



AP[®] Research Academic Paper

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

Sample E

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ☒ **Student Samples**
- ☒ **Scoring Commentary**

AP® Research Academic Paper 2023 Scoring Guidelines

The Response...				
Score of 1 Report on Existing Knowledge	Score of 2 Report on Existing Knowledge with Simplistic Use of a Research Method	Score of 3 Ineffectual Argument for a New Understanding	Score of 4 Well-Supported, Articulate Argument Conveying a New Understanding	Score of 5 Rich Analysis of a New Understanding Addressing a Gap in the Research Base
Presents an overly broad topic of inquiry.	Presents a topic of inquiry with narrowing scope or focus, that is NOT carried through either in the method or in the overall line of reasoning.	Carries the focus or scope of a topic of inquiry through the method AND overall line of reasoning, even though the focus or scope might still be narrowing.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.	Focuses a topic of inquiry with clear and narrow parameters, which are addressed through the method and the conclusion.
Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within a single perspective derived from scholarly works OR through a variety of perspectives derived from mostly non-scholarly works.	Situates a topic of inquiry within relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives, although connections to some works may be unclear.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.	Explicitly connects a topic of inquiry to relevant scholarly works of varying perspectives AND logically explains how the topic of inquiry addresses a gap.
Describes a search and report process.	Describes a nonreplicable research method OR provides an oversimplified description of a method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Describes a reasonably replicable research method, with questionable alignment to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.	Logically defends the alignment of a detailed, replicable research method to the purpose of the inquiry.
Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Summarizes or reports existing knowledge in the field of understanding pertaining to the topic of inquiry.	Conveys a new understanding or conclusion, with an underdeveloped line of reasoning OR insufficient evidence.	Supports a new understanding or conclusion through a logically organized line of reasoning AND sufficient evidence. The limitations and/or implications, if present, of the new understanding or conclusion are oversimplified.	Justifies a new understanding or conclusion through a logical progression of inquiry choices, sufficient evidence, explanation of the limitations of the conclusion, and an explanation of the implications to the community of practice.
Generally communicates the student's ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Generally communicates the student's ideas, although errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization distract or confuse the reader.	Competently communicates the student's ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Competently communicates the student's ideas, although there may be some errors in grammar, discipline-specific style, and organization.	Enhances the communication of the student's ideas through organization, use of design elements, conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and word precision, with few to no errors.
Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND/OR attributes sources (in bibliography/ works cited and/or in-text), with multiple errors and/or an inconsistent use of a discipline-specific style.	Cites AND attributes sources, using a discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few errors or inconsistencies.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.	Cites AND attributes sources, with a consistent use of an appropriate discipline-specific style (in both bibliography/works cited AND in-text), with few to no errors.

Academic Paper

Overview

This performance task was intended to assess students' ability to conduct scholarly and responsible research and articulate an evidence-based argument that clearly communicates the conclusion, solution, or answer to their stated research question. More specifically, this performance task was intended to assess students' ability to:

- Generate a focused research question that is situated within or connected to a larger scholarly context or community;
- Explore relationships between and among multiple works representing multiple perspectives within the scholarly literature related to the topic of inquiry;
- Articulate what approach, method, or process they have chosen to use to address their research question, why they have chosen that approach to answering their question, and how they employed it;
- Develop and present their own argument, conclusion, or new understanding while acknowledging its limitations and discussing implications;
- Support their conclusion through the compilation, use, and synthesis of relevant and significant evidence generated by their research;
- Use organizational and design elements to effectively convey the paper's message;
- Consistently and accurately cite, attribute, and integrate the knowledge and work of others, while distinguishing between the student's voice and that of others;
- Generate a paper in which word choice and syntax enhance communication by adhering to established conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Age and Political Influence

AP Research

April 29th, 2023

Word Count: 4060

Introduction

In a representative democracy such as the United States, we are politically influenced from childhood through political socialization, defined as “the process by which citizens crystalize political identities, values and behavior that remain relatively persistent throughout later life” (Neundorf & Smets, 2017). The formation of our political affiliation is influenced by several factors that take preeminence as one changes, both physically and psychologically. The most obvious change an individual goes through is aging. Issues that were found significant or important to an individual in their youth might have no relevance in their later years, whether such phenomenon is due to their change of perspective or their opinions were actively influenced by other socialization agents.

