

EMERGING POLITICAL IDENTIFICATION OF YOUNG ADULTS

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Emerging Political Identification of Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

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Research has more than adequately established the importance of the role of parents in the political socialization of young people. However, there is surprisingly little research that examines if and when young people deviate from their parental influence. Once deviation occurs, who replaces parents in the role of influencing the development of the political self? This research examined the development of political identification in young people ages 19-24 to discover if young people deviate from their socialized political attitudes usually instilled by their parents. It also sought to discover what outside influence is having the strongest effect on the subjects after such deviation occurs. These variables include their university, parents, professors, peer groups, media outlets, and religious affiliation. Interestingly, after the parents, the subjects' peer groups tested as having the strongest effect on the subjects deviating from their parental political norms. In addition, specific political affiliation was correlated to specific variables; for example the variable "religion" was an accurate predictor of political identification for self-identifying conservatives. The research also reinforced the notion that interpersonal relationships are the most influential in the development of the political self.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to my mother and father, Linda and Doug. Their wisdom and love as I grew into a man was essential to my success in academia and life. They have been role models, friends, philosophers, coaches, caregivers, and most importantly, my mom and dad. I am ever so grateful we made it to a point of peace and prosperity. I look forward to many more years of growing and discovering life as it unfolds before us. You both are my inspiration and greatest fans. You both have provided for me in so many ways that the only way I can repay you is to pass your unconditional love and wisdom on to my children one day. I love you both.

FOREWORD

In the fall of 2003 I took a mass media and public opinion class at North Dakota State University. During the course of the class, I became acquainted with the work of Walter Lippmann and his book *Public Opinion (1922)*. From his work and the lecture, I was required to do a pilot study on an area of interest. My area of interest is politics, and political communication has been at the center of all my academic work. For this particular study, I was interested in understanding if the students in my class had a sound understanding of the political ideology they claimed to believe. To measure their understanding of their professed political ideology, I gave them two surveys to complete. One survey they completed online from a website that identified itself as the "Political Compass Test." This site had a survey that asked varying social, economic, religious, and personal questions without ever using any typical political terms. The second survey asked questions that were laden with typical political terms. Each student was given a random number that they placed on each survey so the results could be matched.

My hypothesis was that the Republican students would come out more liberal than their chosen partisan identity would indicate. My focus was solely on the conservative students because that was who I bantered with in class on political issues. The results, while hardly able to generalize, showed that the self-identifying conservative/Republican students are indeed significantly more liberal than they thought they were through normal political terms. The results also revealed – much to my surprise – that the self-identifying liberals/Democrats are more conservative than they thought they were through normal political terms.

This minor political discovery leads me to ask the questions: Why do people identify politically, does age play a role in their identity, and how do they come to believe what they do? These are the questions I am setting out to answer with this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

Issue of Interest

If you are young and conservative you have no heart; if you are old and liberal you have no brain. This tongue-in-cheek comment assumes younger people should be idealistic and older people should be realistic. Why does this turn of phrase target the young and old as having different points of view in political identification? Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes state in their book *The American Voter* (1964), that only 8% of 21- to 24-year-olds identified themselves as Republicans while 24% over age 65 identified as Republicans. Is the opening comment a witty statement or conventional wisdom? The Campbell et al. (1964) research is more than 40 years old; however, much of the current research on political identification cites the 1964 study as the beginning of this area of research.

Understanding how people associate themselves politically allows the media and the world to get a sense of where elections and policy decisions are headed in the upcoming years. Political identification is widely recognized as a solid predictor for political behavior and voting (Achen, 2002; Schreckhise & Shields, 2003; Wattenberg, 1998). Campbell wrote *The American Voter* (1964) to try to answer the questions of why and how people identify politically. Gaining an understanding of why and how people politically identify themselves is significant in helping political parties, candidates, and even the populous in general become more educated, active, and responsive members of the body politic.

This research study answers questions about young adult identification and who is responsible for this identification beyond parents. This thesis gives a thorough description of the literature and research on party identification and social identity theory as well as a discussion of a subset of socialization that scholars have defined as political socialization. The review of literature reintroduces the idea of a "political self" as a theory that will help guide this inquiry. Next, the review will gauge the strength of the respondent's political identification through the application of the social identity theory. After the review of literature, several hypotheses will be tested and research questions explored through a convenience sample survey of 384 college students. This survey is based on the question structure of The National Election Survey and questions designed to measure for social identity theory. The social identity theory questions reveal the strength of the respondents' political identification. The results will be reported and analyzed, and the final chapter will discuss the conclusions and future implications of this kind of research.

Importance of the Study

The importance of political identification research is far reaching. Primarily, political identification research can help develop an understanding of how and why people identify politically. Understanding political identification makes an important contribution to improving the state of our democracy. In the 1960s, Campbell noted that the researchers sought to understand why we identify the way we do: "The motivational role of perceptions of the wider political environment deserves greater attention than it has received in electoral research" (Campbell, 1964, p. 31). Sapiro

(2004) agreed with Campbell's (1964) remarks 40 years later, arguing that how people develop their political views is relevant to emerging and stable democracies.

A significant amount of research is needed to gain a strong understanding of the evolution of party identification. More specifically, few researchers examine young adults who are just beginning to assert themselves as voting members of the electorate. Research in the literature review shows that parents play the most significant role in political socialization of children and adolescents; however, there is little research to demonstrate the socializing effects beyond parental influences. This study examines what other influences help young people navigate the evolution of their political self after the period of parental socialization. These findings could have strong practical applications as young people's (teens and early 20s) participation in politics is at very low levels (Gimpel et al., 2004). The ultimate goal of this study is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in the area of political identification.

CHAPTER 2.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review has four parts. First, it explores existing research on the concept of party/political identity. Second, the review describes the role of political socialization and the development of the theory of political self. Third, the review examines the role of social identity theory in political identification research. Finally, the review discusses specific research regarding low-information elections, age, and higher education to provide a context into which this thesis fits.

Party/political identity is a well-researched phenomenon. Since Campbell et al. wrote *The American Voter* (1964), scholars have produced an abundance of research discussing party/political identity. Campbell (1964) stated that electoral behavior was based on “the role of enduring partisan commitments in shaping attitudes toward political objects” (p. 135). Holm and Robinson (1978) believed party identification was crucial in determining voter behavior. Bartels (2002) described political identification as “...a pervasive dynamic force shaping citizens’ perceptions of, and reactions to, the political world” (p. 117).

The literature agrees that party/political identification is a powerful force in predicting voting behavior (Schreckhise & Shields, 2003). This is especially true in low-information elections: “The party label is especially helpful for respondents when surveys ask them to express candidate preferences for low-information offices weeks before the election” (Schaffner & Streb, 2002, p. 561). Most elections fall into the category of low-information elections, which is significant because a majority of

voting opportunities are for lesser state, local, and municipal offices (Schaffner & Streb, 2002). The research presents various questions regarding the nature of political identity. Is party identification a stable monolithic force that is given to us by our parents, or is it a fluid, changing phenomenon that moves with the political currents? Perhaps party identification has shades of gray between the political extremes.

Political Identification

Campbell (1964) states that party/political identification is a stable force based on the socialization individuals receive from their parents and their environment. Campbell (1964) did not say, however, that political identification is an unmovable idea and that certain events might bring about a partisan realignment. Other arguments state that party identification is based on a running balance sheet of the two parties and their most recent actions (Fiorina, 1977). Bartels (2002) argues that political or party identification is more than the sum of a running tally: "The running tally may be a convenient accounting device, but is not a moving force in politics" (p. 118-19). Many question the assumed inherent nature of party identification as being stable and long lasting as Campbell, Converse, and other Michigan scholars argue. A new view of party identification argues that people are more susceptible to current conditions and changes in the political environment (Haynes & Jacobs, 1994). The important point is that political identification is a central component to the political self (Lawrence, 2001). Regardless of the many viewpoints the academic world holds, party identification is an important piece – if not the most important piece – of the political puzzle for its predictive value as election time approaches.

The review of literature for this study outlines a transition from the viewpoint that political identity is a stable and socially inherited trait to an active characteristic that is dependent on the current conditions and political climate. To understand the direction of party identification scholarship, exploring its history becomes necessary.

Campbell and Converse

Angus Campbell et al. wrote *The American Voter* (1964), engendering a field of research in political and party identification. While scholars had conducted earlier significant political research, most contemporary research starts with *The American Voter* (1964). Campbell et al. (1964) said that party identification was a prevalent aspect of the political landscape: "Most Americans have this sense of attachment with one party or the other" (p. 68). Not only did Campbell et al. (1964) find that 75% of Americans identify in some way with one party or the other, they also found that party identifications predicted political and voting behavior. Campbell et al. (1964) stated, "For the individual who does, [have party identification], the strength and direction of party identification are facts of central importance in accounting for attitude and behavior" (p. 68).

Party identification is stronger than just the attitudes that the electorate brings to the polls every few years. Psychological forces that affect our daily lives also largely determine an individual's political identification. Campbell et al. (1964) argues that individual factors influence many people in each election. They refer to the components that influence voters as the psychological forces of the environment, such as peer group attitudes and family voting or political behavior: "That the

partisan decision of the individual is profoundly affected by the psychological forces we have measured seems clear in the data of several election campaigns” (p. 33).

Campbell et al.’s (1964) exploration of young adult politicization relied on respondents’ ability to recall the past since most respondents were well past the minimum voting age. The research, however, in conjunction with a review of literature, found that the immediate family heavily influenced most voters at or near the minimum voting age (Campbell et al., 1964). Partisan identifications typically extended far into an individual’s past, if not into the past of an individual’s forbearers as well (Campbell et al., 1964). Parental and family influence is an important area of study, as research conducted for this paper develops an understanding of political identification after the period of parental socialization occurs. Campbell et al.(1964) and studies to be surveyed later revealed a lack of research on young adults who recently reached the legal voting age and were beginning to express themselves politically. This thesis tests the influence parents have in determining voting behavior and political identification. The thesis also tests who and what are influential factors for people after they reach voting age and begin the rite of passage as an adult in the political world.

