

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

**Bell & Howell Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA**

UMI[®]
800-521-0600

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA ON THE POLITICAL
VALUES OF AMERICAN YOUTH

by

DAVID J. JACKSON

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1999

MAJOR: POLITICAL SCIENCE

Approved by:

John M. Stratt *Oct 8, 1999*

Advisor Date

Ronald E. Brown

Charles D. Eller
Gene G. Johnson

UMI Number: 9954519

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 9954519

Copyright 2000 by Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

Bell & Howell Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

DEDICATION

To My Grandfather - Leon Lazowski - He never went to college, but he could have taught us academics a thing or two about hard work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the support I received from Wayne State University in undertaking this dissertation. I am especially thankful to the Department of Political Science for three years of teaching-assistantship funding and the Graduate College for two years of Rumble Fellowship support. The Graduate College also provided me with substantial funds to pay for the coding of questionnaire responses.

I also thank my committee for their assistance, especially Chairman John Strate. Without his nagging I might never have started writing this thing, and without his insights both theoretical and statistical I never would have finished it. The other members of my committee -- Dr. Ron Brown, Dr. Charles Elder, and Dr. Leon Wilson -- provided much useful advice and support as well.

I also thank the professors who allowed me to administer my questionnaire to their students: Dr. Richard Elling, Dr. Susan Fino, Dr. Charles Parrish, Dr. Michael Maggiotto, and Dr. Karen King.

Friends and family have been especially supportive as well. I thank my mom Barb and dad Jim for all of their help, financial and otherwise. My brother Jim and sister Jean have been helpful friends as well. Other friends especially deserving of thanks include Stuart Tucker, Paula Kepos, Paul Sternberg, Steven Engel, Marc Simon, David Ciolek, John Sislin, and the ragged bunch of chalk-dust covered wretches who served with me as teaching assistants in the political science department.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA.....	1
2. CULTURE WARS, THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA, LEARNING THEORY AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION.....	29
3. THE INFLUENCE OF MOVIES ON POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION.....	43
4. THE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ON POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION.....	69
5. THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION.....	99
6. POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION, LEARNING THEORY AND CULTURE WARS REVISITED.....	146
Appendix	
1. QUESTIONNAIRE.....	168
REFERENCES.....	184
ABSTRACT.....	195
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT.....	197

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1.1	Demographic Characteristics of Respondent.....	26
2.1	Relationship between Ideology of Youths and Parents.....	40
2.2	Race and More Liberal than Parents.....	41
2.3	Age and More Liberal Than Parents.....	41
2.4	University and More Liberal than Parents.....	42
3.1	Favorite Movies.....	47
3.2	Messages of Movies with which Respondents Disagreed.....	52
3.3	Church Attendance and Movie Message.....	54
3.4	Ideology and Movie Message.....	54
3.5	Sex and Disagreement with Movies.....	55
3.6	Race and Disagreement with Movies.....	56
3.7	Race and Disagreement with Racist Messages in Movies.....	57
3.8	Ideological Orientation of Objections to Movies.....	58
3.9	Ideology and Orientation Of Disagreement with Movies.....	59
3.10	Political Knowledge.....	60
3.11	Perception of Ideologies of Actors.....	62
3.12	Correlations between Self-Reported Ideology and Ideology of Actors and Parents.....	63
3.13	Youths' Ideological Positioning Relative to Mother and Various Actors.....	64
3.14	Movie Use and More Liberal than Parents.....	66
4.1	Favorite Television Programs.....	71

4.2	Kendall's Tau-c Correlations between TV Use And Selected Variables.....	76
4.3	<i>Seinfeld</i> and Conformism.....	78
4.4	<i>E.R.</i> Preference and Morality of Homosexuality.....	80
4.5	<i>Simpsons</i> Preference and Morality of Homosexuality.....	81
4.6	The <i>Simpsons</i> and Conformism.....	83
4.7	Attitudes toward Women's Equal Roles.....	84
4.8	Sexy Television Preference and Support for Claim that Newer Lifestyles Contribute to Break Down of Society (Women Only).....	85
4.9	Political Themes of Television with which Respondents Disagreed.....	86
4.10	Ideology and Disagreement with Message of a TV Program.....	87
4.11	Ideological Perspective of Themes Disagreed with in TV Programs.....	88
4.12	Ideology and Orientation Of Disagreement with TV Programs.....	89
4.13	Kendall's Tau Correlations between Entertainment Television Use and Other Variables.....	91
4.14	Tau Correlations between Entertainment Television Use and Other Variables... 	93
5.1	Radio Use Among Young People.....	99
5.2	Music Listening Among Young People.....	100
5.3a	Kendall's Tau-c Correlations between Listening to Music Collection and Selected Variables.....	101
5.3b	Kendall's Tau-c Correlations between Radio Use And Selected Variables.....	101
5.4	Race and Disagreement with Songs.....	102
5.5	Song Message and Church Attendance.....	104
5.6	Messages of Songs With Which Respondents Disagreed.....	105

5.7	Orientation of Objections To Themes in Songs.....	106
5.8	Ideology and Orientation of Objections To Themes of Songs.....	107
5.9	Ideologies of Popular Musicians.....	108
5.10	Correlations between Self-Reported Ideology and Ideology of Musicians for only Fans of Music in Question.....	110
5.11	Relationship between Listening to Own Music Collection and More Liberal than Parents.....	111
5.12	Relationship between Information Tables and More Liberal.....	112
5.13	Music preference and Ideology.....	116
5.14	Relationship between Music Preference And Political Party Choice.....	117
5.15	Relationship between Music Preference and More Liberal than Parents.....	118
5.16	Rap Preference and Equal Opportunity.....	119
5.17	Rap Preference and Newer Lifestyles.....	120
5.18	Rap Preference and Relativism (Blacks Only).....	121
5.19	Rap Preference and Relativism (Whites Only).....	122
5.20	Rap Preference and Views on Women's Role.....	123
5.21	Celebrity Endorsement and Help Tibet (White Rap Fans only).....	124
5.22	Alternative Rock Preference and Views on Women's Equality.....	125
5.23	Alternative Rock Preference and Fitting In.....	126
5.24	Alternative Rock Preference and Newer Lifestyles.....	127
5.25	Alternative Preference and Morality of Homosexuality.....	127
5.26	Celebrity Endorsements and Democracy as Sham for Alternative Fans Only...	129
5.27	Classic Rock preference and Women's Equal Role.....	131

5.28	Classic Rock Preference and Cynicism.....	131
5.29	Classic rock Preference and Corruption in Government.....	132
5.30	Classic Preference and Morality of Homosexuality.....	133
5.31	Country/Western Preference and Fitting In.....	134
5.32	Country/Western Preference and Abortion.....	134
5.33	Country/Western Preference and Flag Burning.....	135
5.34	Country/Western Preference and Cynicism.....	136
5.35	Country/Western Preference and Corruption in Government.....	136
5.36	Celebrity Endorsement and Aid to Farmers (Country Fans only).....	137
5.37	Logistic Regression Predicting which Youths Are More Liberal than Both Parents.....	138
5.38	Music Preference and Use on Probability of Being More Liberal than Parents..	139

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

In this work I present a theory of the political socialization process that includes the entertainment media as important agents of socialization. I use data gathered from surveys of undergraduate college students to demonstrate a number of political effects of the entertainment media. These effects are important because they are linked with the ongoing conflict in American society over the basic values that define the political community.

In this chapter I argue that political socialization should remain a worthwhile subject of study. However, political scientists and other social scientists must enlarge the scope of their research on the agents of political socialization to include the entertainment media. I examine some definitions of the concept of political socialization and select and modify one of them for purposes of my research. I examine the traditionally researched agents of political socialization and several general theories of the process. Finally, I discuss the survey instrument used in this study, describe the sample, explain the methods used to analyze the data, and outline the chapters to follow.

Parents, the news media, teachers, political scientists and others have long been concerned about the process by which children acquire and hold political values. In political science, these concerns are the domain of the political socialization sub-field. In other disciplines, such as political psychology, scholars have shown or continue to show interest in the very important matters of the sources of ideology, values, knowledge and issue positions of young people. This dissertation draws on research from several

disciplines, while attempting to make headway with respect to an almost completely ignored phenomenon – the impact of the entertainment media, such as popular music, television programs and movies upon young people’s political attitudes and knowledge. Political scientists generally believe that parents, schools, churches and the news media influence the political socialization of children, and roughly in that order of importance. While each of these has an impact, researchers who focused exclusively on these agents of socialization at times came up with very tenuous results, or no significant results at all. For example Jennings and Niemi (1974) in their classic panel study demonstrate that the correlation of parent and child ideology peaks at a tau value of .34, and then declines as both cohorts age. If parents have so little enduring significance, it suggests that there may be no answer to the question of how young people learn about politics. Also, there plainly is no easy way we can study the process in detail from beginning to end and thus sort out the myriad influences. However, methodological limitations are not the only reason for our lack of knowledge about this subject.

I will argue that political scientists thus far have ignored a veritable gold-mine of agents of socialization by not investigating the influence of the popular culture. In other words, the error may be one of omission. We should increase the number of agents that we examine by considering the influences of entertainment media. If these influences are sizeable we will have a better understanding of why the influence of parents is limited. Even if the effects are not sizeable, we will have added to our understanding of a very important aspect of political behavior. In other words, this work is not designed to tear down previous research so much as to add to it.

Definitions of Socialization

As with many concepts in political science, political socialization is not an easy term to define. Weintraub-Austin and Nelson (1993, 420) define socialization as, “a process by which individuals obtain relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions that enable them to function competently in the socio-political structure.” A similar definition is offered by Sigel (1965, 1), who states, “Political Socialization refers to the learning process by which political norms and behaviors acceptable to an ongoing political system are transmitted from generation to generation.” Dodson (1990, 1112) constructs a similar definition of socialization in the context of political parties and other organizations when she writes, “(t)he socialization process provides individuals with information regarding the attitudes, values, norms, behaviors, and knowledge customary or desirable within an organization.” Almond and Coleman (1960), utilizing the language of systems theory, define socialization as the process of entering into the political culture. Its outcome is a set of attitudes -- cognitions, value standards and feelings -- toward the political system, its various roles and role incumbents. Liebes and Ribak (1992, 619) operationalize socialization as, “the measured similarity between agent and subject, taking relevant social trends into account.”

These definitions share a number of important similarities. First, socialization is defined as a *process*. It is not something that happens quickly or that is due to the influence of a single important agent or experience. Complex developmental processes are at work that can be expected to vary from person to person and environment to environment. Some developmental processes are commonplace. Social scientists believe that individuals emulate those with whom they have intimate contact, and for the

overwhelming majority of persons this means the individual's mother or father. The first inklings of belief are referred to by Knutson (1974) as "pre-political ideologies," and they are the base upon which new beliefs are built. For children beyond a certain age/stage of development, what occurs next is that a new model, belief or image to emulate enters the child's frame that either complements or contradicts the base. The individual then links the new and old beliefs together in a coherent way. Naturally the process builds outward and away from the family when the child first begins to become aware of actors other than parents. It is doubtful that individuals are aware of these developmental processes, how they work, and what impact they have had on their own beliefs.

After parental influence, political scientists think that the school is the next most important. It is thought that schools are most effective at transmitting relatively objective "textbook" knowledge about government and politics, but there are other effects also detailed below. In recent years, more attention has focussed upon the mass media, and especially television. Television watching is so prevalent in homes today that it has very nearly a simultaneous influence along with parents. Also, some of the first important images of the outside world that a child experiences are from television, rather than real, first-hand experiences. Of course, television has long been known to present a distorted picture of the world.

One of the underpinnings of this research is that the television that children and young adults actually watch is not the nightly news, but entertainment. Ever since Plato it has been common to assume that children have trouble differentiating the fictional from the real, and the former dominates the entertainment media. Because the political significance of entertainment media may not be obvious, this does not mean that it is non-

existent. The presence of television in the overwhelming majority of homes, if we find that it has any political content, means it may be an integral element of political socialization.

The second shared characteristic of the definitions of socialization is that the individual obtains *knowledge*. Now, certainly, parents teach their children massive amounts of information and impart important skills. In terms of political knowledge, most parents probably do not spend a great deal of time explaining federalism, the three branches of national government, or the electoral impact of single-member districts to their children. This sort of knowledge is likely gained through the schools, if at all. However, a few very politically active parents may impart such knowledge. Further, general knowledge about politics is something that churches, news and entertainment media impart as well.

The next important shared element of the definitions is that socialization is a process that imparts political *beliefs, values or norms*. Of course, parents occasionally try to influence their children's politics directly by encouraging certain beliefs. More often, however, parents influence the attitudes of their children indirectly. For example, children witness a parent's reaction to being stopped by a police officer (the child witnesses a reaction to coercion and authority), and they see whether or not the parent votes, writes letters to the editor concerning political issues, attends a community meeting, and so on. Teachers, of course, generally claim that they do not attempt to teach beliefs, values or norms in the classroom, but teaching about the American political system undoubtedly endorses its salient features. Aside from schools, other organizations such as churches, frequently offer prescriptive rather than merely descriptive information

about the political system. Commentators and experts on news broadcasts try to influence people's opinions, and increasingly the entertainment world is filled with celebrities making political comments, monetary contributions, or political statements with their work. Certainly, they do this not simply to express their opinions, but also to influence public opinion. Political scientists must discover whether or not these activities have any impact on political orientations.

Interestingly, Almond and Coleman's definition is explicit about the importance of feelings and emotions as outcomes of socialization. It is feelings and emotions, rather than just cognition and reasoning that motivates individuals to acquire political beliefs and act on those beliefs. Because the popular entertainment trades in feelings and emotions, I believe it has not been taken seriously by some scholars as an agent of socialization. We can overcome this problem if we recognize that an agent can have an impact, even if it expresses mere feelings rather than reasoned arguments. To illustrate this point, whereas the works of Karl Marx make a far more intellectually compelling argument for socialism than the music of The Clash, a British punk band, the written words of Marx do not muster the sensual and emotional wallop that results from hearing the angry music of The Clash, Billy Bragg or myriad other passionate and socialist singers.

As the field of psychology has demonstrated, reason does not exist apart from emotion (e.g., Zajonc, 1980; Zajonc and Markus, 1984). Rather, reason is itself a product of emotion. For example, patriotism is a curious blend of reason, based on self-interest (adherence to the nation-state for the protection it provides) and emotion (love for a country and its symbols). (Johnson, 1986) The entertainment industry does not exist to

transmit information. Its purpose is to engage the audience emotionally, but in doing this the ideas that it does transmit are more deeply learned and retained.

Definitions of Politics and Ideology

It is important to note the definition of *politics* that I will utilize in this research and its link to beliefs, values and norms. Political scientists define politics to include activities within a society relevant to the acquisition, use and retention of power. In the public arena, politics includes activities of members of Congress and the president; it includes processes like elections and policy-making; and it includes the activities of non-governmental actors like parties and interest groups. All individuals acquire attachments, beliefs, knowledge and values with respect to politics as a result of learning processes that span from early childhood throughout the adult life-span. One of the most important of these is partisanship. Partisanship is a clear enough construct when used in reference to individuals that it need not be discussed here (see Campbell et al., 1960). Political ideology, however, has taken on many different meanings, so that how it is used in this research must be discussed in some detail at the outset.

Political ideology commonly is defined as a set of coherent beliefs about politics. Ball and Dagger (1998, 5) offer a more elaborate definition when they write, “an ideology is a fairly coherent and comprehensive set of ideas that explains and evaluates social conditions, helps people understand their place in society, and provides a program for social and political action.” Historically the polar opposite terms liberal and conservative imply choices between conflicting positions on issues such as the scope of governmental activity, the responsibilities of the federal versus the state and local

governments, regulation of the economy, isolationism versus intervention, and domestic social welfare spending. Young adults do not often think of these terms in this way. (Campbell and Strate, 1981). Political ideology for the young today includes a host of “culture wars” or “life-style” issues: attitudes toward religion, abortion, affirmative action, civil rights, conformism, gay rights, promiscuity, marriage, violence, women’s role and others not clearly demarcated by the traditional definitions of liberal and conservative.

Taking Ball and Dagger’s definition in the broadest sense, lifestyle issues are not strictly social, but inevitably political because of their relevance to the acquisition, use and retention of political power.

An example might help to clarify political ideology in this domain. If a young person replies to an open-ended question that he or she vehemently opposes the message of a popular musician who depicts the Christian religion in derogatory terms, what sort of ideological position has this individual taken? Clearly the traditional distinctions between liberal and conservative do not get us far. On the other hand, distinctions based upon lifestyle issues do get us where we want to go. An individual who attends church regularly and takes his or her religion seriously enough to get angry about its derogation in popular music is defending a belief system, and one that almost always has political significance. Individuals do make choices based in no small part on the moral precepts of their faith. To the extent that faith and other beliefs guide activity in the public arena they will be considered political ideology and therefore worthy of our study.

The moral precepts that should guide a community are inevitably a matter of contention and politics. For example a traditional moralist will oppose the presentation

of characters on television soap operas who “sleep around” and participate in sexual relations before marriage. Clearly, this individual is saying that sex without the public commitment to marriage and family is immoral. Television writers ought not to condone such behavior by creating characters who engage in it. While traditional morality is not political ideology in its usual sense, it does comprise a set of beliefs about how people should behave in civil society and what the government should do to support such beliefs.

Before I examine previous research in political socialization, I will defend the basic purposes of this research. We need to add to our understanding of the agents of socialization. The entertainment media ought to be counted along with the family, school, peers, church and news-media as an influence on young people’s political values.

To establish a baseline of what already is known, I will review a number of important works in political socialization. It is no secret that research on political socialization has stagnated. A plausible reason for this is that answers to puzzling questions became more elusive once explanations based on the influence of the traditional agents had reached their limits. The failure to examine the entertainment media was glaring. To be sure, there has been some research that has been done in the fields of sociology, psychology, communication and occasionally political science. I will look closely at these works for their insights.

Models of Socialization

What about the general and theoretical works on socialization? Jennings and Niemi (1981, 20-22) discuss four models of socialization. These are the “classic” models of socialization and they will guide my research. Their first model, the *lifelong*

persistence model, holds that what children learn early in their lives endures and that individuals become more resistant to change as they age (for confirmation of the persistence model see Sears and Funk, 1999). The *lifelong openness* model holds that there is little or no effect of childhood learning on adult political values. Individuals are open to influences throughout their lives. The *life-cycle* model holds that persistence of early learning is the rule, but that at certain life-states people are more open to change. For example, the classic claim that young people are more liberal might simply mean that young people are more open to political influence. Finally, the *generational* model asserts that although persistence is the rule, there are certain social and political movements, epochs or periods of upheaval and change and that these influence individuals' political beliefs.

Setting out a generational model, Inglehart (1990, 6) argues that very profound value changes have been taking place in industrial societies in recent decades. He calls the shift one of movement from "materialism" to "post-materialism." He believes that system level changes translate into individual level changes that then have system level consequences. He outlines four system level changes: satisfaction of sustenance needs for larger proportions of populations due to technology change; rising levels of education; the absence of total war during most recent generations; and finally the expansion of mass communications leading to increased penetration of mass media into people's lives. Evidence for these changes, especially for the United States, is conclusive and need not detain us here. These system-level changes lead to changes in people's values (including increasing emphasis on needs for belonging, esteem and self-realization) and skills (including an increased proportion of population with skills to handle politics on a

national scale). Most importantly for this research, these changes in values lead to four system level consequences (while the skills changes lead only to the third and fourth consequences described here). First, conflict based on lifestyle issues increases relative to conflict based on social class. Second, there is a decrease in legitimacy of national institutions and a rise in supranational concerns. Third, there is a change in participation away from party politics and a greater focus on specific issues.

These theoretical pieces are important to my research for a number of reasons. First, with the exception of the *lifelong openness* model, each of Jennings and Niemi's theories of continuity and change holds that early learning is important. Early learning is more likely to occur through connections to the popular culture because young people take popular music, movies and television much more seriously than do adults. Moreover, each of these theories of continuity are really theories of change as well, as Niemi and Jennings point out later in their classic work. The research reported on here, derived as it is from a snap-shot style questionnaire of political attitudes of young people at a given moment, is not the longitudinal study necessary to demonstrate real persistence. However, as Jennings and Niemi indicate, not demonstrating persistence need not trouble us. This research will be successful if it demonstrates that young people have been influenced by the popular culture at some time in their lives, just as it will be a success if it demonstrates that young people are currently being influenced by the popular culture.

Inglehart's work concerning the shift to post-materialism in industrial society is important for this work because it helps explain how the young conceive of politics, how they define political ideology, and what political issues expressed in the popular culture

they disagree with and/or are influenced by. It is not, however, a theory from which the hypotheses I test are derived. Rather, it is a useful framework for helping shed light on why young people might perceive politics in the personalistic and individualistic ways the data seem to indicate that they do. It may help us explain levels of patriotism and nationalism felt by young people. It may assist us in explaining increased attention to environmental and other supranational concerns. It may explain why young people conceive of politics as related with how individuals make moral choices, rather than how collectives make public choices. It may shed light on the origins of the importance of “lifestyle liberalism” and “culture wars” issues among the young.

Agents of Socialization

Having examined some broader theoretical works, I will now examine works in socialization that outline the effects of various agents. I will start with the family, which not surprisingly, is one of the most studied aspects of the sub-field. Early socialization research tended to overstate the importance of the family. Dawson (1966), Hyman (1959) and Levin (1963) present the role of parents as both a mediator between child and society and as a powerful influence on enduring values of children. Of course, early empirical research found similarities between children and parents’ ideology, partisanship and issue positions. (Sigal, 1970) However, the pioneering work by Jennings and Niemi calls much of this into question. Jennings and Niemi (1991) find a weak correlation between parents’ and children’s ideology, and that these correlations decline noticeably as children age. Liebes and Ribak find that families that follow a pluralistic pattern of communication are more likely to induce political participation from the children, as

measured by media use, political knowledge and participation in political conversations. Beck and Jennings (1991) argue that highly politicized families have higher parent/child correlations. Acock and Bengston (1978) find differences between mothers' and father's abilities to transmit political beliefs to children, partly based on the policy areas of the beliefs. Dash (1992) confirms the existence of differential influences between mothers and fathers. Weintraub-Austin and Nelson (1993) find that family communication patterns influence the use and interpretation of the political media, and that these differences move along ethnic lines as well, with Hispanics and Native Americans participating less frequently in political communication. Tedin (1980, 152) finds that parents are more important than peers on ideology and issue position choices. However, on some issues (e.g. marijuana use laws) peers are more influential.

Moore et al. (1985) argue that early childhood learning of political values involves influence by parents and the mass media. Therefore, both of these ought to be considered agents of socialization. Greenstein (1965, 66-70), however, argues that before the age of about ten years, children are incapable of ideological thought. Jennings (1974) finds that children do not learn party imagery from their parents because *neither* parents nor children are very adept at differentiating between the parties. Knutson (1974), however, finds evidence for what she calls "pre-political ideologies" in children as young as third graders.

Schools have been considered as agents of socialization as well. Hess and Torney (1967, 101) believe "the public school appears to be the most important and effective instrument of political socialization in the United States." Ehman (1980), in a long review of literature considering the influence of schools, makes several important

distinctions. First, the influence of the school is not unitary. This is because the school experience is not one experience, but many experiences occurring simultaneously under one roof. Ehman differentiates between classroom attributes, such as textbooks and other media, instructional processes and programs and school-level attributes, such as school governance and organized activities, peer interactions, school organization attributes, and size, financial support and demographic characteristics of the student population (p. 100). The school curriculum transmits political knowledge, but not attitudes; classroom climate, student participation in school activities, and school organizational climate influence student political attitudes. Muller et al. (1987, 27) find that education is a threshold variable that helps explain the additive model of classical participatory democratic theory (that citizens become more supportive of the norms of democracy as they increase their participation in the democratic system). However, these findings were supported only by data from a general sample of the public in New York City and were not confirmed by the author's data from Turkey and Costa Rica.

Anecdotally, Seefeldt (1989) argues that mindless recital of the pledge of allegiance in the schools is indoctrination, and not education, and that socialization of a critical variety ought to occur in the schools. Indirectly, Berti (1988) demonstrates the potential significance of the school on the recognition of politics among children. In her study she demonstrates that children between the ages of six and seven years "do not pay any attention to the collective needs which arise when a large group of people live together in the same area." (p. 443) She believes that these findings support a cognitive-development approach to political socialization. Nevertheless, her research begs the question about what influences might cause the differences she recognizes. Due to the

ages she studies (six- to fifteen-year olds), the school appears as a logical answer, because children spend an overwhelming majority of waking hours for months at a time in that environment. Knowles (1993) argues, with respect to children's reactions to the U.S. war with Iraq in 1991, "the public school served as an important agent of socialization...as a source not only for information but for the development of patriotic attitudes." (p. 21) Television, she asserted, was the major source of information about the war.

Some have suggested the importance of the church on the acquisition and development of political values among American youth. Huckfeldt et al. (1993, 377) drew three conclusions concerning the influence of the parish on attitudes toward abortion: attendance in pro-choice or pro-life parishes related to increases in those respective attitudes; those who attend pro-life parishes regularly were more likely to have pro-life attitudes; and those who attend infrequently were more likely to have pro-choice attitudes if they belong to pro-life parishes. Owen et al. (1988, 545) demonstrated a similar relationship among Protestants when they showed that the theological climate of a congregation contributes significantly to the members' political conservatism, controlling for personal commitment to traditional Christian values and other significant political attitudes.

In a more traditional vein, Peterson (1992) found some support for the "spillover effect." That is, participation in the running of one's church positively correlates with political participation outside the church. Moreover, he also finds support for the claim that church involvement "is more apt to produce Republican and conservative identification among whites, fundamentalists, and females," but "it seems that church

participation has somewhat less pronounced political consequences for blacks.” (p. 133-137)

The news media have been considered as agents of socialization as well. Early studies asserted that mass media were secondary agents of socialization that merely reinforced existing views (Klapper, 1960; Gerbner, 1960). Chafee et al. (1970) supported the view of Greenstein’s that children do not really have ideological or political views before a certain age, so there is nothing for the media to reinforce. Children may acquire information from news media (see Conway et al., 1981), but it is less clear what impact the media has. According to early research, boys and girls prefer different content: “girls like music and non-conflictual themes, while boys prefer adventure and action fantasy content.” (Roberts, 1973). Conway et al. (1981) also find that newsmedia use among children positively correlates with political knowledge, and Delli Carpini and Keeter (1994) find similar results among adults. Newhagen and Reeves (1992) find that respondents remember television news, based in part on the degree of negatively compelling images and sounds. Burriss (1987) finds that as the complexity of a story increases, the ability to recall the story declines; and as story complexity decreases, positive evaluations of the story increase. Graber (1990, 153) finds that the pictures shown during television news broadcasts expand knowledge of the human aspects of stories, but that pictures do not increase knowledge for stories that defy illustration. Robinson and Davis (1990) find that television news viewing actually corresponds with lower levels of comprehension of issues.

According to Valentino and Sears (1998), “the dominant models of mass media effects emphasize agenda-setting, priming, and framing effects.” All three of these

concepts, “assume a potent role for standing pre-dispositions.” According to Entman (1993), “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text.” For Iyengar (1991), framing can be either “thematic” or “episodic,” and that generally the episodic framing of issues makes location of responsibility more difficult for citizens. McCombs and Shaw (1972) define agenda setting as media-control over what people think about, but not necessarily control over what people think. They demonstrate the existence of agenda setting through correlations between content of newspaper reports of the 1968 campaign and survey data about what issues people considered important. Shaw and Martin (1992), in a follow-up to the previous study add controls for race, class, gender and education. They find that increased newspaper reading results in less variation of opinion within categories of these demographic variables, and smaller differences of opinion across categories. Increased television viewing results in less variation of opinion within categories as well. Pan, Ostman, Moy and Reynolds (1994) demonstrate through comparison of samples before and after the Persian Gulf War that exposure to newspaper, CNN and PBS coverage of the war led to higher levels of knowledge about the war. Watching CNN reduced differences in knowledge about the war between persons with different levels of education. Watching network news correlated with increased image-oriented information, while cable coverage correlated with learning abstract information about the war.

Just as interesting as who watches the news is the question of who does not. Not surprisingly, Poindexter (1980, 64) demonstrates that the young avoid the news, adults with larger incomes and more education are less likely to watch local news, while those

with smaller incomes and less education are less likely to view network news. Finally, Page, Shapiro and Dempsey (1987) demonstrate that the content of network television news generates a high proportion of overall change that occurs in the public's policy preferences. Particularly influential are news commentators (e.g., John Chancellor, David Brinkley and so on), experts (retired generals who moved the public against SALT II) and popular presidents.

Sears and Valentino (1997, 46) argue that a well socialized person is one who holds "well-informed, crystallized attitudes toward the important political objects of the day." Presidential campaigns, which the public experiences primarily through the media, "provide unusually intensive political communication both interpersonally and through the mass media." (p. 59). Such campaigns do lead to large changes in attitudes toward major candidates and parties, but the increases last only during the campaign. The authors (Valentino and Sears, 1998) extend these findings by showing that children who experience the most political communication during campaigns experience the greatest gains in socialization.

Bennett (1999) argues that television has been unfairly blamed for the decline in political participation and the withdrawal of public confidence from governing institutions. He argues that "television, while an important political force, has been put in the wrong place in 'declinist' causal schemes of ... politics...(P)olitical uses and abuses of television are as much a response to, as they are primary causes of, societal breakdown, individual isolation, and generalized discontent with politics." (p. 758)

There has been relatively little study of the popular media as agents of socialization. Meyer (1976) argues that the situation comedy *All in the Family* reinforces

political attitudes among adults, but the moral/ethical lessons of the show have no impact on children. Miller and Reeves (1976) show that television characters help shape children's sex-role perceptions. Boys select aggressive characters to emulate, while women choose characters based on their physical attractiveness. The authors contend however that increased exposure to counter-stereotypical characters causes modifications in real sex-role perceptions. Baran (1976) demonstrates that young people who perceive characters on television as sexually more capable than themselves and experiencing more enjoyment report less satisfaction with their own initial coital experiences. Those who enjoyed their first sex perceived as accurate the portrayal of sex on television.

