Parenting Is Political:
Partisan Parenting Advice and Everyday Practice in Contemporary America

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Abstract

This project set out to answer two basic questions: do Democratic and Republican parents engage in different child-rearing practices? And to what extent do the everyday practices of partisan parents map on to the larger politically-oriented advice about raising kids?

To listen to the politically-oriented parenting advice, as presented on Fox News and MSNBC, there is a deep division between Republican and Democratic parents. However, as I demonstrate, the content of the networks is not a good representation of the needs of partisan parents, nor is it presented as a public service to help parents raise good citizens. Instead it is a curated message that extends beyond the needs of parents and attempts to define what it means to be Republican or Democratic in contemporary America. Fox News and MSNBC are part of the culture war (Hunter 1991)—the conflict among political elites—that drives the perception of difference between partisan parents.

Parents exhibit some partisan divide in child-rearing, but only in specific areas. Regardless of political orientation, parents share a sense that contemporary parenting is harder than it was for previous generations. When it comes to discipline, parents' cultural orientation to discipline—including their level of strictness and types of practices they use to shape children's behavior—are more salient for parents than political orientation. However, as children age into teens, parents' cultural orientation to discipline interacts with their partisan affiliation to create partisan division on issues of independence and protection, as demonstrated by the ways parents deal with technological independence. Finally, partisan parents also feel isolated when they talk about their attempts to raise hard working children who resist the lures of entitlement. The common language of the American work ethic hides four contradictory interpretations held by parents on the meaning of hard work. However overall, parents are best described as being united by at least as much as divides them.

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Preface

This project unfolds on two levels, the political and the personal. It starts by exploring partisan parenting advice, as offered by Fox News and MSNBC. Inherent in each network's presentation of parenting is a vision of how parents should discipline their children and express affection and a judgment about how much freedom they should grant to their children. These assumptions about parenting are informed by the partisan perspective from which they are offered. The questions, therefore, are these: Do these networks focus on the same areas of parenting? And, when they are addressing the same subjects, how does that advice differ between the two networks?

The answer to these two questions sets up the rest of the analysis. Each chapter takes up a specific, substantive area of advice and compares the partisan child-rearing advice with the practices of parents. This moves the analysis to the personal level. On the areas that are important to the networks, how do parents live their lives? Do Democratic and Republican parents engage in different parenting practices? Are the differences between partisan parents political only, or do they trickle down to daily interactions with their children?

Finally, this project links the political and personal by analyzing the extent to which the partisan advice matches the behavior of partisan parents. Do partisan parents raise their children in such a manner that they need corrective advice from the networks? Or do partisan parents already employ the techniques and practices the networks suggest, and the advice is more "preaching to the choir" than corrective?

These questions animate the coming chapters as I seek to paint a portrait of the relationship between politics and parenting at both the political and personal levels.

Analyzing Partisan Child-Rearing Advice and Partisan Parents' Practice

To answer these questions, I draw on textual, survey, and interview data. For the partisan child-rearing advice, I draw on Fox News and MSNBC. I gathered transcripts of broadcasts and opinion pieces for all of the parenting advice offered over 16 months—from December 2012 to March 2014—on both networks. This yielded a corpus of 105 pieces—63 from Fox News and 42 from MSNBC—that directly relate to how parents should engage in child-rearing.[1]

To explore the practices of parents, I used *Culture of American Families* data, which were collected in late 2011 and early 2012 by the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture and funded by the John Templeton Foundation. This is a nationally representative survey of roughly 2,900 parents with at least one school-aged child (ages 5-18 years). The survey included over 250 questions about daily practices and orientation to child-rearing along with more than 60 questions about parents' moral and political beliefs. In its scope and focus, it is the most comprehensive survey of parents of school-aged children to date.[2] In addition to the survey, follow-up interviews were conducted with about 100 survey respondents, the majority of which were conducted face-to-face in homes across the country. Interviews were roughly 90 minutes in length and covered parents' perceptions of their own childhoods, their current practices, and their future hopes for their children when they are grown.[3] (For preliminary results from the project, see Bowman 2012; Dill 2012.) For the purpose of this project, the survey data drive the analysis. The interview data fill out the survey results by providing context and also qualifying the survey findings.

The Road Ahead

Chapter One traces partisan divisions highlighted in popular media and then turns to the literature of the culture war—the struggle to define America's soul. More than superficial or demographic differences, the culture war rests on competing moral frameworks of what is good and true. How people define what is good and true informs more than political action and should also be evident in how partisans raise their children and seek to prepare them to be productive citizens. At the public level, both the Democratic and Republican parties recognize the importance of the family and view the members of their party as protecting and defending families. This sets up a very public conversation about how parents should be supported and how they should raise their children. The chapter concludes with a review of contemporary American parenting.

To prepare for examining partisan child-rearing practices, Chapter Two examines the parenting advice associated with the Democratic and Republican parties. Fox News and MSNBC make good proxies for the parties because of their alignment with the parties' messages. I find each network presents parenting advice from a particularly cultural orientation, one that is consistent with Democratic and Republican parties. Both networks focus heavily on discipline, the place of technology in American homes, and the obligation and uncertainty of parents as they prepare their children for adult life. While the topics are common, the advice given and the tone in which it is offered are distinctive to each network. The themes in the partisan advice become the structure for the following chapters.

In Chapter Three we turn to American parents by looking at the disciplinary practices in homes. I classify parents' approaches to discipline as positive, multifaceted, or reactive; each approach correlates with a host of other parenting decisions and aspirations. These disciplinary

approaches interact with political affiliation in such a way that many multifaceted-approach Democrats have more in common with Republicans than with their co-partisans who follow another disciplinary approach. In addition to comparing parents to each other, I also compare them back to the network and show how Fox News and MSNBC are essentially preaching to their faithful viewers.

Chapter Four takes up the concrete case of adolescent technology use by looking at teens' practice (as reported by their parents) and parents' fears about technology and their attempts to control it. Here the networks have identified an area ripe for advising. Parents have clearly internalized the larger cultural anxiety about technology and believe it complicates their attempts to shape their children. However, this anxiety does a poor job of explaining the everyday practices of parents as related to their teens' technology use. Instead, technology is better understood as an item to consume rather than an evil to be feared. Many parents, particularly Republicans and Democrats who follow the multifaceted discipline approach, engage in symbolic monitoring of their children's technological independence. This allows them to feel as though they are tracking their children's online footsteps—a practice encouraged by both Fox News and MSNBC—without actually engaging in the practices, such as the use of monitoring software or collecting kids' passwords, which make it possible. In contrast, Democrats who follow the positive approach to discipline admit that they do not monitor their teens' online activities and rely instead on their intimate relationships to know their children's behaviors.

The final empirical chapter, Chapter Five, looks at parents' own perspectives on their attempts to prepare their children for adult life. Across the political spectrum, parents believe that the received wisdom from generations past is not sufficient to equip them to prepare their children for an uncertain future. At the same time, they still feel that they will manage to cultivate

productive adults who work hard and resist entitlement. To a large extent, parents see entitlement as the result of someone else's bad parenting, something they guard against by encouraging their children to work hard. Parents universally value the American work ethic, but the common language hides very different understandings of what it means to "work hard." It also masks the ways encouraging hard work in children can unintentionally produce the very entitlement they seek to prevent.

Finally, the Conclusion returns us back to the beginning by asking if parents are united with other parents by the universal experience of raising children or if they are divided into partisan camps even in their most intimate lives. Fox News asserts that Republicans have an identity that extends beyond politics and permeates every aspect of their lives. In short, the narrative of the network is that Republicans are a group set apart from the rest of society, a group that must fight to maintain the health and greatness of America. MSNBC, in contrast, seeks to define the universal experience of parenting, even though the child-rearing portrayed on the network is far from universal. Despite the differences in tone, both networks are responding to the same complications of contemporary parenting. They are communicating to parents the appropriate ways to shape children's character, curb use of technology, and deal with entitlement. This tension between similarity and difference is also seen among partisan parents. Which of them takes primacy—the congruence across partisan lines or the disjuncture between partisan parents—may depend on the age of the children.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Politics and Modern Parenting

One cool July 4th morning, I found myself sitting on the curb of Main Street in a small farming town in the Land of Lincoln. I watched the annual parade with my nieces and nephews. Over the next 30 minutes, we saw Republican politicians and tri-county princesses riding atop convertibles, candy-throwing church members publicizing Vacation Bible School, and a long line of antique tractors. Halfway through the parade, my five-year-old nephew started waving his hand-held American flag as hard and fast as his arm would let him. Turning to us he commands, "Wave it hard so everyone will know you love Jesus!"

While we had spent the morning talking about patriotism—What do the stars and stripes on the flag represent? What is a veteran?—we had not made any connections between patriotism and Jesus. This was his own conclusion, to the amusement of the adults. In the weeks that followed, I related this story many times. My Christian friends cheered his statement; my non-Christian friends groaned. Both groups acknowledged he had hit upon a central idea in American public life.

Politics, like many other social cues, such as those associated with class or religion, are "caught" by children rather than explicitly taught. My nephew, on the verge of entering kindergarten, had internalized the politics of his Republican parents in a small, Republican town. What is more, the message he had internalized was radically different than the one caught by my five-year-old niece; she lived 3,000 miles away in another Republican town but was raised by Democratic parents. In this dissertation, I contend that these two children—raised by parents with similar levels of education and with similar levels of religious involvement—experience

different childhoods, in part, because their parents hold different political ideologies. Furthermore, these childhoods are markedly different from the political rhetoric about families.

Partisan Divide in Everyday Life

Public conversations about partisan politics seem determined to reinforce that, even on the most basic level, Republicans and Democrats stand opposed to one another. Every few months, media reports remind us that on a host of issues partisans do not agree:

- Democrats drive Honda Civic Hybrids and Volvos while Republicans prefer Ford Mustangs and Audi A8s (Chapman 2012);
- Democrats relax at night by watching *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and *Modern Family* while Republicans unwind with college football and *NCIS* (Fetto 2012);
- Democrats shop at American Apparel, Lane Bryant, and Kmart while Republicans spend their money at American Eagle Outfitters, Coldwater Creek, and Kohl's (Washington Wire 2012); and
- Democrats imbibe microbrews, Syrah and sauvignon blanc, and gin while Republicans favor Samuel Adams, cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay, and bourbon and scotch (Wilson 2014).

Many times, these articles seem determined to find difference at the expense of the similarities: drinking a microbrew instead of Sam Adams is not likely to change the small talk at a Labor Day barbeque (unless they are debating whether Sam Adams still counts as a "microbrew").

Those conducting more systematic analysis would argue that a backyard barbeque that comingles Democrats and Republicans is an unlikely occurrence. Recent analysis from Pew Research Center found that three-quarters of "consistently liberal" respondents wanted to live in neighborhoods where the "houses are smaller and closer to each other, but schools, stores, and restaurants are within walking distance" while the same proportion of "consistently conservative" respondents said they preferred to live in neighborhoods where the "houses are larger and father apart" and schools and local amenities are "several miles away" (Dimock et al. 2014:13).

Thus, when money is no object, Democrats live in urban centers while Republicans opt for the suburbs. Despite this difference, consistently liberal and conservative respondents agree that it is important to live near family, good schools, and nature. For those at political extremes, there is simultaneously striking similarities and differences.

Partisan difference extends beyond things that can be purchased—housing, beer, and cars—to the way parents choose to name their children. Among highly educated white parents, liberal parents prefer "uncommon, culturally obscure names" that display their cultural capital while conservative parents prefer popular, more traditional, names which "signal…wealth and affluence" (Oliver, Wood, and Bass 2013:27–29). Once again, the small difference of a liberal parent naming their son Garrison, an obscure reference to the 19th century abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, and a conservative parent opting instead for Thomas, a reference to the third U.S. president Thomas Jefferson, is not likely to change the interaction between these boys in kindergarten, or even between their parents. However, the authors of this study highlight the fact that political ideology—apart from education—has the power to influence a "wide range of ostensibly non-political behaviors," including "one of the most significant markers of identity," a child's name (Oliver et al. 2013:28). Thus while many of the partisan differences may feel like an attempt to exaggerate the differences between individuals, they are undergirded by ideological and cultural differences that transcend beer preferences and naming conventions.

Culture War

Much of the public conversation about the partisan divide, or the culture war, in America focuses on these sorts of small "cultural" differences. Or, alternately, the conversation about these cultural differences focuses on the "war." When Pat Buchanan invoked the term in his 1992 Republican Party Convention Speech, culture was a way of describing the "war" raging for the

"soul of America." For Buchanan, the important battles included gay rights and women in combat units, thus highlighting the conflict (Buchanan 1992). Not only does he focus on what makes people different, but it contains the implicit assumption that when the battle is over—when gay marriage is constitutionally banned or women are irrevocably excluded from combat units—the nation will, once again, have a shared foundation, or that America's soul will be saved.

Buchanan was picking up on James Davison Hunter's idea of a culture war, but he glossed over the fundamental argument of the theory. Hunter (1991) argued that beneath the public skirmishes run competing, taken-for-granted moral frameworks that rest on differing first principles that define what is good, true, and worthy, and implicit within that, what must be defended against. Furthermore, to imagine the world from an alternate perspective is inconceivable. These competing moral frameworks lead to contradictory interpretations of common symbols and myths, which are inflamed by political discourse, media sound bites, and public attack advertising (Hunter and Wolfe 2006). For Hunter, the fights about abortion, gay marriage, and a host of other issues are a manifestation of the power struggle of competing worldviews for the right to define American society and the nature of democracy. While these individual issues are important in the changes they bring to American society, Hunter argued that they are only the surface maneuverings of a much deeper conflict.

Scholars have gone hunting for the culture war by focusing on the battles.[a] By looking at public opinion on key issues such as abortion, gender roles in the family, crime and justice, and divorce laws, they try to map the battlefield. After analyzing 20 years of data, DiMaggio, Evans,

[a] James Davison Hunter spent more than half of his book talking about "cultural warfare" and the "fields of conflict." While he was using this to illustrate his theory, it is not surprising that scholars picked up on the battles as the focus of his argument.

and Bryson dismissed the idea of a culture war because they could find no evidence of individuals drawing battle lines. Instead they found widespread agreement on racial integration, women's rights, and criminal justice. Only on the issue of abortion did they find Americans are clearly divided (DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996; Evans 2003). Nonetheless, the lack of clear battle lines leads these scholars to agree with Alan Wolfe (1998) that there is no war because, where divisions do exist, rare as they are, average Americans are not willing to fight.

Other scholars find value in the analogy of a war, but they do not attribute it to culture. Instead, the conflict can be reduced to basic demographic characteristics. For McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2006), the culture war is between the "haves" and the "have nots." Stagnation in the real minimum wage and changes in tax policies that favor the rich have led to realignment in American politics. Here they assume that Republicans are the "haves" and Democrats are the "have nots." Cahn and Carbone reinforce the economy as the driver of division, but in the opposite direction. They single out the shift to an "information economy"—the rise of technology, the forces of globalization, and the decline of manufacturing—as the culprit (Cahn and Carbone 2010:207). These structural changes have unevenly affected families and drive people to ideological extremes. For them, the economic winners are Democrats, especially those living on the coasts, while Republicans, primarily in Midwest and Central states, are the ones being crushed by the knowledge economy. Instead of seeing the conflict as class warfare, Monson and Mertens link the conflict to the "normlessness" created by post-modern family structures.[b] The shift from the "modern family of a breadwinner husband/father and caregiver wife/mother"

[b] These authors do not control for income in their model because they assume that the family structure captures the variation in income (Monson and Mertens 2011:260). There is widespread agreement that family structure and economic conditions are not independent, although the causal direction is debated (Graefe and Lichter 2007; Hymowitz et al. 2013; Smock and Greenland 2010; Smock, Manning, and Porter 2005).

to a variety of family forms, including absent-father, delayed-start, and small-size families, has undermined established practices resulting in political division (Monson and Mertens 2011:245). Here, they allow for variation of political orientation within any given level of income, despite the correlation of family structure and economic conditions, but fail to acknowledge how family formation is embedded in a host of other social and cultural factors (Cherlin 2009; Smock and Greenland 2010). All of these studies, which are, at times contradictory, are not sufficient to explain the political polarization that they do find. Unlike those focusing on the battles in isolation, these scholars find skirmishes but fail to offer a compelling explanation.

A few have picked up on the "culture" in the culture war and examined worldviews as a way of understanding the conflict in public life. Davis and Robinson (1997) find that religious orthodox individuals are more conservative on family-related issues—gender roles, sex education in schools, abortion, teens' access to birth control, and the regulation of sex and marriage—than the general population, including religious liberals. At the same time, the religious orthodox are more liberal on economic issues than others. In a similar vein, Knuckey uses "moral traditionalism," measured by views of tolerance and moral certainty, to explain patterns in the election of officials to the U.S. House of Representatives. While he claims that this "traditional-tolerant" divide is opening a "new front" in the study of the culture war, he is returning to the original theory in Hunter's work (Knuckey 2005:664). Carl Desportes Bowman (2010) sets out to disprove the demographic explanations for differences in gay marriage and beliefs about America's future. He finds that education, gender, and urban location and other demographics lose their explanatory power when cultural variables are introduced into the model. These studies find a link between worldviews and the perspectives people hold on a variety of political issues.

If these worldviews inform people's political positions, then they should also inform other aspects of people's lives. In his analysis of American parents, Carl Desportes Bowman (2012) identified four moral and cultural orientations, or four family cultures, to parenting. These family cultures have strong correlations to political leanings on a variety of public issues but are based solely on the future aspirations for the children, disciplinary practices, and moral orientations. These family cultures are so striking that many parents would likely not let their children spend the night at the home of a parent with a different family culture, even if the child's safety was guaranteed. These parents want to ensure that their children are instilled with the family's worldview and so they prioritize this in their efforts to raise their children.

Thus, observing parents raising their children provides a good window into people's worldviews because parents are generally trying to raise children who match their definitions of good, hard-working, and fair—children that reflect the values of their parents. If these worldviews animate their political orientation, then there should be partisan difference in parental interactions with their children.

Parenting Is Political

Household family dynamics provide a window into the private worldview of parents, but family is also a public institution. As such, both political parties see family as part of their purview. As with most things in American political life, the Democratic and Republican parties disagree on the relationship between families and the government. Yet one fundamental point is assumed by both: government must assist families. The everyday concerns of providing for the moral, emotional, and physical needs of their children are not the responsibility of parents alone: parents must be supported by the larger institutional framework of society. "Both liberals and conservatives tend to look upon the family as an 'endangered species,'" argued Brigitte and

Peter Berger, “even as they perceive the dangers in different and often contradictory ways, and both want the government to step in as protection” (1983:199). At times, these interventionist strategies have clear family aims, such as increased funding for early childhood education, marriage and fatherhood initiatives, and family medical leave policies. Often, however, the parties use families as a rhetorical and moral justification for government action on issues that reach far beyond parents raising children, such as foreign policy decisions, tax cuts, and universal health care.

The Democratic Party

Democratic Party leaders seek to be the “champions of working and middle-class families” through government programs and family-friendly legislation (such as leave policies) (Cahn and Carbone 2010; Elder and Greene 2012; Self 2012). In the Democratic narrative, a strong economy depends on strong families supported by the government. Families, therefore, are symbolically deployed to justify policy initiatives related to a minimum wage increase, equal pay for equal work, universal health care, and other explicitly economic policies that affect the lives of more than just parents. This focus can be traced back to President Johnson’s Great Society plans. Johnson argued that all men, but especially poor and black men, deserved to have an opportunity to earn a wage that would allow them to support their family on a single income. In true progressive fashion, he asserted that it was the government’s job to ensure that all men had an equal opportunity to earn a family-supporting income (Self 2012). Not only would this help create a robust economy, but Johnson hoped that this economic solution would address the “tangle of pathology” present in black families of the 1960s (Moynihan 1965: Ch 4; Self 2012). Economic solutions were seen as the cure for “family breakdown,” crime, and poor educational performance by black children, in addition to alleviating poverty. This focus on

economic structures continues today as Democrats argue for a strong "social safety net" for families. In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Barack Obama used families to lobby for an increase in the minimum wage:

> …a family with two kids that earns the minimum wage still lives below the poverty line.[c] That's wrong…Tonight, let's declare that in the wealthiest nation on Earth, no one who works full-time should have to live in poverty, and raise the Federal minimum wage…This single step would raise the incomes of millions of working families. It could mean the differences between groceries and the food bank; rent or eviction; scraping by or finally getting ahead. (Obama 2013)

In this framework, the government has the obligation to help these struggling families through economic interventions. Furthermore, families and their struggle to afford food for their children and a roof over their head is the crux of the justification for policy changes with much broader implications than "working families."

Using families as the motivation for such wide-ranging policies rests, in part, on the idea that families are embedded in their communities that "affect children directly or through the well-being of their families." Hillary Rodham Clinton argued that individuals and the government have "the opportunity and responsibility to protect and nurture children. We owe it to them to do what we can to better their lives every day—as parents and through the myriad choices we make as employees, workers, consumers, volunteers, and citizens" (1996:317). All the actions of the government, even when not directly connected to families, must work to build a "village worthy of our children."

[c] This is only true for a single-parent family with two children, a detail he did not mention in the speech. Nor did he mention that only 10 percent of people making less than $10.10 per hour, his target for a new minimum wage, were parents caring for children on a single salary (Juelfs-Swanson 2014).

The Republican Party

Where the Democratic Party pledges to assist families, the Republican Party vows to provide protective cover (Self 2012). The Republican Party disagrees that the government should ensure an equal playing field for all families. Instead, the appropriate role of the government is to act as a bulwark that allows families to operate without outside meddling. The institution of the family, they argue, has an historic legacy of "thousands of years in virtually every civilization" and should be allowed to continue without outside interference:

> We are the party of independent individuals and the institutions they create…Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of our society and the first level of self-government. Its daily lessons—cooperation, patience, mutual respect, responsibility, self-reliance—are fundamental to the order and progress of our Republic. Government can never replace the family. That is why we insist that public policy from taxation to education, from healthcare to welfare, be formulated with attention to the strengths of the family. (Republican National Party 2012:31)

From this framework, protecting the inherent qualities of families is the best service a government can provide.

Like Democratic measures, the protections provided by the Republican Party can extend beyond issues that immediately affect families—such as sex education in schools—to issues with national and international policy implications. In 2012, the Republican Party, at the encouragement of former Senator Rick Santorum, successfully blocked the U.S. ratification of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons. Santorum argued that, if passed, the treaty would take "power and responsibility away from…parents and caregivers of disabled persons" and "put the state, under the direction of the United Nations, in the position of determining what is in the best interest of a disabled child, replacing parents who have that

power under current U.S. law" (Santorum 2012). A foreign treaty that would have affected adults, in addition to children, was rejected for fear that the federal government and an international organization might usurped parents.

It would be an oversimplification, however, to say that Republican policies about the family are primarily about keeping the government out of families. When the Republican Party talks about defending families, they typically refer to the "traditional family," or "mom-and-dad" family, raising their own or adopted children (Santorum 2006:25). They see this family structure as an important goal to promote for all Americans, and especially for all children. "It has been proven by both experience and endless social science studies that traditional marriage is best for children…We recognize and honor the courageous efforts of those who bear the many burdens of parenting alone, but even as we believe that marriage, the union of one man and one woman must be upheld as the national standard, a goal to stand for, encourage, and promote…" (Republican National Party 2012:31). As a result, they argue *for* greater government regulation and intervention when it relates to stabilizing these families. Unlike the foreign policy example, bureaucracy is valuable when it protects these families. These government interventions, such as a constitutional amendment protecting "traditional marriage," greater regulation of abortion, and other programs that support the moral integrity of the family are central to the Republican Party (Cahn and Carbone 2010; Elder and Greene 2012; Heath 2012).

The Democratic and Republican Parties clearly see the institution of the family as their responsibility and their right to regulate and legislate certain parts of family life. Beyond that, as we will see, each party has certain assumptions about how the lives of family should be run—how discipline should be administered, how teens should engage with technology, and a host of other day-to-day, moment-to-moment interactions between parents and children. These

assumptions rest on the same moral frameworks that justify the parties' intervention on the public stage on behalf of families.

Who Are Republican and Democratic Parents?

Before turning to child-rearing practices, it is worth pausing to consider parents as partisans. In the American population, the Republican and Democratic parties have constituents who are not raising children, and thus do not fit in the current study. The Republican Party is an aging coalition, and many party faithful have adult children and are not longer involved in child-rearing. Indeed, many are enjoying their grandchildren. Similarly, many Democrats are students and young adults who are not yet raising their own children (Pew Research Center 2011). So who are Republican and Democratic parents? And, who are the parents outside the two parties? Based on the *Culture of American Families* survey data, politically affiliated parents (and nonpolitical ones, too) have the following characteristics.

Partisan Republicans (17 Percent)[4]

Of all the partisan groups, Republicans are the most homogeneous. The overwhelming majority of these parents are white (87 percent) and married (90 percent). Those who are not currently married are divorced rather than never married. Fathers slightly outnumber mothers, the only group where men are in the majority (56 percent vs. 44 percent). There is no geographic concentration for partisan Republicans, who can be found across the country. These parents are spread across the education spectrum; half hold a four-year degree (49 percent), including almost one in five who has an advanced degree (19 percent).

Unsurprisingly, partisan Republicans are the most religious: Almost half are Evangelical (47 percent) followed by a quarter who are Catholic (26 percent). Less than one in ten say they

have no religious preference (7 percent). Of those with religious faith, seven out of ten report a high level of religiosity (70 percent)—religious practice such as attending church, reading scripture, and praying on a regular basis. For these parents, their faith is an ever-present part of their lives and they discuss religion with their children at least every week (69 percent—weekly or more).

Partisan Democrats (18 percent)[5]

While united by party identity, partisan Democrats are not united by other demographics. Half of these parents are white (51 percent), while three in ten are Black (30 percent) and a handful are Hispanic (14 percent). They are primarily mothers, outnumbering fathers by 3-to-2 (61 percent vs. 39 percent). The majority is married (67 percent) and those who are not currently married say they have been at some point (20 percent). While they are in all regions of the country, they are disproportionately in the Northeast and less likely to be living in the South.

When it comes to education, partisan Democrats mirror partisan Republicans: half have a four-year college degree (48 percent) including one in five that has an advanced degree (21 percent). This is important because differences between partisan Republicans and partisan Democrats are *not* due to education.

Less religious than their Republican counterparts, these parents are still primarily Christian (71 percent) but lack a dominant group. Roughly one-third is progressive Protestant (35 percent) while one-fifth is Catholics (21 percent) and a handful is Evangelical (15 percent). These parents display a moderate level of religiosity—they are part of a religious community, and pray and read scripture regularly but not daily. In addition to these Christians, one in five claims no religious preference (22 percent). The majority of these unaffiliated parents do not believe in

God in the traditional sense (47 percent) or are doubtful of his existence even if they do believe (21 percent). They also seriously question the veracity of the Christian Bible: three out of five see it as a book of myths (60 percent) and another 28 percent are unsure how to classify it. Despite this, they are as likely to say they pray daily (46 percent) as they are to say that prayer is not a routine part of their lives (42 percent). The questioning and contradictory nature of these religious unaffiliated parents is distinctive to partisan Democrats.

Politically Non-Partisan (34 percent)[6]

Between the partisans is a group of politically aware parents but without the beliefs that tie them closely to the identity of a particular party. These parents report a history of voting coupled with an intention to cast a ballot in 2012. Within this group, one-quarter leans each toward the Democrats (25 percent) and the Republicans (28 percent) while roughly half lack a clear political preference or do not vote consistently for one party. For those with a party leaning, these parents do not fit cleanly into their party—a Democrat who opposes national health care or a Republican who views themselves as liberal.

What is most distinctive about the demographics of this group is how much they mirror the national demographic trends (as collected by the U.S. Census Bureau). For gender, mothers closely match fathers (53 percent vs. 47 percent). On race, two-thirds are white (66 percent), one in six is (Hispanic 15 percent), and eleven percent is Black. Educational attainment, too, follows this trend: One-third have at least a four-year degree (36 percent), including roughly one in eight with a graduate degree (12 percent), and two-thirds have some college (37 percent) or a high school diploma or less (27 percent). Their regional distribution matches the country. This pattern holds for family structure: three-quarters are married (74 percent) and only 11 percent

say they have never been down the aisle. Another handful have been married but not now (14 percent). The best way to summarize these parents is as the “average American parents.”

When it comes to religion, these parents are predominantly Christian but evenly spread across Evangelicals (25 percent), progressive Protestants (23 percent), and Catholics (26 percent). Christian parents have moderate levels of religiosity, mirroring partisan Democrats on this measure. An additional one in five says they have no religious preference (18 percent), but they generally believe in God (42 percent) or are fairly certain he exists (34 percent). Non-religious parents are more likely to say that prayer is virtually nonexistent in their lives (51 percent never or occasionally) than they are to say they pray daily (35 percent).

Non-Political Parents (30 percent)[7]

For three out of ten parents, the political arena is not on their radar. Most of these parents either said were not registered to vote (68 percent) or that they probably wouldn’t cast a ballot at all in 2012 (80 percent). While their political disconnection is distinctive, these parents are distinctive in other ways as well. As a group they are considerably less educated than other parents. Eight out of ten do not have a college degree, more than half of these have only a high school diploma.

When it comes to race, this group is the most diverse: While half are white, three out of ten are Hispanic (30 percent) and one in four was born outside the country (23 percent), the highest for any group. Like partisan Democrats, mothers outnumber fathers by 3 to 2, and, like all groups, they are predominantly married—two out of three—even if one in three lives in another family arrangement. For those not married, it is most common for them to report that they have never

been so (17 percent). Also, more than other groups, they are disproportionately located in the South.

When it comes to religion, this group shows great diversity. Three out of five are Christian and are roughly evenly distributed across Evangelical, progressive Protestant, or Catholic. On the whole, they display low levels of religiosity—they attend church on occasion and pray when it is meaningful to them, but it is not a central focus of their lives. An additional one-quarter report they have no religious preference. Here, however, these nonreligious individuals differ from the nonreligious partisan Democrats because they are unaffiliated, not unbelieving. These non-political and nonreligious parents believe in God—four out of five have no doubts that God exists (79 percent)—pray daily (63 percent), and even attend church on occasion—three out of five attend a couple of times a year to monthly (61 percent)—but they have no association to a specific church. Thus, when it comes to religion, as with other areas of their lives, Non-political parents are outside many of society's institutions.

These are the characteristics of the partisan parents in this study. When we talk about the relationship between partisanship and discipline, technology, or entitlement culture, the topics of future chapters, those parents carry these demographic traits. Before exploring the child-rearing practices of these parents, it is necessary to explore other forces that shape the daily interactions between parents and children.

Everyday Parenting

While the political parties are concerned with raising the minimum wage and protecting traditional families, parents are carpooling, negotiating bedtimes, and breaking up sibling fights. Along with the routines of daily life, they are trying to train their children to be good adults who

are prepared for independence when the time comes. But, as any parent will tell you, there is no single way to navigate the job of raising children, no universal form of discipline, no unassailable philosophy of child-rearing. Children do not come with instruction manuals, and parents must figure it out as they go (Stearns 2002).

In spite of this, parents succeed in raising children safely to adulthood. This is accomplished in a variety of ways. Two of the most common explanations for the parenting practices deployed in American families are the same as the most common explanation for political polarization: class and religion.

Class and Parenting

When considering the relationship of outside forces to the practices of parents, class is by far the most common consideration. In her seminal work, Annette Lareau (2003) argued that parents in different class positions held different philosophies, which motivates specific practices. Middle-class parents engage in the practice of "concerted cultivation"—a child-centric approach to family life that seeks to develop children's unique gifts through adult-child interactions, organized extracurricular activities, and special accommodations from institutions. This she contrasts with the working-class and poor approach to parenting which she terms "the accomplishment of natural growth." This model focuses not on developing the unique abilities of children but on meeting their basic needs for food, shelter, and affection. Unlike the multi-generational engagement of concerted cultivation, children and adults inhabit different worlds with children left to play with siblings, cousins, and friends while adults engage with their peers. One can imagine a holiday family dinner with two tables set up to hold the family and the food. In concerted cultivation families, children are asked for input regarding the menu, seated among the adults, and incorporated into adult conversation. In natural growth families, adults are

seated around one table with the children relegated to the "kids' table." These differences result from the "intertwining of life experiences and resources, including parents' economic resources, occupational conditions, and educational backgrounds, that seem more important in leading middle-class parents to engage in concerted cultivation and working-class and poor families to engage in the accomplishment of natural growth" (Lareau 2003:250).

These class differences pervade nearly every aspect of family life that many scholars have argued that class is more important than race for the way parents interact with their children (Edin and Kefalas 2005, 2005; Hill 2001; Lareau 2003; Nelson 2010; Roopnarine et al. 2005). Even seemingly ubiquitous elements of life are tinged with class considerations. When it comes to cell phone and computer use, middle- and working-class parents rely on technological controls to provide boundaries for their children. Upper-middle-class parents, in contrast, prefer intensive interpersonal interaction to train their children to provide their own internal controls (Nelson 2010). Among low-income single mothers, having clean, well-dressed children—preferably wearing "Air Jordan" shoes—is a key marker of good parenting. For more affluent parents, such appearance markers are only one part of what constitutes success (Edin and Kefalas 2005). Furthermore, Allison Pugh finds that even when children own the same "hot" childhood commodities—items such as hand-held gaming devices, sneakers, and dolls—how those items are acquired and the parent-imposed limitations on them mean that children in different classes experience the same items in very different ways (Pugh 2009). Thus class both shapes parents' behaviors and is one of the lenses through which seemingly ordinary parts of life are interpreted.

Discipline is also divided along class lines. Lower-class parents are more likely to use physical and punitive discipline, such as spanking or slapping, time outs, or grounding. Middle- and

upper-class families, however, rely on relational strategies such as deep emotional ties, reasoning and negotiation, and evoking empathy for others (Bluestone and Tamis-LaMonda 1999; Bradley et al. 2001; Lareau 2003; Nelson 2010). In addition to how parents exacted punishment, the motivation for the discipline also varies. Working-class mothers were likely to "punish or refrain from punishing" based on "the direct and immediate consequences of children's actions" while middle-class mothers did so on the "basis of their interpretation of children's intent in acting as they do" (Kohn 1977:104). When it comes to the "wild play" of young boys, working-class mothers punish when it becomes intrusive for those around them, regardless of whether that play is "boisterous" or "belligerent." Middle-class mothers are less concerned with the impact on others and more on the internal state of the child: boisterous play is tolerated, belligerent play is not (Kohn 1977:97–100).

These arguments about the centrality of class to parenting follow in a tradition of scholarship that dates back to the early 20th century. In their exploration of life in *Middletown*, Robert and Helen Lynd find that class is highly correlated with the character traits parents want for their children and the extent to which mothers shape their lives around their children. Where working-class mothers placed greater emphasis on "strict obedience" and "loyalty to church," "business-class" mothers ranked "independence" and "frankness" higher (Lynd and Lynd 1929:143–144). Furthermore, the Lynds see the initial movement toward what Lareau would call concerted cultivation and natural growth. Even in the opening decades of the 20th century, business-class mothers talked about "accommodating" their "entire life" around their children, their activities, and interventions with institutions on behalf of their children. Working-class mothers, by contrast, faced greater pressures of "outside work and housework never done," which prevent the intensive parenting exhibited by business-class parents (Lynd and Lynd 1929:146–147).

All of these arguments give primacy to class in the way parents bring up their children and prepare them for adult life. In doing so, they fail to consider other powerful cultural forces, such as religion or political ideology, which cut across class distinctions, uniting members of different classes and dividing those within the same class.

Religion and Parenting

Where the research on class and parenting has been wide-ranging, scholarly work on religion and parenting has been focused on the disciplinary practices and relational characteristics for religious parents. Much of the research highlights Conservative Protestant parents, although it also looks broadly at religious orthodoxy or infusing parenting with religious meaning

When it comes to the parent-child relationship, religious parents have a better relationship with their children than other parents. Mothers and fathers who internalize the teachings of their religion report higher relational quality with their children (King 2003; Mahoney 2010; Pearce and Axinn 1998; Stokes and Regnerus 2009). For divorced fathers, his religiosity is more important to the quality of the father-child relationship than an official child-support agreement (King 2003). Child and teen perspectives support their parents' view of the close parent-child relationship and, in these cases, religiosity rather than church attendance is the important factor. But this can also cause division: high levels of parental religiosity can also lead to lower relational quality and increased household conflict when children place less importance on religion than their parents (Pearce and Axinn 1998; Stokes and Regnerus 2009). However, since this mismatch is fairly rare—only one in ten teens—Stokes and Regnerus argue that shared religious salience between parents and teens acts as a buffer for the turbulence of adolescents. These relationships are "better equipped to enjoy the resulting rapids, rather than be broken apart by them" (2009:167).

These high-quality relationships are not the result of favoring the parent-child connection over discipline. In addition, research shows that Conservative Protestants are more likely than other parents to favor corporal punishment, especially if they believe human nature is sinful and that hell is a real possibility for individuals who live a sinful life (Bartkowski and Ellison 1995; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal 1996; Ellison and Bradshaw 2009). However, they are likely to bundle corporal punishment with low incidence of parental yelling and are more likely to show physical and verbal affection to their children than other parents (Bartkowski and Wilcox 2000; Mahoney 2010; Wilcox 1998, 2004). This led Wilcox to argue that Conservative Protestant fathers, and Conservative Protestants in general, follow a parenting logic of "expressive traditionalism" that is a "hybrid of strict puritanical and progressive, child-centered approaches to child-rearing" (2004:129). Furthermore, this combination of authoritative and supportive behaviors by parents seems to protect children in Conservative Protestant homes from the behavioral, antisocial, and depressive consequences typically found in children in authoritative homes (Gunnoe, Hetherington, and Reiss 2006).

In addition to relational quality and disciplinary practice, religious parents are also distinctive in their desire to cultivate their children's moral development. Parents who view child-rearing as a sacred responsibility are more likely to engage in moral socialization of their children, with the goal of developing empathy for others (Volling, Mahoney, and Rauer 2009). Other research shows that Conservative Protestants put a greater emphasis on obedience from their children, when compared to other parents, although not at the expense of independent thought on the part of their children (Alwin 1988, 1989; Sherkat and Ellison 1993; Starks and Robinson 2005). However, Jeff Dill (2012, 2015) shows that for parents who are active in their religious community, independent thinking typically means internalizing the parents' morality. In this case, independence is from peers, not parents. They want their children to adhere to the values

taught at home in the face of contradicting messages from peers. Given the nature of religion, it is not surprising that highly religious parents devote their attention to cultivating morality in their children.

Political Identification and Parenting

While both class and religion are correlated with parenting practice, I argue that these are not enough to understand the nuance of parental aspirations and behaviors. As we will see in the pages ahead, many trends cut across both class and religion such as political affiliation, and the underlying moral frameworks, unite parents that would be on the opposite sides of these categories. Likewise, political affiliation and all that it entails divides parents who share class or religion.

But before we explore just how partisan affiliation relates to child-rearing, we turn first to the political rhetoric about the ways parents should raise their children. Mapping the partisan child-rearing advice provides a way to connect the political—the public and partisan—expectations for parents with the personal—the ways that parents relate to their children in their own homes. It also allows us to see the ways parents' political orientation seeps into their daily decisions about their children.

Chapter 2

Parenting Is Political

Public statements that Democrats and Republicans make contain implicit assumptions about the nature and responsibilities of families. This political attention on parental action is a recent phenomenon, rather than an enduring part of the American democracy. “Over the last half century,” write scholars Laurel Elder and Steven Greene, “parenthood and the family have gone from being essentially non-political and non-partisan issues—rarely being mentioned in platforms, speeches, presidential campaigns—to providing a central frame for a broad domestic policy agendas of both parties as well as being the center of a new policy focus” (2012:46). This shift accompanied larger changes in American society around the meaning of children in the family. Children lost their productive place in the family economy and became vulnerable dependents who must be protected by parents (Stearns 2002; Zelizer 1994). As parenting became more involved for adults, this theme emerged in political and public conversation.

Political statements regarding the family contain a normative characteristic about what parents should provide for their children within the family. This extends beyond basic economic obligations such as food, clothing, and shelter. Both Democrats and Republicans expect parents to prepare their children for a productive future, equipping them with the traits they will need to succeed as adults and citizens.

First Lady Michelle Obama, who sometimes refers to herself as “Mom-in-Chief,” expounded on the job of parents in her 2012 Democratic National Convention Speech:

> [From our parents] We learned about dignity and decency—that how hard you work matters more than how much you make...that helping others means more than just getting ahead yourself.

> We learned about honesty and integrity—that the truth matters...that you don't take shortcuts or play by your own set of rules...and success doesn't count unless you earn it fair and square.
>
> We learned about gratitude and humility—that so many people had a hand in our success, from the teachers who inspired us to the janitors who kept our school clean...and we were taught to value everyone's contribution and treat everyone with respect.
>
> Those are the values Barack and I—and so many of you—are trying to pass on to our own children. (Obama 2012)

For her, parents explicitly teach their children the basic moral virtues of dignity, hard work, honesty, integrity, gratitude, and humility—traits that are passed down in an intergenerational chain from parents to children to grandchildren. By presenting these traits at the Democratic National Convention, First Lady Obama situated them, and the role of parents, in the larger American political narrative.

In the same manner, Republicans, in their 2012 Party Platform, situated parenting and family as one of the pillars of the American Democracy:

> We are the party of independent individuals and the institutions they create—families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods—to advance their ideals and make real their dreams. Foremost among those institutions is the American family. It is the foundation of our society and the first level of self- government. Its daily lesson—cooperation, patience, mutual respect, responsibility, self-reliance—are fundamental to the order and progress of our Republic. Government can never replace the family. (Republican National Party 2012:31)

In light of this, Republicans view their job, as elected and government officials, as creating a culture that is most conducive to the independent thriving of families. This includes providing parents with the freedom they need to raise their children.

While clearly establishing the connection between parental responsibilities and the larger political discourse, both parties stop short of providing prescription on how parents should raise their children. Instead, each party focuses on the traits that parents need to instill in their children, leaving the actual practice of parenting up to the members of each individual family.

Parenting in Political News

In the absence of parenting prescriptions from the political parties, the enactment of parenting practices for the purpose of cultivating future citizens is difficult to map. As a way to fill in this gap, I turn to the parenting advice offered by politically partisan news organizations—specifically Fox News and MSNBC.

Both Fox News and MSNBC, as channels and not just individual shows, have strong partisan identification. For most Americans, Fox News is seen as politically conservative in its orientation. In 2009, Anita Dunn, then White House Communication Director, characterized Fox News as "…either the research arm or the communication arm of the Republican party…the way we [at the White House] view it is more of a wing of the Republican party" (Dunn 2009). MSNBC is seen as the Democratic counterpoint to Fox News. In a 2012 interview, former President Bill Clinton said that MSNBC "really has become our version of Fox" (Pierce and Warren 2012), implying that it has become the news source favorable to the Democratic Party.

Public opinion backs up the idea that Fox News represents conservative ideas while MSNBC speaks for liberals. A 2013 poll of registered voters by Public Policy Polling found that Republicans overwhelmingly trust Fox News: seven out of ten (68 percent) of Mitt Romney voters say Fox is a trustworthy source. This compares to only one out of five (20 percent) of Barack Obama supporters. Likewise, Democrats are more inclined to believe MSNBC with six

out of ten (58 percent) Obama voters saying they trust the network. In contrast, only one in ten of Romney voters say MSNBC is trustworthy and three-quarters say it is *not* to be trusted. This stark difference extends beyond just these two sources: the report finds that "Democrats trust everything *except* Fox, and Republicans don't trust anything other than Fox" (Public Policy Polling 2013:1). Unsurprisingly, people consume partisan news in accordance with their political leaning and avoid it when it does not match their position or when they are uninterested in politics (Arceneaux and Johnson 2013; Stroud 2011).

The partisan orientation of Fox News and MSNBC is further corroborated by Pew's analysis of the news coverage of the 2012 presidential race. Coverage on Fox News was decidedly more negative for Obama (86 percent of stories) than for Romney (56 percent negative), although, Romney was clearly not a Fox favorite either. As anticipated, MSNBC was less critical of Obama: only 46 percent of the stories were negative, compared to 88 percent negative stories about Romney (Rosenstiel, Mitchell, and Jurkowitz 2012). Pew also found that both networks committed the majority of their airtime to explicitly opinion-based pieces as opposed to factual reporting. On Fox News, just over half of all programming (55 percent) is opinion-based. On MSNBC, however, airtime committed to opinions outnumbers factual reporting by more than 5 to 1: 85 percent of MSNBC's programming is dedicated to the opinions of the hosts and their guests (The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism 2013).

Because of the explicit alignment with political parties, there is no assumption of neutrality in content of Fox News or MSNBC. Guests are recruited, in part, based on their alignment with the perspective of the news organization. This practice, utilized for political segments, is surely not suspended for segments on parenting or child-rearing more generally (Hirsch 1977). Based on

this, I use Fox News and MSNBC as a proxy for the parenting practices associated with the Republican and Democratic parties (See Appendix A).

There are some limitations when considering Fox News and MSNBC as stand-ins for their parties. Despite the clear alignment between the news organizations and the parties, the networks are not part of the political parties. The content on Fox News and MSNBC may be reflective of the Republican and Democratic parties, but they are not sanctioned by them. The parenting advice on Fox News and MSNBC shares an affinity with the tenants of the parties, making it a good proxy, but should not be interpreted as if it came directly from the parties themselves.

In addition, Fox News and MSNBC represent a limited set of voices on what it means to be a Republican or a Democrat. There are many individuals who would claim a partisan identity but not agree with all of the content of these networks. In other words, while Fox News and MSNBC map closely with the rhetoric and positions of the respective national and state parties, the people who vote for those parties do not necessarily embrace or condone the messages of the news organizations.

This is not a reception study. The goal of this chapter, and this dissertation more generally, is not to explore how Democratic and Republican parents interpret, internalize, or implement the parenting advice offered by these partisan sources. Messages communicated through the media are often interpreted in complex and, at times, contradictory ways. As Radway (1984) shows in her study of romance novel readers, the messages that people take away from the story and the meaning they attach to the act of consuming those messages often belie the face value of the message.

The goal of this chapter is to situate parenting, an intimate and familial endeavor, in the larger political culture. Interactions between parents and children, situated in living rooms and bedrooms across the country, are not insulated from the forces of political life. The meaning and advice associated with parenting are historically situated and part of larger cultural narratives. Furthermore, these meanings are contested and just as subject to the power dynamics of public life as any other political contest (Berger and Berger 1983; Hunter 1991; Olick and Levy 1997; Somers 1995; Steinmetz 1999). As previously noted, as families have become centered on child-rearing, so too has the role of parenting become increasingly present in political rhetoric, primarily as a justification for political endeavors such as universal health care and increased military spending (Elder and Greene 2012). But more than that, this political rhetoric about families contains assumptions about how families should operate and what parents should do in their homes with their children: parents are preparing future citizens and, as such, are shaping the future nation. This chapter sets out to examine the dominant narrative about the nature of family and the role of parents in the contemporary American political narrative. By analyzing the parenting advice offered by these partisan news organizations, it sets up the larger political context within which parents are embedded. Subsequent chapters will systematically explore the lives of Democratic and Republican parents in light of the parenting proscriptions offered by Fox News and MSNBC, as representatives of their parties.

Partisan Parenting Advice

While these networks have distinct partisan perspectives and audiences, they are still addressing the same historical moment in parenting. Packaged in different ways—Fox News in an authoritative style, MSNBC in a conversational style—they both take up the nature of the

relationship between parent and child, what happens when natural parenting instincts go awry, and the place technology in the lives of children and parents alike.

