

Change and Stability in the Political Ideology of College Students

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Change and Stability in the Political Ideology of College Students

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Abstract

Over the past 20 years, there has been a trend in American politics for college graduates to identify with the Democratic party and to fall to the left on the ideology scale. College graduates of today are both more liberal than previous college graduates as well as their contemporary non-college graduate counterparts. Previous research disagrees on what mechanisms are driving this growing education gap in American politics. Some point to selection effects while others argue that college socializes students to move to the left. Using data from the Political Engagement Project (2003-2005), I argue that the process that is occurring is a mix of these two ideas, fitting an Input-Environment-Output model. While college students as a whole do come in leaning to the left, college has a mildly liberalizing effect on students, so that college graduates as a whole exit leaning more to the left than they did when they entered. I also point out some factors which predispose students to ideological change or stability during college.

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

A tagline to an article by a conservative radio talk show host reads: “When you send your child to college, you are playing Russian roulette with their character” (Prager 2019). The article goes on to talk about how college students in America are becoming more leftist, turning against traditional American values, and are becoming less happy, which is central to a good character (Prager 2019). He argues that college is to blame for students becoming more liberal, and on the surface level, this appears to be true. Since 2004, there has been a growing gap in the political leanings of college graduates in America. According to a poll conducted by Pew Research Center, as of 2017, 58% of college graduates identify with or lean towards the Democratic party while 36% identify or lean towards the Republican party (Pew 2018). This divide is even larger among those with postgraduate experience as 63% identify as Democrats and only 31% identify as Republican (Pew 2018).

An argument could be made that these are just the effects of millennials, who have more liberal political leanings, coming of age and graduating college (Pew 2018). However, if this was the case we would likely see the same trend among those with only a high school degree, but we do not see this (Pew 2018). This recent educational divide is important in the American political system as college graduates are overrepresented among those who vote (Pew 2018). In 2008, college graduates made up 27.5% of the voting age population, but were 34.1% of those who voted in the election (Leighley and Nagler 2014). In contrast, those with high school degrees made up 31.7% of the voting age population but only 27.4% of those who voted (Leighley and Nagler 2014). Therefore, the political leanings of college graduates may be vital for the outcome of elections in America and the policies that are implemented. If college

students are truly more liberal than their counterparts due to their experiences in college, then the effects of college may be overstated in the political system.

It is clear that recent college graduates are more liberal than their high school graduate counterparts and more liberal than previous college graduates. However, is going to college the root of the cause for this trend? Like the conservative radio talk show host quoted above, many conservative critics claim that liberal professors at universities are indoctrinating their students with liberal political views, which causes students to adopt and display these views (Mariani and Hewitt 2008). This could be plausible as 60% of undergraduate instructors identify as liberal, and students spend a lot of time listening to their professors in class (Sachs 2020). In addition, conservative Republicans have a less positive view of college's effect on the country, with only 46% seeing it as having a positive impact versus the overall average of 60% (Pew 2012). While this indoctrination theory may be popular among critics of higher education, it is unlikely that students are being indoctrinated during college as many come to college with their political views already formed.

Another view on what is causing this gap is that those with more liberal political views are more likely to choose and be able to afford a college education, producing the effect that college graduates are more liberal (Campbell and Horowitz 2016). Under this view, it is uncommon for college students to change their political leanings while in college as they simply continue to hold the views that they entered college with. This selection effect theory contends that college students are already liberal when entering college because they come from backgrounds which are associated with having a liberal ideology, such as coming from a higher socioeconomic status family or having college educated parents, which also make them more likely to attend college.

A third view comes from the foundational work on political attitudes in college students which concludes that political socialization while in college causes changes in student's political views (Kowalski 2007). Political socialization does not necessarily only occur during college, but often occurs when an individual is younger as they learn and develop their political ideology through interactions with those around them, especially their family. However, some argue that there is something special about the college experience and culture which socializes students to form new political ideologies. If this is the case, then college students have a fundamentally different experience than other individuals, which plays an important part in forming their liberal ideology and raises questions about the implication of the inequality of access to the higher education system.

Despite the disagreements in previous research, it remains a fact that some college students do change their political views in college. In this study, I look at what mechanisms and factors about college affect these students' change in political views, and what may cause other students to have stable political views. I aim to analyze the conservative criticism of political indoctrination by college professors and the process of political socialization among college students. I want to understand why college students are more liberal than in the past and more liberal than their non-college graduate contemporaries. I use longitudinal data from the Political Engagement Project (2003-2005), looking at measures of political ideology change and stability, as well as possible factors which might affect the likelihood of an individual to experience ideological change or stability, such as demographics, other pre-college factors, and college experiences. Based on the data that I use, I argue that while college students do enter college leaning to the left as a whole, they end leaning farther to the left due to their educational experiences in college. Therefore, the selection effect does not hold true for all cases. However,

on the individual level, a majority of students remain ideologically stable during college and it is rare for students to totally reverse their ideology, so college only has a mild effect on liberalizing students.

2. Literature Review

Research on the effect of college attendance on political attitudes has led to mixed results. On the one hand, several researchers claim that college does not have an effect on an individual's political beliefs and attitudes. On the other hand, several researchers assert that college does have an effect on political attitudes. Within this body of thought, the view on what about college has an influence differs.

Evidence for the argument that college has no effect on political attitudes

In a 1971 survey conducted by Richard Braungart, he looks at the political attitudes of students from eastern colleges and universities. His sample consists of students from partisan political groups from these schools as well as students in introductory courses from 4 universities to supplement this data. Braungart finds that family politics is the strongest predictor of student politics, followed by the parents' religion and social class (Braungart 1971). It is inferred that college has a minimal effect on the student's political attitude. Therefore, Braungart would support the idea that pre-college factors have a greater influence on students' political views.

As a follow up to this study, in 2016 Colin Campbell and Jonathan Horowitz released their findings from their own research. Using data from the 1994 Study of American Families and General Social Survey, Campbell and Horowitz compare political views of siblings to look at the effects of college on political attitudes while controlling for family background. They measure political ideology on a seven-item scale, as well as support for civil liberties and opposition to gender equality (Campbell and Horowitz 2016). Using a fixed effect model, they

find that the relationship between college and a liberal political ideology is confounded by unmeasured family backgrounds (Campbell and Horowitz 2016). Their findings support what they call the “spurious model” which is the idea that “measured and unmeasured family background characteristics are the primary driver of both college completion and social outcomes” (Campbell and Horowitz 2016). This concept lines up with the self-selection hypothesis that students from certain backgrounds which predispose them to be more ideologically liberal are more likely to attend and graduate from college.

Based on the Roy Model from economics, the self-selection hypothesis contends that observed relationships can be seen as influenced by pre-existing conditions of the individual rather than as a causal relationship shaped by an external factor. Individuals choose to partake in an event or action due to existing characteristics of the individual. In the case of college, people with certain resources and mindsets choose to go to college. Recently, the characteristics that are associated with a higher likelihood of attending college are having parents with higher levels of wealth and educational status, as well as the students believing in gender egalitarianism (Sachs 2020). These factors are also associated with liberal political ideologies (Sachs 2020). This would have the effect of making college graduates more liberal as a whole than those without a college degree. If the self-selection hypothesis is true, we would see college students leaving college with the same political opinions they entered with. Furthermore, important socioeconomic factors would be associated with ideological stability.

This research points to the idea that a student’s background, specifically their family background, is more important in determining their political ideology than their experiences in college. The socioeconomic status of an individual’s family plays an integral role in shaping their political ideology as well as determining whether or not the individual will attend college.

As a high socioeconomic status today is associated with college attendance and ideological liberalism, then college students and graduates will likely be ideologically liberal. However, while this theory may describe why college attendees are more liberal than those who do not attend college, it alone cannot explain why some students do change their ideology in college, and the fact remains that a decent portion of college students change their ideology in college. This is where other theories must come into the discussion which can explain the ideological changes of college students.

Evidence for the argument that college does have an effect of political attitude formation:

Political Socialization

Socialization can broadly be defined as “the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less effective members of their society” (Weidman 1989). John Weidman, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh, provides a framework for how the socialization process works in college. He recognizes norms and social integration as well as reference groups and social relationships as important parts of socialization in college (Weidman 1989). Furthermore, he argues that there are six dimensions which impact student development during college: “clarity and consistency of institutional objectives; institutional size; curriculum, teaching, and evaluation; residence hall arrangements; faculty and administration interaction with students; and friends, groups, and student culture” (Weidman 1989). Tying this together, Weidman proposes that students enter with certain values and personal goals, are exposed to socialization influences at college, weigh these new values in relation to normative pressures and personal aspirations, and either change or maintain the values they entered college with (Weidman 1989). Therefore, the more a student is engaged with these influences during college, the more likely they will be to experience a change in ideology.

In 1943, Theodore Newcomb released his study that has become the foundational work for political socialization in college students. From 1935-1939, Newcomb collected survey data from students at Bennington College. At the time, Bennington College was an all-female school drawing from mostly conservative families while the social climate of the school was more liberal (Kowalski 2007). Newcomb found that many students had changes in political attitudes from conservative to liberal (Kowalski 2007). He concluded that the liberal attitudes of the institution were perceived as the social norm and that this norm became a reference group for the students in the process of political socialization (Kowalski 2007). A major predictor that Newcomb found for a change in attitude of a student was the student's degree of involvement in the college community (Kowalski 2007). Connecting Newcomb's findings to Weidman's framework, the Bennington College study supports friends, peers, and student culture as important aspects to college socialization, while adding another significant feature of university culture as an influence on political socialization in college students. As a follow up, Newcomb surveyed the students 20 years later and found that their attitudes remained fairly stable overtime, indicating there is a lasting effect of political socialization during college (Kowalski 2007). Since the Bennington College study, there have been numerous reports on the college socialization process in students. From the Bennington study, we would expect to see that students who are highly involved in campus life are more likely to experience a change in ideology.

Peer and Social Group Influences

Following the work of both Weidman and Newcomb is the view that college peer and social interactions influence political socialization and attitude change. In 1967, Kenneth Langton examined the impact of class climate in peer groups and schools in the socialization of

political attitudes. He found that working class students who went to heterogeneous schools have different views than working class student who went to homogenous schools (Langton 1967). From this he concludes that student peer groups teach American culture and student subculture, thus playing a vital role in the political socialization process (Langton 1967).

Drawing from a larger population, Eric Dey uses data from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) to examine the influence of peers and social influences on undergraduate political attitudes (Dey 1996). He finds that college peers have a positive influence on a student's political attitudes. Furthermore, George Kuh, through interviews with college seniors, finds that conversations with peers are identified by these students as having an influence on their personal development and social learning (Kuh 1995). Jeffrey Milem expands on the concept of peer influence and argues that the role of peer groups depends on the group's size, homogeneity, isolation, and importance of the group's attitudes to the individual (Milem 1998).

Looking at a specific example of an important social group, P. Wesley Routon and Jay K. Walker examine the effects of Greek Life on members. Drawing on data from HERI, they find that university students in Greek organizations become more liberal towards issues such as marijuana legalization and casual sex during their time at college (Routon and Walker 2016). They are able to show that these attitude changes are due to the student's involvement in the organization as the Greek life members' views on political issues converge over time (Routon and Walker 2016). They argue that the homogenous culture of Greek life creates the homogenous views of the members, just as Milem pointed to group homogeneity as an important factor for the role of peer and group influence on political socialization (Milem 1998; Routon and Walker 2016).

However, not all students at a college or university are socialized in the same direction. Fred Kaiser and J. Robert Lilly conducted a study at a college in Pennsylvania of students who were registered to vote. They find limited political attitude convergence within the student population as a whole (Kaiser and Lilly 1975). Rather, students within certain organizations see an attitude convergence with the other students in those organizations (Kaiser and Lilly 1975). They therefore argue that there are multiple sources of influence of political attitudes in college (Kaiser and Lilly 1975). While this creates the picture that college students as a whole do not have congruent political attitudes, college peer and social groups do play a role in political socialization and therefore the likelihood that a college student will experience a change in ideology during those four years.

These studies support the idea that political socialization does occur during college, and that peers play a large role in this. What needs to be better understood is how the frequency of interaction with peers affects whether or not a student will be socialized and change their views. Furthermore, the types of interactions and conversations that students have with their peers may influence the likelihood of change. For example, conversations about political issues may by their nature have a larger impact on the ideological change of students than conversations on topics which are irrelevant to ideological identification.

Faculty Influences

Another factor about college that Weidman, as well as conservative critics, point to as having an influence on socialization is influence from faculty. In addition to his findings on peer influence, Dey finds that faculty have an influence on students at a positive and equal magnitude of peers (Dey 1996). Conversely, more recent research shows that faculty do not have such an impact on political socialization and political attitude formation of college students. Mack

Mariani and Gordon Hewitt take data on students from HERI as well as the faculty survey from HERI. From descriptive statistics, they find that 43% of students show a shift in political orientation from freshman to senior year (Mariani and Hewitt 2008). Yet when they compare the changes of student ideology to the faculty ideology, they do not find any association (Mariani and Hewitt 2008). Therefore, the role of faculty on changes in student political attitudes remains unclear, yet conservative critics still contend that indoctrination of students by liberal professors is why college graduates are more liberal and why American higher education should be reformed (Sachs 2020). Because of this, there is still much to understand about how faculty and their academic curriculum may shape students' views.

Academic Influences

A third influence which Weidman discusses as having a role in political socialization for college students is academic curriculum, teaching, and evaluation. Jana Hanson investigates whether liberal arts colleges make college students more liberal. She collects data from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education and compares the political views of students who did attend liberal arts colleges to those who did not attend liberal arts colleges (Hanson et al. 2012). She finds that while college students who attended liberal arts colleges came in with more politically liberal views, they also make greater changes to have more liberal views over the course of their college career (Hanson et al. 2012).

A second source of academic influence on a college student's political socialization is the student's major and class choice. Christine Ma-Kellams et al. examine the effects of a degree in science on political attitudes. With data from a university in New England, they find that education in a science-related discipline is associated with greater political liberalism (Ma-Kellams et al. 2014). Importantly, they find no self-selection effect so that it is not the case that

students with more liberal political attitudes choose to go into a science-related discipline. Furthermore, the individual classes that students take are seen to be important for political attitude changes. With data from HERI, Alyssa Bryant looks at students' attitudes towards married women. She finds that taking a women's study course has an effect in shaping the student's changing gender-role attitudes (Bryant 2003). Overall, academic curriculum has been seen to have an effect on student political attitudes, so we would expect to see certain majors and course topics being associated with a change in political ideology.

While academics does appear to have an influence, there are many nuances that are still not understood. First, while the literature above addresses science majors, it is unknown whether other majors influence political ideology. Second, just as gender study classes affect views on gender roles, political science courses may have a certain impact on political views. Lastly, the impact of class activities remains unknown, as different types of class assignments may have different impacts on the students' learning and formation of political ideology.

College Culture

Something that Newcomb discusses in his findings but is not present in Weidman's framework is the idea of college culture. In the Bennington Study, Newcomb discusses the culture at Bennington College as being politically liberal (Kowalski 2007). Newcomb finds that many of the students change from having conservative to liberal political views (Kowalski 2007). He argues that this change is due to the individual student's degree of involvement in the college community (Kowalski 2007). Therefore, it is the liberal culture of the college that is impacting the students. If student groups and social ties were the sole influencers of political views at Bennington, then a growing conservative trend would likely have been observed rather than a liberalization trend.

Subsequent studies on political attitudes of college students have also highlighted the impact of college culture. In 1974, Henry Finney measured levels of civil-libertarianism in undergraduate students at UC Berkeley. Finney measured civil-libertarianism as the support for the free speech of political dissenters, emphasizing those with left-wing/communist beliefs and liberal dissent in academic settings (Finney 1974). He finds that exposure to UC Berkeley's political subculture (climate) does have an effect, although modest, on the students' support for civil-liberties (Finney 1974). Finney defines the political subculture of the school as "a distinctive climate of widely held political attitudes and beliefs in a community which both supports, and is influenced by, recurrent styles of political behavior by some portion of the population in that community" (Finney 1974).

More recently, Tali Mendelberg et al. looked at the influence of affluent schools on students' economic views. These researchers use data from HERI for the years 1989-2001 and their sample includes 359 affluent schools (Mendelberg, McCabe, and Thal 2017). Specifically, they are looking at measures of students' views on taxing the wealthy as well as other economic issues (Mendelberg et al. 2017). They find that these affluent schools promote "class cultural norms" meaning that these students grow to support economic policies which benefit upper-class citizens (Mendelberg et al. 2017). An argument could be made that there is a selection effect happening here as students with affluent backgrounds choose to go to affluent schools. However, Mendelberg et al. find that college socialization is influencing the preferences of these students as a change in opinion is especially observed among socially embedded students (Mendelberg et al. 2017). This study does not support Newcomb's original findings that college has a liberalizing effect on the students through socialization, but it does show that college

culture is an important aspect in political socialization in college students no matter the political leanings of the university.

Jo Phelan et al. find a similar effect in regards to conservative economic views among college students. The authors argue that both economic and social attitudes need to be taken into consideration when measuring college attitude formation (Phelan et al. 1995). To measure both sets of attitudes, they choose the issue of homelessness (Phelan et al. 1995). They conduct phone interviews with a random sample of American adults and find that a college education is associated with a greater tolerance for homeless people but less support for economic aid to the homeless (Phelan et al. 1995). They reason that their findings provide support for the socialization model as “education socializes students to the ‘official culture,’ which in the United States includes values of equal opportunity and equal respect—but not equal outcomes” (Phelan et al. 1995). In this case, the culture of college campuses would be one that reflects the larger culture of the United States and works to socialize the students to this culture.

While these studies highlight the importance of college culture on shaping students’ ideology, college culture is not always easy to define or pick up on in surveys. Therefore, it may be difficult to measure exactly how college culture affects students’ ideology. This is especially difficult when surveys draw from multiple schools. Furthermore, these studies were conducted at the end of the 20th century. The culture of America and of college campuses has changed since then, so the cultural impact and size of impact may have changed too.