Fluck (1987) argues that much of the interpretation of the popular media's influence errs on either the side of overestimating its manipulating and indoctrinating effects, or errs on the side of the media's ability to meet the legitimate needs of the user. Cundy (1990) finds that television advertising by candidates and feature reports on candidates have an influence on viewers' preferences even with very limited exposure. Lenart and McGraw (1989) demonstrate that those who watched a television miniseries depicting the consequences of a takeover of the United States by an enemy state were more hawk-like in their foreign policy attitudes than those who had not viewed the series.

Roberts (1997) demonstrates that MTV's *Choose or Lose* and *Rock the Vote* campaigns had little influence on voter registration levels, actual votes of young people, partisanship, or ideology. Her findings clearly contradict the expectations of the non-academic press (Hammer and Wolfberg, 1992). Gerbner et al. (1984) demonstrate that those who watch more television (both news and entertainment) are more likely to identify themselves as political moderates and to avoid the extremes of the ideological

spectrum. Bennett and Ferrell (1987) argue that music videos teach fundamental values to young people that they then draw upon when making ethical and political decisions. Smaragdi (1983, 198) demonstrates that television watching by children does not impede family life, isolate children from peers, or hinder enjoyment of preferred leisure activities. Neuman (1982) finds that television has a homogenizing effect on viewers. Controlling for education, he finds respondents' analytic and interpretive responses to entertainment television to be the same. Potter and Ware (1989) find that there are 20.2 pro-social acts per hour of prime-time TV. Pro-social acts are rewards given to characters for positive behavior. Selnow (1986) shows that in most entertainment programming problems are presented as solvable in short time-spans by hard work, truth, righteousness and ingenuity. Fictional women find solutions to romantic dilemmas, while men find aggressive solutions to problems. Morgan (1984) finds that watching more entertainment television correlates with a negative perception of the quality of one's life. High-use viewers are less likely than lower use viewers to rate their life as "great." (p. 503)

Popular music has been considered as an agent of socialization as well. An important scientific study is Schwartz and Mannella's 1972 work. They are concerned with young people's perceptions of the political content of popular music and the correlations of these perceptions with self-reported ideology and issue positions. Their data were derived from a survey of 610 suburban New Jersey high school students. They find that a sizeable proportion of teenagers perceive that their favorite music contains political statements or ideas. Teenagers who are more extensively and emotionally involved with music are more likely to perceive it as political. Socio-economic status has

no effect on this perception. Perceiving favorite music as political also is positively related to political interest, attentiveness to politics, and negatively associated with political alienation.

Pratt (1990) conducted a lyrical analysis of popular music. He argues that it affords listeners a means of resisting the messages of the dominant culture. Scheurer (1991), on the other hand, utilizing lyrical analysis as well, reaches the opposite conclusion. He argues that popular music in America has served to reaffirm the mythical understanding of America as a land of good and plenty. Bernard-Donals (1994), relying on the theories of Andrew Ross, argues that as older forms of music (specifically rap, rock 'n' roll and jazz) move from the margins to become more popular, others arise to threaten and replace them on the margins as the voice of subversion. He further argues that the academy (and especially left-leaning intellectuals) should examine critically the music on the margins, and not merely dismiss or lionize it.

Of the various forms of music that might impact young people, rap appears to be the most thoroughly studied, but most of this research has not been done by political scientists. Zillmann et al. (1995) find that after exposure to radical political rap, white high school students gave more support to a hypothetical African-American, liberal candidate for public office than to a white anti-affirmative action candidate. The radical rap had no detectable influence on African American students, and the authors report that, "rap – radical rap, in particular – appears to be a momentary, fleeting delight for African-American audiences." (p. 21) These are counter-intuitive findings, to say the least. It is almost standard to assume that African American students will prefer radical rap to non-political rap (the reverse is true) and will be motivated politically by it (they

do not appear to be). It is nearly standard to assume that white students will be turned off by radical messages in rap music, while based on the research just reported the opposite appears to be true. We still have much to learn about the political significance of rap.

Johnson et al. (1995) find that African American males aged 11 to 16 years exposed to violent rap videos indicated a greater acceptance of violence and a higher probability of engaging in violence compared to those exposed to non-violent videos. Moreover, the subjects exposed to the violent videos in a decision simulation expressed greater acceptance of violence toward women, and were more likely to want to emulate a materialistic young man than one trying to get an education. These findings are consistent with recent arguments about young men, low social standing and proclivities toward crime and violence (Wrangham and Peterson, 1996; Ghiglieri, 1999). Boyd (1994) has analyzed the lyrics of rappers Public Enemy, Sister Souljah, Ice Cube, KRS-One and Arrested Development. These rappers display a great concern about misogyny, racism, a lack of self-respect and control among some in the African American community, police violence, and placing blame on the white community for problems in the African-American community.

Some recent anecdotal evidence has examined the political significance of other types of popular music. Bindas (1993) analyzes the lyrics of the English punk band the Clash. This band in the middle-1970s reacted to the narcissistic remains of the 1960s idealistic and revolutionary counter-cultural spirit with a working-class derived ideology of “freedom, equality, opportunity, an end to imperialism, and a recognition of cultural pluralism.” (p. 78) Thompson (1993) shows that not only was there still a great deal of politics in the lyrics of popular music after the turbulent ‘60s, but that performers were

increasingly putting their politics into practice. Examples include concerts for the Labour Party and against racism in Britain, and the global *Live Aid* phenomenon.

Through a review of dozens of recordings from the Folkways record label, Goldsmith (1996) demonstrates that American folk music has often carried political themes. Leymarie (1993), while mentioning the increasing political content of popular Western music, considers that certain kinds of music (not lyrics) may engender violence and other social pathologies. The jury, she indicates, remains out. Thompson (1993) argues that pop music and politics are related; however, his examination of liberation bands who rejected the right-wing governments of the 1980s in the Western democracies is hardly systematic. Perkinson's (1996) interview with Emily Saliers and Amy Ray of the alternative rock act the Indigo Girls demonstrates their commitment to liberal causes and their belief in activism and educating their fans about political matters. Oumano (1996) asserts that most popular music, "aspires no further than accommodating itself to the world in which it lives. Rather than acting as an agent for progressive change, American pop music reflects and, in some cases, even promotes the cynicism of our huckster society" (p. 79). However, she then cites numerous counter-examples, like Amy Ray, Rage Against the Machine, Ani DiFranco and Billy Bragg. Hendrickson (1997) makes a similar point in an interview with the members of Rage Against the Machine. Clearly, there is still a lot of politics in popular music.

Some other agents of socialization that have been examined include political cartoons, children's literature, and third party presidential candidates. Medhurst and Desousa (1981) argue that before we can consider political cartoons' persuasive effect, we have to create a taxonomy of categories into which the form fits. This they do by

examining 749 cartoons from the 1980 presidential campaign. In terms of children's literature, Marshall shows that children's literature and television depicts leaders frequently. Leaders are shown as being competent, not constrained by the institutions with which they interact, and also benevolent (1981, 396-397). Cook (1982, 333) rejects Marshall's argument that children's literature always presents leaders as omnipotent by pointing out that L. Frank Baum and Dr. Seuss show leaders as distinctly fallible. Koch (1997) demonstrates that those supporting third party candidates become less efficacious and more distrustful of government.

Research Methods

Methodologically, the studies of political socialization have been very diverse. The two most common approaches are content analysis and survey research. Much of the media research focuses on the content of popular culture. If research identifies political content, the possibility exists that such content influences young people's political attitudes, even though the research may not demonstrate it directly. Survey and questionnaire research looks at correlations as indicators of the similarities between the political orientations of agents of socialization and those of youths, but is susceptible to criticism as well. Correlations do not establish causality. For example, if white youths who like rap music can be shown to be more progressive and less racist than their counterparts, how do we know that the beliefs are caused by the music preference and not vice versa? That is, perhaps there is some common cause of youth preferences for rap music and progressive views – such as African American friends. Further, other potential causal variables must be accounted for and controlled. Nevertheless, survey research is

superior to content analysis because it does observe the political orientations of youth, rather than just inferring them. Although we can determine that the entertainment media and performers express political views, to assess influence we also show that young listeners are exposed to the message. Plainly, a combination of the two methods will produce the most convincing findings.

My analysis of the influence of popular culture on youths will be based upon data from a questionnaire distributed to classes of American government students at two large public universities. The questionnaire was distributed to Introduction to American Government courses at Bowling Green State University in the Fall of 1997. It was administered to Introduction to American Government classes at Wayne State University in the Fall of 1997 and again in the winter of 1998. All of the classes in which the questionnaire was administered were mass lecture courses taught by other instructors. Altogether, 732 individuals completed the questionnaire. For a number of reasons, 23 of these will not be analyzed. First, six of the questionnaires were incomplete; not enough questions were answered to merit consideration. Ten of the questionnaires were completed by individuals well past the age where questions about youth socialization make sense. For the purposes of this research, respondents over the age of 30 were deleted. Finally, seven of the questionnaires were completed by foreign students. This dissertation is about youth political socialization in the United States and therefore these cases were deleted as well. Therefore the total sample is 709, although many tables will have a significantly lower n.

Table 1.1 (A-F) shows what the sample looks like in terms of age, class rank, race, sex, and university.

Table 1.1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents
to Political Socialization Questionnaire

A. Age

Years	Percent
17	3.5
18	39.5
19	27.5
20	14.7
21	6.2
22	2.8
23	1.6
24	0.7
25	0.7
26-30	1.7
Missing	1.1
Totals	100.0 (n=709)

B. Class Rank

Rank	Percent
Frosh	51.8
Sophomore	29.5
Junior	13.3
Senior	3.1
Missing	2.4
Totals	100.0 (n=709)

Table 1.1 Continued***C. Family Income***

Range	Percent
Under \$20,000	6.8
\$20,000-\$49,999	27.2
\$50,000-\$74,999	30.0
\$75,000-\$99,999	13.7
\$100,000 or more	13.5
Missing	8.7
Total	100.0 (n=709)

D. Race

Category	Percent
African American	21.7
White	65.0
Other	10.3
Missing	3.0
Totals	100.0 (n=709)

E. Sex

Category	Percent
Male	39.9
Female	59.2
Not Answered	0.8
Totals	100.0 (n=709)

F. University**Percent**

Bowling Green State University	30.5
Wayne State University	69.5
Totals	100.0 (n=709)

The survey included questions about television, music and movie use (including quantity of time spent with each medium, and favorite performers and productions); political attitudes of the respondent and their perceptions of their parents' political attitudes; the respondents' perceptions of the political attitudes of favorite pop stars; and various issue positions. The questions were a mixture of open-ended and closed-ended items. See Appendix 1 for complete text of the questionnaire.

In analyzing responses to the survey I will use marginals, cross-tabulations, and a variety of multivariate methods such as regression analysis and logistic regression. To ascertain the statistical significance of relationships, I set alpha, the largest acceptable probability of a Type I Error, to .10. While this may seem high, the exploratory nature of this research requires greater latitude in terms of significance so that important relationships are not missed.

CHAPTER 2

CULTURE WARS, THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA, LEARNING THEORY AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

The review of previous research in political socialization, media studies and public opinion demonstrates a number of important points. First, political socialization research has declined in terms of quantity in the past twenty years. The main reason for this is that a consensus exists that the family, peers, school, church and news-media exhaust the important agents of socialization. This consensus, however, has failed to solve the puzzle of how children acquire and hold political values. The glaring lack of research by political scientists on the entertainment media as possible agents of socialization clearly leaves a fundamental gap in knowledge relevant to that puzzle.

My conversations with students in classes and other settings and my review of the responses of students to open-ended survey questions demonstrate that young people today think about politics in ways that traditional political science terminology does not account for. As myriad scholars, politicians and demagogues have argued, to use an old but apt metaphor, there is a culture war occurring in the U.S. (see Gitlin, 1997). The war occurs on many fronts, but primarily it is a battle for the hearts and minds of American youths over competing positions on a wide variety of issues including abortion, homosexuality, violence, women's role, drug use, promiscuity, single parenting, and many other related issues. Conservatives tend to believe that permissive attitudes on these issues are prevalent in the entertainment media. For example, a great deal of rap music is concerned with threatening violence to others, expressing one's sexual prowess, or extolling the virtues of a life drunk on malt liquor or high on drugs. Daytime soap

operas on television have long been filled with pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex and all sorts of sexual shenanigans. Recently a new genre of night-time soap operas has grown, and because children are assumed to be in bed when they are broadcast, they are often more explicit than their daytime equivalents. They are also phenomenally popular with young audiences.

Moreover, several recent episodes of television situation comedies and dramas have drawn the ire of (primarily conservative) critics. None was more controversial than when the character played by comedian Ellen announced her homosexuality during an episode of her eponymous program. Gay rights activists lauded the actress's and network's courage for airing the episode. Conservative critics and fundamentalist Christian organizations attacked the network. Not surprisingly, the episode received the show's highest ratings, but nonetheless it was subsequently cancelled. Degeneres asserted that this was because the network perceived the program as "too gay."

Movies also have included controversial content. As always, the greatest concern about movies is the effect that screen violence might have on behavior and beliefs of youths. An example is the deaths and injuries to young people who imitated a stunt from the football movie *The Program*. The strong public belief that too much screen violence desensitizes young people to actual violence suggests that concern over movies will not disappear. The massacre by two students of 15 others at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado which was an act of hate, revenge and madness, seemed to confirm the potential explosive interaction that can occur when disturbed youths have ready access to firearms and are exposed to a popular culture that portrays violence as a solution to life's problems. Moreover the sexual content of movies worries conservative

critics as well.

The internet worries conservatives too. With the relative ease of access to violence and pornography, many believe that young people's values will be perverted by use of the internet. Some call for censorship, or at least the use of filtering software in public libraries to prevent young people from accessing this allegedly dangerous material.

I will argue that "culture wars" issues are important to young people generally, and especially among the young who are deeply engaged the popular culture. Of course the young are not homogeneous, except for their age. Different elements of the popular culture suggest to them competing sets of values by which to live their lives. We can frame these issues in the old left/right, or liberal/conservative framework when the popular culture frames them this way. However, it seldom does. Usually the conflicts presented in the popular culture are between hedonism on the one hand, and delayed gratification on the other. Religion is presented as the source of problems, or the solution. Sexual intercourse is either presented as a recreational activity to enjoy with many partners, or monogamy, children and long-term relationships are endorsed. Class distinctions are criticized or blurred, or the continuation of hierarchy is endorsed. Traditional authority is ridiculed and institutions are mocked, or the authorities and institutions are supported. The individual's needs and desires are paramount, or the community's needs are lionized. The popular culture emphasizes individual rights, or responsibility trumps individualism. These are the distinctions that define the culture wars. The popular culture presents messages that fit on each side of these continua. In this research I examine whether these messages have any effect on young people.

In examining this linkage of the popular media to the culture wars, I will rely ,

when they are helpful, the three models of continuity and change presented by Niemi and Jennings, as well Inglehart's theory of the culture shift to post-materialism.

At the individual level, I argue that learning theory helps explain the influence of entertainment media on young people's political values. Learning theory begins with Thorndike's law of effect (see Skinner, 1974). The law of effect describes operant learning, whereby behavior is shaped and maintained by its consequences. Behavior that is rewarded tends to increase in frequency, while that which is punished tends to decrease in frequency and may eventually disappear. Contingencies in the social environment determine whether a particular behavior is rewarded or punished.

Agents of socialization (parents, schools, churches, peers, news and entertainment media) have some degree of control over the contingencies of reinforcement to which youths are subjected. Both commonality and conflicts of interest occur between agents of socialization and youths. A young person may experience either rewards or punishments through experience with the popular culture. One could witness a behavior in a movie, television program, or song that is the product of the existence (or lack) of an ethical/moral system. If the message contradicts the individual's pre-existing ethical/moral beliefs that is an unpleasant experience and thus constitutes negative reinforcement. The individual thereafter avoids repeating the unpleasant experience by avoiding contexts or the products(s) of the popular culture that led to the unpleasant experience. On the other hand, should other components of the social environment (e.g. peers) provide positive reinforcement for initially unpleasant experiences, the individual's ethical and moral beliefs might change over time. If the message of the popular culture agrees with the young person's, this is pleasure, and thus positive

reinforcement of the individual's beliefs. It is the pushing and pulling of these various experiences on a youth's initial values that result either in a hardening of those values or a change in values.

The literature on political socialization has not drawn upon theory from the field of social biology. This theory, however, may be especially relevant to understanding potential limits to the influence of parents on children. Children are not blank slates. Under ordinary circumstances they can be expected to be partly susceptible but also partly resistant to parental efforts at shaping their beliefs and behavior. In general, a parent and child both share a common interest in the child's success and welfare. However, there may be conflicts of interest as well since the parent may have other children or the ability to have and raise additional children, whereas the child has less interest than the parent in these efforts directed toward its siblings, and more interest in itself (Trivers, 1974). Parental manipulation of children generally should be directed at getting them to cooperate more with their siblings than they are inclined to do. It should also be directed at encouraging children to engage in activities that will lead over time to the children becoming successful in having and raising children of their own.

In contemporary American society it is easy to identify the things that lead over time to children becoming successful in this sense (Essock-Vitale and McGuire, 1988; Buss, 1995). For women, the correlates are marriage, age at first marriage (younger is better), physical attractiveness, marriage to a man of high social standing, and no promiscuity. For men, the correlates are marriage, younger age of wife, number of wives, and education and economic resources. Thus parents ought to reinforce what are generally referred to as "traditional" or "conservative" values. Girls ought not to be

promiscuous, should marry young to men with money, and should focus on their physical appearance. Men, on the other hand, ought to be encouraged to achieve financial success and to marry and provide for a young, attractive woman.

To what extent do parents actually instruct children on appropriate models of behavior? Lakoff (1996) has identified two polar models of parenting—the strict parent and the nurturing parent. The strict parent model is controlling and establishes clear-cut contingencies of reinforcement by making frequent and predictable use of rewards and punishments. As a strategy of socialization, it is designed to prepare children for entry into a world where success depends upon individual achievement. Such a society is characterized by authority, hierarchy, and absolute values and standards. The nurturing parent model is less controlling, protects children from clear-cut dangers, but relies less on parentally created contingencies and more upon contingencies of reinforcement in the larger social world to shape children's behavior. As a strategy of socialization, it is designed to prepare children for entry into a world where success is defined by personal happiness and the nurturing relationships that are established with others.

The problems that parents experience today in raising children may be greater than in prior decades. What if contingencies of reinforcement in the larger social world work at cross-purposes to the goals of parents? That is, the entertainment media are driven by the profit motive. Hollywood makes money when it sells large numbers of tickets. Record companies make money when they sell CD's. Television studios make money when they produce hit programs that get high ratings and command top dollar for advertising. Quite often, however, the most effective way for the popular media to attract youths is to depict behaviors that at least initially are highly pleasurable -- promiscuous

sex, drugs, and general hedonism. The popular media, however, frequently depict these behaviors as without terribly negative consequences. In effect, the entertainment media tell youths that their parents and other agents of socialization have lied to them, or are wrong about the negative consequences of these behaviors. Thus, in many cases we expect a competition for influence of young people between parents, the church, the school and other traditional agents of socialization on one hand, and much of the popular media on the other. In other words, there is a war for the hearts and minds of young Americans.

Do youths actually recognize and believe the messages of the entertainment media? A youth successfully influenced by the strict parent model (conservative youths), may disregard the messages out of hand because they have never been reinforced by parents (and the church and school which were likely selected for the child by the family) and are unlikely to be reinforced by them. This should be the group that is finding much to object to in the entertainment media. They probably find the contingencies depicted in movies, on television, or in music to be a fantasy; and they will turn away from these entertainment media. Moreover they might reject these messages and actively oppose them, and perhaps even find their conservatism hardened by limited exposure to them.

On the other hand, such youths may change their own values after repeated exposure to these messages. This is especially true if the youths lose connections to other traditional agents of socialization, as often happens in college. If youths are removed from the influence of parentally arranged contingencies (especially the strict father) as well as the K-12 schools and the church, continued exposure by such youths to the entertainment media may result in rapid changes in their attitudes and behaviors due to

changing contingencies of reinforcement. A youth can avoid unpleasant experiences with the values in the popular media by avoiding the popular media, or less likely, changing his values. Thus we expect the greatest change in youths' values in the years immediately after they move away from home for the first time.

A youth brought up under the nurturing parent model has probably learned by trial and error experience which messages in the entertainment media to accept and which to reject. They are better able to assign relative weights to parental messages and those of other agents of socialization, and to make informed choices. It is unclear in what direction the entertainment media should be expected to influence these youths. It is likely their pre-existing values will be reinforced, but change is more likely for them than for conservatives raised by strict parents.

Unfortunately the questionnaire does not offer a direct measure of home political environment. However, I do measure youths' perceptions of the political ideology of their parents, which is utilized as a surrogate for their perceptions of their parents' social conservatism.

A troubling phenomenon in recent decades has been the growth in the numbers of single parent families, commonly headed by women. There is ample scientific evidence that single parents on average do a worse job of raising children, using a variety of outcome measures. There are even some two-parent families where there is minimal parenting in the traditional sense. A youth raised with minimal parenting and not subjected to parentally arranged contingencies of reinforcement, may not see through the fantasy of the messages, be reinforced by them, and think that they are valid.

Lakoff's basic argument is simple enough. Conservatives and liberals have

adopted different perspectives with respect to the family and how children should be raised. Conservatives favor the strict father model. Liberals favor the nurturing model. These family values are carried over by metaphor (nation as family) to politics. The bulk of the entertainment media supply little or no reinforcement for the strict parent model of the family. Generally, the popular culture makes fun of it. Even a cursory scan of popular movies, television or song shows that the culture is replete with bumbling fathers, relativistic morals and ethics, and promiscuous sex from both genders. Moreover the entertainment industry seems generally to support homosexuality and other forms of identity politics. Further, those who attempt to promote an absolutist or traditionally conservative ethic are maligned as either out of touch with the times, or just plain mean.

Therefore I suspect some relationships between previous socialization and family model in which it occurred and response to popular culture. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey are between the ages of 17 and 22. Thus they are in some ways at the end of the socialization process as youths. Our measures attempt to investigate the various influences that have influenced and continue to impact their choices about political values and issue positions. Because of the general opposition of the popular culture to the conservative strict parent ethic, I suspect individuals successfully socialized under such a model (conservatives) will be the least influenced by the popular culture and the more likely to reject the messages in it. Young liberals, those raised in the nurturing parent model especially, may in fact be more likely to be influenced by the popular culture and less likely to reject the messages of that culture out of hand.

There is a tacit assumption in this theory that must be discussed. This dissertation

is based on a survey of 709 university students enrolled in introductory level political science courses. Thus almost all of them are between the ages of 17 and 22 years. Thus their responses to the questions are a snapshot of people at a fairly late stage of the socialization process. It is difficult in such a context to witness all the influences that may have contributed to each individual's political values. However that is exactly what the analysis in this dissertation attempts to do by determining the respondents' perceptions of their parents' politics, which schools they attended, their socio-economic class, race, gender, religion, news media use habits, and of course use of the entertainment media.

Because this is not a longitudinal study, I cannot with certainty say which influences were more important at earlier stages of development. I must therefore take the respondents as I find them: capable of accurately reporting some of what influenced them; entirely oblivious of other influences. Thus the model of socialization assumes that young people's political values are relatively well-founded by the time they begin using large amounts of self-selected entertainment media. The young people approach the media with pre-existing values formed by the traditional agents of socialization. However these values were likely influenced by early use of entertainment media as well, especially television and theatrical movies viewed at home on the VCR, the least restricted of the popular media.

This research cannot directly account for the early influence of entertainment media, and it need not do so to demonstrate that the media has an effect. However, it is clear that early exposure to the entertainment media has an effect on children. There are messages in the media of which the younger children may not be consciously aware that

still influence their political values. The Disney movie *The Lion King* endorses hierarchy, patriarchy and monarchy. Would a six year old recognize this? In all likelihood not. However, the message may still influence the child. *Sesame Street* consciously attempts to teach children more than mathematics and the alphabet. It attempts to teach multiculturalism and tolerance. Do young children recognize this? Certainly not. Are they influenced by it? Almost certainly. The Spice Girls made a direct effort to teach young girls self-respect and self-confidence. Because a young girl chanting a chorus of "If you want to be my lover/first you have to be my friend" does not consciously know that she's increasing her self-esteem does not mean it is not occurring.

To make a long story short, when youths responded to the questionnaire their political values likely were well formed. Moreover, the encounters with the popular culture they remember are very recent and very conscious. We have simplified their values into two rough categories: conservatives formed by strict fathers and liberals formed by nurturing families. Much of the dissertation seeks to determine what effect the relatively liberal content of the entertainment media has on these two distinctive groups of young people. therefore, one group that deserves some special attention then is young people who rate themselves as more liberal than both of their parents.

Who is Becoming More Liberal than Their Parents?

Some youths are more liberal than their parents, while some are more conservative. Of course some hold the same ideology as their parents. The popular media present messages that are generally liberal, especially in terms of lifestyles issues. Therefore I would hypothesize that the young people who are more liberal than their

parents are the most likely to have been positively influenced in this choice by the entertainment media. I measure ideology on a seven-point scale. Categories here are collapsed in the following manner: 1 and 2 and 3 are liberal; 4 is moderate, while 5, 6 and 7 are conservative. Respondents are asked to identify each parent's ideology on the same scale. Those who are both liberal *and* more liberal than both parents are the group in which I am most interested. These include youths who locate themselves on the liberal end of the scale and both parents at either the moderate position or at the conservative end of the scale, and youths who locate themselves at the moderate position and both parents at the conservative end of the scale. Table 2.1 shows the location of youths in relation to their parents.

Table 2.1
Relationship between Ideology of Youths and Parents

	Percent	n
Youths More Liberal than Parents	15.1	107
Youths Not More Liberal than Parents	84.9	602
Totals	100.0	709

Clearly most youths are not more liberal than parents. However a substantial proportion are, and there is a sufficient n to look for differences between those who are more liberal than their parents and those who are not.

Are there differences related to sex, race and age? There is no relationship between sex and being more liberal than both parents. Whites are significantly more likely than blacks to be more liberal than their parents.

I would expect that those who are more liberal than both parents are older than those who are not. This is because with age comes opportunity for other agents of

Table 2.2
Race and More Liberal than Parents

	Black	White	Hispanic	Other	Totals
Not More Liberal	90.9%	81.7%	87.0%	87.7%	84.6%
More Liberal	9.1%	18.3%	13.0%	12.3%	15.4%
Totals	100.0% (n=154)	100.0% (n=438)	100.0% (n=23)	100.0% (n=73)	100.0% (n=688)

socialization to have an impact. Table 2.3 demonstrates the results.

Table 2.3
Age and More Liberal Than Parents

	Age		Totals
	1-19 Years	20 Year or More	
Youths More Liberal Than Parents	14.4% (72)	16.9% (34)	15.1% (108)
Youths Not More Lib. Than Parents	85.6% (428)	83.1% (167)	84.9% (583)
Totals	100.0% (500)	100.0% (201)	100.0% (701)

Chi-Square (1) = .060, Sig. = .807

The younger category of youths is slightly less likely to be more liberal than the older category. The difference however is not statistically significant. The entertainment media may be a factor in determining if young people are more liberal than their parents. I will explore this possibility in each of the chapters that follow.

Does university attended make a difference? I would hypothesize that Bowling Green state University students are more likely to be more liberal than both parents because the overwhelming majority of them do not live at home, while the overwhelming

majority of Wayne State University Students commute and thus are more likely to live at home. Table 2.4 shows the results.

Table 2.4
University and More Liberal than parents

	University		Totals
	Bowling Green	Wayne State	
Not More Liberal	80.6%	86.8%	84.9%
More Liberal	19.4%	13.2%	15.1%
Totals	100.0% (n=216)	100.0% (n=493)	100.0% (n=709)

Chi-Square (1)= 4.593, Sig. (two-tailed) = .032

Clearly B.G. students are more likely than W.S.U. students to be more liberal than their parents. However, it is easier for B.G. students to be more liberal because parents of B.G. students are more conservative than W.S.U. parents. Perhaps however, B.G. students become more liberal than their parents because as residents of the university they are removed from parentally arranged contingencies of reinforcement of conservative values.

CHAPTER 3

THE INFLUENCE OF MOVIES ON POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

In this chapter I will examine the influence of movies on the acquisition of political values and knowledge among American youth. For a number of reasons I expect movies to be the least influential aspect of popular entertainment in terms of political socialization. First, with the exception of major blockbusters, most viewers see movies only once. Thus, there is not repeated exposure, which should increase the influence of an agent. Also, movies are a fairly complicated genre. There may be more than one message in any film, and viewers may fail to identify and interpret multiple messages. This is not to suggest that movies do not influence young people's political values; it's just that their influence is more problematic than for television or popular music.

Regarding the influence of movies, we must think again about the nature of the socialization processes. Such processes involve learning that is both conscious and unconscious. It is not necessary that young people be aware of political messages in movies in order for learning to occur. We cannot reasonably expect young people to tell us everything they learned from a movie and expect to get a complete accounting. Some things they will remember and talk about, other things they will not.

What children learn about politics from movies depends on what movies they watch and at what age they watch them. The movies that young children attend often do not contain overt and obvious political content (e.g. *Home Alone*), or if they do that content emphasizes timeless themes such as good versus evil, hierarchy and authority, and monarchy (e.g. *The Lion King*). When children are old enough to take an interest in

and attend movies with actual, obvious political content, some of these movies may be R-rated and youths may not attend these before the age of 18 without accompaniment by a parent or guardian. Many theatres enforce this restriction rigorously. Thus, when youths do get exposure to movies with actual or fictional political content, they are often old enough to have a base of political knowledge, ideology, values, and issue positions derived from not only the traditional agents of socialization, but exposure to other entertainment media as well.