Parenting is political on Fox News

"Are you killing your child's ability to lead?" Asks an earnest TV host. If you're doing the wrong things as a parent, she continues, "[y]ou could be robbing the world of the next Margaret Thatcher or Ronald Reagan" ("Can you Over-Parent your Children?" 20 January 2014). On Fox News, the actions of parents are transported out of living rooms, dining rooms, and backyards of millions of homes and cast into the narrative of the larger American democracy. Parents are not simply seeking to prepare their children for lives as productive adults. They are also raising the "next generation" of Americans, "weaving together the fabric of society" ("A New Years' Resolution You Can't Afford to Miss" 31 December 2013; "A Compass for the Road of Life: Top 10 Lessons I Learned from Mom" 10 May 2014). Individual failures on the part of the parents not only fail their children, but the country as well. Parents who trained their children that they would be protected from the consequences of poor choices became "young adults [who] went out and voted for Obama in droves." Instead of working for success in life, they would rather have an "entitlement society" where they get "more and more and more" from the government ("Sarah Palin, Studio Audience Debate Parenting in America" 20 January 2014). One Fox News contributor linked many of the current societal ills to the poor choices of parents:

> Bottom line is, what we have to do is, stop this craziness where we give kids who lose on sports teams ribbons and trophies. We have to stop the craziness of grade inflation in our schools. Stop the craziness of giving tenure to lousy teachers. Stop the idiocy of saying we're running a country that is a financially responsible country when we're headed for financial abyss. That's what we have to do….Bottom line is, we're living as though we're wealthy when we're not. We watch one stock market bubble rise after another and then burst, because the

> truth always wins. You can't defeat reality forever. ("Are we Raising a Generation of Narcissists?" 8 January 2013).

Fox News blames bad parenting for Occupy Wall Street, Obama's election, and the governmental credit crisis on the national stage. For business, child-rearing deficiencies mean future employees lack the ability to work as a team, deal with failure, or persevere through tough assignments ("Why are Fewer American Kids Playing on Sports Teams?" 3 February 2014; "Is Seinfeld Right about the Evolution of Parenting?" 20 February 2014). In short, "[t]he ruin of a nation," and the "greatness of a nation begins in the homes of its people" ("The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together" 16 October 2013).

In light of this Fox News narrative, moment-by-moment interactions take on crucial importance: the wrong choice made by a mother on a random Tuesday, or by a father every time he picks up his kid from soccer practice, could "cripple" the future success and international standing of America, in addition to "crippling" their child's chance at a successful life. Fox News draws on the future impact of parenting to provide explicit, everyday parenting advice. In other words, because present parental failure could ruin America, Fox News has the authority—one might even say a moral obligation—to instruct parents in correct child-rearing. Even in the most mundane moments of daily life, parents are teaching important lessons to children and they need the proper guidance to get it "right." Some of the suggestions for daily interactions include:

- Parents are encouraged to "have dinner together with your children at least once a week to maintain a healthy, meaningful dialogue." Not only will it foster the intimate parent-child relationship, but it also provides a venue for parents to "immunize" their children against the "messages of victimhood and disempowerment President Obama and his administration are promulgating" ("Back to School, Back to Drugs? Five Things Parents Need to Know" 15 September 2013; "How to Immunize Our Kids Against Obama's Victim Mentality" 30 October 2013);
- Chores should be assigned to children by the time they are about 5 years old, "simply for being a member of the family. Making the bed, picking up clothes (and perhaps even

doing one's laundry, depending on age and ability) become personal responsibilities…" which teaches children the value of hard work ("How to Talk with your Kids about the 'M' Word—Money" 16 March 2013; "'Minimalist Parenting'" the Way to Go? 28 April 2013);

- Use fines, instead of time-outs, subtracted from an allowance or saved funds as a form of discipline. A time-out "requires considerable monitoring and fails to give restitution to the victim…. Imposing fines is easier for parents and sends the message that you have to pay for your actions: "hit your sibling, and you end up paying a hefty fine for inflicting suffering." ("An Economist's Seven Rules for Raising Kids" 03 November 2012).

These are just a few of the very pointed, specific tips Fox News offers to parents about daily life. There is an underlying assumption that, without such advice, parents are rudderless and unable to effectively raise their children.

In addition, Fox News also offers pointed advice about routine, seasonal occurrences. At times of transition, parents are reminded how to prepare their children for a happy and productive school day ("Ten Ways to Help Your Child Handle School Stress" 19 January 2014). In December, Fox News offers tips on how to encourage generosity—and prevent greed or entitlement—in children at a time of gift receiving and materialism ("What Came First at Christmas? Self-Centered Children or Their Parents?" 24 December 2013; "Teach Your Kids to Give this Holiday Season" 09 December 2012). And in the spring, the focus is on how to prepare your "teen" (read: daughter) for prom night so she does not regret photos posted to social media or "feel obliged to have sex" after the event ("How to Prepare your Teen for Prom Night" 01 May 2013). All of these are predictable, highly anticipated events.

Much of this advice about daily and seasonal life is accompanied by the sense that parents, left to themselves, would make the wrong choices when raising their children. Instead of being competent individuals, Fox News seems to think that parents' first instincts—to do everything possible to set one's child up for future success and shield children from heartache in the present—can very easily "cripple" and "fail" their children instead of helping them. Parenting is

portrayed as a balancing act as parents "fight against the natural impulse to be a good parent" ("Are Parents Going Beyond Ethical Boundaries?" 30 October 2013). In every child-related encounter, parents must balance the desire to demonstrate unconditional love, protection, and support for children with the desire to allow them to encounter the real world, face real consequences, and experience real discipline. In every instance, it seems that parents' "natural instincts" are wrong.

It is worth noting that while the message of parental ineptitude comes from a Republican perspective, it would not appear as such in the Republican Party Platform. No Republican candidate would consider giving a stump speech that included telling parents that their natural instincts were wrong. That is no way to win votes. However, the Party and candidates would agree that the actions of parents in the present have national and global consequences.

When combined with the nationalistic meaning of parenting, Fox News suggests the natural impulse of parents is also dangerous for America. Indeed, the greatness and fate of the nation rests on the daily decisions of parents. In seemingly inconsequential interactions between parent and child, parents are "weaving the fabric of society" ("A Compass to the Road of Life: Top Ten Lessons I Learned from My Mom" 10 May 2013). This adds a certain level of urgency to parents' actions, and larger consequences for parental mistakes, even when done with the best of intentions.

"Parents Helping Parents" in the MSNBC Narrative

In contrast, parenting on MSNBC does not have the larger, patriotic narrative. Rather than focusing on training children for a future country, it centers on the experience of parenting in the present. In other words, where Fox puts children at the center of the conversation and instructs

parents on the best way to raise children, MSNBC focuses on the adult's role as the parent and the choices and struggles they face in the present. With this parent-in-the-present orientation, parenting missteps in day-to-day interactions do not have the same cosmic weight. Instead of laying the foundation for a future moment, parents are seen responding to and weighing their decisions in the present circumstances.

This difference in orientation is also reflected in the nature of the conversations about parenting. In contrast to Fox News, which provides volumes of pointed, explicit advice, parenting segments on MSNBC contain almost no specific advice. Instead of experts passing along tips or guidelines to parents about the modifications they must make to raise good children, interactions around parenting feel more like memoirs. The conversational style on MSNBC, rather than a traditional interview format, allows viewers to feel as if they are part of the conversation as guests share stories about parenthood.

In a segment on biracial parenting, one white mother reflects on her introduction to black children's hair:

> I have two African-American girls and it takes a phenomenal amount of time to do their hair as I discovered. I do their hair, of course. It's amazing how many white women will come up and touch their hair, fondle their hair. The thing I've had to teach my 4 1/2-year-old is to tell them, "It's not OK to touch me. I'm a person; I'm not a pet. I'm not a puppy, you can't come up and touch me." But it drives me bonkers, because they don't realize not only the time and energy I put into the hair, but also that it's not OK to touch a child. ("Bi-Racial Parenting and Racial Literacy" 11 August 2013).

Other mothers on the panel, both black and white, affirmed the story, but the anecdote was left to stand on its own. There was no advice given or lesson drawn before the conversation moved on to another story.

Similarly, when comedian Josh Wolf promoted his book on parenting as a single dad, *It Takes Balls*, there was no explicit advice:

> When [my son] was little and he got dressed up for Halloween, he was a Ninja. And I got in trouble because at home I told him he was a Nin-Jew, because we're Jewish, and that he didn't throw a Chinese star, he threw a Star of David. So he went to Kindergarten, and they were like, "Are you a Ninja?" And he was like, "I'm a Nin-Jew!"…[Dads] may do [parenting] a little more differently, but we still do it. Okay, like, I don't take the standard things as seriously. That Nin-Jew example is perfect. I'm very honest, I don't coddle as much like a mother might. When my son was like, "I'd like to play professional basketball." and I told him, "That's not going to happen. Like, we're Jews. Adam Goldberg doesn't play center for the Nicks. You know, you can own a basketball team, but you're not going to play on one." So, I'm just a little more honest, a little more up-front and, some people would say, a little unconventional, I guess.

Despite the segment being billed as "Childrearing Tips from a Single Dad," there was no explicit prescription about parent-child interactions. ("Childrearing Tips from a Single Dad" 20 March 2013).

These discussions around parenting and child-rearing are best described as "parents helping parents," an idea best expressed by show host Melissa Harris-Perry. She demonstrated this when she shared her conversation with her 11-year-old daughter in the wake of the George Zimmerman verdict, which acquitted him of the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black teen. Harris-Perry, who is biracial, hoped her story might provide some guidance for other parents:

> I do not have all the answers. Not even close. I have been asking others to share. On Sunday's *Melissa Harris-Perry*, my panel of parents spoke about how they were grappling with talking to their kids. In the spirit of parents helping parents, I am opening up about the very personal interactions my husband and I had with our daughter on Saturday night…I hope that there is something here that can help others as we work toward just and loving responses to the pain so

> many of us are feeling. ("'Everything Will Be OK. I Love You': Parenting after Trayvon" 15 July 2013)

As her story unfolds—in a series of text messages between her husband and daughter—Harris-Perry shares how her family grappled with the sense that "America has no justice." This intimate look at her family's life is done with the hopes that other parents will glean something useful, but it is devoid of explicit advice.

Other segments seek to provide historical or cultural context for contemporary parenting by offering a description of the latest research or tracing the changes to family life over time. Jennifer Senior, author of *All Joy and No Fun*, helps parents make sense of their chaotic lives explaining the "ahistorical" nature of their task:

> …the family has become a filiarchy, meaning that kids are at the top of the heap, ever since they lost their productive function. They used to work for us, not any more…. until 1940 only half of all American kids graduated from high school. They were working for us throughout the history of this country…. And it made rational, economic sense. It was at least economically rational. You did something for them and they kicked back something back in. What's strange is that their new work, is you're new work. It is driving them to soccer. That's their work. It's going over their homework and going to Kumon [tutoring]. ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014)

Her goal seems to be to offer parents with a way to contextualize their experience, and to give themselves a break in the process: instead of stressing out about all that they feel obligated to do for their children, they should realize that the modern "immersion" parenting actually provides children with advantages that their parents did not provide for them ("The Highs and Lows of Modern Parenting" 3 February 2014; "Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014). Another guest, Hannah Rosen, says she wrote her article about technology and toddlers, which summarizes current research on children and technology but does not offer specific advice, so that parents would cut themselves some slack, "You shouldn't feel guilty, that's the

point of the article. I'm trying to get parents to feel a little less guilty" ("Toddlers and Tablets: One Mother's Advice" 29 March 2013). The implicit hope is that parents will realize they do not need to be so hard on themselves. At the same time, however, this hope does not actually provide parents with ways to manage the "ahistorical" demands they face. Where Fox News legitimates its explicit advice in the larger, nationalistic narrative of parenting, MSNBC's focus on the experience of parents in the present, while seeking to lighten the load for parents, does not provide concrete help for parents.

However, even when lacking prescriptions about parenting and seeking to help parents contextualize their experiences, the televised conversations about parenting still communicate powerful messages about what parents should be doing. Anecdotes about personal experience allow viewing parents to place their practice in the context of others'. Conversations about the "ahistorical" nature of contemporary parenting provide a frame of interpretation for how parents should feel about the, at times, overwhelming nature of their jobs. And critiques about other parents police the boundaries of appropriate parenting without an explicit statement about what parents should do. Consider this example on MSNBC's *Morning Joe* where the host, Mika Brzezinski, "lectures" her co-host, Joe Scarborough, about the amount of time he spends with his children:

> And, by the way, can we talk about Joe for a second…Because, ok, so we work an early shift. We get up at 3, home by 11, I call him about the show, he's driving his kid to tennis, he's driving his daughter home from school, he's watching Iago, he's watching Sponge Bob. He spends like seven hours. What? Why does he need to do that? It's too much…. They have way too much access to him. ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014).

"It's way too much," agrees Jennifer Senior, the day's guest, agreeing that Joe spends too much time focused on his children. In this and other ways, conversations about parenting on MSNBC

are powerful because they portray as common sense a set of parenting practices without explicitly telling parents how they should interact with their children. These parenting narratives constrain the choices of parents even as they seek to provide parents with the historical and cultural context of their actions (Lukes 2005).

This indirect form of parenting advice is broken only twice in 16 months: at times of "very distressing, heartbreaking," "unbelievable tragedy" ("Psychologist: Parents Need to Reassure Their Children" 14 December 2012; "Teen's Tragic Suicide Sheds Light on Cyberbullying" 15 September 2013). On the afternoon of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting[d], a psychiatrist offered pointed guidance to parents on the best way to talk to their elementary school children about tragedy:

> I think that what parents need to be aware of is that with really young kids, elementary school-age kids, you want to really keep it very brief and simple. You don't want to go into any graphic detail. You want to answer whatever questions they may have, we really want to be able to provide them with a lot of reassurance. The thing is of course there's no way to guarantee that the world is safe to your kid, but when a kid is an elementary school-age child you really want to make things very black and white for them. And you want to let them know that even though this tragedy occurred they are very safe, their schools are safe, and they will be okay…. ("Psychologist: Parents Need to Reassure Their Children" 14 December 2012).

Likewise, in the days following the suicide of 12-year-old Rebecca Sedwick, as the connection to cyberbullying became clear, a legal expert critiqued the actions of Sedwick's mother: "I'm so impressed with this mother taking such a proactive role, but you can look at this in hindsight. If I

[d] The shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School is one of three specific events that show up in the parenting advice offered on Fox News and MSNBC. On December 14, 2012, a gunman opened fire in a kindergarten classroom at Sandy Hook Elementary School killing 20 students and 6 staff members (Barron 2012). On July 13, 2013, George Zimmerman was acquitted of murder in Florida in the shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, an unarmed Black man (Alvarez and Buckley 2013). On September 11, 2012, police discovered the body of 12-year-old Rebecca Sedwick. She had committed suicide after months of bullying online (Alvarez 2013).

was advising her, I would say, you needed to go one step further." She proceeded to tell parents that they need to be "snooping" on their kids "on a daily basis" to know if their children were being bullied. ("Teens Tragic Suicide Sheds Light on Cyberbullying" 15 September 2013).

These two examples provide a stark contrast to the other parenting segments on MSNBC. Instead of offering stories about what these experts, as parents, would do with their own children, they prescribe pointed, detailed actions for parents. At these moments of rupture in the larger social narrative, moments of violence toward children that generate social anxiety, the pattern of "parents helping parents" falls away. These events are so far outside the standard experience of raising children that even good parents, mothers and fathers who are competent at raising their children, need outside help to navigate such overwhelming tragedy.

Overparenting

Both networks are concerned with overparenting, or the inversion of the historic relationship between parent and child. The messages communicated vary: for Fox News, overparenting happens when parents focus on the "now." For MSNBC, overparenting is related to the shift of children to the center of the family. But on both networks, overparenting is an outgrowth of parents' natural instincts to connect with and protect their children.

Overparenting is "crippling kids," says Fox News

Overparenting as presented by Fox News means a child-centric world where current concerns—the children's present happiness and self-esteem—are valued over their future preparation. Instead of focusing on their task of preparing children for life as productive adults who contribute to the good of the larger society, parents have become "focused on now…[Parenting] is about [children's] happiness today, not their readiness for tomorrow"

("Crippling our Kids? Experts say parents are failing children" 19 January 2014). Parents do not make this trade-off intentionally. It is an outgrowth of their natural instinct to protect their children and ensure their happiness that causes them to lose sight of the future. The problem, according to Fox News, with this approach to parenting is that it is fundamentally damaging to children, and by extension of the patriotic nature of parenting, also damaging to society. Children who experience overparenting grow up to be "really miserable and depressed human beings because they are not prepared for the realities of life" ("Is Seinfeld Right about the Evolution of Parenting?" 20 February 2014).

For some parents, overparenting comes because parents are trying to be their child's best friend. These parents have become so preoccupied with being accepted and loved by their children that they have centered their world around their child to the extent that "kids that are shorter than a yardstick [are] in full control of adults" ("Tips of Raising Your Powerful Child" 21 September 2013). This preoccupation with acceptance prevents parents from administering "Vitamin N, which is 'no'" or enacting appropriate discipline because they fear they will lose their child's affection ("Tips for Parenting your Powerful Child" 21 September 2013). Instead, parents "have got to be parents," making the hard rules, enforcing the unpopular decisions, and training children:

> [M]ake sure that you are holding them accountable. All of our kids are fully capable of doing things that shame us. And it is our responsibility, when they live under our roof, to be responsible and to teach them to behave properly. We have got to be parents. ("How to Protect Your Children from Cyberbullying" 28 April 2013).

Or, as one parent explained to his daughters, "I'm your father, not your friend, but I'm the best friend you're ever going to have because no one's going to care about you like I care about you" ("Big Daddy's Rules: Steve Schirripa's Guide to parenting" 14 May 2013).

Akin to wanting to be a child's best friend, giving children too many compliments and artificially inflating their self-esteem threatens their moral and psychological development. The focus here is on artificial praise, rather than earned praise, and the examples highlight things that would normally be expected from kids:

> "You crossed the street on your own? That's wonderful! You're a genius! You're going to Harvard now!" or "Kid brings home 5 As and a B. Oh, we are so proud of you! I'm calling Grandma right now! Here's $10! Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss." Now we all think praise works, but it doesn't. It backfires. ("An Attitude of Gratitude" 16 January 2014).

As this psychologist alludes, parents are not lavishing this encouragement on their children because they are deluded about their children's futures: they do not believe that crossing the street makes a kid eligible for Harvard. Rather, they think this kind of praise for everyday actions is what children need. While parents are seeking to help their children, these pseudo accomplishments and artificially inflated self-esteem don't hold up in the "real world":

> I think we do praise our children too much, and for kids who are raised to believe they are the center of the universe, that is very dangerous. They'll learn in the real world that they're not. And very often feel depressed and disappointed. ("Can You Over-Parent your Children?" 20 January 2014)

Parents should trade artificial praise for genuine support and encouragement that helps children to take risks and persevere in tough times.

In order to give children true self-esteem, they need to refrain from protecting children from experiencing the consequences of their own failures. Following their natural instincts, parents "rescue [their] kids too early when they get into trouble" and "don't let the kids deal with the consequences or own up to their mistakes" ("Crippling our Kids? Experts say Parents are Failing Children" 19 January 2014; "Let Your Kids Fail: Over-Parenting's Effect on Kids'

Independence" 31 January 2013). Not only do they fail to learn necessary life lessons from these mistakes, but they learn the opposite to what parents would want:

> Well, I think we have to realize the lessons we're giving our children. And if you want your lesson to be "what you do is not good enough so mommy has to do your homework," then that's the lesson that child is going to have for the rest of their lives. ("Are Parents Crossing Ethical Boundaries? 30 October 2013)

Thus, children learn that they are incapable of acting on their own; they need their parents to act on their behalf and rescue them when things go wrong. When things get hard, when the consequences of their actions become too much to bear, children, who become young adults, will look to someone else to solve their problems. Parents' desire to protect their children and provide them with the best chance of success ends up working against them:

> You know, but this is the age of bailouts. This is the age of when everyone wants a bailout. Whether we're talking about government bailouts or individual. Nobody is supposed to fail. If you fail, there's a "problem" with the system, and you have to change the system. Or there's somebody who's a victim or something. ("Can You Over-Parent Your Children?" 20 January 2014)

To avoid creating more problems in their children, parents should "let [their] children take the reins," even when that means they fail and face the consequences of it ("Let Your Kids Fail: Over-Parenting's Effect on Kids' Independence" 31 January 2013). Temporary pain, the consequences of mistakes made as a 6-year-old or a middle-schooler, while difficult for parents and children in the present, is better in the long run because with it comes with the knowledge that the kid can solve the problem, and others like it, next time.

Overparenting as coping with change, says MSNBC

Where Fox News sees overparenting as natural instincts run amok, MSNBC portrays it as a reaction to the uncertainty parents face raising children in the present. What passed for good

parenting in the 1940s and 1950s—the "Betty Draper" parent—is no longer sufficient. Good parents today "create opportunities for their children to grow and learn, and maybe…develop their character" in addition to "totally protect[ing] their kids" from all possible harm ("The Danger of Overprotecting Children" 28 March 2014; "The Highs and Lows of Modern Parenting" 03 February 2014). Instead of criticizing parents for their child-rearing-on-hyper-drive efforts, the guests historicize this moment in parenting. In addition to the family becoming more child-centered, parents feel compelled to enroll their children in tutoring and soccer, and check their homework, and drive them around town to a myriad of activities because they are preparing their kids for an unknown future:

> But can I tell you something else about all the things you're doing on behalf of your kid. It was much easier when we raised our kids to be like us.…You are now completely uncertain, now, about what you're doing for you kid. You don't know what your kids' futures are going to be. So, because, you know, I don't know the name of the job title that my kid is going to have. So what you're doing is raising your kids for every possible future. Because you don't know what specific future they're going to be a part of. ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014).

Overparenting, then, is portrayed as a rational reaction to the uncertainty generated by shifts in modern life. In this regard, the parenting segments mirrored other sociological research that sees the actions of upper-class parents as the "manifestations of a belief in a child's boundless potential and of the necessity for control over the details of their child's daily life to ensure that children do, indeed, reach their potential while beating out the competition" (Nelson 2010:26).

Parental guilt about the tensions between various roles also drives overparenting, according to MSNBC. Unlike on Fox News where being a parent is portrayed as an adult's primary role, MSNBC portrays parents as having multiple responsibilities: not only are they seeking to do the best for their children, they are also employees, spouses, and friends. Both mothers and fathers

struggle to “juggle the work-life balance,” a task they constantly feel like they fail to do (“Fox Talking Heads: Mom Breadwinners at Odds with the ‘Natural World’” 31 May 2013). As a result, they invest heavily in deep, meaningful relationships with their children, “full saturation, full immersion,” that puts them in constant contact with their children (“The Highs and Lows of Modern Parenting” 3 February 2014). At the same time, there is a sense that this close connection with their children may not actually be the best thing for their children. Joe Scarborough confesses:

> I spend more time with my children in a week than my father, who I dearly loved and respected, spent with me in a year. And I can tell you, looking back, especially with my two older boys that there were times I actually should have spent less time with them when I was home, when I was out of congress. I shouldn't have smothered as much, and it's a thing that I'm trying to learn with [my younger two]. (“The Highs and Lows of Modern Parenting” 3 February 2014)

Thus, despite the sense that their own parents were right to allow children more unsupervised time, the upper-class parents on the MSNBC shows fully embrace this intensive parenting (Rutherford 2011).

Furthermore, these television segments highlight mixed results from high-intensity parenting: overparenting can provide benefits, but at the same time, it is problematic for children and exhausting for parents:

> What helps kids is that we're closer to them so we know what's going on with them. We're in tune with them. People felt neglected in the 70s, so it's not like we want to go back to the 70s. What hurts them is that they are afraid to fail, they’re afraid to take risks. They are afraid to do anything without someone—they have this expectation that an adult is going to intervene for them. (“The Danger of Overprotecting Children” 28 March 2014).

Thus, where Fox News sees overparenting as dangerous, to both children and the nation, MSNBC tries to provide a positive spin for parenting practice that feels, at times, like it will overwhelm the parents along with the children.

Parenting and Technology

"Technology" is a common topic for on both Fox News and MSNBC. As a catch-all phrase, "technology" refers to anything related to the cell phones (including texting), video games, television, computers, or the Internet, including social media, YouTube, or any other content—from pornography to Encyclopedia Britannica—available through a router.[e] On both networks, the concern over technology seems to relate to the way it can rupture the intimate relationship between parent and child. For Fox News, technology is seen as an external force that separates the child from the parent, much like an alcohol or drug addiction would do. In contrast, on MSNBC, technology is portrayed more as a force that separates a parent from their child by drawing them back into their career lives. In both situations, technology damages the intimate bond and parents are encouraged to take control of it.

The Pathology of Technology on Fox News

Instead of being portrayed as a useful tool, it is, as Bill O'Reilly describes it, "an addiction now, among American children…the most dangerous problem we have" ("Young Girls at Risk" 27 January 2014). Described as a drug, social media and video games convince young, impressionable children that they are special, both for who they are but also for what they can accomplish in a virtual world. This positive reinforcement sends children back to their cell

[e] While there is plenty of advice that parents limit children's "technology time"—use of computers, video games, TV, etc.—no one ever seems to mean that parents should limit their child's use of electricity or centralized heating. In these pieces, "technology" has a very specific, yet ambiguous, meaning that is very contemporary.

phones, laptops, and gaming consoles for another "hit" of social acceptance or another level on the game:

> On Facebook, young people can fool themselves into thinking they have hundreds or thousands of "friends." They can delete unflattering comments. They can block anyone who disagrees with them or pokes holes in their inflated self-esteem. They can choose to show the world only flattering, sexy or funny photographs of themselves (dozens of albums full, by the way), "speak" in pithy short posts and publicly connect to movie stars and professional athletes and musicians they "like."
>
> Using Twitter, young people can pretend they are worth "following," as though they have real-life fans, when all that is really happening is the mutual fanning of false love and false fame.
>
> Using computer games, our sons and daughters can pretend they are Olympians, Formula 1 drivers, rock stars, or sharpshooters. And while they can turn off their Wii and Xbox machines and remember they are really in dens and playrooms on side streets and in triple-deckers around America, that is after their hearts have raced and heads have swelled with false pride for "being" something they are not….
>
> These are the psychological drugs of the 21st century and they are getting our sons and daughters very sick, indeed ("We are Raising a Generation of Deluded Narcissists" 8 January 2013).

In the face of this "greatest epidemic," one that "will dwarf the toll of any epidemic we have ever known," Fox News says, parents are the ones who must intervene and save their children from consequences of addiction ("We are Raising a Generation of Deluded Narcissists" 8 January 2013). Parents are the first line of defense and the ones who are responsible when their children's technology use becomes problematic ("Family Physician Talks Teen Bullying and Sexting" 29 October 2013; "How to Protect your Kids from Cyber Bullying" 28 April 2013; "Are Parents Taking Responsibility for Children's Actions?" 17 October 2013; "Should Parents be Held Accountable for Kids' Cyberbullying?" 18 October 2013).

Seen through the lens of addiction, “Parents must be parents” and take the necessary, unpopular actions to stage an intervention for their child:

> Technology and media, whether violent or not…is a drug and [parents need] to do the right thing for our sons and daughters who are addicted: get them off of it. Deal with the fallout. Stand tall for what you believe in.” Like all interventions, “this will cause anger or frustration in some children, but most will get over it pretty quickly, and the ones with a special, abiding interest in such content will struggle more, but need our parental resolve more…. The ones who seem to badly ‘need’ their media/technology/violence fix are no different than alcoholics; they are already addicted and in need of detox” (“Detoxing your kids from Violent Media” 18 December 2012).

This intervention should take the form of serious limits on children’s technology use, trading screen time for time spent outside, with off-line friends, or in other real-world activities.

Even if their children have not reached the stage of addiction, parents must be vigilant and attentive for signs that their children may have a relationship with technology that is interfering with their everyday life. Once-sweet children can turn into “slammin-clickers,” teens who “come home, slam the door, click the lock, and text like a woodpecker that’s got ADHD to all their buddies” (“Tips for Parenting your Powerful Child” 21 September 2013).

Parents are advised to use the tool of technology to prevent the pathology of technology. Responsible parents will use surveillance programs on their teen’s phones and accounts to notify the parent of every photo taken, sent, or received (“Family Physician Talks Teen Bullying and Sexting” 29 October 2013). Furthermore, parents should have all passwords to social media and email accounts and engage in routine checking of these accounts along with all incoming and outgoing messages (“How to Protect your Kids from Cyber Bullying” 28 April 2013). Any infraction—inappropriate pictures taken or received, cruel or overly revealing messages on social media—should result in immediate consequences with all technology

privileges revoked ("How to Protect your Kids from Cyber Bullying" 28 April 2013; "Family Physician Talks Teen Bullying and Sexting" 29 October 2013; "Young Girls at Risk" 27 January 2014). Children must be held "accountable" for their online actions and it is the parents' "responsibility…to teach them to behave properly" ("How to Protect your Kids from Cyber Bullying" 28 April 2013).

Children's privacy is not something parents should respect when it comes to technology because there is no privacy in the online world.

> Host: What do you say to [the parent] who says…"I really don't feel it's right to spy on them. It's kinda like reading their diary.
>
> Guest: I tell that parent, the most important thing you must teach your child about a cell phone or any use of the Internet, is that there is no privacy online. And the way you teach that message is not by preaching it. The way you teach that message is to say, "every photo you take, or send, I'm gonna see." That's how you teach kids. If you want privacy? Go over to your friend's house and talk to them. You don't have privacy with a mobile phone. ("Family Physician Talks Teen Bullying and Sexting" 29 October 2013).

According to Fox News, children need to learn about Internet privacy and the ramifications of their actions by having their parents among their online audience. If parents fail to monitor their children and teach appropriate online behavior, children will have their lives ruined by too much exposure online—either their social lives through bullying or sexting, or their physical lives through suicide ("How to Talk to Your Child about Dating" 21 April 2013; "How to Prepare your Teen for Prom Night" 1 May 2013; "Family Physician Talks Teen Bullying and Sexting" 29 October 2013; "How to Protect your Kids from Cyber Bullying" 28 April 2013; "Are Parents Taking Responsibility for Children's Actions?" 17 October 2013; "Should Parents be Held Accountable for Kids' Cyberbullying?" 18 October 2013).

In the midst of all this concern about the dangerous uses of cell phones, there is also a sense that screens might be one of the few ways for parents to connect with their teens. One expert recommends that parents of teens adopt their children's communication medium to maintain connection:

> I love texting! It keeps me in contact with my girls without being invasive. My girls respond in their time. I text information that needs to be communicated, encouragement, and even funny pictures of the cat. ("Five Tried and True Ways to Connect With your Teen" 4 May 2013).

When used appropriately by parents—not for nagging—texting can be a vital conduit between parent and child. But even this advice reinforces the notion that teens are preoccupied, possibly to the point of obsession, with their technology. Neither this "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" approach, nor the addiction narrative provides parents a way to navigate a middle ground on technology. Despite all the advice, parents are left without a clear path to manage the devices that have become ubiquitous in this modern life.

The Ambivalence of Technology on MSNBC

Unlike the dominant narrative of addiction that permeates technology coverage on Fox News, MSNBC displays a deep ambivalence toward technology. Smartphones, tablets, and the wide availability of access to information, while certainly cause for concern, have also changed life for the better. One yet-to-be-parent host articulated this tension:

> I think what a great era to raise kids in, with all the technological advances. It must be so easy and fun and cool and interesting to learn with all of these technologies. On the other, I already have anxieties about how to handle all of these technologies, and keep, keep my kids off Facebook and Twitter, and I'm technologically savvy with these media. ("Toddlers and Tablets: One Mom's Advice" 29 March 2013)

The answer to this tension is one of active engagement. Instead of seeing a parent's role as akin to that of an interventionist pouring out an alcoholic's whiskey, it becomes about training children to be responsible in a digital world. "[W]e have to teach our children at six, seven, eight how to be digital citizens," encourages one guest, "Every time you give your child a new device or app, you need to talk about appropriate use. It's an ongoing conversation. This is in our lives. It's here to stay" ("The Parent-Child Technology Rift" 29 November 2013). This task of raising responsible digital citizens spans the entire course of childhood. From a toddler's first experience on devices borrowed from mom or dad to a teenager's first cell phone, parents should be training kids and setting appropriate limits so they do not inflict "psychological damage" on other teens and still learn how to engage with people in "real time" ("The Parent-Child Technology Rift" 29 November 2013; "Raising Kids in a Smartphone Era" 08 November 2013; "Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 November 2013; "Teens Tragic Suicide Sheds Light on Cyberbullying" 15 September 2013).

When parents express anxiety over technology—something that varies by the age of the children under discussion, such as brain development in toddlers versus teenage sexting—guests are quick to remind them of their own agency:

> I think one of the big disconnects is that we are so drawn into the screens that we let them take over us and our authority as parents, and we forget that there are some ways that we can monitor them. Especially when your children are little, up to a certain point you can. ("The Parent-Child Technology Rift" 29 November 2013).

Parents are encouraged to recognize the control they have over these devices and how they are used in their homes, something that they should exercise. Instead of surrendering to touchscreens, now a ubiquitous part of childhood, parents should be intentional in how they allow their children to use these devices, and then make peace with their own decisions:

> I think it is by being proactive. Instead of treating this like poison and throwing [your cell phone] back at [your children] and feeling really guilty, I think just think about it. I mean, people have these anxieties about every era of media and technology. If you read back to how parents thought about novels and what they would do to children's brains. Or television, I mean, people thought of Sesame Street and they panicked back in the day. So we're just going through a thing that parents of every generation have gone through. And the smart thing is to do is to think about it beforehand, and not just do it, not think of it as poison and feel guilty about it. ("Toddlers and Tables: One Mom's Advice" 29 March 2013)

This parental agency extends beyond toddlers and grade-school kids to teenagers. At the time when parents feel most out of control with their children's technology use, they are encouraged to "snoop" on their teens' activities:

> You should be tracking and snooping on your kids. The fact is that's where the footprint and the Internet and the media is such an advantage to parents. We have the opportunity to snoop on our kids in a way that we never would have had before. I mean, in the past we would have to look at their shoes and their notebooks to see what they were writing. And if you actually get in there and follow what they're doing, and learn about these sites—it's way beyond Facebook, it's way beyond MySpace, Twitter—it is these smaller sites. And then to go on and see what sites kids are visiting, what apps they are using. On a daily basis, not just once a month. ("Teens Tragic Suicide Sheds Light on Cyberbullying" 15 September 2013).

This advice is given in the context of protecting one's child from cyberbullying, but it is still a way of encouraging parents to assert a measure of control of their children's use of technology. On this one point, that parents should be actively monitoring their children's online activities, Fox News and MSNBC guests are in agreement. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to utilize software designed for that specific purpose. In her study of parents, Margaret Nelson (2010) found a strong class divide between monitoring strategies of parents with middle- and working-class parents preferring software surveillance and upper-class parents choosing purposeful-yet-nonchalant hovering. In light of high-profile cyberbullying, and for Fox News "sexting rings,"

experts on both networks are now encouraging all parents to embrace what had been a middle-class form of monitoring.

The sense of parental agency also extends to the example that parents are setting for their children. Like parents on Fox News, there is frustration that children of all ages—younger children as well as teens—have a tendency to become preoccupied with devices. However, on MSNBC there is a sense that children are enacting the behavior modeled by parents. “I think for a lot of parents,” stressed Randi Zuckerburg, parent and technology pioneer, “the first step is to take stock in your own behavior, a little bit. I think it's very easy to look your children and say, ‘Give me your undivided attention! Put that away! Less video games!...’ But if you're the one who's answering your email, you know?” (“Raising Kids in a Smartphone Era” 08 November 2013). Parents are encouraged to set a “consistent policy” on technology for children *and* parents. If parents don’t want their “teenage daughters” asleep with “their iPhone in their hands” or “their faces on their laptops in bed,” then parents should not take their iPhones or laptops to bed either (“Technology and Its Impact on Parenting” 17 February 2014).

Parental modeling also highlights the way that technology makes parents both more and less available to their children. Because of laptops and smartphones, and other technological changes that have revolutionized the work force, parents can be present with their children, balancing home and work, instead of stuck in the office:

> For every kid that complains, I'll just say, about their parents being on email and being wired up to [the cell phone], and these are the enemies to many kids, I just say would you rather they were in your presence? Or would you rather than be in a factory downtown, which they were in because they had to be there and communicate that way?…Sometimes parents shouldn't feel guilty about being home with their kids instead of at work. (“Technology and Its Impact on Parenting” 17 February 2014)

The challenge with mobile technology is having the "self discipline" to use technology to enhance family life, not overrun it ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014).

For coverage on MSNBC, children's technology use is portrayed in a very mixed light. These advances have led to increased time with family and opened a whole new world of possibilities for children. At the same time, there is a sense that these devices have the potential to overrun family life—both on the part of children and parents—and these parents worry that without proper training children will engage in cruel behavior online or lose important interpersonal skills such as eye contact. The challenges associated with parenting children in regard to technology then, are really a mirror of the same tensions that parents feel in their own lives related to technology. Or, in the words of Randi Zuckerburg, "talk to any mom you meet; they have a complicated relationship with technology" ("Raising Kids in a Smartphone Era" 08 September 2013).

Conclusion

The most striking difference between Fox News and MSNBC's conversations about parenting and family is the focal point of those interactions. For Fox News, raising children is akin to raising the nation and thus every decision a parent makes is a high-stakes, high-risk moment which has long-term consequences for children and democracy. In contrast, MSNBC centers its conversation around the experiences of parents in the present, and the challenges and stresses they face as they prepare children for an unknown future. Each of these perspectives is informed by the political orientation of the news organizations, but they should not be seen as synonymous with the Democratic and Republican parties. The child-rearing advice clearly maps on to the larger themes of patriotism, personal responsibility, and future economic uncertainty

seen in the party platforms and public speeches. However, the curation of the specific child-rearing advice presented by the networks is the responsibility of Fox News and MSNBC.

This chapter lays out the politically oriented child-rearing advice and becomes the framework for investigating how Democratic and Republican parents navigate their daily interactions with their children and seek to prepare them for the future. Chapter 3 explores the ways seek to shape children's behavior and prepare them for adulthood. Chapter 4 looks at parents' practices and attitudes toward technology. Finally, the last chapter returns to the national stage by looking at how parents draw on previous generations of parenting wisdom to raise productive citizens who work hard and resist the temptations of entitlement. Each chapter will situate the lived practices and beliefs of Democratic and Republican parents in larger politically oriented narrative about child-rearing expressed by Fox News and MSNBC.

Chapter 3

Partisanship and Discipline

On both news networks, overparenting is described as the inversion of the relationship between parent and child: the historic role of parents—as authority figure, as disciplinarian, as the central figure in the household—have been supplanted by children. As we have seen, one Fox News commentator describes the situation as "kids that are shorter than a yardstick [are] in full control of adults" ("Tips for Raising Your Powerful Child" 21 September 2013). MSNBC commentators do not see children as controlling their parents, but they still feel the fundamental shift in the relationship between parent and child. "[T]he family has become a filiarchy," explains Jennifer Senior, a guest on MSNBC, "meaning that kids are at the top of the heap, ever since they lost their productive function. They used to work for us, not anymore." She goes on to describe how parents now work for their kids—"driving them to soccer…and going over their homework"—as they engage in "full immersion parenting" ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014; Senior 2014).

The personalities on both networks view overparenting as the outgrowth of natural instincts that parents feel. All parents want to have close, meaningful relationships with their children, to provide a protective environment away from the dangers and failures of life, and to set their children up for success as adults. For Fox News commentators, the problems of overparenting come when parents prioritize emotional connection and protection above future preparation. In this narrative, parents sacrifice discipline—a necessary element for preparing children for future life—to maintain close relationships. In addition, they reinforce their children's self-esteem by shielding them from the consequences of their actions, protecting them from immediate pain, which only sets them up for disastrous outcomes when they reach adulthood. This focus on the

here and now leads parents to forfeit their authority even as they train children to stay dependent on parents who rush in to fix any problems. To raise children who will be prepared for future life, parents need to "fight against [their] natural impulses to be a good parent." ("Are Parents Going Beyond Ethical Boundaries?" 30 October 2013).

MSNBC, on the other hand, does not see overparenting as a myopic focus on the emotional connection between parent and child. Instead, it frames overparenting as a kind of "concerted cultivation" on hyper-drive (In fact, one MSNBC guest mentions Lareau by name on air) (Lareau 2003). Faced with the prospect of preparing their children for an uncertain future, parents work to "create opportunities for their children to grow and learn, and maybe…develop their character" while at the same time insulating them from anything that could damage their development and have long-term consequences that could prevent them from living up to their full potential ("The Danger of Overprotecting Children" 28 March 2014; "The Highs and Lows of Modern Parenting" 03 February 2014). This intensive preparation extends beyond good grades and extracurricular activities and also includes encouraging opinions, developing their communication skills, and teaching them to negotiate (Lareau 2003:238). In the process of preparing children, parents' own lives become swamped by those of their children as they engage in "full immersion parenting." Parents center their lives on their children in the hope that it will set their children up for tremendous success. The paradox is that in preparing their children for the future, they also make their efforts to raise them an even greater challenge. Jennifer Senior describes it this way on one of her visits to *Morning Joe*:

> The very habits that we are encouraging in our kids—to challenge, to feel that they can penetrate any hierarchy, that he can navigate any institution—means that they can also challenge your authority and they can hold you in contempt. They can negotiate with the teacher. They can negotiate with you. ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014; Lareau 2003: 111)

Thus as parents succeed in raising independent children who are prepared for an uncertain future, they must invest more time and energy negotiating with children and intervening on their behalf when that independence goes awry. In short, successful parenting ironically leads to more work on the part of the parent as children gain "independence."

Both networks are responding to the historic shift in parenting but each offers a different explanation for that shift. The question remains as to what extent these two networks mirror the lives of their partisan audience and American families more generally? Do parents sacrifice discipline, and the shaping of their children that comes a result, to maintain intimacy with their offspring, as Fox News contends? Or are parents exhausting themselves to prepare their children for an uncertain future, as MSNBC suggests? Or does the truth lie somewhere in between? Finally, how do partisan parents map onto the advice offered by the partisan networks? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to first map the landscape of American family life as it relates to intimacy, authority, and parental investment.

Intimacy and Authority in American Families

It goes without saying that virtually all parents love their children and want to see them become well-adjusted adults. Parents' definitions of a successful adult vary, but they see it as their responsibility to provide resources and guidance to help their children achieve that success. How they go about accomplishing that falls in predictable, although not uniform, patterns. Drawing on the *Culture of American Families* data, I identify three approaches to molding and preparing children for the future—the positive, the multifaceted, and the reactive. These are based on parents' own attempts to "encourag[e] good behavior and [correct] misbehavior."[8]

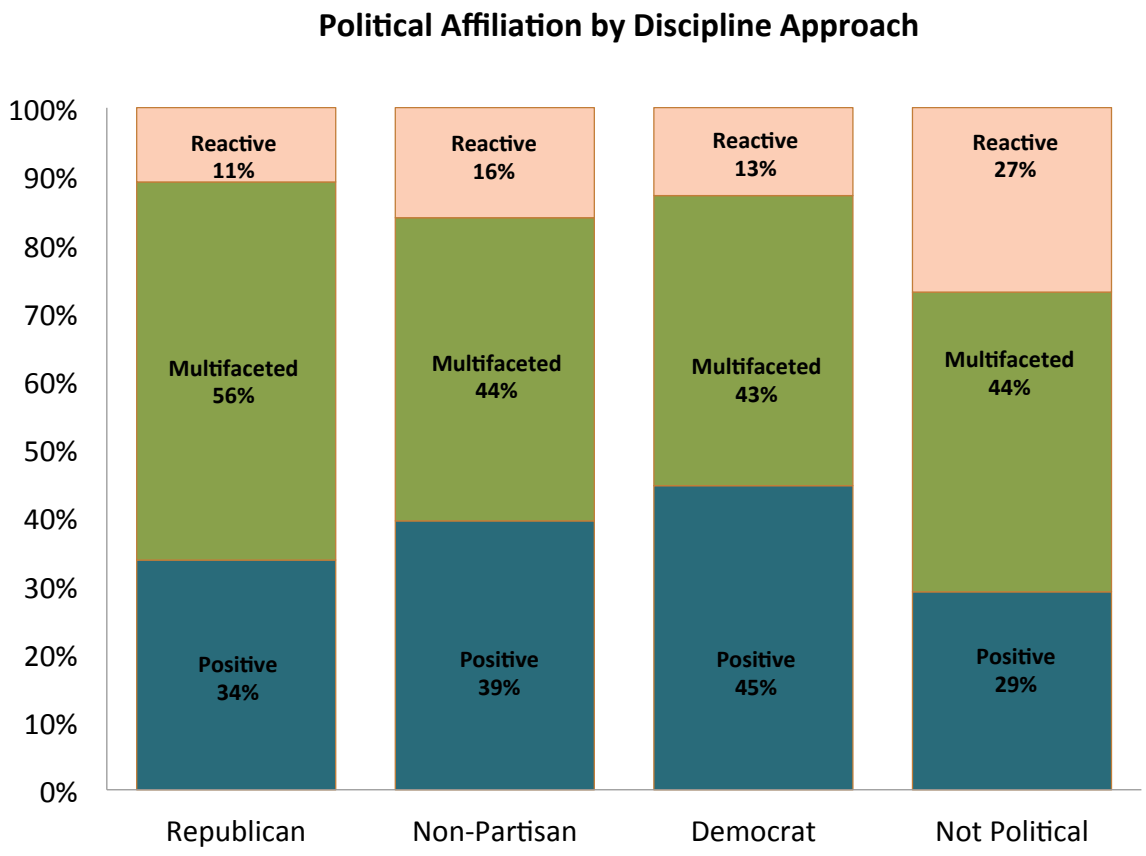
As we will see, partisan parents are in all three approaches. No single approach captures entirely any group of parents, political or otherwise. What this highlights is that partisan parents, who are actively raising children, do not map cleanly on to orientations to discipline. Nor do they match the partisan parenting advice offered by Fox News and MSNBC. Instead, they defy partisan expectations in the ways they approach shaping and correcting their children's behavior.

The first group is the positive approach, named for their emphasis on preemptive, positive, and affirmative techniques for discipline. These parents maintain close relationships with their children as a means of shaping behavior and they invest much effort in raising well-rounded human beings. From across the education spectrum, these parents are more likely to be Democratic or non-partisan.

The multifaceted approach features parents who use a wide range of discipline techniques, often beginning with positive encouragement, progressing to withholding or grounding when that does not work, and finally to spanking, when necessary. These parents have tight relationships with their children and invest much effort in protecting them and preparing them to be competitive in their adult lives. More likely to be Republican than Democrat, these parents also have lower levels of educational attainment but also high levels of religious involvement.

Parents who use the reactive approach have low levels of parental efficacy. These parents love their children and want to see them succeed but have no systematic plan for either discipline or preparing children for adulthood. Seven out of ten either have no interest in politics or no partisan affiliation; almost half have only a high school diploma.[9]

Figure 3.1—Political Affiliation by Discipline Approach



While these groups are defined by their approach to discipline, it extends beyond that to the relationships they cultivate with their children and how they invest in preparing their children for the future.