There is a problem with the lack of research regarding how political affiliation is shaped from youth to adulthood and beyond. Despite the extensive knowledge we have on how political socialization occurs, only a miniscule amount of data is present on how such influences carry, if they do, over individuals’ entire political lives. The problem has negatively impacted those involved in politics, whether directly or indirectly, that rely on voters’ characteristics to influence their intended audience. A possible cause of this problem is the focus of one age group of voters regarding their political affiliation instead of examining them all together. Perhaps a study that investigates how factors of political influence vary in importance by age in a mixed methods study could remedy the situation.

Coming from Cuba, a country where politics was the main topic of conversation, I have always been interested in politics and its inner workings. Cuba and the United States have different political ideals and systems, one in which people have the right and responsibility to vote as an example This led me to investigate what are the greatest political influences among

teenagers for my Individual Written Argument last year. This year I wanted to expand my research and observe this political influence but among a greater population, eligible voters. I seek to find out what makes people vote the way they do depending on the age of the individual.

This study raises an important and not so common question, whether influences fluctuate in importance as one gets older. The most significant benefit for this study is for politicians, who by knowing what mostly influences their target audience may win over their votes. Apart from politicians, I believe that as an individual, to know the tendencies of future voters is valuable information by itself as it has not been widely researched before.

Literature Review

Age is one of the aspects of life that cannot be controlled but has tremendous effects on an individual's life. From someone's age, several characteristics, whether physical or personality, can be inferred, and political party affiliation is no exception. In research conducted by Chicago Booth's Sam Peltzman regarding how individual political ideologies change over time, the data overwhelmingly demonstrates the shift from liberal to conservative values over an individual's political life (Kuta, 2020). This shift could be due to several factors; however, since socialization agents such as family, education, and media are perceived differently as one ages, this phenomenon could be explained. Thus, I hypothesize that the younger an individual is, the more influenced they will be by social media, while as one ages, the greatest influence will be placed on the spouse and family members.

Family

It is not surprising that family has an enormous influence on the political ideologies and affiliation of an individual since the household is the first form of socialization. Parents directly influence the individual's levels of political awareness through the parents' engagement in

politics (Neundorf & Smets, 2017). Those that actively showcase interest in politics foster interest, imitation and subsequently even adoption of these types of behaviors and attitudes, even showcasing higher levels of intention of voting due to such actions (Janmaat & Hoskins, 2021 & Neundorf & Smets, 2017). Politically engaged parents also encourage their children to adopt their parents' party identification as adolescents; however, they are likely to revise their party affiliation in early adulthood since they are more politically engaged and more likely to be exposed to new political stimuli (Neundorf & Smets, 2017).

This parental influence, though strong in the first years of voting and political socialization, slowly decreases in importance as the years pass, with other factors surpassing significance (Lyons, 2016). In a study done by Jeffrey Lyons (2016), who was seeking to identify what and how strong factors shape political identity, he analyzed a data set tracking the partisan identities of almost seven hundred people at age eighteen in 1965, age thirty-five in 1982, and age fifty in 1997. Lyons' (2016) data showcased that a participant's position on that scale at age eighteen was closely tied to their parents' political beliefs. However, as time passed, the spouse's political opinions began to have a greater influence than the parent's original impact (Lyons, 2016).

Education

"Education itself is highly correlated with political knowledge, interest, voter turnout, and other forms of political participation" (Neundorf & Smets, 2017). Given the time students spend in school daily, for academics and extracurriculars, education is one of the most influential socialization agents for political affiliation. However, this research will focus on educational pursuits after high school, since college education seems to be a determinant of political affiliation (Manis, 2022).

As more and more people continue farther into their education, the prospect is that their political views will drastically lean Democrat (Manis, 2022). Joshua N. Zingher (2022), an associate professor at Old Dominion University and author of “Political Choice in a Polarized America: How Elite Polarization Shapes Mass Behavior” did a study regarding Virginia’s shift from a strong Republican state to a swing state that leans Democrat, which he hypothesized was due to the Northern Virginia’s DC suburbs, some of the most educated cities and counties in the nation (Manis, 2022). Zingher (2022) noted that this trend also happened on a national scale, noticing that “higher education is associated with more liberal and less authoritarian attitudes” and highly educated states such as Virginia and Colorado tend to lean Democratic while less educated ones such as Ohio and Iowa lean Republican (Manis, 2022).

