socially desirable responses, thus putting themselves and their parents in the best light. It also might be true that children stated their intentions to vote in the future as some kind of piety owed to their parents.

Although working outside of home decreased the political distance between mother and child, but increased the distance between father and child, the results were

very weak. While I originally theorized that work schedule might affect the interaction time between parent and child, it can be concluded from this study that work schedule has little effect on the transmission of political preferences from parent to child. This finding makes sense for three reasons. First, assuming that children are at home, parents who work from home have more access to their children in the very early years of the child's development. Second, during the early childhood years, children are completely ignorant of political views and political cues. Third, after students begin to attend school regularly for seven hours a day, they may have an hour or two more access to the parent who does not work outside of home. Thus, there seems to be little advantage, politically speaking, for the parent who works from home.

The results in this study have demonstrated that today's parents are still an important agent of political socialization and are capable of molding the political preferences of their children. However, since many of the various factors of the parent-child relationship exhibited such a small effect on the political preferences of their children, the proposition that parents do not seem to generate more of a general effect could be interpreted as surprising. Nevertheless, it is evident that children are likely to be politically similar to their parents; however, because of the weakness of the relationships, it is possible that the factors which were examined in this study failed to consider all important aspects of parental political socialization. Future research might benefit from considering different variables.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Simply put, parents matter in the political socialization process of their children. This parental relationship has withstood the test of time. Students in this survey were more likely than not to subscribe to the political ideology and party of their parents and to obtain their political attitudes. However, children did appear to be more politically similar to their mothers. Parents play an integral role in introducing their children to the political world and shaping their political beliefs. This study provides evidence which should encourage parents to increase the political awareness of their children. As Thomas Jefferson once observed, the success of a democracy is contingent upon an educated populace. Certain civic activities like voting are a fundamental and vital part of our government, and parents should use their influence to create politically attentive children who mature into civic-oriented adults.

Since young people are usually politically uncertain, society would benefit if parents focused more on the political education of their children. Parents should consider new means to awaken the dormant political interests of their children by employing novel

tactics to encourage political thought and debate. Basic values and preferences are instilled in children from an early age, and there is no reason why the political sphere should not be emphasized. Although it might not be ideal for parents to mold their children to mirror their exact preferences, emphasizing the importance of political attentiveness and civic responsibility should be a parental priority. Parents might not like the title of political role models, but in a practical sense that is who they are. That role should be embraced and handled delicately and cautiously by concerned parents.

Based on the findings of this study, I cannot, of course, state with certainty that Herbert Hyman's words that parents are the strongest agent of political socialization hold true today. I can, however, state with confidence that the power of parents is clear, and that this power has remained significant over time.

