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Exploring Political Consumerism: Its Antecedents and Mediating Role Between Family Communication and Political Activity

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EXPLORING POLITICAL CONSUMERISM: ITS ANTECEDENTS AND
MEDIATING ROLE BETWEEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND
POLITICAL ACTIVITY

by

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ABSTRACT
EXPLORING POLITICAL CONSUMERISM: ITS ANTECEDENTS AND
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Viewed as an unconventional approach to politics, political consumerism is a rising form of political action that allows citizens to make political statements with their wallets. However, more research is warranted examining its motivating factors, as well as its connection to other forms of political activity. The family unit is the primary antecedent examined in this study, as it is regarded as one of the most important socializing agents for children, especially when it comes to political development. Conducting a national survey of 523 U.S. adults, the present study explored how one's family communication environment during childhood affects their likelihood of engaging in political consumerism during adulthood, and in turn, how that influences their involvement in offline and online political activity.

Through multiple regression analysis, the results showed that both the conversation and conformity orientations are positively associated with boycotting and buycotting. Path analysis further revealed the mediating role of political consumption on the relationship between family communication and political activity. Overall, this study expands the understanding of family communication patterns theory and suggests that political consumers are involved in various forms of political activity. The results further point to the growing trend of "dual participation," whereby citizens combine offline and online political activities.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the 2020 American National Election Studies (ANES) Time-Series Study, the majority of respondents (57.7%) claimed to have either bought or declined to purchase a certain product or service for political or social reasons. Of those who deliberately purchased or avoided products from certain companies, 22.6% reported engaging in this behavior about half of the time or more in the past 12 months. In fact, respondents reported engaging in political consumerism over the past year more than other political activities, such as joining a protest march, rally, or demonstration (9.4%), contacting an elected state or local official (17.5%), signing a petition (28.4%), or posting political comments online (38.7%) (ANES, 2021). This data suggests that as the avenues of political participation undergo continuous expansion, Americans are more regularly adopting political consumerism as a viable means of political action.

Although traditional modes of political activity, like voting, remain important tools of participation, citizens are adopting less direct and less formal means of trying to influence public policy. Political consumerism is one form of participation that has grown over the decades and has continuously attracted more scholarly attention (e.g., Stolle et al., 2005). According to Gotlieb and Cheema (2017), the growing prevalence of political consumerism indicates a larger societal shift in younger citizens' values, norms, and practices. Those who engage in political consumerism deliberately choose certain products and producers based on social, political, or ethical considerations (Shah et al., 2007). This mode of political activity provides an alternative way of expressing dissatisfaction, especially since companies vigilantly monitor consumer behavior and have become more responsive to these efforts (Shah et al., 2007).

Consumers have continually leveraged their purchasing power to punish and reward companies for their business practices. Concerns over unethical labor practices and unfavorable social, political, and environmental policies can lead consumers to be more conscientious about the type of brands they choose to support via their wallet. For example, in 2019, clients and celebrities were quick to say they planned to cancel their Equinox and SoulCycle memberships after the fitness company, which was seen as an inclusive brand that had supported LGBTQ+ charities in the past, was found to have corporate ties to former president Donald Trump (Jennings, 2019). In 2020, calls to boycott Starbucks erupted on social media after an internal dress code memo prohibited employees from wearing Black Lives Matter apparel on the job. In response, Starbucks quickly reversed their policy, showing the power of consumers to influence company practices and policies (Murphy, 2020). These are just a couple of the countless examples showing how consumers use their power in the marketplace.

As Shah et al. (2007) argue, political consumerism merits "special attention" because it affects "a large cross-section of the citizenry" and has grown to influence and "structure a wide range of consumer decisions" (p. 219). However, questions remain regarding how people come to engage in political consumerism. The family has been found to play a key role in shaping children's political beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. While some families may refrain from political talk and be less tolerant of sharing different opinions, open family communication environments may welcome political discussions and encourage debate (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a). These differences have been well-researched, with scholars examining how different family communication styles are related to various political outcomes, such as political efficacy and political

participation (e.g., Graham et al., 2020). Although the link between family communication and political participation has been examined, scant research exists regarding the specific relationship between family communication and political consumerism. To fill this gap, the present study examines how one's family communication environment during childhood influences their political involvement, and specifically their political consumption, during adulthood.

Scholars have also asserted that political consumerism deserves "more explicit attention" in future research examining political participation (Stolle et al., 2005, p. 262). Having political consumerism at one's disposal expands the very definition of political participation; beyond targeting politicians and political systems, citizens can influence public policy via numerous market actors (Stolle et al., 2005). Citizens who are already politically active are the ones who typically engage in political consumerism (Strømsnes, 2009). By taking part in this form of individualized activism, political consumers demonstrate high initiative and prove to be politically efficacious (Newman & Bartels, 2011; Stolle et al., 2005). Therefore, it is important to investigate how one's propensity for engaging in political consumerism affects their entire repertoire of political activity. Specifically, this study explores how political consumption habits relate to additional participation in offline and online political activity. To provide a foundation for this study, the following sections conceptualize political consumerism, explain family communication patterns theory, and discuss potential antecedents to political consumption and additional forms of political activity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Political Consumerism

Political consumerism is a form of political participation that is characterized by a consumer's intentional decision to avoid (i.e., boycott) or purchase (i.e., buycott) certain products or brands based on political, social, or ethical considerations (Baek, 2010; Stolle et al., 2005). While boycotting products or brands is a means of punishing a company for objectionable policies or business practices, buycotting products or services is a way of rewarding a company for their favorable business practices (Copeland & Boulianne, 2020). Whereas the average consumer selects products or services based on price, taste, and quality, political consumers have a distinct goal and rationale behind their shopping behaviors (Micheletti, 2003; Strømsnes, 2009). They use their market choices to convey political values and policy positions in hopes of creating tangible political, economic, and social outcomes (Newman & Bartels, 2011). Political consumerism can raise the consciousness of consumers and oblige companies to alter their production methods (Micheletti, 2003). Acts of political consumption can also be directed at addressing non-economic issues that pertain to personal and family well-being (Micheletti, 2003). Through this form of civic engagement, individual purchasing decisions are "imbued with political beliefs, ethics, or principles," thus allowing private consumption choices to shed light on larger, more public concerns (Neilson & Paxton, 2010, p. 5). Political consumerism is regarded as another avenue of political participation, quite different from more formal or institutionalized modes (Shah et al., 2007). Despite the ascendancy of multinational corporations, political consumers believe in the power of consumers to shape a fair and ethical marketplace (Neilson, 2010). As market actors have become

increasingly popular targets for citizens looking to make political statements, environmental practices, labor standards, and human rights issues have become increasingly prominent in the marketing of global products and services (Dalton, 2008). Ultimately, the idea of political consumption urges citizens to consider the influence of business on international trade, global politics, business ethics, and its outcomes for government and citizen participation in public affairs (Micheletti, 2003).

Although scholarly interest in political consumerism is growing, there has been debate surrounding whether political consumerism is political, as its actions are not always directed at the state. However, as Copeland (2014a) points out, many instances of political consumerism involve the production of public goods, which fits within the broad domain of politics. Consumption provides a "venue" into policymaking; since consumer behavior is generally unregulated, people excluded from policymaking arenas can leverage their market choices as a means of political expression (Micheletti, 2003, p. 12). Micheletti (2003) further explains that a political connection exists between our daily consumer choices and key global issues related to environmental protection, labor rights, and human rights. Therefore, consumer choices, traditionally considered to be private, have become politicized, dissolving the barrier between political and economic spheres. Additionally, political consumerism is tied to power relations and the allocation of societal values, which are largely determined by private actors (Micheletti, 2003; Newman & Bartels, 2011). Many citizens have greater feelings of political efficacy at the marketplace and view corporations as viable political targets, which has given rise to the politics of products and brands (Echegaray, 2015).

Even though political consumerism is receiving more scholarly attention, the phenomenon has been around for a long time. Political consumerism can be traced back to boycotts, which citizens have used for hundreds of years to protest injustices (Micheletti, 2003). In fact, the term "boycott" was named after Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott of Ireland, who owned a large amount of agricultural land worked on by the Irish peasantry. In the 1880s, the poor working conditions sparked discontent among the peasants who eventually took action against Boycott, refusing to harvest his oats and eventually breaking all contact with him. Although their actions would be labeled as a strike today, the newspapers described the peasants' efforts as a "boycott." Nonetheless, the peasants' actions conveyed a similar main idea: common people could collectively wield their economic power to instigate change (Micheletti, 2003).

Regularly used household products have been and continue to be a primary target of political consumerist activities. For example, between the 1920s and 1940s, dissatisfaction with the price of food prompted American housewives to publicly express their discontent and boycott food products. These actions cut across geographical, ethnic, and religious lines, uniting women in the fight against high food prices. Aside from bonding the women, the boycotts politized motherhood, the family, and the home (Micheletti, 2003). Furthermore, boycotts have been utilized across the world to protest civil rights violations. In the United States, for example, the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott took place to protest racial segregation on the public transit system (Micheletti, 2003; Stolle et al., 2005). Consumer action has also proven to raise awareness and influence industry changes; one instance of this is the boycott against the food manufacturer Nestlé (1977–1984) for its marketing of infant formula to countries in

Africa and Asia, where the product was linked to increased levels of infant mortality (Micheletti, 2003; Stolle et al., 2005). The boycott took place on the international stage and forced a well-known, multinational company to collaborate alongside the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). It led to the 1981 adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, and although companies found loopholes in the code, the boycott demonstrated how consumer action can influence the policymaking process (Micheletti, 2003). The above examples, albeit far from an exhaustive list, highlight the presence of political consumerism throughout history, whether it be used to fight for social justice, labor rights, product accessibility, ethical marketing tactics, and more. Now, it is important to understand how the modes of political engagement have shifted in recent decades, increasing the visibility of political consumerism among citizens and scholars as a tool for political action.

Beginning in the 1970s, America began to see a decline in more traditional means of political participation (e.g., attend a political rally, participate in campaigns, correspond with elected officials) as economic globalization transformed manufacturing, marketing, finance, labor, and consumption (Bennett, 2012). Decreased election turnout in the United States, as well as in most Western democracies, caused worry among many political analysts who may have associated it with waning political interest. However, this downward trend has given rise to new patterns of participation and redefined what it means to be an engaged citizen in a democracy. As society has undergone modernization, there has been an evolution of citizenship norms, the emergence of new political resources, and the adoption of new political skills among citizens (Dalton, 2008). As

Dalton (2008) points out, more traditional means of participation can be associated with duty-based citizenship, which has a narrower view of participation and discourages citizens from engaging in challenging activities that give them more of a direct say in politics. Therefore, the decline in duty-based citizenship has made room for impactful non-electoral modes of political action that afford citizens greater control over the focus and site of political action, and as a result, expands their influence in the political sphere (Dalton, 2008). Moreover, this shift away from duty-based citizenship has brought about a period of "personalized politics" in which citizens mobilize around personal lifestyle values and target various political actors aside from parties, candidates, and the government (e.g., corporations, brands, international organizations) (Bennett, 2012; Copeland, 2014a; Stolle et al., 2005, p. 251). As the nature of citizenship has evolved, citizens have adopted more direct means of political action, such as political consumerism, to influence policy makers. Rather than an unpromising decline in civic participation, the rise of political consumerism and other non-electoral methods of political activity have signaled a revitalization of democratic participation (Dalton, 2008).

On a global scale, previous data from the World Values Survey (WVS) indicates that participation in boycotts has grown steadily over the decades. In 1999, boycotting was more than four times as likely to occur compared to 1974 (Stolle et al., 2005). More recent studies examining political consumption in the U.S. and Europe have found that the percentage of citizens who engage in at least one form of political consumerism ranges from 28% to nearly 50%, which confirms political consumption's status as a widely adopted method of political activity (Baek, 2010; Newman & Bartels, 2011; Strømsnes, 2009). Political consumerism has gained public acceptance in other regions of

the world, such as Latin America, where between 15% and 29% of citizens elect political consumption as a way of influencing the political system (Echegaray, 2015). Citizen involvement in political consumerism varies globally, with it being particularly pronounced in places like Scandinavia (Stolle et al., 2005). Nonetheless, political consumerism has gained global recognition as a valuable means of political activity.