Positive-Approach Parenting (36 percent)

Parents who practice the positive approach emphasize the relationship with their children. Eight out of ten say that they have a close relationship with their children, and more than half of them take it one step further saying they could not be closer to their offspring.[10] They pour time and attention into their kids seven out of ten report they spend more than 2 hours each school day

not just being around their children but actively engaged with them[11]—hearing about their day, helping with homework, bedtime routines, and the like. This includes family dinner: More than half say they eat together every night and another third say they gather around the table several times a week.[12] These meal times are about the connection between family members. In two out of five of these homes, the TV is off, cell phones are left on the counter, and all other technological distractions are set aside as the family engages with each other.[13] Technology is a routine part of dinner for only one in four households. All of these parent-child interactions are not just something they do because they have to; seven out of ten report that they absolutely "love spending time with their kids."[14]

This enjoyment of time spent with children should not be mistaken for an attempt to be the child's best friend.[15] They clearly want to have close friendships with their children when they are grown, but now is not the time for that.[16] In the words of one Democratic mother, "trying to be your kid's best friend is a horrible way to parent."[17] Instead of friends, one-third of parents say that their children clearly see them as authority figures, while another 20 percent see themselves as slightly more authoritative than friends.[18] Along with this, three out of ten parents report that "decisions are made by parents and communicated to children" and another quarter say that they allow some limited negotiation but are still full in control of the situation. Only one in five says that decisions in their households "involve much negotiation."[19] Despite their intimate connections, these parents see maintaining their authority as an important part of shaping their children. A Republican mother of two explains that parents need to bring their knowledge, wisdom, and maturity to situations with their children, something that is compromised when parents seek friendship:

> Mother: I'm not the cool mom. I'm not here to be their friend, so it's not like I'd be the coolest mom either, I'm sure.
>
> Interviewer: What do you think is lost when the parent is a friend?
>
> Mother: Discipline…. [They] Need an adult in the situation…I know from my psychology that they're not fully developed until they're in their 20s. That would be especially the boys, so that would be their risk assessment is poor until they're much older than the girls, so some of that scares me. I need to be there to hopefully help with risk assessment until he's old enough to not do anything too risky. And with her, to steer her into some of the social situations. Obviously she'll have more social issues than he will. To teach her that being popular isn't the most important thing.[20]

Parents, then, need to be the ones who see the long-term effects of children's actions in the present and work to protect and shepherd them through the challenging times—both physical and social—of childhood. This may explain why these parents view themselves as authority figures without characterizing themselves as "strict" parents. The plurality of parents see themselves as balancing between strict and permissive, or slightly stricter than that. Only a handful, one in ten, would describe themselves as "very strict."[21] In light of this, it would seem that the goal is to protect children through their authority, not to "lay down the law." One Democratic mother of three compares her parents' strict parenting approach to her own:

> Both my parents…were more strict with me and my sister than we are with our kids…sometimes [my kids will] say things and I think, "If I'd said that when I was your age, I would have gotten smacked or sent to my room or something like that." And I probably do let them get away with more in terms of staying up too late, but then I say, you know, "Stay up too late, you pay for it in the morning." When they're at a certain age, they have to make their own decisions, you have to manage your own time. I've tried to teach you how to do these things. Now you have to put it in practice and if you don't do it right, you are the one who's going to suffer. Whereas my parents would have been like, "Nope, you're in bed at nine o'clock," or whatever the time was, period. And then, there was not, there was no decision making on my part for things like that.[22]

Where her parents were concerned with ensuring compliance, she wants to teach her children more than just obedience. She wants her children to understand the consequences of their actions—in this case when her 13-year-old daughter stays up too late—and learn to take responsibility for their own choices.

For the most part, children in these households accept their parents' authority and agree with the majority of the decisions their parents make. Parents report that their households are relatively peaceful: one-third of parents report that there is minimal parent-child disagreement in their family while another third says there is some conflict, but still place themselves on the lower end of the scale.[23] Thus their role as a not-so-strict, protective authority maintains a reasonable calm in the household, which in turn fosters a close parent-child relationship. Even in their discipline, positive-approach parents place the relationship, the parent-child connection, at the forefront.

***Discipline**:* When it comes to discipline, these parents are more preemptive than punitive, and rely on the intimate relationship they have with their kids. Rather than reacting to children's problematic behavior, they focus instead on what children do right and providing a good example. Overwhelmingly, these parents say that "praising children for what they do right" is critically important to the way they shape their children's behavior.[24] This is equally important as the example they set: 19 out of 20 say that "setting a good example for children by modeling good behavior" is an indispensable way of shaping their children. Almost as important is "instructing children in appropriate moral and ethical behavior."[25] These three items—praising children, instructing them in appropriate moral behavior, and setting a good example—form the cornerstone of this positive, preemptive approach to discipline.

One Democratic father of two children explains his preference for positive discipline by highlighting how this approach is better for his children's mental and emotional health than the way he was raised:

> Oh, I don't use corporal punishment at all. I try to do as much positive reinforcement, catch them doing positive things instead…I was raised with corporal punishment, I just didn't do it and I try to be more positive in my [parenting]…try to support them emotionally as much as possible…from my own experience I thought it was better to find…it just, it felt better to me when I was growing up when I did something positive and was recognized for it, and I felt that would be the big thing.[26]

This father is focused on how punishment feels to children and chooses to reinforce good behavior rather than applying discipline for inappropriate actions.

This reluctance to apply punishment is a broader trend among these parents. When a child does mess up, these parents say they favor "discussing behaviors at length to help children understand why something is good or bad."[27] They also do not see punishment as crucial to their attempts to shape their children: not a single punitive measure ranks as "very important" for a majority of these parents. This is not to say that parents fail to exact punishments. When the positive reinforcement and talking fails, they will fall back on "withholding" punishments such as time outs, grounding, and taking away technology, which they see as "moderately important."[28] One Democratic father of three whose youngest is a senior in high school explains that discipline is rare with his children, but when necessary it is targeted and often of short duration:

> Mostly either grounding, taking away a privilege. If it was grounding, it was a day. Don't have a lot of behavior problems with our kids. They listened very well. I think they're very reliable. When they say they're going to do something, they do it. There really was not a lot of discipline.…With my son, it was take away computer time…With my daughters, it's the phone. I can turn off the phone; I can turn it back on whenever I want.… [Or] I'd take away privileges, or no you can't go out tonight because I don't agree with what you've done or something like

> that. Never done anything physically or—when it comes to school, we're very big believers in school, being involved in the school, and school spirit and stuff like that, so we don't take away school privileges, like holding them out of a sports practice or going to a dance. We don't do stuff like that, just the little things that they like, the little creature comforts that they can't have. That seems to be enough.[29]

This family focuses on the "creature comforts" when punishment is necessary but, like most preemptive parents, steers clear of anything that could have a lasting impact on the children's school and social life.[30] These parents also reject the idea of giving their children the silent treatment, saying that "being cold and emotionally distant" from children is not at all part of their strategy.[31] Spanking is another punishment that these parents reject as a standard practice: three out of ten say they have never spanked a child and another third say they have only done it once. One highly religious Republican mother of four recalls the moment she gave up spanking her children, opting instead for a positive approach:

> I remember getting so frustrated [with my son] that I went to go spank him. Instead of spanking him, or instead of actually making contact with him, my hand came down on the counter and I jammed my finger, but it was awful. I mean…I realized at that moment that physical discipline wasn't the key for him. I can't say that with all kids, but for him, or even with my girls, it wasn't the key….I needed to step back and take my timeout versus taking my frustrations out on my kids. I wish I could go back and change that. I realized I didn't need to do that.[32]

While many parents share this mother's perspective on spanking, two out of three approve of spanking "when behavior is extreme or when nothing else seems to work," that is when all other ideas have been exhausted (rare as that may be).[33]

The low importance placed on spanking is one of the defining characteristics of positive-approach discipline. This brings together a surprising partisan coalition. As previously mentioned, one-third of Republican parents fall in the positive approach and largely reject

spanking as a part of their daily practice. These Republicans stand in stark contrast to the public image of conservatives as heavy-handed disciplinarians (Lakoff 2002).

***Parental Investment*:** In addition to their time and their attempts to shape their children's behavior through encouragement and example, positive-approach parents say they also invest time and energy to ensure that their children are prepared for the future. Almost half whole-heartedly say they "invest much effort in providing opportunities that will provide [their] children with a competitive advantage down the road" and another one-third agree with this, but to a lesser degree.[34] However, when talking to these parents, they agree that they invest much effort to give their children a plethora of opportunities but insist they are not trying to gain a competitive edge. It is about developing their children, not about "beating other kids."[35] A Democratic mother of three girls, who works full time as a lawyer, describes her aversion to the idea of competition:

> I don't like the term "competitive advantage." I do put a lot of effort into giving them different opportunities to do different things gymnastics, soccer, basketball, art, piano, you know, trying, you gotta develop left and right sides of the brain…So, yeah, I put a lot of effort into giving them lots of different opportunities. Is it to give them a competitive advantage? Not necessarily. Can they take all of those things and use them to their advantage in life? Absolutely. When I read this question, it sounds like the helicopter moms…I don't, I don't want them to think that any of these things that they are doing is simply to succeed in life. To, you know, to be better than the next kid…. I want to give them as many opportunities as I can but I want to do that because I think it will make them better human beings and I want to, I only want to spend my time and their time and energy doing things that they will enjoy and that they will get something positive out of.[36]

For this mother, the effort she puts into giving her children opportunities is about developing them into well-rounded human beings who enjoy life. Any competitive advantage that is gained from it is a nice byproduct. Another Republican mother of two kids who works as a tax clerk opts to redefine the statement to include a variety of things she thinks her children need to be happy:

> I invest much effort, we invest much effort, in providing opportunities for our children that will give them the skills that they need, in every area. They need emotional skills…They need work skills, they need to show up on time, they need—I would like it if they had spiritual skills to help them in life…They need mental skills to cope with the hard days of life…I would like for them to be happy, but where they can support themselves. Skills that will allow them to handle the disappointments in life, skills that will allow them to deal with difficult people in life, skills that will allow them to always believe in themselves, even when they might not think they did that great of a job.[37]

Here, this mother hopes that the effort she invests in her kids will prepare them to be happy, well-adjusted adults, rather than competitive for material success. Yet the opportunities and skills that these parents cultivate in their children still do provide them with cultural and human capital, and an advantage, even if parents protest that it is only for their personal development. This focus on their children's human development over their competitive development may stem from the fact that three out of five parents are not particularly worried that their children will lack the ambition necessary to succeed in life or not be financially successful.[38]

In light of this, parents are more likely to say they invest in shaping their children's character than in providing a competitive advantage: Three-quarters of these parents say they "invest much effort in shaping the moral character" of their children.[39] In addition, two-thirds say that being a person of good moral character is "absolutely essential" for their children and another third say it is "very important."[40] Some of the traits they are trying to instill are honesty, hard work, being reliable and dependable, and loving, all of which at least half of parents say is "absolutely essential" to their child's future success.[41]

Positive-approach parents also invest in sheltering children. Almost half say they "invest much effort in protecting their children from negative social influences" and another third say they seek to protect them, but to a lesser degree.[42] As best as we can tell, they are succeeding. Only one-

quarter say their children "see many things in the media that they should not see," although an additional third admit that it does happen from time to time.[43] In addition, these parents indicate that, for the most part, they do not disagree with their children about their choice of friends or other social practices.[44] Even for parents of teenagers, two-thirds say there is little or very minimal disagreement about friends and activities and almost three-quarters say the same about the romantic relationships of their teens.[45] It is no wonder that half of parents strongly disagree with the idea that they are "in a losing battle with all the other influences out there."[46]

More than parents in the multifaceted and reactive approaches, positive-approach parents have faith in their ability to shelter and shape their children. Yet despite all this investment, these parents are haunted by a lingering sense of guilt and self-doubt. Over half of parents say that they "should invest more time and energy in [their] children," while only one-third of parents think they are doing enough to prepare and protect their children.[47]

Partisanship: As already noted, the positive approach to discipline brings together a coalition of Democratic, non-partisan, and Republican parents who share a common style of discipline. These similarities also extend to the desire to raise well-rounded, well-adjusted human beings who are prepared to live happy, independent lives. As we will see in subsequent chapters, these similarities will continue to unite positive-approach Democrats and non-partisans on practical issues such as technology use (chapter 4) and abstract ones such as entitlement culture and hard work (chapter 5). Positive-approach Republicans, in contrast, more closely mirror Republican parents in other disciplinary approaches than other partisans in the positive approach. In other words, when it comes to technological independence and ideas about entitlement and hard work, we will see Republicans unified by something across their perspectives on discipline.

Positive Discipline on Fox News and MSNBC: The positive approach to parenting is the focus of much of the coverage on the networks. Fox News is directly critiquing the emphasis on intimate relationships over punitive discipline that typifies the positive approach. However, in its portrayal of these parents, Fox News creates a caricature of positive-approach parents, or at least how positive-approach parents want to see themselves. Fox News implies that when parents prioritize positive approaches to discipline over punitive ones—the "easy" way to parent—they sacrifice authority and thus fail to shape their children. Yet positive-approach parents report that they remain in command of their households, communicating decisions and enforcing them when necessary, all while nurturing affectionate connections with their children.

In addition, the analysts and experts of Fox News fail to account for the binding nature of positive-approach parenting. In their view, only punitive measures can coerce children into specific behaviors. Thus, to prioritize praise and modeling of good behavior is to be a "pushover," rather than one who is shaping children. However, as Margaret Nelson argues, intimacy and positive reinforcement can also operate as a form of constraint, powerful yet covert: "Clearly intimacy and hovering lay the groundwork for control in the commonsense meaning of the word: parents are carefully guiding, shaping and determining the contours of their children's actions" (Nelson 2010:11). Positive-approach parents do exert control over their children in ways that are no less binding than other parents, but they are less openly forceful in doing so.

Where positive-approach parents match the critique of "bad" parenting on Fox News, MSNBC also focuses its parenting segments at these parents. Where Fox News sees positive-approach parenting as the "easy" approach, MSNBC's segments focus on the emotional labor necessary to successfully parent in this manner. This focus matches positive-approach parenting: its

preemptive strategy to discipline which requires deep emotional connections to make that strategy viable is “more time consuming and emotionally demanding” than other approaches that utilize the carrot and the stick simultaneously (Nelson 2010:181). Thus positive-approach parents come closest to the classic model of concerted cultivation (Lareau 2003), and the portrait of parents on MSNBC, and must engage in more emotional labor as they seek to covertly and proactively mold their children for a successful adulthood.

MSNBC also seeks to reassure parents that the emotional labor they invest in their children is sufficient, or at least in line with other parents’ investments. By allowing parents to listen to the experiences of the guests and hosts, they can judge where they fit in the larger landscape of raising children.

Multifaceted Approach (46 percent)

Parents who practice the multifaceted approach to discipline are just as intimate with their children as parents who prefer the positive approach. The overwhelming majority—four out of five—say they have a close relationship with their children and more than half of them describe their relationships as “very close.”[48] In addition, they, too, spend more than two hours a day actively interacting with their children.[49] Like positive-approach parents, this means helping with homework, inquiring about happenings at school, or instructing or supervising children in various activities. This is much more involved than simply being the responsible adult in the house while school-aged children play independently in their own rooms or conquer their latest video games. Yet three-quarters report that they completely “love spending time with [their] children.”[50]

Some of this time interacting with kids comes during family dinner. A daily ritual in half of multifaceted households, it is slightly less common than in positive approach households. Another one-third say family dinner happens several times a week.[51] In half of these homes, family meals are routinely accompanied by a prayer or blessing, the highest rate of any of the approaches.[52] When multifaceted families sit down to dinner, it is less likely to be technology-free than in positive approach families. In these households, cell phones or TV are part of family dinner several times a week for four out of ten or a nightly occurrence for three in ten.[53]

Like positive-approach parents, multifaceted-approach parents reject the notion that they should be "best friends" with their children (although they would like to be once their children are adults).[54] Two out of five parents say their children see them as clear authority figures with another one in five saying they are slightly more authority figure than friends.[55] When compared to positive-approach parents, multifaceted-approach parents are more directive with their children. Half say that their decisions are communicated to children rather than the product of negotiation.[56]

Given this, it is no surprise that multifaceted-approach parents are the most likely to say they are moderately strict (29 percent) or very strict (24 percent) when it comes to raising their children.[57] One-third of these parents say they balance between strict and permissive, but they are still more likely than parents who use other discipline approaches who characterize themselves as "moderate" to say they are the authority figure of the household who communicates decisions to their kids.[58] This indicates that even when these parents consider themselves to be not as strict, their actions are still more directive than parents in the other discipline clusters.

While multifaceted-approach parents are more directive and strict with their children, they are not interested in being seen by their children as only a disciplinarian. As one non-partisan father of two children explains, these parents are seeking to strike a balance:

> To me, both of these look like extremes, that I try to balance that. For example, I don't believe you should be your kid's best friend. I think you definitely need to be the parent of the situation. But there's more to being a parent than just being a strict disciplinarian. You have to have interaction with them too, so I do think there's kind of an in-between there.[59]

For these parents, they do not see their position as being either a "best friend" or a "disciplinarian," but work to find a way to be intimate and connected with their children while at the same time maintaining authority and exerting punishment over their offspring.

***Discipline**:* Where the relationship is seen as intrinsically disciplining in the positive approach, multifaceted-approach parents do not rely on the relationship as their primary strategy. Like parents who favor the positive approach, they say that modeling good behavior, praising children for what they do right, and instructing them in appropriate actions are all very important to their parenting.[60] However, these positive strategies do not define their approach to discipline but are instead simply the first step. Where positive-approach parents seem reluctant to any use punitive measures beyond the occasional withholding, multifaceted-approach parents draw on a variety of punishments, often in ascending order. One Republican father of three describes how he and his wife encourage their 6-year-old son to behave at school:

> So we shower them with rewards as well and of course there's always the hug and "good job, we're proud of you." Like his day with all the smileys is up on the refrigerator—we made a big deal out of that, "Go put it on the refrigerator, we're so proud of you, good job." So yeah, there are rewards for good stuff and there are consequences for bad stuff. So it just kind of depends upon what the situation dictates. It's kind of vague, but let's say between one and six check marks—it's a lot of talking, 'Ethan you need to do better, you need to work

> harder,' but a couple of check marks throughout the day really isn't a big problem in the grand scheme of things, so 'just work harder tomorrow.' It's usually when it gets up around eight or nine, ten or more that's when it's like, 'okay look, you weren't paying attention, if you can't do good in school then sorry, no video games, that's your consequence, sorry, that's just the way it is.' And of course he gets mad but usually the next day he does better, so if that's what it took, that's what it took.[61]

As this father indicated praise and rewards come first, followed by conversations about the son's behavior and how he needs to improve, and then, when these approaches fail, the consequences.

As demonstrated here, parents using this discipline approach say "discussing behaviors at length to help children understand why something is good or bad" is very important.[62] Punishment of one form or another often accompanies the conversation. Grounding and taking away technology are ubiquitous in these households and roughly two-thirds say it is very important to their parenting.[63] Withholding allowance, scolding, time outs, and assigning additional chores are less important but still common in many homes.[64]

Spanking and the threat of spanking is moderately important for these parents, but is deployed in specific instances. Four out of five say that spanking should be used rarely, reserved for when "behavior is extreme or nothing else seems to work." Only eight percent say it is a "standard" or frequent punishment. A non-partisan father of two younger children explains how spanking is part of a progression of discipline:

> So I think with our kids, we're like, "Look, we'll put you in time out. You go into time out, and if that isn't working, we're going to spank you. And if we say we're gonna spank you, we are gonna spank you if you do it again, because we're not just gonna threaten and threaten and threaten, and not have there be—you know, there's some ramifications to your actions."

He goes on to explain what he means by spanking:

> So you know, that's not like beating them. It's just like, you know, okay look. You can get a swat on the butt or whatever, or sometimes my daughter, just on the back of the leg, and it's just enough where it's like, you know. You can see she's like, "Whoa!"[65]

While he does not feel the need to hide his spanking, he does feel compelled to explain his actions, and to make it clear he is not endangering a child.

What is striking is that two-thirds of parents in both the positive and multifaceted discipline strategies, and the reactive strategy, say that spanking should be rare, reserved for extreme situations. However, parents who use the multifaceted approach and affirm this position are more likely to report that they have routinely, even if infrequently, used spanking as a form of discipline.[66] This could point to differing conceptions of what counts as "extreme" behavior, or possibility differing ideas of what counts as spanking (a "swat" vs. a "whooping").

Multifaceted-approach parents practice spanking but they emphasize that they do it in the context of an intimate parent-child relationship. Furthermore, these parents have the highest levels of religiosity of the discipline approaches. In this regard, their spanking practices are similar to other conservative parents who engage in "expressive traditionalism," but here it extends across political affiliation (Wilcox 2004:129; Bartkowski and Wilcox 2000; Gunnoe et al. 2006; Mahoney 2010).

As children grow older, they tend to outgrow spanking, forcing parents to rely more on the other punitive measures. A Republican mother of three talks about the transition of discipline as her children aged:

> It's getting harder as they get older in some ways. I have to say when they were younger, we spanked, definitely, time outs, a combination of the two. Once they start hitting a certain age of where you can see that they are really into a certain toy or something like that, then I start taking those things…sometimes we'll give

> them extra chores to do and then there is no real reward for doing those extra chores, that's just what you have to do. We'll take away computer time or Wii time. Isolation sometimes where you go up to your room. I'm trying to think, we really don't spank too much anymore. They're beyond that in terms of that's not the most effective anymore.[67]

For this mother, finding a way to discipline her older children presented a challenge that forced her tactics to evolve. Her oldest is just 10 years old, but she already finds herself having to be more creative in her approach to shaping her children's behavior.

Multifaceted-approach parents do not see punishment as interfering with the intimacy they have with their children. Furthermore, while they value that closeness, it does not define the parent-child relationship. Discipline is a necessary part of raising children, but it is only one of the ways they protect and prepare kids for the future.

Parental Investment: Like parents in the positive approach, multifaceted-approach parents invest more than just their time in shaping their children for the future. Here, again, half of parents strongly agree that they "invest much effort in providing opportunities that will give [their] children a competitive advantage down the road" while another quarter say they work at it, but to a lesser degree.[68] However, where positive-approach parents are uncomfortable with the idea of providing their children with a competitive advantage over other children, these parents own it. They are doing their best to prepare their children for a tight labor market where every perceived advantage matters. This is true across the education spectrum. A father of two children who works as an investment banker and has his children in an elite elementary school describes his drive to provide his children the necessary edge:

> Because the world's a competitive place. I've benefited from everything my parents did and gave me. So I want my kids to benefit from me and everything I do is to just give them as many options as I can…. It's still a little early, but yes, I

> mean, in five years my son is going to be applying to seventh grade and then they're not only competing against the kids in their school they're competing against the kids in all the other schools. So they do have to be differentiated. And I've known this when I went to business school. There are ten thousand people trying to get into Harvard Business School every year—fifteen thousand, whatever, and they only take eight hundred maybe. So you have to excel at something, be different, be unique. You don't want to be just the average. You always want to be different.[69]

Even though his children attend a very prestigious, academically rigorous school, this is not enough to ensure their success. He wants his children to stand out, be at the head of the class, even in this elite environment. Expressing the same sentiment, but to a lesser degree, a daycare worker with two children explains that she tries to expand her children's horizons so they have an edge in the job market:

> When you're exposed to stuff you don't know, you know more, you learn more, so and that's an advantage over kids and they'll all gonna be competing for the same jobs here soon, you know, so the little bit more that you know and the little bit more that I instill in you, that's an asset when you go for a job or college…[70]

This mother does not have the same resources as the investment banker, nor are her children likely to have the same career prospects, but both are driven to give their children every edge to prepare them for a highly competitive adult labor market.

Clearly these parents are concerned with preparing their children for competition in adulthood, but they are also less assured of their children's success. Where positive-approach parents are not worried that their children will be ambitious enough to succeed, only half of multifaceted-approach parents say they do not really worry about a lack of ambition.[71] In addition, more than half of multifaceted-approach parents worry that their children will not be financially successful in life.[72] This drives them to provide every opportunity—to the best of their financial and social

resources—for their children in hopes that doing so will propel them to a stable, successful future.

All this focus on preparing children for success is not at the expense of strong moral development. Four out of five parents say they heavily invest in shaping the moral character of their children, a trait that three-quarters of parents see as "absolutely essential" to succeed in life.[73] Around two-thirds of parents say that being hard-working, reliable and dependable, and loving are "absolutely essential" to their children's future success, and four out of five view being "honest and truthful" as mandatory trait for good adults.[74]

In addition, two-thirds of multifaceted-approach parents say they "invest much effort in protecting [their] children from negative social influences," the highest rate of the three groups of parents.[75] At the same time, these parents are more likely—one in three parents—to say that their children "see many things in the media that they should not see" with another 29 percent saying that it happens from time to time.[76] To combat this, these parents say that until children are at least 17 years old their Internet usage should be supervised by a parent.[77] When it comes to their children's friends and activities, multifaceted-approach parents seem to succeed in insulating their children. They are three times more likely to report that there is little to no parent-child disagreement over who their children choose as friends and what activities they do with them than to say there is high discord on the topic. This begins to falter a little for parents of teens: just less than half report such low levels of disagreement.[78] On the topic of romantic relationships, however, parents and teens seem to be on the same page: three out of five parents say there is little or no disagreement.[79] Based on these items, it would seem that multifaceted-approach parents generally succeed in protecting their children from negative social influences, but they still feel that they are under siege. Only two out of five of multifaceted

parents are confident that they are not in a "losing battle with all the other influences out there," with an additional one in ten feeling like that likely win more often than they lose.[80]

In light of this, it is no surprise that two out of three of these parents feel that they should "invest more time and energy" in their children; this is more than twice those who think their effort is sufficient.[81] This is not to say that these parents feel inadequate in their ability to parent their children.[82] Rather, they are unsure if their investment will pay off for their children's future.

Partisanship: Across their partisan identification, the parents who follow the multifaceted approach to discipline are united by the practices they use to raise well-formed children who are prepared for a competitive labor market. These shared characteristics continue to unify parents beyond discipline. On practical issues such as technology and abstract ones such as entitlement and the value of hard work, multifaceted-approach parents, regardless of political affiliation, hold a similar perspective. This means that Democratic and non-partisan parents who follow the multifaceted approach have more in common with Republicans, in both positive and multifaceted approaches, than with their own partisans in the positive approach. Multifaceted-approach parents would not vote for the same candidate but they would approve of many of each other's child-rearing choices.

Multifaceted Discipline on Fox News and MSNBC: The multifaceted approach to discipline is not the explicit focus of advice on either network, but it is still part of the conversation. At Fox News, it is implied that this approach to child-rearing is the "correct" way. Many of the Fox News segments critique what is essentially the positive approach to discipline and offer advice that would push parents toward the multifaceted approach. But the paradox in this critique and advice is that most of the audience already agrees with the Fox News guests that positive-approach parenting is not the best approach.

Based on demographics, parents in the Fox News audience are predominantly multifaceted. The Fox News audience more generally is overwhelmingly Republican, and three-quarters have less than a four-year college degree (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2012). These characteristics are a better match for the multifaceted-approach parents than the positive-approach ones who are at the center of the parenting critique. This mismatch between the critique of parenting and the audience would suggest that the advice offered is not about encouraging better parenting skills. Most parents who see the advice on Fox News are already implementing the parenting practices prescribed, or at least they want to be seen as implementing them.

This "preaching to the choir" reinforces the cosmic weight of parenting. As seen in the previous chapter, Fox News situates the day-to-day decisions of parents in a larger, patriotic narrative about the fate of the nation. The critique and advice on parenting reminds viewers of their place in the larger national and international context, even when they are wrangling toys strewn across the living and driving carpools to school, soccer, and band. This also feeds into a message of Republican parents as a distinct group of people. By providing the critique of parents who generally match the description of the positive approach and juxtaposing it with the advice that matches the multifaceted approach it works to set this group of parents—of viewers and voters—apart from other parents. This critique and advice plays into the larger Fox News narrative of Republicans as at odds with the larger culture.

MSNBC directs its conversations about parenting toward both positive- and multifaceted-approach parents. This matches the demographics: Democrats are almost evenly split between the positive and multifaceted approaches to discipline. The Democratic-leaning network presents its information in such a way that allows both sets of parents to glean reassurance.

Where Fox News presents explicit advice, mirroring the directive style of parenting it espouses, MSNBC offers examples of other parents, essentially modeling appropriate parenting in much the say way that positive-approach parents seek to shape their children.[83] Viewers get to see into the homes of the hosts and guests, compare how their own homes match up with the featured ones, and get a sense of how close or far they are from "mainstream" parenting. This type of parental advice, although lacking in explicit commands, still communicates the implicit messages of how families should run. In other words, the message becomes, in effect, "If your family looks anything like these families, you're doing a good job. You shouldn't worry so much about your job as a parent."

Where Fox News sets up a dichotomy between parents, MSNBC presents a hybrid of positive and multifaceted-approach parents. While positive-approach parents exhibit the intensive emotional labor and the drive to actively cultivate their children that is depicted on MSNBC, they do not display the anxiety about the future. Multifaceted-approach parents, on the other hand, view their investment in their children as a bulwark against future uncertainty. Where positive-approach parents profess a greater amount of certainty in their child's ability to succeed, and thus concentrate on human development, multifaceted-approach parents focus their investment on cultivating the skills necessary to succeed. Preparing children for a competitive and uncertain future, one where parents "don't know [the] job title [their] kids are going to have," is hard to achieve because parents "don't know what specific future" their children will face ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting" 17 February 2014).

While MSNBC describes overparenting as a hyper-vigilant form of what Annette Lareau called "concerted cultivation," multifaceted-approach parents do not match with the classic paradigm (Lareau 2003). While these parents center their lives on their children, drive them to various

activities, and help with homework—all to prepare them for the future—the emphasis on the stricter, command-and-control authority presents a hybrid form of concerted cultivation. Lacking in these homes is the level of parent-child negotiation and the sense that children should have their environment shaped around them. What is not clear from this study is the extent to which the actions of these parents still create the "emerging sense of entitlement"—the sense that the world should be shaped around the needs of children—that Lareau describes for those who are the product of concerted cultivation. In effect, the multifaceted-approach parents fall between Lareau's two groups of parents—not fully enacting concerted cultivation but also not embracing the accomplishment of natural growth.

Both Fox News and MSNBC engage with parents in the positive and multifaceted approaches, which covers four out of five parents. At the same time, both networks ignore the last group of parents—those who follow the reactive approach to discipline.

Reactive Approach (18 percent)

Where parents who use the positive and multifaceted approaches are proactive in developing close relationships with their children and cultivating social, moral, and human capital in them, parents in the last group are not so strategic in their actions. Instead, these parents react to the various situations that arise with their children without any predetermined pattern for their action. These parents love their children, want to see them succeed, and will have pride in them when they do, but they are not attempting to ensure success in any sort of systematic way.

For these parents, their entire approach to parenting is characterized by a sense of letting things be until they become disordered. While most parents wonder from time to time if they are "doing a good job as a parent," these parents have little sense that they can shape their children.[84]

Reactive-approach parents are characterized by a low sense of parental efficacy. More than half of these parents say they are unsure of the effect they are having on their children; only one in ten is convinced they are making a difference in their children's lives.[85] You can hear a strong sense of resignation as a father of four talks about his attempts to help his son in school:

> Now we mostly just have a conversation-wise, just trying to get into their brain like. Like my oldest here is eight, but like he had a problem in school, like with reading. So we try to sit him down and talk with him about the reading…So, for the most part, he was doing fine; he was doing okay. Then right back, boom, he's back to where he's not learning words…They're not hard words, they're not big words. The same words actually, just might have been used in a different sentence or even a different way. But we just talk to him. We rarely beat him and stuff like that. We don't really get nowhere. Me beating you ain't going do nothing but be sore, then go back and do the same thing over again. You gotta want to learn it; you gotta want to do it, you know?[86]

This non-partisan father does not see much result from his attempts to shape his son and ends up putting the onus back on his 8-year-old son to change his behavior. This is different from the positive approach mother who wants her 13-year-old daughter to begin to understand the consequences of her actions. In this instance, this father seems resigned to the fact that he will not effect much change in his young son.

Reactive-approach parents are also less likely to say that they are intimately connected with their children. While one-third of parents say they are "close" to their children, they are just as likely to say they are in the gap between close and distant as they are to say they are "very close."[87] They still love spending time with their kids, and they do spend two or more hours interacting with their kids each school day, but they are less enthusiastic about it.[88] Family dinner only happens daily in two out of five homes with another one-third eating together several times a week.[89] And, like multifaceted-approach parents, it often (45 percent) or daily (31 percent) involves cell phones and televisions.[90]

Like most parents, reactive-approach parents reject the notion that they are their children's best friend, but are less adamant about it.[91] One Republican father of two boys explains that while he knows that parents are important, he wants to be able to relate to his children on their level:

> I mean, as far as being strict with the kids and I think I, I like to think I have a little bit more fun with my kids as far as being able to associate myself with them on the same level and have a little fun with them versus being more of a parent figure all the time, disciplinary figure at all times. I think that there is a parent/child relationship, but there is also a, almost like a child/child relationship sometimes.[92]

Unlike the other two approaches to parenting, who want to be close to their children while maintaining authority, this father wants to relate to his kids as if he were a kid himself. Only a quarter of these parents say their children see them as a clear authority figure. Instead, one-third say that they balance between friend and authority or slightly more authority than friend.[93] They also see themselves as balancing between negotiating family decisions and parental authority rather than communicating their directives to their children.[94]

These parents are the least likely to characterize themselves as strict. The plurality—44 percent—view themselves as moderate with the remainder of parents as likely to say they are permissive as they are to say they are strict.[95] This "moderate" is different than multifaceted-approach parents who still maintain clear authority with their children. For reactive-approach parents, this "moderate" is, in part, a reflection of their low parental efficacy as well as their lack of systematic discipline.

***Discipline**:* Unlike the positive and multifaceted approaches, not a single one of the 14 disciplinary actions on the survey ranked as very important for a majority of these parents. In short, what makes this group of parents distinct is the absence of what could be called a discipline strategy.

These parents do apply discipline when it becomes absolutely necessary. This is different from the positive approach—which uses punitive measures when positive ones fail—in that it is not the result of a progression. Reactive-approach parents apply punishment when they can no longer ignore their child's bad behavior. One Republican father explains that he really doesn't need to correct his three daughters' behavior because they haven't given him a reason to so. When asked how he does at correct his children, when it is necessary, he says:

> Not well. Not consistently. Again, it's one of those things that I'm like, we probably are failing there. For the most part, they're not bad kids, so I don't feel like we really have a lot of true discipline issues that we have to. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm just naïve and I should be doing something differently. I think it's just an authoritarian rule. I'm the parent; this is how it is type of thing. And maybe a little volume.[96]

While he attributes the lack of discipline to his daughters' good behavior, his household reality isn't so simple. When asked about his greatest regret in parenting, the thing he wishes he could go back and do over, he mentions that his 15-year-old daughter bullies her two younger sisters:

> In a nutshell, she's a bully to her sisters, so she's just not pleasant. She's not pleasant to them and often to us, because that's her personality. And like I say, it's been her personality all her life, so it is what it is. That's where I would say as a parent, somehow I failed. I wish I could have somehow snapped that early on, or had enough foresight to say, she's 15 and this is what she is now, versus if I had done X when she was three, I could have nipped it in the bud.

He says that when she was a preschooler and she would harass her siblings, they thought it was "cute and funny" and they "didn't do anything" at the time. Now he and his wife realize they "might have been able to be addressed then, and not have to address a bigger issue—not bigger issue, but different issues now." In light of this, his statement that they don't "really have a lot of true discipline issues" rings hollow.

Like this father, this group of parents is the most likely to report family conflict. Half of parents say they have a moderate to high level of parent-child disagreement in their household, the highest rate of any of these three groups.[97]

When parents finally resort to punishment—that is, when their child's behavior is so egregious that it can no longer be ignored—it is often in the form of discussing behavior at length, scolding, time outs, grounding, or taking away technology, all of which are moderately important.[98] The father who is resigned to his 8-year-old son's lack of motivation to learn in school says sometimes they "take away the baby doll" or the Xbox for a few days, but he remains noncommittal about it. These punitive measures have a similar place as the positive strategies of praising and instructing children, and modeling good behavior, which are also moderately important.[99] Spanking is not a common practice. Although two-thirds say it is acceptable in extreme circumstances, half say it isn't part of their parenting and another third say it is used only rarely.[100]

Some parents admit that they are slow to discipline their children because they are not particularly successful at it. One apolitical mother of four had such a hard time with discipline that she chose to attend a parenting class, but with little result:

> What do I do? That's one of my big things is I tried to do the time out, it didn't work. They kind of overruled over that. I just have them go to their room and they just wait it out and cry. A couple of times I do, sometimes I have to give them little spankings because they can be a little rebellious at times, but other than that, I just, I guess I just let it all go, you know. I was just talking about it with my cousin, my son's really rebellious and I told him, I was like, I think it's kind of my fault because I do baby him and even when he does things bad, I still baby him. Yeah, that's one of the things that I need to correct about myself.[101]

Thus, despite her training, she has a hard time doing what she feels she should do with her children. This sense of resignation, and for some parents, futility, comes through in much of the actions they take with their children, including the way they invest in their future.

***Parental Investment*:** The lack of a clear parental strategy, along with reactive-approach parents' limited sense that they can affect change in their children, is also evident in their own perception of their investment in their children. Reactive-approach parents do not really think that they "invest much effort in providing opportunities that will give their children a competitive advantage down the road," but neither do they think they leave their children to fend for themselves. Three out of five parents are either undecided on their investment in their children's opportunities and future preparation or think they do this to a limited degree.[102] When asked about their actions in this area, they seem unsure what to say. One mother with a kindergarten daughter says she has given her daughter a competitive advantage because "she already knows how to work a touch phone."[103] Another apolitical father, with one residential child, also sees technology has a competitive advantage, but for a different reason:

> [He] got a TV in the room…He got his movies and everything it's a lot of stuff that I didn't have that I make sure he do have…. It ain't important for him to have it but he just kind of makes him, make sure he got something to do besides just running the streets. That's the main, we do a lot of stuff for him, you know keeping him in sports and everything is keeping him out of the streets because in this town right here these boys are playing around here, they'd rather take what you got before than go and try and get it themselves.[104]

For this father, the TV, movies, and video games he has purchased for his son, as well as the sports he encourages, gives him an advantage in life because it gives him an alternative to the street culture in his small, rural Southern town and keeps alive the prospect of a college education. Here the key advantage is preventative—the absence of a police record—where for parents in the other two approaches the advantage is additional skills and experiences.

While reactive-approach parents are not as active in cultivating an advantage as multifaceted- and positive-approach parents, reactive-approach parents are the most likely to worry about their children's financial future. Again, reflecting their low efficacy, three out of five say they worry that children will "not be financially successful."[105] Despite this concern, they do very little to encourage or prepare their children for future financial independence. They are also the ones least likely to financially support a 25-year-old or encourage them to move home if circumstances do not work out in their child's favor.[106] They seem to trust the future success of their children to chance.

Instead of focusing on the economic advantage they invest instead in character development. Two out of five say they "invest much effort in shaping the moral character" of their children—roughly twice as many who say they invest in giving their children a competitive advantage—and another third say they do it to a more limited extent.[107] These parents think having "strong moral character" is "very important" for their children's future success, but not essential.[108] The same is true for other character traits such as being hard-working, reliable and dependable, and loving.[109] The only trait that they rank as "absolutely essential" is to be honest and truthful, and that is only by about half.[110]

When it comes to the social factors, they say they do try to protect their children from "negative social influences" but to lesser degree. Only a quarter say this takes a lot of effort from them and another two out of five say they do try to do so.[111] The technology-gifting father spent a considerable amount of money, relative to his income, to provide his son with an alternative to the local social influences, but that is the extent of his efforts. There is also greater disagreement in the household about children's friends and activities. Where more than half of positive and multifaceted-approach parents report little to no conflict over their children's choice

of friends, only two out of five reactive-approach parents say the same.[112] Parents of teens are as likely to report middle-to-moderate levels of conflict as little-to-no disagreement.[113] This higher-than-average conflict is reflected in parents' sense of effectiveness in protecting their children: only three out of ten parents see themselves as winning the "battle with other influences out there."[114]

In all three areas—opportunities for competitive advantage, moral character, and social influences—these parents want to be seen as investing in their children, but they do not have clear sense how to accomplish it. Six out of ten agree that they should "invest more time and energy" in their children.[115] They want to see their children succeed and to grow into well-adjusted adults, but only two out of five are certain in their adequacy as parents.[116] They are Lareau's (2003) "natural growth" parents who provide for their children's basic needs without actively cultivating their children's future. These parents are not neglectful of their offspring, but in world where their own lives seem buffeted by chance, they fully expect that their own children's adult lives will be as well.

Partisanship: Parents in the reactive approach to discipline are unified by a low parental engagement and a sense that they can do little to shape who their children become or the future they will live. While reactive-approach parents are from all partisan groups, they are primarily outside of the political process. The plurality, 46 percent, has no political affiliation, and 31 percent claim the political middle. Only one in four has a partisan leaning as either Republican or Democrat. Because of their limited partisan leaning, this group will be largely absent from the analysis in the following chapters.

Reactive Discipline on Fox News and MSNBC: Reactive-approach parents are largely also absent from the political conversation about parenting. This may be explained, in part, by the

lack of political leaning in these parents. They are neither part of the audience of the political networks nor are they part of the opposition, and are thus outside of the relevant conversations. But more than the political disengagement, these parents are also outside many social institutions. They have low levels of education—46 percent have only a high school diploma—and not connected with religious institutions.

While these parents are absent from the political audience, they are not outside of the educational audience. Where Fox News and MSNBC concern themselves with the practices of highly involved, deeply invested parents, much of education research and policy is aimed at trying to engage reactive-approach parents in their children's educational career. These parents are not particularly involved in their children's schools and are less inclined to actively monitor nightly homework. Educational institutions may wish that positive- and multifaceted-approach parents would be, at times, less involved in their children's education; however, it is the reactive-approach parents they want to engage.

Thus, the political conversation about families, as portrayed on these networks, focuses on a specific type of parenting, limiting the arena to those who, by and large, conform to an intensive form of parenting.

Conclusion

Parents in each approach love their children, want to see them succeed, and want to be seen as investing in their children's future. However, they view their job as parents, and the way to prepare their children, in different ways. The political news networks pick up on these differences, reinforcing them even as they reassure parents that the way they have chosen to parent their children is sufficient and will not cripple them in adult life.

At the end of the day, parents in all three approaches want the same things for their children. Despite their varying strategies, they want to raise adults who are smart, highly educated, financially independent, and hard-working.[117] But they also want them to be loving, forgiving, dependable, honest, generous, and intimately connected to their family.[118] In short, they want to raise independent, caring children with good character. Goals both networks, and parents of all political persuasions, can support.

Chapter 4

Consuming Technology and Symbolic Monitoring

Technology, and all that the word evokes, is a concern of parents and networks alike. As we sat in living rooms and at dining rooms talking to parents, nine out of ten brought up technology without prompting (see Appendix B). Republicans were more likely to express anxiety or deep ambivalence about the changes it brought to their lives, and every single Republican parent brought up technology in some form. In contrast, Democrats were more likely to talk about technology without any allusion to anxiety, and a handful did not mention it at all. In this regard, partisan parents mirror their politically aligned news networks.

In keeping with parental rhetoric, Fox News and MSNBC commit significant airtime to the place of technology in the lives of children and parents' responsibility regarding it. Like Republican parents, Fox News demonstrates a greater anxiety about the place of technology in the home and, like Democrats, MSNBC seeks to remind parents that technology is not something to be feared.

On Fox News, technology is presented as pathology, an addiction that parents must guard against, which has the potential to rupture the close relationship between parent and child. In the same way that drugs or alcohol can disrupt family ties, children can become dependent on the drug of technology that in turn devastates household dynamics and corrupts the moral character of young, impressionable minds. But technology is not just an addiction; it is the "greatest epidemic" that "will dwarf the toll of any epidemic we have ever known" ("We are Raising a Generation of Deluded Narcissists" 8 January 2013). Parents "must be parents" and stage an intervention to protect children from gaining a deluded sense of self-esteem and from decimating the once-tranquil home. If parents fail, the consequences are steep: not only will the

parent-child intimacy be killed and children's moral character corrupted, but teens' social reputation will be ruined and, in extreme cases, parental failure can lead to physical harm for kids—even suicide. In light of these high stakes, it is no wonder that Fox News encourages parents to use every tool available to them to monitor and protect their children and intervene on their behalf.

Where Fox News paints parents as the first and last line of defense against the invasion of technology, MSNBC sees parents as responsible for their children's technology use in a different way. Parents are the ones who model appropriate use of cell phones and social networks. When parents become frustrated that their children's undivided attention is directed at digital devices, they would be wise to recall instances where their children have felt the same frustration about their own actions. MSNBC guests encourage a consistent technology policy that applies to parents as well as children. In addition, parents are responsible for training their offspring to be savvy digital citizens.

This starts early, long before a teen has his or her first Facebook account or cell phone. Every time a child engages with an electronic device—a tablet borrowed from a parent, a new gaming console, online research for a school project—there should be a conversation about how to engage with the device and the world reached through it in a savvy way. Parents are encouraged to take control of household policies, be proactive with their children's use, and not to view the range of devices and social connections as "poison" ("Toddlers and Tablets: One Mom's Advice" 29 March 2013). Part of being proactive is the active parental monitoring of what their children use, who they contact, and how they craft their online presence. This helps parents stay connected with the news of their children's lives, and it helps them detect early warning signs, especially as it relates to cyberbullying. This monitoring helps parents train their

children in the appropriate behavior of digital citizens—not just reasonable caution when disclosing information online, but also teaching them to be respectful of others, including detecting unintentional harassment. Parents are continually reminded in explicit and subtle ways to "not let [the devices] take over us and our authority as parents" ("The Parent-Child Technology-Rift" 29 November 2013). Instead, parents need to be proactive in monitoring and training their children in technology.

Despite the radically different tone, Fox News and MSNBC agree on what parents should do to manage technology in their homes. Children should not be given free reign with the personal, social, and reputational consequences associated with cell phones, social networking, and Internet content. It is the responsibility of parents to actively limit children's technology exposure and teach them to manage the pressures that accompany it. Furthermore, parents are encouraged to make use of the tools that are available to them—tracking and monitoring software, requiring all account passwords, and checking the history on various devices—to track their children's online activities. Not only should parents be "tracking and snooping" on their kids, one MSNBC guest reminds parents that they have the ability to know their children's activities in a way that has not been available to parents of previous generations. "In the past we would have to look at their shoes and their notebooks to see what they were writing," but now, she says, parents can "actually get in there and follow what they're doing" ("Teens Tragic Suicide Sheds Light on Cyberbullying" 15 September 2013). This mirrors the advice given on Fox News, where parents are encouraged to use software to record every picture taken and every message sent and received to keep tabs on their children. Thus, the partisan networks agree on the necessity of parents' active monitoring despite the contradictory tone of their messages.

Clearly parents and the networks want to talk about technology and its place in family life, but how does this play out every day? Do Republican parents monitor and control technology to a greater degree to match their anxiety and ambivalence? Do Democrats give their children greater freedom when it comes to technology? Or are they less worried about it because they have faith in their ability to control technology? Finally, do parents heed the networks' advice and follow their children's online lives?

Technology complicates parenting

When placed in a larger context, parents, regardless of political affiliation, generally view technology as a positive part of their lives. Three out of five parents see the expansion of social media platforms as having done more good than harm for society as a whole, and two-thirds think that the "greater use of cell phones and texting as a way of communicating" has also been a positive development for American society.[119] In this regard, parents see technology as a valuable addition to their personal and professional lives, tools that are part of the rhythm of parents' daily routines. Seven out of ten parents say they use a social media account and almost half say they use the Internet for personal use for at least an hour each day. Only four percent of parents say they are never online.[120] Thus, when it comes to facilitating their own lives, parents value technology. The anxiety and ambivalence present when they talk about technology in their children's lives does not extend to their own interactions with technology.