Social Media

In modern times, when almost every aspect of one’s daily life revolves around technology, staying off social media is almost an impossible task. More than eighty percent of every generation uses social media at least once per day, eighty-nine percent being Generation Z, eighty-eight percent being Millennials, eighty-one percent Generation Xers, and eighty-six percent being Baby Boomers use social media daily (Cox, 2019).

With this amount of people connected daily, it is no surprise that politicians and even fellow voters use social media platforms to influence the voting population politically. “Social Media and Political Contributions: The Impact of New Technology on Political Competition,” written with Maria Petrova, Ananya Se, and Pinar Yildirim (2020), noted that within the first month of using Twitter, politicians were able to raise between one percent and three percent of the support they would have raised in a two-year traditional campaign (Wharton College, 2020). Through these platforms, politicians share bits of information and their lives that humanize them

to the public, making them easier to relate to from a voter's point of view (Wharton College, 2020).

Apart from politicians, media itself namely as news sources online, whether they have social media profiles or online pages, have an enormous influence on voters' political views. According to a recent Pew Research Center (2018) study, sixty-two percent of Americans get their news via social media platforms (Brichacek, 2018). Media outlets choose what to publish depending on how much traffic they will bring into their websites, meaning one is hearing what will get one's attention not issues that need to be heard (Brichacek, 2018). Then, though they already choose what receives the spotlight, bias is shown through their publications, offering context and analysis instead of facts (Brichacek, 2018). As the individual clicks more often on these stories, the more biased their feed will become, to a point when the algorithm only showcases one perspective on their social media feed (Brichacek, 2018).

Method

The methodology used for this research would be a mixed methods study, including both qualitative and quantitative to record data from the general population while also analyzing information at an individual level. This method provides the best structure for my research due to the ability to collect analytical data and more personalized answers through qualitative and quantitative methods, in my case an online survey and a follow-up interview. This allowed me to have a general collection of data that could be compared to research from other authors, and more specific recollection of ideas and opinions that also could be analyzed along past research.

Quantitative Method

The first part of this research was conducted with an online survey through Google Forms. This form was sent to several schools and individuals throughout a Southwest town in

Florida over the age of eighteen. In the survey, the participants first signed a consent form. The consent form consisted of a quick description of the purpose of the survey, how the answers would be used, and a time approximate of how long conducting the survey, and interview if desired, would take to complete along with a confidentiality statement that ensured their answers would remain anonymous. Then they continued to answer general questions regarding their age and political affiliation. The participants' answers were divided into four age groups, eighteen to twenty-nine years old, thirty to forty-nine years old, fifty to sixty-five years old, and those older than sixty-five, which then was used to analyze what their influential political factors and if they seem to change with age. The survey consists of twelve questions, some with multiple choice answers while others allowed the respondents to choose the degree they were affected by.

Some of the following questions in the survey are:

- What political ideology do you identify with the most?
- What political party are you registered for voting?
- How closely would you say your political views align with those of your parents?
- How much would you say this pursuit of college education impacted, if so, your political views?
- How often do you use social media for political reasons, intentionally?

The goal number of participants for the survey is one hundred in order to receive a variety of answers.

Qualitative Method

At the end of the quick survey, those that agreed to an interview were instructed to leave some way of contact, such as phone number or email address. The purpose of the interview was

to obtain more specific and individualized information that cannot be asked in an online survey with limited possible answers. The goal was to have an even distribution of interviews from the four age groups in order to better analyze and observe a correlation between age and factors of influence.

The interview asked more specific questions regarding the three factors identified in the literature review: family and significant others, college education, and social media. In total, there were twenty-two questions in the interview. Some depending on previous answers could not be answered or due to the respondent's inability to, such as not being registered for voting among other variables.