A collection of societal changes, including the move from industrial to post-industrial economies, the shift from materialist to post-materialist values, and an increase in educational opportunities provided a foundation for the expansion of political consumerism (Copeland, 2014a). Specifically, Micheletti (2003) attributes citizens' increasing involvement in political consumerism to the rising dependence on the global marketplace for the delivery of goods and services. Whether people recognize it or not, shopping has become a survival mechanism given that nowadays few people produce their own food and clothing. Citizens have also become increasingly concerned about the origins and the impact of certain products, as globalization has lengthened the commodity chain of products and made it more difficult to track (Micheletti, 2003). Another driving factor is that many citizens "are now seeking issues and arenas for involvement that are more flexible, network-oriented, hands-on and that allows them to combine their daily lives with political causes" (Micheletti, 2003, p. 24-24). Particularly in the Western world, increased wealth has given some people the opportunity to consider additional facets of a product aside from price and quality (e.g., environmental impact) (Micheletti, 2003). The growth of political consumerism has also been facilitated by the emergence and pervasiveness of the Internet, e-commerce, and social media (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014a; Kelm & Dohle, 2018).

Clearly, myriad forces have contributed to the growth of political consumerism as a practical and appealing means of political action. Political consumption can be driven by various reasons, whether issues of sustainability, worker's rights, political party affiliation, or social justice be at the forefront of an individual's purchasing decisions. However, for the purposes of this study, political consumerism is broadly defined as a form of political activity involving the conscious decision to refrain from or seek out certain products, services, or producers based on political, social, ethical, or environmental reasons.

Types of Political Consumers: Boycotters and Buycotters

There are two main forms of political consumerism: *boycotting* and *buycotting*. Both forms of consumerism are viewed as means of "lifestyle politics," wherein everyday life provides opportunities to make political statements (Copeland & Boulianne, 2020, p. 4). Individuals who boycott deliberately avoid purchasing products or brands because they disagree with the company's practices or policies. Conversely, those who buycott intentionally purchase products or services because the company producing the product operates under favorable and ethical practices. Requests to buycott are typically associated with messages to "shop local" or with campaigns supporting companies that provide a living wage, use sustainable resources, or adhere to fair trade standards (Kam & Deichert, 2020). While boycotting aims to punish a company by damaging their reputation, good will, or bottom lines, buycotting intends to reward a company for its positive behavior (Copeland, 2014a). Previous scholars have found that different motivational characteristics prompt people to boycott and buycott. Boycotting is considered a form of collective action; networks of boycotters are often larger and highly

interconnected (Friedman, 1999; Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). Due to the collective nature of boycotts and the need for organized efforts, offline and online communication activities have been found to influence boycotts more than buycotts (Kelm & Dohle, 2018). Copeland (2014a) suggested that boycotting is more strongly associated with dutiful citizenship norms, which emphasize obligation, loyalty to the state, and deference to authority. Due to this connection, boycotting has more characteristics in common with traditional interest-based politics, such as voting in elections or working for a political campaign (Copeland, 2014a).

Buycotting, on the other hand, shares more similarities with civic engagement since it entails more informal and cooperative activity that takes place outside of traditional political institutions. It involves the enactment of engaged citizenship norms, which emphasize voluntary activity, forming independent opinions, and aiding others (Copeland, 2014a). Since buycotting is more individualistic, self-motivated, and driven by civic engagement, buycotters typically possess higher political interest (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021) and are more altruistic compared to boycotters (Neilson, 2010). Avoiding purchases involves less effort than seeking out specific brands or products, which led Neilson (2010) to argue that more altruistic people are motivated to engage in the complex process of buycotting because it is satisfying and fulfills their inherent desire to benefit the well-being of others. This may also explain why buycotters tend to target smaller or independent businesses, while boycotters often focus on targeting market leaders and attracting media attention to promote broader industry change (Neilson, 2010).

Political consumers may engage in both boycotting and buycotting behaviors, which scholars have referred to as '*dualcotting*.' These individuals have been found to possess distinct characteristics as well, which may explain their motivations for engaging in both means of political consumerism. For example, Baek (2010) found that dualcotters demonstrate higher levels of political knowledge and they follow politics more closely. Furthermore, Copeland (2014a) determined that dualcotters exhibit higher levels of external efficacy, have higher income levels, and possess strong ideological views. Neilson (2010) also characterized dualcotters as more altruistic than boycotters and buycotters and suggested that dualcotters may be intensified versions of buycotters. Likewise, Copeland (2014a) posited that buycotters, who already choose to reward companies through purchasing goods, will likely consider boycotting goods or brands with incongruent values. Due to this, dualcotters will likely resemble buycotters more than boycotters in regard to citizenship norms.

The efficacy of boycotting and buycotting is important to consider, as well. Boycotting often builds strong networks, and its attempts to mobilize citizens through feelings of disapproval may be more effective than a reward-based mobilization strategy. This may be explained by negativity bias, or the stronger propensity to perceive and process negative stimuli compared to positive stimuli (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). Consistent with this idea, Kam and Deichert (2020) found that negative information provokes boycotting far more powerfully than positive information induces buycotting. The effectiveness of boycotts may also be attributed to them often containing overt conflict between organized groups and corporations, which allows them to gain more traction via the mass media (Copeland, 2014a). Despite these distinctions, it is critical to

remember that boycotting and buycotting involve more complex decisions. The decision to deliberately avoid a product or brand is more feasible if there is an available alternative of similar price and quality, and the decision to intentionally buy a certain product or brand is much easier when there is a minimal gap between comparable products in terms of price and quality (Kam & Deichert, 2020). Therefore, the product market plays a key role in political consumption efforts because if a product or brand performs far better than any of its competitors or alternatives, attempts to boycott or buycott may be less potent.

Antecedents to Political Consumerism

Previous research has sought to define the political consumer through examining political behaviors and socio-demographic factors. Regarding political tendencies, prior research has found that those who possess high levels of political interest (e.g., Strømsnes, 2009) and political knowledge (Baek, 2010; Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017) are more likely to engage in political consumerism. The possession of postmaterialist values also increases the likelihood of political consumption, since these individuals make material choices while weighing ethical or political concerns (Copeland, 2014b). Further, political consumers are often distrustful or critical of government agents and institutions (Stolle et al., 2005). This overall lack of trust stems from the fact that political consumers may perceive political parties and government institutions as inept at effectively addressing their political concerns, which motivates them to boycott and buycott (Copeland, 2014b). Some scholars have found that boycotters exhibit lower levels of political trust compared to buycotters (Copeland, 2014a; Neilson, 2010). Explaining these results, Neilson (2010) posited that trust toward institutions inspires positive behavior, and thus, encourages buycotting. Meanwhile, a lack of trust in

institutions elicits feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction linked to negative corporate behavior, which encourages boycotting.

Generalized trust is another key variable to consider. For example, Neilson (2010) found that more trusting individuals are more prone to buycott than boycott, perhaps because buycotting is more covert and operates largely on the assumption that others are taking similar action while boycotting is often portrayed in the media as a collective act. In line with the individualized nature of political consumerism, Newman and Bartels (2011) discovered that political consumption is enhanced by "a deep-seated discontent regarding the current state of things in one's life" (p. 814). Another positive predictor of political consumerism, especially buycotting, is association involvement, or one's participation in various types of associations such as sports teams, voluntary organizations, and social clubs (Neilson, 2010). In general, people involved in organizations are more likely to be asked to participate in politics and follow through with the request (Verba et al., 1995). Therefore, membership in an organization could lead to individuals being asked and subsequently motivated to boycott or buycott a product, service, or brand (Copeland & Boulianne, 2020).

Ideological intensity is also an important factor, with those who identify as very liberal or very conservative being more likely to participate in boycotts and buycotts than those who identify as moderate (Copeland, 2014b; Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017). Comparing the two ideological camps, Hooghe and Goubin (2022) found that political consumerism was practiced more by those with a left-wing political orientation. Moreover, scholars have concluded that Democrats are more active political consumers compared to Republicans (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017; Strømsnes, 2009). However,

somewhat inconsistent with these findings, Baek (2010) concluded that buycotters were more likely to identify as Republican and conservative while boycotters were more likely to identify as Democrat and liberal. Additionally, Endres and Panagopoulos (2017) found that partisans with more stable policy positions were more active in recent boycotts and buycotts compared to partisans with less consistent positions. Although partisan distinctions are important to consider, it should be noted that political consumers are less prone to identify with a political party; many of these individuals are "ideologically sophisticated," meaning that they can effectively participate in politics independent of "partisan cues" (Copeland, 2014b, p. 276).

Considering the impact of socio-demographic factors, prior research has indicated that women (e.g., Hooghe & Goubin, 2022; Stolle et al., 2005), younger individuals (e.g., Newman & Bartels, 2011), those who are well-educated (e.g., Hooghe & Goubin, 2022; Strømsnes, 2009), and those with a high income (Micheletti & Stolle, 2005) are more likely to be political consumers. Due to its "indeterminacy" and "looseness," political consumerism may be more appealing to younger individuals and women who tend to be more alienated from the formal political sphere (Micheletti, 2003, p. 17). The popularity of political consumerism among women may further be explained by their higher involvement in marketplace activities, as they often assume the traditional role of shopping for the family (Micheletti, 2003; Neilson, 2010). Nevertheless, findings related to socio-demographic factors have been inconsistent, especially with regard to gender and income. For example, Copeland (2014a) found no clear gender or income differences when dividing political consumers into boycotters and buycotters; yet, significant differences emerged for dualcotters, with them being more likely to be female and earn

higher levels of income. Contrary to these findings, Neilson (2010) found significant gender differences between boycotters and buycotters, revealing that women are 53% more likely to buycott than men, while gender does not influence the probability of boycotting.

Although political consumers possess some common characteristics, they are not a uniform group, and their nuanced behaviors are important to take into consideration. Defining the political consumer is not only a task undertaken by academic researchers, but it is an important variable for any business. The politics of a product can escalate into controversial issues for corporations, as history has proven, which makes it imperative for companies to carefully consider how and why it manufactures products (Micheletti, 2003). Poor labor practices and values that are incompatible with consumers' values can elicit negative reactions that damage a company's reputation and good will. Large-scale boycotts and buycotts can impact corporate policy, company personnel, and public perception of a company, and they can even lead to public policy changes (Kam & Deichert, 2020). Acts of political consumerism may also result in financial consequences for companies, and the threat of financial loss alone can be enough to amend corporate policies.

Even though a consumer decision may seem unrelated to politics, political identity can have subtle and nuanced effects on consumer behaviors (Jung & Mittal, 2019). Jung and Mittal (2019) describe political identity as a broad concept comprised of "a wide array of attitudes, motives, logics, and interpretations of how the world works, how the world should work, and how societies may approach various issues and problems" (p. 69). Therefore, a variety of political issues can impact consumption

choices. For example, according to Gromet et al. (2013), environmental protection through government-mandated sustainability efforts is a key issue on the liberal agenda, which in turn, makes conservatives less likely to purchase an energy-efficient product linked to environmental benefits. Although this is just one example, empirical research has demonstrated that consumers evaluate products and brands more favorably if they are presented in a way that corresponds to their political identity. Therefore, brands should consider their political image from a consumer standpoint, which is composed of various elements including the CEO's political endorsements, how the brand responds to social issues, and communication with consumers (Jung & Mittal, 2019).

In general, it is crucial for companies to examine their customer base as they navigate their political brand communication, especially given that boycotters' punitive-oriented actions can be particularly damaging to a brand's success (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). A broad, heterogeneous group of consumers possessing a variety of political views may pose more challenges for brands trying to position themselves toward political issues, as they may run the risk of losing certain customers. This risk is intensified by today's growing political polarization (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). Additionally, based on Neilson's (2010) findings, differences among boycotters' and buycotters' thought processes can influence corporate messaging strategies. Given that boycotters tend to have less trust in institutions, companies targeted by boycotters could recruit trustworthy third parties to endorse their products. Conversely, since buycotters experience higher trust in institutions, companies may preemptively craft messages that promote their social responsibility efforts (Neilson, 2010).

