THE INFLUENCE OF A SOCIAL NETWORK ON POLITICAL ATTITUDES: THE SIBLING RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

CHELSEA JACKIE PHILLIPS: The Influence of a Social Network on Political Attitudes: The Sibling Relationship
(Under the direction of Dr. Thomas Carsey, Dr. Pamela Conover, and Dr. Michael MacKuen)

Many scholars have concluded that parents play a large role in shaping the opinions of children. Yet, other family members may also influence the attitudes of offspring. Children are often affected by the attitudes and behaviors of their siblings as well. Borrowing the niche-seeking hypothesis from evolutionary psychology, this paper develops an interactive explanation of how political attitude formation is influenced by the entire family context. Based on a theory that considers birth order and sibling competition, this paper explains when we should expect the correlation between the political attitudes of parents and children to be low (despite shared genetics and environmental context) and when we should expect intergenerational transmission of political attitudes to be high.
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“A chip off the old block.”

“Like father, like son.”

“Like mother, like daughter.

“Following in his father’s footsteps.”

“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.”

**Introduction**

As the core group most important to the development of political interests, families play a leading role in shaping the issue positions and partisan identity that individuals adopt as well as how they cast their vote. Early studies of sociological context done by the Columbia School touted the significant role of families in individual voting decisions and political preferences (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954). Similarly, studies conducted by the Michigan School spoke to the heritability of party identification, which is the most significant determinant of voting behavior. The authors argued that attachments to specific political parties are rather stable, developed early in life, and result from the familial context (Campbell et al. 1960).

While parents serve as behavior models for their offspring in many areas, work in the field of political socialization discovered that the correlations between the political attitudes of parents and children were rather unimpressive (Jennings and Niemi 1974; 1981). Party identification is passed from parent to child in a majority of cases, but a one-to-one correspondence is not accurate. Specific political attitudes have extremely low rates of intergenerational transference as well.
Most research considering the family’s influence on individual political attitudes has focused on the role of parents in shaping the values and identities of their children. Yet, the family is a social network comprised of many individuals and relationship types. Parents are not the only family members who influence the attitudes of offspring. Children are often affected by the attitudes and behaviors of their siblings as well. The niche-seeking hypothesis from evolutionary psychology uses birth order and sibling competition to predict how political attitude formation is influenced by parents and siblings. In this paper, I explain when we should expect the correlation between the political attitudes of parents and children to be low (despite shared genetics and environmental context) and when we should expect intergenerational transmission of political attitudes to be high.

**Political socialization during childhood**

Early scholars of political socialization viewed the family as the key agent of individual attitudinal development and specially focused on understanding when and how parents passed their political attitudes on to their children (Hyman 1959; Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954). Socialization happens when children learn from their parents what beliefs and opinions to advocate or disavow. Such learning can occur through observation of parental behavior or through explicit instruction by parents. Overtime, children learn their political values from their immediate families (Hyman 1959). The family was viewed as predominantly responsible for explaining the political orientations and political participation rates of offspring (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1954; Thomas 1971; Kraut and Lewis 1975; Bengston 1975). While other socializing agents mattered (i.e., peers, schools, communities, etc.), the family was seen as the most influential social network to the development of partisanship and political interests.
in general (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1954; Hyman 1959).

Many early studies argued for a strong relationship between the political attitudes and behaviors of parents and children (Thomas 1971; Kraut and Lewis 1975; Bengston 1975).

To assess this notion of intergenerational continuity of political attitudes within families, Jennings and Niemi conducted a four wave panel study, beginning in 1965 and ending in 1997, of high school seniors and their parents that measured political attitudes and attitude change overtime. Despite the prevailing assumption that the political preferences of children would likely match those of their parents, these studies found low correlations between most political values of parents and offspring, typically in the .1 to .3 range (Jennings and Niemi 1968; Jennings and Niemi 1974; Jennings and Niemi 1975; Niemi, Ross, and Alexander 1978; Jennings and Niemi 1981; Westholm and Niemi 1992). The only strong correlations found concerned the transmission of partisanship from parent to child (often approaching a correlation of .5), yet overtime even this strong relationship was found to decline (Mattei and Niemi 1991; Niemi and Jennings 1991). From these and other studies, the claim of a close similarity between parent and child political attitudes seemed to have been exaggerated (Connell 1972; Friedman, Gold, and Christie 1972; Westholm and Niemi 1992). Strong relationships between political values of parents and offspring seem to be the exception, not the rule.

This blow to the common belief in the intergenerational transmission of political attitudes from parent to child led to a near abandonment of the study of political socialization after its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet, recently the study of contextual effects and communication networks has revitalized the desire of political scientists to explain how social units influence political attitude formation and maintenance (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and
Sprague 2004; Zuckerman 2005). Studies have shown that families, friends, workmates, neighbors, political discussants, and general political contexts all influence individual political attitudes and behavior (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Zuckerman 2005; Settle and Bond 2010). Although complex, it seems necessary to investigate the differential and joint effects of these various socializing agents if we desire to understand how people develop their political attitudes and identities.

People from very similar backgrounds, like siblings, often develop dramatically divergent views of the social world and adopt political attitudes at odds with each other (Freese, Powell, & Steelman 1999). A reinterpretation of how the family as a social network should be expected to influence offspring political attitudes is required. Specifically, instead of assuming direct transmission of political affiliations and attitudes from parents to children, sibling relationships within the family context must be considered as well.

**Niche-seeking within the family environment**

Evolutionary psychologists study how the human psyche has adapted over time to ensure maximal advantage. Natural selection leads species to adapt biologically and psychologically to fit the demands of their environments with one goal in mind—reproduction, the propagation of one’s genetic material to future generations (Tooby and Cosmides 1995; McGuire n.d.). The ability to obtain parental care and interest significantly increases an individual’s likelihood of surviving childhood and becoming a physically and psychologically mature adult. Thus, the immediate family context is a unique social environment where niche-seeking is often required to ensure future reproductive success.
The evolutionary psychological approach can be applied to the family context most directly through the study of birth order effects (Sulloway 1997). Within the family environment, siblings compete for parental investment and affection. This competition for scarce resources produces psychological variations among siblings (McGuire n.d.). Before the advent of modern medicine, many children failed to survive childhood. Firstborns became viewed as “better Darwinian bets” for passing on the family genes, as they had already survived many deadly childhood diseases (Sulloway 1997, 298). For this reason, the eldest children enjoy a privileged position within the family and are rewarded for following their parents’ rules and generally acting in ways that would please their parents. If you combine the benefits of fulfilling such a role of honor in the family with the benefits firstborns enjoy from their relative advantages in intelligence, strength, and size compared to younger siblings, elder children can maintain parental favor and investment by dominating younger siblings, “parenting” younger siblings, and adopting the attitudes, values, and beliefs held by their parents (Sulloway 1997).