Among such subgroups, the following questions are asked:

- How would you say your parents impacted your personal political views?
- Would you say the longer you studied, more than a high school education, the more education impacted your political views?
- Do you use social media to stay up to date with politics?

More general questions concerning the participants' personal political tendencies, such as their political involvement and interest, frequency of voting, and their personal opinion of what the most influential factor is in their political lives were also asked. These questions gave some basic background information about the participant and their answers to the questions as regards to the research.

Limitations

Given that a part of this study is conducted online, a significant limitation is that there is no way to guarantee that those answering the online survey are over the age of eighteen. Apart from this issue, I also cannot assure that the participants are answering the questions earnestly, so

this problem might also skew the results. Since those participating in the interview would have completed the online questionnaire first, unless I have an in-person interview, they could also be outside the necessary age range. A

Results

Quantitative Results

Age and Political Affiliation

The first objective the survey accomplished was dividing the respondents into the four age categories: 18-29, 30-49, 50-65, and 65 and up. Among the participants, 15 were between 18-29, 17 were between 30-49, 27 were between 50-65, and with the lowest participation, was 65 and up with one participant. Thus, a total of sixty responses were collected.

How old are you?

60 responses

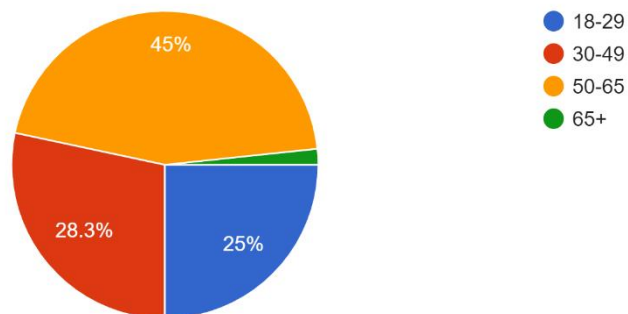
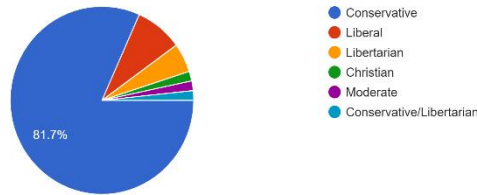


Figure 1: Ages of Participants

The demographics surveyed in this study were political party affiliation and college education since my interest was not to consider variables that could influence the participant but were outside of their control, such as sex and race. Among the first questions asked was to identify their political ideology, in which I gave the freedom to choose among the list I provided or others they considered more appropriate for their answer. An overwhelming majority, 80.9%

of participants chose conservative as their political ideology, 10.6% as liberal, 4.3% as libertarian, 2.1% as moderate, and another 2.1% as Christian. The political ideology does not

What political ideology do you identify as the most?
60 responses



always reflect an individual's political party, so it was fit to add the question to which political party did the participants belong regarding voting registration. Again, an

Figure 2: Political Ideology of Participants

overwhelming majority of 76.6% chose Republican as their party of choice, 8.5% Democrat, 12.8% Independent, and the one outlier that said, “I vote for the person whose beliefs resemble what the Bible says”.

What political party are you registered as for voting?
60 responses

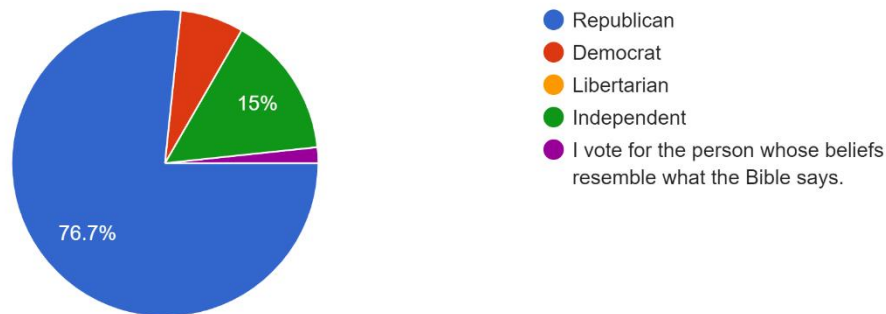
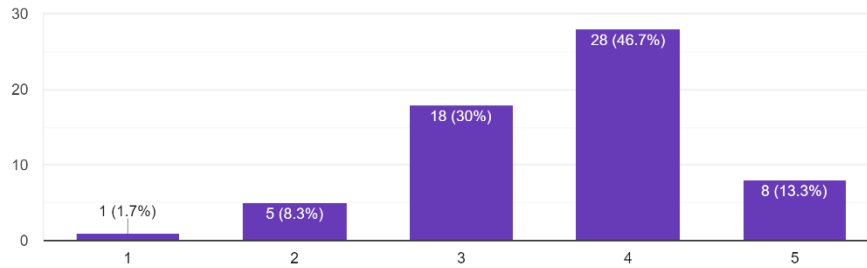