Youths comprise a large percentage of movie-goers, and major studios cater to the youth market. Major studios routinely produce and release movies that appeal to this market because their profits depend heavily upon getting youths to attend these movies.

What movie themes are likely to attract youths? Youths are not adults, but of course they can be expected to display a strong interest in movies with adult themes. They are particularly interested in the pleasures of life that are seemingly readily available to adults but denied to them because of their age, lack of resources, and immaturity. Thus, at least in American culture, there is apparently a ready audience among youths for movies with themes and characters that are linked to socially taboo and mostly adult behaviors: promiscuous sex, illegal drug use, violence, vulgar language, and hedonism. Youths therefore routinely try to acquire and watch X rated movies; they prefer R rated and PG-13 movies and avoid movies rated G as too childish.

Most importantly, movies sometimes depict these behaviors as if they did not have negative consequences, or as if the negative consequences are just a normal part of growing up and maturing. Movies indirectly tell youths that their parents and other agents of socialization are wrong and have even lied about the negative consequences of

these behaviors. Thus, movies may compete directly with parents, the church, the school, and other traditional agents of socialization for the attention of youths and, ultimately, influence over youths' values.

A youth successfully influenced by the strict parent model (conservative youths), may disregard or actively oppose the messages of movies because parents and agents such as the church and school which were likely selected for the child by the family, have never reinforced them. I expect this to be the group who finds much to object to in the political messages of movies.

Once such youths are removed from the influence of parents and these other agents, however, their continued exposure to movies may result in rapid and large changes in their attitudes and behaviors due to changing contingencies of reinforcement. Thus I would expect great changes in youths raised in conservative homes in the years immediately after they move away from home for the first time. Unfortunately, we do not have direct measures of whether youths live at home or on their own.

A youth raised under the nurturing parent model has probably learned by trial and error from his/her own experiences which messages to accept and which to reject. They are better able to assign relative weights to parental messages and those of other agents of socialization. They may be positively reinforced, if they pay attention at all.

More perniciously, youths raised with minimal parenting may not see through the fantasy of the messages, be reinforced by them, and think that they are valid. It is these youths who may experience the greatest influence from watching movies.

In summary, the impact of movies should depend on whether their messages support or challenge the young person's pre-existing political beliefs. When a movie

endorses a youth's pre-existing political belief, that belief should become stronger due to positive reinforcement. When a movie challenges a youth's pre-existing political belief, that belief should become weaker, due to negative reinforcement. Most important is the pattern or schedule of reinforcement. Regular or consistent reinforcement (i.e., always watching movies that endorse pre-existing political beliefs) strengthens those beliefs, but does not make them more durable should regular or consistent reinforcement stop. On the other hand, irregular reinforcement (i.e., mostly watching movies that endorse pre-existing political beliefs, but sometimes watching movies that do not) tends also to make beliefs more durable. Thus, youths whose pre-existing political beliefs have already been subjected to a variable history of reinforcement (some positive, some negative) are likely to hold more durable views and be less affected by any single movie going experience. Any account based on learning theory should examine differential movie-going experiences and the extent to which they are based on race, ideology, class and gender. For example, some youths may not have been exposed at all or very much to particular types of movies; others have had great exposure. These are the sorts of issues my research is designed to shed light upon.

Movie Exposure

An agent of socialization cannot have influence unless individuals are exposed to it. Do young people watch movies? If they do not, then the political content of the movies will not matter.

Based on my data, there can be little doubt that young people watch many movies. When asked to mention their favorite movies and those they have seen recently and liked,

502 movies were mentioned. When asked to name their favorite movie, there were 588 responses; only 121 (21%) either could not remember or did not have a favorite. Of movies mentioned as favorite, no film attracted more than 2.5 percent support; that movie was *Titanic*, a very recent release. The favorites of one percent or more of respondents are indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Favorite Movies^a

Movie	Valid Percent ⁺
Titanic	3.2
Friday	2.9
Top Gun	2.9
Braveheart	2.4
Shawshank Redemption	2.4
Dirty Dancing	1.9
Star Wars	1.9
A Time to Kill	1.5
Jerry Maguire	1.5
Pulp Fiction	1.5
Rock	1.5
Color Purple	1.4
Scarface	1.4
Happy Gilmore	1.2
Pretty Woman	1.2
Forrest Gump	1.0
Ghost	1.0
Soul Food	1.0
Other	68.2
Total	100.0 (n=588)

^aQuestion: What is the name of your favorite movie?

The table shows that with respect to choice of favorite movie, there is some diversity. Of 588 responses 18 movies account for only 31.8 percent of the responses. These movies are each mainstream, Hollywood films. Film critics decry this situation,

criticizing a mono-culture of blockbuster films laden with special effects, thin plots and idiotic dialogue. More interesting and risky independent films do not stand a chance at becoming popular since “trash” is all that young people ever see.

Movies are often thought to be windows to the greater world, but in this regard Hollywood often fails. As Table 3.1 shows, most young people are not exposed to foreign and non-Hollywood American films which have different perspectives on economic, social and political matters, and presumably have a broadening/liberalizing effect on those who view them. In regard to foreign films in particular, there is at least a potential of becoming familiar with and more sympathetic to values that do not resonate in the United States.

There is a large amount of movie-watching by young viewers. This by itself should increase the likelihood that movies have a socializing impact. Also, young people are watching basically the same movies, even though their favorites differ. This increases the likelihood of a common socializing effect. It is worthwhile to examine the content of the 18 films that are the favorite of almost one third of the respondents for politically significant content.

Many of these films contain political content, using both the common definitions of the political, and the culture wars themes developed above. *Titanic* focuses on the delights of romantic love and how the memories of it can transcend time and tragedy. The movie suggests that women should marry for love instead of for money. Individuals from the upper echelons of society are arrogant snobs who look down upon the working class, who are genuine and fun-loving. *Friday*, which stars rapper Ice-Cube, is about the marijuana fueled misadventures of two young African American men in an inner-city

neighborhood. The film is significant because African American actors, a director, and a production team controlled it. Moreover, the film presents a fairly tame and humor-filled version of life in the city, rather than the more common hard-edged presentation.

Top Gun glorifies the exploits of Air Force fighter pilots, while simultaneously suggesting that individuals must sometimes defy rules to achieve both individual and collective success. *Braveheart* glorifies nationalism through the story of Robert the Bruce and the struggle for Scottish independence from England. Rulers are presented as Machiavellian tyrants who rob others and use coercion to get what they want. They crush resistance mercilessly, and are only removed from power by charismatic, courageous and larger-than-life heroes. *The Shawshank Redemption* links criminal punishment, race, and class. The movie is the story of a friendship between a rich white prisoner and an African American, both serving life-sentences. Mostly, though, it is about the dignity and worth of the individual. *Dirty Dancing*, despite the title, is about more than dancing. It too is about tolerance, in this case of the romantic relationship between a wealthy Jewish girl and a Gentile of low social status. *Star Wars*, on the other hand, is an allegory of total war reminiscent of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War conflict. It also encourages tolerance of different races and cultures, and suggests that evil has nothing to do with physical appearances. Women are the equals of men and also can be action heroes.

A Time to Kill tells the story of the murder trial of a black man who kills the white men who raped his ten year old daughter. It explores issues of racism, the influence of the Klan even in the reformed South, and the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. *Jerry Maguire*, despite its ubiquitous line "show me the money!" is a morality play about the importance of principle, love, and honor even if they cost you money.

The Rock is an action thriller whose plot is in no small measure driven by true government conspiracies, and requires its heroes to break into Alcatraz to prevent a poison gas attack on San Francisco. *The Color Purple* explores the complex relationships of a black woman growing up in the rural South at the turn of the century. This woman, named Celie, defies tragedy (twice impregnated by her father and trapped in a hateful marriage where her husband's lover lives with the couple) and affirms the joy of life. *Scarface* tells the story of a Cuban refugee who becomes a very successful drug dealer in Miami. The title character comes to America after Castro opens his prisons and sends the convicts to the United States. *Happy Gilmore* is a comedy about an ex-hockey player who becomes a professional golfer but is unable to shed his violent hockey habits. Because of the excessive product placement, some critics contend the film was actually little more than advertisement. *Pretty Woman* is about the sweet romance that grows between a prostitute and a corporate raider. Both characters are unhappy with their careers, and their romance teaches the lesson of transcendent love.

Forrest Gump reinforces the American myth that determination, honesty and a bit of luck can overcome all odds. *Ghost* is a morality play as well wherein a murdered man returns to his widow to protect her from forces of evil in the world which eventually receive their divine retribution for their awful acts. *Soul Food* is the story of a large extended African American family in Chicago. The film was noted for great performances by its African American cast. Also, a number of critics also were pleased with the kinds of problems the characters in the film faced (middle class family trouble) rather than the standard fare Hollywood black families face (drugs, crime, teenagers running amuck).

What do these brief plot summaries tell us? To be sure, Hollywood films do emphasize the traditional American values of individualism and equal opportunity (even if films emphasize the extent to which society falls short and is hypocritical). More tellingly, many of Hollywood films' political messages are liberal or at least tolerant. In a general way they endorse tolerance of alternative lifestyles, other races and ethnicities, and ethical relativism. The effect of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

A movie that does not have obvious political content, but is nonetheless significant for this research, is *Pulp Fiction*. In this film, directed by Quentin Tarantino, racial epithets and many other obscenities are used so frequently that at first the average viewer is stunned, but eventually adjusts to it. Moreover, the high levels of violence, and the way it is portrayed have raised the ire of movie and social critics. The violence is stylized and graphic, and couched in clever and strange dialogue. The slaughter of human beings by other human beings is approached with equanimity. This film would raise the hackles of those upset with the direction of American culture. The film's defenders would disagree that they intended this effect; however many people saw the film as reinforcing the idea that stylized violence is an end in itself and is acceptable. Thus, the refusal to judge is seen by some as acceptance. Some saw the film as just unnecessarily violent, and more likely to desensitize young American to violence, rather than to disgust and disturb them and turn them against it. Many saw the film as racist because of its characters' frequent use of racial slurs. Rightly or wrongly, many conservative critics saw this film as the quintessential example of what is wrong with immoral Hollywood today. I will return to these themes later in this chapter when I examine what young people think about these movies.

Movies and Perceptions of Political Messages

Young people obviously see many films. Do they perceive any political messages in the movies they see? The capacity of young people to discern a political message in a movie and agree or disagree with it suggests the extent to which they are conscious of, influenced by, or resistant to attempts by Hollywood to shape their political views. When asked if they have ever disagreed with the political message of a movie, 59.4 percent answered yes. Table 3.2 shows the frequency and types of messages with which they disagreed.

Table 3.2
Messages of Movies With Which Respondents Disagreed^a

Theme	Percent
Pro-Violence	17.9
Pro White Racism against Blacks	8.5
Pro-Premarital Sex	
Promiscuity, Nudity	7.7
Pro Black Racism against Whites	7.7
Anti-religion	5.1
Pro-Homosexual Rights	5.1
Pro-Drugs	4.3
Anti Capital Punishment	3.4
Pro-Traditional Roles for Women	2.6
Racial Problems, General	2.6
Unpatriotic to U.S. Gov't	2.6
Against Women's Rights	1.7
Patriotic to U.S. Gov't	1.7
Pro Stereotypes of Arabs	1.7
Pro Stereotypes of Latinos	1.7
Pro-Women's Rights	1.7
Pro Stereotypes of the Irish	0.9
Anti-Capitalism	0.9
Anti-Individualism	0.9
Pro-Materialism	0.9
Can't Be Coded	20.5
Totals	100.0

(n=117)

^aQuestion: If you have ever disagreed with the message of a movie and can remember the name of the movie please write it in the space provided and briefly explain why you disagreed with the message.

The most frequently mentioned concerns are violence, racism, and sexuality.

Based on these responses it is clear that young people not only watch many movies, but are aware of their political content and frequently disagree with it. Moreover, they are concerned with the lifestyle, culture wars issues mentioned in chapter two. When young people think of politics they seem to frame politics in moralistic terms. They view moral choices as political choices as well. I hypothesize, therefore, that conservatives and the religious would be more likely to disagree with the message of a movie, especially with the portrayal of sexuality and violence. Conservatives and the religious typically oppose promiscuity, sex without marriage, divorce and graphic presentations of sex.

Conservatives and the religious usually disapprove of violence in films as well. Violence violates a basic tenet of Christian theology in favor of “turning the other cheek” and “doing unto others...” Moreover, conservatives support law and order. They disapprove of violent crime, and endorse harsh retribution for those who commit violent crimes.

Who is more likely to disagree with the message of a film? I hypothesize that more conservative youths as gauged by their church attendance and political ideology will be more likely to disagree. Table 3.3 shows the relationship between church attendance and disagreement with the message of a movie. Church attendance is measured on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never attends services) to 5 (attends services more than once per week).

As the table shows, there is no statistically significant relationship between church attendance and disagreeing with the message of a movie. Interestingly, those who attend monthly are more likely to disagree than those who attend at any other level. There is no obvious explanation for this.

Table 3.3
Church Attendance and Movie Message

Have disagreed with Message of a movie:	Church Attendance					Totals
	Never	Few a Year	Monthly	Weekly	>Weekly	
No	46%	56%	39%	52%	50%	50%
Yes	54%	44%	61%	48%	50%	50%
Totals	100% (n=13)	100% (n=36)	100% (n=23)	100% (n=27)	100% (n=12)	100% (n=111)

Chi-square (4) =1.636, sig. (two-tailed)=.802

Table 3.4 shows the relationship between political ideology and disagreement with the message of a film. Political ideology is measured on a standard 7-point scale ranging from 1 (extremely liberal) to 7 (extremely conservative). Liberals are those who rate themselves 1, 2, or 3; moderates are 4; and conservatives rate themselves 5, 6, or 7. As the table shows, conservatives are the most likely to disagree with the message of a movie. This is as expected. Moderates are the least likely, and this is as expected as well. However, these differences are not statistically significant at the .10 level.

Table 3.4
Ideology and Movie Message

Have disagreed with Message of a movie:	Ideology			Totals
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	
No	37.8%	42.3%	32.9%	38.5%
Yes	62.2%	57.7%	67.1%	61.5%
Totals	100.0% (n=233)	100.0% (n=272)	100.0% (n=152)	100.0% (n=657)

Chi-Square(2) = 3.710, sig. (two-tailed)=.156

What impact do race and sex have on reactions to the movies' political messages?

With regard to sex, I would hypothesize that young women, because of the common portrayal of violence against women in movies, would be more likely to disagree with the message of a film. Table 3.5 shows the relationship. Contrary to my hypothesis, men are more likely to have disagreed with the message of a movie than are women. Whereas 66% of men disagreed with the message of a film, only 58% of women did and the difference is significant.

The finding with regard to sex may seem puzzling. Although movie violence is often directed at women, they are no more likely to disagree with the violent content of movies than men. I speculate that young men viewing violence against women in movies are disturbed by a stereotypical portrayal of young men as sexual predators, while young women are inclined to assign greater credibility to the stereotype. Moreover, there are other messages in films – including promiscuous but strong female characters – with which women may not be inclined to disagree

Table 3.5
Sex and Disagreement with Movies

Message:	Sex:		Totals
	Male	Female	
Have Not Disagreed	34%	42%	39%
Have Disagreed	66%	58%	61%
Totals	100% (n=276)	100% (n=404)	100% (n=680)

Chi-Square (1) = 3.922, sig. (two-tailed) = .048

With regard to race, I would hypothesize that because racism and violence disproportionately impact blacks, African American youths would be more likely to disagree with the political content of a movie. Table 3.8 shows, again contrary to my hypothesis, that African Americans are not more likely than other races to disagree with the message of a movie. Whereas 52% of blacks report having disagreed with the message of a film, 64% of whites do. Moreover, 76% of Hispanics report disagreeing with the message of a movie, while 61% of those who classify themselves as other disagree. It remains unclear why whites are so much more likely to disagree with the message of a movie. There are no significant relationships between being white and specific messages disagreed with such as violence, promiscuity, or racism. Perhaps the greater conservatism of whites is the reason. Because of the small sample size it is difficult to determine why Hispanics are so likely to disagree with the message of a movie, although I would hypothesize it is mainly because of stereotyping of Latinos.

Table 3.6
Race and Disagreement with Movies

Message:	Race:				Totals
	Black	White	Hispanic	Other	
Have Not Disagreed	48%	36%	24%	39%	39%
Have Disagreed	52%	64%	76%	61%	61%
Totals	100% (n=150)	100% (n=425)	100% (n=21)	100% (n=70)	100% (n=666)

Chi-Square (3) = 8.744, sig. (two-tailed) = .033

What about racist messages in movies? With respect to the negative cultural stereotypes of African Americans, blacks are much more likely to have disagreed with this content than are whites. As Table 3.7 indicates, blacks are three times as likely as whites to have disagreed with the racist message of a movie. Although the difference here is not statistically significant, the direction of the relationship suggests that when the message of a movie hits closer to home for particular racial groups, members of these groups are more likely to disapprove.

Table 3.7
Race and Disagreement with Racist Messages in Movies

	Race		Totals
	Black	White	
Racist Messages			
Have Disagreed	3%	1%	1%
Have Not Disagreed	97%	99%	99%
Totals	100% (n=154)	100% (n=533)	100% (n=687)

Chi-Square (1) = 1.804, sig. (two-tailed) = .179

These findings indicate that young people watch many movies and think about the political and culture wars issues presented in films. Among the various characteristics of youths, race and sex are most linked with disagreement/non-disagreement with the messages of movies, but in a direction opposite of that which might be expected. However, ideology is not statistically significant, but conservatives are more likely to disagree.

The messages young people disagree with in the movies can be categorized by their ideological perspectives. A liberal would disagree with depictions of violence,

racism, traditional roles for women, and so on. A conservative would disagree with anti-religion, pro-homosexuality, and support for premarital sex, promiscuity and nudity. Of course, some youths have never disagreed. A good test of the theory of socialization and learning that informs this dissertation is to examine the ideological perspective of the messages of movies disagreed with by youths. The following table represents the distribution of ideological perspectives taken against movies.

Table 3.8
Ideological Orientation of Objections to Movies

Perspective	Percent	n
Liberal	7.8	53
Neutral	0.4	3
Conservative	5.0	34
Have Not Disagreed	38.7	264
Disagreed/Didn't Say Why	44.7	305
Disagreed/Unclear Reason	3.5	24
Totals	100.0	683

Clearly, disagreeers who would not say why are the plurality, with liberal perspectives second and conservative third. However, the interesting test is the relationship between youths' self-reported ideologies and the ideological perspective of disagreement. Again liberals are those who rate themselves 1, 2, or 3 on the seven point scale; moderates are those who rate themselves as 4; conservatives are those who rate themselves 5, 6, or 7. I hypothesize that *conservatives will be more likely to voice conservative objections than liberals will voice liberal objections; furthermore liberals will be more likely than conservatives never to have disagreed*. The notion here is that conservatives are taught to reject the indecent messages of the popular culture, whereas

liberals are taught the value of tolerance. Limited exposure of conservatives to the entertainment media likely render more durable their pre-existing conservatism, whereas liberals are taught to take in as many influences as possible and sort them out using their own standards. Table 3.9 shows the relationship between self-reported ideology and the ideological perspective of disagreement with movies.

Table 3.9
Ideology and Orientation
Of Disagreement with Movies

Perspective:	Ideology (Lib. = 1, 2, or 3 on scale; Mod. = 4; Cons. = 5, 6, or 7)			Totals
	Liberal	Moderate	Conserv.	
Liberal	10.7% (25)	5.5% (15)	6.6% (10)	7.6% (50)
Conservative	3.0% (7)	2.6% (7)	12.5% (19)	5.0% (33)
Never Disagreed	37.8% (88)	42.3% (115)	33.6% (51)	38.7% (254)
Disagreed/Didn't Say Why or Undefineable	47.6% (111)	49.6% (135)	46.7% (71)	48.2% (317)
Totals	100.0% (233)	100.0% (272)	100.0% (152)	100.0% (654)

Chi-Square (6) = 29.034, sig. (two-tailed) = .000

Conservatives are slightly more likely to disagree with the movies from the conservative perspective than liberals are to disagree from the liberal perspective. This is as expected. Also, liberals are a bit more likely than conservatives never to have

disagreed with the message of a movie, which also is as expected. This demonstrates the existence of a disaffected group of conservatives who disagree with messages in movies and become hardened in their conservatism by exposure to messages with which they disagree, and a group of liberals who are more selective and can take or leave the messages of movies.

Political Knowledge

What is the relationship between movie use and political knowledge? I measure political knowledge by asking respondents to identify the office or political position held by a number of political figures in the American political system. The easiest to name is Al Gore, whom 91.4% correctly identify as the Vice-President. On the other extreme is Stephen Yokich, an important political figure in Michigan and Ohio, whom only 2.3% correctly identify as the President of the United Automobile Workers union. Summing the number of correct responses creates an additive index of political knowledge where 0 indicates none identified correctly, and 11, where all were identified correctly. The following table presents the distribution.

Table 3.10
Political Knowledge

Number Correct	Percent
0 – 2	16.8
3 – 5	56.4
6 – 8	25.0
9 – 11	1.9
	(n=697)
Mean	4.30
Std. Dev.	1.99

Are movies a source of information concerning the political system?

Alternatively, perhaps they are a source of misinformation. I would hypothesize that those who spend more time with movies should have a higher level of political knowledge than others. This is indeed the case. My only measure of frequency of movie use is indirect. Does the respondent have a favorite movie? If they do, then I presume that they are a more frequent movie viewer than if they do not. Those who remember and report their favorite movie have a mean political knowledge score of 4.35, while those who do not have a score of 4.09. The difference, however, is not significant (sig. one-tailed = .116).

Are respondents who have disagreed with the message of a movie more knowledgeable about politics? I would hypothesize that they are because disagreeing with the message indicates not only seeing the movie but actually paying attention to its content. This appears to be the case. Those who have disagreed with the message of a film have a mean political knowledge score of 4.41, while those who have not disagreed have a mean score of 4.23. The difference is not significant at the .10 level (sig. one-tailed = .135).

The Influence of Actors

Movie actors often take political stands outside their artistic work. For example, Bruce Willis is well known to be a conservative Republican, as is Arnold Schwarzenegger. Well known Democrats and liberals include many of the acting Baldwin family, Whoopi Goldberg, Robert Redford and so on. Perhaps stars influence their young fans to take positions similar to their own. This is a very difficult matter to

examine scientifically. For one thing, all we can measure with certainty is young people's perceptions of the ideology and issue positions of actors, not their actual positions. To the extent that there is a degree of consensus among young people about an actor's ideology, we can take that consensus position as the actor's actual position. The best approach may be the simplest, since it results in the smallest error. The actors' true position will be presumed to be the mean value of young people's perceptions of that actor. In the survey, I asked respondents to rate several actors and musicians on the seven-point ideology scale.

Table 3.11 indicates the mean perception of the ideologies for several famous movie actors. *Arnold* is Arnold Schwarzenegger, the star of primarily action films and a well-known Republican; *Carrey* is Jim Carrey, one of the most popular comedic actors in America today and whose ideology is not well publicized; *Willis* is Bruce Willis, an action film actor and Republican; and *Smith* is Will Smith, an African American comedic and serious actor who does not advertise his ideology. As the table shows, the mean values correspond to the presumed reality. Arnold Schwarzenegger is perceived as the most conservative, with Bruce Willis a close second. Jim Carrey is perceived as leaning toward liberal which may be a measure of respondents' general perceptions of Hollywood. Finally, Will Smith is rated as the most liberal. This may be more a measure of white respondents' perceptions of the politics of African Americans than Smith's actual ideology.

Table 3.11
Perception of Ideologies of Actors

Means	Mean	n	Std. Dev.
Arnold	4.43	488	1.46
Carrey	2.85	468	1.49
Willis	3.37	464	1.56
Smith	2.93	491	1.31

In the next step, I determined the relationships between stars' ideologies and young people's ideologies using correlational analysis. Since the data are ordinal, I use tau-b. Interestingly, as Table 3.12 shows, there are several correlations between self-reported ideology and the ideology of stars. Whereas correlations between parents' and young person's ideology are large and significant, those between the ideology of three of the four actors and young person's ideology are smaller, but significant, suggesting the possibility of influence.

When whites and African Americans are examined separately, there are a number of interesting results. For whites, only the correlations with mothers and fathers remain large. When we examine blacks, all the actors except Schwarzenegger have sizeable and positive coefficients. What does this mean? Are blacks more likely than whites to be influenced by the actual ideology of stars? Or are they simply more inclined to project their own ideology onto the star, assuming that the star holds the same ideology that they do? The different signs on the correlations for two conservative actors (negative for Arnold and positive for Willis) reflect inconsistency and suggest projection – that is, among blacks, Willis is the more popular actor.

One way to sort out the relative influence of parents and movie actors is to compare respondents' self-placing on the 7-point ideology scale with each parent and

Table 3.12
Correlations between Respondent Ideology and Ideology of Actors and Parents

	(All Respondents)		(Whites Only)		(Blacks Only)	
	Tau-b	Sig. (2-tail)	Tau-b	Sig. (2-tail)	Tau-b	Sig. (2-tail)
Arnold	-.006	.880	.044	.350	-.101	.220
Carrey	.072	.058	.055	.263	.148	.072
Smith	.135	.000	.049	.315	.311	.000
Willis	.098	.009	.082	.096	.257	.002
Momideol	.458	.000	.404	.000	.573	.000
Dadideol	.369	.000	.327	.000	.405	.000

with several actors. Then absolute distances between self and parents can be measured, and from self and the actors. An interesting and relevant finding would be if there are any respondents who place themselves closer to the actors than either parent. If so, it is at least possible that for some youths, actors are a greater influence over ideology than are parents. Table 3.13 indicates the results of this analysis.

Table 3.13
Youths Ideological Positioning
Relative to Mother and Various Actors

Arnold Schwarzenegger:	Whites	Blacks
Youths Closer to Mother Than Arnold S.	46.8%	58.5%
Youths Closer to Arnold S. Than Mother	20.9%	13.0%
Jim Carrey:		
Youths Closer to Mother Than Jim Carrey	52.4%	49.5%
Youths Closer to Jim Carrey Than Mother	23.2%	21.6%
Will Smith:		
Youths Closer to Mother Than Will Smith	47.2%	41.4%
Youths Closer to Will Smith Than Mother	24.0%	21.2%
Bruce Willis:		
Youths Closer to Mother Than Bruce Willis	40.5%	46.3%
Youths Closer to Bruce Willis Than Mother	28.5%	18.1%

As the table indicates, 20.9 percent of white youths and 13.0 percent of blacks place themselves closer to Arnold Schwarzenegger than their own mothers. About 23.2 percent of whites place themselves closer to Jim Carrey than mom, while 21.6 percent of blacks do so. Interestingly, 24 percent of white youths put themselves closer to Will Smith than mother, while only 21.2 percent of black youths put themselves in this position. Finally, a whopping 28.5 percent of white youths put themselves closer to Bruce Willis than their mother, while 18.1 percent of blacks are closer to Willis than mom. Some interesting trends are evident here. First, the actor who has the most white youths closer to him than mother is Bruce Willis, while Jim Carrey takes top honors for African Americans, although Will Smith, an African American, is a close second. The lack of political statements by both actors suggests projection.

Also, in every case fewer African Americans place themselves closer to the actors than do whites. Blacks and whites are most nearly equal in terms of closeness to Jim Carrey relative to their mothers, and are the furthest apart concerning Bruce Willis. This finding makes sense in that Jim Carrey is not known for his political positions while Bruce Willis is a known conservative.

Movies and Becoming More Liberal than Parents

What about the influence of movies in promoting greater liberalism among youth? Are those likely to be more disagreeable toward the messages of movies more liberal than both parents? I would hypothesize that this is the case because those who are more liberal than both parents probably support free speech and artistic expression over their concern with the negative messages of films with the message of a film than those who

are not more liberal than their parents. Those who have not disagreed with the message of a movie, however, are no more likely to be more liberal than both parents than those who have.

Unfortunately the measure of movie use in the data set is incomplete. Because there was no question on the survey that asked how many movies a respondent watched per week, the only measure is indirect. If a respondent remembers the name of his or her favorite movie that indicates higher use of movies than those who do not. I would hypothesize that those who watch more movies are more likely to be more liberal than both parents. This hypothesis is based on the general expectation that if a young person has become more liberal than parents, some other agent of socialization must have been at work: the popular culture. Those who remember their favorite movie are more likely to be more liberal than both parents. As Table 3.14 shows, a higher percentage of those youths able to remember a favorite movie were more liberal than both parents than those youths who were not able to remember a movie.

Table 3.14
Movie Use and More Liberal than Parents^a

	Don't Remember Movie	Remember Movie	Totals
Not More Liberal	90.9%	83.7%	84.9%
More Liberal	9.1%	16.3%	15.1%
Totals	100.0% (n=121)	100.0% (n=588)	100.0% (n=709)

Chi-Square (1) = 4.100, Sig. (two-tailed) = .043

^aQuestion: What is the name of your favorite movie?

Summary

There are some interesting findings from this examination of movies. Moreover, the data inspire some speculation as well. First, young people do watch movies. The movies they watch are Hollywood blockbusters. There are many young people who have disagreed with the message of a film who see a clash between the values portrayed on the screen and their own values. Movies, it would seem, reinforce the pre-existing values of youths raised in liberal home environments, generating greater tolerance among those already inclined to support that message; however, among youths raised in conservative home environments, they probably harden conservative views among those already inclined to support such positions.

