

Active Political Parenting: Youth Contributions During Election Campaigns*

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Objective. The etiology of active parenting remains almost entirely unexplored in political socialization. Applying ecological and dialectic perspectives, we propose a model of *developmental provocation* to capture contributions of youth to a politicization of parenting during campaigns. *Methods.* Parent-youth dyads in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida were interviewed across two election cycles. Adolescent respondents were juniors and seniors during a midterm campaign, and old enough to vote during the subsequent presidential election. *Results.* Youth news attention, opposition to U.S. military involvement, and first-time voting contributed to conditional change in active political parenting across campaigns, and these activities were more consequential than corresponding behaviors of parents. *Conclusions.* Parenting is not driven primarily by political expertise readily available and deployed in family interaction; of greater consequence is the observable development of youth. A child's potential for political growth is thereby ingrained in an evolving relationship that periodically demands more and more from parents.

Parenting is largely a responsive orientation, beginning with the parent reacting to a wailing baby and continuing throughout the family life cycle (Kochanska, 1997). Early in the parent-child relationship, this responsiveness is structured by the child's need for care and sustenance; when the child enters adolescence, the parent responds not only to basic needs but also to the child's assertion of talent, expertise, and autonomy. As youth seek to differentiate themselves, parents help to retain family cohesion, and strive to preserve leadership, by investing themselves in the behavioral domain in which adolescents assert autonomy (Day et al., 1995). "It is probably true that parents have to be viewed as 'competent' in their children's eyes before their socialization behavior can have its maximum effect" (Bodman and Peterson, 1995:218).

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SOCIAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

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DOI: 10.1111/ssqu.12127

The child's capacity to alter parent values and parenting practices has been recognized in theory of human development since the 1970s (Maccoby and Martin, 1983), although empirical investigations rarely explore the scope of influence. In a notable exception, Pinquart and Silbereisen (2004) observed adolescent influence on parents for values salient to youth, such as the usefulness of new technology. The premise that youth might affect parenting has migrated to political socialization to some extent, most notably in studies of "trickle-up influence" in the United States, whereby classroom discussion during election campaigns (McDevitt and Chaffee, 1998) and mobilizing events (Bloemraad and Trost, 2008) prompt youth to initiate political conversations with parents. Child-to-parent influence occurs with greatest impact in families otherwise deficient in political communication, as evident in studies of immigrant communities and low-income families (Wong and Tseng, 2008).

Nevertheless, the etiology of political parenting remains almost entirely unexplored some five decades after Herbert Hyman (1959) coined "political socialization" to describe a field that would synthesize political behavior with cognitive psychology. Indifference to the situational and developmental factors that foster political parenting is partially explained by the assumption that intentional parenting is not required to explain parent-to-child influence. In status inheritance, parents do not directly shape political orientations; instead, they share with children environments that reinforce parent attitudes in diffusive orientations such as trust in institutions (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995). In the transmission model—a more direct conception of dyadic influence—active parenting is typically a peripheral concern (Jennings and Niemi, 1974). Parent-child similarities in partisan allegiances are interpreted as a product of observational learning through identification, imitation, and modeling. Parents pass on attributes to offspring "wittingly or unwittingly" (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers, 2009:792).

Parenting effort is more explicit in recent studies on the role of zeitgeist in transmission. For example, Boehnke, Hadjar, and Baier (2007) found that parent-child value similarity was stronger in families distanced from societal value climate, surmising that these parents put more effort into shielding youth from opposing values. We are also interested in the responsiveness of parenting to influences exogenous to the family. The current study, however, represents the first attempt to model active parenting as a dependent variable in political socialization. We explicate a dynamic of *developmental provocation* to capture the contributions of youth, alongside parents, to active political parenting (APP). We leverage dyadic interviews across consecutive election cycles to observe family dynamics during a crucial stage of human development, during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood, when youth become old enough to vote.

Developmental Provocation

APP refers to intentional effort to encourage youth development based on recognition of the child's interest in politics and potential for further growth.

This construct departs from modest expectations for childrearing implicit in the status inheritance and transmission models, where influence is often portrayed as haphazard, unintentional, and unidirectional. Adapting insights from human development, APP builds on the more general concept of mindful parenting (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). The following qualities occur simultaneously in mindful parenting: attention and awareness, a motivational component, and a receptive attitude toward a child's emerging interests (Duncan, Coatsworth, and Greenberg, 2009). This concept has not been explored in a political socialization context, but we would anticipate mindful parents taking notice of youth showing a command of issues during an election campaign. Outside the family, parents might become curious about what students are discussing in civics courses. By demonstrating affinity and expertise, youth enhance the salience of politics as a parenting concern. APP manifests in interpersonal political communication, in activities such as encouraging youth to express opinions and to pay attention to news media.

