

MARRIAGE AND GENDER EFFECTS ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines politics and marriage, with particular attention directed toward gender effects on the political communication that occurs between husbands and wives. Three different models of political interdependence within marriages are considered – social cohesion, self-selection, and structural equivalence – and in this context we address several questions. How extensive are the levels of political agreement between marriage partners? Do similar levels of agreement extend across various opinions and behaviors? To what extent do gender-based asymmetries exist in the communication of political information? While levels of marital agreement regarding highly salient partisan opinions are very high, results taken from a 1992 study show that: (1) these levels of agreement are attenuated for other political opinions, (2) husbands and wives are frequently unaware of their spouses' opinions, and (3) in other instances they recognize and acknowledge disagreement. Moreover, the results do not support an interpretation which suggests that husbands uniformly occupy the leading role in political communication within marriages.

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MARRIAGE AND GENDER EFFECTS ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Perhaps the most frequently recurring political conversation is the one that takes place between marriage partners across the kitchen table. Indeed, husbands and wives have become famous for the high levels of agreement that exist in their political preferences. Only rarely, it is thought, does political disagreement survive the repeated opportunities for the communication of political viewpoints and information. Moreover, the political environment that exists within the family – an environment that is created most immediately by the interactions of husbands and wives – has been one of the most widely studied settings of political communication and influence. The political socialization model was crafted largely with respect to the family for the simple reason that no other agent of influence appeared as influential in the early socialization studies. As a consequence, much of what we know with respect to the socialization process depends, at least indirectly and perhaps in complex ways, on patterns of political communication between husbands and wives (Beck and Jennings 1975; Jennings and Niemi 1971, 1974, 1981).

It is ironic, then, that so little effort is addressed to the continued study of political communication between spouses in contemporary political science research. (For a notable exception see Stoker and Jennings 1995.) Political socialization panels at political science conventions qualify as an endangered species, and attention is seldom directed to the study of politics and marriage, even though the marriage relationship has arguably become the paradigm of influential communication in politics (Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, and Levine 1995). The purpose of this paper is to reconsider politics and marriage, with particular attention directed toward gender effects on the political communication that occurs between husbands and wives. We address several questions: How high are levels of political agreement between marriage partners? Do similar levels of agreement extend across various opinions and behaviors? To what extent do gender based asymmetries exist in the communication of political information? Finally, do husbands and wives communicate their political views effectively – do they perceive their spouses' viewpoints accurately?

We address these questions based on a study of the 1992 presidential election. One part of this study included interviews with the spouses of 271 main respondents. These main respondents and their spouses become the subject of our analysis. Before turning to the analysis, we examine two sets of

interrelated issues: the enduring influence of gender in politics and the source of influential communication in marriage.

THE ENDURING INFLUENCE OF GENDER IN POLITICS

The politics of marriage is imbedded in the politics of gender, and hence it is a continuously moving target. As the cultural and political roles of men and women are transformed, so also are the roles of husbands and wives. Seventy-six years ago, in the election of 1920, the rate of turnout among the eligible electorate suffered a dramatic setback due to the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution – the amendment that secured the right to vote for women. Securing the right to vote did not lead immediately to the widespread exercise of that right, and thus the country experienced a yawning gap in the participation rates of men and women that has only recently been eliminated (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Mueller 1988; Brown 1991).

Why did progress come slowly? Politics, political participation, and the activities of citizenship are role specific behaviors, and the exercise of citizenship has often been in conflict with other roles that women have been traditionally expected to fulfill (Elshtain 1981). Before progress could be realized in assuming the role of citizenship, other role expectations needed to be modified, and these other expectations have been enforced by powerful social institutions – particularly the institution of marriage. In short, men and women are likely to be imbedded in recurring, interdependent patterns of social interaction that sustain and nourish particular roles and role expectations, many of which have made it more difficult for women fully to assume the citizenship role (see Jennings and Niemi 1971).

Along some dimensions, the participation gap has disappeared between men and women. Particularly in terms of voter participation, very little difference remains in the levels of involvement between men and women. This is not to say, of course, that men and women have become politically indistinguishable. There is, most obviously, the rise of the newer, widely recognized gender gap in partisan behavior – a gap in which women have become more likely to support the Democratic party and its candidates. And there have been other demonstrations of enduring gender differences as well. Brickell et al. (1995) show that husbands are less likely than wives to report political discussion with spouses, as well as being less likely to evaluate the political expertise of their spouses favorably. Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) demonstrate the role of enduring gender stereotypes in the evaluation of male and

female political candidates. Conover and Sapiro (1993) show recent gender differences in foreign policy opinions. Just as interesting, they show that women are less likely to be guided by partisanship in the formulation of their opinions on foreign policy. In partial contrast, Thorson and Stambaugh (1994) argue that both men and women fit the “Michigan model” of decision making. In particular, both invoke partisanship in making political decisions, but women are more likely to be Democrats, more likely to be concerned with social welfare issues, and more likely to favor Democratic candidates.

These enduring gender differences are not easily explained as a function of underlying belief systems and values. Conover and Sapiro (1993) consider and reject “maternal” and “feminist” orientations and ideologies, thereby showing that the explanatory power of gender is not easily explained on the basis of gender related attitudes. But is it possible that the influence of gender on political behavior might also be understood with respect to enduring patterns of social interaction? One alternative is to examine the effects of gender within the context of the political communication that occurs between men and women, particularly the communication occurring between spouses, and it thus becomes important to consider several different models of influential communication within marriage.

SOURCES OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN MARRIAGE

Certainly the levels of political agreement between spouses are seldom equaled by other environments and relationships (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995: chap. 9). But what is there about marriage that makes it an influential setting for political communication? One answer is related to intimacy, trust, and a shared normative environment – a social cohesion model that stresses the importance of mutual regard (Burt 1987). According to this argument, one spouse adopts the preference of another based on a socially cohesive relationship anchored in deference, and hence as the more-or-less automatic consequence of political communication that identifies spousal preferences and viewpoints. Indeed, the role of communication is less related to persuasion than it is to identification, and political agreement becomes the inevitable consequence of socially cohesive relationships.

Other models and perspectives are also available from which to examine the factors that give rise to influential communication, and a second explanation for political homogeneity between spouses is simply the null model of self-selection (Berelson et al. 1954). To the extent that people select marriage partners within the same strata of society in which they are themselves located, we might expect

husbands and wives to have corresponding political loyalties and opinions. Even if political criteria are wholly irrelevant to the choice of a marriage partner, and even if political communication within particular marriages never occurs, the political opinions of husbands and wives might still be correlated. In short, political agreement within marriages might not be evidence of political communication at all!

