

WHY YOUTH VOTE: IDENTITY, INSPIRATIONAL LEADERS, AND INDEPENDENCE

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation focuses on the development of political identity rather than treating identity as a given. Identity is a way for us to define who we are. In relation to voting behavior, knowing who we are politically, I argue, increases participation. For youth, finding a political identity is no longer aided by simply adopting party identification, but has many different environmental influences most importantly the role of political leaders in shaping one's identity. Inspirational leaders encourage youth participation in a number of ways. Some youth, they have not yet developed a political identity and default to saying they are Independents. For others, being an Independent is a conscious identity but may not be represented in the political environment of candidate choices. Both cases of being an Independent decrease youth turnout. I examine political identity, inspirational leadership and political independence by looking at the American National Election Study (ANES) data, and conducting my own in-depth interviews.

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Why Youth Vote

Chapter 1 Introduction

The focus of my research is to discover why young people vote and what encourages them to do so. Traditionally the voting and civic engagement literatures have emphasized why young people do not vote citing factors such as lack of stability, little investment in politics, and not voting because they are young. Neither the political science nor the psychology literature has taken up the developmental process of a political identity as a variable to explain voting behavior. Identity can explain voting behavior as those who have internalized a political identity are more likely to vote, whereas those who have not are much less likely to vote. This research takes another approach by looking at relationships between youth turnout and other factors including formation of a political identity, inspirational candidates, and political independence.

Youth voting has become a hot topic for voting behavior and civic engagement scholars as new trends appeared in the 2008 elections. Since 18-year-olds gained the right to vote in 1971, overall voter participation rates have declined. This trend is not solely found in the United States but in other western democracies as well (Franklin, 2004). When eighteen year olds did not turnout in similar rates to the rest of the population, scholars began to question the differences in voter participation among different age groups (Converse and Niemi, 1971). Other scholars have begun to focus on positive environmental factors that increase civic engagement of youth (Flanagan, 2003; Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht, 2003). However, this focus is more on the process of socializing youth to become participants in our democracy. The novelty of this present research is in its goal of bridging the gaps between voter participation and civic engagement by re-creating a political identity variable that measures the status of development of political identity in the individual. The political identity variable is a psychological assessment

of individuals' perception of who they are politically. The more someone knows about himself politically, the more likely he will participate. On the other hand, the less one knows about herself politically, the less likely she is to participate. Those with a consolidated identity are more likely to be able to stand up for their beliefs, address adversity, and act on their commitments.

My contribution to the study of identity is to find a way to study the process of political identity development rather than the outcomes and to discover its effects on youth turnout. Political scientists who study voting behavior take for granted political party affiliation, ideology, and political beliefs without considering how and why these formed. Political ego identity is a concept that unites what we take for granted in political science with an understanding that there was a formation process one undergoes to confirm these end-products of identity.

Why study young people?

Certain characteristics of youth are often cited by scholars as to why they do not participate. Youth participation rates are notoriously low, both in presidential and off-year elections, hovering below 50% in presidential elections since 1972 and below 30% in off-year elections (Census Bureau, 2009). Youth have particularly low political knowledge and political interest, suggesting age increases both interest and knowledge in the political system (Campbell et al, 1960). They are difficult to contact and difficult to keep in touch with since their living situation is changing—whether they are moving out of their parents house for college or moving out to start their own lives. However, this group provides us with insight into how initial interactions with the political system are unique for each individual. Youth is the beginning years when one officially interacts with the political system as a voter, and there are many firsts

for youth to overcome such as registration, finding the polling place and gaining political information about the process and candidates, as Plutzer (2002) and Highton and Wolfinger (2001) note.

Young people are understudied as a group and are often undersampled in surveys due to the difficulty in contacting them (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1980; Highton and Wolfinger, 2001). But youth are also undersampled as participants because we tend to acknowledge them as non-participants and tend not to study those who do participate in elections. The problem lies in how youth are perceived as voters. Traditionally, more than fifty percent of youth fall into the category of nonvoters. This categorization has labeled youth in such a way that to study youth voting is to ask the question, “why youth do not vote?”, rather than, “what factors encourage youth voting?” The assumption that youth will vote once they have grown up inadequately considers how this process happens psychologically or politically.

The focus on young people is valuable in that we need to understand this stage of a person’s political life. The biggest criticism of young people is their lack of participation compared to other age categories. However, in the 2008 election young people participated at higher rates (around 49%, Census Bureau 2009) than previous elections—even higher than their increased rates in 2000 and 2004. The dismal rates of participation since 1971 when 18 year olds gained the right to vote have seen a turnaround. The typical analyses for youth turnout are unable to explain, in a convincing way, why youth either do or do not turnout. Many of the reasons and measures for why older groups turnout seem not to accurately describe youth.

Youth bring a unique perspective to politics—they are actors in their initial stages of political life. Young people are also a varied group between them from the young partisan leaders to the confused apolitical youth. Young people are often lumped into a single category

of youth, rather than studying the variation among them. The typical explanations of differences between youth are demographic variables of race, gender, income, residential stability, and education. We fail to look inside the individual for an explanation and fail to try and understand what is going on within the person.

In this dissertation, I take a closer look at what encourages a young person to participate in elections and I argue that we need to focus on the development of a political identity or political self conceptualization, perceptions of inspiration, and political independence. I will explore this developmental process with a new concept—political ego identity. Political ego identity takes into account the process by which one develops an identity and the resources of knowing who one is politically. The four major components of a developed ego identity are knowledge of who one is politically, a period of questioning to find out one’s identity, actions taken to discover, confirm, or reaffirm an identity, and the importance politics plays in an individual’s life (salience). As noted above, I argue those with a cohesive political ego identity know who they are politically and are more likely to participate in elections; similarly, those who have not developed a political ego identity are less likely to participate in politics.

Political context plays a role in how individuals are socialized to interact with the political system. One major hypothesis this research explores is that inspirational leaders increase youth voter participation. Weak political party identifications of youth also create a political context for inspirational leaders who can inspire a new generation of voters to believe in politics. Those who are not partisan are more likely to participate if they have an inspirational leader that inspires them, this does not mean that partisans cannot be inspired, but that their commitment to the party often encourages their participation in elections without inspiration playing much of a role. Inspirational leaders act as role models for young people as they offer

alternatives to the status quo, suggest a variety of new ways to participate, and provide a set of beliefs that young people can take as their own. In addition, I explore youth identification as political Independents and what effect that has on electoral participation. For Political Independents, youth are either developing a political identity and have not yet decided between the parties and choose independence as a default or they are developed Independents, who have committed to that identity. For developed Independents, there is a need for political stimulation in the political environment to turn them out. The limitation of a two party system offers fewer alternatives for those who are pursuing an identity, which tends to decrease the salience of a political identity.

My contribution to the voting behavior literature and to the psychological development literature is to treat political identity as a process, rather than an outcome by which one becomes aware of their political beliefs, values, and goals. In this work I study the impact of political identity on youth turnout. The development of a political identity, I argue, increases youth participation. Where youth people are in the developmental process affects their likelihood of voting.

The Intersections of Contribution and Theory

Traditional Explanations for Youth Non-voting

The literature provides three explanations for low youth voter turnout: stability variables, level of political knowledge and political interest, and generational variations. Many of these explanations lay responsibility on the individual for not voting, instead of looking outside the individual for other causes. Highton and Wolfinger argue a life cycle approach to voting—as one gains stability, such as roots in the community, homeownership, education, stable income, and family, an individual is more likely to vote. Young voters lack many of the characteristics

that would suggest stability and investment in the political system (2001). However, Highton and Wolfinger note that while age does play a role we need to look for other factors that affect turnout, since the typical measures by which scholars argue affect youth turnout tend not to have as great a cause.

Putnam identifies a generational gap in participation that has been growing, where each generation becomes less engaged than those who came before (2000). He argues that because Americans are spending less time outside the home involved in organizations and their communities and more time in front of the television, they are less likely to engage. Those most affected by the generational gap are the young, who grew up in front of the television. These young people have less attachment to the community and therefore participate less, especially in areas of voting and community involvement. The specific generational decline in voting Putnam sees as part of an overall decline in public life in the United States. Bennett and Rademacher (1997) argue that young people lack the knowledge and interest it takes to be engaged in the political system. The voting behavior literature looks at youth voting as a single moment instead of looking at youth as a transitional and learning phase and solely focuses on characteristics of youth voters and non-voters without taking into account the process of developing psychologically into a participant in American democracy.

Voting Behavior

Models within voting behavior tend to look at the individual voter. The Michigan model suggests higher turnout of certain groups based on demographic characteristics, such as age, race, education level, and gender. Social characteristics also come into play, such as political party affiliation, levels of political interest, and political efficacy, including internal and external

efficacy¹ (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960). Even though this literature examines the individual, it focuses on outcomes of development and not the individual's process for development in a particular political context with leaders who display inspirational traits.

Plutzer examines voting behavior as gaining inertia and resources as one develops a habit of voting (2002). Arguing within the traditional voting behavior model that takes into account resources of partisanship, socio-economic status, education, knowledge and interest, Plutzer finds that voting is a habit where youth voters in their first election must overcome many costs in the creation of the habit in order to participate. He explains

As young citizens confront their first election all of the costs of voting are magnified: They have never gone through the process of registration, may not know the location of their polling place, and may not have yet developed an understanding of party differences on key issues (2002, 42).

How we understand voting especially voting for the first time needs to be revised to take into account all those factors that contribute to low voter turnout. However, Plutzer discusses voter turnout in the traditional forms of resources and learning to vote rather than the aspects of self-reflection or identity.

Addressing Life-cycle versus Generational Explanations of Voting Behavior

Voting behavior has generally focused on one of two models, generational or life cycle. Two sets of authors above argue the difference between these two models: Highton and Wolfinger argue for a life cycle approach and Putnam and others argue for a generational approach. To put these two models in an analogy, the life cycle approach is a movie that looks

¹ Internal efficacy refers to whether individuals feel that they understand politics and are competent in the political system. An example of an internal efficacy question would be, "People like me have a say about what the government does." Agreement with this statement would mean that the individual has higher internal efficacy. External efficacy measures whether individuals perceive that the government actually responds. An example of an external efficacy question would be, "Government cares about what people like me think." Agreement with this statement would mean that the individual has higher external efficacy (Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988).

from the beginning to the end of a small set of characters, the generational approach looks at snap-shots in a moment of time of generations of voters and compares them.

Life cycle approaches are the closest to a developmental model and suggest acquisition, almost like a ball rolling down hill begins small and grows as it progresses through its journey. Life cycle arguments tend to follow the development of the individual, both psychologically and socially. Common proponents of the life cycle literature argue that as one moves through the life cycle, they gain a number of aspects of adulthood. For the voting behavior literature, life cycle explanations generally suggests the more adult roles an individual takes on the more likely they are to vote. Highton and Wolfinger, while expressing the concepts of a life cycle approach, also disagree with the common arguments of other voting behavior scholars as greatly affecting turnout of youth. Looking at residential mobility, marriage, home ownership, work status, schooling, leaving home, and age, they look specifically at 18-24 year olds and compare differences between youth. They, in the end, come to find that scholars need to look elsewhere for explanations of non-voting youth. The most important predictor for youth turnout has to do with graduating from school and this has a negative effect on turnout. They also note the importance of age: “independent of all the adult roles growing older increases turnout” (2001, 2007). Yet they do not have an explanation of why age actually matters. Their conclusions suggest the difference in adult roles between 18-24 year olds who have them and others that do not is “only 5.9 percentage points greater” (2001, 2007). What is happening between the ages of 18 and 24 that make one more likely to vote when many of the adult role predictors seem not to affect turnout as much as expected?

In addition to adult roles, other life cycle explanations evaluate the role experience with the political system plays in voting. Plutzer’s argument is somewhat along the lines of a life

cycle approach as one develops experiences. From a Downsian perspective, the costs for voting the first time for any individual are rather high and must be overcome before an individual can eventually vote. In Plutzer's argument the development is not within the individual developing their political self but is developing experiences on how to interact with the political system. Scholars sometimes suggest that young people simply do not vote because they are young with little explanation as to the reasoning behind their statement which places much of the blame for youth non-voting on age alone, meaning age of an individual is the explanation as to why they do not participate rather than unpacking what are the characteristics that make youth fundamentally different from their older counterparts such that they do vote. Life cycle explanations as found in the voting behavior literature are inadequate because they fail to address the psychological development of the young person, which may explain variation between 18-24 year olds.

Generational approaches, on the other hand, suggest aggregate change rather than individual. Where life-cycle changes suggest differences between individuals based on their age, generational explanations suggest looking at different types of engagement based on "when they were young" (Putnam, 2000, 248). Putnam analyzes generational differences to explain the declining participation in America and explains that the major difference between young people and older generations is their level of social capital which is trust in others and community engagement. While the focus may be on youth compared to older voters, the main argument centers around the circumstances during one's youth that encouraged participation.

Current generational explanations of political participation go in two different directions. One is similar to Putnam's argument that young people have checked out of the political system, and the other suggests that young people are engaging in other aspects of life. Bennett and Rademacher, when taking a closer look at Generation X, discuss their movement

away from political participatory behaviors altogether. Some of their explanation as to why young people are not participating is alienation on many different levels: socially with one parent households, economically with entering the job market in uncertain times and politically with political parties not addressing their needs (1997). Generation X was even more disengaged from the political system than were the Boomers. Many of the explanations for the downfall of youth voting were specifically about Generation X. Interestingly, Putnam's work as well ends with Generation X, otherwise known as the slacker generation, but does not take into account the now-youngest generation who has entered the electorate.

Research on the youngest generation, generally understood to be the Millennials (aka Generation Y and Dotnets) since they graduated in the year 2000 or later and came of age during the turn of the century, suggests a different picture from Generation X. Dalton's work in *The Good Citizen* explores different philosophies about what it means to be a good citizen and explains much of the differences in generational participation are due to shifts in those philosophies. Where the Greatest Generation considered voting, military service, paying taxes and obeying the law as the definition of a good citizen, Generation Y (Millennials) consider making the world and the United States a better place, buying or boycotting products for political purposes, and truly understanding another's point of view valuable to the meaning of a good citizen (Dalton, 2009, 38). These different types of citizenship produce very different types of participation between the generations. But Dalton's work suggests we look at the more hopeful side of the picture rather than the dismal fact that young people do not vote because they are engaging in other political behaviors.

Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins and Delli Carpini's work (2006) backs up this point of view with research probing the development of new world views of the DotNets and how that

affects their participation in comparison with older generations. Their generational explanation takes into account socialization and key events when coming of age. In their analysis, Zukin et al note three different types of engagement: political, civic and dual activists. They limit political engagement to attempts to influence policy, policy makers, and government action. They define civic engagement as “organized voluntary activity focused on problem solving and helping others” (2006, 7). Similar to Dalton’s analysis, Zukin et al find generational differences between political and civic engagement where older generations are more likely to engage politically and younger generations civically. Even though these generational accounts consider specific circumstances of socialization they do not focus on the development within the individual and variation between individuals within the same age.

Civic Engagement

Where the voting behavior literature focuses on end product behavior and characteristics of voters and non-voters, the civic engagement literature discusses the process of becoming a citizen and comes closest to a developmental approach to political identity. Civic engagement authors argue that cultivating democratic principles, allowing for participation within communities, and having environments that are politically stimulating increase youth participation across the board (Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht 2003 and Flanagan 2003). Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht (2003) argue that socialization within a democratic community plays a major role in whether young people participate.

Communities that have a competitive political environment, open political discussions, and ethnic diversity are more likely to produce citizens who participate. On the other hand, communities with one major party, little political discussion, and ethnic homogeneity are more likely to have young people who believe politics is already decided, the discussion is closed, and

everyone believes the same things politically. Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht also discuss the value of parents, parental circumstances, and the educational environment. Parents who discuss politics and news media with their children are more likely to have children who are interested and engaged in politics. Parental circumstances also come into play (closely following the voting behavior literature's set of external influences of voting) with party attachment, socio-economic status, and immigration status. Education also becomes a factor in the socialization process in classroom discussions, course curriculum, teacher interest and knowledge, and youth perceptions of authority figures (Gimpel, Lay, Schuknecht, 2003). Flanagan (2003) argues the importance of youth involvement in community organizations and emphasizes how youth come to understand the social order. Values that young people learn in community organizations include connecting and identifying with others, interacting with institutions within communities, and learning how their actions, thoughts and words can make a difference (Flanagan, 2003).

In discussing community service and the value of being reflective about service learning, Yates and Youniss argue reflection is a valuable aspect of encouraging thoughts about how the world works, individual responsibility, and establishing the connections to others (1996). Their assessment of identity and community service ties in very closely with developing a political identity; however they fail to connect service learning to political behaviors in adulthood. The value of their research is to point to the connections between general identity development along with civic engagement offering opportunities for political awareness.

Though the civic engagement research comes from a developmental perspective, its emphasis is placed on environmental circumstances that encourage development of citizens, not on individuals or their internal development of an identity. The focus on youth civic engagement

fails to see development throughout the life cycle and does not accurately connect civic behaviors developed in youth and political behaviors of adults.

Socialization through education, community service, and other social institutions encourage youth to participate in a democracy. Where the voting behavior literature is focused on the individual and the outcome behavior of voting, the civic engagement literature focuses on the environment and what it provides to the individual and the process of acquiring and sustaining many different political behaviors, neither of which discuss identity specifically, but rather focus on behaviors.

Identity as a Psychological Approach

In adult psychological development, one of the major issues in transitioning between adolescence and adulthood is the ability to define oneself. Erikson's early work on psychosocial development discusses a pivotal time for the individual, the identity crisis phase (1994[1967]) defining "sense of inner identity" as the "style of one's individuality" (1994[1967], 50, 87).

The young person, in order to experience [identity] wholeness, must feel a progressive continuity between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he promises to become in the anticipated future; between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives other to see in him and to expect of him. (1967, 87)

Emphasizing the importance of the individual within an environment that has particular historical, cultural, and social connections, Erikson argues that identity is not just about individuals, but the interaction of individuals with their social environment. We develop our identity based in our social surroundings that include a variety of fully formed individual identities from which we can choose to model ourselves after and develop our own identity. While culture, history, and our environment do play some role in the identities available to us, we are able to adapt and develop our own unique political identity.

From the psychological literature, Marcia discusses how one goes through different statuses to form a positive self-identity, meaning individuals create their own identity and the choices of identity are not made for them (1991). In Marcia's original framework (1964/1980), the political identity variable is a component of overall identity development. Individuals are classified into four different statuses: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. Individuals who have a cohesive psychological identity, those who know who they are and what they stand for are in the identity achievement status. Those who are experimenting with their identity and exploring different aspects of their identity but have not yet decided upon a cohesive identity are in the moratorium status. An identity in the foreclosure status is one where there is an identity but the identity is based upon others' definitions, such as parents or mentors. Diffusion status exists when individuals have no idea who they are and are making no effort to attempt to define themselves. The adult development literature proposes that as individuals move from adolescence to adulthood, they form a more cohesive achieved political identity. As the cohort ages, therefore, more and more people have successfully achieved an identity.

Ego identity continues to be a field of research where psychologists link the individual to the larger world. Adaptation has occurred in the psychological measures of identity, as more recent measures of ego-identity (Adams 1998) use survey analysis instead of in-depth interviews to assess identity status of larger samples. Political scientists benefit from the ego identity literature, as they attempt to understand a larger literature of political identity (Kroger, 2000; Hoover, 1997; Yoder 2000). Much of the developmental psychology literature tends to dismiss political identity development due to the fact that many young people are either not interested in politics or they tend to fall into the diffusion identity status (Waterman, 1982), where young people avoid commitments in politics and do not pursue a period of searching for a political

identity. Other studies suggest that even though college offers time for experimentation in different aspects of identity, after college many people seem to fall into a foreclosure status, mirroring their parents' political identity (Waterman, 1982). Again the issue is not examining why youth tend to be in the diffusion status but looking at the process for development of a political identity including why developing a political identity tends to be more difficult than developing other aspects of an overarching identity.

Identity salience refers to the perceived importance of the identity or prioritization of one identity over another. Stryker and Serpe (1994) suggest that the difference between identity salience and identity centrality is that with identity salience one does not need to be aware of the ranking of their identities, suggesting an element of unconscious choice. Their meaning is that our prioritization of identities becomes so ingrained and reinforced that we fail to realize our consistent prioritization of identities. Different people prioritize their identities in the order they find works for them and their life, but context also plays a role. If we consider different aspects of our identity as different hats, then we have different hats for different contexts. During election years, one may get their old dusty political identity hat out of the closet and try it on again, or one may wear their political identity hat all the time (as many politicians do). But we need to realize that political identity is only a part of the overarching identity and understand, as Inglehart notes, "politics is a peripheral aspect of most people's lives" (1997), which may make it difficult to study political identity in the American context but allows for a unique opportunity to place the focus on the individual's self-definition as a viable place to search for answers to political behaviors.

Political ego identity is different from political party affiliation (even though there are elements that overlap), in that it encompasses all of the beliefs about politics, individuals'

evaluations of policy issues, and behaviors as consequences of those commitments. Where political party affiliation is more membership-oriented in an organization and ideology, political identity includes how the individual interacts, believes, and behaves in ways that may well be beyond the understanding focused solely on political party affiliation. One can affiliate with a political party and yet have not achieved a political identity. And one can develop a political identity without necessarily having a firm commitment to a particular political party and its principles.

Inspirational Candidates and the Youth Vote

Candidates play a key role in leading public opinion and highlighting the concerns of the public, while at the same time following public opinion. Leaders have the opportunity to promote a set of policies that people can easily adapt as their own. In a way, leaders are a type of political role model suggesting visions for the future, speaking out about their alternatives to the political status quo, and encouraging participatory activities for followers to engage in. Inspirational leaders engage in these activities particularly well and tend to influence beliefs, commitments, and behaviors of their followers. The leadership literature fits well into the identity development literature by means of a role model figure. I argue, however, that leaders are not typical role models with which one can interact. Leaders are abstract role models because there is rarely direct exchange between the role model and the individual. The individual soaks up the beliefs, commitments and behaviors of the role model without ever being able to touch, have a conversation with, or question the leader directly. Taking on the identity of the role model without critically analyzing and questioning the role model is precisely the concern of many people about inspirational leaders and their connection with youth. However,

the leadership literature does not take into account political identity and leaders as role models as a way to explain the concern of leaders' effects on their followers—especially young followers.

The leadership literature suggests leaders have characteristics that draw voters to them (Cherulnik et al, 2001). As Weber noted, charisma is a type of authority vested within individuals, in both their spirit and rhetoric ([1922]1978). In a larger context, Weber argues that charismatic leaders possess a type of revolutionary will and have the possibility to be independent outside the “regular party machine.” Developments from Weber suggest charisma as a characteristic that can be used to understand leader-follower relations (Gardner, 2003; Post, 1986; Yukl, 1999).

Characteristics of candidates have been a consistent variable taken into account for voter preferences. Assessment of leadership, knowledge, ability to care, morality, and inspiration are measured in the American National Election Survey during presidential election years.² Though Bartels finds that leader trait assessment does not affect voting behavior of those who are highly partisan, it does seem to affect individuals who are not attached to parties and have little ideological attachment (2002). This may make an interesting case for youth, some of whom have strong partisan ties and others who are still developing. Bartels argues that trait assessment did not have an impact on presidential elections between 1980 and 2000, but does note that in close elections, such as 2000, traits may decide an election.

As King contends, the argument in the literature is not whether character assessments exist or have an effect, but rather that character assessments affect voting behavior to the point at which it changes elections (2002). Character traits, King hypothesizes, have an impact on electoral outcomes when voters perceive large differences between candidates, when voters' ties

² However all five trait assessment are not always asked: “really cares” was not gathered in the 1980 election, and “inspiring” was not assessed in the 2000 election. See Bartels “The Impact of Candidate Traits in American Presidential Elections” 2002.

to the party are weakest, when voters see there are few other differences such as performance or policy, when a large number of individuals are influenced by these characteristics, and when the election is close (2002, 41-42). King focuses on the direct effects of leader personality traits on the voting public, but fails to see the direct effect of leadership traits to gain committed volunteers.

Wattenberg argues that candidate-centered politics is on the rise and has major political consequences for political parties, elections, and voters, arguing that candidates have become the center of campaigns rather than the political parties. He finds evidence that when political party attachment weakens, voters preferring candidates over parties and campaigns emphasize the individual, rather than the policy differences (1991).

Leader-follower relations go beyond the original notion of simply charismatic leaders with followers who must obey; they also take into account the interaction between charismatic leaders and their followers. As Post argues, “all leaders—especially charismatic leaders—are at heart the creation of their followers” (1986). Post describes leaders as “mirror-hungry,” where they need audiences to confirm their strength, confidence, and omnipotence; followers on the other hand have an “ideal-hungry personality.” Post notes the circumstance of societal crisis that “otherwise mature and psychologically healthy individuals may temporarily come to feel overwhelmed and in need of a strong and self-assured leader” (1986, 683). However, the leadership literature does not necessarily discuss the specific effects of leaders on youth, or the use of inspiration to encourage participation of groups.

Political Independence: Developed or Default Identity

Political party changes may be understood as a source for shifts in the political identity development of youth (especially partisanship) and focus on candidate-centered politics, rather

than party-oriented politics. The focus for this research is to explain the differences in young Independents and how that affects their voting decision. In his recent look at forty years of the political party literature, Fiorina notes partisanship in the electorate is weakening even when party organizations and partisans in government were strengthening (2002). For youth voters, the evidence suggests Independents are less likely to vote, but fails to explain the relationship between developed Independents and default claims of independence. Campbell et al's original work in *The American Voter* suggested the importance partisanship has on turnout. However, work in the 1970s, such as Abramson (1976, 1979), asserts declines in partisanship were severe enough that parties no longer seem to be present in the American mind, which was especially true for the youngest voters.

Bartels, however, argues for the resurgence of parties in the 1990s and explains that declines in partisanship in 1964 and 1972 were because voters "abandoned their parties unpopular presidential candidate" (2000, 40). Bartels explains the increase in partisanship as partially due to youth's positive reaction to "the political developments of the past two decades" (42). Rosenstone and Hansen suggest the decline in turnout is greatly due to the expansion of the electorate (especially to youth voters) along with declines in partisan identification (2003). Patterson notes "the rise of the independent voter has contributed to the fall in election turnout and interest" (2003, 44). For youth, Independence is sometimes claimed due to lack of information or lack of experience with the political system, but the reasoning behind the claims of independence by youth can better be explained as a function of development.

The Argument

Why do 18-24 year olds vote? I propose to answer the question of youth voting by analyzing the mechanisms that encourage and discourage youth participation and turnout. This age range is unique from other age categories in how they interact with politicians, election officials, and the

electoral system, which yields three compatible explanations for whether or not youth vote: personal political identity, inspirational leaders, and political Independence.

First, I define a developed political ego identity as a combination of behaviors and attitudes. A person with a fully developed political ego identity has 1) a self awareness of who he or she is politically; 2) experienced a period of questioning where he or she has considered different types of identities, labels, and beliefs and has settled on commitments; 3) engaged in behaviors to express his or her political identity like political discussions, working on a political issue, or writing about his or her political label or beliefs, and 4) reached the point where he or she considers politics as an important part of his or her life. I have modified Marcia's statuses to take into account the uniqueness of what a political identity means in reference to voting behavior. The modified statuses are fully developed, somewhat developed, exploration and diffusion. The statuses are ordinal in that each level has achieved a new aspect of identity development. As one goes through the developmental process, he or she 1) becomes more firm in his or her commitments to partisanship or rejection of partisanship, 2) has policy beliefs that are specific and numerous, and 3) believes politics is salient to his or her life.

Fully developed individuals have gone through each of these four steps. They can say that they know who they are politically, have gone through a period of serious questioning about who they are by evaluating different policy positions, have practiced their identity, and believe politics is an important part of their lives. Individuals with fully developed identities are most likely to vote because they are clear about where they stand and how they fit into the political system of parties and policies. Yet, fully developed individuals need not be solely mainstream identities, they may be revolutionaries. However, as political identity pertains to voting, those who are more likely to vote are individuals who do fit within the mainstream political system, i.e., fully developed partisans. Somewhat developed individuals know who they are politically, which makes them more likely to vote. But they have lower levels of development of partisan identification, policy evaluations, and

salience than the fully developed. Explorers think that a political identity is important enough to have and are considering political alternatives through practice. This makes the explorers the third most likely to vote since they can use voting as a way to practice alternative identities. They are also clear in their expression that politics is an important part of their lives, which is why they are struggling to discover who they are politically. Explorers have not yet settled on their political identity, which makes them difficult to activate in the electorate, both by parties and candidates.

Individuals in the diffusion status have none of the characteristics of a developed identity and are the least likely to vote because not only do they not see politics as important in their lives, they are also not secure in who they are as political persons, this makes them insecure in their political actions. Diffusions generally follow an avoidant style of action where they simply will not engage in thoughts or behaviors that would confront their indecision. Each level in development of an identity is crucial to how identity comes about and eventually is settled upon. A person who can say that he knows who he is politically is clear in his identity and self definition, but this is not a complete picture of development. The person also has to go through the process of developing behaviors that support their commitment to that identity.

For the purposes of voting behavior, salience (feeling that politics is important in your life) plays a major role in political identity. Because political identity is but one way to define oneself, if it is not as salient as other identities such as worker, student, parent, then it is less likely that the individual will vote. Considering politics to be an important part of a person's life and a part of who he or she is pushes those who are developed politically to become involved. While politicians and political scientists may think that a political identity is extremely important to who they are, for others in the population, as Inglehart notes, politics and their political identity may be peripheral to other aspects of their lives. For our purposes, salience is crucial to affecting voting behavior since the individual who feels that politics is more central to their lives is more likely to want to participate in behaviors that confirm their identity.

Questioning who one is politically by evaluating issue preferences and comparing these preferences to the positions of the candidates is valuable because it allows the individual to intellectually pursue alternatives. A period of self-questioning through issue evaluation allows the individual to critically examine what policies they believe in and which party they identify with. Dahl notes the distinction between those in the political and apolitical stratum is the political stratum is rational in that it thinks about and considers what its interests are (2005), while the apolitical stratum has unexamined loyalties and personal attachments without critically analyzing why that is the case. The development process that questioning provides to political identity is the mental work that is done to eventually decide on what policy issues are important, where individuals stand politically in reference to parties, and how they deal with new and conflicting information. Those who have questioned their identity are more likely to make the decision to vote because they have decided where they stand on policy issues, how they fit into the party system, and have examined the alternatives in policy choices, candidates, and parties.

The discovery process is to act out one's identity for two purposes: to act out alternatives to see which identity fits and to have the world be reflective to the identity. Where the identity can be questioned by oneself, practicing an identity is inherently a public act where an individual can get feedback from the outside world. Practicing behaviors can come in many forms from political discussions to signing petitions to voting. Behaviors allow us to act out who we are politically while also getting feedback. How political identity bridges the gaps between civic engagement and voting behavior is the development of an identity and belief system during the younger years of civic engagement, when one can engage in a variety of behaviors and experiment about what one believes in. People of different political identity statuses will engage in behaviors that affect their identity; strong identifiers will reaffirm their identity, while explorers use behaviors as a discovery process. Each of the four components to the political identity complement and reinforce one another such that I am more likely to know who I am politically if I've questioned or have been challenged about what

I believe in, have experimented with different behaviors, and if I feel the political aspects of my identity are an important piece of who I am.

I expect young people who have achieved a developed political ego identity status to be more likely to engage in the political process. In addition, those who believe politics is important to their lives are also more likely to vote. Conversely, those who are either diffuse or in exploration are much less likely to vote. Explorers are likely to engage in voting to practice their identity and experiment with different aspects of their political beliefs, but are even less likely to vote because they have not settled on who they are politically, which makes it difficult to decide on a candidate. Diffusion status individuals want nothing to do with politics, have had very little exploration of political alternatives, and have made no commitments in the political realm. This approach is especially applicable to young voters as they go through the process of developing an identity; while this variable may be applied to older voters, it is especially significant to young voters who are in the transition period of identity development.

The lack of identity in young people will help explain why young people do not participate, are less likely to take a stance on political issues, and show high rates of political apathy. Why would one engage in an activity that has little meaning in one's life? Identity may be the key to disentangling the differences between voters and non-voters in the youth population and can bridge the gap between civic engagement and voting behavior, both of which overlook political identity as a variable. While there may be developed non-participants, meaning individuals who know who they are politically but choose not to participate, they are likely to engage in other behaviors.³

In addition to looking within the individual, I also look at the surrounding environment in which the person develops. I expect that by offering hope, creating new politics, and acting against the status quo, an inspirational candidate will create higher turnout among 18 to 24 year olds. Not

³ While this is an interesting pursuit, due to the nature of this dissertation the limitation must be on voting. A later research agenda will cover this type of political identity non-participant.

only do candidates pursue young voters in mediums that are youth oriented, but they also make appeals to youth voters about the future, break old ties, develop “new politics,” and elicit emotional responses. Inspirational candidates interact with youth by engaging in a new politics, as young voters are finding their own political identity; the two actions complement one another. The newness of politics to the youth voter is confirmed by inspirational candidates. Inspirational candidates encourage identity development in young people through creating interest, discussing political issues, promising new politics as young people are developing their own new politics, focusing on ideas and emotion, and helping young people speak a political language that communicates their political identity. For young people developing a new political identity, an inspirational candidate provides a political identity role model. Therefore, youth voters and volunteers become more important to an inspirational leader and will increase turnout by participating in the campaign and by voting. Inspirational leaders more directly affect youth than seasoned voters because youth lack experience with voting, articulating major issues, and developing political identities. Inspirational candidates are also more likely pursue new portions of the electorate to help them create a winning coalition. These candidates are therefore more likely to go outside of the traditional bounds of party identification and pursue individuals in the exploration status.

A third factor that influences youth turnout is Political Independence and what it means to youth. Weakening party identification leads fewer young voters to identify with parties, which plays a role in forming youth political ego identity and makes inspirational leaders possible. I expect to find two types of political Independents—youth who have not yet developed a political identity claiming Independence as a default and developed political Independents who have developed a political identity that does not fit with either of the two political parties. Harvard Institute of Politics Youth Survey has found partisanship to be changing among youth people, where other factors such as religion seem to a better indicator of voting patterns rather than political parties (2004).

Inspirational leaders offer the possibility of creating a new politics when they are not bound by the

mechanisms of party machinery. In the United States, the party machinery is weakening with fewer volunteers working for parties and more working for candidates. Political parties are also limited in their resources which make them less likely to pursue non-partisan identifiers. As a consequence, explorers—traditionally large portions of youth—are not pursued as voters. However, parties are more likely to pursue strong partisans than weak partisans because these people are already committed to their identity it is easier to find and access these people. For voting behavior in particular, it matters how the youth has decided to be Independent as to what affects their turnout in elections. I argue the difference in the two types of Independents is due to the level of political development; developed Independents are more likely to turnout in elections than default Independents.

The Complexities and Contribution

The major question of this dissertation asks, “what makes youth participation in presidential elections more likely?” For the initial concept, personal political identity or self conceptualization plays a major role in who votes and who does not. Those who know who they are politically are much more likely to vote than their counterparts who are either unsure, uninterested, or unengaged in the process of figuring out what they believe in, stand for, and care about politically. I identify four statuses of self conceptualizations in descending order of participation: fully developed, somewhat developed, explorers, and diffusions. The challenge in studying a new variable and its contribution to our understanding of voting behavior is measuring it with reliability and validity. Successful testing of a new theory for understanding voting behavior is to have a strong theory backed up by evidence. For this work, political identity development will be measured with two different protocols: the American National Election Survey, and one-on-one interviews with youth. The combination of qualitative and

quantitative data analysis will provide a richer understanding of the theory and many different types of evidence.

Inspirational candidates are more likely to get youth to participate in elections. But our focus is on the individual youth voter, if they do not feel inspired by their choice candidate or the selection of candidates, then they are not as likely to vote as a youth who believes that the candidate is inspirational. While there are objective measures of leadership, I argue that leader effects must be measured within the individual. Objective measures would suggest certain leaders are more influential than others, consider Kennedy, Gingrich, Reagan, and Obama. But objective assessments do not get voters to the polls. In order to get individuals to vote leaders must make them feel inspired. Inspiration in the end must be felt by people subjectively. Young individuals must be convinced that the leader does inspire them and gives them hope, which may be different for each person. Measures of presidential inspiration include the combination of variables from the ANES and interviews with youth.

The concept of political independence is considerably more difficult because instead of solely looking at partisanship and nonpartisans we have to question their motives to take on these identities. The why, in the case of partisan choice or active non-affiliation, is inherently open-ended with many different explanations. From what we know about who participates and who does not, partisans overwhelmingly participate in presidential elections. Partisans who weakly and strongly identify with the parties are more likely to participate than Independents who claim to be solidly independent or who lean toward one party. Why then study political independence? The purpose is to look more closely at the number of youth who claim to be Independent and how different types of Independents might influence voting. Developed Independents know who they are politically and choose not to identify with either party. On the other hand, default

Independents do not know who they are politically, but feel pressured to choose when asked about their partisanship and would rather not say that they don't know. Developed Independents are more likely to participate because they are committed to an identity and default Independents are not. These two types of Independents in this study become a pursuit of what it means to be Independent in youth and the consequences for political behavior.

Outline for the Dissertation

As you can see the first chapter lays about the arguments that will flow throughout the dissertation and how they are intertwined in eventually explaining the behavior of youth in American presidential elections. This first chapter provided a general overview of the relevant literature that will be addressed throughout the work and expanded on in the specific chapters of the arguments of the work: personal political identity, inspirational leaders, and the role of political Independents. The second, third and fifth chapters will each discuss one aspect of the theory of each of these propositions.

The second chapter deals specifically with the new concept of political identity development and its consequences on youth voting behavior. Relevant literature, the basis for the theory, how one can measure such work and the application of bivariate analyses to test the validity of the measures will be presented. Chapter three develops the conceptualization of what leaders actually do to engage citizens in a variety of behaviors, but the theory used here suggests the power of leadership relies not in the leader themselves but the reaction of individuals to leaders and their subjective association with feelings of hope and subjective assessment of inspiration. In addition, this chapter is also a warning about the aspects of leaders that youth do get caught up in and the hesitation that anyone in a democracy should be about such leaders.

Lastly, the fourth chapter specifically discusses Independents and what encourages these individuals to claim Independence. Rather than directly studying partisanship, which has often said those who are partisans are more likely to participate in elections than non-partisans (Campbell et al, 1960; Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003), I argue that there are different types of Independents who need different encouragements in order to participate. In addition, I address why so many youth in particular are Independents and why they might be stating that they are Independent rather than directly choosing a political party to affiliate with. The sixth chapter evaluates all of these explanations for youth voting against the traditional measures of voting in logistic regression analyses. The final chapter puts all of this work into perspective by discussing the value of studying youth as the beginning point of one's political life. Each of these explanations is interconnected and draws on different aspects of youth behavior and development as political citizens. In addition, this work provides suggestions as to how we can encourage development of a political identity in youth.

Chapter 2 A Critique of Theories on Voter Turnout in General and Youth Turnout in Particular

While there have been volumes written on voting behavior and what encourages and discourages voters to come to the polls, this chapter highlights some of the missing elements in the discussions of voting behavior and specifically voting behavior of young people.

Discussions of voting behavior sometimes begin with who usually votes compared to who does not vote. In the literature emphasizing demographic characteristics to explain lack in turnout, young people are often categorized as non-voters based on characteristics of their age and place in the life cycle (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Other characteristics of voters versus non-voters tend to be demographics indicating that whites vote more than minorities, that women after 1980 are more likely to participate than men, that home-owners are more likely to participate than those who are transitory or who rent, that college-educated individuals tend to vote more frequently than their less educated counterparts, and that those with higher incomes and socio-economic status are more likely to vote than their lower income and status counterparts (Neimi and Weisberg, 2001). Still other attitudinal characteristics, such as partisanship, internal and external efficacy, and the belief that voting matters, are also influential factors in understanding who votes and who does not (Clarke and Acock, 1989). The missing piece of the story, however, is what is fundamentally different about voters and non-voters based on their level of political identity development. I define this development as gaining a set of political issues, having a set of organized beliefs about the political system, and engaging in political behaviors that support those beliefs.

In the voting behavior literature, much of the emphasis is on characteristics of the individual, limitations of the electoral context, rational non-voting and attitudes that either encourage or discourage participation. Very little work has been done on the psychological

development of individuals and how one becomes a political person with knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about politics. My critique focuses on the fact that little real work within political science has been done on the issue of political identity development as a process of how a person becomes political. Other studies have focused on age dependent variables, whereas my work focuses on psychological development that happens independently of these characteristics. In the chapters ahead my work discusses the concept of how a person's political self concept is created. However, I must first address the limitations within the voting behavior literature that constrain how we think about young people as non-voters.

Literature on Non-voting

Niemi and Weisberg note the controversies in how we study voting behavior (2001). They suggest three general areas of inquiry that most of the literature follows—social-psychological, rational voter models, and political psychology. Many different theories of voting create a backdrop for which we understand and analyze who votes and who does not. The different models shape how we think about voters and what encourages and discourages participation in elections. The social-psychological model comes out of the work from the Michigan School where the focus is on “the person's attachment to a party, the person's orientation toward the issue, and the person's orientation toward the candidates” (Niemi and Weisberg, 2001, 14-15). With some of the emphasis on sociological background and social status, the social-psychological approach emphasizes the individual's relationship to the political environment. The second model is the rational voter model that argues people “vote only if they perceive greater gain from voting than the cost (mainly in time) of voting” (15). Rational voters understand that their effect on the outcome of the vote will be minimal, but that the costs in voting (time, energy, and knowledge) that can be overcome with perceived benefits or feelings of

civic duty. The most recent model borrows from psychology, especially cognitive psychology, and calls attention to understanding human thought and motivation. Political psychology models investigate “the problem of decision-making under limited information” (Niemi and Weisberg, 2001, 16). While their typology highlights the controversies in voting behavior surrounding the individual, I have added another set of models that examine development of a political identity as a key component. Each of their models highlights the individual without taking into account the process by which a person becomes political. The social-psychological model focuses on background without seeing the development of the individual. In the pages ahead, I argue the development of the individual and especially the level of development that a young person is in changes his or her likelihood to vote. Beginning with the different explanations for voting behavior and how they come up short, I investigate where a theory of political identity development can supplement our knowledge of whether or not a young person votes.

Demographic and Situational Explanations

Burns, Schlozman and Verba find the major difference in turnout between men and women can be found in workplace opportunities to use civic skills, such as social networks, leadership resources, and exchange of political knowledge, and educational attainment (2001). Finding psychological characteristics as another underlying factor, they note that women are less psychologically involved in politics in the particular areas of interest, information and efficacy. However, they also find women are actually more involved in campaigns that involve female candidates and incumbents. Additionally, women who are working mothers are more likely to participate than homemakers. In their approach which emphasize institutions such as the family, school, and work, Burns et al find institutions of work and education are more likely to foster

participation than social institutions of early childhood socialization, religion, and familial responsibilities.

As noted in the introduction, some of the literature on non-voting behavior focuses in on major differences in voting behavior based on generational differences. Miller and Shanks argue there are three generations voting from 1952 to 1988 which are the pre-New Deal generation, the New Deal generation, and post New Deal generation (1996, 72). Their findings suggest different aspects of life actually influence the different generations' participation; for instance, the pre New Deal generation differences in education and political interest are the reasons for the disparity of voters and non-voters (85). The New Deal generation is also likely to have differences based on educational attainment, but also have differences based on caring about the election outcome and interest efficacy (87-88). For the post New Deal generation, factors of decreasing residential mobility, increasing home ownership and income, and likelihood to identify with one of the political parties are associated with increased turnout. However, disparities in the post New Deal generation occurred due to disparities in economic advantage; those who were advantaged were more likely to vote, and the disadvantaged were least likely indicating a shift from previous generations. In the end, Miller and Shanks find the major differences between voters and non-voters of all generations is the engagement in the social network of life including education, residence, income, church attendance, and marital status, however this changes for the elderly as they lose those social ties. They also found religion to be the new cultural dimension in politics that would begin to divide the country. While they did find that party identification continued to be important, they concluded the major decline in voter participation in the United States has been due to the lack of replacement of older generations with younger generations who vote regularly. Upon reflection, their argument mirrors the

stability factors suggested by early authors, that what distinguishes young people from participating is their lack of social network ties.

Attempting to find out the specific demographics of nonvoters, Ragsdale and Rusk categorize five different types of nonvoters including Politically Ignorant, Indifferent, Selectively Aware, Conditionally Inactive, and Dissatisfied. Politically Ignorant nonvoters have no recognition of candidates or political issues who claim to be independent and are generally less educated and older with below average incomes (1993, 736). Indifferent nonvoters see little difference between the candidates even though they have some political knowledge and recognize the candidates; these nonvoters tend to be highly educated and mobile (737). A slight variant of Indifferent nonvoters are the Selectively Aware who find themselves in less competitive races. Characteristics of Selectively Aware nonvoters are partisans with low levels of education and income (740). Conditionally inactive nonvoters tend to be political independents who do not vote due to their hard economic situation; these nonvoters tend to be younger, of low income, but are on average politically knowledgeable about the race, candidates, and differences between candidates (741). Dissatisfied nonvoters are what Ragsdale and Rusk are deeply concerned about. Accounting for 41% of nonvoters, Dissatisfied nonvoters are more aware than voters about the campaign, candidates and issues. Demographically they are younger with somewhat above-average income and education (740), their abstaining from voting is seen as a protest to the dissatisfaction with the race. While Ragsdale and Rusk's article focuses on senate elections, their work may be generalized to presidential elections with many different voters not participating for a variety of reasons. However, there was no specific category encompassing the youngest voters and explaining why they did not participate.

While still investigating resources, Rosenstone and Hansen believe their major contribution to be in the mobilization of citizens by political leaders, parties, and social movements. Considering the individual by themselves and then as a part of a larger microcosm of politics, Rosenstone and Hansen look at specific characteristics of interest, preferences, and social embeddedness, then move toward how individuals may be inspired and mobilized by others (1993, 5). Respondents who are wealthy, better educated, white, and who participate in other political activities are more likely to participate (43-45). But these characteristics are not the only explanation of who participates and who does not. The second aspect of Rosenstone and Hansen's argument is that these characteristics also provide a certain social network of interaction by which these individuals can be mobilized by external organizations. By questioning the decline in voter turnout, Rosenstone and Hansen discover the decline in participation in political clubs, activities, and political parties as the root cause (126).

Taking a closer look at why education plays a role in participation, Hillygus evaluates three theories of the role education plays in voter participation. The first is the civic education hypothesis that suggests that education provides the skills and knowledge necessary to be an active citizen in politics. Second, the social network hypothesis suggests that education allows individuals to not only be a part of large networks but places educated individuals at the center of these networks. The third theory, political meritocracy hypothesis, states that education is not the key component but intelligence is, and intelligence results in educational attainment not the other way around (2005, 27-29). In her assessment of many factors before, during, and after college, Hillygus finds specific indicators that encourage turnout including parent's education level, verbal skills, and a social science curriculum. Holding political interest constant, verbal skills and a social science curriculum are still significant indicators of political engagement after

college (35-39). Education's role, then, is as a socializer of verbal skills needed to participate in politics and creator of understanding of the political world with a social science curriculum.

How Hillygus goes about attempting to understand why education matters is precisely the approach I am taking to question why getting older matters in youth participation. I evaluate three theories that would suggest differences in why youth turn out on election day while holding constant the common explanations of voting behavior such as partisanship, residential mobility, and socio-economic status.