While political indicators and socio-demographic factors have been traced to political consumption behaviors, its communicative antecedents beg further exploration. Previous literature suggests that communication within offline and online networks can affect one's involvement in political consumption. For example, Baek (2010) concluded that individuals who are more active communicators (i.e., frequent political discussions with family or friends, news consumption, and entertainment program viewing) and are devoted information seekers are more likely to be active political consumers. The same effect has been found in the social media context, as more active users are more likely to be political consumers (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014a). However, further research is warranted regarding these different communicative aspects. Specifically, the family, a driving force in shaping political attitudes and behaviors, should be examined to determine whether different family communication styles stimulate political consumption.

Family Communication Patterns as a Key Antecedent?

The family is a unique relational system that has a profound influence on one's beliefs, values, and communication behaviors (Rauscher et al., 2020). Family communication patterns theory (FCPT) reflects the dynamic communication environments that exist within the family unit by examining how parent-child interactions create a shared social reality among families and teach children different orientations to communication (i.e., conversation and conformity orientations) (McLeod & Chaffee, 1972; Rauscher et al., 2020). The *conversation orientation* and the *conformity orientation* are the two main dimensions of the theory that denote different family communication styles. Researchers have drawn on FCPT for nearly 50 years to examine the effects of

conversation and conformity orientations on family member behaviors (Rauscher et al., 2020, Schrodt et al., 2008). When McLeod and Chaffee (1972) developed the Family Communication Patterns (FCP) scale, they originally labeled the two dimensions of family communication *concept-oriented* and *socio-oriented*. The concept-orientation indicated the extent to which parental discussions of ideas influenced children's understanding and decision-making, while the socio-orientation represented the degree to which social roles and relationships bear greater influence on children's decision-making (Schrodt et al., 2008). This means that a family high in concept-orientation prioritized ideas over relationships, which allowed for differing opinions to be shared among family members. Meanwhile, a family high in socio-orientation prioritized harmonious parent-child relationship over ideas, meaning that conflict was avoided to maintain agreeable family relationships (Schrodt et al., 2008). Based on the interplay between these two dimensions, McLeod and Chaffee (1972) generated four distinct family types: consensual (i.e., high in both dimensions), pluralistic (i.e., high concept-orientation, low socio-orientation), protective (i.e., high socio-orientation, low concept-orientation), and laissez-faire (i.e., low in both dimensions).

McLeod and Chaffee's (1972) initial inquiry paved the way for future research investigating the dynamic family communication environment. Specifically, the theory of FCP originated from McLeod and Chaffee's (1972) research examining the degree of association between children's interpretations of mass media messages and communication patterns acquired through the family (Buckner et al., 2013; Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008). A second wave of FCP research was initiated by Ritchie (1991), who reconceptualized the two underlying dimensions of FCP to create a more comprehensive

understanding of their behavioral characteristics (Schrodt et al., 2008). FCP became seen as not only indicative of information processing, but also of family communication climates (Buckner et al., 2013). Further, the approach to analyzing FCP, which was originally based on the assumption that the FCP scales measure what actually occurs in the family, was improved upon by measuring respondent's perceptions of the family instead (Ritchie, 1991). The concept-orientation was renamed the *conversation orientation* to denote the free exchange of ideas between parents and children, and the socio-orientation was renamed the *conformity orientation* to reflect obedience to parental authority (Richie, 1991; Schrodt et al., 2008). Rather than binary, these two orientations are continuous as a family could be high and/or low on both the conversation and conformity orientations (Graham et al., 2020). The conversation and conformity orientations have been found to foster family communication environments that endure across different generations of family (Rauscher et al., 2020).

The conversation orientation represents the degree to which families create a communication atmosphere that invites all family members to engage in unrestrained discussions about a range of topics (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Families high in the conversation dimension engage in open, frequent, and spontaneous interactions with each other "without many limitations in regard to time spent in interaction or topics discussed" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, p. 85). All family members are involved in the discussions regarding the activities the family plans to participate in together, and decisions are made as a family unit (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Families who are low in the conversation orientation interact less regularly and refrain from discussing many topics openly with one another (Buckner et al., 2013). Private thoughts, feelings, and

behaviors are rarely discussed with other family members, and family decisions are not made collectively (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Meanwhile, the conformity orientation reflects the degree to which family interactions promote a communication environment built on harmony, agreement, and obedience to authority figures. Families high in the conformity orientation interact in a manner that emphasizes a uniformity of attitudes, values, and beliefs (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). These families establish "clear rules that are regularly enforced by parents who do not tolerate their children's deviation from family norms and expectations" (Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008, p. 391). Families low in the conformity orientation value the independence of family members and encourage more heterogeneous beliefs and attitudes (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Family members are able to produce individual thoughts and beliefs, children are involved in decision-making, and it is acceptable for children to question or challenge family rules (Buckner et al., 2013; Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008).

The two orientations also reflect different underlying values that families hold. Families high in the conversation orientation believe that the open and frequent exchange of ideas is necessary for an enjoyable and rewarding family life. Further, parents see regular discussions with their children as a primary avenue of educating and socializing them (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Meanwhile, families low in the conversation orientation do not find the frequent sharing of ideas to be essential to the functioning of their family. Families high in the conformity orientation value their family relationships over external ones, and they expect members to prioritize family time. They believe in a more traditional family structure where families are "cohesive" and "hierarchical" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, p. 86). In line with this belief, resources like living space

and money should be distributed equally among family members, and personal interests and external relationships should be subordinated in order to capitalize on family time. Children are expected to follow their parents' commands, and they do not have much, if any, say in family decisions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Conversely, families low in the conformity orientation do not believe in a rigid and hierarchically organized family. They value independence and personal development among family members, which causes them to encourage the pursuit of personal interests and meaningful relationships outside of the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). Overall, as previous scholars have asserted, both the conversation and conformity orientations represent relational schemas created through family members' communication patterns. In turn, these repeated experiences within the family context guide interactions among family members and influences the ways in which they view the world (Graham et al., 2020; Hamon & Schrodt, 2012; Horstman et al., 2018).

Family Communication Patterns and Political Consumerism

Parents can largely influence a child's political learning prior to adulthood, especially if parents are politically active and involve their children in political discussions (Jennings et al., 2009). Importantly, political predispositions developed during childhood endure over time, and they are much more stable than political positions formed during adulthood (Jennings et al., 2009). The type of family communication environment can enable or constrain one's exposure to politics during childhood, which can be linked to different political outcomes. For example, Hively and Eveland (2009) found that students in high conformity families are less likely to discuss politics. Graham et al. (2020) also found that laissez-faire families (i.e., low conversation, low conformity)

are the least likely to be politically active, while consensual families (i.e., high conversation, high conformity) actively seek and share political information and participate in politics regularly. By engaging in more unrestricted communication, children may become more receptive to their parents' viewpoints, which can result in parents transmitting their political beliefs to their children (Shulman & DeAndrea, 2014). Open and frequent parent-child conversations can also help foster basic skills for effectively participating in challenging political conversations beyond the family setting (Scruggs & Schrodt, 2021; Shah et al., 2009).

A small number of studies have looked at the effects of family communication on political consumerism. Shah et al. (2007) found that news usage prompts political consumerism indirectly through the dual influence of political talk, including conversations with family, and environmental concerns. Baek (2010) also revealed that political consumers are active information-seekers, and they will discuss political issues with peers or family members. Although this finding indicates that political consumers are more willing to engage in political talk, perhaps family political discussions serve as an antecedent to political consumption. Looking specifically at the political socialization of females, Gidengil et al. (2010) concluded that parents can influence their daughters' participation in protest or market-oriented activities during adulthood. In the study, adult women who had a politically active mother often followed in the mother's footsteps, leading Gidengil et al. (2010) to suggest that children with politically active parents engage in an array of political activities as adults, such as boycotting or buycotting. Although this study does not specifically address political discussions within the family, being raised by parents who are immersed in the political sphere may spark a child's

interest in politics and produce a desire to engage in various forms of political participation.

Consistent with these findings, Wicks and Warren (2014) found that parents' political consumption can lead to greater political consumption among their teens. Shared political consumption between parents and their teens can also enhance teen political consumption habits (Wicks & Warren, 2014). Adding to this, Wicks et al. (2014) found that youth are more likely to engage in political consumerism when their parents are political consumers. However, Wicks et al.'s (2014) study did not yield any significant results regarding the effect of parental political discussions on youth political consumption. These insignificant findings may be explained by the fact that dispositions like political interest are still developing through childhood and adolescence (Neundorf et al., 2013), meaning that the desire to boycott or buycott may not be fully present until adulthood. Another reason for these findings may be that adolescents do not have the financial means to purchase comparable, yet more expensive, products (Kam & Deichert, 2020).

More recently, Zorell and Denk (2021) found that political consumerism is motivated and maintained by repeated attempts from others to influence individuals' consumption. Although these efforts take place in both online and offline communication contexts, Kelm and Dohle (2018) found that face-to-face communication remains more influential on political consumerism activities, perhaps because these interactions carry greater social pressure or there is greater trust in the information shared during an in-person discussion. Adding to this, Kam and Deichert (2020) asserted that social groups can transform an individual's expression of personal beliefs into an expression of

collective identity, as well as amplify one's perception that their action, along with the actions of others, will make an impact. In line with this, Lindén (2005) found that friends and family members can impact one's food consumption choices, such as the decision to become a vegetarian, through inspiring or pressuring them to alter their private food strategies (Neilson & Paxton, 2010).

The family unit is an important social group that can disseminate information and potentially inspire political consumption among its members. When deciding where to purchase certain products, family members may discuss the implications of supporting certain businesses, which may simulate intentional purchasing tendencies among children. This may be the case given that buycotting often involves informal learning, meaning that people learn about products or brands that are consistent, or inconsistent, with their values through their friends, family members, and other social networks (Copeland, 2014a). Additionally, the collective nature of boycotting may motivate family members to encourage each other to engage in organized consumer action. The family is a unique human system possessing value and belief systems that impact "how family members perceive their social environment and their family's place in it," and subsequently, their internal and external communication (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b, p. 36). Political consumers view politics as extending beyond the political system to include private attitudes, choices, and behaviors, and therefore, the family may be a prime location for defining those values and attitudes that would prompt political consumption.

Given that the family is a primary agent of political socialization, growing up in an open communication environment may expose children to more political discussions

and encourage the development of policy positions, which in turn, increases one's likelihood of engaging in political consumerism during adulthood. Although previous research addresses family-based discussions to some extent, it is important to conduct a more comprehensive examination regarding the characteristics of one's family communication and how that relates to specific modes of political consumption. The present study aims to fill this gap by assessing the two orientations of family communication patterns and how they relate to boycotting and buycotting.

Understanding the distinctions between boycotting and buycotting behaviors, the effects of family communication patterns may vary for each form of political consumption. Boycotts challenge companies by punishing them for objectionable labor policies or practices, making them more conflict-oriented (Copeland, 2014a; Friedman, 1999). By nature, boycotting is more likely to involve explicit conflict between organized groups and corporations and gain greater attention from the mass media (Copeland, 2014a). Meanwhile, buycotting is less visible, more individualistic, and characterized by Friedman (1999) as more cooperation-oriented (Copeland, 2014a; Neilson, 2010). Frequent family political discussions, even if they provoke disagreement, can enhance children's political knowledge and interest. Therefore, given the prominence of collective consumer boycotts, children who grew up discussing politics may be more motivated to take part in this organized form of political activity during adulthood, as they view it as a viable means of influencing public policy. Buycotting, on the other hand, is less pronounced and may be more of a private endeavor; one may engage in buycotting based on their independent opinions formed through acquiring information and insights from a variety of sources. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1a: Family political communication during childhood will be positively associated with boycotting during adulthood.

H1b: Family political communication during childhood will be negatively associated with buycotting during adulthood.