Despite their favorable perspective on their own technology use, parents think it makes child-rearing harder. In conversations with parents, half of Democrats and non-partisans, in addition to nearly two-thirds of Republicans, expressed concerns about the way technology complicates parenting. This is true for a significant minority of parents who do not indicate fear when it comes to their children's use of technology.[121] For many parents, their misgivings relate to the

way that technology provides a conduit directly to children that circumnavigate parental oversight (Dill 2012). More specifically, parents are concerned that the content their children access will be out of sync with the values that parents want to pass to their children. One non-partisan mother captures the sentiments of many parents when she describes "technology and everything" as a "constant struggle between the world and parental values, and what you're trying to teach your kids."[122]

Particularly parents of younger children are concerned that their children will stumble upon content that does not match what they would find at home. One Republican mother of three elementary-school-aged children explains:

> TV shows are a whole lot different than they were 30, 20 years ago. The Internet, they can accidentally get more exposure. I would say those are the two main places, just TV and computer Internet that didn't exist when I was a kid.[123]

Even if her children are careful about their online activity, they may still encounter racy content in a way that this mother never experienced during her own childhood. This concern is not limited to parents of young children; the issues only become more complicated as children age. Another Republican mother of two adolescents indicates that her concern stems from the larger possibility of web content, and social media specifically:

> Obviously, the social media is huge. Basically, I mean you can find out anything in the world from your house where I certainly couldn't do that. That makes it much tougher as a parent to try to keep up with that…what I had seen on Facebook. I think you can—I think it's kind of a minefield for most people and especially for teenagers…And exposure to a lot of things that you'd just as soon they weren't quite exposed to yet as far as sex, drinking, language.[124]

This mother is concerned that her teens will be exposed to "sex, drinking, [and] language" that can infiltrate her home without her approval.

A second concern is that children will be able to create and maintain relationships with people outside of parental oversight. One Republican father with three elementary-school-aged children worries that his children will come into contact with all manner of people through social media, people beyond their school circles:

> You have social medias, so you have kids that you're interacting with maybe in the school arena, but then also possibly even worldwide really with Facebook and different things like that where if you allow the kids to be involved in that who knows what they're going to come in contact with.[125]

This father is worried that his children will meet people unvetted by their parents. Many parents agree with this sentiment and extend it to the content of the conversations even if they know their child's online friends. A Non-partisan mother of pre-teens says she is not letting her children on social media because she is not able to track who her children talk to and what about:

> It's just unmonitored conversations. It's just not appropriate. Really they do a lot of inappropriate things. There's bad language and sexual talk on there.[126]

While she thinks young teens should not have the freedom to talk to their friends without the monitoring of adults on social media platforms, her children do have their own cell phones where they are allowed to text with friends. Part of the decision in giving her children cell phones last year was to make her life easier—it helps her to "stay connected and know where [they] are now." When she first gave them phones, she said she would check on their texts, but they were "very innocent and nothing" and so she has stopped monitoring them. She admits, "I was overly worried. It's really been fine." This mother illustrates one of the contradictions of many parents when it comes to technology. While they may prevent their children from online interactions because of concerns about the values that may be transmitted or about unmonitored

encounters, they allow their children cell phones, devices that are often mentioned as an afterthought in the interviews.

This contradiction of restricting some technological freedom while encouraging others, as exemplified by this mother, seems to hint that maybe parents are not as worried about technology, and the world reached through it, as they might first appear. Since nine out of ten parents brought up technology and the challenges it entails with no prompting from the interviewers, it is clearly in the forefront of parents' minds, but their own actions belie their professed fears. Parents who express anxiety about technology and think it complicates parenting are equally likely to have a child on Facebook as parents who do not express such concerns.[127] It would seem that this anxiety does not lead to different parenting outcomes.

Furthermore, the concerns about technology seem to be general fears rather than the result of personal experience. Very few parents had stories about their children or even children of their friends using technology to maintain relationships of which parents did not approve. One Republican father talked about a problem he and his wife had with their 15-year-old daughter dating a boy they saw as a "bad apple":

> [W]e had a texting issue with her and this boy that my wife deemed to be a bad apple. And it was a lot of monitoring online on our account to see how often, who, how much, and really brings an awareness to them that a) we're watching, b) we can see, it's not just that we know how many. We can see who you're texting and how often and at what times, all that stuff. So we let the technology do a little parenting for us too…. We wanted to cut off texts. Technology hasn't gone that far; we couldn't do as much as we wanted to. We couldn't just restrict that line and nobody else…. Because she knew we were watching it on the AT&T account, she switched over to messaging through an app, never said so much, but we could tell.[128]

While they were initially monitoring when and how often she contacted the boy, she was able to circumnavigate her parents by using an app on her iPhone. This father claims, "on their phones I won't give them Internet because I don't want them to—there is no need for them to have and so I don't give them the temptation." However, he allows his daughter to use her own money to pay for the data plan for an iPhone, which either he or his wife had to set up with the provider. Furthermore, she pays the data fee directly to her parents. While they may not want to "give her the temptation," they are complicit in her phone-based Internet access, which she uses to circumvent her parents' prying eyes.

It is worth noting that the problem facing this father is not a new one: a daughter dating the wrong young man is not a problem of an Internet age, although technology makes it easier for the daughter. Fears about meeting unknown individuals, and even pedophiles, or having "unmonitored" conversations are not limited to a Facebook era (Best 1990). Parents in *Middletown* were concerned that technology allowed greater teen autonomy and children's ability to maintain relationships away from parental oversight (Lynd and Lynd 1929 Ch. 11). The key difference between Middletown parents and the *Culture of American Family* parents is the time: parents in Middletown in the 1900s were concerned with movie theaters and automobiles while contemporary parents are concerned with social media and cell phones.[f]

[f] I am not trying to argue that technological advances do not change society or the ways that people relate to one another. The technological advance of moving from open fireplaces to enclosed chimneys and cast-iron fire grates revolutionized food preparation because it allowed women, with their full skirts, to cook without setting themselves on fire (Wilson 2012). Changes in physical technology are always accompanied by changes in the society that utilizes them. What I am trying to argue here is that parents often blame, or associate, technology with things happening in their homes that feel beyond their control even if these issues—dating, bullying, access to pornography—are not caused by technology (boyd 2014; Ito et al. 2009; Lynd and Lynd 1929).

Despite the concerns of a plurality of parents that technology complicates parenting—a trait that is more Republican than Democrat or non-partisan—parents do not echo the Fox News narrative of addictive technology. Only one parent, a Democrat, echoed the Fox New message of technology as a drug or an epidemic, and her oldest child is only 7 years old.[129] To affirm this position, parents would have to see themselves as enabling an addict—akin to the person who buys an alcoholic their bottle of booze and then limits them to only two drinks each night. The analogy of the "greatest epidemic" that "we have even known" may appeal to the network's decidedly older audience and may drive ratings (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2012:35). For parents, however, the concept of addiction, especially when technology is ubiquitous, has serious implications for their self-evaluation as parents: If technology is a dangerous addiction, one of epidemic proportions, and I allow my children to use it, what does that say about me as a parent?

In this regard, MSNBC's focus on parents as technology mentors—modeling good use, encouraging online responsibility, and so on—offers a more palatable approach for parents. Instead of framing parents who allow their children access to technology as enablers, they are encouraged to maintain their parental authority in their daily interactions about use. Instead of a drug or a poison, technology becomes a tool to be used, an object to be consumed. Even free services, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Wikipedia, can be consumer objects along with iPhones and tablets. Seeing technology as one of the commodities of childhood—along with Halloween costumes and the must-have Christmas toy—provides a better framework for understanding how parents talk and act regarding it.

In her study of childhood consumption, Allison Pugh (2009) analyzed the negotiations of parents and children around material goods and experiences that fill childhood. She found, across the

income spectrum, that parents were willing to purchase an item (e.g., a toy, shoes, an experience) for their children—at times at great sacrifice, at other times against their better judgment—if the child could convince the parent it was necessary for them to be a full participant in their community. As we will see, this model, which aligns well with MSNBC's rhetoric, does a better job of explaining parents' participation in the technology that complicates their lives. Especially when social media and cell phones are viewed as an entree into a shared public space for adolescents, to deny them the same access as their peers is to mark them out as different and limit their participation in their community (boyd 2014).

One way to further question parental anxiety about technology and explore the alternate explanation of technology as part of childhood consumption is to limit the analysis to parents who have teens who are poised to join Facebook or who have recently joined. If parental anxiety motivates action, then Republicans or those that question the value of social media in society should be more stringent about their children's social media debut. If, however, the consumption framework offers a better explanation, then there should be little differentiation based on parental fears.

Consuming Facebook

Regardless of political affiliation, parents think it is appropriate for children to have their social media debut about the time their sons and daughters approach their 15th birthday—at roughly the same time they get information about birth control and shortly before their first kiss (Bowman 2012).[130] This also places the appropriate Facebook age roughly two years later than the

minimum age imposed by the company.[g] Yet while parents want their children to wait to get Facebook, seven out of ten 14- and 15-year-olds have their own accounts. This indicates that in many households children have social media accounts *before* their parents think it is appropriate, and their parents know about it. There are clear patterns to those who are "early adopters," and positive-approach Democratic parents stand out from other parents.

Early adopters[h]

Any parent will tell you that sometimes their best intentions do not always play out at home. This is particularly true when it comes to social media accounts. For children 11 and or older—the age when the child's peer group is starting to get Facebook accounts[131]—almost half have their own social media accounts, according to their parents, even if their parents think the children are too young.[132] These early-adopting adolescents are more likely to have non-partisan or multifaceted-approach Republican parents. Children living with positive-approach Republican and Democratic parents are less likely to be early adopters; at least that is what their parents say.[133]

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[g] The minimum age of 13 years old is in response to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA), which prohibits companies from collecting and using data about children younger than 13 years without the explicit permission of the parents. As a result of COPPA, companies such as Facebook do not allow children younger than 13 years to join, thus freeing them from having to create different data-use policies for younger individuals. Other social media companies, such as Snapchat and Gmail, also use 13 as the cutoff for participation. In contrast, Twitter does not collect any age information but says that it's "services are not directed to persons under 13" years of age (Twitter 2014). All of these services provide a way for people to report users younger than 13 whose accounts will be deleted (boyd et al. 2011; Facebook 2014; Google 2015; Snapchat 2014; Twitter 2014).

[h] Early adopters generally refer to the technology adoption lifecycle, made famous by Everett R. Rogers. In Rogers' application, early adopters are generally young, educated leaders who are the first to implement some new technology, technique, or idea. They, in effect, set the trend that the rest follow (Rogers 2003). In my application, I do not mean those who are the first to take up a new technology, but rather those in an age cohort who are first to embark on the process of technological independence. More importantly, these are adolescents who are starting their journey before their parents think it is appropriate.

Among parents with early-adopting children, there is little indication that they wish they could take away this technological independence. When talking to parents, only a handful talked about forces beyond their control that led to their child's social media debut. One non-partisan father is not pleased that his 9-year-old son has a social media account—he thinks his son should wait until he is 12 years old—but he feels like the choice was out of his control:

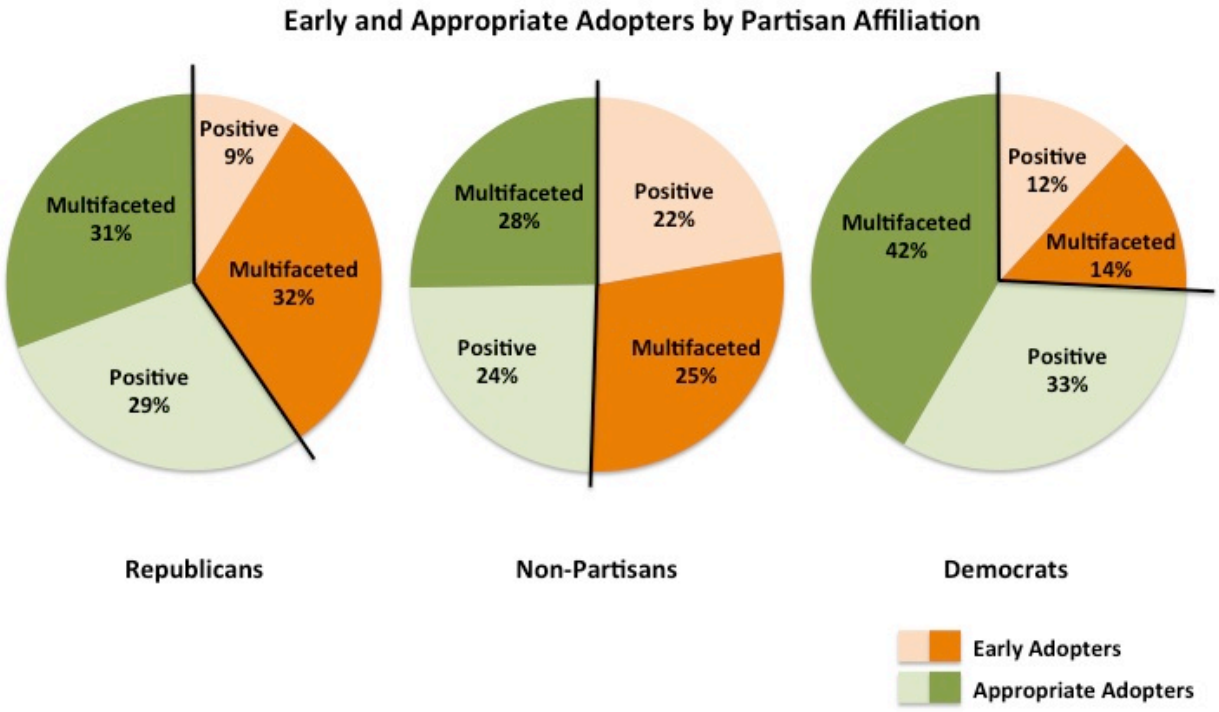
> He has a Facebook account that his mother set up for him. That was one thing that we did not see eye-to-eye on. But he only uses it to play games and I monitor it pretty closely…[Games are] the only reason that he has it. And he only has maybe a half dozen friends on there and they're all family or close friends.[134]

While his son is an early adopter, his experience of social media is focused on games rather than the social interaction. As a result, this father carefully watches his son's activities, but does not restrict his access. This situation is not unique. Other parents must reconcile the fact that another parent allowed a social media account for their child when they would not, but this is not enough to explain the majority of early adopters. Only slightly more than one-quarter of early-adopting children live in blended families.[135]

It also appears that a handful of parents acquiesced to online accounts because it was a necessity for other activities. The Republican mother who described Facebook as a "minefield" tells of how she was "undermined" when it came to the platform. While she wanted her children wait until they were 17 years old, it all changed when her 15-year-old daughter joined the school play:

> I've always told her she couldn't be on Facebook, but when she got in this play the school came back, and she came home from school one day and the play people wanted to communicate that way, so they signed them all up for Facebook without asking the parents. Now, she's on Facebook…see, you get undermined, a lot, I think.[136]

Figure 4.1—Early and Appropriate Adopters by Partisan Affiliation



While she considered objecting to her daughter's new account, she felt that after the fact it was less effective. These are a few examples of situations when parents feel that the decision of their child's social media debut is beyond their control. However, the majority of parents who have early adopters do not give any indication that their hand was forced or that they wish they could take social media access away from their child. In this regard, the idea of technology as part of childhood consumption provides a better explanation than the anxiety expressed by parents.

Parents want to be responsive to the desires of their children. As danah boyd (2014) demonstrates, participation in the arena of social media is necessary for full citizenship in a teen's community. Early adopting of social media may be less about the age when parents feel

it is appropriate and more about the point at which preventing a child from being present in that public space stigmatizes the child in their community (Pugh 2009). While the mother with the thespian daughter felt undermined, she could still have limited her daughter's engagement with the "minefield" of social media. Instead, she viewed it as necessary for her daughter's participation in a larger community.

While they may be willing partners in their children's technological independence, parents of early adopters have mixed emotions about their children's access to technology. There is a clear political divide in how these parents view and manage their children's independence. The handful of Democratic parents with early adopters stand out from the rest: They are almost three times more likely to say they are losing the battle to control teens' technology use than they are to think they have the upper hand. Democratic parents may view technology as a losing battle because they have fought hard and have come to admit defeat. Multifaceted-discipline Democratic parents are more likely to report higher levels of parent-child conflict relating to Internet usage, especially when compared to multifaceted-discipline Democratic parents whose children are not yet active on social media. In contrast, Democratic parents who ascribe to the positive approach to discipline report a level of conflict that matches other parents.[137] This, coupled with their proactive style of positive-approach discipline, may reflect a proactive acceptance on the part of parents that technology is a ubiquitous part of life, one that they cannot control and thus must allow. In contrast, non-partisan and Republican parents of early adopters think that they are in control of their children's technology use, even if their children are online younger than they might think is ultimately appropriate.[138]

Appropriate adopters

All of this compares to the parents with appropriate adopters—children in the same age range as early adopters but without social media accounts. In other words, as the friends of their children join social media, these parents say their own children are too young and are waiting until they are the "appropriate age" to let them join. These parents are fairly confident in their ability to delay their children's social media debut. More than half of Democratic and non-partisan parents and seven out of ten Republican parents of "appropriate adopters" disagree with the idea of a losing battle with technology.[139]

One single Democratic mother says her 13-year-old daughter is pushing to get her own account, but the mother says that since many adults do not know how to appropriately use the platform she is reticent to let her daughter:

> [My daughter] says, "Well, mom, you know, I'm 13. I'm old enough." "Yeah, I understand, but at this point I'm not confident that you're at a point where you can manage that." It's a lot. I mean I have adults who I'm in contact with on Facebook and it just never ceases to amaze me how irresponsible they are with what they post. It just—it's like, "Are you kidding me? Did you really put that out there? Oh, my…" Like you just question their judgment. I'm thinking if there are adults doing this, kids, my goodness![140]

She thinks that 15 years old is about the right time for social media, or once her daughter demonstrates she understands the "consequences" for excessive self-disclosure on social media. For now, her daughter respects her decision to not allow her on Facebook just yet:

> I think because of the relationship I've established with my daughter, she has not been a difficult child to raise for me. She really is not. I'm firm, but loving. I'm clear about what my expectations are for her, and I'm clear about what the reward and punishment system is. I've pretty much always been like that…[141]

This mother is confident that the foundation she has built with her daughter will ensure that her decision is respected. Many parents, like this mother, are willing to grant their children social media access but are waiting until their children display a certain level of maturity. Another Democratic mother with 12-year-old twins says she wants her children to wait until they do not have to lie about their age, and until they have developed are clearer sense of who they are:

> Mother: My son asked one time, and I just said no. I'm thinking in my head 14. I think you have to be 14 to have an account. Most of their friends do. I can go on and see my friend's kids. Most of their friends do have it even if they have to lie about their age to get the account. They have to bump up a couple of years on their birth date. So tons of their friends do have Facebook, but my kids don't…
>
> Interviewer: So in two years they will get on?
>
> Mother: If they ask. I'm not going to encourage it. I'll discourage it as much as I can, but if they're 14. Even now I'm feeling better and better about their judgment. I don't feel like I have to be so crazy. I think by then I'll feel even better.[142]

This mother wants to shield her children from content that would contradict the values she wants to teach her children and confuse them about how they should live their lives. However, once they reach a certain age, she is willing to acquiesce, but for now her twins do not seem particularly interested in their own accounts. She knows she cannot protect them forever, but, she says, "[e]very year I feel like we postpone that they get a strong sense of who we are and what our values are."

Where these parents are waiting for a certain level of maturity, a handful of parents reject it entirely. They see access to social media as a form of peer pressure, destined to lead their children astray. One non-partisan mother has a not-under-my-roof policy. She says her daughters, currently 11- and 14-years-old, can "choose" to get their own social media accounts

when they turn 18 “because [they]’re considered an adult” at that age. In the meantime, she encourages her children to resist the peer pressure to get an account:

> And I tell them, like, don’t be letting nobody trick you into “you don’t have a Facebook page?” You know, peer pressure and that.… Are you going to be a follower or are you going to be a leader? It’s a choice you’ve got to make. You’ve got to be confident in yourself. I believe this is what you build in your child, because the first teaching is coming from me first. So, I believe if the parents invested more into their kids and to be more with them, it wouldn’t happen.[143]

For this mother, resisting Facebook is akin to resisting the pressure to do drugs or any other thing that kids can “get lost and caught up in.” Instead, she says, her kids should focus on their homework, and if they want to be “social” they can have “play dates” with their teammates.

All of these mothers, regardless of the age at which they think Facebook is appropriate, say that their teens are in compliance with their restrictions on social media. These parents may feel that they are able to prevent their children’s social media access, and that they closely monitor all their children’s online activities, but that might not be the case. A 2012 survey of teens found that four out of five had a social network account. This varies by age, but two out of three 12- and 13-year-olds have their own account; that increases to nine out of ten older teens (Madden et al. 2013:21).[144] In both of these age groups, the teens’ self-reporting of their use of social media exceeds that of the parents by roughly 15 percent.[145] In other words, a handful of parents are less aware of their children’s online habits than they think.

When talking with parents, only one, a Democrat, mentioned discovering that her child had a hidden account. This mother, who thinks 16 years old is the right age for social media, walked into her 14-year-old son’s room and happened to catch him on Facebook:

> …he came to me one day and asked me, "Mama, can I have a Facebook page?" I said, "No." I walked into his room one day and there's a Facebook page and I

> was livid. We closed it down. He put it back up. We closed it down. He put it back up. We closed it down. He put it back up, so we've just been back and forth.[146]

This mother does not view Facebook as a public space for teens, but rather as a public space for pedophiles:

> It's a lot that's going on, on Facebook and he has a young mind that hasn't developed yet.… They're kids and they truly have the mind of kids. They don't know that there's predators. As much as I tell them, they don't know that. They haven't really experienced that there is somebody that wants to harm them.… and then they're meeting people. You're meeting people. "Oh, let's meet up somewhere." "Mama, can you drop me off at the library?" "Here it is, I'm dropping you off at the library because I think you're meeting your friends, and I could be dropping you off to somebody that's a predator and not even know it. I drop you off. Leave. I come back and I don't see you again." Those are the things that worry me.

To protect her son, she changed the Internet password and does not allow him to be online without her being physically present. Her 11-year-old daughter, however, has unlimited access on her iPad and computer. In order to prevent her son from circumnavigating parental oversight through his sister's devices, she and her daughter created device passwords. Thus, the daughter, despite her younger age, has greater freedom online than her brother because she does not use it for Facebook. While this mother agrees that trying to control a teen's access to technology is a losing battle, she clearly is not yet willing to admit defeat.[147]

This mother is considerably more concerned about what her children can access on Facebook than what they can reach on the Internet more generally. This leads to the question of how much this mother, and all parents, monitor their children's online lives. Are parents "actually [getting] in there and following" their children online? Or do they feel that it is "too much" to monitor all their children do? Or, alternately, do they reject the idea of monitoring altogether because of the control they feel over their children's technology use?

Symbolic Monitoring: Watching Online Lives

Parents may be willing to let their children online earlier than they think is best, but oversight is still important to parents. Among parents who have children without any technological independence—no social media accounts or cell phones—nearly three-quarters say there is tight oversight of their children's Internet use.[148] Regardless of political partisanship, less than one in ten say they do not restrict their children online. In many regards, this monitoring means very little because children are not online. Half of these parents say their children do not use the Internet on a daily basis and a quarter spend less than 20 minutes each day online.[149] For these younger children, they may not be interested in online access, or parents may be limiting their kids to what they can easily oversee. Either way, this is a limited time demand for parents.

Once children begin to gain some measure of independence—either through social media or cell phones—partisan patterns begin to emerge. Positive-discipline Democratic parents stand out as the most likely to say they do not oversee their children's online activities. One-third of parents say "Internet access is *not* restricted" while only one in five parents say they "tightly restrict" their teens' online activities. Republican and multifaceted-approach non-partisan and Democratic parents are more than twice as likely to say they tightly monitor their children's online activities than are positive-approach Democrats.[150] This difference cannot be attributed to the differences in the age of the children, or to a host of other factors.[151] Instead it is the interaction of political affiliation and disciplinary approaches.[152]

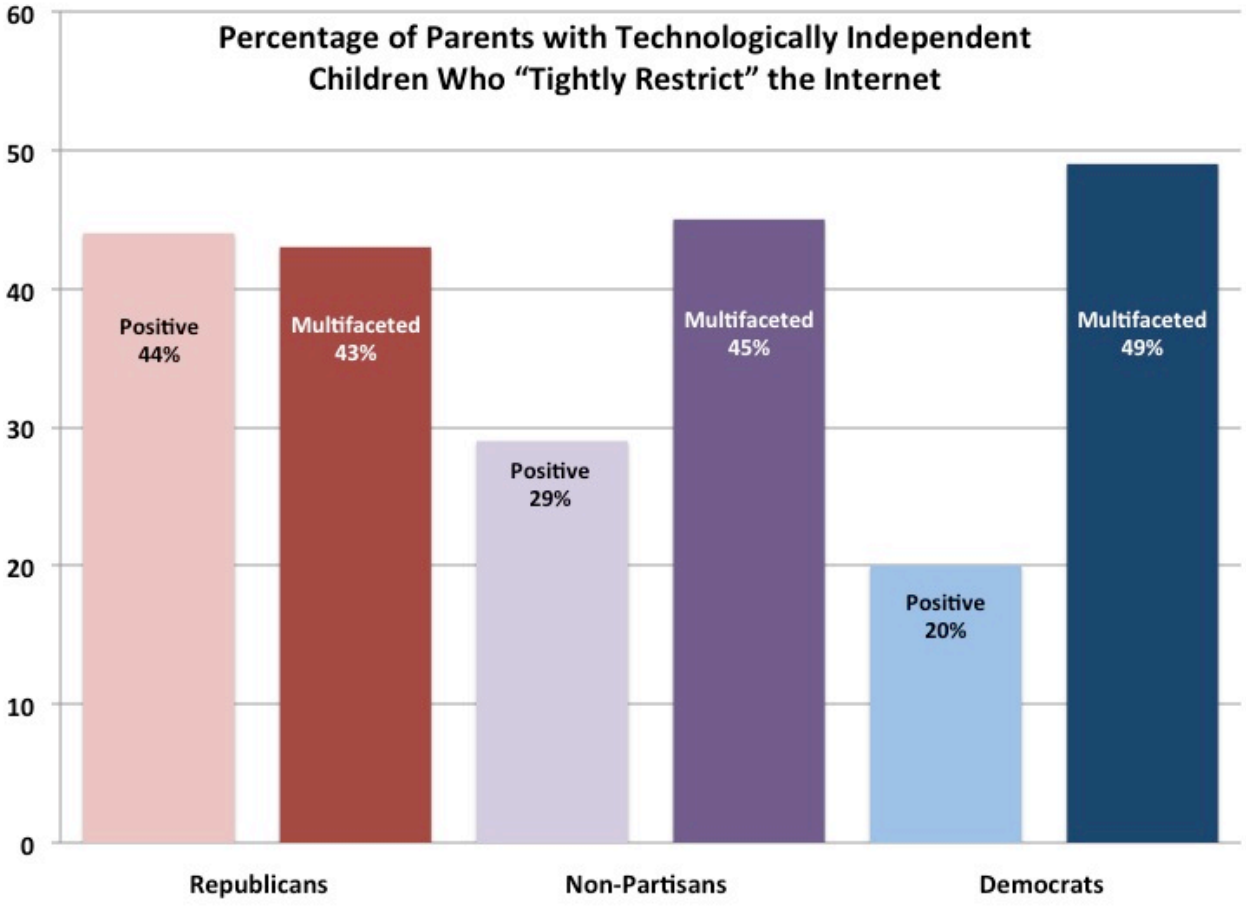
Positive-approach parents rely most heavily on the intimate parent-child relationship to guide and mold their children. Because they have forged such deep connections with their children, they are confident their teens will confide in them and that they will know when their children encounter trouble. In her study of parenting, Margaret K. Nelson (2010) found that parents who

prioritized intimacy engaged in hovering surveillance of their teen's online activity. Instead of actively monitoring through software tools, they preferred to strategically stand in doorways or catch glimpses of computer screens as they entered their children's bedrooms, all the while insisting that they trust their children to behave in the ways they had been trained.

For Nelson, this was a class-based distinction, but here it extends beyond class boundaries to an interaction between disciplinary style and political affiliation. Positive-discipline Democratic parents have faith in their children and the ties they have forged, while also valuing independence. In addition, they are willing to cede Internet monitoring shortly before their teens' 16th birthdays, younger than most other parents. They have faith that their children will be savvy technology users even as they engage in covert, in-person surveillance (just to be sure). In contrast, positive-discipline Republicans and multifaceted-discipline parents, including Democrats, prefer to wait until their child approaches age 17, or a little later.[153] For these parents, tracking their children's online activities is particularly important and is often seen as an effort to protect or shelter their teens from dangerous content or the consequences of inappropriate use. While these parents *say* they tightly monitor their children, there is some indication that this is symbolic monitoring, rather than actual attempts to track their children's digital footprint.

Those who are most likely to say they "tightly restrict" the Internet are also the ones who are least likely to use the Internet for personal use.[154] This is not to say that parents who use the Internet routinely are better equipped to watch over their children online. Three hours a night on Pinterest or Netflix is not sufficient to teach parents how to use the tool to audit their children's online activities. However, parents who spend little time online for personal use are likely ill-equipped to navigate Internet monitoring.[155]

Figure 4.2—Technological Oversight by Partisan Affiliation



Furthermore, even if these parents do tightly restrict the sites to which their children have access, they are not tracking their teens' social networking footprint. While seven out of ten parents have their own social media accounts, only one-third check these accounts daily, and tightly restricting parents are no different than others.[156] Given the volume of content generated in social media each day, it is unlikely that parents are up to date on their children's social media lives if they check weekly or less often.

Talking with parents also belies their tough stance when it comes to technology restrictions: less than one in four claim that they try to keep track of their children's online lives.[157] Of this limited number, only five parents say they have the passwords to their children's social networking accounts, check texts, or monitor Internet traffic using software solutions.[158]

More often, conversation with parents who claim tight Internet restriction is accompanied by a sense that parents want to be seen as attentive. A non-partisan mother of two middle-school children seems keen to communicate how much she pays attention to her children's online activity but also relies on trust:

> They get [online], but I trust them. I really trust them. I watch, I pay attention, I do monitor them. I try to supervise, but I know for the most part, they're not trying to get into anything they shouldn't. [My daughter], the worst that she'll do is listen to music that's a little too much. [My son], he's researching the Illuminati and he likes to dance, so he tries to figure out these dance moves and stuff…I'm a friend of theirs on Facebook and I monitor them.[159]

While this mother claims she tightly restricts the Internet, she also sounds like she is trying to convince herself that she actually carries this out. Instead she relies on trust in her children—that they are not doing "anything they shouldn't"—to compensate. Another mother, a positive-approach Democrat who says she tightly restricts the Internet, refers to herself as the "Facebook police" for her children, their friends, and her extended family. When asked what she is trying to police, she responds, "well, language."

> [My daughter] knows I see what [she posts]—but I don't have her password. I know she has friends whose parents have their kids' passwords and go on. I don't do that. I think there has to be some sense of privacy in a generation where kids have no idea—or have no respect for it…It's just that generation…I said [to her], "What's going on, don't you know your employer is gonna look at that, and you know, that kind of thing." And I say to my daughter, "You know, if someone wants a babysitter, and they see someone swearing on Facebook, well they're not gonna have them watch their kids."[160]

This mother is primarily concerned with the public presentation of her daughter, and the way present actions could be interpreted in the future, and out of context. She tells of an instance where her niece had posted a video of herself at a college party. This mother proceeded to mail her niece a letter, through the United States Postal Service, encouraging her to take down the video because of possible long-term consequences. The problem was not the underage drinking, but the public presentation of it. She explains, "I said to my sister, 'It's not like they're doing anything different than we did, but we didn't film it.'"

These mothers demonstrate two of the ways that parents' actions belie their tough stance on monitoring. Clearly they want to be seen as providing oversight for their children's online activities, even as they rely on their teens' good sense to stay out of trouble. In this regard they are similar to another non-partisan mother with four older teens who admits that the "Internet is not restricted" but still wants to be seen as providing restrictions. She tries to set limits on phone and Internet, and track her teens' online actions but feels inadequate:

> I think there's a lot of monitoring, and there's a lot of stuff you can't even monitor. You know, you can try to do your best, but you can't—with the phones, and the computers, and everything…I think there are so many external influences that we have no control over. Because, again, of the technology and everything.[161]

She recognizes that despite her best efforts, she feels out of control when it comes to monitoring her young adults. However, she still tries to keep tabs, and wants others to know she is doing it. These mothers represent both ends of the monitoring spectrum, but drive home that parental oversight of children with technological independence is more of rhetoric than reality.

This disjuncture between how parents say they monitor and what they do represents a form of "symbolic monitoring" (Pugh 2009).[162] Most parents who claim tight surveillance, when pushed, let slip that their oversight is more ritual than restriction. The rituals are important because it

allows them to claim that they are monitoring their children's online lives. These parents have internalized the cultural milieu of danger, anxiety, and surveillance relating to technology (Best 1990). To say you do not monitor them online is tantamount to admitting that your children are watching pornography, talking to pedophiles, and sexting with their romantic partners. Worse yet, for parents to say they do not monitor is to say they do not care that their children are engaged in these activities. Parents thus engage in symbolic monitoring, which allows their children technological freedom and allows parents to be seen as good parents, all without creating too much conflict in the household or taking up too much time.[163]

This symbolic monitoring also hides similarities between parents. Given the rhetorical nature of the oversight of Republican and multifaceted-approach parents, who claim greater restriction, they may actually give their teens, in practice, similar freedoms to positive-approach Democrats who largely acknowledge that they are not providing oversight. While the actual reality of teens maybe similar across these groups, it would not appear so to other parents. Conversations standing beside the soccer field or at a PTA meeting could lead parents to believe that there are radically different levels of parental oversight as parents talk more than they do.

Listening to Fox News and MSNBC

This symbolic monitoring and the trusting non-monitoring of positive-approach Democrats means that most parents will not heed the network advice to track their children's digital footprints. For those who engage in symbolic monitoring, they are already doing what is suggested, or close enough to it. They are aware of what their children are doing. And, even if they should be doing more, they have good kids who are not up to any of "those things." For these parents, the network advice reinforces the need to appear that one is providing oversight but is unlikely to lead to a change in their behavior.

Even when parents admit that they do not tightly restrict their technologically independent children, primarily positive-approach Democrats, the network advice is likely to make little difference. These parents have strong faith in their abilities as parents and rely on the tight parent-child bond to engage in covert surveillance. Convincing them that they should install monitoring software or start collecting passwords is a tough sell, one that would violate their core assumptions about parenting. In many regards, these parents already embrace the MSNBC message to not let technology undermine their "authority as parents," and are trying to raise children who responsibly use technological tools.

Conclusion

While parents admit that technology makes their lives harder, they generally do not affirm the Fox News narrative of technology as a pathology. They treat their teens' technology use much like other commodities of childhood: as something to be consumed (Pugh 2009). For the most part, parents allow their children technological independence through social media and cell phones, at times against their better judgment, because it is necessary for their teens' full participation in their community. To deny technology is to deny their children full status among their peers. In this regard, parents come closer to the MSNBC model of parents as technological mentors.

Along with this independence, Republican and multifaceted-approach parents engage in symbolic monitoring. While they want to be seen as keeping a close eye on their teens' digital footprint and restricting their online movement, most parents provide very little actual oversight. This symbolic monitoring, instead of restricting their children, is about their own assessment of their child-rearing practices. It is about appearing to be the good parent they want to be. In contrast, positive-approach Democrats are more likely to admit they do not restrict their

adolescents' Internet use, but they also have a strong faith in their abilities as parents. They trust their children to use the technology responsibly, knowing that is how they raised them, and they are confident that their intimate connection with their children would alert them if something went wrong.

Chapter 5

Parental Efficacy, Hard Work, and the Entitlement Society

In many regards, one of the most important long-term goals for raising children is to prepare them to thrive and succeed once they are independent. All of the discipline and the technological monitoring, the carpooling and negotiating are, at the end of 18 years, about preparing productive citizens. But parents are uncertain about how to measure that success, or whether the efforts they put in today will match, or sufficiently prepare, their children for the future that awaits them (Nelson 2010).

Network rhetoric agrees that parents must prepare their children for a future without a clear understanding of what is necessary for success. Fox News takes the concerns one step further by reminding parents that they could be undermining that future by not appropriately handling daily interactions with their children. “Bad” choices by parents—which happen when parents rely on their own instincts—could “deprive” the world of the next great leaders who could solve future global and domestic crises. Parents are thus complicit in constructing the crumbling future their children will inherit. Fox News anchors ask viewers to picture a world without Ronald Reagan of Margaret Thatcher or, in short, a world where an Obama-like figure runs the world. Fox News is clear about how the world, both the hypothetical future and the present, has become so disarrayed. When parents rely on their instincts, children become entitled and expect others to solve their problems. These children are the ones who, in the past, “went out and voted for Obama in droves” in a quest for something—a government handout, an unearned promotion at work—to replace their “mother’s entitlement milk” that they are no longer getting from their parents (“Sarah Palin, Studio Audience Debate Parenting in America” 20 January 2014; Bolling 2014). According to Fox News, President Obama has promulgated this

"entitlement mentality," also described as a "victim mentality," on the American public. He "has urged upon people an unprecedented level of government support that hobbles them and makes it less likely that they will tap their God-given capacities to support themselves" ("How to Immunize Your Kids Against Obama's Victim Mentality", October 30, 2013).

But, Fox News proclaims, there is hope! Since "the greatness of a nation begins in the homes of its people," the future of the nation can be secured by the practices of parents in the present, practices extolled by Fox News each day ("The Family that Prays Together, Stays Together" 16 October 2013). One of the key practices necessary to ensure a bright national and individual future is teaching children to work hard. Raising children who earn their rewards and take responsibility for their own actions is essential to the Fox News narrative ("How to Talk with Your Kids about the 'M' Word—Money" 16 March 2013; "'Minimalist Parenting'" the Way to Go? 28 April 2013; "An Economist's Seven Rules for Raising Kids" 03 November 2012; What Came First at Christmas? Self-Centered Children or Their Parents?" 24 December 2013; "Are Parents Going Beyond Ethical Boundaries?" 30 October 2013; "Is Seinfeld Right about the Evolution of Parenting?" 20 February 2014). Teaching children the value of hard work is seen as the preventative and reparative. It is simultaneously the vaccine and the antidote to an entitlement mentality and Americans' potential global and domestic ruin ("How to Immunize Our Kids Against Obama's Victim Mentality" 30 October 2013).

At MSNBC, the uncertain future is not one that parents create; it is instead connected to the vast possibilities that lie ahead. Parents are faced with the challenge of preparing their children for jobs that do not yet exist in fields that have not yet been imagined. As a result, parents must do everything they can to raise their "kids for every possible future" ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting, 17 February 2014). The old, "Betty Draper" approach to parenting is no longer

sufficient, and parents feel in doubt about the best way to raise their children for the yet-to-be-imagined future ("The Highs and Lows of Modern Parenting" 3 February 2014). In response, MSNBC focuses on the historic anomaly of contemporary parenting. Today's mothers and fathers feel unmoored from the generational wisdom of parenting because they are; their anxiety about raising children and the daily choices they must make is the result of changing rules for parenting in the face of future uncertainty. Parents are not crazy (or losing their grip on reality) for feeling this way as they juggle kids, jobs, and life ("Fox Talking Heads: Mom Breadwinners at Odds with the 'Natural World'" 31 May 2013). In acknowledging and validating these feelings, the guests seek to alleviate some of the guilt that comes with the anxiety. One guest proclaims parents "shouldn't feel guilty," about their child-rearing choices, "I am trying to get parents to feel a little less guilty" ("Toddlers and Tablets: One Mother's Advice" 29 March 2013).

Yet despite this desire to alleviate guilt and the acknowledgement of the ahistorical moment of parenting, MSNBC refrains from advice-giving. Instead, it provides examples of other parents' choices and allow viewers to draw their own conclusions. As one host described, "I do not have all the answers…I hope that there is something [in my story] that can help others" ("'Everything Will Be OK. I Love You': Parenting After Trayvon" 15 July 2013). Thus, while MSNBC identifies parental anxiety and validates the existence of an uncertain future, it offers parents no direct help. Instead, MSNBC assumes that parents will glean what they need from, or norm their parenting to, the segments.

Fox News and MSNBC agree that children face an uncertain future, but they disagree on the cause of the uncertainty. And Fox News, unlike MSNBC, is very prescriptive in its assessment: parents must prevent entitlement by raising responsible, hard-working citizens that match the

image on Fox News. The question here is whether parents share these concerns. Do parents feel unmoored from the wisdom they have received from previous generations? Is what worked for their own parents no longer sufficient for the task of shaping their children for an uncertain future? In addition, while entitlement is a concern for Fox News, do parents of all political affiliations believe they are raising entitled children? Or do they think they are cultivating children who will work hard to succeed?

Drawing on the Received Wisdom of Parenting

Parents' ideas about their parenting experience seem to support the sense on both networks that child-rearing techniques that worked a generation ago are no longer sufficient. Regardless of political orientation, parents are ten times more likely to reject the idea that "it is easier to raise children today than it was 50 years ago" than they are to agree with it.[164] Parents who follow the multifaceted discipline approach, Republican, non-partisans, and Democrats alike, have a greater sense of this disjuncture.[165] Not only is contemporary child-rearing harder, parents affirm the MSNBC narrative that the received wisdom from their own parents is insufficient in the present moment. The plurality of parents, almost half, say they are making some of the decisions their own parents made but are also searching for alternatives to the choices of previous generations. Only one-third of all parents say that the way their parents raised them is largely applicable to their own experience as parents.[166] This is true regardless of political affiliation: Republicans and Democrats feel their own upbringing has limited relevance to the challenges they face.

Even though the liberal network is the one highlighting the historic changes, the transformation in the American family over the last century, and particularly the last 40 years, extends to all families. When children lost their economic value in the family, becoming vulnerable, even

priceless, and in need of protection, the standards by which parents were judged also began to shift (Lynd and Lynd 1929; Stearns 2002; Zelizer 1994). Childhood became increasingly sentimentalized, and motherhood shifted from providing love and basic needs to a bulwark against the hostile forces of the world. Mothers came to bear the responsibility for the protection and moral development of their children (Nelson 2010). Furthermore, as women entered into the work force, their identity as mothers only intensified and the standards for judging good parents became increasingly demanding (Hays 1996). In addition, fathers have also experienced a redefinition of what makes an acceptable parent. With changing economic conditions, which undermined the ability of a father to provide for the basic needs of a household, the notion of what makes a good father has also shifted (Edin and Nelson 2013; Gallagher 2003; Stearns 2002).

These shifts are broad and sweeping, but much of parents' concerns are practical and specific. As we saw in the previous chapter, technology is one area where parents feel that they cannot rely on past wisdom and that, at times, managing it is beyond their control. For other parents, it is not present circumstances that make their lives harder but the plethora of options for parenting. One mother of a young elementary-school-aged son says what makes parenting so much more of a challenge is that parents now have to think about every decision they make and can no longer rely on their own instincts:

> I think we over-think raising kids. I mean I'm wondering if they had all the multitudes of parenting magazines, and *Parents* magazine, and all the books about how to parent and what you should do and what you shouldn't do, and right from wrong, they kind of just did it, right? So in some ways it was probably easier and more instinctual [for previous generations], certainly not—now I'm not saying this about my parents because I think they were incredibly loving—but my dad talked about when he was raised and he said, "Kids were to be seen and not

> heard." And so the way he was raised was not with the love and affection that my generation has for our kids.[167]

To compensate for the overwhelming volume of advice, this mother chose a child care facility for her son that would be able to help her with the day-to-day decisions of parenting:

> But I guess the main thing that drew me to it…is that most of the teachers have been there 10, 15, 20 years, and to me that's a great sign. They like what they do, they're good at it and they really—I mean as a new parent, it's nice to have teachers who know what they're doing when you feel like you don't. So I got a lot of guidance…[168]

The daycare/elementary school has helped her with everyday issues such as potty training, resolving temper tantrums, and encouraging her son to listen when she speaks. She admits that she "got really lucky" when she found this place. Even though she feels like she has a reasonable handle on what it takes to raise a child, she still craves a sounding board and outside validation to affirm her daily child-rearing decisions.

In many regards, she sounds similar to another couple that also feels adrift regarding their own parenting. This couple, however, doubts their own efficacy and worries that they will not be able to raise their children to be the adults they want them to be. The mother explains that her low estimation of their abilities as parents is exacerbated by the absence of a clear standard to measure parenting success:

> Because I don't think there's a lot of guidance, and also you have to kind of just figure it out as you go and put the fires out and handle the crises and make the U-turns and deal with crazy schedules and noise all the time, so you have to learn as you go. So I think that's what I'm taking away from the experience. And without guidance it really makes you feel that you're driving with a blindfold sometimes.[169]

This couple feels that they cannot trust their instincts, and instead turn to a trusted therapist that they have been visiting for more than a decade. All three of these parents see their own

instincts regarding parenting as deficient, in a way that they think was not true of previous generations of parents. Nor are they alone in this: most parent do not see themselves as relying on their instincts alone when it comes to daily parenting decisions. Regardless of political affiliation or disciplinary approach, the plurality see themselves as relying "equally" on information from experts along with their instincts. The remainder of parents are more than three times more likely to prefer "being well informed."[170] In this regard, parents agree with Fox News that too much instinct in parenting leads to disastrous outcomes.

The preference for expert advice also holds regardless of parents' sense of their own abilities as parents. Those with the strongest parental efficacy still balance between instinct and expert knowledge or default to the advice of professionals. In general, parents are reasonably confident in their child-rearing skills, despite the desire for outside validation. Three out of five parents disagree with the assertion that they lack the basic knowledge or competence to shape their children.[171] However, only one in four is fairly confident in their parenting skills, and these parents are more likely to follow the positive discipline approach.[172]

As we saw in chapter 3, there is a correlation between disciplinary practices and parental efficacy. Positive-approach parents show the greatest faith in their ability with eight out of ten Republican and seven out of ten Democratic and non-partisan parents expressing self-assurance. Multifaceted-approach parents trust their abilities but not to the extent of positive-approach parents: seven out of ten Republicans and six out of ten Democrats and non-partisans trust their parenting abilities. In comparison, reactive-approach parents are most likely to say they are uncertain in their parenting choices or are willing to admit that much of parenting is beyond their control.[173] Thus, even though parents think contemporary parenting is harder and

less defined than that of their own parents, they think they are up for the challenge, although they would also like outside reassurance of it.

The desire for external validation and guidance, despite faith in one's abilities to raise children, is part of a cycle. In his history of modern child-rearing, Peter Stearns emphasizes that experts and the media have been beneficiary of, even as they contribute to, contemporary parenting uncertainty. "Parental anxiety in the 20th century," he writes, "has been indissolubly linked to experts, media, and popularizes, who have played, with whatever intentions, on parental guilt" (2002:226). Fox News and MSNBC are no different: both play on parental fears to drive viewership.

While MSNBC specifically attempts to reduce parental guilt, it may actually perpetuate it. By offering validation to parental anxiety, MSNBC affirms for parents that they are right to be anxious about their child-rearing project; by highlighting the historical changes, it reinforces that older models of parenting are not sufficient. The network stops short, however, of providing parents with the tools they need to address the anxiety and insufficiency they face. The only times MSNBC offers specific advice are in matters of life and death—following the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and a teen suicide connected to cyberbullying. Other than that, parents are left to glean necessary knowledge on their own.