Electoral Context Explanations

Burnham argues that there has been a growing dealignment of the parties that affects voters (1970). Parties, he argues, have been slowly replaced by permanent campaigns, and, as a consequence, there is increasing independence of voters and more influence of issue positions in campaigns. As evidence, he notes the weakening party loyalties and party line voting. The major moments for realignment, occurring after periods of dealignment when citizens' attachments to parties weaken, create critical elections that encourage voter participation. Some of the ongoing criticism of Burnham's theory of dealignment pertains to when they are asserted to have occurred and whether realignments have happened and additional questions as to which transition are we in currently.

Engaging in the discussion of critical elections, V. O. Key notes that the electorate is what changes during these revolutionary moments (1955). Voters, due to their deep concern, high involvement and their shifting views of issues and affiliations with parties, are what change during critical elections. Critical elections exhibit "a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate" (1955, 4). A necessary feature of a critical election is the durability of the change that has occurred in the electorate. V. O. Key knew well that the politics of the American

public were shifting and thus they would change their minds from election to election, but for a realigning election to occur durability of the voters' ties and new political system would follow. Looking at the political parties and political system as a whole, Key explains the changes in certain elections are how voters come into and out of the electorate and evaluates the consequences of that entry and exit.

Key went on to contend that the general electorate is both rational and responsible. He finds "an electorate moved by concern about cultural and relevant questions of public policy, of governmental performance, and of executive personality" (1968, 7-8). However Key also maintained that, when asked, the public improvised policy views or followed closely along party lines (xiii). While Key does discuss youth voters, he describes them as new voters who tend not to vote; however, he also finds party loyalties of these youth voters are created long before the age of 21. If party loyalty is such a crucial factor to the creation and maintenance of habitual voters, then young new voters with long-standing party loyalties would seem to be likely voters—not likely non-voters. Continuing his case for changes in presidential elections, Key acknowledges parties "must seek to recruit young voters and to arouse and attract support from among the in-and-out sector of the electorate to maintain their position" (22). While Key may have been right about recruitment of young people, he was wrong that the parties would then seek the support of young adults as voters. Parties make calculating choices about who to pursue as voters and young people are some of the least likely voters parties seek out during election time (Dreger, 1999).

In an earlier work, Burnham noted the major changes to the political system were systematic hurdles and that some changes in politics that produce lower levels of turnout. Systematic issues included registration, residency requirements, and elections held during the

normal working day (1965, 12). Other scholars have also noted these obstacles to who votes (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, Piven and Cloward 2000).

However Burnham also suspects other aspects of the political arena explain why individuals do not participate including mass media and politicians' difficulty to attract the attention of voters.

Schattschneider maintains parties actually liberalized the franchise to receive support and argued the expansion of the suffrage occurred due to party competition. Schattschneider, like V. O. Key, also argues that people are at the center of politics contending that the "movement of voters in and out of the electorate is more important than the shift from party to party" (1942 [1977 Reprint], 49). Maintaining the importance of who participates in politics, Schattschneider also chastises parties for not turning out more voters. Mobilization by the parties not only encouraged people to participate, but got many different groups of people into the political arena in the late nineteenth century, but the reason people voted is because they were asked to vote. Schattschneider focuses on the environmental factors of how parties work to turnout voters rather than looking at what is going on in the mind of the voter. I extend Schattschneider's criticism of the parties' mobilization, however I also find that inspirational leaders tend to play a role in mobilizing youth voters. While I agree that parties have in certain ways lost their power, the mobilization power now resides with candidates and their individual campaigns.

Piven and Cloward consider the decrease in voting behavior to be a consequence of "declining party mobilization and the construction of new legal and procedural barriers" (2000, 28). Increased registration and residency requirements tend to decrease the available voter pool. Parties of the twentieth century were supporters of increased regulation of voting and enacted laws that would limit potential voters, whereas in the nineteenth century parties worked to expand the franchise and connect with voters in order to win elections. Due to strict reforms in

registration and voting, party mobilization was more difficult. As a result, candidates had to rely on other forms of getting out the vote than face-to-face mobilization by party workers and began finding other ways to market to the American public. Parties soon found that they could win elections without voters, or, more specifically, without certain types of voters, and began to focus their resources less on direct contact with constituents and more of the retention of resources from business. Perhaps part of the shift in politics to give the people less and less what they want and more and more of what business wants is precisely the shift that came at the turn of the twentieth century with the system of 1896. While I agree with Piven and Cloward in their assessment of additional barriers to participation, their criticism of voting laws does not necessarily deal with youth voting in particular. Young people, I argue, have been greatly affected by registration laws, misinterpretation of voter registration laws by local boards of election, and unequal treatment of residency requirements for individuals under 24.

In his look at established democracies, Franklin evaluates the role of electoral competition and the expansion of the franchise to young people had on voting behavior. In his model, he argues “low voter turnout would have been blamed on the character of the election, not on the characters of those who failed to vote” (2004, 2). Describing the role of electoral competition, Franklin finds “electoral competition is maximized when strategic uncertainty is low while uncertainty about the outcome is high” (57). The crux of his argument means that there are differences in voting behavior of those who are socially connected versus those who are alienated from the political system. Those who are socially connected know and understand the strategy of mobilizing those within their social network and the effect that their mobilizing others could have on the election. Those who are not as well socially connected and who do not have a preference for the outcome feel neither motivated to vote or to work to motivate others for an

outcome they care little about. In a specific argument about youth voting, Franklin considers lowering the voting age to be a major cause in the decline of voting turnout rates and, through his analysis, finds young people who entered the electorate after the voting age was lowered are less likely to vote than individuals entering the electorate before the voting age was changed (78-82). But lowering the voting age not only affected overall turnout of the electorate, it also made it more difficult to engage young voters due to difficulties in creating a habit of voting (205). Specific to the American political system, Franklin finds that the political parties fail to mobilize young voters and focus on “voters whose concerns are familiar to them” (216). The failure to engage young voters in the political conversation is why many young people fail to turnout. Just as Plutzer notes, Franklin believes individuals vote more frequently as they pick up the habit of voting, but for Franklin, voters are not the only individuals to blame. In my work, I examine the individual and forces outside the individual to determine whether or not a young person votes. However, I place the presence of a political identity above Franklin’s argument about developing a habit of voting. While he focuses on the development of a behavior, I focus on the development of a self-conscious political identity.

In a different look at the shrinking electorate, Patterson blames the number of distractions Americans now have in addition to the electoral system, political parties, the news media, and campaigns (2002, 21). The nature of issue fragmentation, where there is a lack of universal issues and single issues seem to dominate politics, has greatly split the electorate into many different parts as different organized groups compete for a piece of the pie, while parties have a more difficult time getting the attention of and gathering voters. Journalists have taken on the role of constant critics and the perpetual go-between for leaders and the public (67-75). The increasing length of the campaign also seems to tire out voters, who tend to become interested in

the election only a few months if not a few weeks before (101). Patterson also mentions the role that election laws play on affecting turnout including polling hours, registration, and how the Electoral College creates states where candidates will tend to pay attention to big states and those that are competitive (132-144). In order to increase participation, Patterson suggests a slow unfolding of nominees and moving the primaries to later in the electoral season around mid-April (152), in addition to revisions to the electoral system like same day registration, media coverage, and candidate trustworthiness. Patterson's argument is articulate and encompasses many explanations for the changes in the American electorate; however he does not focus on how young people are specifically affected by these changes.

Calculus of Voting

Anthony Downs, on the other hand, maintains that voters are rational creatures that balance costs and benefits (1997). Arguing that there is a problem of collective action, he notes that, voters, if they are rational creatures, could very well see why they shouldn't vote based on a cost benefit analysis. Voters get very little benefit from voting and have to overcome high costs of information acquisition, registration, and actually going to the polls. In addition, a single vote, when measured against the overwhelming number of other single votes, in an election seems extremely unlikely to change the final outcome.

Downs does focus on the individual rather than the masses, but fails to address identity as an issue. Knowing who I am politically greatly increases my likelihood to vote. For young people who are in the process of developing who they are politically, voting is more difficult because they do not know what issues they care about and if they care about politics at all. Downs articulates the rationality of individuals with preferences voting and citizens who are indifferent abstaining (260-273). Those rational voters who have more knowledge about their

political world are more likely to participate. However, Downs bases the indifference on choice between the parties or preferences of one party over another. I argue for a better understanding of the political self to evaluate the whether or not an individual will vote.

Based on the Downsian model, Green and Shapiro discuss their calculus of voting as having four qualities: preferred candidate bias, probability of a single individual determining the outcome, selective incentives, and the perceived costs of voting. Citizens, rather than having to face their peers and say that they did not go to the polls, are more likely to go because “the utility they derive automatically from affirmation and compliance outweighs the voting costs they expect to incur” (1996, 51). In order to overcome the costs of voting, Green and Shapiro find personal concern for the election or interest both affect whether or not an individual will turnout. In the end, they consider feelings of obligation and the need to affirm a partisan identity are the true reasons individuals turnout to vote; however Green and Shapiro also suggest the need to disentangle these two theories, of obligation and identity, in order to better find out which overcomes the rational calculus of non-voting. Within the context of youth voting, there seems to be a lingering question of identity development and calculus of voting. Not only are the costs greater for young voters in their first election, but affirming a not yet fully formed political identity will decrease turnout of young people as well. The calculus of voting articulates that costs of voting may be higher for new voters, but does not necessarily find the costs to be higher for youth voters in particular.

In their seminal work on voting behavior, Wolfinger and Rosenstone investigate the role of benefits, costs, and resources related to voting, such as income, education, and occupational status, while also accounting for costs of voting in registration laws, and perceived benefits of civic duty. Wolfinger and Rosenstone contend education has the largest effect on whether or not

an individual will turnout to vote (1980, 36). As they turn to the question of aging as a component to voting behavior, they uncover evidence that as one ages, they are more likely to vote. But growing older is not their only explanation for increased participation as individuals age, they also maintain that the adult roles hypothesis, which suggests as one takes on adult roles such as marriage and career then they are more likely to participate in politics, is wrong (1980, 58). In Wolfinger and Rosenstone's assessment of registration laws, they investigate which laws have the most effect on turnout and find the closing date, the last day to register before an election, to have the most effect (71). In their conclusion, Wolfinger and Rosenstone evaluate the differences of younger and older participants in the political system and determine that experience with the political system is the major difference between age groups; young people who are not yet equipped with the skills to navigate political bureaucracy are less likely to vote, not because they have not taken on adult roles, but because they do not yet have the experience with the complexities of the political system. However, Wolfinger and Rosenstone do not clearly differentiate between the gathering of resources and the gathering of experience that would encourage a young person to participate in politics.

Attitudinal/Psychological

From an information processing model, Zaller argues the differences in levels of participation are largely due to the ability to receive and process a message, what Zaller defines as political awareness (1992). Individuals need access to knowledge to be able to participate. During intense campaigns, there is more information polarization, meaning increased partisan bias in political advertising, as two or more sides compete for message retention. The best way for an individual to be able to resist the messages is counter-valent information, previous knowledge and experience, and varying communications. While Zaller's work does not

necessarily focus on whether or not an individual will vote, he does examine how an individual will vote given certain constraints of political awareness, party identification, inertia, and policy distance between the voter and incumbent.

In focusing on individual behavior, Krampen attempts to distinguish personality variables from action theory approaches. The action theory model suggests individuals have “subjective goal values and subjective expectancies about goal attainment” (1991, 2). He criticizes both theories of voting behavior, where personality characteristics focus excessively on the individual rather than the circumstances affecting the individual and the action theory model focuses too much on the circumstances and not on the individual personality characteristics. Studying educated young people from Germany, Krampen finds differences between types of political behaviors and how individuals perceive their life situations.

[P]olitical activists possess more adequate cognitive representations of political issues and. . .they perceive their political life situation in a more differentiated and reflexive manner. Their expectancies and valences concerning political events are political actions are subjectively less ambiguous and diffuse (1991, 17).

Non-activists are more likely to be affected by their own personality characteristics rather than by the action theory model. These fundamental differences between activists and non-activists may shed some light on differences between young participants and non-participants in the American political system.

While some of the focus of voting behavior studies may be on rational choices of the electorate, Marcus and MacKuen argue individuals become involved in politics not because of their cognitive reasoning but due to their emotions. Focusing on the intersection between emotion, information processing, and turnout they hypothesize that anxiety and enthusiasm actually encourage participation and information gathering. Enthusiasm encourages active participation and emersion in a campaign where people are throwing themselves towards a cause,

whether the cause is a policy issue or candidate. On the other hand, anxiety causes individuals to pay more attention to politics and, as a consequence, to increase knowledge gathering as individuals forego their previous positions and ways of gathering information (1993, 170-173). Both emotions, anxiety and enthusiasm, work in fundamentally different ways but, in the end, encourage more meaningful participation. Their contribution to voting behavior is the role of emotional engagement in politics actually encourages participation in two distinct ways—one through encouraging interest and the other through increased information gathering. Yet they do not distinguish between young and old participants. Perhaps young people, due to their lack of disappointment with candidates making promises and then not keeping them, will be more likely to be influenced by enthusiasm. Older voters may be more active in their information seeking if a candidate seems too good to be true based on their experience with previous candidates.

Converse, in his discussion of belief systems, (1964) claimed that there was a need for a coherent worldview or belief system if a person has high levels of sophistication and abstract thinking. Individuals who have higher levels of sophistication and coherent world beliefs regardless of age are more likely to participate. He also recognized the need for understanding the development of worldviews within context of how much information individuals process. Individuals attempt to be economical with their cognitive resources and tend to rely on cues from others that are more politically sophisticated than themselves. The level of sophistication in worldviews or belief systems by the average public varies, and Converse breaks these different sophistication level groups down into five distinct categories: Ideologues, Near Ideologues, Group Interests, Nature of the Times, and No Issue Content. These different levels of sophistication also vary in their levels of participation, where the most sophisticated, Ideologues, are also the most participatory, and the least sophisticated, No Issue Content are least

participatory. In his evaluation, Converse maintains “large portions of an electorate do not have meaningful beliefs” (245) and finds that youth are the least politically sophisticated even though they have high levels of education (253).

A key component to explain why young people actually vote is needed. If education and higher levels of sophistication do not explain why young people are not turning out in higher numbers then we must look elsewhere. I argue what education cannot provide you with is who you are (an identity). While you may have a lot of knowledge about the world, self knowledge is a critical component to voting. Perhaps this is the critical distinction between knowing facts and know what one believes, and the additional component of salience—the caring about what one believes.

Youth Voting Behavior

As discussed in the introduction, many theories of voting behavior about the general public suggest that youth do not vote because they are lacking some resource that might encourage them to vote. The literature that focuses on young adult participation looks at many different aspects of what may encourage and discourage participation of young adults. Whether the approach emphasizes turnout or lack of turnout, the two different approaches to youth voting also have different streams of thought. For theories investigating a lack of youth turnout, the approaches discuss feelings of alienation, lack of attention from candidates, registration barriers, and lack of mobilization by organizations. For the theories that investigate what encourages youth participation, the approaches fall into a few categories of civic engagement, socialization factors, and psychological engagement. Even though both sets of theories have explanations of what discourages or encourages participation of youth, none of these theories address development of a political identity. In this section, I will begin with the factors that discourage

participation and then look at what encourages participation while still being critical of the missing component of identity.

Theories of Youth Non-participation

In their early work on youth nonvoting, Converse and Niemi noticed several characteristics of youth that would later be followed up and examined by other authors. Their work, however, set the stage for seeing youth as nonvoters rather than voters. One suggested factor is that youth may not vote because they are focused on other endeavors such as securing a job and a relationship (1971, 461). Other factors that discourage voting include lack of strong political interest (460), lower levels of education (448), less political information (449), and lack of motivation (453). In their discussion of missing motivation for youth voting, Converse and Niemi argue that there is a lack of external stimulation from the political environment and a lack of internal motivation, and along with legal barriers to participation (453). In the United States, there tend to be higher barriers to voting and registration than in other countries; however, Converse and Niemi believe there is more motivation to become registered than to follow through and vote. While there is some hope for increased youth voting, electoral institutions seem to stand in the way including registration and residency requirements that disproportionately affect the young who frequently move (464). Their findings suggest interactions between being young with education and information access, meaning young people who have lower levels of education and information are even less likely than their youthful counterparts to participate. Converse and Niemi frame the debate about youth voting that continues to shape the research today; however, they fail to look at the deeper issues of youth nonvoting based on weak identifications, failure to psychologically connect to the political system or political leaders, and the role of a political identity plays in encouraging participation.

In their explanation of low youth turnout, Rosenstone and Hansen propose three explanations: life-experience hypothesis, life-cycle hypothesis, and generational hypothesis. The life-experience hypothesis is similar to the argument put forward by Wolfinger and Rosenstone in *Who Votes?*, where young people have not yet acquired the resources for participation in politics. The life-cycle hypothesis suggests as young people become integrated into the society or community they become more likely to vote (137). In the generational hypothesis, differences in socializing experiences of different generations changes the rates of participation by cohorts (139). Their conclusions suggest neither the generational hypothesis nor the life-cycle hypothesis holds up well after controlling for life experience (137).

Within their mobilization argument, which suggests that individuals turn out as a consequence of mobilization by parties, leaders, and personal contacts, Rosenstone and Hansen also find evidence that lack of mobilization of young people causes lower turnout in this age group and note that: “in presidential election years political parties are 22.1 percent more likely to contact the most experienced voters, those age sixty-five and older, than the least experienced voters, those eighteen years old” (168). For parties, the choice to mobilize young people can be perceived a waste of resources since young people frequently do not vote. If young people are more likely to vote after they have had life experiences, this does not contradict the hypothesis of identity development. In the psychological literature, as a person ages they are also more likely to develop a more consolidated identity as a consequence of interactions with people, the environment, and self questioning. Getting older is not just the accumulation of experiences, but the slow process of discovery about who one is and what that identity means.

In a survey of registration laws by the Pace Institute, O’Loughlin and Weiler suggest youth are discouraged from voting due to registration barriers. Those especially affected are

college students, who account for about half of the 18-24 year old population (Census Bureau, 2008). The inability of college students to declare residency and register to vote in their college communities due to prohibitive state laws or administrative interpretation of state laws is a barrier to many young people's participation (2004, 3). There are additional options to registration such as absentee ballots, but for some youth this is a barrier to voting as well since registering and then requesting an absentee ballot can be a convoluted process.

Three archetypes of state laws regarding state residency requirements include student choice, restrictive, and high thresholds for establishing residency (13). While student choice laws encourage student participation in local communities where they attend college, restrictive and high registration threshold laws discourage it. They find “[S]tudent choice states are those that allow students, either through explicit statutory language or administrative practice to determine their own residency for voter registration purposes” (12). The real distinction in the implementation of these laws of student registration is who makes the choice of where to vote, in student choice states the students decide, in restrictive and high registration thresholds the local boards of election make the decision.

In addition to the laws, there are also clear differences in the feelings of communities towards college student voting. Differences in perceptions of college students by local boards of election affect the ability of students to register as local implementers evaluate whether or not college students are allowed to vote regardless of what the law says. Some of the negative perceptions of college students include transience of their situation, “superficial interest in the local community,” and lack of a stake in the community (4-5). The differences in the residency and implementation of voter registration laws actually do have an effect on whether or not college students vote. As O’Loughlin and Weiler suggest, “a student choice state is associated

with approximately a 10 percent reduction in the size of the registration gap, and 8 percent reduction in the size of the voter turnout gap [between 18-24 age group and the overall voting population]” (13). While many of the court decisions about restrictive college student voting occurred in the 1970s, every presidential election year has reports of restrictive implementation of election laws especially towards young voters. Restrictive election laws often decrease turnout for the population targeted; however, this does not account for the other half of the youth population who is not affected by these residency and registration laws.

The electoral environment is changing and young voters are being socialized differently from their more active, older counterparts. Wattenberg argues that revolutions in communication technologies changed how young people view media and how well their media habits allow them to interact with politics and the political conversation (2008, 3). Certain media habits including watching the nightly news and reading the newspaper are limited to older populations, while young people are more likely to pick up the remote control, watch cable news and, as a consequence, experience fewer shared events that unite the population (33-43). Having common shared experiences through the media allows the American population to relate to one another and the world. Wattenberg believes “The central reason that many of today’s young adults fail to vote is not the age they are at but rather their lack of exposure to politics” (126). Young adults today are more likely to believe voting is a choice or right rather than a duty or responsibility (129-130).

This change in perception of voting today is also echoed by other authors including Zukin et al and Dalton who find that the real changes in participation are about what constitutes political participation and whether or not this participation has an effect. Wattenberg directly addresses two major issues within the literature of youth voting and refutes both the life cycle

approach and the fact that lowering the voting age created declines in participation (103, 125). To encourage youth voting, Wattenberg recommends two avenues: one of compulsory voting and another which shows young people why politics matters. In the end, Wattenberg discusses what is happening in the political environment rather than focusing on what is happening within individuals. As young people ignore political forms of media, they have no frame of reference on which to build their own personal beliefs, preferences, and identity.

Ashwell, a college student writing on this issue of low voter turnout of youth, claims that youth are involved, but not with voting (2000, 39). Evidence of high levels of community service and caring deeply about how their actions create results in their communities suggests there is something missing from politics, not something missing from young adults. Ashwell contends two major problems of youth turnout are lack of issues discussed in presidential debates that are important to students and the lack of exposure to politics (39). However, Ashwell does not see how only exposure is not enough; there needs to be a level of psychological engagement and formation of personal beliefs in order to be involved.

Another common theme of youth non-participation is the prevalence of individualism and the forgotten common good fosters disengagement from the political system as young people choose not to be a part of community and political life. The former president of Chile, Patricio Azoar asserts “only by opening the eyes of the youth to the communal sense of human existence will it be possible to awaken and strengthen their civil commitment” (Youth Voter Participation, 8). In order to encourage youth to participate in politics the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) suggests several solutions from appealing to youth about representation of their issues in governance to appealing to altruism and their beliefs and convictions (44). Their solutions to the youth turnout problem require implementation by both

institutional and non-institutional actors, including revising the electoral process, working through non-governmental organizations to appeal to youth, and socializing children into an environment where role models not only care about elections but act in them. IDEA discusses many of the same issues of aging that the traditional political scientists articulate: increased resources, become more attached to parties, and become more integrated into society. They do, however, mention one aspect of identity development as a reason for youth non-voting; as citizens grow older they tend to “internalize ideologies more deeply” (24). Though indirectly, IDEA actually highlights an important aspect of youth voting: the process that occurs as youth grow older when they also develop psychologically those commitments to ideology and party.

Highton and Wolfinger also directly discuss youth turnout of 18-24 year olds and evaluate the theory of adult roles meaning as the young person ages they take on more responsibility and begin to fill the roles of spouse, parent, and full-time worker. While evidence is sparse, there do tend to be a variety of theories to suggest adult roles do matter. From the theories available in the field as to why youth do not vote, Highton and Wolfinger evaluate residential mobility, marriage, home ownership, getting a job, leaving school and leaving home as possible indicators of youth nonvoting (2001, 203). Of the specific adult roles evaluated, the findings suggest some rethinking to be done on the part of why youth do not vote. The most important component of who votes in this age group is school; however, it’s not leaving school that is important but being in school that facilitates participation (207). Two other important components are entering the workforce and living away from parents (207). The other theories tested actually produced mixed results or a decline in turnout. Among the youngest, residential mobility is stable and home ownership is somewhat mixed since it is difficult to determine who owns the home—the youth or their parents (204). Marriage, which in older counterparts tends to

increase participation (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980), actually decreases voting for young adults (206). Highton and Wolfinger conclude “Explanations for why some young people vote and others do not must be sought elsewhere” (208). Even voting scholars consider the current adult socialization theories inadequate in explaining why youth either vote or do not. While the theory of adult roles does suggest some slow acquisition of responsibility and roles of adulthood, it does not explain how a person becomes a political being and the process behind that development.

Similar to Highton and Wolfinger’s work on adult roles, Plutzer evaluates the concept of voting as a habit and the fact that youth have not yet developed those resources yet to make voting a habit. The political resources required to develop the habit of voting include socioeconomic status, education, political knowledge, and political interest (2002, 41). Three parental variables influence initial voting: parents’ reported turnout, education, and strength of partisanship (48). Young people who are interested, read politics, and have political knowledge are more likely to overcome the initial barriers to participation and begin to build up the inertia to continue to vote in future elections. In evaluating what continues the inertia, Plutzer finds college education, church attendance, and marriage to be key components of sustained life-long participation. Both being involved in politics and having a knowledge of politics are aspects of individual development that continue to encourage participation. Plutzer both buys into the resources model as an explanation for youth turnout and provides an early model for development; however, he focuses in the behavior of voting rather than what is happening within the individual to encourage participation.

Earlier work done on Generation X suggests some daunting problems for youth political participation. Individuals belonging to Generation X, grew up in the period after the Baby

Boomers and were born between 1965-1978, had very different experiences with the political system than their older cohorts. While Bennett and Rademacher do believe previous cohorts also were apathetic about the political system in their twenties, they also find some clear differences between Generation X and older generations (1997, 22). The characteristics of this generation that make it more difficult to become involved in politics include taking a longer time to grow up and take on adult responsibilities (25), higher degrees of apathy, engaging with alternative forms of media—such as MTV and late night talk shows, and lack of interest. All of these characteristics tend to lead to lower levels of participation and engagement within the political system. Generation X is a unique cohort who seemed even more disengaged from politics and information about the world at large than both its older counterparts and younger counterparts (Generation Y or the Millennials). Bennett and Rademacher articulate why Generation X does not vote, but this reasoning does not hold up for other generations of youth voters. While these characteristics of Generation X can lead one to conclude reasons for their non-participation, very few of the characteristics deal directly with what was psychologically discouraging about politics.

Dennis and Owen believe what makes Generation X different is the lack of party attachment. Generation X not only fails to identify strongly with parties but the independent label does not resonate with them either, which meant many Gen Xers would answer “Don’t know or refuse” rather than identify as a Democrat, Republican or Independent (1997, 45). Instead of partisan affiliations, Generation X seems to be more focused on specific issues to make their political decisions. From American National Election Study data in the 1990s, Dennis and Owen find generational difference in partisan identification, thinking of oneself as Independent, and strength of Independence. They argue the basic cultural fabric of American

partisanship is coming apart due to weakening ties of families and ties to communities (49). Based on the lack of party affiliation of Generation X, Dennis and Owen explain that this generation had “less homogenous political cues from family members,” were less likely to be politically socialized, experienced changes in communications from personalized to impersonalized, and regards parties less than in previous generations (49-55). As a result, Generation X has less of a partisan identity that would tend to increase participation.

Craig and Halfacre in their study of Generation X find that it is not the youth who are not responding to politics, but the political parties failing to change as this new group entered the electorate (1997, 64). Many qualities make Generation X’s focus different from older generations, including quality of life questions, candidates’ personal qualities, and questioning the role of government makes them. While youth do tend to be the most likely to create electoral realignment, Craig and Halfacre find that the lack of party reaction to this cohort discourages participation, which results in ambivalence of a generation of voters. While this argument is specific to Generation X, other scholars have argued that the failure to engage youth with political questions of the day does tend to dampen turnout.

Dreger defines the failure to engage youth in politics as a cycle of inattention, where youth and politicians continue to ignore one another and not engage in the political conversation with each other (1999). Dreger identifies four different explanations of lack of youth turnout including multiple addresses (transience) of youth, little experience with the electoral process, lack of information to “make informed choices,” and that leaders fail to reach out to youth (19). Electoral law also seems to inhibit youth voting as some college youth experience cumbersome absentee voting requirements and problems of dual residency where they live in their college town nine months out of the year, but their permanent residency is considered to be with their

parents. Dreger also summarizes theories found within the literature to include social characteristics, lack of a sense of citizen duty, life cycle approaches, decrease in confidence of political institutions and the electoral system, lack of high profile and engaging campaigns, and preference for personal betterment rather than societal betterment (38-43). None of these explanations suggest lack of a political identity as a reason for not voting, nor does Dreger account for leaders who do pursue youth voters with inspirational messages.

Theories for Youth Participation

In his early call for young people to participate, Mitchell raises many different reasons as to why young people should not only be interested in the electoral process but explains why they should vote. Addressing scholars who say that mobilizing youth is not worthwhile, Mitchell suggests young people can be mobilized around issues that affect them such as economic policy, improving life chances, and drafts (1971, 11-19). The purpose of the work is to inform young voters about the process of the electoral system in addition to informing these new voters as to what potential they have in affecting many different forms of politics. Offering cues on how to assess politicians, cluing into political tactics of candidates, and estimating differences in possible policy differences between parties, Mitchell provides a “how to” book on figuring out politics for young people. However, Mitchell foresees early concern for low youth turnout based on evidence from 1972 national turnout data and problems of residency issues for college youth (118, 142). While Mitchell does address the possibility of the youth vote and offers reasons for young people to turnout to the polls, he does not address what specifically turns out the youth vote.

Voter mobilization efforts by parties tend to turn out voters but these efforts, due to limited resources, are concentrated on potential voters rather than those who are of the youngest

and newest segments of the population (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980, 168). However, Bennion tested the mobilization hypothesis on voters of all ages including the youngest parts of the voting population and found some interesting results. Direct contact by a student-led non-partisan voter registration campaign increased the probability of voting of individuals eighteen to twenty-nine by 18.1 percentage points (2005, 135). Bennion explains that turnout of the young voters probably had the most effect because campaigns often ignore youth voters rather than mobilizing them. If campaigns want youth voters they must concentrate on two major components—direct contact and that the campaign be conducted by other young people—make the most difference (138). The simple urge to vote rather than any specific message of voting, such as altruism or civic duty, makes the most effect on which youth turnout; however some preliminary evidence suggests that young people are convinced by a civic duty message (136-137). While mobilization does matter, we need to be clearer about what mobilization actually does. Does mobilization encourage the individual to belong to a larger voting community or does it increase the importance of voting for the individual? These questions remain unanswered when we discuss youth mobilization.

Certain challenges around mobilization of youth include the fact that politicians fail not only to address youth but also issues that are important to youth that could engage them in politics (Fields, 2003, 3). Like many authors, Fields cites the typical explanations of youth turnout including parents not voting, not knowing how, when, or where to register, and they see volunteering as a viable alternative to politics (4). In addition to the typical explanations, Fields also takes a look at what can be done about low turnout. Increases in civic education, facilitation of service learning, youth coalitions for political action, and youth development all tend to be key factors in increasing political understanding and personal involvement with social and

political issues. In her discussion of the different aspects of civic and political engagement research, Fields explains youth development as a “strong sense of personal identity, responsibility, caring, compassion and tolerance” (9). Fields does not elaborate on what a “strong sense of personal identity” is, but it is clear in the review that considering political identity as a process has not been directly studied. The research in this dissertation is directly about youth development and, in particular, how one develops a political identity. The theoretical foundation has been laid by the civic engagement scholars (Zukin et al, 2006; Gimpel et al, 2003; Flanagan, 2003) on issues of how identity may relate to participation, but this dissertation goes a step further to argue that the process of developing an identity and the different stages that one goes through actually plays a significant role on whether or not a young person votes.

Looking at characteristics of youth socialization that affect turnout, Smith examines many different explanations of political and civic behavior. Following youth from 1988-1994 in the National Education Longitudinal Study, Smith evaluates psychological variables including locus of control and self concept along with external social capital influences such as parental involvement, religious participation, and extracurricular participation and characteristics of the individual including sociability and academic proficiency. Looking at youth in the 8th, 10th and 12th grades along with follow-up studies of adult participation and civic virtue, Smith uncovered different explanations for different ages. Family involvement affected youth motivation for volunteering and contributed to a “more positive self-concept” (1999, 566) in the 8th grade year. Two years later, locus of control, meaning the perceived amount of control an individual has in his or her life, was an influence in the 10th grade and not before or after that time (569). However, the two most consistent stimulants of political participation in young adulthood were

civic virtue, measured by volunteering and the importance of helping others, and extracurricular involvement, measured by sports, music programs, clubs, and student organizations (571).

Using structural equation modeling, Smith contends even civic virtue is a consequence of extracurricular activities. Her findings suggest a clear relationship between extracurricular activities and later voting behavior as young adults since extracurricular activities help to develop the “norms, attitudes, and skills” to participate in political life. Smith does account for socialization of youth to political life, but her psychological assessments do not directly address how an individual forms their identity.

Certain characteristics of the current youngest generation in America seem to suggest more participation by youth rather than less. Young people in Generation Next, as the Pew Research Center calls them, are more interested in national politics and less cynical than their older generational counterparts of either the Boomers or Generation X (Pew Center, 2007, 3). Even though these young people tend to be more focused on personal issues rather than national or international ones, they feel more empowered to bring about social change (7-8). However, some of their opinions actually suggest they are less likely to turn out including feeling less like voting is a civic duty, less guilty about not voting, and more likely to believe that what issues are discussed in Washington do not personally affect them (25-26). On the other hand, when comparing this generation to Generation X at the same age, this generation is more likely to say that they are interested in public affairs than Xers were (36% to 24%, 26). Their more positive views of government might also suggest an increased likelihood to participate in elections. As a generation, they are like many others leaning more Democratic when they were young; in addition, this generation is the least Republican and more liberally leaning ideologically than any other generation (28-29). The Pew study of youth not only compares generations of youth, but

also highlights the characteristics that may have made President Obama's election possible. This study of youth, while focusing on characteristics and generational trends, did not provide answers as to why certain young people turn out and others do not.

In their study of youth turnout within the university context, Bogard et al found that the biggest barrier to youth inactivity during elections was the perception of their own low political knowledge about issues, politicians, and a lack of enjoyment in the political process (2008, 542). In an attempt to correct for these perceived inadequacies, these scholars created programs for young people to engage with politics in a non-threatening manner. Some of the challenges that the authors found for helping youth to acquire information were the position as consumers of civic knowledge rather than as creators and to high levels of distrust of the media and politicians (544). To overcome these challenges, the Hofstra University created a "Day of Dialogue" where students could come and listen to speakers from many different sides of the political debate. The Forum format allowed students to ask questions and debate with individuals on panels, but changed the nature of how students thought of politics. These activities created some room for improving voter registration in the 2004 election (by 14.5%) of Hofstra students as well as an increase in voter turnout.

In a positive view of youth engagement, Zukin et al. actually suggest that young people are involved but not in the traditional forms that we might think they would be. From a generational perspective, they argue that there are new patterns of citizen engagement, such as consumer activism, that older generations don't necessarily subscribe to but youth do. What is particularly unique about the DotNets (the current youngest generation of adults born after 1976) is the circumstances in which they grew up, including a prosperous economy, a time when there was reinvestment in education and community service programs, and the amount of time parents

spent with DotNets (2006, 39). In drawing a comparison between the political situation of the DotNets versus the Generation Xers, the authors contend “Government failure for Xers was institutional; for DotNets, government is full of flawed personalities, not necessarily flawed procedures” (41).

Not only is the center of political problems in a different place for DotNets, but where they consider political power is not necessarily in government but within the marketplace (47). The different economic, social, and political circumstances in which DotNets grew up shape not only how they think about politics, but how they behave in the political arena. By separating civic from political engagement, Zukin et al find young people are engaged in civic actions, but less so in political activities (67). Within the study, young people who were questioned “could not articulate a clear reason for their lack of participation,” (91); however, some other their common answers dealt with feelings of alienation, negative politics, no difference between candidates, and lack of information about politics (93). The major difference between generations in the analysis seems to come from different perspectives on effective political action, where young people feel as though what they are doing as volunteers not only has more of an impact but is also more relevant. Politics not only seems abstract, but is something to be indifferent to.

Contribution of My Work to the Literature of Youth Voting

The current theories of voting behavior and youth voting behavior all seem to be lacking a clear process model that explains how a young person develops into a political being. While many of these theories lay the foundation and provide some insights into why developing an identity is important and how different environmental factors may work to assist in the development, there is no clear evidence about what a political identity process may look like or

the stages youth may pass through as they develop an identity. The life-cycle model takes into account aging and what may occur as a person ages, but this aging process does not necessarily produce higher levels of identity development. There is a connection between age and identity development, where many young people are in the less developed stages of the process. This connection, I believe is crucial for understanding why some young people vote and others do not. Other studies have focused on age dependent variables rather than someone's psychological development, which happens independently of these age characteristics. The focus of this work is how a person's self conception forms and the process of that formation, of which political aspects can be a part or not. I am explaining turnout only among young people and not for the general population. By examining what is different among youth, I focus on what encourages participation of some young people and not others. In the next few chapters, I will develop my concept of political identity development and incorporate psychology into the voting behavior literature to explain differences in why young people vote and why being young is not the sole explanation for a lack of youth turnout.

Political identity development as a theory does not necessarily replace many of these explanations for youth turnout, but puts these explanations into a model that describes the importance of acquiring a political identity. If we begin to see how a person develops their political beliefs, behaviors, and policy stances, we can better estimate who is likely to vote based on their level of development. Many youth may have not yet gone through the stages of development where they question what they believe and settle on who they are as a political person. This development happens within the individual and is the process of self examination and assertion of who one is politically. In the pages ahead, development of an identity is the central argument for encouraging youth political participation that is complemented by two other

components of inspirational leadership and political independence. Inspirational leaders help youth to create their own identity as they provide a political identity model from which youth can construct their own political identity. The examination of political independence addresses why so many young people claim to be Independent and breaks down different types of Independents based on their level of development to further explain how there is variation in voting among young Independents. My works supplements the existing literature on voting behavior—specifically youth voting—with a developmental process explanation of how we become political beings.

Chapter 3 Political Identity: Meaning, Measures, and Evidence

Identity shapes a variety of aspects of life, from how we see the world to how we behave. The concept of a political identity can best be understood as a narrative of one's political self. Identity is the story that we tell ourselves and others about who we are, who we were, and who we foresee ourselves to be. But how does this concept work when trying to understand identity in terms of politics? As noted in the introduction, political identity is complicated in both meaning and how it can best be defined. Much of the literature on identity admits that a political identity is a vague concept that is inherently difficult to measure (Valde, 1996). However, part of the challenge and the reward for both political science and psychology is the development of a better theory to conceptualize political identity.

When I discuss political identity, there are two basic elements—identity development as a process and identity as a status. Identity development is the process that individuals go through to acquire their beliefs, preferences, self identification as political people, and self knowledge. During the identity process, people fall into different statuses of diffusion, explorer, somewhat developed and fully developed. These statuses generally represent the stage within the development process where an individual falls. I define political ego identity as knowing and caring about a set of political issues, having a set of organized beliefs about the political system, and engaging in political behaviors that support their beliefs. I also account for the level of importance politics has to a person's life. If politics is important then these individuals are more likely to have a highly developed identity status. I measure this concept with two different datasets and two different constructions. In the American National Election Study data, I create an identity development continuum and then recode the continuum into four distinct statuses.

Distinguishing Political Identity from Identity Politics

In distinguishing political identity from identity politics, first we must understand the root of each. Political identity is a concept in developmental and social psychology and is in the developmental psychology literature as the creation of a self concept and presentation of that concept to the outside world. Identity politics, however, is rooted in adaptations of identity from political science, which takes into account power structures, group dynamics, and social construction (Hoover, 1997). Political identity is focused on the individual and their internalization of a sense of self. While political identity does take into account social interactions of the individual, the focus is on how individuals create their understanding of themselves and redefines the self with expectations from the outside world. On the other hand, identity politics is a part of understanding groups, especially political groups, whose identity is socially constructed and marginalized. Identity politics focuses on the external and social aspects of identity not on the individual internalized aspects. The fundamental break between the psychological concept of identity and the political science concept of identity is where the focus is placed. For the purposes of understanding voting behavior, I focus on the psychological concept of identity.

Identity politics takes into account the concept of power and the use of power by groups to overcome marginalization. As political scientists, power relations are a focus of how political groups interact with one another, with government, and within themselves. Hoover notes that reducing identity to power is a reductionist view of identity (1997, 7). Identity politics focuses on the socially constructed identity rather than the internalization of an identity. Scholars in identity politics view identity as something that is forced on the individual from the society at large and is represented by those external attributes of race, gender, and ethnicity. Identity politics does not take into account the process by which one develops an identity but the outcome

of identity for study of political purposes. Where political identity considers the process of human development within the individual, identity politics focuses on the social construction and deconstruction of identity as a political concept.

Political Identity as Individual or Social?

The biggest difficulty in understanding political ego identity is to misunderstand the relationship between the individual, society, and the social environment. Individuals are not an island unto themselves, where they figure out who they are with no influence from others. As Hoover notes, “in each application, identity as a phenomenon appears to involve a tension between particular and universal elements, and a recognition that identity resides in the space between individual drives and social responses” (1997, 59). Identity, while constructed by the individual, has consequences when the individual’s identity interacts with society. Society becomes a reflection of the identity in the individual and can limit how individuals may wish to express their identity. Hoover also warns us about the balance of culture and group based identities as they interact with the ego (1997, 61-65). Social identities, when they become overwhelming, can weaken the ability for individual development because individuals become limited by the group or social identity and fail to distinguish themselves as an individual.

What I am discussing here that is different from what other scholars have presented is that I propose to understanding the development of the self rather than the outcomes of demographic or stability characteristics. On the one hand, I see voting as an expression of one’s political self, while on the other hand, non-voting can also be an expression of one’s political self. However, I argue that the major differences in these choices of behavior are really about how developed one is in his or her political identity. I argue here that these individuals more importantly have to know about themselves within the political world. With the discussion of

voting as a habit, the focus lies in the acquisition of resources (Plutzer, 2001) rather than the development of self-conceptualizations. By which I mean asking oneself what he or she believes in politically, how one developed who he or she is politically, and, does he or she actively think about it. Do young people know who they are politically? I consider both active self questioning and self reflection extremely important to political identity development, especially higher levels of development, and voting behavior. Can this development not happen and one still vote or can someone who is highly developed still not vote? I argue young people who are not developed in their political identity they will tend not vote.

People with fully developed political ego identities have 1) a self awareness of who they are politically; 2) experienced a period of questioning where they have considered different types of identities, labels, and beliefs and have settled on commitments; 3) engaged in expressions of their political identity like discussing politics, working on political issues, or writing about their political label or beliefs, and 4) reached the point where they consider politics as an important part of their lives. Each of these aspects of a developed identity can vary over time as one moves through his or her life.

Two of the major concepts in the psychological literature on identity development are commitment and crisis. While commitment is easier to measure than crisis/questioning, both are valuable tools to understand the behaviors of individuals. Measures within political science are exceptional in that they do study a number of commitments, such as partisanship, ideology, policy positions, opinions about campaigns, and political discussions. However, the process for eventually deciding upon commitments is absent. This leaves room for a contribution since many of the measures within political science look at commitments without recognizing that these commitments developed over time and within certain circumstances.

A more difficult measure to create is one based on crisis, also known as questioning. Questioning offers alternative selection that is inherent in identity. An individual with a fully developed identity has made a choice about who they are politically rather than assuming an identity. The larger part of questioning is that it differentiates those who have discovered who they are by choosing between alternatives versus one who assumes an identity due to outside influences. The focus is how much input the individual had in his or her own identity development—was the person an active creator to their own identity or did they collect portions of other's identities and use them as an empty mask with little substance. The individual's creation of their identity is often assessed by asking how different his or her identity is from their parents or friends. The identity process requires that the individual eventually individuate his or herself from others and are able to articulate what makes his or her identity different from those that surround them?

Why is questioning important to voting? If I have questioned who I am politically and have come to a conclusion about who I am then I am more conscious and more clear about what I believe in. This consciousness makes me more likely to vote because I am more confident in my conscious decisions about politics. Take for example, young people in college who begin college with little idea about who they are, but know from their high school government class that they believe in more gun control and like that government provides scholarships. During college, these youth are asked to confront their beliefs on a wide variety of issues such as arguing about environmental protection, more or less government regulation of business, and the change in college tuition rates. There are a wide variety of opportunities on campus for youth to become involved in issues both political and social. In their classes, they are questioned about what they believe in and what they think about, which is a more structured form of self-questioning. This

period of youth is also the time where young people are questioning their place in the world as well as reconciling who they were, who they are, and who they will be. Questioning offers youth alternatives and allows adaption of their own identity—not questioning their identity skips a part in the development process, where having doubts about what one believes in is a normal part. Therefore, a lack of questioning creates less coherence in one’s identity because questioning allows for reconciling among the disparate parts of an identity, and the ability to address clear contradictions between one’s beliefs and actions. An identity that has not been personally tested through questioning will not hold up against external confrontation or in complex situations such as making decisions. A period of questioning increases the likelihood of voting because individuals are more sure in what they believe and are therefore more likely to act out their beliefs. A person who has not gone through a period of questioning when confronted by choices and contradicting evidence is likely to be perplexed by his or her lack of a self knowledge in who he or she is politically.

The literature on socialization in political science does seem to take into account process much better than the voting behavior literature, but it often fails to have a theory that continues through adulthood. Much of this work focuses on children rather than young adults. The assumptions of political socialization scholars suggest there is a foundation for commitments set up early on in life that continues to be built upon as one accumulates experiences with the political world (Beck 1977, Greenstein 1970). Greenstein criticizes the political socialization literature in two ways: the process of socialization is not taken account and the inability to use political socialization to predict behavior. He argues “behavior is a joint function of situational stimuli and psychological predisposition” meaning that we must take into account the individual’s behavior in the context of the environment (1970, 974). Beck suggests that there are

many different agents of political socialization but agrees with Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) that parents tend to be the most influential. However, Beck notes while we understand the different agents of socialization a lot of work needs to be done on learners' contributions to their own socialization, precisely what the psychological literature helps to define.

In psychology, an ego identity refers solely to the individual's development of self: how individuals conceptualize themselves, the theory of the self, and the continuity of the self. Ego identity is inherently personal and is the development of how individuals see themselves and more specifically how they come to think of themselves. The theory of the self notes that we have a running tally of who we were, are and will be, we consider our responsibilities and actions (Moshman, 1999). Continuity is how we tie all of the disparate pieces of ourselves together to form a coherent story. Identity is the story that we tell ourselves about who we are and some parts of this story are better developed than others at certain points in our lives.

With political identity, we may not have yet fully developed the commitments to partisanship or independence, ideology, or political beliefs when we are 18, but may as we grow older or we may never develop political commitments or have a period of questioning. Treating political identity as a process rather than as an outcome allows for periods of transition where one is developing the commitments to political aspects of life. In much of the psychological literature, there is a significant lack of development in political identity (Waterman, 1982; Marcia, 1964; Meilman, 1979). For many people developing a political ego identity is more difficult than developing an occupational, religious, or ethnic identity. Blasi and Glodis contend that we develop commitments on parts of our identity that we find most central to our

understanding of ourselves (1995), meaning that we develop the aspects of ourselves that we find of value and importance.

Identity forms within a context of opportunities and limitations on an identity. Interestingly, the meaning of political concepts, institutions and parties develops from the context in which one grows up; consider the example of Democrats in the South. Yellow dog Democrats were willing to vote for a dead yellow dog before they would vote for a Republican. In this context, what being a Democrat meant for southerners was fundamentally different than what it meant for the northerners of the same era. The partisan identity was shaped by individuals' conceptualization of what their partisanship meant by being in the environment of the South. The circumstances of the environment shape the individual. However the individual is the one with final say about who they are. Côte and Allahar discuss the problems of environments that currently restrict youth development. They argue that post-industrialist countries actually have lower rates of youth identity development due to the nature of institutions and as rites of passage into adulthood become more ambiguous (1996, 71).

Part of the difficulty of developing a political identity is the level of abstraction that is inherent in politics that are not as abstract in occupational identity choices. While there is a level of abstraction, there are also components of politics that make sense to the average person such as political problems of the day, perhaps something national like the economy or local policy issues like road upkeep. Beck notes the transmission of political identity is usually through political objects rather than political abstractions (1977, 125).

Scholars such as Grotevant question whether or not one can have an achieved identity in one domain and not another (1987), meaning I have an achieved occupational identity but a weak or nonexistent political identity. Political identity as noted in the psychological literature has

been difficult to study in comparison with occupational, religious, relationship, and gender role identities (Marcia, 1964; Marcia et al 1993; Waterman, 1982). Literature suggests with the political identity domain many people seem to be diffuse, meaning they do not have a commitment nor are they searching to find one (Archer, 1991; Waterman, 1982; Schwartz, 2001).