Youths who are social conservatives are often repelled by the messages they witness in films, and they either oppose them or disregard them. Although they watch movies and detect political messages, they reject them. They have well-founded political opinions on life-style, culture wars issues. When those beliefs are challenged by movies they recoil against the film, and harden their attitudes. Thus their pre-existing attitudes are actually made more durable by messages that are *contradictory* to their values. Perhaps these youths will change their minds after more repeated exposure and exposure to the same messages from other agents of popular culture, combined with distancing from parents and the church.

Youths raised in a nurturing home are probably more likely to have experienced conflicting values in their contact with various agents of political socialization. They may be less impacted by the message of a movie. For example, young women have had opportunity to observe adult women in all kinds of social roles (e.g. homemaker, career

woman) both in real life and fictively and so may be less disturbed than men at women's non-traditional portrayal in movies. It is young men who are most threatened by these portrayals because they see non-traditional women as a threat.

Also, movie use correlates with youths' being more liberal than parents. Those who remember their favorite movie – thus indicating greater movie use – are more likely to be more liberal than those who do not to be more liberal than their parents.

Finally, it is interesting to think again about the relative ideological placements. That a number of youths, both black and white, are willing to place themselves ideologically closer to some actors than their mother might tell us a number of things. First, it might mean that they are projecting their ideology onto the actors. Undoubtedly in some cases this is the case. However, it might mean that many parents realize their children will confront a smorgasbord of ethical and political choices and that it is important that they be able to make their own choices. Some might call this weak parenting. At a younger age youths more closely identify with their parents, but as they move away from home and K-12 schools and perhaps even the church, other agents of socialization (like the movies) step in to replace the traditional ones. Of course, a longitudinal study is needed to study changes in relative influence of different agents of socialization as youths grow older. It is clear that parental influence wanes, but it is much less clear what influences replace the influence of parents.

CHAPTER 4

THE INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION ON POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Does watching entertainment television influence the political attitudes, values and knowledge of American youth? This chapter explores that possibility. For several reasons it is likely that television programs and personalities will have more of an influence on the political attitudes, values and knowledge of American youth than movies. First, the literature review in chapter one demonstrates that the news media have a profound influence on socialization. If the television news has an effect, I expect that entertainment programming and personalities should have a similar effect, because they are similar in appearance and content. Second, young people watch more entertainment programming than they watch the news. Respondents to my questionnaire report watching the news on television an average of 3.8 days per week, while 49.8 percent report watching more than 2 hours per day of entertainment television.

Third, both television news and entertainment programming often present compellingly realistic political and moral situations to viewers. In this way they both act at least as catalysts for thinking about important political issues. Both kinds of programming often choose one side over another in political controversies, and try to influence their viewers to choose that side. Moreover, if news commentators have as much influence as the literature review in chapter one indicates they do, then it is not unreasonable to suspect that television actors, either in their personal statements or performances, sometimes try to influence the public's beliefs and are occasionally successful.

Fourth, unlike most movies, television programs (sometimes even specific episodes) are viewed repeatedly. Viewers come to know the characters and the actors who perform on their favorite programs. Frequency of contact is traditionally thought to improve the chances of an agent's having an impact, which is why parents and schools are the most significant agents of socialization. From the simplest propaganda models to more sophisticated theories of influence and learning, scholars agree that repetition of even flagrantly false or controversial messages can cause individuals to believe in them. Certainly entertainment television programming's structure lends itself to this possibility. Also, since entertainment programming is fiction, viewers are relaxed and inclined to suspend their suspicions, lending greater credibility to political messages than the same message would possess if presented on the news, where viewers retain their skepticism.

Finally, television entertainment programming often contains both overt and less obvious political messages. Famously, the writers of *Murphy Brown* had their main character decide to have a child out of wedlock, leading to criticism from then Vice-President Dan Quayle. The characters on the program then responded to Quayle's criticism. *N.Y.P.D. Blue* frequently explores issues of police behavior, criminal justice, and racism. These examples (and there are hundreds of others) show that entertainment television is not in its entirety devoid of political messages. Politics, especially politics broadly defined in the way in which contemporary youth define the term, frequently occur on entertainment television. The question remains, however, whether or not youths are influenced by the political content of entertainment television. The first step in investigating this possibility is to examine consumption patterns.

Do Youths Watch Entertainment Television?

A necessary condition for influence by television programming is that young people watch it. What programs do young people view? Even more than with movies, there are relatively few programs that attract the bulk of young people's attention. When asked to name their favorite program, there were 587 responses. Twelve programs attracted support from two percent or more of the respondents. Table 4.1 indicates which programs these were, and the percentage of youths naming them.

Table 4.1
Favorite Television Programs^a

Program	Percent
Seinfeld	10.9
E.R.	9.9
Party of Five	6.5
Beverly Hills 90210	4.9
Simpsons	4.8
Sportscenter	4.3
Friends	3.1
South Park	2.7
Martin	2.7
Days of Our Lives	2.4
Home Improvement	2.4
New York Undercover	2.2
Other	43.2
Totals	100.0
	(n=587)

^aQuestion: What is the name of your favorite TV program?

The top twelve programs account for almost sixty percent of favorite programs. As with movies, this indicates the existence of a mono-culture. Despite the proliferation of cable channels with additional programming choices, the favorite programs of young people remain the relatively mainstream, traditional broadcast network programs (even

though these programs may be viewed through cable, they are still provided by the major networks). Cable might attract niche audiences for its programs (*Sportscenter* and *South Park* are the only cable network programs mentioned), but by and large it appears that young people are attracted to network programming. This should not be glossed over because it tells us something about the television industry, its young audience, and the media-based socialization process. Despite the prevalence of new and often cable-only networks and programming, the major network products remain the most popular. Perhaps, smaller audiences view the cable programs and are influenced by them, but this individual influence cannot be detected by the data in this research.

Political Content of Entertainment Television

As with movies, a number of the preferred programs have had politically oriented episodes recently, especially if the term political includes the personal moral choices individuals make. *Party of Five*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Friends*, and *Days of Our Lives* present characters for whom promiscuity is a normal part of life. A number of critics (and respondents to my questionnaire) find such characterizations and behavior reprehensible. Not only do these programs present promiscuity as normal, they also present a relativistic ethics and morality.

Two satirical cartoons deserve mention. *The Simpsons* and *South Park* are both programs that are critical of nearly every aspect of American politics, culture, economics, religion and so on. These programs also often attack bigotry, homophobia, and most forms of authority. Because they are cartoons their messages may not be taken seriously; nevertheless, when George Bush was president, he called for a return to the days when

the family was "a lot more like the Waltons and a lot less like the Simpsons." (*The Hartford Courant*, August 26, 1992, Section A, Pg. a2) Of course, Bart Simpson got the best of President Bush when he remarked, "Hey, we're just like the Waltons. We're praying for an end to the Depression too."

Interestingly, *Martin* is the only predominantly African American program mentioned. Its existence is politically significant as it typifies and to a degree led the trend in recent years of increasing numbers of African American oriented television programs. I would argue that *Seinfeld* is often politically significant as well in that the show presents working class characters consistently in the most unfavorable light. It also makes comedy of personal behavior that most in American society would deem to be reprehensible. For example, George, a main character, openly rejoiced when his fiance died because it saved him the embarrassment of breaking off the engagement. *New York Undercover*, like most police dramas, generally presents police officers in a favorable light.

Home Improvement presents an unrealistic picture of suburban Detroit bliss, made possible implicitly by the income that Tim, the main character, derives from his star role on a home repair program on cable television. And no matter how often or how severely Tim hurts his wife, kids or friends with hare-brained handyman schemes, his wife always forgives him even though he refuses to change his ways. Thus wives are portrayed as complacent and submissive in direct contrast to feminist ideals. Such a portrayal would not make it onto prime-time if Tim were not mocked and therefore viewed as comedic. *Sportscenter* and other sports oriented programs distract individuals from politics. Team sports mimic warfare and some argue that they teach irrational attitudes of submission to

authority. Finally, *E.R.*, a hospital drama, consistently deals with controversial issues in large cities like AIDS and privacy, budget cuts at public hospitals, race relations, urban violence and so on.

Political Influence of Entertainment Television: Theory

Since the inception of television, scholars have debated whether or not this medium can perform any socially valuable function. Perhaps the most interesting recent perspective on this issue comes from Neil Postman in his work *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Postman argues that television cannot educate people, but that it can still perform a socially useful function by doing what it does best: presenting eye-candy and fluff entertainment. He argues that because television is a visual medium it is foolish to expect it to present logical arguments, for which the linear written word is best suited. Postman does not mean this argument cynically. In limited doses he believes there is nothing wrong with accepting that television can only entertain, not educate. He believes we ought to enjoy fun programming and not expect so much of the medium.

Now, of course, this is not the prevailing belief of government or entertainment executives, especially regarding cable programming. *The History Channel*, *Arts and Entertainment*, and *C-Span* are just a few of the public and for-profit networks whose creators believe that television can educate, inform, and perhaps persuade. If Postman is right then these channels cannot perform these functions, even if people view them regularly. My data indicate that with respect to youths not even that is occurring.

This does not preclude the possibility of political influence by entertainment programming, however. Postman merely argues that sustained, intelligent argument is

impossible through television. This does not mean that individuals' attitudes, beliefs and actions cannot be shaped by television. Otherwise, why would companies spend tens of billions of dollars per year on Madison Avenue trying to influence what products Americans think they need? Because intelligent argument is not possible does not mean that less rational processes of influence are not at work.

The Political Influence of Exposure to Entertainment Television

Researchers can identify political content of entertainment television and demonstrate a relationship between such content and the political orientations of viewers. There are two ways to determine the political content of entertainment television. Researchers can watch the programs rated as favorites (or the programs that consistently score the best in the ratings) and rank their political content on standard scales. Or, we can ask young people their perceptions of the politics of the popular culture they view and then compare those perceptions with self-reported attitudes, hopefully controlling for other influences like parents, news media use, schools, race, class gender and so on. I believe the latter method is superior because it is perceptions that motivate people, not necessarily objective reality. For example, if three social scientists agree that an episode of *Seinfeld* presented workers in a negative light, does that mean that a young fan of the show will see things that way? Absolutely not. However, I do not expect young people to tell everything they learned from a program, because they either prefer not to tell, or might not remember. Thus, while superior, I certainly cannot argue that the comparison of respondents' perceptions with their self-reported ideology is not without its shortcomings.

As with movies, I believe that there is a tolerant, acceptant liberalism prevalent in the moral, ethical and political content of entertainment television. This leads me to expect that those who spend relatively more time with television ought to be more tolerant on life-style liberalism issues. Unlike the case with movies, I have data on actual exposure to test this claim. Table 4.2 shows the correlations between hours per day spent watching entertainment television and ideology and issue positions.

Table 4.2
Kendall's Tau-c Correlations between TV Use
And Selected Variables^a

Variable	Tau-c	Sig. (two-tailed)
Abortion	.034	.266
Women's Equality	.016	.594
Newer Lifestyles	.041	.197
Moral Relativism	.012	.704
Homosexuality as Acceptable	-.059	.058
Ideology	-.011	.722

^aSee appendix for wording of questions.

The correlations generally were small and statistically insignificant. There is a small and statistically significant negative relationship between the number of hours per day of entertainment television watched and support for the morality of homosexuality – more television watching means less support for the morality of homosexuality. These findings are mixed, but suggest a slight tendency of more conservative life-style views. This is a puzzle.

Does watching more entertainment television make one more conservative? If so, why? One possible explanation is that some young people are disgusted with what they see as lax moral standards on television, and become more conservative in reaction

against it. The political learning works in the following way. Young people already have political attitudes when they watch television. For the argument, let us assume that these are relatively conservative views concerning lifestyle issues. The opposite of their position is presented in the programming. Rather than change their minds, increased exposure hardens already conservative views. Liberals likely become more liberal or are not influenced at all.

Moreover, using entertainment television might be a necessary but not sufficient condition for political influence to occur. Many young people may have the television on while performing other tasks like homework or household chores. This type of exposure is unlikely to exert much influence on their political beliefs. Perhaps young people must actively engage with the program for it to have an effect. Two means of measuring level of engagement include favorite program, and whether or not one has disagreed with the message of a program.

The Political Influence of Television Preference

Based on television preference, we might expect ideological or issue position differences between fans of the program and non-fans, especially if the programs are perceived by young viewers as having something to say about morality and politics. In other words, the audience in general could be expected to be turned off by attitudes with which they disagree, and supportive of presentations of attitudes with which they agree. I expect fans of the programs to have their attitudes strengthened when the show agrees with their positions, and to be more likely to change attitudes when they are continuously exposed to a show that contradicts their values.

For example, *Seinfeld* is often described as a program “about nothing.” More precisely, there is almost no development of characters throughout the run of the series. Moreover, the characters generally were self-serving, greedy, and unlikely to show concern for others. The only ethical standards prevailing among the characters on the show are the ones their small circle of friends develop. There is a relationship between preference for *Seinfeld* and choosing to fit in with those around you, rather than conducting yourself according to your own standards. Table 4.3 demonstrates this.

Table 4.3
***Seinfeld* and Conformism^a**

	Seinfeld Fans	Non-Fans	Totals
Fit In	19.7%	13.9%	14.5%
Own Standards	80.3%	86.1%	85.5%
Totals	100% (n=61)	100% (n=617)	100% (n=678)

Chi-Square (1) = 1.476, sig (two-tailed) = .224

^aQuestion: Which of the following two statements comes closer to your own views? You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is CLOSER to your views. ONE, It is better to fit in with people around you; or TWO, it is better to conduct yourself according to your own standards even if it makes you stand out?

Fans of the program are more likely to believe that it is better to fit in than to live by one’s own standards. I argue this is a form of ethical relativism that could be reinforced by the solipsistic nature of the television program *Seinfeld*. Certainly if one believes one ought to fit in, one is less likely to assert that there are fixed and unchanging moral standards. In any case, this television program provides support for those who would refuse to abide by such standards even if they did exist and were acknowledged. Thus, to conservatives especially, this program must seem cynical, vapid and mean-

spirited, and not funny at all.

The second most popular television program might have political influence as well. As suggested earlier, *E.R.* often presents political and moral quandaries. Moreover, in sometimes subtle ways the program's writers imply which moral and political judgements they prefer. For example, for more than a year *E.R.* presented a lesbian character in a very favorable light. I expect that fans of the program should be more favorable to homosexual rights. This expectation is met. Whereas 43.1% of *E.R.* fans agree that homosexuality is morally acceptable, only 34.1% of non-fans hold this position, but the relationship is not statistically significant. It appears that choosing *E.R.* as one's favorite program, and presumably therefore watching it frequently, may influence one to hold a more positive view toward homosexual rights.

Interpreting the overall political ideology of *The Simpson's* is very difficult. The program certainly takes on political, moral and social issues frequently. The problem is the relatively fragmented and scattered nature of the positions taken on the issues. The reason for this is that the program is a satire, which means that multiple interpretations are not only possible, but probably encouraged by the writers. Liberals certainly would be justified in believing that the writers of the program are kindred spirits. However, the opposite interpretation is possible. For example, in the 1997 season *The Simpsons* introduced a homosexual character for one episode. Most viewers would recognize in fairly short order that the episode is a parable about tolerance and support for homosexuals' rights, because only after the gay character saves Homer Simpson's life does Homer become tolerant. However, not all viewers who watch the program might get the message. Viewers not attuned to subtlety might think that the program's writers

in the episode were attacking the gay lifestyle and making fun of homosexual men.

Table 4.4
***E.R.* Preference and Morality of Homosexuality^a**

Homosexual Lifestyles Are Morally Acceptable	Non <i>E.R.</i> Fans	<i>E.R.</i> Fans	Totals
Disagree	46.9%	36.2%	46.0% (n=325)
Neutral	19.0%	20.7%	19.1% (n=135)
Agree	34.1%	43.1%	34.8% (n=246)
Totals	100% (n=648)	100% (n=58)	100% (n=706)

Chi-square (2) = 2.644, sig. (two-tailed) = .267

^aQuestion: Homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable.

There is a relationship between preference for *The Simpsons* and attitudes toward homosexual rights, but the relationship is not in the direction I would expect based on my interpretation of the show's writers intentions, nor is it statistically significant. Whereas 71.4% of *Simpsons* fans disagree with the claim that homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable, only 45% of non-fans hold this position.

Table 4.5
Simpsons Preference and Morality of Homosexuality^a

Homosexual Lifestyles Are Morally Acceptable			
	Non-Fans	Fans	Totals
Disagree	45.0%	71.4%	46.0% (n=325)
Neutral	19.5%	10.7%	19.1% (n=135)
Agree	35.5%	17.9%	34.8% (n=246)
Totals	100% (n=678)	100% (n=28)	100% (n=706)

Chi-square (2) = 7.577, sig. (two-tailed) = .023

^aQuestion: Homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable.

The potential for audience confusion that comes from show's scattered approach to satire is a reasonable explanation for the "wrong" direction of this significant difference. Just as some people did not correctly interpret Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the U.S.A.*, a popular song in 1984 that was seemingly patriotic but in reality spoke to patriotism's irrelevance and danger to everyday working people's lives, not everyone understands what I take to be messages of tolerance toward gays from the writers of *The Simpsons*. From Thomas More's *Utopia* through the present it has been fairly standard for writers to use subtlety and satire to hide their messages from authorities and censors. Thomas More created a fictional island to criticize life in England during the 1500s and keep his head on his shoulders. Springsteen wrote a song whose chorus appeared blindly patriotic, but whose verses told the story of despair of an unemployed Vietnam veteran.

Perhaps the *Simpsons* writers, both from the interest of writing funny material and not hitting viewers over the head with obvious political messages, bury their true opinions under a mound of satire.

Another potentially politically significant message of *The Simpsons* is defiance. When the show was at the peak of its popularity, the main character Bart Simpson was the reason. He is an extremely mouthy, defiant and free-spirited ten-year old. He was far and away the most frequently appearing character on *Simpsons* merchandise, and was clearly the most popular character (he endorses more products in television commercials than the other characters as well). I expect young fans of the program to be influenced by the defiance of this character and therefore to be more likely to oppose fitting in with others, and instead to believe that it is better to do what one thinks is right. In other words I expect the *Simpsons* to have the opposite effect on its viewers than *Seinfeld* has. This expectation is confirmed by the data shown in Table 4.6.

Simpsons fans are more likely to believe it is better to conduct one's life according to one's own standards than non-fans of the program, although the relationship is not statistically significant. Obviously there are myriad other factors that might influence the selection of this position on individualism. In other words, perhaps fans of the program are more defiant and individualistic before they watch the show. This only suggests however that watching *The Simpsons* might reinforce these attitudes of individualism. *Simpsons* fans are more individualistic than others. It appears that in some cases the media may confirm more liberal attitudes in those who already have them.

Several programs such as *Party of Five*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, and *Days of Our Lives* have been criticized for their excessive and promiscuous sexuality. I expect

Table 4.6
The *Simpsons* and Conformism^a

	Simpsons Fans	Non- Fans	Totals
Fit In	3.7%	14.9%	14.5%
Own Standards	96.3%	85.1%	85.5%
Totals	100% (n=27)	100% (n=651)	100% (n=678)

Chi-Square (1) = 2.628, sig. (two-tailed) = .105

^aQuestion: Which of the following two statements comes closer to your own views? You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is CLOSER to your views. ONE, It is better to fit in with people around you; or TWO, it is better to conduct yourself according to your own standards even if it makes you stand out?

differences of opinions on matters of sexuality and women's equality between fans of these shows and non fans. On placement on the seven-point scale of women's equality (where 1 represents support for complete equality) fans of these three programs are .5 of a point lower than non-fans (1.42 for fans, 1.91 for non fans) and the difference is significant at the .002 level. Fans of these sexy programs are more supportive of women's equality than non-fans. However, interpretation of this result ought to be tempered by the fact that of the 81 respondents who rate one of these shows as their favorite, 71 are women. The real test of the influence of these programs is the difference of opinion between women fans of these programs, and women non-fans. Results for these calculations are presented in Table 4.7. It is apparent that women who rate sexy daytime and prime-time soap operas as their favorite are more supportive of women's equality.

Watching such shows may also affect views about newer lifestyles and whether or

Table 4.7
Preference for “Sexy” Television Programs
Attitudes toward Women’s Equal Roles^a

Variable	Mean for Women Who Rate Sexy Shows as Favorite	Mean for Women Who don’t Rate Sexy Shows as Favorite	Sig. (two-tailed)
Women’s Equality	1.30	1.50	.095

^aQuestion: Recently there has been a lot of talk about women’s rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale at point 1. Others feel that a woman’s place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

not they are contributing to the breakdown of society. Table 4.8 shows the relationship. The fans of these shows, surprisingly, are more likely to agree that newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society. This apparent contradiction needs explanation. The female characters on these programs are usually very strong figures; they are also frequently promiscuous, sexually scheming and likely to lie to get what they want. I believe this dichotomy influences women’s reaction to these shows. I believe women who like these programs are positively moved by the strength of the women characters, but simultaneously offended by the lack of moral standards strong female characters demonstrate in doing whatever it seems to take in order to get what they want. This may indicate a relatively high level of sophistication among young women television viewers in that they are able to prefer some aspects of complicated characters while opposing others. Moreover, it is interesting that the characters are in fact complex, rather than merely one-sided caricatures. This may indicate that television writers are more willing now than in the past to create realistic female characters.

Table 4.8
Sexy Television Preference and Support for Claim that Newer Lifestyles
Contribute to Break Down of Society^a (Women Only)

Newer Lifestyles Break Down Society	Non Fans	Fans	Totals
Disagree	29.9%	15.5%	27.4% (n=115)
Neutral	21.6%	29.6%	22.9% (n=96)
Agree	48.6%	54.9%	49.6% (n=208)
Totals	100% (n=348)	100% (n=71)	100% (n=419)

Chi-square (2) = 6.590, sig. (two-tailed) = .037

^aQuestion: The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society.

Political Significance of Disagreement with Entertainment Television

To shed more light on the influence of television, it is useful to see whether youths detected political messages in entertainment television with which they disagreed. In part this is true because it is a measure of level of engagement with television programming. Those who have disagreed must at least have paid attention to the programming with which they disagreed.

When asked if they have ever disagreed with the political message of a television program, of those who gave an answer, 60.6% answered in the affirmative. Table 4.9 represents the distribution of television program themes with which the young respondents have disagreed.

Table 4.9
Political Themes of Television
With Which Respondents Disagreed^a

Theme	Percent
Pro Homosexual Rights	23.4
Pro-Premarital Sex, Nudity, Promiscuity	16.4
Pro-White Racism, Black Stereotypes	7.8
Sensationalization of Social Issues	7.8
Against Women's Rights/Degrades Women	4.7
Pro-Violence	3.1
Pro-Prayer/Religion	2.3
Anti-Capitalism	2.3
Anti-Religion	1.6
Others (no more than one response)	6.4
Uncodeable	21.1
Totals	100.0
	(n=120)

^aQuestion: If you have ever disagreed with the message of a television program and can remember the name of the program please write it in the space provided and briefly explain why you disagreed with the message.

Clearly, the overwhelming concern was television's promotion of homosexual rights. Nearly every one of these 30 responses came from the respondents' opposition to the episode of the television program *Ellen* wherein the main character announced her homosexuality. A close second was concern over the lack sexual morals in television programs. Combined, these concerns accounted for almost 40 percent of the responses. This demonstrates once again that young people discern political content of television in the form of lifestyle or culture wars issues.

I expect that there should exist ideological differences between those who have disagreed with a message versus those who have not. To shed more light on this, Table 4.10 looks at the relationship between ideology and disagreeing with any message of a television program.

Table 4.10
Ideology and Disagreement with Message of a TV Program

Disagreement	Ideology			Totals
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	
Have Not Disagreed (%)	41.2 (94)	41.9 (112)	30.9 (47)	39.1 (253)
Have Disagreed (%)	58.8 (134)	58.1 (155)	69.1 (105)	60.9 (394)
Totals	100.0 (228)	100.0 (267)	100.0 (152)	100.0 (647)

n's are in parentheses

Chi-Square (2) = 5.613, sig. (two-tailed) = .060

As the table indicates, conservative youths are the most likely to have disagreed with the message of a television program, while moderates are the least likely (and liberals are not far behind). This makes sense in that most of the messages disagreed with are conservative disagreements with perceived liberal positions. Again, though, this does not allow us to point the causal arrow with certainty. In the previous chapter I presented evidence for more conservative youths' being more likely to disagree with the message of a movie, and evidence for movies hardening pre-existing conservative attitudes. I believe that relatively conservative youths are repulsed by the immorality and relativism they see in much network programming and those values are actually hardened or become more durable as a result of repeated exposure to such messages. This can occur so long as these youths continue to remain under the influence of other conservative agents of socialization such as parents and the church. More liberal youths more or less can take or leave the messages that reinforce their values because they have

likely been raised by less strict parents and therefore do not react as strongly to any particular agent of socialization.

The messages young people have disagreed with in television can be categorized by their ideological perspectives. A liberal would disagree with depictions of violence, racism, traditional roles for women, and so on. A conservative would disagree with anti-religion, pro-homosexuality, and the glorification of premarital sex, promiscuity and nudity. Of course some youths have never disagreed with a television program. A good test of the theory of socialization and learning that informs this dissertation is to examine the ideological perspective of the messages of television programs disagreed with by youths. The following table represents the distribution of ideological perspectives taken against television.

Table 4.11
Ideological Perspective of Themes
Disagreed with in the TV Programs

Ideological Perspective	Percent	n
Liberal	5.8	39
Conservative	9.1	61
Have Not Disagreed	39.4	265
Disagreed/Didn't Say Why	41.8	281
Disagreed/Undefinable	4.0	27
Totals	100.0	673

Clearly, most youths did not supply ideologically grounded reasons for disagreeing with a television program. Nevertheless, among those who did, conservative perspectives outnumber liberal ones. This is a different order than was the case with movies, where there was more liberal disagreement. Is there a relationship between

youths' self-reported ideologies and the ideological perspective of disagreement? I hypothesize that *conservatives will be more likely to disagree with conservative themes than liberals are to disagree with liberal themes, and liberals will be more likely than conservatives never to have disagreed*. This tests the strict versus nurturing parent model. Conservatives are taught to reject the indecent messages of the popular culture, whereas liberals are taught the value of tolerance. Limited exposure of conservatives to the entertainment media likely harden their pre-existing conservatism, whereas liberals are taught to take in as many influences as possible and sort them out using their own standards. Table 4.12 shows the relationship between self-reported ideology and the ideological perspective of disagreement with television.

Table 4.12
Ideology and Orientation Of Disagreement with TV Programs

Perspective	Ideology			Totals
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	
Liberal	9.2% (21)	4.1% (11)	3.9% (6)	5.9% (38)
Conservative	5.7% (13)	5.6% (15)	19.7% (30)	9.0% (58)
Never Disagreed	41.2% (94)	41.9% (112)	30.9% (47)	39.1% (253)
Disagreed/Didn't Say Why or Undefineable	43.8% (100)	48.3% (129)	45.4% (69)	46.1% (298)
Totals	100.0% (228)	100.0% (267)	100.0% (152)	100.0% (647)

Chi-Square (6) = 36.367, sig. (two-tailed) = .000

As Table 4.12 demonstrates, 41.2% of liberals have never disagreed with the message of a TV show, whereas only 30.9% of conservatives report this. This confirms my hypothesis that liberals should be more tolerant of the popular media and thus to treat it like any other influence. Moreover conservatives are about 5 times as likely to disagree with a TV show from the conservative perspective, whereas liberals are only slightly more likely to disagree from a liberal perspective. These differences are statistically significant and demonstrate again a cadre of conservative youths, who react negatively to the messages of television programs. While still under the influence of other agents of socialization, their conservative values are hardened or become more durable in response to challenges to those values from entertainment television.

Television Use, Political Knowledge, Other Media Use

Another possible influence of entertainment television is on political knowledge. It is standard to believe that newspapers are the best source of detailed information concerning politics, with television and radio finishing second, or in some studies actually correlating with a decrease in knowledge of events.

It is unclear what relationship exists between entertainment television watching and knowledge of political leaders. First, because there is not a great deal of information about politics on entertainment television, we might expect increased watching to correlate with a decrease in political knowledge. In other words, the longer one spends watching the exploits of one's favorite television characters, the less time one is probably spending following politics, especially reading newspapers. The less time one spends following politics, then the less one ought to know. Second, increased watching might

correlate with increased political knowledge. The notion here is that even though there is not much political content on entertainment programming, there is some. Table 4.13 shows the relationships between entertainment television use and both political knowledge and three measures of “spectator” politics.

Table 4.13
Kendall’s Tau Correlations between
Entertainment Television Use and Other Variables^a

	tau-c	sig. (two-tailed)
Political Knowledge	.017	.604
Talking to others about Politics	-.070	.029
Reading a Newspaper	.004	.895
Watching the News on TV	.283	.000
	tau-b	sig. (two-tailed)
Listening to Music on the Radio	.093	.003
Listening to One’s Music Collection	.075	.020

^aSee appendix for question wording.

The relationship between entertainment television use and political knowledge is small and statistically insignificant. Other results however, are interesting. First, there is a significant and negative relationship between hours spent watching entertainment television and talking to family and friends about politics. Apparently watching entertainment television detracts from conversation. Second, and unexpectedly, there is no relationship between entertainment television use and reading a newspaper. Fourth, as one increases the number of hours of entertainment television watched, one watches more news programming as well. Apparently, some who watch entertainment television are also induced to watch news television, even though only the latter is correlated with political knowledge. Third, there are relatively small but statistically significant positive relationships between entertainment television use and time spent listening to music

either on the radio or from one's own collection. These relationships are interesting, if not particularly profound, for they show that when more time that is spent with one form of entertainment, more time is also spent with another.