The Importance of Family Communication Patterns for Political Development

Political participation is a central feature of democracy that can be defined in simple terms as "citizens' affecting politics" (van Deth, 2016, p. 2). More forms of political activity have become available, which van Deth (2016) attributes to the growing influence of government and politics in everyday life, the overlap between private and public spheres, and increased access to political information. Scholars have recognized the expanding definition of political participation, which has led them to study distinct forms of political engagement, such as online and offline participation (e.g., Jung et al., 2011) or institutionalized and non-institutionalized participation (e.g., Hooghe & Marien, 2013). The present study differentiates online and offline political activity due to the unique avenues of participation offered solely on digital platforms, as well as the Internet's ability to facilitate political participation by reducing the time and effort required to perform various political activities (Jung et al., 2011). This distinction is also important because online political participation can aid adolescents' entry into the political sphere and allow young adults to exercise greater influence in politics (Kim et al., 2017).

It is important to consider the relationship between family communication and adolescent political development, as the family is a key agent of political socialization. Regarding political viewpoints, Ledbetter (2015) found that high conversation families

(i.e., pluralistic and consensual) are more successful at transmitting political beliefs between parents and children. Research has also shown that family political discussions, which may be more frequent or robust among families high on the conversation orientation, can elevate a children's likelihood of participating in a variety of political activities. For example, Graham et al. (2020) found that laissez-faire families (i.e., low conversation, low conformity) are the least politically active, while consensual families (i.e., high conversation, high conformity) actively seek and share political information and participate in politics more frequently. Similarly, early research by Meadowcroft (1986) suggested that growing up in a high conformity family hinders adolescents' political development, while high conversation families are more likely to discuss politics and cultivate greater political interest among adolescents. Liebes and Ribak (1992) observed a similar trend within high conversation families, concluding that pluralistic families (i.e., high conversation, low conformity) promote greater levels of political participation. An individual's family communication environment can further influence one's external political discussion networks. Somewhat contrary to previous findings, Hively and Eveland (2009) found adolescent political discussions were more diverse among families high on one orientation and low on another orientation (i.e., pluralistic and protective). The findings were surprising, given the assumption that those raised in a harmonious and conflict-averse environment would tend to gravitate toward similar, homogeneous networks (Hively & Eveland, 2009).

Parents can also facilitate the interaction between children and media messages by affecting their political news exposure, influencing their consumption habits, and engaging them in news-related political discussions (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001). For

example, parents can encourage youth news consumption habits and positively affect their level of civic engagement through modeling news behaviors and engaging in family discussions about news content (York & Scholl, 2015). Yet, it is essential to recognize that adolescents are not "passively socialized" (Valenzuela et al., 2019, p. 1097). Adolescents are active members of the socialization process, considering different viewpoints and constructing their own political identity; as such, a "trickle-up" influence from children to parents adds to the dynamic process of political socialization within the family (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; York, 2019). For example, York (2019) found that baseline levels of youth news consumption and political discussion with peers were positively associated with future political discussion with parents. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that among the varying family communication environments, families may engage in political discussions that are spurred primarily by parents, primarily by children, or a mix of both. Nonetheless, as previous literature suggests, the type of family communication climate one experiences during childhood influences one's degree of political activity during adulthood.

There are important differences between online and offline political activity that cannot be overlooked. As Valenzuela et al. (2012) asserted, these forms of political participation "share a foundation but are empirically different" (p. 17). Although offline political activity is still a key element of civic engagement, political expression via digital channels may appeal to younger generations in particular (Kim et al., 2017), as well as individuals of all ages due to its ability to decrease the cost (i.e., time and physical inconvenience) needed to take political action (Jung et al., 2011). By requiring less time and effort to participate, online activities offer citizens more control over their

engagement in politics (Jung et al., 2011). Another important difference is that online political engagement and activity persists during and between elections, whereas traditional methods of political participation are "punctuated and concentrated around elections" (Feezell, 2016, p. 496). Yet, prior research has regarded participation as a predominately offline occurrence, failing to consider how the Internet has created new methods of political engagement (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010). Recently, scholars have called for distinct measures to separately evaluate offline and online political activity, as it is necessary to further understand the Web's effect on political activity and inequality in participation (Vissers & Stolle, 2014).

The Internet and social media can enhance civic engagement, as it provides an arena for people to express themselves and develop their own identities, as well as connect with many social groups and individuals at once. Compared to in-person conversations, online discussion networks can facilitate higher levels of political engagement through expediting the spread of political messages (Valenzuela et al., 2012). Additionally, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014b) found that social media usage can enhance individuals' political expression, which in turn, may increase their involvement in political activities. As people consume content and interact with others online, they may develop their "political self" and engage in political expression, which can cultivate participation habits that lead to further political action (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014b, p. 627; Jung et al., 2011). In line with this research, Kim and Chen (2016) found that the use of blogs and social network sites were positively related to online political participation. Valenzuela et al. (2012) also found that discussing politics with individuals outside of the more tight-knit group of friends and family results in a higher degree of online political

engagement. Ultimately, research points to the idea that external influences outside of the family, especially political information and discussion networks accessed online, can prompt more online political activity.

Meanwhile, past research has indicated a positive relationship between family communication and more traditional means of political participation. For example, Liebes and Ribak (1992) found that high conversation families encouraged greater levels of political participation. Graham et al. (2020) also found that individuals from laissez-faire homes are significantly less likely to participate in political activities compared to consensual families. In their study, political participation was measured by asking respondents about their involvement in more conventional forms of political activity, such as voting, working for a political party, and displaying a political campaign button, sticker, or sign. In general, offline political participation entails more tradition-based political action, which may be promoted through discussions among family members, especially as this information is passed down from older generations. Given that different communication environments affect political development and political participation, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H2a: Family political communication during childhood will be positively associated with offline political activity during adulthood.

H2b: Family political communication during childhood will be negatively associated with online political activity during adulthood.

Political Consumerism: A Catalyst to Other Modes of Political Activity

Although it may seem that political consumers are detached from political processes, research has shown that politically active individuals are more likely to engage

in political consumerism compared to those who are less politically active (Echegaray, 2015; Stolle et al., 2005; Strømsnes, 2009). Those who engage in political consumerism possess the same types of characteristics that have traditionally been attributed to politically active individuals, which include being well-educated, having a left political orientation, and displaying high levels of political interest (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017; Strømsnes, 2009). Political consumerism is enhanced by a strong sense of citizen duty and group membership, two factors that also augment institutionalized forms of political activity (e.g., voting) (Newman & Bartels, 2011). Rather than an alternative approach to politics, political consumerism can be regarded as an addition to conventional forms of political participation (Echegaray, 2015; Strømsnes, 2009). It is an individualistic form of political participation involving high initiative (Newman & Bartels, 2011; Strømsnes, 2009).

According to Ward and de Vreese (2011), consumer and citizen arenas have merged together, as specific purchasing behaviors can now be tied to political behavior. Specifically, their research found that socially conscious consumption, defined as considering the public consequences of one's private consumption or using one's purchasing power to enact social change, has a positive effect on both online and offline civic participation, but no significant effect on offline political participation. The positive association between online and more civic forms of participation may be explained by the shift away from traditional means to citizenship, such as voting, working for a political party, or sending letters to government officials (Ward & de Vreese, 2011). These results are consistent with findings from Stolle et al. (2005), who found that political consumerism is practiced together with non-traditional and individualistic forms of

political action, but it is not practiced consistently with conventional political acts. These findings suggest that political consumers are more engaged in forms of political activity that share common traits with political consumption.

Contrary to these findings, Gotlieb and Wells (2012) found that citizens who made intentional purchasing decisions based on social or ethical considerations were more likely to also participate in conventional political activities. However, for younger people, understanding political consumption in a collective way was required for them to also engage in other forms of political participation (Gotlieb & Wells, 2012). Interpreting these results, Gotlieb and Wells (2012) posited that political consumerism can serve as a gateway into larger collective political activity for younger individuals who have less experience in civic engagement. Another possible explanation for why political consumption is often tied to other forms of political activity comes from Stolle et al. (2005), who asserted that citizens who actively practice political consumerism believe that it is less effective at bringing about political and social change than other types of political action, such as voting and volunteering. Due to these pessimistic attitudes, political consumers may feel compelled to exercise additional means of political action to effectively advocate for desired change.

Political consumers show great political interest, and they are willing to take part in a time-consuming process that involves learning about company practices and deliberately seeking out alternative products or brands that align with their values (Copeland, 2014b). Given the individualized and self-motivated nature of political consumerism, individuals who use their purchasing power to send political messages may be inclined to engage in other forms of political participation. As Copeland (2014a)

posited, different citizenship norms, which guide people's perceptions of what it means to be a good citizen, underlie both forms of political consumption; whereas boycotting is associated with dutiful citizenship norms, buycotting is tied to engaged citizenship norms. Citizens who stress dutiful norms are more likely to participate in conventional political activities, such as voting in elections and working for political parties. Conversely, people who stress engaged norms are more likely to be involved in "extra-institutional activities," such as collaborating with others to fix social problems (Copeland, 2014a, p. 176). Seeing that the different citizenship norms underpinning each form of political consumption are associated with distinct political participation outcomes, boycotters and buycotters will likely differ in their choices regarding other modes of political activity:

> **H3a:** Boycotting will be positively associated with offline political activity, but negatively associated with online political activity.

> **H3b:** Buycotting will be positively associated with online political activity, but negatively associated with offline political activity.

Due to the link between political consumerism and political activity, and the effect of family communication on political activity, this study also asks the following research question:

> **RQ1:** To what extent does political consumerism mediate the effect of family political communication on political activity?

The Effects of Political Trust and Demographic Factors on Political Consumerism and Political Activity

Political trust carries important implications for a variety of political behaviors. For example, if political trust is low leading up to an election, support may decline for the

party that has held more control in recent governments, and voters may choose to vote for new challengers or abstain altogether (Petrarca et al., 2020). However, the effect of political trust on political participation has continued to raise conflicting findings, with some scholars claiming that political trust is a prerequisite to civic engagement, while others argue that mistrust can fuel greater levels of civic participation (Hooghe & Marien, 2013).

The level of political trust possessed by an individual may encourage them to engage in specific types of political activity. Hooghe and Marien (2013) found that citizens with high levels of political trust are more likely to engage in institutionalized forms of political participation (e.g., voting, contacting government officials), but less likely to participate in non-institutionalized forms (e.g., boycotting products, taking part in a demonstration). In other words, those who distrust the political system are more likely to engage in non-traditional modes of participation, finding that they can effectively challenge and put pressure on policymakers by targeting other actors outside the government. For example, in the Latin American context, political consumerism is seen as a viable political tool because citizens perceive corporations as being more reliable than governments when it comes to handling public demands and following through on their obligation to deliver public goods (Echegaray, 2015). These findings imply that low levels of political trust do not necessarily lead citizens to feel apathetic nor distance themselves from the political system; rather, as Hooghe and Marien (2013) articulate, reduced levels of political trust "indicate a structural trend towards different forms of interaction between citizens and the political system" (p. 13). Based on these

observations, political distrust may mobilize citizens to participate in acts of political consumerism.

Previous research has examined the effects of trust on political consumerism, revealing inconsistent results. While past research has found that political consumerism is intensified by political distrust (e.g., Newman & Bartels, 2011), other scholars have concluded that political consumers are not any more distrustful toward political institutions than those who do not engage in political consumerism (e.g., Strømsnes, 2009). Stolle et al. (2005) found that those who practice political consumerism do not expect national institutions to solve their problems, but they are more inclined to believe in the power of individualized actions to remedy political gripes than those who do not engage in political consumerism. Similarly, Berlin (2011) asserted that when it comes to sustainable development, political consumers may trust some political institutions, but overall, they are critical of the political establishment, and they do not depend completely on the establishment to solve issues of sustainability. Despite having critical and mistrusting attitudes toward political institutions, political consumers often possess strong feelings of internal political efficacy, meaning that they feel like they have the competence and ability to participate in politics (Stolle et al., 2005). Therefore, distrust in the political system does not automatically hinder political consumers' ability or willingness to take political action and attempt to influence the system. Adding to the complexity of the relationship between political trust and political consumerism, Neilson (2010) found that those who are more trusting of institutions are more likely to engage in buycotting, while those who distrust institutions are more likely to boycott. If people perceive institutions as trustworthy and acting in the citizens' best interest, they may be

more inclined to buycott because it is seen as a more positive behavior. Conversely, those who lack trust in institutions may be more willing to punish a business by withholding support from them (Neilson, 2010).