Children born later in birth order are forced to find different roles—or niches—to fill within the family unit, as they cannot occupy the same space as their elder sibling. To garner parental attention and investment, laterborns must create their own distinct niches. Often this is accomplished by rejecting the traditional values and norms of the parents and by engaging in sometimes risky behaviors (Sulloway 1997). Additionally, it has been hypothesized that having been bullied by older siblings, laterborns are likely to identify with the downtrodden and underprivileged. For this reason, they are more likely to be sympathetic to social change and egalitarian norms.
Although little research has directly linked the birth order literature to the development of political attitudes via childhood socialization, niche-filling by siblings has consequences that could lead offspring to develop political attitudes and behaviors that are dependent upon their positions within the family unit (Sulloway 1997). Children assume different values when occupying their respective familial niches. As a result, firstborns and laterborns are socialized into different forms of ideological thinking.

Firstborns are motivated to fulfill parental expectations. As such, they support the status quo, are responsive to parental values, and conscientiously follow the rules. Traditionally, this has led to the expectation that the oldest child within a family will be more conventional and traditional than his or her laterborn siblings. These attributes lead some scholars to predict that firstborns are relatively more likely to develop conservative political attitudes (Healy and Ellis 2007; McGuire n.d.).

Laterborn children often experience bullying and/or domination by older siblings. This leads them to advocate social change and support policies that promote egalitarianism within social relations. Also, laterborns feel less of a need to identify with the attitudes, values, and opinions of their parents. For these reasons, scholars have hypothesized that laterborns are more likely to develop politically liberal identities (Healy and Ellis 2007; McGuire n.d.).

The existence of birth order effects has become widely accepted within popular culture. Firstborns are often depicted as responsible and conventional, while laterborn children are seen as rebels. Nevertheless, using contemporary GSS data, Freese, Powell, and Steelman (1999) found that birth order is not as important for explaining differences in
political attitudes of siblings as are variables like race, sex, age, and sibship size. This result could be used as evidence that sibling relationships do not matter in the development of offspring political attitudes. Yet, I see it as a rationale for re-interpreting the application of niche-seeking to birth order’s role in the development of individual political attitudes within the social network of the immediate family.

Re-interpreting birth order’s effect on political attitudes

Evolutionary psychology assumes that children seek parental investment and attention to survive and thrive. Two expectations follow from this perspective. First, the eldest child within a family is naturally advantaged by his or her privileged position within the family unit. Firstborns act to preserve their relative advantage by accepting and adopting the wishes, values, and standards of their parents. Second, laterborns realize they cannot fill the “niche” already occupied by their elder sibling(s). For this reason, younger children seek alternative, more rebellious, niches to fill, often adopting values and standards that challenge those held by their parents.

Given this starting point, the traditional deduction that firstborns will be more politically and socially conservative while laterborns will be more liberal is faulty. If the firstborn child of politically liberal parents wishes to secure their investment and approval, adopting traditional, conservative, conventional political attitudes is the wrong way to reach the desired goal. Instead, firstborn children of politically liberal parents should adopt their parents’ liberal attitudes in order to maintain parental approval and investment. Similarly, firstborn children of politically conservative parents should adopt their parents’ conservative attitudes.
Likewise, laterborn children should not necessarily be more politically liberal in general. Instead, the political attitudes and identities of laterborn children should depend on the attitudes and identities already adopted by children born earlier in the family unit. If one’s elder sibling adopts liberal attitudes, the way to be different or “rebellious” is to fill an alternative niche by being a political moderate or conservative. In other words, laterborns should choose attitudes and identities that diverge from those of elder siblings.

To test this re-interpretation of the traditional view of niche-seeking within the family context, I posit the following set of hypotheses:

\[ H_1: \text{In families with parents who share the same general political views, firstborn children will adopt the political attitudes and identities of their parents.} \]

\[ H_2: \text{Secondborn children will attempt to differentiate themselves from firstborn siblings by adopting political attitudes and identities that are not like those of their elder sibling.} \]

My first hypothesis looks specifically at families where both the mother and father hold the same general political attitudes and identities. From a theoretical perspective the situation gets complicated when children come from households where parents hold divergent views on politics. No clear prediction exists or is supported by prior research concerning which parent firstborns should attempt to act like, if the parents do not agree. A firstborn might imitate the parent he or she feels psychologically closer to, or the child may adopt the attitudes and values of the parent with more power in the family context, to secure attention and investment. Instead of considering how these many dynamics play into the picture, my analysis simplifies the situation by looking at respondents who were raised by a
mother and father with the same general political attitudes. In such a situation, political attitudes and identities are not only advocated by one parent, but these positions are reinforced since both parents value the same things.

In addition to direct effects of birth order on political attitudes, spacing between siblings likely interacts with birth order. Sulloway (1997) and others have argued that the attitudes of siblings should be the most differentiated when the gap between adjacent siblings is moderate—between two to five years. This is because extremely close or distant siblings are less evolutionarily costly than are siblings who are more moderately spaced (Freese, Powell, and Steelman 1999). Greater sibling rivalry exists between firstborn and laterborn siblings when there is moderate spacing between them. Children born to a family after an extended gap, often behave like firstborn children by adopting the attitudes and opinions of parents. Alternatively, when there is a large gap between siblings, the laterborn child may emulate an older sibling and attempt to be just like them, since direct competition with him/her is relatively low. Using sibling spacing as an interactive variable, the following hypothesis will be tested:

\[ H_3: \text{The political attitudes and identities of secondborn children will be the most differentiated from those of firstborns when the spacing between these adjacent siblings is between two to five years.} \]

If these hypotheses are supported, the low parent-child correlations for political variables discovered by Jennings and Niemi (1974; 1981) should not be surprising. It is not the case that we should expect all children to adopt the political identities and attitudes of their parents. Birth order and niche-seeking affect these relationships. Firstborns should look
more politically similar to their parents than laterborns. Secondborns should look the least politically similar to firstborns when there is a moderate gap between the ages of the two offspring.

**Data and Methods**

The data for my analyses is from an original survey that I designed and implemented. Respondents were 276 college students (73% female) enrolled in introductory political science classes at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Students participated in this study either as a course requirement or for extra credit. The data were collected over a span of six weeks in March and April of 2011. The sample was predominantly white (84%), non-Hispanic (94%), middle class (86%), and from the south (89%). The mean and median age of the respondents was nineteen.

The survey instrument began with several questions measuring demographic features, to be used as controls in my analyses—specifically age, sex, home state, and family socio-economic status. Additionally, respondents were asked about their political involvement. Questions addressed interest in politics, attention to politics, and frequency of political discussions. Whether or not the respondent is interested in politics, attentive to political information, or actively engaged in political discussions likely influences how familiar he or she is with the political attitudes and identities of parents and siblings.