Perhaps the most interesting finding is the negative relationship between entertainment television use and talking to others about politics. It has long been suggested that television isolates viewers since people often watch television alone. Watching entertainment television makes it less likely that a person has both the motivation and the ability to talk to others. It is a passive activity. Although viewers watch and listen to other people, they do not interact with them, and may even become less skilled in conversation, be it about politics or any other subject.

Race and the Influence of Television

Are there significant differences between white and black youths in the amount of entertainment television used? Are there any impacts from these differences? There are no significant differences between men and women, but there are between white respondents and African Americans. African-Americans are members of a partly distinctive sub-culture in American society with respect to the popular media. Television use is measured in a four-point scale where 1 is less than one hour per day and 4 is more than 3 hours per day. Blacks average 2.95 on the scale, while whites average 2.35. The difference is statistically significant at the .000+ level. Moreover, 36.6% of African Americans watch more than 3 hours of television per day, while only 19.5% of whites report watching this much television. Does this difference in quantity of entertainment television watched mean anything? Perhaps the influence of entertainment television on

political knowledge depends on a threshold. That is, differing levels of use only become significant above a certain cut-off. Furthermore, perhaps blacks are more open to influence by television. Table 4.14 presents some interesting relationships.

Table 4.14
Tau Correlations between
Entertainment Television Use and Other Variables^a

Variable	(Blacks Only)		(Whites Only)	
	Tau-c	sig. (two-tailed)	Tau-c	sig. (two-tailed)
Knowledge	.118	.062	-.012	.767
Talking Politics	-.111	.089	-.078	.055
Reading Newspaper	-.019	.775	.036	.383
Watching TV News	.223	.001	.262	.000
	Tau-b	sig. (two-tailed)	Tau-b	sig. (two-tailed)
Music on Radio	.164	.018	.070	.080
Music Collection	.119	.080	.043	.286
	(n=153)		(n=432)	

^aSee appendix for wording of questions.

These results indicate that among African-Americans there is a positive and significant relationship between entertainment television use and political knowledge, watching news on television, listening to the radio, and listening to one's own music collection. Among African Americans, there is a stronger negative relationship between entertainment television use and talking to others about politics. Further, there is a stronger positive relationship for listening to music on the radio or from one's own collection. For whites, the most interesting relationships are the negative one between entertainment television use and talking about politics, and the positive but insignificant one between TV use and reading a newspaper.

There are three possible explanations for these differences. African Americans may be more easily influenced by entertainment television. There is no obvious reason why this should be the case, however. Second, perhaps entertainment television use must first reach a certain minimal level by individuals before it becomes influential. Finally, perhaps African-Americans watch significantly different kinds of entertainment programming than whites, and may therefore learn more from it and become less likely to engage in political conversations.

It may be more important what is viewed, rather than just how much of it is seen. For example, 12.9% of whites report that *E.R.* is their favorite program, making it the favorite show among whites; 12.6% of whites report that *Seinfeld* is their favorite program, making it the second most popular program. The most popular show among blacks is *Martin*, attracting 12.1% of respondents. *New York Undercover* attracted 6.5% of black viewers, making it the second most popular program. The differential socializing impact of these programs is difficult to determine. Apparently *E.R.* and *Seinfeld* have political influence over their viewers. It is unclear what impact, if any, *Martin* and *New York Undercover* can be expected to have. Moreover, small sample sizes (only 15 blacks report *New York Undercover* as favorite, yet it still ranks first) make statistical analysis impossible. Perhaps these programs are popular among blacks because they have predominantly African American casts (*Martin*), or because they feature strong black characters (*New York Undercover*), and have plot-lines whose themes resonate more in the African American community than the content of the *Simpsons* or *Seinfeld*.

Entertainment Television and Political Participation

There are two forms of political participation that may be influenced by entertainment television use: participation in high school student government, and voting intention in the 1998 elections. First, 91.6% of respondents report that their high school had student government. Also, 44.6% report having participated. I expect those who watched more entertainment television would be less likely to participate in student government. This expectation is not met by the data. There is no relationship between entertainment television use and participation in student government.

Now I turn to voting intentions. When asked if they planned to vote in the 1998 elections, 87.3 percent responded in the affirmative. Considering that the respondents range in age from 17 to 30 years, the likelihood that they will actually match this percentage is nil. Clearly, answering yes to this question is the socially acceptable answer. But the question still is arguably a measure of youth support for the norm of voting.

There were statistically significant relationships between race and income and voting intentions. Blacks were more likely than whites to say they planned to vote. Middle and high income groups were slightly more likely to say they planned to vote. Greater use of entertainment television ought to correlate with a reduced voting intentions; however there was no statistically significant relationship.

Summary

Television appears to influence young people's political values, but only slightly. First, there is much political content on television, even in the programs especially

popular with youths. Young people recognize this political content and frequently disagree with it. Homosexuality, sexual freedom and racism are the dominant themes in television programs with which young people disagree. Those who disagree with these messages are more conservative youths. This is as the theory informing this dissertation predicts. Whether or not these youths will eventually acquire more liberal attitudes with repeated exposure or peer pressure, and diminishing influence by parents, remains an open question and is answerable only through a longitudinal study.

Television programming's political messages are primarily liberal and tolerant. Oddly, however, increased television use correlates with decreased support for women's equality. Increased television watching correlates with lower support for homosexual rights, and an overall more conservative viewpoint.

Just what conclusions can be drawn from these disparate findings? Does the apparent lack of coherence in their views indicate simple confusion? Apparently not, for television use results in a hardening or increased durability of the conservative values of youths who are already conservative. Their disproportionate negative reactions to entertainment television simply mean the unpleasantness of the experience with television leads to more variable patterns of reinforcement, similar to gamblers who lose most of the time but every now and then win. Nevertheless I would expect that increased distance from parents will lead to television's having a greater influence. On the other hand, the liberal values of liberal youths appear to be reinforced by the liberal messages of much of the content of entertainment television. The few conservative messages they are exposed to appear to have little or no influence over their political attitudes and beliefs.

Preference for certain programming appears to correlate with certain political beliefs. Fans of the situation comedy *Seinfeld* are more conformist than non fans, while fans of *The Simpsons* are less conformist than non-fans. Fans of *E.R.* are more tolerant of homosexuality than non-fans. These relationships, however, are not significant (with the exception of the *Simpsons* and conformism). Fans of television programs that present promiscuity (including among women) as the norm are more favorable toward women's equality than non-fans. The differences remain large and significant when only women fans are examined.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, a group of youths worth paying particular attention to are those who rate themselves as more liberal than both parents. It seems likely that these individuals are more likely to be influenced by the entertainment media, television included. Does more time spent with entertainment television increase the likelihood that a youth is more liberal than their parents? Apparently not, for there is no statistically significant relationship. Are youths who have not disagreed with the message of a television program more likely to be more liberal than both parents? As was true with movies young liberals' belief in freedom of expression is likely to trump their concerns over the socially damaging messages of entertainment television. Youths who have not disagreed with the message of a television program, however, are not more likely to be more liberal than their parents.

Television watching not only influences political attitudes and beliefs but also activities as well. Entertainment television use positively correlates with watching the news, as expected, but not with political knowledge. Entertainment television use positively correlates with listening to music both on the radio and from one's own

personal collection. Most interestingly, entertainment television use negatively correlates with talking to others about politics. Moreover, blacks watch more television than whites, and each of the relationships mentioned above, with the exception of that of news television use, are stronger for blacks.

CHAPTER 5

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC ON POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Among all of the various socializing influences in the popular culture, I would argue that music has the greatest likelihood of influencing the politics of young people. This is true for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the amount of time and money young people spend on music. Table 5.1 indicates how much time young people spend listening to music on the radio

Table 5.1
Radio Use Among Young People

Hours Per Day	Percent
1 Hour or Less	25.6
1 to 2 Hours	28.6
2 to 3 Hours	20.4
More than 3 Hours	25.5
Totals	100.00
	(n=707)

The table indicates that nearly a quarter of young people sampled listen to music on the radio for more than three hours per day. Moreover, only 25.6% listen less than an hour per day, while 74.5% listen more than an hour per day. Even if a great deal of this listening is done while driving or performing some other task, the radio still plays a large role in young people's lives.

Another measure of music use is how much time youths spend listening to recorded music they have purchased (or had purchased for them). Young people spend much time listening to their own collections of recorded music. Table 5.2 indicates how much they listen.

Table 5.2
Music Listening Among Young People

Hours Per Day	Percent
1 Hour or Less	40.1
1 to 2 Hours	28.6
2 to 3 Hours	15.8
More than 3 Hours	15.5
Totals	100.0
	(n=696)

Young people spend less time with their own collections than with the radio, but the quantity is still impressive. While 40.1% report listening to their own collections less than an hour per day, 15.5% listen to it for more than three hours. Moreover, 59.9% listen to their music collections for more than an hour per day. This amount of listening, coupled with time spent listening to the radio, certainly indicates that music listening is a favorite pastime of American youth. The average number of pieces of recorded music (including records, cassettes and compact disks) is 78. The standard deviation is 154, so there is obviously much variation in the number of pieces owned. About 13.4% own 50 pieces of recorded music making that quantity the modal category, while only 1.4% do not own any. So, most young people own some recorded music and spend a great deal of time listening to it.

Exposure and Political Orientations

Does listening to one's own music collection have any influence on ideology and other issue positions? Many believe that the liberal, progressive bias of pop music influences youths who use relatively larger amounts of it. Tables 5.3a and 5.3b indicate the relationship between listening to one's own music and listening to the radio, and self-reported ideology and a number of other issue positions.

Table 5.3a
Kendall's Tau-c Correlations between Listening to Music Collection
And Selected Variables^a

Variable	Tau-c	Sig
Abortion	.030	.290
Women's Equality	-.022	.432
Newer Lifestyles	-.074	.014
Moral Relativism	.086	.007
Homosexuality as Acceptable	.047	.147
Ideology	-.056	.069

^aSee appendix for wording of questions.

Table 5.3b
Kendall's Tau-c Correlations between Radio Use
And Selected Variables^a

Variable	Tau-c	Sig
Abortion	.041	.180
Women's Equality	-.055	.059
Newer Lifestyles	-.056	.080
Moral Relativism	.044	.175
Homosexuality as Acceptable	.034	.301
Ideology	-.086	.007

^aSee appendix for wording of questions.

Clearly these correlations indicate that listening to the radio and to one's own music collection influences young people's political values. Listening to one's own music collection correlates with greater acceptance of newer lifestyles, increased moral relativism, increased support for homosexuality, and greater liberalism. Increased listening to the radio correlates with increased support for women's equality, greater acceptance of newer lifestyles, and increased liberalism. The effects are small, but statistically significant.

Political Messages in Music

More than any other element of the popular culture, music elicits the strongest

response from young people to its political and moral messages. For example, 78.5% of young people have disagreed with the message of a song. As was the case with television, young people who have disagreed with the message of a song may be politically different from those who have not.

I will start with demographics. Table 5.4 demonstrates the relationship between race and disagreement with the message of a song. I would hypothesize that blacks are more likely to disagree with the message of a song. This is because rap is the music most popular among blacks and appears to have the most offensive messages.

Table 5.4
Race and Disagreement with Songs^a

Message	Race				Totals
	Black	White	Hispanic	Other	
Haven't Disagreed	31.3%	16.7%	21.7%	30.6%	21.6%
Have Disagreed	68.7%	83.3%	78.3%	69.4%	78.4%
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(n=150)	(n=436)	(n=23)	(n=72)	(n=681)

Chi-Square (3) = 17.884, sig. (two-tailed) = .000

^aQuestion: Sometimes artists say things about politics, ethics, morality and so on in their songs. Have you ever disagreed with the message of a song?

Clearly, this hypothesis is incorrect, for African Americans are the least likely to have disagreed with the message of a song, while whites are the most likely. One explanation for this is that a very large proportion of the songs disagreed with are rap songs, where the performers are overwhelmingly African-American. Perhaps blacks, as fans of this music (52.9% of blacks who have a favorite music type report rap as their favorite style of music) are accustomed to its messages whereas more casual listeners are shocked. Perhaps blacks are more defensive about white conservatives' attacks on rap's

allegedly socially pathological messages, viewing such attacks as racist because directed at black performers. Clearly this phenomenon requires closer investigation.

Interestingly, men are more likely than women to disagree with the message of a song. While 81.1% of men have disagreed with the message of a song, only 76.9% of women have. The difference is not significant, however. I would expect that songs that degrade women or promote violence would be opposed by women. Sometimes this is the case. A respondent wrote that she disagreed with the lyric, “A woman’s goal/aim to please/ on her back or knees,” arguing that the artist and his work are, “degrading and disgusting and demoralizing.” Alternatively, perhaps songs which portray women using their sexuality as a means of power over men to achieve success appeal to young women. A number of female rap artists describe trading sexual favors for gifts. For example, Li’l Kim describes having sex for “double digit figures.”

Next we examine ideological differences. I would hypothesize that conservatives are more likely than liberals to have disagreed with the message of a song. This is not the case however. Liberals and conservatives are almost equally likely to have disagreed. Moderates, however are significantly less likely to have disagreed, which is as expected.

Another manifestation of conservatism is church attendance. I would hypothesize that those who attend church more regularly would be more likely to have disagreed with the message of a song. This is because much of the violence and other behaviors endorsed by much popular music have long been held by most religions as antithetical to living a sin-free life in the company of God.

As Table 5.5 shows however, church attendance is unrelated to disagreement with the political message of a song. Those more closely associated with churches were not

Table 5.5
Song Message and Church Attendance

Have disagreed with Message of a song:	Church Attendance					Totals
	Never	Few a Year	Monthly	Weekly	>Weekly	
No	23.1%	34.2%	33.3%	25.9%	16.7%	28.9%
Yes	76.9%	65.8%	66.7%	74.1%	83.3%	71.1%
Totals	100% (n=13)	100% (n=38)	100% (n=24)	100% (n=27)	100% (n=12)	100% (n=114)

Chi-square (4) =1.954, sig. (two-tailed)=.744

more likely to disagree with messages in songs. I expected more conservative respondents on these hot-button issues to be more likely to disagree with a song, but they were not.

To investigate these anomalies I examined more closely the kinds of messages with which young people disagreed. Table 5.6 demonstrates the distribution of themes in songs with which young people disagreed.

Clearly violence is the greatest concern among young people about the political content of music. Most of these concerns revolved around the themes of some rap music. For example, one respondent wrote, "Some rap (not all) glorifies violence against women, children, and just society in general." A fair number of respondents were concerned about rap's promoting of violence against the police. For example, a student reacted negatively to the song by Ice-T called *Cop Killer* by writing, "the song talks about destroying the very things that make society livable."

Second in order of concern were songs that presented religion in a negative light

Table 5.6
Messages of Songs With Which Respondents Disagreed^a

Theme	Percent
Pro-Violence	26.2
Anti-Religion	15.3
Degrades Women/Anti-Women's Rights	14.4
Pro-Premarital Sex, Promiscuity,	9.6
Unpatriotic to U.S. Gov't	5.2
Pro Black Racism	4.8
Pro-Drugs	4.4
Pro General Immorality	1.7
Anti-Capitalism	1.3
Pro White Racism	1.3
Pro Homosexual rights	0.9
Pro Traditional Roles for Women	0.9
Pro Stereotypes of Catholics	0.4
Pro Religion	0.4
Can't Be Coded	12.7
Total	100.0%
	(n=229)

^aQuestion: If you have ever disagreed with the message of a song and can remember the name of the song please write it in the space provided and briefly explain why you disagreed with the message.

or directly attacked religion or a specific religion. A good deal of these comments related to the performer Marilyn Manson. For example, a respondent wrote that he/she disagrees with, "anything by Marilyn Manson. It disgusts me when I hear his music. He does not think there is a god."

Next in order of concern were songs that degrade women or opposed women's rights. Again these concerns often related to rap music. A typical response in this vein includes the respondent who wrote, "A lot of rap talks too much about rape and male control."

The final category of concern that received nearly 10% of responses was related to songs that promoted promiscuity and pre-marital sex. A good example of this is the respondent who wrote that he or she opposes, "*I Want Your Sex* by George Michael. I believe he is corrupting the youth with his lyrics about premarital sex and promiscuity."

The messages young people have disagreed with in songs can be categorized by their ideological perspectives. A liberal would disagree with depictions of violence, racism, traditional roles for women, and so on. A conservative would disagree with anti-religion, pro-homosexuality, and premarital sex, promiscuity and use of sex by women to achieve success. Of course some youths have never disagreed with the message of a song. It is important to examine the ideological perspective of the messages of songs disagreed with by youths. The following table represents the distribution of ideological perspectives taken against songs. Young people's disagreement with songs is just about evenly split between conservative and liberal opposition. Again, those who disagreed but did not give a reason are the largest group.

Table 5.7
Orientation of Objections To Themes in Songs

Objection	Percent	n
Liberal	13.7	95
Conservative	13.5	94
Have Not Disagreed	21.9	152
Disagreed/Didn't Say Why	46.5	323
Disagreed/Undefinable	4.3	30
Totals	100.0	694

I expect conservatives to mention conservative objections to song themes more often than liberals mention liberal objections; furthermore, liberals should be more likely

than conservatives never to have disagreed with the message of a song. Youths who are conservative in a predominantly liberal culture have been taught to reject the “indecent” messages of the popular culture, whereas liberals are taught the value of tolerance. Limited exposure of conservatives to the entertainment media likely reinforce their pre-existing conservatism, whereas liberals are taught to take in as many influences as possible and sort them out using their own standards. Table 5.8 shows the relationship between self-reported ideology and the ideological perspective of disagreement with songs.

Table 5.8
Ideology and Orientation of Objections To Themes of Songs

Orientation Of Objection:	Ideology			Totals
	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	
Liberal	16.6%	13.2%	10.6%	13.8%
Conservative	15.7%	7.5%	23.2%	13.9%
Never Disagreed	17.0%	28.8%	15.9%	21.7%
Disagreed/Didn't Say Why or Undefineable	50.7%	40.5%	50.3%	50.5%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square (6) = 32.030, sig. (two-tailed) = .000

Liberals are pretty evenly split in terms of the orientation of their objection to a song, while the orientations of conservatives are more than twice as likely to be conservative. Moreover, liberals are slightly more likely never to have disagreed with the message of a song. Again the data demonstrate that conservatives, many perhaps raised in the strict father model, are disaffected by the popular culture, disagree with it and have their pre-existing conservative values challenged and perhaps hardened by exposure to it.

The Politics of Pop Stars

Now let us examine the youths' perceptions of the political ideology of various popular music performers. I would hypothesize that youths do discern differences in political ideology among performers based not only on the content of their music and their political activities, but also the general life-style image they portray. Table 5.9 indicates the responses.

Table 5.9
Ideologies of Popular Musicians

Artist	(1=Extremely Liberal, 7=Extremely Conservative)		
	Mean Ideology	n	Std. Dev.
Garth Brooks	4.43	450	1.35
De La Soul	2.96	291	1.60
Will Smith	2.93	491	1.31
Eddie Vedder	2.63	360	1.48
Zack De La Rocha	2.63	253	1.60
Madonna	1.91	541	1.37

The means tell us much about the young people's perceptions of the politics of popular musicians. First, five of the six musicians are at scale values of three or less,

which means youths view them as liberal. Next, Garth Brooks is considered the most conservative. This is plainly because he is a white country and western performer. He carries this image even though he has written a pro-gay rights song. De La Soul is a rap band that is Afro-Centric in their world view. It is not surprising they are considered to be liberal by the respondents. Will Smith is also considered to be liberal and it is not clear that this is accurate. Perhaps his ranking is due more to his being an African-American than his avowed political positions. Eddie Vedder and Zack De La Rocha are both liberal, even radical left-wing activists and performers. The students' perceptions in these cases are accurate. Finally, Madonna is rated the most liberal, and more respondents ventured a guess as to her ideology than any other performer. She is not well known as a political activist; however she has portrayed a life of pure hedonism, especially in terms of sexuality. The respondents' ranking of her as the most liberal among these musicians indicates how deeply young people embrace a definition of liberalism in terms of lifestyle issues, and not the traditional terms of the budget, federalism and so on.

What relationship exists between the ideologies of these musicians and the respondents' self-reported ideologies? I would hypothesize that fans of the kind of music a particular musician performs would be ideologically similar to that performer. When looking at fans of the kind of music performed by the artists in question, the relationships between self-reported ideologies and perception of the ideologies of the performer are large and significant. Interestingly, the relationship for each parent is larger for rap and country fans than for alternative fans. Alternative fans, however, appear to be more influenced by the ideology of popular musicians. For alternative fans,

Table 5.10
Correlations between Self-Reported Ideology and Ideology of Musicians for only Fans of Music in Question

	Tau-b	Sig. (2-tailed)
Rap Fans Only:		
De La Soul	.227	.006
Will Smith	.144	.053
Mom Ideol	.574	.000
Dad Ideol	.500	.000
Alternative Fans Only:		
Zack de la Rocha	.373	.000
Eddie Vedder	.209	.006
Mom Ideol	.306	.000
Dad Ideol	.221	.001
Country Fans Only:		
Garth Brooks	.273	.066
Mom Ideol	.611	.000
Dad Ideol	.443	.003

the relationship with Zack de la Rocha is greater than for either parent. Whereas there is a .373 correlation between respondent and Mr. De La Rocha, there is a .306 with mother and .221 for father. Apparently, many fans of alternative are closer ideologically to alternative musicians than to their own parents.

Youths More Liberal than Parents?

As suggested in the previous chapters on movies and television, a group of youths of unusual interest are those who rate themselves as more liberal than both parents. This group is important because they have, to some degree, rejected the influence of the primary agents of socialization. Has music been more influential with these particular youths? I would hypothesize that those who spend more time listening to music on the

radio and more time listening to their own collections would tend to become more liberal than both parents. Whereas there is no relationship between listening to the radio and being more liberal than both parents, there is a relationship between listening to one's own music collection and being more liberal than parents, as shown in Table 5.11. The least likely to be more liberal than their parents are those who listen the least frequently, while the most likely are those who listen between two and three hours per day.

Table 5.11
Relationship between Listening to Own Music Collection
and More Liberal than Parents

	Less than 1 Hour	1-2 Hours	2-3 Hours	More than 3 Hours	Totals
More Liberal	11.1%	17.6%	19.1%	17.6%	15.2%
Not More Liberal	88.9%	82.4%	80.9%	82.4%	84.9%
Totals	100.0% (n=279)	100.0% (n=199)	100.0% (n=110)	100.0% (n=108)	100.0% (n=696)

Chi-square (3) = 6.260, sig. (two-tailed) = .100

Musicians often try to influence their fans through non-lyrical means as well. For example, many artists allow interest groups to set up information tables at their concerts, and most of these interest groups are liberal (for example, NORML (a marijuana legalization group), Greenpeace, and Amnesty International). Because of the liberal (especially in terms of lifestyle) perspective of these groups, I would hypothesize that those who have been to such performances are more likely to be more liberal than both parents. Table 5.12 demonstrates the results.

Table 5.12
Relationship between Information Tables^a and More Liberal

	Attended Concerts	Not Attended	Totals
More Liberal	27.3%	12.9%	15.4%
Not More Liberal	72.7%	87.1%	84.6%
Totals	100.0% (n=121)	100.0% (n=573)	100.0% (n=694)

Chi-Square (3) = 15.794, sig. (two-tailed) = .000

^aQuestion: Have you ever been to a musical performance where political organizations had set up information tables?

Clearly attending concerts where interest groups have set up information tables correlates with holding political views more liberal than both parents. Whereas among those who had been to such concerts, 27.3% are more liberal than both parents, only 12.9% of those who had not been to such concerts are more liberal than their parents. Clearly these attempts by pop start to reach young people are successful.

Music Preferences and Political Socialization

To what kinds of music do young people listen? Rap music is the most popular, attracting 25.8% of responses to the question of one's favorite music. Alternative rock finished a close second with 24.4%. Classic rock attracted 8.6% of responses, and rhythm and blues attracted 7.8%. Country attracted 5.6% and the remaining preferences were scattered among jazz, blues, no preference and so on.

When youths are asked to identify their favorite song ever, there is a great diversity of responses. Among 406 valid responses, no single song attracted the support of more than 5 respondents. The "most popular" song, Garth Brooks' *The Dance*, was

hardly overwhelmingly popular in that it attracted only 1.2% of responses. Thus, it is not particularly useful to identify the political content of the most “popular” songs. Instead, I will analyze the political content of the top six kinds of music preferred by respondents by looking at both the political content of some songs from the genre and also what scholars and critics have said about the music.

Rap music’s political significance falls into three broad categories. First, there is Afro-Centric rap, which broadly speaking, presents to young listeners a relatively positive message about self-respect, racial pride and dignity. There is not a great deal of Afro-centric rap. It is also true that much of rap includes socially negative messages. A good deal of rap music endorses drinking, killing, misogyny, and other socially deviant or illegal actions. This rap is generally referred to as “gangsta” rap. There is more of this than Afro-centric rap, but it is not the majority either. Justifications for such lyrics run the gamut from legitimacy arguments about rap’s representing street-life to claims that the artists are merely trying to grab listeners’ attention. Finally, most rap appears to be concerned with the same issues with which most popular music is concerned: male-female relationships. It is probably the majority, but its political significance is probably the least, except for the construction of gender roles.

A final word on rap is necessary. The questionnaire from which the data is generated did not permit respondents to differentiate what kind of rap they prefer. Therefore such analysis is impossible in this work. Future researchers are encouraged to allow for such distinctions however.

Alternative rock at first appears bereft of obvious political significance; however there are some notable exceptions. Those bands or performers that are exceptions are

liberal/progressive in their politics. Some bands have allowed Amnesty International and Greenpeace to set up information tables at their concerts (e.g. The Indigo Girls, U2, REM and many other popular alternative bands). Some acts have recorded and performed at benefits for Native-American rights activist Leonard Peltier, the Tibetan freedom movement and other progressive causes. The politics of alternative rock are liberal, especially in terms of life-style issues like women's equality, homosexual rights and anti-racism.

Classic rock came in third in popularity. There is a great deal of politics in this genre but it may not be likely to influence young listeners. This is because the politics of protest from the 1960s prevalent in this music may not be very relevant to the lives of young people in the 1990s. What reason is there to believe that songs of protest against Vietnam or in favor of "Flower Power" will resonate with the children of the parents who made this music popular in the first place? Perhaps, however, the lifestyle liberalism prevalent in much of the music (the "do your own thing" spirit of the sixties in terms of sex, drugs and rock and roll) does mean something to kids of the nineties and correlate with greater liberalism in fans of classic rock.

The modern variant of rhythm and blues is completely devoid of obvious political messages, and therefore its influence will not be examined.

Generally country and western music is considered the most conservative of popular music, and not without some justification. Country lyrics are more likely to endorse traditional moral values than are other kinds of music. C&W performers are more likely than other performers to endorse Republican candidates, and often based on life-style issues. Support for traditional American values is further indicated by support

for family farms. Farm-Aid involved Country musicians and helped raise money and consciousness for the plight of American family farms.

Jazz was preferred by 2.7% of youths, which means 19 respondents preferred this relatively non-political form of music. Therefore its political significance will not be examined.

Seventeen other styles of music attracted a combined 11.1% of responses. The most popular of these was dance, followed by Gospel and rock 'n' roll. None of these attracted more than 13 responses and thus do not permit much analysis. Another 13.8% of respondents did not answer the question or wrote an inappropriate response.

There is a relationship between race and music preference. In terms of country music 89.7% of its fans are white, while 86.7% of classic rock fans are white and 93.6% of alternative rock fans are white. Because of this lack of variation, race will not be used as a control in examining political differences between fans of these kinds of music and non-fans. Rap is the only kind of music attracting both large numbers of fans and a racially diverse fan base. Whereas 41.5% of rap fans are black, 36.4% are white; 15.9% are other and 6.3% are Hispanic. Therefore race must be accounted for when examining the political impact of this style of music.

I would expect country fans, based on the frequently conservative, patriotic and conformist political content of their musical preference, to be the most conservative. I would hypothesize that rap, alternative and classic rock fans would be the more liberal, but it is difficult to speculate in which order they ought to occur. Rap and alternative fans ought to be the most liberal, with classic rock coming next. Table 5.13 shows the relationship.

Table 5.13
Music preference and Ideology

Ideology:	Country	Music Preference				Totals
		Classic	Alternative	Rap	Other/None	
Liberal	28.9% (11)	33.9% (20)	37.6% (64)	35.3% (61)	34.9% (83)	35.3% (239)
Moderate	55.3% (21)	30.5% (18)	36.5% (62)	50.9% (88)	39.9% (95)	41.9% (284)
Conservative	15.8% (6)	35.6% (21)	25.9% (44)	13.9% (24)	25.2% (60)	22.9% (155)
Totals	100.0% (38)	100.0% (59)	100.0% (170)	100.0% (173)	100.0% (238)	100.0% (678)

Chi-Square (8) = 21.316, sig. (two-tailed) = .006

Alternative fans are the most likely to define themselves as liberal, while country fans are the least likely. This is as expected. Classic rock fans are the most likely to define themselves as conservative, while rap fans are the least likely. Country fans are the most likely to define themselves as moderate, while classic and alternative rock fans are the least likely. This indicates that fans of these kinds of rock tend toward extremes, while country fans do not.

When looking at whites only, music preference remains significant. White rap fans are twice as likely to be liberal as conservative (30.0% to 15.0%) and white alternative fans are much more likely to be liberal than conservative as well (37.3% compared to 25.9%). Music preference becomes insignificant at predicting ideology when examining African Americans only. Undoubtedly this is because of the small ideological variation among African Americans: only 14.2% of blacks consider themselves conservatives.

What relationship is there between music preference and partisanship? I would hypothesize that rap and alternative fans are the most likely to be Democrats, with classic rock next and country last. Table 5.14 demonstrates the results.

