

A HIERARCHY OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES IN PRE-VOTING-AGE YOUTH

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Youth voter turnout in the 2008 Presidential elections was one of the highest in recent years. (49% for those 18-25, up significantly from 2004). This increased participation, together with the seachange in digital devices and channels people are using for communication makes the latest Presidential election crucial to our understanding of political socialization processes in the young.

The main idea tested here is whether we can define a hierarchy of different levels of effortfulness of various kinds of political participation and then predict the occurrence of each of those types. For example, talking to others about an election is generally less effortful than attending a political rally. Likewise, participating in school civic exercises is generally required of teens, and therefore does not require effortful intentionality. It is also more effortful to participate in what has come to be called consumer politics (Vogel, 2004; Stolle & Houghe, 2004) where people make statements about political issues like sweatshop manufacturing by refusing to buy products made in those sweatshops.

Attending a rally and insisting on the purchase of free-range eggs require knowledge, planning, and thus extensive intentionality. These forms of political participation are also likely greatly aided by parental help, although school, media exposure, and beliefs and attitudes should also be predictive.

A second idea tested here is concerned with the role of some newly articulated or at least differently defined cognitive variables that we posit to be quite important for predicting the various participation types. The first is what we call **Perceived Hostility**, that is, the perception that the media are unfair and biased. That this variable is important is suggested by the extensive literature that on the hostile media effect. (Vallone, Ross & Lepper, 1985). In this effect, people evaluate news stories written with extreme effort to be fair and unbiased, as biased against their own beliefs or partisanship—Democrats, for example, see stories as biased against Democrats and Republicans see exactly same stories as biased against Republicans.

A next variable is what we call **Civic Mindedness**. These are beliefs that underlie willingness to take part in work that raises the level of all boats: listening to others, helping those less fortunate, being involved in community and standing up, even to opposition, for your values. These beliefs are called “democratic citizen” in that these features have been identified as important for people in order to perform cooperatively with others for the betterment of all (Schudson, 1998; Habermas, 2006).

A third variable, **Persuasion Efficacy**, has to do with the influence people think they have on others. Specifically, it involves an individual’s belief in his or her ability to understand others’ minds and emotions and persuade them to certain points of view.

A fourth variable, **Classroom Political Interest**, indexes not whether youth have experienced civics/political lessons in school, but how much they like and are enthusiastic about such activities—indicating receptivity to civics lessons in school. This variable can be considered an index much like “interest in politics,” but it is focused more specifically on enjoyment and enthusiasm about encountering politics in the school environment.

A fifth variable, **Open Talk Attitude**, is the belief that talking to others about politics is a good thing, even if you disagree with those you are talking to. Talking politics with others can be punishing. Others may know more than you do and they may disagree, perhaps even violently with your fundamental beliefs. Probably for these reasons, many may learn early to avoid the possibility of painful interpersonal experiences by never talking about politics (or religion or other domains held important). Thus this variable indexes willingness to engage even given the likelihood of possible negative experiences.

And finally, we looked at cognitive **Elaboration** levels that youth self-report. To what extent do people connect what they encounter in the media with what they already know? How much do they mull over what they encounter in the media? Elaboration as a cognitively effortful process has long been known to enhance development of knowledge, and we wondered how it would affect the measures of political participation.

Thus there are two general thrusts in the present paper--to explore differences and similarities in different kinds of participation—from the very general community volunteering to traditional political participation to talking to others about politics. Second, to investigate the impact of some new variables on occurrence of those participations. We look at these variables in a critical age group—those who will vote in our next Presidential election.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION: A PROCESS MODEL

The model (Figure 1) guiding this research posits a process that traverses from social structural variables through personality/attitude to media variables (both content and channels) to responses that fall under a broad definition of “political.” The model is related to some recent others (e.g., Shah, et al, 2009; Hively & Eveland, 2009), but looks more closely at personality/attitude/cognitive variables and articulates political participation as a hierarchy of effortful behaviors rather than at a single indicator of “political engagement.”

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Social/Structural Variables

The first stage in the model suggests that the development of political participation is best understood in terms of how communication about the polity is processed by people from social structures that differentiate them by demographic variables like age, race, education, gender; as well as their experiences in social structures like the school system and the family. In the present study we control for demographics, but look specifically at indicators of parental political participation at a time prior (6 months) to when our youth variables were measured. Thus we can ask about the impact of our communication and personality/attitudinal variables with and without control for the impact of the crucial parental structural variable.

Communication Variables

Communication is broadly defined as all passage of messages from source to receiver and for present purposes, we identify three types of communication: from media to people, from people to people, and in terms of the internal psychological processes involved when people engage in communication, examples being attitudes clustered on “helping” or “understanding” others, attitudes about talking with others, self-perceived persuasiveness, the likelihood of mentally elaborating and thinking over incoming messages, and the degree to which political communication is considered interesting.

Media, of course, can be characterized in a large variety of ways, but here we distinguish three dimensions of media content and channel: television and newspaper news, entertainment media content, and online news.

A Hierarchy of Political Participation

The general idea of political socialization is the learning of the young to develop responses to their polity: knowing about it, developing attitudes toward its various aspects, participating in its processes (like voting, attending rallies or community meetings). Clearly, political responses include a wide variety of indicators. The most typical are interest in politics, knowledge about politics, and political participation in behaviors that have been classified as “political.” But there are many other possible variables are of clear significance: amount of politically focused talk with others, classroom-based political curriculum, connecting online about politics through social media activities, community volunteering, traditional political participation, and political boycotting/boycotting.

Structural Variables: Family Influence on Youth Participation

Family communication, especially parental influence has long been considered as an important factor determining the political socialization of adolescents (Hyman, 1959; Greenstein, 1965; Easton & Dennis, 1969). Traditionally, studies in political socialization of adolescence have conceptualized it as a top-down process in which children acquired political attitude, information and behavior from their parents through observation and modeling (Butler & Stokes, 1974; McDevitt, 2005; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000).