Figure 3: Political Party Affiliation of Participants

Family, Education, and Social Media

Following these demographic questions, the categories regarding family, education, and social media. Family was divided into two categories: parental figures and spouses, for those participants are married. Regarding their parents, over 60% of participants stated that their

How closely would you say your political views align with those of your parents?
60 responses



political views are similar or the same as their parents. With a similar turnout, 85.1% of participants stated that they have a similar

Figure 4: Political Alignment with Parents

or the same political views. It is important to note that out of the sixty responses, only forty-seven answered the question regarding marriage.

If you are married, how closely do your spouse's political views align with yours?
47 responses

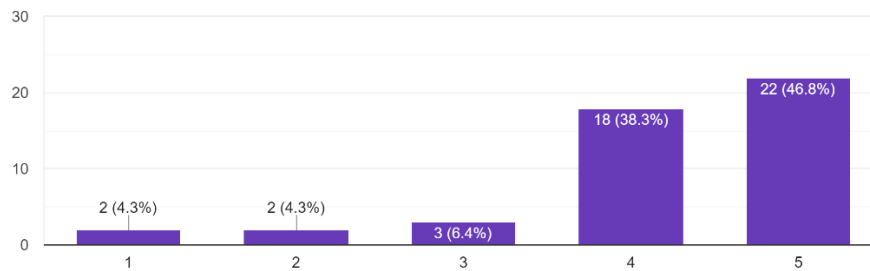
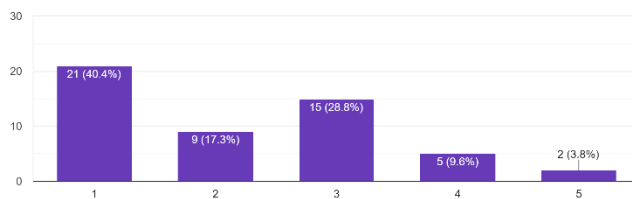


Figure 5: Political Alignment with Spouse

How much would you say this pursuit of college education impacted, if so, your political views?
52 responses



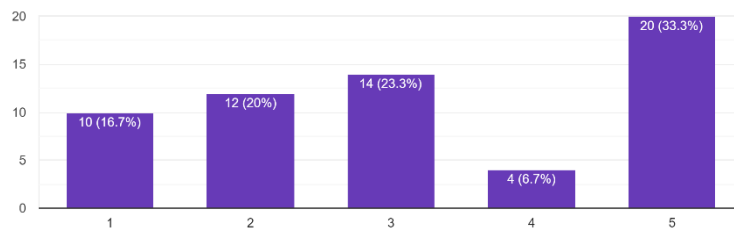
The following questions asked about college education, with forty-six respondents that acquired a college degree. Most of the participants answered yes to the previous

Figure 6: Impact of College in Political Opinion

question, 45.8%, had earned their Masters Degree, and the second highest category was those with a Bachelor's Degree, with 35.4%. Regarding the impact college education had on them, most participants say that their educational career had no to slight impact on their political lives, with thirty individuals in these two categories.

Finally, questions regarding social media usage and impact were asked. Concerning the

How often do you use social media platforms?
60 responses



use of social media, the answers were almost evenly distributed, with 22 stating they do not use social media at all or barely, while 24 said they use these platforms daily or frequently, out of the total 60

Figure 7: Use of Social Media

respondents. Although the past responses were evenly distributed, when asked whether they intentionally used social media platforms for political reasons 58.3% of individuals answered never. Similarly, 75% of responses said that they never use social media platforms to express themselves politically.