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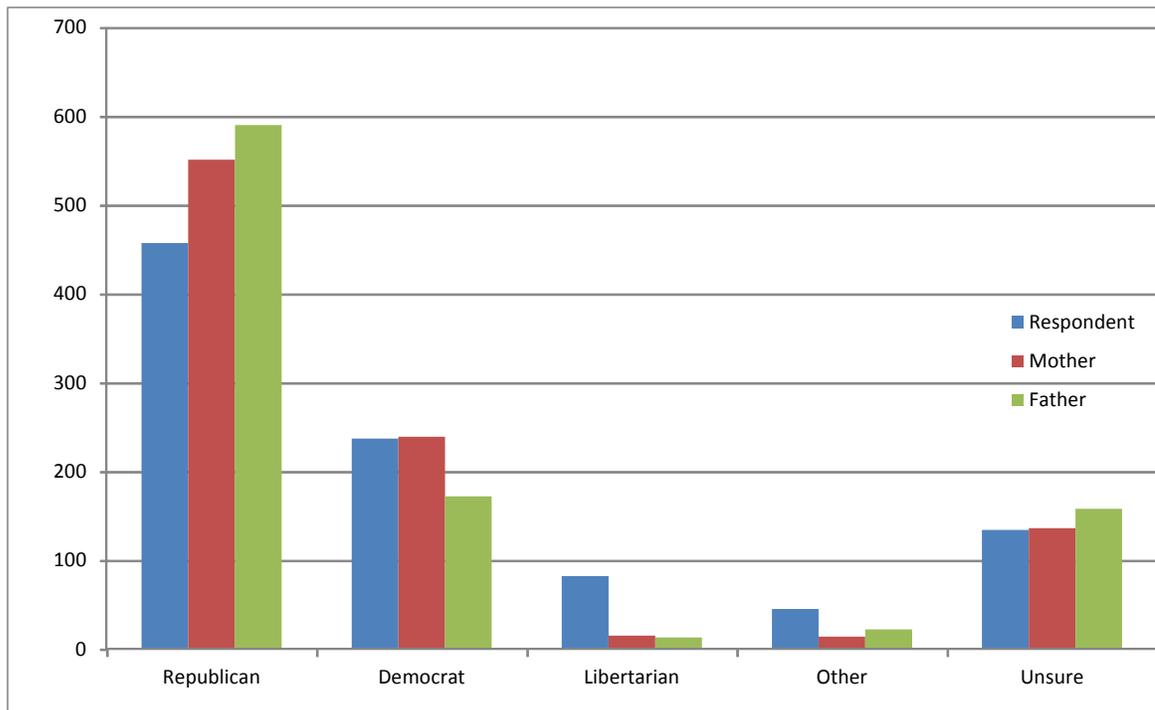
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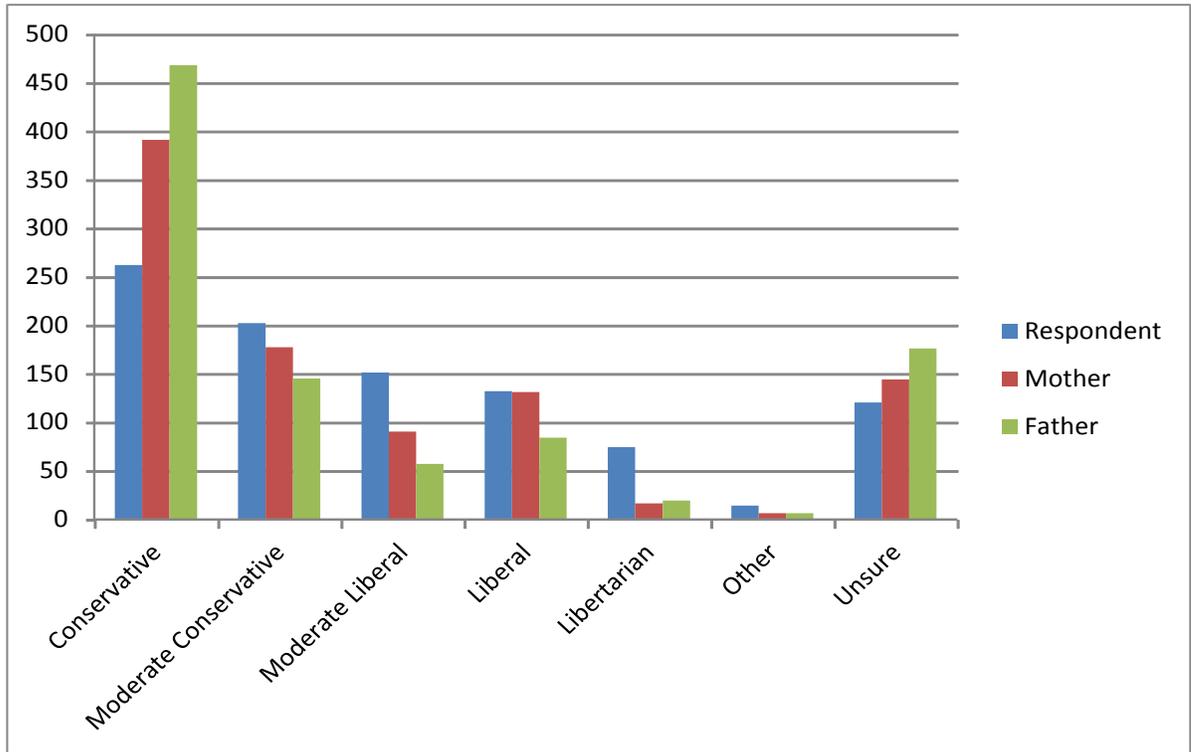
APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