Parent’s party affiliation has been a strong indicator of the children’s partisanship with adolescents more likely to follow the party affiliation of the parents (Desmond and Donohue, 1981; McDevitt, 2005). Parents’ political activities were found to be a strong indicator of how involved in politics the children are (Desmond & Donohue, 1981). Also, parents with higher socioeconomic status were found to talk more to their children about politics, which led to the children to have more political knowledge than the low SES families (Kim & Kim, 2007; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000; McLeod & Chaffee, 1973; Meirick & Wackman, 2004).

More recently, McIntosh, Hart and Youniss (2007) found that parent political knowledge and youth-parent political discussion was an important predictor in youth political knowledge. That is, the knowledge of the parent was transmitted to the youth, and its effect was increased by the parent-child political discussion.

In the literature of family communication and adolescence political socialization, the role of the parent has been acknowledged. It is reasonable to expect that the more the parents know and the more they encourage youth to discuss politics, express their opinion and be politically involved, the more politically socialized the child will be. Adolescents who grow up in a family environment where the parent know a lot about politics, pay more attention to news on politics and encourage to expression of opinions, are more likely to follow their parents interest and knowledge. We summarize these expectations in this hypothesis:

H1: Parental political participation will account for significant variance in youth political participation.

Media Exposure and Political Participation

Adolescents' Use of Media to Obtain News

Mass media play an important role in people's perception of political issues and information. Although mass media have been evaluated as an important source for knowledge of political issues (Delli Carpini, 2000; McLeod, Rush, & Friederich, 1968), the effect of media is diversified depending on the type of medium as well as the purpose of using the medium. For example, television use for entertainment has also been criticized as the cause of decreasing political engagement (Putnam, 2000). Television use for news, however, clearly shows a positive impact (Shah, McLeod & Lee, 2009). Newspaper use, although low among teenagers, still shows a positive impact on political knowledge and interest (e.g., Eveland, McLeod & Horowitz, 1998).

The Internet has emerged as an important additional medium for civic and political engagement (Pew Internet, 2006). Nie and Erbring (2000) showed that Internet use was negatively related to time spent with other media, family and friends, but other studies found that heavy Internet users were more likely to have social relationships than light users (Uslaner, 2004). Internet use has been shown to positively affect political participation (Gibson, Howard, & Ward, 2000; Hill & Hughes, 1998; Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson, & Crawford, 2002). However it has also been shown to affect political engagement negatively or have no effect on it (Johnson & Kaye, 1998; Kraut et al., 2002). A likely explanation for this inconsistency is the operation of mediating variables like level of social capital, personal communication efficacy, and motivation to use the Internet (Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001; Shah, McLeod & Yoon, 2001). Entertainment internet use is not positively correlated with indicators of political engagement (Shah et al., 2001).

An important question is the extent to which youth use the internet for political communication. According to Livingstone and his colleagues, adolescents had little interest in political participation on the Internet (Livingstone & Bober, 2004; Livingstone, Bober, & Helsper, 2004). On the other hand, Montgomery (2000) reported that adolescents used the Internet to express themselves in public forums. Lin et al. (2005) showed that the level of Internet use of adolescents is positively related to the degree to which their involvement of community service when they used the Internet for ginning information. In this vein, among the various usage patterns of the Internet and outcomes of media effects, this study focused on the effect of adolescent's Internet news use (i.e., information use) on two aspects of political engagement: political interest and political knowledge. In fact, bloggers have claimed that the success of Democratic candidate Barack Obama was considered to have depended heavily on the campaign's utilization of social networking websites and blogs (Haas, 2008).

Given the weight of previous research on media use and political knowledge and interest, we expect that:

H2: News media use, including print, television and online news, will increase all levels of political participation.

Adolescent Media Use for Entertainment

While watching a YouTube video of Katie Couric interviewing Sarah Palin can be entertaining, the motive to use media primarily for entertainment has been shown in adults to mitigate against even consuming news. Putnam (1993; 1995) argued that television damaged how well people participated in their own communities. In response to this notion, many researchers looked in a more detailed way at how television was being used (Norris, 1996; Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001; Milner, 2002; Fleming, Thorson, Peng, 2005). What they found was that use of television for entertainment did indeed damage community participation, as well as knowledge about and interest in politics. But use of television for

news, and indeed use of news in general increased knowledge and political interest and participation (McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999).

H3: Media use for entertainment will increase easier types of political participation but decrease a higher level of political participation.

Opinionated news

Thorson and Duffy's (2006) media choice model, which extends uses and gratifications theory to the online environment, identifies several types of news stories from which readers can choose. In their model, these different types are referred to as "voices." Traditional, authoritative news is but one option. People may instead prefer "opinionated" news, from the popular, conservative Fox News Channel to blogs of every type, or "collaborative" news, in which journalists report working closely with their audience or readers as sources to cover a story.

Opinionated news may resonate particularly well with younger audiences. A 2005 Carnegie Foundation report claims that young audiences prefer to obtain news from a source whose politics and attitudes are known and made clear to audiences (Brown, 2005). The report points to the high perceived credibility of self-proclaimed "fake news" host Jon Stewart and rapidly increasing use of blogs for "news" among adolescents as signs of the rising popularity of non-traditional opinionated news formats. Given its high salience to youth, we expect:

H4: Use of opinionated news will increase less effortful political participation (such as talking to others, or classroom activities) but decrease the more effortful types of political participation (such as traditional political participation or charity activities).

Cognitive Variables in Political Socialization

Classroom Political Interest

Schools can potentially provide social interaction that represents a level of political stimulation and communication that may not be available from parents at home (Kioussis & McDevitt, 2008). For low SES families, schools can help them surmount the problem of activating mass media messages in politics and mitigate social structural disparities outside of the classroom. School intervention, such as the Kids Voting USA, informs the young future voters to be politically interested and knowledgeable, leading to a more motivated discussion in school and in family (McDevitt, 2005; McDevitt and Chaffee, 2002). While family and home environment are perceived as the primary agents of political socialization, school has played an important part as a secondary agent, along with mass media exposure (Atkin, 1981).