Fox News, in contrast, offers explicit advice, but it also stokes parental guilt. As we saw in chapter 3, the viewership of Fox News already enacts the child-rearing techniques the hosts and guests recommend. Yet the segments still encourage parents to imagine what could go wrong if they do not "stay the course." It asks viewers to ponder a world without Ronald Reagan. What if Nellie Reagan, mother of the beloved 40th president, had spent too much energy "coddling" little Ronnie, or had failed to teach him about responsibility and hard work? What

crises, global and domestic, would America be facing? By taking this approach, Fox News simultaneously reaffirms viewers' parenting choices and reinforces the anxiety surrounding them.

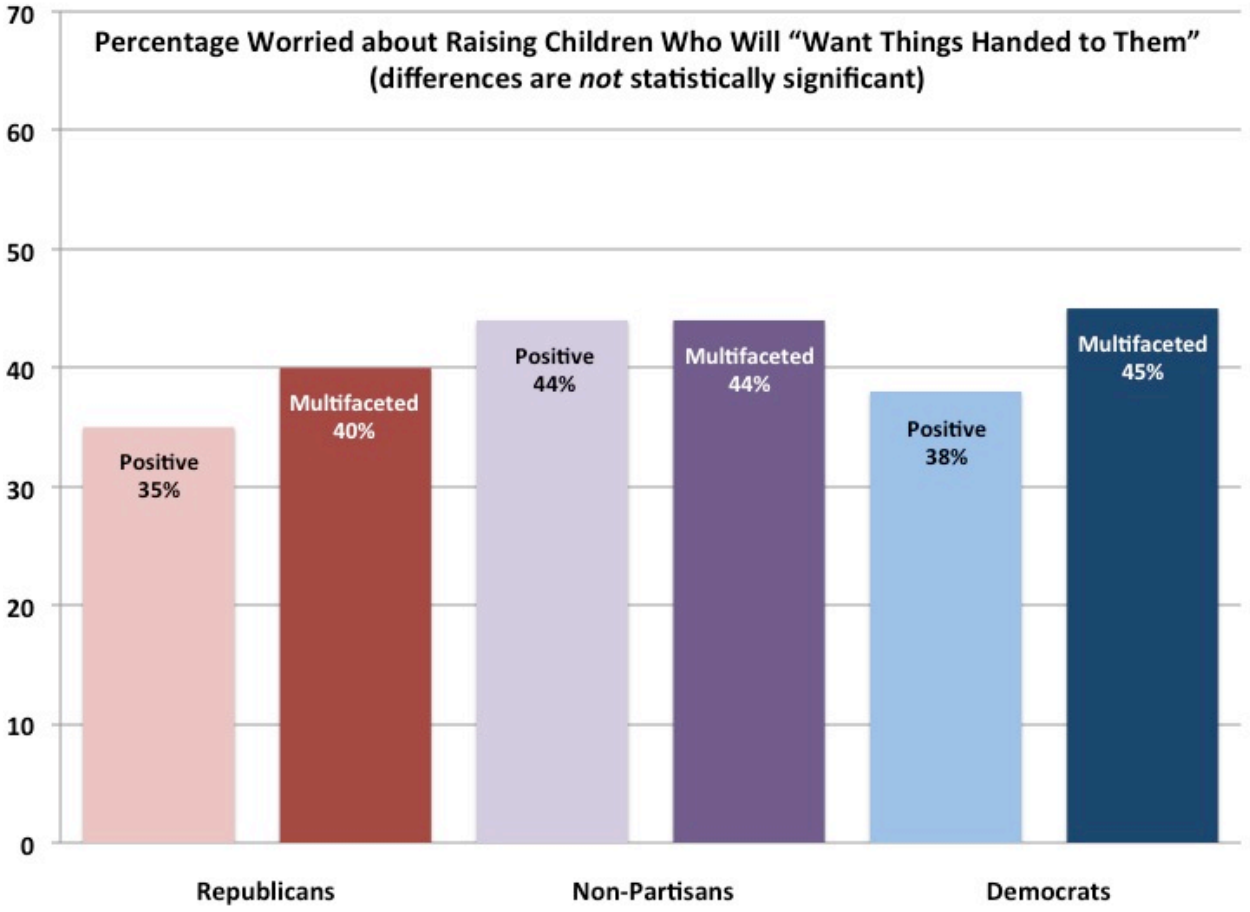
Entitlement Is Someone Else's Failing

Parents of all political affiliations feel that they are unable to draw on the wisdom of previous generations to prepare their own children for the future. Furthermore, partisan conversations about parenting cannot provide parents with a clear sense of certainty on how to achieve it either. So how do parents feel about their prospects for raising children who will work hard, be responsible for themselves, and become productive citizens?

Most parents have faith they will accomplish just that. Only two out of five parents say they are worried that their children will "want things handed to them rather than working hard."[174] There are no partisan or discipline patterns to this, but college-educated parents are more worried about the prospect of raising children who will want handouts.[175] In her study of childhood, Lareau (2003) identifies households that practice "concerted cultivation"—a child-centric model of child-rearing that she associates with upper-class households—as creating an "emerging sense of entitlement."

Because children are the center of their home world, they come to expect that this will continue in school and other public arenas. This style of parenting maps most clearly with the positive approach to discipline in this study. Highly educated positive-approach parents are clearly concerned that their everyday decisions could, unintentionally, create entitled children. Even college-educated, multifaceted-approach parents, despite their greater focus on authority structures and discipline, share this worry.

Figure 5.1—Worries about Raising Entitled Children by Partisan Affiliation



At the same time, highly educated parents are less likely to say they are worried that their children will "lack the ambition to succeed." [176] In other words, they seem to think they might be raising driven children who do not understand that true success must be earned over a long time. They worry that their children will think opportunities and responsibilities should be granted to them because they are smart or dedicated without having to "pay their due." One mother, who holds an MBA and spends her free time training for Ironman triathlons, explains her "real fear" that her two teens will grow up entitled:

> The thing I really hate, the thing I fear the most and maybe you're going to get to this question, is that my children will grow up thinking that the world owes them a living. I think that there is a sense of entitlement in the society that wasn't there when I was a kid that I should be getting the best of everything whether I work for it or not. I worry that they will not understand that if you want something, it's not instantaneous gratification; you have to make a plan, go after it, and achieve it. I think they're going to be okay, but you never know.[177]

She explains that she is concerned, in part, because her children come home and say, "I need a new pair of jeans or a new pair of basketball shoes." These are not essential things, things they need for school or survival, so she worries that these demands are a sign that she has failed to teach her children about the value of hard work and long-term planning. At the same time, she says she is "only slightly concerned" that her children will lack the ambition to succeed, and she can point to places where her children are driven for what they want. Her 13-year-old daughter is passionate about horseback riding and is dedicated to the chores that enable it. She spends time each week mucking stables and cleaning and grooming the horses to earn her lessons. When taken together, this mother hopes that her children will turn out alright in the end.

This mother is a bit unusual in the interviews because she was willing to voice her concerns about raising children who expect unearned rewards. One other mother worried that she might have "spoiled" her girls when they were younger because she did not require chores. Now she is actively working to enforce household assistance by incorporating her girls into the "clutter management" that needs to be done before the house cleaner arrives each week.[178] She hopes this will help teach them the value and necessity of mundane daily tasks.

For most parents, "entitled" children or the "entitlement" culture is the result of someone else's parenting failure. This is particularly true, but not exclusively, for parents with the highest levels of parental efficacy: three out of four say they are not worried about raising children seeking handouts, including almost half who say it is "not at all a concern." In conversations with

parents, they see entitlement as a very real problem, but not one to which they contribute. In addition, while the idea of people expecting unearned rewards is a Fox News conversation, among parents it shows up among Republicans, Democrats, and non-partisans alike.[179] All parents are worried about someone else's entitled children. One Democratic mother with a kindergartner and toddler attributes these problems to "helicopter moms" who train their children to expect luxury, even if their family isn't rich:

> There's a sense of entitlement, it's like there's no work ethic, they don't have to work hard for anything, and everything is given to them. And this type of description used to be what you would associate with the elite, the people who had a lot of money, the people who were born into a certain level and I think again, the keeping up with the Joneses kind of thing, like everybody lives so high above their means and it's almost like we're raising our children the way that we see those people raise their children, too. Like my kids are getting a lot of toys and stuff for Christmas, but there are moms that I know that are giving their six-year-olds iPads. I'm like—I want an iPad.[180]

On the survey, this mother is worried that she may be raising children who want unearned rewards, but she still situates the creation of an entitlement society in someone else's home. She even qualifies her stance by contrasting the "lots of toys and stuff" that her children are getting for Christmas against the specific "entitlement" item of receiving an iPad. Entitlement is not something she is creating, but is instead the result of practices that she "doesn't admire."

Another father, a non-partisan with a 10-year-old son, thinks kids are being too "bold" when relating to their elders, the result of feeling that they "deserve" more than they are due:

> Kids are, I guess for lack of a better term, more empowered.…It's like a, I guess it's like I mentioned before that they have more rights or more empowered for lack of a better term. Like I guess, I guess not more rights but more entitlement. They feel they deserve this or that without actually earning it. And I know it helps to build up their self-respect and self-esteem but what is it costing them? It's

> costing them any type of empathy, you know it's a right that I should have this not a privilege and I think that's, that's detrimental to them.[181]

This father alludes to the idea that entitlement is the result of parents wanting to build children's self-esteem, and is thus an unintended consequence of their best actions as parents. This echoes the Fox News idea that the entitlement culture is the result of parents following their instincts.

Fox News & MSNBC on Entitlement

To listen to parents talk, entitlement is about children's desire for material goods and other rewards without concern for the cost. They worry children do not appreciate the effort it takes to earn the money and maintain a household. This, in turn, means that children think they should receive special treatment as well as items they desire. Entitlement is about the items and labor from parents and other authority figures that children come to expect without proper appreciation for or contributions to the costs, both economic and emotional.

On Fox News, the larger conversations about entitlement (apart from those on parenting) focus on social safety net programs. Entitlement is framed around the relationship between citizens and their government. It would seem that the quest for unearned rewards is only problematic when these children turn the government to replace their "mother's entitlement milk." Entitled trust-fund babies, now grown, stand outside the larger Fox News critique. One anchor, Eric Bolling, sets up a discussion about the transformation of the "United States of Entitlement" with this introduction:

> Folks, we are living in a country where more and more people are riding in the cart and fewer and fewer are pulling the damned thing. Here are the numbers…In the next five years, the Federal government will hand out, doll out, nearly $14 trillion of your money. At the same time, nearly half of all Americans

> pay no, NO, federal income tax at all. America was once filled with proud workers and businesses eager to hire them. We are becoming a nation of free-loaders looking for a way to get paid without ever getting off the couch. As CATO recently pointed out, in 35 states, it pays more to get to the unemployment office than to go to the job site, the plant, or the cubicle. (Bolling 2014)

What is clear in the larger network-wide conversation about entitlement, but less apparent in the child-rearing segments, is the connection between entitlement and the people who actually receive assistance from the government. There is a disconnect between how parents talk about entitlement and what it means to Fox News. Bound up in the media critique of freeloaders and encouraging parents to train their children to value work seems to be a fear that their children could become those who receive assistance from the government. Both networks agree that we face an uncertain future, but implicit in the messages directed at parents from Fox News is the shame of raising children who might need these programs. The majority of households that receive food stamps, welfare, unemployment, or the earned income tax credit include employed individuals who work to provide for their families. By characterizing these households as full of "freeloaders," rather than employees struggling to get by, it preserves the notion of success through hard work. Parents, then, who train their children to be diligent, reliable, and committed to their work, will succeed in life and not face downward mobility as a result of job loss, stagnating wages, or other forces beyond their control.

If entitlement for Fox News, at least as it relates to parenting, encompasses a fear of downward mobility, then it echoes the concern on MSNBC about raising children who are prepared to face "every possible future" ("Technology and Its Impact on Parenting, 17 February 2014). Despite the radically different tones, both networks are responding to the contemporary economic uncertainty that they fear will be worse once their children reach adulthood. Both Republican and Democratic parents are working to prepare their children for this future by encouraging

them to be productive citizens who are ready to face every eventuality. To help with this, they seek to cultivate the value of hard work in their children as a bulwark against future uncertainty and downward mobility. Hard work is also seen, at least on Fox News, as the vaccine and antidote to entitlement. Yet even as parents encourage children to work hard they may, unintentionally, be curating the entitlement they want to prevent.

Hard Work and Unintentional Entitlement

Americans overwhelmingly think that a strong work ethic is "very important" for their children's future success.[182] More than most other character traits, this is endorsed by parents (Bowman 2012). At the same time, two-thirds of parents say "the American work ethic" has suffered since they were growing up.[183] This means that two out of three parents are trying to cultivate a work ethic in their children even as they feel it is devalued in the larger society.[184] In particular, Republican parents see the strongest decline, although they are certainly not alone.[185] What may account for this disconnect between the parental value of hard work and the perceived value of a strong work ethic among co-workers, friends, and bosses is the way people understand hard work. In conversations in living rooms, it is clear that while parents want their children to embrace work, how they understand that work is far from universal. In addition most definitions of hard work subtly reinforce a sense of entitlement in the way it focuses attention on either the ritual or the goal.

Parents have four basic definitions of "hard work" (Figure 5.2) The first interpretation relies on an economic framework and focuses on achieving a goal. Here, hard work is seen as "getting ahead," that is putting in the hours and dedication to achieve financial and career rewards. A second group of parents still situates the work ethic in the economic realm, but focuses on the process instead of the rewards. These parents stress that there is "no free ride" and that how

Figure 5.2—The meaning of "to work hard"

		Focus	
		Goal-Oriented	**Ritual**
Realm	**Economic**	Get Ahead (30 percent)	No Free Ride (33 percent)
	Personal	Perserverence (16 percent)	Do Best (17 percent)

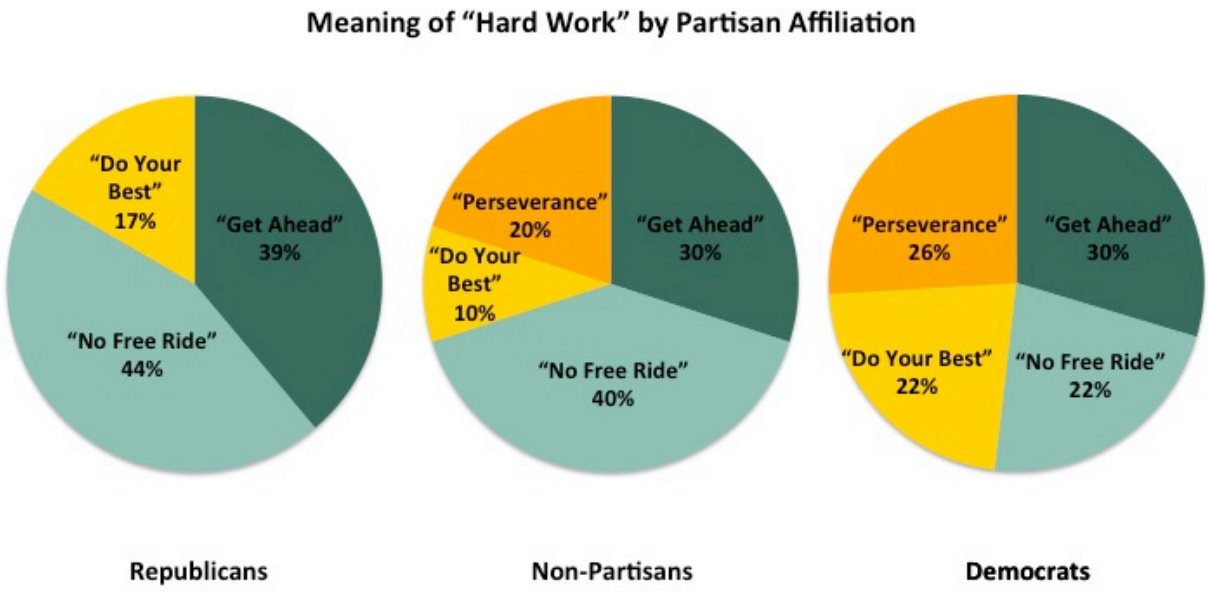
you work, and the effort you expend, is more important than the rewards one may or may not receive. A third group of parents continues to focus on the process but moves the ultimate goal out of the economic realm. For these individuals, hard work is about "doing your best"—at laundry, Xbox, hobbies, or work—regardless of the outcome. Finally, the smallest group parents focuses on non-economic goals. Here, hard work is seen as "persevering through obstacles" to reach something of value—a good marriage, happy kids, or social justice. Each of these interpretations takes on a very different meaning and helps explain the contrast that all parents want their children to work hard even as they perceive its value decaying in society.

Hard work as "Getting Ahead"

The first group of parents talked about the need to instill hard work in their children because it is a necessity for economic and career advancement. As one Republican mother put it, "obviously to be successful at anything, you usually need to work hard."[186]

These parents see hard work as a way of getting ahead at the office or job site, but also as a way of providing a nice house and other material indicators of success. It is their hope that their children's adult lives will be more comfortable and accomplished than they themselves have experienced. These mothers and fathers disproportionately follow the positive discipline

Figure 5.3—Meaning of "Hard Work" by partisan affiliation



approach and are more likely to identify as either Republicans or non-partisans (Figure 5.3). They also tend to think that the American work ethic is similar in stature to where it was during their own childhood, or only moderately reduced, and they generally believe their children's chances at a better future are good.

These parents see hard work as the ticket to career advancement. Dedication to a job will lead to greater recognition and respect among colleagues and, in time, promotion and additional income that comes with it. One Republican father explains that he pushes his two children to work hard at school because it will set them up for career opportunities:

> Because I think that's important in everything they do, whether it's schoolwork. But I think that will carry on when they go to college. I think it will carry on into their studies and into their job place. And I think that doing that, if they're in a company where others can see their progress in their work, that'll give them the

> ability to move up and have a better job or have better opportunities, versus just floating along and not caring. So that's why [hard work is important].[187]

This father, who only holds a high school diploma, sees hard work as a golden ticket that will allow his children to experience greater educational and occupational opportunities than he did.

Another Republican father takes this further, suggesting that hard work is a way to compensate for not being the smartest of a group, "For what you lack in brains, if you work hard, in theory, the bosses will appreciate that."[188] Thus, focus and diligence at the office is a way to overcome perceived inadequacies. This is echoed by another non-partisan mother who sees hard work as necessary for "the masses" like her and her daughter:

> I think [hard work is] critically important because I would rather be lucky than good any day of the week, but you can't rely on that. I think that there are some very fortunate people who strike it rich and have exceptional circumstances and walk into great fortunes financially or however, however you want to qualify success, but the truth of the matter is for the masses, your quality of living really correlates to how hard you're willing to work to earn and maintain it.[189]

While she would clearly prefer that her daughter be the beneficiary of extraordinary circumstances, she recognizes that hard work is more likely to provide her daughter with material and career success. In addition, this mother, who holds a master's degree in science education, highlights that hard work isn't just necessary to achieve success but also to maintain it. This includes mortgage payments and other material goods along with the effort necessary to maintain one's career position. This is echoed by a Democratic father who sees hard work as protecting against having to worry about the basic material needs of life:

> Well just to make sure you're, that you've got the best chance of being employed all the time and getting ahead and having a decent job and not having to struggle so hard, you know. It's not, it's not even that the money is so important it's more just the security of it. Of knowing that, you know knowing that the more you are

> paid you got a meal coming and I think life is a lot happier when you don't have stress worrying about that.[190]

For this father, hard work is about doing better and being free from worry, not about attaining a corner office or occupational prestige. For him, and all of these parents, it is about the search for the "good life."

For parents who see hard work as "getting ahead," career and economic success are intertwined. The time, attention, and effort their children put toward their jobs will provide them with economic stability and career opportunities, and allow them to live full and secure lives. These parents do not talk about hard work as self-reliance or individual accomplishments.

The focus is on the goal to be attained (or maintained) rather than how that goal is achieved. As the mother who wants her daughter to be "lucky" highlights, there are other acceptable ways of reaching the goal. Hard work is necessary, but it can be "boosted" by luck, favors, calling on parents' connections, and a host of other ways. It can also foster a sense that the ends justify the means, regardless of the cost; if one can achieve the desired goal, even by dubious methods, they are entitled to do so. This is the idea of hard work that, pushed to its extreme, created the housing market bubble and subsequent collapse and devastated the U.S. economy.

Hard work as "No Free Ride"

Where parents who view hard work as "getting ahead" focus on the effort as a means to an end, those who describe hard work as caring for oneself focus on the process rather than goal. This is still an economic application of the virtue of working hard, but it is mixed with the American value of individualism. Parents who define hard work as "no free ride" talk about the idea of a self-made individual: No one will provide their children with the necessary breaks in life, and

each individual must work for what they get. As one father succinctly put it, “a lazy hand doesn’t eat.”[191] These parents are particularly pessimistic about the state of the American work ethic in the larger society, seeing it as significantly weaker than during their childhood. Furthermore, this is most common among parents who follow the multifaceted disciplinary approach of all political affiliations, along with Republicans (Figure 5.3).

Republican parents who defined hard work in this way draw on the larger political and social context. They explain that working hard is important for their children in contrast to the political structure that creates the entitlement society. One Republican mother, in the process of explaining the value of dedication, stresses that her children know her politics:

> I think working hard is important. They have seen it in me and [my husband]. We are hard workers. You know, we go to work, and we go to work on time, and we're loyal to our jobs. We—you know—I just—working hard is just so important, because we don't have, you know, the liberal-on-the-dole mentality. Oh, and the girls know where we stand politically, too. We do talk politics with them.[192]

This mother has difficulty explaining exactly why she values hard work and wants to develop it in her daughters, but she can set it up against the antithesis: It is not the “liberal-on-the-dole mentality.” Furthermore, while this mother thinks that raising children who share her view of politics is not particularly important, she clearly links the idea that her children need to earn what they receive with her views of the role of the government and the “mentality” she feels could corrupt her children.

Other parents in this category frequently refer to other people’s work ethic (and the lack thereof) or a cultural value of entitlement. One Republican father called out the Occupy Wall Street protestors as an example of those who have abandoned the value of hard work. This he contrasts against his own story of putting himself through college:

> I've always said, and I've always believed, if you're willing to work, there will always be a job, as long as you don't go out there with pride, I'm too good for that. I've known too many of my friends that are like that. If you're a hard worker, you'll be respected for it, and you'll always have work. That's important in life. There's good times and bad times. Everybody goes through economically difficult times, but it's the lazy ones that only want to work one job. Today students, that whole Occupy [Movement] disgust me. "I can't afford school. I took out the loans." Nobody broke your hand to sign those loans. I put myself through school, no help at all. And at the time, I went to a very expensive private school. I paid the tuition. I worked two and three jobs sometimes. If you work hard, you'll get what you want. If you want it handed to you, you'll never be happy. So hard work is the key to success, or the key to happiness, in my opinion.[193]

While he talks about the material rewards that come as a result of his work ethic, they are obtained through individual achievement and not from parental or governmental gifting. If his son is not seeing the rewards he would expect, then he should work harder—including taking on additional jobs. The focus is on *how* one earns those rewards, not that you get them.

This depiction of hard work is particularly common among Republicans, but it is not limited to them. Other parents make the explicit connection between entitlement and work ethic but are less likely to link it to political positions. A non-partisan mother contrasts her sense of duty against the lack she sees in others but stops short of making a political statement:

> I know some people have gotten away from that work ethic but we still believe in having a work ethic of doing your best all the time and not just because somebody is watching you but because that's what you're supposed to do, is your best. So that means that you don't get anything for nothing, that means that that it's…like them having to do chores for other people, and having to do chores for themselves, that it's not simple to make money. That it's hard work, and that everybody's work counts is part of it too.[194]

Even without political overtones, this mother is still focusing on the process—"doing your best all the time"—by which one receives material rewards.

This definition is closest to the Fox News narrative where hard work is the counterpoint to entitlement, at once the vaccine and antidote to the "liberal-on-the-dole mentality." On the network, there is a concern that America is no longer populated by individuals who are self-reliant, dedicated, and proud of the effort they contribute to society each day. In contemporary America, however, the work ethic is a shadow of its former glory. Even when people are willing to put in the time and energy, they expect some form of special favor, either unearned rewards at the office or unnecessary government handouts. Therefore, hard work defined in any of the three other ways—which cover two-thirds of parents—does not match the standard of a good work ethic because those ways do not emphasize self-reliance and economic stability. Given this narrow focus on the process of hard work, it is not surprising that most of these individuals feel strongly that they are swimming against the values of the larger society.

This version of hard work seems the closest to the "traditional" work ethic but it, too, can create entitlement. By focusing on personal effort in the spirit of American individualism, it renders invisible the help those people have received in the process. This can lead people to feel that their rewards are their right because they earned it; they "pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps." In so doing, the complex networks that helped them achieve those rewards are obscured. These can include parental resources, personal connections, or governmental assistance in the form of tax credits, which disproportionately favor those with greater resources (Campbell 2009; Howard 2009). When seen in light of these networks, to claim all rewards were earned without assistance is also a form of entitlement.

Hard work as "Doing Your Best"

The third definition of hard work also focuses on the ritual, rather than the end goal, but moves the act out of the economic realm. For a sizable minority, hard work is not about pulling oneself

up by one's bootstraps or the drive for material and occupational success. Instead, these parents want to train their children to always do their best in every situation. One Republican mother says she is continually admonishing her children against "the sin called average." She explains, "I've always felt like you need to give 110 percent to whatever you do…so I tell them, remember that, the sin called average? You're not average." Because they are exceptional, her children must always uphold a standard of excellence, regardless of the activity or the outcome.[195]

Unlike the previous two interpretations of hard work, these parents are more likely to be Democratic or outside of the political process (Figure 5.3). They are primarily college educated and more likely to follow the positive disciplinary approach. In this regard, their focus on always doing your best is an extension of their desire to raise well-rounded, fully developed human beings.[196]

These parents are less pessimistic about the state of the American work ethic, which they think has slipped some since their own childhood, but not to the same extent as parents who stress that there is "no free ride." These parents downplay the material and occupational results of hard work and focus on the effort required to always do one's best. They still view hard work as critical to their children's future but define success as referential to one's own capacity for excellence. One Democratic mother, who teaches adjunct at a local community college, explains that for her students and her children, a well-earned B is better than an easy A:

> I tell my students this, kind of in an off way, but I tell them because they're struggling, they're coming back to school and they're struggling. I say, "I'd rather have a doctor that made Bs than one that made—and worked hard for those Bs—than one that glanced at the notes and could walk in and make As," because I feel like when you're working hard you're—and I feel the same way about [my son's] grades. I'd rather have him working and making the Bs than just

> breezing through with As. Obviously I want my child to be intelligent, but the things we work for stay with us longer, so the classes I had to work the hardest at I still remember the material from. I think that's true of all professions.[197]

The effort raises the perceived value of the B, giving it greater importance than the A achieved without hard work. She clearly would prefer that her six-year-old son be "intelligent," but not so much that he gains success without having to invest his best effort in it.

Other parents talk about targeting one's time and energy toward a personal passion, even if that is outside the traditional definitions of success. Another Democratic mother would prefer her children made "hooked carpets" if that is where they were focused and passionate:

> It's not necessarily work as in schoolwork or whatever. If you have a passion for something, you do the best that you can in it. I think, I truly believe that the kids who have the issue, that get in trouble, that fall into the wrong crowd, it's just that they've never found something that they want to work hard at, and they're just floating around. So I think working hard can be on anything. You can work hard making hooked carpets, I don't care, just work hard at something because it fosters passion and a love and a drive for something.[198]

Following their passion provides guidance and structure to her children's lives, even if it is unconventional. For these parents, hard work is not about material or occupational rewards. Instead, it is about living up to a standard of personal excellence. This can apply to household chores, leveling up in a video game, or learning a new hobby. It is about the process of becoming the best version of oneself.

However, by focusing on the effort required to achieve one's personal best, the effort can be conflated with the reward. This is the definition of hard work at play when a college student marches into a college professor's office to inform him or her that he "deserves" an A on his class paper, rather than the C he was given, because he "worked really hard" on it.

There are several possibilities as to why these parents gravitate to talking about hard work as personal excellence. If economic success is assumed, as it is for the positive-approach parents who hold this view, they are free to define hard work and true success in other ways. However, the focus on doing one's best also provides a measure of protection against downward mobility. If their children's future income or occupational prestige do not match their own, or that of their friends' children, they can still take pride in their child's hard work and excellence.

Hard work as "Perseverance"

The last way that parents define hard work focuses on the objective but instead of looking for material or career rewards, it is about overcoming any obstacle in pursuit of a goal. Here hard work is seen as "very important," but not "absolutely essential" to their children's future success. This definition is exclusive to Democratic and non-partisan parents: None of the Republican parents talked about hard work as a drive to surmount any impediment (Figure 5.3). It is also more common among college-educated parents and positive discipline parents.

This understanding of hard work takes on a sense of self-help as parents talk about overcoming obstacles in a marriage, with children, or a career path. A non-partisan mother talks about the necessity of working toward the goals you want, not just waiting for things to resolve without intervention:

> Something that Dr. Phil said. He said, you know, when you're in trouble, and you're the guy in the boat, you have to row to shore. You just can't pray to God you're going to get there. You got to do the work to get there. It's not going to just happen. And I believe that, too. I don't believe you get to where you are unless you are like—even Paris Hilton, she's born with everything, and has everything, but when she doesn't work hard to be a good person, you see all the drama she has. That's everybody, I think. You have to work hard to be good. It's easy to be bad.[199]

This mother has a clear goal she wants for her children—to be a good person—which is only achieved through hard work, not prayer or hoping, alone. It is dedication to a self-improvement project rather than focusing on career or material advancement. For a Democratic father, this is about solutions to life's problems, which involves working smarter rather than harder:

> Because simply to improve your own situation you gotta work at it. You know, it's working hard, it's working smart, it's thinking for yourself, it's not just…it's finding ways to solve problems. You're constantly gonna come across a series of problems in your life, big and small; think about it, figure out something to do, and do it; that simple.[200]

While he frames it as "simple," the effort to overcome the "constant…series of problems" is anything but simple. He frames hard work as the perseverance necessary to manage these and knowing when to look for unconventional solutions. A non-partisan mother echoes the constant nature of life's trials when she frames the necessity of having a job as one of the obstacles:

> Well I think if you can work hard, you can work through anything. Like for me, I've had to work since I've had kids, and I think every mom wants to stay home, but I've had friends that have refused to work and their husbands really had a hard time and I don't know, I just think if you can work hard and get your degree, if you can, you know, your kids won't ever go hungry. I think that's the most important…. You'll do something, you know, and nothing will be beneath you, because you know, as long as you can work hard you can work through it. And I think it's the same with like it doesn't even necessarily have to be money, but like you know when trials come if you can work hard and just say, okay, this is my trial, I'm just going to work through it and just work at it, I think you can accomplish anything…[201]

For this mother, hard work is not related to career advancement, self-reliance, or doing her best in every situation. Instead, it is about enduring and surmounting the twists and turns of life. With hard work she can "accomplish anything," presumably even what she really wants—to be a stay-at-home mom.

This is the definition of hard work that is least likely to create entitlement. It is goal-oriented, like the definition of hard work as "getting ahead," but the goals cannot be achieved by circumnavigating the process. One cannot have a great marriage or become a good person without investing effort in overcoming the obstacles that arise; one cannot achieve these things by having better connections or better luck. This is also the form of "hard work" that drives Olympic hopefuls to rise at 4:00 a.m. to practice, to push through the pain of injury, for the possibility of becoming the world champion.

Hard work Is Not Enough

It is worth noting that only three parents called into question the value of hard work as a means of getting ahead. This is not to say that they thought it was unimportant or felt no need to encourage it in their children. On the contrary, all three thought it was at least "very important" that their children be hard-working. They questioned the sufficiency of a strong work ethic, not its necessity. One Democratic mother with a graduate degree says, "I think it's important to work hard, even though sometimes when you work hard it doesn't always get you where you want to get."[202]

Another mother, who is going to school to be a licensed practical nurse, expands on this idea:

> Because as far as working hard sometimes working hard don't get you sometimes. If you got a job and you work hard at that job you may keep working at a job when nobody still will notice you. You can be busting your behind in the same job for the same paycheck for ten years and they still won't pay you no attention. So working hard kind of came last. I want them to work hard. But…the person that you are will kind of get you a little bit farther than actually being just like working somewhere and being actually just a hard worker.[203]

To her, dedication and effort are important but they are not enough. Instead, “the person that you are”—someone who is willing to help others, generous, and well-liked—is more important than hard work because it is less likely to be overlooked.

None of these parents disparaged the value and necessity of hard work. Nor have they shifted their definition to one insulated from economic pressures or the absence of material rewards. They did not argue for hard work as self-reliance, personal excellence, or perseverance. They affirmed that hard work is about getting ahead in life, even when it does not deliver on the promise. Furthermore, they did not argue that the failure to receive rewards should result in reliance on parents, government, or romantic partners as a substitute for their own effort.

Conclusion

Parents clearly feel the rupture from past generations of parents and as a result feel they are wearing a blindfold as they make everyday child-rearing choices. At the same time, the majority has faith that they will still be able to raise their children to be productive citizens who have all the necessary skills to succeed as adults. They also reject the idea that they are raising entitled children. Their children are ambitious, hard-working, and responsible. The “entitlement society” that so many lament—both parents and the larger cultural narratives—is the result of someone else’s bad parenting.

In addition, contrary to public rhetoric, and even that of some parents, mothers and fathers value hard work and want to cultivate that virtue in their children. However, the common language of the American work ethic hides a more nuanced terrain of what parents are attempting to pass along to their children. These language differences help explain why parents perceive the decline in the American work ethic even as they, individually, continue to esteem it.

No definition of hard work encompasses the majority, or even the plurality, of parents. Yet even as they invest to raise hard-working children, they may also be cultivating the very entitlement they seek to avoid.

Conclusion

This project set out to answer two basic questions: do Democratic and Republican parents engage in different child-rearing practices? And to what extent do the everyday practices of partisan parents map on to the larger politically oriented advice about raising children? Another way to ask these questions is this: to what extent do partisan parents fit into the larger culture war (Hunter 1991)—that struggle to define the soul of America—which is fought between elites in the public arena?

To listen to the politically-oriented parenting advice, as presented on Fox News and MSNBC, there appears to be a deep division between partisan parents. However, I demonstrate, the content of the networks is not a good representation of the needs of partisan parents, nor is it presented as a public service to help parents raise good citizens. Instead it is a curated message that extends beyond the needs of parents, and attempts to define what it means to be Republican or Democratic in contemporary America. Fox News and MSNBC are part of the culture war—the conflict among political elites—that drives the perception of difference between partisan parents.

However, the parent-child interactions in living rooms and backyards across the country do not match the polemical rhetoric of Fox News and MSNBC. Instead, it is clear that partisan parents are united by as much as divides them. Regardless of political orientation, they agree that contemporary parenting is harder than it was for previous generations. As a result, most parents feel like they are searching for the best way to raise their children. When it comes to discipline, parents are divided, but not along political lines. For shaping children's behavior, cultural orientation, not political identity is salient. However, as children age into the teen years, parents cultural orientation to discipline interacts with their partisan affiliation to create partisan division

on issues of independence and protection, as demonstrated by the ways parents deal with technological independence. Furthermore, partisan parents also feel isolated when they talk about their attempts to raise hard-working children who resist the lures of entitlement. These differences are real in homes, and matter for the ways parents interact with other parents at soccer games and PTA, but do they lead parents to believe they are, like Fox News and MSNBC, deeply divided from other partisan parents on deeply held cultural orientations?

Difference and Similarity on Fox News and MSNBC

Parenting advice at Fox News and MSNBC are part of the larger project by the news networks to define what it means to be a Republican or a Democrat. In other words, expert child-rearing tips offered by the networks is not a public service offered to help parents navigate the daily realities of carpools and temper tantrums, cell phones and parent-child negotiations. Instead, it is an attempt to define everyday life through a political filter. As such, the networks reinforce the party narratives of deep division, or culture war, between Democrats and Republicans.

Fox News is engaged in a larger project of defining a particular set of the electorate. The implicit message is that a Republican identity is not just about the role of government in society or America as a global police officer. It is an identity that is intricately intertwined in every part of a partisan's life, even in his or her intimate and family life. My research shows that Fox News advice about specific disciplinary practices does not map on to the needs or practices of the parents in its audience: most of its audience members already follow the recommendations of the Fox News experts. The programming relating to parenting is not about providing parents with the tools they need to raise good citizens. Instead, this ‘"preaching to the choir" serves to draw boundaries that define what it is to be a Republican in every aspect of life (Arceneaux and Johnson 2013; Stroud 2011).

This is particularly apparent in the advice Fox News presents relating to technology use. Both networks provide similar advice about how to navigate teens' technological independence, and encourage parents to track every move kids make on social media and mobile devices. But despite the congruence of the content, the message is radically different. Fox News frames its advice in the larger patriotic narrative of the future greatness of America. In the case of technology, the advice frames necessary parental action as the antidote to the addiction that is consuming young adults and as necessary for the survival of children and American nation alike.

Furthermore, how the message is delivered also attempts to shape how Republicans interact with their children. Presented in a forthright, commanding manner, Fox News broadcasts its message in much the same way that the network encourages parents to raise their children: with direct commands, clear authority, and tough love. In essence, the expert advice provides a model for how parents should direct and supervise their children, all of which provides for the care, protection, and nurturing children need. Thus, the tone and style of the messages, in addition to the specific advice content, fits with the larger network agenda. Fox News is engaged in a project of defining the characteristics of a conservative—not just politically, but also in the daily and personal practices of parenting.

In contrast, MSNBC also attempts to define part of the electorate, but its endeavors are less obvious. Where Fox News is creating an identity for Republican parents as a group apart from the rest of society, MSNBC seeks to portray "everyday parenting." Instead of obvious references to any specific political orientation, MSNBC's experts talk about the simple acts associated with being a parent and the tensions and stress mothers and fathers face. The assumption is that what is presented on the network speaks to the experience of *all* parents, not just Democratic

ones. In so doing, it seeks to define what is normal and, supposedly, natural. However, MSNBC does not speak to the whole base of parents. Instead, it addresses only those engaged in a labor-intensive form of parenting, those who follow the positive or multifaceted approaches to discipline. Nonetheless, MSNBC seeks to define a specific set of parenting practices as universal, and by extension, convey the universality of the network's other content.

Like Fox News, how MSNBC communicates its advice to parents is as much a part of the message as the content. The experts at MSNBC rarely present any specific, direct advice. Instead, guests present their ideas in a roundtable format in the form of a discussion (rather than an interview). Instead of directing parents in child-rearing practices, the informal "parents helping parents" approach forces viewers to glean and internalize from the conversation the appropriate child-rearing techniques. In the same way, the experts on MSNBC (indirectly) encourage parents to train their children to internalize the subtle messages that will prepare them for adulthood, such as being a good technological citizen or self-reliance. This presentation format also works to solidify the universal nature of the parenting presented. Instead of providing explicit advice, content that could alienate some viewers, this conversational format allows parents to interpret the conversations in a way that best fits their own approaches to child-rearing. Thus the format, alongside the content, communicates the message of the universal nature of the parenting advice presented on MSNBC.

The visions of everyday life presented by Fox News and MSNBC are certainly not the only ways for Republican and Democratic parents to raise their children. The networks may infuse their parenting advice with the ideas and values communicated by the Republican and Democratic parties, thereby creating politically oriented parenting advice, but they are not officially part of the party system. Although Fox News and MSNBC are some of the loudest voices for how

partisan parents should engage with their children, the networks' prescriptions are not the only way that political ideals could be translated into everyday child-rearing practices.

Partisan parents agree that there is no one "right" way to raise future Democrats and Republicans. Where the networks paint different portraits of the best way to raise partisan children, actual partisan parents are marked by as much similarity as difference. Instead of a clear political alignment to child-rearing practices, parents are united by as much as divides them.

The Primacy of Similarity

In many moments of everyday life, partisanship is not particularly salient for parents. Instead, parents share a sense that contemporary parenting is harder than it was for previous generations. While this is not universal, the majority of mothers and fathers feel they are raising children in an era they perceive as incongruous with that in which they were raised. In particular, technology complicates their lives in ways foreign to their own parents. As a result, parents largely feel that the generations of received wisdom passed down from their grandparents and parents is arcane. They feel unmoored from previous generations and, at times, overwhelmed by the responsibility of raising their children. This echoes the work of Markella Rutherford (2011) and Peter Stearns (2002) who argue that contemporary parents face the freedom and the weight of having to make choices about child-rearing practices that they feel best suit their family, often without clear external validation. These feelings of uncertainty, or as one parent described it, "driving with a blindfold," is common to parents in America regardless of their political orientation.

Another common experience of parenting is the feeling that American culture has been overrun by a sense of entitlement. While the public conversation about entitlement, at least as it relates to parenting, is limited to Fox News, parents in both parties, along with non-partisan parents, worry about its consequences. This entitlement mentality has crowded out the drive to work hard, leaving the American work ethic as only a shadow of what it was in previous generations. Yet parents overwhelmingly say that *they* value hard work and see it as "very important" to their children's future success. Thus they feel the decline of the American work ethic and the rise of entitlement even as they seek to train their children to value a job well done. Across partisan lines, parents believe that they are not raising entitled children. Entitlement is the result of someone else's bad parenting choices. They are confident that they are raising hard-working and motivated children who will earn their own rewards in life.

The beliefs of the challenges of contemporary parenting and the decline of the American work ethic are common among parents. Another area where parents share similar traits is in how they seek to shape their children's behavior. When it comes to discipline, the differentiation between parents is not along partisan lines Instead, parents can be sorted into three groups—the positive, multifaceted, and reactive approaches—based on their attitudes toward and use of discipline. This, in turn, correlates with the intimacy of parent-child relationships, parental strictness, and the level and meaning of parental investment.

The first group comprises parents who use the positive approach, named for their emphasis on preemptive, positive, and affirmative techniques for discipline. These parents maintain close relationships with their children as a means of shaping behavior and they invest much effort in raising well-rounded human beings. These parents follow most closely what Annette Lareau (2003) calls *concerted cultivation.* Second, parents who use the multifaceted approach use a

wide range of discipline techniques, often beginning with positive encouragement, progressing to withholding or grounding when that does not work, and finally to spanking, when necessary. These parents have tight relationships with their children and invest much effort in protecting them and preparing them to be competitive in their adult lives. Finally, reactive-approach parents are characterized by low levels of parental efficacy. These parents love their children and want to see them succeed but have no systematic plan for either discipline or preparing children for adulthood.

The disciplinary groups do not map directly to party affiliations: Democrats, Republicans, and non-partisan parents can be found in all three disciplinary approaches. More than half of Republicans have an affinity for the multifaceted approach while Democrats and non-partisan parents are split relatively evenly across multifaceted and positive approaches. While partisans share a clear political identity, when it comes to disciplining their children, they have more in common with their co-disciplinarians than their co-partisans. In other words, parents' cultural orientation to discipline—including their level of strictness and types of practices they use to shape children's behavior—are more salient for parents than political orientation at the ballot box.

This is particularly true when children are younger. In the early years of family life, when parents are establishing patterns for their children and families, how a parent approaches discipline is of greater importance than as children age. For instance, spanking is more effective with a 6-year-old than a 16-year-old. While both positive- and multifaceted-approach parents say that spanking is an acceptable practice in rare and extreme circumstances, multifaceted-approach parents are more likely to report that it is a routine, albeit occasional, practice in their homes. Parents are likely to feel a greater affinity for other parents who share the same discipline

techniques, which is correlated with levels of strictness and approach to negotiation. For example, positive-approach parents will feel better about play dates with like-minded families if they know their children will be praised for what they do right and that the negotiating skills they are trying to instill in their children will be encouraged. Likewise, multifaceted-approach parents are more likely to allow sleepovers at homes that share a similar perspective on strictness and authority. Especially at early stages of child-rearing, parents' cultural orientation to discipline is more unifying than their political orientation.

The Primacy of Difference

Where partisan parents had more in common with their co-disciplinarians when their children are younger, parents with adolescences gaining independence, especially technological independence, things begin to shift. Instead of dividing along disciplinary lines, political partisanship and disciplinary approach interact to split positive-approach parents along partisan lines and unite multifaceted-approach parents, Republicans and Democrats alike, with positive-approach Republicans. Positive-approach Democrats value greater independence for their teens, while the new hybrid coalition of positive-approach Republicans and all multifaceted-approach parents aim to exert more control over their teens.

More specifically, Democratic parents who follow the positive approach are more likely to say they do not tightly monitor their teens' online lives. Instead, they lean heavily on the intimate relationships they have forged with their kids to alert them to any issues that may arise (Nelson 2010). In contrast, positive-approach Republican and multifaceted-approach parents, including Democrats and non-partisans, claim that they continue to tightly monitor the online lives of their teens. This monitoring is more symbolic than constraining, but these parents nonetheless feel that they keep a close watch on their adolescent's activities and aim to protect them from

predators, pornography, and potential reputational potholes. To not monitor their children's online activities would be to abandon them to pedophiles, pressuring romantic partners, and a vast array of content that runs counter to the family's values. To parents who insist that they aim to monitor their teens, parents who are willing grant independence (even if they keep close track of their teen's emotional well-being) seem overly permissive and perhaps even callous to the consequences their children might face.

This realignment may feel particularly jarring for positive-approach Republicans. When their children were young, they felt a greater affinity to other positive-approach parents, mothers and fathers who favored negotiation, limited strictness, and focused on praise and proactive discipline. But as their children become teens, positive-approach Democrats grant their young adults greater technological independence than positive-approach Republicans are willing to cede to their own adolescents. Parents these Republicans once trusted to make reasonable decisions during play dates and sleepovers no longer share the same orientation to raising teens. A sleepover may now involve Internet access to content contrary to parental beliefs. Instead, positive-approach Republicans find they have more in common with their co-partisans when it comes to independence through technology. This may contribute, for Republicans at least, to the feeling that the child-rearing practices and values they esteem with their adolescents set them apart from other parents.

Just as striking as the emerging divide between positive-approach partisans is the realignment between positive-approach Republicans and multifaceted-approach parents. The partisan rift between positive-approach parents does not require that positive-approach Republicans align with multifaceted-approach parents. Positive-approach Republicans do not share the same discipline techniques as multifaceted-approach parents and are less likely to characterize

themselves as strict parents. Yet when it comes to containing their adolescent's independence and protecting them from the dangers of social media positive-approach Republicans strike a similar tone to the stricter, more authoritarian parents. The greater emphasis on parental authority in multifaceted homes may explain why partisans remain united on issues of independence, rather than fracturing like positive-approach parents. However, it does not explain why the prospect of impending independence provokes positive-approach Republicans to adopt monitoring strategies similar to that of multifaceted-approach parents. Clearly positive-approach Republicans and multifaceted-approach parents, both Republican and Democrat, feel a greater need to provide oversight and protection for their children, even if the reasons for doing so may differ. This also means that parents who do not share a host of characteristics—race, class, religion, or politics—would still agree on the degree to which teens should be monitored in their technological independence.

Of course, the reality of the technological monitoring in positive-approach Republican and multifaceted-approach homes is more symbolic than constraining. It is a way to demonstrate protection of and care for children even if the actual content accessed by children is not curtailed. It is a way for parents to signal that they are maintaining their proper place as parents. Because most of the parental monitoring is symbolic, the actual experiences in Republican homes would not be all that different than in positive-approach Democratic homes. However, standing on the sidelines at soccer or at parent night at school, Republicans and positive-approach Democrats will *feel* as though they have different monitoring strategies despite their similarities.