Interestingly, Campbell et al. (1964) asserted that the research showed political movement to be very stagnant. They found that in political identification, “the picture is generally one of firm but not immovable attachment” (p. 87). Political movement was not common once someone identified politically: “It is apparent from these various pieces of evidence that identification with political parties, once established, is an attachment that is not easily changed” (Campbell et al., 1964, p. 87).

Once individuals politically identify, they are not likely to cross party lines in the future. Further research in this review challenges the findings of Campbell et al. (1964) and other Michigan scholars of political identification.

Phillip E. Converse followed Campbell et al. with a significant amount of research on political identification from the University of Michigan, forming what has widely been called the "Michigan Model" for political identity. Not surprisingly, Converse's (1979) and Campbell et al.'s (1964) research have similar results, as Converse was a co-author of *The American Voter* (1964). Converse (1979), however, was largely responsible for the panel studies that brought about the Michigan Model for political identification. This review focuses on Converse's (1979) scholarly work in the panel research he did from 1956-60 and 1972-76.

Converse (1979) found that political identification was, by and large, stable in both research panels in the 1950s and 1970s. He labeled the findings that stability persisted through the 1970s as "counter intuitive" (p. 32). The significance of his findings is interesting because even though the electorate experienced the tumultuous 1960s, people still adhered to their previous party identification. Even more striking is that respondents' ideologies did not always match their identification. Furthermore, Converse (1979) found that party identification seemed to be primary in voting decisions despite policy or ideological points of view. Voters were voting with their party identification rather than their thoughts on current policy or attitude toward the current political climate.

This finding set the stage for many scholars during and after Converse's research to question his and Campbell's et al.'s findings. The idea that political

identification was an inherited and stable characteristic throughout an individual's life was not palatable to other scholars. This finding has been challenged time and again by other researchers in the field of communication and social psychology. They began to question the notion that people blindly followed their parents' ideology – the partisan choice was a stable one – and that political behavior is in response to attitudes toward different issues.

Political Socialization and the Political Self

Political socialization has its own subset of research in theories related to politics and socialization in general. It serves as an excellent contextual statement about the history and development of political identification. A cause and effect relationship exists between political socialization and political identification. If political socialization is the process, then political identification is the product. An in-depth analysis of political socialization helps to understand the nature of political identification. For the purposes of this study, political socialization is a contributing element in developing a framework from which political identification is explored.

In the 1970s, the idea of political socialization began to take on a stronger significance as the genesis of political identity: "For all its lack of sharply defined limits, the subject [political socialization] nevertheless has quickly become an important area of research for political and other social scientists" (Dennis, 1973, p. 24). The concept of political socialization can be used as a tool for understanding the nature and genesis of political identification. Political socialization is important because people's political identity is related to the whole concept of self and how we

see ourselves personally and socially. There are several definitions of political socialization.

According to Dawson et al. (1977), political socialization is “the processes through which an individual acquires his particular political orientations—his knowledge, feelings, and evaluations regarding his political world” (p. 33). Political identification is a process of “socialization” between the person and agents of the political system (Dawson et al., 1977). Dennis (1973) defines political socialization as “the process of induction into a political culture. Its end product is a set of attitudes – cognitions, value standards and feelings – toward the political system, its various roles and role incumbents” (p. 7). Ultimately, identification is an ongoing outcome of the socialization process. Dennis is the champion of the macro or systems approach to political identification. The macro approach is significant because without a mechanism to introduce and reinforce the democratic ways of our political system, as new electorates emerged they would become more open to being led astray by destructive forces in society, such as Hitler in Germany (Achen, 2002).

Not only does the mechanism for introducing and reinforcing our political structure perpetuate our political way of life, but it also plays a role in the personal development of the political self. People who develop an early political identity through patriotic stories at school or conversations with parents about legends of the country and former political leaders tend to form very strong ties to the political identity with which they associate. First, children develop an abstract concept related to being an American. As children mature toward adulthood, the level of sophistication related to their understanding of the political world around them grows.

At this point, the parents and family continue to reinforce political points of view that become more party-specific (Hess & Torney, 1967).

These ties to party or political points of view are very strong and not easily broken (Dawson et al., 1977). The strength of party identification is stronger than an individual's ability to explain a particular point of view. For example, young people may say that they are strong Republicans, and as they develop their social/political identity, identifying as a Republican will play a significant role in how they perceive themselves. However, if they were asked to articulate four basic points about why they believe the way they do (unrelated to parental influence), they would be hard-pressed to answer. This scenario is partially realized in Helmut Norpoth's (1987) research on party realignment in the 1980s. Norpoth (1987) found that many new/young Republicans in the 1980s were not claiming the conservative ideology, but were following a charismatic leader or were subject to other outside influences not related to policy decisions. Norpoth's (1987) research sets up a major question of this thesis: When does an individual start to express independent thoughts about political identity and what motivates that individual to do so? To get to the heart of that question, a further understanding of the nature of political socialization is needed.

Political socialization is divided into two parts: macro and micro. The macro, or systems approach, is concerned with the interactions in which values are impressed upon the members of that system (Dennis, 1973). In other words, how do members of the electorate learn and accept political authority and gain confidence in the government? This perspective goes outside the person. The focus is on how people approach the idea of government and political bodies. The micro approach focuses on

“how, when, and why individuals acquire particular political attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors” (Steckenrider & Cutler 1989, p. 56). This thesis is concerned primarily with the micro perspective of political socialization and the development of the political self. According to Steckenrider and Cutler (1989), “It is the micro-perspective that is concerned with the gradual, incremental, lifelong process of developing an individual’s political self” (p. 57).

Dawson (1977) elaborates by drawing on George Herbert Mead to discuss the evolution of a person’s “political self” as something that is developed, “not borne or innate” (p. 41). Political socialization and political identification literature references parents as the key component to forming or socializing the child into understanding the political system (Achen, 2002; Bartels, 2002; Campbell et al., 1964; Converse, 1979; Dawson et al., 1977; Franklin, 1984; Franklin & Jackson, 1983; Greene, 2000; Hess & Torney, 1967). An abundance of research exists on the development of political identity in childhood and adolescence. The development of the political self that occurs after the influences of parental socialization have occurred has often gone unnoticed in the research. The Political Self Theory (PST) sets the stage for discussion during the time in an individual’s life just after political socialization takes place and people begin to express their own political actions, such as voting.

The focus is not primarily on the socialization process from a parental point of view. That phenomenon has already been well documented. The interest is in the process of identification as it evolves independent of parental influences. So while parental socialization certainly sets up the discussion of political identity in young people, the gap in the research is the nature of political identification in the young

adult years. Sapiro (2004) alludes to this: "Because the core of political socialization is not so much what people have learned as how they learn and under what circumstances" (p. 11). He argues that political socialization may not come entirely from the parents, but also the situation and context in which people learn. Even more importantly, the real nature of political socialization may not take place in childhood at all.

Researchers need to explore the socialization of young adults as they enter the electorate as voting citizens. Franklin and Jackson (1983) echo this concern: "Identifications are more than the result of a set of early socializing experiences, possibly reinforced by subsequent social and political activity" (p. 986). Furthermore, Franklin (1984) found that "party identification is not fixed in childhood, and further that it changes in response to policy preferences" (p. 473). Franklin also found that by the age of 25 people were adjusting their political preferences (1984). Franklin's report of party realignment by age 25 has prompted the focus of this thesis to be on new voters ages 18 to 24.. The goal is to identify when the realignment begins and who influences the realignment. Political Self Theory provides the foundation to explain this area of young adult socialization.

Mead (1934) discusses political self in *Mind, Self & Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Dawson et al., (1977) takes Mead's concepts and expands them to explain the complexity of the political self as a lifelong evolving identity. They characterize this idea of a political self as an active element in a person's life if he or she chooses. A person can have an undeveloped political self if they choose not to be active in the political world.

Political Self Theory is derived from an explanation of political self by Dawson et al. (1977), in the book *Political Socialization*. Political Self Theory explains an individual's evolution from infancy to late adulthood as a political being in society. The political self is a snapshot of the process of political socialization at any one point in people's lives, either as adolescents in middle school describing what they heard their parents say after watching the news, 20-year-old political activists fighting for their favorite cause, 40-year-old parents worried about schools and safety, or retirees interested in the Medicare benefit. People are continually in varying stages of political socialization. Sapiro (2004) supports this notion, stating, "In recent decades, political socialization scholars have increasingly agreed that basic learning occurs throughout the life course" (p. 18). Socialization develops our political self. This thesis takes a snapshot of the political self of 18- to 24-year-old college students to gauge who or what is influencing the development of their political self in the early years of their voting life.

Literature on the subject of young adult political identification and political socialization is fairly sparse and incomplete. To summarize, this review of literature demonstrates three things:

- Political identification is the strongest predictor of political behavior.
- Parents play the strongest role in the development of an individual's political identity in childhood and adolescence.
- Researchers have conducted a significant amount of research on the effects of political socialization in children and adolescents, but have produced little research about emerging voters.

Some of the literature argues that identification is going to be stable throughout a person's life. Other literature suggests that many factors can bring about temporary or permanent party realignment. Very little literature discusses how young adults change as they develop their independent political self.