Input-Environment-Outcome Model

Another way to look at the way that college influences students’ political attitudes is through Astin’s “input-environment-outcome model” (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2019). Astin’s model looks at the input and how it influences both the environment and the

outcome directly, with the environment also influencing the outcome (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2019). This model therefore takes into consideration the selection effect that might occur in the college selection process. A student's individual qualities and characteristics influence whether or not they go to college and if they do, where they go to college (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2019). The college that they choose then has an influence on their political attitudes, which is also influenced by their individual qualities and characteristics that they possessed before entering college (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2019). The environment in this model refers to college classes as well as out-of-classroom experiences such as extracurricular activities, living arrangements, campus culture, etc. (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 2019). Therefore, when analyzing the effects of a college education on an individual's political attitudes, it is important to consider factors about the individual that were present before they started college and how these affected the student's experiences in college. This fits more with the idea that college has only a mildly liberalizing effect on college students, as while a majority of students do not change their ideology, those who do change are more likely to move to the left than to the right.

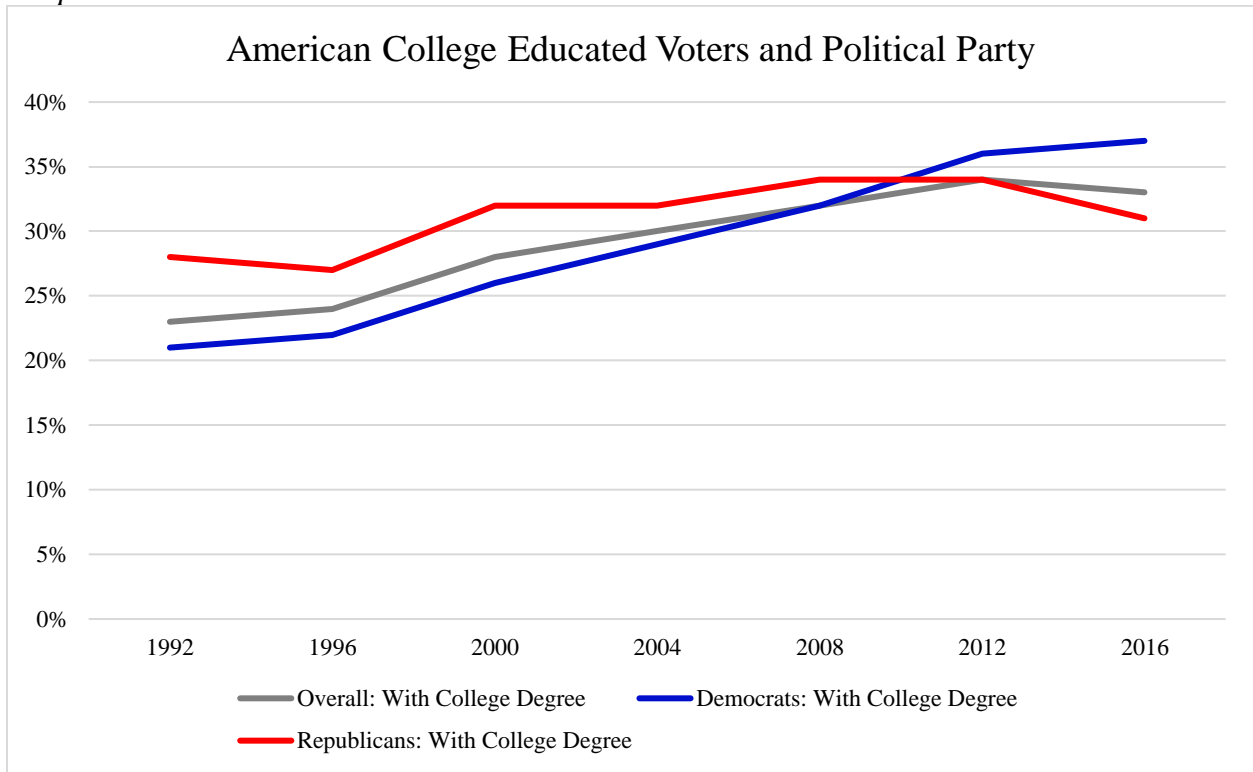
3. College Students and the American Political Climate

To understand why determining whether or not attending college today affects an individual's political ideology and what about college causes this change, it is important to look at how college graduates of today are different from both college graduates of the past and current individuals who have not graduated college. Americans with a college education make up a larger share of registered voters than they did 25 years ago. In 1992, 23% of registered voters held a college degree while 50% of voters did not (Pew 2016). In 2016, 33% of registered voters held a college degree and 33% did not (Pew 2016). The other 34% are made up of

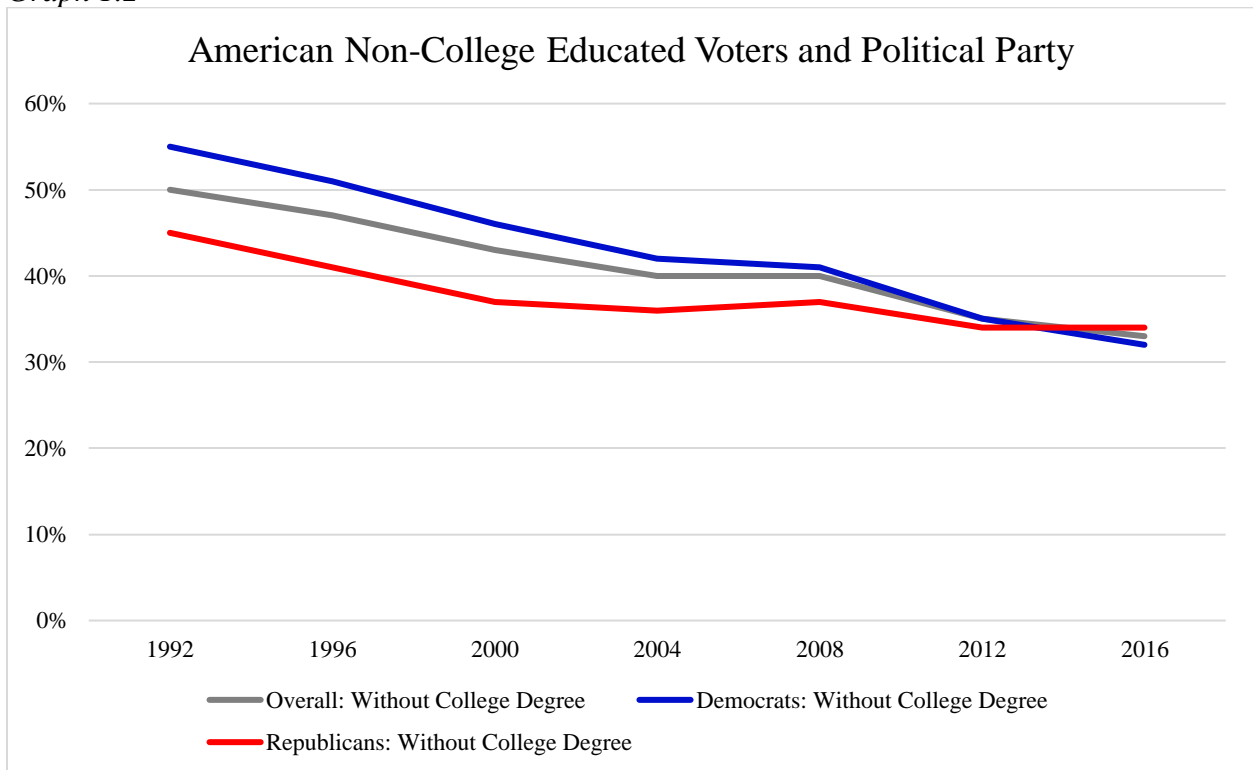
individuals with some college education (Pew 2016). Importantly, this increase in college educated voters is not evenly distributed between the two major parties. Among registered Democrats, in 1992 only 22% of the party had a college degree while 55% had a high school degree or less (Pew 2016). By 2016, 37% of registered Democrats held a college degree (Pew 2016). The proportion of Democrats with a high school degree or less dropped to 32% (Pew 2016). The Democratic party, once the party of working-class Americans, has transitioned into the party of college educated Americans. This is especially exemplified by the decrease of non-college whites as a part of the Democratic party. In 1992, non-college whites made up 59% of the Democratic party; by 2016 they only made up 32% of the party (Pew 2016). It is this demographic group that is driving the decrease in the proportion of non-college educated voters in the Democratic party, especially since the proportion of non-college educated non-whites in the Democratic party has increased.

The Republican party on the other hand has seen a different trend. While the proportion of college graduates in the Republican party has increased, it has not increased as much as it did in the Democratic party. In 1992, 28% of registered Republicans held a college degree (Pew 2016). This amount peaked in 2008 and 2012 with 34%, but dropped down to 31% by 2016 (Pew 2016). The Republican party saw a net gain of only 3% of college educated voters while the Democratic party saw a gain of 16%, more than 5 times the amount in the Republican party. The uneven distribution of the increase of college educated voters to the Democratic party has something to do with the changing nature of college students, whether that be the type of students who go to college or the students' experiences in college.

Graph 1.1



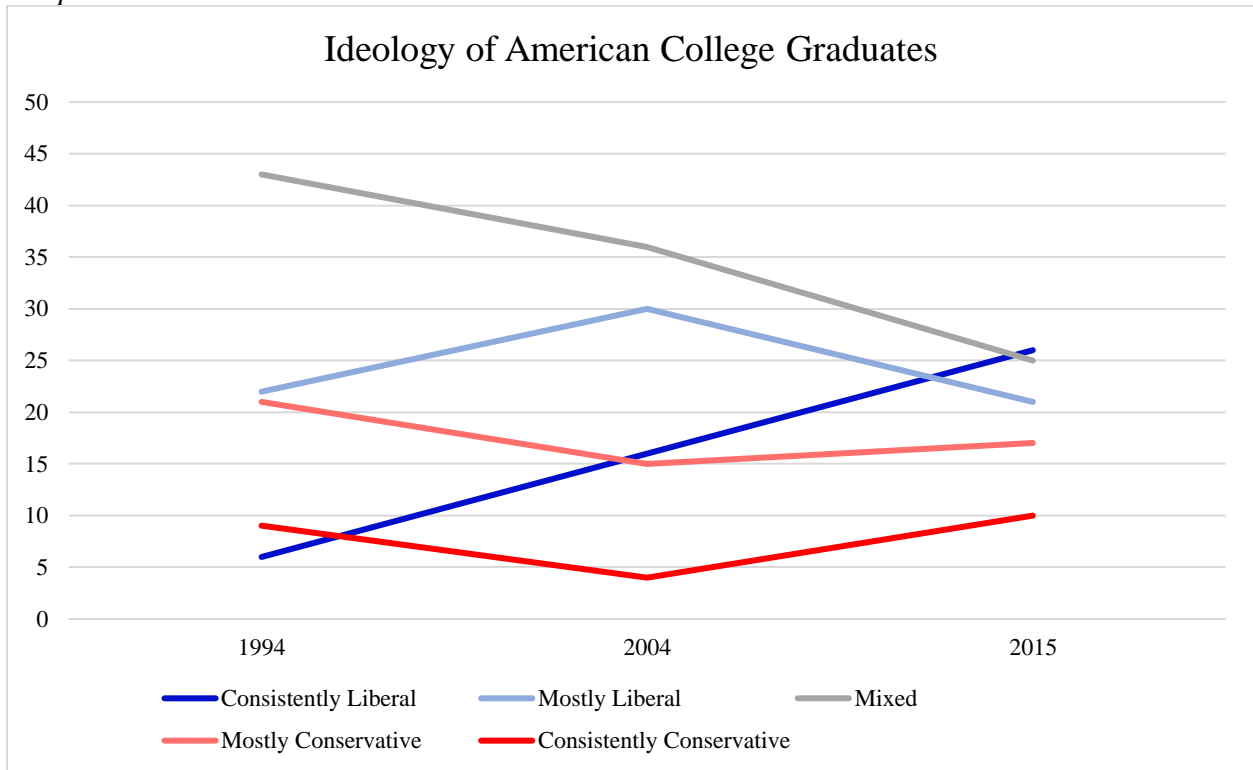
Graph 1.2



Data for graphs from PEW 2016

Not only is the Democratic party made up of more college educated voters than at previous points in history, but college educated voters are more liberal than before (Pew 2016.). The process of how a college student's political ideology is shaped is important in understanding why Americans with a college education are now more liberal than they were in the past. Prior to the 1960s and 1970s, college educated Americans leaned more conservative and identified more with the Republican party (Brint 1985). However, since that time, the college educated in America have become more liberal than the population as a whole (Brint 1985). Among students with a college degree, the amount identifying as consistently liberal has grown from 6% in 1994 to 26% in 2015 (Pew 2016). When combined with those identifying as mostly liberal, 47% of college graduates lean to the left (Pew 2016). Those identifying as consistently or mostly conservative shrank from a total of 30% to 27% (Pew 2016). The growth in those identifying as liberal seems to come from the reduction in those with a college education identifying as having a moderate ideology as the percentage of moderate college educated Americans reduced from 43% in 1994 to 25% in 2015 (Pew 2016).

Graph 1.3

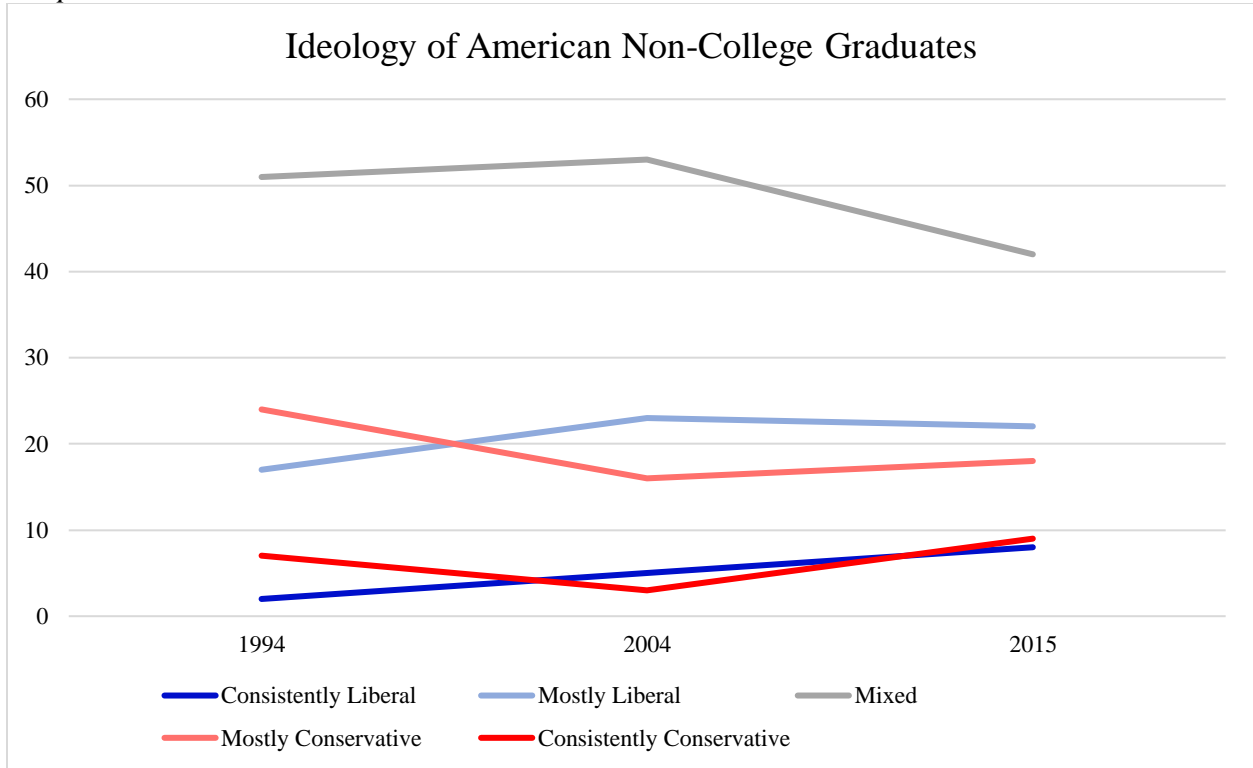


Data for graph from PEW 2016

This trend of a growing liberal base has not been seen as much among the general public or among those with less than a college degree. Gallup finds that while the American public is becoming more liberal, it still as a whole leans conservative or moderate. In 1992, 17% of the American public leaned liberal while 36% leaned conservative and 43% were moderate (Gallup 2019). Since then, the amount of liberals in the country has grown steadily up to 26% (Gallup 2019). The amount of conservatives has remained fairly stable staying between 35% and 40% while moderates have slightly declined to 35% in 2019 (Gallup 2019). Among the general public, the increase in the percentage of liberals is nowhere near the level of increase seen among the college educated. This is also the case among those with less than a college education. Among Americans with less than a college degree, 19% identified as liberal in 1994 (Pew 2016). This did increase to 30% by 2015, but this increase is not as large as the increase among college

educated Americans (Pew 2016). Additionally, the non-college educated group has remained largely moderate as in 2015, 42% identified as such (Pew 2016).

Graph 1.4



Data for graph from PEW 2016

A change in the party identification of the college educated has also been seen in the time since the 1990s. According to Pew Research Center, in 1992 49% of college graduates in America identified as Republican or leaned Republican while 45% identified as or leaned Democrat (Pew 2019). Among those with postgraduate educational experience, in 1992 50% identified as or leaned Democrat and 45% identified as or leaned Republican (Pew 2018). In the 25 years between 1992 and 2017, this party composition among the college educated changed. In 1994, there was the largest gap in party identification with a majority (50%) of college educated Americans identifying as or leaning Republican and 42% as Democrat (Pew 2018). In 1996 among those with postgrad experience, more identified as or leaned Republican than Democrat (Pew 2018). In 2004, Democrats overtook Republicans among those with a college

degree and since then more college graduates have identified as or leaned Democrat than Republican. In 2017, 58% of those with a college degree identified as or leaned Democrat while only 36% identified as or leaned Republican (Pew 2018). Among those with postgrad experience, the divide is even larger. Pew finds that 63% of this group identifies as or leans Democrat while 31% identifies as or leans Republican (Pew 2018). While having a higher education level used to be associated with being a member of the Republican Party, this is no longer the case (Dailey 1983).