Demographic variables and political ideology have also been shown to affect political consumerism and political activity. While some studies have concluded that women are more likely to participate in political consumerism (e.g., Stolle et al., 2005), others have found no significant effects of gender on political consumerism (e.g., Baek, 2010). Meanwhile, men have traditionally been found to be more politically active, which Verba et al. (1997) attributed to the fact that men are typically more politically informed, interested, and efficacious. Previous research has also indicated that individuals with a higher level of education (e.g., Newman & Bartels, 2011; Strømsnes, 2009) and a higher income (e.g., Sandovici & Davis, 2010) are more likely to engage in political consumerism. This may be the case given that well-educated individuals have greater access to political information, as well as product information, and individuals with higher incomes have the resources to engage in the deliberate purchasing of products (Sandovici & Davis, 2010). In line with these findings, income has been found to positively affect both conventional and unconventional political activity (Cicatiello et al., 2015), and education has been found to boost political activity (Verba et al., 1995). Finally, partisan identity and political ideology have been found to play a key role in predicting political activity. For example, political consumerism has been associated with a liberal ideology and identification with the Democratic Party (Copeland & Boulianne, 2020; Strømsnes, 2009). Ideological strength, whether that be liberal or conservative, has

also been positively related to political consumerism and political activity (Endres &
Panagopoulos, 2017; Pan et al., 2006).

Overall, it appears that political trust plays an important role in motivating civic
engagement, and more specifically, political consumerism. Given the polarizing nature of
contemporary U.S. politics and the important implications trust has for political
participation, it is important to examine the impact of political trust on political
consumerism and political activity. Moreover, demographic variables, partisan identity,
and ideological strength have been shown to influence political consumerism and
political activity. Therefore, this study proposes the following research question:

> **RQ2:** To what extent does political trust, partisan identity, political ideology, and
> demographic factors (gender, education, and income) affect political consumerism
> and political activity?

Based on prior literature, the study proposes the following model (Figure 1):
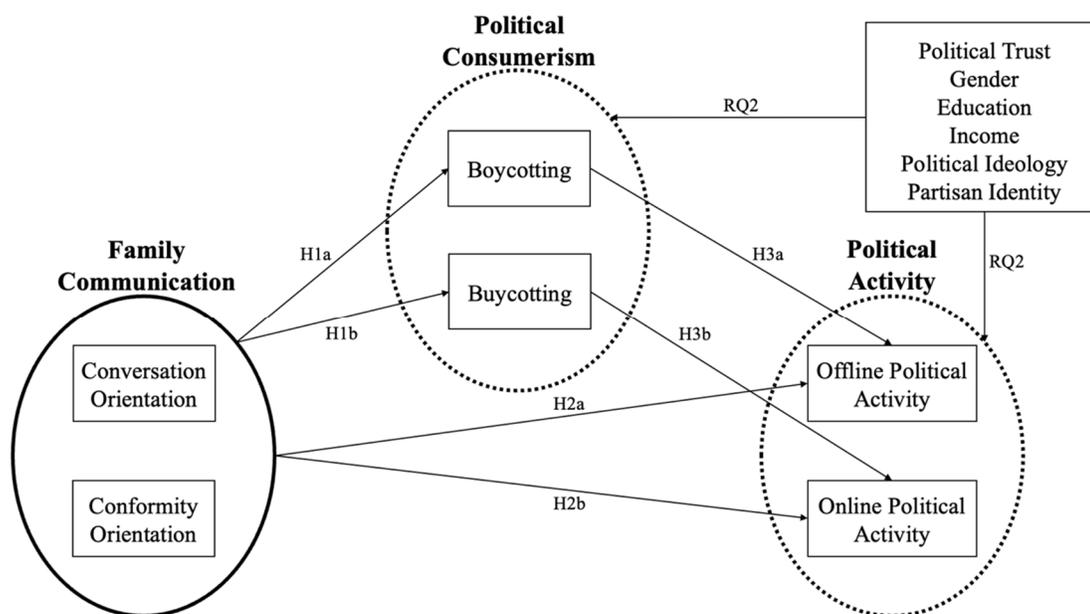
Figure 1. Theoretical model of independent variables, mediators, and dependent
variables.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The total sample consisted of 523 U.S. adults (N = 523) recruited by Qualtrics. Quota sampling was used due to its ability to select subjects based on a predetermined or known percentage (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). Respondents in the present study were recruited based on the U.S. representative quotas on region and gender[1]. The participants varied in age, ranging from 18 to 87 years (M = 47.7, SD = 18.3). Regarding gender, 50.5% of the participants were women (n = 264) and 49.5% were men (n = 259). Among the participants, 78% were White (n = 408), 10.7% were Black (n = 56), 5.4% were Latino (n = 28), 4.2% were Asian (n = 22), and 1.9% were other races (e.g., Native American) (n = 10). The respondents varied in their education level, as 27.8% of participants held a high school diploma or less (n = 146), 33.9% had an associate's degree or some college education (n = 177), and 38.2% had a bachelor's degree or higher (n = 200). Political ideology was also mixed; 32.1% considered themselves conservative or very conservative (n = 168), 41.3% moderate or centrist (n = 216), and 26.6% liberal or very liberal (n = 139). Regarding participants' total family income in the past year, 54.7% (n = 286) had a household income less than $50,000, while the remaining 45.3% (n = 237) had a family income greater than $50,000 (See Table 1).

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[1] According to 2019 U.S. Census Data, females comprised 50.8% of the population and males made up 49.2% of the population. Among the participants in this study, 50.5% were women and 49.5% were men. The Census also showed that 17.1% of the population resides in the Northeast, 20.8% in the Midwest, 23.9% in the West, and 38.3% in the South. The sample was representative of this, with 17.2% of participants residing in the Northeast, 20.3% in the Midwest, 22.9% in the West, and 39.6% in the South.

Table 1. Sample Descriptive Statistics ($N = 523$)

Variables		n	%
Age ($M = 47.7$, $SD = 18.3$)	18-25	73	14.0%
	26-35	92	17.6%
	36-45	90	17.2%
	46-55	89	17.0%
	65+	179	34.2%
Gender	Female	264	50.5%
	Male	259	49.5%
Race	White	408	78.0%
	Black or African American	56	10.7%
	Hispanic/Latino	22	5.4%
	Asian or Asian-American	28	4.2%
	Other races (e.g., Native American)	10	1.9%
Income	Less than $10,000	60	11.5%
	10 to under $20,000	55	10.5%
	20 to under $30,000	79	15.1%
	30 to under $40,000	52	9.9%
	40 to under $50,000	40	7.6%
	50 to under $75,000	89	17.0%
	75 to under $100,000	75	14.3%
	100 to under $150,000	48	9.2%
	$150,000 or more	25	4.8%
Education	High school degree or less	146	27.9%
	Two-year associate degree or some college	177	33.8%
	Bachelor's degree	111	21.2%
	Post-graduate degree or less	89	17.0%
Partisan Identity	Democrat/Lean Democrat	200	38.2%
	Republican/Lean Republican	141	27.0%
	Independent	162	31.0%
	Other	20	3.8%

Table 1 (continued).

Variables		*n*	%
Political Ideology	Very conservative	69	13.2%
	Conservative	99	18.9%
	Moderate/centrist	216	41.3%
	Liberal	84	16.1%
	Very liberal	55	10.5%
Region	Northeast	90	17.2%
	Midwest	106	20.3%
	South	207	39.6%
	West	120	22.9%
Employment	Full-time	169	32.3%
	Part-time	75	14.3%
	Not employed	279	53.3%

Procedure

For this study, an online survey was conducted, and the results were used for data analysis. Survey research was chosen for to its ability to collect large amounts of data from a variety of people in different geographical locations. Surveys also allow researchers to examine a range of variables (e.g., demographic and attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, etc.) and apply various statistical analyses (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). The survey was administered to U.S. adults in July of 2021. Participants were recruited through a Qualtrics panel, and the survey was administered via Qualtrics. Qualtrics is an online service that works with researchers' needs to create a panel of participants based on key factors including sample size, target demographics, survey complexity, and length of survey (Brandon et al., 2014). Qualtrics was utilized for data collection due to its ability to recruit a representative sample. Compared to other web-based survey tools (e.g.,

M-Turk), Qualtrics has been found to be the most demographically and politically representative in the U.S. (Boas et al., 2018). Furthermore, Qualtrics' large participant pool, its ability to obtain participants that match researchers' needs, and the use of demographic screens allows researchers to acquire "focused and externally valid samples" (Brandon et al., 2014, p. 11).

Prior to the survey, participants reviewed and completed an informed consent form with an overview of the study approved by the Institutional Review Board (#HR-3878) at a university in the Midwest United States. After obtaining their voluntary consent, participants were asked to provide their answers related to the main variables of family communication, political consumerism, political activity, and political trust. Other questions regarding demographic information (e.g., education, gender, and income), partisan identity, and political ideology were included in the questionnaire. The participants received $4.51 as compensation for participating in the study.

Two pre-tests of the survey were conducted with 100 participants ($N = 100$) to ensure that the survey was working properly and contained clear instructions and questions. One pre-test was administered via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (M-Turk), an online platform that collects data quickly and provides researchers with respondents who are demographically more diverse than traditional student samples. Several studies have shown that M-Turk samples are reasonably congruent with other samples and responses to established surveys (Sheehan, 2018). The pre-test specifically measured whether the survey items were clear, understandable, easy to answer, and relevant (e.g., "After answering all questions, I found them: unclear/clear"). A five-point differential scale was used for each item. For clarity, the scale ranged from 1 ("Unclear") to 5 ("Clear"). The scale for understandability ranged from 1 ("Confusing") to 5 ("Understandable"). For

ease, the scale ranged from 1 ("Hard to answer") to 5 ("Easy to answer"). Finally,

relevance was measured on a scale from 1 ("Irrelevant") to 5 ("Relevant"). Overall, the

pre-test confirmed that the questions were clear ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.79$), understandable

($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.90$), easy to answer ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 0.71$), and relevant ($M = 4.42$,

$SD = 0.73$). The same questions were asked in the survey administered via Qualtrics. The

results of the Qualtrics pre-test showed that the questions were clear ($M = 4.10$, $SD =$

1.15), understandable ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.35$), easy to answer ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.24$), and

relevant ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 1.28$).

   The MTurk pre-test was also used to determine the median amount of time it took

to complete the survey, which was 10 minutes. Based on the median duration of the

survey in the pre-test, responses that were completed in under five minutes and greater

than 30 minutes were automatically eliminated by the Qualtrics system in the main test.

According to Sheehan (2018), data quality can benefit from limiting the amount of time a

respondent has to complete a survey. Therefore, a minimum time was established to

ensure that respondents provided thoughtful responses, which would be difficult to do in

under half the median time. Further, respondents were given three times the median

length to complete the survey, since it allows for variation among the respondents, yet

ensures that they complete the survey in one sitting (Sheehan, 2018).

   At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked if they intended to

provide their best answer for each question; if they did not agree to provide their best

answers, Qualtrics screened out the participant, preventing them from taking the rest of

the survey. To further ensure data quality, an attention-check question was placed in the

middle of the survey (i.e., "This is to check your attention for this survey. Please check

'strongly disagree' (1)"). All participants provided the correct answer for the attention check (100%).

Measurements

Family Communication Patterns

To measure family communication patterns within the home, this study employed the Revised Family Communication Pattern (RFCP) scale (Graham et al., 2020; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002b). According to Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002b), interactions within the family shape family relationship schemas, which in turn, determines how one perceives their familial relationships and how one behaves in the family context. The RFCP does not require participants to recall the specific language used in conversations with parents; rather participants are asked to consider the broader family communication environment they experienced during childhood. The questionnaire contained 15 statements measuring the conversation orientation (e.g., "My parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs"; Cronbach's α = .958, M = 2.87, SD = 1.12) and 11 statements measuring the conformity orientation (e.g., "In our home, my parents usually had the last word"; Cronbach's α = .902, M = 3.34, SD = 0.93) (See Table 2). Respondents were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with the statements on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree").