It seems reasonable that the more youth enjoy, get involved in, and like school lessons having to do with the political, the more attention they will pay, the more they will learn and hence:

H5: Classroom political interest will increase every type of political participation.

Elaboration

The ability to think deeply about politics begins in adolescence (Eveland & McLeod, 1998) as young people start to mentally process the abstract ideas and concepts which serve as the bases for politics. Eveland & Dunwoody (2001) define cognitive elaboration as connecting separate pieces of information, whether it is from memory or material being processed, into a larger whole that provides a

framework for understanding. Elaboration in terms of media use then occurs when information from media in this case is collected by the individual and compared with prior knowledge, allowing the individual to construct new frameworks for understanding the world. Elaboration thus is positively associated with knowledge.

Different media play different roles in elaboration. With the Web, it appears that the benefits that come with rich interconnected information resources benefit frequent users' ability to elaborate on what they are consuming, whereas with less-frequent users the wealth of information might serve to confuse users and thus hinder elaboration (Eveland, Marton & Seo, 2004). Newspapers have been found to be strongly associated with elaboration, and how the media are used also matters, as use for information and surveillance is positively associated with elaboration compared to use for entertainment (Eveland, 2001; Beaudoin & Thorson, 2004). Given these findings, we predict:

H6: Greater elaboration will increase every type of political participation.

Perceived Hostility

Since its explication in 1985, the Hostile Media Effect has been examined in multiple ways (Vallone et al., 1985). Defined as a "tendency for people who are highly involved in an issue to see news coverage of that issue as biased, particularly biased against their own point of view," most studies key on the effects of individual factors, media reach, and partisan issues (Choi, Yang & Chang, 2009; Gunther & Liebhart, 2006; Gunther, Christen, Liebhart & Chia, 2001, p. 296). Thus we hypothesize:

H7: Higher perceived hostility will decrease every type of political participation.

Civic Mindedness

Civic Mindedness is a concept most closely associated with Habermas' (2006) concept of the public sphere. Dahlberg (200) posited that the concept involved six features, including two that were measured here. The first is a sense of autonomy from government and economic power. To measure this autonomy we included two items, "to be a good citizen you need to stand up for your values," and "people should speak up when they oppose our government's actions." The second is "respectful listening," which we operationalized with "I think it is important to hear others' ideas even if they are different from mine." To those items, however, we added a sense of civic responsibility: "I think it is important to get involved in improving my community," and "Those who are well off should help those who are less fortunate."

Given current streams of research (e.g., Zukin et al, 2009) that suggest linkage between what is sometimes called civic engagement, we posit that:

H8: Higher civic mindedness will increase every type of political participation.

Persuasion Efficacy

To our knowledge, the relationship between persuasion self-efficacy and political participation has not been explored. Although influential people are often called "opinion leaders," these people are usually identified by others and thus differs from Persuasion Efficacy. Development of the concept was informed by both the popular and scholarly literature on traits and behaviors that successful salespeople possess or consciously develop. For decades, much of the sales and self-improvement literature emphasized self-esteem, motivation, confidence, competitiveness, likeability, and adaptability (See, for example, Weitz (1981).

Plank & Greene (1996) applied personal construct theory (PCT) for understanding how dimensions of personality influence sales performance. They argue that individuals constantly gather information to understand and predict other people's behavior and that the sales/persuasion process is built on this motivation and ability. As a salesperson communicates with her prospect, she is anticipating and responding to feedback. Krishnan, et al (2002) found that an individual's confidence in her abilities to persuade were good predictors of sales success. Ford, Churchill, & Walker (1985) also found that a person's "own perceptions of his or her competence and ability may have a major impact on performance" (p. xiv). Based on these findings, we suggest

H9: Higher persuasion efficacy will increase every type of political participation.

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Open Talk Attitude

Talking politics with others can be punishing. Others may know more than you do and they may disagree, perhaps even violently with your fundamental beliefs. Probably for these reasons, many may learn early to avoid the possibility of painful interpersonal experiences by never talking about politics (or religion or other domains held important). Thus this variable indexes willingness to engage even given the likelihood of possible negative experiences. Willingness to talk with others about politics should increase the likelihood of all of the measures of participation examined here:

H10: Higher open talk attitude will increase every type of political participation.

Participation Measures

Political Talk

Political talk is an important aspect of deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1989). By political conversation, all kinds of political talk, discussion or argument should be included as long as they are voluntarily carried out by citizens. We think these types of political conversation happen before adolescents decide to take action on political activities and that it is important that adolescents learn to talk about politics to others. Thus, we hypothesized that adolescent political news use would show similar influence in initiating political talks to those they may not be familiar with.

Civic Classroom Participation

While some may argue that school is less voluntary than other types of political participation because students 'have to' go to school, many classroom participation activities used to educate politics provide similar civic/political activities to that of the adults. For example, Kids Voting USA promotes high school seniors to register to vote as they graduate. Also, Kids Voting USA program has their own voting booth next to the adults in some cities, and the local news media would show the Kids Voting USA voting results along with the voter turnouts and results for the adults (See CIRCLE, 2003, July). As the next step in the political participation hierarchy, we believe that such classroom civic participation can be a bridge between the political discussion, and more adult-oriented harder traditional political and civic participatory behaviors.

Online Political Activity and Traditional Political Participation

The wide use of the Internet in the political realm has made a new type of political activities online not only possible but more prevalent. Best and Krueger (2005), for example, argue that different resources are required to participate in offline behaviors than online behaviors. They found that age, especially, was a strong predictor of online political activities, in spite of the long held belief that younger citizens are less likely to vote, display interest in politics, or participate in non-voting activities. In regards to our hierarchy of adolescent political participation activities, online political activities are regarded as the step before the non-voting political activities happening outside of the Internet world.