Furthermore, this trend among the American college educated is not just simply reflective of a larger trend among the American population. Pew finds that the aggregate party identification of Americans as a whole has remained fairly stable since 1992. In 1992, 36% identified as Democrat, 29% as Republican, and 32% as Independent (Pew 2018). Since then, there has been an increase in the amount of Independents as Pew finds that 37% identify as Independent (Pew 2018). However, they also find that Democrats outnumber Republicans among registered voters as in 2017, 33% identified as Democrat and 26% as Republican (Pew 2018). Gallup finds a somewhat different distribution of party identification. Between 2004 and 2019, identification with the Republican and Democratic parties hover around 30% each, with Republicans having slightly more at times and Democrats having slightly more at other times (Gallup 2007). Independents also make up around a third of respondents, but reach closer to 40% which is higher than either party (Gallup 2007). This is different from how Pew finds that Democrats hold a plurality at times. However, both trends show that Democratic and Republican identification remain stable over the past few decades. This is different from the trend seen among the college educated and how there has been an increase in those identifying as Democrat and a decrease in those identifying as Republican.

Even within the Democratic party those with a college degree are becoming more liberal over time. According to Gallup, while those in the Democratic party are now identifying as more liberal, those with a college degree have seen the most change. Among those in the Democratic party, in 2001, 52% of those with post graduate experience and 42% of college graduates identified as liberal (Gallup 2019). By 2018, these proportions increased to 65% for postgraduates and 58% for college graduates (Gallup 2019). Democrats with a high school education or less have not become as liberal as those with a college education. In 2001, 22% of this group identified as liberal and this increased to 32% in 2018 (Gallup 2019). Not only do those with a college education start and end up as the most likely to identify as liberal within the Democratic party, but they also see the largest increase in the proportion that identify as liberal (Gallup 2019). This is true not only by education level, but also when compared to other demographic measures such as race, age, and gender (Gallup 2019). Therefore, it is seen that having a college education, especially a postgraduate degree, is the greatest predictor of identifying as liberal as a Democrat.

For white Americans without a four-year college, Gallup finds that the trend is for these individuals to identify more with the Republican party. In 1999, 44% of this group identified as Republican or leaning Republican and 44% identified as Democrat or leaning Democratic (Gallup 2019). By 2019, the amount of non-college whites who identified as Republican increased to 59% and the amount who identified as Democrat decreased to 34% (Gallup 2019). This has given Republicans a net advantage of 25 points among white college-nongraduates in America (Gallup 2019). Overall, Americans in general without a college degree are more likely to identify as conservative. In 2019, 43% of college-nongraduates identified as conservative and 19% as liberal (Gallup 2020). With this information, a clear political divide can be seen between

college graduates and college-nongraduates in terms of both party identification and political ideology.

The changing political affiliation of college graduates is associated with a partisan view on the importance and effects of attaining a college education. Both Pew and Gallup find that Democrats have a more positive view of college than Republicans do. A 2019 Gallup poll found that 41% of Republicans said college was important and 18% said college was not too important (Gallup 2019). On the other hand, 62% of Democrats said college was very important and only 6% said it was not too important (Gallup 2019). Independents fall in between the two parties on their opinions about college as well as the US adult population as a whole (Gallup 2019). In a Pew survey, Republicans saw college as having a less positive effect than Democrats. In the survey, 51% of Republicans saw college as having a positive effect and this was even lower among conservative Republicans at 46% (Pew 2012). On the other hand, 67% of Democrats viewed college as having positive effects (Pew 2012). Interestingly enough, more Republicans than Democrats saw college as having been a good personal investment as 87% of Republicans said it was and 81% of Democrats said it was (Pew 2012).

However, a different Pew poll finds that there is a partisan divide in how individuals view colleges and the effects of college on the country. Between 2012 and 2019, Democrats had a consistently positive view of the effects of college on the country remaining above 67% (Parker 2019). Republicans on the other hand have had a change of views. In 2012, 53% of Republicans saw it as positive and 35% as negative (Parker 2019). In 2019 however, only 33% saw it as positive and 59% saw it as negative (Parker 2019). This is exemplified by the article written by the conservative radio talk show host quoted in the introduction, saying that college destroys students' character (Prager 2019). The reasons for why individuals see college as heading in the

wrong direction is also divided along a partisan line. Among Democrats, 92% see tuition costs as a major problem in higher education. Around three quarters of Republicans had issues with tuition costs, as well as viewing that “students are not getting the skills they need to succeed in the workplace,” there is “too much concern about protecting students from views they might find offensive,” and “professors are bringing their political and social views into the classroom” (Parker 2019). Furthermore, 72% of Republicans think that politics at colleges are leaning towards one viewpoint and 67% view this as a major problem (Parker 2019). On the other hand, 48% of Democrats think that politics at colleges are leaning towards one viewpoint and only 26% see this as a major problem (Parker 2019). This political climate of college campuses is central to the increase of college graduates identifying as liberal or Democrat as it could be the source of political socialization on campus, the effect of liberal students attending college at higher rates, or the reason why possible conservative students opt out of going to college.

4. Methodology

Data

To analyze political-attitude change in college students, it is necessary to use a data set that contains multiple key elements. First and foremost, the set needs to be longitudinal so that actual individual level change can be measured and observed so that we do not need to rely on self-reported perceptions of change which are not always accurate. Ideally the data would cover all four years of college, but this is not necessary. While repeated cross-sectional data could be used to measure broad changes and trends among a certain population, it is not possible to measure individual change using these types of data sets since different respondents are used. Panel data is important because the same individuals are used in each wave, so individual level change can be measured. Since individual level change is my dependent variable for this study,

it is important that any data set I use allows for this to be measured. Furthermore, we cannot rely on data that asks students about their previous opinions or previous events. Retrospective surveys are less reliable because there are issues with recall and memory bias. These psychological processes can affect the way that individuals remember ideas or events and how these ideas and events are retold in survey answers. Conscious or subconscious processes will alter how people remember things to make them fit with their current mindset. With the limitations of these other types of methods of data collection, using a panel data set for this project is the best way to go.

However, panel data sets are hard to come by. Data collection for panel studies is expensive and takes a long time, so panel data sets are not as common. While panel data is the best sort of data for this study, it is not without its faults. Primarily, there is the issue of “differential mortality,” or that the sample may be somewhat unrepresentative due to the fact that people have dropped out between waves. These people who dropped out may be different from the people who stayed in the study, and these may be important differences. However, due to the fact that they dropped out of the study, these differences cannot be measured and accounted for in the analysis. This can then create an issue of how representative the sample really is of the broader population.

Second, the data set population needs to be made up of college students who are fairly representative of the college student population as a whole. This aspect is important for the ability to generalize the findings of the study to a broader population beyond the sample. Third, the data set must contain variables to measure political attitude change. This includes a measurement of political ideology and political party of the individual in the first and second wave so that a change between the two can be measured. Fourth, the data set must have

questions about both college and pre-college factors which could affect whether or not a college student experiences a change in political attitude. Lastly, the data set must be contemporaneous. As stated above, the political composition of America has changed overtime, especially in relation to higher education and college graduates as a subset of the voting population. Furthermore, much of the previous research on this topic was conducted with data from the 20th century, so the findings may no longer hold true for current college students. Therefore, to understand the current trends and factors influencing the ideology and attitudes of college students and graduates, it is important to have data that was collected fairly recently.

In an ideal world, I would have been able to create my own survey with the first wave starting before freshman year and the last wave at the end of senior year and with only questions relevant to the information I am interested in. However, as a senior thesis project, this was not possible. Therefore, I had to rely on a secondary data set. I chose the Political Engagement Project (2003-2005) as it meets the four requirements listed above.

Sample

Data from the Political Engagement Project (2003-2005) was collected from a range of colleges and universities across the United States as a part of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Political Engagement Project. The data from this survey are publicly available from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. Participants in the survey were students in one of twenty-one different undergraduate courses and co-/extra-curricular programs which were designed to promote political engagement. The original purpose of the survey was to measure four dimensions of political engagement: knowledge and understanding, skills, motivation, and action. However, the survey also asked about their political ideology and party identification in both waves. In addition, there are questions about

pre-college and college factors which have the chance of affecting political attitude change as seen in the previous literature.

In total, 612 undergraduate students took part in these courses and were surveyed for the project. The students come from a variety of institutions in the United States and from diverse backgrounds including multiple racial/ethnic minorities and a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Sixty-one percent of the respondents in the PEP were female, which is slightly above the 2018 national average of fifty-seven percent of undergraduate students identifying as female (National Center for Education Statistics). Sixty-seven percent of the students in the PEP identified as white, while as a whole in the country fifty-four percent of undergraduate students identified as white in 2018 (NCES). Black students made up twelve percent of the PEP respondents while they made up about thirteen percent of the national undergraduate student body in 2018 (NCES). Because of the sample size of the survey, some groups are underrepresented which makes it difficult to generalize the results for them. Furthermore, students majoring in politics, government, or political science are overrepresented as the PEP was designed to look at the effects of programs designed to promote political engagement. Lastly, as the data was collected in 2003-2005, current patterns in college and students may look slightly different as political interest has grown among college students due to the current political climate. However, overall the participants in the Political Engagement Project are fairly representative of college students as a whole in the United States allowing the findings from the analysis to be generalized. Furthermore, as the study took place between 2003 and 2005, it falls right in the time period where Democratic party identification overtook Republican party identification among college graduates as a whole in the country (Pew 2016). Therefore, this data may provide an insight into this important historical change in political trends.

Table 1.1: Characteristics of Undergraduate Students

	% from PEP	2018 National % from NCES
Female	61	57
Race: White	67	54
Race: Black	12	13
Major: Political Science, Public Policy, Government	25	1.8 (Percentage of bachelor's degrees)
Religion: Christian	45	N/A
SES: Both Parents College Educated	49	N/A

Measures: Political Attitude Change Through Ideology and Political Party

As possibilities to measure political attitude change, the PEP asked about each student's political ideology and party identification. The political ideology variable is measured on a 6-point scale, as opposed to a 7-point scale, with 1 being extremely liberal and 6 being extremely conservative. While the 7-point scale is more common in political research, the 6-point scale forces students to identify as leaning to one side or another as it does not allow for a true neutral or independent. For party identification, students are asked which party they think of themselves as and have the choice of Democrat, Republican, Independent, other, or don't know. For the students who chose "other," they are then asked to write in what they think of themselves as.

To measure political attitude change, I rely primarily on political ideology. While I do discuss party identification when looking at broad changes in demographic groups, political ideology is a better measurement for political attitude change because there is more room for change in addition to the fact that individuals are more likely to change their ideology than their political party. To determine the actual ideological change in each individual, I created a new variable where I subtracted the score of wave 1 from the score of wave 2 (wave 2 score – wave one score = ideological change). The range of possible scores for ideological change ranged from -5 to +5, where having a negative change meant the individual moved to the left (became more liberal), a positive change meant the individual moved to the right (became more

conservative), and a score of 0 meant that the student did not experience a change in ideology between the two waves. The measure of ideological change was the dependent variable for the ANOVA analysis which is described below.

Measures: Pre-college Factors

For the independent variables as a part of the ANOVA analysis, I draw on factors which occur both before college and during college. For the pre-college factors, I first look at the demographic information of the students, including their race, gender, religious identification, and socioeconomic background. Furthermore, the PEP asks groups of questions which relate to different areas as a part of a student's life before and outside of college. There are four of these categories which are: self-perceived identity, previous political exposure, self-rated political interest or knowledge, and media influence. They measure personal identity by having students rate how important to their sense of self different traits are. Previous political exposure includes how often politics was discussed in high school or the political actions of their parents. Political interest/knowledge is measured by asking students how they rate their knowledge on different political events or information. Media influence is measured by how often the students absorb news information from different sources. Each of these have a chance of influencing whether or not a student experiences an ideological change in college or if their ideology remains stable.

Measures: College Factors

At the root of this project is whether or not there is anything about the college experience which causes a change in the political attitudes of college students. To investigate this, I use multiple variables from the PEP in the ANOVA analysis described below. These variables also fall into four categories which are: academics/major, extracurricular activities, socialization in college, and living situation. Academic influences are measured with different questions about

the classes that students take and the work they do for those courses. Extracurricular influences are measured through self-reported membership and participation in different clubs and organizations. Socialization is measured by how often the students interact with other people. Finally, living situation is determined by where the student lived during the survey. Previous literature from Weidman, Newcomb, Dey, Routon and Walker, and Milem has noted that each of these have the possibility to affect a student's political attitude which is why I chose these factors. It is important to see whether or not these factors are predictive of ideological change or stability to respond to the criticism that colleges and universities indoctrinate students with liberal attitudes.

Analysis

To determine if any of these factors had an effect on whether or not a student would change their political ideology during college, I ran an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test with a Scheffe post-hoc test. For the ANOVA test, I created three groups of which I compared means. The three groups are students who moved to the right, students who moved to the left, and students who remained stable in their ideology. I created these groups by calculating how each individual student changed in ideology, and assigned them into one of the three groups depending on how they changed. The degree of change on the ideology scale did not matter in this case, only the direction. The groups broke down so that there were 105 respondents in the group that moved to the right, 133 respondents in the group that moved to the left, and 351 students in the group that remained stable. The presence of three groups made it so that there are two degrees of freedom, and the reference group was the group of students who remained stable. I ran the ANOVA test for variables dealing with each of the 8 factors, comparing the means for the three groups. Once the null hypothesis was rejected for a variable and it was confirmed that

there was a statistically significant difference between the means for one of the three groups, the Scheffe Test then came into play. The Scheffe test indicates which pairs of means are significantly different. If a statistically significant difference is found between the means of two groups, then this indicates that this variable has an effect on determining the likelihood that a student from the group experienced a change in ideology or not. If no difference was found, then that variable likely had little effect on the stability or volatility of a student's political ideology.

5. Findings

Demographics

Race

To begin, I take a look at the broad changes in the group population, looking at different demographic factors and how they relate to ideological change or stability. Based on the overall divide in American political views between different races, it would be expected that different racial groups experience a different amount of political change in college (Pew 2018). To start off, we see that white students come into these college experiences from the PEP leaning to the left. In the first wave, 42.8% identified as Democrats, 20.9% identified as Republican, and 70.2% fell to the left on the ideology scale. Between wave one and wave two, 36.8% of white students experienced a change on the ideology scale with 16.2% moving to the right and 20.6% moving to the left. This creates a split in wave two where 45.3% identified as Democrat and 19.4% identified as Republican, with 71.9% falling to the left on the ideology scale. Among white students, it is seen that college has a mildly liberalizing effect as more students move to the left than to the right and there is an increase in affiliation with the Democratic party. Despite these changes, it appears that being white, as compared to other races, is not predictive of ideological change during college. Based on the data from the PEP, 71% of students who

remained stable were white, while 64% of students who moved to the right and 63% of students who moved to the left were white. While white students do appear to make up a larger portion of stable students than they do for students who change, there is no statistically significant difference between the three outcomes.

Among black students, we see somewhat of a different trend. In wave one, 70.8% of black students identified as a Democrat. In wave two, 75.3% of black students identified as Democrat while no black students identified as Republican in either wave. (This is not to say that no black college students in America identify as Republican, only that among this sample none did.) This increase in students identifying as Democrat comes from students who did not know their party identification in wave one sorting themselves into a party in wave two. Furthermore, 79.7% fell to the left on the ideology scale in wave one. In the time between the waves, 37% of black students experienced a change on the ideology scale. Of these students, 59.2% moved to the left and 40.7% moved to the right. In this instance, moving to the right does not necessarily mean that these students became conservative; rather, because many of them entered leaning far to the left, they could only stay the same or move to be less liberal, but still on the left on the ideology scale. This may be because their political identity was shaped by their racial identity before coming to college so that college had little effect on their political leanings. Based on this concept, we might assume that being black would be predictive of a stable ideology in college students as their race, which is a permanent factor, is likely central in the process of shaping their political ideology. However, the analysis of the PEP data shows that being black is not predictive of any certain type of ideological change in college as compared to being of another race. Black students make up a roughly equal percentage of students in each of the three categories, where black students are 10% of those who moved to the right, 12% of

those who moved to the left, and 12% of those who remained stable. Therefore, the racial identity of black students does not appear to have an influence on how these students' political ideology will change in college. The assumption that a black student's racial identity is central to the formation of the political ideology is not necessarily true in all cases.

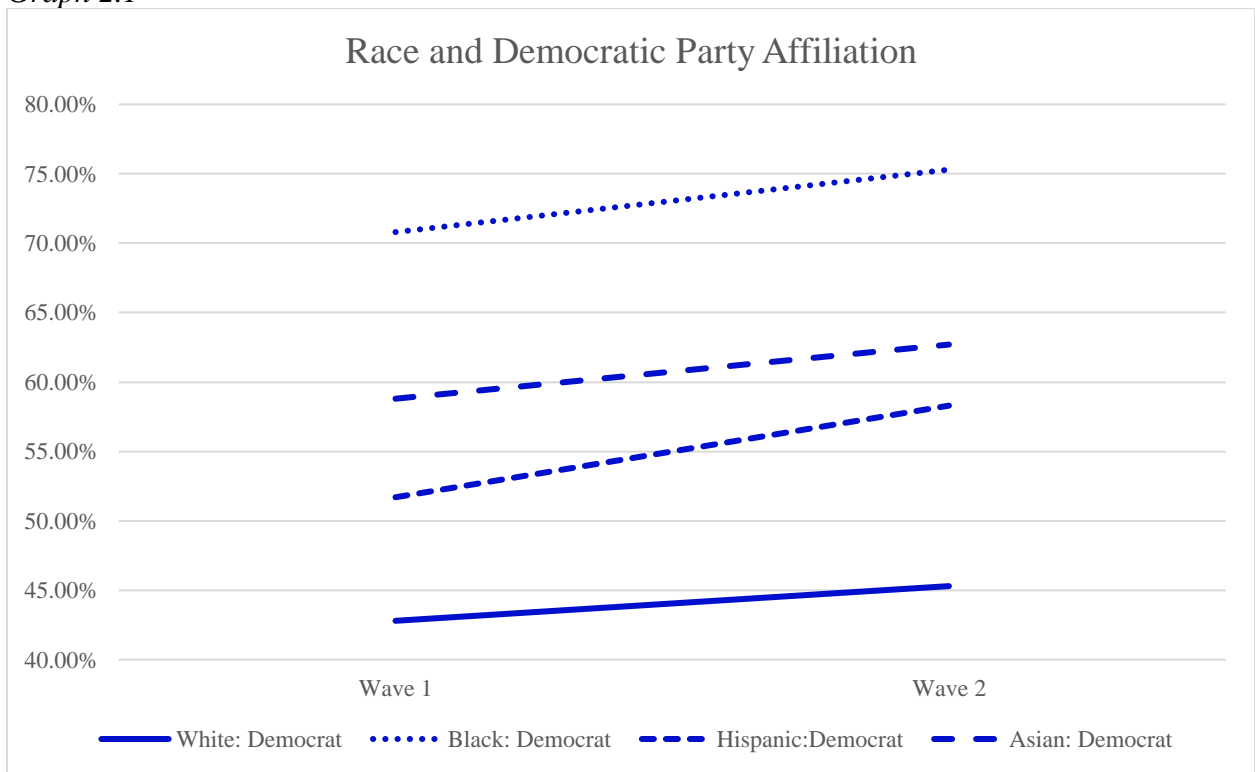
Hispanic and Asian students followed a similar trend to white students where they came in leaning to the left and ended leaning farther to the left. In wave one, 51.7% of Hispanic students identified as Democrat and only 8.3% as Republican. On the ideology scale, 80% fell to the left during wave one. Between the two waves, 58.3% of Hispanic students experienced a change in their political leanings, which is a larger share of students than among white students. In wave two, 58.3% of Hispanic students identified as Democrat and 6.7% identified as Republican while 86.7% fell to the left on the ideology scale. Being Hispanic does appear to be predictive of an ideological change during college based on analysis from the PEP. Among students who remained stable, 7% were Hispanic, while 13% of those who moved to the right and 16% of those who moved to the left were Hispanic. There is a statistically significant difference between the stable group and the group that moved to the left, so that Hispanic students were more likely to move to the left than remain ideologically stable during college. Among Asian students, 58.8% came in as Democrats and 62.7% left as Democrats. Not as many Asian students experience a change in ideological leaning as 39.7% did. Something that is interesting about Asian students is that in wave one, 83.8% leaned to the left while in wave two 79.4% leaned to the left. This is a slight decline, but may be indicative of something about Asian students' experiences in college being different from the rest of their peers. Yet, it does not appear that this experience is directly tied to their racial identity, as being Asian is not predictive of a move to the right, nor a move to the left or ideological stability. For the three groups, 12%

of students who remained stable were Asian, 10% of students who moved to the right were Asian, and 13% of students who moved to the left were Asian.

