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An Examination of Parental Transmission on Young Voters' Political Party Affiliation, Parenting Style Mediations

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship of parental transmission and young voter's political affiliation by examining parental and offsprings' political affiliations within the United States. Correlations between both maternal and paternal political affiliations with offspring political affiliations were significant. Paternal types of authoritative and permissive parenting acted as mediators of parental transmission. Examining literature from psychological, political science, historical, and sociological tests, the thesis explores how young voters' develop their political affiliations. Suggestions from the text emphasize the importance of examining voters' identities, historical events, and the priorities of the generation to understand young voters' political behavior.

Keywords: parental transmission, political affiliation, young voters, parenting styles, personality, dog whistle politics, polarization

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When the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was ratified, political scientists turned to examine the political behavior of the election's newest addition: the youth vote. When 18 to 20-year-olds were allowed to vote in the United States, research shifted to observe how these young voters were participating in the political field. Since this addition, expansive amounts of literature have been published to better understand how the young voter forms their political affiliation. Observation in America has continuously looked toward the behavior of the youngest voters, as they hold the nation's future power. Researchers have kept up with the developments of new technologies and shifting climate in the United States to continue to predict how the youngest generation of voters will behave. One component to the formation of young voters' political affiliation that has received substantial research is the role of parental transmission.

Parental transmission is the concept that parents can pass ideas off to their offspring and have influence on the offspring's beliefs and values. With various changes in the United States over the past 60 years, parental transmission may not play the same role in influencing young voters' political affiliations. The purpose of the presented research is to explore if present day parental transmission is still related to young voters' political affiliations. While this exploration is an important component to understanding how modern youth make their political decisions, it is also vital to examine how historical and sociological encounters in the last 60 years have impacted affiliation development. Examination of voting behavior from multiple perspectives suggests that political scientists should explore the developments of political affiliation through a holistic approach. Considering all the internal and external factors that may influence a young

voters' political affiliation produces key characteristics to understanding the present political development in the United States.

Literature Review

Early work on the idea of intergenerational transmission began in the 1950s and since then has become a multi-faceted network of research trying to explain how youth adopt their values, beliefs, and ideas. Current work for the intergenerational transmission of political affiliation from parents to offspring looks at the external influences on youth to better create an understanding of how they form their political identity. In this modern age, youth have more access to information than those before them due to media outlets that provide quick and convenient access to the world's breadth of knowledge. Due to advanced research on transmission, researchers are motivated to expand literature and examine the different components of intergenerational transmission of political party affiliation. These factors focus on concepts such as the different socialization structures modern youth are exposed, the different types of learning that impact children and the cognitive processes they develop, and finally, a large amount of recent research that has begun to focus on the different aspects of the family unit and the impact the unit as a whole has on the child's political development. Modern research supports the idea that transmission of knowledge and beliefs, wether it be political or not, is not a simple psychological process. Many different genetic and environmental factors play a role in forming who a youth is to be and what they are to value.

Socialization Structures

Socialization is the process in which an individual develops their beliefs, values, and ideas in order to behave appropriately within society. Given this process, socialization can occur in many different ways and be influenced by many different sources of information. The process

of socialization can be motivated by peers, school, recreational activity groups, media, family, and more (Quintelier, 2015). Specifically, in this text, the focus will be placed on how parental socialization of political parties occurs. While parental socialization is the focus, it is important to also evaluate the role of other forms of socialization in politics to grasp a better understanding of how youth adopt their party affiliations.

While examining the different forms of socialization in depth, Quintelier (2015) wanted to research how five different agents of political socialization potentially influence political participation. The five agents she researched were: parents, peers, school, voluntary associations, and media. Quintelier conducted longitudinal survey research with 3,025 students from various schools throughout Belgium. Participants were surveyed at 16, 18, and 21, and were asked questions about their involvement with each of the five agents, as well as their perceived political participation. Due to modern societal structure, Quintelier hypothesized that parental socialization is not the only explanation to how adolescents formulate their ideas and receive political information. Past research shows that children of politically active parents are more likely to engage in political discussion in all aspects of their lives (Quintelier, 2015). According to Quintelier, it was this premise that motivated her research. Findings reveal that across all ages, engaging in political discussion with peers, parents, or watching the news constantly, increases future political participation, whereas, increasing television and interaction in school environments decrease future participation. The findings support the idea that close relationships and discussion are essential for political socialization despite society's large emphasis on watching television. The reports also support the idea that when students are forced to engage in political activities in school, retention rate and participation will not carry over.

Hooghe and Boonen (2015) wanted to specifically examine the extent to which parents are still seen as important socialization agents in adolescents' lives today. The researchers also wanted to look at the effect gender-specific socialization might have on transmission. Using survey research on 3,426 child-parent dyads, Hooge and Boonen researched the political involvement of families and the amount of socialization that occurs from households compared to general socialization. They wanted to see if there were any effects to same gender parent-offspring dyads. Their findings revealed that parental transmission is still stronger than general socialization of political alignment. Hooghe and Boonen expected to find the youth deviating from their parents party affiliations and suspected their behavior would reflect a decline in political interest; however, their hypothesis was incorrect. Youth still align with their parents. Consistent with several other articles, the researchers also found that the more politically involved a household unit was, the stronger rates of transmission occurred. In terms of gender specific socialization, Hooghe's and Boonen's initial hypothesis was not supported. No effect occurred between a parent and child of the same gender. The researchers' data did however reveal that the father's role in talking about politics in the home has a larger effect than the mother's role.

Hatemi, Funk, Medlan, Maes, Silberg, Martin, et. al (2009) wanted to compare the existing research of parental socialization and new research on genetics to examine which hypothesis better explains why transmission occurs. Hatemi et al. (2009) wanted to look at three different sources of variance: additive genetic, common/shared environment, and unique/unshared environment, to determine how youth attain their political attitudes. The researchers used two different samples of monozygotic and dizygotic twins in order to obtain their data. One sample was a longitudinal sample of adolescents with two subgroups. One

subgroup was followed from ages 9.5 to 14 and another group was followed from 11 to 17. The other sample was a cross-sectional sample that assessed the roles of various genetic and environmental factors in different age cohorts ranging from 18 to 88 years old. Hatemi et al. (2009) found many results from their data that help to better understand how youth may obtain their political attitudes and the role of parental socialization. They found that gradually youth become more opinionated and solidified on their opinions with age. They also discovered that as early as 14 or 15, youth hold enough political opinions to reflect that of adults. In groups under the age of 20, the researchers found that common, shared environments or unique, unshared environments were the two best fit models for understanding how youth form their opinions. Researchers discovered that around 21 years of age, environment plays a smaller role in influencing adolescents, and genetic influences increase. The researchers hypothesize that these findings could be due to youth commonly leaving the home around this age. They also hypothesize that during adolescence parents may be subconsciously teaching their children political attitude heuristics. The researchers believe the use of political heuristics would help the children associate which political attitudes go with one another. These findings suggest that campaigns target not only future potential voters, but due to the large environmental impact on youth, parents as well.

Social Learning Theory

In 1973, Albert Bandura coined the idea of Social Learning theory. Bandura initially faced backlash as Social Learning theory focuses on external motivations for learning and behavior; however since then, his theory has gained lots of support. Social Learning theory is the idea that people learn and imitate behaviors from others. Bandura was clear in making sure that society understood this theory as a two way road, meaning that not only does the environment

create behavior, but behavior can also create environment (Bandura, 1973). Social Learning theory is foundational in understanding why parental transmission occurs. Offspring learn many things through social learning from their parents, and political affiliation is no exception. Current research emphasizes the idea that clear and constant cues allow for the learning process to take place more easily and more effectively, producing higher levels of transmission.

To contextualize Social Learning theory, Joris Boonen (2019) wanted to examine the effects of parental socialization on negative partisanship. Past research from Social Learning theory suggests that parents who positively reinforce clear political cues, are more likely to have children who share the same political affiliation as their parents. According to Boonen, prior research has supported the Social Learning hypothesis; however, that past research has only explored partisanship, and not negative partisanship. Boonen predicted that negative partisanship will still be transmissible; however, the negative partisanship effect would not be as large as the one for partisanship. Boonen's prediction was not supported, and instead, negative partisanship showed an effect the same size as partisanship. Findings from Boonen's survey research reveal that negative partisanship is transmissible. He also found that transmission occurs more for supporters of the most polar parties. In this specific study, the most polar party was a radical right party.

In another study, Boonen (2016) used archival data from a longitudinal study of 1,430 family triads (father-mother-child) to look at the family structure and parental influence on adolescent voter behavior. He predicted that both mothers and fathers would influence their child's party preferences, mothers would have a stronger positive influence, and adolescent children would not directly influence their parents' party preferences. Boonen (2016) used prior research findings that revealed top-down processing is not the only relationship between parents

and children when discussing politics. Children can influence and initiate political discussions in the household. This idea reflects the reciprocal relationship Bandura explained in his Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1973). In order to evaluate the families, Boonen looked at factors such as political interest, conventional political participation, political efficacy, and participatory activities for both the parents and the child. Results reveal that children do receive positive influence from both parents in developing their party preferences; however, both fathers and mothers equally influence their child's preferences. When examining further, research revealed that even though fathers were found to be more interested in politics, followed political news more, and had a higher rate of political efficacy, both parents had shared influence. The researcher's final hypothesis, that children do not directly influence their parents' party preferences, was supported in this research. The finding can be implied to understand that while the relationship between parent and child is not solely top-down processing, it is also not a two-way relationship either. Children can merely instigate political conversation, which can temporarily increase parental political involvement. According to this research, children cannot influence parental political affiliations.

In accordance with Boonen's 2016 research, McDevitt and Chaffee (2002) researched to see if adolescents can restructure political communication within the family structure. For a long time, society believed that socialization was merely a process in which parents placed influence on adolescents and knowledge only flowed in a downward line. McDevitt and Chaffee (2002) used 457 parent-dyads of youth in 5th to 12th grade from Kids Voting enriched programs. The sample was used to show that social influence is a process of reciprocity and adolescents can influence parents. Kids Voting was a program implemented in schools so that children could learn basic civil engagement. Studies on the program found that its implementation increases

future civic engagement and voter participation. Findings reveal that parents in these dyads increased the strength of their partisan identification, developed stronger feelings about candidates, and were more likely to express opinions about campaign issues. These results demonstrate the presence of a feedback loop where children will discuss a new concept or idea with their parents, then the parents will further educate themselves on this new topic to maintain a leadership hierarchy within the family structure. If the conversation is revisited in the future, the feedback loop allows both the children and parent to discuss the topic at a deeper level. Children stimulate political interest in adults just as adults stimulate interest in children.

The vast network of political transmission research emphasizes the idea that cue clarity and amount of deliverance are vital for children to understand their parents' political views and replicate them. Cue clarity can be examined through Tedin's 1974 research. Tedin (1974) wanted to research parental transmission based on three founding criteria: the nature and extent of the attitude correspondence between parents and children, the degree to which that correspondence is a function of parental transmission as distinguished from other social forces, and the factors that affect the success of transmission. Tedin (1974) researched these three essential criteria for parental transmission by conducting survey research with 322 parent-child dyads. The children had recently graduated from high school and were going to enter their first election. Tedin looked at factors such as adolescent perception of the parent's attitude. Researchers found that 72 percent of adolescents were able to correctly identify their parents' political identification, but only 12 percent could correctly identify parent's attitudes on specific issues. Levels of transmission are not determined by a correct perception but merely moderated by one. The more accurate an adolescent's perception of their parent's ideas and affiliation, the more influence the parents will have on the adolescent's attitude. Findings support that when perceptual accuracy is

held constant, parents can have influence on both the adolescent's party affiliation and their issue-based attitudes. Tedin (1974) also found the greater an issue is to a parent, the more influence the parent will have on the adolescent's attitude toward that same issue. Finally, Tedin (1974) also wanted to look at the conditions of family interaction. He found that conditions will not affect the success of attitude transmission. For example, the warmth of the parent will not impact transmission. What researchers found is that the amount of political discussion within the household does increase transmission.