Parents also feel a disjuncture with other partisans when it comes to instilling the virtue of hard work in their children. Parents see working hard as "very important" to their children's future

success and seek to cultivate it. At the same time, they feel the demise of the American work ethic in the larger society, leading them to believe that other parents are not training their children to value hard work.

But other parents have not lost faith in the virtue. Instead, I find that the common language of the American work ethic hides four different interpretations among parents of what it means to work hard. Two definitions focus on the economic realm, framing hard work as either focused on the goal of career and material success or on the ritual of self-sufficiency. In both of those definitions, the outcome of hard work is financial, but the first focuses on the financial rewards while the second emphasizes the dignity of providing for oneself and family without handouts from either the government or extended family. Other parents choose to encourage their children's hard work outside an economic arena. Instead of talking about the financial outcomes, they seek to encourage their children to persevere through adversity to achieve a specific goal or reward them when they engage in the ritual of hard work as part of a quest for personal excellence. In conversations with parents, each of these understandings was presented as an explanation for the importance of diligence.

There is a clear partisan divide in how parents understand hard work. Overwhelmingly, Republicans see hard work as an economic virtue, defining it either as achieving career and material success or self-sufficiency even if the material success is limited. In contrast, half of Democrats define hard work outside of the economic realm, seeing it instead as a quest for personal excellence or overcoming obstacles to achieve a desired goal such as a happy family. These conflicting definitions help explain why parents overwhelmingly value hard work while simultaneously perceiving its demise: regardless of how a parent defines hard work, the majority of other parents do not adhere to "their" definition.

For three of these definitions—material success, self-sufficiency, and personal excellence—even when parents are training their children to value hard work, they may unintentionally be instilling in them a sense of entitlement. The varied definitions also allow parents—both Democrats and Republicans—to see entitlement as the result of someone else's parenting choices. Partisans in both camps can to point to the parental failure to teach children to work hard because other parents adhere to a "wrong" definition of what it means to be dedicated and industrious. Republicans point out that praising children for their effort encourages them to expect a reward even when they do not achieve a minimum standard of quality. Democrats counter that focusing on career advancement can motivate people to adopt an ends-justify-the-means thinking. Thus, partisans feel at odds with each other despite their agreement the necessity of the virtue.

But what do we make of these differences? Do parents feel divided from other partisan parents? Do parents feel the culture war from the news networks as they interact with other parents as PTA meetings or play dates? Or are the disciplinary similarities across partisan lines enough to mitigate the division on technology and hard work?

For parents with elementary-school-aged children, there is little to suggest that partisan parents would feel as though they are engaged in culture war. Their cultural orientation to discipline is clearly more salient for mothers and fathers than political identity. How other parents view strictness and their practices of discipline is more likely to constrain children's play date choices than the parents' political affiliation. However, for children who are gaining independence that gives them freedom beyond the safe space of their homes, parents' cultural orientation to discipline interacts with their political affiliation, creating a greater sense of partisan disjuncture. As discussed, when navigating technological independence, positive-approach parents are

faced with a situation where parents they once trusted to make reasonable decisions can no longer be trusted to share their same values. While the cross-section data used for this study lack the ability to know how parents make sense of this shift, the data seem to suggest that the partisan schism that emerges among positive-approach parents emphasizes the difference between parents because it upsets the status quo.

This parental realignment when children reach adolescence also suggests that how individuals understand and experience the culture war can shift based on personal experience. How an individual's cultural orientation interacts with his or her life circumstances—in this case raising teenagers—may cause the culture war to become more salient at some points in one's life than others. Hunter's (1991) theory of elite conflict anticipates shifts in the political issues that have salience on the public debate. For example, Obamacare has become a key battlefield between elected Democrats and Republicans, but it did not exist when Hunter first proposed his theory. However, neither Hunter's theory, nor the myriad of studies testing the culture war among partisan individuals considers the ways that common events in a person's biography (Mills 1959) shape or change that person's perception of cultural conflict. Instead, the culture war is studied at a moment in time, a snapshot, and assumes that individuals are fixed in their perceptions of cultural conflict. Future study of the culture war should investigate how biography, cultural orientation, and politics intertwine.

Finally, in closing, it is important recognize that even when parents are divided on independence and protection, they share a desire to raise good children. Most parents are doing the best they can to raise future citizens. Parents love their children and want to have an intimate relationship with them. They want to raise adults of whom they can be proud: citizens who are hard-working,

dependable, honest, forgiving, generous, and a host of other traits, all of which is easy to forget when we focus on what divides rather than what unites.

Appendix A

Analyzing Fox News and MSNBC

Over a 16-month period—December 2012 to March 2014—I gathered all articles published on the websites of and interviews aired on Fox News and MSNBC related specifically to parenting. These pieces had to include one of the following:

- Explicit parenting advice
- A reflection on the nature or practice of parenting
- A critique of someone else's parenting, which revealed a sense of how not to parent.

Many of these articles contained all three elements, as explicit parenting advice was often framed in relation to a general critique of "parents," in a general, plural sense, or an admission that parents are overwhelmed in their task of child-rearing. This yielded a corpus of 105 documents—63 from Fox News and 42 for MSNBC.

What I excluded were articles that talked about parents only in the context of their holding a credential. For example, if an author gave advice on the best ways for parents to interact with school officials regarding their children's suspension, that would be included. However, if the article was a report about the parents of a suspended child appealing her suspension, that was not included. The first case is a prescription of what parents should do and how parents, at times, go awry when dealing with school administrators. The second case is a reporting of what parents did without an explicit evaluation of their actions appropriate or inappropriate.

In addition, all the articles and interviews had to originate from these two sites. Many of the articles and interviews on Fox News come from other sources—most often local affiliates, radio affiliates, or the Associated Press. I decided that in order to be a reflection of the Fox News "brand," articles needed to come from the actual site. There are numerous articles that appear

on both the Fox News and NPR websites because the articles originate from the Associated Press.

Most of the advice was directed at either general experience of parenting—daily events such as discipline or sibling fights—or seasonal, yet routine events—the first day of school, gift giving at Christmas, or prom. However, there are three major news stories that ran during this time frame and are clearly evident in the articles related to parenting: the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, the George Zimmerman trial verdict in July 2013, and the suicide of Rebecca Sedwick in September 2013.

To conduct the analysis, I used Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), one option for Topic Modeling in humanities and social sciences, to divide the text into topics based on the words in each of the 105 total documents in the Fox News/MSNBC corpus. LDA uses a probabilistic, iterative algorithm based on Bayesian statistics to allocate all the words in the documents into "topics," or collections of co-occurring words. In this regard, it is similar to other iterative allocation algorithms, such as k-means cluster analysis (Aldenderfer and Blashfield 1984; Halkidi, Batistakis, and Vazirgiannis 2001). For LDA, the allocation is done without regard to the context of the word use, often referred to as a "bag of words" approach, but it does consider which topic words from the same document are placed (Blei 2012, 2014; Blei and Lafferty 2006; Jockers and Mimno 2013; Mohr and Bogdanov 2013; Ponweiser 2012). Another simplified way of thinking about this is trying to guess a stranger's weekly menu based solely on the contents of the stranger's shopping cart in the grocery store: Tomatoes and garlic could just as easily be used for bruschetta as tarka dhal, but the baguette is likely to be used with the bruschetta while the red lentils are destined for the dhal. In this way, the contents of the cart can be used to backtrack to the recipes or the latent, underlying structure for the items in the cart. Of course,

these guesses are only probabilistic—this stranger may be making homemade spaghetti sauce instead of bruschetta—but the more items in the cart, or the more documents included in the analysis, the more certainty about the underlying structure. Common in biological science and data mining, LDA has more recently entered into social science (see the *Poetics* 2013 special issue on Topic Models).

To prepare for the LDA analysis, I stripped out all punctuation, and removed a list of common "stopwords." This list included overly common words, such as "a," "the," and "and" along with other words that were specific to the context (i.e., "Fox," "MSNBC," and names of anchors). Once the data was prepared, I used an algorithm developed by Martin Ponweiser to determine the number of topics present in the Fox News/MSNBC corpus. The results suggested that 20 topics was an appropriate number (Ponweiser 2012). Then I used the MALLET package in R to run the LDA analysis (Mimno 2013).

In order for a topic to be included in the discussion in this chapter, the topics needed to relate to questions on the *Culture of American Families Survey* and have a correlate on both networks (see Table 2.2). On MSNBC, there were two topics that did not relate to questions on the survey and did not have a correlate on Fox News, so they were excluded from the analysis for this chapter. These two topics both related to issued faced by Black parents—Topic2, "Bi-Racial Parenting," deals with parents' cultural experience of raising biracial children; Topic14, "'Post-Trayvon' Parenting," captures the conversation about raising Black children, especially sons, in the wake of the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin and the dynamics of a "Post-Trayvon" world. On Fox News, Topic16 on "Addiction & Narcissism" lacked a correlate on MSNBC, but because addiction and the conversation about narcissism are so

Table 2.1 -- Network Means Across Topics

	Technology Etiquette Topic1	Bi-Racial Parenting Topic2	Responsibility Topic3	Good Parenting Topic4	Quality Time & Connection Topic5	Mental & Physical Health Topic6	Sports & Competition Topic7	Preparing Kids for School Topic8	Giving to Children Topic9	Community Responsibility Topic10	Risk Behaviors Topic11	The Secret of Happy Families Topic12	Parent-Child Connection Topic13	"Post-Trayvon" World Topic14	Technology Dangers Topic15	Addiictions & Narcissism Topic16	Spoiled Kids Topic17	Limits, Boundaries, & Protecting Kids Topic18	Relationships Topic19	Protection & Independence Topic20
Fox	5.86%	1.06%	4.16%	18.04%	5.43%	2.29%	3.69%	13.50%	5.19%	4.97%	2.24%	1.20%	8.06%	0.76%	4.75%	5.73%	2.19%	4.82%	3.98%	2.08%
MSNBC	7.70%	5.88%	2.22%	14.62%	3.46%	2.57%	1.64%	10.84%	3.74%	4.49%	2.58%	3.58%	13.62%	7.24%	3.91%	1.12%	2.29%	3.01%	1.84%	3.69%

Table 2.2 - Top 50 Words Per Topic

	Technology Etiquette Topic1	Bi-Racial Parenting Topic2	Responsibility Topic3	Good Parenting Topic4	Quality Time & Connection Topic5	Mental & Physical Health (Ind. Bullying) Topic6	Sports & Competition Topic7	Preparing Children for School (Ind. Shooting) Topic8	Giving to Children (Ind. Gifts and Time) Topic9	Community Responsibility Topic10	Risk Behaviors Topic11	The Secret to Happy Families Topic12	Parent-Child Connection Topic13	"Post-Trayvon" Parenting Topic14	Technology Dangers Topic15	Addictions & Narcissism Topic16	Spoiled Kids Topic17	Limits, Boundaries & Protecting Kids (Ind. from Culture) Topic18	Relationships Topic19	Protection & Independence Topic20
1 people	hair	money	kids	family	bullying	sports	school	children	children	drinking	families	like	verdict	parents	drug	buy	young	divorce	kid	
2 time	black	single	parents	mom	day	football	kids	spend	life	young	family	people	trayvon	phone	drugs	party	god	relationship	mother	
3 useful	gun	credit	child	dinner	school	games	children	moms	support	binge	happy	time	black	girls	media	tea	adults	involved	talk	
4 life	violence	groups	children	table	eat	game	talk	christmas	child	women	books	great	worry	mean	teenagers	rule	like	dating	kantrow	
5 real	year	teaching	things	respect	bullied	play	parents	time	care	night	business	home	president	media	real	president	lose	sex	neighborhood	
6 book	game	teach	feel	wanted	healthy	playing	child	reading	college	sex	ideas	back	country	year	health	giving	choices	daddy	street	
7 make	people	female	good	time	students	coaches	should	gift	responsibility	people	military	big	zimmerman	facebook	school	adults	christ	teens	joy	
8 technology	american	lessons	parent	food	year	violent	age	read	older	girls	book	mean	people	should	alcohol	simple	generation	decisions	wearing	
9 research	risk	americans	thing	remember	america	players	time	year	learned	teen	confidence	women	safe	bullying	people	siblings	special	relationships	powerful	
10 important	african	pay	like	week	habits	pakin	day	home	lives	education	sports	work	year	mother	social	learned	choose	marriage	dangerous	
11 games	friday	personal	parenting	today	eating	coach	important	daycare	home	sexual	women	mom	face	case	mental	oldest	told	percent	penny	
12 play	factor	jobs	make	pass	practice	year	make	study	raise	prom	set	kids	trial	online	bank	younger	feel	spend	afraid	
13 love	like	financial	part	work	wrap	movies	years	brain	foster	teens	teams	question	night	young	issues	clothes	worth	partners	give	
14 friends	community	poverty	give	share	bullies	sport	young	recent	solution	extreme	pressure	died	case	daughter	pressure	price	today	family	questions	
15 skills	brown	successful	love	local	abuse	law	kid	families	simply	recent	happiness	good	felt	stop	turn	job	youth	good	son	
16 made	kill	give	learn	wrote	french	played	house	holiday	mother	alcohol	positive	talking	obama	call	abuse	work	eyes	spouse	friend	
17 growing	beautiful	chores	kind	create	france	line	parent	working	world	policies	modern	daughter	jersey	responsibility	poor	pay	cutting	longer	fight	
18 man	white	card	life	families	contempt	player	home	young	call	lives	play	girls	african	girl	illicit	games	perfect	consume	tips	
19 night	racial	ages	mind	friends	ross	male	back	center	provide	drink	spend	father	american	dolls	facts	naturally	messages	couple	hoodie	
20 great	race	government	find	write	internet	costas	making	average	higher	sexuality	years	day	racism	teach	year	lower	short	contact	house	
21 conversation	hand	saying	hated	taught	high	agree	stress	gifts	hand	dangers	single	line	live	internet	healthy	older	daughters	person	chance	
22 should	shooting	mothers	sense	nation	home	blame	live	program	opportunities	federal	days	abuse	powerful	phones	study	practice	sons	says	writer	
23 morning	york	country	bad	torch	fat	show	safe	mom	community	drinks	pull	started	talking	photo	lead	number	plan	making	awesome	
24 learning	thought	bank	work	TRUE	temper	team	place	child	words	year	internet	talk	boy	friends	twitter	real	rules	social	happiness	
25 manners	grand	eat	feeling	crazy	left	case	deal	present	forever	university	goal	book	wrote	child	medications	dishwasher	desire	situation	freedom	
26 childhood	theft	spending	point	meal	wasn	fear	ways	happy	losing	protect	fight	kid	world	behavior	start	offer	barbie	couples	music	
27 dot	auto	earn	mean	makes	hurt	athlete	fact	showed	neighbors	call	spanking	years	fear	teen	facebook	free	battle	prepare	walking	
28 read	buy	ability	year	church	snack	hockey	control	research	change	risks	find	talking	safety	chores	epidemic	gifts	made	biggest	biggest	
29 social	violent	finance	times	values	drunk	quit	tv	spending	live	sexually	punishment	hours	police	abuse	adolescent	tree	imagine	completely	hand	
30 success	culture	hunger	idea	called	investigation	win	schools	group	encourage	face	obvious	risen	white	suicide	prescription	share	movie	values	producer	
31 joining	policy	america	understand	questions	babe	tonight	news	starts	figure	states	century	son	america	letter	million	allowance	finally	mind	growing	
32 teaching	connecticut	marriage	touch	creative	washington	favorite	teacher	bedtime	united	town	excerpt	play	son	adult	addiction	household	pain	maintain	stand	
33 today	color	work	start	grew	times	oldest	families	attention	ready	truth	stereotype	rules	long	social	teen	small	happening	face	concert	
34 fun	save	raising	today	word	girl	comfort	behavior	spent	harm	percentage	rethink	job	teenager	charged	pay	reasonable	percent	parent	conservative	
35 connection	americans	order	long	speaking	dollar	youth	process	joy	communities	plan	high	reality	conversation	start	news	loads	harm	divorced	gratitude	
36 modern	week	working	matter	households	recently	moment	high	seinfeld	husband	vulnerable	study	lose	smart	absolutely	notion	counter	bodies	rules	encouragement	
37 eating	sense	married	problem	gratitude	disorder	violence	long	giving	agree	shooting	group	city	alright	national	toy	texting	married	wrote		
38 person	killer	mark	guilty	watch	mail	baseball	week	TRUE	individual	chicago	moments	morning	race	block	country	labor	toxic	present	responsibility	
39 shows	brooklyn	planning	son	lay	shame	governor	told	equal	eat	high	history	full	florida	fit	rise	sibling	lord	build	father	
40 early	police	book	story	stop	weeks	person	feelings	favorite	act	healthy	focus	care	conversations	send	treatment	temper	congress	room	jessica	
41 big	boy	training	open	created	pay	equal	america	learning	moved	students	written	daughters	grammys	olds	dangerous	vision	jesus	teenager	rock	
42 tips	student	allowance	message	breakfast	exercise	success	made	groups	eating	paid	wife	guy	lose	apps	underlying	responding	judgment	sexual	loss	
43 offer	touch	requires	experience	asked	full	earlier	elementary	share	work	real	illness	middle	boys	charges	active	rasmsen	feelings	decide	groceries	
44 hot	gunman	balance	american	sat	today	tv	family	books	greater	ten	mornings	stop	death	cyberbullying	dialogue	kids	reflection	building	atlantic	
45 missing	unacceptable	percent	daughter	minutes	sticks	movie	free	french	limits	idea	leaders	easy	happen	nally	data	rules	funny	presence	barna	
46 date	dreadlocks	estate	guilt	simple	bring	raised	handle	holidays	gain	college	overcame	working	aware	parent	doubt	suit	realize	separation	stranger	
47 etiquette	face	programs	future	household	steps	throw	questions	bigger	deserve	risk	happier	mother	risen	cyber	narcissism	medal	problems	agree	bikes	
48 eventually	strong	decide	wrong	top	month	plays	remember	show	extended	smart	lady	guys	color	taught	difficult	buying	culture	health	control	
49 computer	requires	setback	personal	power	content	goal	past	childcare	TRUE	access	traditional	break	difficult	beautiful	teens	routine	father	accept	season	
50 care	feel	child	fact	door	actions	entitlement	helping	benefits	students	reaction	movement	reason	watching	photos	psychological	behavior	skirt	enact	leave	

closely tied to social media, it became part of a larger analysis—including Topic 1, “Technology Etiquette,” and Topic15, “Technology Dangers”—about parents’ response to technology.

I tracked most these 20 topics back to the original documents to get a sense of the conversation and the ideas revealed in the topic model. The general idea of each topic can be seen in Table 2.2—Top 50 Words Per Topic. The topic models showed three main topics—“Good Parenting” (Topic4), “Preparing Kids for School” (Topic8), and “Parent-Child Connection” (Topic13)—that accounted for 40 percent of the words in both the Fox News and MSNBC corpus (see Table 2.1). Based on the randomized permutation plots (Jockers 2014; Jockers and Mimno 2013), it is clear that a similar proportion of words from both networks are assigned to Topic8 (Figure 2.1)—“Preparing Kids for School”—(which includes the aftermath of the Sandy Hook shootings). There is more differentiation for Topic4 (Figure 2.2)—“Good Parenting”—that leans toward Fox News, and Topic13 (Figure 2.3)—“Parent-Child Connection”—is clearly dominated by words from MSNBC, although Fox News also contributes to the topic.

Despite the similar pattern of word use in Topic4 (Figure 2.4), the word-use chart (Jockers and Mimno 2013) shows that Fox News and MSNBC are talking about good parenting in different ways. MSNBC is more concerned with parental guilt, and a close reading of the texts associated with the topic confirms that many segments are aimed at easing the guilt parents feel. On Fox, the advice is more concerned with the problems of parenting, teaching children, and how parents get things wrong. This hints at the tone the two networks’ takes in the approach to parenting, but it also highlights how relying on the topic models alone would miss an important part of the message. As noted in the chapter, there is a very different tone on the two networks: Fox News is correcting bad parenting and instructing parents in the correct way to raise their children while MSNBC presents conversations between parents in a “parents helping parents”

style. Both are powerful forms of norming appropriate parental behavior (Illouz 2003), but they have a very different feel. It wasn't until I tracked back these topics to their original sources that I encountered the tonal differences. Relying on the topic models alone would have missed this entirely and would yielded a different trajectory to this chapter, in addition to chapter 5, which takes up some of these ideas in the *CAF Survey* data. This corpus is small by the standards used with topic modeling, but it makes it possible to see what is overlooked using topic modeling. In many large corpora, it is impractical to read the entire set of words and documents that make up a topic. When utilizing topic models, it is important to understand its limitations and the tradeoffs that come with a specific technique.

Figure 2.1—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic4: Good Parenting

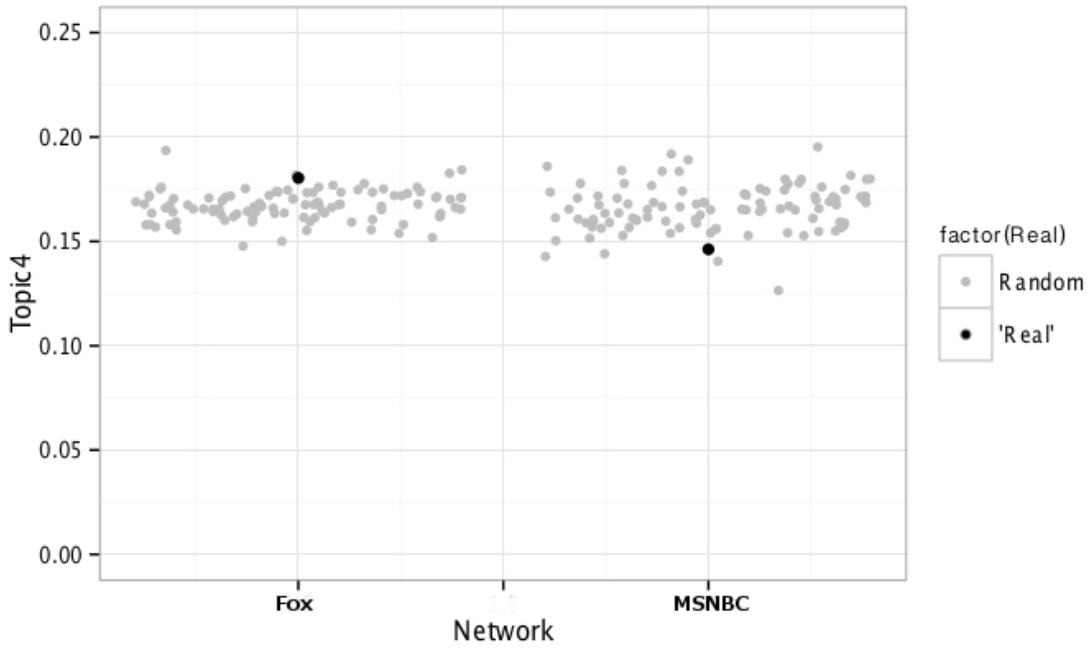


Figure 2.2—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic8: Preparing Kids for School

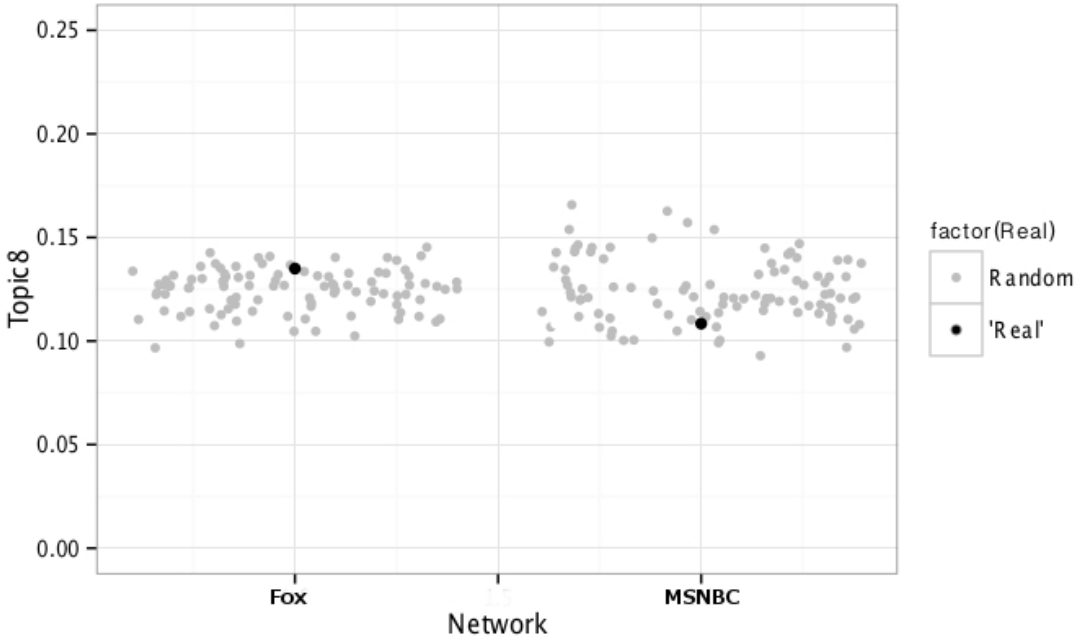


Figure 2.3—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic13: Parent-Child Connection

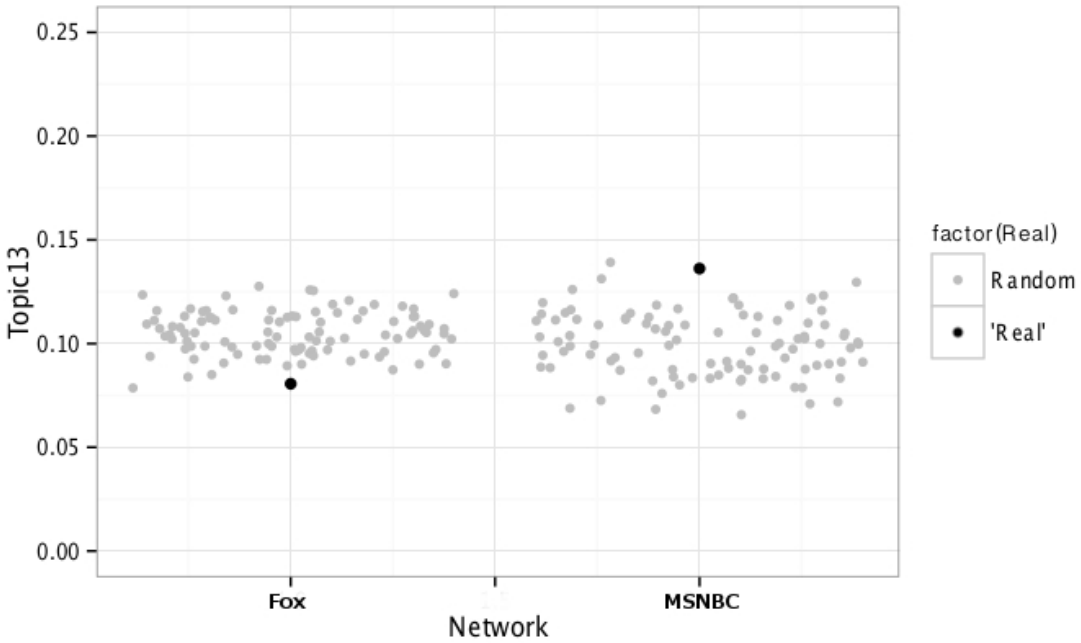
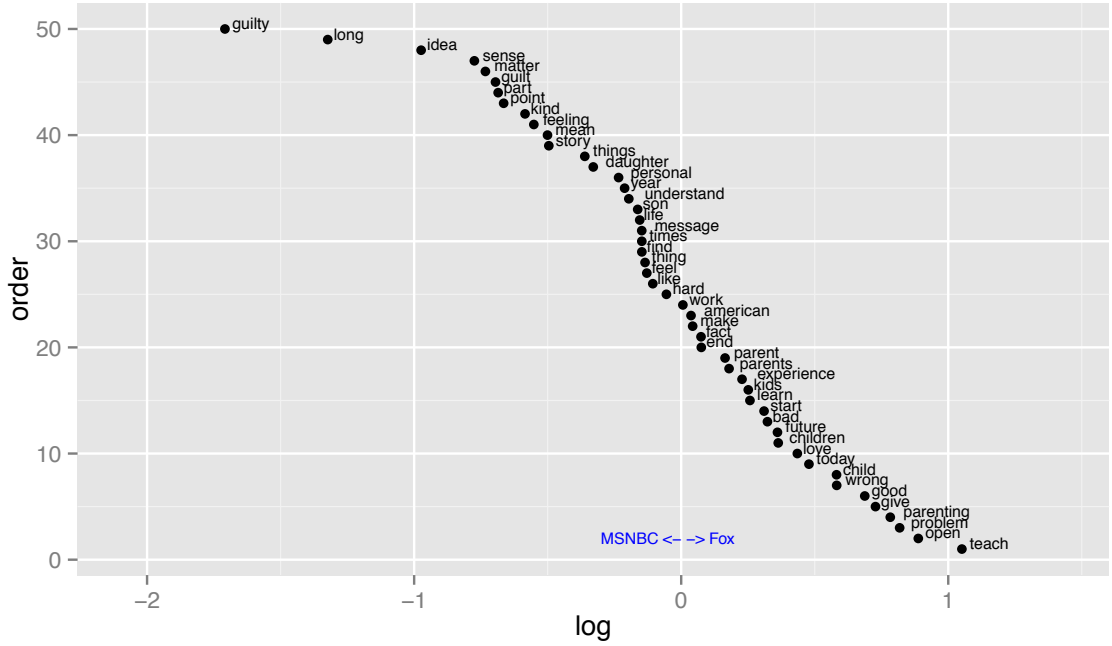


Figure 2.4—Word Use for Topic4: Good Parenting



The other two common topics have a similar word usage, (as evidence by the proportion of words clustering around the 0 line). The MSNBC tilt seen in the randomized permutation for Topic13 seems to be connected to conversations about working parents—both men and women.

Because all three of these topics are essentially about the way parents interact with their children, parents' responsibility to children, or how parents act on children's behalf, each features heavily in all three sections in Chapter 2. The first section, *Parenting in Political News*, along with chapter 5, combines parts of these three topics with the tonal differences noted earlier and Topic10 (Figures 2.7 and 2.8)—"Community Responsibility."

Figure 2.5—Word Use for Topic8: Preparing Children for School (incl. after school shootings)

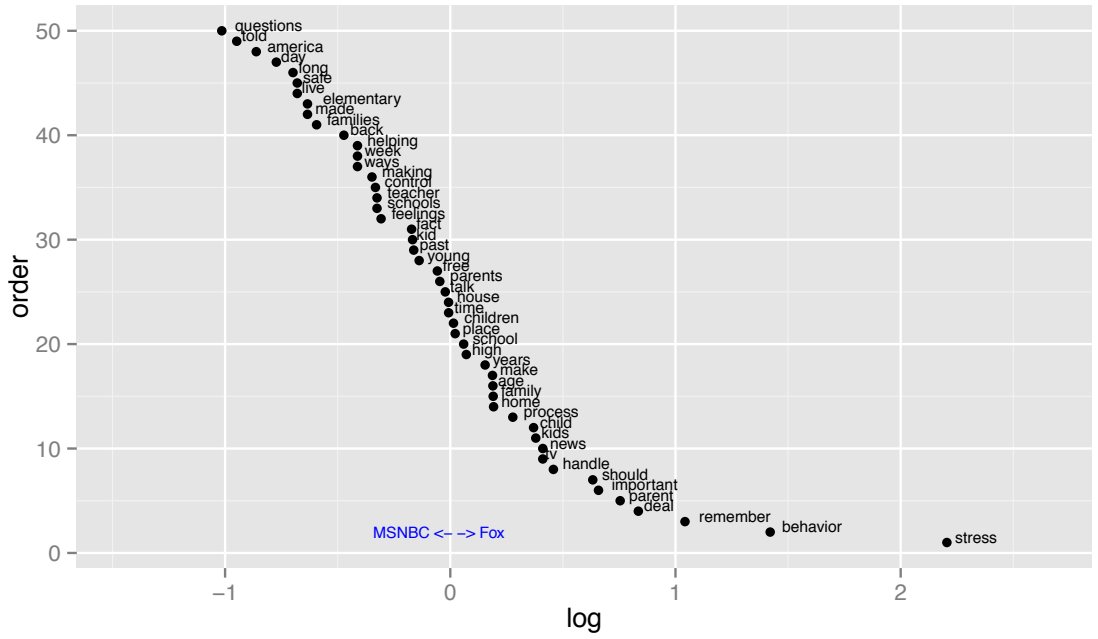


Figure 2.6—Word Use for Topic13: Parent-Child Connection

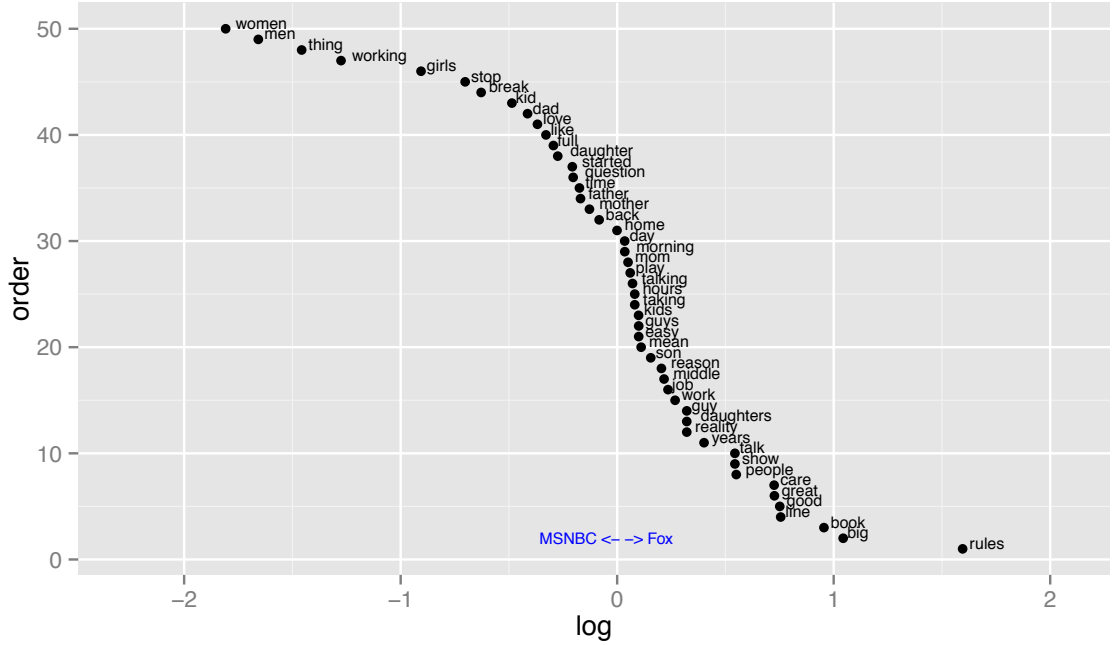


Figure 2.7—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic10: Community Responsibility

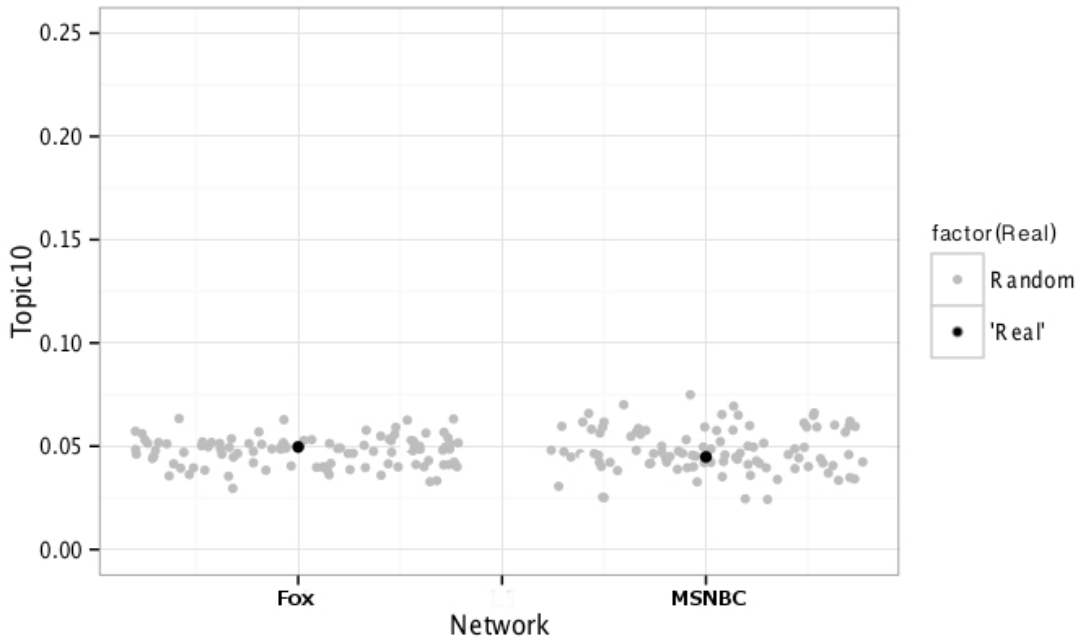
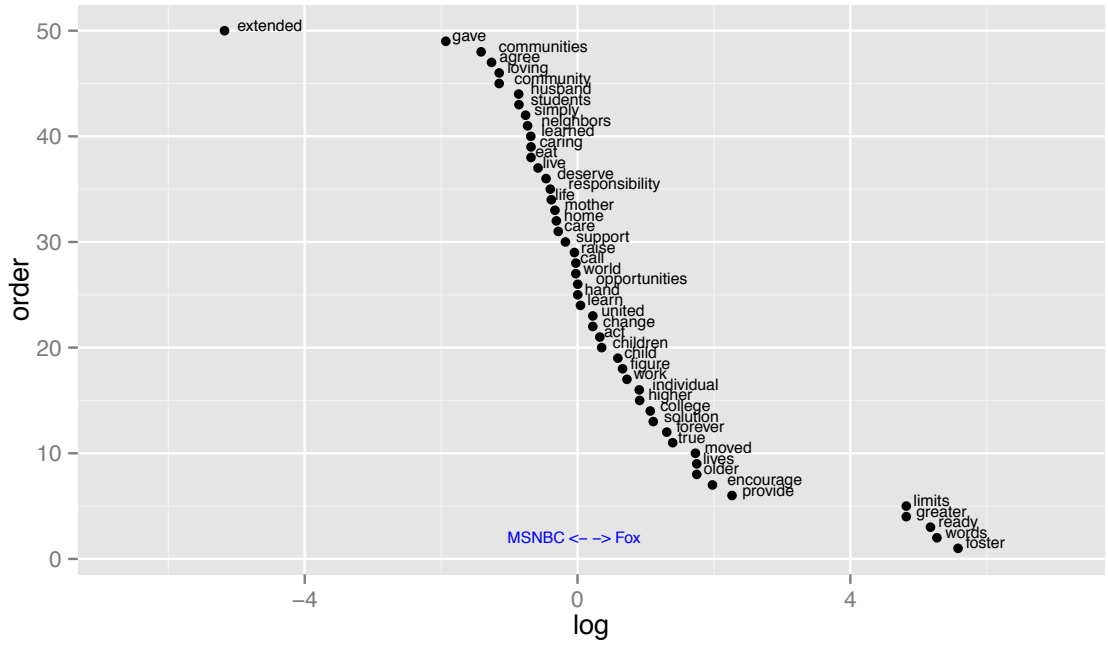


Figure 2.8—Word Use for Topic10: Community Responsibility



The second section, *Overparenting* and Chapter 3, draw on these three along with Topic20 (Figures 2.9 and 2.10)—"Protection & Independence"—to talk about the way that natural instincts in parenting can go overboard, invert the historic parent-child relationship, and lead to overparenting.

Finally, the third section, *Parenting and Technology*, combines the common three topics with three related to technology. The idea of technology was easiest to identify from the topic models. Two of the three models related to technology come up relatively high on each network. Based on the randomized permutation plots, Topic1 (Figures 2.11 and 2.13)—"Technology Etiquette"—and Topic15 (Figures 2.12 and 2.14)—"Technology Dangers"—words from both networks are allocated to these topics in a similar manner. That is, the proportion of the conversation on these networks that relate to the latent idea in these topics is similar.

Figure 2.9—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic20: Protection & Independence

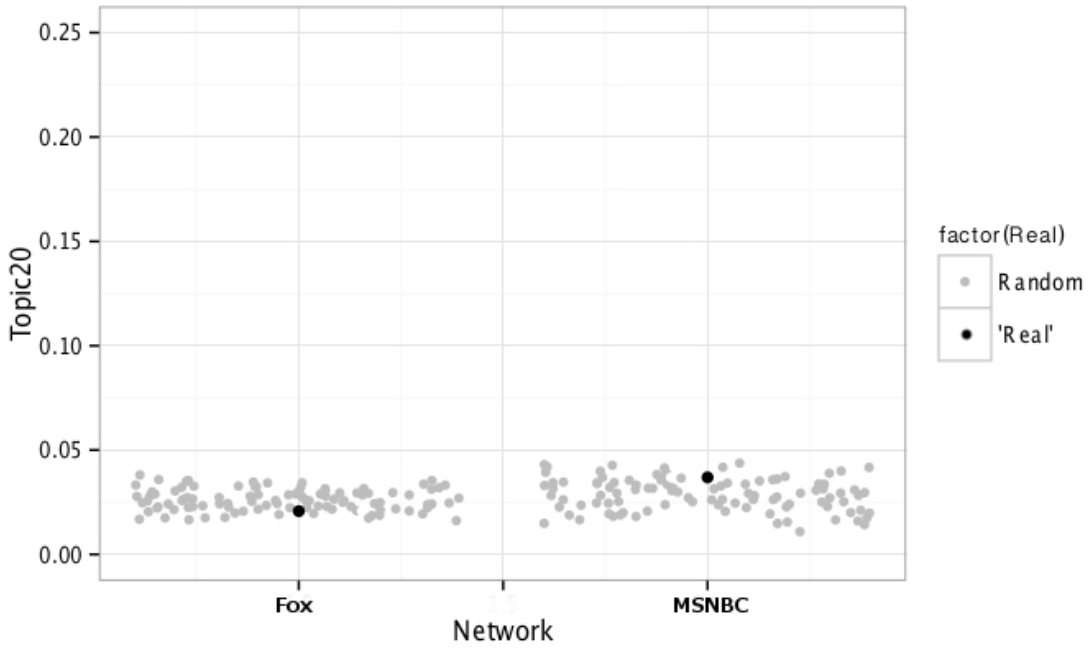


Figure 2.10—Word Use for Topic20: Protection & Independence

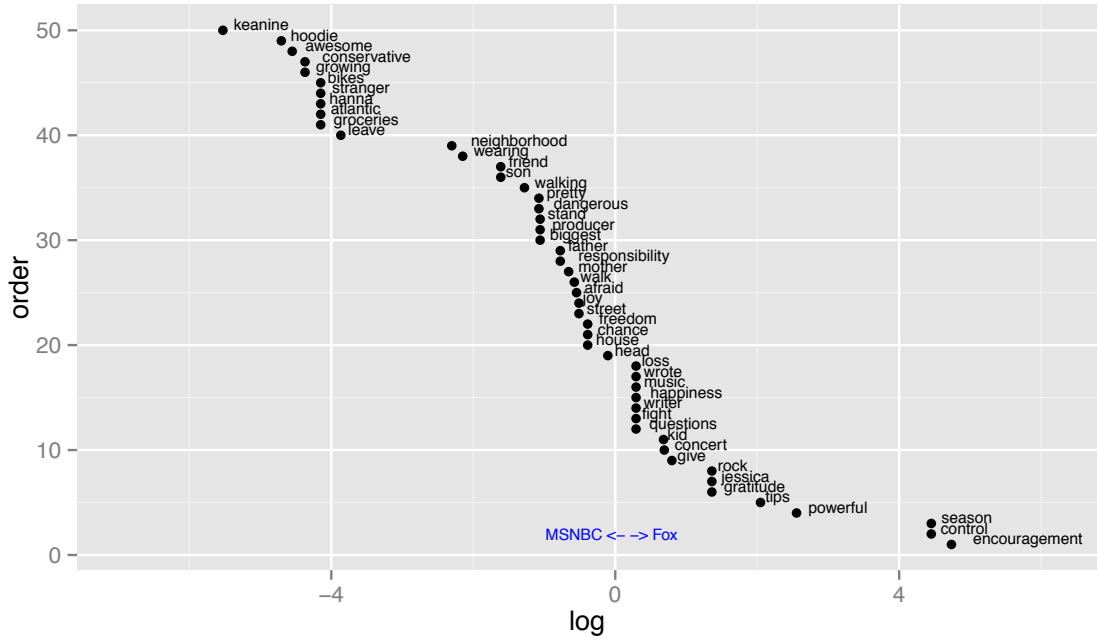


Figure 2.11 –Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic1: Technology Etiquette

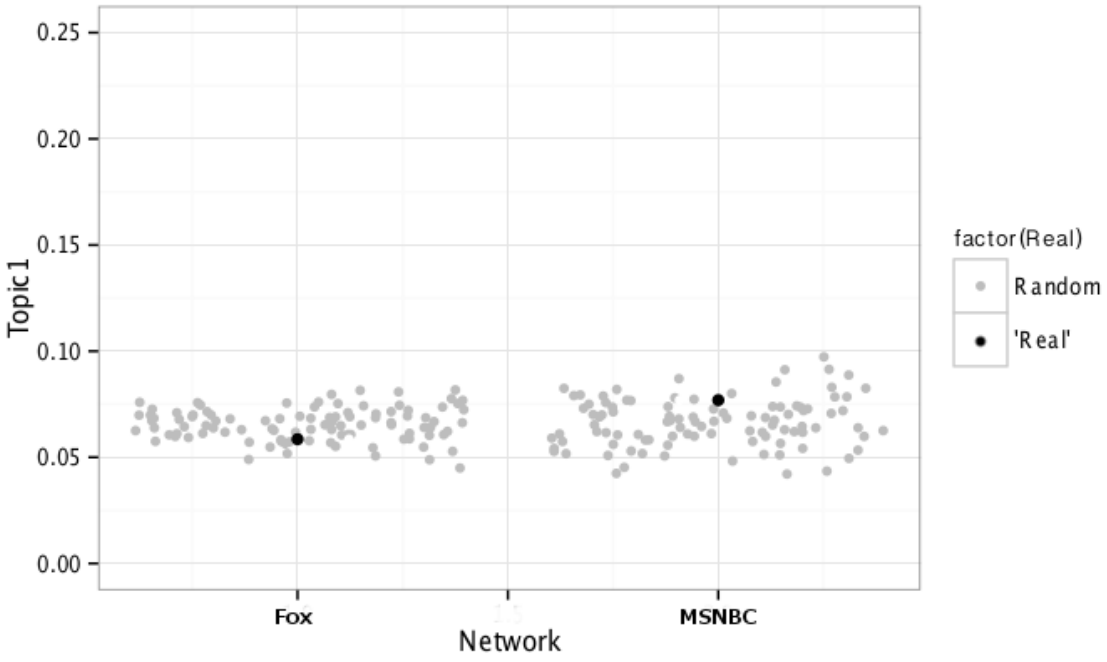


Figure 2.12—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic15: Technology Dangers

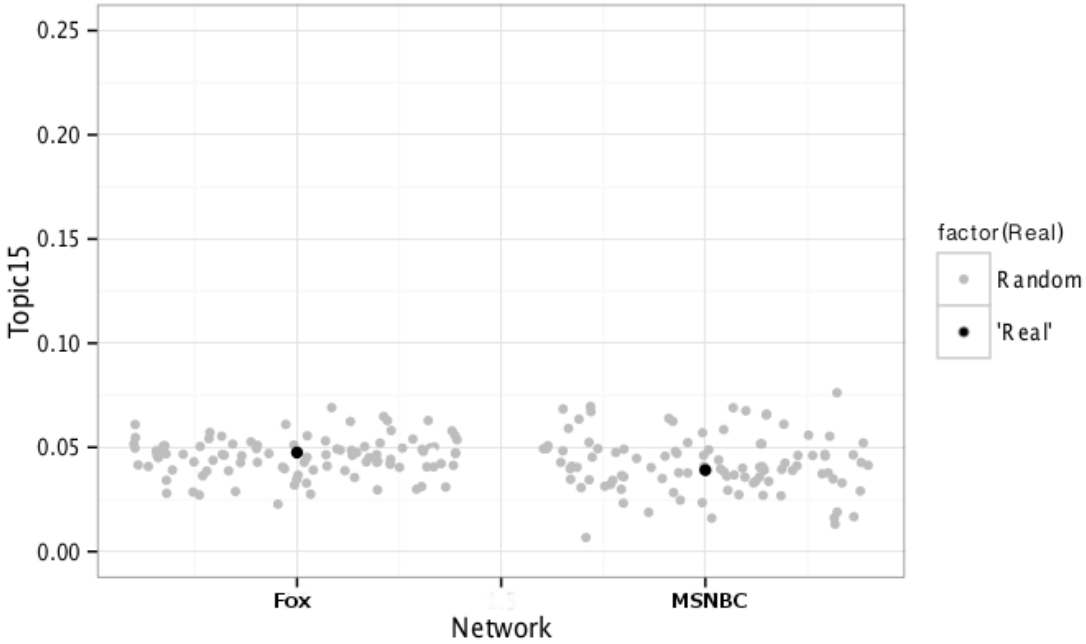
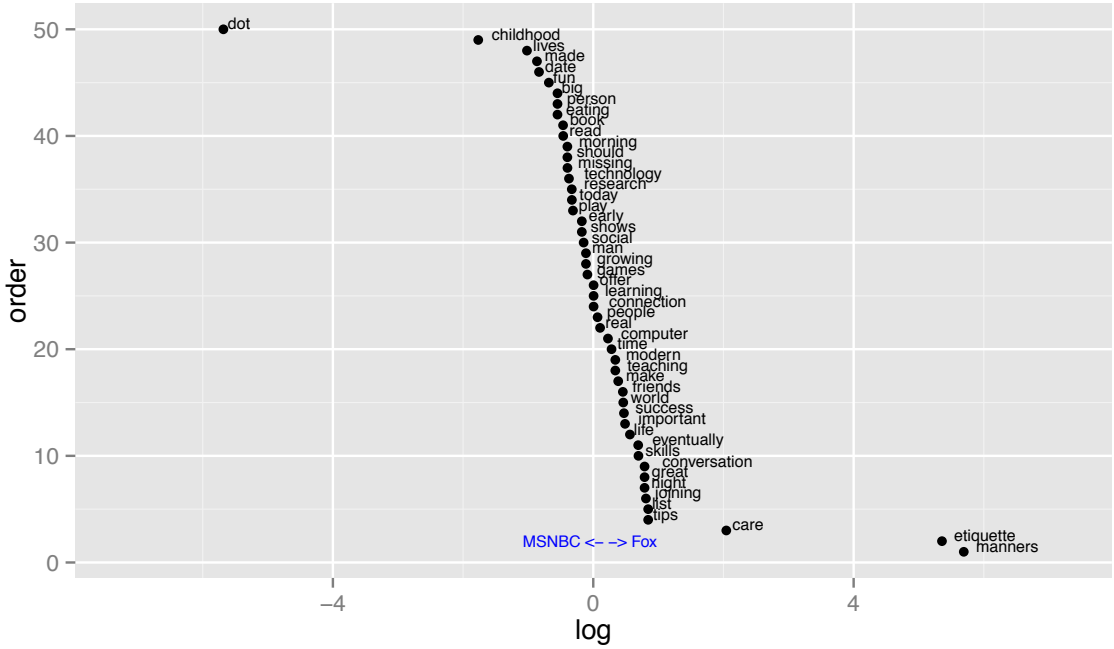


Figure 2.13—Word Use in Topic1: Technology Etiquette



Moving on to the distinctive words used by the networks, it is clear from the clustering around the 0 line that Fox News and MSNBC are talking about technology etiquette in similar ways—technology at meals, connections with people, and conversational skills, to name a few. This matches the actual texts when I tracked the topic back to the documents.