Table 5.14
Relationship between Music Preference And Political Party Choice

	Country	Classic	Alternative	Rap	Other/none	Totals
Democrat	43.3% (13)	25.5% (14)	28.8% (42)	59.9% (88)	45.1% (97)	41.5% (157)
No Preference	13.3% (4)	21.8% (12)	26.7% (39)	12.2% (18)	21.0% (45)	19.3% (73)
Independent	23.3% (7)	16.4% (9)	16.4% (24)	11.6% (17)	11.7% (25)	15.1% (57)
Republican	20.0% (6)	36.4% (20)	28.1% (41)	16.3% (24)	22.0% (47)	24.1% (91)
Totals	100.0% (30)	100.0% (55)	100.0% (146)	100.0% (147)	100.0% (214)	100.0% (592)

Chi-Square (9) = 42.476, sig. (two-tailed) = .000+

Rap fans are the most likely to be Democrats with country fans coming in second. Country fans are nearly all white, so race does not account for this difference. It remains unclear why classic rock and alternative rock fans are the least likely to be Democrats.

When examining whites only, music preference becomes insignificant at predicting partisanship. When examining blacks only, music preference remains significant, but the numbers of black classic rock, country and alternative fans are so low that meaningful analysis is impossible.

Does music preference have any influence on being more liberal than one's parents? Table 5.15 presents the results.

Table 5.15
Relationship between Music Preference and More Liberal than Parents

	Music Preference					Totals
	Country	Classic	Alternat.	Rap	Other/none	
More Liberal	5.0%	23%	20.2%	12.0%	13.5%	15.1%
Not More Liberal	95.0%	77.0%	79.8%	88.0%	86.5%	84.9%
Totals	100.0% (n=40)	100.0% (n=61)	100.0% (n=173)	100.0% (n=183)	100.0% (n=145)	100.0% (n=602)

Chi-Square (8) = 11.535, sig. (two-tailed)= .021

Clearly there is a relationship between music preference and whether or not a youth is more liberal than his or her parents. Country fans are the least likely, while classic rock and alternative rock fans are the most likely. This is as expected. Country is the most conservative music, while alternative rock contains the most liberal messages, especially in terms of life-style issues. Classic rock contains traditional liberal messages

as well that may influence the handful of youthful fans of the music.

The Influence of Rap Music

From these brief descriptions of kinds of music, I generated several hypotheses. I expect rap fans to be more supportive of equal opportunity for minorities (as we would expect those influenced by Afro-centric rap to be) and more morally relativistic than their counterparts (as we would expect fans of violent rap to be).

Table 5.16 demonstrates the relationship between rap preference and support for equal opportunity.

Table 5.16
Rap Preference and Equal Opportunity^a

Support for Equal Opportunity	Non Rap Fans	Rap Fans	Totals
Disagree	6.4%	7.0%	6.6%
Neutral	5.1%	11.6%	7.4%
Agree	88.5%	81.4%	86.0%
Totals	100% (n=78)	100% (n=43)	100% (n=121)

Chi-square (2) = 1.749, sig (two-tailed) = .417

^aQuestion: Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

A large majority support equal opportunity regardless of whether they prefer rap or not. Rap is insignificant at predicting difference of position on equal opportunity whether examining youths of all races, African Americans, or whites.

What about the relationship between rap music and morality? Unfortunately, the questionnaire does not contain any questions about violence or drug use. However, there

are questions about newer lifestyles, moral relativism, and women's role that are instructive.

Table 5.17
Rap Preference and Newer Lifestyles^a

Newer Lifestyles Breakdown Society	Non Rap Fans	Rap Fans	Totals
Disagree	28.6%	23.5%	27.3% (n=193)
Neutral	20.2%	25.7%	21.6% (n=153)
Agree	51.1%	50.8%	51.1% (n=361)
Totals	100% (n=524)	100% (n=183)	100% (n=707)

Chi-square (2) = 3.174, sig (two-tailed) = .205

^aQuestion: The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society.

Regarding newer lifestyles, as table 5.17 shows, those who prefer rap music are somewhat less likely to agree with the claim that newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society, but the difference is not statistically significant. Whereas 23.5% of rap fans disagree with the statement, only 28.6% of non-rap fans do. Rap is, perhaps, a cynical statement that society is broken down but not a statement of support for the breakdown.

When examining the question of moral relativism (support for the claim that morality ought to change with the times), rap preference has an effect on blacks, as shown in Table 5.18, but not on whites, as shown in Table 5.19.

Table 5.18
Rap Preference and Relativism^a (Blacks Only)

Morality Ought to Change with the Times	Non Rap Fans	Rap Fans	Totals
Disagree	58%	38.4%	87.7% (n=75)
Neutral	6.2%	4.1%	5.2% (n=8)
Agree	35.8%	57.5%	46.1% (n=71)
Totals	100% (n=81)	100% (n=73)	100% (n=154)

Chi-square (2) = 7.298, sig (two-tailed) = .026

^aQuestion: The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.

As the tables indicate, when controlling for race, rap preference influences youths' positions on moral relativism. The apparent reason why there is no effect on the races when mixed is because they seem to cancel each other out. Whereas rap preference appears to correlate significantly with greater moral relativism among blacks, among whites rap preference appears to correlate with slightly reduced moral relativism. Perhaps white rap fans enjoy the socially pathological messages of some rap music voyeuristically, but when asked in a serious setting, such as that produced by survey research, oppose moral relativism.

Rap music tends to be perceived by the respondents (and the author) as the music most likely to contain negative messages about women. Thus I would hypothesize that rap preference would correlate with reduced support for an equal role for women in

Table 5.19
Rap Preference and Relativism^a (Whites Only)

Morality Ought to Change with the Times	Non Rap Fans	Rap Fans	Totals
Disagree	38.6%	37.5%	38.4% (n=168)
Neutral	9.9%	15.6%	10.8% (n=47)
Agree	51.5%	46.9%	50.8% (n=222)
Totals	100% (n=373)	100% (n=64)	100% (n=437)

Chi-square (2) = 1.898, sig (two-tailed) = .387

^aQuestion: The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.

society, and more support for the claim that a woman's place is in the home. This appears to be the case, although the differences are not large and only approach statistical significance.

Although rap appears to predict lower support for women's equality in the overall sample, the more interesting relationship occurs when race is controlled for. Black rap fans are less supportive of women's equality than black non-fans, whereas for whites there is little difference. Musicians often take political positions outside of their performances. For example, the members of popular white rap band The Beastie Boys organize and perform at annual concerts calling on the West to do more to end Chinese military occupation of Tibet. Do such endorsements have any effect on the young fans of the performers?

Table 5.20
Rap Preference and Views on Women's Role^a

Women's Equality	(1=equality, 7=women stay home)			
	Rap Fans	Non-Fans	Diff.	Sig. (One-Tailed)
All Respondents	1.95	1.83	.12	.142
Blacks Only	1.74	1.51	.23	.141
Whites Only	1.92	1.86	.06	.361

^aQuestion: Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale at point 1. Others feel that a woman's place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

I placed a question concerning this position on each questionnaire. On some of the surveys, there was indication that the position or quote was endorsed by the Beastie Boys, while on others the quotation or position was merely mentioned. In both cases, students were asked to agree or disagree with the position using a five point scale where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. The different questionnaire versions were randomly distributed to each of the classes. Respondents were instructed not to talk to one another about the questionnaire, nor to look at one another's answers. The instructor, graduate assistants and I monitored the respondents to make sure they did not. I hypothesized that The Beasties' endorsement would lead to greater support for the celebrity's position, but it had no impact on the overall sample. Thus I would hypothesize that white rap fans would be more likely to agree with the position when it is ascribed to the band than when it is not.

The Tibet question elicited different responses in the hypothesized direction when looking at white rap fans only. They were examined because the celebrities who endorsed a position were white rap musicians. Respondents were much more likely to

Table 5.21
Celebrity Endorsement and Help Tibet³ (White Rap Fans only)

West Do More To Help Tibet	Non-Celebrity Endorsed	Celebrity Endorsed	Totals
Disagree	21.7%	7.3%	12.5% (n=8)
Neutral	52.2%	36.6%	42.2% (n=27)
Agree	26.1%	56.1%	45.3% (n=249)
Totals	100.0% (n=23)	100.0% (n=41)	100.0% (n=64)

Chi-Square (2) = 6.229, sig. (two-tailed) = .044

³Question (celebrity endorsed): The Beastie Boys believe that other countries should do more to end the Chinese military occupation of neighboring Tibet. How do you feel about this issue?

³Question (non-celebrity endorsed): Some people believe that other countries should do more to end the Chinese military occupation of neighboring Tibet. How do you feel about this issue?

agree that the West should do more to help Tibet when they responded to those positions endorsed by celebrities. Looking at blacks only, the endorsement of the Beastie Boys has no significant impact on difference of opinion on the assistance to Tibet question.

The Influence of Alternative Rock

How about the fans of alternative rock, the second most popular form of music among respondents? Are they different from their peers ideologically, or on particular issues? Are they more supportive of women's equal role in society? I would hypothesize that they are for a couple of reasons. First, the messages of alternative rock

tend to be liberal and supportive of women's equality. Importantly as well, many women and women led bands are tremendously successful in this genre. Also, new-wave rock, the precursor of alternative rock, offered women opportunities heretofore denied by other kinds of popular music. Thus I expect the gender revolutionary tradition of alternative rock to continue to have some influence today. Table 5.22 demonstrates that alternative fans are more supportive of women's equality than are fans of other kinds of music.

Table 5.22
Alternative Rock Preference
and Views on women's Equality^a

Women's Equality		(1=equality, 7=women stay home)	
Alter. Fans	Non-Fans	Diff.	Sig. (one-Tailed)
1.65	1.92	.27	.010

^aQuestion: Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale at point 1. Others feel that a woman's place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

Clearly there is a relationship between alternative rock preference and attitude toward women. Fans of the music are significantly more likely to believe in women's equality than non-fans.

Are fans of alternative rock more or less likely to believe it is better to fit in with those around you than fans of other music? I suspect that they would be less likely to believe it is better to fit in. I hypothesize this for a number of reasons. First, non-conformity and individualism frequently are values espoused by alternative rock stars both in their music and through other means. Just being a fan of the music indicates non-conformity to the rest of the world. Table 5.23 shows that fans of alternative rock indeed

are less likely to believe it is a good idea to fit in with those around you, although only marginally so.

Table 5.23
Alternative Rock Preference and Fitting In^a

	Non Alt. Fans	Alt. Fans	Totals
Better to Fit In	15.9%	10.1%	14.5%
Use Your Own Standards	84.1%	89.9%	85.5%
Totals	100% (n=509)	100% (n=169)	100% (n=678)

Chi-square (1) = 3.517, Sig. (two-tailed) = .061

^aQuestion: Which of the following two statements comes closer to your own views? You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is CLOSER to your views. ONE, It is better to fit in with people around you; or TWO, it is better to conduct yourself according to your own standards even if it makes you stand out?

How about concern over newer lifestyles and homosexuality? Does preference for alternative rock predict anything in these areas? I expect greater tolerance for alternative and homosexual lifestyles from fans of alternative rock for the reasons already mentioned for these fans' preferences in other areas. Table 5.24 shows the relationship between preference for alternative rock and concern that newer lifestyles may contribute to the breakdown of society. I expect fans of alternative rock to be less likely to believe this argument.

Clearly there is a relationship between alternative rock preference and the lack of a belief that newer lifestyles contribute to the breakdown of society. Whereas 32.9% of alternative fans disagree with the statement, only 25.5% of non-alternative fans do.

The data are even more striking on the relationship between alternative rock and the moral acceptability of homosexuality. These findings are presented in Table 5.25.

Table 5.24
Alternative Rock Preference and Newer Lifestyles^a

Newer Lifestyles Breakdown Society			
	Non Alt. Fans	Alt. Fans	Totals
Disagree	25.5%	32.9%	27.3% (n=193)
Neutral	20.6%	24.9%	21.6% (n=153)
Agree	53.9%	42.2%	51.1% (n=361)
Totals	100% (n=534)	100% (n=173)	100% (n=707)

Chi-square (2) = 7.297, sig (two-tailed) = .026

^aQuestion: The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society.

Table 5.25
Alternative Preference and Morality of Homosexuality^a

Homosexual Lifestyles Are Morally Acceptable			
	Non Alt. Fans	Alt. Fans	Totals
Disagree	50.3%	32.9%	46.0% (n=325)
Neutral	19.1%	19.1%	19.1% (n=135)
Agree	30.6%	48.0%	34.8% (n=246)
Totals	100% (n=533)	100% (n=173)	100% (n=706)

Chi-square (2) = 19.867, sig (two-tailed) = .000

^aQuestion: Homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable.

Agreement with the statement that homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable was far higher among alternative fans than others.

Celebrities often take political positions outside of their performances. For example, Zack De La Rocha, the lead singer and songwriter of an alternative rock band called Rage Against the Machine, has said, "What passes for democracy today is a sham. It's all about raising money and owing favors to the wrong people." Also, popular folk and alternative rock act The Indigo Girls have supported Native American rights organizations for years. They organize benefit concerts for groups that endorse self-determination for native peoples

I placed a question concerning each of these positions or quotes on each questionnaire. On some of the surveys, there was indication that the position or quote was endorsed by the respective celebrities mentioned above, while on others the quotation or position was merely mentioned. In both cases, students were asked to agree or disagree with the position using a five point scale where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. The different questionnaire versions were randomly distributed in each of the classes. I hypothesized that De La Rocha's and the Indigo Girls' endorsements would lead to greater support for the celebrity's position among alternative rock fans only.

Clearly when a popular alternative rock musician makes the statement, fans of alternative rock are more likely to agree than when the statement is merely printed on the page without support from a performer. Alternative fans are more likely to agree with the claim that democracy is a sham when that statement is made by a popular alternative musician, but unfortunately the difference is not significant. There was an insufficient

Table 5.26
Celebrity Endorsements and Democracy as Sham^a for Alternative Fans Only

Issue:	Non-Celebrity endorsed	Celebrity	Totals
Democracy is a Sham:			
Disagree	20.9%	10.0%	12.7% (n=22)
Neutral	23.3%	23.1%	23.1% (n=40)
Agree	55.8%	66.9%	64.2% (n=111)
Totals	100.0% (n=43)	100.0% (n=130)	100.0% (n=173)

Chi-square (2) = 3.658, sig. (two-tailed) = .161)

^aQuestion (celebrity endorsed version): Zack de la Rocha, of Rage Against the Machine, said, "What passes for democracy today is a sham. It's all about raising money and owing favors to the wrong people." How do you feel about his comments?

^aQuestion (non-celebrity endorsed version): Some people believe that what passes for democracy today is a sham. It's all about raising money and owing favors to the wrong people. How do you feel about this statement?

sample size to analyze the differences on the statement made by the Indigo Girls, but the differences were in the hypothesized direction.

The Influence of Classic Rock

I would expect fans of classic rock to be more liberal overall and more progressive on issues than fans of other kinds of music. This is true for a number of reasons. First, it was during the 1960s and 1970s when classic rock was still

contemporary rock 'n' roll that politics first became prominent in American popular music. During the 1960's and 1970's rock musicians frequently wrote songs with political themes, and almost all of them from the liberal perspective. From Bob Dylan's anti-war songs of the 1960s to Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young's anti-violence, anti-Nixon, anti-racism anthems of the 1970s the music now known as classic rock is replete with liberal political messages. Moreover, the musicians in this genre frequently wrote of doing one's own thing in terms of sex and drugs and bombastic individualism. If young people prefer this music, I would expect it to influence them in a liberal direction.

As demonstrated earlier however, fans of classic rock are not more likely to be liberal than fans of other music, and in fact fans of classic rock are pretty evenly split among liberals, moderates and conservatives. Moreover, classic rock fans are the least likely to be Democrats. However, classic rock fans are the most likely to be more liberal than their parents. This is because, classic rock fans, perhaps ironically, are the most likely to have conservative parents. Thus their movement toward greater liberalism may not show up as actual liberalism or progressive stances on issues. For example, classic rock preference has no influence on abortion position, conformism, newer lifestyles, or moral relativism. However, classic rock does influence positions on some issues.

I would hypothesize that fans of classic rock should be more supportive of women's equality. This was a major theme of the 1960s and 1970s progressives and is often sung about by classic rock performers. Moreover, there are several strong female performers in classic rock such as Janis Joplin, Grace Slick and Joni Mitchell, each of whom still today is respected for their pioneering work for women in rock. As Table 5.27 demonstrates however, this is not the case.

Table 5.27
Classic Rock preference and Women's Equal Role^a

Mean for Classic Rock Fans	Mean for Non-Classic Rock Fans	Diff.	Sig. (one-tail)
2.49	1.80	.69	.000

^aQuestion: Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale at point 1. Others feel that a woman's place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

Clearly fans of classic rock are less supportive of equal roles for women than are non-fans. Why this is the case is puzzling, except that classic rock fans have more conservative parents and parental influence may be more discernible on this issue than on others.

I would expect classic rock fans to be more cynical about politics than non-fans. This should be so because classic rock contains a prevalence of messages critical of the U.S. government and its domestic and international policies during the 1960s and 1970s. This, however, is not the case as Table 5.28 indicates.

Table 5.28
Classic Rock Preference and Cynicism^a

Government Run For:	Non-Classic Fans	Classic Fans	Totals
Benefit of All	22.2%	42.0%	24.0%
A Few Big Interests	77.8%	58.0%	76.0%
Totals	100% (n=513)	100% (n=50)	100% (n=563)

Chi-Square (1) = 9.776, sig. (two-tailed) = .002

^aQuestion: Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

While more cynical than not, classic rock fans are nearly twice as likely as non fans to believe that the government is run for the benefit of all. Also, as Table 5.29 shows, classic rock fans are much more likely than non-fans to believe that not many government officials are crooked. They are less likely to believe that quite a few are. Again this indicates a greater faith in government among classic rock than non-fans that requires explanation. It is difficult to make sense of all this. Perhaps classic rock fans draw a favorable contrast between the relatively benign governmental leaders and policies of their own youth and those experienced by their parents and the focus of massive protest demonstrations. In addition, they have more conservative parents than do fans of other types of music.

Table 5.29
Classic rock Preference and Corruption in Government^a

Corrupt Officials:	Non-Classic Fans	Classic Fans	Totals
Hardly Any	2.9%	1.8%	2.8%
Not Many	28.9%	45.5%	30.4%
Quite a Few	68.2%	52.7%	66.8%
Totals	100% (n=584)	100% (n=55)	100% (n=639)

Chi-Square (2) = 6.519, sig. (two-tailed) = .038

^aQuestion: Do you think that QUITE A FEW of the people running the government are crooked, NOT VERY MANY are, or do you think HARDLY ANY of them are crooked?

Finally I would expect fans of classic rock to be more supportive of the morality of homosexuality. However, as the following table indicates the findings on homosexuality are mixed.

Table 5.30
Classic Preference and Morality of Homosexuality^a

Homosexual Lifestyles Are Morally Acceptable			
	Non Classic Fans	Classic Fans	Totals
Disagree	45.7%	49.2%	46.0% (n=325)
Neutral	20.2%	8.2%	19.1% (n=135)
Agree	34.1%	42.6%	34.8% (n=246)
Totals	100% (n=645)	100% (n=61)	100% (n=706)

Chi-square (2) = 5.471, sig (two-tailed) = .065

^aQuestion: Homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable.

Classic rock fans are more likely than non-fans to agree or disagree on homosexual lifestyles, and less likely to take a neutral position. What this means, if anything, is a puzzle.

The Influence of Country and Western Music

Are fans of country and western music different politically from non-fans?

Because this music is the more conservative and traditional of the favorite kinds of music mentioned, I expect fans' politics to reflect this. Table 5.31 demonstrates the relationship between preference for country music and conformity.

Both country and non-country fans are overwhelmingly in favor of conducting oneself according to one's own standards; however, whereas 86.1% of non-country fans

Table 5.31
Country/Western Preference and Fitting In^a

	Non C&W Fans	C&W Fans	Totals
Better to Fit In	13.9%	23.1%	14.5%
Use Your Own Standards	86.1%	76.9%	85.5%
Totals	100%	100%	100%
	(n=639)	(n=39)	(n=678)

Chi-square (1) = 2.488, Sig. (two-tailed) = .115

^aQuestion: Which of the following two statements comes closer to your own views? You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is CLOSER to your views.

ONE, It is better to fit in with people around you; or TWO, it is better to conduct yourself according to your own standards even if it makes you stand out?

support this position, only 77.5% of country fans do. The difference, however, is not statistically significant. The traditional values often espoused in country music tend to support conformity. There are fixed and unchanging moral standards that one ought to learn and follow. Living in a small town in the North or the South typically requires conformity to the beer-swilling, C & W music listening, blue collar job, pick-up truck driving lifestyle or becoming an outcast.

Country music preference seems to explain some differences of opinion on the abortion question as well, with country fans (as expected) taking the more conservative position. Table 5.32 demonstrates this relationship.

Table 5.32
Country/Western Preference and Abortion^a

Abortion:	Non CW Fans	CW Fans	Totals
Never Permit	10.2%	7.7%	10.0%
Permit in Rape/Incest	31.4%	61.5%	33.1%
Permit/Prove Need	13.2%	10.3%	13.0%
Permit All Abortion	45.2%	20.5%	43.8%
Totals	100%	100%	100%
	(n=668)	(n=39)	(n=707)

Chi-square (3) = 15.682, sig. (two-tailed) = .001

Question: Which comes closer to your views on abortion?

- By law, abortion should never be permitted
- The law should permit abortion only in the case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger
- The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established
- By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.

Country fans are half as likely as non-fans to believe that abortion should be permitted in all circumstances. Moreover, country fans are almost twice as likely as non-country fans to permit abortion only in cases of rape or incest, which is a strict limitation.

Patriotism as a political theme is prevalent in country music as well. I expect that country fans are less supportive of the legality of flag burning than non-country fans.

Table 5.33 demonstrates that this is in fact the case, although the relationship again only approaches statistical significance.

Table 5.33
Country/Western Preference and Flag Burning^a

Flag Burning:	Non-Country Fans	Country Fans	Totals
Against the Law	64.8%	77.2%	65.5%
Legal	35.2%	22.9%	34.5%
Totals	100% (n=576)	100% (35)	100% (n=611)

Chi-Square = 2.239, Sig. (two-tailed) = .135

^aQuestion: Should burning or destroying the American flag as a form of political protest be LEGAL or should it be AGAINST THE LAW?

The patriotism of country music fans manifests itself in their opposition to the legality of flag burning. While nearly 65 percent of non-country fans oppose it, 77.2 percent of country fans do, but the difference is not statistically significant. But this is only a piece of the patriotism puzzle.

Country fans are less cynical and less likely to believe that people in government are corrupt. Those who are very patriotic may be less disposed to be cynical about politics and government than others. Table 5.34 shows the relationship between country

music and cynicism, and table 5.35 shows the relationship between country music and belief in the crookedness of government officials.

Country fans are nearly twice as likely as non-country fans to believe that the government is run for the benefit of all. Furthermore, more country fans believe that hardly any government officials are corrupt and fewer believe that quite a few are. Troublingly, however, a majority of both groups believes that quite a few government officials are corrupt.

Table 5.34
Country/Western Preference and Cynicism^a

Government Run For:	Non-Country Fans	Country Fans	Totals
Benefit of All	22.7%	45.2%	24.0%
A Few Big Interests	77.3%	54.8%	76.0%
Totals	100% (n=532)	100% (n=31)	100% (n=563)

Chi-Square (1) = 8.075, Sig. (two-tailed) = .004

^aQuestion: Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?

Table 5.35
Country/Western Preference and Corruption in Government^a

Corrupt Officials:	Non-Country Fans	Country Fans	Totals
Hardly Any	2.5%	9.7%	2.8%
Not Many	30.4%	29.0%	30.4%
Quite a Few	67.1%	61.3%	66.8%
Totals	100% (n=608)	100% (n=31)	100% (n=639)

Chi-Square (2) = 5.612, Sig. (two-tailed) = .060

^aQuestion: Do you think that QUITE A FEW of the people running the government are crooked, NOT VERY MANY are, or do you think HARDLY ANY of them are crooked?

Are country fans, like fans of other kinds of music, influenced by celebrity endorsements? What are the differences in level of agreement with political positions when taken by a country musician versus the same position when not endorsed by a musician? Table 5.36 shows the differences on the issue of assistance to American farmers among country fans when endorsed by Tim McGraw, a popular country star and the same position when not so endorsed.

Table 5.36
Celebrity Endorsement and Aid to Farmers^a (Country Fans only)

	Non Celebrity endorsed	Endorsed	Totals
Gov't Should Do Less	12.5%	0.0%	2.8% (n=1)
Gov't Does Enough	50.0%	10.7%	19.4% (n=7)
Gov't Should Do More	37.5%	89.3%	77.8% (n=28)
Totals	100% (n=8)	100% (n=28)	100% (n=36)

Chi-Square (2) = 10.584, sig. (two-tailed) = .005

^aQuestion (celebrity endorsed): Tim McGraw has performed at a concert designed to raise money for American farmers. Many believe that the government should do more to help these farmers. How do You feel about this?

^aQuestion (non-celebrity endorsed): Many believe that the government should do more to help American farmers. How do You feel about this?

As table 5.36 shows, although the number of country fans is too small to draw reliable conclusions and were not evenly distributed between celebrity and non-celebrity endorsed versions, country fans' responding to the celebrity endorsed farm question were less likely to think that government should do less, the position opposite that of the

performer. Moreover, they were much more likely to believe the government should do more.

I expect that fans of country music are more likely than non-fans to be influenced by country star Tim McGraw's position on assistance to farmers. The differences were greater, but low sample size prevents meaningful analysis.

Music Preference and Being More Liberal than Parents

In order to determine the independent influences of different music preferences on the ideology of young people, I performed a logistic regression. Whether or not the youth was more liberal than both parents as the dependent variable (1=more liberal; 0=not more liberal) Popular media use measures were the independent variables. Only four of these proved significant or nearly significant: alternative rock preference (1=yes; 0=no), classic rock preference (1=yes; 0=no), country and western preference (1=yes; 0=no) and hours spent listening to one's own music collection (ranging from 1 to 4). Moreover, the influence of each of these was in the expected direction. Table 5.37 indicates the results.

Table 5.37
Logistic Regression Predicting which Youths Are More Liberal than Both Parents

Variable	b	s.e.	df	Sig.	Exp (b)
Alternative	.5587	.2393	1	.0196	1.7484
Classic Rock	.7920	.3411	1	.0202	2.2079
Country	-.9671	.7410	1	.1918	.3802
Listen	.2045	.0960	1	.0332	1.2269
Constant	-2.3592	.2637	1	.0000	

Chi-square (4) = 16.350, sig. = .0026

Table 5.38
Music Preference and Use on Probability of Being More Liberal than Parents

Alternative fans	P	Classic Rock fans	P
Less than 1 Hour	.17	Less than 1 Hour	.20
Between 1 and 2	.20	Between 1 and 2	.24
Between 2 and 3	.23	Between 2 and 3	.28
More than 3	.27	More than 3	.32
Country fans	P	Other fans	P
Less than 1 Hour	.04	Less than 1 Hour	.10
Between 1 and 2	.05	Between 1 and 2	.12
Between 2 and 3	.06	Between 2 and 3	.15
More than 3	.08	More than 3	.18

Being a fan of alternative rock music multiplies the odds of being more liberal than both parents by 1.7484, holding all else constant. Being a fan of classic rock multiplies the odds of being more liberal than both parents by 2.2079. Being a fan of country music reduces the odds, multiplying them by .3802. Also, for each level increase in music use, the odds of being more liberal than parents are multiplied by 1.2269. All of these relationships are significant, or in the case of country music's influence, nearly significant. Table 5.38 shows the joint effect of music preference and usage on the probability of being more liberal than parents. Fully 32% of classic rock fans and 27% of alternative fans who listen to their collections more than three hours per day are predicted to be more liberal than both parents. These percentages drop off substantially with less listening.

Influence of Music on Political Knowledge

Music may also influence political knowledge. First, the more one listens to music the less time one presumably has for reading a paper or watching the news on

television, two activities that contribute to greater political knowledge. Interestingly, listening to one's own music collection is positively related to listening to music on the radio ($\tau\text{-}b = .371$, sig. two tailed = .000) and watching entertainment television ($\tau\text{-}b = .075$, sig. two tailed = .020). There is no relationship between listening to one's own music and watching the news or reading the newspaper. Listening to music on the radio is also related to watching entertainment television ($\tau\text{-}b = .093$, sig. two-tailed = .003). Listening to music on the radio however is not correlated with reading the paper or watching the news on television. Thus, listening to music is not associated with reading a paper or watching news on the television, and has little impact upon political knowledge.

Does musical preference influence political knowledge? This appears to be the case. I expect fans of the more politicized music to be more politically knowledgeable than non-fans. More specifically, fans of rap, alternative rock, and country ought to know a little more than others. The results are a bit surprising.

Rap fans have a mean political knowledge score of 4.02, while non-fans score a mean of 4.40. The difference of .38 is significant (prob. = .030, one-tailed). Afro-Centric rap includes political themes, but it comprises only a small proportion of the total output of rap musicians. The overwhelming majority of rap does not set out to educate its listeners politically.

What about the political knowledge of alternative rock fans? Fans of this music have a mean political knowledge score of 4.50, while non-fans score 4.24. While this is a small difference, it is significant (sig. = .065, one-tailed). I believe fans of this music are slightly more knowledgeable than non-fans because of the overt attempts of so many musicians in this genre to educate their fans by making public statements, performing at

benefit concerts, or allowing groups to set up information tables at their concerts. This is especially true with respect to information tables at concerts. About 24.4% of alternative fans report having attended a performance where information tables were set up, while only 15.1% of fans of other styles of music report this. Clearly alternative musicians are more likely to try to inform their fans about politics, and this effort may be yielding at least some minimal results.