Commitment is a clear concept in political science and means does one have standing commitments to political beliefs about parties, policies, political problems, and the understanding of politics. Or do young people not? Do they only have commitments in some areas and not in others? Are these commitments rigid or fluid? Was there some questioning involved? If not, why not? Did someone else simply suggest ideas and they followed them? Commitment can be measured by many of the variables found on the American National Election Study—questioning however cannot.

Often in political science we choose to look at the end product of identity rather than how people developed their politics. Looking at the development of identity can actually help to better understand other long-measured variables of voting behavior and why some variables tend to have more credence than others. The development of identity gives some explanation as to how people eventually decide on a party identification and why others do not.

The literature on identity development places a political identity as one of many aspects of the individual, which makes it so difficult to study because different aspects of our identity compete for our attention and some identities may be prioritized over others. However, I am attempting to create a political identity variable that measures only the aspects of one's identity that are political.

Political Ego Identity

Unlike the social identity literature, the psychological identity literature refers to the individual. Psychological identity is formed from experiences of the individual and construction by the individual but is not socially constructed. Even though a psychological identity is developed throughout the life span, the consolidation of an individual's identity usually occurs in early adulthood between the ages of 18 to 21 (Marcia, 2002).

Political identity is that which encompasses our political selves. While there are many different aspects of an individual's identity, political identity refers to only the aspects of an overarching identity that are political, such as beliefs about what a good society means, or how much regulation is appropriate. Many people engage in politics differently from formal groups petitioning government for resources to informal community organizations attempting to improve the lives of its citizens. Politics, I argue, needs to be understood on the individual level, we need to find out how the average person thinks about and engages with politics. Part of the discussion with political identity is to consider different constructions of a political identity and how politics can be inherently individualized.

There are major components to having a political identity including self competence, self knowledge, and belief that politics is important in one's life. Self competence refers to the individual's assessment of their ability to engage with politics. In the political science literature, self competence is normally measured with internal efficacy such as questions about whether or not politicians listen to me (Niemi et al 1991). Secondly, the individual must have some belief system and knowledge about their beliefs. Self knowledge is a particularly important concept since the discussions of political knowledge hinge on the ideas about factual knowledge and political sophistication rather than what the individual believes about politics. Self knowledge is what inherently comes first based in beliefs about the world and politics that stem from how the

individual sees the world and their place in it. Self knowledge for youth may be particularly difficult since they may have not been asked about their own thoughts about politics, their political world, and how they feel about it. Part of the exploration process in identity consolidation is to engage in self questioning about what issues are of particular importance to the individual. The notion of importance of politics comes from the psychological concept of salience, how prevalent is the political identity compared to the other aspects of one's identity.

Aspects of Psychological Identity

Among the aspects of identity, there is identity formation, commitment and salience. Full identity formation generally occurs in the transitional phase between adolescence and adulthood, but, for some, full identity achievement does not come until later years of adulthood, if ever. Identity is a complex mixture of different identities; consider a single individual and the number of identities he or she has as a student, worker, citizen, sibling, family member, and significant other. Each identity provides an element of role expectations and fulfillments in addition to the internalization of beliefs about the identity. Marcia's original development (1964) of occupational and ideological features—including religious and political—fails to take into account the many different aspects of life and identity. Developments on Marcia's original measure have branched out to include sex roles, ethnic, and relational identities; yet, little work has been done on improving our understanding of a political identity. Identity formation is the process by which one acquires an identity, presents that identity to the social world, and adapts to the reactions afterwards. The formation process takes into account past, present, and future context. In the political context, the political identity formation process is the acquisition of a political identity is only a part of the larger identity acquisition. The formation process for political identity development takes into account knowledge about politics from childhood such

as family discussions about politics, parental modeling of reading the newspaper, watching the news, and going to the polls, future-orientations such as where the youth would like to be politically and perception of changes the youth might go through, and present context of politics such as the political institutions of government and parties, individual's circumstances, and present relation to politics such as efficacy and salience.

Linkages of Identity Statuses and Behavior

The focus of this research is to answer the question whether or not political identity status can be linked to voting behavior and whether certain identity statuses encourage voting behavior in youth. I argue that the consolidation of an identity may be the biggest difference between 18-24 year old participants and non-participants in the electoral system. This argument differs from current findings in political science because it integrates a process model of development and a testing of different statuses on whether or not a youth will turnout. Different statuses of political identity development can also be recognized in differences of voting behavior among young adults. This comparison allows us to see how identity can shape the likelihood for someone to vote. In much of the psychological development literature, the period of the most identity development occurs between adolescence and early adulthood, (Marcia et al, 1993; Moshman, 1999) which is the precise time period when we find many young people are not participating in politics. The reason for nonparticipation, I argue, is that these young people are still developing their political identity and have not yet decided who they are politically.

Converse, in his discussion of mass politics, noted two components in development of a worldview: interest in politics that seemed common among average individuals and ideology by proxy (1964, 216). Converse identified the components that many psychologists find when looking at different identity statuses within identity development. Much of the difficulty found

in psychology is also found in political science around how individuals develop an identity if they do so at all.

In the psychological literature, identity statuses have been linked to many different types of behaviors in children, adolescents, and adults. However, the missing link is an analysis of political identity and its effect on voting behavior. The acquisition of identity is a slow process by which an individual comes to know and decide who he or she is. This process begins in late childhood and early adolescence and continues well into adulthood (Erikson, 1994). Marcia notes “the greatest change in identity status occurs between 18 and 21 years of age” (1980, 164). Commonly, identity in older adults is referred to as a mid-life crisis where individuals reexamine their life, commitments, and at times redefine who they are. Given this context we are able to connect different identity statuses with different characteristics an individual might display, and different behaviors one might engage in.

Erikson saw identity development as a stage in the life cycle of human development and concluded, “In no other stage of the life cycle, then, are the promise of finding oneself and the threat of losing oneself so closely allied” (1994, 244). Part of the concept of political identity is the development of the individual as their own unique person in attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs about politics. Individuals can be differentiated in their identity statuses in attitudes, behaviors and beliefs based on whether an individual has commitments, has overcome a period of inner turmoil where he or she questions these components of an identity and eventually decide who he or she is.

In distinguishing statuses, Marcia maintains “*Behaviorally*, one who has an identity appears to others as committed to certain beliefs and values (an ideology) and is directed in terms of a vocational path (an occupation). One who lacks an identity appears to others as directionless

and vague or superficial” (1991, 529, italics original). With in-depth interviews, Marcia found that we can tap into different aspects of identity to determine one’s identity status. How individuals explain their beliefs, how these beliefs came about, and the actions an individual takes to commit to those beliefs were originally studied by open- and close-ended questions. The major contribution of Marcia’s work was to provide a clinical assessment of identity such that practitioners and researchers could have an objective assessment of identity development and the characteristics of four identity statuses. Further growth from Marcia’s work has stemmed an entire discussion of adolescent and adult development. However, much of the work done by psychologists has not focused on the relationship of behaviors to identity statuses but rather cognitive, relational, and role characteristics of each status.

Much of the identity work in psychology has been about theory development especially about what an identity is and what it means to the individual. How one looks at behavior in relation to identity is generally in hindsight rather than attempting to predict future behavior based on identity statuses. Moshman explains the relationship between identity and behavior as “an identity is not just an attempt to describe one’s typical behavior, but is an account of the core beliefs and purposes that one construes as explaining that behavior” (1999, 79). While identity may guide our actions, we also construct an identity from how we have behaved and received feedback from others based on that behavior. The process of identity construction is understudied in the field (Schwartz, 2001); however, progress has been made on the theoretical aspects of identity development such as characteristics of each status and behaviors in controlled settings (Waterman, 1982). Eventually the individual must create a cohesive self where the parts of identity seem to fit together, and create continuity between thoughts and actions.

Within identity development, scholars believe two components are extremely important: identity elements of commitment and crisis (Erikson, 1994; Marcia, 1964). Commitment is often based on the attachments one forms to social groups, belief systems, and attitudes. One is defined as committed politically if they express attachment and identify themselves with certain party, ideology, and set of opinions (Marcia, 1964; Marcia et al 1993). However, the term crisis is more difficult to understand. Crisis encompasses questioning one's beliefs, searching for alternative identifications, and inner turmoil about not reaching a resolution about who one is and what he or she stands for. Crisis can result from individuals searching on their own or being questioned by others about their beliefs and attachments. Baumeister identifies two different types of identity crisis as deficit and conflict. Deficit identity crisis suggests all of the questioning occurs within individuals where they decide for themselves what to do within an inner vacuum. On the other hand, there are also crises that include conflict where different definitions of self are incompatible and in order to overcome the crisis the individual must resolve this conflict (1991, 519-520). In theory, commitment and crisis are straightforward issues; however, in practice presence of commitment and crisis becomes more difficult to assess.

The scoring criteria for identity statuses are generally around the topics of knowledge, activity of gathering information, consideration of alternatives, emotional tone about commitments, and desire to make decisions. Knowledge tends to capture how much content individuals have gathered about themselves and about their world. Active pursuit of information distinguishes the four levels of identity status on Marcia's original scale from one another such that achievements have the highest levels of pursuit of information about different identities and diffusions have the lowest. Along side the gathering information is the consideration of alternatives where individuals have engaged in behaviors to seek out and try out alternative

commitments. Emotional tone is particularly important when distinguishing statuses in that higher level status have a tone of confidence, stability, and optimism (Marcia et al, 1993, 164-165). In their criteria, Marcia, Waterman, Matteson, Archer, and Orlofsky hold commitments up to high standards, especially for political commitments, they believe “one may claim to adhere to a political philosophy, right or left, that clearly calls for activism; yet, if no evidence is found of direct political activity, commitment is assumed to be minimal” (1993, 209). Part of identity commitment is the behaviors that accompany such commitment, such as voting as a behavior related to political identity commitments of party and ideology. They also note “ideological commitment has declined appreciably” and there needs to be some explanation as to why this is the case (1993, 277).¹ Yoder argues there are many different barriers to identity development found in the socio-cultural context and part of overcoming these barriers is to develop agency or a sense of control in one’s life (2000).

Meilman finds as age increases the presence of political commitment and crisis, meaning as we age we are both more likely to make commitments to politics and are more likely to engage in questioning about politics (1979, 231). But the commitments Meilman is referring to are not the same as commitments found in the voting behavior literature such as commitments to community or social ties, but commitments to beliefs and a political outlook. The commitment is of individuals to their beliefs and actions within the political realm.

Identity development also tends to interact with the conscious and unconscious choices we make about what is important to our lives and what behaviors we engage in. Those aspects of our identity that we feel are central to our lives consciously may not be as important subconsciously. Claims about what aspects of our lives we think are most important may not be present in how we act. Serpe finds that there is a relationship between identity and salience

¹ Remember Marcia describes ideological commitment in two forms religious and political.

where “commitment will have a greater impact on identity salience than the converse” (1987, 51). He also argues “the great possibilities for personal choices. . .the stronger the relationship between commitment and identity salience” (1987, 46).

Political scientists have also linked personality to political actions. Monroe and Epperson (1994) find that political actions are limited based on our personality dispositions. Their study focuses on narratives from World War II and individuals’ discussions of their actions towards Jews. They consider “ethical political actions arise spontaneously, resulting from deep-seated dispositions that form one’s central identity” (1994, 219). Once identity is decided upon actions that follow seem much clearer because that individual has committed to his or her identity and will therefore engage in behaviors to reaffirm that identity.

Cole and Stewart (1996) have directly linked political behavior with a developed political identity defined as “a pattern of beliefs related to the social and structural relationships that connect the individual to social groups. . . , the political realm is personally relevant, and that collective actions are the best responses to social problems” (132). Their measure of political identity includes political salience, collective orientation, system blame, ideology, and power discontent. With their work on black and white women who graduated from college twenty years earlier, their findings suggest that having a political identity only affects white women’s midlife political participation in a variety of areas. However Cote and Stewart also find student activism and feelings of social responsibility account for midlife political participation of both white and black women (135). I argue that political identity is not just racial and partisan identity, but is the internalization political knowledge to create a coherent self conscious political self. While I do include some acts as evidence of commitment, I include in my statistical model only discussion of politics. However, theoretically I do include certain expressions of identity

such as political discussions, writing about political beliefs, and engaging in certain acts of identity expression.

As social beings we are consistently dealing with feedback about ourselves, which can in turn change a person's identity. Those who are sure about their identity are much less likely to change their behaviors than those who are exploring different identities or who are wavering on where they stand. Swann and Hill relate behavior with an identity as "people infer who they are by observing their recent behaviors and the reactions of others and translating this information into appropriate self conceptions" (1982, 59-60). They find individuals are active in their maintenance of self conceptions and refute and undermine information that disconfirms those self conceptions (1982, 66). For young people developing a political identity, the reaction of others about who one is politically illuminates the importance of others recognizing and acknowledging the identity of the individual. The role that other people play especially the role peers play in shaping the young person's identity is that of reaction which the young individual adapts to.

Waterman, in looking at the process of identity development through time, finds that college is an important time where youth begin to develop political identity commitments. However, many youth seem not to be interested in politics (1982, 347). He goes on to observe that "the adult years are a period of strengthening identity but not a time when many new identity issues are raised or novel possibilities considered" (1982, 349). This may very well be the distinguishing factor in older and younger adults in their identity development. The reason why fewer young people vote is due to where they are in the process of identity development. Young adults are trying to find their way in the political world and are looking to find those commitments. The next step in the developmental process is to see how those commitments fit

into the overarching identity of a person, which is where individuals come to decide how their political identity ranks in order of importance.

Under Marcia's original framework different characteristics and reactions to questioning have been found in each of the identity statuses. Based on these characteristics found in the psychological literature, we can find characteristics that identify different political identity statuses and create a typology of how individuals within each of those statuses may score on a political identity and salience scale.

Achievement Status

Individuals who have achieved an overarching identity are likely to display certain characteristics such as flexibility in thoughts and actions, more reflective about their actions and are willing to take responsibility for what they've done (Marcia, 1980). Erikson's understanding of an achieved identity was settling on an identification that would eventually lead to commitments (1994). He describes fully developed identities displayed as a "sense of psychosocial well-being. Its most obvious concomitants are feeling of being at home in one's body, a sense of 'knowing where one is going,' and an inner assuredness of anticipated recognition from those who count" (1994, 165).

Marcia's early work suggests that individuals who have reached achievement status have particular characteristics. He says "With respect to ideology, [a person in the achievement status] seems to have reevaluated past beliefs and achieved a resolution that leaves him free to act" (1966, 552). Two important components Marcia identifies early on in the ideological dimension of identity are evaluation and resolution. How we have come to measure identity has been through psychological testing such as in-depth interviews, tests of coherence, anxiety tests, and conformity. Achievements tend to be high in feelings of autonomy and internal locus of

control meaning that they feel in control of their lives and outcomes (Marcia 1993, 25).

Achievements are also found to be effective decision makers (Schwartz, 2001).

There do tend to be gender differences in statuses around political identity development. Men tend to excel in achieving a political ideology, whereas women tend to be foreclosed (Matteson, 1993, 89), but on other aspects of identity development women are more likely to be highly developed, such as relationship identities. Some of the explanation for women to be foreclosed in political identity development comes from the social support for women; there is social support for religious, occupational, interpersonal, and relationship aspects to an identity, there is little support for women to develop their identity politically (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba, 2001). Matteson also found within identity development girls are more likely to believe stability as important and girls in committed statuses (Achievement and Foreclosure) are more likely to be popular. In a review of the research, Waterman found different accounts of political identity development in a few different studies. However, in each of the studies males tended to be more developed in their political ideology than women (1982, 350). While there may be variation between domains of an identity, those who are achieved have commitments in many different domains such as occupation, relationship, and life style commitments. Those with a large number of commitments are more likely to be either achieved or foreclosed (Schwartz, 2001, 27). However Stryker and Serpe warn “having an identity does not automatically activate a full range of possible role-related behaviors” (1983, 59).

Achievements are often identified as trusting, having feelings of aliveness and “lower discrepancies between the actual and ideal self” (Hoegh and Bourgeois, 2002). As part of Erikson’s human development theory, certain factors are needed to transition to the next level of development. Hoegh and Bourgeois identify factors that precede identity development and are

consequences of identity development or lack thereof. For an individual to develop an identity one must have a secure environment where parents are structured but not overbearing. In addition, individuals must learn the basic aspects of trust in others so that they can eventually trust themselves. Hoegh and Bourgeois remark, “Personal ego development is demonstrated by the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughtfulness, non-defensiveness and independent thinking” (2002, 579). As a consequence of achieved identity development, individuals in this status are more likely to develop intimacy and acquire adult relationships.

Moratorium Status

In the scale of identity development, following closely behind identity achievements are those in the moratorium status. “Moratoriums” are individuals who are in-between commitments though they do often display an exploratory need to resolve their commitments and eventually settle on an identity. Moratoriums are also reflective, and willing to take responsibility for their actions, and Josselson notes there begins to be a presence of autonomy in one’s thinking and actions (1980, 197). Erikson perceived moratoriums as having identity in many forms and not necessarily deciding on any specific commitments (1994). He found moratoriums as exploring the world without settling on commitments and having difficulty keeping commitments. In his work, Erikson considered moratoriums as experimental and wanting to sample different identities. Marcia saw the status of moratorium characterized as an “active struggle to make commitments” and evidence of a crisis period (1966, 552). Moratoriums are struggling to make commitments and are pursuing courses of action to make commitments eventually. Moratoriums often express a tension for not having settled on an identity and feel pressure to eventually settle.

Within psychological testing, moratoriums tend to rate high on anxiety scales. Marcia explains there is such high anxiety in this status since moratoriums are in a stage of identity

where they are being pressured to eventually decide who they are and to settle on commitments (1993, 24). This tension is often captured on anxiety scales as the individual in moratorium at times feels that there is no right answer and cannot decide which avenue of action or inquiry to pursue. Moshman argues that once a person enters moratorium then they can never return to a foreclosure status, suggesting that questioning begun during the moratorium stage cannot be reversed (1999).

Foreclosure Status

Foreclosure status has tended to be one of the most studied identity statuses mainly for the reason that scholars would like to encourage higher levels of identity development. This status is often typified by individuals mimicking those they look up to, whether it is parents or leaders. Marcia identified “foreclosures”—individuals in this type of status in politics—as “he is what his parents are with little or no personal stamp of his own” (1964, 30). Characteristics Marcia found in foreclosures were need for authority, strong leadership, and deeply believe in obedience (1964, 142). Roker and Banks find that foreclosures, in school girls, are less likely to be found in public schools where different and competing viewpoints are (1993). This evidence suggests that just the presence of alternative viewpoints to parents offers opportunities for political identity development. Hoover defines foreclosure where “identity is conferred rather than achieved” and links this status with high authoritarianism (1997, 35). Foreclosures need for structure and assurance of a steady future often encourage foreclosures to support institutions and regimes where these assurances are met.

Archer, in specific reference to political ideology, notes the gender differences in identity development where men are more likely to be in the foreclosure status and women in the diffusion status (1991, 523). Kroger finds differences in parenting styles result in different

identity outcomes, “Adolescents low in identity exploration have generally come from families who avoid expression of differences. Foreclosure parents have consistently been described as overly involved with their children, using denial and repression to avoid dealing with unwelcome thoughts and events” (1993, 9). Marcia’s original conceptualization of foreclosures were those who exhibited commitments without crisis or questioning those commitments (1966, 552). Foreclosures tend to be prematurely committed to an identity with little or no gathering of new information or consideration of alternatives. Premature commitment to an identity tends to make foreclosures more resistant to change (Marcia et al 1993, 184). However there is some differentiation in the field, Meilman argues that there is a different type of foreclosure found in adolescence, he defines it as a “*self determined foreclosure*, to account for subjects who were highly committed to their views but who had neither experienced a crisis nor had adopted their parents’ views” (1979, 230, italics original). Kroger also finds differences between firm and developmental foreclosures, where firm foreclosures are steadfast in their commitments and developmental foreclosures are open to consideration of alternatives (1995, 322).

Diffusion Status

“Diffusions” are individuals generally characterized as not interested or unengaged with politics and society. Côte and Allahar, in linking the individual to the larger society, explain “As the identity of adult members becomes ambiguous, they are less able to guide the young through the self discovery process that is an integral part of forming an identity” (1996, 71). They argue, in a postindustrial society, government and the economy benefit from youth identity confusion because it is easier to subjugate and control them (160). Roker and Banks find differences in identity development in girls based on public versus private school, while they find a wider range of ideologies in public schools many of these girls are “alienated from or [have a] lack interest in

politics” (1993, 299). Marcia found diffusions to exhibit two different approaches either uninterested in ideology of politics or taking a “smorgasbord approach in which one outlook seems as good to him as another” (1966, 552). In general diffusion statuses tend to have an external locus of control where they think others are making all the decisions affecting their lives (Marcia, 1993, 25). Like moratoriums who have anxiety about making decisions, diffusions also have high levels of anxiety, which can also be explained by the tension to make decisions. However, Waterman finds diffusion statuses tend to persist into adulthood around religious and political ideology rather than in occupation—meaning when one begins in the diffusion status in areas of ideology they are more likely to stay in this status through adulthood (1993, 60).

Identity Processing Styles and Identity Statuses

Identity statuses differ not only in the assessment of identity, but also in the style of processing. Berzonsky and Kuk argue “the various identity statuses differ in the social-cognitive processes they use to solve personal problems, make decisions, and process identity-relevant information” (2000, 82). Three different processing styles emerge from the research including information-oriented, normative, and avoidant-oriented. The information-oriented processing style is closely associated with higher levels of identity status development and includes individuals who “actively seek out, evaluate, and use self-relevant information” (83). The normative processing style requires that the individual live up to the expectations and prescriptions of a significant other, whereas the avoidant style includes individuals who shun personal problems and decisions (83). Self-exploration became a key component in assessing the information-oriented processing style, suggesting questioning and self reflection are key components to how one processes information about themselves (92). Self-exploration is therefore a key component to higher levels of identity development.

Political Identity Particulars

In the original conceptualization of identity, Erikson broke identity down into occupational and ideological aspects. Marcia's development from Erikson was to break down ideology into religious and political components (1964). However many scholars of identity development have found it difficult to study political identity development and often find young adults in either foreclosure or diffusion statuses when it comes to political identity. Kroger argues that political aspects of self, over time, are becoming the "least important to self definition" (1993, 369). From 1984 to 1990, she finds fewer university students in the achieved status and more in the foreclosure status. This shift she believes are closely related to the changes in political and economic climate where in 1984 there was stability, optimism and opportunity, in 1990 there was uncertainty and recession (1993, 373).

Distinguishing Political Ego Identity from Party Identification

Political ego identity is fundamentally different from political party affiliation, in that it encompasses all of the beliefs about politics, individuals' place within politics, and behaviors as consequences of those commitments. Where political party affiliation is more of a label, political identity includes how the individual interacts, believes, and behaves in ways that may well be beyond the understanding focused solely on political party affiliation. One can affiliate with a political party and yet have not achieved a political identity, and one can develop a political identity without necessarily having a firm commitment to a particular political party and its principles. Consider for example the individual who is a Democrat, but has no clear opinions about politics, has very little political knowledge including who the vice president is much less which party they are from. This person who has little political confidence or awareness would score extremely low on identity development. All this person may know about politics is that

there are two political parties with little knowledge of what the parties stand for, much less what he or she stands for. For Campbell et al, these individuals are typical voters, but for my work these individuals would fall into the lowest identity status-diffusion and would therefore be the least likely to participate in elections. On the other hand, as Converse found, the individuals who are the most sophisticated in political knowledge and who are the most active in politics declare themselves as Independents (1964, 217). These individuals take on no political party affiliation, but are highly developed politically.

Party identification is one of the most studied variables of the sociological aspects of voting behavior. If we look back to Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes's work, we find that partisan identification was the variable with the most explanatory power for voter turnout and is defined as "the individual's affective orientation to an important group-object in his environment" (1960, 121). For Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes partisanship solely takes into account the affective portion (or feelings) of an identity and lacks a deeper meaning of identity and the process by which one acquires an identity. Aldrich explores a changing partisanship that is now a more distanced relationship between party and voters where party is no longer an aspect of ordinary life (1995, 168). How we study partisanship is in the form of affiliation that then relates to behavioral outcomes. Political ego identity takes into account commitments, exploration between alternatives, and knowing who one is. Partisanship, while it is a commitment, does not mean that alternatives were explored, nor does it mean the person knows who he or she is politically. Partisanship is a surface level identity that acts as a cue to political behavior; political identity on the other hand looks at deeper connections to belief structures, policy preferences, and self-reflection.

One can also have a political ego identity and not adopt a political party to affiliate with. A person can know who he or she is politically and not make commitments to the two political parties because the parties do not represent the person's identity. Developmentalists measure affiliation with a political party as a commitment, this assumption that higher levels of identity development require commitment to a political party is flawed. Survey format questions on identity development require commitment to a political party (Marcia 1964, Adams 1998). However, commitment can be measured in other ways and need not be commitment to an organization, but a commitment to ideology and beliefs that may not coincide with available options from the two political parties. In the psychological literature, measures of political ego identity have generally been considered much weaker than measures of occupational and religious ideology (Marcia et al, 1993). The difficulty in measuring the political aspects of identity is that there seems to be little interest and a lack of clear beliefs or commitments in young people (1993, 55). Partisan identity is but one aspect of the larger concept of political ego identity that takes into account commitments, such as partisanship, ideological commitment, and policy preferences. I, however, do not use partisanship as a variable in my identity scale because I believe that partisanship is too easily acquired and evidence of a developed political identity requires more in-depth self knowledge, reflection and questioning.

Distinguishing Political Ego Identity from Ethnic Identity

In the developmental psychology literature, the concept of ego identity began with Erikson, who split the ego identity into two components: occupational and ideological (1994). Marcia further broke down the aspect of ideology into two components: political and religious. New formations in the ego identity literature have focused on developing new domains of identity which include interpersonal interactions, sex roles, and ethnic identity (Schwartz, 2001).

In comparison, ethnic identity and political identity are domains of a larger ego identity.

Political identity is an older concept and has a longer measurement history, whereas ethnic identity has recently been adopted.

Ethnic identity pertains to those aspects of one's identity that are racial, ethnic, and cultural including the social processes to achieve an ethnic identity, the belonging to an ethnic group, and the distinguishing elements between groups (Sears and Levy 2003; Quintana et al 2006). Elements of ethnic identity are not solely political, just as all the elements of a political ego identity are not solely ethnic. However, there are spheres that overlap. Those aspects of ethnic identity that are political should be included in an analysis of political ego identity.

Knowing who one is should not be limited by a narrow understanding of identity that excludes difficult to measure variables, which is why there should be an expansion of the understanding of ethnic identity. In studying political identity and its interaction with ethnic identity there may be clearer evidence of ethnic elements of a political identity in ethnic minorities than with ethnic majorities (Beck 1977, Sears and Levy 2003), but scholars have to be careful that they are studying aspects of political identity and not a larger identity.

Scope of This Dissertation

I limit the scope specifically to 18-24 year olds because they are the youngest and actual first timers in any total voting cohort. But this does not mean that they all have questioned or know who they are politically. Nor does it mean that each young person is a blank slate. But for a large majority of people this time is where they begin to develop other aspects of the lives, such as occupational and lifestyle decisions, and where they tend to begin to make decisions for themselves away from their parents. For some young people, ages 18-22 are college years where one can experiment with many different aspects of life including politics, social spheres, what

one wants to be when he or she gets out of school, and decide who he or she really is personally. There are those who are questioning and there are clearly people who will lead the young Republicans and young Democrats on campus. Fully developed political identities are those who know who they are and what they stand for, who engage political debate with others and asked questions about themselves, and who seem certain in their political outlook. However, certainty at a young age can seem dangerous-especially since it is unclear whether individuals are thinking for themselves or are accepting someone else's thoughts.

Civic Engagement and Identity Development

For aspects of civic engagement and political participation, identity formation is vital as a series of times in one's life when one is exploring alternative identities, having confrontations with others, and making commitments. For youth who are participating in civic activities, offering opportunities for exploring alternatives, such as working for non-profits, is a way for the individual to experience other ways of looking at the world and seeing others' situations. When the civic engagement is school based, the civic opportunities and later classroom discussions of engagement opportunities offer confrontation of different beliefs about the world for both the student and their peers (Flanagan, 2003). Periods of self reflection in journal entries, measured by changes in how students perceive the world and their role within it, allow the individual to make commitments about what they think is important, how they think about the social situation, and how they define themselves in context (Yates and Youniss, 1996).

In the process of forming an identity, one goes through a period of crises and eventually settles on commitments. Differences between statuses are based on evidence of crises and commitments. During a period of crisis one's beliefs, self-conception, and behaviors have gone through some type of conflict, whether it is inside the individual or as conflict with others in an

attempt to define one's self. Commitment, how invested an individual is in the identity, is another aspect of identity that compliments confrontation. Scholars have differentiated commitment as "a clear sense of self definition" (Yoder, 2000), affective commitment as the potential loss of social relationships associated with an identity, and interactional commitment based on the number of relationships created by the identity (Serpe, 1987). But civic engagement offers more alternatives to people more than a simple political party identification. The many different ways to participate civically² offers a better opportunity to define oneself and is an explanation as to why youth consider civic and political engagement as distinct. This may also reveal why a political identity is more salient in other Westernized nations who have more of a choice in political parties and more alternatives politically whether through policy, political beliefs, or political groups.

The Intersection of Political Science and Psychology: Promises and Limitations

Questions about identity development are usually expressed as: Has the individual committed to his or her political identity? Has there been a period of exploration where the individual has sought out alternatives, considered different points of view and searched for new information? However, the real-world data does not seem to assess exploration very well. For political science, we have been measuring different levels of commitment for over 80 years. However, as mentioned above, the limitation in the political science literature is the level of exploration. What this notion of exploration provides us is a closer look at the development, how did the individual come to make these commitments. Have they put much time into considering the alternatives or did they simply take on what their parents were?

As an example, Converse and DuPeux (1969) suggest that different individuals develop partisan attachments with and without information of their parents, but those who do not have

² However, voting in this work is considered political engagement.

information about their parents' party affiliation are less likely to develop attachments to party. Some of the work on the effects of parental influence on partisanship has to do directly with levels of exploration. If an individual does not want to explore alternatives, he or she will simply settle on what his or her parent's affiliation was rather than discovering commitments to parties on his or her own. But all the political science literature seemed to ask was what was the relationship between parents and children rather than about the development of an identity on the children's own.

My Conceptualization of Identity

I generally consider identity the personal understanding of self. How individuals see themselves in the world. All of the power to define oneself lies within the individual, but that does not mean that the self is not altered by outside factors. We are in essence the product of our environments. In particular, the political environment from which we come plays a role in how we see the world and how we see ourselves interacting with that world. More generally, the political world in the United States is limited by two national parties, but there is also the possibility to be an Independent.³ When scholars think about politics they generally consider two aspects of politics: ideology and partisanship. Ideologically in the United States, politics falls between conservative and liberal on two types of policy areas-social and economic (Lane, 1967). While this may be an oversimplification for many political scientists, for much of the population politics is simplified into choices of two.

When one has a political identity, one is able to make decisions more quickly, to evaluate information and adapt to it, and become secure in explaining feeling about particular issues. For a political identity in particular, there are certain levels of comfort that go along with having an

³ The topic of Independents and identity development will be discussed in the fifth chapter and deals directly with the question of identity development and how one can be Independent in addition to being highly developed in an identity.

identity such as comfortable expressing who one is politically. What I see as the most important part of political identity development is how one acquires a self concept. What do we see in the mirror if asked who are we politically? At first many people would seem to identify themselves in the typical partisan identification fashion, but I argue that this is the individual reacting to the expectations of the outside world. In surveys of politics, how we tend to identify people is in terms of partisanship. But there are many other aspects of identification that come into play when discussing who one is politically, such as ideology and issues. Part of what is missing from the available data is an open-ended question asking who one is politically. Identity is deeper than these superficial labels and many things are taken into account as to who one is politically this work explores the elements included in different levels of identity development on a continuum of little to no development to fully developed.

There are many different ways to understand identity, which is why I distinguish political ego identity from other forms of identity. Political ego identity is the self conceptualization of political aspects of one's own life. Importantly, this distinction is where identity is constructed, I argue that while identity may be influenced by other factors it is constructed by the individual rather than by society or social groups. In the end, what is of importance to my study is how individuals conceive of themselves politically. What is the story that individuals convey to others and themselves as to who they are politically? A step in the process is the narrative that from which we inform and justify our actions. But political identity is simply a part of an overarching identity that takes into account other aspects of one's life including career, family, relationships, religion and others. Our narratives are constructed within particular contexts and languages that both expand and limit our understanding of ourselves. But in the end, it is the individual that holds the answers to his or her life.

Thinking about the models and considering what the characteristics of an achieved identity are, there are clear indicators that distinguish the different statuses. My statuses are somewhat different from Marcia's original conception. The four statuses I have developed are fully developed, somewhat developed, exploratory, and diffusion. Three of Marcia's original concepts are in the statuses: "fully developed" is like an achieved identity; "moratorium" is the term exploratory and diffusion is used for the same concept. I have decided to change from the original statuses foreclosure into what I call somewhat developed. The reasoning behind this change is the fact that a foreclosed individual still has an identity even though their identity may not be as developed as someone who has questioned who one is politically. What is often missing in the foreclosure status is individuation. The individual seems to mimic others around them rather than individualize their identity. I argue that foreclosures do have an identity and that identity is currently somewhat developed, these individuals have not yet gone through periods of self questioning and struggle that would result in a more developed identity. These individuals then are somewhat developed.

Exploration is the seeking of information and along with believing there is value in politics. A person has to be interested in finding out who he or she is and must be interested in the political world in order to be a part of it. Salience, defined as being interested and feeling that politics is important to one's life, is an integral part of exploration which encourages exploration of alternatives. Interest is sparked and then one looks through the available alternatives for where one fits.

I use two measures in an attempt to assess levels of political identity development: an identity status measure and a salience measure. The identity status measure examines evidence of commitments to policy issues, ideology, as well as a crude assessment of exploration through

discussions of politics. The salience measure taps into interest in politics and public affairs to gather some type of evidence about the importance of politics to one's life. A full explanation and detailed construction of the measures is included in the sixth chapter. Based on my conceptualization, I provide an explanation for each status and examples are below.

Typology of Political Ego Identity Statuses

Fully Developed

Fully developed individuals know who they are politically and believe politics is important to their lives. They score high on both political identity and salience scales and exhibit many of the behaviors of their commitment to politics. These fully developed individuals are score high on the identity scale and have high levels of salience—meaning fully developed individuals know who they are politically and believe that politics is important to their life. As a consequence, fully developed identities are more likely to vote than any of the other statuses. Take for example a youth activist whose set of beliefs favors increasing environmental protection, increasing government transparency, want the United States to be more active in human rights around the world (especially in Darfur). This person expresses his or her beliefs both in thoughts and actions. He or she has thought through what issues are especially important to him or her and take steps to express his or her commitments to causes. This extreme example of a person with a fully developed political identity has commitments to a set of beliefs, is aware of the political world, is self aware in what he or she believes politically, and believes politics is an important part of his or her life.

Based on information gathered from focus groups, individuals who were fully developed tended to be older, more sure of themselves, and had a sense of confidence when they talked about politics. They knew what areas of politics they cared about and were certain when they

said that they did have a political identity. When asked if their identity was still under development they would clearly answer no, I know who I am. Based on the sample, these were very few participants within the age category of 18-24. All of those who were fully developed noted a sense of struggle in the formation of their identity. The struggle, however, was more externalized than I previously thought. Two individuals noted the struggles with their parents about politics that had changed their relationship, but they were certain about what they believed in politics and were not going to change because they disagreed with their parents and that was an uncomfortable situation (Gentry, 2010).

Somewhat Developed

As a replacement for foreclosure, I have a status of somewhat developed. Somewhat developed captures some level of commitment to beliefs, self knowledge and policy preferences, while at the same time has lower levels of salience than more developed counterparts. While somewhat developed individuals are more developed in their identity it does not necessarily mean that politics is important to their lives. Somewhat developed individuals have not become fully developed for many different reasons, but from my interaction with somewhat developed focus group participants—somewhat developed individuals tended not to individualize their own political identity from others—meaning there did not seem to be any personalization of the identity. Somewhat developed individuals relied on others for their self definition and while they did accept this definition there seemed to be little thought as to what they, not others, believed. On the standard statuses, the most developed status, achievement, would be the highest on the scale followed by moratorium, then foreclosure, then diffusion. However as political identity relates to the specific behavior of voting, having more commitments to a political identity increases the likelihood of voting. Also the major distinction between Marcia's original

conceptualization and my own is that I emphasize salience rather than exploration. Somewhat developed individuals are not as committed to their political beliefs or believe politics to be as important to their lives, as fully developed individuals. However, they do exhibit more commitments and awareness than their less developed counterparts. In terms of questioning one's political identity, somewhat developed individuals may not have questioned their political commitments. Consider the youth who grew up in a Republican household, where the parents were partisan and had strong beliefs about specific political issues such as government regulation, and providing for social services. For somewhat developed individuals they are more committed to a political identity than they are self aware—meaning they can identify what they believe in and what commitments they have to a political party or ideology, but are less able to identify why they have these beliefs and commitments. Often these individuals will say that they've always known who they were politically, and searching for alternatives was not an important component to their development.

In the focus groups, a particularly clear example of a somewhat developed individual said that there were not clear differences between what his friends and parents thought and what he thought. Much of the influence of somewhat developed individuals' political identity comes from their environment—mainly people who were around them. In the lives of the somewhat developed, there seems to be no disagreement between parents or friends about politics. The somewhat developed seemed to follow the crowd and not create waves or disagree with others. There seemed to be a lot less turbulence in their acquisition of a political identity because they disagreed very little with others who seemed to shape their identity and because politics seemed to be a conversation that was avoided. In some ways, somewhat developed individuals seem to

have explored what other people thought and accepted it without serious questioning of what they believed.

Explorers

Explorers have not yet developed the commitments that either the fully developed or somewhat developed statuses have, but this does not mean that are not attempting to figure out who they are politically. Explorers, like Marcia's moratoriums, believe that the development of commitments to their political identity is important, but they have not yet settled on commitments. Explorers would score low on the political identity scale compared to the more developed statuses, but have high to medium levels of salience. Exploring new identities is to engage in behaviors of discovery and attempt to test drive different identities to see which one fits. However, their likelihood of voting is much lower than their developed counterparts because they do not yet have commitments formed. Voting could be an exploratory behavior, but explorers are more likely not to vote. A typical youth explorer may seem confused about politics, but believes politics is important enough that they want to be more developed. With few stable commitments and little self awareness, this youth seems to be meandering through the political process searching for an identity. The most important distinction between explorers and the other statuses, in the qualitative focus groups, is their assessment of their identity as continually underdevelopment. When asked whether or not they had a political identity many would say "I guess but then again may be not". Explorers tended to have less coherent discussions on politics or were timid about expressing their ideas, yet they were interested and even eager to hear what others thought about politics.

Diffusions

Of all the individuals different statuses, diffusions, who have few if any commitments and care little about politics, are the least likely to vote. Comparatively, they score exceptionally low on both political identity and salience scales. While there may be different reasons for diffusion such as indifference, alienation, ignorance, or disgust, in the end they are the least likely to vote since they have little to no commitments and don't find politics to be that important to their lives. A typical diffusion will exhibit avoidant behaviors rather than exploratory or committed behaviors. These youth do not see the importance of politics nor do they strive to become self-aware or create commitments. There are many varieties of each type of identity status, and diffusions could generally be from two different categories those youth who don't seem interested in politics and another type of youth who may be alienated from the political system (perhaps the difference lies in passive versus active avoidance). Typically diffusion youth find other things to occupy their time, avoid situations where they may be confronted with politics, and are reluctant to engage in discussions of politics and when asked often answer "I don't know." The most common characteristic of diffusions was jaded—meaning they were more turned off by politics than never being turned on to politics (Gentry, 2010). The sense was from diffusions what politics was corrupt and there was nothing they could do about it. They would say politics doesn't really matter—indicating a low sense of personal efficacy. Diffusions liked to disagree and be confrontational with others in the focus group by questioning why others thought what they did, but when asked how they felt said that they did not know.

Explaining the Process of Development

The steps, I argue, of the developmental process of a political identity are socialization, exploration, judgment of others' politics, self questioning, and coherence. Socialization, illustrated in Figure 1, is the first element of the process where external forces shape the young

person's identity. Where people grow up, their economic and social circumstances, their parents, school situation, and friends all contribute to the first formation of the political being. As the first building block of the entire developmental process, socialization—specifically the amount of political socialization by external forces—provides a foundation for the future of the political identity. Socialization can be extensive or minimal and, as a consequence, leads to different levels of identity development. For higher levels of identity in young adulthood, many fully developed individuals were socialized to be interested, engaged, and a part of politics. From my research with young people in focus groups, parental encouragement to have knowledge about politics played a major role in the successful early development of an identity by people who were in their young adult years. Parents, however, were not the only force of socialization that mattered—schools also seemed to play a role with social studies teachers discussing politics and mock elections in the early years of education. From the focus groups, those in the lower statuses often noted that they did not discuss politics in their homes, schools, or communities—for them, socialization of other factors such as vocation or social status were more important than political development. After the stage of socialization, individuals who have no socialization or minimal socialization often end up in the diffusion status because they have not been socialized to think politics is important or because other aspects of their overarching identity are more important than their political identity. For individuals who have been extensively socialized in their environment, they tend to progress to the next stage—exploration.

The second step in political identity development is exploration. Exploration of alternative ideas from their parents, teachers, and peers, is a key component to a cohesive and highly developed identity. A portion of the exploration process is finding out about how the political system works and what the major issues of debate are. Exploration can be an extensive

look or may be minimal to not existent. Some diffusions have not explored the political possibilities and therefore are not interested or engaged in continuing to find out who they are politically. For individuals who are somewhat developed the exploration element of the development process is extremely minimal to the point where their exploration was to find out what other people's ideas were and not necessarily their own ideas.

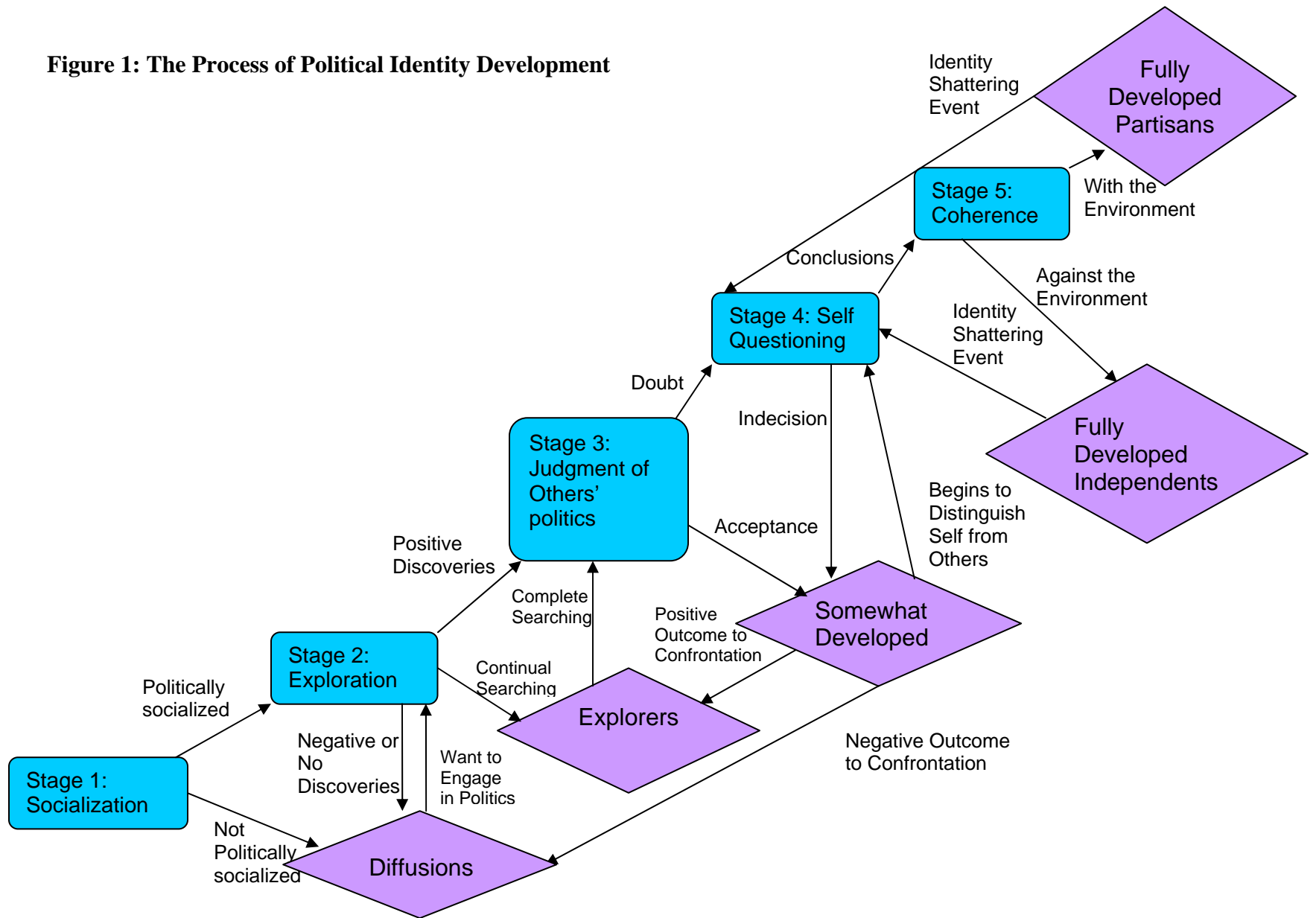
As the flowchart suggests (Figure 1), three possibilities happen in the exploration stage. Individuals may explore what their political environment has to offer and may be disappointed to the point that they do not want to interact with any aspect of politics. These diffusions are often disappointed with what they find in the political environment or through negative interactions with the environment became uninterested or disappointed and never continued to the other stages. Another pathway as a consequence of exploration is to continue to search within the political environment; individuals then are in the status of explorers. The status of explorer may be momentary or ongoing; a person may choose to continually explore what the political environment has to offer without ever deciding how he or she feels about what others' politics is and without ever deciding on his or her own political identity. Scholars in psychology expect that exploration is a transition status where one will eventually achieve further development (Marcia, 1980; Kroger, 1993). However, in the context of elections an individual may explore during every election cycle and see what the political environment has to offer without ever deciding what he or she believes. The decision to vote becomes particularly difficult because both candidates offer a believable option and these individuals cannot decide which candidate to support because they have not judged the value of others' politics and determined what their own politics is. A third alternative is to move on to the judgment stage after a person has discovered

what the political environment has to offer and feels confident that they have enough information to judge others' politics.

Young people tend to develop a political identity in two ways, either through struggle or acceptance, in the judgment stage. After exploring what options are available in the political environment, individuals begin to make decisions about what others' believe based on whether or not they agree or disagree. At this point in development, there can be an enormous amount of struggle with others or an absence of struggle all together because the individual accepts others' beliefs. Explorers are still currently between the exploration and doubt or acceptance stage because they are unable to make decisions about whether or not they disagree. What makes this stage different from exploration is that exploration is about knowledge and facts, whereas the judgment stage deals directly with how the individual reacts to the information found in the exploration phase and continues to gather information that is not necessarily factual knowledge, but opinions about what other people believe—such as those who were important socializers in the past or experts of the present. Two pathways of judgment are doubt and acceptance, where doubt leads to the next level of development and acceptance leads to the somewhat developed status.