The literature that does exist discusses how socialization does follow one trend closely. As young people leave their parents' home and socialization influence, they have a broad perspective on political socialization and the terms that label their points of view. As individuals get older and take more time to understand the complexity of the political environment, their focus becomes narrower the more they choose to engage the political system (Dawson et al., 1977). Dawson's (1977) comment supports the notion that young people do not have as strong an awareness of the implications of their professed political identity as was suggested in the pilot study mentioned in the Foreword.

To believe that when people reach 18 or 25 years of age their political identity becomes complete, stable, and unchanging, would be foolish (Steckenrider & Cutler, 1989). Political socialization is a lifelong process that changes as the political world forms and re-forms around us.

This review has provided a contextual basis for the origins of political identification. This perspective is a strong contributor toward the ultimate focus of this research: the political identification of the respondents. Having a solid understanding of the nature and genesis of political identification through the lens of political socialization provides a clearer picture of where it is going in the future. This study examines the responses by the participants and their political views of the

moment. Political socialization allows researchers to understand how the respondents are influenced up to that point.

Age, Higher Education, Religious Right, and Low-Information Elections

Since “political self” research is limited, this review will cover other areas that have specifically focused on political identification for the purpose of framing where this study might fall in the mosaic of current political identification research. This section will review age distribution, the religious right, and low-information elections for framing purposes.

Age distribution research points to the significance of young people’s political behavior. Even though young people are a significantly smaller portion of the population, they will be the most active contributors to the economy (Gimpel et al., 2004). The most significant finding by Gimpel et al. (2004) is that if current trends of low political involvement continue, as baby boomers die with no one to take their place, overall political involvement will suffer.

A component of our society that counteracts low involvement is higher education. Higher education is a significant predictor of political involvement (Hillygus, 2005). Hillygus (2005) elaborates on this idea: “Formal education leads to strong democratic behavior and a deeper level of involvement as education causes democratic behavior” (p. 29). Based on Hillygus’s research, a possible limitation to this study is that all respondents are currently enrolled in an institution of higher education. If people who are enrolled in some type of higher education institution have typically low levels of political engagement, then others who are not involved in higher education are even less engaged in the political process. Hillygus (2005) found

that college students “with no social science credits have a predicted 56.8% chance of voting, which is still far higher than young people in the populations with no higher education at all” (p. 41). Hillygus’s (2005) research illustrates the need to understand the portion of the electorate involved in higher education, as they will more than likely be the people engaged in the political process later in life.

The religious right has been a growing phenomenon in our society since the advent and growth of evangelical churches in the 1960s, but it has been under-studied in America (Hood & Smith, 2002). Conventional wisdom states that religious individuals in this country tend to fall on the right side of the political spectrum. Hood and Smith (2002) sought to examine this phenomenon in more detail. They found that religious right identifiers are socially and theologically conservative. However, they are not automatically a part of the Republican Party. The identification is based on religious identification rather than political identification (Hood & Smith, 2002). However, with a socially conservative perspective they are correctly identified as the “religious right” and not the religious moderates or liberals. Hood and Smith (2002) called for more research that asks respondents to self identify with their faith and political ideology: “A natural extension of this research, then, would be an examination of religious rightists with an overtly partisan context” (p. 10).

The final piece of research that illuminates the focus of this study is a brief look at low-information elections. As stated before, voters in low-information elections rely on cues from the partisan identification of the candidate to make their voting decisions (Schaffner & Streb, 2002). Since many elections have a low-information element, understanding how party identification plays a role in election

behavior is important. To develop that role, understanding the nature and development of party identification takes on greater significance.

In summary, this section explained the framework in which this research is being conducted. The contribution is significant in order to provide context for this thesis. By studying the impacts of gender, age, education, and partisan choice on party identification, this thesis is able to develop a precise focus on the political self. The next challenge is to find a way to measure the strength of a person's political identity/self.

Social Identity Theory

Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1986) introduced social identity theory in 1979 in the first chapter of *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Social identity theory "is a theory of intergroup conflict" (p. 7). This theory reveals why and how people identify themselves in a social context during times of stress or competition. People identify in a variety of different ways through school, hometown, religion, and even sports. The aspect of social identity theory this thesis is most concerned with is in the political realm. Social identity "consists...of those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself belonging" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). Competition or times of stress cause people to define certain aspects of their lives. For example, during a political election people tend to define their voting choices by their partisan identification.

The literature shows that because party identification is a key component of voting behavior, each party tends to compete for the support of voters. Competition tends to feed on itself: "The pressure to evaluate one's own group positively through

in-group/out-group comparisons lead social groups to attempt to differentiate themselves from each other” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). A social group is “a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social group” (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225).

In this case the social groups are political parties, which easily fall within the definition of a social group. This theory is primarily focused on how people see themselves as members of one group/category (the in-group) in comparison with another (the out-group), and the consequences of this categorization, such as election results (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Stets & Burke, 2000; Friedkin, 2004). The competition for members among groups is a key component of social identity theory. Without the in-group/out-group struggle there would be no need for this theory. Politics and the American political system are specifically predicated on this type of competitive struggle. Social identity theory is uniquely qualified to measure and answer the types of hypotheses and questions raised by this thesis.

Are political parties relevant as a study of in-group versus out-group conflict? Tajfel and Turner (1986) outline three types of variables that influence differentiation among groups. First, individuals need to internalize the group as part of their self-concept. Second, situations in society must allow for open comparison of the groups. Third, the in-group(s) must not try to compete with every group in society, only the groups relevant to them. The point of differentiation is to achieve some sort of dominance over the out-groups. The concept of in-group/out-group struggle is relevant and a close mirror to the current political climate of the nation’s two-party system. Party members do identify themselves, in varying degrees, with a political

party as part of their self-concept. Every time an election or contest occurs over issues in a legislative body, comparisons exist between the parties. Typically, the major parties or in-groups do not compete with the smaller or third-party political organizations. The differentiation between the in-group and out-group is a large part of the context of this study. The differentiation allows people to select an identity that matches their own actions or beliefs. Because of the differentiation in party selection, this study seeks to understand how individuals come to terms and act on their perceived political identity.

The positive image of the in-group invariably forces the members of that group to develop negative feelings toward the perceived out-group (Nesdale & Flessler, 2001). This theory is predicated on two important points: self-categorization and social comparison. These two points make social identity theory an excellent tool to develop a rating system for the strength of political identification. Political identification of the respondents is measured by self-categorization. Inherent in the nature of self-categorizing is comparison as people choose a party to represent their political choices. Even though 10 people can identify themselves as either conservative or liberal, the degree to which they identify can vary quite a bit from person to person or even from time to time in a single person (Ashforth & Mael 1989). The varying shades of gray of political identification may allow people to discover a more precise understanding of their political identity.

Steven Greene wrote "Social Identity Theory and Party Identification" in 2004. His research is the first to truly tie social identity theory to political identification. Greene's contention is that *The American Voter* (1964) is really just

social identity theory ahead of its time: "Based on extensive experimentation and development, social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978) is able to build on this foundation and provide a rich theoretical framework for understanding the perceptual patterns of modern partisanship" (Greene 2004, p. 136). Greene asserts that the nature of partisanship to be in a group and to promote an "us versus them" mentality is a natural "psychological outgrowth of self-perceived membership in a political party" (p. 138).

Greene (2004) makes an excellent point about the shortcomings of research completed since Campbell et al. (1964): "Scholars have focused on partisanship as an attitude toward a political party" (p 137). He and others believe that partisanship is more than an attitude; partisanship is a way that individuals see themselves as a part of the community, country, and political environment. Many psychological forces influence how people approach the political world and consequently how they develop their political self. Previously, the literature discussed how people can have a partisan identity that will often trump any particular attitude they might have on specific policy issues, which clearly supports the notion of the importance of psychological influences. Greene (2004) agrees that perceived social identity would have an effect on attitudes and perceptions.

Greene (2004) found that social identity affects political perceptions and partisan behaviors. He asserts that scholars need to change their reference point of research and look beyond "attitudes toward, but group belonging with, a political party (p. 148). Through Greene, this thesis will be able to operationalize its research. The literature reveals that the political self is always evolving. The method

established by Greene will measure the strength of partisan choices in young college students.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

H1: Parents will play the most influential role in deciding the respondents' political identity.

H2: Respondents will identify parents as the most conservative, while identifying the media and professors as the most liberal.

H3: Respondents who identify their parents as being the strongest influence in determining their political identity will have a stronger political identity than those who do not identify their parents as the most significant influence.

H4: Respondents who identify themselves as Republican will be more likely to identify their parents and/or faith as the most influential factors in deciding their political ideology.

H5: Respondents who identify themselves as Democrat will be more likely to identify their parents, education, media, and/or peer groups as the most influential factors in deciding their political ideology.

RQ1: Are the respondents showing any sign of deviating from their parents in their political identity?

RQ2: After parents, what factors influencing political identity are statistically significant?

Summary

The review of literature provides a framework for the hypotheses and research questions of this study. Campbell et al. (1964) and Converse (1979) established that self-identification is a valid way of gathering data on an individual's political preferences.

Hypothesis one confirms the findings of several other scholars regarding the role of parents in political identification. Starting with Campbell et al. (1964), parents are identified as the most influential factors in the development of their children's political identification. Confirmation of this hypothesis is important because it reveals that the respondents are similar to the multitude of other studies that confirm parents as the most influential factor. The importance of this hypothesis is to create a framework of reliability as this study ventures into new research and seeks to add significant data to the body of existing knowledge.

Hypothesis two is based on the political landscape of the environment of the survey. It states the respondents will find parents to be more conservative and the media and professors more liberal. North Dakota has a long history of being conservative. Despite electing Democrats to Congress, North Dakota has rarely ever voted for a Democratic president. Republicans have been in a supermajority in both houses of the state legislature since the early 1990s. Republicans hold the Governor's office as well as most of the constitutional offices. The state is perceived as being politically and socially conservative. In addition, conventional social stereotypes portray the media and professors as liberal. This hypothesis is designed to measure

whether the respondents are in line with conventional wisdom of the political landscape of North Dakota as well as popular stereotypes of the media and academia.

