



THE CENTER FOR INFORMATION & RESEARCH ON CIVIC LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT
www.civicyouth.org

November 2009

CIRCLE Working Paper #68

**Spiral of Rebellion: Conflict Seeking of Democratic
Adolescents in Republican Counties**

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This paper is derived from research made possible with support from CIRCLE and the University of Colorado's Innovative Seed Grant Program.

Abstract

A study of adolescents living in red and blue counties during the 2006 midterm elections shows a striking pattern of Democratic youth thriving in political expression and debate when exposed to Republican ideological climates. Democratic adolescents were more likely to talk with parents and friends about politics, disagree openly, test opinions, and listen to opponents if they lived in Republican counties compared with Democratic youth living in liberal or balanced counties. Compared to Republican youth residing in the same communities, Democratic youth in Republican counties were also more likely to engage in political discussion, to pay attention to news media, and to express confidence in their ability to comprehend campaign issues. The frequency of disagreeing in conversations predicted support for liberal activism. Disagreeing was a particularly strong predictor of supporting liberal activism for youth living in red counties.

These findings support the theory—proposed by McDevitt and colleagues in other studies—that young people sometimes express political identities through conflict and disagreement, not because they come to share the views of parents, teachers, or majorities in their communities.

The same pattern was not found for Republican youth in Democratic counties during the 2006 elections; they were not more politically expressive when exposed to hostile ideological climates. However, Republican identity (like Democratic identity) correlated with knowledge of the political parties. The results suggest that Democratic identity is frequently expressed in deliberative and conflict-seeking activities, while Republican identity is often grounded in knowledge. Overall, the study suggests the value of peer-centered, critical discussion as a strategy for youth political mobilization.

An implicit theme of conflict avoidance undergirds theories of how children develop proto-ideological identities. In the family transmission model, the child's exposure to and dependence on parents facilitate the internalization of deferential orientations such as respect for order, submission to authority, and acceptance of discipline (Barker & Tinnick, 2006; Niemi & Jennings, 1991). The formation of political identity is wrapped up with the family's need for social cohesion, the parent's desire to retain leadership as the child enters adolescence, and the child's need for parent approval (Peterson, 1995). By co-orienting their opinions with those of parents, children learn how to express views without disrupting family expectations for hierarchy in interpersonal exchanges (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972; Olson, 1995; Saphir & Chaffee, 2002). Identity crystallization during adolescence, to a great extent, is a function of surveillance, as youth achieve increased perceptual accuracy in monitoring and taking cues from the ideological climates of families (Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 1999; Westholm, 1999) and other developmental contexts (Sears & Valentino, 1996; Youniss, McLellan, Su, & Yates, 1999).

Many teenagers are quite capable of rebellion, of course, when identity dispositions previously internalized are subject to critical awareness and possible rejection (Erikson, 1968; Haste & Hogan, 2006). Even so, identity formation as observation and absorption of ideological influences resonates with the many conceptions of adult political behavior grounded in conflict avoidance (McDevitt & Ostrowski, 2009). In political psychology theory, individuals retain cognitive consistency and elude dissonance by opting for participatory modes—such as marking ballots inside voting booths—that do not require public declarations of allegiance (Ulbig & Funk, 1999). In media scholarship, concepts such as selective exposure, attention, and recall emphasize preference for content that reinforces existing beliefs and partisan commitments (Chaffee, Saphir, Graf, Sandvig, & Hahn, 2001; Iyengar & Simon, 2000). In political sociology, “accountability pressure” inherent in social networks implies harmonious identities in ideological expression (Mutz, 2002; Nir, 2008). Scholars of interpersonal communication report that many adults find political conversation in face-to-face settings to be unpleasant, risky, and unrewarding (e.g., Conover, Searing, & Crewe, 2002). In the “spiral of silence,” humans possess a social skin acutely sensitive to opinion climates, and, due to fear of isolation, express contentious views only when they perceive majority support (Hayes, 2007; Noelle-Neumann, 1974, 1979).

Normative theories of human development in deliberative democracy, however, require that youth obtain overtly expressive dispositions, including a willingness to speak out in hostile climates (Hess & Ganzler, 2007; McDevitt & Caton-Rosser, 2009; Murphy, 2004). Still, it seems naïve to assert that youth—with political efficacy and identity crystallization not yet realized—might somehow overcome the conflict-avoidant limitations that taint adult identity expression.

Here we present a counter-intuitive hypothesis against this pessimistic backdrop of deliberative theory applied to youth development. We propose that adolescents who self identify as Democrats will flourish in expressive and confrontational interaction when they reside in Republican-dominated counties during an election season. We test the rebellion hypothesis with a panel study of high school seniors interviewed before and after midterm elections of 2006. Respondents were exposed to competitive campaigns in 10 states. We matched individual-level panel data with voter turnout records at the county level. This allows us to explore whether relationships between partisan identity (PID) and deliberative dispositions are moderated by proximate ideological climates. In some respects, we anticipate the opposite of the spiral of silence—i.e., a spiral of rebellion. We expect that Democratic adolescents in Republican counties will not only be more politically expressive than Republican youth in the same regions; they will participate more vigorously in deliberative activities compared with Democratic youth in Democratic counties. If our theorizing is valid, conflict seeking in interpersonal political communication should engender motivation for confrontational activism, with this sequence most apparent among blue teenagers in red counties.

Developmental Provocation

We adopt the framework of *developmental provocation*, whereby political maturation during adolescence is marked by healthy doses of agonism in interpersonal communication and identification with activism. Activities such as initiating conversations on controversial topics, disagreeing with teachers, and confronting parents elicit feedback that allows youth to contemplate options for ideological allegiance. In an initial test of the model, we interviewed adolescents at a middle school in Lubbock, Texas, before and after the 2000 presidential election (McDevitt, 2006). Active reflection on news content predicted frequency of initiating conversations about the campaign. Many parents took offense in this mostly low-income, Anglo-Hispanic community. They warned children that they should be careful when voicing controversial opinions. Children persisted nonetheless—they had been armed with cognitive resources obtained from media. This provocation prompted both admonitions and encouragement from parents. Either way, teenagers benefitted from the feedback, as they were able to compare their opinions with those of parents.

A subsequent study on developmental provocation traced influences of civic curricula on conflict seeking among high school juniors and seniors in Florida, Colorado, and Arizona (McDevitt & Ostrowski, 2009). Student-parent dyads were interviewed following the 2002 election season and after the next election cycle, in 2004. Classroom discussions and debates prompted students to discuss politics with parents and friends, but also to openly disagree during the 2002 campaigns. Conflict seeking in interpersonal communication, in turn, predicted support for liberal confrontational activism. Conflict seeking endured as a latent disposition, and became activated during the subsequent election season (2004), when the age range for panel respondents was 19-20. Participation in classroom discussions and debates in 2002 again predicted frequency of voicing disagreement and support for aggressive activism.

The empirical bridging of the disposition to disagree with activism support suggests the value of conflict seeking in identity development and identity assertion, at least for liberally inclined youth. The current study includes measures that allow us to look for the same sequence among Republican youth. However, the ideational structure of liberal ideology is perhaps more conducive to conflict seeking during adolescence (McDevitt & Ostrowski, 2009). Post materialism, distrust of authority, and suspicion of institutions, tradition, and power might predispose liberal-minded adolescents to more likely identify with confrontational activism (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005).

Here we seek to replicate findings from the 2002-2004 study, whereby political identity during adolescence is expressed in conflict-seeking communication, and then manifest in support for confrontational activism. Unlike in the previous study, we can observe conflict-seeking dynamics against the backdrop of supportive and hostile climates. At issue, theoretically, is the interplay of PID and proximate ideological climate. In contemplating the range of possible outcomes, we think it is useful to consider a typology of *contagion/affirmation*, *integration*, and *rebellion/differentiation*.

Contagion/affirmation as an explanation for how adolescents experience PID is suggested by conflict-avoidance themes in prior studies of political behavior and family socialization. In an affirmation scenario, influences from adult role models and adolescent peers constitute ideological contagion. Youth seek affirmation—and avoid conflict/dissonance—by adopting prevailing ideological sentiments. Certainly this dynamic must be at work for many youth, as evident in generation-by-generation reproduction of geopolitical culture in red/blue

America (Bishop, 2008). Applied to the current study, contagion/affirmation would become manifest in Republican adolescents more likely to express themselves politically when residing in red counties. We would observe Democratic youth as particularly expressive in blue counties.

Integration implies socialization advantages for children and adolescents growing up in ideologically diverse communities. Youth are exposed to a pluralism of partisan perspectives; they hear divergent views from teachers, parents, preachers, and peers. An invigorating environment of ideological diversity becomes manifest, as a developmental construct, in youth more likely to be politically engaged in these communities compared to cohorts in red and blue regions.

Contagion/affirmation and integration are probably valid conceptions for how PID is experienced by many adolescents in various ideological climates across the United States. However, our prior research on developmental provocation leads us to predict a rebellion dynamic for Democratic youth in Republican counties. A conflict-seeking disposition is implied in how progressives describe the “good citizen,” and how they imagine moral-political growth during adolescence (Watts & Flanagan, 2007). Commitments to social justice, human rights, and institutional reform become meaningful through critical reflection, but also through confrontation. In similar fashion, the perspective of developmental provocation anticipates that PID is expressed through conflict seeking in primary groups. Perhaps more so than with conservative identity, liberal PID is forged in interpersonal communication, in exchanges animated by some degree of ideological tension (McDevitt & Ostrowski, 2009). While families, classrooms, churches, and peer networks offer opportunities for ideological exchanges, the broader layer of geopolitical climate—when conservative—should enhance the agonistic dispositions of young Democrats. We expect Democratic identity to thrive as an expressive orientation in hostile climates.

Manifestations of Conflict Seeking

Our modeling of conflict seeking in the context of ideological climate incorporates variables from three areas of electoral engagement: deliberative dispositions, media use/cognition, and partisan/activist identity.