From the information gathered in focus groups, individuals who accept what their parents or friends tell them about politics do have an identity and are likely to vote because others tell them to, but they have little individuation—meaning they are unclear where their identity ends and where others' begin and they are unable to differentiate their identity from others' political identity whom they have accepted. The practice of doubting what others believe and disagreeing with what others believe is a part of distinguishing one's own identity from others and allows for the individual to say this is how my identity is different. Fully developed individuals often doubt

Figure 1: The Process of Political Identity Development



socializers and experts, which leads them to the next level of development. Participants who were fully developed often discussed the judgment stage as a difficult time period where they disagreed with parents and peers, which at best lead to an agreement to disagree and at worst shunning of the topic of politics or the individual attempting to attain an identity.

Where exploration was the discovery of facts about the political environment and judgment was about the discovery of interpersonal information, self questioning is the element of the process that distinguishes the somewhat developed from the fully developed individuals. At this point in the process, individuals must look inward to figure out what they believe—which is often seen as an inner turmoil. Where judgment was about the external struggle with others who may disagree, self questioning is the struggle with oneself about who one is and what one cares about. This point is where people individualize themselves from their predecessors and begin to articulate who they are to the outside world. The person is questioning what he or she actually believes in and care about politics. In this stage, the importance of politics (salience) becomes personalized—politics is not just important for politics' sake—but politics is personally important to the individual. The two pathways that result from the period of self questioning are indecision about what one believes and conclusions about what one believes. Indecision of what one believes leads to the somewhat developed status, even though the person has gone through all of the other stages of development he or she has not finally decided upon the person that he or she is. Still not knowing what they believe, stand for, and identify as leads to somewhat developed. While individuals may have conclusions to what they believe, who they are, and how they identify themselves, these conclusions are disparate pieces to the identity puzzle. Conclusions to the internal struggle of what one believes then lead the individual to consolidate the different aspects of their political identity into a coherent whole.

For those individuals in the higher levels of identity development, there is evidence of cohesion—meaning that people are comfortable in their own political skin and are willing to hold opinions that will differ from others even though disagreement may be uncomfortable. The process of development is not just finding out who they are, but in a way also defending their beliefs. As the fifth step in the process, political persons begin to merge the parts of themselves that were the foundation, who they are after self-questioning, and the political person that they will be. Coherence of a political identity does not suggest that individuals are rigid to their beliefs, but does mean that when new information comes along it does not create a crisis of character; rather these individuals take the information in and process it against their current knowledge of themselves. In essence, this stage allows for individuals who have a coherent whole of an identity to continually reevaluate their world. For politics, this may only be every four years, but high developed individuals in the last stages of development are open to new information because they are secure in their political identity. Often rigidity occurs when individuals are insecure about their beliefs and they must protect their identity from outside factors that might question their identity or point out inconsistencies. In their minds, people at this stage see how all of the disparate parts of their political beliefs fit together as a complete whole. This stage can also be understood as the consolidation of the self where the malleable elements from self questioning become starker.

The final outcomes of coherence actually have to do with the interaction within the political environment. While development is not dependent on how well the environment fits the individual, how the individual eventually fit into the environment does matter. Individuals who not only have coherence with their identity but also whose identity fits into the political environment reasonably become partisans. Individuals whose identity does not fit with the

environment or who do not feel represented by the partisan options tend to become fully-developed Independents. While the final stage may be coherence the outcome greatly depends on how these individuals are able to relate with and accommodate their beliefs into the electoral choices available. Alternatives within the process model include different pathways to statuses. Somewhat-developed individuals, when they come into confrontation with their accepted beliefs, have two reactions to different types of confrontation. When the somewhat developed person, after confronting the accepted beliefs of others, reconsiders his or her position of acceptance and begins to explore again they then take on the status of explorers. Somewhat developed individuals may also progress to the stage of self questioning when they begin to see distinctions between what they believe and what others believe. In this way, the somewhat-developed person is slowly undergoing the part of the process of individuation. When the confrontation of their accepted beliefs completely destroys their identity to the point where they no longer know who they are and are not pursuing ways to figure out who their political self is, then these individuals become diffuse. Diffusions may leave their status if they become interested in the politics or want to begin engaging with the political world, which leads them to the exploration stage. Explorers may eventually feel as though they have completed their investigation of politics and, based on that decision, can move on to the third stage of judgment. There are also times where fully-developed individuals can undergo an identity crisis and begin to question themselves about their beliefs. In everyday terms, people at middle age go through some sort of mid-life crisis where they question their existence. In terms of a political identity, identity-shattering events can be wars, economic crises, or political scandals that make the person question his or her identity and affiliations.

The Data: How to Measure Political Ego Identity Development?

For the purpose of studying the outcome of voting behavior, we must decide how to study political ego identity as a concept. In the psychological literature, identity has been studied through in-depth interviews with people of all ages and through survey analysis, but not a combination (Schwartz, 2001, 19). The choice of how to study identity may be confounded by the breadth of knowledge we want to pursue. In addition, I have to consider the developmental process of identity in studying voting behavior and the related concepts such as interest, efficacy, and belief systems.

Survey analysis is required to distinguish those individuals with a cohesive political ego identity, those still searching, those who decided on their identity but that identity is not salient, and those who refuse to decide on a political identity. What I am studying within the political identity statuses is whether the young person is committed to an identity and believes that political identity is an important part of their lives. Surveys from the American National Elections Studies provide information about statuses and how these statuses affect the decision to vote, but do not specifically take into account the process of development. ANES tends to ask questions about outcomes such as the commitment of partisanship and ideology rather than focusing on how or why a person developed these commitments. The ANES does however provide assessment of youth in many different decades and with a much larger sample size for analysis that could otherwise not be achieved.

The American National Election Study data came from the cumulative file which includes data from 1952 to 2004. Only 18-24 year olds were included in the analysis of this data. Some of the questions used in the identity status scale only were available in certain years—1972-2004. Based on the available data, an identity scale was created and the details of creation are below.

A focus group study was conducted with individuals between the ages of 18-24. A total of eighteen participants were included in 6 focus groups. Participants were recruited from an advertisement on Craigslist, a website used to advertise to younger people for employment, housing, and for sale items. I conducted the original collection of the data in both note form as the participants answered questions and with a digital recorder. Participants consented to audio tape of their voices and were informed of the audio recording of voices in the study prior to arrival. At any time, participants could choose not to answer a question or end their participation. While a few participants chose not to answer questions, no participants dropped out of the study. The time of the focus group generally lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour and a half for larger focus groups. A pilot was conducted prior to the formal focus groups to deal with awkward question wording and to capture an accurate time frame. Adjustments were made in the protocol and were given to the Institutional Review Board before the original data were collected. For the full questionnaire and demographic questions please see the appendix.

Modeling for Political Ego Identity

Hypothesis 1: The more achieved one's political identity is and the more politics is salient to his or her life, the more likely he or she is to vote.

The hypothesis suggests that those who have a more developed identity are more likely to vote. On the identity scale, the fully developed individuals are the most likely to vote and diffuse individuals are the least likely. Fully developed individuals participation is closely followed in their likelihood of voting by somewhat developed individuals who have commitments to politics. Explorers are more likely to participate than diffuse individuals, but have not yet made the commitments that the somewhat developed have. Individuals who are more developed in terms of commitments and salience are the most likely to vote. What

distinguishes highly developed individuals from the somewhat developed is that the somewhat developed's identity is not as salient as the fully developed. Those who are explorers have not yet decided upon an identity but they do believe that having a political identity is important. These individuals are seekers of information about the political system and about themselves, but have not decided on who they are. Diffusion status individuals simply choose not to commit or explore alternatives. These individuals do not think that politics is important enough to commit to an identity or engage in political activities.

Control Variables

In voting behavior there are certain influences that we need to control for. The controls for this type of study are typical controls for turnout such as gender, race, income, education, marital status and years within a community. Each of these elements has different influences on the likelihood of voting and therefore needs to be held constant when looking at the influence of my variables of interest. Women are often more likely to vote than men after 1980, which requires that gender be held constant (Conway, 2000). Race has long played a role in whether or not an individual will turnout; our reference variable here will be whites since they tend to vote more frequently than other races. Educational attainment tends to play a role in influencing voting behavior as the number of years in education increases so does the likelihood of voting (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Generally being married increases turnout, however being married tends to have an adverse effect on youth, meaning for the very young voters it actually decreases turnout (Highton and Wolfinger, 2001). Higher personal and family incomes tend to increase turnout, perhaps because it tends to increase other resources as well such as access to information, education, and free time (Gimpel et al, 2004; Verba, Scholzman, Brady, 1995). Longer residency within a community often increases turnout because the individual has some

knowledge of local bureaucracy and politics, and, therefore, may be better equipped to both register and vote. What does not need to be held constant is age since the parameters of the study limit the ages to between 18 and 24. The reason each of these variables is taken into account is their influence in changing the odds of youth turnout.

Political Ego Identity Components on the ANES

Political identity is understood to lie on a continuum, however political identity can also be placed into four categories: fully developed, somewhat developed, explorers, and diffusions. In order to measure the degree to which one knows oneself politically, I use self placement assessments on policies, ideology, self-awareness, and exploration. As noted in the previous chapter, Independence can be a type of Fully Developed identity and in the identity scale is treated as such. Those who say that they identify with a party or are conscious Independents, have a commitment to ideology, and take clear policy stances are fully developed. Those who identify themselves as political party leaners, and have fewer policy stances, list fewer problems facing the nation, and fewer mentions of candidate differences are somewhat developed. Salience, meaning how important an identity is to your life, must be measured through question proxies. Those who think politics is an important part of their lives are more likely to say that they find politics interesting and follow public affairs. In the analysis, an interaction effect between political identity development and salience will be tested to explain the increased probability of voting.

Components of the Political Ego Identity Index

The developmental process of identity is specifically what I am trying to capture with this measure. While there are two ways to study development, looking at a particular cohort over time (longitudinal studies) or looking at a snapshot of many different cohorts (cross-sectional

studies) and comparing their levels of development with one another, I use the data available which are cross-sectional data from the American National Election Survey. These cross-sectional data will be analyzed as a snapshot at different periods of time and assess the status of each person based on a political identity index. A political identity index and a salience index, will be used to see how the level of development affects youth participation in elections.

The component parts of the political identity index consist of political knowledge, self competence, commitment ideology, and a set of opinions about policy measures. The purpose for each of these inclusions is specified below. The components to the salience scale include measures that I believe are proxies to measuring how important politics is to one's life. Please see Table 3.1 for a list of questions used to capture identity concepts. Due to the limitations with the data available on the ANES and limitations with under-sampling young people in most presidential election years, there are some issues with reliability of the results.

To measure the various aspects of political identity development, we must first take into account levels of exploration and commitment. Commitment in its most basic form was initially analyzed via partisanship (Marcia, 1964), however I argue that partisanship without identity depth is only superficial. With the development of my project, I found that another way to capture Independents was through distinguishing between highly developed and less well developed. In the revision of the identity scale, I include developed Independents as committed to an identity that does not fit with the available partisan options. I create a model where commitment was measured not by partisanship but other aspects of commitment such as opinions and ideology. Those who know more about the political parties are able to be committed to being Independent because they have at least some information. This distinction between Independents developed from Converse's distinction between different types of

Independents: those who are highly involved and politically sophisticated and those who seem to know nothing about politics (1964, 227). However, Converse's question about which party is conservative is not present for all the years under study. A total of three political knowledge variables were included in the identity measure and consisted of being able to identify which party has control of the House of Representatives and correctly place each party on a liberal-conservative scale. While there may be disagreement among political knowledge scholars, this is one of many standard measures of political knowledge (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Zaller, 1992).

A single measure of exploration available on the ANES is whether or not one discussed politics with friends and family, but does not include the extensiveness of the exploration concept. As a basic measure of exploration this variable includes whether or not the individual has engaged in finding out about the political system and the available political options from which to create an identity. Additional data were needed for a fuller representation of the statuses and processes happening during identity development--a focus group study is included to account for these different aspects of measures.

The dependent variable of voting behavior was based on self reported voter turnout, except for years when vote validation was available.⁴ In the years where vote validation was available, the self reported votes were checked against the validations and corrected when needed. For the dependent variables of voting for a specific presidential candidate, the vote validation was also used to correct times when respondents said they voted for a particular candidate, when they did not vote at all. A total of 125 cases were corrected from self reported votes to validated non-votes. Seven cases where the respondent actually voted but said that they

⁴ Vote validations were available from the ANES Cumulative file for the years of 1964, 1976, 1980, 1984, and 1988.

did not were corrected for the general voting category, but could not be corrected for which candidate they voted for.

The level of political knowledge is a crucial component to identity development in that someone must know about the environment in which they are developing an identity. The amount of political knowledge that one has is an outcome of exploration, where the individuals with more political knowledge sought out that knowledge and have in that seeking addressed some political alternatives. The presence of political knowledge as a part of one's identity development is crucial because this environmental knowledge of alternatives leads the individual to the judgment stage in the identity process, which produces some amount of self knowledge. While it is not necessary for one who has a lot of knowledge about politics to have a political identity, having a fully developed political identity would be a product of a search for self knowledge—self questioning. One cannot base their identity solely on unfounded assertions but with engagement within the environment that one is attempting to produce an identity from. Having political knowledge is therefore necessary to having a highly developed identity and distinguishing one from lower level statuses. Those with little knowledge about their political world are less likely to have an identity (diffusion) or are on the path to exploration, which would suggest some amount of knowledge growth (explorers).

Another component of higher levels of identity development is self-competence as described by Carmines as “People who feel good about themselves, who think of themselves as competent seem to be prime candidates for political involvement” (1991, 81).⁵ Self competence can be measured in two ways. One is self competence measured by disagreement with the position “politics is too complicated,” here the individual is assessing their level of competence

⁵ However there are limitations to Carmines's study since he did not measure voting behavior since the participants in the sample were adolescents.

with what they see are the realities of the political world. A second measure of self competence is the belief that one can affect government decisions, which is also captured in the index with the question worded “People like me don’t have a say in what government does.” These components of self competence have a direct relationship with identity development. Individuals who are highly developed in their political identity are likely to feel that they are competent within the political system and in their effect on government.

Theoretical research suggests ideology both plays a role in development of an identity and influences voting behavior. Ideology is also a component of commitment. We can measure whether or not an individual places themselves on the liberal/conservative scale or whether they say that they don’t know or have not thought much about it. Ideology also captures something different from partisan identification because it is more amorphous and less structured. Ideology can exist independently of parties because it is more of a belief structure rather than an identification or affiliation. The beliefs bound up in ideology can either align with the partisan options or not, for example libertarian ideology aligns somewhat with the Republican platform, but the ideology is distinct from the identification with Republicans. Ideology perhaps requires more self knowledge than partisanship because it requires knowledge about abstract belief systems rather than about concrete objects such as parties. The development of an ideology not only requires knowledge about the ideological options available, but also judgment about one’s agreement or disagreement with those ideologies.

As a measure of exploration, I include the variable of discussions with friends and family. Political discussions relate directly to engagement with others who have different ideas about politics. Talking with others about politics allows an individual to see how others think and feel about politics, and also encourages expression of the individual’s thoughts and feelings about

politics. While this is not a perfect measure of exploration, it does measure exposure. The value of having a measure of exploration is to capture some aspect of the exploration stage in the identity process. While one may have explored the world of politics, the exposure of that individual to many alternatives may be limited. Zaller (1992) and Green, Palquist, and Schickler (2002) both articulate problems with limited discussion since many individuals tend to stay in their secure niche of people who they are comfortable discussing politics with and those individuals tend to have similar beliefs. They are arguing that the discussion measure lacks validity because it does not necessarily require a variety of opinions pursued, but reinforcement of one's own beliefs. I would add that exploration when minimal does lead to lower levels of development—diffusions who want little to do with politics and explorers who have a difficulty leaving this mode of searching. If exploration is minimal due to the lack of alternative options or because exploration has led to only reinforcement of the beliefs of others, then the individual will probably have a difficult time deciding on their own identity and become only somewhat developed. However, as a measure of exposure of different expressions of politics, this question does work within an overarching aspect of self awareness.

In the political identity process model after exploration one must begin to decide and judge the opinions of others and then question where they stand on issues. In order to measure judgment, I use specific policy questions to understand whether or not a person has opinions about these policy areas. The limitation of the questions due to the fact that not all participants answered questions in all years and the fact that different policy questions were used for each year greatly limits the number of questions from which to choose and further limits the number of participants available for the analyses. To account for this disparity, not all of the same policy opinion questions were used in the variable. Please see the appendix for specific question

wording by years. Three questions were used for every year except 1952, when only two policy opinion questions were available. A few policy questions were asked many years in a row and effort was taken to include questions that were available in multiple years. All of these variable question headings are included in Table 3.1.

The following set of opinions functions as one component within the measure. Each opinion is dichotomous adding one point if there is an opinion present and a zero if not. The three different opinions take into account opinions that tend to be discussed and appear universally in most presidential campaigns. The aspect of a set of opinions is more accurate than measuring each individual opinion. Each opinion should not be as important as each of the other components, therefore it is measured more as a set of opinions; does the individual have a set of opinions by which they make decisions? The more opinions one has about different issues that are generally captured in presidential elections (such as international relations, economic choices, and abortion) then the more likely they are to participate. Each of these issues has been covered in presidential campaigns since 1980 and are often major issues that the public cites as important issues facing the nation.

The overall structure of the identity scale variable is to capture important elements of a fully developed identity and the gradations in between by offering a more comprehensive measure of political identity development as different people fall into different categories of development.

Creation of a Salience Index Measure

In addition to having aspects of a developed identity one must also believe that politics is important to their lives. Here salience is referred to as importance; how important is political identity and politics to the individual? How does one place politics with the other aspects of

their life, especially the other identities within their life that might take away from the feeling that politics is important and central to one's life?

There are two components to the salience measure: interest in politics and how frequently one follows politics. Both of these components are highly correlated with turnout (Carmines, 1991). Carmines also measures the concept of political salience and defines it as those who find politics interesting and relevant (1991, 84). Carmines found salience as a mediating factor to the political competence and political involvement linkage (1991, 79). Stryker and Serpe also differentiate salience from identity centrality by making the distinction between those aspects of self that we are aware in the choices we make, versus salience which is unaware but persistently affect how we behave (1994). Salience, in their terms, means priorities that we assign to aspects of our identities subconsciously. For example, an individual can claim that what is central to their identity is motherhood, then wife, then worker, but in her behaviors based on the amount of time and value placed on the identity the priorities are worker, wife, then mother. However the two questions on the ANES are asking substantively different questions about an attitude and behavior. In an attempt to capture how important a political identity is to one's life, we have to measure salience as how important politics is to one's life, which both components of the salience index capture. The higher on this salience index a person is, the more likely they are to vote.

The first question in the salience measure is about interest in political campaigns. The question also leaves room for the respondent to say that they are not interested. Specifically, the question reads "would you say that you have been/were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following the political campaigns this year?" This question taps into the level of interest in campaigns, not necessarily politics. However, elections do seem

Table 3.1 Variables Used in the Construction of the Original Identity Scale with Policy and Salience Scale

| Theoretical Construct | Concept | Variable in ANES Data | Original Variable Scaling |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Political Identity Measures | | | |
| Self aware | Political Knowledge | A ₁ = a) Correctly identifies Republican party placement on ideology scale- b) Correctly identifies Democratic party placement on ideology scale c) Knows Party with House Majority before the election- | Correct answer on factual questions 0-3pts possible |
| Self aware of who they are politically | Political Confidence | A ₂ =Politics seems too complicated- | 3 point- Agree=0, Neither=1, Disagree=2 |
| Self aware | Political Competence | A ₃ =Say in what Gov does - | 3point- Agree=2, Disagree=0, Neither=1 |
| Commitment | Political Commitment to Ideology | A ₄ =R Self placement Liberal Conservative scale- | Dichotomous Places self on scale=1 Don't know=0 |
| Commitment | Has a Set of opinions | A ₅ = R opinion: Better off if US Unconcerned with the rest of the world A ₆ = Government Health Insurance Scale A ₇ = R opinion: By law, when should abortion be allowed A ₈ = R placement: Defense Spending Scale A ₉ =Did US do the Right thing getting involved in War A ₁₀ =How should US proceed in current war A ₁₁ =Guaranteed Jobs and Income A ₁₂ =Government Assistance with Medical Care A ₁₃ =Urban Unrest Scale | Dichotomous for each opinion, total of three opinions, 0-3 Recorded as single component as Set of Opinions Missing Values in each year coded as 0 |
| Engaged in Questioning | Behavior of exploration | A ₁₄ =Does R discuss Politics with Family and Friends- | Discusses Politics=1, Does not discuss=0 |
| Salience Measures | | | |
| Politics is important to their lives | Level of Interest | D ₁ =Interest in elections | 0=not at all interested, 1=somewhat interested, 2=very much interested |
| | Attention to public affairs | D ₂ =Interest/Follow in public affairs | 0=Hardly at all, 1=only now and then, 2=some of the time, 3=most of the time |

to tap into people's larger interest in politics (Patterson, 2002), usually because more is at stake during elections.

Another measure of salience is not based on an individual's claim of interest, but more specifically on behavior. Those who behave as though politics is important to their lives are more likely to vote. Frequency of following politics is assessed by the question, "Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?" This question depicts a wider involvement and level of importance of politics in one's life. Individuals who believe politics is important to their lives are likely to follow it more closely than those who are interested only in election years. Frequency of following politics measures a broader interest in politics than the interest in elections question. In addition, the question taps into how one behaves rather than just level of interest and one who behaves as politics is important to their lives is more likely to vote.

Testing Identity Development and Voting: Evidence from the ANES

For this analysis, I utilize the American National Election Study's Cumulative File for the years 1972 to 2000. While the ANES sampled a population of adults, I filtered their sample based on age (18-24) and only presidential election years were included. Only 2484 cases fitting these criteria were available from all the data in the cumulative file, which is a consequence of the ANES under-sampling of young people. Due to the inclusion of the variety variables in the Political Identity scale only 1343 participants answered all of the ANES questions in the scale. However, the data analysis suggests some preliminary justification for the scale and a particular tipping point for youth to engage in voting behavior. This Identity scale includes a range between 0 and 12 with most young people having an identity score of 7. The measure shows a normal distribution with a standard deviation of 2.52.

Low scorers on the scale had lower levels of identity development and higher scores indicated higher levels of development. Interestingly, many youth actually scored in the middle of the scale, as indicated with a mean and median at 7, suggesting young people tend to be between explorers and somewhat-developed identities. The spread of the scores in the normal distribution suggests there are fewer diffusions and fully-developed individuals than there are young explorers and somewhat developed individuals.

Based on this measure of identity statuses developed from the American National Election Study questions available, identity status is positively related to youth turnout. As young people increase the number of components in their identity status, there tends to be an increase in voting. The tipping point, where more youth vote than not, in the identity scales for more youth in a category to vote rather than not is around 8. The identity development measure was moderately positively related to youth turnout and is statistically significant. With the Identity Status with Policy measure and youth turnout, the positive relationship's Kendall tau-c is .39 ($p < .00$).

While the continuum of identity statuses is valuable, specific identity status categories need to be tested. Creation of the status categories came directly from the identity status scales by altering the scales into four distinct categories of development. For the identity scale the statuses break down into diffusions represented by 0-3 on the scale, explorers as 4-6, somewhat-developed as 7-9, and fully-developed as 10-12. Theoretically, diffusions know little about their political environment and little about who they are as a political person. Based on the measure, it is possible that a diffusion knows his or her political ideology and has some opinions formed, but has not explored the political world and has little self confidence and self competence. In essence, a diffusion is captured by my model of identity development. A fully developed person

Table 3.2 Cross Tabulation of Identity Scale Measure with Policy and Vote Turnout for Young People 18-24

| Turnout | Identity Scale Outcome | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | Total |
| Did Not Vote | 100% (1) | 88.2% (15) | 82.5% (33) | 80.3% (16) | 71.9% (100) | 70.4% (119) | 55.4% (102) | 56.3% (108) | 48.2% (82) | 40% (62) | 24.7% (23) | 28.2% (22) | 17.2% (5) | 54.6% (733) |
| Voted | 0% (0) | 11.8% (2) | 17.5% (7) | 19.7% (15) | 28.1% (39) | 29.6% (50) | 44.6% (82) | 43.8% (84) | 51.8% (88) | 60% (93) | 75.3% (70) | 71.8% (56) | 82.8% (24) | 45.4% (610) |
| Total | 1 | 17 | 40 | 76 | 139 | 169 | 184 | 192 | 170 | 155 | 93 | 78 | 29 | 1343 |

N=1343, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

has many if not all of the components that make up this identity, but may not discuss politics due to his or her environment such as living in a household where politics is avoided because these discussions cause conflict. Explorers know more about the political environment and themselves than the diffusions do and this is evident by their higher numbers on the continuum. Explorers know something about the political world and are beginning to form the beginnings of an identity from that information and the cut off accurately captures that. Somewhat developed individuals have more knowledge about the political world and themselves than their exploring counterparts, but have not reached full knowledge about their political identity. The combination of components in the scale account for self knowledge as well as knowledge about the political world, but the additive combination helps to delineate how much an individual knows. In Marcia's articulation of a combination of questions, individuals in higher levels of development had more evidence and lower levels did not (1964). Adams, in his survey measure of identity, also used scales and ranges to score levels of development (1998).

Table 3.3: Cross-Tabulations of Identity Status with Policy Components by Vote Turnout of Young People 18-24

| Turnout | Identity Status | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | Diffusions | Explorers | Somewhat Developed | Fully Developed |
| Did Not Vote | 82.1% (110) | 65.2% (321) | 48.7% (252) | 25% (50) |
| Voted | 17.9% (24) | 34.8% (171) | 51.3% (265) | 75% (150) |
| Total | 134 | 492 | 517 | 200 |

N=1343, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004,

When the identity scale is broken down into statuses, the measure also is positively related to youth turnout and is statistically significant (Tau-c=.35, p=.01). These findings suggest that identity status does seem to play a role in which young people travel to the polls on Election Day and which do not. Young people who are in the diffusion status of political

identity development are more likely not to vote (82.1%) than to vote (17.9%). Those in the highest category, fully developed, are more likely to vote (75%) than not (25%). The theory of identity development does have a clear positive relationship with voting behavior of young people.

Additional Explanations for Youth Turnout Despite Identity Development

While I believe political identity development plays a valuable role in accounting for what is not currently captured in the voting behavior literature, there are additional explanations as to why youth may choose to vote or not vote despite their identity status. Some explanations include cynicism whereby individuals have low levels of self efficacy and they believe that their vote cannot make a difference either because they as individuals are ineffective or because the system is broken. Internal efficacy is measured by a single variable and is included in the identity scale, but does not take into account external efficacy based on the individual's perception of the system. External efficacy can account for disgust with politics, politicians, and the political system, but was not accounted for in the identity measure or in this study of what encourages youth voting behavior.

Requests from others to vote are important to some youth turning out. As Bennion suggests youth are more likely to vote when asked by their peers and through mobilization efforts that specifically target youth (2005). Young people who may not be interested in politics most of the time may become interested during an election year because there is more coverage and others around them are engaged in politics. Rational choice arguments for explaining voting behavior (such as high costs of engagement versus low perceived benefits) still apply, however political identity development adds more specificity to any model of youth political participation in presidential elections. While political identity development might not be the only reason for

young people to go to the polls, it is an important factor that should be accounted for in any analysis of youth voting behavior.

What is Different about Youth Participants and Non-participants?

In the end, this argument about youth identity development seeks to find an answer to what encourages young people to turnout. Looking at differences within political identity, I identify why some young people do vote and others do not. While much of the literature about voting behavior suggests stability and demographic differences between voters and non-voters, scholars still apply these explanations to a lack of youth turnout. However, as Highton and Wolfinger found these typical explanations tend not to stand up when comparing youth to one another (2001).

I argue it is not the demographic variables or stability variables that affect voting behavior of young people, but rather the psychological development of an identity. What affects youth turnout is not their social, residential, or economic situation but rather their psychological awareness of self and commitments to aspects of politics. Does the young person know who he or she is politically? What matters more than what outside factors may change behavior is what is inside the individual with their beliefs, commitments, and feelings of importance their political identity.

Studying identity development of youth is particularly valuable to the research on voting behavior because this research focuses on the process by which we become political creatures. Young adulthood is a particular time in both voting behavior and formation of an identity. For voting behavior, eighteen is the first time that youth are able to participate in the electoral process by casting a ballot. The first few years of adulthood also seem to influence whether or not the individual will vote in the future. For identity development, young adulthood is the time

where active formation of one's overarching identity begins to occur. Young adulthood is a time to be experimental in order to figure out the type of person we are and the type of person we want to be. Considering identity development to be a life long process, we are each architects of ourselves. Childhood tends to be where we become socialized to the norms of society and where we begin to build the foundation of our political selves. Adolescence and young adulthood is the time where we are building the structural components of our political selves and later adulthood is where we are putting the final touches on who we are or a time when we remodel. In comparison with other aspects of identity development such as vocational or even religious identity, political identity development seems to be the most difficult and drawn out of the identity processes.

Chapter 4 Inspirational Leaders, Personal Narrative, and Youth Identity

Inspirational Leaders and the Youth Vote

Inspirational leaders turn out young people in two important ways: 1) they encourage participation through promises of hope and feelings that change can happen and 2) they give form to vague identities of young people, which indirectly supports higher levels of identity development. When leaders inspire youth and make youth feel hopeful, they are directly increasing turnout of youth. Older counterparts, unlike young people, have experience with the political system and one time or another have been disappointed by leaders not fulfilling promises. Older Americans are less likely to fall for the appeals of newness and change. I argue youth are more likely to turn out to the polls when they believe a leader is inspirational and the leader makes them feel hopeful.

Leaders, especially inspirational ones, are integral to youth identity development because they articulate who they are politically to youth. This example narrative engages young people in identity development who might not otherwise have developed. Leaders by example work as identity role models for young people and these inspirational leaders ask youth to believe in issues and concerns the youth believe are important. In a way, inspirational leaders are confronting youth with political alternatives and are explaining what the major issues of current debate are. In election years when there is an inspirational leader, young people can feel as though they are a part of the campaign and as a consequence begin to figure out what they believe. Inspirational leaders tap into youth networks to connect with youth where they are and ask youth to be a part of a larger movement. Identity development happens indirectly through interaction with inspirational leaders because these leaders display their own political identity and become identity models for youth. The combination of offering an identity from which to

adopt and model as one's own as well as the targeting of youth as members of an inclusive campaign allows inspirational leaders to reach more youth than other types of leaders.

I define an inspirational leader as a type of charismatic leader, who promises new politics, engages voters, especially those who were previously disengaged, through their presence encourages others to act, discusses hope, makes universal appeals, and supports inclusive politics (anyone can join as long as he or she believes). Inspirational leaders include many different leaders throughout time: Gandhi, Reagan, Hitler, JFK, and Robert Kennedy. Inspirational leaders make a special effort to not only target youth but to include them as a major part of the campaign. Their appeals to new politics and change are often the hallmarks of the campaign that young people want to be a part of. Hope in something different, and a new future is what draws young people to inspirational candidates. But inspirational candidates by the nature of their character tend to be people who, through their beliefs, actions and articulation of their own identity encourage participation in others. The common theme in inspirational campaigns is that "you too can be a part and make a change in the world." Inspirational leaders have a reciprocal relationship with their young followers—meaning that both get something out of the relationship. Leaders make appeals that youth want to be a part of and youth in turn act on these appeals to propel the leader into power.

Youth who have little familial input or socialization from society as to what to believe about politics and what is politically possible, I argue, are more likely to develop an identity when inspirational leaders are present. These leaders are not solely someone to look up to, but someone who says exactly what the young person is feeling but in a more articulate fashion. Inspirational leaders can act as a template from which to build an identity and they bring to the forefront the major issues of the day for young people to think about and form an opinion. Truly

inspirational leaders allow their followers to develop their identity and become an independent, rather than dependent, political person. As a consequence these leaders indirectly help young people to develop their own identity, which in turn increases their turnout in the polls.

The Intersection of Identity Development and Leadership

Young people, as they are on the journey to developing their beliefs, preferences, and commitments, have influential identity models that they will use to develop their own identities. However, some young people will simply take on the role of follower and not develop beyond what their role models (whether they be politicians or parents) think and become paralyzed when they have to make decisions for themselves. A higher level of development would be to take into account what the role model had to offer, but adapt it to one's own understanding and belief system—in essence personalizing the identity template.

Political leaders can act as abstract role models for youth who are attempting to develop an identity. What political leaders provide to young people is not only a reason to participate, but a figure to look up to when there may be no other political role model in one's life. Inspirational leaders are leaders who provide a reason to participate through words and actions. They exemplify what is to be done and they also articulate their own identity to others. These two pursuits encourage young people to develop their own identity and vote. In addition, peers also play a role in influencing the concept of a leader as transformative, inspirational, and convincing. Friends and peers work to convince their fellow young people about the leader and what that leader can do for people like them. Friends can be influential in encouraging others to vote and vote for a specific candidate. In a way, young people who have been activated or inspired by the leader spread their enthusiasm to others, which can have a ripple effect. Huddy suggests the interaction between leaders and identity as "one's perceived similarity to the

prototypic group member that plays a key role in the formation and development of social identity” (2001, 134). Not only does the role model embody the characteristics that the group would like to assume, but they also act in ways that sanction certain types of behaviors which influences others to act.

The development of identity has to do with whether or not role models are present. Role models are individuals we look up to and when we are very young attempt to mimic. Consider the political example of children who watch political television (such as news networks or programs) with their parents and perhaps yell at the television the same way that their parents do, or the number of children of politicians who become politicians themselves. These children are learning the roles of what being political means. For my purposes though, role models occur throughout one’s life, these are the people that we look up to, admire, attempt to mimic, and who seem to be a guiding force in our thinking. Much of the leadership literature in political science argues that the same modeling is true for political leaders as it is for parents (Meindl, 1995; Bass, 1988). These leaders are individuals to which people attach because they epitomize the political party or they articulate what we are thinking. Role models within psychology play a similar role to leaders within political science; the larger difference is that role models tend to be personal—meaning there is a perceived connection between the followers and the leader. Leaders tend to be more abstract figures where only a select few actually know who the leader really is, but the effect of the leader can be enhanced by group interaction (Meindl, 1995).

While presidential candidates are certainly not rock stars, they can be celebrities in their own right as we have seen with the presidential election of 2008. Some criticized Obama for his celebrity status (Kellner, 2009). He was also a role model for many young people. The concern about role models is whether or not they allow the individual followers to think for themselves.

Concern for the status of political celebrities is about identity. The criticism concerning identity centers around what followers of the celebrity leader actually do, are these individuals thinking for themselves? Is there some manipulation going on between the leader and followers? Do the followers have identities of their own or are they substituting the leaders' wishes as their own? Do the role models allow for identity development of the individual follower or is the follower simply parroting the role model?

Not everyone is affected equally by inspirational leaders. Those individuals who have strong political backgrounds are often just as cautious about these leaders as many older adults are. However, many young people growing up in families where politics is rarely discussed and in school environments that avoid politics can be influenced by inspirational leaders. These leaders act as abstract role models—individuals who epitomize what a political identity is and express the confidence that having a political identity can have. Other celebrity role models affect our identities as we are growing up, and for a political identity inspirational leaders are these role models of political identity and add another component to how one learns about the political world and the possible identity options.

Meaning and Interaction of Leadership

Targeting by Candidates: How to Convey a Personal Narrative

How youth voters are targeted by candidates is another difference between these voters and older voters. Different appeals to different voters are strategic moves for candidates; just as candidates adapt speeches to different audiences, they also differ in their appeals to different age groups of voters. Competitive elections increase turnout of all age groups (Wolinetz, 2006). However, what makes youth different from other age cohorts is how they are approached and if they are approached at all. Dreger argues often what occurs between youth voters and candidates

is a cycle of mutual neglect, whereby youth voters rarely come to the polls to vote and, as a consequence, politicians in regular elections do not pursue these voters because it would be a waste of limited resources (1999). This vicious cycle occurs in elections where candidates need not pursue youth voters. In competitive elections, candidates must pursue potential voters from as many demographic categories as possible in order to increase their base of supporters. How these candidates target voters is very different with regard to what issues to raise, how to phrase appeals, and choice of rhetoric.

In competitive elections, candidates must pursue targeted campaigns to voters (Farrell and Webb, 1998), and targeting of youth voters by campaigns requires different strategies than appeals to older cohorts. Bondelli (2007) argues that youth-targeted campaigns mobilize youth voters better when they are outside the traditional campaign structures and focus on peer-to-peer contact, which is one-on-one contact with someone near their age. In addition, young people are more likely to vote if they are simply asked to do so and if the asking is less scripted and more informal (Bennion, 2005).

What political leaders provide is an articulation of beliefs, worldviews, and policy preferences that the American public can understand and either accept or reject. However, for individuals developing politically, these articulations early in their political development can be some of the early building blocks for developing their own sets of beliefs. But in the end, what role models cannot answer for the individual is: what is my place in the political world?

How leaders articulate their own personal identity, which youth can mold themselves after, is through a personal narrative. In the consideration of a personal narrative to explain political identity we can think to politicians who continually attempt to tell the public their personal narrative about their political identity and how they developed this identity. Politicians

attempt to create a coherent self by merging the past with the present in an attempt to explain what the future holds. Politicians must be clear about their political selves to convince the public about who they are. During election time, politicians are competing in their personal narratives and the use of those narratives to convince the public to vote for them. Politicians often seem to have a strong sense about who they are politically that is often captivating and engaging to their audience. Their identities often seem to overshadow less well formed identities that are searching for some coherence and resolution to indecision. Politicians in a way are trying to convince the public that their personal narratives match each individual's own narrative.

Charismatic Leadership and Opinion Leaders

Weber defined a charismatic leader as one who works outside the boundaries of the routine happenings and tends to create new dynamics of politics. He defined this type of leader as “the term charisma will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities” (1978, 358). In Weber's terms, charisma means some exceptional character who people are drawn to and will follow. In comparison with Weber's other types of authority, only the charismatic authority is created from the individual's endowment of power. Traditional authority comes from the following of immemorial customs and legitimacy of authority based on following customs. Different from charismatic and traditional authority, legal or rational authority comes from normative, legal rules and authority is vested in the one who issues commands (1978, 328). Charismatic authority is not based in any historical sense of legitimacy and is found in the great person. Where authority in the traditional or legal sense is legitimized by rules outside the individual, charismatic authority is found in the perceived power of the individual and is outside the routine rule structures that legitimized other

types of authority. While traditional and legal authorities can be legitimized without followers, the essence of charismatic power relies in the followers to acknowledge their power.

Weber in his discussion of authority states, “the basis of every system of authority, and correspondingly of every kind of willingness to obey, is a *belief*, a belief by virtue of which persons exercising authority are lent prestige” (1978, 382). For charismatic authority, the belief is in the extraordinary character of the individual that makes him stand out from other men. As Weber suggests validity of charisma is measured on “recognition by those subject to it” (1978, 386). The charismatic leader needs the masses to legitimize his authority. Charismatic authority, unlike traditional or legal, is based more on emotion. As a consequence, the leader must consistently be spectacular, promise the most, employ “propaganda measures in the competition for leadership”, and have a utopian component (1978, 389). Charismatic leaders are the result of belief of their followers not of legal or traditional rules and they tend to defy the old rules and attempt to create a revolution. However, because charismatic leadership is based on emotion and not reason these leaders must continually fulfill the needs of their followers and staff in both their material and idealistic needs.

Grounding the discussion of leaders in voting behavior, Converse agrees that there are leaders that convince others to act politically. However, Converse sees these opinion leaders are much closer to home than inspirational presidential candidate. Converse considers differences among opinion leaders and average citizens, and limits his definition of those who are opinion leaders to Ideologues and husbands to wives. Ideologues in Converse’s categorization of the American public are the most knowledgeable and the most active people in the political environment (1964). Ideologues encourage the participation of others and often engage others in conversations about politics. Additionally, Converse also saw that husbands were overwhelming

figures in shaping the politics of their wives. While Converse was correct in his assessment of opinion leaders as guides to others and as cues for appropriate behavior, he is not very specific about leadership (1964, 231). In his mention of charismatic leaders, Converse notes how they are inherently ideological and communicate to others the recognizable principles of the ideology (1964, 213).

As Laszarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet note, personal contacts matter when attempting to convince a person to vote (1968, 151-156). Political candidates also want to achieve this type of personal connection with their potential voters. In more recent presidential elections, candidates attempt to connect with youth in many different forms of media for the purposes of making the personal connection that will encourage the young person to vote. To target and encourage turnout of young people, candidates themselves seem overwhelmed with the new and changing media markets for youth and as a consequence hire political consultants to make strategic appeals to youth. Political consultants with advances in polling technology have been at the forefront of social science research in developing new ways to analyze and understand voters. Political leaders not only pursue young people on the basis of youth issues and emotional appeals, but also look for youth in mediums where young people are comfortable tend to be more successful in gaining young voters and volunteers.

Transformational Leaders and Inspiration

What may attract youth to strong inspirational leaders is the fact that the leaders are sure of themselves and have an air of self confidence. While the concept of leadership may at times be elusive, Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich contend that there are certain processes that occur as the romanticized conception of leadership is being formed (1985, 99). In organizational behavior, a romanticized conception of leadership refers to the association between leaders and outcomes

when there is a lack of direct information about organizational events meaning when there is not clear explanation for success or failure within an organization the leader is often ascribed “control and responsibility—with events and outcomes to which they can be plausibly linked” (1985, 80). In addition to ascribing responsibility, Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich find that there are some psychological effects to leadership as well, including selective perceptions.

With these selective perceptions, people ignore information that would change their perception of the leader, people believe information that confirms their support of the leader, and the group of people work to maintain the conceptualization of the leader (1985, 99). While their work originally studied leadership in the business world, their conception of a romanticized leadership can clearly be drawn to inspirational leadership in the political world. Political leaders and presidents, in particular, are often criticized for their success and failures in policy with little explanation as to alternative explanations. Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich point out to moments where leaders are associated with the outcome, large fluctuations in organizational performance for good or bad and when there are surprising events (1985, 90-93). In politics, leaders can change the course of events or at least be perceived that they are, and can be seen as omnipotent by followers who imbue the leader with superhuman abilities beyond what is actually possible (Hecl, 1981).

In an assessment of transformational leadership, Francis and Bass determine the use of inspiration in leading and suggest what makes leaders transformational is that they “articulate a realistic vision of the future” (1990, 151). By providing such a vision to individuals in the political environment, transformational leaders are leaders who not only epitomize inspiration within themselves but inspire others to act. These leaders inspire loyalty, command respect, consider what each person needs to be effective, and stimulate others intellectually (1990, 153-

Table 4.1 Typology of Leadership: Three Constructions

| Type of Leader | Charismatic | Transformational | Inspirational |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Author | Weber | Bass | Gentry |
| Characteristics of the Leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Exceptional power -Superhuman -Perceived as Divine Origin of Charisma -Demands new obligations -Authority opposed to traditional or bureaucratic authority -Authority that is foreign to all rules | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Communicates high expectations -Uses symbols to focus efforts -Expresses important purposes in simple ways -Provides vision and a sense of mission -Coaches and Advises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promises new politics -Encourages others to act -Creates inclusive politics—anyone can join as long as they believe -Engages Voters -Discusses Hope -Makes Universal Appeals |
| Leader-Follower Relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Devotion and absolute trust from followers -Leader must fulfill ideal and material needs of followers -Leader’s power comes from belief -Two types of followers: staff and masses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Instills Pride in Employees -Relationship built on respect and trust of leader and of followers -Gives personal attention to each employee | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -People trust the leader, but are also able to think for themselves -Leader encourages others to act who then attempt to get others involved -Followers are able to model their identity from the leaders’ example |
| Consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -These leaders can create democratizing movements -Masses begin to favor people who are spectacular, promise the most and employ effective propaganda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promotes intelligence, rationality and careful problem solving -Employees can think for themselves and be creative in the pursuit of the mission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Leader articulates their purpose through a personal narrative -Followers have an identity model -Leaders encourage participation through their presence and identity development of followers |
| Examples | Ancient prophets, military leaders, Napoleon | World Renowned CEOs | Presidential Candidates, Movement organizers |

154). How a leader comes to be seen as inspiring is through their vision, transformational leaders not only provide a vision, but a way to achieve that vision with actions that can be taken by their followers. Empowerment of followers to not only become a part of the vision, but to be a part of the solution is particularly important with transformational leaders.

Within the organizational leadership literature, two types of leaders are often juxtaposed: transactional and transformative leaders. Transactional leaders tend to be the standard for leaders who maintain the status quo and who perform adequately with little change within the organization. Transformative leaders, on the other hand, work to make substantial changes within the organization especially around the behavior of subordinates. Transformative leaders tend to help their subordinates, or in the political leadership sense—followers, realize that they are a part of a vision and that they have the responsibility to create change.

In a deeper investigation into transformational leaders, Popper delves into the context, consequences and political aspects of leadership (2005). Shifting from the emphasis on transformational leaders in business, Popper focuses on how leaders transform society. He argues what transformational leaders actually do is to change their followers by changing their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (2005, 9). By identifying three types of leadership, Popper explains the different types of relationships between leaders and followers. The regressive relationships emphasize projection and transference between the leader and followers where the leader is fulfilling the needs of security and certainty of their followers without allowing them to be independent (2005, 36-45). Followers, in this sense, project their life aspirations onto the leader and transfer their identity to the leader and receive little in return. Developmental relationships are the leaders who act like good parents and encourage “independence rather than dependency” (2005, 47). These leaders focus on empowering their followers to believe in their

own abilities and support their intellectual development to solve problems. In my articulation of leadership, inspirational leaders empower their followers to act and find opportunities where they can participate.

Lastly, the symbolic leader is one that is no longer a person but a symbol of meaning. “History is replete with examples of leaders whose personality, words, and behavior became symbolic representations, representing some transcendental essence beyond the concrete personality of the leader himself” (Popper, 2005, 51). The essence of a successful transformational leader is one that causes their followers to become empowered and make decisions on their own. In my own terms, an inspirational leader is one who not only articulates a vision, but allows followers to be a part of that vision and find ways through their individual decisions to make the vision possible. Inspirational leaders cannot have a regressive relationship with their followers because a crucial part of inspiration is to allow followers to think and act for themselves.

Bass also finds that part of transformational leadership is the relationship between the leader and followers in that the leader must encourage followers to trust in themselves and in the mission (1990). Distinguishing between transactional and transformational leadership, Bass finds that transactional leaders simply explain expectations and intervene when these expectations are not met. At the very basic level, transactional leaders focus on the task at hand and only interact with followers during short exchanges such as a reprimand or expectation (1990, 20). Transformational leaders, on the other hand, include followers in their purpose and mission and as a consequence followers put in extra effort to achieve the mission (1990, 21). Leaders can be transformational in a number of ways from inspiring followers, to meeting the emotional needs of followers, to intellectually stimulating them (1990, 21). What Bass finds in

organizational psychology is also true in politics; followers continue to work for the leader because they internalize the mission and see their own responsibility in carrying it out. What political leaders provide is a vision of a different political future that the followers can become a part of and be instrumental in achieving the shared vision. Leaders in this context provide the vision while followers implement it.

One characteristic of being a transformational leader is to have the ability to inspire others. Bass argues inspiring leaders encourage followers “to exert themselves beyond their own expectations and self-interest” (1988, 22). Just as a transformational leader provides the vision to followers, inspiration induces the actions of followers through emotional and symbolic appeals. Inspirational leaders consider how to simplify and communicate complex ideas into symbolic terms that followers can identify with and understand. In reference to leadership in politics, Bass considers the role that public impression of candidates matters (1988, 24). The significant distinction Bass makes between charismatic leaders and inspirational leaders is the component of intellectual stimulation. Inspirational leaders intellectually stimulate their followers which support them to think for themselves and prevent “habituated followership characterized by the blind unquestioning trust and obedience such as seen in charismatic leader-follower relations” (1988, 28).