Charity Activity

Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins and Delli Carpini (2009) suggest that hands-on participating with others toward the public good is closely related to more specific political participation. Even though what we will call charity activity is usually outside campaigns and political officials, it can have important impacts on political issues like public safety, education, and community development. McKinney, Kaid and Bystrom (2005) argued indeed **that the driving force of democracy can be found in individual citizens' many acts of joining, volunteering, serving, attending, meeting, participating, giving and perhaps most importantly, cooperating with others (p. 6). For them, the simple act of voting is not the core value or practice fueling democracy. Instead, these actions of volunteerism are where the civic dialogues take place. Unlike traditional political campaign participation, volunteer activities involve the attention to the community, and its needs. Thus, we argue that charity is also an important aspect of political socialization.**

Consumer Politics

Stolle, Hooghe, and Micheletti (2005) defined consumer politics as the selection of products “based on political or ethical considerations, or both” (Micheletti, Follesdal, & Stolle, 2003). Consumer politics are part of a broader activity that Bennett (1998) “lifestyle” politics, in which people participate in more informal groups that share similar interests. Zukin et al (2009) found that more Americans were involved in some kind of consumer activism than in any other political activity except voter registration and voting (p. 77).

Political participation as a hierarchy of responses

In light of previous research on political socialization agents and different types of political participation, we argue that political participation is a multidimensional concept that includes many different socialization agents that play a role in equipping young people with the means to navigate citizenship. The socialization process of young people to adapt to the existing political system does not require a single primary agent to teach everything, but rather different agents to teach different aspects of politics, starting from general interest to political participatory activities to voting in the future.

Given that so many people never develop an advanced interest in politics, variables like voting, putting a political sign in their yard, making phone calls, or volunteering for a candidate, we consider such traditional measures of participation as “higher” and more effortful. The same can be said of volunteer activities in general and in political consumerism like boycotting and boycotting. In contrast, talking to others about politics appears to be something that just about everyone does. For many American youth, school curricula often involve studying politics and if that is the case, youth would be likely to participate. And finally, online political activity, especially with smart phone access and extensive access to high-speed wireless, would be expected to be fairly likely to occur.

We expect three features of these political participation activities to occur. First, we expect that H11: the percent of youth who are involved in the less effortful levels to be high, while the percent of youth who are involved in the more effortful levels to be low. We next expect that H12: our process variables will be able to account for more of the variance in the less effortful than the more effortful activities of the hierarchy.

Finally, we expect that when we control for the occurrence of each of the political participation activities in the parent, that variable will so highly predict the activity in the youth that H13: there will be little variance left for our process variables to account for. On the other hand, with the increased complexity of the more effortful participation variables, we expect H14: the process variables to continue to account for a lot of the variance even when parental political participation variables are controlled.

METHOD

Survey data were collected from a third-phase panel of parents and youth during May and June 2009. The first wave was gathered between May 20 and June 25, 2008 by Synovate, a commercial survey research firm, using a four-page mailed questionnaire. The second wave was gathered from these same respondents between November 5 and December 10, 2008, again using a four-page mailed questionnaire. Synovate employs a stratified quota sampling technique to recruit respondents. Initially, the survey firm acquires contact information for millions of Americans from commercial list brokers, who gather identifying information from drivers' license bureaus, telephone directories, and other centralized sources. Large subsets of these people are contacted via mail and asked to indicate whether they are willing to participate in periodic surveys. Small incentives are offered, such as pre-paid phone cards, for participation. Further details of the sample features can be found in Shah, McLeod, & Lee, 2009).

Of the 4,000 mail surveys distributed, 1,325 responses were received, which represents a response rate of 33.1% against the mailout. A small number of these responses were omitted due to incomplete or inconsistent information, resulting in a slightly smaller final sample. As a result, 1,255 questionnaires were mailed out for the second wave on November 4, 2008. Of the recontact surveys distributed, 738 were returned, for a panel retention rate of 55.7%. The focus of the study reported here was the third panel of the study that was fielded in May and June 2009, six months after Obama's election. Of the recontact surveys distributed, 305 were returned, for a panel retention rate of 41%.

Predictor variables

Adolescent variables were measured in June 2009, except for gender and age, which were measured in the first wave of panel conducted in May 2008. (See Table 1 for descriptive statistics and index reliabilities).

Demographics Adolescent gender and age were measured with typical survey questions: "What is your gender?" "What is your current age?" Party identification was measured by the question: "Of the two major political parties, which of the following best describes your party affiliation?" The response scale ranged from 1 (Strong Democrat) to 5 (Strong Republican).

Media Use Adolescents were asked about the number of days in a typical week they watched or read TV News, Print News, Conservative News, Entertainment, and Online News. *TV News* was a composite 3-item index of responses to viewing local TV news, network TV news, and morning TV news programs (e.g., The Today Show, Good Morning America, or The Early News). *Print News* was a composite 2-item index of responses to reading a print copy of a local newspaper and the school's student newspaper. *Conservative News* (Opinionated News) was a composite 2-item index of responses to

viewing FOX cable news programs (Bill O'Reilly, Hannity & Colmes) and to reading conservative blogs (Instapundit, Michelle Malkin). *Entertainment* was a composite 4-item index of responses to watching Primetime reality programs (Survivor, American Idol), primetime comedy programs (Two & a Half Men, The Office), primetime cartoon programs (Family Guy, Simpsons), and primetime drama programs (Grey's Anatomy, CSI, Lost). *Online News* was a 3-item composite index of reading/viewing national newspaper websites, local newspaper websites, and TV news websites.