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Family Communication Items (CVO) and (CFO)

Family Communication Items	Mean (SD)
Conversation Orientation (CVO)	
CVO1: In our family we often talked about topics like politics and religion where some people disagree with others.	2.67 (1.42)

Table 2 (continued).

Family Communication Items	*Mean (SD)*
CVO2: My parents often said something like "Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions."	2.57 (1.32)
CVO3: My parents often asked my opinion when the family is talking about something.	2.65 (1.39)
CVO4: My parents encouraged me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.	2.54 (1.41)
CVO5: My parents often said something like "You should always look at both sides of an issue."	3.07 (1.44)
CVO6: I usually told my parents what I am thinking about things.	3.05 (1.38)
CVO7: I could tell my parents almost anything.	3.02 (1.45)
CVO8: In our family we often talked about our feelings and emotions.	2.67 (1.42)
CVO9: My parents and I often had long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.	2.89 (1.43)
CVO10: I really enjoyed talking with my parents, even when we disagreed.	3.11 (1.41)
CVO11: My parents liked to hear my opinions, even when they didn't agree with me.	2.95 (1.37)
CVO12: My parents encouraged me to express my feelings.	3.01 (1.43)
CVO13: My parents tended to be very open about their emotions.	2.76 (1.42)
CVO14: We often talked as a family about things we had done during the day.	3.07 (1.38)
CVO15: In our family we often talked about our plans and hopes for the future.	3.07 (1.39)
Conformity Orientation (CFO)	
CFO1: My parents often said something like "You'll know better when you grow up.	3.53 (1.29)
CFO2: My parents often said something like "My ideas are right and you should not question them."	2.80 (1.40)

Table 2 (continued).

Family Communication Items	*Mean (SD)*
CFO3: My parents often said something like "A child should not argue with adults."	3.28 (1.45)
CFO4: My parents often said something like "You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad."	2.51 (1.33)
CFO5: My parents often said something like "There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about."	3.20 (1.41)
CFO6: When anything really important was involved, my parents expected me to obey without question.	3.71 (1.23)
CFO7: In our home, my parents usually had the last word.	4.00 (1.15)
CFO8: My parents felt that it is important to be the boss.	3.48 (1.28)
CFO9: My parents sometimes became irritated with my views if they were different from theirs.	3.11 (1.32)
CFO10: If my parents didn't approve of it, they didn't want to know about it.	3.05 (1.32)
CFO11: When I was at home, I was expected to obey my parents' rules.	4.05 (1.15)

Political Consumerism

This study measured political consumerism using seven items borrowed from Newman and Bartels (2011) and Baek (2010). Participants were asked if they had ever engaged in boycotting (e.g., "Not bought something because of conditions under which the product is made, or because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it"; Cronbach's α = .795, M = 1.88, SD =1.56) and buycotting (e.g., "Bought a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it"; Cronbach's α = .841, M = 1.35, SD = 1.30) (See Table 3). The measure of political consumerism was a dichotomous variable coded "1" if the

respondent had participated in at least one form of political consumerism (i.e., boycotting or buycotting), and "0" if they had never participated in either form (Newman & Bartels, 2011). Rather than measure political consumerism as a single variable, it was divided into boycotting and buycotting. All the items for boycotting were combined, and the frequency of engaging in boycotting was indicated from "0" (never participated in any form of boycotting) to "4" (participated in all forms of boycotting). Similarly, all the items for buycotting were combined, and the frequency of engaging in buycotting was indicated from "0" (never participated in any form of buycotting) to "3" (participated in all forms of buycotting).

Table 3. Political Consumerism (CONSM) Items

Political Consumerism Items	% (Yes/No)
CONSM1: Decided not to buy something from a certain company because you disagree with the social, environmental, worker, or political policies of the company that distributes the item.	Y – 52.8% N – 47.2%
CONSM2: Not bought something because of conditions under which the product is made, or because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it.	Y – 53.2% N – 46.8%
CONSM3: Participated in a boycott (certain products or stores).	Y – 37.7% N – 62.3%
CONSM4: Avoided buying something in order to register a protest or send a message.	Y – 44.0% N – 56.0%
CONSM5: Engaged in "buycotting," that is buying a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or sells the product.	Y – 42.3% N – 57.7%
CONSM6: Bought something from a certain company because you agreed with the social, environmental, worker or political policies of the company that distributes the item.	Y – 44.4% N – 55.6%

Table 3 (continued).

Political Consumerism Items	% (Yes/No)
CONSM7: Bought a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces or provides it.	Y – 48.4% N – 51.6%

Political Activity

Adopting Jung et al.'s (2011) scale, political activity was divided into two

categories for measurement: offline and online political activity. Respondents were

instructed to recall their political activity during the 2020 election year. Offline political

participation was measured with 12 items, including whether respondents "voted in the

2020 election," "spoke with public officials in person," or "worked for a political party or

candidate" (Cronbach's α = .854, M = 3.45, SD = 3.01). Online political activity was

measured by six items, which asked participants if, during the 2020 election cycle, they

participated in activities such as "sending e-mails to politicians" or "visiting a campaign

or candidate advocacy website" (Cronbach's α = .811, M = 1.61, SD = 1.90). Given that

Jung et al. (2011) applied their study to the 2008 election, some of the items were

updated to reflect today's digital environment. For example, respondents answered

whether they "used a social media platform to encourage others to take action on political

issues," or "used hashtags related to a political/social cause" during the 2020 election

year (See Table 4). The measure of political activity was a dichotomous variable coded

"1" if the respondent had participated in that activity, and "0" if they did not participate

in that activity. All the items for offline political activity were combined, and the

frequency of these actions was indicated from "0" (did not participate in any form of

offline political activity) to "12" (participated in all forms of offline political activity). All

the items for online political activity were also combined, with the frequency being

indicated from "0" (never participated in any form of online political activity) to "6"

(participated in all forms of online political activity).

Table 4. Political Activity Items (OFA) and (ONA)

Political Activity Items	% (Yes/No)
Offline Political Activity Items (OFA)	
OFA1: Voted in the 2020 election	Y – 75.5% N – 24.5%
OFA2: Spoke with public officials in person.	Y – 17.4% N – 82.6%
OFA3: Contacted (e.g., called, sent a letter) a public official at any level of government.	Y – 29.6% N – 70.4%
OFA4: Participated in a demonstration or protest for a political cause.	Y – 16.1% N – 83.9%
OFA5: Attended a political meeting, rally, or speech.	Y – 19.5% N – 80.5%
OFA6: Contacted the media to express your opinion on a political issue.	Y – 15.9% N – 84.1%
OFA7: Encouraged someone to vote.	Y – 69.2% N – 30.8%
OFA8: Wore a campaign button or article of clothing (e.g., hat, t-shirt).	Y – 29.6% N – 70.4%
OFA9: Displayed a campaign bumper sticker or yard sign.	Y – 27.5% N – 72.5%
OFA10: Worked for a political party or candidate.	Y – 10.7% N – 89.3%
OFA11: Was involved in political action groups, party committees, or political clubs.	Y – 14.3% N – 85.7%
OFA12: Participated in any local political actions.	Y – 19.3% N – 80.7%

Table 4 (continued).

Political Activity Items	% (Yes/No)
Online Political Activity Items (ONA)	
ONA1: Sent e-mails to politicians.	Y – 28.9%
	N – 71.1%
ONA2: Visited a campaign or candidate advocacy Web site.	Y – 31.9%
	N – 68.1%
ONA3: Made contributions to a political campaign online.	Y – 23.3%
	N – 76.7%
ONA4: Used a social media platform to encourage others to take action on political issues.	Y – 32.3%
	N – 67.7%
ONA5: Changed profile picture on social media to show support for a political/social cause.	Y – 22.8%
	N – 77.2%
ONA6: Used hashtags related to a political/social cause.	Y – 21.6%
	N – 78.4%

Political Trust

This study adopted the items proposed by Craig et al. (1990), which measure the level of trust toward both regime and incumbent authorities. This instrument contains nine incumbent-based trust items intended to evaluate the perceived honesty, fairness, and competence of government officials and elected leaders (e.g., "Most government officials try to serve the public interest, even if it is against their personal interests"). Four regime-based trust items were included as well to assess the respondents' perceptions and feelings of loyalty to the political system (e.g., "Whatever its faults may be, the American form of government is still the best for us") (See Table 5). Participants were instructed to indicate their level of agreement with the statements on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 ("Strongly disagree") to 5 ("Strongly agree"); (Cronbach's $\alpha = .730$, $M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.62$).

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations (SD) of Political Trust (PT) Items

Political Trust Items	Mean (SD)
PT1: You can generally trust the people who run our government to do what is right.	2.64 (1.25)
PT2: It often seems like our government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves rather than being run for the benefit of all the people.	3.93 (1.05)
PT3: Most government officials try to serve the public interest, even if it is against their personal interests.	2.68 (1.22)
PT4: When government leaders make statements to the American people (e.g., on television), they are usually telling the truth.	2.66 (1.15)
PT5: Unless we keep a close watch on them, many of our elected leaders will look out for special interests rather than for all the people.	3.98 (1.03)
PT6: Those we elected to public office usually try to keep the promises they made during the election.	2.86 (1.18)
PT7: Most of the people running our government are well-qualified to handle the problems that we are facing in this country.	2.90 (1.20)
PT8: Most public officials can be trusted to do what is right without having to constantly check on them.	2.62 (1.21)
PT9: Quite a few government leaders are not as honest as the voters have a right to expect.	3.94 (1.05)
PT10: Whatever its faults may be, the American form of government is still the best for us.	3.68 (1.17)
PT11: It may be necessary to make some major changes in our form of government in order to solve the problems facing our country.	3.53 (1.24)
PT12: I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of.	3.83 (1.27)
PT13: There is not much about our form of government to be proud of.	2.73 (1.27)

Control Variables

This study included participants' demographic information (i.e., gender, income, and education), partisan identity, and political ideology as control variables in the analysis. Previous research has indicated that women are more inclined than men to participate in political consumerism (e.g., Sandovici & Davis, 2010; Stolle et al., 2005). However, some studies have found that gender does not significantly influence political consumerism (Baek, 2010), while others have found that women are more prone to specific political consumption behaviors (i.e., buycott) (Neilson, 2010). Further, scholars have revealed that younger individuals (e.g., Newman & Bartels, 2011; Sandovici & Davis, 2010) and those with higher levels of education (e.g., Newman & Bartels, 2011; Strømsnes, 2009) are more likely to be political consumers. However, Baek (2010) found that less educated and lower-income consumers are more likely to buycott, while more educated and higher-income consumers tend to boycott because they have access to the necessary resources to find alternative products or brands. Lastly, individuals with a liberal ideology, as well as Democrats, have been shown to display greater levels of political consumerism (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017; Strømsnes, 2009). Scholars have also determined that individuals at the ends of the ideological spectrum are more likely to participate in boycotts and buycotts than those who identify as moderate (Copeland, 2014b). Meanwhile, Baek (2010) found that Republicans and conservatives prefer buycotting while Democrats and liberals engage more in boycotting. The differences observed among boycotters and buycotters suggest that different types of political consumption are linked to different demographic characteristics and political orientations. Overall, the mixed findings regarding the effects of gender, education, income, partisan identity, and political ideology on political consumerism warrant further investigation.