Respondents next answered four policy preference questions that considered contemporary political issues. Table 1 includes the question wording of these items. At the end of the survey, respondents indicated their partisan and ideological self-placement on seven-point scales (which were re-coded to three-point scales for all analyses that follow).
Table 1: Policy Preference Question Wording

1. Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Others think the government should just let people get ahead on their own. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 5. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, and 4. Which is closer to the way you think? (5 answer choices)

2. Please tell me if you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with this statement: “The government should guarantee that all citizens have access to health insurance.” (4 answer choices)

3. There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the following responses best agrees with your view on this issue? (1 = Abortion should never be forbidden, since one should not require a woman to have a child she doesn’t want. 2 = Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child. 3 = Abortion should be permitted in the case of rape/incest or if the life of the woman is in danger. 4 = Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger. 5 = Abortion should never be permitted.)

4. People have differing opinions on the issue of gay marriage. Which of the following comes closest to what you think? (1 = Gays should be allowed to marry. 2 = Gays should not be allowed to marry but should be allowed to enter into legal relationships that give them the same rights as married couples have (i.e., Civil Unions). 3 = Gays should only have their most basic rights protected, but should not be allowed to marry or to enter into civil unions. 4 = Government should not legally recognize gay rights in any way.)

In addition to answering questions pertaining to their own political attitudes, respondents were asked a series of questions pertaining to the political attitudes of their family members—parents and siblings. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had spent a majority of their growing up life living with a maternal and/or paternal figure present. They were also asked to list their siblings, indicating how many years they had spent living in the same household with each sibling and sibling type (options included: full-, half-, step-, or adopted sibling). Having completed the necessary components to identify family members and relationship status, each respondent who had grown up with a mother (or step-mother) and/or father (or step-father) were asked to think about each parent individually. The respondent was asked to identify where he or she believed the parent stood on the four policy
preference questions listed in Table 1, and where the parent would place himself or herself in terms of party identification and ideology. Likewise, respondents were asked the same questions about any siblings indicated. (For the full text of all relevant questions, please see the Appendix.)

The above measures of parent and sibling political attitudes and identities are self-reported by survey respondents and not validated by the target. Yet, this should not pose a problem given the theoretical assumptions of the study. Specifically, children develop niches within families based on their perceptions of where their parents and siblings stand on issues. These perceptions may or may not be accurate, but the accuracy of such perceptions is not necessary to the niche-seeking process. If a firstborn believes his parents are both very conservative, he should adopt conservative attitudes based on his perception and desire to model his parents, regardless of whether or not his parents actually identify as conservative.

It is also possible that respondents projected their own political attitudes and identities onto their parents and/or siblings. If this is the case, it should be easier to find evidence in support of my first hypothesis (firstborns may project their political attitudes and identities onto their parents, instead of the other way around, which would make them similar). Also, it should be more difficult to find evidence for my second and third hypotheses (secondborns may also project their political attitudes and identities onto their older sibling, which would make them similar not distinct).

The dependent variables necessary to test my hypotheses involve measures of political similarity between the attitudes and identities of parents and children, and between firstborn and secondborn siblings. I operationalized the level of political attitudinal similarity
in three ways. First, I considered partisanship, dividing respondents into three categories: Democrat, Independent, or Republican. Second, I considered ideology using Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative self-placement options. Finally, I looked at specific policy preferences, using the four political issue questions previously mentioned.

**Are firstborns conservative and laterborns liberal?**

The original application of niche-seeking to birth order in the sibling context hypothesized that firstborns would be politically conservative, due to their desire to follow the rules and uphold tradition. Laterborn children were hypothesized to be politically liberal since they sympathized with the downtrodden and did not feel bound to behave conventionally. I began my analyses by testing these hypotheses using respondent ideology as my dependent variable. I ran two bivariate logistic regression models. The model reported below in Table 2 addresses whether firstborns are ideologically conservative, while the model in Table 3 addresses whether laterborns are ideologically liberal.

The dependent variable for my first model presented in Table 2 is a dummy variable for respondent conservatism coded 1 if the respondent identified as a conservative, 0 if he or she identified as a moderate or a liberal. The dependent variable for my second model presented in Table 3 is a dummy variable for respondent liberalism coded 1 if the respondent identified as a liberal, 0 if he or she identified as a moderate or a conservative. I also use dummy variables to indicate respondent birth rank. The variable **firstborn** is coded 1 if a respondent reported that he or she was the eldest or only child in the family, 0 otherwise. Similarly the variable **laterborn** is coded 1 if a respondent indicated that he or she was not
the firstborn child in his or her family, 0 if the respondent was a firstborn (only children are considered to be firstborns for all analyses).

Table 2: Ideologically conservative respondents

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>Firstborn</td>
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<td>AIC</td>
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Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, * p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents.

Table 2 shows the results of my first logistic regression model looking at respondents who identify as political conservatives. If the original prediction concerning birth order and political ideology is correct, firstborns should be significantly more likely to be ideologically conservative than laterborns. The coefficient estimate for firstborn in Table 2 above is positively signed but statistically insignificant. It is not the case that firstborns report conservative ideological views significantly more often than children who occupy other birth ranks within the family.

Table 3: Ideologically liberal respondents

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
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<td>(0.187)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laterborn</td>
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<td>(0.260)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>238</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>334.01</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, * p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents.

In Table 3 above, the results of a logistic regression model looking at respondents who identified as ideologically liberal are presented. The original hypothesis is that laterborns should be significantly more likely to be ideologically liberal than firstborns. The
coefficient estimate for laterborn shown in Table 3 is insignificant and incorrectly signed. Just as firstborns are not more likely to be conservative than laterborns, laterborns are not more likely to be liberal than firstborns.

**Similarity of political attitudes for parent-firstborn pairs**

Failing to find support for the original hypotheses concerning birth order and political attitudes, I move on to the hypotheses that rely on my re-interpretation of the theory. To test the hypothesis that firstborns should adopt the same political attitudes and identities as their parents, I ran three logistic regression models for my first two dependent variables—shared party identification of parents and offspring and shared ideology of parents and offspring, respectively. The first model in each analysis simply considered the bivariate relationship between being a firstborn child in a family and the similarity of the respondent’s political attitude with that of his or her parents. The second model brought in basic demographic control variables that could influence the relationship. The third model added political involvement variables (e.g., interest in politics) to the mix.

To test my first hypothesis using the policy position variables, I ran separate logistic regression models for each of the four issues presented. While it would be possible to create a single scale using these four measures, doing so would make it impossible to determine whether firstborns held the same attitudes as their parents on specific policy issues. A child could potentially hold ideologically liberal positions on two of the policy issues and conservative positions on the other two policy positions. The child’s parents could also hold ideologically liberal positions on two issues and conservative positions on two issues. When
an additive scale is created combining all four policy questions, the child and parents could
match on the scale, yet hold opposing positions on all four issues.