A third alternative explanation that might account for political agreement between spouses is a structural equivalence model. Two individuals are structurally equivalent to the extent that they are similarly located in social structure. In his reanalysis of the Illinois medical diffusion study (Coleman et al. 1966), Burt (1987) argues that structural equivalence rather than social cohesion (e.g., intimacy) serves as the better explanation for the adoption of a new drug by doctors. Doctors were more likely to be influenced by their peers and professional equals in making a professional decision to prescribe a new drug, rather than by their intimates.

Why should structural equivalence lead to influence, and how might structural equivalence be relevant to marriage? Burt (1987) argues that status anxiety is the vehicle of influence with respect to the adoption of a new drug by doctors, but at least in the realm of politics and public opinion, one might just as readily argue self interest (see Sears and Huddy 1990). When we evaluate the political information supplied by others, it is reasonable to take account of the bias that comes along with the information, and it is probably wise to rely on sources of information that carry compatible biases (Downs 1957). What better way is there to locate a compatible bias than to acquire information from someone who is similarly located in social structure? Setting gender related issues temporarily aside, husbands and wives typically occupy similar locations in social structure and hence hold similar interests. In short, seen from the perspective of structural equivalence, it is entirely reasonable for husbands and wives to rely on one another for information, and hence we might explain political influence without resort to intimacy.

Why does this matter? To the extent that intimacy and mutual regard account for agreement, there is less room for open disagreement within marriages, political agreement becomes the nearly inescapable byproduct of marriage, and communication is only important as a means of identifying spousal preferences. To the extent that self-selection accounts for agreement and shared preferences, political communication is largely irrelevant. But to the extent that agreement is driven by shared perceptions of interest, we should expect patterns of spousal influence to depend on the definition and

convergence of interests and perspectives. Marriage becomes one more very important factor responsible for the imbeddedness of individuals within ongoing systems of social interaction that serve to educate citizens politically (Granovetter 1985).

If we assume that persuasive communication matters – that spousal agreement is not an automatic consequence of either intimacy or self-selection – several factors might explain variation in levels of political agreement within marriages. Latane (1981: 334) argues that influential communication depends on three characteristics of the source: strength, immediacy, and number or frequency. Spouses are, almost by definition, immediate to one another – they are typically close to one another in both time and space. In contrast, both of the other factors – strength and number – vary across marriages and across marriage partners. Some spouses hold strong opinions and viewpoints, while others are indifferent to politics. And while most marriage partners interact frequently, relatively few of them (political scientists aside) give primary attention to politics during these interactions. Hence, the extent to which politics enters into social discourse within a marriage might have a great deal to do with levels of influence and agreement (also see Cacioppo and Petty 1979).

The political socialization studies are highly relevant on this point: To the best of our knowledge, none of the socialization studies successfully demonstrated an enhanced level of familial influence on children as a consequence of familial intimacy, but the importance of parental politicization for familial influence is well documented (Jennings and Niemi 1968; Tedin 1974). In other words, the political influence of families may be a product of political discussion frequency rather than intimacy, and thus the reality and frequency of political disagreement between spouses warrants further attention.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper is one part of a larger study concerned with the acquisition of information by citizens during the high stimulus setting of a presidential election campaign. Our focus is thus on individuals, but individuals who are imbedded within distinctive informational settings and environments. Such a perspective requires not only that we obtain information on individuals, but also on the environments within which they are located, as well as on the intermediary sources of information through which they obtain political information. To this end, we employed a replicate design with a stratified cluster sample, producing two separate representative samples of 20 counties each. Los Angeles

County appears in both samples, and thus the end product is 40 county samples drawn from 39 counties. Within each county, random digit dialing was used to generate a sample of approximately 33 respondents per county sample, for a total sample of 1318 respondents. (Study design details are available in the appendix.)

One part of the survey included a social network battery – a series of questions designed to identify patterns of social interaction and communication for our respondents. Main respondents were asked to provide the first names of up to four people with whom they discussed “important matters.” After recording as many as four names, the interviewers asked respondents to identify anyone else with whom they discussed the events of the past election campaign. Each main respondent could thus identify as many as five names, and after the names were recorded, they were asked a battery of questions regarding each discussant. Married main respondents who failed to include their spouses among the five names were asked a similar battery of questions regarding their marriage partners.

After obtaining discussant identifying information from the main respondents who were willing to provide it, we interviewed 271 of their spouses and 841 of their other discussants. These interviews were of relatively short duration, but they included many of the same questions regarding preferences and opinions that were included on the main respondent survey instrument. Moreover, particularly with respect to the spouses, both interviews included perceptual information regarding the opinions of the other marriage partner. This provides an opportunity to examine not only the correspondence in preferences and opinions, but also the extent to which respondents correctly perceived their spouses' opinions.

The primary data set for this paper is built around these interviews with the main respondents and their spouses. Most analyses examine the levels of agreement and accuracy of perception for the 271 spousal pairs for whom we have interview data from both sides of the marital dyad. In several instances, however, we examine the patterns of social communication among all the married respondents to the main survey, particularly as these patterns of communication are related to asymmetries in political information sharing between husbands and wives.

LEVELS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN HUSBANDS AND WIVES

A first question with respect to political communication between husbands and wives relates to the level of political conformity that exists within marriages. For the most part, **Part A of Table 1** reflects the commonly held belief that husbands and wives share political viewpoints and preferences. Nearly 80 percent of the dyads produce agreement in 1992 vote choice among those dyads in which both husband and wife report voting. Part B of the same table shows that these levels of agreement are especially high among supporters of the major party candidates, but somewhat lower among dyads involving Perot supporters. Approximately 80 percent of dyads with a spouse who is a Clinton or Bush supporter involve agreement, but only about 60 percent of the dyads with a spouse who is a Perot supporter involve agreement. These results may suggest that it is easier to accommodate disagreement over an independent (partisan-neutral) candidate than it is to accommodate disagreement over the candidates of opposite parties.