What about classic rock? I would expect it to have little impact on knowledge of contemporary political leaders because most of the politicians mentioned in the music no longer hold office. This is not the case however. Classic rock fans score a mean on the political knowledge index of 4.84, while non-fans score 4.25, and the difference is significant at the .028 (one-tailed) level. Perhaps the historical political content of classic rock primes fans of classic rock to pay attention to contemporary politics.

Finally, despite the high prevalence of political messages in country music, its fans are no more knowledgeable than fans of other music. Perhaps the following statement is very generally true: musicians who try to inform only through their music (country) may not be as successful as musicians who inform through music, concerts and information booths at shows (alternative rock). Fans of the kinds of music where almost no attempt is made to educate or convince are less knowledgeable than fans of other music (rap).

Summary

From this review of music it is clear that young people spend a great deal of time listening to the radio and their own personal music collections. The relatively simple premise which this research is built is that an activity which young people spend so much

time doing (and that contains some political content) might have some influence on their politics. This appears to be the case.

In terms of overall exposure, increased music listening appears to correlate with ideology, especially on the extremes of the 7-point liberal conservative scale. Moreover, greater music listening predicts less agreement with the claim that newer lifestyles are a threat to society. Also greater music use correlates with an increased belief in moral relativism.

A majority of young people have disagreed with a political message in a song. Whites are more likely than blacks to have done so, and men are more likely than women. The most frequently disagreed with theme is violence, followed by anti-religion, anti-women's rights and pro-premarital sex and promiscuity. Conservatives are more likely to disagree with themes from a conservative orientation than liberals are to disagree from a liberal orientation. I believe this is because conservative youths more often are raised by strict parents and find more to object in music than liberal youths raised by nurturing parents who are taught to take in and sort out all the various influences on their politics.

Young people's perception of the political orientations of popular musicians appears to influence their politics as well. Music preference seems to matter here a great deal. Generally fans of the kind of music performed by the musician in question are influenced by the musician. Sometimes the level of influence eclipses that of parents. For example, many alternative rock fans see themselves, ideologically, as closer to musician Zack de la Rocha than either mother or father. Interestingly as well, country fans and rap fans show much higher correlations with parents than do alternative fans.

Listening to music on the radio and listening to their own collections positively correlates with being more liberal than parents. Further, having attended concerts where interest groups have set up information booths also positively correlates with being more liberal than one's parents, because the political philosophy and issue positions of these organizations are liberal.

Music preference appears to influence the politics of young people as well. Music preference predicts ideology, but only among whites. Alternative rock fans are the most liberal, while country fans are the least. Party is influenced by music choice as well, but only among blacks. Country fans are the least likely to be more liberal than parents, while classic and alternative rock fans are the most likely, and the more time they spend listening to their preferred kind of music the more likely they are to be more liberal.

Rap music has some influence on young people's political orientations. Rap fans are a little less likely to believe that newer lifestyles contribute to the breakdown of society. Race matters here though. White rap fans are more likely to strongly agree with the claim than non-fans, whereas black rap fans are only slightly more likely to agree. Rap may be a cynical statement that society has broken down but may not be support for the breakdown. Rap musicians are able to influence their fans, but race appears to matter again. White rap acts are able to influence white fans, and black rap acts are likely more easily able to influence black fans. In terms of women's equality, rap and race combine to have a significant influence once again. Black rap fans are significantly less supportive of women's equality than black non-rap fans. Rap has no influence on white fans' perspective on sexual equality.

Fans of alternative rock are more in favor of women's equality than non-fans.

They are more likely to believe it is better to live by one's own standards. Alternative fans do not believe that newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society and they tend to be more in favor of homosexuality than non-fans. Moreover, fans of the music are more likely than non-fans to agree with political positions when taken by performers in the genre.

Classic rock fans seem to be more conservative than non-fans. Moreover, they are more patriotic, less supportive of equal roles for women, and more extreme on the abortion question. This could be the case for a couple of reasons. First, perhaps the young fans of classic rock are missing the liberalizing messages and merely enjoying the music as kitsch and nostalgia. In other words, like many young people in the 1960s and 1970s perhaps they are just going along for the ride. Also, the questionnaire did not offer the respondents a choice of "rock 'n' roll" in terms of music preference. Rock 'n' roll, both the classic and contemporary variants, is macho, male dominated music. I expect fans of this music to be more conservative, patriotic, and less supportive of equal roles for women. Perhaps fans of politics-free, misogynistic rock 'n' roll selected classic rock as the category nearest their actual preference.

Country and western music fans are politically different from non-fans as well. They are more likely to believe it is better to fit in than other youths do. They are less supportive of abortion rights than others. Moreover they are less cynical about the national government than others. Finally, as with the other kinds of music, country musicians may be able to influence their fans on political issues, such as assistance to farmers.

Finally, music preference may affect political knowledge. Rap fans appear to be

less knowledgeable than others, while alternative fans appear to know a little bit more. Country fans know neither more nor less than fans of other music.

Of all the elements of the popular culture, clearly music has the greatest impact on young people's political values. The influences are relatively specific. Fans are influenced differently, depending on the kind of music they prefer. Further, use of music as measured in hours per day is important. Type of music and exposure interact. For youths with liberal parents, listening to music generally reinforces pre-existing values, as do other elements of the popular culture. The popular culture does not provide reinforcement for young conservatives' pre-existing conservative values.

What does this mean for the values that youths will hold in the future? I expect that liberal youths will continue to have their liberal values reinforced when they listen to most types of popular music. I expect that conservative youths' relatively durable values may weaken and perhaps change over time due to the absence of reinforcement, especially as they distance themselves from their parents. Although some elements of the popular culture do reinforce conservative values (i.e., country music), they are less prominent than elements of the popular culture that reinforce liberal values or no widely accepted values at all.

CHAPTER 6

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION, LEARNING THEORY AND CULTURE WARS REVISITED

In this work I presented a theory of the political socialization process that includes the entertainment media as important agents of socialization. I used data gathered from surveys of undergraduate college students to demonstrate a number of political effects of the entertainment media. These effects are important because they are linked with the ongoing conflict in American society over the basic values that define the political community, the conflict some call the “culture war.”

Political socialization should remain a worthwhile subject of study for political scientists. However, political scientists and other social scientists must enlarge the scope of their research on the agents of political socialization to include the entertainment media. This lack of imagination is one of the reasons this very important sub-field of political science has stalled.

Political scientists generally believe parents, schools, churches and the news media politically socialize children, and roughly in that order of importance. While each of these has an impact, researchers who focused exclusively on these agents of socialization at times came up with very tenuous results, or no significant results at all. Thus, if parents have little enduring significance, it suggests that there may be no answer to the question of how young people learn about politics. I do not believe this is the case. Political socialization research is difficult because there are so many independent variables (agents) that influence the acquisition and holding of political values by young people. This complexity, rather than suggesting that political socialization research ought to abate, instead suggests to me that it ought to continue, but with more realistic

expectations.

Political scientists search for the smallest number of independent variables to explain the largest amount of variation in a dependent variable. This method is not always the best to apply to socialization research. Certainly there are independent variables that explain a fair amount of young people's political values, and to a large extent these have been identified. One of the best examples is the influence of parents' party attachments on their children's party attachments. Yet the effects thus far accounted for are not very large, and thus much remains to be explained. Popular media may not be the sole or even the key factor in explaining young people's political attitudes. It seems likely that nothing will soon replace parents, the schools, churches, peer groups and so on. However, the research presented in the preceding chapters clearly demonstrates that the entertainment media do influence young people in some circumstances. The entertainment media may not be the most important agents, but they do matter.

I defined political socialization as the process by which young people acquire and hold political values. Inglehart's work concerning the shift to post-materialism in industrial society employs this definition because it helps to explain how young people conceive of politics, how they define political ideology, and what political issues current in the popular culture they pay attention to. A focus on political values helps shed light on why young people might perceive politics in the personalistic and individualistic ways the data indicate that they do. It helps explain levels of patriotism and nationalism felt by young people. It assists in explaining increased attention to environmental and other supranational concerns. It explains why young people conceive of politics in terms of

individual moral choices, rather than of politics in terms of collective or public choices. It sheds light on the importance of “lifestyle liberalism” and “culture wars” issues among the young. It explains why young people believe Madonna, who has expressed few political beliefs, is more liberal than Eddie Vedder, who helped convince Congress to investigate Ticketmaster’s alleged monopoly over concert ticket distribution.

Young people think about politics in ways that traditional political science terminology does not account for. As myriad scholars, politicians and pundits have argued there is a culture war occurring in the U.S. (see Gitlin, 1997). The war, as seen by conservatives, rages on many fronts. Primarily it is seen as a battle for the hearts and minds of American youths over competing value dichotomies that define a wide variety of issues including abortion, homosexuality, violence, women’s rights, drug use, promiscuity, single parenting and so on. Conservatives believe that permissive attitudes on these issues are prevalent in the entertainment media, and the data presented above indicate that in many cases they are correct. Conservatives also tend to assume that the entertainment media do influence youths’ values. This is undoubtedly true, but processes of influence are very complex, and determining the effects of the entertainment media on young people’s politics is no easy process. If determining the influence of parents proved elusive to scholars in the 1970s, why should we expect that determining the influence of entertainment in the 1990s ought to be any easier?

The data indicate that “culture wars” issues are important to young people generally. Young people are not a homogeneous group. They are alike only with respect to their age and the period during which they are living. Different elements of the popular culture suggest to them competing sets of values by which to live their lives. It is

a mistake to frame these in the old left/right, or liberal/conservative frameworks, because the popular culture and young people rarely frame an issue this way.

Usually the conflicts presented in the popular culture seem to involve several value distinctions -- hedonism vs. delayed gratification, individualism vs. family and community, equality vs. authority and hierarchy. That violence and sex in the popular media are commonplace demonstrates the widespread appeal of hedonism, if only as spectator. For example, religion, with its focus on morality and punishment, is more often presented as the source of problems, rather than the solution. Rocker Marilyn Manson attracts fans and the ire of conservatives with his shocking opposition to religious values.

Sexual intercourse is presented as a recreational activity to enjoy with many partners or to use as one more tool to achieve success; while monogamy, children and long-term relationships are rarely endorsed. For example, daytime and prime-time soap operas like *Beverly Hills, 90210* and *Melrose Place* depict a good deal of bed-hopping not only for fun but manipulation as well.

Class distinctions are blurred or misunderstood as expected in a post-materialist culture. How does Tim Taylor, the patriarch of *Home Improvement*, afford his family's upper middle-class lifestyle while working for a local cable television program?

The legitimacy of institutions, the need for hierarchy and respect for authority are mocked. The individual's needs and desires are paramount, while the community's needs are neglected or overlooked. Perhaps no program mocked authority more or placed the individual's needs higher than *Seinfeld*. The popular culture emphasizes individual rights, not responsibility, family, friends and community. There is certainly more

alternative rock, rap, and classic rock music singing the praises of individualism than the virtues of community, family and neighborhood.

These are the distinctions that define the culture wars. The popular culture presents messages that fit on each side of these dichotomies, but the preponderance appear to fit on the side of hedonism, individualism, equality, and the meaningless of class distinctions. The research presented above demonstrated that different kinds of young people are influenced by these competing messages in different ways. Not all young people approach the popular culture in the same way. In other words, young people are “pre-socialized” before they are influenced by the popular culture. Depending on when they start watching television, listening to music, or going to the movies young people have already been subject to the other agents of socialization. Thus the popular culture either contradicts or reinforces existing political values, more than it instills new ones.

Learning theory helps explain the influence of the entertainment media on young people’s political values. Thorndike’s law of effect (see Skinner, 1974) describes operant learning, whereby behavior is shaped and maintained by its consequences. Behavior that is rewarded tends to increase in frequency, while that which is not rewarded tends to decrease in frequency and may eventually disappear. Contingencies in the social environment determine whether a particular behavior is rewarded or punished.

Agents of socialization (parents, schools, churches, peers, news and entertainment media) have some degree of control over the contingencies of reinforcement to which youths are subjected. For example, a parent may offer smiles and kind words of support when a child parrots the parent’s political ideology and this positively reinforces the

child's budding ideology. Similarly, a young person may or may not experience rewards through experience with the popular culture as well. One could witness a behavior in a movie, television program, or song that makes a political or moral statement. If the message contradicts the individual's political, ethical, or moral beliefs that is an unpleasant experience and thus constitutes negative reinforcement. Just as touching a hot stove teaches a child through pain that the choice to do so was wrong, when rapper L'il Kim sings that she sells sex for money, this contradicts a youth's belief in the sanctity of sexuality. The individual thereafter avoids repeating the unpleasant experience by avoiding the element of the popular culture that led to the unpleasant experience.

On the other hand, should other components of the social environment (e.g. peers) provide positive reinforcement for initially unpleasant experiences, the individual's ethical and moral beliefs might change over time. In other words, there are two different ways to avoid the unpleasant experience of popular culture that contradicts one's values. One can avoid the popular culture that produces the unpleasant experience, which is probably the more likely behavior. Or, less likely, one could change one's values. The initial negative experience might not be so negative that the individual makes an all-out effort to avoid the popular culture completely. The individual may know the messages are "wrong," based on his/her existing values, but still find the message sufficiently reinforcing due to its fictional rendering of the consequences of promiscuity, drug use, violence and so on. This repeated exposure might break down the initial opposition to the messages. How frequently the message must be repeated and/or how much support from other elements of the young person's social world the new message requires before sinking in requires longitudinal and true experimental research.

On the other hand, if the message of the popular culture agrees with the young person's values, this is pleasure, and thus positive reinforcement of the individual's beliefs and behavior. When a parent promises a child his favorite dessert for cleaning up his room and then delivers it, this is pleasure. When a child suspects that drug use is not so bad after all and sees a movie like *Dazed and Confused* where drug use is apparently glorified, the youth experiences pleasure and has his values reinforced, and will likely seek out similarly reinforcing experiences.

The literature on political socialization has not drawn upon theory from the field of social biology, which may be especially relevant to understanding potential limits to the influence of parents on children. The influence of parents is especially worthy of consideration because it has the first and most durable impact and that which the popular culture either contradicts or reinforces.

Children are simultaneously susceptible and resistant to parental efforts at shaping their beliefs and behavior. In general, a parent and child both share a common interest in the child's success and welfare. However, there may be conflicts of interest as well. (Trivers, 1974) Parental manipulation of children generally should be directed at encouraging children to behave in ways that will lead to the children becoming successful in raising children of their own.

In contemporary American society it is easy to identify the things that lead to children becoming successful in this sense (Essock-Vitale and McGuire, 1988; Buss, 1995). For women, the correlates are marriage, younger age at first marriage, physical attractiveness, marriage to a man of high social standing, and no promiscuity. For men, the correlates are marriage, younger age of wife, number of wives, and education and

economic resources. Parents ought to reinforce what are usually called “traditional” or “conservative” values. Girls ought not to be promiscuous, should marry young to men with money, and should be physically attractive. Men, on the other hand ought to be encouraged to achieve and succeed and marry and provide for a young, attractive woman.

To what extent do parents actually instruct children on appropriate models of behavior? As argued previously, Lakoff (1996) has identified two polar models of parenting—strict parent and nurturing parent. The strict parent model is controlling, establishes clear-cut contingencies of reinforcement, and makes frequent use of rewards and punishments. The nurturing parent model is less controlling. Parents protect children from clear-cut dangers, but rely more upon contingencies of reinforcement in the larger social world to shape children's behavior.

What kind of socialization children benefit from most cannot be solved here. In other words, it is unclear which model is “right” in an objective sense. However, entertainment media attract large audiences of youths to sell them products by depicting behaviors contrary traditional conservative values -- the values taught to children under the strict parent model. The entertainment media tend to reinforce promiscuous sex, drugs, hedonism and so on. In effect, the entertainment media tell youths raised under the strict parent model that their parents and other agents of socialization are wrong about the negative consequences of these behaviors. Thus, there is a competition for influence of young people between parents, the church, the school and other traditional agents of socialization on one hand, and much of the popular media on the other. Competition takes the form of entertainment media either challenging or complementing pre-existing values. The competition is seen as especially fierce by children raised under the strict

parent model.

As the research presented demonstrates, youths sometimes recognize and believe the messages of the entertainment media. As argued earlier, a youth successfully influenced by the strict parent model (conservative youths) dislikes the messages in the entertainment media because they have never been reinforced by parents (and the church and school which were likely selected for the child by the family) and are unlikely to be reinforced by them. This is the group that finds much to object to in the entertainment media. Generally the data confirm that the less progressive and more conservative youths are the most likely to disagree with the entertainment media. This is especially true in regard to lifestyle and culture wars themes in the entertainment media.

These conservative youths, however, may change their own values after repeated exposure to the contrary messages. This is especially true if the youths lose connections to other traditional agents of socialization, as often happens in college. If youths are removed from the influence of parents and parentally arranged contingencies such as the K-12 schools and the church, continued exposure by such youths to the entertainment media may result in rapid changes in their attitudes and behaviors due to changing contingencies of reinforcement. Thus we expect great changes in youths in the years immediately after they move away from home for the first time. Thus, the strict father model actually produces a less secure and durably socialized child. The data neither confirm nor deny this hypothesis. Age seems to be of no significance in predicting whether youths are more liberal than their parents, but the range in the sample is very narrow. Attending Bowling Green University (the traditional residential university utilized in the survey), however, is correlated with being more liberal than one's parents.

It is unclear if this is because B.G. students, as residents of a traditional university are removed from parents and parentally arranged agents of socialization, or if it is because B.G. parents are more conservative than Wayne State parents. However, with the exception of listening to the radio, conservative youths do not use the entertainment media at lower levels than liberals or moderates. Thus there is continued exposure, and the possibility of change.

A youth raised under the nurturing parent model has learned by trial and error from experiences which messages in the entertainment media to accept and which to reject. They are better able to assign relative weights to parental messages and those of other agents of socialization, and to make balanced choices. Thus I expect these youths' political values actually to be more stable when there is a change in the environment. They are accustomed to making choices and sorting out the myriad influences they face. Not having spent their lives being told what to believe, they do not feel the need to reject previous agents of socialization, whether from youthful rebellion or intellectual choice. Thus children raised in this way are more stable than children raised under the strict parent model. The data seem to confirm this. When they pay attention to the liberal messages in the entertainment media, liberal youths appear to have their liberalism positively reinforced. The few conservative messages (negative reinforcement) seem to have no influence on them.

Finally, a youth raised with minimal parenting may not see through the fantasy of the messages of the entertainment media, be positively reinforced by the pleasure experienced through experiencing them, and think that they are valid. The data demonstrated that those individuals most likely to come from homes with no father at all

are often the most likely to be politically influenced by the entertainment media. For example, 21.2% of black youths report their ideology as closer to black actor Will Smith than their own mothers. How durable this influence is remains open to investigation.

There is a relationship between previous socialization and response to the popular culture. The overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey are between the ages of 17 and 22. Thus, they are at the end of the socialization process as youths. There is still the possibility of change, but political learning processes at these ages include mainly the reinforcement of existing beliefs, and less commonly, the replacement of existing beliefs with new ones. Because of the general opposition of the popular culture to the conservative strict parent ethic, individuals socialized under such a model (conservatives) will initially be less influenced by the popular culture and more likely to reject the messages in it. They may even experience a hardening of their conservatism as a result of limited exposure to it. Liberals, those raised in the nurturing parent model especially, will be the most positively influenced by the popular culture and the least likely to reject the messages in it.

Each of the elements of the entertainment media has been investigated as to its influence on young people's political values. Let us summarize the influence of each of these agents, beginning with movies.

The Influence of Movies on Political Socialization

Young people do watch movies, and the movies they watch are Hollywood blockbusters. The movies, however, do not appear to have a great influence on the political beliefs of young people. There is some influence. For example, women are less likely than men to disagree with the message of a movie. Perhaps this is because they see

women characters who, while engaging in reprehensible behavior by the standards of traditional morality, are nonetheless strong and successful. For their part, men may be more likely to disagree because they see women who are powerful, manipulative and independent – the very opposite of what they are naturally attracted to -- that is, women who are submissive and dependent.

I looked at how youths placed themselves ideologically relative to actors. A not insignificant number of youths, both black and white, placed themselves ideologically closer to actors rather than to their mother. This might mean that they are projecting their ideology onto the actors. Undoubtedly, in some cases, this is true. Nevertheless, some parents offer their children a smorgasbord of ethical and political choices and allow their children to make their own selections. Some might call this weak parenting. Other youths may have once more closely identified with parents, but after they have moved away from home, K-12 education, and perhaps even the church other agents of socialization (like the movies) have stepped in to replace the traditional ones. Of course a longitudinal study is needed to demonstrate this.

The Influence of Television on Political Socialization

Next I examined television. Television influences young people's political values, both in ways that were anticipated and ways that were not. First, there is a great deal of political content on television, even in the programs especially popular with youths. Young people recognize this political content and frequently disagree with it. Homosexuality, sexual freedom and racism are the dominant themes with which young people disagree.

Moreover, those who disagree with these messages are the more conservative youths, consistent with the theory. Whether or not these youths will soften their attitudes with repeated exposure or peer pressure remains an open question and is answerable only through a longitudinal study.

As discussed above, television's political messages are primarily liberal and tolerant. Increased use of television correlates positively with increased support for abortion rights. Increased television use correlates with decreased support for women's equality. Viewers of greater amounts of television are more likely to believe that newer lifestyles contribute to the breakdown of society, and also with the claim that moral standards ought to change with the times. This is an apparent contradiction. Increased television watching correlates with lower support for homosexual rights, and overall, a more conservative viewpoint.

What conclusions can be drawn from these disparate findings, especially in light of the theory this dissertation explores? I believe this analysis demonstrates that television reinforces beliefs in those who have already acquired them from earlier agents of socialization. Youths who are already conservative are exposed to messages with which they disagree, and the unpleasantness of this experience leads to a hardening of these beliefs rather than a change. Whether increased distance from strict parents and other agents of socialization will lead to television's having a greater influence remains to be determined. Liberals are positively reinforced by the pleasure they receive from witnessing liberal messages in television.

Preference for certain programming appears to correlate with certain political beliefs. Fans of the situation comedy *Seinfeld* are more conformist than non-fans, while

fans of *The Simpsons* are less conformist than non-fans. Fans of *E.R.* are more tolerant of homosexuality than non-fans. Fans of television programs that present promiscuity (including among women) as the norm are more favorable toward women's equality than non fans. The differences remain large and significant when only women fans are examined. Thus, television watching does not make all youths more conservative, just those who are already conservative. Liberals on the other hand seem to become more liberal from watching liberal programming (e.g. *E.R.* and the dramas with promiscuous female characters).

Television is unique. Popular programs last for many seasons and develop loyal fans. Fans select programs they like for various reasons. Certainly some of this selection, whether conscious or not, is based on whether or not the values supported by the program conform with those of the fan. Thus conservatives probably will not watch the sexually explicit shows, thus limiting these programs' influence over them. Women who want to see strong female characters will watch the sexy soap operas. Those who prefer to fit in and go along with the crowd will be attracted to *Seinfeld*, while individualists will seek out programming like *The Simpsons*. This will limit the ability of these programs to influence non-fans or casual watchers, since people who do not like a program will not watch it consistently. However these programs do have the power to reinforce beliefs and values among their fans. This pattern of behavior and its political significance is consistent with the theory I have been expounding in this work thus far. Young liberals probably seek out programs they believe will be consistent with their values. Young conservatives, finding little television consistent with their values, watch television and find their conservatism hardened by exposure to liberal messages with

which they disagree.

Television watching not only influences political attitudes and beliefs but also activities as well. As expected, entertainment television use positively correlates with watching the news, but not with political knowledge. Entertainment television use positively correlates with listening to music, both on the radio and from one's own personal collection. Most interestingly, entertainment television use negatively correlates with talking to others about politics. The dying art of intelligent political conversation is being hurried to its grave by increased use of entertainment television. Moreover, blacks watch more television than whites, and each of the relationships mentioned above, with the exception of news television use, increases in strength when looking at African-Americans only.

The Influence of Music on Political Socialization

Music influences young people's politics as well. In terms of overall exposure, young people spend a great deal of time listening to the radio and their own personal music collections. Increased music listening correlates with ideology, especially on the extremes of the 7-point liberal conservative scale. Moreover, greater music listening predicts less agreement with the claim that newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society. Also greater music use correlates with an increased belief in moral relativism. Each of these relationships is as expected.

A majority of young people have disagreed with a political message in a song. Whites are more likely than blacks to have done so, while men are more likely than women. The most frequently disagreed with theme is violence, followed by anti-religion,

anti-women's rights and pro-premarital sex and promiscuity. Conservatives are more likely to disagree with themes from a conservative orientation than liberals are to disagree from a liberal orientation. I believe this is because conservatives tend to be raised by strict parents and find more to object to in music than liberals raised in homes where parents are more nurturing and teach their children to sort out on their own all the various influences on their political values.

It is not surprising that conservative white males do not like violence and promiscuity in the popular culture. I suspect this is the case because violence by non-whites and female sexual power are perceived by conservative white males as attacks on the legitimacy of white male dominance of economic, social, and political life.

Young people's perception of the political orientations of popular musicians appears to influence their politics as well. Generally black musicians have a greater influence on blacks and white musicians have a greater influence on whites. Music preference has some impact in this area as well. Generally fans of the kind of music performed by the musician in question are more influenced by the musician. Sometimes the influence seems to eclipse that of parents. This is a condition I would expect to occur from children raised by nurturing parents because such parents do not insulate their children from the popular culture. For example, among alternative rock fans, music preference is more than an expression of musical taste. It is also a choice to join a distinctive sub-culture of friends who dress, talk and probably think alike. It is not improbable that such a closely knit community could take the place of parents.

Interestingly as well, country fans and rap fans show much higher correlations with parents than do alternative fans. I would like to speculate a bit about why this might

be true. For country fans I suspect they are more likely raised by strict parents. Therefore in the short term they show a greater correlation with their parents' ideology because they have been exposed less frequently to contrary agents of socialization. These individuals would be an interesting group to watch over time because I would hypothesize that as distance from parents increases and other agents of socialization contrary to parents emerge, sudden changes in values may occur as well.

In terms of why rap fans are more closely connected with parents I believe this may be due to race. Blacks show a greater correlation with each parent's ideology than do whites. The correlation between youth and mother's ideology for blacks is .573 (sig. two-tailed = .000) and the correlation between youth and father's ideology for blacks is .405 (sig. two-tailed = .000). The correlation between youth and mother's ideology for whites is .404 (sig. two-tailed = .000). The correlation between youth and father's ideology for whites is .327 (sig. two-tailed = .000). That blacks are more closely related to parents' ideology and make up a plurality of rap fans probably explains why rap fans appear to be more closely related to parents.

In terms of young people who are more liberal than their parents, both listening to music on the radio and listening to their own collections positively correlate with the likelihood of holding such an ideological position. More interestingly, having attended concerts where interest groups had set up information booths positively related with the likelihood of being more liberal than one's parents too. This is as expected. The musicians who allow interest groups are more liberal as are the interest groups invited to disseminate information.

Music preference appears to influence the politics of young people as well. Music

preference predicts ideology, but only among whites. Alternative rock fans are the most liberal, while country fans are the least. Party is influenced by music choice as well, but only among blacks. Country fans are the least likely to be more liberal than parents, while classic and alternative rock fans are the most likely. Classic rock fans may be more liberal than parents because their parents are more conservative than other parents. Mothers of classic rock fans and alternative fans are the most conservative, while fathers of classic rock fans are the most conservative. These differences are significant as well. Country fans on the other hand are more likely to be Democrats and less likely to be liberal. This may be because country fans are lifestyle conservatives and pro-union economic liberals, and this distinction does not appear on the blunt seven point scale.

Rap music and race together have a great deal of influence on young people's political orientations. Rap fans are a little less likely to believe that newer lifestyles contribute to the breakdown of society. White rap fans are more likely to strongly agree with the claim than non-fans, whereas black rap fans are only slightly more likely to agree. Rap may be a cynical statement that society has broken down, but does not demonstrate support for the breakdown.

Moral relativism, rap preference and race are related as well. White rap fans are less morally relativistic than white non-fans, whereas black rap fans are more morally relativistic than black non-fans. I believe this is because white rap fans approach rap somewhat voyeuristically in terms of the socially pathological messages, but remain fairly strongly opposed to them and to moral relativism. Blacks are more morally relativistic than whites, but this does not explain why black rap fans would be more relativistic than non-rap fans. It may be defensive. Black rap fans take an "anything

goes” attitude in terms of the music because they may perceive as racist white elite complaints against the music. Rap musicians are able to influence their fans. White rap acts are able to influence white fans, and black rap acts are likely more easily able to influence black fans. In terms of women’s equality, rap and race combine to have a significant influence. Black rap fans are significantly less supportive of women’s equality than black non-rap fans. Rap has no influence on white fans’ views on women’s equality.

Fans of alternative rock are more in favor of women’s equality than non-fans. They are more likely to believe it is better to live by one’s own standards. Alternative fans do not believe that newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society and they tend to be more in favor of homosexuality than non-fans. Moreover, fans of the music are more likely than non-fans to agree with political positions when taken by performers in the genre.

Fans of alternative rock appear especially worthy of future consideration for a number of reasons. First, the music is the most political in terms of content and activism by musicians. Second, its popularity is growing. Usually more than one station in each major market is dedicated to it exclusively. Recently the Detroit market had three stations playing alternative rock, but now there are two. Finally, the fans of this music appear the most susceptible to political influence by the music, musicians and interest groups favored by the musicians.

Classic rock fans are basically more conservative than non-fans as well. I do not believe this is attributable to the content of classic rock, because its fans are generally more conservative. The fans of macho rock 'n' roll selecting classic rock on the

questionnaire because it was the category closest to their actual music preference.

Country and western music fans are politically different from non-fans as well. They tend to be more likely than other youths to believe it is better to fit in. They are less supportive of abortion rights and legalized flag burning than others. Moreover they are less cynical about the national government than others. Finally, as with the other kinds of music, country musicians are able to influence country fans on important political issues, such as assistance to farmers.