Hypothesis three gauges the strength of identification. If parents are the most influential factors in the development of political identification (Achen, 2002; Bartels, 2002; Campbell et al., 1964; Converse, 1979; Dawson et al., 1977; Franklin, 1984; Franklin & Jackson, 1983; Greene, 2000; Hess & Torney, 1967), then respondents who identify parents as the most influential should have stronger identification than those who are beginning the process of developing an independent political self.

Hood and Smith (2002) set the groundwork for hypothesis four. In the review they called for more research that asks questions regarding religious and overt politically identifying characteristics. The survey asks whether self-identifying Republicans find their faith to be a motivating factor in developing their political identification.

Hood and Smith (2002) indirectly contributed to the framework of hypothesis five. Research indicates religion as a possible motivating factor shaping Republicans' political identifications. The public sees several types of entities/organizations as being liberal. Hypothesis five asks if any of these entities/organizations (including parents) play a role in the development of the respondents' political identification.

Research question one explores any deviation occurring from the parents in how the respondents identify. This question is framed by two parts of the literature review. Franklin (1984) stated that by age 25, individuals are starting to make political decisions independent of parental influence. This research creates an opportunity to question people between ages 18 to 24 as to how much they are

deviating from their parents in their personal political identification. Along with Franklin's (1984) assertion is the theory of the political self, which states that a person is always evolving as a political being. This evolution is a lifelong process. Does this process begin in childhood with parental socialization or does it start after political emancipation? Does breaking from parental influence begin at age 18? Franklin (1984) found that it begins at least by age 25. This research question explores whether it begins earlier.

Research question two is designed to identify what other factors play a role in the development of the political identity beyond the parental influence. The survey asks about a variety of different variables that could influence the respondents' point of view. Previous research has shown that variables such as gender, education, faith, and economics can play a role in developing political identification. However, this survey seeks to understand the perception of the individual in relation to other entities as being influential rather than an abstract concept. The questions in the survey ask whether specific people or entities are influential. For example, what influences political identification more: mother or father rather than the respondent's sex, professors rather than education, significant others and social groups rather than specific policy or social issues.

CHAPTER 3.

METHOD

Participants

This study employed a convenience sample of 18-year-old or older college students. The sample included a total of 373 respondents consisting of undergraduate students enrolled in several sections of a freshman-level public speaking course at North Dakota State University. The survey was distributed in the spring semester of 2005.

The respondents' sex was divided fairly equally as 190 (50.1%) of the 373 respondents were male and 183 (49.1%) were female. The respondents were divided by age: 276 (74%) of the respondents were 18 or 19 years old, 52 (13.9%) of the respondents were 20 years old, and the remaining 44 (11.8%) respondents were 21 years or older. The respondents were classified by grade level with 271 (72.7%) of the respondents in their first year of college, 70 (18.8 %) in their second year, and 32 (8.6%) in their third year or later.

Architecture, business, pharmacy, and undecided were the majors of 126 (33.7%) respondents. The remaining 274 (66.3%) of the respondents were distributed over 99 other majors. The majority, 348 (93.3%) respondents, reported that they were Caucasian, 7 (1.9%) reported themselves as American Indian or Alaska Native, 7 (1.9%) as Asian, 6 (1.6%) as Black or African American, 1 (.3%) as Hispanic, and 4 (1.1%) as other. The respondents identified their political affiliations: 112 (30.1%) identified themselves as Democrats, 88 (23.6%) identified themselves as having no preference and 173 (46.4%) identified themselves as Republicans.

Procedure

The survey for this thesis was distributed to professors, instructors, and teaching assistants to hand out for completion in class. Typically, the instructor had the students complete the survey at the beginning of class. Most instructors offered extra credit for completing the survey. The completed survey was placed in a manila envelope and returned to the author's desk. The author reviewed each of the surveys to determine that they were filled out correctly. The surveys were collected over a two-week period. The data was entered into an SPSS software package for the purpose of analysis. Some of the surveys had a typo on them that was corrected in class and acknowledged with a written change on the survey by the respondents. Only surveys with the correction of the typo by the respondents on the survey itself were considered valid and used as part of the data analysis.

Measures

This survey used three types of measures. First, some questions relied on self-reporting to gather information needed to prove the different hypotheses and answer the research questions. Campbell et al. (1964) in *The American Voter* support the use of self-reporting as a reliable way to measure political identification. Questions 1-47 were developed mimicking National Election Survey questions. They employed Likert-type scales, a rank order system, and simple either/or questions (see Appendix A).

Second, for the purpose of research, this thesis borrowed the data-collecting methods of Greene (2004), whose original origins are from Mael and Tetrick's (1992) Identification with a Psychological Group (IDPG). Questions 48-56 were based on

Greene's work. His scale measures the strength of partisanship in the respondents. IDPG begins by measuring the strength of the shared identity and perceptions of the respondents with the group (Greene, 2004). The appendix includes the 10 points of interest regarding the scale. These points ask specific questions about how the respondents react to criticism or compliments from the psychological group with which they identify. For example, if someone were to criticize or compliment my chosen group, would I feel insulted or honored by their comments? The scale also asks if the respondents act like members of their group, relate to the successes and failures of the group, and refers to the group using language like "we rather than they" (Greene, 2004, p. 41).

The reliability of the research tool was sustained using Cronbach's alpha (Keyton, 2001). Cronbach's alpha is able to determine if the survey has "internal reliability or internal consistency" (Keyton, 2001, p. 114). For the survey to have reliability the coefficient alpha must be above .7. The coefficient alpha for the measuring instrument in this survey was .88.

Third, demographic questions reported the respondents' age, race, sex, major, and year in school. The questions were based on U.S. census questions.

The variables in this survey were the respondents, their parents, the media in various forms, social groups and significant others, and church/faith. They were measured based on the political identification of the entity/person. Each question used two or more of these variables to determine an answer to the hypotheses or research questions. The variables were also measured for the influence they had on the respondents when developing their political identification. For the purpose of the

survey, American political parties were used to define political identification, such as Democrats and Republicans.

The purpose of the survey was to measure the basic political knowledge of the respondents and to measure the respondents' perception of various entities' political leanings. The survey also measured the influence different entities/people had on the development of their political identification. Finally, the survey measured the strength of the identification the respondents had with their political identity. A breakdown of how each hypothesis and research question was analyzed is provided in the next section.

Analysis

The results for hypothesis one employed the use of two questions in the survey. First, a 5-point Likert scale measured how much the respondents agreed with a statement about political preference of specific variables: parents, the media, church and faith, peers, and education. A comparison of means revealed the significance of the answers and who was the most influential on respondents. Second, the survey employed a rank order question system, which required the respondents to report in order of importance, from 1 to 13, which entity was most influential. The variables were network news, books, professors, church/faith, Comedy Central, parents, talk radio, CNN, news magazines, friends/social groups, newspapers, websites, and Fox News. Another comparison of means indicated which entities/people were the most influential.

Hypothesis two measured the results using a 7-point Likert scale. The respondents identified several variables as being either Republican or Democrat. The

variables for hypothesis two were: mother, father, best friend, social group/friends, media, NDSU, North Dakota, significant others, professors, and yourself. A comparison of means identified the perceived labels the respondents gave each entity/person.

Hypothesis three employed a Pearson Coefficient Correlation to determine the support for the hypothesis. The Pearson Coefficient Correlation “examines the linear relationship between two continuous level variables...provides a measure to how much they are related” (Keyton, 2001, p. 232). With the Pearson coefficient, a two-tailed test determines significance. The variables in this situation included the scale of political affiliation created out of the responses to the IDPG scale questions and the parents’ political identity.

Hypothesis four and five used the same method for analysis. A one-way ANOVA “examine[d] the differences between two or more groups on a dependent interval/ratio variable” (Frey et al., 2000, p. 348). The one-way ANOVA determined any statistical significance between the results of different groups. The variables tested were parents, peers, education, media, and church/faith. Once significance was determined, a Post Hoc test determined the nature of the comparison and the level of significance of the variables via Tukey HSD, Scheffe, and LSD tests. The variables for hypothesis four were self-identifying Republican respondents, parents, and church/faith. For hypothesis five, the variables were self-identifying Democrat respondents, parents, education, media, and peer groups.

Research question one used a two-tailed t-test to provide an answer. The two-tailed t-test is used “when a researcher asks a research question or states a hypothesis

for which a difference in either direction is acceptable" (Keyton, 2001, p. 217). If the researcher presumes a difference exists but is not sure which direction the difference will go, a two-tailed t-test determines the answer (Keyton, 2001). This form of analysis provided results on the respondents and each of their parents separately. The result of this comparison provided the answer to research question one. The variables for research question one were the respondents and the respondents' mother and father, considered separately.

Research question two employed the Pearson Coefficient Correlation to determine if the other influential entities/people had a level of statistical significance. The result of the Pearson Coefficient Correlation provided the answer to research question two. The variables measured to determine possible significant influence on the respondents were: mother, father, best friend, social group, media, NDSU, North Dakota, significant other, and professor.

Through the use of demographic questions based on U.S. census questions, political identification questions based on NES questions, and social identity questions based on Greene (2004) and the IDGP scale, this survey provided data to prove or disprove five different hypotheses and answer two research questions. With the work of Campbell et al. (1964) and Converse (1979) as well as many other scholars, the use of self-reporting as a viable means for data collection is supported. Results from a one-way ANOVA, t-test, two-tailed t-tests, and simple means derived from various Likert-scales provided statistical backing to the conclusions, as they determined the proofs for the hypotheses and answered the research questions.