How far do these levels of agreement extend across other political loyalties and opinions? Table 2 reports a set of simple regressions of the self-reported opinion or loyalty of the spouse on the self-reported opinion or loyalty of the main respondent. How should we interpret these simple models? First, we are not attempting to estimate levels of influence, but rather levels of agreement, and thus we are setting aside issues of simultaneity in the preferences of husbands and wives. Second, in interpreting these models we focus primarily on the slopes and secondarily on the intercepts. Because the left-hand-side and right-hand-side variables are measured using the same metrics with the same questions, perfect agreement would be indicated by a slope of 1 and an intercept of 0, and we treat these coefficient values as the perfect agreement baseline. In contrast, any intercept with a slope of 0 would be evidence of political independence between wives and husbands. The extent to which intercepts deviate from 0 depends, of course, on the metric of the particular left-hand-side variables, and this is the reason that we focus primarily on the slopes. (For readers interested in measures of fit, the standard error of the estimate and the R^2 value for the model are also included.)

Part A of Table 2 considers four different partisan behaviors – party identification¹ and the candidate evaluations of Bush, Clinton, and Perot. While none of the slopes in Table 2 indicate political uniformity within these marriages, partisanship and the evaluation of the major party candidates produce

the high levels of agreement we would expect on the basis of Table 1. In contrast, for an opinion that is less clearly defined along traditional partisan lines – the evaluation of Ross Perot – we see a much lower level of agreement. Viewed from one perspective, the level of agreement on highly partisan issues is quite high. Viewed from a somewhat different perspective, marriage partners would seem to enjoy a great deal more slack with respect to political opinions that lie at the edge of partisan boundaries.

Part B of Table 2 extends the analysis of marital agreement to consider four policy opinions that were relevant to the 1992 campaign. Complete question wording can be found in the appendix, but the four opinions are measured on five point scales that respond to the following topics:

1. *health policy*: should the government see to it that everyone has health insurance, or should health insurance be left to businesses and individuals?

2. *abortion policy*: should women choose for themselves whether to have an abortion, or should the government restrict abortions?

3. *minorities policy*: should the federal government make special efforts to improve the position of black people and other minorities, or should minorities get ahead on their own without any government help?

4. *environment and economy*: which is more important, jobs and economic development or protecting the environment?

Each of these policy areas quite clearly has an important relationship to partisan politics, but none of them are as clearly related to partisan boundaries as major party candidate evaluation. Moreover, each of the policy areas involves fairly complex determinations and considerations which the survey questions attempt to reflect. Perhaps not surprisingly, the level of agreement with respect to the opinions is, in general, lower than that for the major party candidate evaluations. Indeed, one of the opinions – environment versus the economy – shows a very low level of agreement, and only one of the opinions – the abortion policy opinion – shows a level of agreement that is quite comparable to partisanship and evaluations of Clinton and Bush.

Why do we see lower levels of agreement with respect to most of these other opinions? First, these other opinions are not unambiguously related to partisanship – there continues to be room in both parties for heterogeneous opinions on all four opinions. And hence, social influence is less likely to be cumulative across the opinions: convincing a husband to vote for Bush is no guarantee that he will also adopt a pro-life position on abortion. Second, the issues are complex, the incidence of faintly held opinions is likely to be high, and hence there is a greater opportunity for undetected and seldom

articulated opinions to survive inside a marriage. Third, for many of the same reasons, the prior existence of well articulated opinions and thus the reliability of the opinion measures are also likely to be problematic, further depressing measures of opinion agreement (Zaller and Feldman 1992).

Neither of these latter reasons explain the low levels of agreement regarding Ross Perot, however. The opinion regarding Perot should be no more complex or unarticulated than the opinions regarding Clinton and Bush, and the reliability of the Perot measure should not be less than the reliability of the Clinton and Bush measures. Yet we see a lower level of agreement regarding Perot.

Moreover, while these factors might be expected to depress the overall levels of agreement on the policy opinions, there is considerable variation in levels of agreement across the opinions. Why? Unfortunately we have no measure of the extent to which the various policy areas are salient to the respondents, but the salience of these opinions is likely to vary quite considerably. Particularly in the context of a marriage relationship, abortion policy is likely to be more salient among more people, and hence more frequently discussed, thereby making it socially visible within more marriages. In other words, we may be seeing evidence of the fact that opinions regarding abortion are given more air time at the kitchen table. Communication is more frequent, disagreement is more visible, influence is more potent, and levels of agreement correspondingly increase.

How much of the relationship between spouse's opinions on candidates and opinions are due, in fact, to underlying agreement on basic partisan orientations? In other words, to what extent are shared opinions the residue of shared partisan loyalties? And once we take account of shared loyalties and opinions, is there any remaining evidence of a systematic gender gap *between marriage partners*?

Table 3 reconsiders the relationships between spouses' opinions on issues and candidates while controlling for the partisan orientations of both husbands and wives, as well as adding a dummy variable for whether the main respondent is male. (The models in Table 2 consider the relationship between spouses' partisan loyalties independent of whether the main respondent is a male or female.) What do these reestimated models show? First, in terms of the opinions toward each of the presidential candidates, the relationships between spouses' opinions are sustained, even though the magnitude of the relationships are reduced somewhat for the evaluation of the major party candidates. Moreover, with the exception of the health policy opinion, levels of policy agreement are not significantly diminished by

including the additional regressors. In short, agreement regarding candidates and issues is not simply an artifact of shared partisan orientations.

Second, the dummy variables for main respondent gender in the Table 3 models provide an estimate of the gender gap within marriages. This gender gap *between spouses*, conceived as an intercept shift in the left-hand-side variable measuring the spouse's opinion, is most pronounced with respect to candidate evaluations and partisanship. Most importantly, wives tend to be more favorable toward Clinton and less favorable toward Perot. Wives also appear to be less favorable toward Bush and more Democratic in terms of their partisan loyalty, but the dummy variables are not discernibly different from zero at the 95 percent confidence level. With respect to the policy opinions, there is no evidence of even marginally discernible effects due to gender.

What does this analysis suggest regarding the models of political communication and agreement within marriage? First, agreement is not automatic. Levels of agreement vary considerably across various opinions and loyalties, and there is at least some evidence to suggest the survival of a partisan gender gap within marriages. Thus it would be difficult to reconcile these results with a self selection argument suggesting that agreement is pervasive due to a sorting and matching process that automatically and more-or-less uniformly creates political agreement within marriages. Moreover, to the extent that disagreement is sustained within marriage, and particularly to the extent that a gender gap persists between husbands and wives, the social cohesion model would seem to be discredited as well.

At the same time, however, these results do not finally or fundamentally confirm or contradict either the social cohesion or structural equivalence models. *Both* social cohesion *and* structural equivalence assume the importance of communication, but they differ on the roles that communication plays. According to social cohesion, communication is important because it informs one spouse of another spouse's preference, and mutual regard then translates recognition into agreement. According to structural equivalence, communication is important but not determinate, and hence disagreement might survive communication. In short, we must look more closely at patterns of communication, and we begin by focusing on gender asymmetries in the patterns of communication within marriages.