In all of the models presented in this paper, the following coding procedures were
utilized. The variable age is quasi-continuous and coded in whole year increments.
Respondent sex is coded as a dummy variable indicating whether a respondent is female (1
indicates that the respondent is female, 0 indicates that the respondent is male). Respondent
race is coded as a dummy variable indicating whether a respondent is white (1 indicates that
a respondent is white/Caucasian, 0 indicates that the respondent identified with a different
race). South is a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent was from a southern
state. Using conventional standards to define south and non-south—1 indicates that a
respondent is from the south, 0 indicates that the respondent is not from the south. The
variable SES is measured on a five-point scale starting with 1 which equals working class,
followed by lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, and 5 which equals upper
class.

The variable attention measures respondent attention to politics. It was measured on
a four-point scale with 1 being that the respondent pays a lot of attention to politics, and 4
being that the respondent pays no attention at all to politics. Interest is a variable that asks
how interested respondents are in politics. A respondent’s interest in politics was measured
on a three-point scale with 1 being that the respondent is very interested in politics and 3
being that the respondent is not at all interested in politics. Finally, political discussion is
measured by the variable discussion. Respondents were asked how frequently they talked
about politics with friends or family. Response options ranged from 1 – a respondent talked
about politics every day, to 6 – a respondent never talked about politics with family or
friends. Finally, **age difference** is the difference between the age of a respondent’s firstborn sibling and the age of the respondent.

Beginning with shared partisanship of parents and offspring as the dependent variable, a respondent was coded 1 if his or her party identification matched that of his or her parents and 0 otherwise (for all analyses related to my first hypothesis, only respondents who indicated parents of the same political party were included.) While respondents had selected their partisanship and that of their parents from the conventional seven-point partisanship scale, I collapsed responses to three categories for these analyses: Strong Democrat, Weak Democrat, and Independent/Lean Democrat all equal “Democrat”, Independent equals “Independent”, and Strong Republican, Weak Republican, and Independent/Lean Republican all equal “Republican”.
Table 4: Same Partisanship of Respondent and Parents

<table>
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<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.533)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>187.21</td>
<td>143.04</td>
<td>147.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, * p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents who indicated that both of their parents identified with the same political party.

Considering the results of my analysis in Table 4 above, my first hypothesis fails to be confirmed by any of the three models looking at similarity between firstborn partisanship and parent partisanship. The coefficient estimate for firstborns is incorrectly signed in all three models given my hypothesis. Nevertheless, the result is not statistically significant in any of the models. In Models 2 and 3, being female has a statistically significant negative effect on a respondent’s likelihood of identifying with the same political party as her parents. Female offspring are less likely than male offspring to identify with the same political party as their parents. None of the other independent variables in any of the models depicted in Table 4 were significant.
My second set of models considered similarity of ideological affiliation between parents and offspring as the dependent variable. A respondent was coded 1 if his or her ideological self-placement matched that of his or her parents and 0 otherwise (note that only respondents who indicated parents with the same ideology were included.) While respondents had indicated their ideological affiliation and that of their parents on the typical seven-point ideology scale, I collapsed responses to three categories for these analyses: Extremely Liberal, Liberal, and Moderate/Lean Liberal all equal “Liberal”, Moderate equals “Moderate”, and Very Conservative, Conservative, and Moderate/Lean Conservative all equal “Conservative”.

Table 5: Same Ideological Affiliation of Respondent and Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.039***</td>
<td>-0.362</td>
<td>0.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.243)</td>
<td>(3.120)</td>
<td>(3.362)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firstborn</td>
<td>0.148</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
<td>-0.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.362)</td>
<td>(0.445)</td>
<td>(0.474)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>0.023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.154)</td>
<td>(0.164)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.909</td>
<td>-0.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.574)</td>
<td>(0.636)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-1.087</td>
<td>-0.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.736)</td>
<td>(0.764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>0.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.659)</td>
<td>(0.687)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.884**</td>
<td>0.863**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.298)</td>
<td>(0.299)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.463)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.565)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.289)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>188.85</td>
<td>143.67</td>
<td>141.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, * p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents who indicated that both of their parents had the same ideological affiliation.
Again, my first hypothesis fails to be confirmed considering the results for ideological similarity presented in Table 5 above. In Model 1, the coefficient estimate for firstborn is properly signed, given my hypothesis. Yet, when control variables are included for demographics and political involvement in Models 2 and 3 respectively, the coefficient estimate for firstborn becomes negative. Still, in none of these models is the estimate for firstborn statistically significant. In Models 2 and 3, family socio-economic status has a statistically significant effect on the logistic probability of a respondent reporting the same ideological affiliation as his or her parents. The higher one’s family’s SES, the more likely the respondent is to report the same ideology as his or her parents.

Finally, the last set of models testing the first hypothesis considered similarity of parent-child policy preferences as the dependent variables. For this analysis, I ran separate logistic regression models for each of the policy questions from Table 1. Below in Table 6, the dependent variable for Model 1 is shared issue position of parents and offspring on the policy question concerning government guarantee of jobs from Table 1. The dependent variable for Model 2 is shared issue position of parents and offspring on the policy question concerning government guarantee of health care from Table 1. The dependent variable for Model 3 is shared issue position of parents and offspring on the policy question concerning abortion policy from Table 1. The dependent variable for Model 4 is shared issue position of parents and offspring on the policy question concerning gay rights from Table 1. As with partisanship and ideology, a respondent was coded 1 if his or her policy preference on a specific issue matched that of his or her parents on the same issue, 0 otherwise (again, only respondents who indicated parents who held the same position on the policy issue of interest were included in the analyses.)
### Table 6: Same Policy Position of Respondent and Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: Jobs</th>
<th>Model 2: Health Care</th>
<th>Model 3: Abortion</th>
<th>Model 4: Gay Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercept</strong></td>
<td>7.123</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td>-4.098</td>
<td>3.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.631)</td>
<td>(3.795)</td>
<td>(3.778)</td>
<td>(3.833)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Firstborn</strong></td>
<td>-0.123</td>
<td>0.270</td>
<td>0.202</td>
<td>-0.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.519)</td>
<td>(0.499)</td>
<td>(0.440)</td>
<td>(0.447)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>-0.158</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>0.200</td>
<td>-0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.202)</td>
<td>(0.172)</td>
<td>(0.179)</td>
<td>(0.179)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>-0.402</td>
<td>-0.524</td>
<td>0.157</td>
<td>-0.804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.651)</td>
<td>(0.602)</td>
<td>(0.497)</td>
<td>(0.542)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td>-0.764</td>
<td>-1.372*</td>
<td>0.458</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.802)</td>
<td>(0.826)</td>
<td>(0.623)</td>
<td>(0.702)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South</strong></td>
<td>-1.161</td>
<td>-0.555</td>
<td>-0.101</td>
<td>-0.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.949)</td>
<td>(0.941)</td>
<td>(0.652)</td>
<td>(0.728)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SES</strong></td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.087</td>
<td>-0.084</td>
<td>0.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.341)</td>
<td>(0.290)</td>
<td>(0.262)</td>
<td>(0.311)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention</strong></td>
<td>-0.219</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.172</td>
<td>-0.861*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.486)</td>
<td>(0.496)</td>
<td>(0.450)</td>
<td>(0.425)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest</strong></td>
<td>-1.132*</td>
<td>-0.395</td>
<td>-0.932*</td>
<td>-0.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.614)</td>
<td>(0.596)</td>
<td>(0.540)</td>
<td>(0.531)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discussion</strong></td>
<td>0.368</td>
<td>0.499</td>
<td>0.523*</td>
<td>0.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.322)</td>
<td>(0.336)</td>
<td>(0.273)</td>
<td>(0.287)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIC</strong></td>
<td>113.56</td>
<td>122.81</td>
<td>156.80</td>
<td>153.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, a $p < .1$, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents who indicated that both of their parents held the same position on each policy issue.*