Incorporating ecological and dialectic perspectives, developmental provocation describes the politicization of family interaction that occurs when parents observe increasingly engaged youth and respond through active parenting. We propose that a child's potential for political growth is ingrained in an evolving relationship that periodically demands more and more from parents. In ecological frameworks, forces affecting parent-child relations are traced within a multidirectional system involving student and parent networks, community, and culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). McDevitt and Chaffee (1998) documented influences on dyads arising from the overlapping ecologies of schools and families in San Jose, California. Participation in class discussion during the 1994 election season motivated students to initiate conversations at home, prompting parents to pay more attention to news media. Student-to-parent influence resulted in a closing of knowledge gaps between parents of low and high socioeconomic status (SES).

An initial study on developmental provocation focused on how youth (rather than parents) benefit from agonistic interaction in family political communication (McDevitt, 2006). We interviewed middle-school students in Lubbock, Texas, before and after the 2000 presidential campaign. Active reflection on campaign news predicted frequency of adolescents initiating conversations about issues and candidates. Many parents took offense in this mostly low-income, Latino-Anglo community, and warned children that they should be careful when speaking up on controversial issues. Students persisted, eliciting both admonitions and encouragement. Parent feedback, in turn, fostered adolescent adoption of a partisan identity.

These findings fit nicely within a dialectic approach to parent-child relations. Dialectic models emphasize contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the everyday experiences of parents. Kuczynski explains that "parents must constantly balance their needs with their child's needs and their will with their child's will and must recognize contradictory values, goals, impulses, and sources of information" (2002:7). Applied here, a dialectic perspective predicts

that an initial politicization of the dyad should predispose that relationship to subsequent politicization as parents and youth adjust to the competence and interests of each other.

Low-SES families represent an intriguing context for observing youth contributions to APP. We propose an initial provocation, rather than activation of preexisting dispositions, to convey parent adjustment to politicized youth. Studies on value transmission show that reciprocal influence is more likely in families with authoritative (i.e., supportive and responsive) parenting, but many low-income parents prefer an authoritarian climate (Saphir and Chaffee, 2002). With these families in mind, a parent's effort to promote political development is primarily a function of youth competence rather than parenting predispositions or expertise.

Parenting During Campaigns

Challenges of data collection and precise timing for observation of dyadic interaction might account for the absence of research on political parenting as an outcome variable. Here we are interested in what occurs when parenting of adolescents shifts to parenting of emerging adults. Developmental psychologists describe emerging adulthood (roughly spanning 18–25) as a period of identity exploration as youth form a coherent sense of self. The assertion of ideological commitments signals one manifestation of this transition, potentially acting as a provocation for parenting. With this dynamic in mind, the sociopolitical climate leading up to the 2004 presidential campaign seemed ideal for our purposes due to the unfolding of youth opposition to the U.S. and U.K. invasion of Ba'athist Iraq (Banaji, 2008). In the spring of 2004, the Pentagon struggled to enlist troops large enough to confront popular resistance in Iraq. While a military draft had been abolished 30 years earlier, rumors of reinstatement circulated. The war became for us a promising lens for observing a politicization of parent-youth interaction.

The 2002 midterm elections provided the backdrop for initial interviews of high school juniors and seniors, along with one parent from each family. Dyads were recruited from regions in Arizona, Colorado, and Florida, allowing for a good deal of variance in deliberative learning experiences in terms of curricular approaches and state-wide campaign stimulation. We interviewed dyads again after the 2004 election, which offered youth a first chance to vote.

Previous analysis showed that classroom discussion effects endured over the two-year period, culminating in an increased probability of youth voting (Kioussis and McDevitt, 2008). Curricular influence on voting was sustained and mediated by the inculcation of habitual discussion with parents and youth news attention. The voting study did not assess parenting motivation, but the results imply a political contagion of family life. Student news attention engendered stronger feelings about how the government was handling the Iraq War, which became the evaluative basis for adopting an ideological identity. In family interaction, consequently, parents were engaging with youth

increasingly sophisticated about partisan politics, and parents may have become mindful of class discussion spilling over into the family. Under these circumstances, anticipation of future conversations could motivate parents to exert more effort in shaping the political identities of youth. Apart from student influence, parent engagement in an election campaign should also contribute to political parenting, acting as a situational resource. Adapting these findings to developmental provocation leads to an initial hypothesis:

H1: Controlling for parent campaign engagement, youth participation in class discussion will predict APP during a campaign, and APP during the next election cycle.