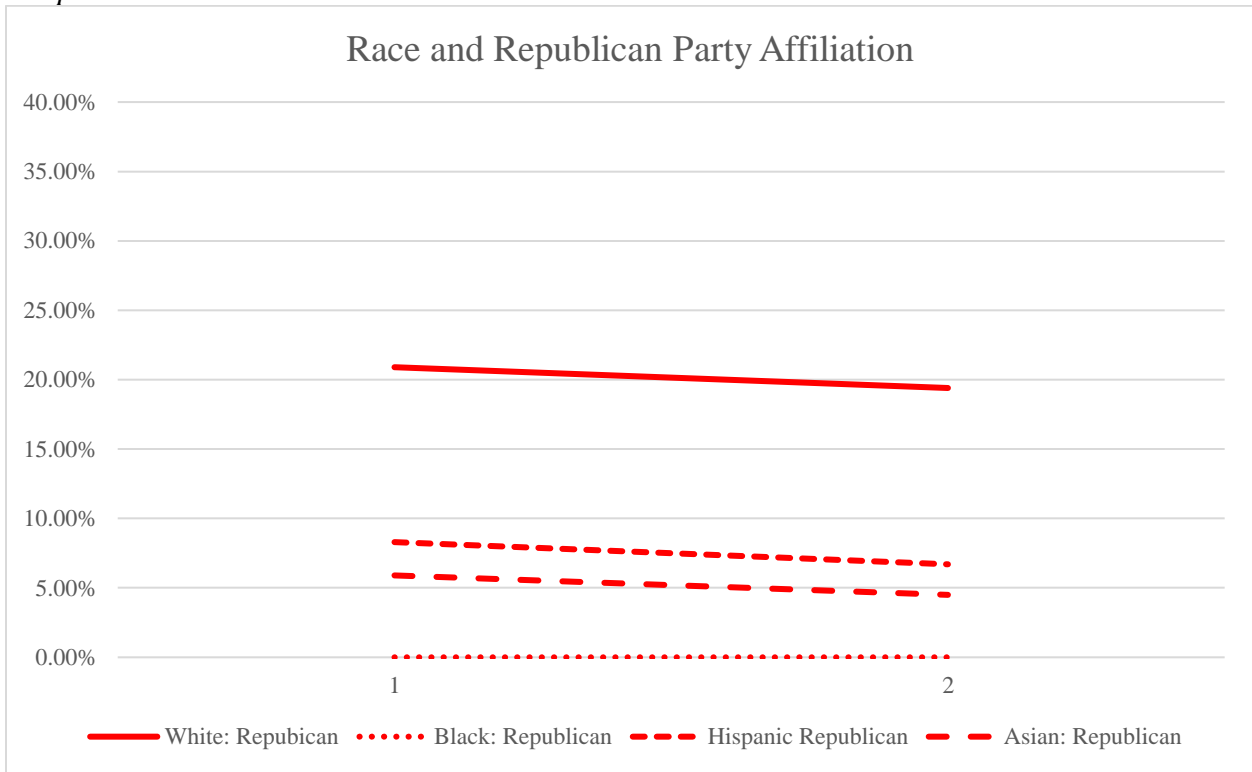
Table 2.1 Race and Political Party/Ideological Leaning

	Wave 1: % Democrat	Wave 2: % Democrat	Wave 1: % Republican	Wave 2: % Republican	Wave 1: % Leaning to the Left	Wave 2: % Leaning to the Left
White	42.8%	45.3%	20.9%	19.4%	70.2%	71.9%
Black	70.8%	75.3%	0.0%	0.0%	79.7%	79.2%
Hispanic	51.7%	58.3%	8.3%	6.7%	80.0%	86.7%
Asian	58.8%	62.75	5.9%	4.5%	83.8%	79.4%

Graph 2.1



Graph 2.2



Graph 2.3

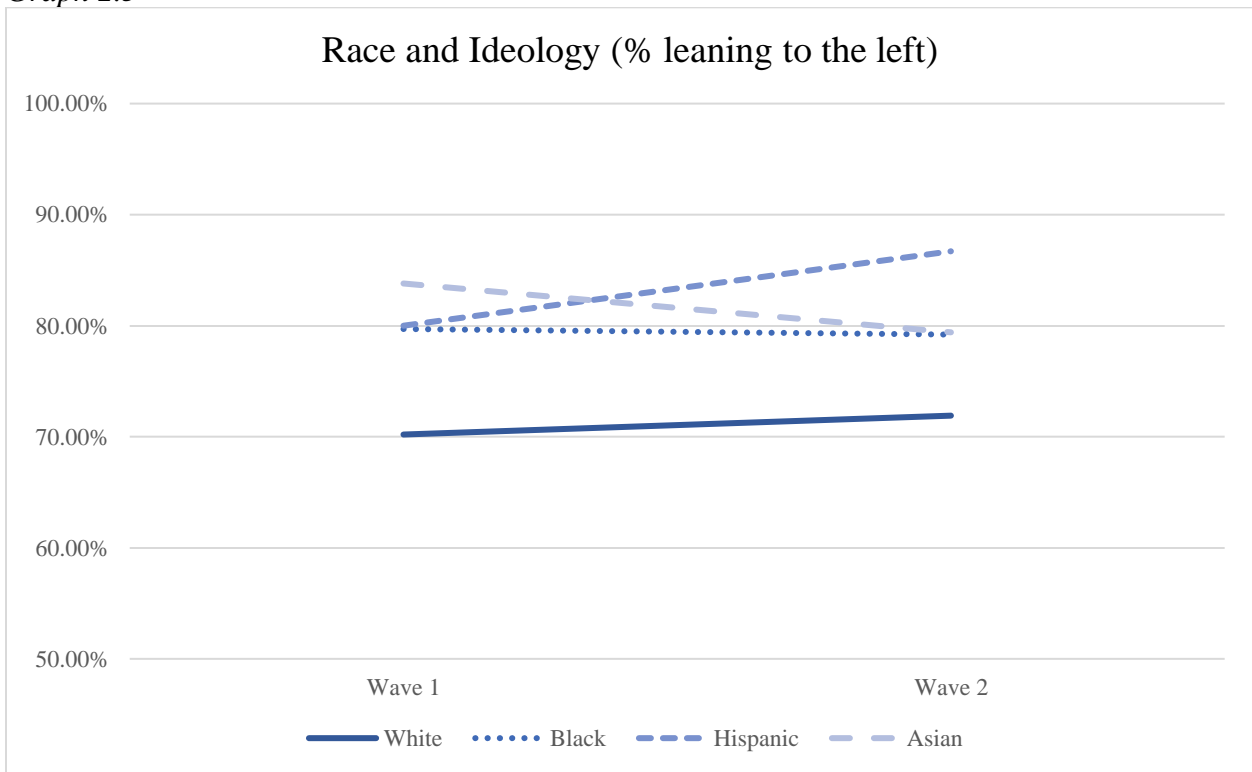


Table 2.2: One-Way ANOVA for Race

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	%	%	%		
<i>Race</i>					
White	.64	.71	.63	1.80	N/A
Black	.10	.12	.12	.066	N/A
Hispanic	.13	.07	.16	4.59**	BC
Asian	.10	.12	.13	.283	N/A

Gender

Another area where a difference is seen among subgroups of a demographic is in gender. Among the public as a whole, there is a gender gap where in general, women lean Democratic and men lean Republican (Pew 2018). However, this gap is somewhat mediated in the PEP by the fact that all of these respondents are college educated, so they lean more to the left than the nation as a whole. To begin, women in wave one are more liberal than men in wave one. Among women, 51.1% start as a Democrat, 13.0% as Republican, and 78% fall to the left on the ideology scale. Men come in as 43.3% identifying as a Democrat, 19.7% as Republican, and 66.4% are on the left of the ideology scale. In wave two, women are still more liberal than men as 53.4% of women are Democrats and 49.1% of men are Democrats. Also, in wave two, 12.1% of women are Republicans while 17.5% of men are Republicans. Based on these percentages, not only are women more liberal than men, but women start off as more Democratic than men end.

A fascinating difference between men and women that emerges from this survey is the difference in how they change on the ideology scale. Among female students, 36.2% experience a change and of those students, 60.9% move to the left and 39.1% move to the right. On the other hand, a larger percentage of men experience a change on the ideology scale as 44.5% have a change. Furthermore, among the male students who change, 50% move to the left and 50%

move to the right. This is especially interesting considering that men saw a larger jump in the percentage identifying as Democrat between the two waves than women did. So, it may be the case here that college influences more men to identify as Democrat, but does not necessarily have an overwhelming influence on moving their ideology to the left.

Furthermore, the gender of a student is predictive of a change or stability in ideology during college. Among students who moved to the right, 50% were male and 50% were female. Among students who moved to the left, 40% were male and 60% were female. Among students who remained stable, 36% were male and 64% were female. For men, there is a statistically significant difference between moving to the right and remaining stable, where being male is predictive of moving to the right. For women, there is also a statistically significant difference between moving to the right and remaining stable; but in this case, being female is predictive of stability. A reason for why women are more likely to remain stable during college is because their gender identity has been central to the formation of their political ideology, and this does not change during college. Another reason may be that women are more interested in politics and have greater political knowledge going into college so that their political opinions are already formed and crystalized. On the other hand, men may not see their gender identity as being central in the formation of their political opinions or they are not as politically interested or knowledgeable going into college. While men are more likely to move to the right than to remain stable, they are not statistically more likely to move to the right than to move to the left, which is why we see an equal amount of men who change during college moving in either direction.

This finding is somewhat surprising in comparison to what Fred Greenstein found in his study on children and politics. Greenstein finds that women as a whole are less politically

interested, meaning that they participate less in politics and have more vague opinions about politics (Greenstein 1969). He cites studies showing that adolescent females are less politically interested than males and that boys are better politically informed than girls (Greenstein 1969). He hypothesizes that the reason for this is that men are viewed as the politically dominant figures in society, so boys are more likely than girls to take on this role (Greenstein 1969). He also posits that boys are more prone to being interested in social studies, which lends itself to politics, while girls are more interested in humanities (Greenstein 1969). If what Greenstein finds were truly the case, then we would expect to see women being more open to political change during college. If women were not exposed to as much political information during their youth, then they would have more to learn as they grow older, and college would be a major source of this. Therefore, we would expect to see similar findings to those of Newcomb at Bennington, with the female college students being more open to ideological change.

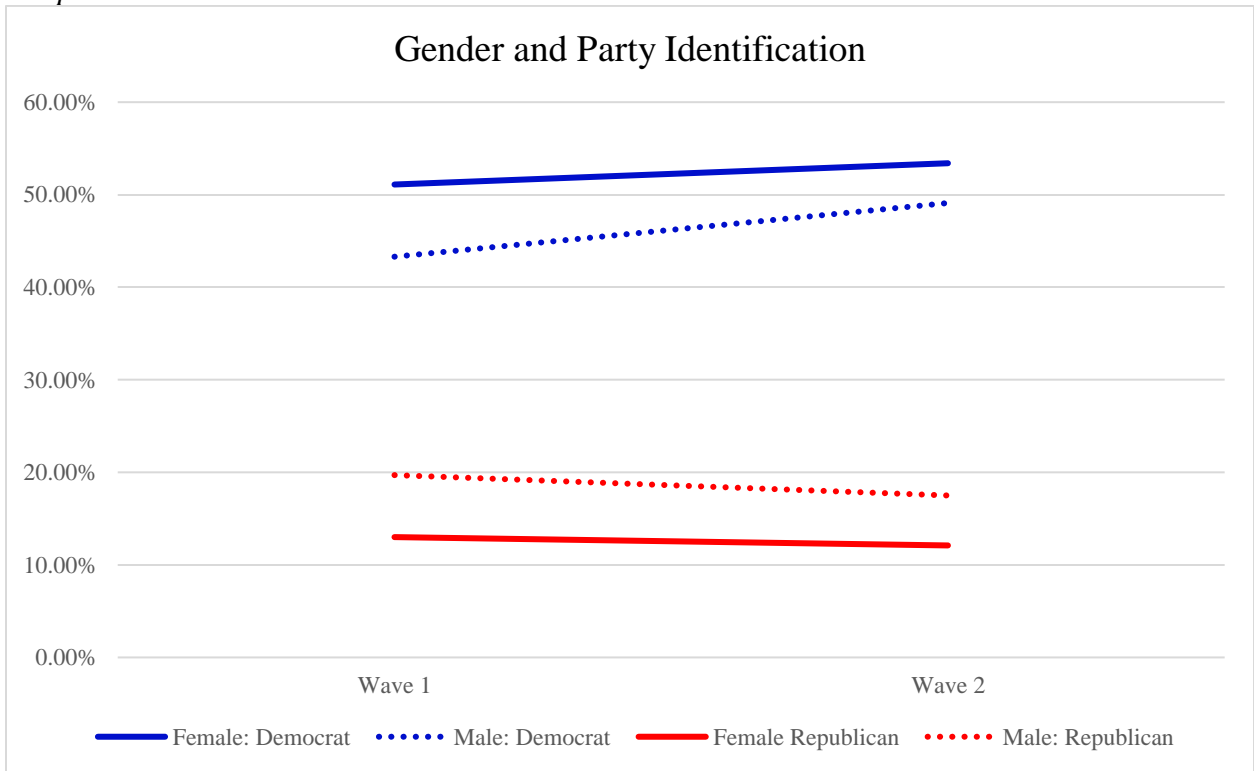
However, with the PEP we see the opposite pattern. Women are more likely than men to have a stable political ideology, while men are more likely to change. This indicates that women may have more political interest and knowledge going into college than men do, which is a reverse in the trend seen in Greenstein's study. One explanation for this is that times have simply changed. Greenstein was writing in the 1960s, and the PEP data was taken in the 2000s, forty years later. The social climate around gender and politics has changed so that it is more acceptable for women to have their own political opinions and men are not seen as the sole dominant political figures in society. Furthermore, more time has passed since the ratification of the 19th Amendment so that women are increasingly taking on the role of being politically engaged. Whatever the case may be, it seems that women, more so than men, are forming their

political opinions earlier in life so that they are less influenced by factors later in life, such as going to college.