Another aspect of understanding transmission rates from parents to offspring is by examining the cognitive processes that go into political identification. Bougher and Lau (2020) set out to research if parents are the primary socializing agents for voters and how parents may affect children's cognitive motivations and decision strategies. Using 99 student-parent dyads, the researchers conducted surveys to discover correlations between parent and child cognitive motivations, decision strategies, and other observable preferences. The researchers predicted there would be a positive correlation between a parent's and child's cognitive motivations, but that correlation would be weaker than more observable correlations, such as comparing parent-child information search behaviors. Bougher's and Lau's (2020) hypotheses were supported, showing that parents and children have cognitive motivations that correlate positively, but there is an even stronger relationship between their information search behavior. Bougher and Lau (2020) also found the more autonomy-supportive a parent is toward their offspring, the more likely the parent and child are to align politically. These findings can be used to better understand that parental figures help socialize their children and that it starts with cognitive processes. Children observe and learn these cognitive processes from their parents, then implement the cognitive behaviors into their own life, especially in their voting behavior.

Family Unit

While examining the role of parental socialization of political affiliation on children, most of the focus is placed on the relationship between the parent and the child; however, to fully understand all the factors that influence a child's political affiliation, research needs to examine the entire family unit. Within the family unit, researchers have conducted work on how the relationship between two parents affect the offspring, how the political involvement of a family impacts transmission, and even how parents with extreme affiliations can impact political learning in children. Research even reveals that the type of parenting parents display can impact the amount of alignment offspring will adopt. These factors are vital components of socialization and demonstrate that the formation of youths' party affiliation is multi-faceted.

Okolikj and Hooghe (2022) researched to see not only if intergenerational transmission of party and ideology affiliations take place, but if socioeconomic status and family discussion impact the rates of transmission. Along with looking at these important factors, Okolikj and Hooge (2022) wanted to determine if there were differences in the political ideation of 15 to 19-year-olds. They approached this curiosity by dividing adolescents into three groups: 15-year-olds who had no experience voting, 16 and 17-year-olds who participated in mock elections, and 18 and 19-year-olds who participated in a real election. The researchers expected to see transmission rates, rates increasing when socioeconomic status of a household increases, and when more political discussions take place in the household. Findings revealed that parental transmission does occur. If a parent was right of the scale, their offspring was more likely to also be right of the scale as well. Results support the idea that with more political discussion in the household comes more political transmission. Contrary to what the researchers expected, socioeconomic rates did not have a significant effect on transmission rates. Finally, the most

important finding concluded that the researchers were unable to determine differences in the voting opinions of 15-year-olds to 19-year-olds, suggesting that initial political affiliations are already formed by the age of 15. The information is valuable to researchers because they should research even younger children to determine when the first appearances of political affiliation occur in adolescents.

Iyengar, Konitzer, and Tedin (2018) researched how the family as an entire unit can impact parental transmission. The researchers obtained survey data from 1974 that examined marital relationships and the amount of agreement in their political affiliations, as well as parent-child triads' intergenerational transmission. This data was then compared to survey research obtained from 2015 marital relationships and parent-child triad participants. Examining these different groups allowed for the researchers to look at the impact of polarization on political alignment within spouse pairs, as well as get a better understanding of intergenerational transmission. Findings from their research reveal that there was an eight percent increase in spousal agreement between 1974 and 2015. The researchers may attribute this increase in agreement due to the rising polarity within the country, in accordance with past research that supports the idea that the more extreme someone's beliefs are, the more their partner will probably be aligned with them. Reflecting the increase in spousal agreement, Iyengar, Konitzer, and Tedin (2018) found that intergenerational transmission rates increased by six percent. The researchers explain this by expanding on the idea that with an increase in spousal alignment, the cues parents deliver to offspring might be more clear for the offspring to read and follow. When spouse agreement occurs, the individuals are more likely to hold extreme opinions. Findings conclude that if a child accurately perceives their parents' party affiliation(s), transmission is more likely to occur.

Murray and Mulvaney (2012) researched to explore if specific parenting style had an impact on maternal-offspring party affiliation. They looked at the three parenting styles of permissive parenting, authoritarian parenting, and authoritative parenting. The researchers tried to control factors such as socioeconomic status, maternal education level, and religious affiliation, but in turn found these demographics did have a slight impact on intergenerational transmission. The researchers predicted they would find that the more authoritative a mother is, the more likely the offspring is to express a similar partisan identity. They also predicted that authoritative parenting will have a stronger relationship with transmission than authoritarian and permissive parenting. Murray and Mulvaney (2012) found that statistically, both authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles had the strongest relationship; however, when considering the sample size and looking non-statistically, authoritative parenting had the strongest influence. These results make their hypothesis semi-supported. Their results showed positive strong correlations between authoritative and authoritarian parenting, and revealed a negative relationship between permissive parenting and transmission of party affiliation. One important finding from this research was that the higher a mother scored on a parenting style, the stronger the correlation was between the mothers' and offsprings' party affiliation (e.g. the more authoritative a mother was, the more likely their offspring had the same party affiliation). Other notable findings from this data analysis uncovered that the more religious offspring were, the more likely they were to identify as republican, and mothers with a higher education or in a single-parent household were less likely to identify as republican. One limitation to this study was that most offspring were white college students which impacts cultural, socioeconomic, and educational factors, making this research less externally valid.

Big Five Personality Model

Modern research is beginning to look at the impact personality traits in the Big Five Personality model have on decisions voter make. This specific sector of research is quickly expanding to look at how personality traits can moderate or mediate other relationships of the voting world, such as partisanship and voter turnout. In the research study presented in this text, personality traits from the Big Five will be examined to see if they potentially moderate or mediate the relationship between parents' political affiliation and young voters' political affiliation. This approach is a new concept to research, so past literature focused on how personality traits moderate and mediate other components to voting will be explored to support hypotheses and research methods.

The Big Five personality model is a five-factor model that breaks down personality into five dimensions. The five trait scales are Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness. While the traits are ambiguous constructs, they can still generally be operationally defined. Agreeableness refers to how cooperative, caring, and helpful an individual might behave. Conscientiousness is measured by how much an individual is organized, detail-oriented, and a planner. Extraversion refers to how sociable an individual is and a person's excitability. Neuroticism is the trait that measures an individual's emotional stability. Finally, openness is an individuals' willingness to try something new, consider different perspectives, and think creatively. Each of the traits are measured on a scale from high to low, indicating how much an individual possesses that specific trait, or its opposite. For example, if an individual has a low score for extraversion, they will be labeled as more of an introvert. The point of this model is to emphasize that the different traits are not dependent on one another for forming an individual's personality. There are currently several different theories in existence for how traits

of personality are broken down; however, the Big Five personality theory has received a lot of attention and is commonly used in personality research. Due to its vast literature in prior research, this model was chosen for the survey examined throughout this text.

Jeffery Mondak and Karen Halperin (2008) wanted to further research each of the Big Five traits' influence on different aspects of political behavior. The researchers looked at each of the personality traits individualistically to identify their impact on politics. Mondak and Halperin (2008) examined areas such as attitudes, economic perceptions, efficacy, participation, social involvement, and political knowledge. The researchers were able to uncover significant findings for each of the traits, covering each of the topics they examined.

The researchers started by looking through their data to see if there were any correlations with political alignment and personality, as prior research suggested there would be links. Mondak and Halperin (2008) found that openness is positively correlated with higher levels of liberalism and conscientiousness is positively correlated with higher levels of conservatism. When the researchers examined economic perceptions, they did not find a lot of personality connections; however, they discovered that high levels of emotional stability (neuroticism) is linked with high thoughts of economic fairness (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). The researchers even examined personality's impact on political efficacy. Political efficacy can be broken down into two types: internal and external. Internal efficacy is when an individual believes they can understand and participate in the political field, and external efficacy is when an individual believes they can politically make an impact on the government. Mondak's and Halperin's findings suggest that those high in openness have high levels of internal efficacy and those high in agreeableness have high levels of external efficacy and more trust in the government.

Mondak and Halperin wanted to look at multiple factors of politics to gain a better understanding on how political predispositions might be determined by personality (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Another important factor they examined was participation. Extraverts were positively correlated with higher levels of participation. The researchers believe this finding may result from the vast amount of opportunities politics offers to participate in group work (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). Mondak and Halperin also discovered that there is a significant negative correlation between agreeableness and participation. In the polar environment of the United States, the more an individual participates in political discourse the more they are disliked by opposers. Individuals high in agreeableness seek social approval from others, so engaging in such a risky social environment is not appealing, and may deter agreeable individuals from participating in politics (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). This finding is important because prior research from Hooghe and Boonen suggests that increased political discourse in the household increases the chance of parental transmission of political party (Hooghe & Boonen, 2015). Finally, Mondak and Halperin (2008) wanted to examine the balance voters carry between political involvement and political knowledge in terms of personality. They found that individuals high in conscientiousness and extraversion are highly involved and opinionated, but lack in areas of political knowledge (Mondak & Halperin, 2008). The only trait that was found to be related to higher levels of involvement and higher levels of knowledge was high levels of openness to experience. Mondak and Halperin (2008) thoroughly examined the different areas of politics in relation to personality to gain a better understanding of how personality may determine some political behaviors.

Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, and Pangopoulos (2012) wanted to examine the impact different types of voter appeals have on voter turnout for different personality types. The authors

examined personalty type through using the Big Five Traits. Gerber et al. (2012) expected to find different results for each appeal and each personality trait. Through background research on the traits and different types of appeals, the researchers decided to use three different appeals in their survey research. The first appeal they used was a social pressure treatment. The wording in this appeal mentioned that who votes is public record and that people's social circle can find out if they voted or not. The purpose of the appeal is to invoke fear in citizens to encourage them to vote. The second appeal used in their survey research discussed voter participation in relation to civic duty. The appeal mentioned how important it is to vote because it is a citizen's democratic role and is important for citizens to use their voice through voting. The third and final appeal was tailored toward the instrumental benefits that can come from voter participation. The appeal discussed how beneficial it is to vote when an election is close and how in those moments, every vote matters. The intent of this appeal was to persuade those who see a benefit to voting and want to participate.

After deciding on the appeals they wanted to use in their survey research, Gerber et al. (2012) made predictions about how participants either high or low on each of the Big Five traits would react to each statement. They measure their reaction through how likely they would be to vote after reading the appeal (Gerber et al., 2012). While the researchers provided 15 different hypotheses with a range of different predictions, they made predictions on which traits would be most affected by each appeal. Gerber et al. (2012) predicted that those high in neuroticism and low in extraversion will become socially uncomfortable from the social pressure appeal, and be more likely to vote in response. Then they also predicted that those high in agreeableness will be most affected by the civic duty appeal because they want to engage in behavior that is seen as

socially appraised (Gerber et al., 2012). Finally, the researcher predicted that openness will be most affected by the instrumental benefits appeal.

After conducting their survey research, the researchers uncovered several results they were not expecting. While the researchers revealed several findings, some were more significant than others. Findings for extraversion revealed those high in extraversion were not persuaded by the social pressure appeal and had a low voter turnout (Gerber et al., 2012). The research on conscientiousness yielded results for multiple appeals. The researchers discovered that participants who were high on the conscientiousness scale were not persuaded by the social pressure appeal nor the civic duty appeal. The researchers were uncertain about the way those high in conscientiousness would sway but predicted if it was poorly it would be due to highlighting the benefits of voting (Gerber et al., 2012). The findings for neuroticism were consistent with the researchers' hypotheses. As predicted, the researchers found that those high in neuroticism are more likely to vote after being exposed to the social pressure appeal. The researchers predicted this finding would result from uncomfortable pressure felt by those high in neuroticism. Also, those high in neuroticism responded in high voter turnout to the civic duty appeal (Gerber et al., 2012). Finally, those high in openness responded more favorably to both the social pressure and instrumental benefit treatments. Openness was an interesting trait for the researchers to evaluate because the act of voting in general might be more appealing to those who are more open to experience anyways (Gerber et al., 2012).

The vast amount of trait-specific results unveiled from this research provide support that the researchers' overall question (if the different personality traits from the big five moderate responses to different voter appeal and in turn impact voter participation) is likely supported. Through correlational survey research Gerber et. al (2012) found many significant relationships

that should be explored further. It can be supported that how a participant scores on the Big Five personality traits moderates the relationship between their response to different voter appeals and how likely they are to participate in elections. This research supports how personality traits may moderate the relationship between a youth's voter affiliation and their parents' voter affiliation.