The sequence is not inevitable, as APP is never realized in many homes. Particularly in low-SES families, news media attention is infrequent for both parents and children, and political discussion occurs rarely (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman, 1995). A more hopeful view is suggested by the trickle-up process applied to civic education, as described above with the closing of knowledge gaps among parents in San Jose. A politicized teen is likely to be a greater source of provocation in low-SES homes, and thus a stronger impetus for changes in parenting.

H2: Short-term and long-term effects of class discussion on APP will be most pronounced among low-SES parents.

At stake in these hypotheses is the capacity of schools to act as staging grounds in the diffusion of deliberative dispositions to families. Mobilization of parents in civic education potentially extends and sustains school influence in preparing youth for active citizenship.

From an ecological perspective, classroom discussion effects would help us to illustrate the predictive capacity of developmental provocation in accounting for influence exogenous to the family. However, the model also highlights the proximate influence of youth behavior as observable in the home in a dialectic fashion as parents adjust to a politicization of family interaction. The panel design allows us to test whether changes in APP from 2002 to 2004 are a function of various dimensions of youth political competence manifest during the second election cycle. For youth in particular, the most partisan issue during the 2004 campaign was the government's prosecution of the Iraq War (Banaji, 2008). We measured youth attention to news about Iraq, support/opposition to the war, and whether respondents voted. Conceptually, this range of behavior represents competence in cognition, opinion, and electoral participation, providing insight as to the activities most consequential for prompting APP.

By measuring the same behaviors of parents, we can compare contributions of youth and parents to APP. Developmental provocation proposes that what matters most for APP is not the parent's intrinsic political interest and available resources but awareness of youth competence. Furthermore, the impact of youth campaign involvement on APP should be most apparent in

low-SES families because this engagement would be a greater source of novel stimulation.

H3a: *Youth news attention, opinion about the war, and voting will predict APP in 2004 after controlling for APP in 2002.*

H3b: *The three dimensions of youth campaign engagement will emerge as stronger predictors of APP in 2004 compared with corresponding parent engagement.*

H4: *Influence of youth engagement on APP in 2004 will be pronounced in low-SES families.*

Methods

The first phase of the study involved interviews of juniors and seniors, along with separate interviews of one parent from each family, following the 2002 elections. We interviewed dyads again one year later, and a final time after Election Day 2004. The study sites were Maricopa County, Arizona, which includes the Phoenix metropolis; El Paso County, Colorado, with Colorado Springs as the largest city; and Palm Beach/Broward counties, Florida, epicenter for the ballot-recount saga of 2000. The sites incorporate sociopolitical and demographic diversity along with multiple state-wide campaign backdrops for civic instruction. We wanted to ensure sufficient variance across schools and classrooms with respect to the kinds of learning experiences that are sufficiently deliberative, peer-oriented, and election-focused. The total sample includes students representing more than 150 schools, and preliminary analysis revealed a good deal of variance in activities such as frequency of class discussions and debates about candidates.

Data Collection and Sampling

The population consists of families in the four counties with at least one dyad consisting of a parent and a student in grade 11 or 12. We obtained lists of dyads from a major vendor for sample frames, and began each wave in November—after Election Day in the case of 2002 and 2004. We used a combination of interviews modes—mail back, telephone, and web-based surveys—and provided small incentives (\$5 phone cards). There is substantial attrition from year to year, as we needed to gain cooperation from both a parent and an adolescent to complete a dyad, while keeping up with youth respondents during a mobile phase of their lives. The *n*'s for dyads are 491 in 2002 (982 respondents), 288 in 2003 (576 respondents), and 187 in 2004 (374 respondents). Using the RR3 formula of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, response rates for completed dyad interviews were 58 percent (Wave 1), 59 percent (Wave 2), and 65 percent (Wave 3).

We deploy 2002 (T1 campaign) and 2004 (T2 campaign) data for the present study.

Basic demographics for the youth sample at T1 are as follows: 53 percent juniors and 47 percent seniors; 57 percent female and 43 percent male; 64 percent Anglo, 12 percent Hispanic, 7 percent African-American, 3 percent Asian, 1 percent Native American, and 13 percent “other.” In terms of SES, 50 percent of parents indicated that they graduated from college, and 75 percent said they earned at least \$41,000 annually.¹

An analysis compared respondents who participated in all waves with those who did not. Findings showed few demographic differences. However, youth earning lower grades experienced greater attrition, and we saw a drop-off of Hispanic families, from 12 percent to 8 percent. Beyond demographics, *t*-tests compared the two groups for class discussion, parent campaign engagement, and APP in 2002. The analysis failed to uncover significant differences.