As with parent-child partisanship and ideology, the coefficient estimates for firstborn are not statistically significant in any of the models from Table 6 which look at shared parent-child policy preferences. On the issues of healthcare and abortion policy, the coefficients for firstborns are correctly signed given the first hypothesis. Nevertheless, they are incorrectly signed on the policy issues of government guarantee of jobs and gay rights. In each of the issue preference models reported in Table 6, one or more political involvement variable is a modestly significant predictor of when a respondent will hold the same policy preferences as his or her parents. Typically, when a respondent pays more attention to
politics, talks more about politics, or is more interested in politics, his or her policy preferences are more likely to differ from the preferences of his or her parents.

The results presented in Tables 4, 5, and 6 fail to support the first hypothesis that firstborns will hold political attitudes and identities that are similar to those of their parents. Given the negative coefficient for firstborn in almost all of my models, it actually appears that the political attitudes and identities of parents and their children will be more dissimilar if the child is a firstborn. Yet, it is important to remember that none of the results for firstborns came out statistically significant regardless of which dependent variable was being considered. Small sample size may have contributed to the null results.

**Similarity of political attitudes for firstborn-secondborn pairs**

Next I test the hypotheses that secondborn children attempt to differentiate themselves from their elder sibling by adopting political attitudes and identities that are not the same as those held by firstborns and that sibling spacing has an interactive effect on this relationship, I ran four logistic regression models for my first two dependent variables—shared party identification of respondent and firstborn sibling and shared ideology of respondent and firstborn sibling. The first model in each analysis looks at the bivariate relationship between being a secondborn child in a family and the similarity of the respondent’s political identity with that of his or her firstborn sibling. The second model brought in basic demographic control variables that could influence the relationship. The third model added political variables (e.g., interest in politics). The fourth model adds an interaction term that allows me to test my third hypothesis concerning sibling spacing. I also ran logistic regression models using similarity of sibling attitudes on each of the four policy
position questions from Table 1 as dependent variables, like I did previously when testing hypothesis 1.

Beginning with a model predicting shared partisanship of respondent and firstborn sibling, a respondent was coded 1 if his or her party identification was the same as his or her elder sibling and 0 otherwise. As previously discussed, I collapse the seven-point partisanship scale for the following analyses to three categories: Democrat, Independent, and Republican.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: Same Partisanship of Respondent and Firstborn Sibling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Difference</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Diff * 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, * p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents who are not firstborns or only children.
Considering the results of the models presented in Table 7, shared party identification of firstborns and their siblings does not appear to depend on whether or not the sibling in question is the secondborn child in a family. The results for secondborn are correctly signed in Models 2, 3, and 4, but statistically insignificant. In Models 2 and 3, where demographic and political involvement variables are included, whether or not a respondent is from the south has a modestly significant effect on the logistic probability of a respondent reporting the same party affiliation as his or her firstborn sibling. Respondents from southern states are more likely to report the same party identification as their firstborn siblings. Additionally, how interested a respondent is in politics influences whether he or she identifies with the same political party as his or her firstborn sibling. Those respondents who reported being more interested in politics were significantly more likely to report that they shared the same partisanship as their firstborn sibling. Interestingly, respondents who reported paying more attention to politics were modestly significantly less likely to identify with the same political party as their firstborn sibling. This result does not appear to be driven by issues of heteroskedasticity, although the variables correlate at .621. I re-ran two separate models dropping first interest and then attention as predictors of shared partisanship. With interest dropped, attention remained negative and insignificant. With attention dropped, interest remained positive and significant. Since Model 4 from Table 7 includes an interaction term between sibling age difference and secondborn status, I have provided a graphical representation of my results below.
Figure 1 above depicts the predicted probability curve for secondborn respondents. The dependent variable is on the y-axis: at 0 the party identification of secondborn respondents differs from their firstborn sibling; at 1 the party identification of secondborn respondents matches their firstborn sibling. The x-axis shows whether or not a secondborn respondent falls within the moderate age gap being considered: at 0 the secondborn is either less than two years younger than the firstborn or more than five years younger than the firstborn; at 1 the secondborn is between two to five years younger than the firstborn. The curve in Figure 1 is relatively flat suggesting that respondents who are both secondborns and between two to five years younger than their firstborn sibling are no less likely to report the same partisanship as their firstborn sibling than are other secondborns. This result fails to support the expectation of hypothesis 3.

My second set of models considered shared ideological affiliation of respondents and their firstborn siblings as the dependent variable. A respondent was coded 1 if his or her ideological self-placement was the same as that of his or her elder sibling and 0 otherwise. While respondents had indicated their ideological affiliation and that of their firstborn sibling
on the conventional seven-point ideology scale, I again collapsed responses to three
categories for these analyses: Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative.

Table 8: Same Ideological Affiliation of Respondent and Firstborn Sibling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.386</td>
<td>-0.161</td>
<td>-0.160</td>
<td>-0.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.314)</td>
<td>(3.714)</td>
<td>(3.893)</td>
<td>(3.915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondborn</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0.120</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>0.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.390)</td>
<td>(0.456)</td>
<td>(0.462)</td>
<td>(0.762)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.187)</td>
<td>(0.191)</td>
<td>(0.193)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.050</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
<td>-0.026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.527)</td>
<td>(0.589)</td>
<td>(0.593)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>0.420</td>
<td>0.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.553)</td>
<td>(0.579)</td>
<td>(0.591)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.155</td>
<td>-0.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.710)</td>
<td>(0.726)</td>
<td>(0.734)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.231</td>
<td>-0.253</td>
<td>-0.253</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.258)</td>
<td>(0.265)</td>
<td>(0.266)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>-0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.455)</td>
<td>(0.458)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.507)</td>
<td>(0.514)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.280</td>
<td>-0.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
<td>(0.292)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Difference</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.797)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Diff * 2nd</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>-0.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>166.54</td>
<td>136.81</td>
<td>139.99</td>
<td>143.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents who are not firstborns or only children.

Table 8 shows results for the four models predicting shared ideology of respondents
and firstborn siblings. In none of the models is the coefficient estimate for secondborn
correctly signed given hypothesis two and three, nor is it significant. Additionally, none of
the independent variables are significant in any of the models from Table 8. Small sample
size may be driving these null results, as the properties of maximum likelihood estimation
apply asymptotically. Since Model 4 includes an interaction term, I have plotted a probability curve below.