In 2018, Steven Webster conducted research to identify if there are significant connections in the United States between personality type and how a voter views their opposing party. Webster conducted his archival research by using results collected from an 2012 American National Election Survey (ANES) (Webster, 2018). His examination focuses on negative partisanship– the hostility an individual feels against one party, causing them to support the opposing party. Webster used a two factor system where he first determined if a voter was a negative partisan, and if they were a negative partisan, to what degree were they one.

In Webster's findings he discovered that for identifying which voters were negative partisans, the scale of extraversion was the largest determinant. A negative correlation existed such that the more extraverted an individual was, the less likely they were to be a negative partisan (Webster, 2018). He believed these results may be connected to the increased social interactions extraverts have compared to introverts. According to Webster, the more conversations extraverts have with members of the opposing party, the less likely they will be to despite the party as a whole. He mentions this is just a suggested explanation as he predicts there could be cases where increased conversation actually increases feelings of hostility against the opposing party (Webster, 2018). Webster then examined those identified as negative partisans to determine where they lie on the scale of partisanship. He revealed that agreeableness had the largest impact on determining where voters lie on the scale. Those who were high in agreeableness viewed the opposing party less negatively compared to the individuals low in

agreeableness (Webster, 2018). Past research conducted on agreeableness shows that often individuals want to receive social approval from others, which may potentially explain these findings. Understanding how extraversion and agreeableness may impact a voter's affiliation decision extends the possibility that one of these traits may alter the relationship between parental and offspring political affiliations.

Another factor to consider in regards to personality and politics, are the personality trends researchers are finding in different geographical regions throughout the United States. Rentfrow, Gosling, Jokela, Stillwell, Kosinski, and Potter (2013) wanted to research if there were any affiliations between personality type, geographical residence in the United States, and values and beliefs (including political affiliation). Rentfrow et. al (2013) recognized to gain an accurate view of the United States personality types and beliefs and values according to geographical location, they should use a large sample and over a long period of time. For their research methods they used five different subsets of data collection ranging over 12 years and including four different types of survey collection. The researchers began by analyzing the results they received for their participants' personality type according to the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (Rentfrow et al., 2013). The five traits were previously analyzed separately and assessed for their geographical relevance by prior researchers, so Rentfrow et al. wanted to identify clusters of personality types.

After assessing the data they received, the researchers identified three cluster types that effectively separated their data. When the researchers looked at the three clusters in comparison to the geographical regions of the United States, they found that the clusters reflected different regions (Rentfrow et al., 2013). The first cluster was named the Friendly and Conventional profile and was represented by individuals "high (in) Extraversion, Agreeableness, and

Conscientiousness, and low (in) Neuroticism and Openness"(Rentfrow et al., 2013). Members of the cluster were more politically conservative. The cluster was found most often in the Great Plains and in the South, reflecting high conservative and social values. The second cluster was called the Relaxed and Creative profile and was identified by members with "low Extraversion, low Agreeableness, average Conscientiousness, very low Neuroticism, and very high Openness" (Rentfrow et al., 2013). The cluster was found throughout the West and the Eastern Seaboard. The cluster is known for being less conservative than the Friendly and Conventional profile and value open-mindedness, individuality, and happiness (Rentfrow et al., 2013). Finally the third cluster was named the Temperamental and Uninhibited profile and was created by people with "lightly below-average Extraversion, low Agreeableness, low Conscientiousness, very high Neuroticism, and slightly above average Openness" (Rentfrow et al., 2013). The cluster was represented in the New England Region and Mid Atlantic. The Temperamental and Uninhibited profile was characterized by individuals who value competitiveness, liberalism, and passion (Rentfrow et al., 2013).

Rentfrow et al. (2013) used their cluster and geographical analysis to argue against previous statements of where political ideals originate. The researchers mentioned that political scientists identified demographic and cultural factors to be the cause of polarity in the United States (Rentfrow et al., 2013). The researchers used their findings to suggest that beyond factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, etc. personality should also be considered for polarity in the United States, especially because there are patterns of personality types congregating in regions throughout the nation.

For the research study presented in this text, it is important to consider all factors that may impact parental transmission of political affiliation as well as understand the basis to why

personality may moderate or mediate any findings. Analyzing prior research on socialization, social learning theory, the family unit, and personality help the survey to include measures to increase construct validity and build off previous findings. Examining past research also allows reflection on the struggles and obstacles past researchers have tackled while researching political psychology. It is important to recognize majority of past research was conducted through the use of survey research. While survey research is a quick way to attain a lot of information, its validity is partially sacrificed because everything is through self-reports. This factor should not only be recognized in the analysis of prior research, but also analysis for the survey in the present study. Regardless, the repetitive results that arise from political psychology research allow for new research to explore further relationships, continuing the progression of what society knows about political behavior.

Hypotheses

The topic of parental transmission of political affiliations is a broad topic with a vast amount of prior literature. With the amount of research, several different hypotheses can be formed. We predict to see a significant positive correlation between participant's political affiliation and maternal political affiliation, as well as a significant correlation between participant's political affiliation and paternal political affiliation. Presence of these significant correlations will support the hypothesis that parental transmission of political affiliation occurs in young voters. We also predict to see correlations between maternal political affiliation and type of parenting, as well as paternal political affiliation and type of parenting. We predict to see significant positive correlations between authoritarian and authoritative (flexibility) and significant negative correlations for permissive parenting. Finally, we predict to see a positive correlation between conscientiousness and participant political identification and a negative

correlation between neuroticism and participant political identification. These correlations are based on findings from the literature review.

The purpose of our research is to find statistics that emphasize findings on the relationships of parental transmission, as well as add to literature by looking for personality trait mediators or moderators of the parental transmission relationships. We predict that the personality traits of neuroticism and conscientiousness may have mediator or moderator effects as these two traits are relevant in political affiliation. After looking at prior literature, we saw significant effects of neuroticism and conscientiousness and believe they may alter political affiliation relationships in our research analysis. We expect to find other relevant statistical findings in our data after analyses are conducted.

Methods

In order to measure modern rates of intergenerational transmission of political party affiliations in the United States, we designed a survey measure comprised of both pre-established psychological measures and questions adapted to fit our inquiries. The purpose of this research was to look for correlations between parental political affiliations and offspring affiliations, correlations between the types of parenting parents implemented and the rates of transmission, and finally, to look for mediators or moderators of any relationships in regard to personality measured by the Big Five factor model. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the survey was obtained from the institution's IRB board.

Participants

Participants for this survey were between the ages of 18 to 33 and current residents of the United States. After reading an informed consent section, participants were asked to report age, race and ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, education level, and residential region in order

to expand our analysis. For the survey, a total of 394 respondents (34.5 percent female) were collected. Respondents were aged from 18 to 33 (SD 2.24) to fit survey criteria, and 20% were 25-years-old. Three respondents were above 25 which is outside of the original parameter range (one 30, one 32, one 33) because of Prolific fails to filter out ineligible participants. Due to the proximity in age to the parameters, these participants' data was kept in the collection. Of those who disclosed their race, 251 participants were White (63.7%), 70 were Asian (17.8%), 43 were Black (10.9%), four were American or Alaskan Native (1%), one was Native Hawiaan or Pacific Islander (0.3%), and 21 participants (5.3%) indicated "other." Of the 394 participants, 17.8% indicated they were of Hispanic or Latina or Spanish origin. Other specific demographics are reported in Appendix A.

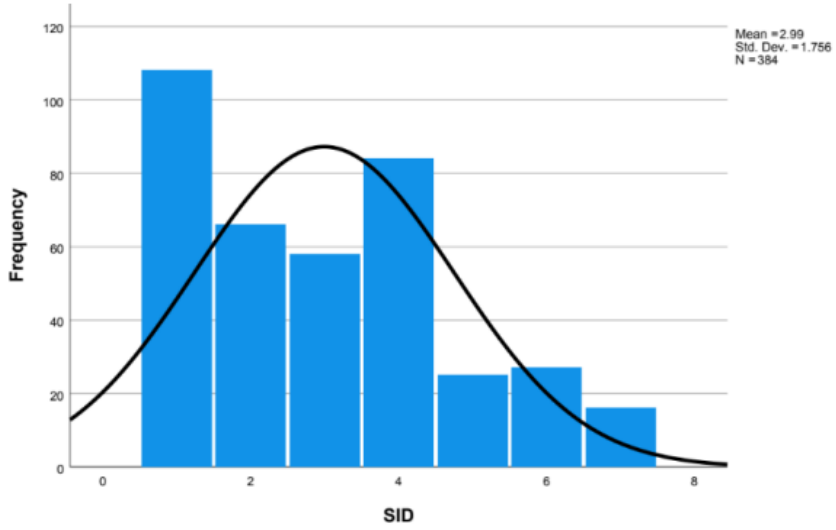
The sample size for this survey was determined by the researcher's estimation of availability to funding from an undergraduate institution. All participants were recruited through Prolific. Prolific is a platform that helps researchers easily recruit a diverse set of participants by providing compensation to participants who complete surveys. Surveys are uploaded to Prolific, then Prolific recruits all participants who are eligible to partake in the survey via email, allowing slots to fill up on a first come first serve basis. Participants were compensated $3.34 ($8/hr) for completion of the survey. Attention checks were performed throughout the survey process to eliminate unengaged participants. Through the use of attention checks, six participants were removed from the original data set changing the total number of participants from 400 to 394.

The aim of this survey was to understand if significant correlations still exist between parental political affiliation and young voters' political affiliation. Subjects indicated their own partisan affiliation on a seven-point scale from strong Democrat (one) to strong Republican (seven). Distribution of political affiliation amongst participants is presented in Figure 1.

One-hundred-and-eight participants identified as strong Democrats (27.4%), 66 as weak Democrats (16.8%), 58 as independent Democrats (14.7%), 84 as Independents (21.3%), 25 as independent Republicans (6.3%), 27 as weak Republicans (6.9%), 16 as strong Republicans (4.1%), and 10 subjects identified as "other" (2.5%). As seen in the figure below, this data is skewed to the left. For this survey's research purposes, the skewed distribution will not alter results as the purpose of the research is to compare parental affiliations with young voters' affiliations.

Figure 1

Histogram of Participants' Political Affilation



Note. Distribution is skewed left, breakdown of affiliations is shown in Appendix A.

Materials

This survey was comprised of 128 items and 2 previously existing measures. Survey questions inquired about demographics, participant's voter affiliation and participation, parent's/parents' voter affiliation, the Parental Authority Questionnaire, and the Big Five Inventory, (BFI) (See Appendix B for detailed accounts of the survey). After participants completed the demographic section, they were inquired about their perception of their

parent's/parents' political affiliation and the amount of political discussion that occurred in their household growing up (specific wording and coding of measures are included in the Appendix B). The participants then took the Parental Authority Questionnaire and BFI. The participants were made aware of the purpose of the study in the informed consent and reminded of the purpose in the debrief. No use of deception or masking took place in this survey.

The Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri,1991) is a 30-item self-report questionnaire that identifies parenting style through the perspective of offspring. Participants read statements about parental behavior, then using a 5-point Likert scale, indicate if they agree or disagree that each behavior occurred in their home. Responses to the questionnaire are coded and calculated to determine where a parent lies on a parenting scale for three different parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative (flexibility), and permissive. The version used in the survey received a modest reliability rating. The questionnaire can be used to measure both maternal and paternal parenting styles with the adjustment of subject wording. The questionnaire was repeated twice in the study to allow two-parent household subjects to indicate both parenting styles.

The Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999) was also used in the survey to study personality types. The inventory includes a total of 40 different items to measure each of the Big Five personality types. The BFI includes statements describing a behavior reflective of one of the traits and participants are to indicate how much they agree or disagree with the statement. Indications are made on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly). The reliability of the BFI is moderate.

Procedure

The design used in this survey research was non-experimental as the purpose was correlational research. Participants that fit the parameters of the survey were recruited by Prolific

and then completed the survey. Survey data was collected in the span of one day. The intent of the survey was to further explain relationships between parental and offspring political affiliations. Beyond looking for a significant correlation between parental and offspring, correlations were examined between parenting style and political affiliations, as well as personality and political alignment. The data was also analyzed to see if any parenting type or personality traits from the Big Five mediated or moderated the relationship between political transmission.

Analysis

The first step in analysis was to code data and provide overall measurements for the constructs in the Parental Authority Questionnaire and BFI. After finding participants' data on these variables, descriptive statistics were conducted on the data set. Next correlations were performed on all possible variables in relation to the participants' self-political identification, maternal figure's political identification, and paternal figure's political identification. When correlations were established using Pearson's R, they were followed by regression analysis for moderating and mediating variables.