GENDER EFFECTS ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION ASYMMETRIES BETWEEN SPOUSES

We have seen that agreement between spouses is variable across opinions and behaviors. This encourages us to look more closely at the nature of political communication between husbands and wives. In particular, we are interested in gender based asymmetries in the political communication that occur within marriages. Earlier work by Brickell et al. (1995) demonstrated pronounced asymmetries in patterns of political discussion between husbands and wives. Husbands, as compared to wives, were less likely to report their spouses as political discussion partners, and they were less likely to value their political knowledge and expertise. These results were taken from a 1984 community based election study in South Bend, Indiana, and thus it is perhaps important to ask whether these asymmetries continue to hold in 1992 as well as 1984, and in the nation as a whole as well as in South Bend.

Table 4 addresses gender-based asymmetries in the perceptions of spouses based on the entire sample of main respondents who report being married. The social network information obtained from the 1992 national survey is not directly comparable to that obtained from the South Bend study because different name generators were used to identify the main respondents' patterns of social interaction and communication. Rather than asking for the three people with whom the main respondent discussed the election campaign – the South Bend name generator – we asked for as many as four people with whom the main respondent discussed “important matters,” followed by a single additional “campaign events” discussant. While the results are not directly comparable, we can still ask whether there are gender based patterns in the naming of spouses as discussants. Rather than focusing on inclusion versus exclusion, however, we focus more generally on the order in which married men and women name their spouses.

Part A of Table 4 shows, overall, a remarkably similar pattern among men and women. Thirty-four percent of husbands and wives name their spouse as the first-named important matters discussant. Somewhat more than 21 percent name their spouses as campaign events discussants after failing to name them as an important matters discussants. (This is in large part the result of respondents who were unable to name an important matters discussant but were able to name a spouse as a political discussant.) Overall, men are more likely to omit their wives than women are to omit their husbands (30 percent versus 22 percent), but this is entirely due to the lower frequency with which men name their

wives as the second through fourth important matters discussants. As the regression results show, gender produces a statistically indiscernible effect on the order in which the spouse is named.

A second measure of potential political communication asymmetries between spouses is obtained by comparing the frequency with which husbands and wives report that they discuss political matters with each other. Part B of Table 4 shows that husbands are less likely than wives to report that they discuss politics with their spouses frequently, and the regression shows a statistically discernible effect. These results are revealing because we might assume that if the husband is engaged in a political discussion with a wife, then the wife would be engaged in a discussion with the husband. Quite clearly, the difference lies in the respondent's frame of reference. One explanation of the difference is that husbands do not value these conversations as much as wives. But alternatively it may be that men discuss more overall, and hence the relative importance of spousal discussion is less for husbands.

Finally, Part C of Table 4 shows the effect of gender on the value placed on spouses' political knowledge. We asked the respondents to assess how much their spouses "know about politics," and here we see a fairly dramatic effect. Men are less likely to value their wives' opinions than women are to value their husbands' opinions. One third of wives think their husbands know a great deal, but only 14 percent of husbands feel that their wives similarly qualify. Thus, especially with respect to spousal assessments of marriage partners' political knowledge, we see an asymmetry in the evaluation of husbands and wives that reflects the earlier South Bend results.

What is the source of the asymmetry? Men may undervalue, or women may overvalue, the political expertise of their spouses due to an explicit or implicit division of labor (and interest) that is present within many marriages (Sapiro 1984; Jennings and Niemi 1971). Alternatively, partisan politics may be like Monday night football – a spectator support that appeals primarily to men. In either event, these asymmetries make it important to examine the effectiveness of political communication flows between husbands and wives, and for this purpose we return to the data set built on spousal dyads.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SPOUSES

Thus far we have seen three things: First, there is a pronounced gender-based asymmetry in many marriages regarding judgments of political expertise – women are more likely than men to judge the political knowledge of their marriage partners favorably. Second, with respect to highly partisan

behaviors – partisan identification, vote choice, and candidate evaluation – levels of agreement within marriages are generally quite high. Third, levels of agreement are much more variable with respect to opinions regarding policy issues.

One interpretation of these results – based on a social cohesion argument – is that men tend to be politically dominant within marriages, perhaps due to higher levels of political interest, or perhaps due to long standing gender stereotypes regarding the role of women with respect to the public sphere. This dominance, in turn, is translated into high levels of agreement with respect to highly visible partisan behaviors because, in the context of socially cohesive relationships, wives rely on their husbands' judgments. At the same time, as many policy opinions are less salient, less frequently discussed, and hence less socially visible, husbands and wives demonstrate much lower levels of agreement with respect to these policy opinions simply because they are unaware of their spouses' opinions.

An alternative interpretation, based on structural equivalence, is that the delegation of political decision-making by wives to husbands is far from complete. Decision-making costs are often reduced within marriages by the delegation of decision-making responsibilities, but such delegation is discretionary and reversible, particularly when there is a divergence of self-perceived interest. Hence, a great deal of disagreement survives within marriages because social influence is escapable – husbands and wives frequently exercise independent judgment in forming their own positions and opinions on political issues.

How are we to choose between these two interpretations? A crucial issue in making the choice is the extent to which disagreement is correctly recognized within marriages. If disagreement is recognized – if spouses agree to disagree – then we have evidence which undermines a socially deterministic rendering of political influence within marriages. Alternatively, if disagreement only survives when it is unrecognized, it would be support for the irresistibility of spousal influence and for the social cohesion model.

Thus, a fundamental issue for this analysis is the manner in which we should conceive the effectiveness of political communication within marriages. One basic indicator of effective communication is the extent to which one marriage partner correctly perceives the political viewpoints and preferences of the other marriage partner. Levels of correct perception can, of course, vary across spouses and

behaviors. To the extent that husbands are politically dominant, we would expect wives to perceive more accurately than husbands. To the extent that opinions are salient and hence more frequently discussed, we might expect levels of accurate perception to increase. To the extent that both husbands and wives exercise political judgment, we might expect disagreement to survive recognition. We begin by examining the accuracy and effectiveness of political communication with respect to several different political opinions and behaviors.

The levels of correct perception with respect to vote choice are considered in Table 5, first as a function of gender and then as a function of agreement. The table shows high levels of correct perception that are only modestly differentiated by gender. Ninety-three percent of women and 89 percent of men correctly perceive their spouses' voting behavior. These levels of correct perception are striking, but they must be understood with reference to the behavior being perceived.