The following were indexes comprised of statement measured on 5-point Likert scales (1=Strongly Disagree; 5=Strongly Agree). *Perceived hostility* was a 2-item index of responses: "Most news coverage is biased against my views," and "Most politicians can't be trusted." *Civic Mindedness* was a 5-item index of the statements: "I think it is important to get involved in improving my community," "Those who are well off should help those who are less fortunate," "I think it is important to hear others' ideas even if they are different from mine," "People should speak up when they oppose our government's actions," and "To be a good citizen, you need to stand up for your values." *Open Talk Attitude* was a 2-item index of the statements: "Among my friends, it is OK to talk about political issues," and "Among my friends, it is OK to disagree with one another over political issues." *Persuasion Efficacy* was a 3-item index of the statements: "I am influential among my friends," "I am good at persuading people to see things my way," "When I talk about politics I try to convince other people I am right." *Class Political Interest* was a 4-item index of the statements: "I am interested in politics," "I enjoy it when teachers created class activities around political issues and current events," "I participate more than my classmates in class activities about politics and current events," "To be a good citizen, you need to be knowledgeable about political issues." *Elaboration* was a 4-item index of the statements: "My friends often seek my opinion about politics," "I try to connect what I see in the media to what I already know," "I often recall what I encounter in the media and later on think about it," "I often refer to things I have learned from the news in conversation."

[Insert Table 1 here]

Criterion Variables

We created composite indexes for the following six criterion variables: "Political Conversation," "Civic Classroom," "Online Political Activity," "Classic Campaign Political Participation," "Charity Activity," and "Political Consumerism." All items that comprised these indexes were measured in response to how frequently the adolescent engaged in these activities during the past three months on 8-point response scales (1=Not at all, 8=Very Frequently). *Political conversation* was a 4-item index of the activities: "Talked about news and current events with family members," "Talked about news and current events with friends," "Talked about news and current events with adults outside your family," "Talked about news and current events with people who disagree with you." *Civic Classroom Activities* was a 5-item index of the activities: "Followed the news as part of a class assignment," "Learned about how government works in class," "Discusses/debated political or social issues in class," "Participated in political role playing in class (mock trials, elections)," and "Encouraged to make up your own mind about issues in class." *Online Political Activity* was a 7-item index of the activities: "Read comments posted by readers on the news web," "Posted comments on a news website or political blog," "Exchanged political emails with friends and family," "Forwarded the link to a political video or news article," "Received a link to a political video or news article," "Watched video news stories online," and "Watched political/candidate videos online." *Traditiional Political Participation* was a 5-item index of the activities: "Contributed money to a political campaign," "Attended a political meeting, rally, or speech," "Worked for a political party or candidate," "Displayed a political campaign button, sticker, or sign," and "Participated in a political protest activity." *Charity Activity* was a 3-item index of the activities: "Raised

money for a charitable cause,” “Did volunteer work,” “Worked on a community project.” Finally, *Political Consumerism* was a 2-item index of the activities: “Boycotted products of companies that offend my values,” “Bought products from companies because they align with my values.”

Control Variables

Five control variables based on parental attitudes and behavior were constructed from items measured in Wave 2, from November 08 till December 08, right after the 08 Presidential Election. Each index is a parallel index of the six adolescent criterion variables except “Political Conversation” and “Civic Classroom.” Political conversation was measured by a single item on an 8-point scale that asked parents how much they: “Talked about news and current events with family members (1=Not at all, 8=Very Frequently).” There were no parallel questions for parents about class activities, so the parent’s “Political Participation” was used as the control variable for Civic Classroom Activities. Parent control variables are shown in Table 2.

RESULTS

To test the hypotheses, we set up hierarchical regression analyses where Block 1 included the demographic variables, Block 2 different news media use, Block 3 with cognitive variables, and finally Block 4 with Persuasion Efficacy, Class Political Interest and Elaboration. The final model predicted 47% for political conversation, 34% for civic classroom activities, 36% for online political activities, 23% for youth political participation, 20% for community charity activity, and 18% for political consumerism.

[Insert Table 3 here]

We also ran a hierarchical regression analysis (Table 4) including the parental political participation as a control variable in the first block. This allowed us to observe the impact of our process variables beyond the direct impact of parental participation.

H1 predicted that the indicators of parental political participation would account for significant variance in adolescents’ political participation. This hypothesis was supported for all six criterion variables. When we ran the hierarchical regression model with parental participation index, the R2 change was significant across all types of youth participation variables. The change in R2 across the six participation variables is shown in Figure 3. The largest R2 change was for the youth political participation (R2 change=.259, $p<.001$), accounting for more than a quarter of the total variance. The least R2 change was for the political talk (R2 change= .06, $p<.001$).

[Insert Table 4 here]

H2 predicted that news media use, including print newspaper, television news, and online news would increase all youth political participation activities. This hypothesis was partially supported. **First, television news use, print news use and online news use significantly predicted the political conversation of youth (See Tables 3 and 4). For civic classroom activities, only television news and print news were significant predictors. Online political activities were significantly predicted only by online news use, and youth political participation and charity activities were only predicted by television news use. For political consumerism, none of the news media use was significant.**

Then, we looked at two different types of media use, entertainment media and opinionated news. H3 was only partially supported. **Entertainment news negatively influenced the political talk significantly** ($\beta=-.10$, $p<05$). This finding held even after controlling for parental participation. H4

predicted that opinionated news use will influence different types of political behaviors. We used the conservative news use index to represent opinionated news use. Conservative news use positively predicted the online political activities, youth political participation, and political consumerism, but not the easier types of political participation (political conversation or civic classroom activities). The result showed that conservative news use positively influences the level of online political activities, political participation and political consumerism activities of youth. Again, this pattern held after controlling for parent participation (Table 4).

H5 predicted that classroom political interest would increase every type of political participation. This hypothesis was partially supported. For the lower effort political participation indices, class political interest significantly predicted political conversation ($\beta=.24, p<.001$) and civic classroom activities ($\beta=.25, p<.001$) whereas for the higher effort participation, only community charity activities were significantly predicted by class political interest ($\beta=.20, p<.01$). These findings remained significant after controlling for parental participation.

We suggested influence of the different types of cognitive process variables: perceived hostility and belief in democratic citizenship. We predicted that greater elaboration would increase every type of political participation (H6), but higher perceived hostility (H7) would decrease political participation. Elaboration significantly and positively predicted the political conversation ($\beta=.2, p<.01$), and negatively predicted the community charity activities ($\beta=-.2, p<.01$). Perceived hostility negatively predicted community charity activities ($\beta=-.12, p<.05$), but none of the other youth participation measures.