CHAPTER 4.

RESULTS

Descriptive

The respondents were asked to demonstrate a basic understanding of American political parties. A high number of respondents, 278 (74.5%), were able to identify Republicans as conservative, and 281 (75.3%) identified Democrats as liberal. Among the respondents, 37 (9.9%) identified Republicans as moderates while 35 (9.4%) identified Democrats as moderates. To identify Republicans as conservative or moderate as well as Democrats as liberal or moderate is realistic. With those labels in mind, 315 (84.4%) of the respondents were able to describe Republicans, while 316 (84.7%) of the respondents were able to describe Democrats.

In the 2004 presidential election, 99 (26.5%) of the respondents reported voting for John Kerry while 199 (53.4%) of the respondents reported voting for George W. Bush, with 75 (20.1%) either not voting or voting for a third party candidate. When voting for more than president, 70 (18.8%) of the respondents voted straight ticket Democrat and 98 (26.3%) of the respondents voted straight ticket Republican. Another 116 (31.1%) of the respondents reported voting a mixed ticket in the presidential, senate, and congressional races and 88 (23.6%) of the respondents reported not voting in the senate and congressional races. Of the 373 respondents, 304 (81.5%) reported that they voted for president in the last election.

Questions identified mothers and fathers separately. The mothers were identified as a Democrat by 126 (33.7%) respondents, and 97 (26%) identified their fathers as a Democrat. Of the parents with no preferences, 54 (14.5%) indicated their

mother had no preference and 66 (17.7%) identified their father as having no preference. Respondents identified 191 (51.2%) mothers as a Republican and 210 (56.6%) identified their father as Republican.

The survey asked the respondents to report which entities played the strongest role in influencing their political preferences. The strongest entity was parents with 286 (76.6%) respondents reporting them as an influence in determining their political preferences, while just 57 (15.3%) of the respondents marked indifferent, and 29 (7.8%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that their parents are influential in determining their political preferences. Similarly, the following numbers/percentage of respondents agreed to varying degrees that the following entities are influential in developing their political preferences: church/faith 188 (47.7%), peers 176 (46.4%), media 105 (28.2%), and education/professors 63 (16.8%). The following number of respondents were indifferent to these categories as being influential: peers 148 (39.7%), education/professors 162 (43.4%), media 148 (39.7%), and church/faith 116 (31.1%). The number of respondents who disagreed that the categories were influential were as follows: peers 51 (13.7%), education/professors 146 (39.2%), media 119 (31.9%), and church/faith 78 (20.9%).

Specifically regarding the media, the survey asked the respondents which aspects of the media were the most influential. The results revealed that the respondents did not find the media to be a significant influence in the development of their political identity. Less than 50% of the respondents reported that network news is moderately to mostly influential and all other categories are reported as being less influential than network news.

The next questions asked which entities (not including the media) played the most influential role in the respondents' political preferences. Among the respondents, 70 (18.7%) reported that professors were moderately to mostly influential, 240 (82.8%) identified parents as being moderately to mostly influential, 255 (68.3%) reported friends/social group as being moderately to mostly influential, and 199 (53.4%) reported church/faith as being moderately to mostly influential.

Next, a rank order question asked the respondents to gauge the most important to least important of 13 different entities for their influence in developing political identity. The scale measured 1 as the most influential and 13 as the least influential. The respondents reported parents as being the most influential with a mean of 2.34. Parents were followed by: friends/social group 4.26, church/faith 5.94, newspapers 6.07, CNN 6.37, and network news 6.6. These six people/entities were the most influential in determining the respondents' political identity.

Hypotheses

The results support hypothesis one, which states that parents will play the most influential role in deciding the respondents' political identity. Hypothesis one was tested in two different ways. First, five variables were measured to determine the strength of the relationship between the respondents and the following: parents with a mean of 3.957, church/faith with a mean of 3.344, peers with a mean of 3.336, media with a mean of 2.833, and education/professors with a mean of 2.644. The mean results from questions 13-17 indicated parents were the most influential.

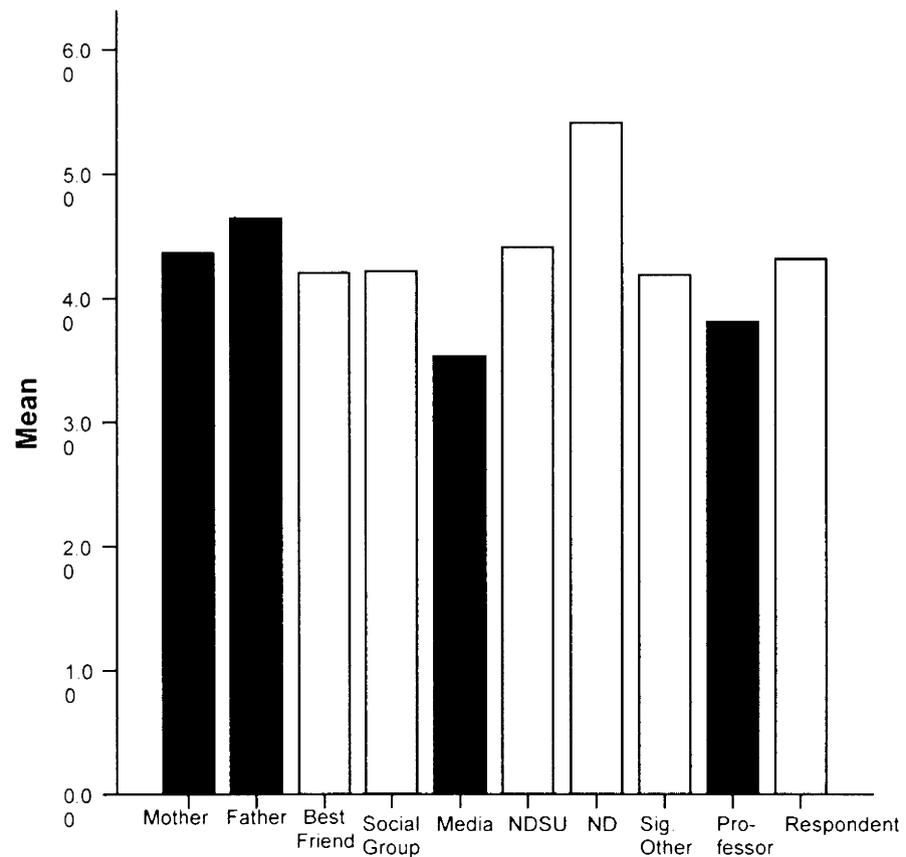
The second approach measured the strength of the relationship between the respondents and a set of variables. Once again the mean for each variable indicated

the strength of influence on the respondents. In this case the lower the mean, the stronger the influence. Parents had a mean of 2.343, peers had a mean of 4.261, faith had a mean of 5.948, CNN had a mean of 6.379, and network news had a mean of 6.606. These scores represented the top five most influential entities/people in determining the respondents' political identification. Figure 1 provides a graphic explanation of the results for hypothesis one.

Hypothesis two was supported. The results came from comparing the means of questions 3, 4, 7, and 11. A 7-point Likert-scale was used to measure the respondents' perceptions of the political identification of parents (which is divided between mother and father), media, and professors. The number 1 signified a strong Democrat, the number 4 signified no preference, and the number 7 signified a strong Republican. The means of the variables indicated that the hypothesis is supported: father had a mean of 4.651, mother had a mean of 4.35, professors had a mean of 3.795, and media had a mean of 3.546. The results show that both parents had a mean that indicated a Republican tendency, while professors and the media had a mean that indicated a Democratic tendency in the eyes of the respondents.

Hypothesis three: Respondents who identify their parents as being the strongest influence in determining their political identity will have a stronger political identity than those who do not identify their parents as the most significant influence. Hypothesis three is supported. To test this hypothesis, a Pearson Coefficient Correlation measured the results of the survey. Two sets of questions answered this hypothesis. First a scale of political affiliation was used to gauge the strength of the respondents' identification with their political grouping.

Figure 1.

Perceived Political Identification of Socializing Variables

This scale was developed from the answers to questions 48-56. Second, the results of question 28 and the scale of political affiliation were contrasted using the Pearson Coefficient Correlation to determine support for the hypothesis. The statistical results showed a positive, moderate relationship between parents and the strength of the respondents' political affiliation at .323 via a Pearson Correlation. The results reached a significance level of .05 at (two-tailed) .000.

Hypotheses four and five: respondents who identified themselves as Republicans were more likely to identify their parents and/or faith as their most

influential factors in deciding their political ideology. Respondents who identified themselves as Democrats were more likely to identify their parents, education, media, and/or peer groups as most influential in deciding their political ideology.

Hypothesis four was partially supported and hypothesis five was not supported. A one-way ANOVA was employed, determining faith as the only statistically significant result from this question (see Table 1). By using comparisons of Tukey HSD, Scheffé, and LSD tests, the results revealed a significant difference between Democrats and Republicans on the variable of faith. Republicans were significantly more likely to name faith as an influential factor in determining their political preferences, with a mean difference of .9194 and a significance of .000. Democrats were the exact opposite at -.9194 and a significance of .000.

Table 1.

One-way ANOVA for statistical significance

<u>Source</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>Sig.</u>
Between groups			
Parents	2	2.697	.069
Peers	2	1.030	.358
Education	2	3.167	.043
Media	2	.888	.413
Church/faith	2	22.675	.000*

The results for education, media, parents, and peers were not found to be significant. Education had a mean difference of .2271 for Democrats and -.2271 for Republicans with a significance of .124. Media had a mean difference of .1682 for

Democrats and -.1682 for Republicans with a significance of .184. Parents had a mean difference of -.1652 for Democrats and .1652 for Republicans with a significance of .357. Peers had a mean difference of .0438 for Democrats and -.0438 for Republicans with a significance of .906.