Predictors of APP

Hypotheses call for APP measurement in 2002 and 2004; class discussion and parent campaign engagement at T1; and youth and parent news attention, opinion about the war, and voting at T2.

Class discussion (T1: $M = 6.40$, $SD = 2.34$). Youth responded to the following with a 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*) scale: “In school this fall, how often has the election been discussed in your classes?” and “How often have your teachers encouraged you to say what you think about politics, even if the topic is controversial?” Items were summed to create an index ($r = 0.56$).

Parent campaign engagement (T1: $M = 0.57$, $SD = 0.90$, $\alpha = 0.67$). Parents indicated whether they attended “any political meetings, rallies, dinners, or things like that”; if they worked for a party or candidate; and if they wore a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on a car, or placed a sign in a window or in front of a house. Items were coded 0/1 and summed.

News attention (T2). Youth ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.10$) and parents ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.00$) estimated how much attention they paid “to news about Iraq,” using a scale anchored by 1 (*none*) and 5 (*a great deal*).

Opposition to war (T2). We asked respondents to describe their feelings “about the government’s handling of the situation in Iraq.” Youth ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.28$) and parents ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.39$) answered with a *strongly support* (1) to *strongly oppose* (5) scale.

Voting (T2). To overcome limitations of self-reported voting, we matched names and addresses with voter files from the four counties, and were able to confirm voting/nonvoting for 158 of the 187 dyads (coded 0/1; students: $M = 0.63$, parents: $M = 0.84$). Unconfirmed respondents claimed they voted

¹Demographics compare favorably with Census data from the three regions in terms of ethnicity and gender, although the sample is somewhat skewed upwardly in SES.

in other counties or refused to indicate where they voted. We found no significant differences in demographics between confirmed and unconfirmed voters/nonvoters.²

APP

A summed, six-item index assessed parenting at T1 ($M = 20.19$, $SD = 5.02$, $\alpha = 0.73$) and T2 ($M = 19.16$, $SD = 3.87$, $\alpha = 0.70$). Using the 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*) scale, parents reported how often they encourage a child to “pay attention to a news story.” Parents and youth separately estimated how often the parent talked with the child about the campaign, and how often the parent encourages the child to say what he or she thinks about politics regardless of whether they agree. Finally, parents used a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) in responding to the following: “It’s easy for me to get a child to talk about politics.”

Sociodemographics

T1 controls include state of residence, youth and parent gender, ethnicity, SES, youth year in school, and grades earned in school. The Appendix provides wording and coding.

Data Analysis Strategy

Panel data allow us to document youth and parent contributions to parenting across consecutive campaigns. While data were collected from dyads, the level of analysis for hypothesis testing is at the individual level. The first analysis explores whether a factor exogenous to the family—in this case class discussion—can promote APP, particularly in low-SES homes. We assume that gaps in APP in 2002 should be detected due to SES and parent campaign engagement. Hierarchical multiple regression will document influence of sociodemographics, parent engagement, and class discussion. We then assess the interaction of class discussion \times SES. To support inferences about causality, all predictor variables were measured in 2002, with APP assessed in 2002 and 2004. Caution is nonetheless warranted in interpretation of curricular influence in 2002. Student participation in class discussion is plausibly viewed as an effect of parenting or a consequence of sociodemographics. However, we can point to a marginal, zero-order correlation between class discussion and

²This measure could be viewed as an indicator of voting registration and actual voting, but we expect the latter activity to be more consequential as behavior potentially observed by parents.

parent campaign engagement ($r = 0.07$, n.s.). Similarly, the lack of an empirical connection between grades earned and class discussion ($r = 0.03$, n.s.) suggests that curricular effects are not simply an artifact of the more academically oriented students being more likely to recall or exaggerate participation.³

A second analysis examines intrafamily dynamics at a more granular level, informed by our expectation that youth campaign activities will be stronger correlates of APP in 2004 than corresponding parent behaviors. We set up a lagged dependent variable model, with youth and parent electoral involvement in 2004 as synchronous predictors. By controlling for APP in 2002, we establish a rigorous test for documenting influence attributed to youth and parent indicators of news attention, opinion about the war, and voting in 2004. In specifying a conditional change model, we presume that APP is responsive to situational assertion of youth political competence at T2 and that an initial prompting at T1 predisposes the orientation to restimulation.⁴

Results

We consider first the extent to which APP can be explained by demographics. As shown in Table 1, year in school produces the only significant coefficient (at $p < 0.05$) in the control block (Model 1) in 2002. Youth grades earned becomes significant in the subsequent equations. SES emerges as a fairly strong predictor in 2004 ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). The influence of SES on APP could vary dramatically as adolescents leave childhood behind and begin to assert autonomous political identities. Youth gender also correlated with active parenting at T2. Dyads with female youth possessed an advantage in parenting over those with male youth ($t = 2.44$, $p < 0.05$). This finding resonates with a study on how high school seniors acquired knowledge during the 2006 elections (Wolak and McDevitt, 2011). Girls benefitted more than boys from political talk at home, hinting at the importance of active parenting for female youth.