*Figure 1: Party affiliation of respondent and parents.*



**Figure 2: Ideology of respondent and parents**



<i>Table 1</i>		
<u>Correlation</u> between political preferences of respondent and political preferences of parents.		
IV	DV	<b>Results</b>
Mother political attitudes	Respondent political attitudes	.7400***
Mother political ideology	Respondent political ideology	.5486***
Mother political party	Respondent political party	.3899***
Father political attitudes	Respondent political attitudes	.6587***
Father political ideology	Respondent political ideology	.4604***
Father political party	Respondent political party	.3931***
*p <0.1 **p <0.01 ***p<0.001 N=955		

<i>Table 2</i>			
Mother-child political relationship analysis			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Distance from mother	Shared political party	Shared political ideology
Mother work schedule	-.021 (.027)	.022 (.112)	-.018 (.114)
Mother level of involvement	-.093 (.021)***	.451 (.088)***	.443 (.089)***
Mother level of political engagement	-.009 (.012)	.166 (.063)**	.171 (.063)**
Respondent level of political engagement	.006 (.010)	.142 (.041)	.204 (.042)
<p>*p &lt;0.1  **p &lt;0.01  ***p&lt;0.001  N=955</p>			

<i>Table 3</i>			
Father-child political relationship analysis			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	Distance from father	Shared political party	Shared political ideology
Father work schedule	.018 (.032)	-.063 (.118)	-.160 (.132)
Father level of involvement	-.128 (.022)***	.388 (.078)***	.426 (.080)***
Father level of political engagement	-.042 (.019)*	.230 (.068)**	.244 (.068)***
Respondent level of political engagement	.015 (.012)	.149 (.042)	.204 (.043)
<p>*p &lt;0.1  **p &lt;0.01  ***p &lt;0.001  N=955</p>			

<i>Table 4</i>	
Effect of mother's encouragement to vote	
	Respondent's stated intent to participate in civic activities like voting
Mother's encouragement to participate in civic activities like voting	.209 (.018)***
Respondent level of political engagement	.334 (.014)
<p>*p &lt;0.1  **p &lt;0.01  ***p &lt;0.001  N=955</p>	

<i>Table 5</i>	
Effect of father's encouragement to vote	
	Respondent's stated intent to participate in civic activities like voting
Father's encouragement to participate in civic activities like voting	.198 (.018)***
Respondent level of political engagement	.331 (.014)
*p <0.1 **p <0.01 ***p <0.001 N=955	

## APPENDIX II

*The goal of this survey is to provide a better understanding of political ideology. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and all results are completely anonymous. You are consenting to participate in this survey by answering these questions. The estimated time of completion is 10-20 minutes. If you are under the age of 18, you may not complete the survey – when requested, please simply return your blank survey without having completed it. Thank you very much for your help, without which this research cannot be completed.*

Q1: Which best describes your level of interest in politics?

- high
- moderate
- low
- unsure/no response

Q2: In an average week, how often do you discuss politics with friends, family, peers, or coworkers?

- frequently
- occasionally
- rarely
- never
- unsure/no response

<b>Q3-11: Respond to each of the following questions by placing a check mark ✓ in the box that corresponds to your answer.</b>	<b>very favorably</b>	<b>somewhat favorably</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>somewhat unfavorably</b>	<b>very unfavorably</b>	<b>unsure/ no response</b>
Recently, several federal courts have declared many state bans on same-sex marriage unconstitutional. How favorably do you view this outcome (i.e., the declaring of these same-sex marriage bans as unconstitutional)?						
To the best of your knowledge, how favorably would your <i>mother</i> view this outcome (i.e., the declaring of these same-sex marriage bans as unconstitutional)?						
To the best of your knowledge, how favorably would your <i>father</i> view this outcome (i.e., the declaring of these same-sex marriage bans as unconstitutional)?						
Recently, states such as Texas and Louisiana have passed laws greatly restricting the number of abortion providers in each state, thus making it more difficult to obtain an abortion. How favorably do you view these laws (i.e., laws making it more difficult for women to obtain an abortion)?						
To the best of your knowledge, how favorably would your <i>mother</i> view these laws (i.e., laws making it more difficult for women to obtain an abortion)?						
To the best of your knowledge, how favorably would your <i>father</i> view these laws (i.e., laws making it more difficult for women to obtain an abortion)?						
How favorably do you view President Obama's job performance since he has been in office?						
To the best of your knowledge, how favorably would your <i>mother</i> view President Obama's job performance since he has been in office?						
To the best of your knowledge, how favorably would your <i>father</i> view President Obama's job performance since he has been in office?						