Deliberative dispositions. Multiple indicators embody an implicit continuum, from relatively passive, to assertive, to confrontational expression. The continuum reflects the premise that mere exposure to political conversation—while potentially beneficial—requires less effort and ideological conviction than adversarial exchanges. Frequency of conversing about politics with parents and talking about politics with friends constitute our indicators of exposure. Finding oneself caught up in a political conversation is not necessarily a conflict-ridden experience. On the other hand, self-selection to such exchanges—even when conversations are initiated by others—implies some desire to experience ideological tension when the willing discussants are Democratic youth in red counties, or Republican youth in blue counties. We also asked respondents to identify the “greatest influence” on their political beliefs; options were parents, teachers, friends, religion, political parties, and news media. Compared to Republican youth, we expect that Democratic respondents will more likely name friends given our conception of liberal identity as an expressive orientation. Friendship networks would be highly valued for liberal youth curious about viewpoints beyond their immediate families.

Moving beyond exposure, initiating conversations represents an assertive orientation. Bringing up politics suggests a desire for conflict when youth live in hostile climates. Other indicators of active engagement include the testing of personal opinions in conversation and a willingness to listen to partisan opponents. Efforts to refine opinions, and to hear out opponents,

reflect normative ideals of youth development in deliberative democracy (McDevitt & Kiouisis, 2006). They also embody the Eriksonian conception of moral-political maturation proceeding through value clarification. Still another indicator of assertive communication is *active* participation in classroom discussions when teachers invite this type of interaction. Further along the continuum, conflict seeking is directly evident in activities such as a willingness to openly disagree in conversations, and confronting parents about their ideological commitments.

Media use/cognition. Assertive and confrontational expression implies a need for some kind of armory for political cognition. We deploy indicators for news media attention and knowledge of political parties. A third variable—comprehension efficacy—represents the perceived capacity to understand the significance of political events and issues covered by media. Scholarship on adult information processing shows that active reflection on media content is a stronger predictor of knowledge and other media effects compared with mere exposure (Fleming, Thorson, & Zhang, 2006). The same is true in studies of child news processing during campaigns (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2000). Efficacy in comprehension should also boost confidence for youth who want to lock horns with parents, siblings, and friends. In the Lubbock study, perceived ability to comprehend campaign news predicted the frequency of initiating conversations (McDevitt, 2006).

Partisan/activist identity. Indicators include partisan allegiance (Republican, Democratic, Libertarian, Green, other), strength of PID, and support for liberal confrontational activism. Identification with activism represents conflict seeking as behavioral intent. We asked respondents to gauge their support for actions such as “creating a web site to embarrass a corporation” and “trespassing on private land to protest the cutting down of ancient forests.” Preliminary analysis revealed that conservative versions of these items—such as “joining a protest against illegal immigration” and “boycotting a Hollywood movie that mocks religion”—did not hold together as reliable indices at pre- and post-election. The conservative predisposition to support social order might work against the crystallization of a confrontational stance in youth activism. In comparison to the liberal battery, the conservative items were also less likely to correlate significantly with indicators of conflict seeking in deliberative expression.

Methods

The Democratic Party gained six gubernatorial seats, six seats in the U.S. Senate, and 31 seats in the House following the 2006 midterm races. We set out, nonetheless, to ensure a good deal of variance in ideological climates in light of our theoretical interest in conflict seeking as an expression of political identity. Consequently, in anticipation of the pre-election interviews, we selected five “red” states and five “blue” states based on the Republican-to-Democratic voter turnout ratios during the 2004 presidential election. Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Florida, and Ohio represent red states in the present study, while California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington constitute the blue states. Competitive campaigns for governor played out in nine of these states during the fall of 2006, while Washington experienced a competitive race for U.S. Senate. Ballots of six states included both gubernatorial and Senate races (CA, FL, MN, OH, PA, and RI). The Appendix provides a list of races where party control changed in the 10 states. This mix of states also provided regional, cultural, and demographic diversity in counties where we recruited youth for interviews.

Sampling and Data Collection

We selected a representative random sample of 9,250 high school seniors in the 10 states from a database of approximately 8,000,000 students provided by American Student Lists. We obtained data via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) at Perceptive Market

Research (PMR), in Gainesville, Florida. Pre-election (T1) interviews occurred from July 21 to October 8, 2006, garnering 950 completed interviews, or 95 from each state. The average length of interview was 15 minutes. We attempted telephone contact an average of 10 times. Using the RR3 formula developed by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, the response rate for completed interviews was 43%.¹ We commenced post-election interviews on November 8, the day after polls closed. We interviewed through January 7, 2007, again working with PMR. This effort netted 570 completed interviews, or 57 from each state. The average length of a CATI session was 15 minutes, and we attempted to reach T1 respondent an average of 12 times; the RR3 response rate at post-election (T2) was 62%.

The demographic profile at T1 is skewed somewhat by a gender imbalance of 56% female and 44% male, but ethnicity compares favorably with data obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). We matched individual respondents with aggregate statistics from the NCES to allow for sample/population comparisons. Sample percentages for ethnicity are 73.7 white/Anglo, 9.1 Hispanic, 7.4 African-American, 3.7 Asian, and .4 Native American. Corresponding NCES percentages are 78.1 white/Anglo, 9.5 Hispanic, 8.0 African-American, 3.6 Asian, and .7 Native American. Sample percentages for parent income are 52.2 for less than \$25,000, 25.8 for \$25,000 to less than \$65,000, and 22.0 for \$65,000 or higher. Respondents' age distribution is 1% 15, 6% 16, 85% 17, 9% 18, and 1% 19. Variance in ethnicity held up, for the most part, despite attrition during the T2 interviews, although the percentage for African-Americans declined from 7.4 to 6.8. Income distribution did not appreciably narrow.

Democratic youth were somewhat more likely to complete both interviews: Democrats comprised 51% of the subsample for youth identifying with a major party at T1, compared with 55% at T2. Respondents in general who completed both interviews ($n = 570$) appeared more active in deliberative activities compared with those who dropped out at T2 ($n = 380$). Both attrition results are not surprising in light of our theoretical conception of Democratic ID as more overtly expressive than Republican ID. The interviews themselves represented opportunities to articulate views about politics. Still, the sample of high school seniors with data collected at waves 1 and 2 should be understood as skewed upward in terms of deliberative inclinations. In comparison to youth who completed only one interview, these respondents were measured significantly higher for the following T1 indicators (measures described below): willingness to disagree, initiating conversations, listening to opponents, testing out opinions, and frequency of talking about politics with parents. Respondents in this group were also measured higher on knowledge of political parties. With the exception of disagreeing ($p < .01$), mean differences were significant at $p < .05$.

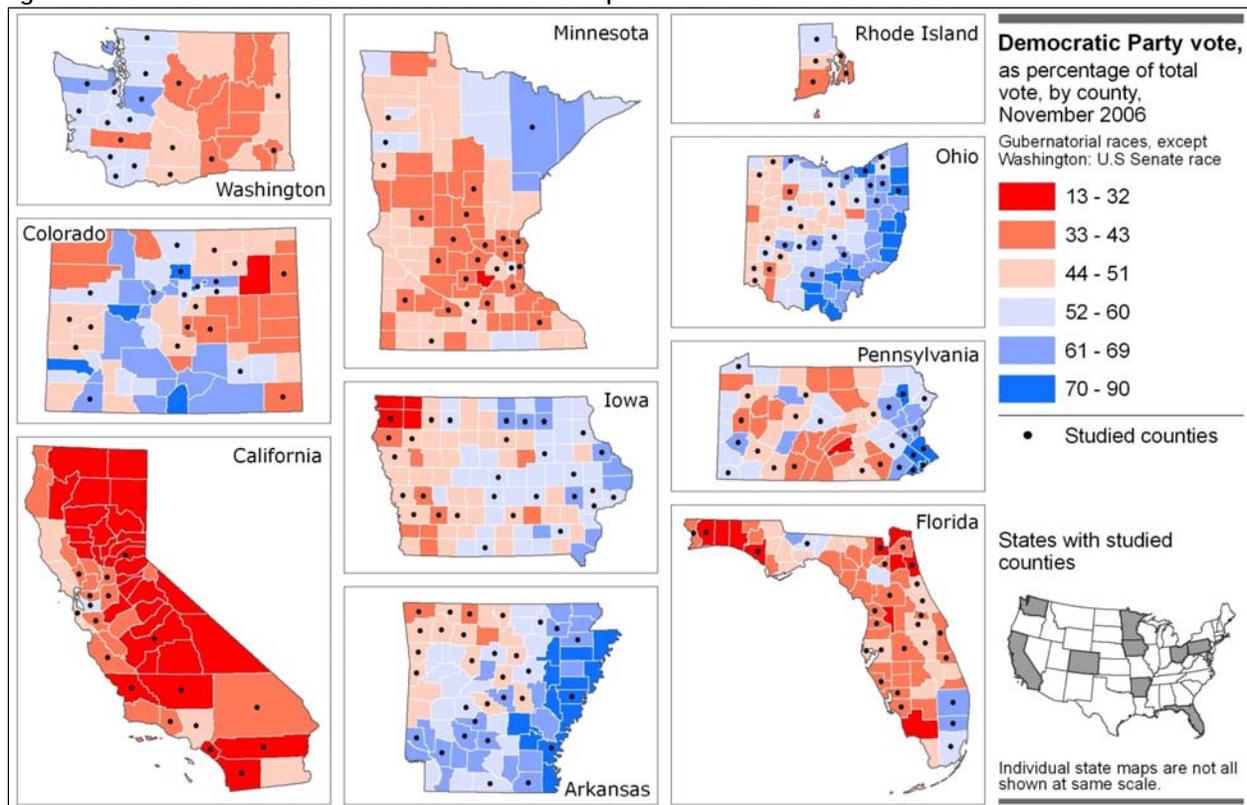
Data Structure

Analytical possibilities include the documenting of effects at the individual and contextual (i.e., county) levels, along with cross-level interactions. We are particularly interested in whether Democratic ID varies in its association with deliberative dispositions due to county climate. Multilevel data suggest the possibility of hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) in that we can think of high school seniors as nested in counties. HLM is not viable, however, due to the prevalence of cases in which studied counties include only one or several respondents (Beaubien, Hamman, Holt, & Boehm-Davis, 2001). The 570 high school seniors who completed both interviews were recruited from 237 counties; 127 of these included only one respondent, and only eight counties contained 10 or more respondents.² Thus, concerns about non-independence of observations and correlated errors—when using analyses such as ordinary least squares regression (OLS)—are not as severe as would be the case if there were fewer counties in relation to number of respondents. School affiliation could also represent a theoretically meaningful contextual unit, but nearly every school ($n = 479$) was associated with

one respondent at T2. We also considered contextual effects and cross-level interactions associated with state ideological climate. Exploratory analyses, however, failed to pick up contextual or cross-level influence tied to state climate as operationalized by the red/blue classification described above.