Parent campaign engagement and class discussion were entered in the next block, followed by class discussion \times SES in Model 3. In the final equation, both parent engagement ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$) and class discussion ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$) produce significant coefficients as main effects in 2002. Parent participation in the first campaign faded as a predictor of APP two years later, but the curricular effect endured ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$). The findings offer support for H1, that participation in class discussion will predict APP

³Other scenarios might nonetheless generate suspicion of the interpretation of a class discussion effect on APP. Teachers' awareness of levels of family politicization, or perhaps unmeasured dimensions of instruction quality, could drive the relationship. Limitations of the study design include the absence of survey data from teachers on motivation for fostering class discussion.

⁴Conditional change models that incorporate lagged dependent variables control for unmeasured heterogeneity and are consequently effective for assessing habitual behavior reinforced by other explanatory variables (Finkel, 1995).

TABLE 1
Parent Campaign Engagement and Class Discussion as Predictors of APP

	APP (2002)						APP (2004)							
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3			
	β	<i>B</i> (SE)	β	<i>B</i> (SE)	β	<i>B</i> (SE)	β	<i>B</i> (SE)	β	<i>B</i> (SE)	β	<i>B</i> (SE)		
Predictors (2002)														
Sociodemographics														
Colorado	-0.01	-0.07 (0.64)	0.05	0.51 (0.60)	0.05	0.51 (0.61)	0.08	0.58 (0.66)	0.13	0.98 (0.67)	0.14	1.01 (0.67)		
Florida	0.09	1.17 (0.79)	0.06	0.81 (0.74)	0.06	0.81 (0.75)	0.06	0.57 (0.91)	0.06	0.60 (0.90)	0.07	0.70 (0.89)		
Parent gender (male)	-0.08	-0.86 (0.64)	-0.07	-0.70 (0.59)	-0.07	-0.70 (0.60)	0.09	0.66 (0.66)	0.10	0.74 (0.65)	0.10	0.76 (0.64)		
Youth gender (male)	0.02	0.15 (0.59)	0.03	0.29 (0.55)	0.03	0.29 (0.55)	-0.20	-1.42* (0.63)	-0.16	-1.15+ (0.63)	-0.18	-1.30* (0.63)		
Ethnicity (white)	0.10	1.33+ (0.80)	0.09	1.17 (0.75)	0.09	1.17 (0.75)	0.12	1.41 (1.03)	0.10	1.13 (1.02)	0.12	1.37 (1.01)		
Family SES	0.09	0.20 (0.14)	0.07	0.15 (0.13)	0.09	0.15 (0.13)	0.31	0.52** (0.15)	0.30	0.50** (0.15)	0.31	0.51** (0.15)		

TABLE 1
continued

	APP (2002)			APP (2004)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
	β	B (SE)	β	B (SE)	β	B (SE)
Youth year in school	0.14	1.39* (0.57)	0.10	0.99+ (0.54)	-0.01	-0.08 (0.61)
Youth grades earned	0.12	0.79+ (0.41)	0.12	0.82* (0.39)	-0.02	-0.09 (0.48)
Campaign involvement						
Parent engagement	0.25	1.31*** (0.29)	0.25	1.31*** (0.29)	0.09	0.28 (0.30)
Youth class discussion	0.25	0.56*** (0.12)	0.26	0.56*** (0.14)	0.20	0.31* (0.14)
Interaction						
Class discussion \times SES			0.00	-0.01 (0.39)		
R^2	0.08	0.20	0.20	0.17	0.21	0.23

NOTE: $n = 491$ dyads (982 respondents) in 2002; $n = 187$ dyads (374 respondents) in 2004.
 + $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

during an initial campaign and again during the next election cycle. Peer discussion apparently prepared students for enduring receptivity to campaign stimulation, and this receptivity contributed to APP beyond what would be predicted by the parent's previous campaign engagement.