In the conversations about the dangers of technology, it is clear that Fox News and MSNBC are talking about different sorts of dangers. There is general agreement about the problems of cyberbullying and that parents have a responsibility to be monitoring their children's technology use. However, Fox News is more concerned with photos sent between teens (see Figure 2.14). This matches the conversation when tracked back to the texts.

Figure 2.14—Word Use in Topic15: Technology Dangers

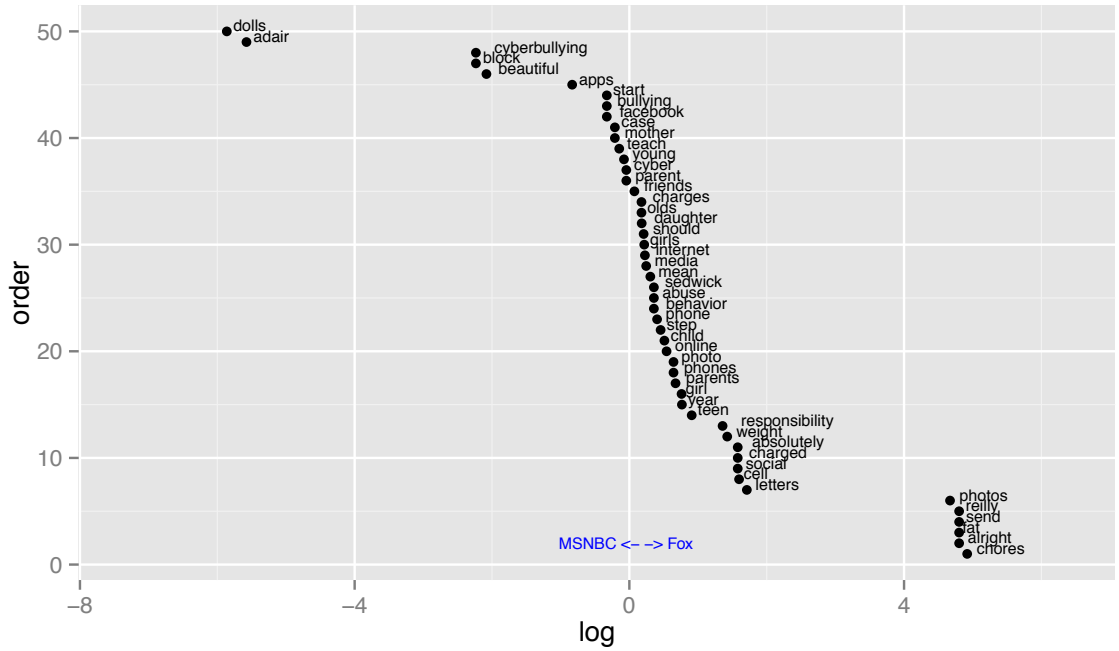
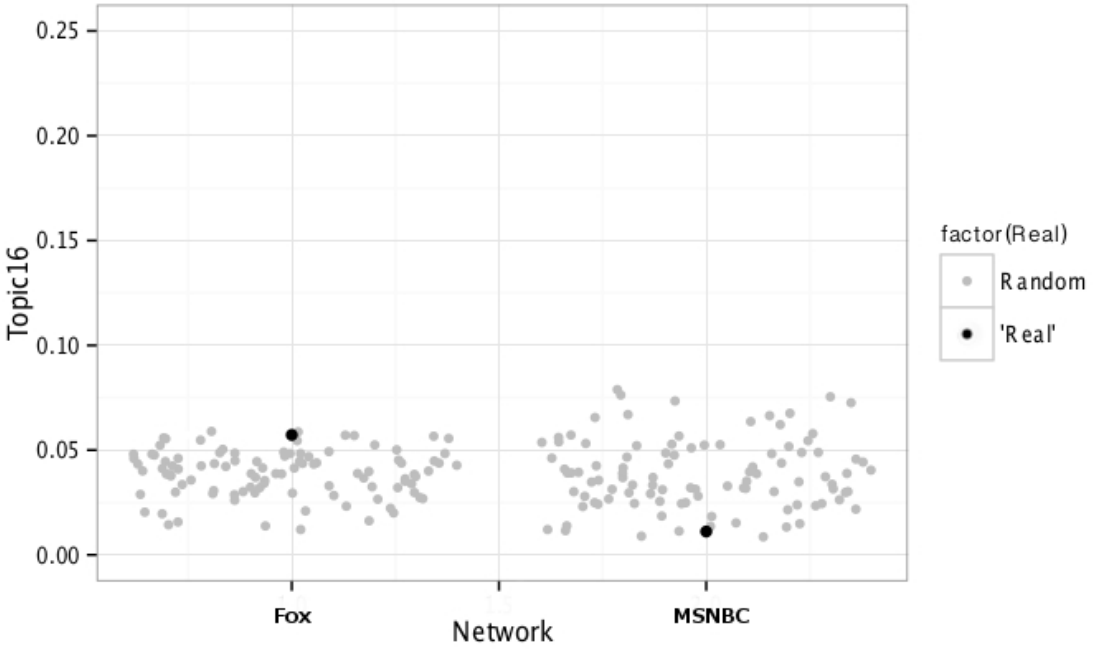


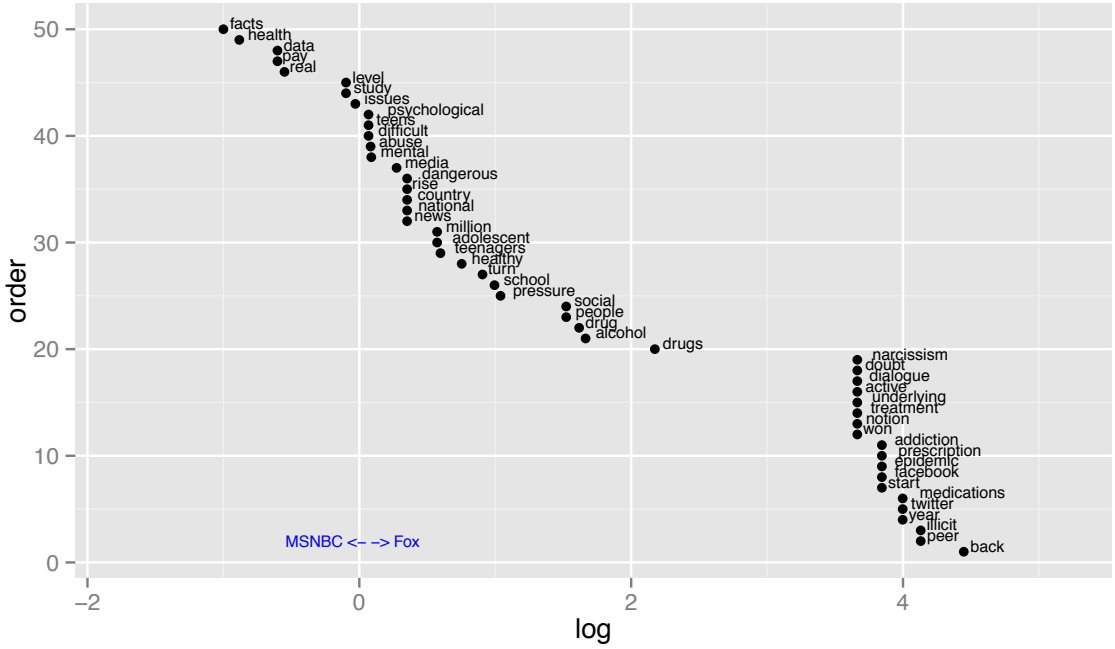
Figure 2.15—Randomized Permutation Plot for Topic16: Addiction & Narcissism



Looking at Topic16 (Figure 2.15 and 2.16)—"Addiction & Narcissism"—it's clear that there is a greater allocation of words from Fox News than from MSNBC and that this allocation is at the edge of what would be expected based on random chance. In other words, this topic relates to a conversation that is happening on Fox but is largely absent from MSNBC.

The word use for the topic shows that Fox News is talking about the addition of social media, the epidemic of Facebook, and the narcissism and doubt that plague adolescents. Based on Figure 2.16, it is clear that this type of conversation about technology is missing from MSNBC. This matches the conversation when tracked back to the broadcast documents.

Figure 2.16—Word Use for Topic16: Addiction & Narcissism



Appendix B

Talking to Parents about Technology

In the interviews, we did not ask parents directly about technology. Instead, we waited for parents to mention it and then followed up with additional questions once they broached the subject. The three most common times for the conversation to turn to technology were when we asked these questions:

> "Do you think parents today have an easier or harder time raising kids than parents in your parents' generation?"
>
> "When your child misbehaves, what are the specific things you do to try to correct the behavior or get your child to do what you want him/her to do?"
>
> "Some people think kids face a lot of pressures these days. Do you think kids face a lot of pressures? What are the pressures?"

Of the 94 interviews used for this project, 86 (91 percent) brought up technology in some form or another. Of the nine who did not mention technology, seven were Democratic or Democratic-leaning non-partisan parents. All Republican and Republican-leaning parents brought up the topic.

In the interview sample, 42 parents (55 percent of the interviewees) talked about their parenting job being more challenging, often when compared to their parents' experience, because they had to contend with technology. Of these parents, 33 went beyond feeling that technology complicated their job as parents and expressed concerns as to the nature of the content or effects it would have on their children. These parents either expressed a deep ambivalence about their modern technology or an overt fear of the danger it could cause their children. Because of the nature of our interviews, we did not explicitly ask if technology made their lives harder so that we could hear how they talked about it. As a result, 29 parents (31 percent)

talked about technology without any indication that it made their lives easier or harder, and another 9 parents (9 percent) did not mention technology at all.

In many regards, there is disjuncture between parents' answers on the survey and our conversations with them in the interviews. For the most part, parents are more sanguine about technology in their survey responses. On the survey, the technology questions are situated with other questions about the larger society, alongside other questions relating to political events and moral perspectives, rather than related to parenting practice. Several weeks and months later, these parents are more pessimistic about technology when we sat at their dining room tables. As a whole, the interviewed parents are no more fearful than other parents when asked about a series of negative outcomes for their children (based on the Q41 question set: "We all have nagging fears for our children, the things we hope will never happen. For each of the following, please select the answer that represents how deep the fear is in your daily life."). In addition, parents in the interview sample were no more likely to think that they were in a losing battle when it comes to controlling teens' access to technology (Q33.H) or their attempts to monitor the Internet (Q18.G). They are only different from the larger survey sample in that interviewed parents are less likely to have children with cell phones (50 percent have cell phones [unweighted] compared to 58 percent of parents who did not interview [weighted]). In addition, parents in the interview sample are *more* likely to have a Facebook account than those who were not interviewed, and for those with accounts, they were more likely to check them on a daily basis. (Not Interviewed [weighted]: 30 percent do not have Facebook accounts; 33 percent have accounts they check daily. Interviewed [not weighted]: 18 percent do not have Facebook accounts; 40 percent have an account they check daily).

The greater concern about technology exhibited by parents in the interviews cannot, therefore, be attributed to differing fears for their children or their attempts to control their children's access to technology. Nor can it be attributed to a lack of engagement with technology, that their fear stems from a lack of understanding of what their children encounter or the way the platforms might be used. Some would argue that the survey reflects parents' true feelings about the technology they encounter and the interview responses are simply the rationalized story that they think needs to be told (Vaisey 2009). To a certain extent, I agree with this theory. Based on their own use of technology and the way they allow their children to interact with it, I think parents are less fearful than they may seem at times during the interviews. At the same time, I think it is possible for a parent to think that certain aspects of technology may make their job as parents harder while at the same time accepting this addition without the fear that is often attributed to parents. A mother may think that her job as a parent is harder because she has to drive her daughter to soccer practice every night and return to pick her up three hours later, but that does not mean she is afraid of either driving or soccer practice.

At the same time, we should not write off the fear and concern that parents express in the interview because it, at times, contradicts their survey answers and the practices they employ with their children. Since we did not ask parents directly about technology—but 91 percent of interview parents brought it up of their own accord—it is clear that technology is an important element of modern parenting. In addition, since every single Republican and Republican-leaning non-partisan parent brought it up while Democratic and Democratic-leaning non-partisan parents were the mostly likely to fail to mention technology, there are important patterns in the interview responses that should not be dismissed. To make sense of the survey-interview disjuncture, it helps to consider the context for both the survey and interview questions.

On the survey, the technology questions are in two locations. First, they are surrounded by questions about parental efficacy and the parent-child connection. As seen in Chapter 3, parents overwhelmingly feel connected to their children and feel successful in maintaining those relationships. Second, the technology questions are surrounded by questions about political events. Here, questions about the value of social media and cell phones are paired with the value of "Obamacare," same-sex marriage, and cohabitation.

In contrast, in the interviews, the parents brought up technology most often when we asked them to compare their own parental experience to what they recall of their own parents' experience. That is, they talked about technology when we asked them to reflect on the evolution of modern parenting. In her defense of interviewing, Allison Pugh identifies four types of information that can be gleaned through more fluid interactions, which are excluded from the rigid form of surveys. Of particular importance for this discussion is what she terms meta-feelings, which "capture the felt collisions between two levels of culturally shaped emotions—a deep, primal level forged in our earliest experiences, and another, generated by the cultural frameworks of the social context in which we find ourselves today" (2013:51). These meta-feelings provide clues to the interviewer about the respondent's "relative ease with the prevalent worldviews." In our interviews, our question about the disjuncture between contemporary parenting and that of previous generations in essence primed parents to tap into their meta-feelings. It brought to light the ways that the received wisdom of parenting, passed from down from grandmother to mother, failed to address some of the greatest challenges of modern parenting, challenges that are exacerbated by new technologies. Thus, the fear communicated by many of these parents is less about the hardware and software ubiquitous to modern life and more closely tied to the sense that, when it comes to technology, parents feel like they are "driving with a blindfold" (Interview 1255).

Finally, it is worth noting that four parents—all of whose oldest children were in elementary school and who also had other younger children—said that technology actually made their lives easier. Primarily, they said, it allowed them access to information and people that previous generations of parents were not able to access (i.e., “mom groups” online, information for teen moms). One mother also mentioned that technology made her life easier because she can use it when she “need(s) to have a moment” to herself (Interview 1384). (Also see Dill 2012:Chapter 2).

Endnotes

[1] See Chapter 2 for a full discussion of the inclusion criteria and strategy of analysis.

[2] The survey was fielded by Knowledge Networks and utilized its probability-based KnowledgePanel®. The panel was recruited using a multi-stage sampling technique that began with a comprehensive, address-based sampling form supplied by the United States Postal Service. The sample for the *Culture of American Families Survey* was drawn from the larger KnowledgePanel using a probability proportional to size technique, which has been refined and patented by Knowledge Networks (Knowledge Networks 2012). To ensure a representative sample of all Americans, Knowledge Networks supplied Internet access and laptops to homes without them. The survey, which took approximately an hour to complete, was collected September 2011–January 2012 (including the non-response follow-up survey). While the target was 3,000 parents, the final sample size was 3,017. Due to response-set behavior, 113 cases were dropped before analysis. The survey had a design effect of 2.2486 with a completion rate for the screener of 64.2 percent and a qualification rate of 88.6 percent. (For more information on the survey, including the complete questionaire, see Bowman 2012.)

[3] The interview portion of the project had 101 interviewees. The final interviewee sample was 94 interviews because 7 individuals did not fill out the political party question or had response-set behavior in the survey. Respondents were recruited through the final question of the survey, which asked respondents if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Approximately 1,259 showed interest in being interviewed. Ninety-one of the interviews were conducted face-to-face in the interviewees' homes in eight geographically dispersed metropolitan areas (Chicago, Boston, Los Angles, Seattle, Atlanta and rural Georgia, Columbus and rural Ohio, Philadelphia, and Phoenix). An additional ten interviews were conducted on the phone to reach more rural individuals. In order to get a broad representation of race and ethnicity, education and income, gender, and family structure, we utilized a purposive sample. As the interviews progressed, the interview director adjusted the targets to capture underrepresented groups. Interviews were conducted November 2011–March 2012. Each interview averaged an hour and a quarter but ranged from about half an hour to a little over two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and identifying information was discarded after the interviews. All respondents were paid $50 for their participation. The interviews used a semi-structured, conversational format and were conducted by the interview director, Jeffrey Dill, or me. Interview topics ranged from interviewees' reflections on their own childhoods to character traits they wanted for their children, and from decisions about schooling to discipline strategies. (See Dill 2012 for the complete questionnaire.)

[4] Partisan Republicans had to identify as Republicans (Question 7 from KN panel) and see their political ideology as conservative (Question 11 from KN panel). Furthermore they had to be registered to vote (Question 3 from KN panel) and had to have voted for, or planned to vote for, the Republican candidate in 2008 and 2012. Finally, they had to agree that "Barack Obama's election to the presidency in 2008" and "the recent national health-care reform law" (PPACA) were both bad for "our society" (Questions 83.G and 83.H). If parents who identified as Independent or "other party" met the other criteria (conservative, voted Republican twice, and saw Obama's election and the health care law as bad for society), they were also classified as partisan Republicans (19 percent of partisan Republicans). I made this choice because I encountered a number of respondents in the interviews who identified as a member of the Tea Party but classified themselves in the data as "Independent" or "Other Party." At the time the survey was fielded, the Tea Party was still in its infancy, and many members saw themselves as independent from the established political parties (Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

I also considered including a measure of people's perspective on the Tea Party as good/bad for society, but it was too restrictive on the Republicans—13 percent of parents who met the criteria for a partisan Republican as identified above thought the Tea Party was bad for society. About the time of the survey,

there was clear tension within the Republican Party as the Tea Party pushed further to the right (Kraushaar 2013; Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Sussman 2012). The division highlighted by the Tea Party question may be pointing to the within-party tension rather than separating out political groups.

[5] Partisan Democrats had to identify as Democrats (Question 7 from KN panel) and see their political ideology as liberal or middle-of-the-road (Question 11 from KN panel). "Liberal" is a word that Americans have been hesitant to use because of its demonization in broader political rhetoric (Kazin 2011; Klar 2014). For this reason, I have included "middle-of-the-road" parents who identify as Democratic in the group of partisan Democrats when I have excluded "middle-of-the-road" who identify as Republican from the partisan Republicans. In addition to these identifications, respondents had to be registered to vote (Question 3 from KN panel) and had to have voted for, or planned to vote for, Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. Finally, they needed to agree that "Barack Obama's election to the presidency in 2008" and the "recent national health-care reform law" were good for "our society" (Questions 83.G and 83.H). As with the partisan Republicans, respondents who identified as "Independent" or "Other Party" but met all the other criteria were classified as partisan Democrats (15 percent of partisan Democrats).

In addition, I considered using a social index to sort partisans—including views on abortion (Question 79), the legal recognition of same-sex marriage (Question 83_I), and the impact on society of people living together (Question 83_E)—it was also too restrictive. This dropped 30 percent of partisan Republicans and 34 percent of partisan Democrats. Given the changing views on same-sex marriage, the recent Republican focus on fiscal responsibility, and the presence of highly religious individuals in the Democratic party, I decided to exclude the social index from the classification process (Farrell 2011; Hart 1996; Lepore 2010; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press 2013; Sherkat et al. 2011; Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

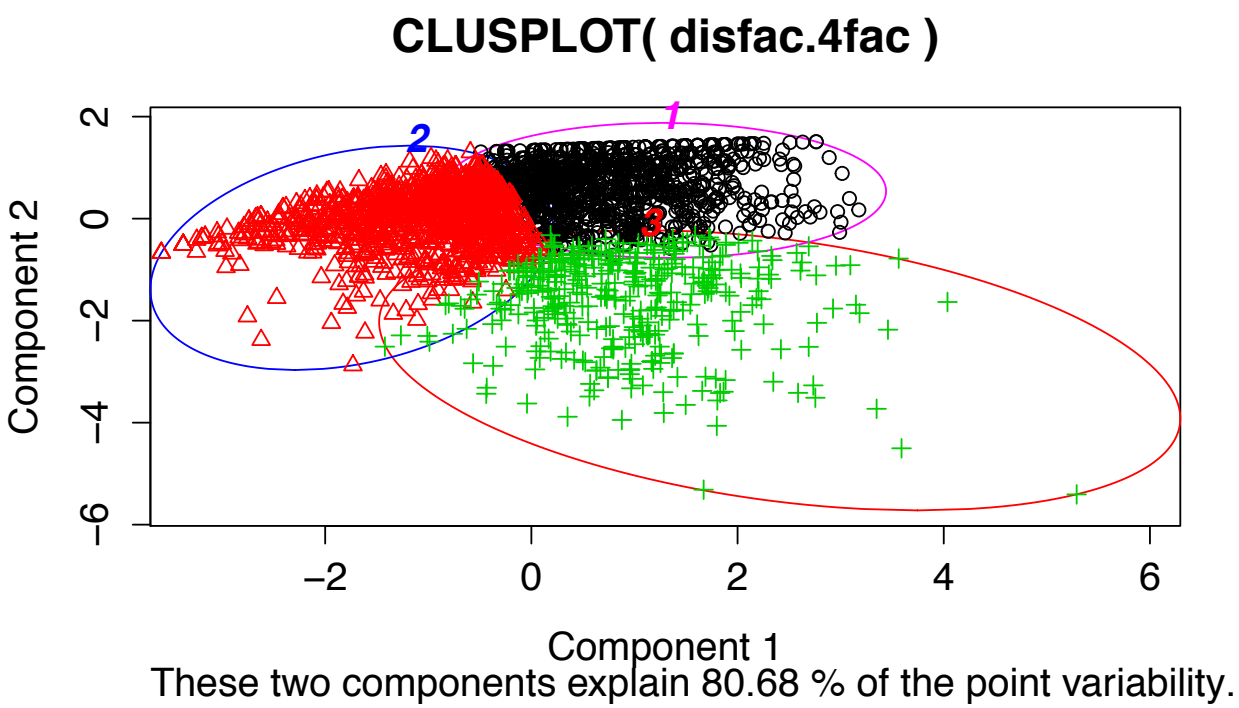
[6] Politically non-partisan parents are a residual category. These parents say they are registered to vote, that they intend to vote in 2012, and voted in 2008 (158 respondents were dropped because they were missing an answer for their 2008 voting). Within this group, 45 percent say they have "no preference" when it comes to political party or that they were Independents who did not meet the criteria to be classified as a partisan. These "no preference" parents were not classified as non-political because they reported that they voted, or at least felt compelled to report that they voted (Bernstein, Chanda, and Montjoy 2001). Therefore, they are not completely disconnected from the political arena. Non-partisan parents also include parents who planned to switch their vote—casting their ballot once for the Republican and once for the Democrat—between 2008 and 2012 (43 percent, but includes 23 percent who are either Independent or "No Preference" already discussed). In addition, parents who claimed they voted twice for the party opposite their party identification (i.e., Republican who voted twice for Obama—2 percent—or Democrat who voted twice for the Republican candidate—2 percent) are also non-partisan parents.

Finally, 30 percent of this group is made up of parents whose party and voting practices matched but who did not meet some additional criteria to be classified as partisan (17 percent Republican; 13 percent Democratic). Most often, their professed ideology did not match their parties (i.e., liberal Republicans or conservative Democrats).

[7] Non-political parents were classified based on their intention to vote or their voter registration. If they indicated that they would not vote (80 percent—Question 82) or that they were not registered to vote, or didn't know if they were registered (68 percent—Question 3 from KN panel), they were classified as not political. Since voting tends to be over-reported, the fact that these parents were explicit about their intention to abstain from the political process is important (Bernstein et al. 2001).

[8] These three clusters are created using a k-means cluster analysis using the "cluster" package (1.15.2) in R. The clusters were created using three indices, generated using principal component analysis, based on the discipline questions in the survey. Each component was generated by specifying one factor from the PCA (Stevens 2009). The three components were positive approaches to discipline (eigenvalue = 1.93), withholding discipline practices (eigenvalue = 2.37), and spanking (eigenvalue = 2.07). These factors were then fed into the k-means cluster analysis.

Figure 2.1—Discipline Cluster Plot



In Figure 4.1, cluster 1 is the “positive approach,” cluster 2 is the “multifaceted approach,” and cluster 3 is the “reactive approach.”

[9] **Table 2.1—Education for all three discipline approaches**

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
High School	24	34	45	33
Some College	29	38	28	33
B.A.	26	19	20	22
Graduate Degree	21	8	7	13
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 4.2—Political Affiliation for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
Republicans, Partisan	16	21	10	17
Politically Non-Partisan	37	33	31	34
Democrat, Partisan	22	17	13	18
Not Political	24	29	46	30
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.3—Religion for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
Catholic	25	22	26	25
Evangelical	16	36	15	22
Progressive Protestants	25	19	24	24
Other Religion	12	8	9	9
Nothing in Particular	22	15	26	19
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.4—Religiosity for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
Secularist	12	5	8	8
Low	25	19	39	25
Low-Medium	25	24	26	24
High-Medium	22	24	17	22
High	17	28	10	20
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.5—Geographic Region for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
Northeast	21	17	18	18
Midwest	24	20	23	22
South	26	44	37	36
West	30	20	22	24
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.6—Gender for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
Father	47	41	52	45
Mother	53	59	48	55
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.7—Marital status for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
Married	80	70	65	73
Not Married	20	30	35	27
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.8—Race for all three discipline approaches

	Positive	Multifaceted	Reactive	Population
White	76	58	64	66
Black	6	19	12	13
Hispanic	18	23	25	22
Total	100	100	100	100

[10] Q24: "Generally, how would you describe your relationship with your kids?" Very Close: 50 percent. Close (2): 35 percent.
[11] Q13: "Being realistic, on a typical school day, about how much time do you spend interacting with your children?" 2-3 hours: 34 percent. More than 3 hours: 35 percent.
[12] Q14: "How often do children in your family typically sit down together with one or more parents for a meal?" Daily: 57 percent. Several times a week: 30 percent.
[13] Technology at dinner is a combination of Q16: "How often do family members use electronics (such as computers, cell phones, Game Boys, or e-readers) during family meals?" and Q17: "How often is the television on and visible during family meals?" Never or Rarely: 39 percent. Weekly: 39 percent. Daily: 22 percent.
[14] Q33_D: "I *love* spending time with my children." Completely Agree: 68 percent. Mostly Agree: 26 percent.
[15] Q33_M: "I sometimes feel more like my children's best friend than their parent." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 58 percent.
[16] Q31_R: "I hope to be best friends with my children when they are grown." Agree: 50 percent. Slightly Agree: 25 percent.
Q21_T: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…interested in preserving close ties with parents and family…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 46 percent. Very Important: 45 percent.
[17] Interview 1255.
[18] Q18_K: "Children see their parents as friends (1)/Children see their parents as authority figures (7)." 6 and 7: 33 percent. 5: 20 percent.
[19] Q18_L: "Family decisions involve much parent-child negotiation (1) / Family decisions are made by the parents and communicated to children (7)." 1-3: 21 percent. 4: 25 percent. 5: 25 percent. 6-7: 29 percent.
[20] Interview 820.
[21] Q22: "How would you describe your parenting approach with your own children?" Very Strict and Moderately strict (2): 13 percent. 3: 31 percent. Moderate: 36 percent.
[22] Interview 2356.
[23] Q28: "On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you describe the overall level of parent-child disagreement that exists in your family?" 1 and 2: 35 percent. 3 and 4: 31 percent.
[24] Q36_N: "Praising children for what they do right." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 97 percent.
[25] Q36_L: "Instructing children in appropriate moral and ethical behavior." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 88 percent.
[26] Interview 59.
[27] Q36_D: "Discussing behaviors at length to help children understand why something is good or bad." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 61 percent
[28] Q36_B: "'Time outs' or sending children to their room." Moderately Important and 5: 51 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 16 percent. Q36_I: "Grounding children from activities with friends." Moderately Important and 5: 47 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 27 percent.

Q36_K: “Withholding television, Internet, and cell phone privileges.” Moderately Important and 5: 43 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 34 percent.
[29] Interview 1719.
[30] Q36_M: “Denying opportunity to join a club or play a sport.” Not Important at All: 36 percent. 2 and 3: 38 percent.
[31] Q36_J: “Being emotionally cool and distant to your children for a while.” Not Important at All: 52 percent. 2 and 3: 32 percent.
[32] Interview 260.
[33] Q27: “[Spanking] should only be used rarely, when behavior is extreme or when nothing else seems to work.”—62 percent.
[34] Q31_I: “I invest much effort in providing opportunities that will give my children a competitive advantage down the road.” Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 46 percent. Slightly Agree: 32 percent.
[35] Interview 678.
[36] Interview 2356.
[37] Interview 2643.
[38] Q41_L: “How deep is the fear in your daily life [over] the possibility that one of your children will…lack ambition to succeed?” Not A Concern At All: 32 percent. Only A Small Worry: 29 percent
Q41_E: “How deep is the fear in your daily life [over] the possibility that one of your children will…Not be financially successful in life?” Not A Concern At All: 27 percent. Only A Small Concern: 33 percent.
[39] Q31_M: “I invest much effort in shaping the moral character of my children.” Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 77 percent. Slightly Agree: 18 percent.
[40] Q21_AB: “Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…persons of strong moral character…as adults?” Absolutely Essential: 64 percent. Very Important: 34 percent.
[41] Q21_F: “Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…loving…as adults?” Absolutely Essential: 61 percent. Very Important: 35 percent. Q21_I: “Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…hard-working…as adults?” Absolutely Essential: 50 percent. Very Important: 47 percent. Q21_J: “Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…honest and truthful…as adults?” Absolutely Essential: 77 percent. Very Important: 22 percent. Q21_P: “Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…reliable and dependable…as adults?” Absolutely Essential: 58 percent. Very Important: 39 percent.
[42] Q31_O: “I invest much effort in protecting my children from negative social influences.” Completely and Mostly Agree: 48 percent. Slightly Agree: 35 percent.
[43] Q31_G: “My children see many things in the media that they should not see.” Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 24 percent. Slightly Agree: 33 percent.
[44] Q29_H: “How much parent-child disagreement typically exists around…choice of friends and activities with friends?” None: 46 percent. 1: 25 percent.
[45] For parents whose oldest child is at least 13 years old: Q29_H: “How much parent-child disagreement typically exists around…choice of friends and activities with friends?” None: 38 percent. 1: 26 percent. Q29_O: “How much parent-child disagreement typically exists around…Observing appropriate limits with boyfriends or girlfriends?” None: 53 percent. 1: 19 percent.
[46] Q31_K: “Parents today are in a losing battle with all the other influences out there.” Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 51 percent. Slightly Disagree: 14 percent.
[47] Q31_S: “I should invest more time and energy in my children.” Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree and Slightly Disagree: 34 percent. Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 20 percent. Slightly Agree: 36 percent.
[48] Q24: “Generally, how would you describe your relationship with your kids?”: Very Close: 48 percent. 2: 35 percent.
[49] Q13: “Being realistic, on a typical school day, about how much time do you spend interacting with your children” 2-3 Hours: 34 percent. More than 3 Hours: 39 percent.

[50] Q33_D: "I *love* spending time with my children." Completely Agree: 73 percent. Mostly Agree: 21 percent.
[51] Q14: "How often do children in your family typically sit down together with one or more parents for a meal?" Daily: 49 percent. Several Times a Week: 33 percent.
[52] Q15: "How often do you have a prayer or blessing with family meals?"

- Positive: Daily or Several Times a Week: 37 percent. Once a Month to Once a Week: 9 percent. Rarely or Never: 54 percent.
- Multifaceted: Daily or Several Times a Week: 47 percent. Once a Month to Once a Week: 10 percent. Rarely or Never: 43 percent.
- Reactive: Daily or Several Times a Week: 24 percent. Once a Month to Once a Week: 17 percent. Rarely or Never: 60 percent.

[53] Technology at dinner is a combination of Q16: "How often do family members use electronics (such as computers, cell phones, Game Boys, or e-readers) during family meals?" and Q17: "How often is the television on and visible during family meals?" Weekly: 43 percent. Daily: 31 percent.
[54] Q33_M: "I sometimes feel more like my children's best friend than their parent." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 59 percent.
Q31_R: "I hope to be best friends with my children when they are grown." Agree: 56 percent. Slightly Agree: 16 percent.
Q21_T: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…interested in preserving close ties with parents and family…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 59 percent. Very Important: 35 percent.
[55] Q18_K: "Children see their parents as friends (1)/Children see their parents as authority figures (7)." 6 and 7: 39 percent. 5: 18 percent.
[56] Q18_L: "Family decisions involve much parent-child negotiation (1) / Family decisions are made by the parents and communicated to children (7)." 1-3: 14 percent. 4: 16 percent. 5: 22 percent. 6-7: 47 percent.
[57] Q22: "How would you describe your parenting approach with your own children?" Very Strict and Moderately Strict (2): 24 percent. 3: 29 percent. Moderate: 32 percent.
[58] Among multifaceted-approach parents who say they are "moderate," 40 percent say their decisions are communicated down to children (Q18_L) with an addition 23 percent saying they allow very limited negotiation.
[59] Interview 1848.
[60] Q36_A: "Modeling good behavior and setting a good example." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 96 percent. Q36_N: "Praising children for what they do right." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 97 percent.
[61] Interview 1216.
[62] Q36_D: "Discussing behaviors at length to help children understand why something is good or bad." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 75 percent
[63] Q36_I: "Grounding children from activities with friends." Moderately Important and 5: 33 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 63 percent. Q36_K: "Withholding television, Internet, and cell phone privileges." Moderately Important and 5: 29 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 67 percent.
[64] Q36_H: "Withholding children's allowances or purchases." Moderately Important and 5: 44 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 42 percent. Q36_C: "Scolding or speaking to children in a strong voice." Moderately Important and 5: 50 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 40 percent. Q36_B: "'Time outs' or sending children to their room." Moderately Important and 5: 45 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 46 percent. Q36_G: "Assigning additional chores that children must do as punishment." Moderately Important and 5: 44 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 37 percent.
[65] Interview 2988.

[66] Q26: "During the entire course of your parenting, how often have you used physical discipline, such as spanking or slapping a child, if ever?" (response percentages are for parents who say spanking should be rarely used (Q27)).

- Positive: Never or Only Once: 52 percent. Rarely: 38 percent. A Fair Bit or More: 10 percent.
- Multifaceted: Never or Only Once: 27 percent. Rarely: 45 percent. A Fair Bit or More: 30 percent.
- Reactive: Never or Only Once: 46 percent. Rarely: 41 percent. A Fair Bit or More: 14 percent.

[67] Interview 412.

[68] Q31_I: "I invest much effort in providing opportunities that will give my children a competitive advantage down the road." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 51 percent. Slightly Agree: 25 percent.

[69] Interview 135.

[70] Interview 775.

[71] Q41_L: "How deep is the fear in your daily life [over] the possibility that one of your children will…lack ambition to succeed?" Not A Concern At All: 29 percent. Only A Small Worry: 23 percent

[72] Q41_E: "How deep is the fear in your daily life [over] the possibility that one of your children will…not be financially successful in life?" A Worry, But Not a Fear: 35 percent. A Real Fear: 13 percent. One of My Deepest Fears: 5 percent.

[73] Q31_M: "I invest much effort in shaping the moral character of my children." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 84 percent. Slightly Agree: 9 percent. Q21_AB: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…persons of strong moral character…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 73 percent. Very Important: 25 percent.

[74] Q21_F: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…loving…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 70 percent. Very Important: 27 percent. Q21_I: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…hard-working…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 62 percent. Very Important: 36 percent. Q21_J: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…honest and truthful…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 82 percent. Very Important: 18 percent. Q21_P: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…reliable and dependable…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 60 percent. Very Important: 34 percent.

[75] Q31_O: "I invest much effort in protecting my children from negative social influences." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 64 percent. Slightly Agree: 25 percent.

[76] Q31_G: "My children see many things in the media that they should not see." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 31 percent. Slightly Agree: 29 percent.

[77] Q42_E: "At which age do you think it first becomes appropriate for a child to…surf the Internet without parental monitoring or supervision?" Mean: 17.1 years (category "not appropriate at any age recoded to 25 years old).

[78] Q29_H: "How much parent-child disagreement typically exists around…choice of friends and activities with friends?" None and 1: 57 percent. Moderate—10: 18 percent. For parents of teens: None and 1: 44 percent.

[79] Q29_O: "How much parent-child disagreement typically exists around…Observing appropriate limits with boyfriends or girlfriends?" None: 48 percent. 1: 14 percent.

[80] Q31_K: "Parents today are in a losing battle with all the other influences out there." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 41 percent. Slightly Disagree 13 percent.

[81] Q31_S: "I should invest more time and energy in my children." Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree and Slightly Disagree: 28 percent. Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 35 percent. Slightly Agree: 30 percent.

[82] Q31_Q: "I often feel inadequate as a parent." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 59 percent. Slightly Disagree: 11 percent.

[83] Special thanks to Yuliya Dudaronak for pointing this out.

[84] Q31_D: "I often wonder whether I am doing a good job as a parent." 55 percent of all parents agree with this statement. Only 34 percent reject it.

[85] Parental efficacy index: 53 percent say they are undecided about their parental efficacy or agree that they are not a good parent. Only 13 percent strongly rejects the idea that they do not know what they are doing when it comes to child-rearing. See endnote 171 for more details on parental efficacy index.
[86] Interview 1793.
[87] Q24: "Generally, how would you describe your relationship with your kids?" Very close: 29 percent. 2: 34 percent. 3 and 4: 29.
[88] Q13: "Being realistic, on a typical school day, about how much time do you spend interacting with your children?" 2-3 Hours: 33 percent. More than 3 Hours: 27 percent.
Q33_D: "I *love* spending time with my children." Completely Agree: 47 percent. Mostly Agree and Slightly Agree: 42 percent.
[89] Q14: "How often do children in your family typically sit down together with one or more parents for a meal?" Daily: 40 percent. Several Times a Week: 34 percent.
[90] Technology at dinner is a combination of Q16: "How often do family members use electronics (such as computers, cell phones, Game Boys, or e-readers) during family meals?" and Q17: "How often is the television on and visible during family meals?" Weekly: 45 percent. Daily: 31 percent.
[91] Q33_M: "I sometimes feel more like my children's best friend than their parent." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 25 percent. Slightly Disagree: 19 percent. Undecided: 26 percent.
[92] Interview 911.
[93] Q18_K: "Children see their parents as friends (1)/Children see their parents as authority figures (7)." 6 and 7: 24 percent. 5: 20 percent. Middle: 32 percent.
[94] Q18_L: "Family decisions involve much parent-child negotiation (1)/Family decisions are made by the parents and communicated to children (7)." 1-3: 18 percent. 4: 31 percent. 5: 22 percent. 6-7: 25 percent.
[95] Q22: "How would you describe your parenting approach with your own children?" Very Strict and Moderately Strict (2): 8 percent. 3: 20 percent. Moderate: 44 percent. 5: 20 percent. 6 and Very Permissive: 7 percent.
[96] Interview 1805.
[97] Q28: "On a scale of 0 to 10, how would you describe the overall level of parent-child disagreement that exists in your family?" Moderate (5): 33 percent. 6-10: 18 percent.
[98] Q36_D: "Discussing behaviors at length to help children understand why something is good or bad." Moderately Important and 5: 66 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 21 percent. Q36_C: "Scolding or speaking to children in a strong voice." Moderately Important and 5: 66 percent. 6 and Extremely Important: 7 percent. Q36_B: "'Time outs' or sending children to their room." Moderately Important and 5: 66 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 10 percent. Q36_I: "Grounding children from activities with friends." Moderately Important and 5: 68 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 9 percent. Q36_K: "Withholding television, Internet, and cell phone privileges." Moderately Important and 5: 65 percent. Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 17 percent.
[99] Q36_A: "Modeling good behavior and setting a good example." 6 and Extremely Important: 40 percent. Moderately Important and 5: 51 percent. Q36_N: "Praising children for what they do right." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 36 percent. Moderately Important and 5: 53 percent. Q36_D: "Discussing behaviors at length to help children understand why something is good or bad." Very Important (6) and Extremely Important: 22 percent. Moderately Important and 5: 66 percent.
[100] See endnote 53.
[101] Interview 2611.
[102] Q31_I: "I invest much effort in providing opportunities that will give my children a competitive advantage down the road." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 20 percent. Slightly Agree: 31 percent. Undecided: 30 percent. Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree, and Slightly Disagree: 19 percent.
[103] Interview 2224.
[104] Interview 2105.
[105] Q41_E: "How deep is the fear in your daily life [over] the possibility that one of your children will…not be financially successful in life." A Worry, But Not a Fear: 36 percent. A Real Fear: 17 percent. One of My Deepest Fears: 5 percent.

[106] Q33_J: "I would willingly support a 25-year-old child financially if they really needed it." Agree: 21 percent. Slightly Agree: 29 percent.
Q33_K: "I would encourage a 25-year-old child to move back home if they had difficulty affording housing." Agree: 23 percent. Slightly Agree: 33 percent.
[107] Q31_M: "I invest much effort in shaping the moral character of my children." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 42 percent. Slightly Agree: 33 percent. Undecided: 18 percent.
[108] Q21_AB: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…persons of strong moral character…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 33 percent. Very Important: 52 percent.
[109] Q21_F: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…loving…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 30 percent. Very Important: 55 percent. Q21_I: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…hard-working…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 28 percent. Very Important: 59 percent. Q21_P: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…reliable and dependable…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 30 percent. Very Important: 60 percent.
[110] Q21_J: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…honest and truthful…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 47 percent. Very Important: 46 percent.
[111] Q31_O: "I invest much effort in protecting my children from negative social influences." Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 27 percent. Slightly Agree: 38 percent.
[112] Q29_H: "How much parent-child disagreement typically exists around…choice of friends and activities with friends?" None and 1: 43 percent. Moderate—10: 24 percent. For parents of teens: None and 1: 44 percent.
[113] For parents of teens, No Disagreement and 1: 38 percent. 3: Moderate: 36 percent.
[114] Q31_K: "Parents today are in a losing battle with all the other influences out there." Completely and Mostly Disagree: 28 percent. Slightly Disagree 15 percent. Undecided: 29 percent.
[115] Q31_S: "I should invest more time and energy in my children." Completely Disagree, Mostly Disagree, and Slightly Disagree: 25 percent. Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 23 percent. Slightly Agree: 35 percent.
[116] Q31_Q: "I often feel inadequate as a parent." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 38 percent. Slightly Disagree: 17 percent. Undecided: 24 percent.
[117] Q21_A: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…highly educated…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 35 percent. Very Important: 41 percent.
Q21_C: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…financially independent…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 44 percent. Very Important: 44 percent.
Q21_I: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…hard-working…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 52 percent. Very Important: 44 percent.
Q21_M: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…smart/intelligent…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 29 percent. Very Important: 50 percent.
[118] Q21_F: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…loving…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 59 percent. Very Important: 35 percent.
Q21_J: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…honest and truthful…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 74 percent. Very Important: 25 percent.
Q21_P: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…reliable and dependable…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 56 percent. Very Important: 40 percent.
Q21_R: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…forgiving of others when wronged…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 29 percent. Very Important: 46 percent.
Q21_T: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…interested in preserving close ties with parents and family…as adults?" Absolutely Essential: 49 percent. Very Important: 41 percent.

Q21_U: “Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is it that your children be…generous with others…as adults?” Absolutely Essential: 31 percent. Very Important: 48 percent.