Notwithstanding the absence of state-level effects, we do expect to find influence at the more proximate context of county climate. We operationalized climate as the ratio of Democrat to total voter turnout in 2006 for the nine gubernatorial races and the contest for US Senate in Washington (Democrat/Republican + Democrat + other). This variable ranged from .14 to .89 across the 237 counties; the mean was .51. Figure 1 illustrates the partisan climates in counties with adolescent respondents. While we classified California as a blue state leading up to midterm elections, the state appears as mostly red in Figure 1 due to the victory of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a moderate Republican with more than enough name recognition and cross-party support to win comfortably in 2006.³

Figure 1: Partisan Climates in Counties with Adolescent Respondents: Midterm Elections 2006.



Planned Analyses

The distribution for perception of “greatest influence” offers our first glimpse at whether Democratic ID is, in fact, a more expressive orientation compared to Republican ID. Moving beyond perception, we then look for differences between Republican and Democratic youth with respect to deliberative dispositions and cognition/ media use. Our intent is to identify correlational patterns, although the panel design allows us to document whether campaign stimulation widened the expected gap between Democrats and Republicans in deliberative activities. A subsequent analysis reports correlations between *strength of PID* and measures of deliberation, cognition, and media use. Behavioral associations with PID intensity could net insights as to whether Democratic allegiance crystallizes along a more deliberative path compared with Republican ID.

Ultimately we are interested in whether ideological climate moderates relationships between PID and the other dimensions of political engagement. Consequently, we will examine correlations for PID and the other indicators across red and blue counties, at pre- and post-election. A rebellion dynamic would show up in coefficients for Democrats stronger in red counties, and coefficients for Republicans larger in blue counties.

To more precisely test the rebellion hypothesis, we pursue OLS analyses in predicting deliberative dispositions as dependent variables at T2. After controlling for demographics and county climate, we enter Democratic and Republican ID at post-election, followed by the county climate x PID interactions at T2. We specify the same OLS model in accounting for variance in cognition/media use. The regressions consequently situate the two PID indicators as independent variables in predicting political engagement. While PID is somewhat malleable as issues become salient to youth (Niemi & Jennings, 1991; Sears & Valentino, 1996), we assume it to be a relatively stable orientation for most adolescents in the time frame used for the present study. By contrast, prior research on adolescents portrays interpersonal communication, media use, and cognition as highly responsive to campaign stimulation (Kiousis & McDevitt, 2008; McDevitt, 2006).

Democratic ID is likewise situated as a predictor in the final OLS analysis, which documents antecedents of youth support for liberal confrontational activism. We explore whether county climate moderates the influence of PID and deliberative dispositions on activism support. The intent is to demonstrate an empirical bridge between conflict seeking in interpersonal communication and conflict seeking as activist volition. We expect that the Democratic ID/red county interaction will prove predictive, but we also anticipate that assertive expression will provide an interpersonal foundation for supporting activism, particularly in hostile climates.

Operational Measures

Pre-election demographic controls include respondent age, gender, ethnicity, and three indicators of family socioeconomic status (SES): students’ reports of parent income, parent education, and number of publications that parents subscribe to at home.⁴ We also controlled for respondents’ grades received in school, plans to attend college, and religious participation as behavioral orientations with implications for political interest (Youniss et al., 1999; Youniss, McLellan, & Yates, 1997). Item wording and coding for control variables are provided in the Appendix.

We relied primarily on respondents' self reports for measuring deliberative dispositions, cognition/media use, and partisan/activist identity. Knowledge of political parties represents an important exception to the self-reports; we quizzed respondents during the T1 and T2 interviews. To the extent that knowledge outcomes reflect the overall patterns of results, we can have more confidence in the study's internal validity. Nearly every indicator, including knowledge, was assessed at pre- and post-election. We measured active participation in classroom discussion only at T2 because the school year had not commenced for most of the sample when contacted at T1. The Appendix provides item working, coding, reliability assessment, and descriptive statistics for all of the indicators.

Results

We expect that Democratic adolescents were more expressive in deliberation and conflict seeking before and after the 2006 elections. Consequently, we should consider whether this finding could be dismissed as an artifact of demographics. Republican respondents were more likely to be white and to actively participate in religion, as shown in Appendix Table 1. White/Anglo ethnicity typically correlates with political interest in studies of youth and adult behavior (Hyman & Levine, 2008; Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995), and religious youth are more likely to be civically and politically engaged (Cecero, 2006). While a modest demographic advantage favors Republican youth in the sample, religious participation in many regions of the United States might correlate negatively with support for liberal confrontational activism (Westheimer, 2004). Girls were more likely to identify with the Democratic Party (58.2%), and boys with the GOP (51.4%). Recent research shows young females and males to be different politically, as opposed to one gender possessing a general advantage. Boys tend to be more conservative, while girls are predisposed to favor progressive, pro-social policies (Baskir, 2006). How these developmental trajectories relate to conflict seeking is difficult to predict. In a study described above—involving high school students in Florida, Colorado, and Arizona—male gender marginally correlated with support for confrontational activism (McDevitt & Ostrowski, 2009). On the other hand, young females might more likely identify with *liberal* confrontational activism as commitment to social justice.

We also examined whether county climate correlated with individual-level indicators of deliberation, cognition/media use, and partisan/activist identity. We split the Democratic voter ratio for counties at the mean to create a red/blue dichotomy. Blue counties appeared somewhat more hospitable for electoral engagement at pre-and post-election. Significant differences in means at T1 were revealed for knowledge ($t = 2.52, p < .05$), comprehension ($t = 2.09, p < .05$), and support for liberal confrontational activism ($t = 2.04, p < .05$). We found T2 differences for talking with parents ($t = 2.38, p < .05$), initiating conversations ($t = 2.16, p < .05$), knowledge ($t = 2.37, p < .05$), and comprehension ($t = 2.14, p < .05$). We anticipated this geopolitical pattern given how the partisan winds were blowing at the time. However, favorable environments for electoral engagement in blue counties work against our prediction of Democratic youth expressing themselves more vigorously in red counties.

Table 1 reports the PID breakdown in red and blue counties, at pre- and post-election.⁵ The percentage of self-identified Republicans did not change appreciably in red or blue counties, from T1 to T2, but respondents were more likely to identify as Democrats as electoral drama unfolded. The percentage for Democrat ID in red counties rose from 18.1 to 23.7, and climbed at a similar rate in blue counties, from 26.5 to 31.1. These results foreshadow what was to occur in the 2008 presidential election, when Barack Obama drew the support of 66 percent of voters under 30 (Levine, Flanagan, & Gallay, 2009).

Table 1: Partisan Identification of Adolescents in Red/Blue Counties, Pre- and Post-Election (%)

	Red Counties		Blue Counties	
	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>
Republicans	29.3	28.8	22.3	22.7
Democrats	18.1	23.7	26.5	31.1
Libertarians	6.5	2.8	8.0	4.6
Green	1.9	2.3	2.9	2.5
Other party/stance	5.1	2.3	5.9	3.8
Not political	34.9	39.1	29.8	34.0
Don't know	4.2	0.9	4.6	1.3

n = 567

With these preliminary findings described, we return to our primary interest in partisan identity as an expressive orientation. This leads to respondents' perception of the "greatest influence" on their beliefs (Table 2). Distributions are significantly different between Republican and Democratic youth at T1 (Pearson chi-square 36.589, *df* 6, $p < .001$) and at T2 (Pearson chi-square 37.590, *df* 6, $p < .001$). Parents were named most frequently by youth in both groups. The largest difference occurs with religion, particularly at post-election, when 24.8% of Republicans identified religion as the greatest influence compared with 1.5% for Democrats. The higher percentages for friends among Democrats fits with our premise that liberal identity becomes manifest as a deliberative orientation within primary groups. Democratic adolescents were also more likely to perceive news media as the greatest influence. Linkages of Democratic ID with perceived influence from friends and media reflect a model of developmental deliberation, whereby political conversation among peers heightens the social utility of cognitive resources obtained from media.

Table 2: Perception of Greatest Influence on Political Beliefs, Republican and Democratic Adolescents, Pre- and Post-Election (%)

	Republicans		Democrats	
	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>
Parents	39.4	43.8	44.4	50.4
Teachers	11.9	11.7	16.9	11.9
Friends	5.0	7.3	8.4	11.1
Religion	22.9	24.8	4.0	1.5
Political parties	5.0	3.6	4.9	4.4
News media	5.0	8.8	17.8	18.5
Don't know	1.8	0	3.6	0.7
	<i>n</i> = 218	<i>n</i> = 138	<i>n</i> = 225	<i>n</i> = 167

Pre-election (T1): Pearson chi-square 36.589, *df* 6, *p* < .001

Post-election (T2): Pearson chi-square 37.590, *df* 6, *p* < .001

Table 3 offers a more granular look at manifestations of adolescent PID during a campaign setting. Cell entries are eta coefficients for associations between PID and deliberative dispositions, cognition, and media use. Of the 11 comparisons at pre-election, Democrat ID is more strongly correlated with political involvement in eight cases. The Democratic advantage shows up even more strongly at post-election, in 11 of 12 comparisons. Issues circulating during the campaign period apparently made explicit some latent differences in identity orientation. At T2, coefficients are significant for Republicans only for classroom discussion and knowledge. And notice that the former activity could be interpreted as a natural intervention, of sorts, to the extent that schools introduced peer political communication to youth who might otherwise not engage in such discussions. This interpretation is backed by the .00 coefficient at T2 for Republican ID and talking with friends about politics. T2 coefficients for Democrats are significant for 11 of 12 indicators, with strength of PID emerging as the lone exception. PID strength also shows up as an intriguing anomaly at pre-election: Republican ID is more strongly correlated with PID strength ($r = .20, p < .001$) compared with the Democratic ID correlation ($r = .01$).