Analysis

Following data collection, multiple regression analysis was employed using STATA 17 to analyze the relationship between the independent variables (i.e., family communication and control variables) and each dependent variable (i.e., boycotting, buycotting, offline political activity, online political activity). Four separate regressions were run to analyze the effects of the conversation and conformity orientation, and the control variables, on each dependent variable. Another two regressions were conducted to examine the effects of boycotting and buycotting on both forms of political activity. Following this, an additional two regressions were run to include all the variables, meaning that offline political activity and online political activity were the dependent variables. For offline political activity, the results showed significant effects for the conversation and conformity orientation, boycotting and buycotting, gender, other political parties, and political trust. For online political activity, the results showed significant effects for the conversation and conformity orientation, as well as for boycotting and buycotting. The results from these two regressions were used determine which variables to include in the subsequent model for path analysis. Path analysis aims to determine the strength of the paths within the model, which are representative of the different relationships among the model's constructs (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011). Therefore, to further analyze the data, path analysis was run using AMOS 25 to test the proposed structural model and to evaluate the mediation effect of political consumerism.

RESULTS

Testing Hypotheses: Multiple Regression Analysis

For hypothesis testing, a series of ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses were conducted using STATA 17 statistical software program. Multiple regression was used in the analysis to assess how the independent variables (conversation and conformity orientations) and control variables, including political trust, political ideology, and demographic factors (gender, education, income, and political party) influence dependent variables (boycotting/buycotting and online/offline political activity). To ensure accurate hypothesis testing via multiple regression analysis, the degrees of multicollinearity and heteroskedasticity were assessed.

Multicollinearity causes "shared" variance among independent variables, which reduces the ability to predict dependent measures and makes the effect of each independent variable less distinguishable (Hair et al., 2010, p. 201). Multicollinearity can be measured by tolerance, which is "the amount of variability of the selected independent variable not explained by the other independent variables" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 201). Another measure of multicollinearity is the variance inflation factor (VIF), which shows the effect that the other independent variables have on the standard error of a regression coefficient. The VIF is the inverse of the tolerance value; smaller tolerance values and larger VIF values signal issues with collinearity. In general, the degree of collinearity is considered acceptable if the tolerance value is greater than 0.10 and the VIF is less than 10 (Hair et al., 2010). According to the VIF and tolerance tests, the present study showed no violation of multicollinearity in all independent variables.

One of the most common assumption violations in multiple regression analysis is heteroskedasticity, or "the presence of unequal variances" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 185). In statistical tests applying multiple regression, it is "assumed that the residuals are normally distributed and have uniform variances across all levels of the predicters" resulting in homoscedasticity (Kline, 2011, p. 23). However, heteroskedasticity may arise if there are outliers, extreme non-normality in the observed scores, or more measurement error within the criterion or predictors (Kline, 2011). To assess heteroskedasticity, the present study conducted the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test. For the test evaluating the relationship between family communication and political activity (i.e., *H2*), there was heteroskedasticity as the fitted values of offline political activity, $\chi^2(1) = 25.54$, $p <$ 0.001, and online political activity, $\chi^2(1) = 12.91$, $p < 0.001$, were smaller than 0.05. Additionally, when testing the relationship between political consumerism and political activity (i.e., *H3*), heteroskedasticity was present as the fitted values of offline political activity, $\chi^2(1) = 74.08$, $p < 0.001$, and online political activity, $\chi^2(1) = 76.16$, $p < 0.001$, were smaller than 0.05. As a result, White's heteroskedastic robust standard error was run as a remedial measure, and this study reports these results (i.e., changed standard errors and tests of statistical significance).

For *H1–H3*, political trust, political ideology, political party, and demographic factors (gender, education, and income) were added into the regression models. The variables gender and political party were recoded as dichotomous variables. To control for gender, the variable labeled "Female" was created, coded "1" for female and "0" for male. For political party, a recoded variable labeled "Republican" was created where Republican was recoded as "1" and Democrat, independent, and other political parties

were all recoded as "0." An "other parties" variable was also created by recoding

independent and other party as "1" and Democrat and Republican as "0." Together, all

independent (conformity and conversation dimensions of family communication) and

control variables in the model accounted for a significant portion of the variance in

boycotting behaviors, $R^2 = 0.13$, $F(9, 513) = 8.26$, $p < 0.001$ and buycotting behaviors, R^2

$= 0.14$, $F(9, 513) = 9.42$, $p < 0.001$. *H1a* proposed that family political communication

during childhood will be positively associated boycotting during adulthood, while *H1b*

proposed that family political communication during childhood will be negatively

associated buycotting during adulthood. As expected, family political discussions during

childhood appeared as a strong predictor of boycotting. However, family communication

also positively predicted buycotting, which was not anticipated. The results indicated that

one unit change in the conversation orientation results in an increase of 0.20 in

boycotting behaviors ($b = 0.20$, $t = 3.35$) and an increase of 0.25 in buycotting behaviors

($b = 0.25$, $t = 4.91$), controlling for effects of other independent variables in the model.

Similarly, the results showed that one unit change in the conformity orientation results in

an increase of 0.27 in boycotting behaviors ($b = 0.27$, $t = 3.80$) and an increase of 0.28 in

buycotting behaviors ($b = 0.28$, $t = 4.66$), controlling for effects of other independent

variables in the model (See Table 6-1).

The two orientations of family communication and the control variables in the

model also accounted for a significant portion of the variance in offline political activity,

$R^2 = 0.25$, $F(9, 513) = 16.13$, $p < 0.001$ and online political activity, $R^2 = 0.18$, $F(9, 513)$

$= 12.35$, $p < 0.001$. *H2a* proposed that family political communication during childhood

will be positively associated with offline political activity during adulthood, and *H2b*

posited that family political communication during childhood will be negatively associated with online political activity during adulthood. *H1a* was supported, as family political discussions during childhood appeared as a strong predictor of offline political activity. However, contrary to expectations in *H2b*, family political communication appeared to positively predict online political activity, as well. The results indicated that one unit change in the conversation orientation results in an increase of 0.72 in offline political activity ($b = 0.72$, $t = 6.57$) and an increase of 0.40 in online political activity ($b = 0.40$, $t = 5.35$), controlling for effects of other independent variables in the model. The results further showed that one unit change in the conformity orientation results in an increase of 0.67 in offline political activity ($b = 0.67$, $t = 4.95$) and an increase of 0.40 in online political activity ($b = 0.40$, $t = 4.82$), controlling for effects of other independent variables in the model (See Table 6-2).

Furthermore, both forms of political consumerism and control variables in the model accounted for a significant portion of the variance in offline political activity, $R^2 = 0.32$, $F(9, 513) = 24.82$, $p < 0.001$ and online political activity, $R^2 = 0.32$, $F(9, 513) = 25.64$, $p < 0.001$. *H3a* proposed that boycotting will be positively associated with offline political activity, but negatively associated with online political activity. Meanwhile, *H3b* proposed that buycotting will be positively associated with online political activity, but negatively associated with offline political activity. However, the analysis revealed that both forms of political consumption were strong predictors of both offline and online political activity. The results showed that one unit change in boycotting behaviors results in an increase of 0.52 in offline political activity ($b = 0.52$, $t = 5.21$) and an increase of 0.51 in online political activity ($b = 0.51$, $t = 4.52$), controlling for effects of other

independent variables in the model. The results further showed that one unit change in buycotting behaviors results in an increase of 0.32 in offline political activity ($b = 0.32$, $t = 5.25$) and an increase of 0.43 in online political activity ($b = 0.43$, $t = 5.76$), controlling for effects of other independent variables in the model (See Table 7).

Regarding *RQ2*, those with lower levels of political trust were more likely to engage in boycotting behaviors ($b = -0.47$, $t = -4.25$). Among the demographic variables, other political parties were a negative predictor for boycotting ($b = -0.35$, $t = -2.10$), offline political activity ($b = -1.05$, $t = -3.59$), and online political activity ($b = -0.47$, $t = -2.48$). Income was a positive predictor for offline political activity ($b = 0.13$, $t = 2.18$), while gender was negatively associated with offline political activity ($b = -0.55$, $t = -2.34$). Lastly, education was positively associated with online political activity ($b = 0.10$, $t = 1.98$), controlling for the effects of other independent variables in the model (See Tables 6-1 and 6-2).

Table 6-1. OLS regression analyses for the relationship between family communication and political consumerism.

Variables	Boycotting (BOY)		Buycotting (BUY)	
	b	t	b	t
Conversation	0.20**	3.35	0.25***	4.91
Conformity	0.27***	3.80	0.28***	4.66
Education	0.06	1.32	0.05	1.38
Income	0.05	1.65	0.03	1.23
Political Ideology	0.09	1.35	0.07	1.17
Female	−0.19	−1.40	0.00	0.01
Republican	−0.34	−1.73	−0.30	−1.84
Other Parties	−0.35*	−2.10	−0.23	−1.71
Political Trust	−0.47***	−4.25	−0.17	−1.85
Constant	1.18*	2.15	−0.24	−0.53
N	513		513	
R^2	0.13		0.14	
F	8.26***		9.42***	

Note. ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$. Independent variables were not in violation of multicollinearity (i.e., VIF of each variable < 10 and Tolerance of each variable > 0.10). Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test revealed that there was no heteroskedasticity.

Table 6-2. OLS regression analyses for the relationship between family communication and political activity.

Variables	Offline Political Activity (OFA)		Online Political Activity (ONA)	
	b	t	b	t
Conversation	0.72***	6.57	0.40***	5.35
Conformity	0.67***	4.95	0.40***	4.82
Education	0.10	1.26	0.10*	1.98
Income	0.13*	2.18	0.06	1.52
Political Ideology	−0.16	−1.12	−0.01	−0.17
Female	−0.55*	−2.34	−0.25	−1.56
Republican	−0.40	−1.07	−0.41	−1.79
Other Parties	−1.05***	−3.59	−0.47*	−2.48
Political Trust	0.18	0.97	−0.08	−0.65
Constant	−1.27	−1.18	−0.95	−1.49
N	513		513	
R^2	0.25		0.18	
F	16.13***		12.35***	

Note. ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$. Results for offline and online political activity were based on White's heteroskedastic robust standard errors because the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test revealed that there was heteroskedasticity (OFA: $\chi^2 (1) = 25.54$, $p < 0.05$, ONA: $\chi^2 (1) = 12.91$, $p < 0.05$). Independent variables were not in violation of multicollinearity (i.e., VIF of each variable < 10 and Tolerance of each variable > 0.10).

Table 7. OLS regression analyses for the relationship between political consumerism and political activity.

Variables	Offline Political Activity (OFA)		Online Political Activity (ONA)	
	b	t	b	t
Boycotting	0.52***	5.21	0.32***	5.25
Buycotting	0.51***	4.52	0.42***	5.76
Education	0.06	0.78	0.07	1.44
Income	0.11	1.87	0.04	1.04
Political Ideology	−0.30*	−2.07	−0.10	−1.26
Female	−0.50*	−2.23	−0.21	−1.47
Republican	−0.32	−0.88	−0.30	−1.45
Other Parties	−1.04***	−3.74	−0.40*	−2.40
Political Trust	0.67***	3.54	0.21	1.71
Constant	0.70	0.80	−0.01	−0.02
N	513		513	
R^2	0.32		0.32	
F	24.82***		25.64***	

Note. ***$p < .001$, **$p < .01$, *$p < .05$. Results for offline and online political activity were based on White's heteroskedastic robust standard errors because the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test revealed that there was heteroskedasticity (OFA: χ^2 (1) = 74.08, $p < 0.001$, ONA: χ^2 (1) = 76.16, $p < 0.001$). Independent variables were not in violation of multicollinearity (i.e., VIF of each variable < 10 and Tolerance of each variable > 0.10).

Path Analysis: Testing the Mediating Role of Political Consumerism

This study also posed a research question about the extent to which political consumerism mediates the relationship between family communication and political activity (*RQ1*). For this reason, the effects of the two orientations of family communication on offline and online political activity, controlling for boycotting and buycotting behaviors, needed to be further analyzed. To test the mediation effects of political consumerism, path analysis using AMOS 25 was conducted. Path analysis uses simple bivariate correlations to estimate the strength of the causal paths between variables in the model (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2011). To determine which control factors to include in the path diagram, an additional two multiple regression analyses were run that included all variables and analyzed offline political activity and online

political activity as the dependent variables. The tests of VIF and tolerance indicated no violation of multicollinearity in all independent variables. However, the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test revealed that there was heteroskedasticity as the fitted values of offline political activity, $\chi^2(1) = 67.62$, $p < 0.001$, and online political activity, $\chi^2(1) = 61.85$, $p < 0.001$, were smaller than 0.05. Due to this, White's heteroskedastic robust standard error was run as a remedial measure, and this study reports those results.