How often do you use social media for political reasons, intentionally?
60 responses

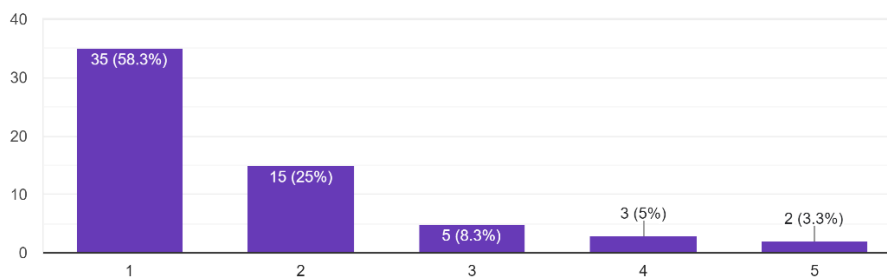


Figure 8: Use of Social Media for Political Reasons

Qualitative Results

Overall, I received a total of six interviews, two of which were 18 of age, one with 43 years of age, and three between the ages of 50 and 65. For the purpose of this paper, the participants will be identified as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on.

Demographics

Before asking more in-depth questions regarding the categories of family, education, and social media, individuals were asked general questions about their voting tendencies. All six participants expressed that they are frequent voters, except Participant 2, who has not yet voted in any election due to just turning eighteen years old. When asked why they voted, most answered along the lines of doing such an act due to “my obligation and responsibility as a citizen of this country” as Participant 4 stated. The results for their political party and ideology also were skewed to the conservative/republican side for most of the interviewees, with Participant 2 being the only participant who identified a liberal/democrat.

Family

The answers regarding the impact of family on the political view of the individual were all over the place. Participants 1 and 2, who are both 18 years old, stated that “I talk about politics frequently with them” and parents foster “learning to create my own opinions and core values”. On the other hand, the rest of the participants described that their relationship with their parents did not influence their political opinion, for several reasons including parents not being politically engaged and “highly opinionated parents”, as said by Participant 6.

For those individuals who are married, they responded along the same lines: their spouse, though holding similar views, did not influence them greatly politically. Participant 4 stated “My husband and I have similar worldviews based in Scripture, so I hold his opinions in high regard.

I do not feel compelled to align with him on everything, but we do hold similar views on most things.” The rest of the participants felt similar ways, as they had either nonpolitically engaged partners or they formed their own opinions by themselves.

Education

Two of the interviewees, being age 18, were still in high school, so they could not answer the questions relevant to college education. The other four participants all had obtained some form of college education, Participant 4 with a Master’s Degree, Participant 5 with a PhD, and Participants 3 and 6 with a Bachelors’ Degree. All of them responded no to the question “Would you say the longer you studied, more than a high school education, the more education impacted your political views?” When asked why, several gave answers that involved their surroundings. For instance, Participant 3 explained how she did not hear a lot of political talk around students on campus and Participant 6 explained how he “felt college students, even during my time at college, had a shallow, myopic perspective.”

Social Media

Similarly to the family related answers, there was a large spectrum of answers regarding the use and expression in social media. All participants had an average of an hour on social media platforms, except for Participant 5 who claimed to have five minutes; nonetheless, all six individuals used at least one social media platform daily. When asked if they used social media to keep up with politics, most of the participants stated yes, the main platform used was Twitter. However, some said no, such as Participant 4, who explained that “there are too many unreliable sources floating around social media.” An interesting note is that all but Participant 2 stated that they do not use social media at all to express themselves politically, unlike the mixed answers on the previous question.

Discussion

Family

36 participants indicated that their political views aligned closely or were completely alike. Similarly, 40 of the married participants stated that their political stances align closely or are the same as their spouse. In the interviews, a phenomenon similar to Lyons' data from his research is observed. Participants 1 and 2, both 18 years old, stated that their parents foster political conversation at their homes and push them to create their own opinions. Participant 1 stated "they've (my parents) had a large impact on my political views as I talk about politics frequently with them", supporting the idea that parents foster their childrens' levels of political awareness and engagement in politics (Neudorf & Smets, 2017). It is important to note that Participant 1 stated that he had very similar views as his parents. Regarding spouses, unlike Lyons' research (Lyons, 2016), they did not become the greatest influence on an individual's life, they shared similar views; nonetheless, they did not affect the participants' views. Such an example is seen with Participant 4, who stated that his wife "while very intellectually curious, she is not particularly interested in studying this matter (politics)." Meaning that the data collected in this study does correlate with past findings, to a certain extent. Family still seems to be a great influence, especially in the younger years of one's life; however, the spouse does not become the main influence on a person's life, but rather a companion that shares similar standings on issues.