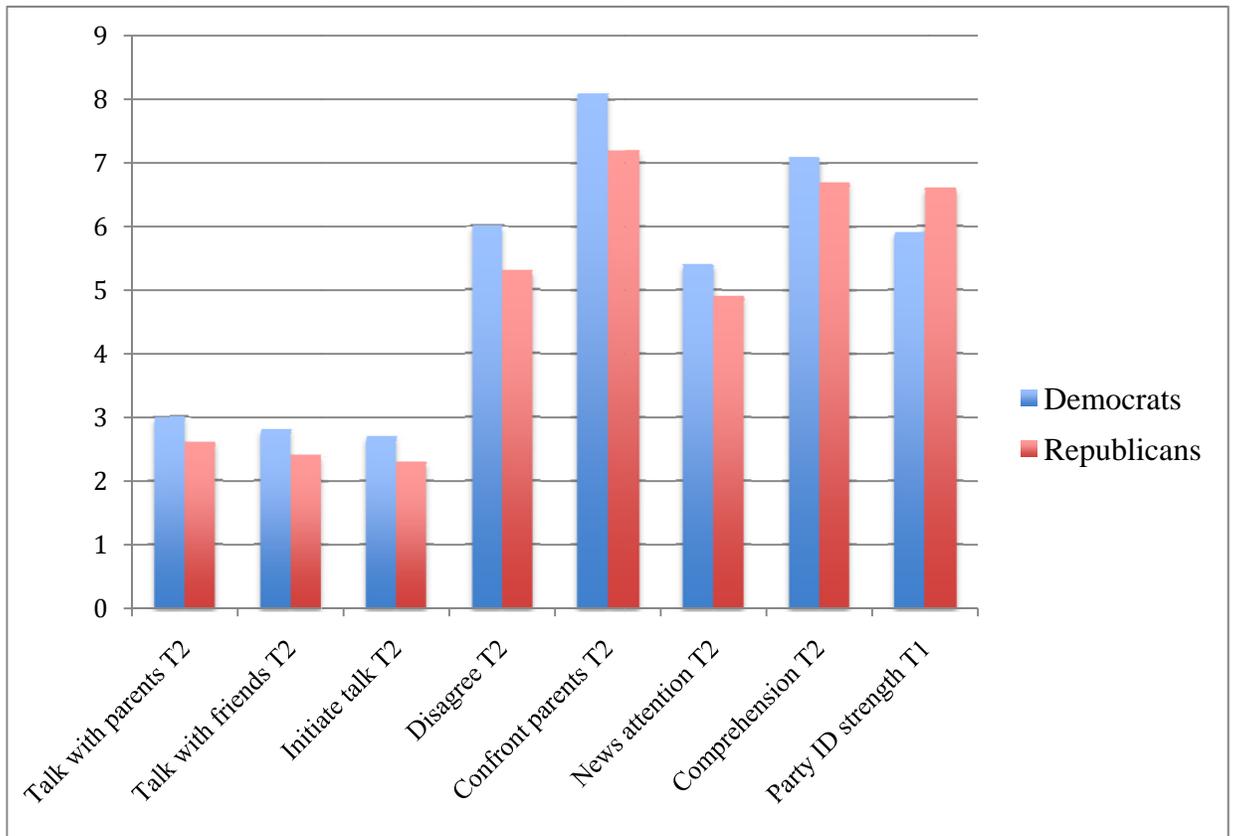
Table 3: Party Identification and Political Engagement, Pre- and Post-Election (Eta Coefficients)

	Republican ID		Democrat ID	
	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>
<i>Deliberative Dispositions</i>				
Talk w/ parents frequency	.08*	.03	.07*	.28***
Talk w/ friends frequency	.05	.00	.11***	.19***
Initiate political talk	.09**	.03	.11**	.28***
Test out opinions	.04	.02	.04	.12**
Listen to partisan opponents	.07*	.02	.11***	.13**
Participate in class discussions		.11*		.16***
Disagree openly	.06†	.01	.14***	.15***
Confront parents	.02	.01	.06†	.19***
<i>Cognition & Media Use</i>				
Knowledge of parties	.16***	.20***	.23***	.21***
News media attention	.07*	.06	.10**	.24***
Comprehension efficacy	.10**	.08†	.14***	.22***
Strength of Party ID	.20***	.08	.01	.07
	<i>n</i> = 218	<i>n</i> = 138	<i>n</i> = 225	<i>n</i> = 167

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 2 depicts means for measures in which there are significant differences between Republicans and Democrats. Reflecting the pattern evident in eta coefficients, means are significantly greater for Democrats at post-election with respect to talking with parents and friends, initiating talk, disagreeing, confronting parents, news attention, and comprehension. Once again we see the exception of PID strength, with Republican adolescents possessing an advantage at T1.

Figure 2: Differences in Political Engagement between Republican and Democratic Adolescents (Means): Pre-Election and Post-Election



We do not dismiss the latter comparison as a quirky finding, but view it as a potentially important insight about the nature of conservative youth identity. This consideration led to Table 4, which looks at relationships between PID strength and other indicators of engagement. Cell entries are partial correlations, which control for demographics and behavioral traits that tend to predict political interest (grades, plans to attend college, and religious participation). For Republicans at pre-election, PID strength is a significant correlate of talking with parents ($r = .39, p < .001$) and knowledge ($r = .23, p < .05$). At T2, knowledge becomes the sole correlate of Republican ID strength. PID strength among Democrats correlates with more indicators of political involvement: talking with friends, initiating talk, and comprehension at T1, and testing out opinions, listening to opponents, classroom discussion, confronting parents, knowledge, and news attention at T2. Thus, we might say that a firm allegiance to the Republican Party is manifest in knowledge during adolescence, while Democratic ID is expressed more holistically, in political cognition but also interpersonal communication.

Table 4: Strength of Party Identification and Indicators of Political Engagement, Pre- and Post-Election (Partial Correlations)¹

	Strength of Party Identification					
	<i>Republicans</i>		<i>Democrats</i>		Δ Strength PID ²	
	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>Rep</i>	<i>Dem</i>
<i>Deliberative Dispositions T1/T2</i>						
Talk w/ parents frequency	.39***	.21	.12	.06	.04	.20
Talk w/ friends frequency	.13	-.08	.27**	.13	-.19	-.07
Initiate political talk	.16	.19	.27**	.16	-.01	-.08
Test out opinions	.03	.04	.06	.29**	-.04	.13
Listen to partisan opponents	.17	.01	.11	.23*	-.02	.13
Classroom discussions		.11		.29**	.03	-.01
Disagree openly	-.03	.08	.14	.04	.16	-.05
Confront parents	.18†	.02	.02	.26*	.12	.06
<i>Cognition & Media Use T1/T2</i>						
Knowledge of parties	.23*	.32*	.17†	.27*	.10	.16
News media attention	.02	.03	.16†	.29**	-.06	.28*
Comprehension efficacy	.19†	.01	.23*	.11	-.02	-.13
	<i>n</i> = 218	<i>n</i> = 138	<i>n</i> = 225	<i>n</i> = 167	<i>n</i> = 138	<i>n</i> = 167

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

¹ Partial correlations control for age, gender, ethnicity, grades received in school, plans to attend college, religious participation, and the three measures of SES.

² Deliberative dispositions, cognition, and media use at post-election (T2) are correlated with change in strength of PID.

Table 4 also reports partial correlations for *change* in PID strength. We are interested in identifying dimensions of political interest during the post-election period associated with increased strength of identity. Media attention is the only significant correlate for Democrats ($r = .28, p < .05$), and there are no significant relationships for Republicans. Findings reported so far suggest that while Democratic youth tend to express partisan allegiances through micro-social interaction, media use is also important. A plausible inference is that liberal identity is expressed in interpersonal communication fueled by attention to news.

We seem to have established that youth Democratic ID was more of a deliberative orientation to electoral politics in 2006 compared with Republican ID. Next, we consider whether the behavioral implications of these identities are influenced by ideological climate. Table 5 reports eta coefficients for PID and indicators of political engagement at T1 and T2 and in red/blue counties. (We again split the Democratic voter ratio for counties at the mean to create red/blue categories). Rebellion activation and conflict seeking would be evident if coefficients tend to be higher for Republicans in blue counties, or Democrats in red counties. As shown in Table 5, this pattern is not evident among Republican youth. Pre-election coefficients are higher in red counties for eight of 11 comparisons, and higher in red counties in six of 12 comparisons at post-election.