Table 2.3: Gender and Political Party/Ideological Leaning

	Wave 1: % Democrat	Wave 2: % Democrat	Wave 1: % Republican	Wave 2: % Republican	Wave 1: % Leaning to the Left	Wave 2: % Leaning to the Left
Female	51.1%	53.4%	13.0%	12.1%	78.0%	79.4%
Male	43.4%	49.1%	19.7%	17.5%	66.4%	66.5%

Graph 2.4



Graph 2.5

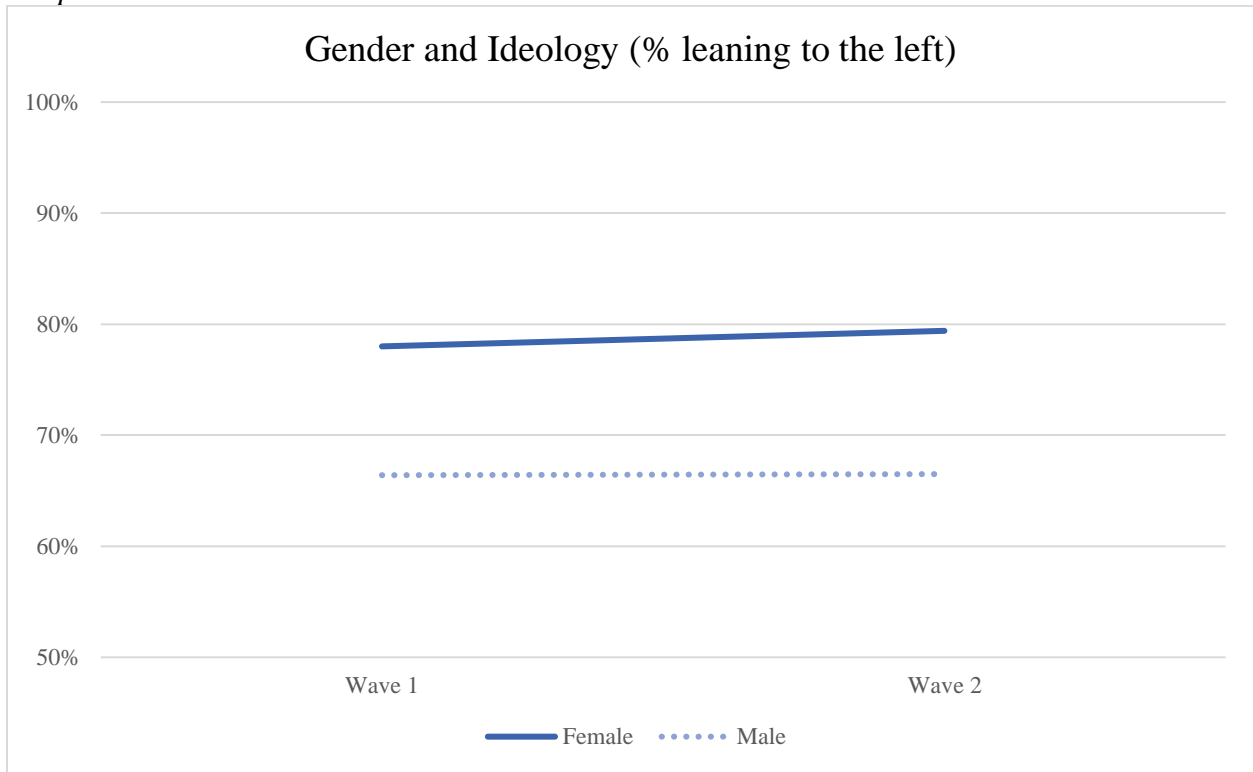


Table 2.4: One-Way ANOVA for Gender

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	%	%	%		
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	.50	.36	.40	3.67*	AB
Female	.50	.64	.60	3.67*	AB

Religion

From the PEP, three major religious groups can be formed: Christians, non-Christians, and those who are non-religious. Among Christians during wave one, 38.1% identified as Democrat and 26.3% identified as Republican. Furthermore, 61.5% fell to the left on the ideology scale. Between the two waves, 44.2% of Christian students experienced a change on the ideology scale, with 52.9% of these students moving to the left and 47.1% moving to the right. In wave two, 44.9% of Christian students identified as Democrat and 22.8% identified as

Republican. Additionally, in wave two 63.1% of students lean to the left on the ideology scale. Among Christians, students are seen to be moving to the left, but liberals do not dominate this groups as much as they do for non-Christians or non-religious students. Despite this apparent leftward change, analysis from the PEP indicates that being Christian is actually somewhat predictive of moving to the right ideologically. For the three groups of students, 55% of those who moved to the right, 48% of those who moved to the left, and 42% of those who remained stable were Christian. This creates a statistically significant difference between moving to the right and remaining stable, so that Christian students were more likely to move to the right than to remain stable, but not more likely to move to the right than to move to the left.

Breaking this group down further, white Christians look different than Christians as a whole. In terms of party identification, in wave one, 29.2% of white Christians identify as Democrat and 33.3% identify as Republican. This is the first and only group we see with more students identifying as Republican than Democrat. Furthermore, in wave one, 56.1% of these students fall to the left of the ideology scale. While this is still a majority leaning to the left, this is the lowest that we have seen. In wave two, 34.9% of white Christians identify as Democrat and 30.2% identify as Republican. This group of students no longer has a plurality of individuals identifying as Republican. As for ideology, 43.2% experience a change on the ideology scale with 44.5% moving to the right and 55.4% moving to the left. This individual level change has a limited effect on the overall ideological leaning of these students though as 57.1% lean to the left in wave two, which is only a one percentage point increase from wave one. White Christians are also different from Christians as a whole in that this identity is not predictive of ideological change or stability. Of Christian students, white Christians make up 65% of those who move to the right, 72% of those who move to the left, and 71% of those who remain stable. This trend

looks more like the overall trend of white students from the PEP. Therefore, it is likely that their racial identity is more salient in their political ideology formation than their religious identity.

Among non-Christian religious students, 63.2% identified as Democrat in wave one and 13.2% as Republican while 75.7% leaned to the left on the ideology scale. Between wave one and two, 38.2% moved on the ideology scale, with 55.1% of these moving to the left and 44.8% of these moving to the right. These changes make it so that in wave two, 64.4% of non-Christian students identified as Democrat and 11.4% as Republican while 77.3% were on the left on the ideology scale. It is seen that non-Christians students come in as more liberal and leave as more liberal compared to Christian students, but experience less of a change due to their strong incoming views. It is also the case the being non-Christian is not predictive of neither ideological change nor stability. Among the three groups, 25% of those who moved to the right, 24% of those who moved to the left, and 25% of those who remained stable were Non-Christian students.

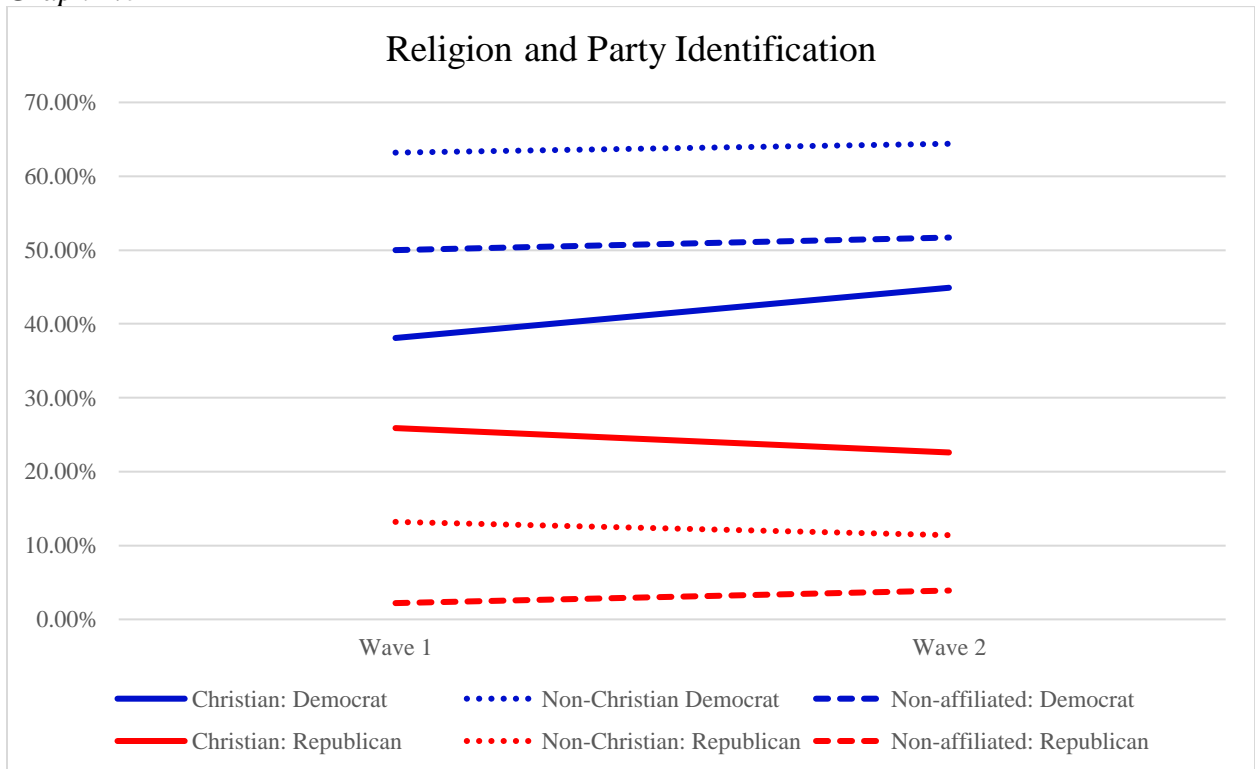
Non-religious students follow somewhat of a different pattern than religious students. For party identification, 50.0% enter as a Democrat and 2.2% as a Republican and 51.7% leave as a Democrat and 3.9% as a Republican. Many of these students either identify as independents or as not politically affiliated, just as they are not religiously affiliated. However, on the ideology scale, in wave one 89.2% lean to the left and in wave two 89.8% lean to the left. From this, it is clear that these non-religious students do have strong leftward leanings, yet they are not as inclined to sort themselves into corresponding political parties. Furthermore, they see little overall change in their ideological leaning, which is unlike either religious grouping discussed or any other demographic group. This stability of political ideology is actually predicted by their non-religious affiliation. Of students who remain stable, 33% are non-affiliated, while 19% of

those who move to the right and 28% of those who move to the left are non-religious. This produces a significant difference between moving to the right and remaining stable, where non-affiliated students are more likely to remain stable than move to the right.

Table 2.5: Religion and Political Party/Ideological Leaning

	Wave 1: % Democrat	Wave 2: % Democrat	Wave 1: % Republican	Wave 2: % Republican	Wave 1: % Leaning to the Left	Wave 2: % Leaning to the Left
Christian	38.1%	44.9%	25.9%	22.6%	61.5%	63.1%
White Christian	29.2%	34.9%	33.3%	30.2%	56.1%	57.1%
Non-Christian	63.2%	64.4%	13.2%	11.4%	75.7%	77.3%
Non-affiliated	50.0%	51.7%	2.2%	3.9%	89.2%	89.9%

Graph 2.6



Graph 2.7

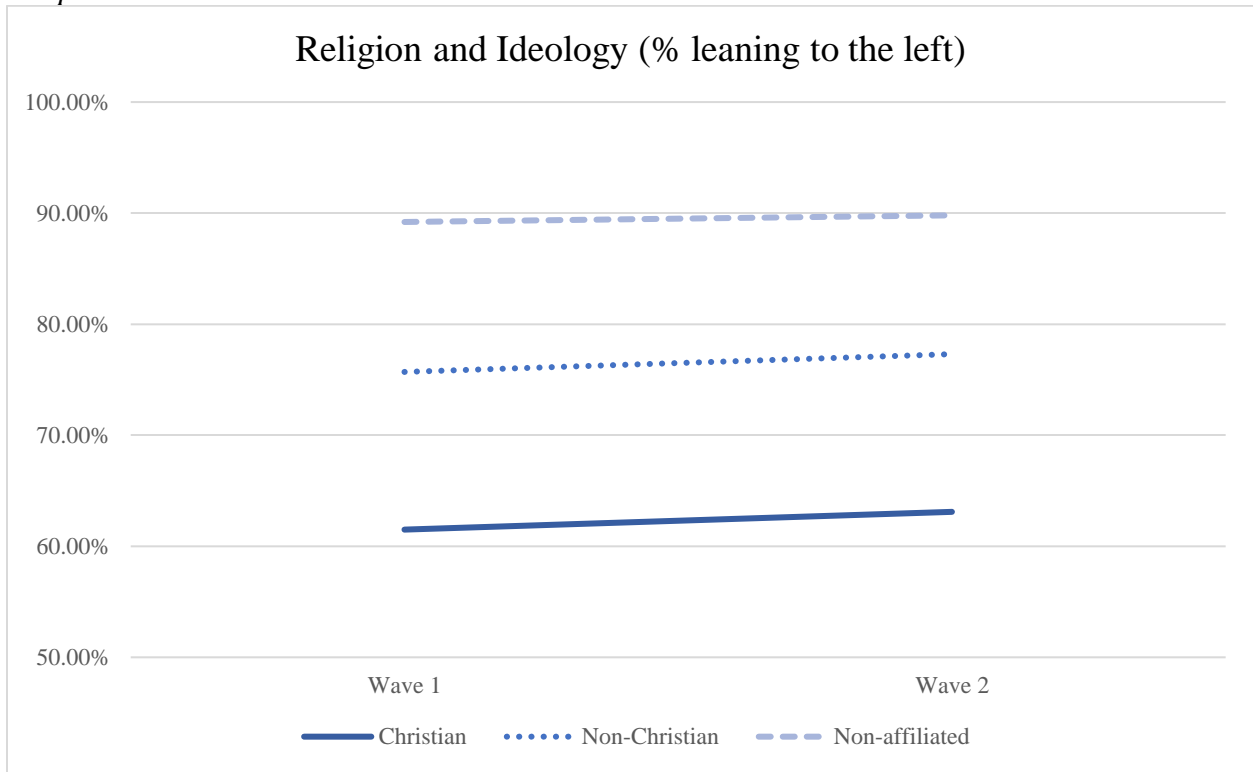


Table 2.6: One-Way ANOVA for Religion

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	%	%	%		
<i>Religion</i>					
Christian	.55	.42	.48	3.09*	N/A
White Christian	.65	.71	.72	.416	N/A
Non-Christian	.25	.25	.24	.042	N/A
Non-affiliated	.19	.33	.28	3.64*	AB

Parents' Level of Education

The level of education that an individual's parents' have is important for multiple reasons. First, a higher level of education is associated with greater political knowledge. If a student has one or more parents with a college degree, then they are more likely to have been exposed to political topics before and already have formed some political beliefs. Additionally, education level is associated with income and economic status. If someone's parents have a

college degree, then they are more likely to come from a high-income family. With this being said, a student's parents' level of education could have an impact on their ability to go to college and their political views going into college.

Among students with both parents having attained a college degree, 52.5% are Democrats in wave one and 14.2% are Republicans. Additionally, 78% fall to the left on the ideology scale. Among these students, 35.1% experience a change in ideology between wave one and wave two with 52.3% moving to the left and 47.6% moving to the right. In wave two, 54.4% of these students identify as Democrat and 12.6% as Republican with 77.2% falling to the left on the ideology scale. These students' party identification and ideological leanings look similar in wave two to how they looked in wave one. This indicates that their political beliefs and ideological leanings were formed before they arrived at college and that their experiences in college did little to change their views. This idea is supported by the fact that the ANOVA analysis of PEP shows that having two college-educated parents is associated with ideological stability during college. For the three groups, 53% of students who remained stable come from a family where both of their parents are college educated, while 48% of students who move to the right and 41% of students who move to the left have two college-educated parents. It appears that the significant difference is between the stable group and the group who moved to the left, so that students with two college-educated parents are more likely to remain stable than move to the left. This may be because this group of students came in very far to the left on the ideology scale, so that they can either remain stable or move to the right.

Students with neither parent having attained a college degree look different from this previous group of students. In wave one, 43.4% of these students identify as Democrat and 18.2% as Republican. Furthermore, 67.6% lean to the left on the ideology scale. Between the

waves, 44.8% of students experience a change in ideology leaning, with 51.5% moving to the left and 48.4% moving to the right. At wave two, 50.7% identify as Democrat and 16.2% as Republican with 69.7% leaning to the left on the ideology scale. These students, while they lean liberal, are not as liberal as students with two college educated parents during the first or second wave. However, unlike the students with both parents having attained a college degree, more of these students experience a change in party identification and ideological leaning, indicating that their experiences in college have an impact on their political beliefs. Despite the higher rate of change, having no parent with a college education is not predictive of ideological stability or change. Of the three groups, 21% of those who remain stable, 30% of those who move to the right, and 24% of those who move to the left have no parent with a college education. Due to the lack of significant difference between the three groups, having neither parent with a college education does not affect the student's likelihood of ideological change during college.

Students with only one parent who graduated from college look more like students with neither parent having attained a college degree. In wave one, 43.8% of these students identify as Democrat and 15.3% as Republican, with 70.4% leaning liberal. These students fall in between the other two groups for the proportion that experienced a change in partisanship leaning, with 42.8% moving on the partisanship scale. However, unlike the previous groups of students, a higher percentage moved to the left with 66.1% of those who changed moving to the left and 33.8% moving to the right. In wave two, 46.2% of these students identified as Democrat and 15.9% as Republican, with 74.8% leaning liberal. In this way, the party identification of these students looks more like students with neither parent having attended college, and their score on the partisanship scale looking more like students whose parents both got a college degree. It can be seen that attending college does have an impact on their political beliefs like it does for those

students whose parents did not attain a college degree. However, the education background of their parents is not predictive of their ideological change during college. Among the three groups of students, 22% of those who remain stable, 20% of those who move to the right, and 30% of those who move to the left have only one parents with a college education. Even though it appears that these students are overrepresented among those who move to the left, there is no statistically significant different between the groups. Therefore, there may be another factor causing these students to shift in ideology.

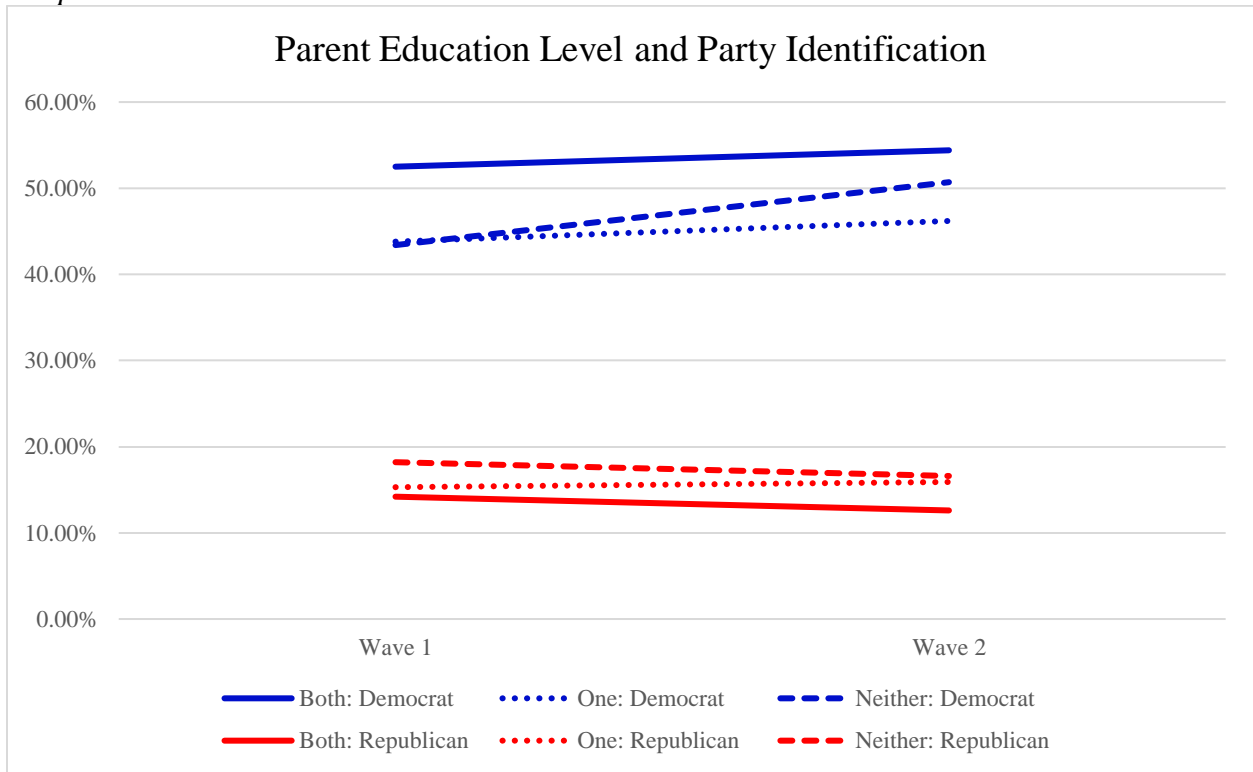
As with the findings on gender, these findings on parents' education level contrast with what might be expected from previous research. On the one hand, a student's parents' education level is indicative of how much political information the student would have been exposed to growing up, where the more education one's parents have, the more exposed to political information one is. We would expect to see that students with both parent's having a college degree would be more likely to remain ideologically stable, while students with neither parent having a college degree would be more likely to change ideologically. However, while we see that students with two college educated parents are more likely to remain stable, we do not see that students with less than two college educated parents are more likely to experience a change in ideology. Furthermore, my findings both support and go against what Greenstein argues in his study that high-socioeconomic children are more likely to be politically interested and involved (Greenstein 1969). He argues that children of higher-status parents are more likely to internalize a sense of responsibility and more likely to plan for the future, which translates to being more politically interested and involved (Greenstein 1969). Greenstein additionally finds that higher-status children are more likely to ground their party preferences in information (Greenstein 1969). If having two college educated parents translates to a higher socioeconomic status and

having neither parent with a college education translates to a lower socioeconomic status, then we would again expect to see the first group as more likely to be stable during college and the second group to be more likely to change during college. Yet, we only see that the first group is associated with stability while the second group is not associated with change nor stability. Therefore, socioeconomic status as measured through parents' education level is only predictive of ideological stability or change during college to a certain extent.