Figure 2 shows the predicted probability curve for secondborn respondents. The dependent variable is on the y-axis: at 0 the ideology of secondborn respondents differs from their firstborn sibling; at 1 the ideology of secondborn respondents matches their firstborn sibling. The x-axis shows whether or not a secondborn respondent falls within the moderate age gap being considered: at 0 the secondborn is either less than two years younger than the firstborn or more than five years younger than the firstborn; at 1 the secondborn is between two to five years younger than the firstborn. There is a slight downward slope in the line depicted showing that if a respondent is a secondborn and between two to five years younger than his or her firstborn sibling, the respondent is less likely to identify with the same ideology as the firstborn. This is in line with the prediction of hypothesis 3.

Finally the last set of models for my second and third hypotheses considered similarity of policy preferences between respondent and firstborn sibling as the dependent
variable. For this analysis I again ran separate models for each of the four policy questions from Table 1. Below in Table 9 the dependent variable for Model 1 is shared policy position of respondent and firstborn sibling on the policy question concerning government guarantee of jobs from Table 1. The dependent variable for Model 2 is shared policy position of respondent and firstborn sibling on the policy question concerning government guarantee of health care from Table 1. The dependent variable for Model 3 is shared policy position of respondent and firstborn sibling on the policy question concerning abortion policy from Table 1. The dependent variable for Model 4 is shared policy position respondent and firstborn sibling on the policy question concerning gay rights from Table 1. A respondent was coded 1 if his or her policy preference on a specific issue was the same as that of his or her firstborn sibling, 0 otherwise.
Table 9: Same Policy Preference of Respondent and Firstborn Sibling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: Jobs</th>
<th>Model 2: Health Care</th>
<th>Model 3: Abortion</th>
<th>Model 4: Gay Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.558</td>
<td>-5.255</td>
<td>-7.236a</td>
<td>-2.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.110)</td>
<td>(4.21)</td>
<td>(4.231)</td>
<td>(4.549)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondborn</td>
<td>-2.061a</td>
<td>-0.237</td>
<td>0.767</td>
<td>-0.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.182)</td>
<td>(0.830)</td>
<td>(0.844)</td>
<td>(0.929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0.285</td>
<td>0.143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.205)</td>
<td>(0.204)</td>
<td>(0.203)</td>
<td>(0.223)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>-1.147</td>
<td>-0.502</td>
<td>-0.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>(0.640)</td>
<td>(0.653)</td>
<td>(0.603)</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>-0.449</td>
<td>-1.264</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.647)</td>
<td>(0.679)</td>
<td>(0.614)</td>
<td>(0.669)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>1.205</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>1.505</td>
<td>-0.415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.917)</td>
<td>(0.786)</td>
<td>(0.917)</td>
<td>(0.911)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>0.151</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>-0.098</td>
<td>0.563*</td>
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<td>(0.280)</td>
<td>(0.279)</td>
<td>(0.264)</td>
<td>(0.282)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention</td>
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<td>0.370</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>-0.246</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.486)</td>
<td>(0.485)</td>
<td>(0.483)</td>
<td>(0.530)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>-0.801</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>0.186</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.555)</td>
<td>(0.546)</td>
<td>(0.528)</td>
<td>(0.569)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>0.602a</td>
<td>0.074</td>
<td>-0.198</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.316)</td>
<td>(0.302)</td>
<td>(0.302)</td>
<td>(0.330)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Difference</td>
<td>0.117</td>
<td>0.240</td>
<td>-0.534</td>
<td>-1.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.820)</td>
<td>(0.826)</td>
<td>(0.824)</td>
<td>(0.856)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Diff * 2nd</td>
<td>2.461a</td>
<td>0.430</td>
<td>0.316</td>
<td>1.457</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.397)</td>
<td>(1.113)</td>
<td>(1.116)</td>
<td>(1.199)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>130.34</td>
<td>134.45</td>
<td>136.57</td>
<td>121.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. *** denotes p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, a p < .1, two-tailed tests. Sample includes all respondents who are not firstborns or only children.

Table 9 presents the results of my four models looking at shared respondent and firstborn sibling policy preferences. In Models 1, 2, and 4 the coefficient estimate for secondborn is correctly signed given my second and third hypotheses, yet drawing direct inferences from this result is complicated by the interaction term within each model. In Model 1 looking at the role of government in guaranteeing jobs the coefficient estimate for secondborn and the interaction between sibling age difference and secondborn status are both modestly significant. SES is significant in the model that considers gay rights. Since these
models include an interaction term, I provide graphical depictions of the results from each model below.

Figure 3 shows the predicted probability curve for secondborn respondents reporting the same policy position as their firstborn siblings on the jobs question from Table 1. Respondents who are two to five years younger than their firstborn sibling were more likely to report holding the same attitude as their sibling than were secondborn respondents not within this moderate age gap. This finding runs contrary to the expectations of hypothesis 3.
The predicted probability curve for secondborn respondents who identify with the same policy position as their firstborn sibling on the issue of the government’s role in providing health insurance is depicted in Figure 4. As with the policy preference question concerning jobs, the slope is upward showing that secondborn respondents within the two to five year age gap of the firstborn are more likely to report the same policy position on this issue. Again, this result is not in line with hypothesis 3.
Considering abortion policy, Figure 5 shows the predicted probability curve for secondborn respondents reporting the same issue position as their firstborn sibling. Secondborns who are two to five years younger than the firstborn are more likely to report the same attitude on this issue than are secondborns who are outside of this moderate age gap.

Finally Figure 6 shows the predicted probability curve for secondborn respondents selecting the same policy preference as their firstborn sibling on the issue of gay rights. As with the three previous policy measures, secondborns are more likely to report the same issue stance as their firstborn sibling if they are moderately spaced in age. It is important to remember, however, that the coefficient for the interaction term was only modestly significant in one of the four models presented in Table 9. In Model 1 which considered similarity of sibling attitudes on government policy related to jobs the interaction term was significant at the .1 level.
Discussion

Past research leads us to expect that social interactions play a role in shaping our attitudes and identities. The immediate family context—including parents and siblings— influences the political values of offspring via observation and communication. Unfortunately political scientists have yet to explain how people from very similar backgrounds, like siblings, can develop contradictory political views. Without this knowledge it is difficult to predict when offspring are more (or less) likely to adopt the attitudes of their parents.

In this paper I extend the research in this area by drawing on niche-seeking theory from evolutionary psychology. This theory uses birth order and sibling spacing to explain variations in the attitudes and behaviors of offspring. The original expectations of the birth order literature were that firstborn children would be politically conservative while laterborns would be politically liberal. This is not the case. Firstborn children are no more likely to be conservative than are laterborn children. Similarly laterborn children are no more likely to be liberal than are firstborns.