Table 5: Party Identification and Political Engagement by Red/Blue Counties, Pre- and Post-Election (Eta Coefficients)

	Republican ID				Democrat ID			
	<i>Red Counties</i>		<i>Blue Counties</i>		<i>Red Counties</i>		<i>Blue Counties</i>	
	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>
<i>Deliberative Dispositions T1/T2</i>								
Talk w/ parents frequency	.16*	.01	.04	.07	.06	.34***	.14*	.19**
Talk w/ friends frequency	.00	.02	.03	.02	.17*	.27***	.01	.19**
Initiate political talk	.11	.04	.01	.05	.21**	.34***	.04	.22**
Test out opinions	.09	.01	.03	.01	.18**	.16*	.04	.08
Listen to partisan opponents	.12	.01	.02	.02	.12†	.20**	.08	.09
Participate in class discussions		.12+		.11†		.22**		.12†
Disagree openly	.06	.06	.03	.02	.19**	.26***	.05	.04
Confront parents	.00	.03	.07	.04	.10	.18**	.01	.17**
<i>Cognition & Media Use T1/T2</i>								
Knowledge of parties	.27***	.21**	.07	.20**	.25***	.29***	.17*	.10
News media attention	.03	.07	.07	.06	.23**	.30***	.04	.19**
Comprehension efficacy	.08	.13†	.04	.07	.28***	.32***	.05	.13*
PID strength	.26**	.16†	.20**	.05	.01	.11	.02	.02
	<i>n = 77</i>	<i>n = 76</i>	<i>n = 58</i>	<i>n = 61</i>	<i>n = 60</i>	<i>n = 72</i>	<i>n = 75</i>	<i>n = 95</i>

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

A rebellion dynamic is clearly evident for Democratic youth. At pre-election, coefficients for Democratic ID and political involvement are higher in red counties in nine of 11 comparisons. At post-election, Democratic youth are more highly engaged in hostile climates in 12 of 12 comparisons. Democrats seemed to thrive in Republican counties as the election season progressed; coefficients in red counties increased from T1 to T2 in 10 of 11 comparisons. A conflict-seeking theme is concretely evident with regard to disagreeing and confronting parents. Looking across the table—at the eight categories of T1/T2 red/blue counties—disagreeing generates significant coefficients only for Democrats, and only in red counties. Confronting parents is only significant across the eight categories for Democrats in red counties at T2.

Results in Table 5 imply a pattern of cross-level interactions—individual ID by regional climate—whereby the influence of Democratic identity is magnified in red counties. The OLS analysis in Table 6 tests the interaction hypothesis in prediction of deliberative dispositions at post-election. Pre-election controls along with county climate are entered in the first equation. (For Table 6 and subsequent regressions, we use the voter-ratio measure for county climate).

Model 2 incorporates the two post-election markers for PID, and Model 3 adds the post-election interactions (ID x county climate).

Table 6: Party Identification and County Ideological Climate as Predictors of Deliberative Dispositions, Post-Election (OLS)¹

	<i>Post-Election Outcomes</i>							
	Talk w/ parents	Talk w/ friends	Initiate talk	Test opinions	Listen to opponents	Classroom discussion	Disagree openly	Confront parents
<i>Pre-Election Predictors</i>								
Age	.173 (.185)	.008 (.200)	-.009 (.175)	.301 (.340)	.000 (.187)	.470 (.329)	.141 (.367)	.646 (.514)
Gender (male = 1)	.065 (.173)	.353* (.165)	.136 (.145)	.267 (.281)	-.308* (.155)	-.277 (.272)	.261 (.303)	.058 (.425)
Ethnicity (white =1)	.105 (.182)	.024 (.197)	.016 (.172)	.151 (.335)	.072 (.184)	-.137 (.324)	-.189 (.361)	.103 (.506)
Grades received in school	-.052 (.159)	.229 (.172)	.063 (.150)	-.364 (.292)	.074 (.161)	.281 (.283)	-.158 (.315)	-.156 (.442)
Plans to attend college	.036 (.102)	.048 (.111)	-.126 (.097)	.134 (.188)	-.080 (.104)	-.060 (.182)	-.160 (.203)	.267 (.284)
Active in religion	.007 (.051)	-.003 (.055)	.010 (.048)	-.124 (.092)	.025 (.051)	-.121 (.090)	-.062 (.100)	-.091 (.140)
Parent education	.050 (.068)	.007 (.073)	.057 (.064)	.043 (.124)	-.016 (.068)	-.005 (.120)	.091 (.134)	.185 (.187)
Parent income	.059 (.047)	.019 (.051)	.018 (.044)	.021 (.086)	-.025 (.048)	.101 (.084)	.116 (.093)	-.011 (.131)
# publications at home	.048 (.067)	.001 (.063)	-.036 (.055)	.074 (.108)	.088 (.058)	.079 (.104)	.165 (.116)	.040 (.163)
County ideology (blue)	.822 (.633)	.919 (.686)	.998 [†] (.600)	-.164 (1.166)	.128 (.642)	.807 (1.129)	-.643 (1.229)	-.046 (1.763)
Model 1 ΔR^2	.055	.051	.041	.030	.039	.041	.034	.026
<i>Post-Election PID</i>								
Republican	.346 (.211)	.395 [†] (.228)	.502* (.200)	.091 (.388)	.431* (.214)	1.096** (.376)	.454 (.419)	.870 (.587)
Democrat	.715*** (.177)	.840*** (.192)	.845*** (.168)	1.162*** (.326)	.638*** (.179)	1.021** (.316)	1.229** (.352)	1.873*** (.493)
Model 2 ΔR^2	.052	.068	.087	.047	.046	.051	.041	.056
<i>Post-Election Interactions</i>								
Rep x county ideology	.025 (.083)	-.001 (.090)	.036 (.079)	-.144 (.154)	-.005 (.085)	-.081 (.149)	-.004 (.166)	-.240 (.232)
Dem x county ideology	-.204** (.078)	-.133 (.085)	-.168* (.074)	-.296* (.144)	-.171* (.079)	-.318* (.139)	-.367* (.155)	-.263 (.218)
Model 3 ΔR^2	.031	.010	.025	.017	.020	.021	.024	.008
Total R^2	.139	.129	.153	.094	.105	.113	.099	.090

$p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $n = 567$

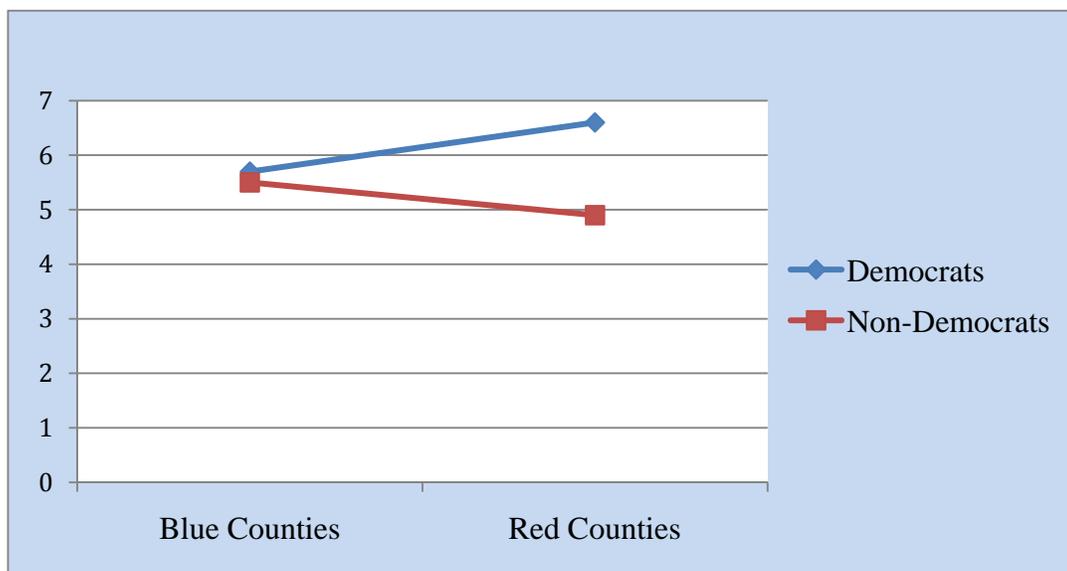
[†] Cell entries are unstandardized betas coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) in the final equation of hierarchical regression.

Demographics generally fail to account for variance in deliberative dispositions, with the exception of males more likely to talk with friends about politics, and females more likely to listen to opponents. Moving on to Model 2, Democratic ID is clearly the stronger predictor. Republican ID accounts for significant variance in initiating talk, listening to opponents, and participation in classroom discussion. Democratic ID towers over Republican ID, though, as a consistent predictor. All eight of the beta coefficients are significant, and for all but two outcomes the significance level is at $p < .001$. In Model 3, the Democratic ID x climate interaction nets additional variance. Coefficients are significant for all of the dependent variables except for talking with friends and confronting parents. Notably, betas are negative across the eight

outcomes, signifying a moderation effect, whereby Democratic ID is a stronger predictor in Republican counties.⁶ None of the Republican interactions are significant.

In one example of the negative interactions, Figure 3 portrays how county ideology moderates the influence of Democratic ID on willingness to disagree. We contrasted Democrats with non-Democrats to represent the effect reported in Table 6, but the same dynamic would appear if we contrasted Democratic ID with Republican ID. While we have emphasized conflict seeking as a distinguishing manifestation of Democratic allegiance, disagreeing in hostile climates is also apparent for Republican youth. This is shown in Figure 3, as Democrats disagreed more frequently in red counties, and non-Democrats (including Republicans) disagreed more often in blue counties.

Figure 3: Interaction Effect of Democratic ID and County Ideological Climate on Willingness to Openly Disagree, Post-Election



The analysis in Table 7 mirrors the three-model structure of the previous table, but with cognition and media use as the T2 dependent variables. Demographics show up again as meager predictors, although gender (male) predicts knowledge. In Model 2, Republican ID accounts for variance in knowledge ($B = 1.679$, $SE = .551$, $p < .01$) and comprehension ($B = .716$, $SE = .280$, $p < .05$). The former result echoes back to Table 4, where knowledge emerged among engagement indicators as the only measure significantly correlated with PID strength for Republicans at post-election. Democratic ID in Table 7 predicts knowledge, news attention, and comprehension, but not PID strength. These findings resonate with results presented in Table 3. There we found that Democratic ID was strongly correlated with all indicators of engagement

except for PID strength at T2. The final model in Table 7 adds the interaction terms, and we see the same pattern observed for deliberation among Democrats; all of the coefficients are negative, indicating that influences of Democratic ID on cognition and media use are more pronounced in conservative climates.⁷ Interaction betas are significant for knowledge ($B = -.468$, $SE = .204$, $p < .05$), news attention ($B = -.324$, $SE = .128$, $p < .05$), and comprehension ($B = -.232$, $SE = .104$, $p < .05$). Once again, none of the Republican interactions reach significance.