Table 2.7: Parent Education Level and Political Party/Ideological Leaning

	Wave 1: % Democrat	Wave 2: % Democrat	Wave 1: % Republican	Wave 2: % Republican	Wave 1: % Leaning to the Left	Wave 2: % Leaning to the Left
Both College Educated	52.5%	54.4%	14.2%	12.6%	78.0%	77.2%
One College Educated	43.8%	46.2%	15.3%	15.9%	70.4%	74.8%
Neither College Educated	43.4%	50.7%	18.2%	16.6%	67.6%	69.7%

Graph 2.8



Graph 2.9

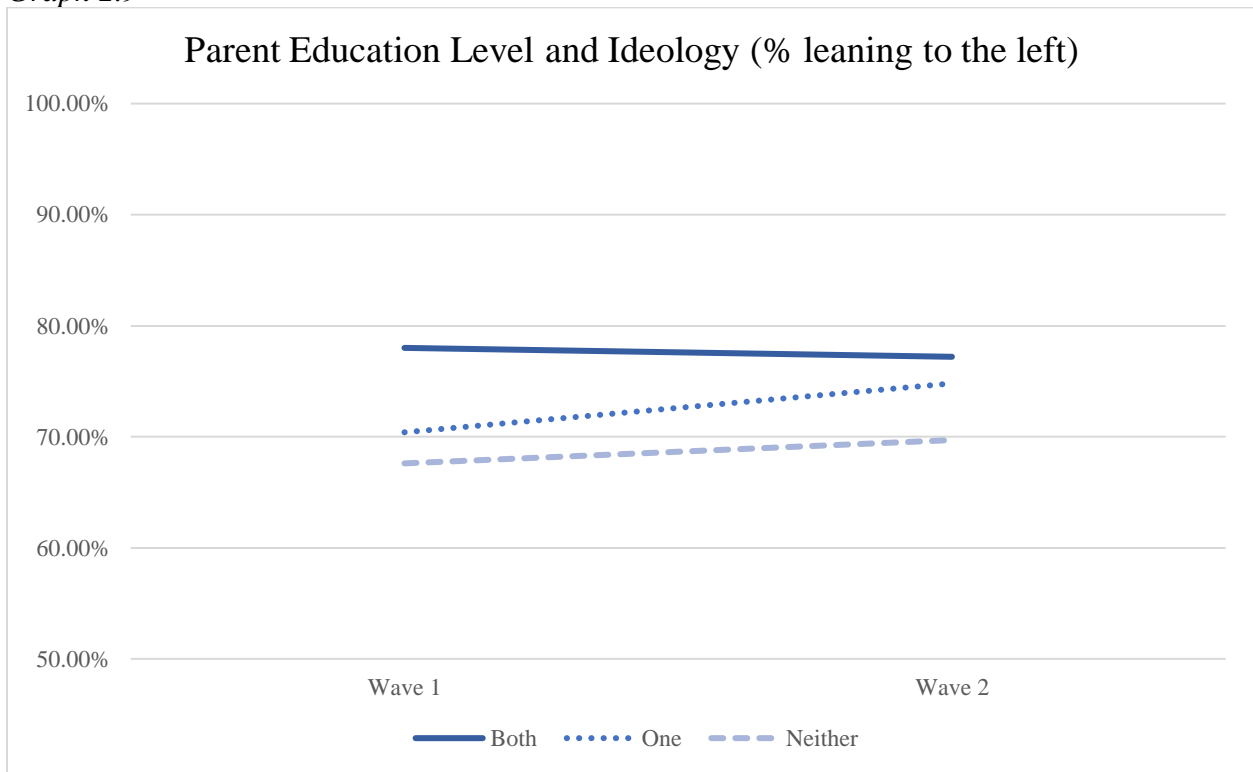


Table 2.8: One-Way ANOVA for Parent Education Level

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	%	%	%		
<i>Parents' Level of Education</i>					
Neither College-Educated	.30	.21	.24	1.70	N/A
One College-Educated	.20	.22	.30	2.30	N/A
Both College-Educated	.48	.53	.41	3.08*	N/A

Overall Takeaways

With these basic demographic findings from the Political Engagement Project, three major patterns can be seen as to how college affects groups of students. The first is that college has little effect on students with strong preexisting political beliefs. This is seen with black students, female students, non-religious students, and students with both parents having attained a college degree. For black and female students, their identity likely played a large role in shaping their political attitudes before they arrived at college. In the general public both blacks and women lean towards the Democratic party, so it is not surprising that college students from these groups follow the same pattern (Pew 2018). For students whose parents are both college educated, they were likely to have been exposed to political issues and topics throughout their lifetime as education is associated with political knowledge and involvement. Therefore, these students likely formed political opinions while they were growing up based on their family background. Because these groups of students already have strong views entering college, there is little room for movement. As for non-religious students, it is harder to tell what might have had an impact on their political party identification and ideology leanings before they entered college. In fact, one might assume that because they do not have religion to influence their political view, they would be more susceptible to change, but this is not the case. Despite this, it

is the case that among the general public, individuals with no religious affiliation strongly lean towards identifying as a Democrat (Pew 2018).

A second pattern that emerges is that college creates stronger liberal leanings in students. For many groups, a plurality of students enters identifying as Democrat or leaning to the left and end with more students identifying as Democrat and leaning more to the left. This pattern is seen in white students, Hispanic students, Asian students, male students, non-Christian students, and students with one or neither parent having attained a college degree. For some of these students, their identity is not as strongly tied to their political affiliations. For example, in the general public, men and whites see a fairly even split between Republican and Democrat (Pew 2018). Because they are not necessarily predisposed to a party or ideological leaning, there is more of an opening for them to change. As for Hispanic, Asian, and non-Christian students, their identity is often tied to a political leaning, as it is seen amongst the general public that these groups lean to the left (Pew 2018). However, the data from the PEP show that these groups of students do become more liberal between wave one and wave two, suggesting that college had an impact on their party identification and ideology. As for the students with one or neither parent having attained a college degree, they were likely not exposed to many political issues growing up, so their college experiences provided them with an opportunity to learn about these issues and form opinions about them.

A third pattern that is seen is a complete reversal in political leanings. This is only seen in one group from the PEP: white Christians. This process is the most difficult to achieve and least likely to be observed as once an individual has a party identification, it is unlikely to change. However, among white Christians who participated in the PEP, it is observed that in wave one a plurality of students identifies as Republican and then in wave two a plurality of

students identifies as Democrat. This is somewhat surprising as among the general public, white Christians overwhelmingly identify as Republican (Pew 2018). It can be concluded that college did have an impact in reversing the party leanings of this group. Something else that is interesting about white Christians is that even though a large change is seen in party identification, a similar change is not observed in overall ideological leanings. Therefore, for these college students their religious beliefs and college experiences may be pulling in two different directions and for some their experiences in college come to outweigh their religious predispositions. Although this is the only group from the PEP that follows this pattern, it does not mean that they are the only group that does in the entire college population.

Furthermore, we see from the ANOVA analysis that demographic traits are both predictive of ideological stability and of ideological change. This suggests that in some cases, certain pre-existing (pre-college) factors are more important to the formation of the political ideology of an individual than the experience of college is. For female students, non-religiously affiliated students, and students with two college educated parents, their identity as a part of these groups or exposure to previous political information is predictive of ideological stability. For the first two of these groups, their identity has likely had a large part in forming their ideology, but this is certainly not the only process taking place. For the last group, exposure to previous political knowledge from their college educated parents may have influenced their ideology. On the other hand, a students' identity may lend themselves to being more open to change during college. For male students, Hispanic students, and Christian students, their demographic identity is predictive of ideological change during college. For male and Christian students, it appears as though they are more apt to moving to the right than staying stable, which aligns with the idea of an ideological gender gap and Christians as being socially conservative.

For Hispanic students, they are more likely to move to the left than to remain ideologically stable, and there is likely something about their ethnicity or group experiences that makes them more open to change during college. In the next section, I will explore what might also have an impact on changing a student's political ideology, including aspects about the college experience.

Analysis of Pre-college and College Factors

Political Knowledge/Interest

The original purpose of the Political Engagement Project was to “study the effects of a number of promising educational approaches that were designed to support political development.” The hope was that taking part in these programs and courses would increase the political knowledge and interest of these students. This appears to have been the case as on average, students rate themselves as having more in-depth knowledge about political issues and following politics more often after the program/course. These questions may also be instructive about why students may be likely to change their political views during college or remain stable in their political ideology. In general, individuals who have more political interest and knowledge are more stable in their political views (Zaller 1992). Because these people have the most exposure to political issues and different opinions, they are likely to have formed strong political opinions (Zaller 1992). Therefore, even when faced with new political information, they will remain steady in their views (Zaller 1992). If this is the case for the general public, then it can likely be observed on the college level as well.

What we find with the data from the PEP is that this holds true with certain variables. First, the students who remained stable more closely followed government and public affairs than students who moved to the left during wave one. For wave one, students who remained

stable had a mean of 4.44 while students who moved to the left had a mean of 4.00 and students who moved to the right had a mean of 4.26. There is a significant difference between the students who remained stable and the students who moved to the left, while students who moved to the right fall in between. During wave two, students who remained stable had a mean of 4.61, students who moved to the left had a mean of 4.36, and students who moved to the right had a mean of 4.55. By wave two, there is no significant difference between these three groups for how often each follows government and public affairs. An explanation for this difference is that students who remained stable had more incoming exposure to political issues. This means that their political views were stronger at the beginning and more likely to hold. On the other hand, students who moved to the left followed politics the least, and therefore had the most to learn about politics during their time at college. Therefore, they were more open to change from what they were about to experience at college. The reason why the significant difference disappears by the second wave is because all of the students increased how often they follow politics due to the courses and programs they were taking with the PEP, so this was no longer predictive of ideological change. However, it remains important that pre-college exposure to political affairs is predictive of ideological stability.

Another factor that is predictive of ideological stability from the PEP is how students rate their knowledge about current or international political issues. Students who remained stable rated themselves as having more in-depth knowledge on this topic than students who moved to the left. For this measure, during wave one, students who remained stable had a mean of 4.04, students who moved to the left had a mean of 3.67, and students who moved to the right had a mean of 3.88. During wave two, students who remained stable had a mean of 4.28, students who moved to the left had a mean of 3.96, and students who moved to the right had a mean of 4.31.

In both waves, there was a significant difference between the students who remained stable and the students who moved to the left, but not with students who moved to the right. (Even though students who moved to the right had a higher mean than students who remained stable, this did not create a significant difference with students who moved to the left because they had a higher standard deviation.) As with the previous measure on following politics, students who claimed to have a more in-depth knowledge of national and international political issues were those students who remained stable. If students have a better understanding of politics, then they are able to form stronger opinions which last and do not waiver. Students who have lower levels of understanding of political issues will be more likely to change their political views and may draw insight from those around them at college.

The last variable measuring political interest/knowledge to have a significant difference between the three groups is how students rate their knowledge on theories about politics and democracy. Again, students who remained stable rated themselves as having more in-depth knowledge on this topic. Students who remained stable had a mean of 3.99, students who moved to the left had a mean of 3.72, and students who moved to the right had a mean of 3.67. While the differences between the means does produce an F that is significant, there is no indication on which groups this is between. Furthermore, in wave two, this significance disappears; students who remained stable had a mean of 4.26, students who moved to the left had a mean of 4.11, and students who moved to the right had a mean of 4.36. Therefore, this measure does not appear to have a large effect on ideological change or stability despite having a significant F .

These measures indicate that previous political interest and knowledge should be predictive of ideological stability in college students. However, if this was the case, we would see the same pattern for all measures of political interest and knowledge with the different

variables from the PEP. Yet, there are variables asking about political interest and knowledge that do not have a significant difference between any of the groups for either wave one or wave two, such as knowledge about local or state politics or knowledge about economic issues.

Therefore, there must be something special about the political knowledge that students get from following government and public affairs or from understanding current national or international political issues which causes students to remain ideologically stable rather than move to the left.

Connected to this idea of political interest and knowledge is a student's previous exposure to political issues, which I look at next.

Table 2.9: One-Way ANOVA for Political Interest/Knowledge (Wave 1 and Wave 2)

	Moved right ^A (<i>N</i> = 105)	Stable ^B (<i>N</i> = 351)	Moved left ^C (<i>N</i> = 133)	<i>F</i>	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (<i>SD</i>) or %	Mean (<i>SD</i>) or %	Mean (<i>SD</i>) or %		
How often do you follow government and public affairs in a week (1=never; 6=most of the time)	4.26 (1.32)	4.44 (1.32)	4.00 (1.44)	5.21**	BC
	4.55 (1.13)	4.61 (1.24)	4.36 (1.24)	2.03	N/A
How do you rate your knowledge about current national or international political issues (1= no knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)	3.88 (1.34)	4.04 (1.23)	3.67 (1.48)	3.94*	BC
	4.31 (1.16)	4.28 (1.11)	3.96 (1.19)	4.48*	BC
How do you rate your knowledge about current local or state political issues (1= no knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)	3.10 (1.20)	3.28 (1.23)	3.22 (1.31)	.932	N/A
	3.73 (1.17)	3.55 (1.23)	3.56 (1.27)	.902	N/A
How do you rate your knowledge about political leaders and their roles (1= no knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)	3.71 (1.27)	3.79 (1.26)	3.51 (1.24)	2.48	N/A
	4.10 (1.21)	4.08 (1.22)	3.90 (1.25)	1.14	N/A
How do you rate your knowledge about current economic issues (1= no	3.67 (1.20)	3.65 (1.22)	3.43 (1.25)	1.79	N/A

<i>knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)</i>	4.10 (1.18)	3.84 (1.13)	3.87 (1.11)	2.21	N/A
How do you rate your knowledge about organizations that work on social and political problems (1= <i>no knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)</i>	3.39 (1.30)	3.70 (1.34)	3.48 (1.32)	2.85	N/A
	4.05 (1.14)	4.01 (1.21)	3.90 (1.26)	.565	N/A
How do you rate your knowledge about theories about politics and democracy (1= <i>no knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)</i>	3.67 (1.31)	3.99 (1.37)	3.72 (1.55)	3.15*	N/A
	4.36 (1.21)	4.26 (1.23)	4.11 (1.36)	1.23	N/A
How do you rate your knowledge about political institutions and how they work (1= <i>no knowledge; 6= in depth knowledge)</i>	3.81 (1.29)	3.97 (1.36)	3.69 (1.48)	2.24	N/A
	4.37 (1.10)	4.28 (1.21)	4.17 (1.31)	.817	N/A

Previous Political Exposure

Some possible sources of students' incoming political knowledge and interest might be from their experiences during high school or at home, and these can also have an effect on whether or not a student experiences a change in ideology during college. High schools as a place of learning could be responsible for teaching students about political issues which increase their political knowledge. Unfortunately, the PEP only asked one question about exposure to political topics in high school, so we are not able to have a full understanding from this. This question asks how often political topics were discussed in high school, ranging from never to very often. Students who remained stable had a mean of 4.08, students who moved to the left had a mean of 3.87, and students who moved to the right had a mean of 3.75. As would be expected, students who remained stable reported discussing politics in high school at a higher rate than either group of students who changed ideology during college. However, this difference is not at a significant level, and so no conclusions can be realistically drawn from this.

Another place where incoming college students may have been previously exposed to political issues is at home. Again, the variables from the PEP are not comprehensive on this topic, so we cannot get a full understanding on the effects of this and how it may affect the changing or stable political ideology of college students. However, it is worth investigating because parent socialization and party identification can be predictive of a child's political views. One measure that could indicate political exposure at home is whether or not one's parents received the newspaper. The newspaper could be a source of political knowledge for the parents who then discussed the topics, or a direct source for the kids who might also read the newspaper. Therefore, it might be the case that one's parents receiving the newspaper is predictive of ideological stability since they were exposed to political topics from a young age. Despite these assumptions, there is no significant difference between the students who remained stable, the students who moved to the left, and the students who moved to the right for how often their parents received the newspaper.

Another parent measure that could affect an individual's political knowledge and thus stability of ideology is how often the parents voted in elections. The more often one's parents voted, the more likely that their parents were politically knowledgeable and involved. The less often one's parents voted, the less likely that their parents were politically knowledgeable and involved. This could be used as a proxy measure for how much an individual was exposed to political issues growing. If this is the case, we would expect to see the stable students' parents voting at a higher rate than the parents of the students who had a change in ideology. However, like the previous measure, there is no significant difference between the three groups, so parent's voting is not predictive of a student's change in ideology. Despite these null findings, this does not mean that political exposure from previous education or parents has no effect, only that these

measures that the PEP took had no significant effect on the difference between the three groups.