Results

Descriptive statistics for each of the relevant variables and further extensions of data analysis can be found in Appendix C. Pearson correlations were conducted between the participants' political affiliation and several variables, as well as the parents' political affiliations and the parenting styles. Results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the participants' political alignment and their maternal figure's political alignment (r=.38). There was also a statistically significant positive correlation between the paternal figure and participants' political affiliation (r=.36). These significant correlations support our predictions

that parental transmission still occurs. Much to our surprise, the only statistically significant correlation between political affiliation and personality was neuroticism (r= -.186). The relationships between personality and political affiliation are displayed in Table 2 below. Finding only a significant relationship between neuroticism and subject's political affiliation limited our mediation and moderation analysis.

Table 2

Personality and Self Identification Correlations

		SID	extraversion	agreeableness	conscientiousness
SID	Pearson Correlation	1	.056	-.063	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.278	.221	.131
	N	384	380	376	376

		neuroticism	openness
SID	Pearson Correlation	-.186**	-.005
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.920
	N	381	382

Note. Correlations were significant with a=.05

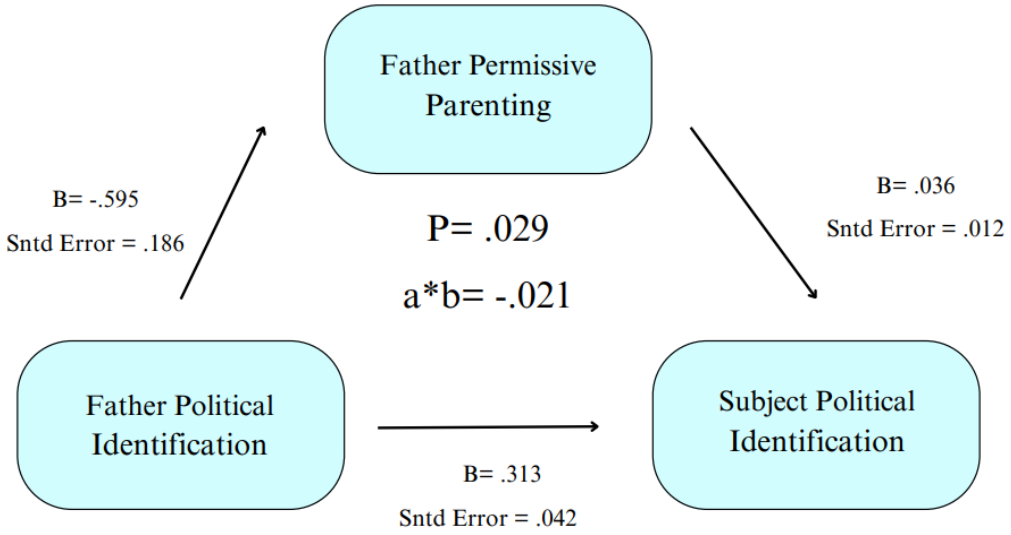
Correlations between parenting styles and the parental figure's political affiliation yielded significant results (expansion of data can be found in Appendix C). There was a statistically significant positive correlation between maternal political affiliation and authoritarian parenting (r= .182). Another significant correlation between maternal political affiliation and authoritative (flexibility) parenting revealed a negative relationship between the two variables (r=-.15). Our prediction that significant relationships will exist between maternal political affiliation and parenting style was partially supported because the permissive parenting style correlation was not statistically significant. Significant correlations were revealed for all three paternal parenting styles and paternal political affiliation. There was a significant negative correlation between paternal affiliation and permissive parenting (r=-.172), a positive correlation between paternal affiliation and authoritarian parenting (r=.232), and a negative correlation between paternal

affiliation and authoritative (flexibility) parenting. The significant results produced support for our predictions that parenting style will have a relationship with paternal political affiliation.

Much to our surprise, no statistically significant mediators or moderators were found in relation to subject's political affiliation and personality. Our predictions for these relationships were not supported. We did not make predictions about parenting type serving as mediator between parent affiliation and offspring affiliation, but through further analysis of data, statistically significant mediators were discovered. Two statistically significant mediators were revealed for paternal affiliation and permissive parenting (p=.029) as well as authoritative (flexibility) (p=.049) parenting. The statistics were run through a sobel test to examine for significance. These relationships can be viewed in Figures 3 and 4 below.

Figure 3

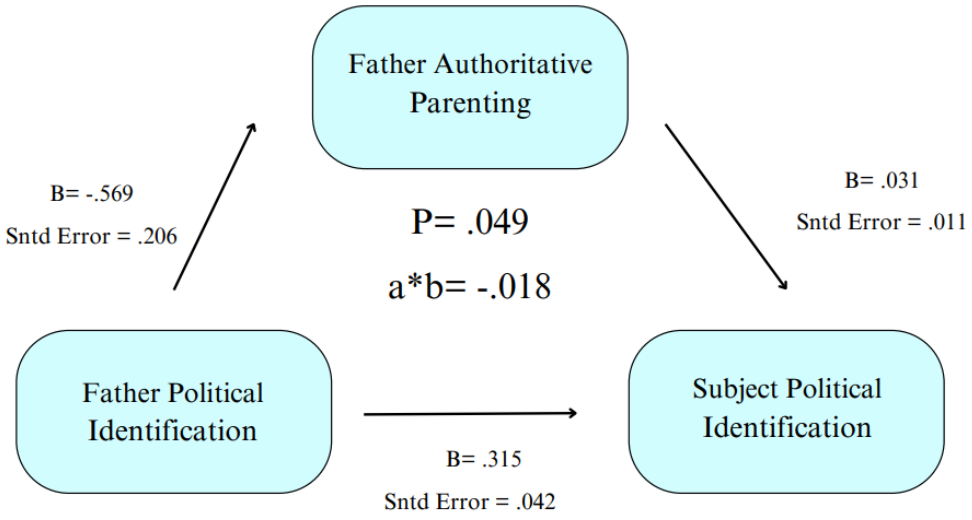
Father Permissive Mediation



Note. Mediation was significant at a=.05

Figure 4

Father Authoritative (flexibility) Mediation



Note. Mediation was significant at a=.05

Discussion

In line with previous literature on parental transmission, we found that there are significant relationships between parental affiliations and offspring affiliations. Our statistically significant relationships can serve as support to the argument that parental transmission still occurs, and that parental influence may be a factor for young voters' political affiliation formation. Due to the prevalence of statistically significant relationships between parental affiliation and youth affiliation, further research can be conducted with an experimental design to try to find causal relationships between parents and offspring affiliations.

Surprisingly, the personality section did not produce the results we were looking to obtain in relation to political affiliation. The lack of statistical significance may be a result of a small sample size because our correlations are not in alignment with the mass data produced in published research. In our literature review, we discussed several important relationships between personality traits and political alignment that we were not able to explore given our

correlation results. In further studies, this survey could be applied again to a larger sample to identify if results would reflect that of the population.

The correlations discovered between parental affiliation and parenting style reflected the findings of Murray and Mulvaney (2012). In the literature review, findings supported that authoritarian parenting and authoritative parenting have stronger effects on political transmission compared to permissive parenting. Our data reflects this relationship, as statistically significant relationships existed between authoritarian and authoritative parenting for the maternal figure, but not permissive parenting. All three parenting styles are significant for the paternal figure; however, the authoritarian relationship is much stronger than the flexibility and permissive relationship. Murray and Mulvaney (2012) also discovered that the permissive parenting relationship is a negative correlation which is reflected in our data set with the paternal affiliation. Statistically significant correlations for parenting styles, support the psychological principle that parenting style has an impact on offspring. These relationships should be examined in further research because parenting styles continue to produce significant results in several areas related to child development and political affiliation formation could be another one of those factors.

The significant mediators found through analysis were not the relationships we were expecting to discover. Our predictions about personality and moderation and mediation were not supported; however, since this was a new exploration our lack of findings is still important to the contribution of research. Due to the lack of relationships, we can support the idea that personality does not play as large of a role in young voters developing their political affiliations as we originally thought. With our paternal parenting style mediations (authoritative and permissive) we can discuss further the role that parenting styles play in formation of political affiliation.

Authoritative and permissive parenting from the father mediates the relationship between the father's political affiliation and the offspring's affiliation. The parenting styles have an impact on the amount of political transmission that occurs. Further research should be conducted on the relationship between parenting style and parental transmission to see how large of an effect the parenting styles can have on the transmission relationship.

The largest limitation of this study is the small sample size. Our results do not reflect highly supported results found in the literature of political psychology. Likely, our smaller sample size does not produce a sample representative of the population which greatly limits the external validity of this research. With increased sample size, our data might have reflected the trends often seen in research between personality and political affiliation, and maybe even the geographical trends that are associated with these relationships as well. Further research should be conducted to determine just how large of a role parental transmission plays in youth development of political affiliation. Research should also continue to expand outside of parental transmission to determine the combination of factors that play a role in youth political affiliation development.

Further Discussion

While it is important to analyze the results provided from the survey research, these findings are not enough to create a full examination of how youth political affiliations are made. Further discussion needs to occur in relationship to historical events and developing sociological discourse that takes place in the United States. Examining factors from multiple disciplines gives academics a better view to the full process of how affiliations are made. We refer this interdisciplinary examination as taking a holistic approach to understand formation of political

affiliations. Future research should incorporate even more disciplines into the scope of political affiliation development.

History of Appeals to the Young Voter

The kind of strategies and tactics politicians use toward young voters has adapted over the past 60 years. Focus on the young voter essentially began after WWII, when citizens who were old enough to fight, but not old enough to vote wanted to change the rules (Blumenthal, 2015). When the young voters could vote, appeals to encourage young turnout began to take place. With the invention of new technology and different political strategies to gain voters' attention throughout history, the network in which young voters received their knowledge expanded. Modern first-time voters have more say in where they choose to obtain their information and from who they choose to obtain it. In the past 60 years, voter's laws and technological advancements have altered the way in which presidential candidates and political campaigns attract young voters and attempt to increase voter turnout. These changes should be examined to better understand why young voters choose to vote and how they obtain their information. Regardless of the impact parental transmission has on young voters' political affiliations, society needs to take a holistic approach, looking at the internal and external factors that shape a new voter's opinion.

1960-1989.

In the 1950s there was much debate on if the voting age should be determined on a state by state basis or by the federal government. This debate continued into the 1960s, having legal discussion, until the 26th amendment was ratified in 1971, officially changing the national voting age to 18. Along with this change came several shifts in the way the youth vote was approached from both the youth's perspective and presidential campaigns. Around Nixon's (Republican)

reelection, the Young Voters for President (YVP) organization was formed. This organization informed society of how segmentation alters presidential elections (Blumenthal, 2015). Society began to recognize that each age bracket voted differently and made decisions based on different considerations. The Young Voters for President group learned it is hard to predict young voters' political behavior as young voters are very fluid and new to the political environment. Regardless, Nixon made it his goal to create a relationship between the young voters and his campaign (Blumenthal, 2015). He achieved his goal by opening YVP field offices around the country on college campuses that allowed students to directly interact with the campaigns and election. The YVP was not the only organization to approach college students during this time. In 1972, voter registration drives were also organized across college campuses, in an effort to help register newly eligible voters (Pederson, 2006). Voter turnout during this election was unique because this was the first time 18 to 20-year-olds could participate in the election. Due to the rule expansion, young voters participated in order to show the rest of the population they cared about their civic duty (Pederson, 2006).

Unfortunately, after this election, young voter turnout rates did not remain high. Some theorists, such as Stacy Pederson, believe the Nixon scandal could have affected young voters' relationship and feelings toward politics and voting (Pederson, 2006). President Nixon was involved in a situation where he abused his power, which is now known as the Watergate Scandal. Five burglars attempted to break into the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters and were caught. The five burglars ended up being four former CIA agents and one member of the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEP). This meant that the five burglars all had connections to President Nixon. Nixon and other government officials destroyed all evidence of the break in, tried to get the government to stop investigation and cover the situation

up, as well as create lies about who the burglars were and what they were doing. Nixon and affiliated officials were eventually caught in their lies and punished, but as a result trust in the government was also altered. Citizens had a hard time regaining trust with the government due to the power the officials held and could abuse. By 1975 voter turnout continued to decreased drastically. The decrease in young voter turnout continued into the 1980s, which was when organizations around the country decided to do something about it. Organizations such as the United States Student Association, State Student Association, and State Public Interest Research Groups, joined together in order to increase voter turnout. Their efforts produced minimal results in increasing participation; however, this established group relationship would later be implemented again (Pederson, 2006).