Research Questions

Research question one: Are the respondents showing any sign of deviating from their parents in their political identity? The results indicated that respondents did deviate from their fathers' political identification. However, deviation from their mothers' political identification was not significant. A two-tailed t-test answered this question. First, comparing the means showed the mother and respondent means were very close. The mothers' mean was 4.3504 and the respondents' mean was 4.3261. The father and respondent mean indicated a variance. The fathers' mean was 4.6515 and the respondents' mean was 4.3217. The two-tailed t-test indicated significance in the father/respondent findings at .000. Table 2 demonstrates the difference in means with the respondents and each parent separately. Notice how the mean difference between respondent and mother is limited, but the difference between respondent and father is larger. Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate the deviation that occurred in the respondents from their fathers but not their mothers. In Table 3, notice the results of a two-tailed analysis show the difference to be statistically significant at .000.

Table 2.

Deviation relationship between father and mother of the respondent

<u>Pair number</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Number</u>
Pair #1	Mother	4.3504	371
	Respondent	4.3261	371
Pair #2	Father	4.6515	373
	Respondent	4.3217	373

Table 3.

Paired sample analysis showing statistical significance

<u>Pair</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Significance (2-tailed)</u>
Pair 1	Mother/Respondent	.0243	.762
Pair 2	Father/Respondent	.3298	.000*

Research question two: After parents, what entities are statistically significant? Social groups, significant others, and NDSU were reported as being the next most influential entities/people in determining the respondents' political identity. The media, North Dakota, best friend, and professors were not reported as being statistically significant. Employing a Pearson Correlation Coefficient, groups and significant others were reported as having a positive relationship in influencing the respondents' political identity. The respondents' self-political perceptions were compared with the respondents' political perceptions of other entities as possible predictors of the respondents' political identity. Social groups had a coefficient of .294 and a significance of .000. Significant others had a coefficient of .127 and a significance of .007. NDSU was an anomaly, with an inverse relationship to respondents' political

identification. The NDSU coefficient was $-.121$ with a significance of $.001$. The results showed that the next most influential entities/people were statistically significant.

Table 4.

Model of influential variables and their Beta, t, significance scores

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Mother	.286	6.366	.000*
Father	.311	6.797	.000*
Best Friend	.043	1.123	.262
Social Group	.294	7.145	.000*
Media	-.019	-.522	.602
NDSU	-.121	-3.21	.001*
North Dakota	.008	.224	.82
Significant Other	.101	.2724	.007*
Professors	-.028	-.804	.422

Model Summary

<u>Model</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>R square</u>	<u>Adj. R Square</u>
1	.788	.621	.611

Of those not statistically significant: the media had a beta score of $-.019$ with a significance of $.602$. North Dakota had a beta score of $.008$ with a significance of $.823$. best friend had a beta score of $.043$ and a significance of $.262$, and professors had a beta score of $-.028$ with a significance of $.422$. Table 4 illustrates the beta score for each entity/person and the significance. Please note the scores for mother, father,

social group, and significant other. They all demonstrated that the entities/people were statistically significant in influencing the respondents' political identification. An anomaly was the inverse relationship between NDSU and the respondents. Notice the negative beta score for NDSU and its significance.

CHAPTER 5.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Descriptive Analysis

The purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of the political identity of the respondents and perceived identity of influencing factors in their lives. This study sought to discover if there was any deviation from parental influence and who or what that influence might be. To fulfill this purpose, the study tried to answer a few questions. First, the study tried to discover if the respondents were consistent with previous research regarding parental influence in developing political identity. Second, the study tried to discover if the conventional wisdom and perceived stereotypes of North Dakota and various entities were supported. Finally, the study tried to discover if there were other entities besides parents that have an influence in the development of political identification in the respondents. Essentially, can the results determine if the respondents were deviating from their parents and, if so, who/what influenced them?

This chapter covers five areas. First, it explores the descriptive statistical results and what they mean for this study. Second, it features a short discussion of the limitations of this study. Third, a review of the results for each hypothesis and research question is presented. Fourth, the chapter develops a synthesis of what the data mean when viewed as a whole and the implications that can be drawn from it. Finally, a short discussion of possible future research concludes the chapter.

A plurality of respondents (46.4%) identified themselves as Republicans, while (30.1%) identified themselves as Democrats. For president, 53.4% voted for George W. Bush and 26.5% voted for John Kerry. The perceived political identification of many entities/people that influenced the respondents yielded interesting, yet predictable, information. The fathers were identified as Republicans 56.4% of the time. The mothers were identified as Republican 51.1% of the time. The respondents identified North Dakota as being Republican 46.6% of the time. The data revealed the conservative political environment in North Dakota, so conservative that even though 30.1% identified themselves as Democrats, only 26.5% of the respondents voted for John Kerry. If none of the independents voted for Kerry, which seems unlikely, approximately 16% of the Democrats voted for Bush. This conservative background is not surprising considering the voting behavior demonstrated by North Dakota citizens in past elections for president and almost all state constitutional offices.

Limitations

This study has some limitations. The study is limited to one medium-sized midwestern university and its students. The results cannot be generalized to the public as a whole. The respondents were 93.3% Caucasian. The survey did not ask the respondents to indicate the political identification of their faith. The survey referred to faith and church as a general concept rather than recognizing its incredibly complex nature.

Hypotheses 1-5

The first two hypotheses offer support for existing research, which is significant as it indicated that the respondents were consistent with research conducted over the last 40 years. Hypothesis one states that parents are the most influential entity in the development of their children's political identity. The results for hypothesis one concur with previous research that parents are the most important factor in the development of a political identity (Achen, 2002; Bartels, 2002; Campbell et al., 1964; Converse, 1979; Dawson et al., 1977; Franklin, 1984; Franklin & Jackson, 1983; Greene, 2000; Hess & Torney, 1967). The next closest influence was faith/church, followed by peer group. Hypothesis two states that respondents will identify parents as being conservative while identifying the media and their professors as being liberal. The results indicated that hypothesis two is supported. The support of hypotheses one and two is a reflection of both the background of North Dakota as well as conventional stereotypes of the media and professors, which indicate that the respondents were representative of their environment. Regardless of whether the media and professors are actually liberal, respondents perceived them as such on NDSU's campus. The results provided an external validity because the respondents were similar to the political environment they exist in and allow for at least some generalizations for this region.

Hypothesis three focuses on respondents who identify parents as being the most influential and those who do not. Hypothesis three is supported: parental-based identification is stronger than independent identification. Hess & Torney (1967) imply that even those who do not currently identify parents as the most influential

source for political socialization were at one point probably under the influence of parental socialization. If the respondents were under the influence of parental socialization and are now emerging with an independent political self, then the strength of identification of the independent self is probably weaker than the strength of identification of those still subject to parental influence. A belief, even if it is not thought out or questioned, that has been formed and has endured over time will be stronger than a belief that has recently evolved. The support of hypothesis three indicates that the strength of identification is stronger in those who are currently subject to parental influence than those who are not. This indicates that as respondents seek independence from their parents politically, their sense of political self is much more subject to influence and change than those who are not deviating from parental influence.

In hypotheses four and five, several variables were analyzed for their predictive value. Hypotheses four and five tested the influential factors for self-identifying Republicans and self-identifying Democrats. Both hypotheses state that parents are the most influential. Hypothesis four includes faith as a variable, and hypothesis five includes the media, education, and peer groups as variables. The results indicate again that parents are influential. As for the other variables, only faith was statistically significant as a predictive variable. Self-identifying Republicans identified faith as an influential factor, while self-identifying Democrats indicated that none of the factors were statistically significant.

The results of hypotheses four and five were consistent with the research conducted by Hood and Smith (2002). The results supported the notion that the

religious right is a conservative movement that aligns itself (for the most part) with the Republican Party. This research is a natural extension of Hood and Smith's (2002) research. They called for a study of the religious right in an overtly political setting. While the questions did not say religious right, they did ask the respondents to identify their faith as being influential. Those who did identify their faith as being influential also identified themselves as being Republican. The results indicate that faith can be used as a predictor of political identification.

Research Questions 1 and 2

Research question one asked, "Are respondents showing any sign of deviating from their parents in their political identity?" The results demonstrated that deviation from parents is occurring, but it is counter-intuitive. The results showed that the respondents were deviating from their father more than their mother. The research in this study regarding deviation indicated that mothers play a stronger role in the later stages of political socialization. This is a new piece of information, as the review of literature did not reveal a preference for mothers over fathers. Franklin (1984) simply stated that by age 25, adults were beginning to adjust their political preferences. This is not a direct contradiction of Campbell et al. (1964) and Converse (1979), as they did not attempt to measure the possible evolution of political identity. The results are more of an extension of Campbell et al. (1964), Converse (1979), and Franklin (1984) by providing more precise information about the identification of a specific age group.

The results for research question two indicate that social groups and significant others play the next most influential role in the development of the

political self. This is not surprising as the respondents begin to develop their own life outside of parental influence. Consequently, the next closest entities/people will play the role that parents once did. The difference is that these two variables may have much larger numbers and more diversity. Imagine a mother and father versus a significant other and a peer group. A larger impact exists when considering that as the respondents get older, there will be more people providing intentional and unintentional input into the development of the respondents' political self.