Next, I will examine how an individual’s identity may affect their likelihood of ideological change or stability.

Table 2.10: One-Way ANOVA for Previous Political Exposure

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %		
In high school, how often were political topics discussed (1= never; 6= very often)	3.75 (1.34)	4.08 (1.51)	3.87 (1.47)	2.46	N/A
Did your parents get a daily newspaper at home when you were growing up (1= no; 2= yes; 3= don't know)	1.76 (.450)	1.83 (.435)	1.73 (.464)	.061	N/A
How often did your parents vote in elections (1= not at all; 4= every election; 5=don't know)	3.25 (.896)	3.32 (.868)	3.28 (.959)	.306	N/A

Personal Identity

Previous research on political attitudes has tried to connect these attitudes to specific personality characteristics that individuals possess. One common measurement of personality is the five-factor model; this model argues that an individual’s personality is the sum of 5 traits: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. John Jost argues that two of these traits are especially important and connected to political beliefs. He reasons that a high level of openness is connected to political liberalism and supporting change and egalitarianism. On the other hand, conscientiousness is related to political conservatism and wanting to maintain the status quo. Based off of these principles, it would be easy to assume that these traits can also be related to the direction that students move in college with more open students moving to the left and more conscientious students moving to the right.

The Political Engagement Project does ask about each student's personal identity during both wave one and wave two. While the questions asked do not entirely line up with the traits that are a part of the five-factor model, some variables do lend themselves towards these traits. However, the findings from the analysis do not line up with ideas on the connection between these traits and ideological change based on Jost's findings. First off, there are many null findings where a personality trait does not relate to a change or lack of change in ideology in either the first or second wave. For example, related to the idea of conscientiousness is that of being fair or unbiased. With this question from the PEP, one might assume that those who move to the right would rate fairness as being more central to their sense of self. However, there is no statistically significant difference in how students who move to the right rate themselves and the other two groups of students. Furthermore, a measure of being unconventional or non-conformist can be related to the idea of openness as a personality trait. If the five-factor model had any relation to predicting how students change their ideology during college, we would expect to see students who move to the left rating being unconventional as more central to themselves. However, again we do not see the expected results. Students who move to the left rate this trait as being central to their sense of selves at a similar level to those students who moved to the right and students who remained stable in both wave one and wave two.

There are two places where we find a statistically significant difference between two groups with the personality trait variables. First, in wave one there is a significant difference in how students who remained stable and students who moved to the left rated being concerned about justice and human rights as a part of their sense of self. Students who moved to the left had a median rating of 4.68 while students who remained stable had a median rating of 4.97. Students who moved to the right fell in the middle with a median of 4.70. What is interesting

about this finding is that students who remained stable rated this trait as more central to their sense of self than students who moved to the left. One might assume that being concerned about justice and human rights is a trait we would associate with being politically liberal or falling to the left on an ideology scale. However, here we see that it is associated with students who remain stable. It is important to keep in mind that students who move to the left are not the same as people who fall to the left, that students who move to the right are not the same as people who fall to the right, and students who remain stable are not the same as individuals who fall ideologically in the middle. Therefore, personality traits may not affect a change in ideology as much as they affect an individual's ideology.

Another place where we see a significant difference is with how students who move to the right and students who remain stable rate themselves as being compassionate and concerned about all. During wave two, students who remain stable have a median rating of 5.15 for this trait while students who move to the right have a median rating of 4.79 for this trait. Students who move to the left fall in between with a median rating of 5.02. What is important for this situation is that the statistical difference only appears in wave two, not wave one. What creates this difference is that students who move to the right rate themselves lower on this trait in wave two and students who remain stable rate themselves as higher. This wave difference is also key in the last variable as there is only a significant difference in wave one, not wave two. Because neither of these traits remain important in explaining the difference between any groups, it seems unlikely that personality traits are predictive of ideological change in college. Finally, in this vein of non-college influences, I will look at how exposure to the news media affect students' ideological change and stability.

Table 2.11: One-Way ANOVA for Personal Identity (Wave 1 and Wave 2)

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %		
How important to your sense of who you are is being guided by spirituality/religious faith (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	3.84 (1.81)	3.68 (1.88)	3.82 (1.86)	.437	N/A
	3.85 (1.86)	3.79 (1.83)	3.65 (1.86)	.389	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being smart, intellectually capable (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	5.33 (.742)	5.16 (.939)	5.08 (1.04)	2.22	N/A
	5.29 (.863)	5.22 (.883)	5.11 (.944)	1.22	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being concerned about international issues (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.15 (1.40)	4.15 (1.28)	3.86 (1.34)	2.56	N/A
	4.26 (1.25)	4.17 (1.27)	4.04 (1.23)	.897	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being fair, unbiased (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.54 (1.18)	4.59 (1.11)	4.60 (1.19)	.094	N/A
	4.68 (1.11)	4.73 (1.11)	4.74 (1.07)	.119	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being willing to stand up for what I believe is right (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	5.27 (.933)	5.31 (.889)	5.13 (.968)	1.87	N/A
	5.16 (.986)	5.33 (.870)	5.16 (.908)	2.52	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being involved in solving community problems (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	3.84 (1.35)	4.10 (1.26)	3.90 (1.44)	2.18	N/A
	4.04 (1.26)	4.32 (1.18)	4.19 (1.32)	2.30	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being creative or imaginative (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.41 (1.25)	4.45 (1.29)	4.50 (1.36)	.133	N/A
	4.40 (1.21)	4.58 (1.18)	4.57 (1.28)	.954	N/A

How important to your sense of who you are is being politically involved (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	3.65 (1.46)	3.89 (1.51)	3.61 (1.65)	2.08	N/A
	3.90 (1.33)	4.19 (1.37)	4.07 (1.46)	1.93	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being compassionate, concerned about all (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.93 (1.29)	5.07 (1.12)	5.00 (1.20)	.585	N/A
	4.79 (1.21)	5.15 (1.05)	5.02 (1.09)	4.60**	AB
How important to your sense of who you are is being honest or truthful (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	5.33 (.967)	5.19 (.966)	5.31 (.893)	1.40	N/A
	5.11 (1.08)	5.25 (.892)	5.24 (.908)	.927	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being concerned about government decisions and policies (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.21 (1.47)	4.40 (1.29)	4.09 (1.39)	2.86	N/A
	4.45 (1.15)	4.53 (1.24)	4.47 (1.11)	.274	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being unconventional, non-conformist (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	3.60 (1.50)	3.53 (1.51)	3.59 (1.46)	.123	N/A
	3.68 (1.37)	3.63 (1.39)	3.93 (1.41)	2.25	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being concerned about justice and human rights (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.70 (1.20)	4.97 (1.08)	4.68 (1.26)	4.38*	BC
	4.74 (1.12)	4.88 (1.06)	4.82 (1.13)	.690	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being responsible, someone others can depend on (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	5.30 (.869)	5.26 (.989)	5.31 (.869)	.213	N/A
	5.18 (.978)	5.33 (.864)	5.28 (.904)	1.20	N/A
How important to your sense of who you are is being outgoing or sociable (1= <i>not central to my sense of self</i> ; 6= <i>very central to my sense of self</i>)	4.61 (1.30)	4.65 (1.33)	4.59 (1.35)	.112	N/A
	4.68 (1.17)	4.69 (1.25)	4.73 (1.15)	.074	N/A

Media Influence

The media, specifically the news media, can influence an individual's political attitudes in multiple ways. First, the news media can be a source of political knowledge for many individuals, as it can be where people obtain information about current events. On the other hand, some media sources can play into partisan divisions. While it is not the case that certain news media outlets have the effect of switching an individual's ideology, these outlets may serve to reinforce an individual's pre-existing beliefs and ideologies. Between these two procedures, it is worth investigating whether or not media exposure can influence an individuals' change in ideology during college.

The Political Engagement Project asks students about their typical weekly exposure to different types and sources of news media both in wave one and in wave two. For the analysis, I draw on the data from wave two as this will be the data that contains a student's media exposure during college. From the analysis, there emerges two patterns of differences between the three groups of students. The first difference is the difference between students who move to the right and students who move to the left. Students who move to the right read magazines and watch national news on television more times in a given week than students who move to the left. For reading magazines, students who move to the right report a median of 3.32, students who move to the left report a median of 2.70, and students who remain stable report a median of 2.83. For watching national news, students who move to the right report a median of 4.94, students who move to the left report a median of 4.11 and students who remain stable report a median of 4.29. For each of these, there is a statistically significant difference between the students who move to the right and the students who move to the left. Furthermore, students who move to the right

report reading about public affairs and politics in the newspaper at a higher rate than students who move to the left, although the difference borders on statistical significance.

Another pattern is between students who move to the right and students who remain stable. Students who move to the right watch local news on television more frequently than students who remain stable, with a median of 4.74 and 4.04 respectively. Students who move to the left fall in the middle with a median of 4.11. For the other two measures of media exposure (radio and internet) students who move to the right report a higher exposure to these outlets than students who remain stable or students who move to the left, but not at a statistically significant rate. Overall, it is clear from the data that students who move to the right have a higher self-reported exposure to all sources of news.

To make sense of this, it is important to frame this trend in terms of the types of influences that news media exposure can have on an individual. If the news media was purely a source of political information and knowledge, then we would have likely seen that students who remain stable have the highest exposure to the news media. This would coincide with John Zaller's principle that the individuals with the highest political knowledge (and therefore the least likelihood of changing ideology) have the highest exposure to political information. However, we do not see this as students who remain stable are exposed to the news media during the week at lower rates than students who move to the right. Another possibility is that students who move to the right are obtaining their news from ideological outlets, specifically conservative media outlets. While this may be true for some students, it cannot be true for all students as some students who move to the right still fall on the left end of the spectrum and would not choose to watch conservative news media. What could be the case is that the information students are getting from media outlets are different from the types of information that students

get from classwork activities which are associated with students moving to the left (discussed below). This media influence could also work counter to the college campus culture, as in general college has the effect of moving more students to the left than to the right. Now that I have covered non-college factors from the survey, I will now to turn college factors and experiences and how they affect political ideology.

Table 2.12: One-Way ANOVA for Media Influence

	Moved right ^a (N = 105)	Stable ^b (N = 351)	Moved left ^c (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %		
In a typical week, how often do you read about public affairs and politics in the newspaper (1= never, 8= 7 days per week)	5.57 (1.92)	5.30 (2.10)	4.93 (2.16)	2.98 (Sig=.052)	N/A
In a typical week, how often do you read magazines (1= never, 8= 7 days per week)	3.32 (1.87)	2.83 (1.83)	2.70 (1.74)	3.92*	AC
In a typical week, how often do you watch national news on television (1= never, 8= 7 days per week)	4.94 (2.39)	4.29 (2.40)	4.11 (2.34)	4.02*	AC
In a typical week, how often do you watch local news on television (1= never, 8= 7 days per week)	4.74 (2.63)	4.04 (2.43)	4.11 (2.28)	3.37*	AB
In a typical week, how often do you listen to news on the radio (1= never, 8= 7 days per week)	4.20 (2.56)	3.92 (2.46)	3.89 (2.57)	.579	N/A
In a typical week, how often do you read about public affairs and politics on the internet (1= never, 8= 7 days per week)	5.25 (2.26)	5.13 (2.31)	4.86 (2.31)	.988	N/A

Peer Socialization

Based off of the work done by Weidman and Newcomb, it would be expected that socialization plays a role in changing the political views of college students. This would mean

that students who experience a change in ideological leanings would have a higher rate of interaction with their peers than those who stayed stable in their ideology. Analysis from the Political Engagement Project does not show this. Rather, the ANOVA test shows that students who have a stable ideology have a rate of higher interaction with their peers at a statistically significant level than students who moved left. The mean frequency for students who stayed stable was 5.14 while the mean frequency for students who moved to the left is 4.59. This finding does not support the idea that socialization causes students to change their views. Alternatively, it points to the idea that students will surround themselves with like-minded individuals who reinforce their preexisting political views and ideology. However, a statistically significant difference is not seen between students who remained stable and students who moved to the right. Students who moved to the right had a mean frequency of interaction with their peers of 4.99, which is higher than those who moved to the left but lower than those who move to the right, but not at a significant level. This complicates the idea that students who remain stable are unique and remain stable due to their high frequency of interaction with peers.

Another piece of evidence from the PEP that counters the socialization theory about ideological change in college students is that there is no significant difference between the three groups for the frequency of discussion about political events or public affairs with others. Students who remain stable have a mean frequency of 4.79 for discussion of current political events and 5.57 for discussion of political affairs. Students who move to the right have a mean frequency of 4.76 for discussion of current political events and 5.39 for discussion of political affairs. Students who moved to the left had a mean frequency of 4.59 for discussion of current political events and 5.15 for discussion of public affairs. Because these differences are statistically insignificant, it shows that the frequency of socialization of each group is not that

much different from the other, pointing away from the idea that socialization is a force in moving students to the left. Rather, it may be the case that students who remain stable have higher rates of political knowledge, so they are more likely to discuss political issues with others.

Teetering on the level of statistical significance is the variable “frequency of discussion of current political events with people who hold different views.” Students who moved to the right had a mean frequency of interaction of 4.48 while students who moved to the left had a mean interaction of frequency of interaction of 4.06. This difference indicates that students who move to the right have slightly more interaction with those who have different political views than those who move to the left, but not students who remain stable. Unfortunately, data collected for the PEP do not contain information about the political ideology of the people whom the students interacted with, so it is difficult to draw conclusions about how these other individuals may have affected the students. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the students who moved to the right do not all fall to the right on the political spectrum. These students all have different political views; their similarity is that they moved to the right during the time of this project, so different processes may be involved for different students. For example, assuming that the political climate of college campuses is liberal leaning, students who started out on the right and moved further to the right might have done so in opposition to the students they were interacting with that they perceived as too far to the left. Another possibility is that students who started out all the way to the left had no other direction to move but to the right interacted with a campus culture that was liberal but not as far to the left as these students. These students may be pulled more towards the ideological center, thus moving to the right. Overall, it does not seem like socialization through interaction and conversations with peers has

a large effect on changing or stabilizing students' political ideologies. Next, I will examine how the academic experiences of these students and how they are tied to ideological change.

Table 2.13: One-Way ANOVA for Peer Socialization

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %		
Frequency of interaction with peers (1= never; 6 = very often)	4.99 (1.28)	5.14 (1.23)	4.59 (1.47)	8.73***	BC
Frequency of discussion of current political events with others outside of classes (1=never; 6= very often)	4.76 (1.35)	4.79 (1.39)	4.56 (1.38)	1.36	N/A
Frequency of discussion of current political events with people who hold different views (1= never; 6= very often)	4.48 (1.40)	4.36 (1.41)	4.06 (1.48)	2.99 (Sig=.051)	N/A
Frequency of discussion of public affairs with others (1= 0 days per week; 8= 7 days per week)	5.39 (1.87)	5.57 (1.95)	5.15 (2.04)	2.34	N/A

Academics

Because the Political Engagement Project was centered around certain types of courses or academic programs, there are a lot of variables asking about the students' experiences with these programs. A few findings emerge from looking at these variables and seeing how different aspects about the class or program contributed to the students' learning. First, students who moved to the right found research projects to be less important to their learning for the program than students who remained stable or students who moved to the left. For this variable, students who moved to the right had a mean of 3.35, students who remained stable had a mean of 3.93, and students who moved to the left had a mean of 4.11. There is statistically significant difference between the means of the students who moved to the right and the students who

remained stable as well as between the students who moved to the right and the students who moved to the left. This indicates that students who moved to the right did not learn as much from the research papers they had to write as a part of the PEP, while students who remained stable or moved to the left learned more from these research papers either reaffirming the existing beliefs or moving them to the left.

Two other variables appear to have played an important role in moving students to the left. The first is having opportunities to influence the course content and organization. Students who moved to the left found this aspect as being important to their learning with a mean of 3.87, while students who remained stable had a mean of 3.07 which is significantly less. This indicates that these opportunities had a role in moving student's ideologies to the left. Furthermore, political simulations as a part of the course or program also made a difference in a student's ideology. Students who moved to the left found this aspect important to their learning with a mean of 2.14 while students who stayed stable had a mean of 1.57. Again, this difference is statistically significant, indicating that these political simulations helped drive students' ideology to the left. With both variables, the means of students who moved to the right fall in between the students who remained stable and the students who moved to the left. There is no statistically significant difference between the means, but it indicates that these experiences were more important to those students who had a change in ideology than those who remained stable, especially for those students who moved to the left. This points to class related learning experiences as having an effect on changing students' ideology and producing college graduates who as a whole lean to the left.

Specifically, these independent, self-driven learning experiences seem important to moving students to the left, and not learning experiences that are influenced by professors.

According to many conservative critics of higher education, liberal professors are imposing their ideology on students, causing the students to become more liberal. If this were the case, we would expect to find professor-led learning experiences to be important to the students' learning and predictive of moving to the left, but this is not the case. Professor assigned readings, lectures, and even classroom discussions do not produce a significant difference in the means of the different groups of students when they rated the importance of each of these aspects to their learning. Because each group of students rated these experiences to have about the same level of importance to their learning, it does not appear that these professor-driven experiences play a role in changing students' ideology. Even when these courses or any other course required that students keep up with politics or discuss politics in class, the experiences between the three groups of students does not statistically differ. Therefore, it does not seem like professors are indoctrinating their students with liberal values; rather, when students do move to the left, it is because of the work that the students do for the class. Tied to specific academic experiences is the academic major of students, which I turn to next.