Where charismatic leaders tend to care about the attachment followers have to them and how followers fulfill the leaders’ self interest, inspirational leaders need followers who can think for themselves and act independently of the leaders’ direct supervision. In terms of identity, inspirational leaders would not want followers to blindly mimic their own identity, but encourage followers to discover their own initiative and identity. Followers of inspirational leaders can

question the leaders' actions without fear of reprimand and can help the leader realize their vision by thinking of innovative ways to achieve their purpose.

Considering candidates and how candidates affect voting patterns, Rahn, Aldrich, Bogida, Sulluivan, Ferejohn, and Kuklinski argue personal qualities of candidates affect the publics' final vote judgments (1990). In their attempt to argue that all voters use personal qualities of the candidates to assess competence as a political leader, they find "personal qualities on affect is greater than the impact of competence" (1990, 153). How voters feel about the candidates is more important than the objective assessment of candidate competence in the position. Voters take many different aspects of a candidate into account when attempting to assess leadership qualities including the traditional ones such as partisan affiliation, ideology and issues, but personal qualities—feelings about the candidates and perceived competence are also key indicators of leadership potential. Candidate characteristics such as charismatic or inspirational as judgments about candidates are valid because for voters the personal characteristics. These characteristics matter when choosing a leader and at times these questions about personal qualities are also assessments of a leader's potential.

A candidate's style of politics also shapes voter perceptions. Rosenberg, Bohan, McCafferty, and Harris argue "how a political candidate looks and speaks has a significant impact on that candidates chances of being elected—style shapes image and image affects the vote" (1986, 108). Two characteristics they investigated were non-verbal cues and attractiveness of candidates. Non-verbal cues often include eye contact, body posture, and personal distance (1986, 110) which can affect how a candidate is perceived in front of an audience. In testing their hypothesis on attractiveness of candidates, they held constant party affiliation and issue approaches. Based on results their experiment, appearance does matter when deciding who to

vote for and how candidates present themselves matters when there seems to be little difference in issues between the candidates. Based on their assessments, participants concluded attractive candidates were a better fit to hold public office and lead.

In their study of presidential traits of candidates, Miller and Shanks note that only certain characteristics mattered in the 1992 election. With many different traits to assess, the only evaluations that seemed to matter in voting were perceptions of the candidate as honest and inspiring, and whether or not people felt that the candidate cared about people like them (1996, 425). Partisanship, however, does bias candidate trait assessments (1996, 420). Based on these results we begin to see the role that emotion plays in candidate assessment and the level of importance that voters place on these emotional appeals. However, voters must also feel that the candidate is someone who will listen to people like them; people need to feel from candidates that they will be represented in their democracy. Successful candidates will not only rely on the inspirational characteristics but will also acknowledge the role of honesty and inclusion in their connection to American voters.

Certain traits and campaign rhetoric seem to attract youth voters including inspiration, feelings of hope, and promises of change. Inspirational leaders are more likely to turn out youth voters based on the characteristic of inspiration. I argue youth need to be inspired to be mobilized to vote. While the characteristics of honesty and efficacy may be present in candidates, these characteristics do not evoke action on the part of the youth voters. Inspirational candidates by their very nature arouse emotion and action in others.

Even as partisan loyalties began to erode in the 1960s, new fascination with presidential candidates began to rise, not just in the mind of the electorate but, for political scientists, as well. Stokes argued the changes in American voting behavior were due to the emphasis on candidates.

Short term electoral change, he believed, stemmed from the turnover of political personalities (1966, 25). By looking at mass media, Stokes claimed

if the political effects of issues and personalities in the wider environment depend partly on what the electorate hears and how it is disposed to react to what it hears, it follows that changes in communication and response tendencies can at times alter the political effects of a stimulus which has not itself changed (1966, 25).

The judgments of presidential candidates was not only about which party they belonged to and what policies they hoped to create or supported, but the person that the candidate was, or at least the person that candidates hoped to portray.

A deepening concern in political science about the movement toward candidate-centered elections was that the less well-educated American public would focus on superficial characteristics of candidates rather than substance. Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk found several important peculiarities in this claim by examining how voters as information processors consider attributes of the candidates including assessments of competence, integrity, reliability, and charisma (1986). Their findings suggest even educated citizens assess candidates' personal qualities to determine their vote decision. Based on the amount of information available, voters who follow politics are more likely to have information based on candidate characteristics and make decisions based on candidate dispositions (1986, 527). Evaluations of candidates from presidential election years tend to be based on what the respondent based previous evaluations of candidates, but only in the dimensions of competence, integrity and reliability (1986, 529). In their minds, the American public has an idea about how a president ought to look and act, and what personality characteristics they should have, but these ideal expectations of presidents are affected by the candidates available, the political environment, and how the media portrays these dispositions (1986, 533-535). While charisma does not seem to be a characteristic evaluated by voters from year to year, there may be serious consequences for youth voters who vote for

candidates who inspire them in one election year; since there are no candidates, in later years, who are charismatic. Youth may be less likely to vote if there are no charismatic candidates on the ballot.

Concern for leader-follower relations and how leaders either allow followers to disagree is based in political history and psychology. The basis of concern for political leaders being charismatic or inspirational is the example of Hitler who was able to convince his followers of his beliefs and in addition was able to continue to recruit young minds through manipulation. Huddy writes of this manipulation that, “there is abundant evidence from everyday politics that political and national identities can be manipulated by the words and actions of political leaders, can shift in intensity with normative support for a movement’s goals and can vary in salience across settings” (2001, 148). Another basis for the concern often comes from the example of cult leaders whose followers are deeply dedicated to the leader’s cause seemingly without complaint or disagreement. Concern for both of these types of leaders resides in the idea that what is being manipulated are thoughts and the individual is not thinking or existing as his or her own person. However, another basis for concern exists in emotional manipulation as well. While these two concepts can be theoretically separated, in reality emotion and thoughts are very much interconnected.

Uneasiness about emotional manipulation is deeply founded in leader-follower relations. Erikson warns about the consequences of merging one’s identity with a leader’s identity to feel complete (1994, 168). A significant consequence includes lack of a fully developed identity on the part of a person of any age. Adherence to the wishes of the leader based on emotional attachment is often a major concern with the manipulation of young people. While I argue inspirational leaders, in order to be inspirational, cannot pursue fear as a motivator for action,

charismatic leaders can. The distinction between inspirational and charismatic leader is based on how the leader encourages individuals to act whether through manipulation or encouragement. Inspirational leaders will encourage followers to act for themselves and pursue causes because the individual agrees with them; on the other hand, a charismatic leader will sway followers to pursue causes because, in the end, the leader wants them to.

There is a fine line to be drawn about the role and responsibility of leadership. Leaders may choose to pursue causes that are selfish and self serving rather than the greater good. For presidential candidates it can be difficult to see whether they are attempting to act selflessly to pursue democracy or whether their actions are self interested. In addition to the fine line between motives there is also the question of how a leader elicits participation on the part of followers, through encouragement or manipulation. An inspirational leader works through encouragement and social networks to elicit participation of followers. Other more nefarious leaders work through manipulation, emotional or social. The question is not only about how the leader goes about educating participation but for what purpose.

Influential figures often are criticized for their ability to affect young people. Erikson notes “youth can attach itself to seemingly utopian world images which somehow prove to be realizable in part, given the right leader—and historical luck” (1994, 182). Youth, in a way, seem more susceptible because they are more likely to believe in change and possibility of new politics than their older counterparts. However, as Erikson suggests true leaders not only attract youth but “create significant solidarities” (1994, 191). Belief in an inspirational leader is limited when the solidarity is only young people. This spread of belief in the leader is particularly important to the creation of an inclusive environment that propels inspirational candidates to power.

The real challenge for candidates in the American political system is to break rules about partisanship and become leaders that anyone would want to affiliate with. Some candidates, such as Reagan and Obama, have attempted to target partisanship as the problem of politics in the United States. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler articulate that partisan change is often the result of the “social group composition of its leadership and, by extension, its public persona” (2002, 13). Inspirational leaders shift the composition of the party and change the perception of partisanship and politics in the public’s mind. While presidential candidates of all levels of inspiration do provide a face to the party they represent, inspirational leaders change the concept of the party by providing a new persona and expanding the nature of true involvement by individuals of all characteristics.

Inspirational leaders reshape the persona of political parties to include more people in them and in some ways reshape who participates in the party activities and who does not. Many campaigns use youth as door-to-door correspondents, mobilizers, and, from my experience, as volunteers carrying a lot of the weight with set-up of political events. However, inspirational leaders seem to give youth more chances to be a part of and move up in the campaign hierarchy (Gentry, 2008).

Politicians as celebrities is an odd combination and from what we know about young people’s role models, politicians tend to rank near the bottom. Pew Research Center finds that today’s youth (Generation Next) are less likely than older people to mention a politician as a role model or hero (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2007, 9). “Only 8% of young people named a current or former elected official when asked who they admire most. Politicians are much more popular with the older generations (20%)”, where many mentioned Ronald Reagan as one of the most admired people (2007, 10). Young people today are more likely than

older generations to mention a person that they know rather than someone they do not know personally. This challenge for inspirational leaders is twofold, creating a persona that feels like someone youth would want to know and trust while still achieving the characteristics of someone who can lead.

Inspirational leaders are abstract role models to youth. Many young people who may be inspired to work for the candidate or become voters for the candidate will never meet or know the candidate personally. In such a way, inspirational candidates are creations of what the followers believe. Meindl considers the social construction of leadership, where leaders are in essence the creation of their followers. The social construction of leadership suggests the creation of a leader is through interfollower relationships rather than the sole creation of the leader (1995, 330). The focus then becomes how followers construct their understanding of the leader and the ways in which they communicate these constructions to their peers. In essence, “leadership is very much in the eyes of the beholder: followers—not the leader—and not researchers—define it” (1995, 331). When the emphasis is shifted to the followers’ creation of the leader, then peers tend to play a larger role in the understanding of what leadership qualities are important, how people assess charisma, and what role leaders play in a more decentralized construction. Much of the emphasis on creation of the leader in followers’ minds is how leaders are then able to control contexts and circumstances in order to shape their reputation as a leader rather than through actions (1995, 333). In the context of inspirational leadership, the social construction model complements the identity development model because it not only accounts for the lack of interaction with the leader, but also how peers play a role in shaping the identity of the leader and as a consequence the identity of the youth followers.

The Peer Influence and Inspirational Leaders

Peers tend to play a role in influencing youth on many different subjects from styles of dress to acceptable behaviors. However, little research has been done on the effect of peers on the influence of leadership. Again, the hesitation about inspirational leaders and what effect they may have on the American public stems from fear about mob mentality, the manipulation of emotions, and the bandwagon effects. Bandwagon effects may very well be in play when we discuss the role of social networks not only to influence whether or not someone votes, but also what party or person they vote for. When the latest fad is a political leader, the same effects that one might expect from other aspects of youthful peer influence also play a role.

Effective inspirational leaders actively encourage spreading the word about the leader: “Tell your friends and get them involved as well.” Youth feeling like they need to belong can at times make them susceptible to leaders who promise change, a brighter future, and inclusion into a group. Leaders have often satisfied the need to belong by creating bonds of friendship between followers and by enhancing social networks of friendship by expanding them to be more inclusive. Inspirational leaders unlike cult leaders rely on their spread of the message through as many followers as possible. Cult leaders while inclusionary toward obedient followers often cut ties between followers and those outside the cult. For an inspirational leader to become successful their message must be spread as far and as quickly as possible.

These peer networks work as a muffled sounding chamber, and the message is never as clear as the leader articulated it, but some elements of the message are communicated. Popper finds “As with a contagious disease, people transmit to each other attributions of leadership, relay stories, and supply information that is not always accurate until finally a character is built” (2005, 31). Political campaigns actually compound this muffled message due to the necessary vagueness of the campaign message—meaning general appeals to a wide audience, such as

Obama's "Yes We Can." Campaign messages need to be vague enough to be inclusive without offending anyone again tapping into the ability to include believers in the campaign. Aside from the diehard volunteers, what people remember from the campaign message is very little context with lots of emotion. Opinion leaders in these youth peer groups are individuals who have an achieved political identity and are then pushing their friends to decide their political identity.

The limitation of not actually knowing the candidate in person is overcome by the media interaction the American public receives through mass media. As Stokes notes, "in a sense, the only real candidate stimuli are those which reach the voter via mass media and interpersonal conversation, stimuli which rarely are complemented by direct voter contact with the candidate" (1966, 25). The power of peers in the indirect interaction between the candidate and the voter is to shape the information that the voter takes in and these stimuli can be biased, ill-informed, and blatantly wrong. Peer influence can be especially dominant when young people have little interest in or interaction with news media (Wattenberg, 2008). Peers then become the sole stimulus from which the young person receives information about the candidates, which makes this influence difficult to fight against.

Peers, in youth, tend to play a larger role in influencing perceptions and assessments about the world. This influence does not stop at the latest trends in music or clothing but also expands to other aspects of life as well, including politics. The impact of inspirational leaders can be expanded through word of mouth and personal connections that young people have to one another. Inspirational leaders engage potential voters who then engage their friends and peers. There is a ripple effect of engagement through the initial leader influence, which then becomes much larger as young people interact with and influence one another to vote for the candidate or participate in some way with the campaign. From my additional research, young volunteers said

they were able to get their friends involved and influenced many of their friends who would not have voted in the 2008 election (Gentry, 2008). Young people readily admit that they either voted or participated in the campaign because a friend asked them to. The personal contact and influence of peers works to convince young people to vote and also influences their perception of the leader. In a way, the inspirational leader needs only to activate a specific few who are influential in their peer group. These young opinion leaders then engage in both convincing others that the leader is inspirational and that others will be a value to the campaign. The emotional nature of inspirational leadership excites enthusiasm in the believers, which activates followers of the initial followers to become involved. In these ways, peers have a major influence on who votes and in convincing others the leader is inspirational, which indirectly influences youth to vote because they have something to believe in.

Evidence of Inspirational Leadership Effects on Youth Turnout

Hypothesis 2. The perception of a leader as inspirational in an election makes it more likely that the youth will vote. Inspirational leaders not only encourage youth voting, but encourage youth to vote for them.

The data below are from two different studies of inspirational leadership. The first study investigates the direct relationship of how youth assess presidential candidate traits and whether or not these youth turned out to the polls. The two trait assessments include whether or not the candidate makes one feel hopeful and whether or not the candidate is seen as inspiring. The first study begins with 1980 as the year these trait assessment questions were placed on the American National Election Study. Study two involves the examination of inspirational leadership based on inspirational messages of presidential candidates from 1972, when youth gained the right to vote, to 2008. Content analysis is used to evaluate the presence of inspirational messages by candidates of both major parties. Content analysis is the study of specific terms and phrases used

in written or oral speech to examine patterns and themes as well as a comparison of different written and oral speeches to one another (Krippendorf, 2004). For this inspirational message research, a wide variety of concepts are studied, such as “we politics,” youth, hope, change, and mentions of the future.

Study 1

There are two ways to study the influence of leadership on youth turnout, one being how the individual assesses the qualities of an aspiring candidate for the presidency and the other is based on how the leader makes the individual feel. Both of these assessments are available from the ANES questions of trait assessment and affective feelings. For this research, trait assessment of both Democratic and Republican candidates as “inspiring” is assessed by the choice of an answer: extremely well, quite well, not to well, or not well at all. Another way to study the power of inspirational leaders is to assess how they make individuals (who may become followers) feel. Individuals in this question answer whether or not the leader makes them feel hopeful.

Two specific questions from the American National Election Study were used to analyze the effect of inspirational leaders on whether or not a young person turned out to vote. Inspiration is measured by the question: “In your opinion does the phrase inspiring describe [candidate name] extremely well, quite well, not to well, not well at all?” (ANES, 2005). Feelings of hopefulness are measured by the question: “Has [candidate name] because of the kind of person he is or because of something he has done made you feel hopeful?” (ANES, 2005). I run four different crosstabs of youth turnout and perceptions of inspirational candidates. The first crosstabs examined turnout and perceptions of the Democratic candidate, the second of the Republican candidate. The same analysis was conducted for whether or not the presidential

candidates made the respondents feel hopeful. The preliminary results suggest turnout is positively related to feelings of hopefulness and inspiration.

Feelings of hopefulness about either candidate seem to encourage voter turnout of 18-24 year olds (N=1117). Both Democratic and Republican candidates encourage youth participation when they elicit feelings of hopefulness. Democratic candidates tended to produce a stronger relationship, which is probably due to young voters a leaning towards Democratic candidates in general. However, Republican candidates also fared well when they encouraged feelings of hope.

As seen in Table 4.2 below, young people who feel that the candidate is hopeful are more likely to vote than not vote. Young people who felt that either candidate made them feel hopeful were more likely to vote (52.6%) than not (47.4%). Neither candidate eliciting feelings of hopefulness seemed to decrease the proportion of young people that would vote (28.1%) but increased proportion of those that would stay home on election day (71.9%). The hypothesis is confirmed here—the effect of feelings of hopefulness on voting is positive and significant, but simply measuring whether or not the individual votes is the first step. If the candidate is to make a real impact on the youth voter, the candidates must not only get youth to vote, but encourage the youth to vote for them.

While it may be possible for youth to vote against an inspirational leader that makes them feel hopeful, often the sense of hopefulness encourages voting for the candidate that elicits this response from youth voters. I have found in my work with youth volunteers during the 2008 election that these young people are more committed to their sense of partisanship and responsibility to work for the party than they are to be moved by emotional responses to the candidates. I often found young Republicans admitting that Obama was both inspiring and

Table 4.2 Cross-tabulations between Feelings of Hopefulness for Either Candidate and Voting of 18-24 Year Olds, 1980-2004

| Turnout | Either Candidate | | Tau-c |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| | Hopeful | Not Hopeful | |
| Voted | 52.6% (439) | 28.1% (79) | .18* |
| Did Not Vote | 47.4% (396) | 71.9% (202) | |

N=1116, *p<.01 Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

elicited feelings of hopefulness in them, but they would vote for McCain out of loyalty and common policy stances. In a way, the emotional appeals of candidates can be tempered by commitments to partisanship and policy preferences.

The next step in the research is to analyze the relationships between feelings of hopefulness and actually voting for a candidate. Based on the expansion of the original hypothesis, candidates who create hopefulness in voters will encourage these voters to turnout for them. In theory, the relationship between voting for a particular candidate is mitigated by how each candidate makes the young person feel—meaning if the outcome is voting for a Democratic candidate then we would expect the relationship with feeling hopeful for the Democratic candidate is positive and negative with the Republican candidate and vice versa. The hypothesis of voting for a candidate to feelings of hopefulness is again confirmed. The relationship between a young person feeling hopeful about the Democratic candidate and then voting for that candidate is moderately positive and significant. On the other hand, feelings of hopefulness about a Republican candidate resulted in a small negative relationship with voting for a Democratic candidate. The largest category of young people is particularly telling; with 509 participants not feeling hopeful results in them not voting for the Democratic candidate (93.2%). As a consequence, the need for young people to feel hopeful as an effect of the candidate is important for turning them out to the polls.

Table 4.3 Cross-tabulations between Feelings of Hopefulness and Voting Democratic of 18-24 Year Olds, 1980-2004

| Voting Democratic | Candidate Type | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Republican Candidate | | Democratic Candidate | |
| | Hopeful | Not Hopeful | Hopeful | Not Hopeful |
| Did Note Vote for Democratic Candidate | 88.4% (428) | 70.3% (440) | 63.7% (360) | 93.2% (509) |
| Vote for Democratic Candidate | 11.6% (56) | 29.7% (186) | 36.3% (205) | 6.8% (37) |
| Pearson's R | .22* | | .36* | |

N=1110, *p<.01, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

Table 4.4 Cross-tabulations between Feelings of Hopefulness and Voting Republican of 18-24 Year Olds, 1980-2004

| Voting Republican | Candidate Type | | | |
|--|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Republican Candidate | | Democratic Candidate | |
| | Hopeful | Not Hopeful | Hopeful | Not Hopeful |
| Did Note Vote for Republican Candidate | 67.6% (327) | 92% (576) | 89% (503) | 73.3% (400) |
| Vote for Republican Candidate | 32.4% (157) | 8% (50) | 11% (62) | 26.7% (146) |
| Pearson's R | .31* | | -.20* | |

N=1110, *p<.01, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

Voting Republican and feeling that the Republican candidate makes you feel hopeful are moderately and positively related, whereas feeling that the Democratic candidate makes you feel hopeful is slightly and negatively related to voting for the Republican candidate. These results suggest it is important for candidates of both parties to be conscious of the need to make youth feel hopeful for their candidacy, in order to not only get youth to vote, but to vote for them.

Measuring how the candidate makes youth feel hopeful focuses on the consequence of the candidate's ability to inspire. However, another way to assess candidate ability is to directly measure the voters' perceptions of the candidate as an inspirational leader. To do so, I use the question from the ANES that asks participants to assess whether inspiring describes the

candidate extremely well, quite well, not to well, or not well at all. Based on these assessments, we can determine whether the individual feels that the candidate is inspirational and where they place a candidate on an ordinal scale.

An interesting twist in the data was the different effects that Democratic and Republican candidates individually had on youth turnout. While both candidates had a positive relationship between voter assessments of inspiring and turnout, the results were small and did not reach levels of statistical significance. Again, the relationship between voting and inspirational leaders is different from expected and further analysis is needed to determine whether or not inspiring affects voting in general or voting for a candidate.

The major difference for both candidate assessments as inspiring occurs when young people believe inspiring describes the candidate extremely well. For both Republicans and Democrats, more young people are in the non-voting category (62.7%) when they do not think

Table 4.5 Cross Tabulation between Either Candidate Trait Assessment of Inspiring and Voting of Youth 18-24 Years Old, 1980-2004

| Turnout | Either Candidate | | Tau-c |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|-------|
| | Inspiring | Not Inspiring | |
| Voted | 45.8% (298) | 37.3% (91) | .07* |
| Did Not Vote | 54.2% (352) | 62.7% (153) | |

N=860 for rating of Republican candidates and N=845 for rating of Democratic Candidates, * indicates $p < .05$
Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

that inspiring describes the leader either extremely well or quite well than the voting category (37.3%). But more young people are likely to vote (45.8%) when they think either candidate is inspiring than not (37.3%). The relationship is extremely small but statistically significant ($p = .02$). Relationships must now be assessed between the specific vote for a candidate and the assessment of either candidate as inspiring.

For Democratic candidates, young voters' assessment of inspiring does have a small positive relationship, that is statistically significant, with youth voting Democratic (Tau-c=.23). The data for Democratic voting is particularly telling and seems to confirm the argument that youth nonvoters are likely to be interested in and inspired by Democratic candidates. Fewer young people, however, seem to vote Democratic than I originally thought and what the

Table 4.6 Cross Tabulation between Candidate Trait Assessment of Inspiring and Voting Democratic of Youth 18-24 Years Old, 1980-2004

| Turnout | Candidate Type | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Republican Candidate | | | |
| | Extremely Well | Quite Well | Not too Well | Not Well at All |
| Did Not Vote for Democratic Candidate | 94.1% (95) | 86% (259) | 75.1% (251) | 78.1% (118) |
| Voted for Democratic Candidate | 5.9% (6) | 14% (42) | 24.9% (83) | 21.9% (33) |
| Tau-c | -.12* | | | |
| | Democratic Candidate | | | |
| Did Not Vote for Democratic Candidate | 60.8% (59) | 74.4% (247) | 89.5% (291) | 94.8% (128) |
| Voted for Democratic Candidate | 39.2% (38) | 25.6% (85) | 10.5% (34) | 5.2% (7) |
| Tau-c | .23* | | | |

N=853 for Republican Candidates, N=839 for Democratic Candidates, *p<.01, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

assumption in mass media often is. Even though they find the candidates to be inspiring, young people still are less likely to vote Democratic, even though the relationship is positive. There is also a statistically significant negative relationship between thinking Republican candidates are inspiring and voting Democratic (Tau-c=-.12, p<.01), which makes sense because if you think the Republican candidate is inspiring you are more likely to vote for a Republican than for the Democratic option.

When looking at the data for voting Republican, similar patterns arise. Young people who think Republican candidates are extremely inspiring are more likely to be voting for them

(40.6%) than those who think inspiring does not describe the candidate well at all (4%), and those who think the Democratic candidate is inspiring are less likely to vote for the Republican candidate (8.2%) than those who think inspiring does not describe the candidate well at all (22.2%). While both relationships are statistically significant, they are still small suggesting

Table 4.7 Cross Tabulation between Candidate Trait Assessment of Inspiring and Voting Republican of Youth 18-24 Years Old, 1980-2004

| Turnout | Candidate Type | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Republican Candidate | | | |
| | Extremely Well | Quite Well | Not too Well | Not Well at All |
| Did Not Vote for Republican Candidate | 59.4% (60) | 75.7% (228) | 86.5% (289) | 96% (145) |
| Voted for Republican Candidate | 40.6% (41) | 24.3% (73) | 13.5% (45) | 4% (6) |
| Tau-c | .23* | | | |
| | Democratic Candidate | | | |
| Did Not Vote for Republican Candidate | 91.8% (89) | 88.3% (293) | 72.9% (237) | 77.8% (105) |
| Voted for Republican Candidate | 8.2% (8) | 11.7% (39) | 27.1% (88) | 22.2% (30) |
| Tau-c | -.14* | | | |

N=853 for Republican Candidates, N=839 for Democratic Candidates, *p<.01, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

other variables may be important to assessing influences to voting for candidates. Voting in general is affected by feelings of hopefulness that candidates elicit from potential voters rather than thinking the candidates are inspiring. As the hypothesis suggested, young people are more likely to vote for a candidate if they the candidate makes them feel hopeful. All in all, the data suggest there are clear relationships between assessments of candidate traits and how candidates make young people feel.

Study 2

By inspirational leader, I mean someone who arouses emotion and attachment, encourages others to become active, creates a new politics, and instills hope. Charisma is a trait

that creates a desire to be around the person, draws people to the person, and makes an emotional connection with others. Though inspirational leaders are charismatic, there is another element to them—encouraging activity in others.

An inspirational leader is a type of charismatic leader, one who promises new politics, engages voters, especially those who were previously disengaged and new voters, inspires others to act, discusses hope, makes universal appeals, and supports inclusive politics (anyone can join as long as he or she believes). Though all ages are drawn to an inspirational leader, youth are especially drawn because they are less likely to be skeptical and more likely to believe in change. Inspirational leaders have an effect on young people, who are discovering their own politics because these leaders promise something new. As young people are developing their political identity, inspirational leaders ask young people to focus not on themselves with “me politics,” but instead encourage a “we politics” that asks what we can do to create change. Inspirational leaders utilize togetherness as a force of political change, which encourages others to act.

In an attempt to study the distinctions between inspirational leaders and other types of leaders, I analyze presidential candidate speeches at the national conventions for both parties from 1972 to 2008. To study inspiration and youth turnout, I analyze the content of speeches by all candidates, and look at national turnout data from the Census Bureau¹ to evaluate this hypothesis. The focus on these candidates for comparison is to be consistent through time and look at years when youth voting is on the rise. The choice of speech analysis is an objective observation of leader appeals such as hope, we politics, connection with youth and change, as I argue an inspirational leader will appeal to emotion using verbs that are about we politics (much more frequent use of third person references), discuss youth, and promote a “new politics”.

¹ Source: Table A-9: Reported Voting Rates in Presidential Election Years, by Selected Characteristics: November 1964-2008.

The choice of nomination speeches is based on the fact that these speeches are the culmination of a campaign and if a candidate is inspiring this is the moment to show how inspiring they can be to the nation as a whole not just a single targeted speech. More Americans watch the national convention nomination speeches than many other speeches during the campaign. To be able to compare leaders through time a common ground needed to be assessed. While the specific impact of a speech on an individual cannot be measured, this measure of inspirational candidates' language does play a role in encouraging young people to vote.

Methods

Each one of the twenty speeches was entered into Altas.ti version 5.2 for analysis and word counts. All of the speeches were retrieved from the American Presidency Project² and were adapted for analysis. Only the words of the presidential nominee were included even though some speeches included audience cheers and feedback sequences between candidates and the audience. Each speech was placed in a word file and copied as primary documents to the Hermetic Unit (individual unit of word analysis) and included author's name, a measure of time (year) and indicator of party.

Word counts were included for each of five areas: We politics, hope, change, youth, and future. We politics analysis included the words we, our, together; all of which suggest people coming together to work on politics. Word counts of hope included hope, hoping, and hopes, but excluded hopelessness and hopeless due to the differences in connotation. To analyze change, only the single word was included in the analysis, while there were instances of changes and changing, it was not clear whether or not the candidate was discussing the concept of change in particular or simply discussing the changing world. Discussions of youth included young, youth, and youngsters, but excluded younger and youngest since these distinctions generally were

² Location of all speeches: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/nomination.php>.

talking about siblings and not actually discussions of young people. Lastly, future was coded with future and its plural form. The “word chuncher” output was performed, and counts are included in the following table 4.8.

Results

The following analysis includes both scatter plots³ of the number of mentions of each of the context words and overall youth turnout. In addition, correlations were created to analyze the relationship between word counts of key terms and youth turnout overall.

An interesting outcome of the data analysis is the number of “we politics” mentions; candidates across partisan lines in an attempt to connect with the American public are likely to mention we, our, and together. The three speeches of unusually high number of we politics included Clinton’s 1996 speech and the two speeches by Bush and Kerry in 2004, after September 11th. Change tends to be skewed towards more mentions by Republicans rather than Democrats, whereas mentions of the future are more represented by Democrats. Speeches including mentions of the youth were predominately Democratic candidates.

Each inspirational rhetoric category was analyzed for bivariate correlation and significance. In order to control for speech length, each inspirational rhetoric category was divided by the total number of words in each speech to acquire a specific percentage of inspirational rhetoric used by each candidate. Some surprising results emerged: “We politics” is negatively related to youth turnout, but was not a significant indicator of turnout. Change also turned out not to be significant but was a positive relationship between the percentage of the speech that mentioned change and the percentage of youth turnout. Mentions of hopes, hope, and hopeful also turned out not to be a significant correlate of voting not did mentions about the future. Even the relationship between the mentions of youth and youth turnout was negative

³ Please see appendices for scatter plots.

Table 4.8 Presidential Nominee Speech Word Count Percentage by Total Sentences at National Conventions 1972-2008

| Candidate Name | Party | Change | Future | Hope | We Politics | Youth | Total Words | Total Sentences | Time | Youth Turnout |
|----------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------------|------|---------------|
| McGovern | Dem | 2% (2) | 0% (0) | 2% (2) | 70% (76) | 2% (2) | 2600 | 108 | 1972 | 49.6% |
| Nixon | Rep | 2% (5) | 2% (5) | 2% (4) | 80% (166) | 1% (2) | 4348 | 207 | 1972 | 49.6% |
| Carter | Dem | 1% (2) | 1% (2) | 1% (2) | 91% (128) | 3% (4) | 2932 | 140 | 1976 | 42.2% |
| Ford | Rep | 2% (3) | 2% (3) | 0% (0) | 55% (97) | 1% (1) | 2895 | 176 | 1976 | 42.2% |
| Carter | Dem | 1% (2) | 9% (26) | 2% (5) | 39% (107) | 1% (3) | 4655 | 274 | 1980 | 39.9% |
| Reagan | Rep | 0% (1) | 2% (4) | 1% (3) | 82% (167) | 0% (1) | 4640 | 204 | 1980 | 39.9% |
| Mondale | Dem | 1% (2) | 9% (17) | 1% (1) | 44% (81) | 2% (3) | 2418 | 184 | 1984 | 40.8% |
| Reagan | Rep | 1% (4) | 4% (13) | 2% (7) | 56% (164) | 2% (5) | 5061 | 292 | 1984 | 40.8% |
| Dukakis | Dem | 0% (0) | 6% (7) | 3% (3) | 85% (102) | 8% (9) | 3194 | 120 | 1988 | 36.2% |
| HWBush | Rep | 4% (11) | 1% (3) | 1% (4) | 36% (106) | 2% (6) | 4139 | 298 | 1988 | 36.2% |
| Clinton | Dem | 3% (7) | 3% (7) | 4% (10) | 51% (142) | 1% (4) | 4436 | 280 | 1992 | 42.8% |
| HWBush | Rep | 4% (13) | 1% (3) | 0% (1) | 33% (109) | 1% (4) | 4872 | 328 | 1992 | 42.8% |
| Clinton | Dem | 1% (3) | 3% (10) | 2% (6) | 83% (291) | 3% (12) | 6994 | 352 | 1996 | 32.4% |
| Dole | Rep | 0% (0) | 1% (3) | 1% (2) | 29% (96) | 1% (4) | 5771 | 333 | 1996 | 32.4% |
| Gore | Dem | 2% (6) | 4% (11) | 1% (4) | 47% (146) | 1% (2) | 5487 | 313 | 2000 | 32.3% |
| WBush | Rep | 1% (3) | 0% (0) | 2% (6) | 49% (144) | 2% (5) | 4118 | 296 | 2000 | 32.3% |
| Kerry | Dem | 1% (2) | 2% (6) | 1% (4) | 64% (206) | 3% (10) | 5166 | 321 | 2004 | 41.9% |
| WBush | Rep | 5% (15) | 3% (9) | 5% (14) | 96% (266) | 1% (4) | 5021 | 277 | 2004 | 41.9% |
| Obama | Dem | 7% (15) | 3% (7) | 2% (5) | 61% (137) | 4% (8) | 4651 | 226 | 2008 | 44.3% |
| McCain | Rep | 3% (9) | 1% (4) | 0% (0) | 37% (105) | 0% (0) | 3971 | 287 | 2008 | 44.3% |

N=20, Source of all speeches: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/nomination.php>, Youth Turnout Data Retrieved from Census Bureau Table A-9: Reported Voting Rates in Presidential Election Years, by Selected Characteristics: November 1964-2008.

and not significant.

Though the bivariate correlations of the inspirational rhetoric were not significant, perhaps there are other factors that may account for youth turnout. Time may be an intervening variable that would suggest increases in certain years, such as the first year 18-21 year olds gained the right to vote or a year with an inspirational leader. Incumbents may also depress turnout of young people who might be more excited to vote when there is a more open election. Multiple regression analysis was used to account for the intervening variables of time and presence of an incumbent.

Table 4.9 Correlation Coefficients of Inspirational Rhetoric Percentage of Total Sentences in Speech by 18-24 Year Old Turnout

| Inspirational Rhetoric | Correlation with Youth Vote Percentage | Significance |
|------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Change | .39 | .09 |
| Future | -.07 | .79 |
| Hope | .07 | .77 |
| We Politics | .23 | .34 |
| Youth | -.19 | .44 |
| Total Inspirational Rhetoric | .22 | .34 |

N=20, Source of all speeches: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/nomination.php>, Youth Turnout Data Retrieved from Census Bureau Table A-9: Reported Voting Rates in Presidential Election Years, by Selected Characteristics: November 1964-2008.

Regression analysis does suggest some significant relationships between youth turnout and the indicator variables. The control variable of time was negatively related to youth turnout suggesting not only that time mattered, but that years when youth voting was at its highest were closer to 1972. Mentions of change increased youth turnout, whereas all of the other measures of inspirational rhetoric terms were not significant. This analysis suggests there is much room for improving the theory of a relationship between what candidates say in their nomination speeches and turnout of young people ages 18-24.

Table 4.10 Unstandardized Coefficients for Aggregate Youth Turnout by Year and Percentage of Mentions of Inspirational Rhetoric by Total Sentences of Presidential Candidates, 1972-2008

| <u>Independent Variable</u> | <u>B</u> | <u>t-value</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Year | -0.24 (0.11) | -2.16* |
| Incumbent | -1.22 (2.45) | -.50 |
| Change | 1.92 (.72) | 2.67* |
| Future | 0.14 (0.46) | .30 |
| Hope | -0.66 (1.19) | -.56 |
| We Politics | 0.07 (0.07) | .97 |
| Youth | -0.54 (0.80) | -.67 |
| Constant | 506.68 (219.17) | 2.31* |
| Model R ² =.51 | | Model Adjusted R ² =.23 |

N=20, *p<.05 Source of all speeches: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/nomination.php>, Youth Turnout Data Retrieved from Census Bureau Table A-9: Reported Voting Rates in Presidential Election Years, by Selected Characteristics: November 1964-2008. Standard errors are in parentheses. Dependent variable is 18-24 year old turnout in each election year, which varies. Example of year coding=1972. Incumbent coded as candidate incumbent=1, non-incumbent=0. All Inspirational rhetoric variables (Change, Future, Hope, We Politics, and Youth) are coded as percents within sentences, example Clinton's 1996 number of mentions of We Politics=291/Total sentence count=352 yields 83%, which is coded as 83.

Conclusions

While many of the variables did not prove to be significant, there are things to learn from these analyses. When it comes to youth turnout, youth are affected by other appeals than what is presented at the nominating convention. Candidates may appeal to young people with other strategies such as peer-to-peer contact, contact from the campaign and other mediums rather than the acceptance speech at a national convention.

New directions for this data may be differences between candidates percentage of youth voting for them in the general elections. Disparities between candidates rather than overall youth vote counts may be a more accurate predictor of appeal and inspiration. National conventions may not affect the youth vote if youth do not watch it. An analysis of a specific campaign and

comparison between candidates' speeches in one election may be a more accurate predictor of youth turnout.

Other than mentions of change, the data do not suggest a relationship between the language of candidate nomination acceptance speeches, presidential candidates may appeal to youth in other ways-whether creating Youtube videos, playing the saxophone on national television, or appearing on Saturday Night Live. The party or campaign may focus more on appeals to youth rather than the presidential candidate in this single appearance since the candidate has many different constituencies to appeal to on this single night.

Candidate mentions of "change" have a significant relationship with youth turnout, which does explain some of the reason why Obama's campaign strategy including change worked so well. Youth are drawn to making a difference and making a name for themselves in the political world, part of the process of youth development may include making the world anew. To figure out who they are politically, youth need to distinguish their beliefs from those of their older counterparts. The mention of change in a campaign may signal to the electorate and youth in particular that they can be involved in a movement for transformation.

The year also plays a role in youth turnout. Since 1972, turnout of youth in presidential elections has declined, but with a few moments of increased participation. Only time will tell whether the trend of moments of participation or overall rise in electoral participation of youth after 2008. The years in which youth participation was above forty percent were years where candidates seemed to pay more attention to youth and pursue them as voters. The first election when 18-20 year olds received the right to vote, participation of 18-24 year olds rose. In 1992, Clinton went on late night and talk shows in an attempt to talk directly to the public and to pursue youth voters in areas where they were comfortable with. Obama, in 2008, made an effort

to pursue youth voters and made direct contact with youth in a variety of mediums with Youtube, texting, e-mailing, and social networking sites. These particular years included both political candidates and political moments create youth engagement in politics.

In the end, this analysis suggests a less direct relationship between presidential candidate speeches and their effects on youth turnout. However, appeals to change are significant. Studying candidate speeches may not be the best way to measure whether or not people perceive a candidate to be inspirational. The influence of inspirational candidates happens not necessarily in the speeches that they give but the relationship that they create with their followers. The relationship between young people and inspirational candidates thrives on the hope that the candidate instills in individuals—hope for the future, hope for the new, hope for discovering their own political identity. In conclusion, these data suggest that the relationship between candidate speeches and youth turnout are not as simple as they first appear.

Based on these two studies, inspirational leadership does have a relationship to youth voting in that these inspirational leaders encourage electoral participation. The warnings of theorists on leader-follower relations should be heeded, leaders must allow their followers to think, act, and be themselves. In Popper's terms, leaders should have a developmental relationship with their followers where they encourage the identity development, self-reflection, and positive actions of their followers. Leaders should be role models for youth who are continuing to develop their own identity, but not constrain that development to such a point where youth followers become exact replicas of their inspiring leader. A balance needs to be struck on the responsibility of a leader to encourage electoral participation and identity development of youth, while still allowing young people to find their own identity. Inspirational

leaders indirectly encourage participation since the very presence of the leader as an identity role model for young people to find their own personal political narrative.

Chapter 5

Political Independence of Youth

The connection of young Independents to youth voting behavior is that Independents as a whole are less likely to vote than are partisans. Young people are also more likely to identify as Independents, which would suggest that one explanation for a lack of youth turnout is due to the higher numbers of Independents among youth who are less likely to vote. I argue there are two types of Independents—developed and default. Developed Independents have chosen to be Independent because they have gone through the identity development process and have actively decided that they identify as Independent. On the other hand, default Independents identify as Independent because they know little about the other options and feel the need to choose something to identify with. In a way, default Independents are not honest with themselves and others that they do not know who they are politically. As a consequence, default Independents have a difficult time making a choice about which party to affiliate with or to make the choice to choose to be Independent. The way to distinguish between the active choice of Independence versus Independence by default of not knowing who to identify with is through identity development. To better understand what encourages young people to vote, I distinguish between developed Independents who are more likely to vote because they know who they are politically and default Independents who are less likely to vote because they have lower levels of identity development.

The number of Independents who choose not to affiliate with either party brings into question what role partisan identification plays as part of an identity. These Independent young people may have fully developed a political identity that is not a partisan one. Thinking back to the other aspects of identity development discussed in previous chapters, partisanship is one

component to identify a person's political identity development. However, there are alternate pathways to higher levels of development and an Independent may be a person who has fully developed his or her identity. These Independents may lack a level of coherence within the environment meaning though people know who they are politically, their identity is based on a lack of identification with a political party. On a methodological point, an unavoidable question is how we measure when one has achieved a developed political identity without developing a partisan identity. Can identity be measured in other ways that allow for people who are Independents? Can development be measured in another way to account for a lack of affiliation and commitment to a party? How does one decide when one has become fully developed rather than just somewhat developed? Due to the limitations of the cross-sectional data I have available, it seems that one would need to distinguish between fully developed and somewhat developed identities based on partisan affiliation, but how does one then account for the third of the population who claims to be Independent? What identification as an Independent may mean for one person may not mean the same for another. For example one person may identify as an Independent because she is disgusted with the two political parties whereas another person may identify as an Independent because his views are not represented by either party.

This section of the dissertation analyzes the high numbers of young people who claim to be Independent and poses a theory about identity and Independence. Beginning with the meaning of political Independence, I move through the reasons as to why young people may claim to be Independent and then evaluate Independence based on their level of identity development. I use ANES data, a Regional Poll, and focus groups to identify youth who say that they are Independent and analyze how Independence might affect youth turnout.

The connection of political Independence to political identity development is in how there are, as I argue, two different types of Independents—those who have higher levels of development and actively choose not to affiliate with the political parties available in the American system and those who claim Independence out of a lack of self knowledge for why they choose to be Independent. I distinguish between these two identity states of Independence as developed Independents and default Independents. A new way to study how and why young people claim to be politically Independent is through their level of development. Distinguishing between these different types of Independents may also explain why some young people choose to be partisans later in life and others remain Independent identifiers. To better understand youth and their choice of Independence I analyze young people who identify as Independents and look to see how both identity development and inspirational leaders work to turn out these young people. The focus continues to be on why youth vote and in doing so disentangling identity development of young Independents will shed more light on which young Independents vote and which do not.

Since the 1950s, the shifting of the American public away from parties seemed to be concentrated in youth no longer identifying with one of the two political parties (Kaufmann, Petrocik and Shaw, 2008). Even when young people did identify as partisan their commitment to partisanship was not as strong as their older counterparts (Miller, 2001). Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes argue that young adults have voted too few times to have “a sure indication of party allegiance” (1960, 126). From their national sample surveys between 1952 and 1957, young people (21-24 year olds) were the largest group to say that they were Independents; roughly 31% of 21-24 year olds claimed to be Independent versus only 15% of individuals over 70 (1960, 162). Miller and Shanks find similar levels of independence when comparing

generations. Pre-New Dealers, whose first election was either before 1920 or from 1920-1928, were more likely to identify with parties than their Post-new Deal counterparts, who came of voting age between 1968 and 1988 (1996). Thirty-five more incidents of claiming to be Independent occurred in the younger generations rather than the older (1996, 96). Explanations for the shift away from parties were based on generational changes such as higher education rates, breakdowns in social institutions such as families, and major scandals in politics that turned young people off of politics altogether (Miller and Shanks, 1996; Bennett and Rademacher, 1997; Dennis and Owen, 1997). Still other explanations (Wattenberg, 1996, 2008; Fitzgerald, 2003) deal directly with the parties as institutions that shifted their interactions with the public away from personalized contact with the public via door-to-door visits to impersonalized contact through mass media. For the parties, the interaction with the American public was and continues to be largely mediated through political consultants who construct the imagery of politics. At the same time, young people began to be more cynical about and distrustful of politics, politicians, and media. The explanations for larger shifts of young people towards claiming to be politically Independent are focused on reactions to the political environment rather than the individual. I argue that the change is happening in how young people identify themselves and what they perceive political independence to mean.

Political independence intersects with levels of identity development during the development process when individuals begin to categorize themselves within the political environment. Some individuals in the somewhat developed status take an identity from their parents or identity models rather than figuring out their identity on their own. In the somewhat developed status, it is easier to adopt an identity without the difficult questioning and self-doubt about their political identity. Somewhat developed individuals have a superficial affiliation with

party in that they take on an affiliation, usually what their family members were, without going through the steps to become their own political person—that is, judging the opinions of others and self-questioning. If adopting a political identity is so easy, then adopting a partisan identity should raise substantial questions about socialization of partisanship. Consider the political socialization literature that suggests even children claim partisanship without knowing what the parties are (Beck, 1977; Campbell et al, 1960). Does a person need to know anything about politics before he or she claims to be a partisan?

In the context of identity development, to ascertain different levels of development two pieces of identity are evaluated: evidence of questioning and evidence of commitment (Marcia, 1991). This evaluation is what makes partisanship difficult to measure; are people saying that they are partisan sufficient enough to be convinced that these individuals have a commitment? Or can an individual have a political identity that is Independent and by the same token mean that he or she refuses to commit to parties or the partisan system? In the literature of identity development the refusal to commit is often categorized as a characteristic of diffusion; however, there are many different individuals who are Independents who have commitments to their beliefs, policy preferences, and know their political identity. For both the voting behavior literature and the identity development literature the presence of political Independence is a challenge to disentangle.

Since the 1960s, young people have consistently been identifying as Independent rather than partisan, and I believe they are doing so for two reasons—they do not want to be affiliated with the political parties out of disgust or, due to their lack of knowledge about the parties, they do not want to claim they are partisan. One political independent is developed of her choice to identify as such and the other is doing so as a default setting. Both conceptualizations of young

political Independents place at the center how the individual understands and constructs his political identity.

Political Independence: Developed or Default Identity

I define two different categories of Independents, those who are highly developed in their beliefs and world view are developed Independents who know their identity and choose not to affiliate with either of the two political parties; and those who choose to be Independent because they have not yet chosen an identity and do not know who to affiliate with are default Independents. Erikson argues there is a social and historical context that influences the development of identity and that it is important to take into account political parties as they help young people develop who their political identity (1994).

Serpe suggests for the relationship between salience and commitment, “the greater possibilities for personal choices. . . the stronger the relationship between commitment and identity salience” (1987, 46), meaning the more choices there are, the more likely there is commitment to an identity and the more important that identity is. However this is a problem for a political identity that is limited by the political environment based on the number of alternatives (Schwartz, 2001). Limitations in choice may decrease the salience of a political identity in the American context where politics is limited to two political parties and discussions of politics are limited by the availability of alternative viewpoints. Where political scientists might say that too much choice leads voters to increased information costs, psychologists argue that choice allows for more self discovery and a more solid commitment to a final choice. I argue that while there may be a longer time period of uncertainty as a person tries to find out his or her political commitments, more choice is good for political identity because a person can feel that their thoughts are represented by the system options.