Finally, music preference appears to influence political knowledge. Alternative fans appear to be much more knowledgeable, country fans about average, and rap fans less.

Why Political Scientists Must Study the Influence of Music

Clearly the popular culture influences the political values of young Americans. Music is the most significant influence, with television second and movies third. This order exists for a number of reasons. Movies are seen usually only once or twice. For an agent of socialization to have great effect, repeated exposure helps. Television programs are watched repeatedly. However, no element of the popular culture is experienced more repetitively than music. Many young people are able to remember the words of dozens of songs at a time due to repeated listening. Very few if any remember all the words to a television program or movie.

There is a greater variety of music, and young people do more self-selection of songs as well. There are fewer movies than television programs at any time, and there are fewer television programs than songs. Thus, young people have a wider variety of songs to chose from that will reaffirm their pre-existing values. Moreover, there is a

greater chance that they will be randomly exposed to songs that challenge their values than there is of being randomly exposed to movies and television programs that do so.

Also, music resonates more emotionally than the other aspects of the popular culture. Songs define a time and dredge up long-term memories much more than do television programs and movies. This may be due to the shorter lengths of songs and that they usually have one simple theme. The increased emotional connection gives them greater influence.

Finally, music preference helps create “virtual communities” among young people. As suggested earlier, just preferring alternative rock as a musical choice can be a reason for young people to form social groups. The young people who prefer classic rock often dress in 1970’s fashion as a way of further bonding. Other forms of music create similar communities. The increased social cohesion around music as opposed to other forms of popular culture certainly gives music extra influence over young people’s political values.

The data do not conclusively prove my claims about the differences between strict parents and nurturing parents. However, the data are consistent with the theory. Young conservatives are more likely to disagree with messages in the popular culture. Young conservatives are more likely to disagree from the conservative perspective than liberals are to disagree from the liberal perspective. Conservatives raised by conservative parents recoil against the popular culture and liberals raised by liberal parents take the entertainment media as just another influence. A longitudinal study would be required to determine whether young conservatives as they move further from the influence of parents will be more influenced by the entertainment media whereas young liberals will

have more stable orientations and will not be so influenced.

There has been much speculation about the influence of the entertainment media over young people's values, political and otherwise. Unfortunately not enough research has been done to test whether our worst fears or greatest hopes about media influence are correct. The research presented here indicates a middle path is the more reasonable. Determining the influences on young people is a phenomenally complicated process. Demonstrating the influence of parents, the agreed upon strongest influence over young people, is difficult. Demonstrating the influence of entertainment media is even more difficult. But clearly they have an influence, especially as a secondary influence challenging or confirming the pre-existing values that other agents of socialization have instilled.

APPENDIX 1
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Which of the following two statements comes closer to your own views. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is **CLOSER** to your views.

ONE, It is better to fit in with people around you; or **TWO**, it is better to conduct yourself according to your own standards, even if that makes you stand out?

- a. ONE comes closer to my opinion
- b. TWO comes closer to my opinion
- c. Don't Know

2. Which comes closest to your views on abortion? (please circle one)

- a. By law, abortion should never be permitted
- b. The law should permitted abortion only in the case of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger
- c. The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established
- d. By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice

3. Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Others feel that a woman's place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6

Where would you place yourself on this scale? (please circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Women and Men should have an equal role						A woman's place is in the home

4. Zack De La Rocha, of Rage Against the Machine, said. "What passes for democracy today is a sham. It's all about raising money and owing favors to the wrong people." How do you feel about his comments? (please circle one)

AGREE STRONGLY

AGREE SOMEWHAT

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE STRONGLY

5. Should burning or destroying the American flag as a form of political protest be LEGAL or should it be

AGAINST THE LAW? (Please circle one)

LEGAL

AGAINST THE LAW

Don't Know

6. Recently some people have raised concerns about low wages and poor working conditions at Nike shoe factories overseas. Michael Jordan, who has a product endorsement deal with Nike has said that he's not concerned about the issue. He said, "I don't know the complete situation. Why should I? I'm trying to do my job. Hopefully Nike will do the right thing, whatever that may be." How do you feel about Michael Jordan's comments? (Please circle One)

AGREE STRONGLY

AGREE SOMEWHAT

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE STRONGLY

7. Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?

FAVOR

OPPOSE

DON'T KNOW

Following are several statements. After you read each one circle the response that indicates whether or not you agree with the statement.

8. The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of society.

AGREE STRONGLY

AGREE SOMEWHAT

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE STRONGLY

9. The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.

AGREE STRONGLY

AGREE SOMEWHAT

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE STRONGLY

10. Homosexual lifestyles are morally acceptable.

AGREE STRONGLY

AGREE SOMEWHAT

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE STRONGLY

11. Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people? (please circle one response)

FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

FOR A FEW BIG INTERESTS

DON'T KNOW

12. Do you think that **QUITE A FEW** of the people running the government are crooked, **NOT VERY MANY** are, or do you think **HARDLY ANY** of them are crooked? (please circle one response)

HARDLY ANY

NOT MANY

QUITE A FEW

DON'T KNOW

13. Please write in the space provided the name of the public figure you most respect.

14. Do you plan to vote in the 1998 elections? (Please circle one): Yes No

15. Tim McGraw has performed at a concert designed to raise money for American farmers. Many believe that the government should do more to help these farmers. How do you feel about this? (please circle one)

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO MORE

THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING JUST ABOUT ENOUGH

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO LESS

DON'T KNOW

16. The Beastie Boys believe that other countries should do more to end the Chinese military occupation of neighboring Tibet. How do you feel about this issue? (please circle only one response)

AGREE STRONGLY

AGREE SOMEWHAT

NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE

DISAGREE SOMEWHAT

DISAGREE STRONGLY

Here is a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers, and the like. In the space next to the names, please write in what job or political office the person now holds.

17. Al Gore _____

18. Sandra day O'Connor _____

19. Trent Lott _____

20. William Rehnquist _____

21. Dennis Archer _____

22. John Engler _____

23. Carl Levin _____

24. Newt Gingrich _____

25. Stephen Yokich _____

26. David Bonior _____

27. Maryann Mahaffey _____

28. If you know what political party your mother/legal guardian prefers, please circle the name of that party:

- a. Republican
- b. Independent
- c. No Preference
- d. Other Party
- e. Democrat
- f. Don't Know

29. If you know what political party your father/legal guardian prefers, please circle the name of that party:

- a. Republican
- b. Independent
- c. No Preference
- d. Other Party
- e. Democrat
- f. Don't Know

30. How many days in the PAST WEEK did you talk about politics with family or friends? (please circle one)

(none) 1 day 2 days 3 days 4 days 5 days 6 days 7(every day)

31. How many days IN THE PAST WEEK did you read a daily newspaper? (please circle one)

0 (none) 1 day 2 days 3 days 4 days 5 days 6 days 7(every day)

32. How many days IN THE PAST WEEK did you watch the news on TV? (please circle one)

0 (none) 1 day 2 days 3 days 4 days 5 days 6 days 7(every day)

33. On average how many HOURS PER DAY do you spend listening to music on the radio?

(please circle one)

- a. less than 1 hour
- b. more than 1 hour, but less than 2 hours
- c. more than 2 hours but less than 3 hours
- d. more than 3 hours

34. If you talk to others about politics, with whom do you talk about politics most frequently? (please circle one)

- a. mother
- b. father
- c. brother
- d. sister
- e. teacher
- f. minister/pastor/church leader
- g. other (please specify) _____

35. On average how many HOURS PER DAY do you spend watching TV?
(please circle one)

- a. less than 1 hour
- b. more than 1 hour, but less than 2 hours
- c. more than 2 hours but less than 3 hours
- d. more than 3 hours

36. If you have your own music collection, on average how many HOURS PER DAY do you spend listening to it?
(please circle one)

- a. less than 1 hour
- b. more than 1 hour, but less than 2 hours
- c. more than 2 hours but less than 3 hours
- d. more than 3 hours

37. If you have your own music collection, about how many compact discs, cassette tapes and records do you own? _____

38. What kind of music is your favorite? (please circle one)

- a. Country
- b. Jazz
- c. Classic Rock
- d. Alternative Rock
- e. Rap/hip-Hop
- f. Other (specify) _____

39. Do you remember the name and artist of the first piece of recorded music you purchased? If you do please write them in the space provided:

40. Who is your favorite musical artist?

41. What is the name and artist of your favorite song ever?

42. Who is your favorite actor/actress?

43. What is the name of your favorite movie?

44. What is the name of your favorite TV program?

45. Sometimes artists say things about politics, ethics, morality and so on in their songs. Have you ever disagreed with the message of a song? (please circle one):

Yes No

46. If you have ever disagreed with the message of a song and can remember the title of the song and the artist please name them and briefly explain why you disagreed with the song in the space provided.

47. Sometimes actors and writers say things about poetics, ethics, morality and so on in their movies. Have you ever disagreed with the message of a movie? (please circle one):

Yes No

48. If you have ever disagreed with the message of a movie and can remember the name of the movie please write it in the space provided and briefly explain why you disagreed with the message.

49. Sometimes actors and writers say things about politics, ethics, morality and so on in their television programs. Have you ever disagreed with the message of a television program? (please circle one):

Yes No

50. If you have ever disagreed with the message of a television program and can remember the name of the program please write it in the space provided and briefly explain why you disagreed with the message.

51. Please list a few songs you like right now and who sings them:

52. Please list a few movies you like right now:

53. Please list a few television programs you like right now:

54. Please list a few magazines you like to read:

55. How would you describe your political beliefs? (please circle one):

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

56. How would you describe your mother/legal guardian's political beliefs? (please circle one, if you don't know please don't circle anything).

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate, middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

57. Have you ever been to a musical performance where political organizations had set up information tables?

yes no

58. If you have been to a musical performance where political organizations had set up information tables and you can remember the name of the organization, the issue they were interested in, or any other information about them please write it in the space below.

59. How would you describe your father/legal guardian's political beliefs? (please circle one, if you don't know, please don't circle anything):

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

How would you describe the political beliefs of the following people/groups? (please circle one, if you don't know, please do not circle anything):

60. De La Soul:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

61. Zack De La Rocha:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

62. Madonna:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

63. Garth Brooks:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

64. Eddie Vedder:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

65. Arnold Schwarzenegger

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

66. Will Smith:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

67. Jim Carrey:

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

68. Bruce Willis

extremely liberal
 liberal
 slightly liberal
 moderate; middle of the road
 slightly conservative
 conservative
 extremely conservative

69. Your Age: _____

70. High School Attended: _____

71. State you are from _____

72. Town/City you are from _____

73. Year in College (please circle one): Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

74. Sex (please circle one): Male Female

75. Race (please circle one): African-American White, non-Hispanic Hispanic Other

76. High School Grade Point Average (on a 4.0 scale) _____

77. What is your mother/legal guardian's occupation?

78. What is your father/legal guardian's occupation?

79. What is your best guess about your family income? (please circle one)

- a. under \$20,000
- b. \$20,000 to \$49,999
- c. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- d. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- e. \$100,000 or more

80. What is your religious affiliation? (please circle one)

- a. Protestant
- b. Catholic
- c. Jewish
- d. Muslim
- e. other, please specify
- f. none

81. Did your High School have student government? (please circle one): Yes No

82. If your high School had student government, did you participate ?(please circle one):

Yes No

83. If so, what did you do? (circle any that apply):

- a. ran for office
- b. campaigned for another candidate
- c. voted
- d. other (specify) _____

84. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what? (please circle one)

- a. Republican
- b. Independent
- c. No Preference
- d. Other Party
- e. Democrat
- f. Don't Know

85. Did you participate in organized sports in High School? (Please circle one)

- a. yes
- b no

86. If you did participate in athletics in High School, which sport(s) did you play?

87. If you knew that your favorite actor/actress or musical performer held a political view that you disagreed with how would their position influence yours? (Please Circle One)

I would probably change my mind

I might change my mind

Their position would have no influence on me

REFERENCES:

- Acock, Alan and Vern Bengtson. (1978). **On the Relative Influence of Mothers and Fathers: A Covariance Analysis of Political and Religious Socialization.** *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Aug.
- Ball, Terence, and Richard Dagger. (1998). *Political Ideologies and the Democratic Ideal.* New York: Longman.
- Baran, Stanley J. (1976). **Sex on TV and Adolescent Sexual Self-Image.** *Journal of Broadcasting*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 61-68.
- Beck, Paul Allen. (1974). **A Socialization Theory of Partisan Realignment.** In the *Politics of Future Citizens.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Beck, Paul Allen and M. Kent Jennings. (1991). **Family Traditions, Political Periods, and the Development of Partisan Orientations.** *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Aug.
- Bennett, H. Stith and Jeff Ferrell. (1987). **Music Videos and Epistemic Socialization.** *Youth and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 344-62.
- Bennett, Stephen Earl. (1988). **Know-Nothings Revisited: The Meaning of Political Ignorance Today.** *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 69, 476-490.
- Bennett, Stephen E. (1997). **Why Young Americans Hate Politics, and What We Should Do About It.** *PS*, Vol. 30, No. 1, March, 47-52.
- Bernard-Donals, Michael. (1994). **Jazz, Rock 'n' Roll, Rap and Politics.** *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 28, Fall, 127-138.
- Berti, Anna Emilia. (1988). **The Development of Political Understanding in Children Between 6-15 Years Old.** *Human Relations*, Vol. 41, No. 6, June, 437-446.
- Bindas, Kenneth J. (1993). **"The Future is Unwritten": The Clash, Punk and America,**

- 1977-1982. *American Studies*, No. 34, Spring, 69-89.
- Boyd, Todd. (1994). Check Yo Self, Before You Wreck Yo Self: Variations on a Political Theme in Rap Music and Popular Culture. *Public Culture*, Vol. 7, 289-312.
- Burriss, Larry L. (1987). How Anchors, Reporters and Newsmakers Affect Recall and Evaluation of Stories. *Journalism Quarterly*, Summer/Autumn, pp. 514-519.
- Buss, David M. (1995). *The Evolution of Desire: Strategies of Human Mating*. New York: Basic Books.
- Campbell, Angus et al. (1960). *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research. (1994). *Continuity Guide to the National Election Studies: 1952-1993*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Chafee, Steven H., L. Scott Ward and Leonard P. Tipton. (1970). Mass Communication and Political Socialization. *Journalism Quarterly*, Winter, 1970, 647-659.
- Chafee, Steven H. and Yuko Miyo. (1983). Selective Exposure and the Reinforcement Hypothesis: An Intergenerational Panel Study of the 1980 Presidential Campaign. *Communication Research*, Vol. 10, No. 1, January, 3-36.
- Conway, M. Margaret, A. Jay Stevens and Robert G. Smith. (1975). The Relation Between Media Use and Children's Civic Awareness. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 52, 531-538.
- Conway, M. Margaret, et al. (1981). The News Media in children's Political Socialization. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 45, 164-178.
- Cook, Timothy E. (1983). Another Perspective on Political Authority in Children's Literature: The Fallible Leader in L. Frank Baum and Dr. Seuss. *Western*

Political Quarterly, 326-336.

Cundy, Donald T. (1990). Image Formation, the Low Involvement Viewer, and

Televised Political Advertising. *Political Communication and Persuasion*, Vol. 7.

Dash, Shrikant. (1992). Transmission of Ideology and Partisanship in India, Canada and

The United States. *Political Psychology*, Vol. 13, No. 4.

Delli Carpini, Michael X., Scott Keeter, and J. David Kennamer. (1994). Effects of the

News Media Environment on Citizen Knowledge of State Politics and

Government. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 2, Summer, 443-456.

Dodson, Debra L. (1990). Socialization of Party Activists: National Convention

Delegates, 1972-1981. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 34, Nov. 4,

1119-1141.

Dworetz, Steven. (1987). Before the Age of Reason: Liberalism and the Media

Socialization of Children. *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 13, No. 2, Summer,

187-218.

Ehman, Lee H. (1980). The American School in the Political Socialization Process.

Review of Educational Research, Vol. 50, No. 1, 99-119.

Entman, Robert M. (1993). Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm.

Journal of Communication. Vol. 43, No. 4, 51-58.

Essock-Vitale, Susan M. and Michael T. McGuire. (1988). What 70 Million Years Hath

Wrought: Sexual Histories and Reproductive Success of a Random Sample of

American Women. In L. Betzig, et al. (eds.), *Human Reproductive Behavior: A*

Darwinian Perspective. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Fluck, Winfried. (1987). Popular Culture as a Mode of Socialization: Theory About

Social Functions of Popular Cultural Forms. *Journal of Popular Culture*. 31-46.

- Frank, Reuven. (1992). "A Surprise from MTV," in *The New Leader*, July 13-27, 20-21.
- Garramone, Gina M. and Charles K. Atkin. (1986). *Mass Communication and Political Socialization: Specifying the Effects. Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 50.
- Gerbner, George and Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli. (1984). *Political Correlates of Television Viewing. Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 48, 283-300.
- Ghiglieri, Michael P. (1999). *The Dark Side of Man: Tracing the Origins of Violence*. New York: Perseus Books.
- Gitlin, Todd. (1995). *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America is Wracked by Culture Wars*. New York: Owllet.
- Graber, Doris A. (1990). *Seeing is Remembering: How Visuals Contribute to Learning from Television News. Journal of Communication*, Vol. 40, No. 3, Summer, 134-155.
- Graber, Doris A. (1997). *Mass Media and American Politics*. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Greenstein, Fred I. (1969). *Children and Politics*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Goldsmith, Peter. (1996). *Review Essay: Smithsonian/Folkways Reissues. Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 40, No. 1, Winter, 121-131.
- Hahn, Carole L. (1996). *Investigating Controversial Issues at election Time: Political Socialization Research. Social Education*, October, 348-350.
- Hammer, Joshua and Adam Wolfberg. (1992). "Not Just Video Hits Anymore: MTV Energizes a Young - and Powerful - Electorate," in *Newsweek*, Nov. 2, 92-93.

- Hansen, Christine Hall. (1995). Predicting Cognitive and Behavioral Effects of Gangsta Rap. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 16, Nos. 1 and 2, 43-52.
- Hendrickson, Matt. (1997). "Revolution Rock," in *Rolling Stone*, Sept. 4, 35-43.
- Hess, Robert and Judith Torney. (1967). *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Holbert, R. Lance. (1998). The Role of the Mass Media in Inglehart's Materialist/Postmaterialist Value Shift. Paper presented to the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, 1998.
- Huckfeldt, Robert, Eric Plutzer, and John Sprague. (1993). Alternative Contexts of Political Behavior: Churches, Neighborhoods, and Individuals. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 55, No. 2, 365-381.
- Ikenberry, G. John and Charles A. Kupchan. (1990). *International Organization*. Vol. 44, No. 3, 283-315.
- Inglehart, Ronald. (1990). Political Value Orientations. In M. Kent Jennings, Jan W. van Deth et al. *Continuities in Political Action*. New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. (1987). *News That Matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto. (1991). *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Jennings, M. Kent and Richard G. Niemi. (1974). *The Political Character of Adolescence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jennings, M. Kent and Richard G. Niemi. (1981). *Generations and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Johnson, Gary R. (1986). **Kin Selection, Socialization, and Patriotism: An Integrating Theory.** *Politics and the Life Sciences*. Vol. 4, 127-154.
- Johnson, James D., Lee Anderson Jackson, and Leslie Gatto. (1995). **Violent Attitudes and Deferred Academic Aspirations: Deleterious Effects of Exposure to Rap Music.** *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 15, No s. 1-2, 27-41.
- Knowles, Trudy. (1993). **A Missing Piece of Heart: Children's Perceptions of the Persian Gulf War of 1991.** *Social Education*, Vol. 57, No. 1, 19-22.
- Koch, Jeffrey. (1998). **The Perot Candidacy and Attitudes toward Government and Politics.** *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 141-153.
- Lakoff, George. (1996). *Moral Politics: What Conservatives Know that Liberals Don't.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Leming, James S. (1987). **Rock Music and the Socialization of Moral Values in Early Adolescence.** *Youth and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 4, June, 363-383.
- Lenhart, Silvo and Kathleen M. McGraw. (1989) **America Watches Amerika: Television Docudrama and Political Attitudes.** *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 3.
- Leymarie, Isabelle. (1993). **Rock 'n' Revolt.** *Unesco Courier*, Vol. 46, 7-24.
- Liebert, Robert M., and Joyce Sprafkin. (1988). *The Early Window: Effects of Television on Children and Youth.* New York: Pergamon Books.
- Luskin, Robert, John McIver and Edward Carmines. (1989). **Issues and the Transmission of Partisanship.** *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 33, No. 2, May.
- Marshall, Thomas R. (1981). **The Benevolent Bureaucrat: Political Authority in Children's Literature and Television.** *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 34, 389-398.
- McCombs, Maxwell E. and Donald L. Shaw. (1972). **The Agenda-Setting**

- Function of Mass Media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 176-187.
- Medhurst, Martin J. and Michael A. Desousa. (1981). Political Cartoons as Rhetorical Form: A Taxonomy of Graphic Discourse. *Communication Monographs*, Vol. 48, September, 197-236.
- Merelman, Richard M. (1966). Learning and Legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 60, 548-561.
- Merelman, Richard M. and Gary King. (1986). The Development of Political Activists: Toward a Model of Early Learning. *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 67, Sept.
- Meyer, Timothy P. (1976) Impact of "All in the Family" on Children. *Journal of Broadcasting*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 23-33.
- Miller, M. Mark and Byron Reeves. (1976). Dramatic TV Content and Children's Sex-Role Stereotypes. *Journal of Broadcasting*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 36-49.
- Moore, Stanley, James Lare and Kenneth Wagner. (1985). *The Child's Political World*. New York: Praeger.
- Morgan, Michael. (1984). Heavy Television Viewing and Perceived Quality of Life. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 61, Autumn, 499-504.
- Muller, Edward N., Mitchell A. Seligson, and Ilter Turan. (1987). Education, Participation, and Support for Democratic Norms. *Comparative Politics*, Oct., 1987, 19-33.
- Nelson, Murry R. (1989). Political Socialization and Social Studies Education: Reassessing the Conventional Wisdom. *Social Education*, Sept, 1989, 314-316.
- Nelson, Rob and Jon Cowan. (1994). *Revolution X*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Neuman, W. Russell. (1982). Television and American Culture: The Mass Medium and the Pluralist Audience. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 46, Winter, 471-487.

- Newhagen, John E. and Byron Reeves. (1992). The Evening's Bad News: Effects of Compelling Negative Television News Images on Memory. *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Spring, 25-41.
- Niemi, Richard G. and M. Kent Jennings. (1992). Issues and Inheritance in the Formation of Party Identification. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4, Nov.
- Oumano, Elena. (1996). "Music and Politics: A Delicate Balance," in *Billboard*, November 9, 79-82.
- Page, Benjamin I., Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey. (1987). What Moves Public Opinion? *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 81, No. 1, Mar., 23-43.
- Poindexter, Paula M. (1980). Non-News Viewers. *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 30, Autumn, pp. 58-65.
- Potter, W. James and William Ware. (1989). The Frequency and Context of Prosocial Acts on Primetime TV. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 66, 359-366.
- Pratt, Ray. (1990). *Rhythm and Resistance: Explorations in the Political Uses of Popular Music*. New York: Praeger.
- Roberts, Erin. (1997). The Effects of "Rock the Vote" and "Choose or Lose" on Youth Voting Behavior in the Greater Northern West Virginia Panhandle Area. Presented at the Northeastern Political Science Convention, Nov. 13.
- Robinson, John P. and Dennis K. Davis. (1990). Television News and the Informed Public: An Information-Processing Approach. *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 40, Summer, 106-119.
- Rohlfing, Mary E. (1996). Don't Say Nothin' Bad About My Baby: A Re-Evaluation of Women's Roles in the Brill Building Era of Early Rock 'n' Roll. *Critical Studies*

in Mass Communication, Vol. 13, No. 2, 93 -114.

Scheurer, Timothy E. (1991). *Born in the U.S.A. The Myth of America in Popular Music From Colonial Times to the Present*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Schwartz, David C. and Charles J. Mannella. (1975). *Popular Music as an Agency of Political Socialization: A Study in Popular Culture and Politics*. In David C. Schwartz and Sandra Kenyon Schwartz, *New Directions in Political Socialization*. New York: The Free Press.

Sears, David O. and Carolyn L. Funk. (1999). Evidence of the Long-Term Persistence of Adults' Political Predispositions. *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 1, 1-28.

Sears David O. and Nicholas A. Valentino. (1997). Politics Matters: Political Events as Catalysts for Pre-adult Socialization. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 1, 45-65.

Seefeldt, Carol. (1989). The Pledge of Allegiance in Public Schools. *Childhood Education*, September, 62-63.

Selnow, Gary W. (1986). Solving Problems on Prime-Time Television. *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 36, Spring, 63-72.

Shaw, Donald L. and Shannon E. Martin. (1992). The Function of Mass Media Agenda Setting. *Journalism Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 4, Winter, 902-920.

Skinner, B.F. (1974). *About Behaviorism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Smaragdi, Ulla Johnsson. (1983). *TV Use and Social Interaction in Adolescence: A Longitudinal Study*. Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist and Wiksell International.

Strate, John, Charles Parrish, Charles Elder, Coit Ford. (1989). Life-Span Civic Development and Voting Participation. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 83, No. 2.

- Tedin, Kent. (1974). The Influence of Parents on the Political Attitudes of Adolescents. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 68.
- Thompson, B. (1993). Right-on Rock. *New Statesman and Society*, 25 June, 22-25.
- Trivers, Robert L. (1974). Parent-Offspring Conflict. *American Zoologist*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 249-264.
- Valentino, Nicholas S. and David O. Sears. (1998). Event-Driven Political Communication and the Pre-adult Socialization of Partisanship. *Political Behavior*, Vol. 20, 127-153.
- Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis E. Owen and Samuel S. Hill, Jr. (1988). Churches as Political Communities. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 2, 531-548.
- Weintraub Austin, Erica and C. Leigh Nelson. (1993). Influences of Ethnicity, Family Communication, and Media on Adolescents' Socialization to U.S. Politics. *Journal of Broadcast and Electronic Media*, Fall, 419-435.
- Wrangham, Richard and Dale Peterson. (1996). *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Zajonc, R. and H. Markus. (1984). Affect and Cognition: The Hard Interface. In C. Izard, J. Kagan and R. Zajonc (eds.), *Emotion, Cognition and Behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Zajonc, R. B. (1980). Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences. *American Psychologist*, Vol. 39, 151-175.
- Zillmann, Dolf, Charles F. Aust, Kathleen D. Hofman, Curtis C. Love, Virginia L. Ordman, Janice T. Pope, Patrick D. Seigler, and Rhonda J. Gibson. (1995).

Radical Rap: Does It Further Ethnic Division? *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 16, Nos. 1-2, 1-25.

ABSTRACT
THE INFLUENCE OF THE ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA ON THE POLITICAL
VALUES OF AMERICAN YOUTH

by

DAVID J. JACKSON

December 1999

Advisor: **Dr. John Strate**
Major: **Political Science**
Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy**

This study examined the influence of popular movies, television and music on the acquisition and development of political values in young Americans. The influence of entertainment media was examined using data from a survey of 709 Wayne State and Bowling Green State University students in the Introduction to American Government course.

The entertainment media reinforce existing values. Movies are the least influential, while music is the most. TV's influence falls between these two. The influence of entertainment media is significant because it relates to a conflict in American culture over basic values. This conflict is called the "culture war." Conservatives fear the entertainment media encourage young people to take permissive positions on "culture wars" issues like women's equality, homosexuality, pre-marital sex and so on.

Because parents are the most significant agents of socialization, two opposite models of child-raising were related to the influence of the entertainment media: strict parent socialization and nurturing parenting. Conservatives prefer the strict model while

liberals favor the nurturing model. In general, the entertainment media denigrate strict parents in favor of the more liberal nurturing model. Thus conservative youths find more to object to in the entertainment media, while liberals find less. Conservative values are challenged by the entertainment media, which seems to harden these values. Liberal values are reinforced by the entertainment media. Moreover, the entertainment media, especially music preference, is important in determining whether a young person is more liberal than his/her parents. The entertainment media influence young people to change their values, but the data utilized in this study could not demonstrate this.

Socialization should remain a vital sub-field of political science for it raises basic questions facing a political system: will it survive, and in what condition? By the time young people must consciously account for the entertainment media, their political values are well formed. Under what conditions the media might lead to change ought to be examined in more detail. These conditions include exposure, distance from parents, peer support and so on.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

David J. Jackson

I began working on political campaigns when I was 15 years old. Because I was born and raised in a politically active family, this was not as anomalous within the family as it appeared to outsiders. It was natural then that I pursue an undergraduate degree in political science, which I earned with honors from the University of Detroit in 1991. In 1993 I completed an M.A. in political science at Bowling Green State University.

I received a number of honors and awards at the academic institutions I attended. I won an Insignis full-tuition and room scholarship at the University of Detroit. I won the Thomas Rumble Fellowship twice at Wayne State University. I was awarded graduate teaching assistantships at Bowling Green state University and Wayne State University as well.

I am especially proud of the teaching I have done while pursuing my degree. The institutions at which I have taught are Bowling Green State University, Delta College, Wayne State University, The University of Detroit Mercy, and Washtenaw Community College. I have taught a wide variety of subjects, including American Government, Statistics, American Political Thought, Ancient Political Thought, Modern Political Thought, International Relations, Research Methods, Political Economy, and Public Policy.

My studies have also afforded me the opportunity to present my research at several conferences and in one professional journal. I have presented papers at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, the American Culture Studies Association, and the Ohio Association of Economists and Political Scientists. I have published an article with my good friend and colleague Steven Engel in *Political Research Quarterly*.

Currently I am on my second one-year teaching appointment at Bowling Green State University. I expect to find a tenure-track position next year.