With the new addition of young voters to the ballots, politicians did not know how to predict their political behavior. The ambiguity of voting behavior made it hard to know how to reach the attention of these voters. One potential explanation for low turnout after the Nixon scandal could be that in the 1980s there was a large focus on the increasing number of major business corporations. Due to the youth's distrust of the government after the Nixon scandal, youth turned to corporations for leadership. These corporations provided the country a sense of idealism the government was not providing, potentially altering the young's interest in politics in general (Pederson, 2006). Regardless of the reasons behind why young adults were not engaging in politics, in the next decades, voter turnout began to increase. In the coming years, with the use of cable, politicians were able to make their appeals reach different types of audiences. The voters who watched the news and followed political discussion became a very specific, fragmented group, but by adding in the viewers of other cable networks, politicians were able to get their information to voters of a different audience. By finding a way to reach a variety of

different voters, the way politicians campaign toward young voters forever changed. These changing political tactics can have altering effects on how youth voters form their political affiliations.

1990-2007.

Since the 26th amendment change in 1971, only two elections have seen a youth voter (18 to 20-year-olds) participation rate of over 50 percent. These two elections were Bill Clinton's (Democrat) 1992 election and Barack Obama's (Democrat) 2008 election (Simmons, 2014). Bill Clinton included several tactics in his presidential campaign to try to gain young voter support. One of these tactics included appearing on the Arsenio Hall Show. Political scientist Matthew A. Baum conducted research on why so many political candidates started to appear on talk shows and E-shows in the 1990s and early 2000s (Baum, 2005). Baum's research revealed this is a great tactic to reach audiences who are not typically politically engaged, nor have prior partisanship affiliations. Baum's research supports why talk shows became a useful way to campaign to larger audiences. His research represents a domino effect of events that eventually led to the success of campaigning through talk shows. Statistics revealed in the United States, the number of channels the average family household had access to increased by over 80 percent from 1995 to 2000 (Baum, 2005). This increase was accompanied by the trends that showed viewers were watching the news less frequently and were more likely to change the channel if their attention was not maintained (Baum, 2005). This meant less viewers were receiving information on presidential political debates. What research did reveal was that E-talk shows viewers were the individuals who were less likely to be interested in politics. The statistics revealed these viewers tended to be less educated and more likely to be young, female, and liberal (Baum, 2005). Appearing on talk shows allowed presidential candidates to find an outlet to connect to young voters and send a

political message. Presidential candidates, such as Clinton, would appear on these shows and try to flaunt themselves in a positive light, showing they are relatable humans. A typical strategy was to appeal to the audience by deemphasizing any partisan aspects of their campaign messages (Baum, 2005). Baum explained that through psychological principles such as thinking heuristics and likability priming, these strategies worked and revealed that those not already involved in politics were more likely to vote for candidates that appeared on these talk shows (Baum, 2005). This shift to televised action should be largely considered when contemplating where young voters attain their political affiliations. Increased televised access meant more direct exposure to the candidates and political information, which could have potentially altered the amount of parental political influence young voters were receiving.

2008-Modern Day.

By the time the 2008 election came around for Barack Obama's campaigning, seeing political candidates on television was a new normal, but the use of social media was new and emerging. It is important to note this election was one of the firsts to incorporate social media use. According to Pew Research, only 5 percent of the adult population used social media in 2005 (Hernandez, 2019). Obama had much more involvement with social media compared to his Republican counterpart, Mitt Romney; however, Obama also had a much larger focus on the young voter population compared to Romney. His social media posts were informative and professional, a tactic that is fitting to this specific election and time frame (Hernandez, 2019). Obama included different special interest pages on his Facebook that allowed for people to find more information on his campaign according to their identities. Pages included groups such as young voters, women, veterans, etc. (Hernandez, 2019). Bryan Boroughs conducted research on young voters social media use during the 2008 election. His findings revealed that accessing

political content increased the likelihood that anyone would participate in the 2008 election, but even more so that young voters would participate (Boroughs, 2010). Twenty-five percent of voters aged 18-29 during the 2008 election said someone contacted them either by phone or in person to encourage them to vote for Obama (Boroughs, 2010). With the new emergence of social media platforms, young voters were more likely to participate in elections and were more likely to give into their friends' social pressure and vote for who their friends were voting for. The use of social media in political campaigning may have altered the influence young voters receive from their peers because young voters began posting about their political affiliations openly. This election transformed the way in which many young voters received their political information and began to pave the way for how social media is used in modern day politics.

Since 2008, the United States has yet to see a presidential election with over 50 percent of the young voters' participation. Like the election of 2008, social media still plays a vital role in attracting the young voter's attention, but with social media now being a larger part of daily life, new social media political tactics and strategies have emerged. Yamiemily Hernandez's statistics reveal that in 2018, 88% of adults 18-29 reported having at least one form of social media (Hernandez, 2019). Her statistics also reveal that in 2016, 44% of US adults reported using some form of social media to learn about the election (Hernandez, 2019). These statistics show a drastic change in the amount of social media use occurring in modern political campaigns. Even the number of followers candidates had on their social media sites increased greatly between 2008 and 2016. Both Hilary Clinton (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican) had over seven million Instagram followers. In the 2008 election, the largest number of followers Barack Obama had was just over two million (Hernandez, 2019). With the younger voters interacting more with social media, less interaction occurred with traditional

media such as newspapers and television broadcasting; however, there is still a large reliance on these media platforms for political information.

Beyond the increased usage of social media, politicians use new strategies to gain support through social media. One tactic that Donald Trump used throughout the 2016 election was content that was more laid back and less professional. The use of this kind of social media related more closely to typical social media use and allowed followers to interact and participate more with his content. Donald Trump's campaign relied on interaction with his social media posts so that he could continue to repost his supporters' responses. This was a tactic that Hilary Clinton and Bernie Sanders (Democrat) did not implement as heavily. The increase in video and photo usage on social media platforms has also altered how political campaigns use social media. Videos allow for important segments of speeches to be highlighted and shared with a larger audience. One major difference in the way modern politicians use social media to campaign is that candidates no longer make specialized pages for people to research the candidates' policies on identity related issues. Unlike how Obama had the different pages for young voters, women, veterans, etc. to be able to read more specific information, not a single 2016 candidate had these interactive pages or specified areas on any of their social media platforms. Both the 2008 election and 2016 election placed a lot of emphasis on identity, so the lack of social media pages was not due to a shift in election focus. The lack of these pages could potentially have an impact on voter turnout or even political affiliation.

Examining the way in which politicians have adapted their political campaigns along with new advancements in technology, gives society a better look into the goals of politicians and how the opinions of young voters are made. Understanding how history has shaped the voters today also lets researchers know what influences and political changes may occur in the

future. Seeing that the way in which voters obtain their information and the kind of information they receive is constantly changing, it can be argued that political scientists need to take a holistic approach to the way in which voters form political affiliations. Researchers should not only investigate how identity politics and family politics impact voting trends, but also how historical trends of the time may also influence political development as well.

Political Polarization in the United States

Political polarization has prevailed in the United States for centuries and has become a debate for academics to identify when polarization has changed the most. Strong arguments for the modern wave of political polarization begin as early as the 1930s and others argue the civil rights movements occurring in the 1960s sparked the modern wave (Frymer, 2011). Regardless of when its roots began, polarization in the United States has altered the political field. In earlier eras of political polarization, most debate centered around one central idea. For example, in the ratifying of the constitution, polarization arose from those who wanted to ratify the constitution (federalists) and those who opposed (antifederalists). In modern day, multiple issues and concerns have stemmed from central debates making added controversy increase polarization (Frymer, 2011).

The modern wave of polarization can be viewed through the effects and context of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and other points in the Civil Rights movement. These historical encounters elevated race, a point for identity politics, into discussion about government and policies. The intersection allowed for conversations to develop from prior ones, expanding the amount of discourse happening in each political party. The expansion of ideas can be identified as conflict extension– when additional factors become added to an original discussion, adding new points of discussion, and in result expanding the horizons of an argument (Layman, Carsey,

Horowitz, 2006). In the time of the Civil Rights movement, inequalities and hierarchies that had lasted for over 200 years began to be dismantled by enlarging the size and scope of the federal government. With such a drastic change to the structure of the government it is logical that voting behavior and the climate of polarization responded with change as well.

In the modern era of polarization in the United States, the political parties focus on essentially the same main issues; however, each party's proposed solutions to each issue are often in opposition of one another. Having different solutions and opposing policies makes the current political environment charged with polarization. Polarization can alter the way in which young voters chose their political alignment. Young voters often feel they must fit into one party or another and the polarization forces voters to categorize themself into one group, decreasing the number of moderate voters in the country.

Congress

Several theories have emerged to explain the main causes for the current polarization in America. Many of these theories focus on the roles that Congress, general voters, and other factors play in contributing to the overall political climate. The shifts in the types of politicians in Congress and how they vote have become a large focus in understanding polarization.

Poole and Rosenthal (1984) conducted research from 1959 to 1980 on the US senators to understand shifts in Congress' polarization. The researchers placed each senator on a ideological scale from -1 being the most liberal to +1 being the most conservative. The researchers chose to only focus on differences for senators due to the convenience of each state only having two representatives (Poole & Rosenthal, 1984). The researchers' findings concluded that over the years the number of mixed party states rose significantly. Poole and Rosenthal (1984) provided several possibilities to why the increased two-party representation was occurring in more states,

but the argument they supported the most was that within each state more polarization was occurring (Poole & Rosenthal, 1984). They proposed that the shifts occurred because those on the lower demographics relative to each state (lower SES, lower education levels, etc.) started to want Democratic support and those on the relatively higher demographics for their state wanted Republican support. With more split states in the senate came a more competitive senate. Poole and Rosenthal (1984) calculated what a fully competitive senate would look like, explaining that it would include 50 percent of the states being mixed, 25 percent with both senators identifying as Democrat, and 25 percent identifying as Republican. Their research from 1929 to 1959 concluded that the senate was well below the 50 percent state mixture. By 1980, the senate reflected almost a perfect fully competitive senate, which demonstrates the rising polarization. When Poole and Rosenthal looked where the senators were falling on the ideological scales from 1959 to 1980, they noticed that many senators were leaning far towards opposite sides of the spectrum and very few senators were moderates (Poole & Rosenthal, 1984).

While these statistics demonstrate that polarization was increasing in Congress, it is also important to discuss the implications that occur from this polarization and how it alters Congress' behavior. Members of Congress used to have overlap between their ideologies but since the 1980s that overlap has not only vanished, but a larger gap has grown between Republicans and Democrats in terms of ideology (Galston, 2008). Members of Congress can naturally influence one another and since there is such a large separation between Republicans and Democrats that separation only gets parted further as influence from one member of Congress to another grows. It has also been revealed that members of Congress from the same state who politically align will converse before group votes. Conversing creates stronger

agreements between the two parties which makes their opposition of one another even stronger (Poole & Rosenthal, 1984).

While there are many changes in Congress, there are also growing expectations of members of Congress in terms of how they politically align. While Congress becomes more polarized, general voters simultaneously also become more polarized as there is a positive feedback loop between the two groups (Poole & Rosenthal, 1984). The more polarized general voters become, the more polarized of a candidate they want to represent their state, which means politicians need to align themselves on the extremities in order to be selected into office. A great example of this pressure is present in the state of California. Since the 1980s, California has been known for its voters with Democratic values: economic fairness, wanting restrained government spending, accessible healthcare, and much more. The counties in the state became more polarized from one another and the Democrat counties became even more Democratic. The state is now known for being filled with majority Democrats. It would be difficult for a moderate candidate to represent this state as the California voters' views are so strong. Due to this, a moderate candidate essentially has not represented California since the 1980s (Galston, 2008). The positive feedback loop not only pressures Members of Congress to become extremists when they become elected, but the feedback loop also encourages the representatives to continue to lean further on their side of the spectrum. Receiving constant support of controversial ideas from voters encourages the politicians to keep pushing toward the extreme side while they still have the support (Galston, 2008). The feedback loop progresses polarization within the nation rather quickly.