My re-interpretation of the effect of birth order on offspring political attitudes posited that firstborn children would adopt the attitudes of their parents to secure their attention and investment, while secondborn children would attempt to distinguish themselves from firstborns. My analyses of the data are generally inconclusive and fail to support these hypotheses. Firstborns do not appear to develop political attitudes and identities that are more similar to their parents than laterborns. Likewise, secondborn children—especially those moderately spaced from firstborns—are not more likely to distinguish themselves politically
from firstborn children than other siblings. There are several viable explanations for these null results.

First, for many of my analyses I was working with small samples of less than 100 respondents. The properties of maximum likelihood estimation are asymptotically valid but do not necessarily hold with small samples. Thus, the standard errors I estimated in my models may have been too large to allow for significant coefficient estimates. Increasing the sample size may help with drawing inferences.

Also, as previously discussed, respondents may have projected their own attitudes and identities on to their parents and siblings. If all respondents regardless of birth rank used their own political positions to select answers to the questions regarding parental values it would be very difficult to find significance based on birth order. It appears that this may be what happened as 80% of respondents reported the same party identification as their parents and 75% of respondents reported the same ideological affiliation. Likewise, if respondents projected their own attitudes on to their firstborn siblings it would be difficult to find evidence supportive of my second or third hypotheses since there would be little variation by birth rank. Without collecting attitudinal information from the parents and siblings of respondents, it is impossible to determine how much of a role projection bias played in my results.

While small samples and projection bias may account for some of my null findings, it could also be the case that offspring do not strategically adopt their political attitudes and identities to ensure maximal parental attention and investment. We know that many Americans are not very interested in or knowledgeable about politics. Also discussions of
political topics are rather infrequent among most social networks, including immediate families. While children often seek niches within the family they may not consider political identities to be important niches to fill. Many of the analyses I ran found the variables measuring political involvement to be significant. Future research should consider how interest in politics, attention to politics, and discussion of political issues influences the dynamics of offspring political attitude development. It may be the case that filling political niches within the family environment matters, but only in families where politics are viewed as especially important and political identities are salient.

There is another way to consider the results that supports the niche-seeking hypothesis and birth order effects. It could be the case that firstborns realize they possess a privileged position within the family unit. Due to their relative advantages compared to laterborn siblings and the lack of importance their family attaches to politics, firstborns may not fear loss of security if they adopt political attitudes and identities that differ from their parents. Laterborns already feel like the underdog and are seeking ways to gain parental attention and investment. If the firstborn child did not adopt the political attitudes and identities of their parents, this niche remains open for laterborns to fill. Future work in this area should consider how laterborn children react when firstborns do or do not adopt the same political attitudes and identities as their parents.

My analyses also found that respondent sex, race, and family socio-economic status can affect the likelihood of children adopting the same political attitudes and identities as their parents or firstborn siblings. Further exploration of these findings may help explain when offspring will be more or less likely to follow in their parents footsteps politically.
This paper is a first attempt at explaining when the correlations between parent and offspring political attitudes should be high and when they should be low. Much work remains to be done to enhance our understanding of how social networks influence our political attitudes and identities. While the family is the key agent of socialization during childhood, other entities—peers, schools, and communities—also influence our values and behaviors. Scholars interested in explaining why individuals adopt specific political preferences should consider these influences, while not ignoring the role of parents and siblings in attitude development.
APPENDIX A: Full-Text of Survey Questions to be Used in Analyses

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

AGE: What is your age?

SEX: What is your sex?
Male (0)
Female (1)

RACE: What term best describes your race?
White/Caucasian (1)
Black/African American (2)
Asian/Pacific Islander (3)
Arabic/Middle Eastern (4)
Native American/American Indian (5)
Other (6)

LATINO: Are you Hispanic/Latino(a)?
Yes (1)
No (0)

SES: How would you describe your immediate family’s economic status?
Working class (1)
Lower middle class (2)
Middle class (3)
Upper middle class (4)
Upper class (5)

NC: Have you spent the majority of your life living in North Carolina?
Yes (1)
No (0)

NON-NC: In which state have you spent the majority of your life?

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT VARIABLES

ATTENTION: Some people don’t pay much attention to politics, and some people do. In general, how much attention do you pay to politics?
A lot (1)
Some (2)
Not much (3)
None at all (4)
INTEREST: Some people aren't very interested in politics, and some people are. In general, how interested are you in politics?
Very much interested (1)
Somewhat interested (2)
Not at all (3)

DISCUSSION: On average, how often do you talk about politics with family or friends?
Every day (1)
A few days per week (2)
Once a week (3)
Once a month (4)
Rarely (5)
Never (6)

RESPONDENT POLICY PREFERENCES

RESPONDENT JOBS: Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Others think the government should just let people get ahead on their own. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 5. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, and 4. Which is closer to the way you feel?
1 - Government should guarantee jobs (1)
2 (2)
3 (3)
4 (4)
5 - People should get ahead on their own (5)

RESPONDENT HEALTH INSURANCE: Please tell me if you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with this statement: “The government should guarantee that all citizens have access to health insurance.”
Completely agree (1)
Mostly agree (2)
Mostly disagree (3)
Completely disagree (4)

RESPONDENT ABORTION: There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Which one of the following responses best agrees with your view on this issue?
Abortion should never be forbidden, since one should not require a woman to have a child she doesn't want. (1)
Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child. (2)
Abortion should be permitted in the case of rape/incest or if the life of the woman is in danger. (3)
Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger. (4)
Abortion should never be permitted. (5)

RESPONDENT GAY RIGHTS: People have differing opinions on the issue of gay marriage. Which of the following comes closest to what you think?
Gays should be allowed to marry. (1)
Gays should not be allowed to marry but should be allowed to enter into legal relationships that give them the same rights as married couples have (i.e., Civil Unions). (2)
Gays should only have their most basic rights protected, but should not be allowed to marry to enter into civil unions. (3)
Government should not legally recognize gay rights in any way. (4)

FAMILY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

MOTHER: Growing up, did you generally live in the same household as your biological/birth mother, step-mother, other maternal figure, or what?
Biological/birth mother (1)
Step-mother (2)
Other maternal figure (3)
No maternal figure present (4)

FATHER: Growing up, did you generally live in the same household as your biological/birth father, step-father, other paternal figure, or what?
Biological/birth father (1)
Step-father (2)
Other paternal figure (3)
No paternal figure present (4)

SIBLING RANK: What is your sibling rank?
Only child (1)
Firstborn/Eldest (2)
Middle child (2nd of 3) (3)
Youngest (4)
Other (5)

SIBLING INFORMATION: Please fill in the blanks below with the first names of your siblings (from oldest to youngest; in other words, first-born to last-born). Also, mark the columns appropriately. In the column labeled "Sibling Type", please select whether your sibling is a full-, half-, or step/adopted- sibling. In the column marked "Sibling Sex", please
select whether your sibling is male or female. In the column marked "Sibling Age", please enter your sibling's current age. In the column labeled "Years Lived Together", enter the number of years you've lived in the same household as your sibling. Do not include yourself in this list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sibling Type</th>
<th>Sibling Sex</th>
<th>Years Lived</th>
<th>Sibling</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full (1)</td>
<td>Male (1)</td>
<td>1st born</td>
<td>Age (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half (2)</td>
<td>Female (2)</td>
<td>2nd born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step/Adopted (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4th born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5th born</td>
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<td>6th born</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8th born</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9th born</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>10th born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11th born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12th born</td>
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</table>

Note: Each row represents a different sibling born order. The symbols (•) indicate the selection options for each category.
PARENT POLICY PREFERENCES

MOTHER JOBS: Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 5. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, and 4. Thinking about your MOTHER, which do you think is closer to the way she feels?