<b>Q12-17: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (Place a check mark ✓ in the box that corresponds to your response.)</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>	<b>somewhat agree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>somewhat disagree</b>	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>unsure/ no response</b>
I agree with the following statement: "Less government involvement in the economy is generally a good thing."						
To the best of my knowledge, my <i>mother</i> would agree with the following statement: "Less government involvement in the economy is generally a good thing."						
To the best of my knowledge, my <i>father</i> would agree with the following statement: "Less government involvement in the economy is generally a good thing."						
I agree with the following statement: "Tax rates on the wealthiest Americans are high enough."						
To the best of my knowledge, my <i>mother</i> would agree with the following statement: "Tax rates on the wealthiest Americans are high enough."						
To the best of my knowledge, my <i>father</i> would agree with the following statement: "Tax rates on the wealthiest Americans are high enough."						

Q18: With which political ideology do you most identify?

- conservative
- moderate with conservative leaning
- moderate with liberal leaning
- liberal
- libertarian
- other
- unsure/no response

Q19: With which of the following political ideologies would you say your *mother* most closely identifies?

- conservative
- moderate with conservative leaning
- moderate with liberal leaning
- liberal
- libertarian
- other
- unsure/no response

Q20: With which of the following political ideologies would you say your *father* most closely identifies?

- conservative
- moderate with conservative leaning
- moderate with liberal leaning
- liberal
- libertarian
- other
- unsure/no response

Q21: With which political party do you most identify?

- Republican
- Democratic
- Libertarian
- other
- unsure/no response

Q22: With which political party does your *mother* most identify?

- Republican
- Democratic
- Libertarian
- other
- unsure/no response

Q23: With which political party does your *father* most identify?

- Republican
- Democratic
- Libertarian
- other
- unsure/no response

Q24: Which of the following best describes your *mother's* work schedule while you were growing up?

- worked mostly outside of home
- worked mostly from home
- work situation varied over this time frame
- other
- unsure/no response

Q25: Which of the following best describes your *father's* work schedule while you were growing up?

- worked mostly outside of home
- worked mostly from home
- work situation varied over this time frame
- other
- unsure/no response

(Questions continue on the following page.)

<b>Q26-36: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements? (Place a check mark ✓ in the box that corresponds to your response.)</b>	<b>strongly agree</b>	<b>somewhat agree</b>	<b>neutral</b>	<b>somewhat disagree</b>	<b>strongly disagree</b>	<b>unsure/ no response</b>
My mother is politically attentive (e.g., involved in activities such as voting or participating in political organizations, reading or watching political news, or discussing politics).						
My father is politically attentive (e.g., involved in activities such as voting or participating in political organizations, reading or watching political news, or discussing political issues).						
While I was growing up, my mother strongly encouraged me to participate in civic activities, such as voting.						
While I was growing up, my father encouraged me to participate in civic activities, such as voting.						
I plan to participate regularly in civic activities, such as voting, in the future.						
My mother was involved in school activities (e.g., assisting with homework, going to sporting events or attending school meetings).						
My father was involved in school activities (e.g., assisting with homework, going to sporting events, or attending school meetings).						
While I was growing up, I spent a lot of time with my mother.						
While I was growing up, I spent a lot of time with my father.						
My mother and I share the same interests (e.g., have the same preferences or hobbies).						
My father and I share the same interests (e.g., have the same preferences or hobbies).						

Q37: What is your class standing?

- freshman
- sophomore
- junior
- senior
- refuse to answer

Q38: Where would you say you are from?

- Oklahoma
- Texas
- other U.S. state
- other country
- refuse to answer

Q39: What is your sex?

- male
- female
- refuse to answer

VITA

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Master of Arts

Thesis: Examining the Parent-Child Political Relationship

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Biographical:

Education:

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