General Voters

What Matters

Over the past 60 years, the priorities of youth voters have evolved. Academics have argued in recent decades, politics rooted in lifestyles, identities and symbolic conflicts have emerged (Manza, 2012). The changes of priorities in voters needs to be constantly evaluated in order to understand what impacts a voter's decision for that specific election. The evolution of voter priorities is a reflection of historical events occurring in each decade, the ever-changing focus of the political world, and the trends of what each generation values. Understanding the path of change voter's priorities took helps to explain why the current matters are of importance and how these newer focuses lead to increased polarization within the United States.

The 1992 and 2008 elections saw record numbers of youth turnout, which led several academics to question what increased turnout. Some academics inquired if this increase reflected changing priorities in youth voters. Daniel J. Simmons theorized the voter increase in these elections likely reflected the needs of modern youth voters: to be socially connected to their communities. After looking at the youth employment rates, marital status, and religious involvement of the voters during these two elections, Simmons found statistically significant results for employed youth voters (18-29) and voter turnout. Simmons believes that due to the economic environment young employees experience, they become more connected with their community and care more about policies, so they are more apt to participate in elections (Simmons, 2014).

Even since 2008, the United States has tracked changes in the priorities of modern youth voters. There are several factors that affect this new generation of young voters. According to Claire Zhu, after conducting research in 2021, the most important factors that affect young voter

turnout are: race and ethnicity, social media, income, education, and voter and education laws (Zhu, 2021). Some of these factors are consistent with past records, while others show development over time. For a long period of time, race and ethnicity have been an essential factor in voter turnout not only for young voters, but for eligible voters of all ages. One aspect of Zhu's research focused on a recent increase of participation from minority groups such as Asian Americans and Hispanics (Zhu, 2021). Zhu also revealed that in communities where minority populations are larger and have more say in the overall outcomes, higher rates of voter turnout from these minority groups are present. Her statistics also reveal there is a clear correlation between larger voter turnout for those in higher income brackets. Statistics from 2016 present that only 41.4 percent of eligible voters with a family income below $10,000 participated in the presidential election compared to the 80.3 percent of eligible voters that participated that come from households with an income greater than $150,000 (Zhu, 2021). Consistent with past voter turnout results, the more educated an individual is, the more likely they are to vote. Finally, Zhu discussed how laws and regulations surrounding voting have a large impact on voter turnout, but she also takes into account that this factor has additional weight for first time voters. Zhu explained that all the registration requirements and deadlines can be intimidating for young voters, especially because these regulations vary by state and are constantly subject to change (Zhu, 2021). It is important for society to recognize how these identity-based factors as well as the laws and regulations required to vote impact young voter turnout. Not all young voters are exposed to the same factors or process when first forming their political affiliations and participating in elections. These factors impact the voter regardless of the amount of influence their parents have on their affiliation.

Ideological Realignment

One theory to how individuals became more politically polarized in the United States over the past 60 years is identified as ideological realignment. The theory centers around the idea that discussion about ideology has morphed into political party discussion, now making the two inseparable in the United States. Due to the alignment of both ideology and party affiliation, individual voters are forced to choose where their loyalties will lie, and this specific theory suggests voters will follow their ideological identification.

Recent statistics that demonstrate how the nation has become more polarized since the 1970s encourage discourse on the theory of ideological realignment. Political scientist William Galston tracked voters party alignment since the 1970s and noticed two things: there are now fewer unaligned voters in the United States, and two-thirds of voters identify themselves as some kind of partisan (Galston, 2008). In the 1970s it was more common to see voters who more often identify with one party still vote for the opposing party. Now with the connection between ideology and political parties, this trend has decreased. Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) also conducted research and revealed several findings about how voters have shifted their alignment today. Around the time of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Democrats in the United States had a very large advantage of voter support. This was likely because White Southerners were still mainly Democrats as well as majority of the new African Americans entering the voting system. Since the 1970s the Democrat advantage has seen a large decline. Abramowitz's and Saunders' research reveals that it is white male and white Southerner Conservatives who shifted political alignment the most, shifting to the Republican party. Statistics even revealed, during the time of realignment during the Reagan and post-Reagan era, intergenerational transmission decreased, and young voters were choosing political parties based on the policies, not their parental

influence (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). As a whole the generation shifted to be more conservative (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). The collection of statistics reveal that mass changes in political alignment were occurring which shifted the political climate of the nation as well.

The idea of ideological realignment is a theory proposed to explain the vast statistical changes since the 1970s. Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) believe in order to have ideological realignment there needs to be a party leader present whose ideas are contrasting to the current political environment and who combines ideological and party policies. Ronald Reagan is attributed with being one of these charged leaders because he was both strongly Conservative and Republican (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). Reagan's election forced unaligned voters to decide if his campaigns supported the majority of their policies. Bill Clinton was another one of these charged candidates (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). Although Clinton made efforts to oppose liberalism in his policies to win back some of the voters who had shifted toward the Republican party, his policies still reflected economic liberalism which continued to merge the line between political affiliation and ideology. The politicians' combinations of ideology and political party had large impacts on the way in which voters cast their ballots. The ideology breakdown from 1970 to 2000 typically reflected 75% of Liberals and 25% of Conservatives voting Democrat (and vice versa for the Republican party) (Galston, 2008). By Obama's election in 2008 the percentage of voters had shifted to 90% of Liberals voting for Obama and only 205 of Conservatives voting for him. These statistics reveal that individual voters were moving toward parties that also aligned with their ideologies. It must be also be considered that while these statistics support the shift toward ideology and party alignment, these statistics could be a result of the importance of identity-based politics in this presidential election. With the Obama

being the candidate for the Democratic ticket, representation in the government was a large focus within identity-based politics.

At first, critiques questioned if voters were moving toward political alignment due to the ideologies (ideological realignment) or due to the policies the parties were campaigning (partisan persuasion). Abramowitz's and Saunders' (1998) statistics support that the transition was due to ideologies and not due to partisan alignment. When voters started voting in alignment with both their political party and ideology, polarization in the nation increased because policies were being pushed to further political extremes. As the trend of ideological realignment occurred for several years, those who were not already partisans began to align themselves consistently with the parties that better represented their values. The process of choosing which political party better represented an individual voter's needs became known as a process called sorting.

Sorting and Geography

Individual voters are sorting themselves into political parties based on identity and their ideology. Voters typically face four distinct levels of political conflict: social structure, group identity, political organization and party systems, and public policy outcomes (Manza, 2012). The conflicts voters face are also considered when finding which political party they most align with. Voters are facing societal pressure to pick which party they should support as well as societal pressure to keep the same partisan identity (Galston, 2008). When congress and the media polarize messages of the political parties more, voters will find where they fit best. Voters will often stay aligned in the same party because the gap to the opposing party is so large. Trends have emerged where individuals are beginning to politically sort themselves by county within each state. Counties of blue and red are popping up in states as individuals are aligning themselves with like-minded individuals (Galston, 2008). The geographical change creates larger

polarization because when like-minded people group, they influence one another and create even stronger viewpoints. From 1976 to 2004 the number of landslide states in the United States increased by 21% (Galston, 2008). The increase reflects the sorting process occurring throughout the nation as well as the geographical grouping. With individuals consistently voting for the same party, states are seeing trends where the majority is always voting for the same party. Sorting and geographically moving allows for like-minded individuals to fuel one another increasing the politically charged views groups take on.

Another form of sorting that has occurred in recent years is grouping by religion. Religion has always played a major role in politics; however, it now serves as a way to sort individuals into political parties. From 1952 to 1988 the number of voters who were regularly religious that voted for the Republican party versus the Democrat party was a difference of two percent (Galston, 2008). From 1992 to 2004 that gap shifted all the way to a 12% increase. Traditional Christians who attend church often began identifying themselves more with the Republican party when conservatism also became connected with this party. The Republican party argues for policies such as banning abortion, teaching abstinence for sex education, and allowing prayer in education (Galston, 2008). It is in examples like religion where the line is seen between identity politics and increased partisanship throughout the United States.

Other Factors

Judiciary Branch

In addition to Congress and the individual voter, there are several other factors that have smaller effects on polarization in the nation, one of these factors being the Judiciary branch. When ideologies began entering the campaigns of political parties, it was only a matter of time until ideology debates would be brought to the courtroom. It is now a regular occurrence for

Judiciary officials to have to make decisions surrounding ideology (Galston, 2008). With these decisions can come increased polar reactions from the nation. Ideologies are more involved with identity, so when these court case decisions are made, they impact specific groups of people making these decisions more emotionally charged. In addition to the decisions judiciary officials make, filling open judicial positions, especially those in the Supreme Court, can add to the political polarization of the United States (Galston, 2008). Filling a spot on the Supreme Court is so heavily pressurized because the officials not only hold such a large amount of power, but they are also able to hold that title for life. Careful political consideration goes into the process of choosing a candidate who will serve on the court. Typically, the judges who are chosen to fill the vacancy ideologically lean toward Liberalism or Conservatism. Rarely is a moderate judge selected. This is to ensure that the party choosing the official will be more likely to win cases that make it to the court. With this decision often comes very polarized responses from members of the opposing party (Galston, 2008). The selection of a new Supreme Court judge will remain in conversation for a while and degrading comments are typically made about the selection in response to the resentment individuals and elites feel, contributing to a polarized climate as supporters try to defend the new judge.

Political Activists

Activists serve many roles in the political field that politicians nor general voters also take part in. Along with activists' duties come increased polarization as they are a main point of communication to the public (Layman, Carsey, Horowitz, 2006). Activists typically serve as leaders in their own communities. The public often turn to them to be updated on new political debate, what changes parties are making, and to better understand the differences between the two dominant parties in the nation (Layman, Carsey, Horowitz, 2006). With this communication

comes political power. Activists are typically extremists toward their party; therefore, the information they are likely to spread is also going to be polarized. Not only do activists have a large influence on their communities, but activists also play an important role for politicians (Layman, Carsey, Horowitz, 2006). Politicians need support in order to secure candidacy spots and win elections. If a politician puts out a controversial statement and they do not receive support, they will lose voters and will not complete their job successfully. Instead, ideally a politician will put out a controversial statement and receive support from activists, especially because they are extreme leaning. Once a politician receives support, they will continue to push ideas further to the extremes until they no longer receive support (Layman, Carsey, Horowitz, 2006). This positive feedback loop leads to more extreme opinions which fuel polarization. Activists also help support politicians because there will be an activist to support each issue (Layman, Carsey, Horowitz, 2006). In a lot of cases multiple policies will be introduced at one time. Some activists will support the policies that align with their identity, while other activists will not be able to relate to those policies on a personal level so they may be more likely to support the other policies introduced (Layman, Carsey, Horowitz, 2006). Political activists serve as protagonists who encourage involvement from the community and provide necessary support to politicians.

Media

A final potential contributor to the nation's polarization is the use of opinionated media. Media is a modern addition to the previous factors; however, academics have conducted an abundance of research on the potential implications politically charged media can have on the nation's political climate. Emily Kubin and Christian Von Sikorski (2021) conducted a meta-analysis on all the published research relevant to polarization and the media. Kubin and

Von Sikorski (2021) collected 121 relevant studies between 2002 to 2020. Their overall findings suggest that media is a contributor to polarization in the United States and has significant findings for elected officials, but it may not fuel individual voters' polarization as much as initially expected (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021).

Research was conducted on all types of media including social media platforms, television news, articles, and more. Researchers have placed additional attention on Twitter because it produces polarizing effects whereas apps such as Facebook and Whatsapp do not contribute to polarization (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021). When a politician tweets something controversial, their posts receive more interaction and attention (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021). Politicians are then encouraged to continue posting these polarizing comments, which increases polarization in the political climate. Similarly, research reveals that officials known for making more politically charged comments and having stronger beliefs receive more news coverage than those who do not (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021). The additional coverage once again encourages politicians to increase their controversial statements and further push their policies to the extreme end of their policy.

While expected findings for the impact media has on polarizing individual voters is smaller than predicted, significant findings were still discovered. In general, if an individual exposes themself to media coverage that is like-minded to their political views, their polarization will increase (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021). This research was supported through findings of social media and more traditional forms of media such as reading news articles about in-party scandal, being exposed to likeminded news media, and incivility on news media from out of party sources (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021). Current research was not conclusive on if charged news about the opposing party increases polarization. Further research will need to occur before

scientists are aware of the effects of opposing media. While the media is a smaller factor to contributing to US political polarization, it is still an important factor to take into account.