The results do not suggest that peer groups and significant others play a stronger role. The results merely indicate that the next most influential entities/people are statistically significant, which implies an unwitting competition is occurring for the attention of the respondents. As the respondents age, the competing forces of influence in the respondents' lives will become more diverse. It is reasonable to ask, as the respondents get older, will the impact of parents diminish and the impacts of other people/groups become stronger? More importantly, the results indicate what might be the origin of political emancipation for the respondents as they enter the political world as voters. If this does indicate some sort of emancipation process, it also indicates that this process is not a quick and decisive moment, but rather an evolution over a period of time. Dawson et al. (1977) and Franklin (1984) assert the same idea that political socialization occurs over time and is not something someone is born with or an unchangeable component of a person's identity.

The results support the rationale for using social identity theory that Greene (2004) suggests as a model for exploring political identification. Greene asserts that previous scholars have approached political identification from an attitudes

perspective. He believes that political identification is a social identity issue, not an issue of attitudes toward political issues. The research in this study validates his claim because it illustrates that the process of socialization is the key to developing an individual's political identification. The fact that respondents were simply replacing their closest personal connections from parents to significant others and peer groups indicated that the method of socialization did not change, just the variables in it.

Social identity theory is also valuable because it directly measures the relationship of the respondents to particular political dispositions. More importantly, it gauges the level of strength of their political dispositions. Exploring the varying levels of strength of the respondents' political dispositions allowed for the distinction of in-group/out-group associations as well as the strength of parental, peer, and significant other influences on the respondents. By gauging the strength of parental, peer, and significant other influences, this study can report on the possible movement of the respondents from one influential factor to another. It is in comparing the strength of political identification with the self-reported influences (parents, peers, media, significant others, education, etc.) that allows the conclusions to be drawn from the data; specifically, drawing conclusions about who is influential, who is not influential, and the strength of the influence from outside sources.

Implications

The results support the current research about the importance of parental influence in political socialization (Achen, 2002; Bartels, 2002; Campbell et al. 1964; Converse, 1979; Dawson et al., 1977; Franklin, 1984; Franklin & Jackson, 1983; Greene, 2000; Hess & Torney, 1967). Supporting current research is significant

because it demonstrates results consistent with the findings of several other research studies conducted using some of the same questions and concepts.

The study supports the hypothesis that the political identification of respondents who have not yet deviated from parental influence is stronger than those who have deviated. Political identification for those consistent with parental influence is a belief cultivated over time from authority figures such as parents. Parentally-influenced political identification will be stronger than the belief of a young person in search of their political identity with relatively little life experience. The significance of parental versus non-parental identification is that it indicates the fluid nature that might exist in the socialization process of young adults. This implies that the individuals young people choose to associate with can have a huge impact on how they develop their political identity.

For Republican respondents, faith can be used as a predicting factor in determining the respondents' political identity. The results of this study are consistent with Hood and Smith (2002). Hood and Smith indicated that the religious right is conservative and not liberal or moderate. Republicans were correctly identified as conservative by 74% of the respondents. Democratic respondents exhibited no additional predictive variables that would indicate their political identification. The results indicate that the respondents were consistent with conventional wisdom regarding the political stereotypes of adults in this region of the country, the media, and professors. The respondents indicated in the survey that their parents are more likely to be Republicans, while the media and professors are more likely to be Democrats.

The results support the notion that parents, peer groups and significant others play the statistically significant role in influencing the respondents. The research in this study fills the gap described by Franklin (1984). As stated in the review of literature, Franklin found that by age 25, adults were adjusting their political preferences. This study focused on 18- to 24- year-old adults. The indication that there are entities that contribute to the respondents' political preferences outside of their parents is a significant contribution to the research of political identification.

This result, coupled with the finding that respondents were beginning to deviate from their parents, indicates the emergence of a political self outside of the influence of parents before age 25. Haynes and Jacobs (1994) and Fiorina (1977) argued that there are influences outside of the family that can cause an individual's political identification to evolve. The difference between their assertions and the results offered in this study is that it is a specific person or group that is contributing to the change in the respondents' political identification rather than political currents or tallies of recent political events. The argument could be made that this contradicts established research, which indicates parents as being the most influential over time in an adult's political self. In fact, this research stands on the shoulder of Campbell et al. (1964) and Converse (1979) by recognizing that the genesis of political identification is indeed in the family unit. However, this research goes beyond Campbell et al. (1964) and Converse (1979) by asserting that as adults grow older they begin to look outside of the family unit to other possible sources of information.

No one can doubt that parents are the most important factor in the political socialization of children and adolescents. The previous research even indicates that

parents may end up being the most important influence for some people throughout their lives. However, this study has shown that young people are capable of deviating from their parents as well as indicating what entities are the most influential and possibly replacing parents as sources of influence.

The significant findings of this study indicate that young people between the ages of 18 and 24 are beginning the process of deviating from their parents. Two specific results point to this conclusion. The first result is the deviation of the respondents from their fathers' political identification. This result indicates that young people are already breaking away from their parents, specifically their fathers, by age 18.

The second factor is that peer groups and significant others play a statistically significant role in the development of the respondents' political identification compared to other influencing factors such as media or education. Despite the evidence of deviation, there is an aspect of the parental political socialization process which the results indicate have a permanent or long lasting effect. The interpersonal nature of socialization that occurs in the family unit creates the process by which young people may identify later in life, separate from their parents. The results suggest that parents are merely being replaced by the next closest interpersonal relationship in the respondents' lives.

The results indicate that the next significant influence is peer groups and significant others. The deviation is not in how the respondents are deviating, but to whom they choose to deviate. Commercial, professors, or even ministers are not making the largest impact in terms of influence, as young people begin to assert their

independence from parental socialization. The implication of this finding is that the money spent in the media and the influence of education may be taking a back seat to the influence of a conversation at a coffee shop with a close friend or the political views of a lover.

The discovery of interpersonal relationships as being the most influential to the development of the political self at any stage is significant for many reasons. There is a significant amount of money spent every election cycle to persuade the electorate to vote a certain way. This money may not be nearly as effective as the candidates and political parties hope it will be. Another implication, which can be inferred from these results, is that political choices are being decided in family, friends, or peer group environments. If this is true, the power of politics still lies in the people and not the media. The questions the results beg are: Is the power of perception from millions of ads that bombard the voter not as powerful as the millions of conversations occurring every day about political preferences? Is there a more effective way to campaign than massive media buys? Are politicians and political parties chasing a red herring in search of political power? The future research section of this thesis will explore the possibility of how to answer those questions.

Future Research

More research needs to be conducted to determine the exact nature of how individuals deviate, at what age they deviate, and for what reasons. Future research needs to determine the exact nature of how the respondents are influenced. The results of this study suggest that the influence and deviation is based on the

interpersonal relationships between the respondents and their next closest personal relationship.

More research could illuminate the factors that lead to respondents identifying themselves as Democrats or Republicans. In the same vein, research should be conducted to explain the nature of faith and how different views of faith play different roles in predicting political identification. This study also presents the question: Is there a need in future research for the scholars to separate mothers and fathers in the research tool when considering the influence of parents?

One of the questions the results of the survey asks is: Do parents set a standard of how the socialization process develops, which renders other methods of influence largely moot? Further research that answers this question will enlighten the process of political socialization for future scholars. Research question one alone is cause for another study. More research is needed to explore the role mothers and fathers play at all stages of the political socialization process. The results indicated that fathers are not making as lasting an impression as mothers are. Should future studies weigh the answers regarding the mothers' political identification as being a stronger influence than the fathers'? Does this imply that the respondents are simply closer to their mothers? Or are there other factors that are causing this phenomenon?

This study begins to shed light on an important aspect of political socialization. The results indicate that future research should consist of evaluating the nature and strength of interpersonal relationships as a determining factor for political identification. This researcher should also keep in mind the complexity of sex roles in

the socialization process. Another focus to be aware of is the process of socialization as an independent variable.

More research needs to be completed regarding this set of variables to determine if the rate of deviation from parental influence is a predicting factor in the respondents' political identification. Rate of deviation is the rate at which a group of young people chooses to deviate from their parents. The research tool for this survey is not complex enough to calculate a rate of deviation in terms of the age in which respondents choose to deviate from their parents as well as how much they choose to deviate. For the sake of this survey deviation occurs when respondents' political identity is different from their parents.

This study answered some questions about the possibility of independent political socialization. This study also created more questions that will flesh out the possible influences and time frames of emerging independent political socialization of young adults. Future research in this area could help shed light on the mystery of political socialization in young people and perhaps show a model for how political socialization occurs throughout the lifetime of an individual.

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APPENDIX A.

NATIONAL ELECTION SURVEY QUESTIONS

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SECTION G

G1-G10 - LIBERAL-CONSERVATIVE

RESPONDENTS SHOULD BE RANDOMLY SELECTED TO RECEIVE EITHER THE G1/G1.T SERIES OR THE G6. E SERIES.

G1.

Please look at page 3 of the booklet. We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.

T G1.T

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives.

21

G1a. Spec: 282__ V000439

Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?

T G1a.T Spec: 283__ V000439a

When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal;

moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, extremely conservative, or haven't you

thought much about this?

- 1 EXTREMELY LIBERAL Skip to G2
- 2 LIBERAL Skip to G2
- 3 SLIGHTLY LIBERAL Skip to G2
- 4 MODERATE; MIDDLE OF THE ROAD → G1b
- 5 SLIGHTLY CONSERVATIVE Skip to G2
- 6 CONSERVATIVE Skip to G2
- 7 EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE Skip to G2
- 8 DK →G1b
- 0 HAVEN'T THOUGHT MUCH [DO NOT PROBE] →G1b

V000440 COMBINED FTF/PH

G1b. Spec: 284__ V000441

(IF MODERATE, DK OR HAVEN'T THOUGHT)

If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative?