At the end of the high intensity national spectacle of a presidential election campaign, it would be remarkable to find that many husbands and wives were mistaken regarding their spouses' voting preferences. These husbands and wives have been bombarded by media stimuli and partisan messages that have virtually forced them to pay heed to the election campaign. As a consequence, the agenda of the externally driven political environment has been inflicted upon countless kitchen table conversations, and in this sense the political content of marital discussions is largely exogenous to the marriage. The agenda of marital discussions regarding politics, like the agenda of all political conversations, is a product of political salience, and salience is controlled in large part by the larger political environment (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995).

The table also shows that disagreement registers a relatively modest depressing effect on communication effectiveness. More than 75 percent of the spouses who actually disagree correctly recognize their disagreement. In short, there is little evidence here to suggest strong gender effects on communication effectiveness. Males and females do not substantially differ in their correct perception of a spouse's voting preference. And while the effectiveness of communication is reduced when there is disagreement, correct perception is still the overwhelming norm.

What is the effectiveness of communication for policy opinions that are typically less salient? In addition to asking the main respondents for their own opinions regarding the four policy issues (health,

abortion, minorities, and environment), we also asked them for their perceptions of their spouses' opinions. Thus we are able to consider these perceptions not only in the context of main respondents' own opinions but also in the context of their spouses' self-reported (true) opinions. To the extent that perception is accurate – to the extent that effective communication is occurring – we would expect the perception of the spouse's opinion to be closely tied to the spouse's true opinion. We also asked the discussants for their perceptions of their spouses' opinions, and thus we are able to double our sample size for the remaining analysis. That is, we pool together the main respondent perceptions of the discussant spouse with the discussant perceptions of the main respondent spouse. (For purposes of the ensuing discussion, we refer to the perceiver as the ego and the perceived as the alter.)

The ego's perception of the alter's opinion is regressed on the true (self-reported) opinion of the alter as well as on the ego's own (self-reported) opinion in Table 6.² The most important comparison to make for each of the regressions is with respect to the relative magnitudes of effects for the ego's self-reported opinion and the alter's self-reported opinion. To the extent that the effect of the ego opinion is large, the ego is projecting his or her own opinion on the perception of the alter. To the extent that the effect of the alter's true opinion is large, we see evidence that accurate (effective) communication is taking place.

For each regression, the effect of the ego's opinion is larger than the effect of the alter's opinion. In only one instance – the abortion opinion – does the effect of the alter's true opinion compare favorably to the effect of the ego's opinion. For the other three opinions, the projection effect is between 4 and 6 times the magnitude of the correct perception effect. **Thus, only for abortion opinions can we say that the effectiveness of communication is high.**

It is certainly no accident that higher levels of agreement correspond to more accurate perceptions and more effective communication. In particular, the external political environment stimulates higher levels of political interest and discussion with respect to some topics than others. Higher levels of discussion lead to more accurate perceptions of spousal opinion, and as a consequence to higher levels of agreement. In short, accuracy of communication is the link that ties together issue salience with increased levels of agreement inside marriages. Perhaps the more important questions for our purposes

are: (1) Is the effectiveness of spousal communication structured by gender? And (2) is disagreement regarding a salient policy opinion capable of surviving the correct perception of spousal opinion?

GENDER ASYMMETRIES IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

Comment [ahg1]: Q 1 is effectiveness of communication structured by gender?

We have seen little evidence of any gender-based asymmetry in the perception of a spouse's voting behavior – husbands and wives are almost equally accurate in their perceptions. But do gender-based asymmetries appear for the accuracy of perceptions regarding spouses' opinions on specific policies? Table 7 repeats the analysis of Table 6, but an ordered probit model³ is substituted for the least squares models, and dummy variables with dummy variable interactions are included to consider whether the observed patterns of communication are gender specific. In assessing the models in terms of the possible gender-based communication contingencies, attention should be directed toward the dummy variable interactions. Nowhere does the coefficient for such an interaction generate a sharp t-value, and hence there is no evidence to support the existence of gender based communication effects. This conclusion is worth repeating: While our earlier results show that wives value the political expertise of husbands more than husbands value the expertise of their wives, there is little evidence here to suggest that husbands are more effective at communicating their viewpoints than wives are.

With the exception of abortion, the results in Table 7 provide a dramatic demonstration of ineffective communication. Stated quite simply, correct perception is often an artifact of agreement. For the three other policy opinions, one spouse frequently assumes that the other spouse holds the same opinion. When this is true, the perception is accurate. When it is false, the perception is inaccurate. From a different vantage point, the data in Table 7 indicate that, with the exception of the opinion regarding abortion policy, perceived agreement is high and only modestly affected by the spouse's true opinion. The decision rule used by individuals in forming cognitions of a spouse's political viewpoints is quite simple: if in doubt, assume agreement (Sniderman et al. 1991; Tversky and Kahneman 1973; Kahneman and Tversky 1973). The irony is, of course, that such a decision rule drastically underestimates the extent to which a lack of agreement is present within marriages, and in so doing it limits the extent to which an actual convergence of viewpoints and opinions is likely to occur.

However, in the context of a salient issue such as abortion, many spouses are able to recognize and maintain disagreement. One explanation points toward the status of abortion as an issue

in the “private sphere” – an issue that is more likely to engage women and thereby lead to more effective communication among marriage partners. This may very well be true, but we should not by default assume that men are dominating the discussion of “public sphere” issues. Once again, there is no evidence here (from the dummy interactions) to support male dominance in patterns of communication (or non-communication) with respect to any of these issues.

A second explanation of why the abortion issue is different points toward the continuation of a gender gap in orientations toward partisan politics in general (Conover and Sapiro 1993). The Monday night football syndrome suggests that following partisan politics may be an activity that is often more attractive to males, and partisan politics may be what individuals have in mind when we ask them to rate their husbands and wives with respect to levels of knowledge regarding political affairs (See Table 4C). When the focus shifts to specific political issues, however, the gender asymmetries regarding evaluations of political knowledge may well become more complex.

Throughout the analysis we have assumed that salience of an issue stimulates discussion and communication. Is such an assumption warranted? We cannot assess the extent to which the particular policy assumptions are salient to the respondents, but we can assess the salience of politics more generally, and its consequence on the frequency of political discussion that occurs within marriages.