Political party changes may be understood as a source for shifts in the political identity development of youth (especially partisanship) and focus on candidate-centered politics, rather than party-oriented politics. The focus for this research is to explain the differences in young Independents and how that affects their voting decision. In his recent look at forty years of political party literature, Fiorina notes partisanship in the electorate is weakening even when party organizations and partisans in government were strengthening (2002). For youth voters, the evidence suggests Independents are less likely to vote, but fails to explain the relationship between developed Independents and default claims of independence. Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes's original work in *The American Voter* suggested the importance partisanship has on turnout. However, work in the 1970s, such as Abramson (1976, 1979), shows declines in partisanship are severe to the point that parties no longer seem to be present in the American mind, which was especially true for the youngest voters. Bartels, however, argues for the resurgence of parties in the 1990s and explains that declines in partisanship in 1964 and 1972 were because voters "abandoned their party's unpopular presidential candidate" (2000, 40). Bartels explains the increase in partisanship as partially due to youth's positive reaction to "the political developments of the past two decades" (42). Rosenstone and Hansen suggest the decline in turnout is greatly due to the expansion of the electorate (especially to youth voters) along with declines in partisan identification (2002). Patterson notes "the rise of the independent voter has contributed to the fall in election turnout and interest" (2003, 44).

For youth, independence is sometimes claimed due to lack of information or lack of experience with the political system, but the claims of independence by youth can better be explained as a function of development. Youth who are conscious of their political choices are more likely to be developed. If they are Independents, they are evaluating the political parties

once they have a developed identity and do not feel as though that identity is represented by the political parties. These developed Independents have coherence within themselves, but find little coherence of their identity with options available in the political environment. Those who are less well developed are default Independents and are less likely to vote. Developed Independents can be characterized by high levels of political knowledge about parties and candidates, but believe neither party represents their views completely. The most important distinction between developed and default Independents is their level of identity development—developed Independents know who they are politically, have a set of political beliefs, and, as a consequence, vote. Whereas default Independents have little understanding about who they are politically, are unclear about their political beliefs and, as a consequence, fail to vote. Both sets of Independents find that the label better describes their identity than a set partisanship, but the distinction is based in how developed their identity is. I attempt to distinguish these two types of Independents with their level of identity development by looking at a dataset of youth Independents from the ANES. Many youth find being politically Independent more appealing rather than saying they are partisans because they are sick of partisan bickering in Congress and politicians who do little for them (cycle of mutual neglect, Dreger 1999).

What is Political Independence?

Political Independence can mean many different things to many different people, but there are common understandings of what political independence means today. Two major forms of independence include being an independent thinker or not affiliating with either political party (Keith et al, 1992). To be a political Independent today may be a reaction to partisan politics in Washington or the lack of a need for party to inform one's decisions on political issues and cues for whom to vote. Political independence is not a new phenomenon of

the youngest generation, but it does seem to be the case that many young people when they first enter the electorate claim to be Independents. There is no one explanation as to why young people are more likely to claim they are Independent than their older counterparts, but the common explanation is that young people have not yet developed the attachment to party that older voters have (Campbell et al, 1960, 126). This explanation suggests that as youth grow older they create ties to one of the parties and continue to vote for their party as diehard fans (not so different from supporting a sports team through the good and the bad seasons). I argue that political identity development can help shed some light on why young people claim to be Independent, but also explain why differences in voting patterns of Independents is largely based on whether they fall on the identity development continuum.

The socialization literature would seem to contradict this assessment by Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes that young people lack a partisan identity. Much of the socialization literature finds that young people become socialized to support one party or another. Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1968) found that young people actually become influenced by their families to vote for a particular party. Two examples they bring out are

“two *first voters* who took over the family pattern at the very beginning of their voting careers: “Probably will vote Democratic because my grandfather will skin me if I don’t” and “If I register I will vote Republican because my family are all Republicans so therefore I would have to vote that way” (142)

These two first time voters are heavily influenced by their family with little questioning of what they wanted from a party and a candidate. They knew who they were politically without much questioning on their own or of their families—on the political identity scale they would rank as somewhat developed. Cues for first time voters on which policies to care about, what the candidates and parties stand for, and what they know, feel, and think about politics can be

challenging. Just as Plutzer notes, the costs for entering into the political system for first timers can be extremely high (2002). However, I argue the costs are extremely high for youth voters not because they have to figure out how the political world works, but they must be introspective about what they believe. Youth voters must come to grips with how they fit into the political system, and may have to go against family expectations. It is no wonder that politics can become easily overwhelming for young people—they have to figure out what they care about first.

Keith, Magleby, Nelson, and Orr reason that the nonpartisanship of the Independent voter is exaggerated and much of the literature on partisanship and independence failed to look at the follow-up question regarding whether or not respondents lean towards one party or whether they are pure Independents. Instead of a growing number of Independents, they argue there are a growing number of hidden partisans (1992, 4). Even those who do claim to be Independent have lower levels of interest and participation. In the nineteenth century, being an Independent meant thinking independently from what others did or thinking on one's own and being willing to express those thoughts without the fear of being ostracized by others, going against the crowd regardless of the consequences and standing up for what one believed (7). To illustrate this type of Independent, Keith, Magleby, Nelson and Orr quote Dole from 1891 "As on the playground, some do not care always to go with the crowd, or even prefer to be by themselves. Such as these, who think for themselves, and dare to stand alone, make the Independents in politics" (1992, 7). But this esteemed Independent of the nineteenth century does not seem to exist today since much of the evidence we have about Independents explains that they are not thinking about, engaging in, or interested in politics.

In their explanation of Independence and youth, Keith, Magleby, Nelson and Orr find, “Not until 1964 were people under the age of 29 significantly more likely than the entire population to be Pure Independents” (1992, 116). Cohorts who came of age in the Vietnam and Watergate scandal era were more likely as youth to be Independent than any generation before it; however, as they aged, these cohorts were more likely to be partisan. Younger generations who came of age after 1976 were not as averse to being partisan but more likely to be Independent than cohorts coming of age in 1960 (1992, 125). In addition to comparing generational difference, Keith, Magleby, Nelson and Orr evaluate the interaction of education and Independence as an explanation and discover that the growing numbers of pure Independents, Independents who do not lean towards either party, were “most common at the lower end of the educational distribution” (133). College educated young people tended to be the closet partisans who said they were Independent, but when probed answered that they leaned towards one of the two parties.

In their conclusion, Keith, Magleby, Nelson and Orr discuss the fact that the measure of partisanship and independence has not been threatened, but that scholars need to consider what different types of Independents mean and who they are. With growing cynicism towards the parties as institutions, people become less likely to outright identify with the parties. However, when probed, leaners do appear and are fundamentally different from Pure Independents in their likelihood to vote, their interest in politics, and whether they have opinions. In my explanation of a political identity development and political Independents, Keith, Magleby, Nelson and Orr’s work compliments the developed Independents who would rather not identify with the political parties, and default Independents are the Pure Independents who seem to have little knowledge about the political system or their place in it.

If parties are considered social institutions where belonging matters, not belonging can ostracize young people who feel that the parties do not represent them. Schwartz maintains that “social institutions are most likely to attend to those individuals whose personality attributes reflect the characteristics and beliefs of social institutions,” while others risk being alienated (2001, 35). Strong partisans often feel at home in parties and believe that the parties represent their interests, beliefs about government, and fulfill the need to belong. However, being an Independent who is alone in the world intellectually battling the parties by themselves is a myth; now more young people are frustrated with political parties as institutions and the divisive partisanship that they see in government (Wattenberg, 1996). As social institutions, parties in the electorate no longer seem to dictate how one should behave in order to belong to the political order. In American politics, parties have been weak compared to other countries where parties are not only affiliations but social connections with communities (Crotty, 2006).

Wattenberg argues that the decline of American parties is happening because “it is increasingly difficult for Americans to see the relevance of political parties in this candidate-centered age of mass media” (1996, x-xi). The shift away from partisan identities to identifying with candidates has had major consequences on how of little importance Americans view parties. Wattenberg taps into and evaluates the feelings of choosing a candidate regardless of party label, parties confusing issues rather than making them clear, and the possibility of America no longer needing political parties (16). While many Americans disagreed with the opinion that we no longer need parties, a majority (Strong Partisans 58.6%, Weak Partisans 74.2%, Independents 82.9%) did believe “the best rule in voting is to pick a candidate regardless of party label” (16). In reference to Independents, Wattenberg finds that Independent non-partisanship is as stable as partisanship (29). Identifying two types of Independents, he says there are the no preference

Independents and those who clearly state “I’m an Independent” (38). Even though political cynicism has risen along with Independence, Wattenberg concludes there is no clear relationship in the data and goes on to argue that political parties have decreased in relevance due to candidate centered politics.

Partisanship, Independence, and Voting

Since Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes’s seminal work on the American electorate, one of the major predictors of turnout is whether or not an individual affiliates with either one of the political parties (1960, 143). Partisanship provides many different things to American politics by shaping the debate around partisan views and providing cues to voters in the booth. Parties in American politics seem to make politics easier and, in a way, parties make knowledge about politics more accessible than the rigorous policy debate that happens in Congress or the infighting between each of the branches of government. But the public has grown to dislike parties for a variety of reasons ranging from disappointing wars to disappointing candidates to political gridlock as a result of the partisan infighting that seems to get little done in terms of outcomes for the public (Wattenberg, 1996). People have slowly become more cynical about political parties, especially young people who hope that change can happen during an election year and the future is open for possibilities. For a variety of reasons people are unhappy with the parties and the party system. This disappointment has reshaped the commitment to political parties as a part of a political identity. For political identity, the negative connotation of parties can affect whether or not a person chooses to commit to a political party or at least admit that he or she identifies as partisan.

The trends toward less identification with political parties tend to occur at the same time as declines in national voting patterns. Rosenstone and Hansen describe the changing nature of

partisanship from 1954 to 1992 as weakening ties of the American public to parties. During the period of 1952-1964, about a third of Americans considered themselves strong partisans, and this number dropped in the 1970s by about 9 percentage points (2002, 151). Patterson blames the increase of the Independent voter on the “fall in election turnout and interest” (2002, 44); arguing that partisanship is what turns out voters because parties help to show voters what stake they have in elections in addition to rooting for a side (2002, 46).

Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes find that young voters and new voters, who have never previously voted, enter into the electorate and do not yet have a concrete party allegiance because they have voted so few times (1960, 126). These new voters tend to react more to the political times than their older counterparts and as a consequence are more likely to drift away from and between parties (1960, 154). While there do tend to be more young people who are Independent (24% of 21-24 year olds versus 15% of those over 70; 1960, 162), Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes believe that there is a life-cycle change contending that in their youth, young people tend to lean Democratic and as they age they become more Republican (1960, 155).

Schattschneider explores the role of parties in governance and how parties sway voters to cast a ballot for them. In his historical analysis, Schattschneider explains that parties liberalized the franchise to get support from potential voters. But he shortchanges partisanship saying that “movement of voters in and out of the electorate is more important than the shift from party to party” (1942, 49). Much of what Schattschneider saw of party government was how interests were consolidated into policy or thwarted policy initiatives. In his understanding of American political parties, Schattschneider was clear about what the parties were not: “The concept of the parties as a mass association of partisans has no historical basis and has little relation to the facts

of party organization” (1942, 54). Where he makes the biggest distinction is being partisan versus being a member of a party: there is no obligation to the party and parties seem not to be in control of who its members are (1942, 56). This fundamental difference between American political parties and the parties of Europe is the open membership of American parties where all a person has to do is say that he or she is a member. This sense of belonging to a party without responsibility or obligation to it can seem somewhat superficial. Other times identifying as partisan with little knowledge about the parties, candidates, or issues also leaves one with little foundation on which to base an identity.

Belonging is a strong pull to parties who tend to fulfill a type of social identification need of the electorate. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler argue that “party identification is a genuine form of social identification” (2002, xi) and expound on Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes’s original conception of partisanship and partisans as failing to pay attention to new information. They claim partisan identification is developed from the family environment or adult socialization (2002, 6). Rather than seeing partisanship solely as an identification with parties, people tend to ask what social groups belong to which parties and into which of these social conglomerates they best fit (2002, 8). The individual is managing her self conceptions and how she conceives parties’ social groups. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler find that for young people the process of matching which groups belong to which party and where they fit into that scheme is a learning process (2002, 10). Independents, they argue, tend to find politics less engaging than partisans (2002, 46). Partisan change does happen, but only gradually. As adults, partisan changes may come from where one lives and with whom one interacts (71). Green, Palmquist, and Schickler point out some elements of a developmental process, explaining

“Although teenagers are strongly influenced by their parents’ party affinities, this imprint fades over time as young adults are exposed to other influences and develop their own views” (82).

Where Green, Palmquist, and Schickler are studying the social context of belonging, sorting out social groups of the parties, and balancing the self conception with identification, I am focused on the self conception and how the individual develops his or her own identity. While our focus is different, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler and I find that identity development is a process where youth is a turbulent period of finding oneself and then figuring out where one fits into the scheme of parties. Our biggest difference is that Green, Palmquist, and Schickler argue that young people are sorting out their social identity and the social groups associated with parties, whereas I argue young people are sorting out their own identity and then choosing to affiliate with either one of the parties or not at all. With a focus on Independents in this chapter, I argue the importance of the development of their self-conception as an Independent whereas Green, Palmquist, and Schickler would say that the Independent did not see themselves as identifying with the parties’ social groupings.

The tension in this work is how partisans engage in exploration and self questioning rather than blind acceptance of an identity. It seems as though if one has a fully developed identity that one of the major characteristics is flexibility not rigidity. Rigid partisans would seem to have the common characteristics of identity foreclosures in that they fail to see alternative points of view, they are emotionally and intellectually tied to their partisanship with no room for change, and they do not take in contradictory information that would perhaps make them question their identity (Zaller, 1992). However, Green, Palmquist, and Schickler in their work with partisan social identities argue that partisans are not as rigid as once thought, but that these partisans do take in contradictory information that then reshapes their behavior (2002). But

these are the somewhat developed individuals in my measure; the rigid partisans for my purposes are more likely to vote than the malleable explorers who are interested in politics and are trying to find where they fit in.

Engaging in the discussion of partisan identification and voting, Bartels maintains that partisan loyalties have rebounded since the declines of 1960s and 1970s (2000, 35). This rebounding has been due to a resurgence of partisanship in “younger and better educated voters” who perhaps were not around during the disappointing and unpopular candidates in 1964 and 1972 (40). The shifts in American parties have not come from major demographic changes, but from changes in the national political environment such as whites in the South sorting themselves into the Republican party and African Americans in the South sorting into the Democratic party. Bartels finds people under 40 to be less partisan between 1952 and 1984 but not thereafter (41). There is resurgence after 1984 for youth voters to vote as partisans in congressional elections. However, for the purposes of this work I limit young voters to 18-24 and focus on presidential elections. Lumping all individuals under 40 into one youth category is deceiving since there are major shifts towards commitment to partisanship after age 25. To better understand the youngest voters in the population, I argue we must study their levels of partisanship at the crucial moment of identity development in young adulthood.

In a retrospective look at parties and their relation to the American public over the past 40 years, Fiorina contends that major changes in the political environment have reshaped partisanship and disagrees with Bartels that partisanship is on the rise. Looking at the trends throughout the twentieth century, Fiorina evaluates the changes in parties as organizations and major restructuring of government as a result of progressives. Major revisions in civil service and welfare benefits took the power out of the hands of the parties and placed them into the

hands of government officials. Changes in elections to direct primaries also took power away from partisan leadership and placed more power in the hands of the public; while we still see that the party leadership does continue to play a role in national primaries for the presidency such as the Clinton/Obama contest, the public has a voice. Parties as organizations were attempting to compensate in the 1980s for major declines of partisanship in the electorate (2002, 104). Fiorina explains that party identification today now needs to account for candidate positions, which can be different from the party line (104). Parties today are different organizations than classic parties and work to house the most advanced campaigning strategies (103) rather than be mass organizations of people working to get the party into government.

To Fiorina, even though the Rockefeller Republicans (socially liberal and economically conservative policy preferences) and Southern Democrats (socially conservative and economically liberal policy preferences) have aligned with their modern parties, this realignment does not mean that partisanship means more today than it did in the 1950s (107). The influence of partisan identification cannot be denied, but today there are other intervening factors including how candidates portray themselves as partisan or bipartisan, how the candidates stand on issues, and the lack of mobilization of potential voters by parties. Fiorina concludes “I see no persuasive evidence that party in the electorate is stronger today than in the 1950s” (109). While the role of parties in the electorate may be changing, partisanship does not necessarily seem to have more of an influence on the vote outcome than it did in previous times and today’s voters are more likely to be convinced by candidates to vote.

The Interaction of Parties with Political Identity

Parties provide a socio-historical context to the development of a political identity. The problem for a political identity development is the limitation within the political environment

based on the number of alternatives (Schwartz, 2001). Limitations in choice may decrease the value of a political identity in the American context where politics is limited to two political parties, or the choice of Independence. And discussions of politics are limited by the availability of alternative viewpoints making it more difficult to define one's self politically if it is outside the typical two party system, but youth of today are defying the typical partisan labels.

In early work with the declines of partisan identification, Abramson notes that there are two explanations for changes: political inexperience (life-cycle) or socialization (generational). Evaluating both explanations, Abramson utilizes data between 1952 and 1974 and finds that if we control for the length of time in the electorate, young adults have more partisan attachment than their older counterparts. At the same time, the political environment at this time was not conducive to formation of strong party loyalties. For young adults, there was a decrease in partisan identification as well as a decrease in strong identifiers. For political Independents, Abramson notes "young Independents were more likely to retain their Independence than were young partisans to retain their partisan loyalties (1976, 475). In terms of identification, Independents seem to be the most stable group. Even though Abramson concludes the generational explanation is a better understanding of the changes in young people's partisanship, he does note that the decrease in strong identifiers cannot be explained by generational changes alone. The larger consequences of this work suggest that leaders can take advantage of weak partisan ties of youth and make broad appeals to garner youth support. In addition, the political environment in which a young person grows up has an effect on his socialization and, later, identification with a political party or as an Independent.

In a later study, Abramson evaluates youth partisanship from both the life-cycle and generational perspectives. In his examination of the data, Abramson finds that the life-cycle

explanation is not correct when it comes to gains in strength of partisanship (1979, 91). Focusing specifically on the development of youth partisanship, Abramson notices the role of socialization in early development of partisanship and argues once partisan strength is established in early adulthood it generally remains stable throughout the life time (91). In his assessment of the 1970s, Abramson found that youth were much less likely to identify as partisans than their youthful counterparts of the 1950s and 60s. Noticing early declines in partisan identification Abramson's research does provide a bit of a foundation of what has been happening since the 1970s, a slow partisan decline as the youngest cohorts enter the electorate and are not as attached to parties. In his critique of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes' articulation in *The American Voter*, Abramson completely discounts the aging process (life-cycle model) as an appropriate explanation of how youth develop partisan loyalties. However, he fails to provide adequate evidence for generational or period effects. Nor, in the end, does he explain why partisanship is changing in the youngest cohorts.

The unique relationship between partisan identity and political identity is because one can have partisanship without a cohesive political identity and vice versa. Partisanship as a weaker form of identification is a surface level commitment and can be one of many aspects to a political ego identity, which has deeper structures and meanings. One can be a partisan even if one does not know who he or she is politically because he or she has simply adopted the partisanship of his parents and donned the outer shell of partisan identification without reflecting on larger questions about beliefs or policies.

Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet discuss development in terms of how an individual develops her vote choice in a complex environment of cross-pressures (1968, xxxvii). Party loyalty continues to trump the influence of political leaders in Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and

Gaudet's study; however, the many influences on political decision making can alter the final vote decision. The observation that people often vote along the same historical lines as their family is a crucial finding in their work. However, at times individuals have to reconcile other pressures from their social environment and their identities with those family pressures to make a final decision. As Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet suggest identity is more complex because people may choose to identify with the occupation and social status category that they want to be rather than what they are.

How people identify themselves matters, and their self conception can at times be more important than how social groups or their political environment tell them to think. As for partisans, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet make two important claims about how 25% of respondents agree whole-heartedly with their parties (37) and how partisans' interaction with the party is crucial to how we understand party influence. "The partisan is assured that he is right; he is told why he is right; and he is reminded that other people agree with him, always a gratification and especially during times of doubt" (88). A consequence of being a partisan is this self-assuredness that comes from belonging to a party, but Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet's work done on the 1944 election does not seem to fit parties today.

For Independents, there tend to be many cross-pressures where they see benefits from both sides of the aisle and may feel pressured to choose one even though they may disagree with other aspects of the possible options in candidates or policies. Those who are cross-pressured—for example identifying as a Democrat because of one's social status or occupation, but aspiring to higher occupational and social roles. These individuals, therefore, feel pulled in two directions with their current identity and their identity to which they aspire—and nonpartisans can feel a sense of uncertainty when it comes to making the vote decision and the decision to

vote. On the other hand, partisans are constantly reminded of their contribution and what else they can do to get their party into office, even if they do not whole-heartedly agree with everything the party stands for. For Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, identification is important in two ways: the self conception of a person about his status and how individuals eventually reconcile the cross-pressures of partisan identification to vote for a candidate.

Evidence from Partisan Identification

More recent work on the youngest generation of voters suggests identification with the parties is to the benefit of the Democrats. The Pew Center for Social Research found from 2007-2008 “58% of voters under age 30 identified or leaned toward the Democratic Party” (Keeter, Horowitz, and Tyson, 2008, 1). Since 2004, one of the biggest shifts in the electorate toward the Democratic Party occurred with an 11% advantage over Republicans. Compared to the Baby Boomers or Generation X when they were young, Generation Y is more progressive and more likely to identify with the Democratic Party. The fact that Keeter, Horowitz, and Tyson’s research at Pew only identifies Democrats and Republicans limits their ability to analyze a generation that identifies as Independent. The forced partisan categories fail to present the larger picture of dynamics within identification, and exaggerate the number of partisans.

Changes in partisan identification shifted in the 2008 race, and larger and larger portions of voters are more willing to say that they are Independent rather than identify with one party of the other. Immediately after the election, Gallup estimates included 28% identifying with Republicans, 33% with Democrats and 37% with Independents (Gallup, 2010). The percentage of individuals identifying with Independents increased by five points from the 2006 election and increased ten points from the 2004 election. The major change in both elections was less identification with the Republican Party. However, the measures for Democratic and Republican

leaners have changed very little. Since the 2004 election, there has been an even split of both party leaners at 48%, whereas the 2006 election the shift was 39% Republican leaners to 49% Democrat. In 2008, the numbers stayed pretty much the same with 40% Republican and 51% Democrat (Gallup, 2010), but it is crucial to understand with leanings that more and more individuals are not portraying themselves as party leaners. For the 2008 election, Jones notes that the Democrats have the identification advantage which has been the largest since 1983 (2009). What Jones fails to note is the growing number of individuals identifying as Independents. The high for the Democratic Party was 36% compared to the Republican 28% which leaves room for 36% of the public identifying as Independent.

Changes in the electorate are the number of young people who are less likely to identify with either party or who choose to be Independent. As the Harvard Institute for Politics Survey of Youth notes, young people are better measured with other identifiers, such as policy preferences and ideology, and are much less likely than their older counterparts to identify with a political party (2008). In 2004, Harvard's Youth Survey of Politics and Public Service notice a major change in identification stating that "Over half of all young people defy traditional left-right political labels, instead their political affiliations and typology are predicated on their level of religiosity" (Harvard Institute of Politics, 2008, 10). Young Americans today break down into traditional liberals, traditional conservatives, and those that are the centrists tend to break further down into secular centrists and religious centrists. Growing numbers of youth are not identifying with parties but secular centrists; in the 2004 poll only 23% of college students were secular centrists, whereas in 2008 they made up 42% of young Americans (Harvard Institute of Politics, 2004 and 2008).

In my analysis of Independents, I find that there are Independents who are not at the lowest levels of identity development but are all over the spectrum. The assumption that young Independents are non-voters because they are of the default identity is not necessarily true. With data from the ANES and a Regional Poll, I test my hypothesis that developed Independents are more likely to vote than their default counterparts. In addition, I address the assumption that young Independents are less likely to vote than their partisan counterparts. With my identity scale, I am distinguishing between what I call default Independents due to their lack of self knowledge and low levels of salience, and developed Independents who are knowledgeable about the political world and their own identity who are likely to vote.

Evidence from the ANES of Identity Statuses by Independence

The political identity scale from the third chapter was used again to analyze the differences between young (18-24) partisans and Independents. The scale ran from 0-12 and then the statuses were established at precise thresholds within the scale. Diffusions are between 0 and 3, Explorers between 4 and 6, somewhat developed at 7-9, and fully developed from 10-12. To account for the possibility that one can have commitments to ideas, ideology, and beliefs and not be partisan, I created this identity scale where young Independents had the possibility of being in the highest level of development (table 5.1). Data analysis suggests a large number of Independents are around the lower levels of development on the identity scale.¹ The median of level of development for pure political Independents was 5 (18.3%), strong partisans on the other hand had higher modes for Democrats 8.5 (16.1% in 8 and 9) and for Republicans 11 (19%). Independent leaners have a common mode of 6 (Democratic Leaners 17.2%, Republican leaners 15.8%). Weak partisans had a higher mode of identity development at 7. Independent youth are

¹ For ANES questions included in the political identity development scale please see appendix A.

Table 5.1 Percentages of Identifiers in Each Point of the Identity Scale

| Political Identity Scale | Strong Democrat | Weak Democrat | Independent-Democrat | Independent | Independent-Republican | Weak Republican | Strong Republican | Total |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 0 | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0.4% (1) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0.1% (1) |
| 1 | 0.8% (1) | 1.4% (4) | 2.0% (5) | 1.4% (3) | 1.1% (2) | 0.5% (1) | 0% (0) | 1.2% (16) |
| 2 | 0.8% (1) | 2.9% (8) | 2.5% (6) | 5.5% (12) | 2.7% (5) | 2.7% (5) | 0% (0) | 2.8% (37) |
| 3 | 3.4% (4) | 6.8% (19) | 4.5% (11) | 11.4% (25) | 3.3% (6) | 2.2% (4) | 1.3% (1) | 5.4% (70) |
| 4 | 3.4% (4) | 9.3% (26) | 9.4% (23) | 16.9% (37) | 13.6% (25) | 8.6% (16) | 5.1% (4) | 10.3% (135) |
| 5 | 12.7% (15) | 9.7% (27) | 9.4% (23) | 18.3% (40) | 11.4% (21) | 10.8% (20) | 13.9% (11) | 12% (157) |
| 6 | 14.4% (17) | 12.9% (36) | 17.2% (42) | 16% (35) | 15.8% (29) | 9.2% (17) | 7.6% (6) | 13.9% (182) |
| 7 | 12.7% (15) | 18.3% (51) | 16.4% (40) | 10% (22) | 14.7% (27) | 15.1% (28) | 7.6% (6) | 14.4% (189) |
| 8 | 16.1% (19) | 14% (39) | 13.9% (34) | 7.3% (16) | 10.9% (20) | 16.2% (30) | 11.4% (9) | 12.8% (167) |
| 9 | 16.1% (19) | 12.9% (36) | 9% (22) | 5% (11) | 13% (24) | 16.2% (30) | 15.2% (12) | 11.8% (154) |
| 10 | 7.6% (9) | 4.3% (12) | 8.6% (21) | 5% (11) | 7.1% (13) | 10.8% (20) | 8.9% (7) | 7.1% (93) |
| 11 | 9.3% (11) | 4.7% (13) | 4.5% (11) | 3.2% (7) | 4.3% (8) | 7% (13) | 19% (15) | 6% (78) |
| 12 | 2.5% (3) | 2.9% (8) | 2% (5) | 0% (0) | 2.2% (4) | 0.5% (1) | 10.1% (8) | 2.2% (29) |
| Total | 118 | 279 | 244 | 219 | 184 | 185 | 79 | 1308 |

N=1308, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

more likely to be in the two lowest levels of development in the scale and less likely to be in the highest levels of development than are partisans.

There is evidence that an Independent can achieve the highest level within the Identity scale if the prerequisite of being partisan to have a higher development of identity is removed. An interesting element of the revised scale is the higher number of Independents than partisans in the second to highest category of development. While partisans do dominate the highest category of development within the scale, Independents are not all unconscious about who they are and about the political world. With this knowledge, we begin to see the variety of young Independents that exist. Overall there is a nice spread of Independents throughout the Identity scale, suggesting there are many different levels of development with Independents and not just the extremes of default and developed Independents.

When the identity development scale (used in Table 5.1) is broken down into the four distinct statuses, the patterns between partisans and Independents become starker (Table 5.2). Independents tend to be diffusions more than any other category (32.3%), whereas strong Democrats tend to be somewhat developed (11.5%) and strong Republicans are more frequently fully developed (15%). Diffusions are most likely to be Pure Independents, which suggests some validity to the assertion that many Independents have little knowledge about the world and about themselves. There is clear evidence of a small population of fully developed Independents (9%). Weak partisans often fall into the identity status of somewhat developed for weak Republicans 17.3% and either somewhat developed (24.7%) or diffusion (25%) for weak Democrats. Some variation in the Independent leaners exists, where Independent Democrats are almost evenly split between all four statuses and Independent-Republicans are more likely to be explorers (15.8%). Overall, Independents again are more likely than other partisan identifiers to fall into the two lowest levels of identity development.

Table 5.2 Percentage of Identifiers in Each Status of the Identity Scale

| Partisanship | Political Identity Scale | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Diffusion | Explorers | Somewhat Developed | Fully Developed | Total |
| Strong Democrat | 4.8% (6) | 7.6% (36) | 10.4% (53) | 11.5% (23) | 9.0% (118) |
| Weak Democrat | 25% (31) | 18.8% (89) | 24.7% (126) | 16.5% (33) | 21.3% (279) |
| Independent-Democrat | 18.5% (23) | 18.6% (88) | 18.8% (96) | 18.5% (37) | 18.7% (244) |
| Independent | 32.3% (40) | 23.6% (112) | 9.6% (49) | 9% (18) | 16.7% (219) |
| Independent-Republican | 10.5% (13) | 15.8% (75) | 13.9% (71) | 12.5% (25) | 14.1% (184) |
| Weak Republican | 8.1% (10) | 11.2% (53) | 17.3% (88) | 17% (34) | 14.1% (185) |
| Strong Republican | 0.8% (1) | 4.4% (2) | 5.3% (27) | 15% (30) | 6% (79) |
| Total | 124 | 474 | 510 | 200 | 1308 |

N=1308, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

The next step in the investigation of identity development and Independence is to look at the behavior of these young people. Are Independents more likely to vote than their partisan counterparts? Based on data from table 5.3, Independents are less likely to vote (39.8%) than their partisan counterparts (53.1%); however there is more variation in the types of Independents. In the two lowest statuses, Independents are more likely to not vote (60.2%) rather than vote (39.8%). The tipping point—meaning the point at which more young people in each status are more likely to vote than not—for voting also changes for Independents when they reach the somewhat developed status rather than the fully developed status for partisans (table 5.3). This finding means that Independents can be less well developed and still vote whereas partisans in order to be more likely to vote need to be in the highest level status. The relationships between identity status and youth voting behavior are positive and significant for both partisans and Independents. Over a third of youth Independents are likely to vote than not, which suggests the evidence for young people as politically Independent and non-voters is not entirely correct.

Table 5.3 Youth Voter Turnout by Partisan and Independent based on Identity Status

| | Political Identity Status | | | | Tau-c |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|
| | Diffusion | Explorers | Somewhat Developed | Fully Developed | |
| Partisans | | | | | |
| Did not Vote | 64.6% (31) | 55.3% (110) | 47.6% (140) | 24.2% (29) | .24* |
| Voted | 35.4% (17) | 44.7% (89) | 52.4% (154) | 75.8% (91) | |
| Independents | | | | | |
| Did Not Vote | 90.8% (69) | 70.4% (193) | 49.1% (106) | 26.3% (21) | .40* |
| Voted | 9.2% (7) | 29.6% (81) | 50.9% (110) | 73.8% (59) | |
| Total | 46.9% (310) | 53.1% (351) | 60.2% (389) | 39.8% (257) | |

Partisans N=661, Independents N=646, * p<.01, Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004

Evidence of Change in Youth Partisan Identification from 1952 to 2004

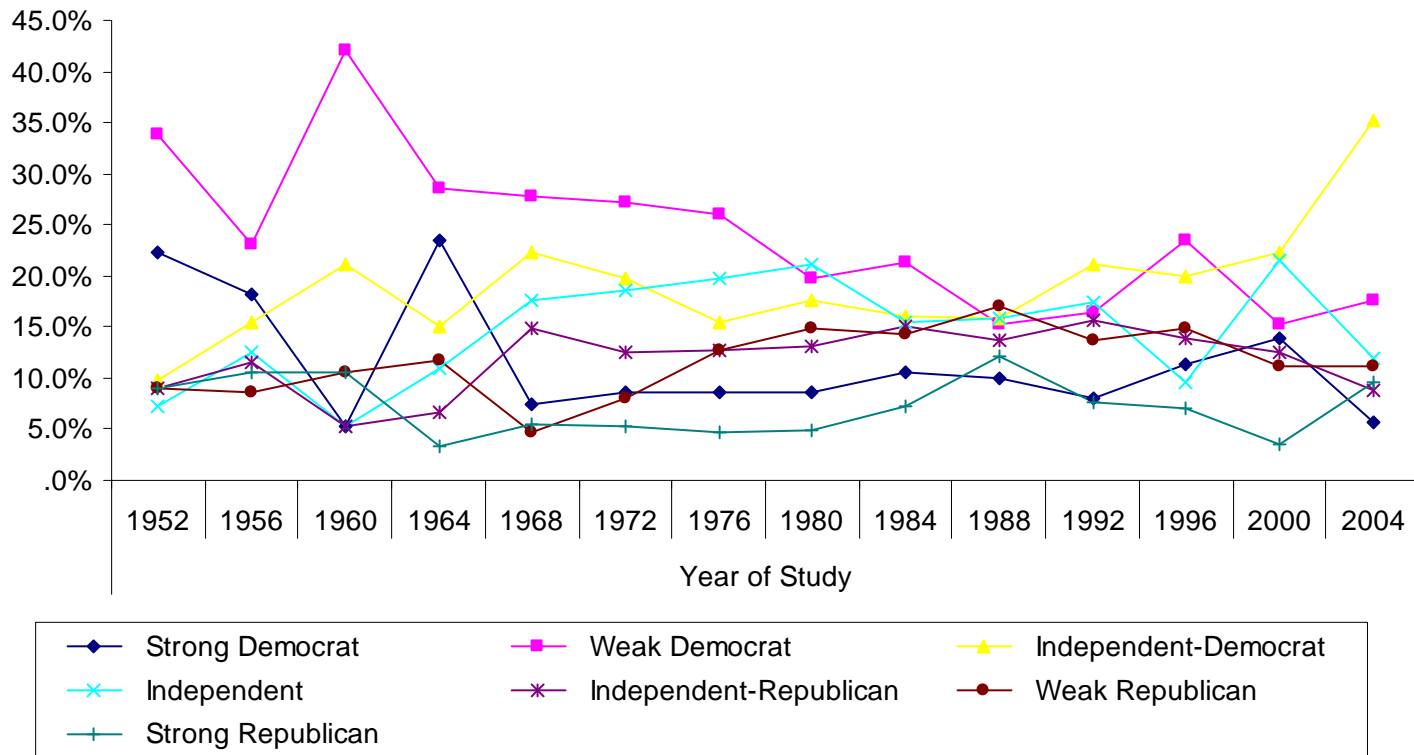
Looking at the number of youth that identify with political parties, there have been some major shifts through the years as young people have become more likely to say that they are political Independents. From 1952 to 2004, the trend is that more young people are likely to say that they are Independent: 7.1% in 1952 versus 21.5% in 2000 (table 5.4). The largest increase of youth claiming to be Independent occurred between 1968 and 1972, which were the presidential election years where the expansion of voting rights to include 18-20 year olds passed. Graph 5.1 illustrates the changes that occur between years, and shows the high number of weak Democrat identifiers increases throughout the years. From 1960 to 1980 the proportion of youth identifying as Independents continues to rise, until 1984 when Republicans made gains in the proportion of youth who either identified as weak Republicans, Strong Republicans, and Independents who leaned towards the Republican Party. In 1996, the proportion of Independents dropped to a low of 9.6%, but rose dramatically to the largest percentage of Independents at 21.5% in 2000 only to be followed by another drop to 12% in 2004. Often the largest percentages of identifiers for most years are Independent-Democrats or weak Democrats. While

Table 5.4 Percentage of Young Identifiers by Year on American National Elections Survey

| Party Identification | 1952 | 1956 | 1960 | 1964 | 1968 | 1972 | 1976 | 1980 | 1984 | 1988 | 1992 | 1996 | 2000 | 2004 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Strong Democrat | 22.3% | 18.3% | 5.3% | 23.5% | 7.4% | 8.7% | 8.7% | 8.6% | 10.6% | 10.1% | 8.0% | 11.3% | 13.9% | 5.6% |
| Weak Democrat | 33.9% | 23.1% | 42.1% | 28.6% | 27.8% | 27.1% | 26.0% | 19.8% | 21.2% | 15.3% | 16.5% | 23.5% | 15.3% | 17.6% |
| Independent-Democrat | 9.8% | 15.4% | 21.1% | 15.1% | 22.2% | 19.7% | 15.5% | 17.6% | 16.1% | 15.9% | 21.2% | 20% | 22.2% | 35.2% |
| Independent | 7.1% | 12.5% | 5.3% | 10.9% | 17.6% | 18.7% | 19.9% | 21.2% | 15.4% | 15.9% | 17.5% | 9.6% | 21.5% | 12% |
| Independent-Republican | 8.9% | 11.5% | 5.3% | 6.7% | 14.8% | 12.5% | 12.6% | 13.1% | 15% | 13.8% | 15.6% | 13.9% | 12.5% | 8.8% |
| Weak Republican | 8.9% | 8.7% | 10.5% | 11.8% | 4.6% | 7.9% | 12.6% | 14.9% | 14.3% | 16.9% | 13.7% | 14.8% | 11.1% | 11.2% |
| Strong Republican | 8.9% | 10.6% | 10.5% | 3.4% | 5.6% | 5.4% | 4.7% | 5% | 7.3% | 12.2% | 7.5% | 7% | 3.5% | 9.6% |

Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File, 1952-2004, N=2410

Graph 5.1: Percentage of Young Partisans by Year



Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File, 1952-2004, N=2410

there have been major shifts throughout the late twentieth century into the twenty-first, the evidence is more young people have identified as Independent or as Independent leaners than they do as partisans.

Larger Questions for Consideration of Independents and Voting Behavior

Regarding political identity development, should Independents be counted as developed or not developed? Independent could be considered a label; however, the larger question is whether or not it is a conscious choice of Independence. I argue that choosing to align or not align with the parties is a part of developed identity. A default choice of Independent and would not be considered a part of a developed identity, but a forced choice possibly because respondents do not want to admit that they do not know where they belong.

Each of the models (5.2 and 5.3) at this point does not account for stated partisanship. Partisanship could be considered a commitment made by the individual, and, if she is likely to make such a commitment, then she has a more developed identity. Here is where typical measures may not fit. I would like to consider different types of Independents: developed and default. A developed Independent could be considered as having a commitment to be non-partisan. However the trick is to distinguish between developed Independents and individuals who choose Independence because they are undecided. I argue the best way to study this concept for young people and how Independence may affect their voting behavior is based on how developed their identity is. To better understand Independents and especially young Independents we must look past the claim of Independence to a deeper level of self knowledge and self questioning in an attempt to understand why some young people actively choose to be Independent and do so consciously, versus the claim to be Independent as a default position while the young person figures out who he or she is.

Conclusions of Political Independence

One of the major contributions of this work is the conceptualization of Independents. As we have seen Independents were historically perceived as individuals who thought deeply about politics and who could think independently of the party lines (Keith et al, 1992, 6). However, in other periods of American history, parties were formidable forces that shaped what America thought about, consider politics to be, and mobilized Americans. To not be partisan in a time when parties seemed to rule politics meant stigmatization of Independents. Party systems did tend to provoke a certain diehard quality for those who belonged and ostracized those who did not. The change in the conceptualization of Independents came after Americans as a population began to see parties as less important in politics (Wattenberg, 1981). Instead of stigmatizing Independents as individuals who knew little about politics, partisans began to be seen as people who pushed their beliefs with little concern for what others thought.² For those who began to claim Independence as their partisan identification, they seemed to be saying that there is more to political life than just saying that you are a Democrat or Republican.

There are many explanations as to why there has been such an increase in young Independents from the increase in education to media to the growth of candidate centered politics. With more education than generations that came before, young people today have more access to information and more knowledge about the world—yet that does not always translate into more information about politics. Many young people still claim that they do not vote because they do not have enough information about the candidates or issues (Bogard, Shienhart, and Clarke 2008). Youth today seem to believe that political Independence means an independent thinker and a person who does not want to be a part of the parties—it is unclear

² From the focus group data, many young people mentioned that Independence meant thinking for oneself or being sick of the political parties; whereas being partisan had the connotation of being pushy about one's beliefs.

whether they believe the reason to identify as a political Independent is because one disagrees with parties. Disgust with partisanship and the need to be unique seems to drive more young people to identify as Independents.

Media also tends to play a role in exaggerating the power of Independents in a single election. As Patterson notes, the shift in the media toward a candidate-centered emphasis increases the number of Independents (2002). Media does tend to focus on the swing voters who, in close elections, may decide the outcome. The emphasis is placed on a set of voters who are going to make the major difference in the final election outcome; however, as Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet suggested getting voters towards the end of the election cycle means targeting voters who are not interested, invested, or engaged in elections. The growing focus on Independent voters may have encouraged some young people to not identify with the political parties, but from my own research and focus groups with young people the appeal is two-fold—not wanting to identify with parties and believing Independence means you think for yourself (Gentry, 2010).

As this research suggests, there is a wide variety of Independents at many different developmental levels; however, there is some clear distinction between individuals who are more developed than others. Developed Independents are more likely to vote than their Default counterparts. The level of development for an Independent to vote is less than it is for partisans, suggesting that partisanship does still play a role in who votes and who does not. In the next chapter, Independents will be tested against the partisan counterparts to see whether identity development and inspirational leaders have more influence on their voting behavior than that of partisans.

Chapter 6 Bringing it Altogether: Multivariate Analysis

While there have been many general explanations for why Americans do not vote in presidential elections, there are fewer explanations as to why young people do not vote. As discussed in chapter 2, scholars have a variety of reasons why young people do not vote—from too many distractions, to lack of an investment in the political system (meaning many different things—from the fact that young people do not pay taxes, to the fact that they are not committed to improving their communities), to the assumption that they have not gone through the life-cycle changes that might encourage participation.

I have argued there are other explanations for what might encourage youth political participation and, most importantly, have maintained that much of the voter behavior literature leaves out the crucial bit of knowledge—knowledge about oneself. If we do not know who we are politically, participation becomes more difficult because we have little self knowledge and the system becomes overwhelming in the options and information it has to offer. However, those who are confident about their political identity and can clearly say that they know who they are as political beings are the most likely to participate in voting.

What makes my study of youth voting particularly different is explaining turnout by where youth are in the developmental process of a political identity. Young adulthood is the culmination of breaking with childhood and looking towards the future to the adult that youth want to become. Young people, at this point in their lives, may have already found their political identity or they may be at the other extreme avoiding politics altogether. The major contribution of this work is the process of political identity development and how development affects the behavior of voting. As I argued in chapters 4 and 5, there are other factors that can help the developmental process along—such as inspirational leaders who act as identity models or

political independence that is a conscious portrayal of an identity. I expect that identity development will have different effects for partisans and Independents.

As a culmination of this work on youth voting behavior, this chapter examines all three explanations in different multivariate models to account for the value of each hypothesis on voting behavior of young people. A complete model that accounts for all three hypotheses is included in the final models. Political identity, inspirational leaders, and political independence are all tested against traditional explanations of youth turnout to see whether the identity theory survives against the older traditional explanations. I will begin the process by explaining how the original political identity scale was constructed, modified and finalized, and then look at how each of the three explanations in this dissertation explains some of the variance of youth turnout. I then test my explanations with the typical explanations of youth turnout to see how much identity theory accounts for turnout beyond the traditional measures.

There are many different explanations for youth turnout. Much of the focus has been on why youth do not vote rather than what might encourage youth participation. I argue that the voting behavior literature should focus on what encourages rather than discourages participation. Some explanations currently exist on ways to encourage participation. Youth engagement in politics with others, such as parents or peers, does seem to encourage participation. Interest in politics is another key variable but not one that is an end in itself, interest can be a means to an end—the political identity.

For my focus here, much of this multivariate analysis is what influences individuals to either vote or not. Each of the three arguments within my dissertation has been taken into account in a variety of ways from the identity scale and statuses, roles that leaders play in youth turnout, and the differentiation between conscious and default Independents. In addition to the

variables from the arguments in this dissertation, many of the typical explanations of low voter turnout, especially low youth turnout, are controlled for. Some of the typical explanations, such as ideology and levels of interest, are built in the scale of identity development.

Why Use Multivariate Analysis?

At this point in my research, I have analyzed each of the hypotheses through bivariate statistics. For identity development, I found that higher levels of identity development are positively related to voting in young people. Inspirational leaders increase youth turnout in general and inspirational candidates encourage voting for themselves. Independents come in many varieties, but higher developed young Independents vote at higher rates than lower developed young Independents. The next step is to look at how well these hypotheses stand up to traditional measures of youth voting and how much variance these measures explain.

I use logistic regression due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable, one either votes or does not. Determining the probability one will vote or requires using a method that appropriately deals with only two outcomes (Pollock, 2009; Field, 2005; Knoke, Bohrnstedt, and Mee, 2002; Pampel, 2000; Lottes, DeMaris, and Adler, 1996). I use logistic regression to test the possibility that identity development, salience, inspirational leaders, and political independence affect voting behavior while controlling for the traditional measures.

Modeling

The purpose of using an index for political identity and salience is to create a single measure that incorporates all of the behaviors and attitudes of relevance. I want to develop a measure of political identity that accurately depicts one's identity status. In using the term youth voting, I refer to young people between the ages of 18 and 24, which is standard in the voting literature. I choose 18 to 24 instead of 18-30 because the number is more descriptive of individuals

who are the youngest voting age, have lower voting rates than other age cohorts including 25-30 year olds, and are just beginning to participate in the political process.

Bringing it all Together: Identity, Leaders, and Independents

While my work has addressed three seemingly separate topics, they all relate back to the central contribution of political identity development and explain youth turnout. Another reason why multivariate analysis is needed is to determine the contribution of each of my theories about what encourages young people to vote. The intersection of all of these explanations happens at the individual level. Each of the explanations for what encourages young people to participate is connected to where a young person is in his or her development. Multivariate analysis allows for each of the elements of the theory to be tested while controlling for the other explanations.

To conduct the analysis, I begin with analyzing identity development against control measures to better account for the effect of identity on youth voting. The identity development scale from the ANES needed some revision as many participants did not answer all of the questions included on the scale. The processes for modification are included below. Identity development can be affected by inspirational leaders because inspirational leaders provide a personal narrative of their own identity development. Acting as identity role models, these leaders work to encourage young people to vote through their exemplar identity and due to their emotional appeals. The next step in the analyses is to test identity development and inspirational leadership along with the control measures, to account for the amount of influence on which young people vote. In the final tests, I interact Independent (as a dichotomous variable) with political identity development to test its effect on turnout. Each theory is tested to provide the most comprehensive explanation of what encourages young people to vote.