H8 predicted that civic mindedness would significantly increase every measure of political participation. Contrary to this prediction, however, civic mindedness only influenced youth participating in charity activities, but not the other types of political participation.

H9 suggested that higher persuasion efficacy would increase every type of political participation and H10 suggested that higher open talk attitude would do likewise. Persuasion efficacy only affected civic classroom activity, although this effect remained after parental control was applied. Open talk influenced both political talk and civic classroom activity, and these two effects also remained after parental control was applied.

Our final hypotheses concerned the differences in the low- and high-effort participation categories. H11 predicted that the percent of youth involved in the lower hierarchy of participation would be higher than the percent of youth involved in the higher hierarchy of participation. This hypothesis was supported. The mean for the three low-effort participations (political talk, civic classroom activity and online political activity) was significantly higher than the mean for the three high-effort participations (Low effort mean = 2.76; high effort mean = 2.06, $t(303) = 11.48, p<.001$). As can be seen in Table 1, however, the three highest means were for political talk, civic classroom, and charity activity. The other three variables showed lower means.

H12 suggested that the process variables would account for more of the variance in the low-effort participations. As shown in Figure 2, the total R2 for lower effort participations-- political talk, classroom political activities, and online political activities--was greater than the R2 for higher-effort participations.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

The process variables were entered in Block 3 and Block 4. In Block3, perceived hostility, belief in demographic citizenship, open talk attitude were entered in the model. Class political interest, persuasion efficacy, and elaboration were entered in Block 4. The R2 change from Block 2 to Block 3 was larger in

less effortful activities, political talk (R2 change=.111, $p<.001$), civic classroom activities (R2 change=.110, $p<.001$) than online political activities (R2 change=.033, $p<.001$), political participation (R2 change=.005, ns), charity activity (R2 change=.039, $p<.01$), and political consumerism (R2 change=.044, $p<.001$). This pattern was similar for Block 4, with R2 change from Block 3 to Block 4 being the largest in political talk variable.

The R2 change controlling for parental participation is shown in Figure 3. Here, it is found (H13) that for the less effortful variables (political talk, civic classroom activities and online political activities, the parent control doesn't add much variance to the model. On the other hand, for more effortful political participation variables, such as classic political campaign participation, community charity activities and political consumerism activities, parental participation adds larger variance to the model. From this result, the parents influence adolescents' more effortful political outcomes above and beyond all other political socialization influences, such as media, and other process variables.

H14 suggested that the process variables would account for significant variance in the participation scores even when parental political participation variables were controlled. That this was supported can be seen in Table 4 where blocks 3 (media), 4 and 5 (cognitive and attitudinal variables) generally continued to show significant R2 change even when the parent controls were added. Figure 3 shows graphically, however, that the change in R2 was less for the low-effort participation variables.

[Insert Figure 3 here]

DISCUSSION

Although Verba, Nie, & Kim (1978) and more recently Claggett & Pollock (2006) have posited that there are a number of "modes of political participation," their categories remain narrowly focused on a clearly political domain (e.g., voting and campaigning). Nevertheless, they, as well as Zukin et al (2009) have moved socialization research toward the idea that different kinds of political responses are affected by differing clusters of sociostructural, media, and cognitive/attitudinal variables. That is clearly a finding in the present study. The present study, however, goes beyond the simple distinguishing of types of political response to identify a continuum of responses that represents the effortfulness of the types. Lower-effort participation like talking about politics, doing classroom political assignments, and talking with others online about politics had greater amounts of their variance accounted for the predictive variables. Higher-effort participation like traditional political behaviors (putting up a lawn sign), community volunteering, and engaging in consumer politics had less variance accounted for the predictive variables. More importantly, parental behavior at a prior point in time was far more predictive on the higher-effort participation than it was of the lower-effort participation. For our young sample, parental impact on getting out and "doing" was large. For talking with others about politics, either in person or online, and participating in school political activities, the mass media and features of the youth themselves (perceived media hostility, civic mindedness, open talk attitude, persuasion efficacy, class political interest, and elaboration) had far more impact. Of course, parents would influence these features of their children, but once these features are in place, many of the child's behaviors become more independent of direct parent impact.

Of the cognitive/attitudinal features of the teen, perceived hostility of the media had virtually no effect, which seems somewhat comforting. Civic mindedness had no impact on the more traditional political categories of participation, but strongly affected charity activity. In spite of suggestions that community engagement is of a cluster with political participation categories, (e.g., Zukin, et al) and our

own contention that civic mindedness is made up of features that would equip teens with attitudes consistent with active citizenship, there was not the expected link with the political domain.

Open talk and interest in classroom civics work both positively affected political talk and civic classroom activity. Causal directionality is, of course, undecided. Class political interest also positively related to charity activity, which is suggestive that civic training affects a broader domain than just the political. Hopefully further studies of these classroom efforts can identify just what kinds of topics and assignments lead to this broader effect.

Elaboration was positively associated with political talk, as many have found, but oddly, it was consistently negatively related to charity activity. Why would thinking deeply about news and integrating it with what you already know be negatively associated with working in your community? Simplistically, it may be that there are “thinkers” and “doers,” but we suspect the relationship is much more complex, perhaps involving mediators like partisanship, race, and gender. Nevertheless, it is a link deserving of further study. WE COULD GET AT THIS

Hierarchical regression should perhaps give way to structural equation approaches to the data presented here. Interactions of our predictive variables and potential problems with multicollinearity also need further analysis.

Political socialization is more and more being seen as a process much more complex than children adopting the political partisanship and issue stances of their parents (e.g., Shat et al, 2009). Teens are clearly developing cognitive and attitudinal approaches to school, media, and others that lead to different levels of political participation. For pre-voting age youth, the more effortful participation types are still greatly affected by parents, but even at this age, self-impact is clearly observed for the less effortful participation types.

