



“Adopted” Party Identification and Political Values

According to a national survey of adopted parents, conducted in 2007 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, forty percent of children adopted domestically and internationally by Americans are a different race or culture from their adoptive parents. In 1994 and in 1996 Congress passed legislation prohibiting agencies from getting federal help from discriminating against would-be parents based on race or national origin. A common criticism of interracial adoption has been about the adopted child’s identity formation across political, social, and cultural borders. Supporters of international and interracial adoption argue that every child needs a loving family regardless of race but it is important to explore how a difference in biological kinship and age can affect various aspects of an adolescent such as party identification and political ideologies.

One of the most common sources for our first party identification is family. Childhood influence can begin as early as elementary school or when a child remember events that occurred during their childhood associated with a specific political party. As one of the driving forces behind formation of party identification and political ideologies, family plays an integral part in a child’s development, often leaving a permanent impression. I challenge the theory of family influence in childhood as one of the most common sources of party identification and political ideologies under specific circumstances of an interracial adoption, the type of upbringing, and a considerable age disparity between the parents and child.

This topic is relates to the building blocks of social science research as it incorporates the basic concepts and process of building a theory and hypothesis, utilizing models and measuring data, observing data, and conducting research. The significance of this topic lies in party identification, which allows us to distinguish between Democrats and Republicans, Independents, Green Party members, and Tea Party members. Voter preference in elections can also be obtained from party identification as well as distinguishing short-term factors such as candidates and stances on issues, from long-term factors. Party identification can indicate and predict viable forms of political behavior, which is at the heart of political

science. I believe that party identification and political values are not transferred as result of childhood influence to people who experience a difference in kinship, biologically and in age. My general ideas being expressed in this theory tackle the assumption that “We are the products of our parents.” Interracial adoption is a unique circumstance, where the race of the child is inherently different than the parents. Couple this with an age disparity, and a family’s influence on political party and ideologies may no longer have standing.

As qualitative research, I will stay open to the various reasons of how this theory became knowledge. Instead of assuming that this theory came from induction, where our experiences led to a theory, I will wait until to make my conclusion. It would be challenging to assume that this theory became common knowledge through deduction, as one would have to make multiple assumptions that vary from person to person, and family to family. I would obtain my asking the following questions:

1. Are you adopted, and if so, are you a different race from your adopted parents (interracial adoption)
2. Did you ever experience a loss of culture, identity, or loss growing up?
3. How much contact, or exposure did you have to your cultural heritage or indigenous group growing up?
4. How do you and your parents approach politics?

From these grounded interviews, I will then be able to compare and contrast their personal experiences and determine how they relate to party identification and political ideologies. I believe that my theory is logical. If a child is vulnerable to loss of identity, family, and culture, and does not have strong emotional or biological ties to his/her parents, then the transference of political values and party identification is not a given. I believe my theory is conceivable if not accurate.

Competing, or imposing theories might argue that biological kinship and age disparity have no connection with the party identification or political ideologies of a child. Other sources of party identification may identify socioeconomic status or the amount of knowledge one possesses relating to

political issues as the source of party identification. One could even argue that personal experiences outside family structure and influence could be the determining factor.

The general ideas of my theory include interracial adoption and age disparity influencing the transference of political values and party identification from the parents to the child. My qualitative conceptual definition is to what extent interracial adoptees inherit the political values and ideologies from their parents, influencing party identification. An operational definition cannot be determined as there are no variables, or empirical representations that would accurately measure my theory to explain my concept. Because my research is qualitative, it lacks variables, which would disallow the formation of a hypothesis.

For the same reasons as my belief on how my theory was formed, I would like to wait and test my theory before I make my final conclusion. I believe I have a defensible claim as family structure and socialization can have varying effects on different people. In the least sense it is conceivable. I would consider my theory beautiful in the novelty standard. It would cause people to take notice of patterns that have generally been accepted by the public, such as family being the main influence of party identification in childhood. It opens the door to new circumstances, in which popular beliefs may not apply. My theory could lead to more ideas in the realm of family structure, examining the similarities and differences across other interracial families. Economic status, fame and influence, gay parents, and single parents might be another factor that could possibly affect the transfer of party identification and political values. The process of my research would be just in the sense that the individuals providing me with my data will offer it willingly and honestly.