Table 7: Party Identification and County Ideological Climate as Predictors of Cognition and News Media Use, Post-Election (OLS)¹

	Post-Election Outcomes			
	Knowledge of parties	News attention	Comprehension	Strength of PID
<i>Pre-Election Predictors</i>				
Age	.283 (.483)	.034 (.302)	.358 (.246)	-.019 (.450)
Gender (male = 1)	.944* (.399)	.215 (.250)	.041 (.203)	.137 (.364)
Ethnicity (white = 1)	.349 (.475)	-.193 (.298)	.110 (.242)	-.090 (.486)
Grades received in school	.039 (.415)	.377 (.260)	.065 (.211)	.020 (.468)
Plans to attend college	.061 (.267)	.006 (.167)	-.089 (.136)	-.083 (.256)
Active in religion	-.027 (.132)	-.007 (.082)	.015 (.067)	.256 [†] (.135)
Parent education	.055 (.176)	.016 (.110)	.061 (.089)	.248 (.182)
Parent income	.239 [†] (.123)	.074 (.077)	.105 [†] (.062)	-.107 (.122)
# publications at home	.040 (.163)	.183 [†] (.096)	.088 (.078)	.088 (.149)
County climate (blue)	2.318 (1.655)	.137 (1.036)	1.382 (.842)	.677 (1.707)
Model 1 ΔR^2	.118	.058	.084	.058
<i>Post-Election PID</i>				
Republican	1.679** (.551)	.670 [†] (.345)	.716* (.280)	.025 (.584)
Democrat	1.944*** (.463)	.743* (.290)	1.059*** (.236)	.204 (8.239)
Model 2 ΔR^2	.066	.028	.073	.002
<i>Post-Election Interactions</i>				
Republican × county ideology	-.033 (.218)	-.189 (.137)	-.119 (.111)	.161 (.174)
Democratic × county ideology	-.468* (.204)	-.324* (.128)	-.232* (.104)	-.212 (3.749)
Model 3 ΔR^2	.020	.026	.019	.006
Total R^2	.154	.113	.176	.067

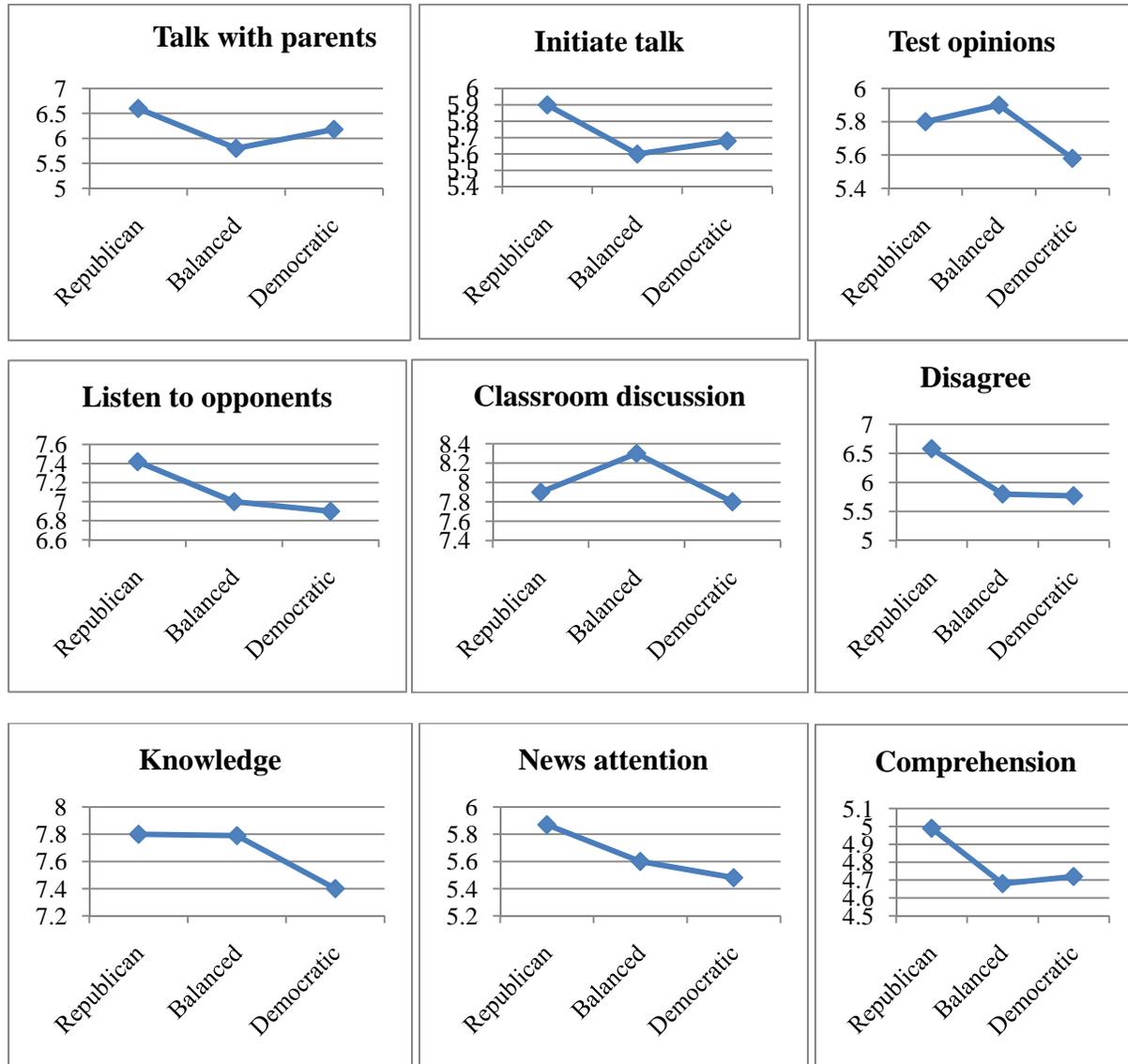
[†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $n = 567$

¹ Cell entries are unstandardized betas coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) in the final equation of hierarchical regression.

Figure 4 illustrates in additional detail the significant interactions documented in tables 6 and 7. Our intent is to demonstrate how empirical dynamics are consistent with the theoretical conceptions involving contagion/affirmation, integration, and rebellion/differentiation. To illustrate the interactions, we transformed the voter ratio measure into triadic categories:

Republican, Balanced, and Democratic counties. Means for Democratic adolescents are plotted against the three county types. The nine graphs portray outcomes associated with the six interactions in Table 6 and the three in Table 7.

Figure 4: Means for Democratic Adolescents in Republican, Balanced, and Democratic Counties, Post-Election



In every case we see a generally downward slope, whereby lower levels of engagement for Democratic youth occur in Democratic counties. A uniform pattern of differentiation/rebellion is evident for listening to opponents, disagreeing, knowledge, and news attention. Distinct patterns are nonetheless evident for other interactions. Talking with parents, initiating talk, and comprehension appear to reflect a combination of differentiation and affirmation. That is, the highest means occur in Republican counties, but the second highest means are plotted in Democratic counties. Lowest means hover above Balanced counties. Thus, in relative terms, both hostile and friendly climates appear conducive to talking with parents, initiating talk, and comprehending news coverage. This seems to suggest that climates are sometimes consequential to the extent that they *either* arouse conflict *or* provide a safe environment for expression.

Integration becomes apparent in the final two interactions, involving testing out opinions and active participation in classroom discussion. The highest means occur in Balanced counties. This outcome seems to make sense conceptually for the two behaviors. The act of refining viewpoints in conversation implies a desire to solicit opinions from others, an outcome functional for integrating multiple viewpoints in pluralistic climates. Participation in classroom discussion affords the same opportunity. Indeed, advocates of deliberative instruction describe the purpose of civic education exactly in these terms—i.e., of schools allowing youth to construct identities through inter-subjective exchanges in diverse communities (Hess & Ganzler, 2007; Murphy, 2004).

The final analysis explores antecedents of support for liberal confrontational activism. We expect that the Democratic ID/red county interaction will again prove predictive. We also anticipate that expression in hostile climates will create a bridge between conflict seeking in interpersonal communication and conflict seeking as intended activism. In preliminary analysis, the strongest zero-order correlates of activism support were talking with parents, talking with friends, disagreeing, and confronting parents. We carried these variables forward into the OLS analysis used in Table 8. Demographics are entered first along with county climate and support for liberal confrontational activism at pre-election. While demographics and climate fail to generate significant betas, the benchmark indicator of activism support is a strong predictor in Model 1 ($B = .506$, $SE = .057$, $p < .001$). Model 2 enters Democratic ID, talking with parents and with friends, disagreeing, and confronting parents at T2. Disagreeing stands out as the only significant predictor ($B = .278$, $SE = .135$, $p < .05$).⁸ Model 3 adds climate interactions with Democratic ID and with the deliberative dispositions. We find marginally significant coefficients for talking with friends x climate ($B = -.540$, $SE = .294$, $p = .07$) and disagreeing x climate ($B = .533$, $SE = .307$, $p = .07$). The negative beta for the former indicates that talking with friends is more likely to promote support for liberal activism in red counties. However, the positive beta for the latter signifies that disagreeing provides a stronger foundation for aggressive liberal activism in blue counties.