To ensure that the findings are not simply a result of sociodemographics leading to class discussion in 2002, which in turn explain the stimulation of APP, we matched groups for the control variables. We created subsamples for male/female parent, male/female student, white/nonwhite, low/high SES, junior/senior, low/high grades, and low/high parent engagement. Correlations between class discussion and APP remain significant for all groups (ranging from $r = 0.21$ to 0.37) with the exception of male parents ($r = 0.15$). The mean for APP is higher in female-parent dyads ($t = 2.37, p < 0.05$), although the interaction term for parent gender \times class discussion did not generate a significant beta in a supplemental analysis.

According to H2, short- and long-term effects of class discussion will be pronounced in low-SES families. A class discussion \times SES interaction did not occur in 2002, as foreshadowed by the matching analysis, but evidence for a modest gap narrowing emerged in 2004. The negative coefficient indicates that the curricular effect on APP was strongest in low-SES families ($\beta = -0.21, p = 0.07$). Still, the result provides meager support for H2.⁵

Main effects of school-based discussion demonstrate that the parent-child subsystem is permeable to input from a broader ecology of human development. The next analysis is designed to reveal what occurs in the dyad as parents adjust to a young adult's coming of age as a voter.

Sociodemographics along with APP in 2002 were entered in the first block of Table 2, followed by youth and parent campaign behaviors in 2004 in Model 2, and SES interactions with youth campaign activity in Model 3. Multiple indicators of electoral engagement raise collinearity as a concern, but diagnostics revealed that variance inflation factors were less than 2 for all predictors. According to H3a, youth news attention, opinion about the war, and voting will predict APP in 2004 after controlling for APP at baseline. With all variables entered (Model 3), youth measures are clearly more consequential than those of parents. The coefficients for news attention ($\beta = 0.32, p < 0.01$), opposition to the war ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$), and voting ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$) are all significant despite controls at T1, offering robust support for H3a. As anticipated by H3b, youth news attention, war opposition, and voting were stronger predictors of APP in 2004 compared with the corresponding behaviors of parents, none of which generated significant coefficients.⁶

⁵Our focus here is the politicization of parenting during campaigns, but we also collected dyadic data in 2003. Using the same predictors and a parenting index created for a noncampaign setting, classroom discussion again predicts APP ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$). The class discussion \times SES interaction approaches significance ($\beta = -0.15, p = 0.06$).

⁶The weighing of youth versus parent influence on APP could underestimate the parent contribution to the extent that APP in 2002 affected youth campaign behaviors in 2004. That is, influence of APP in 2002 could be mediated by youth behavior two years later. However,

TABLE 2
Youth and Parent Campaign Activities as Predictors of APP

Predictors	APP (2004)					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	B (SE)	β	B (SE)	β	B (SE)
Sociodemographics & APP (2002)						
Colorado	0.09	0.66 (0.72)	0.04	0.25 (0.70)	0.00	0.03 (0.69)
Florida	0.00	-0.03 (1.01)	-0.02	-0.24 (0.94)	-0.01	-0.14 (0.93)
Parent gender (male)	0.12	0.92 (0.74)	0.05	0.39 (0.70)	0.05	0.41 (0.69)
Youth gender (male)	-0.06	-0.44 (0.74)	-0.08	-0.56 (0.70)	-0.14	-1.05 (0.72)
Family ethnicity (white)	-0.03	-0.35 (1.20)	-0.03	-0.34 (1.20)	-0.02	-0.23 (1.08)
Family SES	0.19	0.30 ⁺ (0.16)	0.16	0.25 (0.15)	0.13	0.22 (0.15)
Youth year in school	-0.11	-0.81 (0.68)	-0.11	-0.77 (0.64)	-0.12	-0.85 (0.63)
Youth grades earned	0.00	-0.01 (0.49)	-0.05	-0.23 (0.45)	-0.07	-0.36 (0.46)
APP	0.52	0.41 ^{***} (0.08)	0.38	0.30 ^{***} (0.08)	0.35	0.27 ^{**} (0.08)
Campaign involvement (2004)						
Youth news attention			0.19	0.67* (0.32)	0.32	1.15 ^{**} (0.37)
Parent news attention			0.12	0.49 (0.39)	0.15	0.60 (0.39)
Youth oppose war			0.19	0.52 ⁺ (0.27)	0.22	0.62* (0.30)
Parent oppose war			0.10	0.26 (0.28)	0.12	0.34 (0.28)
Youth vote			0.27	2.06 ^{**} (0.77)	0.29	2.21 ^{**} (0.82)
Parent vote			-0.07	-0.78 (1.10)	-0.08	-0.84 (1.09)
Interactions (2004)						
Youth news attention x SES					-0.25	-1.12* (0.46)
Youth oppose war x SES					0.13	0.49 (0.39)
Youth vote x SES					0.02	0.11 (0.46)
R^2	0.38		0.55			

NOTE: $n = 158$ dyads (316 respondents).
⁺ $p < 0.10$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The substantive significance of youth predictors is pronounced with nearly 60 percent of variance explained when all measures are included in Model 3.