Identity versus Control Measures: Evidence from the ANES

Control Variables

In voting behavior there are certain influences that we need to control for. The controls for this type of study are typical controls for turnout such as gender, race, income, education, marital status and years within a community. Each of these elements has different influences on the likelihood of voting and therefore needs to be held constant when looking at the influence of my variables of interest. Women are often more likely to vote than men after 1980, which requires that gender be held constant (Conway, 2000). Race has long played a role in whether or not an individual will turnout; our reference variable here will be whites since they tend to vote more frequently than other races. Educational attainment tends to play a role in influencing voting behavior as the number of years in education increases so does the likelihood of voting (Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Generally being married increases turnout, however being married tends to have an adverse effect on youth, meaning for the very young voters it actually decreases turnout (Highton and Wolfinger, 2001). Higher personal and family incomes tend to increase turnout, perhaps because it tends to increase other resources as well such as access to information, education, and free time (Gimpel et al, 2004; Verba, Scholzman, Brady, 1995). Longer residency within a community often increases turnout because the individual has some knowledge of local bureaucracy and politics, and, therefore, may be better equipped to both register and vote. What does not need to be held constant is age since the parameters of the study limit the ages to between 18 and 24. The reason each of these variables is taken into account is their influence in changing the odds of youth turnout.

Political Ego Identity Components on the ANES

Political identity is understood to lie on a continuum, however political identity can also be placed into four categories: fully developed, somewhat developed, explorers, and diffusions. In order to measure the degree to which one knows oneself politically, I use self placement

assessments on policies, ideology, self-awareness, and exploration. As noted in the previous chapter, Independence can be a type of Fully Developed identity and in the identity scale is treated as such. Those who say that they identify with a party or are conscious Independents, have a commitment to ideology, and take clear policy stances are fully developed. Those who identify themselves as political party leaners, and have fewer policy stances, list fewer problems facing the nation, and fewer mentions of candidate differences are somewhat developed. Salience, meaning how important an identity is to your life, must be measured through question proxies. Those who think politics is an important part of their lives are more likely to say that they find politics interesting and follow public affairs. In the analysis, an interaction effect between political identity development and salience will be tested to explain the increased probability of voting.

The Models are each constructed with the typical explanations in turnout such as gender, race marital status, educational level, income, and residency added first to the model. I then add my explanations to account for what identity, salience, and the interaction between them can contribute. Model 1 includes only the traditional explanations, whereas Model 4 includes the identity scale along with two measures of salience: interest in the election and interest in public affairs.

Of the control variables in Model 1, only Education ($\text{Exp}(B)=1.65$) and income ($\text{Exp}(B)=1.20$) affected whether or not a young person would turn out to vote. None of the other characteristics of gender, race, marital status, or residency measures were significant predictors of turnout. When the Identity Development Scale is added as a predictor of youth turnout in Model 2, a better explanation for youth turnout is captured with a decrease in the -2 Log Likelihood of 57.91. Education remains as a significant indicator turn out ($\text{Exp}(B)=1.42$, $p=.01$)

and so is income (Exp(B)=1.21, p=.01); but identity status also is significant when controlling for the typical explanations for voting behavior (Exp(B)=1.24, p=.01). Again, gender, race, marital status, and residency were not significant.

When the variable of interest in the election is added to the second model, Identity development retains its significant effect on youth voting behavior. Education remains a significant indicator of youth turnout (p=.01) as does income (p=.01). However, both identity development and interest in the election are also significant predictors in Model 3. The shift in the third model suggests that there may be interaction effects that need to be taken into account with Identity Development and Interest. Theoretically this makes logical sense because as one's identity becomes more solidified it also becomes more important to one's life. Both of these indicators together, knowing who I am politically and thinking politics is an important part of my life, would increase youth voting. Interaction effects are added in Table 6.3.

Table 6.1 Logistic Regression Models of Traditional Explanations for Voter Turnout Against Identity Development Scale with Policy Indicators, 1972-2000

| Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender | 0.02 (0.13) | 0.12 (0.13) | 0.18 (0.13) | 0.20 (0.13) |
| White | 0.15 (0.15) | 0.07 (0.16) | 0.11 (0.16) | 0.12 (0.16) |
| Married | -0.11 (0.13) | -0.04 (0.14) | -0.10 (0.14) | -0.12 (0.14) |
| Education | 0.50** (0.05) | 0.35** (0.06) | 0.33** (0.06) | 0.32** (0.06) |
| Income | 0.18** (0.06) | 0.19** (0.06) | 0.19** (0.06) | 0.19** (0.06) |
| Residency | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) |
| Identity Development Scale | _____ | 0.21** (0.03) | 0.17** (0.03) | 0.16** (0.03) |
| Interest in Election | _____ | _____ | 0.44** (0.10) | 0.37** (0.11) |
| Interest in Public Affairs | _____ | _____ | _____ | 0.12 (0.08) |
| Constant | -2.70** (0.28) | -3.62** (0.32) | -3.68** (0.33) | -3.71** (0.33) |
| -2 Log Likelihood of Model | 1524.59 | 1466.68 | 1448.87 | 1446.56 |

N=1203 ** indicates significance at the .01 level * indicates significance at the .05 level. Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004. Standard errors are in parentheses.

The importance of politics to an individual's life can also be measured by their level of interest in public affairs, while the ANES does not directly measure the importance of politics to a person's life the general importance of politics to one's life can be assessed by the level of interest measure. In Model 4, interest in public affairs is included in the equation to account for the other aspect of salience. Adding interest in public affairs did not significantly adjust the -2 Log likelihood by very much from the previous model (change in -2 Log likelihood= 2.31), nor was the variable a significant predictor. As with the previous models, Education (Exp(B)=1.37, p=.01) and income (Exp(B)=1.21, p=.01) continue to be significant indicators to turnout. Both the identity development scale and interest in the election are highly statistically significant. For a single increment increase in the identity scale, the odds that a young person will vote increases by 28% and for an increase in interest in the election the odds increase by 45%.

Based on the previous influence of political identity development on youth voter turnout before the salience measures were added, perhaps there is an interaction effect between identity and salience. Theoretically this could be true since one who is fully developed had to go through the political identity process where they had to explore the political world, make judgments about it, question themselves, and eventually settle on their own political identity. Going through the process might develop interest in politics, but this does not discount individuals who may or may not be interested in politics. Sometimes a person is somewhat developed meaning they know who they are politically, but are not interested in politics, usually because their identity is not of their own making.

Different Models of Analysis

The questions available on the American National Election Study greatly limit the possibility of accurately measuring political identity development. Based on the data available,

the full identity scale variable only included cases from 1972-2000 with a sample size of 1203. No questions on the ANES ask about self questioning and commitment to a personal political identity or even most basically knowing oneself politically. One major critique of this measure is that it simply captures what important aspects other scholars have already noted such as internal efficacy, political knowledge, and interest. Part of the need for additional data from which to draw is from these deficiencies within the data. While the ANES is a good place to begin to test measures of identity development against control variables, other data needed to be collected to further test the validity of these concepts.

Inspirational Leaders and Youth Turnout

The second theory in this work argues that inspirational leadership increases youth turnout. Leaders encourage young people to participate in presidential elections both directly and indirectly. In this section, I test the theory of inspirational leadership against the typical indicators of youth turnout to better understand the influence of inspirational leaders when these standard measures are held constant. As discussed in chapter 4, inspirational leaders do not only increase general turnout but actually have a greater effect on getting young voters to vote for the specific candidates that display these characteristics. Therefore, three dependent variables will be tested to account for the different outcomes of general voting and voting for the Democratic or Republican candidate.

The original controls model includes the measures of gender, race, marital status, educational categories, income percentiles and residency in the community by year. As expected, educational level and income are significant indicators as to which young people will go to the polls. For an increase in educational level there is an increase in the odds of young people voting by 42% ($p=.01$). Income increases also increase the odds of a youth voting by

Table 6.2 Logistic Regression Coefficients within Models for Youth Turnout with Traditional Explanations, Inspiring Candidates, and Hopeful Feelings

| Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender | 0.13 (0.13) | 0.22 (0.16) | 0.31* (0.16) | 0.20 (0.17) | 0.18 (0.17) |
| White | 0.08 (0.16) | -0.05 (0.19) | -0.21 (0.18) | -0.07 (0.19) | 0.01 (0.20) |
| Married | -0.04 (0.14) | -0.19 (0.18) | -0.30* (0.18) | -0.23 (0.18) | -0.24 (0.18) |
| Education | 0.35** (0.06) | 0.34** (0.07) | 0.30** (0.07) | 0.31** (0.07) | 0.31** (0.07) |
| Income | 0.19** (0.06) | 0.16** (0.07) | 0.17** (0.07) | 0.16* (0.07) | 0.17* (0.07) |
| Residency | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) |
| Democrat | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | 0.35* (0.20) |
| Republican | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | -0.02 (0.21) |
| Identity | 0.22** (0.03) | 0.27** (0.04) | 0.27** (0.04) | 0.25** (0.04) | 0.24** (0.04) |
| Either Candidate Inspiring | _____ | 0.30* (0.18) | _____ | 0.14 (0.19) | 0.14 (0.19) |
| Either Candidate Hopeful | _____ | _____ | 0.76** (0.20) | 0.74** (0.21) | 0.67** (0.21) |
| Constant | -3.66** (0.32) | -4.18** (0.43) | -4.30** (0.42) | -4.38** (0.44) | -4.35** (0.45) |
| -2 Log Likelihood | 1470.42 | 943.86 | 973.92 | 928.30 | 912.00 |

Models 1: N=1209, Model 2: N=798, Model 3=834 & 4; N=793, Model 5=772, **indicates significance at the .01 level, *indicates significance at the .10 level. Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004. Standard errors in parentheses.

21% (p=.01). Similar to the influences of the control variables in the identity status measures increases in education and income do tend to increase which young people vote.

Controlling for the typical variables accounting for youth turnout, inspirational leadership also increases the odds of a young person voting. The more young people believe that inspiring describes the candidate then the more likely they are to vote. Even though educational status and income are still significant indicators (p=.01 and p=.02, respectively), finding the characteristic of inspiring in a candidate increased youth turnout by 35% when young people saw either candidate as inspiring (p=.01). Identity remains significant when inspirational leadership is included and seems to have more of an effect when also account for the inspirational characteristic of leadership (31% turnout increase for a single increase in the identity measure).

In Model 3, hopefulness that the candidate made the individual feel was assessed against the control variables. While education and income remain as significant indicators of youth turnout, assessment of either candidate as creating hopeful feelings did increase youth turnout. When young people believe that the either candidate makes them feel hopeful, they increase their odds of voting by 114%. In this model, gender and marriage seem to have an effect that does not occur in any other model of inspirational leadership.

The effect of feelings of hopefulness about the candidate is larger than simply thinking that the candidate is inspiring. This finding leads to the question why there would be such a large difference between subjective assessments of candidates' characteristics and what the individual feels. Could the youth feel hopeful about a candidate that is not inspirational? As found in the definition of inspirational leadership, this type of leader creates hope in others. But it is possible that the same individual who feels hopeful about a candidate does not think that the same candidate is inspiring. The two questions, I argue are measuring different aspects of inspirational leadership, but they are two distinct concepts. Hope measures positive beliefs about the future that the candidate can bring. These assessments of inspiration measure the level that candidates activate and give breath to the individual voter. In the end, the individual feels hope about the candidate based on their leadership characteristics, while inspiring measures one aspect of a candidate's characteristics. In such a way, the hopeful measure is more of a holistic approach to the traits that the candidate offers rather than only measuring inspiring.

When all control measures, inspirational leadership characteristics, and feelings of hopefulness are taken into account, the effect of assessing either candidate as inspiring does not retain significance. Education and income remained significant indicators ($p=.01$, $p=.03$, respectively). However, even with the control measures and accounting for two different aspects

of inspirational leadership, only the effect of the either candidate creating hopeful feelings is significant ($p=.01$). The effect that leaders have on young people is to make them believe in their candidacy, which is somewhat different from a leader having the quality of inspiring. If young people agreed that the candidate made them feel hopeful then it increased their likelihood to vote. Young people who thought that either candidate made them feel hopeful increased their odds of voting by 104%.

When voting for candidates, young people may be less affected by the emotional appeals of inspirational leadership and yet still vote for other reasons, such as partisanship. Therefore, I account for the effects of partisanship when voting for both Democrats and Republicans in order to assess the true appeal of the candidates' characteristic of inspiring and the feelings of hopefulness that candidates elicit.

Analyzing the general vote, both individuals who affiliated with the Democratic party and with the Republican party were more likely to vote than if they were Independents. When accounting for partisanship, the only statistically significant relationships are candidates' creation of hopeful feelings. When young people feel hopeful for either candidate, they are 95% more likely to vote ($p=.06$) versus thinking either candidate is inspiring which does not have a significant impact on youth turnout ($p=0.48$). If a young person identifies as a Democrat, then he or she increases their odds of voting by 41% ($p=.08$). On the other hand, if they identify as a Republican the relationship is not significant ($p=.91$).

Bringing it all Together: The Effect of Young Independents

Each of the three theories accounts for an aspect of what might encourage young people to vote in presidential elections. By bringing all of the explanations for encouraging youth

turnout, I create five different models from the two datasets. Only one model comes from the Regional Poll data which analyzes identity, Independents, and the interaction between the two.

Two explanations for what might encourage political Independents to vote were identity status and salience. Young Independents could be either be default Independents or conscious Independents. In my bivariate findings, there were clear differences between partisans and Independents in their likelihood to vote. But there were also differences between the higher levels of development and lower levels of development in Independents where the higher developed Independents were more likely to vote than their default counterparts. Based on these findings additional analyses need to be run for the traditional explanations of turnout against the effect of being Independent.

The first model addresses the influence of being Independent against traditional measures of turnout. In this model, only three indicators affect youth voting to a level of acceptable statistical significance. Education increases the odds that a young person will vote by 63% ($p=.01$). Income also increases the odds of a young person turning out by 18% ($p=.01$). Being an Independent does affect voting behavior of young people by decreasing the odds that a young person will vote by 39% ($p=.01$). The commitment to partisanship does tend to increase voting behavior, but there may also be an interaction between Independence and identity development.

Model 2 takes into account the main effects of the three theories within this dissertation: identity development, inspirational leaders and Independence. All of these variables are included in the model as are the traditional measures of voting behavior to test for which variables are the most accurate indicators of youth turnout. In this model some interesting findings come into view. The variable of identity status does stand up to scrutiny when accounting for controls. A single point increase in the identity status scale increases voting behavior by 44% ($p=.01$).

Table 6.3 Logistic Regression Coefficients within Models for Youth Turnout with Traditional Explanations, Identity Development Scale, Inspiring Candidates, Hopeful Feelings, and Independents

| Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender | 0.01 (0.11) | 0.25 (0.17) |
| White | 0.14 (0.13) | 0.00 (0.19) |
| Married | -0.04 (0.12) | -0.28 (0.18) |
| Education | 0.49** (0.04) | 0.29** (0.07) |
| Income | 0.17** (0.05) | 0.16* (0.07) |
| Residency | 0.00 (0.00) | 0.00 (0.00) |
| Identity Status | _____ | 0.15** (0.05) |
| Interest in Election | _____ | 0.44** (0.15) |
| Interest in Public Affairs | _____ | -0.01 (0.10) |
| Either Candidate Inspiring | _____ | 0.11 (0.19) |
| Either Candidate Hopeful | _____ | 0.52* (0.22) |
| Independent | -0.50** (0.11) | -0.83 (0.55) |
| IndependentXIdentity | _____ | 0.09 (0.07) |
| Constant | -2.18 (0.25) | -3.67** (0.54) |
| -2 Log Likelihood | 2023.16 | 901.40 |

Model 1 N=1596, Model 2 N=731 **indicates significance at the .01 level *indicates significance at the .05 level
 Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004. Standard errors are in parentheses.

Of the control measures, education continues to increase youth turnout by 35% (p=.01) and income increases turnout of young people by 17% (p=.03). Interest in the election tends to matter more than interest in public affairs and increases turnout by 57% (p=.01). Of the Inspirational leadership measures, thinking either candidate makes the individual feel hopeful increases voting by 68% (p=0.02). Being Independent does have a significant effect on turnout by decreasing youth turnout by 68% (p=0.05), but the interaction between Independence and Identity needs to be assessed. When an additional model with the interaction effect of identity

and Independence was run no additional variables were significant including the interaction ($p=.29$).

Based on the evidence available all theories of youth voting do tend to stand up to scrutiny. When accounting for the common variables that affect youth turnout, identity, feelings of hopefulness and Independence all affect whether or not a young person will go to the polls on Election Day. Having an identity does increase youth turnout. As young people begin to develop who they are politically they become more likely to vote. While thinking that a candidate is inspiring does not necessarily hold up with the other measures, part of the reasoning is that assessment of the candidate as inspiring is captured in how the individual feels about the candidate as a whole making the individual feel hopeful about the future. Independence does tend to decrease youth turnout as many scholars predict. These results are promising, especially with the value that Identity Status adds as a measure to predict the turnout of young people. While the level of Identity and Independence did not interact, there may still be evidence that there are substantive differences in what encourages partisans to get to the polls versus what may encourage a young person who identifies as an Independent.

As people age, they are more likely to be in the higher levels of development unless there is a crisis event that makes these individuals question their identity. Based on the data from chapter 3, many more adults are in the somewhat and fully developed statuses rather than explorers or diffuse. These early differences between adults and youth may help to distinguish the fact that identity matters when studying young people and other factors come into play when studying older adults. While further analysis requires that young people and adults in the same sample be compared based on their levels of identity development or identity statuses,

preliminary results suggest how adults feel about the specific act of voting and its importance to their lives seems to trump all other measures of identity and Independence.

Chapter 7 Conclusions

Identity development as a process provides an explanation for what gets young people out to the polls on election day. The process of development happens over a period of time and generally with stops and starts. Young people who understand the significance of the way they act and think politically have a developed identity. Developing a political identity gives young people confidence to act in the political arena and also makes them feel self confident that they can make a difference in politics.

This work has approached youth voting behavior by looking through a lens of potential voters rather than consistent non-voters. If we study the young people who do participate versus the ones who do not, then we get a better picture of what encourages youth participation. In this interdisciplinary work, I have worked to show what political identity development might look like and how it interacts with inspirational leaders and political Independence. The evidence for political identity as a valuable measure to explain at least some of what encourages and discourages youth voting behavior has been laid out. More work is still needed on how political identity might affect other types of political and civic behavior.

While the concept of political identity is a holistic approach to comprehending the many elements of a political individual, there are some limitations in capturing a psychological concept with close-ended questions. Political identity development as a measure does hold up against traditional explanations of youth turnout, or lack of turnout. As seen in chapter 6, identity remains a statistically significant indicator of youth turnout. Political identity also informs us about what makes political Independents different from one another and at the same time different from partisans. While political Independence is known to decrease turnout in general voting behavior, it also tends to decrease youth voting. Political identity further informs us that

there are variations that exist between political Independents. The fully developed Independents are more likely to vote than their partisan counterparts. However, this evidence must be weighed against the larger numbers of young political Independents who are in the lowest level of development and are more likely not to vote than their partisan counterparts.

The biggest disappointment in this work has been the outcomes for inspirational leadership. Inspirational candidates do tend to increase voting for themselves, but the simple presence of an inspirational leader in an election does not necessarily mean more young people will turnout. Inspirational rhetoric also had mixed results. The only significant piece of inspirational rhetoric was the use of the word “change”. More uses of the word increased youth turnout in those years. Future work in this area may investigate the relationship between candidates and turnout of youth for the candidates. Two different types of assessment are taking place. In the case of inspiring, candidates are assessed on how much that trait describes them. In the case of hopeful, the assessment is based on how the individual feels. In the former, the leader is under study, and in the latter the effect of a leader’s inspirational nature is assessed. How young people feel about the leader does have a clear relationship to which young people will turnout. Feeling hopeful about the candidate increases the odds that a young person will turn out.

Independents continue to be a mystery to much of political science, partially because we believe that partisanship is so central to turnout. While partisanship does increase youth turnout, assessing where a young person is in his or her development is also crucial. I have argued that there are two types of young political Independents: developed and default. A developed Independent is conscious about his or her choice of Independence and has gone through the process of gathering information about the political environment and about his or her self. I

suggest that these young Independents will remain Independent into later adulthood because it is part of their political identity. Default Independents, on the other hand, seem to choose Independence without much information about the political world or how they fit into it. These defaults feel pressured to choose an identification, but are unwilling to say that they do not know. In essence, political Independence is a holding place for defaults while they figure out their political identity, if any. From my focus group interviews, the appeal of Independence came from the association between thinking for oneself and political Independents. Independence, in this way, was a reaction to the assimilation of partisanship and partisan views. The young people that I interviewed were interested in thinking for themselves even if they did not know what they thought about politics. Independence has been associated with the freedom to choose, and without rules and pressures of partisanship.

The political implications of this work are how we think about what it means for an individual to be a political person and how that political person develops. Development of a political identity is the key contribution of this work. However there are additional possibilities for what identity, inspirational leadership, and political Independence may mean for future studies in youth voting behavior. Most basically, my work brings the importance of the individual back into analysis. While there are other aspects of identity studied in political science, my work does not study group identity development but the development of the individual identity. Self development is critically important because even though we are social beings we think for ourselves. Putting individuals at the center of the analysis is critical for understanding individual voting behavior.

The Larger Implications of Political Identity Development

Political Identity may be used to better understand the information bias and why it is such a complicated concept. Much of the literature argues there is a partisan bias to the information that is received by individuals, where they fail to process information against their partisan beliefs and readily take in information that confirm their beliefs (Zaller, 1992; Green et al, 2002). I argue, however, that there may be an identity bias due to the need to preserve one's mental self and continue to confirm coherence within oneself. A person may have particular biases to information that contradicts their state of identity. The implications of this argument suggest that bias is not solely based on partisanship but the beliefs and worldview of the individual. However, identity also allows for more malleability in what one believes suggesting that our political identities are complex creations of only one aspect of the individual. Even though a person is fully developed he or she not rigid in his or her beliefs but do take in new information and figure out how it fits with their political identity.

Information processing is different as more developed identities become solidified. Solidified identities are less likely to change are a result of new information, whereas less developed identities are more likely to take in new information. Between different statuses there are stark variations based on how the individual relates to new information. The difference between a Diffusion status individual and an Explorer is based on the reaction to new information. Where Diffusions end up reacting either by avoiding new information or distrusting any new information, Explorers, on the other hand, feed on new information and will attempt to gather new information to take it in and soak it up. In this way, Explorers are more open to processing new information whereas Diffusions are less open. Somewhat developed individuals, even though they may have reached their current state of identity by accepting what others have said about the world, are actually less likely to process new information because this information

may force them to confront their acceptance of previous information. Uncertainty about what to believe may lead somewhat developed individuals to question what they think and reevaluate their beliefs and identity. Somewhat developed individuals are actually more fragile in their identity status because they lack self certainty. Fully developed individuals, while they are not as open as Explorers to new information, are open to questioning their identity. However, unless some new information breaks the foundation of their identity fully developed individuals are more likely to take the new information and adapt it to the larger identity they have already built.

The development of a political identity is more difficult than the development of other identities such as occupational or religious. Two explanations for this difficulty in development are the complicated nature of politics and the personal relevance of politics. Active participation of children in politics is rare and often epitomized by mock presidential elections in school. Even though religion is particularly abstract, special efforts have been taken by religious institutions to make religion accessible to its youngest participants. Political institutions focus on those they serve, adults. Schools today are less likely to teach civic skills than they were fifty years ago. Because the political world is particularly complicated, people learn about the political world and their political selves from others. Through socialization, young people become acquainted with the political world and political actors. However, less political socialization from school and their parents, I argue, has resulted in many more young people having lower levels of identity development. Developing what is particularly different about themselves can be particularly difficult if politics remains abstract because institutions and role models either are not available or not elucidating the political maze.

Influence of Other Actors on Political Identity Development

Other circumstances also play a role in how one defines oneself politically. The political circumstances when one grew up play a role in our experiences and expectations of how politics works. Considering the two youngest generations, Xers and Millennials, had two very different childhoods and grew up in different circumstances where politicians made different promises. Xers are much more jaded about politics and tend to be more conservative—in some part due to the Reagan revolution that happened when they were young. Their Millennial counterparts who tend to be more optimistic and liberal—who grew up during the prosperous Clinton era full of scandal. While both generations are distrustful of politicians in general, they approach politics in a different way mainly how they can either make a difference or disengage.

Parents, peers, and schools all tend to play a major role in socialization of young people. Parents provide the foundation from which we build our political world. Parents are often socializers of morality and often provide the basis of our personal politics and how we begin to form our political identity. Our interaction with peers leads us to question our foundation through the interaction with different viewpoints. One thing that is interesting about peers is that we generally choose to be friends with people who have similar interests, backgrounds, and perspectives as we do. In a way, the friends that we choose actually compliment our political foundation. Schooling does play a role in development, but generally supports the status quo (Merelman, 1991). But schooling tends to be generalized enough so as to support the political system that exists, rather than question it. Much of the teaching through the final years of high school is on American history rather than American politics and few textbooks cover history in a political way. However, college does seem to be the place where aspects of one's political life come into question and one engages in discussions with those who may believe different things. College for many can be a confronting experience where one is trying to figure out what he or

she believes in. College is the environment to experiment with who we are while trying to reconcile who we were and who we will be. But for many others college is not the path that they pursue, jobs and families are their endeavors. Non-college youth are an understudied population in the United States, some of the reason is that college students are an easily targeted group and are easy to connect with. But these two groups may be fundamentally different in how they develop politically.

Voting and Identity

The assumption with voting is that the individual has to gain political information about the outside world. I am arguing that individuals have to gain political information about themselves—what they believe, how they place certain beliefs in context with policies, and how that then shapes whether or not they vote. Individuals must have a certain amount of self-competence and self-confidence in order to vote. Even if their vote will not change an election, individuals need to believe that their vote was the right one and that voting was the right thing to do.

Youth of today, with more college education than any other generation before them, often articulate that they do not have enough information to make an educated decision about who to vote for (Bogard, Sheinheit, Clarke, 2008). The challenge then becomes how do we encourage youth to gather information about the candidates, how do we encourage acquisition of more knowledge about politics? Information today is more easily accessible than ever before, the information is available but youth seem not to seek it out or seem confused about how to look for it. If young people are saying that they do not have enough information about the candidates, policies or politics, and the information is easily accessible, the logical question is what else is there to do? Do young people need to know that the information is easily available? With

search engines this excuse seems easy to overcome. What else keeps youth from accessing the information available to them? These questions need to be disentangled to get to the real reasons as to why young people do not gather information about the candidates. However, googling and going to candidates' websites will never result in a youth finding their own political identity—this comes with much more time, reflection, and thought. Perhaps what young people are saying is that they do not have enough knowledge about what they believe in, stand for, and therefore refrain from participating.

A Note on the Interaction between Political Identity Development and Social Identity

Could I feasibly conceptualize that part of identity development is to fit into a specific social grouping such as Green, Palmquist, and Schickler in Partisan Hearts and Minds suggest as partisanship? Is part of finding one's identity discovering what social group one belongs to? Several times when I have presented this theory this specific point was raised, however I hesitate to consider social groups as a part of conceptualizing identity development. Is part of identity development deciding which social group one is a part of? In considering social groups, there is a lot of literature, which I have not included on social identity development. This literature generally focuses on race and ethnicity, precisely what Green, Palmquist and Schickler are saying is the crux of the information missing from our understanding. How I perceive identity is very much the product of the individual rather than a product of society. How I understand identity is in terms of the individual's development and reaction to the outside world. The individual's identity growth comes from within the individual rather than from society. Social identities however are outside of the individual created by a social group for general purposes of identification not because the group wants individuals to develop their sense of self. Where a personal identity comes from within, the social identity is adopted from outside sources.

Consequences of Inspirational Leadership

Inspirational leadership deals with aspects of emotional appeals versus tempered commitments. While inspirational candidates can work to encourage youth voting, the youth who these candidates may be affecting the most are individuals who have not yet developed the commitments to what they believe and who they are politically. In this sense, identity development can help to detect who is more persuadable during election time. Identity commitments seem to take away the uncertainty of not knowing where one belongs and also take away from the influence of others. Several of the interviews that I did with young volunteers in the 2008 race had an identification with a party before they volunteered. While there were some young people who were moved by the candidate, more young people were socialized by their parents to become a participant in politics and to see the value of partisanship.

In the complex political environment where inspirational leaders are replacing party, individuals can adopt a political identity of the political leader without questioning or examining how the person might differ from their chosen leader. Many of the concerns with youth in the Obama campaign was precisely about this phenomenon of identity acceptance without questioning but lacked a name. The concern was that young people were not voting based on their critical analysis of politics and what they stood for politically, but rather because an inspirational leader was involved and convinced youth to believe in his platform. Many were concerned that young people were not critically examining their beliefs, political interests, or knew little about what they believed in besides the person.

For identity theorists, role models are major influences on adoption of a cohesive set of beliefs, but for identity development to fully occur the individual has to be able to distinguish

themselves from the role model. Often role models for politics are parents, which is why so many young people adopt the party and candidate of their parents.

The role of inspirational leaders today is to provide a set of problems and policy solutions, encourage people to identify with the leaders, and encourage participation (all three of which are components of a political identity that is adopted rather than developed). The language change from being a partisan to being a candidate supporter is an indicator of the shift from party centered to candidate centered campaigns. Looking at paraphernalia of both 2008 presidential campaigns, there was little reference to parties and much more reference to the individual candidate. Whether the candidate-centered references were in the form of buttons, stickers, or signs, the emphasis on following a candidate without regard to party and the party's set of beliefs. Being a candidate supporter is the new type of identity that is being reshaped in present times, but the warnings of how one develops their political identity are the same as warnings of simply taking on a party label without having thought about it. The warnings to youth to examine their identification with Obama as a candidate were warnings about not taking on a political identity without truly questioning the similarities and differences between the candidate and themselves.

The competition between parties and candidates for identifiers and loyalists is inherently in the problem of defining who we are politically. At the heart of the matter, the political context in which people discover what they believe in, how they define themselves politically, how important politics is to their lives, and how they engage in actions to confirm and reaffirm their identity is in flux, making it more difficult to develop a political identity.

While some of the variables did not prove to be significant, there are things to learn from this analysis. When it comes to youth turnout, youth are affected by appeals other than what is

presented at the nominating convention. Candidates may appeal to young people with other strategies such as peer-to-peer contact, contact from the campaign and other mediums rather than the acceptance speech at a national convention. The peer effect of asking other young people to vote for a particular candidate needs to be studied. Peers do play a major role in young adults' lives as they attempt to navigate the world and look to their friends for advice about how to act.

New directions for the study of leadership language in speeches could be to examine differences between the percentages of youth who vote for each major party candidate in the general elections. Disparities between candidates rather than overall youth vote counts may be a more accurate predictor of appeal and inspiration. The choice of nomination speeches was an attempt to capture the overall message of the campaign in a single speech. However, national conventions may not affect the youth vote, if youth do not watch it. An analysis of a specific campaign and comparison between candidates' speeches in one election may be a more accurate predictor of youth turnout.

The language of presidential nomination speeches does matter and the percentage of mentions of the word change actually increases youth turnout. Presidential candidates may also appeal to youth in other ways—whether creating Youtube videos, playing the saxophone on national television, or appearing on Saturday Night Live. The party or campaign may focus more on appeals to youth rather than the presidential candidate in this nomination appearance since the candidate has many different constituencies to appeal to on this single night.

The consequences of inspirational leaders on democracy include short term and long term outcomes. One consequence is for young people who are developing an identity as the inspirational leader gains recognition. These inspirational leaders can help shape identities of an entire generation of young people. In the short term, the positive effects of inspirational leaders

include increasing turn out of young people and encouraging young people to find their own political identity. In the long term, inspirational leaders can have a negative effect as their young adherents become disenchanted with the unfulfilled promises and disappointments with the leader. Those who are disenchanted may be less likely to participate in the future precisely because they had high hopes that were quickly dashed.

The 2008 Candidates Beyond Party

In the 2008 election, both presidential candidates portrayed themselves as beyond parties and highlighted their own qualities in what makes a good leader. While Wattenberg argues this is an on-going trend for candidate-centered campaigns and elections, 2008 seems to be the culminating point to proclaim oneself to be beyond the party label. McCain portrayed himself as a Maverick who could buck the party when he felt it necessary and he consistently told the public in his campaign speeches and in the presidential debates that he was willing to work on bipartisan legislation and had done so in the past. McCain has long held this title as Maverick in the Republican Party, but ran his campaign on his uniqueness and attempted to highlight moments in his career where he went against his party. For example in the first presidential debate, McCain notes “I have a long record and the American people know me very well and that is independent and a maverick in the Senate” (McCain and Obama, September 26, 2008). The Obama campaign in response to the McCain as Maverick needed to delegitimize McCain’s claims and did so with tying McCain to Bush such as during the first debate when Obama noted that he had “a better recipe for economic growth than the policies of President Bush—that John McCain wants to [sic] follow” (McCain and Obama, September 26, 2008).

McCain has been considered by many as the old maverick who split with his party on major issues such as campaign finance reform, immigration reform, and tax cuts (York, 2008).

Yet, McCain in the 2008 election had to carefully navigate the playing field in getting his party behind him. McCain's appeals to the Republican Party were to recruit establishment members into supporting his candidacy, while at the same time attempting to convince the American public that he was the maverick that his history portrayed him to be. The challenge for McCain in the 2008 election was to promote an image to the American public that McCain was the McCain from the 2000 primaries that appealed to many Independent voters, but also securing the Republican base. The image of maverick seemed disingenuous to the American public because McCain did not keep with his image of independence when he was pandering and accepting support from the ultra-conservative Republican establishment, such as Falwell and Hagee. In the 2008 race, McCain seemed unable to reestablish himself as the maverick he was in the 2000 campaign partially due to Obama's appeal (Tumulty, 2007).

Obama's appeal in the 2008 election was that he appeared apart from traditional partisan politics. Not only was Obama not in the Senate during the vote for the Iraq war, but he also was a new face to national politics. Obama represented a new face for the Democratic Party that many of the other primary candidates did not. Like McCain, Obama was new and fresh for the party (Turow, 2004). Obama's potential as a candidate in the presidential race was to distinguish himself and offer something fresh to the politics of old. Obama was a young senator of mixed-race heritage who could not be blamed for decisions made before he was in national office. Obama was appealing as a fresh face in national politics with some background in local and state offices. Tumulty's comment early in the primary season would pave the road for how the race between the two final candidates would pan out. She noted "Democrat Barack Obama has staked a claim to the 2008 version of McCain's 2000 theme of running as a high-minded

alternative to traditional politics” (2007). Obama’s image as an alternative to traditional politics was upheld by his opposition to the war when it was politically risky (September 26, 2008).

Claims to independence and individuality were not the only thing, in the second presidential debate Obama noted “you’re not interested in hearing politicians pointing fingers” which highlighted the disgust Americans had with traditional partisan infighting (October 7, 2008). Establishing himself as different, not just from party but from politics, was to point to “politicians in Washington who haven’t done anything” with alternative energy and many other issues of concern to the public for 30 years, while noting McCain was there 26 of those years. Obama tapped into two big aspects of what made Americans fed up with politics-partisan fighting and feeling that nothing was getting done in Washington. While both of these reflect disgust with parties, there are deeper issues with disgust with politics.

Obama was successful in articulating he was beyond party because he was not part of the policy-making decisions with which many Americans were upset, mainly the Iraq War; in addition to speaking out about the war, he had little political baggage unlike Hillary Clinton, made promises of hope and opportunity, reflected disgust that Americans were feeling about politics and political parties, and had a unique racial and community service background.

The question can be raised whether or not Obama was successful because he was beyond parties or outside Washington politics. In the end, Obama argued that he was both. During the primaries, he portrayed himself as the new kid on the block of presidential politics and a new face to the Democratic Party. In the Democratic primary debate, Obama distinguished himself as what the people are looking for as “someone who’s going to solve problems and not resort to the same typical politics that we’ve seen in Washington” (Obama, January 21, 2008). In addition, Obama made claims that he could do things differently and get work accomplished by including

the American public as he noted “I wouldn’t be running if I didn’t think that I could bring the country together most effectively, that I can overcome the special interests of Washington most effectively that I can inspire the American people to get involved in their government most effectively” (Obama, January 21, 2008). Obama had aims of being an inspirational leader and his appeal to voters was to include them in the political discussions, inform them that they not only had a say in politics, but had opportunities to make a difference in the campaign and in the country.

One larger question about inspirational leaders is whether they are able to sustain engagement of young people in elections. An issue with inspirational leaders is their appeals to emotion and the fluidity of emotions. Not all elections will have an inspirational leader that will activate the young people. Will these young people then be likely to vote in future elections without an inspirational leader? At this point it is unclear due to the fact of limited numbers of youth who are able to be analyzed in panel studies. However, I argue for two explanations to sustaining participation of young people: if the youth was solely activated by the emotional appeals then he or she will not continue to vote in later elections. If the youth is not only inspired by the inspirational candidate, but develops an identity from the identity model of that leader then he or she will continue to vote after the initial election that he or she was activated precisely because he or she had developed an identity.

Developed and Default Political Independence of Youth

One key aspect of the Independence work is to distinguish between higher developed Independents and lower developed Independents. While one may choose to be Independent for a variety of reasons, how one concludes that he or she is Independent has many different avenues and only some of these avenues result in highly developed Independents. Converse found

Independents who were highly developed in their identity, knew about the political world, and yet chose not to affiliate with either political party (1964). In his measure of political sophistication, Converse found “among the most highly sophisticated, those who consider themselves ‘independents’ outnumber those who consider themselves ‘strong’ partisans, despite the fact that the most vigorous political activity, much of it partisan, is carried on by people falling in this cell” (1964, 227). My explanation to Converse’s finding is that these individuals who choose not to affiliate with either of the two political parties, but who participate in a variety of political activity and are highly sophisticated about politics are actually developed Independents.

Young people who are developed Independents are more likely to stay Independent than their less developed counterparts, default Independents. Some of the reason why we see a shift in the number of Independents as people age is their development of an identity and along with that development the acquisition of partisan identification. Many young people tend to fall into the categories of diffuse or explorers because they have not yet formed judgments about the political system, or as Bogard, Sheinheit and Clarke find young people will actively admit that they do not vote because they do not have enough information (2008). For explorers, the continual seeking of information is part of the process of development; however, for diffusions the lack of a commitment to even search for information is a consequence of a lack of socialization or a disappointment with the political system.

Schattschneider once noted, “Democracy is not to be found in the parties but between the parties” (1942, 60) and he was right about where many Americans find themselves. Little did he know that his assessment of parties would come to fruition with many different types of identification and the growth in the number of Independents. Many Americans continue to find

themselves somewhere between the parties rather than with them. Opinions about policies also are not housed in one partisan articulation, but Americans, and especially youth, find that both parties have something to offer and it is through compromise that much of the work of government gets achieved.

Some of the explanation in the weakening of partisan identities can also be explained by socialization. Family influence in partisan socialization that Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1968) found in the 1950s has changed. Many parents of the youngest voting cohort to date (Generation Y) came of age during the turbulent political years of the 1960s and 1970s. As Miller and Shanks determined, the post New Deal generation had high number of Independents in their youth, but later became partisan (1996). Parents are key socializers of identity and if the political socialization is minimal or lost all together, then young people have to engage with politics on their own. While some parents act as guides to how to act and engage with the political world, other parents avoid political discussions altogether. In essence there are residual effects of turbulent political times on identity of those who experienced them and how these people then socialize their children.

In my qualitative work with young volunteers in the 2008 campaigns and focus groups with young people, I found that the highly developed young people mentioned a lot of parental socialization to politics. Whether parental involvement was discussing politics over the dinner table, watching news shows together, or taking their children to the voting booth; parents who were actively involved and supportive of their child's socialization tended to produce children who had fully developed identities at earlier ages. Many young people who developed their identity at an early age were also fully developed partisans rather than Independents. However I believe that many of these young partisans did not question their own identity as children

because they did not have the cognitive capacity to do so as children. The later development of these partisan children came when they had to interact with their peers and individuals within society who disagreed with their perspective. Growth of a developed identity came as a consequence to the questioning.

Get out the Vote Drives Targeting Youth: Nonpartisan Organizations and Independents?

More recently, candidates are focusing on how to get young voters out along with other types of voters; this has led to targeting campaigns with varying success. But many of these new get out the vote (GOTV) campaigns tend to be bipartisan rather than partisan; the rise of Independence in youth may be due to the fact that there have been increasing number of GOTV campaigns that are bipartisan or non-partisan rather than partisan. Youth-targeted campaigns have flourished without the parties due to the growing concern since 18-20 year olds gained the right to vote that young people are not turning out to the polls and there are serious consequences for democracy when young people do not vote. Because parties have chosen not to focus on youth, because it is both too expensive and youth are less likely than their older counterparts to vote, bipartisan campaigns targeting youth voters have no partisan prodding at all.

One explanation for the number of Independents recently may have to do with changes in the political system as a whole. When parties lost their patronage power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they lost ties that bound potential voters to them. In the twentieth century shifts in how the parties connected with voters changed enormously as political consultants became a major force in national politics in the late sixties and early seventies. Shifts in media also exacerbated a social disconnect between people and the parties. Targeting campaigns for candidates became narrower and mainly comprised of mailings and television advertisements rather than direct contact from volunteers. Volunteer forces were focused on

leaners and consistent voters who could be persuaded to vote for the candidate rather than the party.

How the shifts in media, political campaigns, and targeted appeals have to do with young voters is how campaigns persuade them to vote. Parties, with resources being funneled into budgets for political consultants, have much less of an impact in registering and encouraging voters to go to the polls than they did a century ago. To fill the connections to young voters, voter registration and turn out drives have been increasingly non-partisan. Consider many of the voter registration efforts focused on young voters—Rock the Vote, Vote or Die, or College initiatives to get students registered—all of these examples of get out the vote drives are inherently non-partisan. While partisan campaigns for registration and voting were openly biased about which side they wanted to win, non-partisan campaigns would like to register and have as many people, and especially young people, vote as possible.

These non-partisan campaigns may be having more of an effect than simply encouraging young people to vote, but also may be influencing how and whether they identify as Independents. Mobilizing forces of the early twentieth century were dominated by partisans for partisan reasons, however today mobilization campaigns are shared between partisan and non-partisan campaigns. Young people are often not targeted by partisan campaigns due to the limited resources and perceptions by campaign staffers that targeting youth would be a waste in resources. Therefore, young people are more likely to be targeted by appeals from non-partisan organizations to register and vote. Youth who have not yet identified with a party may choose to identify as Independent. If the state where the registration is taking place requires that the individual register with a party—they may choose not to, whereas if partisans were coming to the door to register new voters the young person may feel pressured to register with their party.

Perhaps the lack of pressure to register with a party leaves little influence on the young person to register and vote for a particular party. More research needs to be done on the effects of non-partisan voter registration drives, but clearly voter registration is no longer monopolized by parties. If parties fail to reach out to youth voters, then non-partisan outreach programs will.

Consequences for the American Public

The context by which individuals come to know who they are politically is changing. With more of an emphasis on candidate over party, identifications of the public are becoming more amorphous. The context of weakening parties in the electorate over the last thirty years has created a vacuum where Americans have little connection to what parties mean and how parties may shape their identity. Encouraging participation in the political system is encouraging people to ascribe to a set of beliefs. In the past the set of beliefs was put forward in party platforms and recognition of what the two political parties stood for. Today much more emphasis has been placed on candidates articulating the platform for individuals to believe in and follow. The difficulty is when the focus changes from parties to individuals; policy becomes the articulation of a campaign rather than a cohesive consistent platform that is long lasting.

The changing political context makes it more difficult for citizens to know their own political identity by which I mean individuals knowing who they are politically, questioning their beliefs, and engaging in behaviors that confirm their identity. Developing a political identity includes opportunities to question available alternatives in beliefs, labels, and policy decisions. Parties with platforms provided the American public with clear alternatives between the two parties and allowed more opportunity for Americans to place themselves on a political party spectrum. Parties previously provided easy self-definition; you are either a Republican or a Democrat. Parties oversimplified the process for identity development because adoption of the

party identification did not mean you had to do any other questioning about who you were politically. Early studies in voting behavior focused on partisanship as a key identification (Lazersfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1968; Campbell et al, 1960). If an individual grew up in a Democratic household, more than likely he or she would be a Democrat, but simply adopting a political definition of party label did not require questioning of policies, politics, or candidates. Easy acceptance of a political definition allowed individuals to participate in the democratic process with little information other than partisan cues. But developing a true political identity requires more than defining oneself as a partisan.

Shifting identification to independence may be a new opportunity for individuals to define who they are politically, but could also mean that their identity is simply taking on the Independent label because they do not want to be identified with the political parties. If the Independent label is simply reactionary, meaning “I’m not either one of those partisans”, then the identity again is simple. An Independent who says, “I agree with these policies of this party and those policies of that other party and have this opinion about this issue that neither party seems to address”, is much more complex in how he or she defines his or herself and how he or she understands politics.

Making the distinction of what a political identity entails is particularly important to our discussion. I argue part of the reason people either participate in politics or do not is precisely this issue of knowing who they are politically. People who are able to define themselves through their political beliefs, policy stances, and meaningful associations are much more likely to participate in the political process. In a democratic society, we would hope that citizen identifications are not simply labels, but thought out, conscious, identities based on a period of self-questioning and reflection. Individuals who solely base who they are politically on whom

their parents were are not fully developed individuals politically. In Dahl's understanding, those who adopt political affiliations without examining their loyalties belong to the apolitical stratum (2005). Engaging in politics requires some aspect of questioning, conflict, and difference of ideas. Where parties thirty years ago offered stances that were clear to voters to easily identify with and then participate, today inspirational leaders are taking the place of parties as the basis for identification.

How America May not Know Who it is Anymore and Why it Matters

The changing environment by which people are figuring out who they are politically, discovering their political beliefs, engaging in the body politic, and dealing with more amorphous political distinction has made it more difficult for people psychologically. This is especially true for young people who have been growing up in an environment of political independence where, since 1968, more than a third of Americans identify themselves as Independent rather than with either political party.

Candidates in the 2008 election actually claimed to be beyond party, which was seen not only in the rhetoric, but also in their campaign paraphernalia. This phenomenon of candidate centered elections and campaigns are not particularly new, but the emphasis on the two major candidates shrugging off parties is. I found that volunteers are more likely to say that are a candidate supporter than a partisan, when I asked how they became interested in the campaign (Gentry, 2009).

Participants in the electoral system should be conscious to examine their political identity and how they came to develop it. Whether one's loyalties are to parties or candidates or a combination, these affiliations need to be examined. During the transition period of youth, participants in the political system need to examine themselves, how they fit into politics, and

how they established their beliefs. Self-reflection, meaning careful thinking about one's beliefs and definitions, is needed to be an informed citizen, but Americans may not spend the time analyzing what they stand for or why their beliefs exist. Self-definition in the political world is important to how people place themselves in the political world and how they inform others where they stand. Self-identification must be carefully done with thoughtful, critical questioning of who we are, or else America will be left without knowledge of who it is politically which has far dire consequences than simply who will participate in elections.

This research is just been the beginning of a longer journey to explore how political identity and its development influence voting behavior. Interestingly, the validity of this ANES measure seems to fit with the theory posed: as one enters into higher levels of development he or she is more likely to vote and lower levels of development suggest one is less likely to vote.

While the ANES analyses did confirm the possible use of political identity development as an influence on voting behavior, more data is still needed. Direct discussions with youth will provide more concrete examples of how identity development actually happens rather than focusing on outcomes of the statuses as with the ANES data.

The data also suggest many different levels of development for Independents, which requires a revision of the theory of default and developed Independents. For youth, Independence may be considered an option until more information is gathered about the political system and the two parties. Yet the same could also be true for adults. One major direction that needs to be investigated is what Political Independence may mean for youth that it may not for older counterparts.