1 - Government should guarantee jobs (1)
2 (2)
3 (3)
4 (4)
5 - People should get ahead on their own (5)

MOTHER HEALTH INSURANCE: Thinking about your MOTHER, please tell me if she would completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree with this statement: “The government should guarantee that all citizens have access to health insurance.”

Completely agree (1)
Mostly agree (2)
Mostly disagree (3)
Completely disagree (4)

MOTHER ABORTION: There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Thinking about your MOTHER, which one of the following responses best agrees with her view on this issue?

Abortion should never be forbidden, since one should not require a woman to have a child she doesn’t want. (1)
Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child. (2)
Abortion should be permitted in the case of rape/incest or if the life of the woman is in danger. (3)
Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger. (4)
Abortion should never be permitted. (5)

MOTHER GAY RIGHTS: People have differing opinions on the issue of gay marriage. Thinking about your MOTHER, which of the following comes closest to what she thinks?

Gays should be allowed to marry. (1)
Gays should not be allowed to marry but should be allowed to enter into legal relationships that give them the same rights as married couples have (i.e., Civil Unions). (2)
Gays should only have their most basic rights protected, but should not be allowed to marry to enter into civil unions. (3)
Government should not legally recognize gay rights in any way. (4)

**NOTE: The previous four policy questions were repeated, inserting STEP-MOTHER, FATHER, and/or STEP-FATHER, as appropriate to the respondent.

**SIBLING POLICY PREFERENCES**

SIBLING 1 JOBS: Some people feel the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Suppose these people are at one end of a scale, at point 1. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 5. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, and 4. Thinking about your sibling, {name of first sibling automatically inserted based on earlier response}, how do you think he/she feels about this issue?
1 - Government should guarantee jobs (1)
2 (2)
3 (3)
4 (4)
5 - People should get ahead on their own (5)

SIBLING 1 HEALTH INSURANCE: Thinking about your sibling, {name of first sibling automatically inserted based on earlier response}, please tell me if he/she completely agrees, mostly agrees, mostly disagrees, or completely disagrees with this statement: “The government should guarantee that all citizens have access to health insurance.”
Completely agrees (1)
Mostly agrees (2)
Mostly disagrees (3)
Completely disagrees (4)

SIBLING 1 ABORTION: There has been some discussion about abortion during recent years. Thinking about your sibling, {name of first sibling automatically inserted based on earlier response}, which one of the following responses best agrees with his/her view on this issue?
Abortion should never be forbidden, since one should not require a woman to have a child she doesn't want. (1)
Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child. (2)
Abortion should be permitted in the case of rape/incest or if the life of the woman is in danger. (3)
Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger. (4)
Abortion should never be permitted. (5)

SIBLING 1 GAY RIGHTS: People have differing opinions on the issue of gay marriage. Thinking about your sibling, {name of first sibling automatically inserted based on earlier response}, which of the following comes closest to what he/she thinks?
Gays should be allowed to marry. (1)
Gays should not be allowed to marry but should be allowed to enter into legal relationships that give them the same rights as married couples have (i.e., Civil Unions). (2)
Gays should only have their most basic rights protected, but should not be allowed to marry to enter into civil unions. (3)
Government should not legally recognize gay rights in any way. (4)

**NOTE: The previous four policy questions were repeated, inserting Sibling #2 – Sibling #12, as appropriate to the respondent.

IDEOLOGY

IDEOLOGY: One way that people talk about politics in America is in terms of conservative, moderate, and liberal. The scale below represents the ideological spectrum from very liberal to very conservative. Where would you place YOURSELF on this scale?
Extremely Liberal (1)
Liberal (2)
Moderate/Lean Liberal (3)
Moderate (4)
Moderate/Lean Conservative (5)
Conservative (6)
Extremely Conservative (7)

MOTHER IDEOLOGY: One way that people talk about politics in America is in terms of conservative, moderate, and liberal. The scale below represents the ideological spectrum from very liberal to very conservative. Where would you place your MOTHER on this scale?
Extremely Liberal (1)
Liberal (2)
Moderate/Lean Liberal (3)
Moderate (4)
Moderate/Lean Conservative (5)
Conservative (6)
Extremely Conservative (7)
SIBLING 1 IDEOLOGY: One way that people talk about politics in America is in terms of conservative, moderate, and liberal. The scale below represents the ideological spectrum from very liberal to very conservative. Where would you place {name of first sibling automatically inserted based on earlier response} on this scale?
Extremely Liberal (1)
Liberal (2)
Moderate/Lean Liberal (3)
Moderate (4)
Moderate/Lean Conservative (5)
Conservative (6)
Extremely Conservative (7)

PARTY IDENTIFICATION

RESPONDENT PID: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?
Democrat (1)
Republican (2)
Independent (3)
Other (4)

RESPONDENT PARTISAN STRENGTH: If you consider yourself a Democrat or a Republican, would you consider yourself a Strong Democrat/Republican or a Not very strong Democrat/Republican?
Strong (1)
Not very strong (2)

RESPONDENT PARTISAN LEANING: If you consider yourself an Independent or member of another party besides the Democrats or Republicans, do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?
Closer to the Republican Party (1)
Closer to the Democratic Party (2)
Neither (3)
MOTHER PID: Generally speaking, does your MOTHER usually think of herself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?
Strong Democrat (1)
Weak Democrat (2)
Independent/Lean Democrat (3)
Independent (4)
Independent/Lean Republican (5)
Weak Republican (6)
Strong Republican (7)

**NOTE: The previous question was repeated, inserting STEP-MOTHER, FATHER, and/or STEP-FATHER, as appropriate to the respondent.

SIBLING 1 PID: Generally speaking, does {name of first sibling automatically inserted based on earlier response} usually think of him/herself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?
Strong Democrat (1)
Weak Republican (2)
Independent/Lean Democrat (3)
Independent (4)
Independent/Lean Republican (5)
Weak Republican (6)
Strong Republican (7)

**NOTE: The previous question was repeated, inserting Sibling #2 – Sibling # 12, as appropriate to the respondent.
REFERENCES


Settle, Jaime E., Christopher T. Dawes, Nicholas A. Christakis, and James H. Fowler. n.d. “Friendships Moderate an Association Between the DRD4 Gene and Political Ideology.”