[119] Q83_C: “Please tell me whether you think…the expansion of Internet-based social networking like Facebook or Twitter…have been very bad, mostly bad, mostly good, or very good for our society?” Mostly and Very Good: 59 percent. Mostly and Very Bad: 41 percent.

In addition to the crosstab, I ran a multinomial logistic regression (not shown) (Long and Freese 2005). Even when controlling for race, marital status, education, religiosity, political affiliation, and discipline cluster, there are no significant differences. Men are more pessimistic about the impact of social media (predicted probability for bad: .54) as are highly religious parents (predicted probability for bad: .52, versus .39 for parents with the lowest level of religiosity).

Q83_D: “Please tell me whether you think…greater use of cell phones and texting as a means of communication…have been very bad, mostly bad, mostly good, or very good for our society?” Mostly and Very Good: 65 percent.

In addition to the crosstab, I ran a multinomial logistic regression (not shown). Even when controlling for gender, race, marital status, education, religiosity, political affiliation, and discipline cluster, there are no significant differences. Democratic parents are slightly more positive than other parents.

[120] Q104: “How often do you personally use Facebook or another social networking site?” Never: 29 percent. Q103: “In a typical day, how much personal (non-work-related) time would you estimate you spend on the Internet—doing email, browsing the Internet, Facebook, streaming videos, shopping, etc.?” None: 4 percent. Less than 20 Minutes and 20 Minutes to an Hour: 49 percent. 1-2 Hours and 3-4 Hours and More than Four Hours: 47 percent.

[121] In the interviews, roughly 40 percent of parents who do not talk about fear of technology nonetheless think it makes child-rearing more challenging.

[122] Interview 654: White, Non-partisan mother with some college education who follows the positive-discipline approach.

[123] Interview 412: White, Republican mother with some college education who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach.

[124] Interview 2427: White, Republican mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.

[125] Interview 84: White, Republican father with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.

[126] Interview 1689: White, Non-partisan mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.

[127] Regardless of their anxiety, ambivalence, or lack thereof, 45 percent of parents have at least one child on Facebook.

[128] Interview 1805: White, Republican father with a college degree who follows the reactive-discipline approach.

[129] Interview 630: White, Democratic mother with a college degree.

[130] Based on Q42_C: “At what age is it first appropriate for a child to have a Facebook or Twitter account?” Mean is 14.8 years, with “not appropriate at any age” excluded from the analysis. Only 4 percent of parents think social media accounts are inappropriate at any age.

There are statistically significant differences on the appropriate age of social media between:

- mothers (15.0 years) and fathers (14.5 years) (p-value = 0.005),
- white (14.4 years) and not-white parents (15.5 years) (p-value = 0.000),
- married (14.7 years) and not married parents (15.1 years) (p-value = 0.047),
- secularists (14.0 years) and those with high religiosity (15.2 years) (p-value = 0.000), and
- positive- (14.5 years) and multifaceted-approach parents (15.0 years) (p-value = 0.014).

There are no differences between parents of different education levels, geographic regions, religious preferences, or political party affiliations.

[131] By age 11, roughly one-quarter of children (29 percent) have their own Facebook or Twitter accounts, according their parents (n = 312 11-year-olds). This is up from 15 percent of 10-year-olds (n = 328 10-year-olds). At age 12, roughly half have social media accounts (47 percent) (n = 311 12-year-olds).

[132] 45 percent of children between 11 and the age deemed appropriate by their parents have a social media account (n = 738). Most of the children in this gap are 13 years or younger (58 percent), but a handful (16 percent) are 16 to 18 years old. Children whose parents think social media accounts are "not appropriate at any age" are included if they are younger than 19 years.

[133] Table 4.1—Among children 11 years or older but still younger than their parents' appropriate age.

	Appropriate Adopters	Early Adopters
Republican Positive	77 percent	23 percent
Republican Multifaceted	49 percent	51 percent
Democratic Positive	74 percent	26 percent
Democratic Multifaceted	75 percent	25 percent
Non-Partisan Positive	52 percent	48 percent
Non-Partisan Multifaceted	47 percent	53 percent

[134] Interview 1848: White, Non-partisan father with a graduate degree who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach.

[135] 28 percent of *children* who are early adopters of technology live in blended families. This does not necessarily mean that the specific child spends time in two households: it could be that he or she has a step-sibling who lives in the home part-time.

[136] Interview 2427: White, Republican mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.

[137] Q29_L: "Describe the level of parent-child disagreement that typically exists relating to Internet usage—either the amount or content."

Table 4.2—Level of Conflict by Appropriate and Early Adopters

	Conflict Among Appropriate Adopters		Conflict Among Early Adopters	
	No-to-little (0-1)	Moderate-to-high (5-10)	No-to-little (0-1)	Moderate-to-high (5-10)
Republican Positive	56 percent	2 percent	46 percent	13 percent
Republican Multifaceted	49 percent	20 percent	36 percent	30 percent
Democratic Positive	52 percent	16 percent	32 percent	32 percent
Democratic Multifaceted*	43 percent	3 percent	33 percent	42 percent
Non-Partisan Positive	49 percent	11 percent	54 percent	20 percent
Non-Partisan Multifaceted	52 percent	29 percent	41 percent	21 percent

* Due to sample size and design effects, this is the only group that has a statistically significant difference between appropriate and early adopters.

[138] Q33_H: "Trying to control teenagers' access to technology is a losing battle." For parents with children younger than the parents' appropriate age but on social media: (Because of the small sample size of these groups, the categories were reduced).

- Republicans: Disagree: 48 percent. Agree: 47 percent (n = 98).
- Politically non-partisan: Disagree: 51 percent. Agree: 36 percent (n = 177).
- Democrats: Disagree: 24 percent. Agree: 66 percent (n = 66).
- Not political: Disagree: 50 percent. Agree: 35 percent (n = 102).

Even with the small sample size, this is a statistically significant difference. This pattern holds, even with smaller cell sizes when crossed with the discipline clusters. Positive Democrats are most likely to say they do not have control of their teens' technology (10 times more likely to say they are not in control of their children's technology use than to think they are in control). Positive Republicans are the most confident in their control over their children's technology use; 3 out of 5 say they are not losing the battle. Multifaceted-approach parents—both Republicans and Democrats—think they are in a losing battle, but neither is as pessimistic as positive Democratic parents.

[139] Q33_H: "Trying to control teenagers' access to technology is a losing battle." For parents with children younger than the parents' appropriate age but who are on social media: (Because of the small sample size of these groups, the categories were reduced).

- Republicans: Disagree: 70 percent.
- Politically non-partisan: Disagree: 57 percent.
- Democrats: 54 percent.
- Not Political: 61 percent.

These differences are not statistically significant (p = 0.759).

[140] Interview 96: Black, Democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach.

[141] Interview 96: Black, Democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach.

[142] Interview 1689: White, Non-partisan mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.

[143] Interview 1757: Black, Non-partisan mother with a college degree who follows the reactive-discipline approach.

[144] The Pew Research Center's *Teens and Privacy Management Survey* was fielded July-September 2012, roughly six months after the *Culture of American Families Survey*. Because of the close timing of the two surveys, the *Teen and Privacy Management Survey* provides a reasonable comparison for talking about teen use versus parental knowledge.

[145] Parental report of social media accounts is 49 percent of children 12 and 13 years old and 75 percent for teens 14 to 17 years old.

[146] Interview 2397: Black, Democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach.

[147] Q33_H: "Trying to control teenagers' access to technology is a losing battle." Answer: Slightly Agree.

[148] Q18_g: "Children's Internet access is not restricted./Children's Internet access is tightly restricted." For families with children not on social media *and* without cell phones: 6 and 7: 72 percent. Only 7 percent say there is no oversight (1 and 2). In addition, I ran a multinomial logistic regression (not shown) controlling for gender, race, marital status, education, religious affiliation, religiosity, political affiliation, and disciplinary approach. None of these variables produced a statistically significant difference in the predicted probabilities.

[149] Q49: "In a typical day, how much time would you estimate your [Selected Child] spends on the Internet—doing email, browsing the Internet, Facebook, streaming videos, shopping, etc.?" For parents whose selected child "has *neither* cell phone *nor* social network account" (Q7_technology; n = 1,200): None: 48 percent. Less than 20 minutes: 25 percent. 20 minutes to an hour: 19 percent. More than an hour: 8 percent. For these children who lack technological independence, the mean age is 7.9 years old.

[150] Q18_G: "Children's Internet access is not restricted./Children's Internet access is tightly restricted." For positive-discipline Democratic parents who have at least one child who has a cell phone and/or a social media account. Not Restricted (1 and 2): 34 percent. Tightly Restricted (6 and 7): 20 percent. For positive-discipline Republicans and all multifaceted-discipline parents, roughly 15 percent say it is Not Restricted (1 and 2) while around 45 percent say it is Tightly Restricted (6 and 7).

[151] This difference is not explained by the age of the child. Among parents with children who have either a cell phone and/or a social media account, there is no statistically significant difference in age for the oldest child of Positive-discipline Democratic parents (mean age: 15.8). Other politically engaged parents have an oldest child that ranges from 15.6 for multifaceted-discipline Democrats to 16.1 for multifaceted-discipline Republicans. For their youngest child, positive-discipline Democrats have children that are slightly (and statistically significantly) older than other parents' children, but the difference is still small. Positive-discipline Democrats have a youngest of 12.1 (mean) compared to 10.9 years for both multifaceted-discipline Democrats (p = 0.18) and positive-discipline Republicans (p = 0.04). While this difference is statistically remarkable, the difference between 11 and 12 years of age is unlikely to be the reason why positive-discipline Democratic parents are more relaxed in terms of Internet monitoring.

Furthermore, a multinomial logistic regression (not shown; Likelihood ratio: 334.315; p = .000) included gender, race, marital status, education, religious affiliation, religiosity, age of the oldest child, political affiliation, disciplinary approach, and an interaction between political affiliation and disciplinary approach, it becomes clear that positive-discipline Democrats, in the absence of other traits that correlate with it, are not statistically different from non-political and non-partisan parents who are also positive in discipline style. What becomes apparent is that positive-approach Republicans are the positive-approach outlier with predicted high monitoring mirroring multifaceted-discipline parents of all political persuasions. Thus, it is clear that Democrats, non-partisan, and non-political parents are split along disciplinary approaches but Republicans are unified within in their political affiliation across disciplinary approaches. Since I control for gender, race, and education, the differences here are not attributable to these factors.

Table 4.3—Multinomial Logistic Regression on Parental Report of Internet Restriction

(Base outcome: Internet Is Tightly Restricted. Reference Category: White, Catholic mothers with some college education and follow the reactive approach to discipline)

	Internet is not restricted.						3			Balanced				5		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	
Father	0.109	0.212	1.115	-0.306	0.524	0.098	0.293	1.103	-0.477	0.672	0.172	0.261	1.187	-0.340	0.683	0.320	0.264	1.377	-0.197	0.837
Not White	-0.095	0.241	0.910	-0.568	0.378	-0.329	0.339	0.720	-0.994	0.337	-0.043	0.294	0.958	-0.620	0.534	-0.152	0.313	0.859	-0.767	0.463
Not Married	-0.029	0.237	0.971	-0.493	0.435	-0.440	0.371	0.644	-1.167	0.288	0.176	0.287	1.193	-0.386	0.739	-0.569	0.323	0.566	-1.203	0.066
High School	-0.364	0.288	0.695	-0.929	0.201	-0.069	0.386	0.933	-0.827	0.689	0.144	0.310	1.155	-0.465	0.753	0.174	0.319	1.190	-0.451	0.799
Bachelors Degree	0.425	0.245	1.529	-0.056	0.905	0.021	0.345	1.021	-0.656	0.697	0.210	0.269	1.233	-0.317	0.737	0.726	0.301	2.067	0.135	1.317
Masters or more	0.259	0.311	1.295	-0.352	0.870	0.470	0.453	1.599	-0.418	1.358	0.259	0.334	1.295	-0.397	0.915	0.258	0.425	1.294	-0.576	1.092
Oldest Child	0.158	0.032	1.171	0.095	0.221	0.092	0.036	1.096	0.021	0.163	0.097	0.034	1.102	0.030	0.163	0.044	0.035	1.045	-0.024	0.112
Progressive Protestant	0.496	0.296	1.642	-0.084	1.076	0.265	0.403	1.304	-0.526	1.057	0.392	0.345	1.480	-0.285	1.070	0.510	0.344	1.666	-0.164	1.185
Evangelical	-0.146	0.335	0.864	-0.804	0.512	-0.522	0.456	0.594	-1.417	0.373	0.520	0.363	1.681	-0.192	1.232	0.227	0.358	1.254	-0.476	0.929
No Religion	0.151	0.363	1.163	-0.562	0.864	-0.793	0.489	0.452	-1.752	0.166	0.339	0.414	1.404	-0.472	1.151	-1.035	0.443	0.355	-1.904	-0.166
Other Religion	-0.146	0.360	0.865	-0.852	0.561	-2.081	0.739	0.125	-3.531	-0.630	-0.542	0.443	0.581	-1.411	0.326	0.084	0.456	1.088	-0.811	0.979
Religiosity	-0.231	0.109	0.794	-0.445	-0.017	-0.253	0.170	0.776	-0.586	0.080	-0.101	0.122	0.904	-0.340	0.139	-0.300	0.132	0.741	-0.560	-0.041
Republican	-0.341	0.732	0.711	-1.777	1.095	-0.541	1.065	0.582	-2.630	1.548	0.744	0.786	2.105	-0.798	2.286	0.248	0.772	1.281	-1.267	1.763
Democratic	-1.111	0.756	0.329	-2.595	0.373	1.096	0.779	2.994	-0.432	2.625	0.036	0.847	1.037	-1.626	1.698	0.296	0.765	1.345	-1.204	1.796
Not Political	-0.431	0.693	0.650	-1.791	0.928	0.923	0.724	2.517	-0.498	2.344	0.412	0.694	1.510	-0.949	1.773	0.617	0.680	1.854	-0.716	1.951
Positive Discipline	-0.516	0.495	0.597	-1.486	0.454	0.013	0.570	1.013	-1.105	1.131	-0.152	0.599	0.859	-1.326	1.022	0.027	0.566	1.028	-1.084	1.138
Multifaceted Discipline	-1.545	0.496	0.213	-2.518	-0.573	-0.570	0.598	0.565	-1.743	0.602	-0.835	0.609	0.434	-2.030	0.360	0.024	0.522	1.025	-1.000	1.048
Interaction																				
Republican by Positive	-0.810	0.870	0.445	-2.515	0.896	-0.868	1.229	0.420	-3.279	1.542	-1.003	0.920	0.367	-2.808	0.803	-0.652	0.903	0.521	-2.423	1.120
Republican by Multifaceted	0.553	0.841	1.739	-1.097	2.203	0.869	1.189	2.384	-1.464	3.201	-0.437	0.926	0.646	-2.252	1.379	-0.391	0.910	0.677	-2.176	1.395
Democratic by Positive	1.466	0.865	4.331	-0.230	3.162	-0.321	0.902	0.725	-2.090	1.448	0.063	0.974	1.066	-1.847	1.974	0.130	0.898	1.138	-1.632	1.891
Democratic by Multifaceted	1.523	0.875	4.584	-0.194	3.239	-1.371	1.013	0.254	-3.358	0.616	0.142	0.980	1.152	-1.780	2.064	-1.964	1.012	0.140	-3.949	0.021
Not Political by Positive	0.240	0.794	1.271	-1.317	1.797	-0.799	0.896	0.450	-2.558	0.959	-0.231	0.865	0.794	-1.927	1.465	-0.882	0.948	0.414	-2.742	0.977
Not Political by Multifaceted	0.618	0.803	1.856	-0.958	2.194	-0.798	1.040	0.450	-2.837	1.242	-0.082	0.844	0.921	-1.738	1.573	-0.738	0.810	0.478	-2.326	0.850
Constant	-1.654	0.679	0.191	-2.986	-0.322	-1.675	0.823	0.187	-3.289	-0.060	-2.137	0.879	0.118	-3.861	-0.414	-1.090	0.800	0.336	-2.660	0.480
Likelihood Ratio	271.075																			
McFadden's R^2	0.061																			

[152] See Endnote 156.

[153] Q42_E: "Please tell us the age at which you think it first becomes appropriate for a child to…surf the web without parental monitoring or supervision."

	Positive (15.9 years)	Multifaceted (17.0 years)	Reactive (16.0 years)
Democratic (16.3 years)	15.8 years	17.1 years	15.5 years

Non-Partisan (16.2 years)	15.3 years	17.3 years	15.1 years
Republican (16.6 years)	16.5 years	16.8 years	15.5 years
Non-Political (16.7 years)	16.6 years	16.9 years	16.9 years

[154] When time spent on the Internet (Q103) is added to the multinomial logistic regression, for Internet monitoring, it indicates a statistically significant negative relationship between time spent on the Internet for personal use and the level of Internet restriction that parents of technologically active children report (Likelihood ratio: 344.759; p = 0.000).

Q103: "In a typical day, how much personal (non-work-related) time would you estimate that you spend on the Internet—doing email, browsing the Internet, Facebook, streaming videos, shopping, etc.?"

Table 4.4—Multinomial Logistic Regression on Parental Report of Internet Restriction

(Base outcome: Internet Is Tightly Restricted. Reference Category: White, Catholic mothers with some college education and follow the reactive approach to discipline. Likelihood Ratio and McFadden's R2 calculated without the survey design function.)

	Internet is not restricted.					3					Balanced					5				
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	
Father	0.084	0.213	1.088	-0.334	0.502	0.020	0.292	1.020	-0.553	0.593	0.132	0.260	1.142	-0.378	0.643	0.268	0.260	1.307	-0.243	0.778
Not White	-0.114	0.243	0.892	-0.590	0.362	-0.417	0.345	0.659	-1.094	0.259	-0.050	0.286	0.951	-0.611	0.511	-0.121	0.316	0.886	-0.742	0.500
Not Married	-0.045	0.238	0.956	-0.512	0.423	-0.442	0.364	0.642	-1.156	0.272	0.172	0.287	1.187	-0.391	0.735	-0.565	0.326	0.568	-1.204	0.073
High School	-0.389	0.291	0.678	-0.959	0.181	-0.096	0.388	0.908	-0.856	0.664	0.120	0.312	1.127	-0.493	0.733	0.043	0.313	1.044	-0.571	0.658
Bachelors Degree	0.404	0.246	1.497	-0.079	0.887	0.013	0.345	1.013	-0.665	0.690	0.193	0.268	1.212	-0.333	0.718	0.702	0.303	2.019	0.109	1.296
Masters or more	0.250	0.310	1.284	-0.359	0.859	0.353	0.463	1.423	-0.555	1.261	0.264	0.334	1.302	-0.392	0.920	0.214	0.423	1.239	-0.615	1.043
Oldest Child	0.157	0.032	1.171	0.094	0.220	0.092	0.037	1.096	0.020	0.165	0.098	0.034	1.103	0.031	0.165	0.036	0.035	1.037	-0.033	0.105
Progressive Protestant	0.452	0.296	1.572	-0.129	1.033	0.205	0.397	1.227	-0.574	0.983	0.315	0.349	1.370	-0.370	1.000	0.523	0.343	1.688	-0.149	1.196
Evangelical	-0.164	0.338	0.849	-0.826	0.498	-0.470	0.468	0.625	-1.388	0.449	0.492	0.356	1.636	-0.207	1.191	0.115	0.356	1.122	-0.582	0.813
No Religion	0.167	0.363	1.182	-0.546	0.880	-0.930	0.471	0.395	-1.854	-0.005	0.381	0.414	1.463	-0.431	1.192	-1.043	0.446	0.352	-1.918	-0.169
Other Religion	-0.167	0.362	0.847	-0.877	0.544	-2.064	0.740	0.127	-3.515	-0.612	-0.551	0.444	0.577	-1.421	0.319	0.089	0.460	1.093	-0.812	0.990
Religiosity	-0.209	0.111	0.812	-0.426	0.009	-0.273	0.166	0.761	-0.599	0.054	-0.072	0.123	0.931	-0.312	0.169	-0.292	0.132	0.747	-0.551	-0.033
Republican	-0.344	0.726	0.709	-1.768	1.080	-0.486	1.042	0.615	-2.529	1.558	0.735	0.774	2.086	-0.783	2.253	0.225	0.763	1.252	-1.271	1.721
Democratic	-1.040	0.741	0.353	-2.493	0.413	1.177	0.763	3.244	-0.320	2.674	0.109	0.810	1.116	-1.480	1.698	0.259	0.755	1.296	-1.221	1.740
Not Political	-0.389	0.698	0.678	-1.758	0.979	1.027	0.733	2.794	-0.410	2.465	0.346	0.686	1.414	-0.999	1.692	0.678	0.677	1.970	-0.651	2.007
Positive Discipline	-0.507	0.499	0.602	-1.486	0.472	-0.046	0.585	0.955	-1.193	1.101	-0.144	0.590	0.866	-1.301	1.012	-0.004	0.566	0.996	-1.114	1.105
Multifaceted Discipline	-1.585	0.500	0.205	-2.565	-0.605	-0.576	0.607	0.562	-1.767	0.616	-0.861	0.593	0.423	-2.025	0.303	-0.142	0.515	0.867	-1.152	0.867
Interaction																				
Republican by Positive	-0.813	0.861	0.443	-2.503	0.876	-0.755	1.198	0.470	-3.104	1.594	-1.006	0.909	0.366	-2.790	0.777	-0.637	0.894	0.529	-2.391	1.116
Republican by Multifaceted	0.570	0.835	1.768	-1.069	2.208	0.832	1.166	2.298	-1.455	3.119	-0.436	0.909	0.646	-2.220	1.348	-0.170	0.901	0.843	-1.938	1.598
Democratic by Positive	1.367	0.845	3.923	-0.290	3.024	-0.328	0.888	0.720	-2.071	1.415	-0.074	0.948	0.929	-1.933	1.785	0.128	0.889	1.137	-1.616	1.872
Democratic by Multifaceted	1.514	0.862	4.545	-0.178	3.206	-1.334	1.004	0.263	-3.303	0.634	0.107	0.947	1.113	-1.750	1.965	-1.814	0.999	0.163	-3.774	0.146
Not Political by Positive	0.228	0.795	1.256	-1.332	1.789	-0.769	0.898	0.464	-2.530	0.993	-0.143	0.862	0.866	-1.835	1.548	-0.947	0.941	0.388	-2.792	0.898
Not Political by Multifaceted	0.592	0.816	1.808	-1.008	2.192	-0.940	1.086	0.391	-3.069	1.190	-0.031	0.833	0.969	-1.665	1.603	-0.618	0.810	0.539	-2.207	0.971
Parental Internet Use	0.291	0.159	1.338	-0.021	0.604	0.413	0.214	1.511	-0.007	0.832	0.312	0.154	1.366	0.009	0.615	0.047	0.196	1.048	-0.337	0.431
Constant	-2.380	0.849	0.093	-4.044	-0.715	-2.613	0.941	0.073	-4.459	-0.767	-2.957	0.929	0.052	-4.780	-1.135	-0.996	0.939	0.369	-2.839	0.847
Likelihood Ratio	279.862																			
McFadden's R^2	0.064																			

[155] This could be an indication of a division of labor: respondents who are not active online in their personal lives allow their partners to monitor the Internet access in their homes. In conversations with one mother—a Democrat who follows positive discipline—mentioned that her husband, who works as a video game developer, was responsible for the software solutions that monitor Internet traffic and email communication (Interview 919: White, Democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the positive-approach). Another father, a Republican, said his wife was the "go-to-person" and the one who "lays down the law" with their three daughters, so she was the one who kept a close eye on cell phone logs and Internet traffic (Interview 1805: White, Republican father with a college degree who follows the reactive approach). Division of labor clearly applies in these two homes, but evidence suggests that many parents want to say they are more restrictive than they actually practice.
For unmarried parents, the same pattern—low personal Internet use but high restrictions for teens—holds. In the multinomial logistic regression (see endnote 154), marital status is statistically significant but does not produce a significant difference in the predicted probabilities of parents saying they tightly restrict their children's Internet access (see Table 4.3)
In single-parent homes, there is only one parent who must do all the monitoring. This would suggest that many parents—married and unmarried—are more relaxed than they want to appear. (A handful of parents, seven percent of those with technologically independent children, are living with a partner who could, theoretically, provide Internet restriction. However, given the statistics on the stability of cohabitation, it is more likely that the survey respondent is responsible for the restrictions since he or she is considered the stable adult in the child's life (Cherlin 2010; Kennedy and Bumpass 2008)).
[156] For parents with technologically-active children: Q104: "How often do you personally use Facebook or another social media account?" Never: 30 percent. Daily or More: 32 percent. For parents who "tightly restrict" their children's Internet use, there is no difference in social media use patterns: Never: 32 percent. Daily or More: 31 percent.
[157] Among interview parents with technologically independent children, only 9 of the 40 parents (roughly 30 percent) who talk about technology claim that they try to monitor their children online. An additional five (roughly 10 percent) talk about encountering problematic online behavior by chance. For example, the mother who found her son's Facebook account because she walked into his room while he was logged in (see Footnote 27).
[158] Interviews 432, 919, 996, 1805, and 2252.
[159] Interview 295: Multiracial, Non-partisan mother with some college who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach. Q18_G: "tightly monitor the Internet."
[160] Interview 2098: White, Democratic mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. Q18_G: "tightly monitor" the Internet.
[161] Interview 654: White, Non-partisan mother with some college education who follows the positive-discipline approach. Q18_G: Internet is "not restricted"
[162] The idea of symbolic monitoring draws on directly on the work of Allison Pugh. In her consumption study, Pugh argued that parents engaged in either "symbolic deprivation" or "symbolic indulgence" as a way of reconciling the difference between what they did provide and what they thought they should provide for their children. Upper-class parents used symbolic deprivation—pointing to all the things their children did not have—as a way to bridge the gap between their children's material abundance and their concerns about materialism and entitlement. Lower-class parents used symbolic indulgence—highlighting the important commodities their children did have—to demonstrate their care for their children even though they could not provide them with all they items they wanted.
[163] For parents who say the Internet is "tightly restricted" and have children with either a cell phone or a social media account, 54 percent say there is little to no conflict (0-2) relating to cell phones, texting, or Internet, which includes 21 percent say there is *no* conflict (0).
[164] Q31.A: "It is easier to raise children today than it was 50 years ago." Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: 51 percent. Completely Agree and Mostly Agree: 5 percent. Parental efficacy makes no difference, neither does political party. Positive-discipline parents are less pessimistic than other parents.

[165] Q31.A (see above). Completely Disagree and Mostly Disagree: Positive: 42 percent. Multifaceted: 64 percent. Reactive: 42 percent.
[166] Q20: "The way we were raised often influences our parenting. Which statement *best* expresses the way your own upbringing influences your parenting?"
"The way I was raised is mostly a positive model that I try to repeat with my own children."—35 percent.
"The way I was raised was an *equal mix* of good and bad; I repeat some things and reject others with my own children."—47 percent.
There is no difference in this across discipline approaches or political affiliation.
[167] Interview 112: White, Democratic mother with college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.
[168] Interview 112: White, Democratic mother with college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach.
[169] Interview 1255: White, Democratic mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. This mother was interviewed with her husband, a white, stay-at-home dad who agreed with her assessment about the state of modern parenting.
[170] Q40.F: "To me, parenting means…being well informed/Following your instincts." Equally(4): 43 percent. "Being well informed" (1 and 2): 26 percent vs. "Following your instincts" (6 and 7): 8 percent
[171] Parental efficacy is measured using mean index of the following seven questions:

- Q31_D: "I often wonder if I am doing a good job as a parent."
- Q31_H: "My children need more from me than I am able to provide."
- Q31_J: "I have little clue what it takes to be a really good parent."
- Q31_K: "Parents today are in a losing battle with all the other influences out there."
- Q31_Q: "I often feel inadequate as a parent."
- Q31_S: "I should invest more time and energy in my children."
- Q33_C: "Once children enter high school, parents have little influence over them."

Lower scores represent greater disagreement with each of these statements. 57 percent of parents scored a 3.5 or lower on the index. This indicates that they, on average, "Slightly Disagree" with these statements.
[172] Parents who received a 2.5 or lower, which on average indicates they "Mostly" or "Completely" disagreed with the statements, represent just 24 percent of parents. In a multinomial logistic regression, the largest statistically significant trait for parents with the greatest sense of efficacy was following the positive-discipline approach (predicted probability: 0.43 for "Mostly" or "Completely" Disagree). In addition, women and politically engaged parents are more likely to have certainty in the ability to parent, but not to the same degree as the positive-discipline approach. However, too much should not be made of these findings since the regression only reduces the prediction error by a small amount
Reference group are white, Catholic mothers with some college education. These mothers are politically non-partisan and follow the multifaceted-discipline approach. Base outcome is Undecided category of Parental Efficacy Index (see endnote 171). Likelihood Ratio and McFadden's R2 calculated without the survey design function.

Table 5.1—Multinomial Logistic Regression on Parental Efficacy Index

	Mostly Disagree					Slightly Disagree					Agree				
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	
Father	-0.487	0.181	0.614	-0.842	-0.133	-0.157	0.176	0.855	-0.502	0.189	-0.292	0.248	0.747	-0.778	0.194
Not White	-0.185	0.205	0.831	-0.587	0.216	-0.225	0.196	0.799	-0.609	0.159	0.147	0.264	1.158	-0.372	0.665
Not Married	-0.164	0.217	0.849	-0.590	0.262	0.215	0.207	1.240	-0.192	0.622	0.218	0.260	1.244	-0.292	0.729
High School	-0.153	0.244	0.858	-0.630	0.325	-0.430	0.227	0.650	-0.874	0.014	0.028	0.282	1.029	-0.525	0.581
Bachelors Degree	0.271	0.219	1.311	-0.158	0.699	-0.055	0.203	0.946	-0.454	0.343	-0.107	0.269	0.899	-0.635	0.421
Masters or more	-0.213	0.262	0.808	-0.727	0.302	-0.398	0.238	0.672	-0.865	0.069	-0.566	0.379	0.568	-1.309	0.177
Oldest Child	0.009	0.018	1.009	-0.026	0.044	0.012	0.016	1.012	-0.020	0.044	0.066	0.023	1.068	0.022	0.111
Progressive Protestant	-0.127	0.242	0.881	-0.601	0.347	0.240	0.240	1.271	-0.231	0.711	-0.155	0.315	0.856	-0.774	0.463
Evangelical	0.016	0.265	1.016	-0.504	0.536	0.533	0.267	1.704	0.009	1.057	0.877	0.350	2.404	0.190	1.564
No Religion	0.249	0.312	1.283	-0.362	0.860	0.260	0.291	1.297	-0.310	0.831	-0.510	0.368	0.600	-1.231	0.210
Other Religion	0.126	0.346	1.134	-0.553	0.804	0.813	0.331	2.254	0.163	1.462	1.682	0.396	5.375	0.905	2.458
Religiosity	0.127	0.093	1.136	-0.056	0.310	0.059	0.093	1.061	-0.123	0.241	-0.434	0.115	0.648	-0.659	-0.209
Republican	0.293	0.250	1.341	-0.197	0.783	0.401	0.230	1.494	-0.049	0.851	0.091	0.351	1.095	-0.597	0.778
Democratic	0.239	0.254	1.270	-0.259	0.737	0.341	0.249	1.406	-0.147	0.829	0.491	0.339	1.634	-0.173	1.155
Not Political	-0.643	0.248	0.525	-1.129	-0.158	-0.197	0.229	0.821	-0.646	0.251	-0.193	0.270	0.824	-0.723	0.337
Positive Discipline	0.565	0.209	1.760	0.155	0.975	0.183	0.197	1.200	-0.203	0.568	-0.137	0.284	0.872	-0.695	0.420
Reactive Discipline	-0.690	0.278	0.502	-1.234	-0.145	-0.296	0.235	0.744	-0.756	0.164	-0.321	0.290	0.725	-0.889	0.247
Constant	-0.198	0.447	0.821	-1.074	0.678	-0.075	0.406	0.927	-0.871	0.720	-0.973	0.560	0.378	-2.072	0.126
Likelihood Ratio	234.696														
McFadden's R^2	0.040														

[173] 68 percent of positive-approach parents disagree that they lack parental efficacy, including 33 percent who strongly disagree. Among reactive-approach parents, 41 percent are undecided about their abilities to parent and an additional 13 percent agree that they do not have much influence over their children. Even when controlling for education (Less than BA vs. BA or more), this same basic pattern holds. The difference in parental efficacy across discipline approaches cannot be attributed to the educational variation across the three groups.

[174] Q41.F: "We all have nagging fears for our children, the things that we hope will never happen. Please select the answer that represents how deep the fear is in your daily life that one of your children will…want things handed to them rather than working hard." "Not a Concern at All" (1) and "Only a Small Concern" (2): 56 percent.

[175] Reference category is white, married mothers with some college. They are Catholic, political but non-partisan, and follow the multifaceted disciplinary approach. Base outcome for both regressions is A Real Fear. Likelihood Ratio and McFadden's R2 calculated without the survey design function.

Table 5.2—Multinomial Logistic Regression on Fear that Children Will Not Want to Work Hard

	No Concern					Small Concern					A Worry				
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	
Father	0.094	0.224	1.098	-0.345	0.532	-0.080	0.216	0.924	-0.502	0.343	0.134	0.214	1.144	-0.286	0.555
Not White	-0.231	0.238	0.793	-0.699	0.236	-0.465	0.241	0.628	-0.936	0.007	-0.250	0.233	0.779	-0.708	0.207
Not Married	0.212	0.251	1.236	-0.280	0.704	0.043	0.249	1.044	-0.446	0.532	0.017	0.245	1.017	-0.464	0.498
High School	-0.297	0.290	0.743	-0.867	0.272	-0.134	0.282	0.875	-0.687	0.420	-0.101	0.278	0.904	-0.647	0.445
Bachelors Degree	-0.494	0.259	0.610	-1.003	0.014	0.099	0.253	1.104	-0.398	0.596	0.302	0.246	1.353	-0.181	0.785
Masters or more	-0.568	0.319	0.566	-1.194	0.057	0.171	0.310	1.187	-0.436	0.778	0.304	0.310	1.356	-0.304	0.913
Oldest Child	0.051	0.021	1.053	0.010	0.093	0.033	0.019	1.033	-0.006	0.071	0.043	0.020	1.044	0.004	0.081
Progressive Protestant	0.333	0.308	1.395	-0.270	0.937	0.106	0.292	1.112	-0.467	0.680	0.237	0.283	1.267	-0.319	0.792
Evangelical	0.622	0.341	1.863	-0.046	1.291	0.599	0.339	1.820	-0.067	1.265	0.364	0.327	1.439	-0.277	1.004
No Religion	0.785	0.364	2.192	0.071	1.498	0.464	0.361	1.590	-0.244	1.172	0.939	0.354	2.559	0.245	1.634
Other Religion	-0.041	0.396	0.960	-0.817	0.736	-0.286	0.377	0.751	-1.026	0.453	0.016	0.364	1.016	-0.698	0.731
Religiosity	0.137	0.114	1.147	-0.087	0.361	0.023	0.115	1.023	-0.203	0.248	0.068	0.109	1.070	-0.147	0.283
Republican	0.262	0.312	1.300	-0.350	0.875	0.443	0.296	1.557	-0.137	1.023	0.447	0.301	1.564	-0.144	1.038
Democratic	0.188	0.302	1.207	-0.404	0.780	0.208	0.288	1.232	-0.357	0.774	0.112	0.283	1.119	-0.443	0.667
Not Political	0.299	0.287	1.349	-0.263	0.861	0.280	0.277	1.323	-0.264	0.824	0.450	0.264	1.568	-0.067	0.967
Positive Discipline	0.587	0.254	1.799	0.088	1.086	0.403	0.240	1.496	-0.068	0.874	0.378	0.240	1.459	-0.094	0.849
Reactive Discipline	0.201	0.334	1.223	-0.454	0.857	0.590	0.314	1.804	-0.026	1.206	0.408	0.309	1.503	-0.198	1.013
Efficacy	-0.781	0.092	0.458	-0.961	-0.601	-0.514	0.089	0.598	-0.687	-0.340	-0.244	0.091	0.783	-0.422	-0.067
Constant	1.535	0.594	4.641	0.371	2.699	1.303	0.572	3.679	0.182	2.423	-0.076	0.597	0.927	-1.247	1.096
Likelihood Ratio	306.468														
McFadden's R^2	0.051														

Table 5.3—Multinomial Logistic Regression on Fear that Children Will Lack Ambition to Succeed

			No Concern				Small Concern			A Worry		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	
Father	-0.392	0.204	0.676	-0.793	0.009	-0.066	0.204	0.936	-0.467	0.334	-0.311	0.210	0.732	-0.723	0.100
Not White	-0.348	0.236	0.706	-0.810	0.114	-0.476	0.237	0.621	-0.940	-0.012	-0.512	0.236	0.599	-0.974	-0.049
Not Married	-0.315	0.234	0.730	-0.774	0.145	-0.430	0.237	0.650	-0.896	0.035	-0.335	0.242	0.715	-0.809	0.139
High School	0.010	0.261	1.011	-0.501	0.522	-0.139	0.277	0.870	-0.681	0.403	-0.101	0.266	0.904	-0.623	0.421
Bachelors Degree	0.110	0.243	1.117	-0.367	0.587	0.457	0.243	1.579	-0.020	0.934	0.215	0.239	1.240	-0.253	0.683
Masters or more	0.063	0.294	1.065	-0.513	0.639	0.670	0.294	1.954	0.093	1.246	0.205	0.309	1.227	-0.400	0.810
Oldest Child	-0.002	0.018	0.998	-0.038	0.034	0.021	0.019	1.021	-0.017	0.058	0.003	0.019	1.003	-0.034	0.040
Progressive Protestant	0.429	0.282	1.536	-0.124	0.982	0.106	0.267	1.112	-0.416	0.629	0.263	0.281	1.300	-0.289	0.815
Evangelical	0.368	0.308	1.445	-0.236	0.972	0.328	0.319	1.388	-0.297	0.953	0.116	0.308	1.123	-0.488	0.721
No Religion	1.442	0.357	4.229	0.743	2.141	1.082	0.349	2.950	0.398	1.765	1.194	0.355	3.301	0.498	1.890
Other Religion	0.216	0.369	1.241	-0.507	0.939	0.068	0.368	1.071	-0.653	0.790	0.230	0.374	1.258	-0.504	0.963
Religiosity	0.352	0.110	1.422	0.137	0.567	0.339	0.113	1.404	0.117	0.561	0.311	0.110	1.364	0.095	0.527
Republican	0.154	0.288	1.167	-0.410	0.718	0.264	0.282	1.302	-0.288	0.816	0.374	0.287	1.454	-0.189	0.937
Democratic	0.200	0.280	1.221	-0.349	0.749	0.075	0.279	1.078	-0.472	0.622	0.205	0.298	1.228	-0.379	0.790
Not Political	-0.015	0.266	0.985	-0.537	0.508	-0.096	0.270	0.909	-0.625	0.433	0.451	0.258	1.570	-0.054	0.956
Positive Discipline	0.414	0.223	1.513	-0.023	0.851	0.401	0.230	1.493	-0.051	0.852	0.007	0.229	1.007	-0.442	0.457
Reactive Discipline	0.099	0.296	1.104	-0.481	0.679	0.266	0.294	1.304	-0.310	0.842	0.201	0.284	1.222	-0.357	0.758
Constant	-0.595	0.454	0.551	-1.486	0.295	-1.040	0.472	0.354	-1.965	-0.115	-0.577	0.457	0.562	-1.473	0.320
Likelihood Ratio	122.171														
McFadden's R^2	0.020														

[176] Q41.F: "We all have nagging fears for our children, the things that we hope will never happen. Please select the answer that represents how deep the fear is in your daily life that one of your children will…want things handed to them rather than working hard." Not a Concern at All (1): 48 percent. Only a Small Concern (2): 27 percent. This is true even when controlling for education, discipline approach, and political orientation.
Q41.L: "We all have nagging fears for our children, the things that we hope will never happen. Please select the answer that represents how deep the fear is in your daily life that one of your children will…lack the ambition to succeed." Not a Concern at All (1): 48 percent. Only a Small Concern (2): 29 percent.
[177] Interview 1450: White, non-partisan mother with a graduate degree who follows the multifaceted disciplinary approach. She has a strong sense of parental efficacy. She has "a real fear" that her children "will want things handed to them rather than working hard" but she is has "only a small concern" that they will "lack the ambition to succeed."
[178] Interview 783: White, democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the positive disciplinary approach. She is reasonably confident in her abilities to parent, and she is worried that her children "want things handed to them" and "lack the ambition to succeed."
[179] The handful of parents who thought they might be raising entitled children were all Democrats, and more likely, had high education. However, due to the construction of the interview sample, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the connection between Democrats and the concern that they might be contributing to the growing sense of entitlement.
[180] Interview 472: White, Democratic mother with a college degree who follows the positive disciplinary approach. She says she is worried that her children "will want things handed to them rather than working hard" and that they will "lack the ambition to succeed."
[181] Interview 493: White, Republican father with some college who follows the positive disciplinary approach.
[182] Q21.I: "Thinking about your own hopes for your children, how important is each of the following as adults? Hard-working." Only five *respondents* said that this trait was either "Not at All Important" or "Not Very Important." 95 percent of parents said it was "Very Important" (44 percent) or "Absolutely Essential" (51 percent).
[183] "Compared to when you were growing up, would you say there has been a decline or improvement in…the American Work Ethic?" Strong and Moderate Decline: 66 percent.
[184] While two-thirds of parents feel that the American work ethic is in decline compared to their own childhood, this could be no more than powerful nostalgia (Boym 2007; Gillis 1996; Oliver 2010). For the sake of my argument here, it is more important that parents *feel* that they are fighting against a larger force of cultural decline. The accuracy of their memories, and how well those memories map onto the historical narrative, is of lesser importance.
[185] Reference category is white, married mothers with some college. They are Catholic, political but non-partisan, and follow the multifaceted disciplinary approach. Base outcome is Improving and Holding Steady. Likelihood Ratio and McFadden's R2 calculated without the survey design function.

Table 5.4—Multinomial Logistic Regression on State of American Work Ethic

	Strong Decline					Moderate Decline				
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval		Coefficient	Standard Error	Relative Risk Ratio	Confidence Interval	
Father	-0.230	0.191	0.794	-0.605	0.145	-0.034	0.155	0.966	-0.339	0.270
Not White	-0.332	0.210	0.718	-0.743	0.080	-0.624	0.167	0.536	-0.953	-0.296
Not Married	-0.100	0.219	0.905	-0.530	0.329	-0.260	0.179	0.771	-0.611	0.092
High School	0.127	0.243	1.136	-0.350	0.604	-0.085	0.209	0.919	-0.494	0.325
Bachelors Degree	-0.183	0.220	0.832	-0.616	0.249	0.117	0.181	1.124	-0.238	0.472
Masters or more	-0.487	0.262	0.615	-1.001	0.027	-0.076	0.222	0.927	-0.511	0.359
Oldest Child	0.010	0.018	1.010	-0.026	0.046	0.000	0.015	1.000	-0.030	0.029
Progressive Protestant	0.641	0.262	1.898	0.126	1.155	0.554	0.207	1.739	0.148	0.959
Evangelical	0.970	0.292	2.637	0.398	1.541	0.655	0.238	1.926	0.188	1.123
No Religion	0.337	0.340	1.401	-0.330	1.004	0.730	0.242	2.074	0.255	1.204
Other Religion	0.439	0.330	1.551	-0.208	1.086	-0.050	0.273	0.951	-0.586	0.485
Religiosity	0.047	0.100	1.048	-0.149	0.243	0.117	0.079	1.125	-0.037	0.272
Republican	1.042	0.244	2.835	0.563	1.521	0.979	0.214	2.663	0.560	1.398
Democratic	-0.715	0.267	0.489	-1.238	-0.192	-0.099	0.200	0.906	-0.492	0.294
Not Political	-0.038	0.252	0.963	-0.532	0.456	0.276	0.204	1.318	-0.124	0.676
Positive Discipline	-0.541	0.204	0.582	-0.942	-0.140	-0.102	0.173	0.903	-0.441	0.237
Reactive Discipline	-1.113	0.276	0.328	-1.654	-0.572	-0.299	0.220	0.741	-0.731	0.132
Constant	-0.515	0.450	0.598	-1.397	0.367	-0.117	0.362	0.890	-0.827	0.593
Likelihood Ratio	241.445									
McFadden's R^2	0.051									

[186] Interview 820: White, Republican mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. She sees the American work ethic as "holding steady" compared to when she was a child and thinks being "hard-working" is "Absolutely Essential."
[187] Interview 334: White, Republican father with a high school diploma who follows the positive-discipline approach. He see the American work ethic as declining "moderately" since his childhood and thinks being "hard-working" is "Absolutely Essential" to his children's future success.
[188] Interview 1805: White, Republican father with a graduate degree who follows the reactive-discipline approach. He thinks the American work ethic is in "moderate decline" and he thinks that being "hard-working" is "Fairly important" to his daughters' success.
[189] Interview 627: White, non-partisan mother with a graduate degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. She sees the American work ethic as in moderate decline since she was a child and sees being hard-working as "Absolutely Essential" for her daughter's future success.
[190] Interview 2753: White, Democratic father with some college who follows the multifaceted-discipline approach. He sees the American work ethic as in "moderate decline" since his childhood and thinks that being "hard-working" is "Very Important" to his children's future success.
[191] Interview 84: White, Republican father with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. He sees a "strong decline" in the American work ethic compared to his childhood and thinks that hard work is "Absolutely Essential" to his children's future success.
[192] Interview 2643: White, Republican mother with some college who follows the positive-discipline approach. She sees moderate decline in the American work ethic and thinks that being hard-working is "Absolutely Essential" to her children's success. She says that is "Not Very Important" for her children to share her "own outlook on government and politics."
[193] Interview 248: White, Republican father with a college degree who follows the multifaceted disciplinary approach. He sees a strong decline in the American work ethic and thinks being hard-working is "Absolutely Essential" to his children's future.
[194] Interview 2056: White, Non-partisan mother with some college who follows the multifaceted disciplinary approach. She sees the American work ethic as in "moderate decline" and think that being hard-working is "Very Important" for her children's future.
[195] Interview 2426: Multiracial, Republican mother with a college degree who follows the multifaceted approach. She sees the American work ethic as in "moderate decline" and believes that being hard-working is "Absolutely Essential" to her children's future.
[196] See chapter 3.
[197] Interview 49: White, Democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. She sees the American work ethic as "holding steady" and views being hard-working as "Very Important" to her children's future success.
[198] Interview 472: White, Democratic mother with a college degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. She sees the American work ethic as in "moderate decline" and views being hard-working as "Very Important" to her children's future success.
[199] Interview 490: Asian, non-partisan mother with a college degree who follows the multifaceted disciplinary approach. Despite immigrating to the United States as a child, she sees a "strong decline" in the American work ethic. She sees being hard-working as "Very Important" to her children's future success.
[200] Interview 59: White, Democratic father with a college degree who follows the positive disciplinary approach. He sees a "moderate decline" in the American work ethic and think being hard-working is "Very Important" to his children's success.
[201] Interview 1564: White, non-partisan mother with a college degree who follows the positive disciplinary approach. She sees a "strong decline" in the American work ethic and thinks that being hard-working as "Absolutely Essential" to her children's future.
[202] Interview 1778: White, Democratic mother with a graduate degree who follows the positive-discipline approach. She thinks being hard-working is "Very Important" to her children's future success.

[203] Interview 648: Black, non-political mother with some college who follows the positive disciplinary approach. She see a “strong decline” in the American work ethic and thinks being hard-working is “Absolutely Essential” to her children’s future success.

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