H4 proposed that synchronous influence of youth campaign participation on APP in 2004 will be most apparent in low-SES families. A pattern of gap narrowing does not arise, although the impact of youth news attention is pronounced in low-SES families ($\beta = -0.25, p < 0.05$).

Discussion

We have characterized APP as childrearing infused with awareness and responsiveness to youth development. Parenting imbued with political purpose is certainly more appealing than the seemingly realistic view of accidental influence. An optimistic perspective was validated in class discussion effects on dyads in three states. Curricular influence on APP became manifest during midterm elections, which are typically associated with modest levels of political interest in schools and families. The baseline effect was echoed in a subsequent presidential election, accounting for variance beyond what would be predicted from the parent's own campaign engagement. Counter to our expectations, however, class discussion was not a greater stimulus to political parenting in low-SES families.

The second analysis generated insight into youth behaviors that contribute to active parenting across election cycles. News attention, opposition to the war, and voting predicted conditional change in APP, and these activities were more consequential than corresponding behaviors of parents. The pattern suggests that parenting is not driven by political expertise readily deployed in the family. Of greater consequence is the observable growth of the child. Youth news attention in particular was a stronger stimulus to APP in low-SES families. When habitual and observable, affinity for news might serve as a potent source of provocation for these parents as they take notice of a steady flow of ideas and controversies entering the home.

Developmental provocation challenges conventional approaches to political learning at a fundamental level of interpersonal influence. Traditionally defined, political socialization refers to an intergenerational process by which children acquire behavioral traits that sustain a political regime. Instead, we emphasize socialization to political agency, whereby youth contribute to—or gravitate toward—proximal environments conducive to their own development.

A view of youth and parents as agentic partners departs dramatically from early theorizing, which portrayed family influence as vertical and often unintentional transmission. As Jennings and Niemi put it, “[m]uch of what passes for political socialization—especially in the home—is low-key and

correlations of APP in 2002 with youth campaign participation in 2004 are modest, ranging from 0.05 for opposition to the war to 0.23 for voting.

haphazard” (1974:330). Correspondence of value orientations in parents and their offspring is nonetheless demonstrated across numerous national contexts and decades of research (Vedder et al., 2009). Perhaps ironically, developmental provocation rehabilitates parenting. Studies on trickle-up influence might represent an overcorrection in challenging the transmission paradigm. Here we emphasize contributions of parents and youth to APP, a scenario that brings to mind a sports analogy. A give-and-go in basketball occurs when a player with the ball passes to a teammate and repositions herself for a return pass. In developmental provocation, a son or daughter signals interest in politics, prompting a parenting response. The act of giving—the showing of youth expertise—is rewarded by a parent, who returns the favor by coaxing further political development sometime in the future.

Youth-induced parenting offers an explanation for why parents experience the interaction as rewarding. If a father cajoles a teenager to read news magazines and the child is unreceptive, neither member of the dyad gains much. When youth show receptivity, active parenting is affirmed and possibly ingrained in family communication. This interpretation accords with transmission perspectives that anticipate child influence given authoritative parenting.

Child-prompted parenting suggests processes in which the family mediates influences from other socializing agents. Youth bring provocative ideas home to parents as they become increasingly exposed to political experiences. APP emerges as one way in which the family system copes with tension arising between youth assertion of political identity and parent motivation to preserve authority. Ecological and dialectic dynamics are inevitable, implying that a subsistent family logic is, in fact, well designed for political socialization. This view of the family as porous to political stimulation challenges a prevailing presumption in traditional socialization theory—that families function as a conservative force in modulating social change.

At the heart of developmental provocation is energized reciprocity in family interaction, and in this respect the present study illustrates the potential for coherence in a field often viewed as fractured by a lack of effort to synthesize political socialization with developmental psychology (e.g., Zaff, Youniss, and Gibson, 2009). The former perspective focuses on parent transmission and the inculcation of dispositions conducive to electoral participation, while the latter emphasizes community and civic contexts for learning outside the family. Youth-prompted parenting bridges the two. Youth agency manifests in the capacity to translate external provocations into family dynamics that engender active parenting.