Education

Unlike past research and data, college education for the people in my study did not seem to have an impact on the political stance of individuals. In the online survey, over fifty percent of those that attended college expressed that their education had little to no effect on their political

views. As most of my participants fell on the conservative spectrum and over forty-five percent had achieved a Masters Degree or higher, the idea presented by Manis (Manis, 2022) that high education is associated with liberal attitudes is not supported by my online research. The interviews, though only ten percent of my original population size, demonstrated the same kind of findings. Participants 4 and 5 had achieved the highest level of education among the interviewees, with a Master's Degree and a PhD, correspondingly. They both answered that their education did not affect their political views on a matter as more liberal or conservative. While Participant 5 simply stated no to this question, Participant 4 explained that "the more I studied the Bible, the more my views changed. The more I studied other topics, the more informed I became and the more I was able to make reasoned decisions". My findings completely disagree with the findings from Manis' research in Virginia (Manis, 2022), that prove the correlation between the attainment of higher education and liberal tendencies, since both my survey and interviews point out that college does not have a great, if any, impact on political socialization.

Social Media

The use of social media for politics was not a surprising finding. The online survey indicated that twenty-four individuals used social media platforms daily or frequently, with fourteen claiming a moderate use, and the rest twenty-two rarely or never. To no surprise, Participants 1 and 2, the only 18 years old interviewees, claimed to use social media platforms to intentionally research political issues, Participant 1 going as far as stating that his "greatest influence on me is political commentary on social media". The rest of the interviewees, though spread across the ages of 40 to 65, shared similar views to the ones from the younger participants. All except for two explained that they use social media platforms in order to expand their knowledge and research political issues, as Participant 6 explained that he uses "twitter to

follow people across the political spectrum and aggregate their talking points or publishing for current events”. These findings support the data from Pew Research Center regarding the sources Americans use to get their news, especially political ones; the number being over 60% (Brichacek, 2018).

Conclusion

This study addressed the question “How do factors of political influence vary in relevance depending on age?” using a mixed methods approach to examine the influences family, education, and social media had on an individual’s political views. An online survey and personal interviews were used to conclude that social media, no matter the age of the individual, seemed to have the greatest influence on one’s political stances. Thus, while one of my hypothesis was supported by the data, my second hypothesis was not supported, since spouses did not seem to impact an individual’s political identity

Starting from location, my study was conducted in a small Southwest County in Florida, with most of our population being conservative in political views. This presented an issue since most of my answers were from individuals of similar political background and party, so there is a limitation due to the lack of political diversity in my population. My sample size was also smaller than expected, with a total of sixty participants on the online survey and six for the interview. This posed a problem since the sample population was substantially small so my findings are limited to a homogenous, small sample.

Taking into account the limitations in my study, future research should implement a greater sample group across a large area in order to collect a mixture of opinions, political affiliations, and age. Apart from these issues, researchers should expand their studies to political figures, to observe what they deem influential and compare such findings with the population

References

- Brichacek, A. (2018, December 4). *Six ways the media influence elections*. Journalism and Communication. <https://journalism.uoregon.edu/news/six-ways-media-influences-elections>
- Cox, T. (2019, July 2). *How Different Generations Use Social Media*. The Manifest. <https://themanifest.com/social-media/how-different-generations-use-social-media>
- Janmaat, J. G., & Hoskins, B. (2021). The changing impact of family background on political engagement during adolescence and early adulthood. *Social Forces*, 101(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soab112>
- Kuta, S. (2020, June 9). *There Are Two Americas, and Age Is the Divider*. The University of Chicago Booth School of Business. <https://www.chicagobooth.edu/review/there-are-two-americas-and-age-divider>
- Lyons, J. (2016). The Family and Partisan Socialization in Red and Blue America. *Political Psychology*, 38(2), 297–312. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12336>
- Manis, E. (2022, May 16). *New research provides insight into why our education says way more about our politics than it used to*. PsyPost. <https://www.psypost.org/2022/05/new-research-provides-insight-into-why-our-education-says-way-more-about-our-politics-than-it-used-to-63152>
- Neundorf, A., & Smets, K. (2017). Political socialization and the making of citizens. In *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935307.013.98>