The history and complex components of polarization in the United States alters the voting trends political scientists see in today's voters. With polarizing officials and polarizing parties, voters themselves are becoming less and less moderate. Sometimes this moderation can decrease the amount of parental transmission occurring throughout generations. On the other hand, for offspring coming from families who are at the ends of the spectrums, transmission can continue to occur as young voters find a way to sort themselves into a partisanship. Understanding the societal pressures that come from polarization and how policies in the United States continue to change give political scientists a better understanding of how young voters form their political opinions. The important historical progression of polarization in the nation needs to be considered in the discussion of how political affiliations are formed.

Dog Whistle Politics

Modern political activists have examined more closely the ways in which politicians and political campaigns send messages, and sometimes subliminal messages, to the general public. One of these activists, Ian Haney Lopez, a law professor and author of *Dog Whistle Politics,* has taken a closer look at how racial appeals are used in everyday political discussion to alter the way in which members of different races perceive the political world. Discussion on what dog whistle politics is and how it impacts how candidates campaign, help to explain why individuals vote the way they do and form their partisanship. These important factors affect how young voters form their political ideas, impacting voter behavior. Dog whistle politics feeds off the naivete of everyday citizens to alter policies and political candidates, making young voters a

prime target of these appeals. It would not be adequate to evaluate how young voters form their political affiliations without examining dog whistle politics and the appeals' harsh implications.

Dog whistle politics is defined by Ian Lopez as hidden messages transmitted in politics that violate a moral consensus (Lopez, 2014, 4). The analogy of the dog whistle is used to describe how these appeals are hidden, and typically not noticed, like how a dog whistle is not noticed by the human ear. Dog whistle politics is viewed as forms of racism that society does not identify as obvious racism. The appeals are more racially structured and societally involved. These appeals include a wide variety of tactics including: specific language to address policies that disadvantage minority groups, theories to approach race that rely on equality not equity, and subtle attacks that increase feelings of racial resentment. Dog whistle politics is especially important in the United States because we have a two-dominant party system. The two major parties are often pitted against one another, creating racially charged parties for the past 60 years. Lopez states parties became racially identified around 1964, which historically makes sense given the civil rights movement at this time (Lopez, 2014, 20). Due to the charged parties, statistics show that race is a large deciding factor in political affiliation. Addressing the historical and modern factors, and issues of identity politics in the United States, can help reveal why parental influence on young voter political affiliation is not the only influential factor to consider. Young voters make political decisions on their identity and what will benefit them the most. In the racially resentful society of the US, this typically means aligning with the party that best supports an individual's race.

Race Baiting and Language.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, some of the most apparent and common use of dog whistle politics were race baiting and using ambiguous language to refer to racial commentary in

political discussion. This is likely a result of segregation being a forefront issue during the previous two decades. Understanding how race baiting and language were used as dog whistles in these decades helps society to better understand how these appeals have evolved and continued to be accepted over the years.

Alabama governor George Wallace (Democrat) was one of the first politicians to understand how dog whistle appeals, however ethically wrong, could help him gain the political support he desired (Lopez, 2014, 13). Wallace realized that in a time when racial attitudes were the focus of the United States, his audiences did not want to listen to his policies on schools, highways, taxes, etc. Voters wanted to hear about his policies on racism. Although, Wallace realized using blatant white supremacist language would not be an effective way to communicate his support for segregation to a national audience beyond the South. Wallace began to use coded terms in his campaigns to indirectly communicate his support for segregation. He used phrases such as "defending states' rights" and the "freedom of association" to try to convince voters to support his cause. Wallace's hostility was rewarded because it was not outward, but instead hidden (Lopez, 2014, 19).

Wallace was one of many politicians who used coded language to mislead voters into supporting malicious political intentions. Even Nixon used the phrase "forced bussing" to refer to buses that carried students across neighborhoods to schools in order for schools to be desegregated. By mentioning that forced bussing was an inconvenience for all involved, he was sending the underlying message that too much desegregation was occurring; however, some naive voters were only thinking about the amount of effort it took to desegregate schools. Other voters supported Nixon's notions because they wanted to stop busing for their own economic benefits, and some voters even supported Nixon because they held blatant racist beliefs. Nixon

did not initially race bait and use coded language. Nixon began when he noticed Wallace winning over the South with his use of dog whistle politics (Lopez, 2014, 23).

Former president Ronald Reagan (Republican) began using race baiting as early as the mid-1960s. In the 1980s Reagan continued to use race baiting to support his economic motives. Reagan painted the picture that members of each race behaved differently within society. He tried to communicate that white people were the hard workers and taxpayers, while members of minority races just partied (Lopez, 2014, 58). Reagan often used the coded language of "welfare cheats" to imply a false stereotype that Black women (referred to as "welfare queens") commit welfare fraud in order to attain more funding from the government. With Reagan's race baiting and constant discussion, it became implied that when he mentioned welfare cheats, he was referring to individuals of color. Reagan was able to maintain candidacy support and implement tax policies that shifted wealth from the poor and middle classes to the rich (Lopez, 2014, 66). It's important to note that the use of dog whistle appeals throughout Reagan's presidency still impact modern racial tensions today. The false stereotype that citizens of color do not work as hard as white people within the US is still present and creates barriers for minorities in all kinds of environments, such as academic and work environments. The stereotype of the welfare queen is still mentioned in modern day. The transparent view of stereotypes from the 1980s to the 2020s emphasize how vital it is that society historically examine the development of dog whistle politics in our political discourse. Some of the stereotypes that would have affected young voters then, also impact the way in which young voters form their political alignments today.

Color-blindness.

The United States has tried out several policies and ways to approach race in America. One of these attempts to reach equality was the idea of implementing color-blindness.

color-blindness means to not see the differences between people of different races and act as if everyone is the same and treat everyone the same. Modern day Democratic and Liberal political activists have tried to educate against this idea because it fails to recognize the different hardships minorities face in this country. It also fails to acknowledge that due to past mistreatment, treating everyone equally, or the same, will still continue to disadvantage members of minority groups. Activists have also tried to create a shift from the term equality, which means treating everyone the same, to equity, which refers to giving everyone what they need in order to succeed. Regardless of modern attempts, the ideas of color-blindness still plague today's society, which is why it is important to examine some of their roots and how politicians used this flawed policy to better their political arguments and gain voter support.

It is important to note that in relation to color-blindness it is essential to discuss the formation of the term ethnicity in the United States. Starting with race in the 1910s there was debate on the role race played. Some sociologists believed race was purely a biological concept allowing for racism to take place in the decisions of how minorities were being treated in the nation. Others believed that race had social implications that came along with it (Winant, 2007). Race and culture began to come into conversation later in the 1910s when immigrants were coming into the nation. To preserve a sense of nationalism, terms for culture and race were emerging for these immigrants (Winant, 2007). Being presented in the 1920s, ethnicity was a way to describe culture, and race was a way to describe supposed biological factors. Back then, white people were identified by different ethnicities because of the different European countries they originated from (Lopez, 2014, 95). Nowadays, ethnicity still refers to cultures, but it is more to do with racial affinities. Due to this history of ethnicity, under color-blindness, politicians were able to present the hardships that come to these minority groups as their own doing and

their own fault (Lopez, 2014, 95). Conservatives would argue that since they are attacking culture and people's behavior, they are not racist and instead were making judgments on moral character. This approach unfortunately allowed for false stereotypes to continue to persist, such as the idea that minorities in the US do not work hard enough.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and David Dietrich (2011) comment on the ways in which a focus on color-blindness ideologies create three types of modern racism: abstract liberalism, cultural racism, and minimization of racism. Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich acknowledge that adopted ideas of color-blindness dismiss the possibility of America being in this so-called "post-racism" era. They believe instead the country is in a state of "new racism," where Jim Crow motivated racism is not the forefront, but rather subtle claims and causes in indirect conversation with race. Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich (2011) define abstract liberalism as framing race-related issues in the language of liberalism, while simultaneously rejecting new approaches to race-related issues. The two say a lot of times abstract liberalism can be seen when politicians push for equality instead of equity. Cultural racism is when the focus of the conversation is on culture instead of biology because the perpetrators do not see the harm in attacking the group rather than the individual. The example explained above where members of ethnicities were being stereotyped as creating their own failure by politicians is a great example of this form of racism. The final type of modern racism is the minimization of racism which is the belief that the social standing of minorities is not based on the history of discrimination but rather other factors.

The modern forms of racism were present in Obama's 2008 election in relation to color-blindness. At the beginning of the election campaign, Obama was seen as a sign of hope for people of color (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). For some white people, Obama being the Democratic ticket emphasized the color-blind ideology. They operated under the assumption that

since a member of color was able to represent a political party in the presidential election, the system of equality and implementing color-blindness was working (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). Political scientists comment that Obama tried to distance himself from race to better his campaign. Obama placed himself in a position where racial discussion in relevance to him became difficult. Obama achieved this state by emphasizing the idea that lots of people of color have gotten where they want to be without using "racism as a crutch" (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011). This discourse is a form of minimization of racism. After pushing these ideas, some members of the Black community faced conflict because they did not support his minimization of racism statements, but they also did not want to challenge his policies because this was a historically significant moment and they did not want racial feedback (Bonilla-Silva & Dietrich, 2011).

Since a rather wide shift has occurred surrounding the idea of color-blindness in the United States, research has been conducted on why this is a detrimental way of thinking. One of these studies was conducted surrounding racial group stereotypes during Obama's presidency. Under this research, the results revealed that when color-blind language was used in a campaign anti-black prejudice increased for Republicans, but not for Democrats (Lopez, 2014, 101). Researchers believed these findings arose because color-blind language would allow for more racially charged statements to be made, making Republicans more racially resentful. Another research study recruited 100 white children from Texas to talk about their associations between the meanness of white people and Black people (Lopez, 2014, 77). The researchers found that the white children said they perceive more Black people being mean than they perceive white people being mean (Lopez, 2014, 77). This response reflects racial bias; however, this bias was not biologically transmitted, but rather learned. With a closer look, these children had learned

racial stereotypes from their parents, increasing their racial resentment even as children. Color-blindness fails to recognize the oppression minority groups have faced and creates obstacles for these groups to obtain government help. Political groups continue to prey on this idea to help advance their motives to reduce government support, affecting modern day political discussion and debate. The idea of color-blindness continues to affect the arguments politicians make, altering the way in which young voters vote and politically align themselves based on their own identities. Young members of minority groups will tend to vote for the party that will disadvantage them the least; however, due to the use of dog whistle politics this rhetoric can make things confusing for young voters, and limit their choices due to racial sentiment.

Racial Jujitsu.

Ian Haney Lopez describes the denial and attack of racist comments by political parties as the act of "racial jujitsu". This pattern of behaviors has occurred so much in politics lately that it can be predicted and identified. Lopez mentions that the process goes as following: someone makes a discrete racial comment through references to culture, behavior, or economic class, then in defense to being called out they make claims that since biological statements surrounding race were not mentioned, they were not being racist, and finally they end this pattern by calling any of their critics racists for bringing race into the conversation (Lopez, 2014, 130).

The use of racial jujitsu causes a lot of bantering back and forth between the politicians who use it and the progressive politicians who call them out. A lot of racial jujitsu occurred around Obama's presidential campaign, with punches indirectly and subtly attacking Obama's race. Progressive politicians do not like the backlash they get for bringing the racially charged comments to the public's attention. When the progressive politicians receive backlash, they lose any potential support from voters who are racially resentful and paying attention to the politician

using the dog whistle politics (Lopez, 2014, 139). As a result, this bantering pattern makes progressive politicians question if they should bring the racial comments up and can in turn silence necessary conversations surrounding race. This tactic is very detrimental not only to the progressive candidates' campaign, but it is also detrimental to voters. The public is not receiving adequate racial discourse and are watching politicians get away with racially charged comments and punches because others are too afraid of the backlash they may receive in return. The effects of racial jujitsu may alter the way in which young viewers view politics, and potentially cause a sense of distrust in our politicians from any party affiliation.