Table 8: Deliberative Dispositions and County Ideological Climate as Predictors of Support for Confrontational Activism, Post-Election (OLS)¹

	Support Confrontational Activism (T2)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Pre-Election Predictors</i>			
Age	-.040 (.638)	-.124 (.640)	-.196 (.639)
Gender (male = 1)	-.003 (.527)	.004 (.533)	-.198 (.539)
Ethnicity (white =1)	.206 (.622)	.235 (.622)	.445 (.631)
Grades received in school	.496 (.552)	.513 (.551)	.266 (.562)
Plans to attend college	-.341 (.352)	-.315 (.354)	-.317 (.358)
Active in religion	-.121 (.166)	-.098 (.168)	-.089 (.166)
Parent education	.311 (.233)	.288 (.233)	.268 (.233)
Parent income	-.230 (.163)	-.250 (.164)	-.228 (.165)
# publications at home	-.112 (.200)	-.146 (.200)	-.111 (.200)
County ideology (blue)	2.208 (2.154)	2.405 (2.147)	.916 (2.244)
Support for confrontational activism	.506*** (.057)	.494*** (.048)	.508*** (.059)
Model 1 ΔR^2	.310		
<i>Post-Election Predictors</i>			
Democrat ID		.546 (.604)	4.758 (12.478)
Talk w/ parents		-.167 (.260)	-.198 (.260)
Talk w/ friends		-.115 (.252)	-.076 (.252)
Disagree openly		.278* (.135)	.300* (.136)
Confront parents		.046 (.097)	.082 (.099)
Model 2 ΔR^2	.018		
<i>Post-Election Interactions</i>			
Democrat \times county ideology			-1.894 (5.700)
Talk w/ parents \times county ideology			.030 (.290)
Talk w/ friends \times county ideology			-.540† (.294)
Disagree \times county ideology			.533† (.307)
Confront parents \times county ideology			.198 (.280)
Model 3 ΔR^2	.021		
Total R^2	.350		

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. $n = 567$

¹ Cell entries are unstandardized betas coefficients (standard errors in parentheses) in the final equation of hierarchical regression.

Discussion

Democratic identity in late adolescence appears more overtly expressive and deliberative compared with Republican identity, at least in the context of 2006 midterm elections. Democratic ID was the stronger correlate of talking about politics, initiating conversations, refining opinions, listening to partisan opponents, participating in classroom discussions, disagreeing openly, and confronting parents. Deliberative deficits of Republican youth became more apparent following Election Day; Democratic adolescents were more likely to flourish in deliberative exchanges as campaign drama unfolded. Correlates of *strength of party ID* told a different story, however. While Democratic ID strength was systematically linked with deliberative dispositions at post-election, Republican identity strength held its own with respect to knowledge of the two major parties.

Pending replication in future campaign settings, Democratic identity takes shape as an external, conflict-seeking, interpersonal orientation, while Republican ID is more aptly portrayed as grounded in cognition. The results might also imply a distinction between Democratic ID as a questing, exploratory disposition, and Republican ID as more firmly anchored in foundational belief. Perhaps the most telling finding in support of this interpretation is the post-election comparison for youth identifying religion as the greatest influence on their beliefs (24.8% for Republicans, 1.5% for Democrats).

An intriguing implication is that dynamics of formative partisan identity resonate with the philosophical tension between progressive and conservative visions of "the good citizen." Progressive ideology celebrates the inter-subjectivity of civic and political engagement, in conceptions such as the public sphere, social capital, deliberative democracy, and communitarianism (Murphy, 2004). In conservative visions of the ideal citizen, civic virtue springs from the pursuit of self-interest and the guarding of individual autonomy (Murphy, 2003; Westheimer, 2004). Thus, a liberal-leaning adolescent who knows next to nothing of political philosophy is likely to acquire dispositions congruent with progressive ideals. The same alignment of behavior and philosophy occurs among conservative youth. This mirroring extends to conflict seeking, as Democratic youth appear more likely to disagree and to confront parents, reflecting the progressive ideal of challenging authority. Republican adolescents were less likely to partake in such provocations, conducting themselves in interpersonal orientations that appear more respectful of hierarchy and authority.

These interpretations are another way of saying that the deliberative advantage of Democratic adolescents does not necessarily embody a superior commitment to civic virtue. For example, autonomy in opinion formation and identity allegiance is arguably more likely ensured by internal, cognitive reflection, rather than a reliance on interpersonal communication. And while progressives in the academy emphasize civic virtue as moral transcendence and post-conventionalism (e.g., Haste & Hogan, 2006; Stolle et al., 2005), support for illegal and dangerous activism is perhaps more appropriately expressed in the years following adolescence.

Families, classrooms, and other primary groups constitute the most proximate domains for expression of PID, but layered over these micro-social contexts is regional ideological climate. We anticipated cross-level interactions through a typology of contagion/affirmation, integration, and differentiation. The latter construct best describes results reported in tables 6 and 7. Democratic adolescents were particularly animated in deliberative interaction, and more strongly engaged in political cognition, when living in hostile climates. The rebellion dynamic is perhaps best described as the antithesis of the spiral of silence model (Hayes, 2007, Noelle-Neumann, 1979). Roused, challenged, provoked, or otherwise engaged, Democratic youth seemed to thrive in red climates.

Ironically, the results are consistent with a key assumption of the spiral of silence: individuals actively monitor opinion climates. Democratic youth apparently took notice of regional climates. Significant coefficients for cross-level interactions (PID x county climate) are difficult to explain unless we presume that adolescents were aware of ideological sentiments in their communities. But instead of keeping silent—as the original spiral of silence formulation would predict—Democratic youth were more motivated to speak up in red counties.

Deliberative and confrontational exchanges, in turn, accounted for increased motivation for activism. A spiral of rebellion seems warranted in describing this sequence, such that conflict seeking in micro-social interaction engenders conflict seeking in political participation.

Several cautionary remarks are warranted given the results and nature of the data. We do not know whether a respondent held minority views in a particular family, classroom, or friendship circle. Safety of a blue domestic sphere in red communities might be necessary to trigger conflict seeking for many adolescents. In fact, Democratic youth named parents as the most important influence on their beliefs. On the other hand, they were more likely than Republican youth to confront parents, and more likely to confront parents in hostile counties.

We also note the modest variance accounted for among the dependent variables in Table 6 (deliberative dispositions) and Table 7 (cognition/media use). Total variance attributed to the predictors ranged from .09 for confronting parents to .18 for comprehension efficacy.

An obvious limitation of this study is the observation of conflict-seeking dynamics during a single campaign season. Perhaps the rebellion pattern is partly an artifact of Democratic adolescents realizing that their party was ascendant more generally—i.e., across the nation—in late 2006. Thus, youth may feel emboldened to rebel in hostile climates only when they perceive ideological support beyond their local confines. An intriguing follow-up study would document identity dynamics during an election cycle in which the Republican Party gained substantially in statewide elections.

Possibilities for varying interpretations of Democratic-ID x red-county effects bring up uncertainty as to what exactly these high school seniors were rebelling against. Local news coverage? School or classroom ideological climates? We do not have direct evidence as to the process whereby youth monitor proximate climates, although the results do show that Democratic adolescents were more attentive to media and felt more efficacious in comprehending the flow of issues and events. We also cannot conclude that ideological climate at the county level happens to be the best regional unit for documenting rebellion responses. Climates in wider geopolitical contexts—or in narrower community surroundings—might constitute the most consequential backdrops from which Democratic youth rebel.

Finally, future research should incorporate social cognition and personality variables typically used in political psychology research, but missing here. A more rigorous test of the rebellion hypothesis would factor in (or control) dispositions such as need for cognitive closure, traditionalism, and postmodernism (Golec & Van Bergh, 2007).

Keeping these limitations in mind, the results do appear to challenge prevailing conceptions of PID in political socialization. Conflict seeking, rather than conflict avoidance, characterizes the assertion of partisan allegiance among Democratic youth. To a lesser degree, conflict seeking was also apparent among Republicans—as evident in Figure 3—with both groups more likely to disagree in hostile climates. The results affirm an insight from the

developmental provocation perspective (McDevitt, 2006; McDevitt & Ostrowski, 2009), whereby interpersonal tension in the family is accompanied by youth electoral engagement.

Erikson (1968) comes to mind in the scenario of youth expressing conviction through agonistic communication, and through the rejection of prevailing ideological beliefs. The act of initiating conversations ensured that opinions about candidates and issues, and probably parents' PID in many homes, would become salient in family interaction. Thus, family influence is less a function of passive internalization and more a function of deliberation. Political scientists nonetheless persist in describing youth PID in outdated concepts such as "imprinting" (Dinas, 2009; Niemi & Jennings, 1991) and "inheritance" (Glass, Bengston, & Dunham, 1986). The present study is more in keeping with revisions to the transmission model, which acknowledge that youth PID can be appreciated as more autonomous when political viewpoints become salient in family communication (Westholm, 1999).

In more pragmatic terms, results from this study suggest a need for peer-centered discussion about topical issues in U.S. social studies curricula. We have documented a significant gap in interpersonal political engagement between liberal and conservative youth. A strikingly consistent pattern of deliberative deficits appeared among Republican youth. However, recent research shows that schools can promote equality of civic and political development by allowing students to wrestle with contentious issues (Hess, 2004; Hess & Ganzler, 2007). Unfortunately, conflict-avoidant instincts of school boards, teachers, and parents preclude this kind of instruction in many communities (McDevitt & Caton-Rosser, 2009). Still, an argument put forth by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse in 1996 still resonates. Civics is not enough. If we can tolerate and even promote agonistic expression in classrooms, more youth would benefit from deliberative development.

Notes

1. The response rate was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{completed interviews}}{((\text{completed interviews} + \text{partial interviews}) + (\text{refusals} + \text{non-contacts} + \text{others}) + \text{e(unknown households} + \text{unknown others)})}$$

$$\frac{950}{((950 + 0) + (363 + 224 + 89 + 15) + .241 (204 + 690 + 1223 + 288))} = 43\%$$

2. The eight counties with more 10 or more respondents are as follows:

Los Angeles, CA 15
 San Diego, CA 10
 Jefferson, CO 11
 Polk, IA 12
 Hennepin, MN 16
 Kent, RI 16
 Providence, RI 26
 King, WA 18

3. Schwarzenegger dwarfed Democratic rival Philip Angelides in the 2006 gubernatorial race, winning by 56 to 39 percent. Due to California's ambiguity as a red/blue state following the 2006 gubernatorial race, we looked again at the possibility of finding state-level influence on our indicators of political engagement. Dropping California adolescents from the sample, the findings described above were not altered—i.e., exploratory analyses did not reveal contextual or cross-level influence tied to state climate as operationalized by the red/blue classification. We also reran the analyses reported in the Results without California respondents. Dropping California respondents did not significantly alter findings documented in tables 1-8.