Wharton College. (2020, August 17). *How Social Media Is Shaping Political Campaigns*.

Knowledge@Wharton. <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/how-social-media-is-shaping-political-campaigns/>

Appendix A: Survey Questions

How old are you?

What political ideology do you identify the most as?

What political party are you registered for voting?

How closely would you say your political views align with your parents?

If you are married, how closely do your spouse's political views align with yours?

Have you acquired a college education?

If you answered yes to the previous question, what level of college education did you accomplish?

How much would you say this pursuit of college education impacted, if so, your political views?

How often do you use social media platforms?

How often do you use social media platforms for political reasons, intentionally?

How often do you use social media platforms to express your political views?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

How old are you?

Are you a registered voter?

Do you vote frequently? Why or why not?

Would you consider yourself a politically engaged person? Why or why not?

What political party are you registered as on your voter card?

Do your political views align to those of the political party on your political card?

Under what political ideology do you most closely relate to? eg. liberal, conservative, libertarian, independent, etc

Family

How would you say your parents impacted your personal political views?

Do they still impact your political views to this day? If so, how? If not, why?

Are you married or in a serious relationship (one of more than a year)?

If yes, does your spouse/significant other impact your political views?

If yes, how? If not, why not?

Education

What is the highest form of education you have obtained?

Would you say the longer you studied, more than a high school education, the more education impacted your political views?

If so, how were they impacted?

If not, were they challenged by your environment?

Social Media

Would you consider yourself active on social media?

How many hours daily do you spend on social media platforms?

How many social media platforms do you engage yourself in daily?

Do you use social media platforms to express yourself politically?

If so, why?

Do you use social media to stay up to date with politics?

If yes, how?

If not, what other sources do you use to stay up to date with politics?

Final Question

What would you say is your greatest influence when it comes to your political views on an issue?

Academic Paper

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Sample: E

Score: 3

This paper earned a score of 3. The research objective of this paper is stated on page 3: “This study raises an important and not so common question, whether influences [on one’s political affiliation] fluctuate in importance as one gets older.” The paper also presents a hypothesis on page 3: “the younger an individual is, the more influenced they will be by social media, while as one ages, the greatest influence will be placed on the spouse and family members.”

This paper did not earn a score of 2 because it describes a reasonably replicable research method on pages 6–9, a mixed method analysis consisting of a survey of 60 residents aged over 18 (divided into multiple age groups) in southeast Florida, and follow-up interviews with 6 consenting survey respondents. Additionally, the paper presents a new understanding on page 17, based on student-generated data that appears on pages 9–17.

This paper did not earn a score of 4 for several reasons. First, although there is a literature review on pages 3–6, there is no explanation of how the study presented in this paper might address the gap in scholarly literature on this topic. Note that the only attempt at addressing this gap appears in the introduction on page 2: “There is a problem with the lack of research regarding how political affiliation is shaped from youth to adulthood and beyond. Despite the extensive knowledge we have on how political socialization occurs, only a miniscule amount of data is present on how such influences carry, if they do, over individuals’ entire political lives.” However, this statement only asserts that a gap exists and fails to contextualize the goal of this study within the existing body of scholarly literature on the topic. Second, the methods described on pages 6–9, while reasonably replicable, are not defended, and the reader is left to question why the paper employed surveys and follow-up interviews. This lack of defense is particularly problematic because the surveys and follow-up interviews provide self-reported data, but the research objective on page 3 does not seek to address participants’ perspectives. Third, there is a question of the generalizability of the results, which the paper acknowledges in the third paragraph on page 17 (fairly small sample size and limited to residents in a town in southeast Florida).