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Table 1. Reliabilities estimates and descriptive statistics for adolescents' composite indexes

Composite Variables	No. of items in index	Cronbach's alpha	Mean (SD)
Parent Political Participation (scale: 1-8)	5	.85	1.49(1.10)
Persuasion Efficacy (scale: 1-5)	3	.64	3.03 (0.84)
Classroom Political Interest (scale: 1-5)	4	.81	2.88 (0.93)
Elaboration (scale: 1-5)	4	.77	2.97 (0.84)
Civic Mindedness (scale: 1-5)	5	.69	3.90 (0.64)
TV News (scale: 0-7)	3	.82	1.85 (1.85)
Entertainment (scale: 0-7)	4	.62	1.97 (1.40)
Online News Sites (scale: 0-7)	3	.65	0.53 (1.00)
Online Political Activity (scale: 1-8)	7	.92	1.63 (1.18)
Class Activity (scale: 1-8)	5	.92	3.46 (1.96)
Political Participation (scale: 1-8)	5	.91	1.38 (1.07)
Political Talk (scale: 1-8)	4	.91	3.48 (1.82)
Charity Activity (scale: 1-8)	3	.86	3.03 (2.05)
2-item Variables	Pearson's <i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	Mean (SD)
Print (scale: 0-7)	.38	<.001	1.54 (1.64)
Consumer Politics (scale: 1-8)	.75	<.001	1.88 (1.63)
Open Talk Attitude (scale: 1-5)	.79	<.001	3.61 (0.96)
Perceived Hostility (scale: 1-5)	.27	<.001	2.94 (0.82)
Conservative News (scale: 0-7)	.41	<.001	0.35 (0.97)

Table 2. Reliabilities estimates and descriptive statistics for parent composite indexes

Parent Control Variables (scales: 1-8)	No. of items in index	Alpha/r	Mean (SD)
Talked About News	1	n/a	5.84(2.14)
Online Political Activity	7	.91	2.24 (1.72)
Traditional Political Participation	5	.85	1.50 (1.06)
Charity Activity	2	$r = .74^{***}$	3.12 (2.38)
Political Boycott	2	$r = .79^{***}$	2.77 (2.25)

Note: $***p < .001$.

	Political Talk	Civic Classroom Activity	Online Political Activity	Political Participation	Charity Activity	Consumer Politics
Block 1						
Gender (F)	.07	.05	.05	.01	.08	.11*
Age	.02	.02	.01	-.01	-.06	.02
Party ID (R)	.01	.00	-.03	-.01	.02	.03
Race (W)	.03	.02	-.08	-.19***	.01	.03
<i>R</i> ² Change	.019	.099	.041*	.073***	.011	.022
Block 2						
TV News	.15**	.16**	.07	.16*	.21***	.08
Print News	.12*	.12*	.00	.02	.06	.06
Conservative News	.08	-.09	.18**	.29***	.10	.18***
Entertainment	-.10*	-.04	.00	-.02	-.09	-.05
Online News	.12*	.06	.28***	-.04	.08	-.01
<i>R</i> ² Change	.236***	.128***	.247***	.142***	.130***	.090***
Block 3						
Perceived Hostility	.00	-.02	.08	.03	-.12*	.03
Civic Mindedness	-.08	.00	-.06	-.08	.17**	.07
Open Talk Attitude	.14**	.12*	.03	.02	.01	.04
<i>R</i> ² Change	.111***	.110***	.033*	.005	.039**	.044***
Block 4						
Persuasion Efficacy	.07	.14*	.08	.02	.05	.12
Class Political Int	.24***	.25***	.12	.06	.20**	.12
Elaboration	.20**	.09	.11	.06	-.20**	.00
<i>R</i> ² Change	.108***	.091***	.037**	.008	.024*	.026*
Total <i>R</i>²	.475***	.338***	.358***	.228***	.204***	.182***

Table 3. Hierarchical regression models for adolescents (N=305)

Note: Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients, *R*² were noted. **p*<.05, ***p*<.01, *p*<.001.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression models controlling for parental political participation (N=304)

Note: Cell entries are standardized regression coefficients, R^2 were noted. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, $p < .001$. # All Parent Controls were measured in Wave 2. All Parent Controls were comprised of identical items that correspond to child dependent variables except Talked About News, which was a single items that asked parents how much they talked about news and current events with family members.

	Political Talk	Civic Classroom Activity	Online Political Activity	Political Participation	Charity Activity	Consumer Politics
Block 1						
Parent Controls [#]	.08	.04	.27***	.43***	.42***	.40***
R ² Change	.060***	.016*	.157***	.259***	.232***	.205***
Block 2						
Gender (F)	.07	.05	.03	-.01	.09	.08
Age	.02	.02	.00	-.01	-.06	-.02
Party ID (R)	.01	-.01	-.05	-.07	.03	.02
Race (W)	.02	.02	-.07	-.12*	-.04	.01
R ² Change	.018	.006	.032*	.034*	.019	.010
Block 3						
TV News	.15**	.16*	.08	.20***	.19***	.11
Print News	.11*	.12*	.00	.02	.03	.05
Conservative News	.08	-.10	.17*	.22***	.09	.14*
Entertainment	-.10*	-.04	.02	-.04	-.05	-.02
Online News	.12*	.05	.24***	-.08	.07	.01
R ² Change	.206***	.123***	.188***	.091***	.080***	.071***
Block 4						
Perceived Hostility	.00	-.02	.08	.03	-.07	.01
Civic Mindedness	-.09	.00	-.04	-.07	.15**	.00
Open Talk Attitude	.14**	.12*	.02	.03	.02	.07
R ² Change	.097***	.107***	.022*	.004	.017*	.024*
Block 5						
Persuasion Efficacy	.06	.14*	.08	.04	.01	.10
Class Political Int	.24***	.24***	.04	-.02	.14*	.07
Elaboration	.20**	.09	.11	.05	-.19*	-.02
R ² Change	.099***	.087***	.021*	.002	.017*	.015
Total R ²	.480***	.342***	.420***	.390***	.364***	.325***