In Table 8, salience is measured in two different ways: first in terms of reported interest in the campaign and second in terms of candidate preference strength. The first measure provides an individual’s subjective assessment of salience by asking individuals whether they were interested in the campaign. Second, reference strength is measured as the divergence of candidate evaluations – as the variance around a single respondent’s mean evaluation of the three presidential candidates, where each evaluation is measured on a 0 to 10 scale. This measures salience indirectly, by considering the extent to which an individual holds divergent opinions regarding the candidates. The measurement hypothesis here is that people with higher variances hold stronger preferences: they are more highly opinionated, and hence the outcome of the election is more salient for them individually.

Both measures of salience are included for both marriage partners, allowing us to see the effects of salience on reported discussion frequency that flow through the alter as well as the ego. Do

individuals only perceive high levels of discussion if they are personally engaged by politics? Or does personal engagement generate cascading consequences that are realized through social communication? In other words, is a husband or wife likely to report discussing politics more frequently with a spouse for whom politics is more salient and important?

The ordered probit model in Table 8 generates statistically discernible effects on the frequency of discussion with spouses due to three of the four explanatory variables: ego interest, alter interest, and the strength of ego's candidate preference. A separate analysis failed to sustain contingent effects due to gender – the pattern of effects is not discernibly different for husbands and wives.⁴ The lesson to be taken is that the frequency of communication within a marriage depends on the salience of politics for the marriage partners, and hence the extent of effective communication is likely to depend on the issue, the political environment, and the political engagement of particular husbands and wives (Stoker and Jennings 1995). Returning to Latane (1981), it is not simply immediacy or intimacy that affect influence, but also the strength of opinions and the frequency of communication.

CONCLUSION: RETHINKING THE ROLE OF MARRIAGE IN POLITICS

Perhaps it is time to rethink the role of marriage in politics. This paper has produced several results that may run counter to commonly accepted views. First, there is more political slack in most marriages than one might suppose, if only because many political opinions are less salient, less fully discussed, and hence less socially visible. Indeed, many marriage partners fail to recognize disagreement for the simple reason that, for many issues, they hold only the haziest perceptions of what their partners are thinking! In short, it is a mistake to equate marriage with social control or lock grip agreement over all political issues. Moreover, there is little evidence here to suggest that political agreement within marriages is either the automatic consequence of social cohesion or the residual effect of self-selection. At least in terms of abortion opinions, agreement is not the necessary consequence of correct perception. Rather, agreement between spouses would appear to depend on the particular details of spousal communication patterns.

Second, to the extent that marriage partners do hold common opinions, it is a mistake to believe that the husband is always responsible. Wives are more likely than husbands to respect the political expertise of their spouses, but we have not uncovered any other gender asymmetries in political

communication. Moreover, not all political issues are “male issues” (Huddy and Terkildsen 1993), and hence we should not expect husbands always to be dominant in political communication within marriages.

Finally, in more general terms, it is perhaps time to invoke methodological individualism in the study of political communication between marriage partners. A social cohesion model encourages us to think of spouses as an inseparable unit. A structural equivalence model encourages us to think of them as interdependent actors with individually unique interests, perspectives, and preferences. To the extent that husbands and wives occupy similar positions in social structure, and to the extent that they communicate regularly regarding political issues, we should expect them frequently to arrive at commonly held opinions and preferences. What remains to be understood is who takes the lead with respect to what opinion in which circumstance, and what are the factors that explain the effective communication of political information between husbands and wives.

None of this is intended to minimize the importance of spousal communication and influence in politics. We are only arguing that political agreement between husbands and wives is neither automatic nor uniform across various opinions and individuals. Indeed, the lack of uniformity in their political viewpoints – the fact that spouses frequently hold different opinions – is perhaps the best evidence to be obtained in support of the powerful influence of husbands and wives with respect to the many highly salient political issues regarding which they so frequently do reach agreement.

NOTES

1. In order to maintain cross-national comparability, our measure of partisan identification is based on a measure commonly used in European studies. The initial probe is: "Many people lean toward a particular political party for a long time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. Do you generally lean toward a particular party?" A follow up question that asked how strongly or weakly they lean toward the party produced a five category response. If the respondent replied independent or no party to the original probe, a follow up question asked: "If you had to choose, do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or the Democratic party?" The result is a 13 category scale, from -6 for very strong Democrat to 6 for very strong Republican.
2. The self-reported opinions are measured on a 5 point scale, and the perceived opinion is measured on a 3 point scale. See the appendix for details.
3. A large majority of the perceiving spouses select one option or the other with respect to their spouse's opinion, and hence the middle categories for the perceived opinions are lightly populated. Combining the middle category with either of the other categories and reanalyzing the data with a binomial probit model does not change the results reported here.
4. Including the gender based contingencies does have the effect of reducing the size of the t-ratio for the spouse's level of interest to 1.8.

APPENDIX

SAMPLING DESIGN

This study is one part of a five nation comparative effort undertaken in Britain, Germany, Japan, Spain, and the United States during the early 1990s. The American study design is based on a stratified cluster sample in which the primary sampling units are counties. Three strata are employed: county population size, the educational composition of the county population, and the proportional change in the county's population from 1980 to 1990. Based on these strata, the county populations of the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia were allocated to 20 cells, each of which included 5 percent of the total population. A replicate design was employed in which two counties (or the District of Columbia) were independently chosen from each cell with replacement. And the probability of selecting a particular county within a particular cell was proportional to the relative population of the county within the cell. This produced two separate representative samples of 20 counties each. Los Angeles County appears in both samples, and thus the end product is 40 county samples drawn from 39 counties. Within each county, random digit dialing was used to generate a sample of approximately 33 respondents per county sample, for a total sample of 1318 respondents.

While the main respondent survey provides the central data base for this paper, these survey data are supplemented by other data collection efforts and data sources. Shorter interviews were conducted with two snowball samples. One snowball sample includes 271 spouses of the main respondents. A second snowball sample includes 841 non-spouse discussion partners. All interviews were conducted with people identified as discussants by the main respondent. Finally, we are also able to collect aggregate data on the counties and merge these data together with the survey in order to characterize the county environments within which the respondents reside.

All survey field work was conducted using computer assisted telephone interviewing by the Polimetrics Laboratory at Ohio State University and the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University. Interviews with the 1318 main respondents began during the week after the election campaign, and except for loose ends, was completed by the end of January. The main respondent interviews lasted somewhat in excess of one hour. The response rate was 48 percent, calculated as the ratio of completions to the sum of completions, refusals, and partials.