- 1 LIBERAL
- 3 CONSERVATIVE
- 5 MODERATE
- 7 R REFUSES TO CHOOSE
- 8 DK

V000449 COMBINED FTF/PH

FTF: G3, G4, AND G5 ARE RANDOMIZED

TELEPHONE: G3.T, G4.T, AND G5.T ARE RANDOMIZED

G3. Spec: 287_2 V000455

Where would you place Al Gore on this scale? [DO NOT PROBE 'DK']

23

T G3.T Spec: 291_2 V000455a

What about Al Gore? (Do you think he is extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the

road, slightly conservative, conservative, or extremely conservative?) [DO NOT PROBE 'DK']

- 1 EXTREMELY LIBERAL
- 2 LIBERAL
- 3 SLIGHTLY LIBERAL
- 4 MODERATE; MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
- 5 SLIGHTLY CONSERVATIVE
- 6 CONSERVATIVE
- 7 EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE
- 8 DK →SKIP TO NEXT PRES. CAND OR G11

G4. Spec: 287_3 V000465

Where would you place George W. Bush on this scale? [DO NOT PROBE 'DK']

G4.T Spec: 291_3 V000465a

What about George W. Bush? (Do you think he is extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle

of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, or extremely conservative?) [DO NOT PROBE 'DK']

- 1 EXTREMELY LIBERAL
- 2 LIBERAL
- 3 SLIGHTLY LIBERAL
- 4 MODERATE; MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
- 5 SLIGHTLY CONSERVATIVE
- 6 CONSERVATIVE
- 7 EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE
- 8 DK →SKIP TO NEXT PRES CAND OR G11

G6.E Spec: 295__ V000442

We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, do you usually

think of yourself as a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or haven't you thought much about this?

- 1 A LIBERAL →SKIP TO G6b.E
- 3 A CONSERVATIVE →SKIP TO →SKIP TO G6c.E
- 5 A MODERATE →G6a.E
- 7 NEITHER [VOL] →G6a.E
- 8 DK →G6a.E
- 0 HAVEN'T THOUGHT MUCH [DO NOT PROBE] →G6a.E

G6a.E Spec: 296__ V000443

(IF DK, HTM, NEITHER, OR MODERATE)

If you had to choose, would you consider yourself a liberal or a conservative?

- 1 LIBERAL →SKIP TO G7.E
- 3 CONSERVATIVE →SKIP TO G7.E
- 5 MODERATE[VOL] →SKIP TO G7.E
- 7 R REFUSES TO CHOOSE [VOL] →SKIP TO G7.E
- 8 DON'T KNOW →SKIP TO G7.E

G6b.E Spec: 297__ V000444

(IF LIBERAL)

Would you call yourself a strong liberal or a not very strong liberal?

- 1 STRONG LIBERAL →SKIP TO G7.E
- 5 NOT VERY STRONG LIBERAL →SKIP TO G7.E
- 8 DK →SKIP TO G7.E

G6c.E Spec: 298__ V000445

(IF CONSERVATIVE)

Would you call yourself a strong conservative or a not very strong conservative?

- 1 STRONG CONSERVATIVE
- 5 NOT VERY STRONG CONSERVATIVE
- 8 DK

K1. Spec: 375__ V000519

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

- 1 DEMOCRAT
- 2 REPUBLICAN →SKIP TO K1b
- 3 INDEPENDENT →SKIP TO K1c
- 4 OTHER PARTY [SPECIFY] →SKIP TO K1c
- 5 NO PREFERENCE →SKIP TO K1c
- 8 DK →SKIP TO K1c

K1a. Spec: 376__ V000520**(IF DEMOCRAT)**

Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

- 1 STRONG →SKIP TO K2, K3, OR K4
- 5 NOT VERY STRONG →SKIP TO K2, K3, OR K4
- 8 DK →SKIP TO K2, K3, OR K4

K1b. Spec: 377__ V000521**(IF REPUBLICAN)**

Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

- 1 STRONG →SKIP TO K2, K3, OR K4
- 5 NOT VERY STRONG →SKIP TO K2, K3, OR K4
- 8 DK →SKIP TO K2, K3, OR K4

K1c. Spec: 378__ V000522**(IF INDEPENDENT, NO PREFERENCE, OTHER OR DK)**

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic party?

- 1 CLOSER TO REPUBLICAN
- 3 NEITHER [VOL]
- 5 CLOSER TO DEMOCRATIC

C1.

Please look at page 2 of the booklet. I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.

PROBE FOR DON'T KNOW RESPONSE: When you say "don't know" do you mean that you don't know who the person is or do you have something else in mind?

T C1.T

I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. The feeling thermometer can rate people from 0 to 100 degrees.

Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person. Rating the person at the midpoint, the 50 degree mark, means you don't feel

particularly warm or cold toward the person. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.
PROBE FOR DON'T KNOW RESPONSE: *When you say "don't know" do you mean that you don't know who the person is or do you have something else in mind?*

C1a. Spec: 196_1 V000359

(Looking at page 2 of the booklet) (How would you rate:)

Bill Clinton

T C1a.T

The first person is Bill Clinton

Where on that feeling thermometer would you rate Bill Clinton?

APPENDIX B.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please tell me your **opinion** on the following questions. Please mark only one answer per question. **Use an X to mark your answer.**

1. A Republican is typically

- [1] ___ Liberal
 [2] ___ Moderate
 [3] ___ Conservative

2. A Democrat is typically

- [1] ___ Liberal
 [2] ___ Moderate
 [3] ___ Conservative

In your **opinion**, which political party fits each person or entity? **Please circle the number** that correlates with the political party each person or entity is most closely associated with. **Only circle one number for each example.** Rep=Republican; Dem= Democrat

	Strong Dem.	Dem.	Weak Dem.	No Preference	Weak Rep.	Strong Rep.	Rep
3. Mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Best friend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Social group/friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. NDSU	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. North Dakota	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Significant other	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Professors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Yourself	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

“_____” is/are the most influential in determining my political preference.
Please mark your answers by circling one number for each person/entity.

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13. Parents	5	4	3	2	1
14. Peers	5	4	3	2	1
15. Education/ professors	5	4	3	2	1
16. Media	5	4	3	2	1
17. Church/ Faith	5	4	3	2	1

On a scale of 1 to 10 please indicate the strength to which each of the following media has **influenced you** in developing **your** political identity, with 1 being least influential; 10 being most influential. **Please circle your number/ranking for the corresponding media example.**

Most influential to you ← Moderately influential → Least Influential to you

18. Network \ News	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
19. Newspapers	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
20. Fox News	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
21. Comedy \ Central	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
22. Talk Radio	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
23. CNN	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
24. News Magazines	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

25. Books	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
26. Websites	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

On a scale of 1 to 10 please indicate the strength to which each of the following people/entity has **influenced you** in developing **your** political identity, with 1 being least influential and 10 being most influential. **Please circle your number/ranking for each corresponding example.**

Most influential to you ← Moderately influential → Least Influential to you

27. Professors	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
28. Parents	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
29. Friends/ Social Group	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
30. Church/ Faith	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Please rank order from 1 to 13 the people/entity that influenced you the most in developing **your** political identity with 1 being most influential and 13 being the least influential.

31. _____ Network News
32. _____ Books
33. _____ Professors
34. _____ Church/faith
35. _____ Comedy Central
36. _____ Parents
37. _____ Talk Radio
38. _____ CNN
39. _____ News Magazines
40. _____ Friends/Social Group
41. _____ Newspapers
42. _____ Websites
43. _____ Fox News

44. Please indicate who you voted for in the last Presidential election by **placing an X in the appropriate place.**

- [1] _____ John F. Kerry
- [2] _____ George W. Bush
- [3] _____ Third Party/Independent Candidate
- [4] _____ Did Not Vote

45. Please indicate if you voted straight ticket in the last election (straight ticket means only the candidates from one party for every position you voted for) by **placing an X in the appropriate place.**

- [1] ___ Straight ticket
 [2] ___ Mixed ticket
 [3] ___ Did Not Vote

46. Please indicate if you voted democratic, republican, third party, or mixed ticket in the states last congressional and U.S. senate elections by **placing an X in the appropriate place.**

- [1] ___ Democratic
 [2] ___ Republican
 [3] ___ Third Party/Independent Candidate
 [4] ___ Mixed Ticket
 [5] ___ Did Not Vote

47. **If you did not vote**, please indicate who you would have been most likely to vote for in the last presidential election by **placing an X in the appropriate place.**

- [1] ___ John F. Kerry
 [2] ___ George W. Bush
 [3] ___ Third Party/Independent Candidate
 [4] ___ I voted

Of the three possible political affiliations you identify with (Democrat, Republican, and Independent voter/Third Party,) answer the following questions as they relate to you and your chosen group. **Circle the answer that most reflects how much you agree with the statement.**

48. When someone criticizes my political party/group, the criticism feels like an insult?

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

49. When I talk about my political party/group, I usually say "we" rather than "they".

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

50. The limitations associated with my political party/group also apply to me.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

51. My political party/group's successes are also my successes.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

52. If the media criticizes my political party/group I feel angry or embarrassed?

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

53. I typically act like a person that is from my political party/group.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

54. I am interested in what others think about my political party/group.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

55. I have a number of qualities typical of my political party/group.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

56. When someone praises my political party/group I feel it is a compliment.

Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Indifferent	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Please **circle or check** the item that applies to you. Please write out an answer when the question calls for it.

57. Age: 19 20 21 22 23 24+

58. Gender: [1] ___ Male [2] ___ Female

59. Major: _____

60. Race: (Please select all that apply)

[1] ___ American Indian or Alaska Native

[2] ___ Black or African American

[3] ___ Asian

[4] ___ Hispanic

[5] ___ Caucasian

[6] ___ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

[7] ___ Other _____

61. Year in School: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior Graduate

Thank you for your participation. Please turn this questionnaire into your instructor!