How an individual racially identifies has a large impact on the way in which they view the nation, the current political tensions, and policies politicians endorse. It is important to factor in an individual's race and look at them holistically to better understand their political affiliation, which is why looking at rates of parental transmission is simply not enough. Understanding how dog whistle politics increases feelings of racial resentment in young white voters, while simultaneously allowing politicians to get away with racial comments and ideas that affect minority voters, helps to better understand why in today's political climate voting trends dependent on race are present. The use of coded political rhetoric forces voters to prioritize supporting parties that will best support their own identity because society does not currently tackle these issues separately from political parties. The use of dog whistle politics is detrimental to the political world and the way in which young voters form their long-lasting political identifications.

Conclusion

With constant change in the United States, the behavior of citizens also changes accordingly. The way individuals form beliefs and values is a result of the different internal and

external factors operating within that individual's life. How young voters form their political beliefs and values is a study of interest because of the impact these voters will have on the future. After examining the relationship of parental transmission on offspring, it can be supported that parental influence still plays a role in the development of young voters' political identification. It was even discovered that the type of parenting from the paternal figure mediates the relationship between parental political affiliation and offspring affiliation. While the research supports prior efforts to explain how youth gather their information and make decisions, it is not adequate to just examine these factors. Additional exploration was done on the history of voting appeals and polarization in the United States, along with talk about the development of dog whistle politics. These factors help to demonstrate that political scientists need to take a holistic approach to looking at voters to better understand their political behaviors.

The findings in this study help to emphasize prior research's findings by supporting modern parental transmission. With the revelation of the mediating variables, the data also expands literature on the role of parenting style in child development. Even the lack of findings contribute to the scientific community. By not finding any relevant relationships between self-identification and personality traits from the Big Five, future researchers can redesign the survey at hand or create variations to explore these relationships further. The arguments presented in this paper offer suggestions for the path political scientists and researchers should take for their next steps. The importance of applying interdisciplinary research on political affiliation formation is essential to understanding not only how affiliations are made, but also how these affiliations change over time and shape our nation's political field. Understanding the historical development of current trends in the nation will help political scientists to predict

changes in political behavior in the future. These findings underline the societal need for more interdisciplinary research to occur within our nation.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Data Demographics

Table A.1

Gender Frequency

	N	%
man	242	61.4%
woman	136	34.5%
other	15	3.8%
Missing System	1	0.3%

Table A.2

Age Frequency

	N	%
18	20	5.1%
19	25	6.3%
20	39	9.9%
21	44	11.2%
22	61	15.5%
23	61	15.5%
24	64	16.2%
25	76	19.3%
30	1	0.3%
32	1	0.3%
33	1	0.3%
Missing System	1	0.3%

Table A.3

Race Frequency

	N	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	1.0%
Asian	70	17.8%
Black or African American	43	10.9%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.3%
White	251	63.7%
Other	21	5.3%
Missing System	4	1.0%

Table A.4

Ethnicity Frequency

	N	%
Hispanic or Latina or Spanish Origin	70	17.8%
Not Hispanic or Latina or Spanish Origin	315	79.9%
other	3	0.8%
Missing System	6	1.5%

Table A.5

SES Frequency

	N	%
Lower Class	38	9.6%
Working Class	122	31.0%
Middle Class	165	41.9%
Upper Middle Class	59	15.0%
Upper Class	5	1.3%
I don't know	4	1.0%
Missing System	1	0.3%

Table A.6

Education Frequency

	N	%
Less than high school diploma	15	3.8%
High School Diploma or GED	84	21.3%
Some college, but no degree	121	30.7%
Associate's Degree	36	9.1%
Bachelors Degree	128	32.5%
More than a Bachelors Degree	8	2.0%
Missing System	2	0.5%

Table A.7

SID Frequency

	N	%
Strong Democrat	108	27.4%
Weak Democrat	66	16.8%
Independent Democrat	58	14.7%
Independent	84	21.3%
Independent Republican	25	6.3%
Weak Republican	27	6.9%
Strong Republican	16	4.1%
Missing System	10	2.5%

Table A.8

FID Frequency

	N	%
Strong Democrat	50	12.7%
Weak Democrat	56	14.2%
Independent Democrat	26	6.6%
Independent	59	15.0%
Independent Republican	26	6.6%
Weak Republican	46	11.7%
Strong Republican	84	21.3%
Missing System	47	11.9%

Table A.9

MID Frequency

	N	%
Strong Democrat	84	21.3%
Weak Democrat	78	19.8%
Independent Democrat	35	8.9%
Independent	49	12.4%
Independent Republican	31	7.9%
Weak Republican	55	14.0%
Strong Republican	53	13.5%
Missing System	9	2.3%

Table A.10

2020 Presidential Election Participation

	N	%
yes	255	64.7%
no	136	34.5%
Missing System	3	0.8%

Table A.11

2022 Mid-Term Election Participation

	N	%
yes	196	49.7%
no	197	50.0%
Missing System	1	0.3%

Table A.12

2024 Presidential Election Predicted Participation

	N	%
yes	297	75.4%
no	30	7.6%
Maybe	67	17.0%

Appendix B: Research Materials

Participation

Items were answered with a "Yes" or "No"

1. Did you vote in the 2020 Presidential Election?
2. Did you vote in the 2022 Mid-term Election?

Item was answered with a "Yes," "No," or "Maybe"

1. Do you intend to vote in the 2024 Presidential Election?

Identification

Items were answered on a 7 point scale from 1 "Strong Democrat" to 7 "Strong Republican"

1. Please indicate your political identification from the following options.
2. What do you believe is your mother's political identification?
3. What do you believe is your father's political identification?

Political Discussion

Items were answered on a 5 point scale from 1 "Daily" to 5 "Never"

1. How often did your mother discuss politics in the home when growing up?
2. How often did your father discuss politics in the home when growing up?
3. How often did your mother discuss *her political view* in the home when growing up?
4. How often did your father discuss *his political view* in the home when growing up?

Items were answered on a 4 point scale from 1 "About daily" to 4 "Not at all"

1. When you were growing up, how often did your family unit talk about government and politics at home?

Items were answered on a 4 point scale from 1 "Nearly every day" to 4 "Less often"

1. Now, thinking about the people you talk with, whether in person, over the phone, or electronically, how often do you discuss government and politics with others?

Parental Authority Questionnaire

Parental Authority Questionnaire

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number of the 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your mother. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your mother during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. While I was growing up my mother felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Even if her children didn't agree with her, my mother felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what she thought was right.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Whenever my mother told me to do something as I was growing up, she expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.	1	2	3	4	5
4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my mother discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My mother has always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My mother has always felt that what her children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.	1	2	3	4	5
7. As I was growing up my mother did not allow me to question any decision she had made.	1	2	3	4	5
8. As I was growing up my mother directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My mother has always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.	1	2	3	4	5
10. As I was growing up my mother did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.	1	2	3	4	5

11. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my mother when I felt that they were unreasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My mother felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.	1	2	3	4	5
13. As I was growing up, my mother seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Most of the time as I was growing up my mother did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
15. As the children in my family were growing up, my mother consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.	1	2	3	4	5
16. As I was growing up my mother would get very upset if I tried to disagree with her.	1	2	3	4	5
17. My mother feels that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
18. As I was growing up my mother let me know what behavior she expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, she punished me.	1	2	3	4	5
19. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from her.	1	2	3	4	5
20. As I was growing up my mother took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but she would not decide for something simply because the children wanted it.	1	2	3	4	5
21. My mother did not view herself as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My mother had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but she was willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.	1	2	3	4	5
23. My mother gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow her direction, but she was always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.	1	2	3	4	5
24. As I was growing up my mother allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and she generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.	1	2	3	4	5

25. My mother has always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.	1	2	3	4	5
26. As I was growing up my mother often told me exactly what she wanted me to do and how she expected me to do it.	1	2	3	4	5
27. As I was growing up my mother gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but she was also understanding when I disagreed with her.	1	2	3	4	5
28. As I was growing up my mother did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.	1	2	3	4	5
29. As I was growing up I knew what my mother expected of me in the family and she insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for her authority.	1	2	3	4	5
30. As I was growing up, if my mother made a decision in the family that hurt me, she was willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if she had made a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5

Description: The PAQ is designed to measure parental authority, or disciplinary practices, from the point of view of the child (of any age).

The PAQ has three subscales:
permissive (P: items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24 and 28), authoritarian (A: items 2, 3, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26 and 29), and authoritative/flexible (F: items 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23, 27, and 30). Mother and father forms of the assessment are identical except for references to gender.

Scoring: The PAQ is scored easily by summing the individual items to comprise the subscale scores. Scores on each subscale range from 10 to 50.

Author: Dr. John R. Buri, Department of Psychology, University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105.

Source: Buri, J.R. (1991). Parental Authority Questionnaire, Journal of Personality and Social Assessment, 57, 110-119

Big Five Inventory

Scale:

The Big Five Inventory (BFI)

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

Disagree strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5

I see Myself as Someone Who...

____1. Is talkative

____2. Tends to find fault with others

____3. Does a thorough job

____4. Is depressed, blue

____5. Is original, comes up with new ideas

____6. Is reserved

____7. Is helpful and unselfish with others

____8. Can be somewhat careless

____9. Is relaxed, handles stress well

____10. Is curious about many different things

____11. Is full of energy

____12. Starts quarrels with others

____13. Is a reliable worker

____14. Can be tense

____15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker

____16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm

____17. Has a forgiving nature

____18. Tends to be disorganized

____19. Worries a lot

____23. Tends to be lazy

____24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset

____25. Is inventive

____26. Has an assertive personality

____27. Can be cold and aloof

____28. Perseveres until the task is finished

____29. Can be moody

____30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences

____31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited

____32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone

____33. Does things efficiently

____34. Remains calm in tense situations

____35. Prefers work that is routine

____36. Is outgoing, sociable

____37. Is sometimes rude to others

____38. Makes plans and follows through with them

____39. Gets nervous easily

____40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas

____41. Has few artistic interests

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____20. Has an active imagination

____21. Tends to be quiet

____22. Is generally trusting

____42. Likes to cooperate with others

____43. Is easily distracted

____44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

Scoring:

BFI scale scoring ("R" denotes reverse-scored items):

Extraversion: 1, 6R, 11, 16, 21R, 26, 31R, 36
Agreeableness: 2R, 7, 12R, 17, 22, 27R, 32, 37R, 42
Conscientiousness: 3, 8R, 13, 18R, 23R, 28, 33, 38, 43R
Neuroticism: 4, 9R, 14, 19, 24R, 29, 34R, 39
Openness: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, 44

Appendix C: Data Analyses

Table C.1

Correlation of SID and MID

		SID	MID
SID	Pearson Correlation	1	.380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1180.977	545.900
	Covariance	3.083	1.444
	N	384	379
MID	Pearson Correlation	.380**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	545.900	1777.886
	Covariance	1.444	4.630
	N	379	385

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C.2

Correlation of SID and FID

		SID	FID
SID	Pearson Correlation	1	.360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1180.977	466.286
	Covariance	3.083	1.380
	N	384	339
FID	Pearson Correlation	.360**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	466.286	1646.622
	Covariance	1.380	4.759
	N	339	347

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C.3

Correlation of MID and Parenting Styles

		MID	mauthoritarian	mflexibility	ppermissive
MID	Pearson Correlation	1	.182**	-.150**	-.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.004	.455
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1777.886	1262.555	-971.531	-224.664
	Covariance	4.630	3.376	-2.598	-.665
	N	385	375	375	339

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table C.4

Correlation of FID and Parenting Styles

		FID	ppermissive	pauthoritarian	pflexibility
FID	Pearson Correlation	1	-.172**	.232**	-.149**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	<.001	.006
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1646.622	-954.804	1576.500	-913.872
	Covariance	4.759	-2.842	4.706	-2.720
	N	347	337	336	337

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table C.5

Permissive Parenting Mediator on FID x SID

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	29.271	.888		32.952	<.001
	FID	-.595	.186	-.172	-3.203	.001

a. Dependent Variable: ppermissive

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.706	.402		1.758	.080
	FID	.313	.042	.387	7.499	<.001
	ppermissive	.036	.012	.156	3.025	.003

a. Dependent Variable: SID

Table C.6

Authoritative Parenting Mediator on FID x SID

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	32.930	.984		33.475	<.001
	FID	-.569	.206	-.149	-2.765	.006

a. Dependent Variable: pflexibility

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.733	.410		1.788	.075
	FID	.315	.042	.388	7.537	<.001
	pflexibility	.031	.011	.148	2.874	.004

a. Dependent Variable: SID