Table 2.14: One-Way ANOVA for Academics

	Moved right ^A (<i>N</i> = 105)	Stable ^B (<i>N</i> = 351)	Moved left ^C (<i>N</i> = 133)	<i>F</i>	Significant Subgroup Differences
Assigned readings by professors promoted learning (0= <i>not part of this program</i> ; 6= <i>very important to my learning</i>)	4.31 (1.66)	4.30 (1.58)	4.38 (1.48)	.135	N/A
Discussions about current events in this program promoted learning (0= <i>not part of this program</i> ; 6= <i>very important to my learning</i>)	4.58 (1.60)	4.64 (1.61)	4.76 (1.49)	.428	N/A
Lectures in this program promoted learning (0= <i>not part of this program</i> ; 6= <i>very important to my learning</i>)	4.67 (1.61)	4.58 (1.53)	4.70 (1.52)	.381	N/A

Research papers or projects in this program promoted learning (0= <i>not part of this program</i> ; 6= <i>very important to my learning</i>)	3.35 (2.10)	3.93 (1.91)	4.11 (1.80)	5.06**	AB; AC
Opportunities to influence the course content/organization of the class/program promoted learning (0= <i>not part of this program</i> ; 6= <i>very important to my learning</i>)	3.32 (1.98)	3.07 (2.05)	3.87 (1.84)	7.74***	BC
Political simulations in this program promoted learning (0= <i>not part of this program</i> ; 6= <i>very important to my learning</i>)	1.67 (2.03)	1.57 (2.10)	2.14 (2.27)	3.48*	BC
This course encouraged students to express their political opinions (1= <i>not at all</i> ; 6= <i>a great deal</i>)	4.79 (1.42)	4.88 (1.40)	5.08 (1.12)	1.48	N/A
This course encouraged students to be open to diverse political opinions (1= <i>not at all</i> ; 6= <i>a great deal</i>)	4.49 (1.37)	4.67 (1.39)	4.76 (1.22)	1.24	N/A
This course helped students consider political issues from a variety of perspectives (1= <i>not at all</i> ; 6= <i>a great deal</i>)	4.71 (1.38)	4.66 (1.31)	4.87 (1.20)	1.30	N/A
Any other classes required you to keep up with politics (1= <i>no</i> ; 2= <i>yes</i>)	1.67 (.474)	1.75 (.434)	1.72 (.451)	1.43	N/A
In this course/program, how often did you express a political view or explain your position on an issue (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)	4.54 (1.45)	4.46 (1.57)	4.35 (1.63)	.483	N/A
In this course/program, how often did you express a political view that was controversial (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)	4.04 (1.60)	3.81 (1.63)	3.89 (1.63)	.780	N/A

Academic Major

Another aspect about college that previous scholars claim to affect a student's ideology is their academic major. Results from the Political Engagement Project show that this is not the case. The only major that creates a finding which borders on statistical significance is political science/public policy/government. From the PEP, political science majors make up 29% of

students who remained stable in their ideology, 23% of students who moved to the right, and 19% of students who moved to the left. The important difference in this case would be between those students who moved to the left and those students who stayed stable; however, the difference does not reach statistical significance. Other majors which one might suspect to move students to the left, such as other social sciences or arts & humanities, or to the right, such as business/marketing, do not do so. Even majors which are not political or ideological in nature and one might predict to be associated with a stable ideology, such as STEM majors, are not associated with stable political ideologies. Therefore, a student's academic major does not appear to have an influence on their political ideology. Next, I will turn to extracurricular activities that students are a part of during their time in college and how these activities may affect political ideology.

Table 2.15: One-Way ANOVA for Academic Major

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %		
Political Science/Public Policy/Government	.23	.29	.19	2.99 (Sig=.051)	N/A
Other Social Science	.43	.41	.46	.471	N/A
Business/Marketing	.05	.03	.06	.792	NA
Arts & Humanities	.05	.07	.09	.800	N/A
STEM	.20	.14	.15	.997	N/A
Other/Undecided	.05	.05	.05	.016	N/A

Extracurricular Activities

While at college, students are not only involved in academics but also extracurricular activities. Participation in different extracurricular activities have the possibility to affect a student's political ideology through interaction with other members or through activities done as

a part of an organization or group. For example, one might think that volunteering for a religious group might pull a student to the right or volunteering for an environmental organization might pull a student to the left. However, the data show that this is not the case. While students who moved to the right did have a higher mean frequency for volunteering for a religious group, there is not a statistically significant difference between any of the three groups. Furthermore, there is no statistically significant difference between the three groups as to their mean frequency of volunteering for an environmental organization.

Where there is a statistically significant difference is in belonging to a civic/community group and belonging to an arts/music group. In both cases, students who remained stable are more likely to belong to these types of organizations than students who moved to the right. With membership to a civic or community group, 70% of students who stayed stable said they did previously or currently and 51% of students who moved to the right said they did previously or currently. Students who moved to the left fell in the middle at 60%, but this did not create a statistically significant difference with the two other groups. As for past or current membership with a performing arts or music group, 57% of students who remained stable claimed membership and 43% of students who moved to the right claimed membership. Again, students who moved to the left fell in between at 52%. A possible reason for why students who remained stable were more likely to participate in these types of organizations is because they knew what they wanted to do going into college and were able to find organizations which would help them stick to their convictions. For example, arts students are typically considered to be more liberal, so by joining an arts group and surrounding themselves with likeminded students, their pre-existing ideologies will be reinforced. This process may not be entirely a conscious choice, but rather people are attracted to those who are similar to them.

However, if it was the case that students joined organizations and extracurricular activities to reinforce their existing ideologies, there would be more indications of this from the data from other organizations; yet this is not the case. For all other extracurricular activities and organizations the Political Engagement Project asked about, students who remained stable were not significantly more likely to have participated than students who moved left or right. Therefore, students are not necessarily selecting into organizations based on a desire to reinforce their ideology. This indicates that there may be something special about civic or arts groups which causes student to remain stable in their ideology. Finally, I turn to the living environment of students during college and how this may change a student's ideology.

Table 2.16: One-Way ANOVA for Extracurricular Activities

	Moved right ^A (N = 105)	Stable ^B (N = 351)	Moved left ^C (N = 133)	F	Significant Subgroup Differences
	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %	Mean (SD) or %		
How often have you volunteered for a religious group in the past four years (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)	3.04 (1.92)	2.75 (1.75)	2.61 (1.60)	1.79	N/A
How often have you volunteered for an environmental organization in the past four years (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)	2.32 (1.71)	2.18 (1.32)	2.36 (1.42)	.963	N/A
How often have you volunteered for a political group, candidate, or official in the past four years (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)	2.63 (1.72)	2.66 (1.71)	2.56 (1.54)	.190	N/A
How often have you volunteered for a community organization involved in health in the past four years (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)	3.32 (1.73)	3.63 (1.64)	3.40 (1.63)	1.94	N/A
How often have you volunteered for an organization involved with children or	3.59 (1.75)	3.80 (1.64)	3.63 (1.76)	.885	N/A

education in the past four years (1= <i>never</i> ; 6= <i>very often</i>)					
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a performing arts/music group on campus or in the community	.43	.57	.52	3.53*	AB
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to an environmental group on campus or in the community	.28	.38	.33	1.63	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a religious group on campus or in the community	.50	.58	.59	1.10	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to an organized sports group on campus or in the community	.71	.67	.69	.293	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a student government group on campus or in the community	.46	.53	.46	1.15	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a student publications group on campus or in the community	.42	.44	.43	.081	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a subject-oriented group on campus or in the community	.58	.55	.61	.646	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a civic or community group on campus or in the community	.51	.70	.60	6.79****	AB
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to an ethnic or racially affiliated group on campus or in the community	.35	.30	.33	.456	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a political group or candidates running for office on campus or in the community	.34	.40	.36	.735	N/A
Do you, or have you in the past, belong to a college-level honor society on campus or in the community	.44	.38	.41	.557	N/A

Living Environment in College

When students are not in class or partaking in an extracurricular activity, they are likely in their room. Where a student lives while in college is important in determining who a student interacts with and spends a significant amount of time with. This social interaction with others has the possibility of influencing a student's ideology just as going to class or talking to their friends does. The most common form of housing in college is to live in a college dorm or in campus housing. In this situation, students are surrounded by other students. Depending on the university, students will be surrounded by their fellow classmates or by students from other classes. With campus housing, 50% of students who remained stable lived in campus housing, 45% of students who moved to the left lived in campus housing, and 40% of students who moved to the right lived in campus housing. Despite these differences in proportions, there is not a statistically significant difference between the groups. Therefore, it does not look like living in campus housing has an effect on ideology.

Some schools offer housing for students in a certain program so that these students can live together. If students spend time with these other students both in the classroom and where they live, this will increase the amount of interaction that students have with these specific individuals and increase the possibility of socialization to change ideology. However, again there is not a statistically significant difference between the three groups of students; 12% of students who remained stable, 11% of students who moved to the left, and 10% of students who moved to the right lived in this type of housing.

In their article, Routon and Walker show that students who are a part of a Greek organization on campus do experience a change in political ideology. While being a part of a Greek organization can be considered an extracurricular activity, it also can determine where a

student lives during college. Because being a part of a Greek organization is shown to change students' views on certain political issues, it can be expected that living with a fraternity or sorority will change a student's political ideology. However, data from the Political Engagement Project do not show that this is the case. Among students who remained stable, 5% lived in a fraternity or sorority while 7% of students who moved to the left and 5% of students who moved to the right lived in a fraternity or sorority. These findings do not mean that what Routon and Walker found were wrong, but that the process of changing the political views of Greek organization members is more complex. While Routon and Walker find that these students come to have more similar views, they may start in different places so that some are moving to the right while others are moving to the left while others are remaining stable. Furthermore, they find that these students change their views on key issues; while this may be the case, students may not perceive that these changes have changed their overall ideology, so they do not report a change in their ideology.

While living on campus does not appear to have an effect on students' ideology, living off campus could produce a different result. One option is that students live within walking distance of campus; 21% of students who remained stable, 19% of students who moved to the left, and 16% of students who moved to the right did this. There is no statistically significant difference between these three groups. Another option is to live within driving distance; 13% of students who remained stable, 15% of students who moved to the left, and 7% of students who moved to the right did this. These differences are also not statistically significant. These null findings indicate that living off-campus, presumably with peers, does not have an effect on a student's political ideology.

The one living situation that does seem to be associated with a change in ideology is living with one's parents or relatives. Among students who moved to the right, 38% lived with their parents or other relatives, while only 26% of students who remained stable and 21% of students who moved to the left lived with their parents or relatives. These data produce a significant difference between both the students who moved to the right and the students who moved to the left and the students who moved to the right and the students who remained stable. One reason for this finding is that living with one's parents or relatives moves them to the right. The parents of college students may be more conservative than their children, so by living with their parents these students may come to adopt more similar views to their parents. However, it would not make sense if parent driven socialization and change was the only process occurring in this situation. If parents influence their children's political ideology, then this process would have likely occurred in the 18 years the child was living with their parents before they started attending college. By the time the child reached college age, living with their parents during college would likely cause their political ideology to remain stable, not move to the right. Another explanation for this finding is that students who live with their parents are missing out on college experiences which cause students to move to the left or reinforce their incoming ideologies. Therefore, while other living conditions are associated with all three groups at a roughly equal rate, living at home overwhelmingly produces students who move right. This may indicate that there is something about living on campus with other college students and being surrounded by the campus culture which increases the likelihood that students stay stable or move to the left.

Table 2.18: One-Way ANOVA for College Living Environment

	Moved right ^A (<i>N</i> = 105)	Stable ^B (<i>N</i> = 351)	Moved left ^C (<i>N</i> = 133)	<i>F</i>	Significant Subgroup Differences
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	Mean (<i>SD</i>) or %	Mean (<i>SD</i>) or %	Mean (<i>SD</i>) or %		
With parents/other relatives	.38	.26	.21	4.88**	AB; AC
Other students in course/program	.10	.12	.11	.096	N/A
Dorm/campus housing	.40	.50	.45	1.88	N/A
Fraternity or sorority	.05	.05	.07	.467	N/A
Other residence within walking/biking distance from campus	.16	.21	.19	.579	N/A
Other residence within driving distance from campus	.07	.13	.15	2.04	N/A

6. Discussion

To start off, there are different college and non-college factors which cause students to move to the left, move to the right, or remain stable. Students who move to the left are more likely to be Hispanic and rate opportunities to influence the course content, political simulations, and research papers or projects as more important to their learning experiences while in college. Students who move to the right are more likely to be male, live with their parents or relatives while in college, and consume different types of media such as magazines, national news on television, and local news on television. Students who remained stable are more likely to be female, non-religiously affiliated, have both parents be college educated, rate themselves as having higher political knowledge about government and public affairs and national and international political issues, see themselves as compassionate, belong to a civic or community group, belong to a performing arts group, rate research papers as promoting to their learning, and interact with their peers at a higher frequency. From these lists it appears that there are more factors influencing college students to remain stable in political ideology than to change their political ideology. On top of this, the majority of students from the PEP have a stable political ideology between the two waves, indicating that students are more likely to remain stable than to

experience a change in ideology. Therefore, these findings indicate that going to college does not put college students at risk of being indoctrinated by liberal college academia.

However, it remains the case that the PEP population ends up as more liberal than it started. Of the students who did experience a change in ideology, a majority moved to the left. In wave 1, 48% of the students identified as Democrats while in wave 2, 51.7% identified as Democrats. In wave 1, 73.2% of the population fell to the left ideologically while in wave 2, 74.1% fell to the left. Importantly, the percentage of students identifying as extremely liberal increased from 11.7% to 14.6%. So, while these college students do come in overwhelmingly leaning to the left, they end up leaning even more to the left. This is why it is important to determine which factors are predictive of ideological change. Even though a majority of students do not change, there is a sizable subset of the population that does change during college, and this has had some impact on the educational divide in America.

The findings from this project contrast with what previous literature has said on this topic, fitting with some previous findings, but not entirely. First of all, there is no evidence that students are being indoctrinated by liberal professors. While the results from this study do uphold critics' main claim against colleges, that students are liberalized while at college, it is not to the same degree as they claim, nor is there much influence coming from professors (Sachs 2020). A large reason why this theory does not hold up is because students come to college with already formed political opinions. Incoming college students are not blank slates to be molded by their professors; they have their own experiences which have affected their political view and ideology. Even if some of these experiences do come in college and have a liberalizing effect, that does not make them any less legitimate than other factors which influence political beliefs.

Next, some findings from this project uphold the self-selection hypothesis. Braungart argues that family politics and social class are strong predictors of students' politics, and this seems to be the case from the PEP. Students with two college educated parents, which is an indication of high socioeconomic status, are more likely to have stable political views. Their ideological stability during college indicates that their political views were shaped before coming to college, specifically by their family socioeconomic status. Furthermore, it seems that students who rate themselves higher on certain aspects of political knowledge are more likely to remain stable during college. This fits with Zaller's model that those with the most political knowledge also have the most political exposure, in this case likely from their parents, and therefore have the most stable political views. Students with high political exposure, likely ideologically liberal political exposure for college students, may be more likely to attend college, and remain ideologically stable during college. However, other factors which would fit Braungart's argument are not associated with ideological stability in the PEP, meaning that certain things we would expect to influence the self-selection process are not at play. Furthermore, it remains the case that a large minority of college students do experience an ideological change in college, and a majority of these students move to the left.

The question then remains, what is causing these students to change their ideology during college and move to the left? Newcomb, Dey, Milem, and Routon and Walker would argue that socialization is causing students to move to the left while in college. Specifically, they argue that peer socialization plays an important role. However, I find that this is not the case. Students who interact most with their peers are actually more likely to remain stable than to move to the left. Even discussions of political events with peers has no effect on whether or not a student will experience a change in ideology. Furthermore, the added peer interaction from living on campus

or in Greek Life housing does not affect a change in ideology. What does affect a change in ideology is living with one's parents, and these students are more likely to move to the right. This may indicate that students living with their parents are missing out on certain experiences and aspects of living with other college students which would cause their political ideology to remain stable or move to the left. What my findings indicate is that political socialization during college may be a thing of the past. While studies from 50 years ago do show the importance of socialization on ideology during college, I do not find these same results. This may be because people are socialized and politicized at an earlier age now so that college socialization no longer has a large influence like it used to.

While social learning from peers does not appear to be as important as in the past, another type of learning does seem to be pushing students to the left. What does seem to move students from the PEP to the left is their classroom experiences. Specifically, moving to the left is associated with hands-on learning opportunities, such as research papers, political simulations, and opportunities to influence the course content. There must be something about the research that students do for these assignments and opportunities which exposes them to more liberal ideas or which causes them to rethink and reshape their preexisting beliefs. However, it is important to keep in mind that the experiences are not shared by all college students, and that they may be unique to students in the PEP.

Limitations

First and foremost, a limitation of this project stems from the participants in the dataset. Respondents to the survey all took place in the PEP which meant they took courses specifically geared towards political issues. Therefore, these students may be more politically minded or have a higher exposure to political issues than the average college student. This could affect

how students shape their political ideology, as students learning about politics will think more about political issues and their own beliefs than other students. Students learning about politics may also already have strong political views, making it so that this dataset underrepresents the amount of students who change their ideology during college. What would solve this issue is a dataset that takes a truly random sample of college students and asks them about their political beliefs and college experiences.

Furthermore, this data set only covers two years of the students' time in college. To better understand the full effect of college on students' political views, it would help to have a survey which covers all four years. What would be even better would be to conduct follow up surveys after the students graduate from college to see if the views they held in college remained stable once they graduated. However, because panel data sets are hard to come by and hard to produce, a data set with these characteristics is hard to obtain. Additionally, because of the sample size, I could only break the group of students down into three broad groups. There were not enough students at the fringes to look at what was influencing these students to make drastic changes in their ideology. Therefore, while there may be something interesting going on which causes students to flip their political leanings, this cannot be measured as not enough students experience this.

7. Conclusion

As stated above, going to college does not have the effect of flipping college students from conservative to liberal. However, the fact remains that getting a college degree is associated with political liberalism and being a member of the Democratic party. This is because while many students do not change their ideology during college, those who do are more likely to move to the left than to the right, showing that college has a mildly liberalizing effect on

students. The process through which this happens appears to fit best with Astin's input-environment-output model. Student's ideological leanings influence whether or not they go to college and where they go to college. Today, students with high socioeconomic status who can afford a college education and value a college education are more likely to go to college so that incoming college students are more liberal than college students in the past or those not going to college. The creation of an individual's political ideology begins early in life, when they are young and live with their parents. However, political learning and socialization does not end there, but carries on into early adulthood, when people choose whether or not to go to college. Once in school, the college environment does have some effect on some college students, causing the body as a whole to be more liberal than when they started. Therefore, neither the selection effect theory nor political socialization completely explain what is going on here. Neither theory is able to adequately explain why some students remain ideologically stable while others experience a change in ideology. What I have been able to do is weave together the two theories to create a more comprehensive picture about college students' experiences, both in college and before college, and identify what might influence ideological stability or change in college.

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