Certainly one criticism of the political identity scale could be that it is redundant—it measures variables well established in the field and puts them all into one scale. On the contrary,

these are components that help a person to understand who they are and what they stand for politically. Where this research has original insight is the process of development rather than assuming people are political creatures as soon as they become adults.

From what we know now, one way in which youth may be different from their older counterparts, and making them less likely to vote, is their level of political identity development. However, I do not generalize in saying that more youth are found in the lower levels of development. Rather than stating youth do not vote due to stability variables, I take a deeper look into how a person becomes political and attempt to look at the process and outcomes of this development on youth political participation. One bold direction this research will take is to argue that the years when there is more youth participation are also years when youth are more fully developed in their political identities, whether from parental guidance, self questioning, or the role that political leaders may play in acting as a role model for youth struggling to find out who they are.

Linking Civic Engagement and Voting Behavior Through Identity Development

Political identity links civic engagement and voting behavior through different aspects of reinforced participation. Internalizing the value, behaviors, and beliefs about participating in one's community and through voting have similar foundations. Civic engagement links the individual's actions to those of the community can enhance one's interest in interacting with the socio-political system. The biggest link between civic engagement and voting behavior is connecting of the individual with the political system. Civic engagement offers more of a hands on approach to encourage people of all ages, but especially young people, to become active in their communities, whereas voting is much more of an abstract, adult task. The link between these two activities is the individual. Through civic participation an individual learns how the

political system works, who makes the decisions, what he or she believes in and what he or she thinks society should be like. Youth are not only getting information about the political system they are also learning information about themselves and their views about the world, which is exploration of an identity.

Civic engagement allows for concrete knowledge about the political system and how the individual fits into it, in addition to moments of confrontation about socialized beliefs. Forming a cohesive political identity requires that the identity must come into confrontation with alternative viewpoints. As Yates and Youniss note, students who participate in community service at a soup kitchen become confronted about their opinions on poverty and its causes (1996, 279). Confrontation of previous beliefs about the world, how one defines herself and the political order are valuable stimulants for a more cohesive identity. Confrontation is needed for individuals to acknowledge their beliefs about themselves and the political world, and know that there may be differences in what they believe and what others believe.

Forming a political identity requires moments of transitioning and defining oneself. Civic engagement in adolescent years offers moments of focus on the often latent identity of civic and political life. Participation at a younger age offers situations where an individual defines his or herself and gives a reflective element to transitioning between how the individual looks at the world. Participation becomes a crucial aspect to developing an identity as young people find what they believe in, gain more knowledge about how the world works, and engage in behaviors that might otherwise be nonexistent. Civic engagement allows youth to look beyond themselves and to see a larger world to connect with. But in a youth's life, just as with politics being peripheral to many adults' lives, civic engagement is one of many different

opportunities available to define oneself. Those who support civic engagement should acknowledge the occasions where self definition and transcendence is possible.

Political identity can also help to explain why an individual would choose not to engage in civic or political life later. Negative experiences during civic activities may make an individual not want to continue participating. Reinforcement is important in the experiences that one has when participating. If the experiences or the reactions to one's behavior are negative then this makes the individual less likely to engage in the future. For example, if a student working in his or her community at a help outreach center and has a negative experience with the director or patrons, then he or she is less likely to want to go back into that environment, which can affect further civic engagement and have a negative impact on later political engagement. Civic engagement may also be perceived as work rather than as a rewarding experience from which one can learn. This topic gets into the deeper debate about voluntary versus mandatory community service in schools. This may certainly not turn all students off, but some may perceive civic service as something to do simply because it is required.

The major component of civic engagement to identity development is internalization of beliefs and self-reflection. If the individual sees the civic opportunity as another requirement rather than an opportunity to consider what's going on in the world then they will be less likely to continue to participate. Careful criticism of civic engagement programs should take into account the costs of turning some students off to civic and political life altogether versus the rewards of opening a student's eyes to community and political experience. Centrality is another reason why some might choose not to engage in civic life later on. If the civic and political identity are not central to the individual than his or her identity may be formed from other aspects of his or her life and politics becomes peripheral. If a civic or political identity is not a

central or salient part of one's life other priorities will come up. As we develop in adulthood, this aspect of centrality also plays a role as we age and take on new identities.

Identity can also explain the differences in opinion of young people about civic versus political engagement. Civic engagement encourages participation directly through community activities, institutions of government, and volunteerism. For early identity development there needs to be direct relationships between the individual and society. Civic engagement provides those opportunities. Some of the difficulty with developing a political identity is that much of politics can be abstract such as political parties, political ideology, and policy. Engaging in civic life has more concrete connections to identity and placing the individual in context to a larger world. Political engagement offers much less of a concrete activity save for interactions with political parties and political volunteers.

A theory for building a bridge between civic engagement in adolescence that encourages later voting behavior is identity development. Better conceptualization of an idea leads to better research design and analysis. The connection of political identity to voting behavior helps us understand another element of voting behavior that is deeper than our current measures and takes into account differences based on youth. How identity can foster civic engagement is through conscious pursuit of ways to encourage better civic engagement through developing youth's political identity. Political ego identity can also be studied under changes in political circumstances that may affect a generation of young people and their development as political beings.

Civic engagement is a field that could benefit from more emphasis on political identity. Programs geared towards civic engagement should take into account more than just self-reflection, and encourage youth to be clear about what they believe and what they think and how

that may change through their participation. Self definition, self reflection, and positive feedback about the civic and political behaviors we pursue are major components to studying a new variable that not only bridges civic engagement and future political engagement, but also illuminates the peculiarities of what it means to be young and transitioning towards the political person one will be.

Voter Registration Laws and Youth Turnout

Another avenue of study for youth turnout is the limitations on college student registration and absentee ballots. No analysis of voter turnout can ignore the role of legal barriers to registration and voting to explain poor turnout. As a consequence, future research on what may discourage youth turnout will be elaborated here. Certainly one of the major ways to discourage youth turnout is to make the process more difficult. Scholars such as Rosenstone and Wolfinger (1980) pointed out early on that legal barriers to registration depress turnout. Legal barriers for young people are often proposed by local boards of election to avoid voter fraud and prevent young people from voting in two locations. The major laws that affect youth turnout are residency, registration, and absentee ballots.

Residency requirements make it difficult for college students to register in the communities where they attend college. As the Pace Institute's analysis of these laws suggests, states, where students have the choice of where to register, have the highest registration and turnout of young people (2004). From my own previous research, students can at times be caught in a catch-22 where they cannot register in the county where they go to college and the county where their parents' reside does not permit outside students living away from their parents from voting (Gentry, 2004). Tight residency requirements ask that young people change their identification (driver's licenses or non-driver's identification) to match their current

residence, which may change frequently due to dorm room moving or moving off campus. The continued burden to change their driver's license every time the student moves, actually, deters students from registering in their college town. There are a few additional reasons why young people should be given the choice to register where they live from nine to twelve months out of the year.

While some registrars may be very difficult when dealing with college student voters, the benefits that college students give to the community are immense. Considering budgets and federal monies to the area, college students for the purposes of the Census are counted as residents where they go to college. As a consequence, the states and localities that house these college students get additional monies from the federal government based on the number of residents in the area (Census Bureau, 2009). Federal monies for programs and interstate systems go to the same localities that may deny college students the right to vote where they are counted by the Census to live. In addition, issues of reapportionment at the federal level and redistricting at the state level are based on population densities, which are based on Census counts. At the most basic level, college students who are denied the opportunity to vote in the college towns are denied representation.

Students do not only contribute to the tax base for federal monies but college and university students also bring in and pay local taxes which can contribute to their college communities. College students work in the communities where they attend college in addition to the money that is brought in to the community from the college or university itself. Around the country, college students pay local and state taxes for purchases in those communities and when they work also pay state and local taxes on income. But money isn't the only factor, college students also volunteer in the communities where they attend college. For all that students and

higher education institutions bring to communities across the country, students continue to be denied access to register where they attend school or at least have a choice in where they consider home.

Absentee ballots also tend to be a difficult and onerous process for young people. While there has been at least some research into how these laws affect college students, there is a lack of research in how these laws affect individuals who are not in college—which are half of the 18-24 population. The process for absentee ballots can not only be time consuming, but also requires the information to be sent to the county registrar months in advance of the election date.

Final Thoughts

The voting behavior literature is missing the most crucial bit of knowledge about youth voting—the knowledge about oneself. Incorporating the aspects of identity development into attempts to understand youth turnout is not only valuable but essential to distinguishing what makes young people different. The life of this work is inherently positive, there are ways to study what encourages youth voting. While I have attempted to be neither prescriptive nor suggest that everyone be developed in their identity, I do see this contribution of identity development as an interdisciplinary approach to why youth vote.

Political identity development does not need to be linear. While my model in chapter 3 is presented in a two dimensional format, I see identity development as inherently cyclical. People go through stages of development and may have crises serious enough to entirely shift their status. For youth voting behavior, political identity development is influential in explaining why some youth vote. Young people in the higher statuses of identity development do turnout more than lower statuses. Inspirational leaders encourage youth participation when they inspire hope in others. Young Independents are not all the same and those who are more developed in their

political identity are more likely to participate than their default counterparts. In the end, politics is not the focal point of many people's lives and their political identity is but one part of the larger personality. For young people, identity matters.

Appendices

Appendix A. Construction of the Scale and ANES Data Questions

Political Ego Identity Components on the ANES and Coding

Traditional Variables:

Gender: Coded as Male=0, Female=1

Race: 1948-1998: INTERVIEWER OBSERVATION OF RACE 2000 AND LATER: What racial or ethnic group or groups best describes you? 1972 AND LATER (exc. 2002): In addition to being American, what do you consider your main ethnic group or nationality group?
Coded: White=1, Non-white=0

Married: 1952: Are you married? 1956 AND LATER: Are you married now and living with your husband/wife (2002: spouse)-- or are you widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never married?
Coded: Married=1, Never married, divorced, separated, widowed, and partners=0

Education: 1952-1972: How many grades of school did you finish? 1974 AND LATER: What is highest grade of school or year of college you have completed? Did you get a high school diploma or pass a high school equivalency test? 1974,1976: Do you have a college degree? (IF YES:) What degree is that? 1978-1984: Do you have a college degree? (IF YES:) What is the highest degree that you have earned? 1986 AND LATER: What is the highest degree that you have earned?
Coded 7 categories 1=8th grade or less, 2=High school, no diploma, 3=High School Diploma, 4=High School Diploma plus non-academic training, 5=Some college or Associates Degree, 6=Bachelors Degree, 7=Advanced Degree

Income: 1952,1956-1960: About what do you think your total income will be this year for yourself and your immediate family? 1962: Would you tell me how much income you and your family will be making during this calendar year, 1962. I mean, before taxes. 1964,1968: About what do you think your total income will be this year for yourself and your immediate family. Just give me the number/ letter) of the right income category. 1966,1970: Many people don't know their exact (1966/1970) income yet; but would you tell me as best you can what you expect your (1966/1970) income to be--before taxes? You may just tell me the letter of the group on this card into which your family income will probably fall. 1972-1990, 1992 LONG-FORM,1994-LATER EXC. 2000 TELEPHONE: Please look at this card/page (2000 FTF: the booklet) and tell me the letter of the income group that includes the income of all members of your family living here in [previous year] before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income. (IF UNCERTAIN:) What would be your best guess? 1992 SHORT FORM: Can you give us an estimate of your total family income in 1991 before taxes? This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest and all other income for every member of your family living in your house in 1991. First could you tell me if that was above or below \$24,999? (IF UNCERTAIN: what would be your best guess?) (IF

ABOVE/BELOW \$24,999:) I will read you some income categories, could you please stop me when I reach the category that corresponds to your family situation? 2000 TELEPHONE: I am going to read you a list of income categories. Please tell me which category best describes the total income of all members of your family living in your house in 1999 before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income. Please stop me when I get to your family's income.

Coded: by percentiles 1=0-16 percentile, 2=17-33 percentile, 3=34-67 percentile, 4=68-95 percentile, 5=96-100 percentile

Residency: How long have you lived here in (1986 AND LATER: your present) (1984: this) city/town/township/county (2002: community) ?

Coded by number of years

Political Identity Scale Questions on the ANES

A_{1a} Correct Democratic Party Placement on Ideology Scale: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you (1996 AND LATER: Here is) a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place the Democratic Party 7 point ideology scale?

Coded: 1=Extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal 0=Moderate, middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, extremely conservative

A_{1b} Correct Republican Party Placement on Ideology Scale: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you (1996 AND LATER: Here is) a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place the Republican Party 7 point ideology scale?

Coded: 0=Extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, Moderate, middle of the road 1=slightly conservative, conservative, extremely conservative

A_{1c} Knows Party with House Majority before Election: 1958-1968: Do you happen to know which party had the most Congressmen in Washington before the election this/last month? (IF NECESSARY:) Which one? 1970 AND LATER: Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington before the elections (this/ last) month? (IF NECESSARY:) Which one? (2000, 2004: DON'T PROBE DK)

Coded: 0=Incorrect, Don't Know, no, 1=Correct party mentioned

A₂ Politics is Too Complicated: Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.

Coded: 0=Agree, 1=Neither, 2=Disagree

A₃ Say in What Government Does: People like me don't have any say about what the government does.

Coded: 0=Agree, 1=Neither, 2=Disagree

A₄ Self Placement on Ideology Scale: ALL YEARS EXC. 2000 TELEPHONE,2002: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is (1972,1974: I'm going to show you) a 7-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? (7-POINT SCALE SHOWN TO R) 2000 TELEPHONE: When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, extremely conservative, or haven't you thought much about this? 2002: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate or middle of the road, slightly conservative, extremely conservative, or haven't you thought much about this?

Coded: 0=Don't know, 1=Liberal, Conservative, Middle of the Road

A₅ Opinion Better off if US is unconcerned with the rest of the world: 1956-1960: (Same introduction as in VCF0805 [CARD WITH RESPONSES SHOWN]). 1968,1980: Now I'd like to read some of the things people tell us when we interview them (1968: and ask you; 1980: As I read, please tell me) whether you agree or disagree with them. 1972: I'd like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of these next six statements. 1976: I am going to read you two statements about US foreign policy and I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each statement 1984-1988,1992: I am going to read a statement about US foreign policy, and I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree. 1990,1994-LATER: Do you agree or disagree with this statement. ALL YEARS: 'This country would be better off if we just stayed home and did not concern ourselves with problems in other parts of the world.'

Coded: 0=Don't know, no opinion, 1=Agree or Disagree

A₆ Government Health Insurance Scale: There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some (1988,1994-LATER: people) feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses (1984 AND LATER: for everyone). (1996,2004: Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1). Others feel that (1988,1994-1996: all) medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance (1984 AND LATER: plans) like Blue Cross (1984-1994: or [1996:some] other company paid plans). (1996,2004: 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, or haven't you thought much about this? (7-POINT SCALE SHOWN TO R)

Coded: 0=Don't know, no opinion, 1=Placement on scale (1-7)

A₇ Opinion By Law when should Abortion be allowed: ALL YEARS EXCEPT 2000 TELEPHONE: There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. (RESPONDENT BOOKLET) Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view? You can just tell me the number of the opinion you choose. 2000 TELEPHONE:I am going to read you a short list of opinions. Please tell me which one of the opinions best agrees with your view. You can just tell me the number of the opinion you choose.

Coded: 0=Don't Know, No opinion, 1=Opinion (never, in certain cases, when reason is established, always)

A₈ Defense Spending Scale: Some people believe that we should spend much less money for defense. (1996,2004: Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1.) Others feel that defense spending should be greatly increased. (1996,2004: Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7.) (2004: And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2,3,4,5, or 6). Where would you place yourself on this scale or haven't you thought much about this? (7-POINT SCALE SHOWN TO R)

Coded: 0=Don't Know, No Opinion, 1=Placement on 7 point scale

A₉ Did the US Do the Right Thing by Getting Involved in the War: 1952: Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Korea two years ago or should we have stayed out? 1964,1966: Have you been paying attention to what is going on in Vietnam? (IF YES:) Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Vietnam or should we have stayed out? 1968-1972: Do you think we did the right thing in getting into the fighting in Vietnam or should we have stayed out?

Coded: 0=Don't know, 1=Yes or No

A₁₀ Opinion How should US Proceed in the Current War: 1952: Which of the following things do you think it would be best for us to do now in Korea? (OPTIONS CORRESPONDING TO CODE CATEGORIES READ TO R) 1964-1970: Which of the following do you think we should do now in Vietnam? (OPTIONS CORRESPONDING TO CODE CATEGORIES READ OR SHOWN)

Coded: 0=Don't Know, 1= Pull out, peaceful settlement, stronger stand

A₁₁ Opinion Guaranteed Jobs and Income: 1956-1960: 'The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work can find a job.' 1964,1968: In general, some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own." Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other. (IF YES:) Do you think that the government -- 2002: Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has A JOB AND A GOOD STANDARD OF LIVING. Others think the government should just LET EACH PERSON GET AHEAD ON THEIR OWN. Which is closer to the way you feel or haven't you thought much about this?

Coded: 0=Don't know, no opinion, 1=Govt to see everyone has a job or get ahead on own

A₁₂ Opinion Government Assistance with Medical Care: 1956,1960: Around election time people talk about different things that our government in Washington is doing or should be doing. Now I would like to talk to you about some of the things that our government might do. Of course, different things are important to different people, so we don't expect everyone to have an opinion about all of these. I would like you to look at this card as I read each question and tell me how you feel about the question. If you don't have an opinion, just tell me that; if you do have an opinion, choose one of the other answers. 'The government ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost.' 1962: Now on a different problem. 'The government ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost.' Do you have an opinion on this or not? (IF YES:) Do you agree that the government should do this or do you think the government should not do it. 1964,1968: Some say the government in Washington ought to help people get

doctors and hospital care at low cost; others say the government should not get into this. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other? (IF YES) What is your position?

Coded: 0=Don't know, no opinion, 1=help people or stay out

A₁₃ Urban Unrest Scale: There is much discussion about the best way to deal with the problem of urban unrest and rioting. Some say it is more important to use all available force to maintain law and order -- no matter what results. Others say it is more important to correct the problems of poverty and unemployment that give rise to the disturbances. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? (7-POINT SCALE SHOWN TO R)

Coded: 0=Don't know, Haven't thought much about it, 1= Placement anywhere on scale

Set of Opinions Variable Creation: A₅-A₁₃ added together, with a minimum of 0 and maximum of 5. The only available number of questions for all years was 3 opinions so in recoding the maximum was shifted to 3 by coding 4s and 5s as 3s.

A₁₄ Discuss Politics with Family and Friends: Do you ever discuss politics with your family or friends?

Coded: 0=No, 1=Yes

Salience Questions on the ANES

Interest in Elections: Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you have been/were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in (1952-1998: following) the political campaigns (so far) this year?

Coded: 0=not much interested, 1=somewhat interested, 2=very interested

Interest in Public Affairs: 1964 AND LATER: Some people seem to follow (1964: think about) what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all? 1960, 1962: We'd also like to know how much attention you pay to what's going on in politics generally. I mean from day to day, when there isn't any big election campaign going on, would you say you follow politics very closely, fairly closely, or not much at all?

Coded: 0=Hardly at all, 1=Only now and then, 2=Some of the time, 3=Most of the time

Appendix B. Focus Group Questionnaire

Focus Group Questions

Intro Statement: Thank you again for volunteering to be a part of this focus group. My name is Bobbi Gentry and I am a Political Science Graduate student at the CUNY Graduate Center. I am conducting these focus groups for my dissertation. I am investigating a concept that I call political identity development. It is the process of how one comes to have beliefs about politics and government, how one identifies politically, and how one behaves politically.

In front of you is a consent form that is required for your participation that you need to read and sign in order to participate. Please read it over and consider your participation in this group. If you are willing to participate please sign and date the bottom. By signing this consent form you are agreeing to be audiotaped. Information from the survey will remain confidential and no one other than myself will be able to connect your name with your answers.

As a participant in this focus group you are expected to participate honestly and respectfully. Please answer the questions as you perceive them. Remember you can choose to end your participation at any time or to not answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. The format of this focus group is open discussion where you can answer and discuss these ideas with one another. At the end of this session, I will give you a short questionnaire to fill out. Again, thank you for participating and let's begin.

In thinking about politics, let's talk about voting, interest in politics and political independence:

1. In the news around election time, some of the focus is on who votes. Some of the election coverage is on who does not. Did you vote in the 2008 presidential election? Why did you vote or why didn't you vote?
2. If you did vote, what influenced your choice?
3. Most youth in America are not interested in politics. However, some are very interested, others are somewhat interested and some young people are only interested during election time. What about you, how interested in politics are you? What are your reasons for your level of interest and if you are not interested what are the reasons you're not? At what age did you first become interested in politics or at what age did you become turned off from politics?
4. Political Independence can mean many different things from not identifying with the one of the political parties to thinking independently to being a political Independent. What does Political Independence mean to you?

Now I have some questions about political identity?

5. Do you think you have a political identity?
6. How would you describe this identity?
7. Political identity come in many different varieties, and how we come to develop them also varies. What I mean by political identity includes beliefs about government and politics, how a person identifies themselves politically, and how people behave politically. How did you develop your political beliefs, if any?

8. How are your parents' political beliefs different from your own or have you not thought about it? What about your friends?
9. At what age did you know you had a political identity? At what age did you first develop a political identity? Is your political identity still underdevelopment?
10. If a person has a political identity, how would they behave versus someone who does not have one? Why?

Now I would like to talk about the influences on a political identity

11. Consider who or what helped you to develop your beliefs; some examples include parents, friends, co-workers, news media, and popular culture. What are the main influences on how you think politically or haven't you thought about it?
12. Are there any politicians or political leaders who influenced your political identity? What role, if any, do political leaders play in influencing your political identity?

Let's consider changes in political identity.

13. Have you at any point changed your political identity such as your ideology or party identification? That is, have you changed from being liberal to being moderate or conservative or vice-versa? Or have you changed your party identification from Democrat to Republican or Independent or vice versa?
14. Some people go through a period of self questioning about their political identity and others know their political identity without any questioning; have you gone through a period of questioning?
15. What gets you to question what you believe politically? Do you seek sources of information that may be different from your own beliefs?
16. Lastly, what would get you to be interested in politics? What would get you to vote?

Ending Statement: That is all the discussion questions I have, please fill out this demographic questionnaire before you leave. Thank you again for being a part of this focus group, your thoughts and discussion were extremely helpful.

Demographic Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is for group comparisons. The only identification on this portion of the questionnaire will be your focus group number.

Please Circle your answers and answer each question to the best of your ability.

Focus Group Number: _____

1. Age: _____
2. Generally speaking do you think of yourself as a Democrat, Republican, Independent or what?
 - a. Democrat (if you answered this please proceed to portion A)
 - b. Republican (if you answered this please proceed to portion A)
 - c. Independent (if you answered this please proceed to portion B)
 - d. Other (Please Specify)_____ (if you answered this please proceed to portion B)
 - e. Don't Know (if you answered this please proceed to portion B)
 - f. Prefer not to answer
 - A. If you think of yourself as a Democrat or Republican, do you consider yourself a strong partisan, weak partisan or neither?
 1. Strong
 2. Weak
 3. Neither
 - B. If you think of yourself as an Independent, do you lean towards the Democratic party or the Republican or neither?
 1. Lean towards the Democratic Party
 2. Lean towards the Republican Party
 3. Do not lean towards either party
3. What do you consider your main ethnicity? You can choose more than one answer.
 - a. White
 - b. Black
 - c. Asian
 - d. Native American
 - e. Hispanic
 - f. Biracial
 - g. Other
 - h. Prefer not to answer
4. Which political party do your parents belong to?

| Mother | Father |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Democrat | a. Democrat |
| b. Republican | b. Republican |
| c. Independent | c. Independent |
| d. Other_____ | d. Other_____ |
| e. Don't Know | e. Don't Know |
| f. Prefer not to answer | f. Prefer not to answer |
5. Were you registered for the 2008 election? Yes No

6. Please indicate whether or not you have engaged in any of these political activities and how frequently:

| | |
|---|--|
| Volunteered for a political party | Never Once A Few Times Occasionally Frequently |
| Signed a petition | Never Once A Few Times Occasionally Frequently |
| Discussed politics with family | Every day Once a Week Once a Month Every Couple of Months Once a Year Never |
| Discussed politics with friends | Every day Once a Week Once a Month Every Couple of Months Once a Year Never |
| Read about politics in the newspaper or on the internet | Every day Once a Week Once a Month Every Couple of Months Once a Year Never |
| Watched a show that included politics | Never Once A Few Times Occasionally Frequently |
| Convinced others to vote | Never Once A Few Times Occasionally Frequently |

Contributed money to a candidate or party Never
Once
A Few Times
Occasionally
Frequently

Volunteered for community service Never
Once
A Few Times
Occasionally
Frequently

Watched a comedy show about politics such as “The Daily Show” or the “Colbert Report” Never
Once
A Few Times
Occasionally
Frequently

Now I’d like to ask you about some current events to measure your level of political knowledge.

7. In which two countries are the United States currently fighting wars?

8. Who is the current Vice President? _____

9. Who is the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? _____

10. Who is the current Speaker of the House of Representatives? _____

11. Which political party currently controls the House of Representatives? _____

12. Which political party currently controls the Senate? _____

13. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a. 8th grade or less
- b. 9-12 grade, no diploma or GED
- c. High School Diploma or GED
- d. High School Diploma or GED plus non-academic training
- e. Some college
- f. Community College Degree, Associates
- g. Four year College Degree, BA or BS
- h. Advanced Degree, PhD, Masters, JD
- i. Prefer not to answer

14. Please circle the income category that best describes the total household income of your family living in your household. This figure should include all salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income.
- a. Less than \$30,000
 - b. \$30k-\$49,999
 - c. \$50K-\$74,999
 - d. \$75k-\$99,999
 - e. \$100,000 or more
 - f. Prefer not to answer
15. What is your personal income category?
- a. Less than \$30,000
 - b. \$30k-\$49,999
 - c. \$50K-\$74,999
 - d. \$75k-\$99,999
 - e. \$100,000 or more
 - f. Prefer not to answer
16. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important, how important is politics to your life? _____

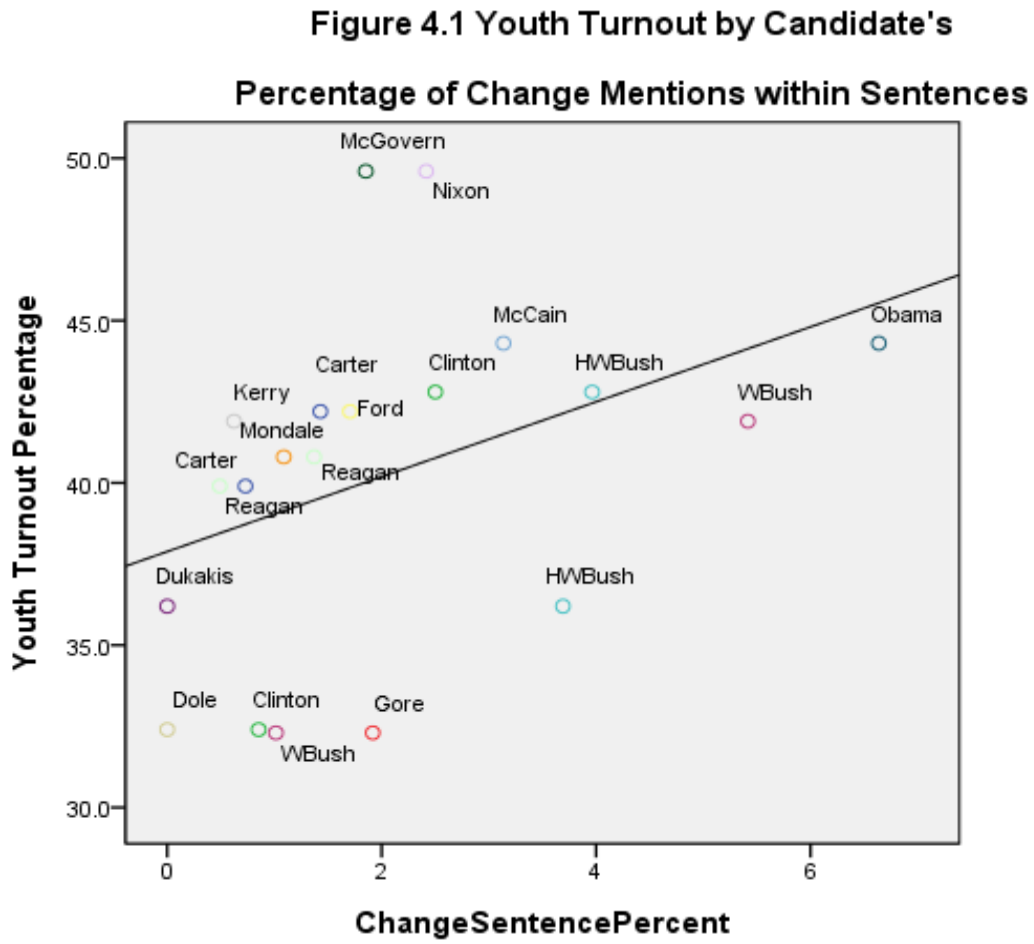


Figure 4.2 Youth Turnout by Candidate's

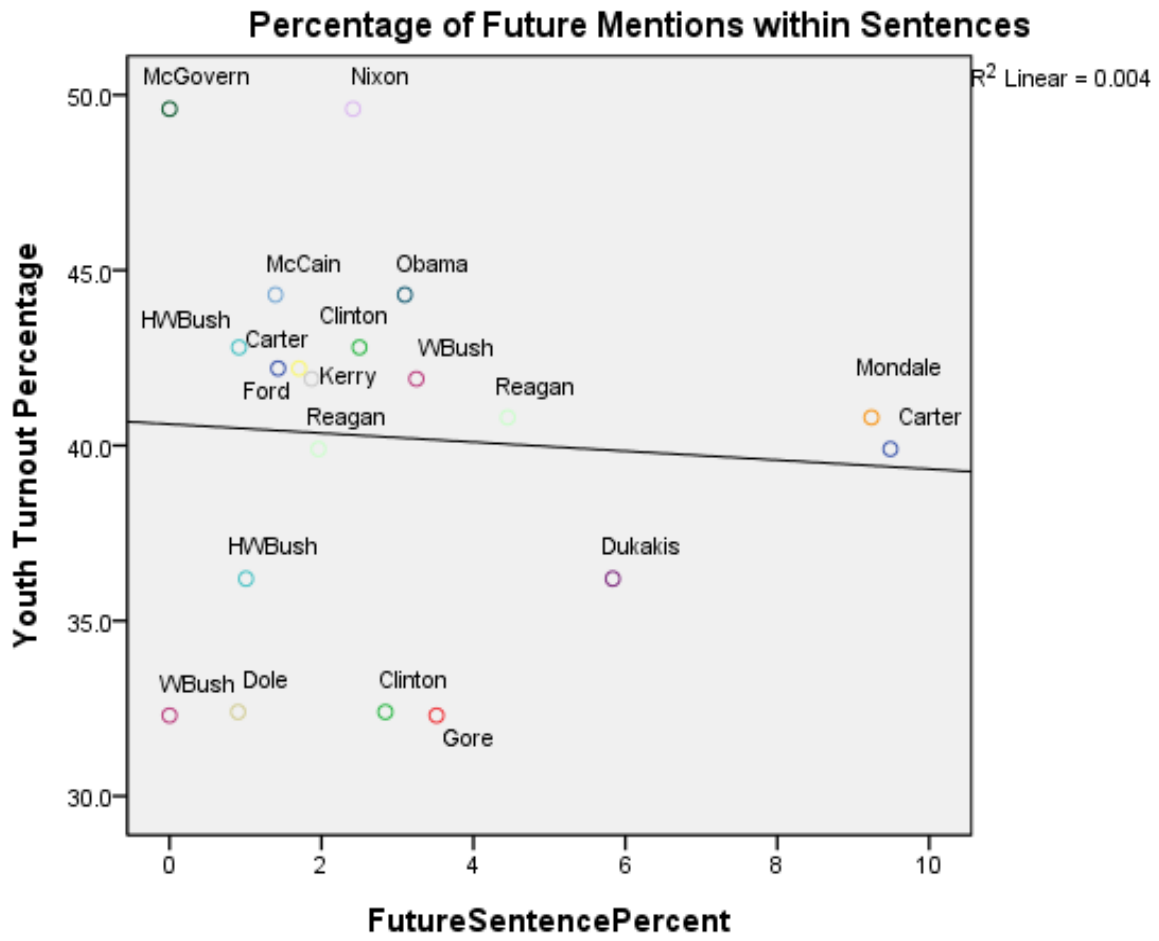


Figure 4.3 Youth Turnout by Candidate's

Percentage of Hope Mentions within Sentences

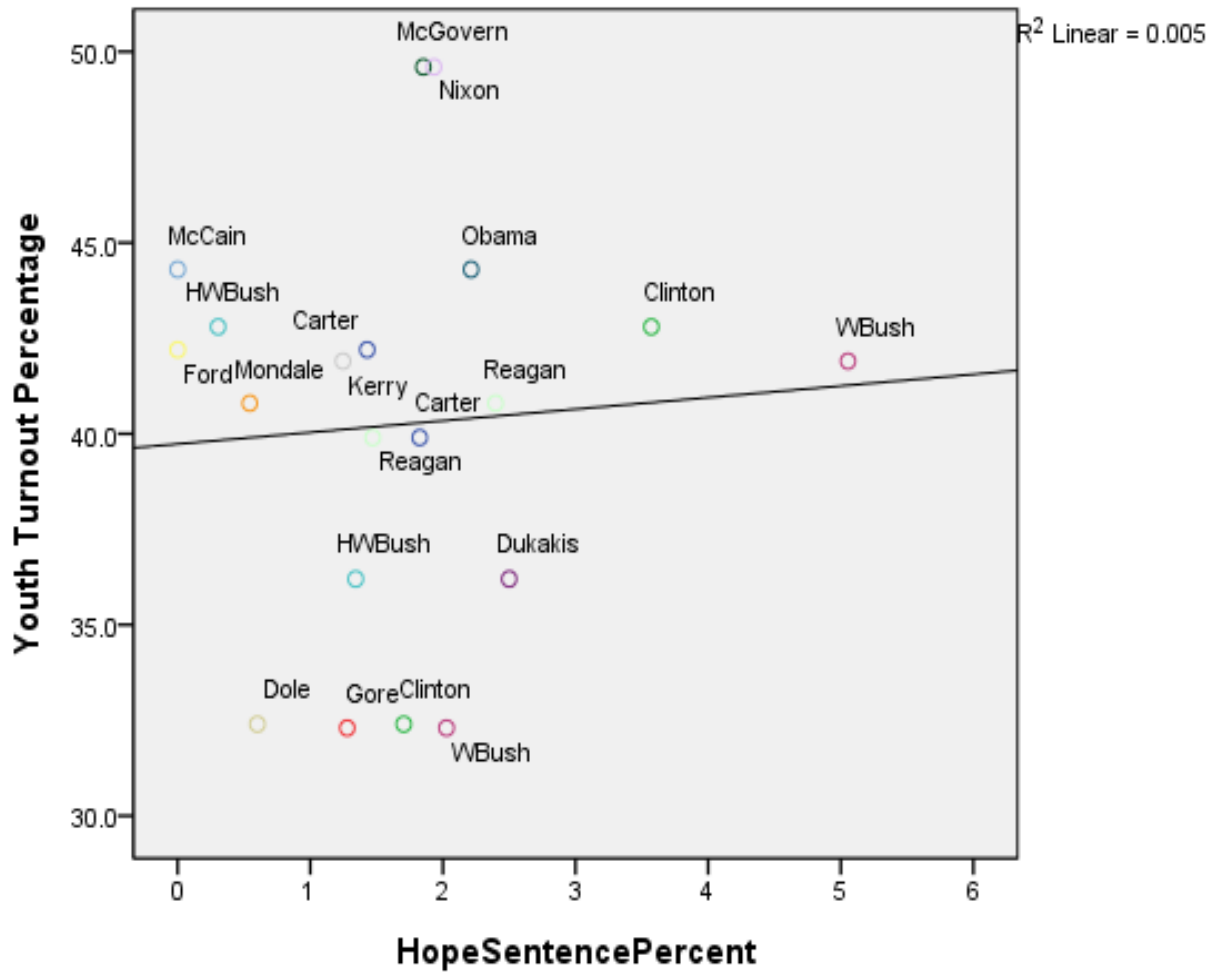


Figure 4.4 Youth Turnout by Candidate's

Percentage of "We Politics" Mentions within Sentences

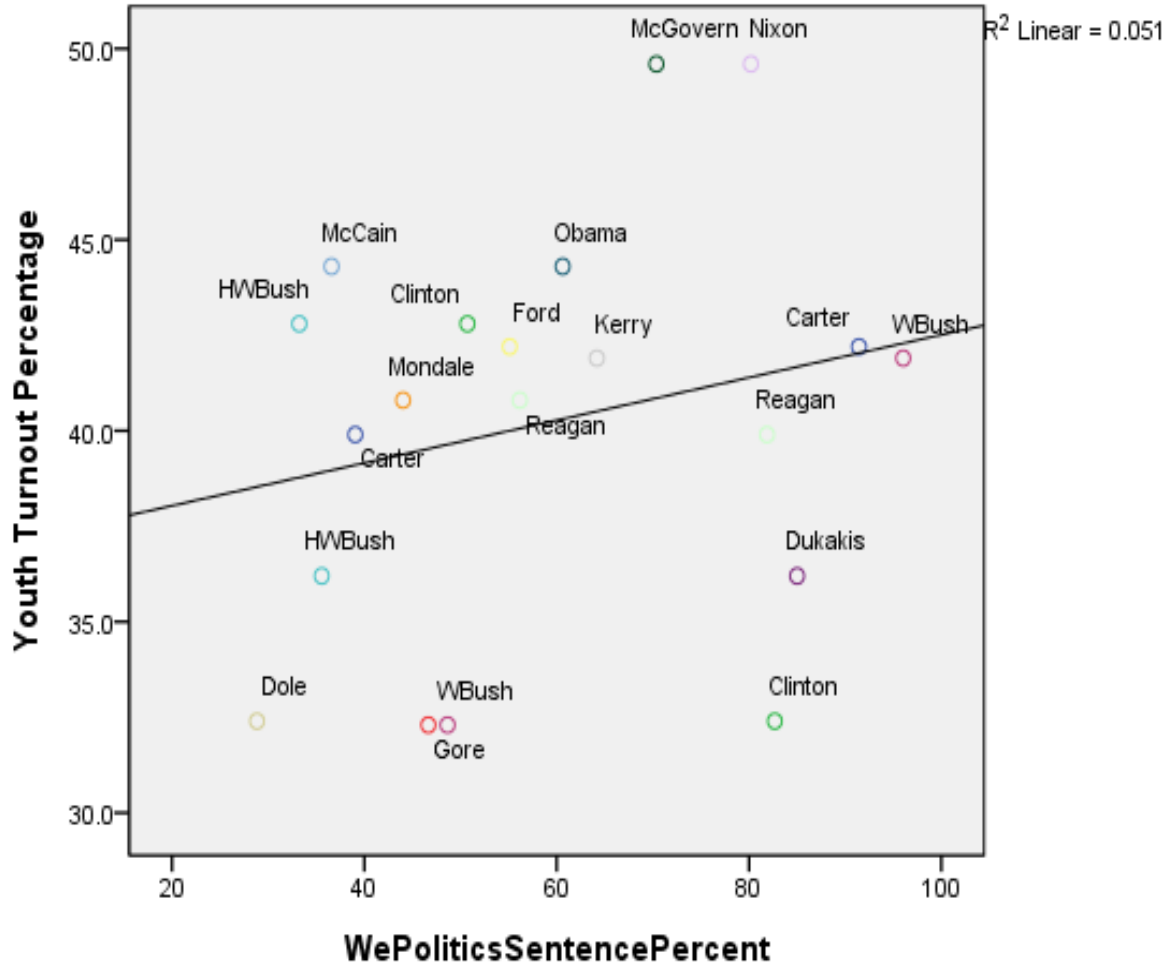
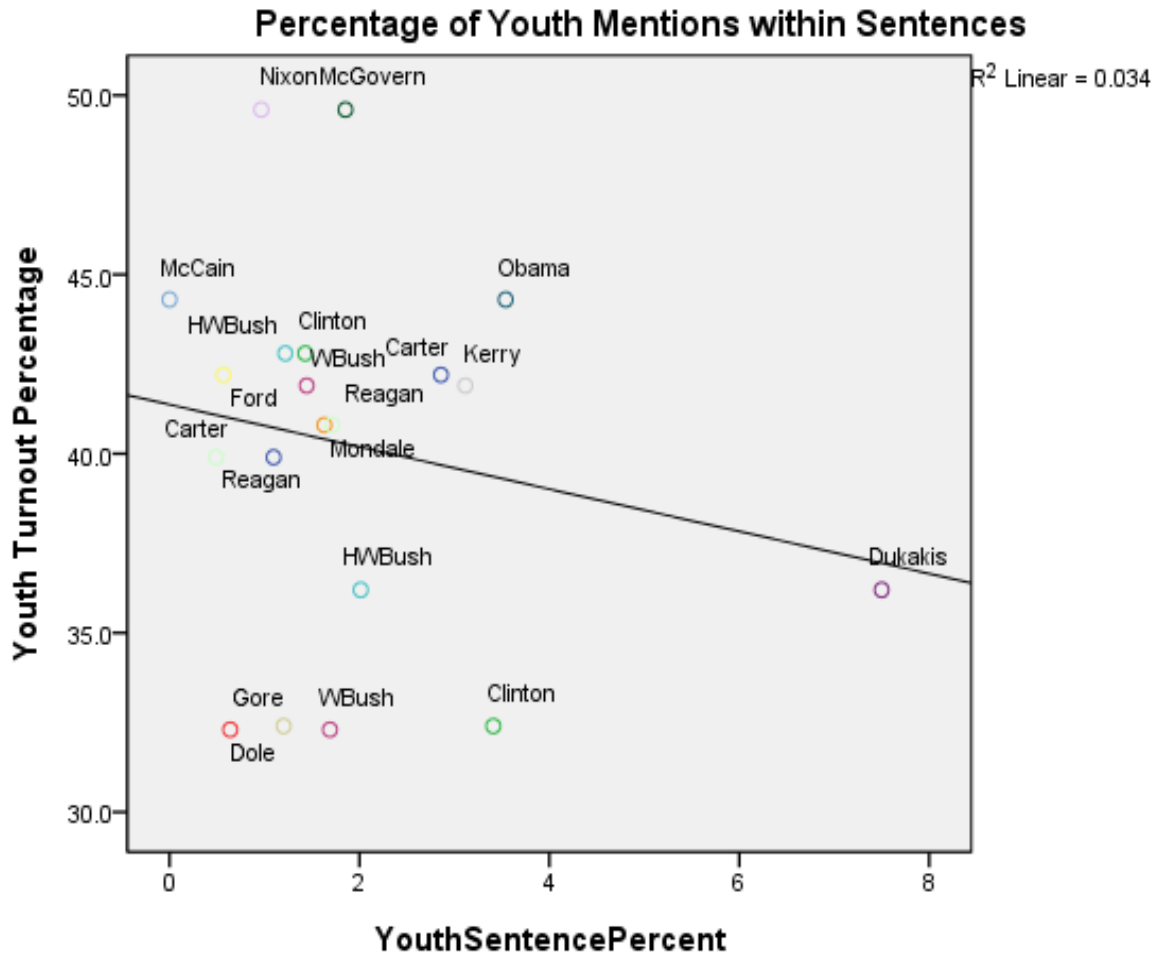


Figure 4.5 Youth Turnout by Candidate's



Appendix D. Discussion of Interaction Effects from Chapter 6

Three different types of interaction effects might be occurring at once, the interaction between identity and interest in an election where a person's place in the identity process affects youth voter turnout based on a person's level of interest in the election. Another interaction may be one's political identity affects whether or not a young person votes based on their level of interest in public affairs. Both aspects of salience might be combined to account for a total level of importance of politics to one's life based on current events (interest in the election) and the general importance of politics (interest in public affairs). Both political identity development and levels of interest in politics will account for some portions of voter turnout even if identity or salience is controlled for. Therefore, I include in the model the single variables in with the interaction effects to account for the individual influence of both identity and salience (Jaccard, 2001).

When only the interaction effect is included in the analysis, the interaction between identity development and the salience measure is significant. Of the control measures, education and income remain consistently valuable to understanding youth turnout. The choice of including the main effect variables with the interaction effects is a difficult one to make, but should also be driven by theoretical considerations. Often the choice is about whether or not the main effect and the interaction when accounted for actually decrease the significance of both effects (Jaccard, 2001; Pollock, 2009). I chose to run the logistic regression with the main effects and interaction effect (in Model 5 of Table 6.2) because I think that voting behavior is affected by the level of identity development when salience varies. For example, if a young person has a fully developed identity but does not think that this election is interesting then they are much less likely to vote. On the other hand, if an explorer believes that this election is

important but does not yet have a more developed identity then they are most likely to vote than those explorers who do not think politics or this election is interesting. When all of the effects are accounted for, only identity development and interest in elections continue to be significant when the interaction effect between them is also included. However, the interaction effect is not

Table 6.2 Logistic Regression Models and Interaction Effects for Youth Turnout with Traditional Explanations, Political Identity Measure with Policy, and Salience

| Variable | Model 5 | Model 6 | Model 7 | Model 8 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender | 0.20 (0.13) | 1.23 (0.13) | 1.13 (0.13) | 1.24 (0.13) |
| White | 0.12 (0.16) | 1.18 (0.16) | 1.19 (0.15) | 1.16 (0.15) |
| Married | -0.12 (0.14) | 0.84 (0.14) | 0.88 (0.13) | 0.82 (0.13) |
| Education | 0.32** (0.06) | 1.42** (0.05) | 1.45** (0.05) | 1.46** (0.05) |
| Income | 0.19** (0.06) | 1.21** (0.06) | 1.23** (0.06) | 1.22** (0.06) |
| Residency | 0.00 (0.00) | 1.00 (0.00) | 1.00 (0.00) | 1.00 (0.00) |
| Identity Development Scale | 0.19** (0.06) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Interest in Election | 0.46** (0.18) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Interest in Public Affairs | 0.20 (0.15) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Identity Scale X Salience | -0.01 (0.02) | 1.04** (0.01) | _____ | _____ |
| Identity Scale X Interest in Election | _____ | _____ | 1.09** (0.01) | _____ |
| Identity Scale X Interest in Public Affairs | _____ | _____ | _____ | 1.05** (0.01) |
| Constant | -3.91** (0.45) | -2.99** (0.29) | -2.91** (0.28) | -2.94** (0.28) |
| -2 Log Likelihood | 1446.14 | 1495.67 | 1591.84 | 1557.18 |

Model 5: N= 1203, Model 6: N=1243, Model 7: N=1310, Model 8: N=1278 **indicates significance at the .01 level * indicates significance at the .05 level. Source: American National Election Study Cumulative File 1952-2004. Standard errors are in parentheses.

significant (p=.52). However, when each of the interaction effects is taken into account without the main effects of the components to salience, and identity development, then each interaction effect is a significant indicator of youth turnout.

Of the three additional models run without the main effects (Models 6, 7, 8), the interaction between the Identity scale and salience is the when included in the model has the smallest -2 log Likelihood (1495.67). Each increment increase in the interaction between identity and salience

increases the odds of youth voting by 4 percent. Of all the models with interactions, the most accurate model is the one that included the main effects along with the interaction effect of Identity and Salience, whereas the closest interaction model without the main effects is Model 6. The interaction model with identity development and salience makes sense because a young person is more likely to vote when he or she feels the importance of the politics measured by specific interest in the election and general interest in public affairs and has a developed identity.

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