4. The three indicators of family SES did not form a reliable index.

5. While we completed 570 interviews at post-election, we were not able to match three adolescents with county voter ratios, due to inaccurate addresses. The *n* is consequently 567.

6. A preliminary analysis revealed the same interaction pattern at pre-election, whereby Democratic ID was a stronger predictor of deliberative dispositions in Republican counties.

7. The same interaction pattern occurred at pre-election, whereby Democratic ID exerted more influence on media use and cognition in Republican counties.

8. The zero-order, eta coefficient for Democratic ID and support for liberal confrontational activism is .20 ($p < .01$). The parallel coefficient for Republican ID is -.23 ($p < .001$).

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Appendix

State Races Where Party Control Changed in 2006

Red States (as of 2004)

Arkansas Governor
 Colorado Governor
 Colorado House: 1 seat
 Florida House: 2 seats
 Iowa House: 2 seats
 Ohio Governor
 Ohio Senate: 1 seat
 Ohio House: 1 seat

Blue States (as of 2004)

California House: 1 seat
 Minnesota House: 1 seat
 Pennsylvania Senate: 1 seat
 Pennsylvania House: 4 seats
 Rhode Island Senate: 1 seat

Measures

Demographics (T1)

Age. "What is your age?" 15 = 1, 16 = 2, 17 = 3, 18 = 4, 19 = 5, 20 = 6 ($M = 3.04$, $SD = .41$).

Gender. Indicated by interviewer. male = 1, female = 0 ($M = .44$, $SD = .50$).

Ethnicity. "Of what ethnic group do you consider yourself?" white/Anglo = 1; Hispanic, African-American, Asian, Native American, other = 0 ($M = .74$, $SD = .43$).

Number of publications at home. "How many newspapers and news magazines do your parents subscribe to? Would you say 0, 1, 2, 3 or more than 3?" 0 = 0, 1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3, more than 3 = 4 ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.31$).

Parent education. "Please indicate the highest level of education completed for your mother or father. Would this be some high school, completed high school, attended some college, graduated from college, or attended graduate school?" some high school = 1, completed high school = 2, attended some college = 3, graduated from college = 4, attended graduate school = 4 ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 1.19$).

Parent income. "For statistical purposes we need to estimate your parents' household income before taxes. Would you say your parents' income is less than \$15,000, between \$15,000 and \$25,999, between \$26,000 and \$40,999, between \$41,000 and \$65,000 or above \$65,000?" less than \$15,000 = 1, \$15,000-\$25,999 = 2, \$26,000-\$40,999 = 3, \$41,000-\$65,000 = 4, more than \$65,000 = 5 ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.67$).

Grades in school. "What grades do you usually get in schools? Would you say mostly A's, mostly B's, mostly C's, or mostly D's?" mostly A's = 3, mostly B's = 2, mostly C's = 1, mostly D's = 0 ($M = 1.76$, $SD = .49$).

College plans. "I definitely plan to attend college." Respondents used a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale. ($M = 4.75$, $SD = .77$).

Religious participation. Using the same scale, respondents considered: "I am very active in a religious group right now." ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.52$).

Deliberative Dispositions (T1 & T2)

Talk with parents. "How often do you talk about politics with your parents?" Respondents answered with a 1 (*never*) to 5 (*frequently*) scale (T1: $M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.14$; T2: $M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.14$).

Talk with friends. "How often do you talk about politics with your friends?" (T1: $M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.17$; T2: $M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.19$).

Initiating political talk. "Sometimes people get caught up in various conversations—but how often do you INITIATE conversations about politics?" (T1: $M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.12$; T2: $M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.09$).

Testing opinions. A respondent considered how often he/she tests out opinions in conversations "to see how people might respond" and "to see if your views are persuasive?" The summed items created an index (T1: $M = 5.41$, $SD = 2.21$, $\alpha = .81$; T2: $M = 5.36$, $SD = 2.09$, $\alpha = .85$).

Listen to partisan opponents. "How often do you listen to people talk about politics when you know that you already disagree with them?" (T1: $M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.26$; T2: $M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.15$).

Participation in classroom discussion. Respondents were initially asked to consider how often the election campaign was discussed in their classes. "Think about your actual participation in political discussions in class. Estimate your participation on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning 'I never spoke up' and 5 meaning 'I spoke up often.'" Respondents then considered the following: "Think about your effort at listening during these classroom discussions about politics. Estimate your listening effort on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning 'I didn't listen' to 5 meaning 'I actively listened.'" The items were summed to create an index at T2 ($M = 7.31$, $SD = 2.03$, $\alpha = .69$).

Willingness to openly disagree. Using the *never/frequently* scale, respondents assessed how often they "openly disagree with parents about politics" and "openly disagree with friends about politics." The summed items created an index (T1: $M = 5.33$, $SD = 2.23$, $\alpha = .67$; T2: $M = 5.46$, $SD = 2.16$, $\alpha = .63$).

Confronting parents. Three items were summed to create an index. Respondents considered how often they express "a political opinion to challenge a parent," "an opinion to provoke some response from parents," and "an opinion to see if it might upset your parents." (T1: $M = 7.35$, $SD = 3.11$, $\alpha = .74$; T2: $M = 7.41$, $SD = 3.14$, $\alpha = .77$).

Cognition, Media Use, & Partisan/Activist Identity (T1 & T2)

Knowledge of parties. Ten items were summed to create an index (T1: $M = 5.44$, $SD = 3.05$, $\alpha = .83$; T2: $M = 6.57$, $SD = 3.03$, $\alpha = .85$). Respondents were asked which party "do you consider more liberal," "is more in favor of raising the minimum wage," "is more in favor of stem-cell research,"

"is more in favor of defining marriage as solely between a man and a woman," "is more in favor of tax cuts to help stimulate the economy," "controls the U.S. House of Representatives," and "controls the U.S. Senate." Respondents were also asked to identify the party affiliations of Hillary Clinton, Al Gore, and Richard Cheney. Correct = 1, incorrect, don't know/no answer (DK/NA) = 0.

News media attention. Respondents were asked how much attention they pay to "news about politics" and "news about politics on the Internet." They answered with a 1 (*none*) to 5 (*a great deal*) scale. Responses were summed to create an index (T1: $M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.87$, $\alpha = .63$; T2: $M = 4.83$, $SD = 1.95$, $\alpha = .69$).

Comprehension efficacy. Respondents were asked to consider how a series of statements describes them: "When I see or read a news story about an issue, I try to figure out if it is biased," "When I hear news about politics, I try to figure out what is REALLY going on," "News about people running for office makes me wonder how they might change things," "When it comes to political knowledge, I feel better informed about issues than most people," and "I feel confident that I can understand political issues." Response options and coding: *Not like me* = 1, *Somewhat like me* = 2, *A lot like me* = 3. The five items were summed to create an index at T1 ($M = 10.49$, $SD = 2.37$, $\alpha = .67$). The latter two items were dropped at T2 due to low reliability ($M = 6.63$, $SD = 1.59$, $\alpha = .63$).

Party identification. "Which of the following best represents your beliefs in terms of a political party or a political stance? Green Party, Libertarian, Democrat, Republican, some other political stance, or would you say that you are not really political?" Republican ID coded 1 for Republican, 0 for other party/stance, DK/NA; Democratic ID coded 1 for Democrat, 0 for other party/stance, DK/NA.

Strength of party identification. "How strongly do you identify with this political party or political stance? Respondents used a 1 (*weak identification*) to 10 (*strong identification*) scale (T1: $M = 5.92$, $SD = 2.44$; T2: $M = 6.27$, $SD = 2.15$).

Perception of greatest influence. "Indicate which of the following has had the greatest influence on your political beliefs. Would this be your parents, teachers, friends, religion, political parties, or news media?"

Support for liberal confrontational activism. A battery of six items comprised a summed index (T1: $M = 13.85$, $SD = 4.55$, $\alpha = .62$; T2: $M = 13.30$, $SD = 4.57$, $\alpha = .67$). Respondents used a 1 (*do not support*) to 5 (*strongly support*) scale in considering the following forms of activism: "Dropping banners over highways to protest a government policy," "Creating a web site to embarrass a corporation," "Trespassing on private land to protest the cutting down of ancient forests," "Refusing to pay taxes in order to protest a government policy," "Refusing to obey police orders in a street protest," and "Refusing to purchase products from companies that pollute the environment."

Appendix Table 1: Demographics for Adolescents with Republican or Democratic Identities at Pre-Election (Percentages)

		Republicans	Democrats
Age	15-16	4.7	5.3
	17	85.8	88.0
	18 & older	9.6	6.7
Gender	female	48.6	58.2
	male	51.4	41.8
Ethnicity	white/Anglo	86.7	72.9
	Hispanic	5.0	9.3
	African-American	1.8	9.8
	Asian	2.8	4.0
	Native American	.5	.4
	other, DK/NA	3.2	3.5
Grades	mostly A's	88.2	81.5
	mostly B's	10.0	14.5
	mostly C's	1.8	4.0
Plans to attend college ¹		91.3	91.6
Active in religion ²		36.7	16.0
Parent education	some high school	6.9	8.0
	completed high school	15.6	14.2
	some college	16.5	19.6
	graduated from college	44.5	42.2
	attended graduate school	16.5	16.0
Parent income	\$25,000 or less	41.8	48.4
	more than \$25,000 to \$65,000	31.1	23.6
	more than \$65,000	27.1	28.0
Publications at home ³		30.7	33.8
		<i>n</i> = 218	<i>n</i> = 225

¹ Respondents who indicated 5 on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale.

² "I am very active in a religious group right now." Respondents who indicated 5 on the disagree/agree scale.

³ Respondents who indicated three or more.

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) conducts research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25.

CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is now also funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, and several others. It is based at the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University.