In a clustered sampling design, such as the one we are employing, normally utilized procedures for calculating the standard errors of simple random samples are not theoretically justified. Clustering often creates homogeneity within clusters which compromises the amount of information gathered with the sample, thereby increasing the standard errors. These problems are reduced in our own study by two separate factors. First, since our clusters are large units (counties), there is a great deal of heterogeneity within the clusters. Second, we have employed a stratification procedure which yields benefits by increasing variation among the clusters. Replicate designs were conceived as a means of calculating standard errors for complex samples (Sudman 1976; Deming 1960). At the simplest level, statistical estimates for each independent sample can be compared to yield a central tendency as well as a standard error around the central tendency. The problem with such a strategy is that it seldom yields a high number of degrees of freedom because the number of replicates is inherently limited.

In response to this problem, a variety of pseudo-replication strategies have been developed that multiply the number of potential half samples that might be drawn from a simple replicate design such as the one we have employed. Two half samples might be drawn by treating Sample A and Sample B as separate samples. But then another set of half samples can be drawn by exchanging one county from each list, thereby producing two new half samples. And so on. Kish and Frankel (1970) draw on the work of Plackett and Burman (1946) to produce a "balanced replication" procedure in which each combination of clusters is statistically independent from each of the other combinations of clusters, thereby reducing the number of replications while still exploiting the available information. While all the standard errors of this paper are calculated on the basis of a simple random sample, we have engaged in analyses which employ the Kish and Frankel procedure. Using the procedure, standard errors for both

means and regression coefficients compare very favorably to those calculated on the basis of a simple random sample, with design effects that are on average only slightly greater than unity.

ISSUE QUESTIONS

For each issue, respondents were asked their own position on a five point scale, as well as their perceptions of Clinton, Bush, Perot, and their spouse or partner on a three point scale. We show the full main respondent and spouse questions for the first issue question, but only the initial main respondent question for the other three.

ISSUE 1: MEDICAL INSURANCE

On a different topic, an important issue these days is the availability of health insurance to cover medical costs. Some people feel that the federal government should see to it that every American is covered by health insurance. Others feel that health insurance coverage should be a matter of individual and employer choice.

Do you think: that the federal government should see to it that everyone has health insurance, should health insurance be left to individual and employer choice, or is neither position acceptable to you?

- <1> government should see to it
- <3> should be left to individual and employer choice
- <5> neither position acceptable

- <8> DK
- <9> RF

If the respondent chose "neither position acceptable," they were asked:

If you had to take a position, would you lean more toward the federal government seeing to it or toward leaving it to individual and employer choice?

- <1> government should see to it
- <3> should be left to individual and employer choice

- (VOLUNTEERED)
- <5> neither alternate acceptable

- <8> DK (no probe)
- <9> RF

(Later in the sequence they were asked:)

What do you think (your husband, wife, partner) prefers?

(Do you think (your husband, wife, partner) prefers: that the federal government see to it that everyone has health insurance, that health insurance be left to individual and employer choice, or does (your husband, wife, partner) not seem to prefer one over the other?)

- <1> federal government see to it
- <3> be left to individual and employer choice
- <5> does not prefer one over the other

- <8> DK (no probe)

<9> RF

ISSUE 2: ABORTION

Many people have been concerned about abortion in recent years. Some people think that women should be able to choose for themselves whether to have an abortion. Others think that government should restrict abortions.

Generally speaking, do you think: women should be able to choose for themselves, should the government restrict abortions, or is neither position acceptable to you?

- <1> women should be able to choose
- <3> government should restrict abortions
- <5> neither position acceptable

<8> DK
<9> RF

ISSUE 3: MINORITY AID

There has been debate in recent years about how to improve the social and economic position of black people and other minorities. Some people feel that the federal government should make special efforts to improve the position of minorities. Other people feel that minorities should have to get ahead on their own without any government help.

Do you think: there should be special government efforts to help minorities, should minorities have to get ahead on their own, or is neither position acceptable to you?

- <1> special government efforts for minorities
- <3> minorities should get ahead on their own
- <5> neither position acceptable

<8> DK
<9> RF

ISSUE 4: ENVIRONMENT VS. ECONOMIC GROWTH

There is a lot of talk these days about promoting jobs and economic development on the one hand and protecting the environment on the other hand. Most people want both. But if you had to choose, which do you think is more important [bold]right now[n]: promoting jobs and economic development, protecting the environment, or is neither position acceptable to you?

- <1> promoting jobs and economic development
- <3> protecting the environment
- <5> neither position acceptable

<8> DK
<9> RF

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Table 1

Level of reported agreement on the vote between spouses.

A. Total percentages

Vote of Main Respondent	Discussant Vote		
	Bush	Clinton	Perot
Bush	32.0%	3.4	4.4
Clinton	4.4	35.9	2.4
Perot	3.9	3.4	10.2

N=206

B. Column percentages

Vote of Main Respondent	Discussant Vote		
	Bush	Clinton	Perot
Bush	79.5%	8.0	25.7
Clinton	10.8	84.1	14.3
Perot	9.6	8.0	60.0
N=	83	88	35

Table 2

Simple regressions of spouses' opinions on main respondents' opinions.

A. Partisan opinions.

	party identification	Bush evaluation	Clinton evaluation	Perot evaluation
constant	.23 (1.12)	2.32 (7.71)	2.55 (7.99)	3.15 (9.51)
main respondent opinion	.58 (11.62)	.57 (11.33)	.55 (10.83)	.28 (4.74)
standard error of estimate	3.26	2.38	2.41	2.59
R ²	.34	.32	.30	.08
N	262	270	270	268

B. Policy opinions.

	health policy	abortion policy	minorities policy	environment policy
constant	1.40 (7.81)	1.00 (7.16)	2.07 (10.22)	2.49 (12.09)
main respondent opinion	.40 (6.23)	.52 (9.97)	.32 (5.36)	.14 (2.24)
standard error of estimate	1.62	1.41	1.68	1.83
R ²	.13	.27	.10	.02
N	259	265	258	261

Note: T-values for coefficients are shown in parentheses.

Table 3

Regression of spouses' opinions on main respondents' opinions,
with controls for main respondent partisanship and main respondent gender.

A. Partisan opinions.

	party identification	Bush evaluation	Clinton evaluation	Perot evaluation
constant	.591 (2.033)	3.507 (10.087)	3.052 (7.794)	3.546 (9.712)
main respondent opinion		.377 (6.634)	.414 (6.942)	.288 (4.821)
main respondent party ident.	.585 (11.672)	.049 (1.127)	.006 (.125)	-.029 (.597)
spouse party identification		.274 (6.711)	-.258 (6.044)	-.004 (.090)
main respondent male (dummy)	-.701 (-1.739)	-.363 (1.400)	.553 (1.998)	-.904 (2.794)
standard error of estimate	3.253	2.073	2.214	2.572
R ²	.349	.495	.427	.105
N	262	270	270	268

Table 3 cont.