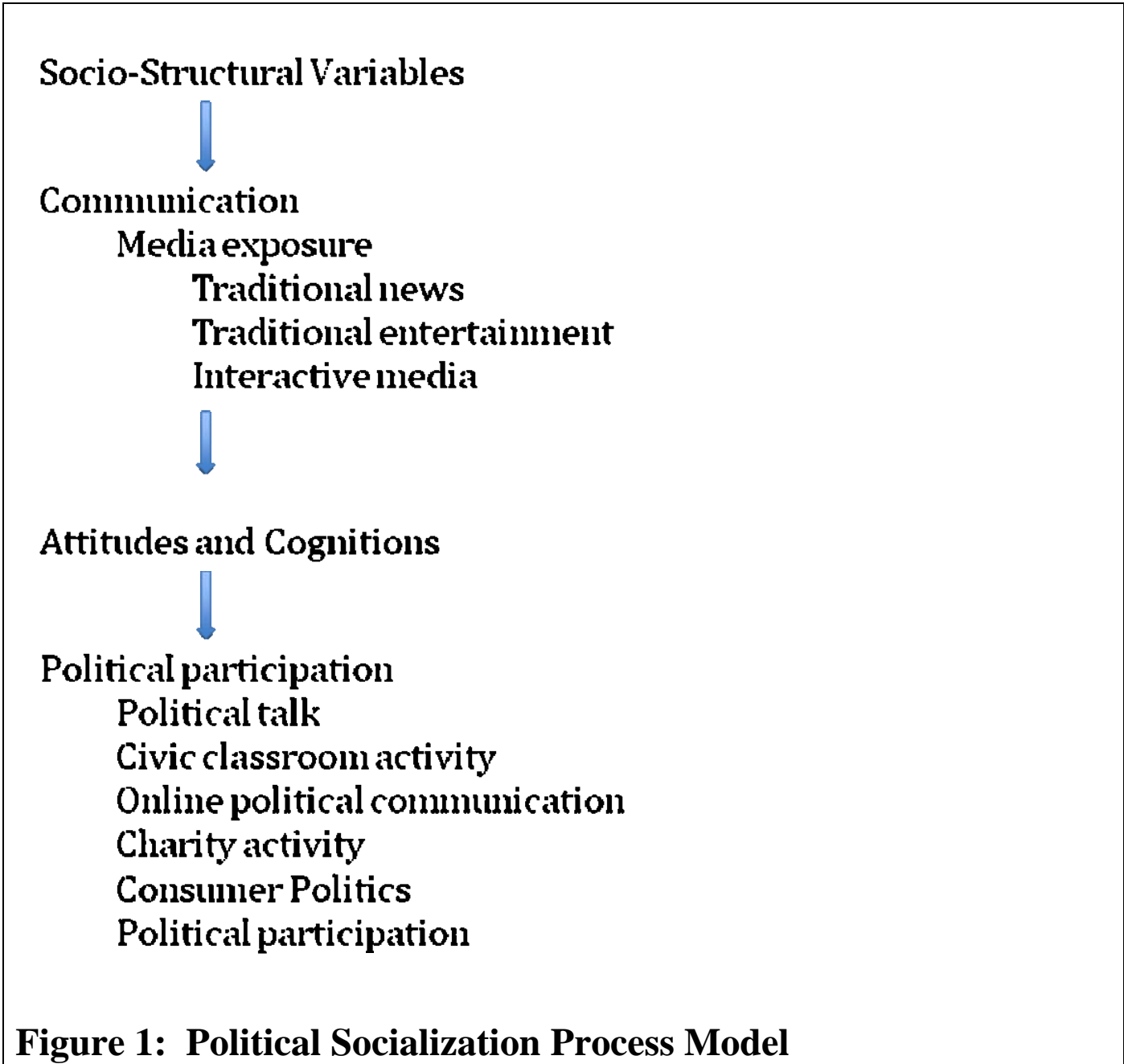


Figure 2: Total R² for Child Regression Models

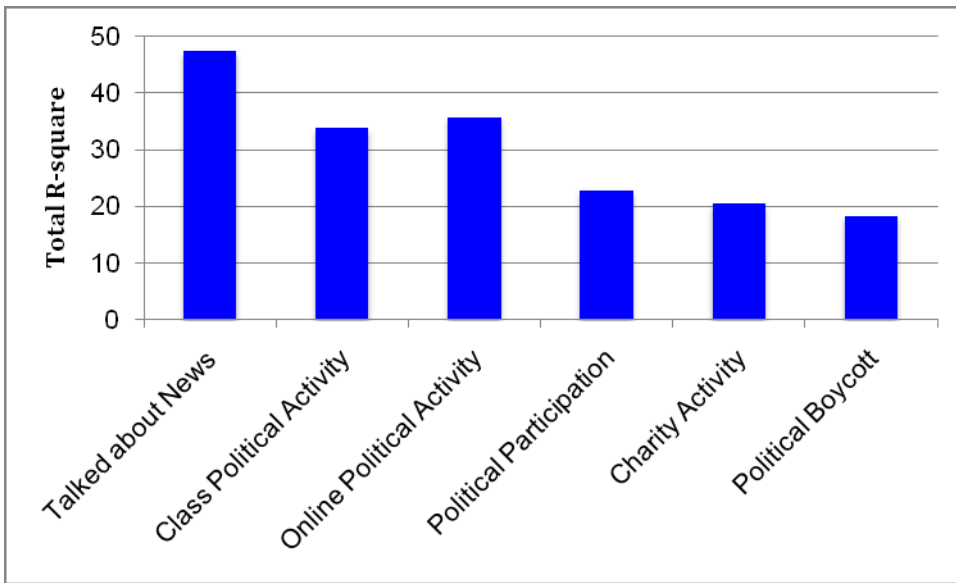


Figure 3: R² Change for Child Regression Models Controlling for Parent Political Participation