Implications for Civic Education and Policy

Political parenting is rarely discussed in U.S. popular culture, policy making, and educational reform. Consider the high-profile initiative to reclaim “the

civic mission of schools” (Gould, 2011). There is no parallel campaign to raise awareness about the civic mission of parents. In the 19th century, by contrast, educators assumed that public schools should educate both children and immigrant parents to ensure a cohesive civic culture (Warren, 1988).

Recruitment of parents represents a promising strategy for enhancing public support for civic education. Citizenship education is increasingly viewed as a vital component of civic regeneration, even as its goals and practices remain contested, evident, for instance, in social studies instructors tiptoeing around topical issues in fear of parent backlash. Nevertheless, schools should be viewed as staging grounds for political expression, allowing for diffusion of deliberative dispositions from classrooms to living rooms. When students explore political identities outside the classroom, the agonistic quality of ideological expression compels a parent response. Parents would need to reconcile their partisan preference with influence originating from school, but they might also come to appreciate civic nurturing as a shared responsibility.

Limitations and Future Research

Panel and dyadic elements allowed for tracking of influences on APP from one campaign to the next, but our model specification is open to criticism. Lagged dependent variables can suppress the explanatory power of other substantive variables (Achen, 2000). We dropped the autoregressive term for APP in an alternative model; the coefficients for parent news attention, opinion about the war, and voting fail to reach significance, repeating the pattern shown in Table 2. On the other hand, the original model might be biased toward youth influence due to selection of the Iraq War as an issue of particular salience to youth. We also lacked a precurricular measure of parenting in the first analysis (Table 1). However, a prior study on family interaction incorporated a baseline assessment of parenting style. Saphir and Chaffee (2002) found that class discussion predicted an increase in parent tolerance for opinion expression, with the curricular effect mediated by student-initiated conversations about electoral politics.

We were unable to demonstrate a clear pattern of low-SES parents benefiting disproportionately from class discussion and youth electoral engagement. Sample recruitment and attrition narrowed SES variance, although prior research has shown that low-income and immigrant parents respond favorably in response to youth-initiated conversations about contentious issues (Bloemraad and Trost, 2008; Wong and Tseng, 2008). Future research that identifies a particular orientation to parenting—such as expectations about normative family interaction—might clarify the meaning of SES in developmental provocation.

The study design allowed us to capture some aspects more than others in the mechanisms that engender politicized parenting. We assessed parenting

effort in response to cognitive, attitudinal, and participatory aspects of youth engagement. We seem to have captured parenting in terms of awareness and observation, but failed to account for motivation. Future research should explore whether there are distinct motivational dimensions of APP, and if so, antecedents and outcomes. A teenager's zeal for service learning might engender *civic* parenting, while *partisan* parenting might proceed from a desire to defend family values against hostile media.

Politicization of the family might increase the salience of existing categories of purposeful parenting, but inductive reflection could arise as well. Identity theorists mark adolescence "as the period in the lifespan when people first begin to dedicate themselves to systems of belief that reflect compelling purposes" (Damon, Menon, and Bronk, 2003:120). If we allow that political purpose exists as a dyadic construct, the exploration of youth identity should induce reflexivity in political parenting.

Youth motivation for prompting parent feedback represents another intriguing area for exploration. A provocation external to the family might function as a wake-up call for youth as well as parents. At some level of recognition, emerging adults might begin to expect more from parents, and in doing so, they become more like parents themselves.

Appendix

The following variables were measured in 2002.

State of residence: Colorado (0,1), Florida (0,1), Arizona omitted category.

Youth and parent gender: "What is your gender?" Female = 0, male = 1.

Youth year in school: "What grade are you in at school?" 11th = 0, 12th = 1 ($M = 0.47$).

Youth grades earned: "Would you say your grades are mostly As, Bs, Cs, or Ds?" Mostly As = 4, mostly Bs = 3, mostly Cs = 2, mostly Ds = 1 ($M = 3.4$, $SD = 0.73$).

Family ethnicity (youth respondents): "Of what ethnic group do you consider yourself?" Hispanic, Native American, African American, Asian, other = 0; white = 1.

Family SES: An index was created by summing standardized scores from youth and parent reports of income and parents' report of education ($\alpha = 0.69$). "For statistical purposes, we need to estimate (your parents'/your) household income before tax." Less than \$15,000 = 1, \$16,000 to \$25,000 = 2, \$26,000 to \$40,000 = 3, \$41,000 to \$60,000 = 4, above \$60,000 = 5. "Indicate your level of formal education completed." Some high school = 1, graduated from high school = 2, some college = 3, graduated from college = 4, attended graduate school = 5.

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