B. Policy opinions.

	health policy	abortion policy	minorities policy	environment policy
intercept	1.850 (8.749)	1.095 (6.382)	2.305 (9.932)	2.553 (10.794)
main respondent opinion	.198 (2.790)	.493 (9.074)	.287 (4.552)	.140 (2.141)
main respondent party ident.	.089 (2.882)	.015 (.542)	.016 (.483)	-.005 (.149)
spouse party identification	.085 (2.808)	.050 (1.816)	.052 (1.548)	-.075 (2.096)
main respondent male (dummy)	-.023 (.196)	-.091 (.522)	-.263 (1.231)	-.046 (.199)
standard error of estimate	1.536	1.388	1.668	1.818
R ²	.228	.307	.121	.052
N	251	257	250	252

Note: T-values for coefficients are shown in parentheses.

Table 4

Evaluations and perceptions of spouses' expertise by main respondent gender.**A. Order in which spouse is named as a discussion partner.**

	(0) women	(1) men	
			LEAST SQUARES
(1) first (important matters)	34.08%	34.30	intercept= 3.296
(2) second (important matters)	14.43	10.55	slope= .245
(3) third (important matters)	5.22	3.17	t-ratio= 1.607
(4) fourth (important matters)	2.49	.79	R ² = .003
(5) fifth (campaign events)	21.64	21.11	
(6) not named	22.14	30.08	
N=	402	379	

B. When you talk with (spouse), do you discuss political matters:

	(0) women	(1) men	
			LEAST SQUARES
(1) often	33.58	26.91	intercept= 1.831
(2) sometimes	51.49	50.40	slope= .164
(3) rarely	13.18	19.00	t-ratio= 3.065
(4) never	1.74	3.69	R ² = .012
N=	402	379	

C. Generally speaking, how much do you think (spouse) knows about politics?

	(0) women	(1) men	
			LEAST SQUARES
(1) a great deal	32.84	13.79	intercept= 1.729
(2) an average amount	61.44	68.97	slope= .306
(3) not much at all	5.72	17.24	t-ratio= 7.369
N=	402	377	R ² = .070

Table 5

Do the main respondents correctly perceive their spouses' voting choices? By the sex of the main respondent.

Does the main respondent perceive spouse correctly?	main respondent sex	
	female	male
no	6.9%	11.0%
yes	93.1%	89.0%
N =	101	118

Does the main respondent perceive spouse correctly?	agreement regarding presidential vote?	
	no	yes
no	22.7%	4.4%
yes	77.3%	95.6%
N=	44	159

Table 6

Perception of spouse's policy opinion on self reported opinions of
perceiving (ego) spouse and perceived (alter) spouse.

	health policy	abortion policy	minorities policy	environment policy
intercept	-.32 (5.72)	-.43 (10.35)	-.09 (1.34)	-.34 (4.72)
main respondent (ego) opinion	.38 (19.95)	.26 (14.76)	.37 (20.83)	.33 (18.42)
spouse (alter) opinion	.08 (4.20)	.23 (13.10)	.06 (3.27)	.06 (3.59)
standard error of estimate	.63	.54	.63	.70
R ²	.55	.64	.55	.45
N	462	501	451	453

Note: T-values for coefficients are shown in parentheses.

Table 7.

Perception of spouse's policy opinion on self reported opinions of perceiving (ego) spouse and perceived (alter) spouse, with contingent effects for gender of perceiving spouse. Ordered probit models.

A. Perception of alter's health policy opinion.

N=462, chi-square = 312.70, df=5, p=.00

	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-ratio	Mean of X
Constant	-1.812	0.210	8.629	
ego opinion	0.646	0.068	9.494	2.286
alter opinion	0.137	0.062	2.231	2.325
ego opinion X male ego	0.082	0.100	0.825	1.195
alter opinion X male ego	0.081	0.090	0.896	1.152
male ego ^a	-0.975	0.370	2.632	0.509
threshold	0.292	0.054	5.397	

B. Perception of alter's abortion policy opinion.

N=501, chi-square = 353.35, df=5, p=.00

	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-ratio	Mean of X
Constant	-2.814	0.257	10.947	
ego opinion	0.551	0.075	7.345	2.062
alter opinion	0.496	0.074	6.730	2.060
ego opinion X male ego	-0.099	0.099	0.993	1.012
alter opinion X male ego	-0.078	0.099	0.789	1.002
male ego ^a	0.197	0.348	0.568	0.493
threshold	0.142	0.047	3.039	

Table 7 (continued).

C. Perception of alter's minorities policy opinion.

N=451, chi-square = 314.37, df=5, p=.00

	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-ratio	Mean of X
Constant	-1.626	0.265	6.134	
ego opinion	0.715	0.081	8.784	2.973
alter opinion	0.131	0.059	2.216	2.978
ego opinion X male ego	-0.081	0.098	0.827	1.537
alter opinion X male ego	0.004	0.083	0.045	1.455
male ego ^a	-0.204	0.348	0.587	0.5033
threshold	0.457	0.068	6.709	

D. Perception of alter's environment and the economy policy opinion.

N=473, chi-square = 274.25, df=5, p=.00

	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-ratio	Mean of X
Constant	-2.556	0.258	9.886	
ego opinion	0.548	0.062	8.785	2.736
alter opinion	0.096	0.062	1.532	2.780
ego opinion X male ego	0.019	0.081	0.239	1.416
alter opinion X male ego	0.052	0.081	0.641	1.406
male ego ^a	0.596	0.345	1.729	0.5032
threshold	0.292	0.053	5.549	

a. Male ego is dummy coded 0 if the perceiving spouse is male.

Table 8

Reported frequency of political discussion with spouse on issue salience.
Ordered probit model.

N= 531, Chi-square= 82.48,df=4, p=.00

	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	Mean of X
Constant	0.318	0.129	2.457	
ego's candidate preference strength	0.022	0.006	3.535	10.04
alter's candidate preference strength	0.004	0.006	0.694	10.06
ego's self reported interest in campaign	0.690	0.112	6.157	0.640
alter's self reported interest in campaign	0.312	0.112	2.786	0.642
threshold parameter	1.470	0.079	18.619	