Together, all independent and control variables in the model accounted for a significant portion of the variance in offline political activity, $R^2 = 0.37$, $F(11, 511) = 24.95$, $p < 0.001$ and online political activity, $R^2 = 0.35$, $F(11, 511) = 25.48$, $p < 0.001$. The control factors of education, income, political ideology, and partisan identity (i.e., Republican or Democrat) did not have a significant association with offline political activity. However, the control factors of gender, other political parties (i.e., not Republican or Democrat), and political trust were significantly associated with offline political activity. The results indicated that one unit change in gender results in a decrease of 0.46 in offline political activity ($b = -0.46$, $t = -2.10$). Furthermore, one unit change in other parties results in a decrease of 0.80 in offline political activity ($b = -0.80$, $t = -2.96$). Lastly, one unit change in political trust results in an increase of 0.47 in offline political activity ($b = 0.47$, $t = 2.58$), controlling for the effects of other independent variables in the model. Regarding online political activity, none of the control variables were significant. Therefore, gender, other parties, and political trust were the control variables included in the path diagram, with pathways between them and offline political activity (See Table 8).

Table 8. OLS regression analyses for the relationship between all variables and political activity.

Variables	Offline Political Activity (OFA)		Online Political Activity (ONA)	
	b	t	b	t
Conversation	0.53***	5.12	0.24***	3.72
Conformity	0.43**	3.46	0.22**	2.94
Boycotting	0.49***	5.02	0.31***	5.08
Buycotting	0.36**	3.23	0.36***	4.81
Education	0.06	0.77	0.06	1.46
Income	0.10	1.68	0.03	0.89
Political Ideology	−0.23	−1.72	−0.07	−0.89
Female	−0.46*	−2.10	−0.19	−1.31
Republican	−0.12	−0.34	−0.20	−0.98
Other Parties	−0.80**	−2.96	−0.28	−1.70
Political Trust	0.47*	2.58	0.12	0.98
Constant	−1.76	−1.73	−1.23*	−2.10
N	513		513	
R^2	0.32		0.32	
F	24.82***		25.64***	

Note. ***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05. Results for offline and online political activity were based on White's heteroskedastic robust standard errors because the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test revealed that there was heteroskedasticity (OFA: χ^2 (1) = 67.62, *p* < 0.001, ONA: χ^2 (1) = 61.85, *p* < 0.001). Independent variables were not in violation of multicollinearity (i.e., VIF of each variable < 10 and Tolerance of each variable > 0.10).

To validate the mediation effects of political consumerism, this study employed a bootstrapping procedure (*N* = 5,000), which is a computer-based technique of resampling that allows for the estimation of standard errors and confidence intervals (Kline, 2011). Preacher and Hayes (2008) recommend bootstrapping to examine mediation effects, as it "provides the most powerful and reasonable method of obtaining confidence limits for specific indirect effects under most conditions" (p. 886). For path analysis, the overall model fit was assessed using the following fit indices: the χ^2 goodness-of-fit statistic, the comparative fit index (CFI), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Criteria established by Hair et al.

(2010) was followed to determine whether the model was considered to have acceptable fit. Specifically, the desired values for the different fit indices were based on the sample size ($N \geq 250$) and the number of indicators ($m \geq 30$). The model achieved good fit if the χ^2 statistic was significant, as well as CFI ≥ 0.90, SRMR ≤ 0.08 with CFI ≥ 0.92, and RMSEA ≤ 0.07 with CFI ≥ 0.90. To evaluate the mediation effects of political consumerism, this study conducted a bias-corrected bootstrapping procedure based on 5,000 bootstrap resamples ($N = 5,000$), and 95% confidence intervals were implemented to determine the significance of these effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). According to criteria set forth by Hair et al. (2010), the final path analysis achieved an acceptable model fit, $\chi^2 = 29.28$, $df = 9$, $\chi^2/df = 3.25$, $p < 0.01$, CFI $= 0.98$, RMSEA $= 0.066$, and SRMR $= 0.034$.

Path analysis confirmed the results of multiple regression analyses for hypothesis testing. Specifically, the path analysis revealed the positive relationship between the two orientations of family communication – conversation orientation and conformity orientation – and the two main forms of political consumerism – boycotting and buycotting (*H1a, H1b*). The conversation orientation was statistically and positively associated with both boycotting: $\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.041, .215] and buycotting: $\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.130, .293]. Similarly, the conformity orientation was statistically and positively associated with boycotting: $\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.116, .286] and buycotting: $\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.145, .311]. The path analysis further confirmed the positive relationship between the two orientations of family communication and the two modes of political activity (*H2a, H2b*). The conversation orientation was statistically and positively associated with both offline political activity: β

= 0.24, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.157, .304] and online political activity: $\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.100, .250]. Similarly, the conformity orientation was statistically and positively associated with both offline political activity: $\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.054, .206] and online political activity: $\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.043, .184]. Finally, the path analysis further confirmed the positive relationship between the two forms of political consumerism and the two types of political activity – offline political activity and online political activity (*H3a, H3b*). Both forms of political consumerism, boycotting: $\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.162, .359] and buycotting: $\beta = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.059, .249] were statistically and positively associated with offline political activity. Additionally, boycotting: $\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.166, .357] and buycotting: $\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.152, .343] were statistically and positively associated with online political activity (See Table 9).

Based on the regression results, three control variables – gender, other parties, and political trust – were included in the path analysis to further examine their effects on offline political activity. Gender: $\beta = -0.06$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [−.112, −.010], and other parties: $\beta = -0.09$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [−.146, −.042] were found to be significant and negatively associated with offline political activity. Meanwhile, political trust was found as a significant and positive factor associated with offline political activity: $\beta = 0.07$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [.013, .121] (See Table 9).

The present study also posed a research question (*RQ1*) about the mediating role of political consumerism on the relationship between family communication and political activity. The results showed significant indirect effects of the conversation orientation on offline political activity, $\beta = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.042, .162], and online political

activity, $\beta = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.024, .101], through boycotting. There were also significant indirect effects of the conformity orientation on offline political activity, $\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.099, .253], and online political activity, $\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.064, .169], through boycotting. Furthermore, the results showed significant indirect effects of the conversation orientation on offline political activity, $\beta = 0.03$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.043, .149], and online political activity, $\beta = 0.05$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.050, .135], through buycotting. There were also significant indirect effects of the conformity orientation on offline political activity, $\beta = 0.04$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.053, .186], and online political activity, $\beta = 0.06$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [.070, .177], through buycotting (See Table 10).

While a full mediation occurs when the direct effect becomes nonsignificant in the presence of the indirect effect, partial mediation is present when the direct effect is reduced, but still significant (Hair et al., 2010). As the results for *H2a* and *H2b* indicated, there was a significant direct effect of family communication on political activity, which means that political consumerism (boycotting and buycotting) partially mediated the relationship between family communication (conversation orientation and conformity orientation) and political activity (offline and online political activity) (See Figure 2). These results suggest that interactions within the family setting can motivate children to engage in political consumption during adulthood, which subsequently makes them more likely to take part in other types of political activity during adulthood.
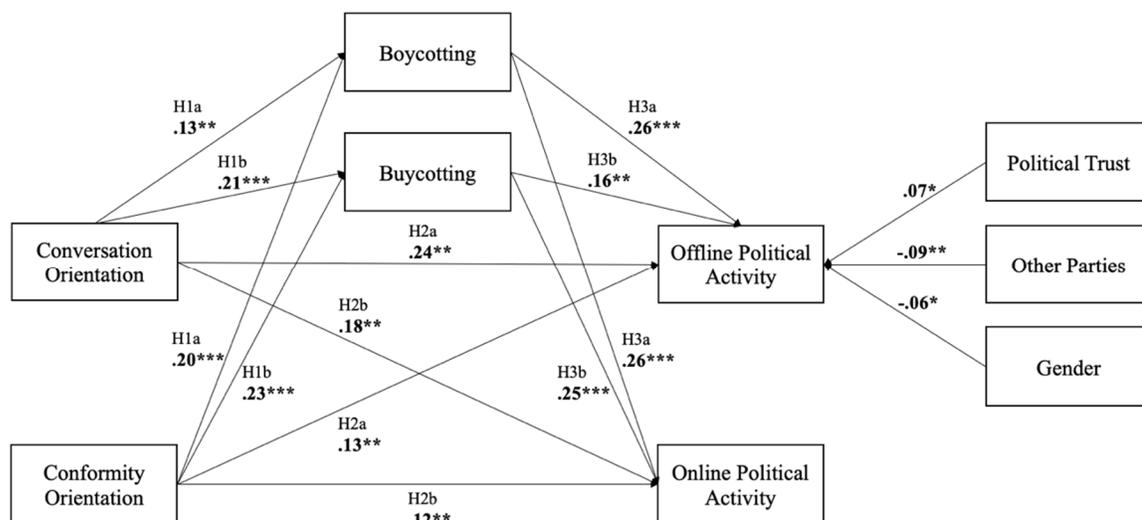
Figure 2. Bootstrapping (*N* = 5,000) results for path diagram of family communication, political consumerism, and political activity. Model fit indices: χ^2 = 29.28, *df* = 9, χ^2/df = 3.25, *p* < 0.01, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA = 0.066, and SRMR = 0.034.
***p* < .001, ***p* < .01., *p* < .05.

Table 9. Hypothesis testing in the proposed path analysis model using Bootstrapping (*N* = 5,000)

Hs	Parameters			Standard Coefficient (β)	S.E.	*p*	95% CI
H1a	FC (CVO)	→	BOY	0.13	0.04	0.006	[0.04, 0.22]
H1a	FC (CFO)	→	BOY	0.20	0.04	***	[0.12, 0.29]
H1b	FC (CVO)	→	BUY	0.21	0.04	***	[0.13, 0.29]
H1b	FC (CFO)	→	BUY	0.23	0.04	***	[0.15, 0.31]
H2a	FC (CVO)	→	OFA	0.24	0.04	0.001	[0.16, 0.30]
H2a	FC (CFO)	→	OFA	0.13	0.04	0.002	[0.05, 0.21]
H2b	FC (CVO)	→	ONA	0.18	0.04	0.001	[0.10, 0.25]
H2b	FC (CFO)	→	ONA	0.12	0.04	0.002	[0.04, 0.18]
H3a	BOY	→	OFA	0.26	0.05	***	[0.16, 0.36]
H3a	BOY	→	ONA	0.26	0.05	***	[0.17, 0.36]
H3b	BUY	→	OFA	0.16	0.05	0.003	[0.06, 0.25]
H3b	BUY	→	ONA	0.25	0.05	***	[0.15, 0.34]

Table 9 (continued).

Hs	Parameters			Standard Coefficient (β)	S.E.	*p*	95% CI
-	OP	→	OFA	-0.09	0.03	0.001	[-0.15, -0.04]
-	GEN	→	OFA	-0.06	0.03	0.022	[-0.11, -0.01]
-	PT	→	ONA	0.07	0.03	0.015	[0.01, 0.12]

Note. S.E.: bootstrap standard errors, CI: confidence intervals, FC (CVO): family communication – conversation orientation, FC (CFO): family communication – conformity orientation, BOY: boycotting, BUY: buycotting, OFA: offline political activity, ONA: online political activity, OP: other parties, GEN: gender, PT: political trust.

Table 10. Standardized specific indirect effects in the path analysis using Bootstrapping (*N* = 5,000)

Parameters					Standardized Coefficient (β)	*p*	95% CI
FC (CVO)	→	BOY	→	OFA	0.03	0.003	[0.04, 0.16]
FC (CVO)	→	BOY	→	ONA	0.03	0.005	[0.02, 0.10]
FC (CVO)	→	BUY	→	OFA	0.03	0.003	[0.04, 0.15]
FC (CVO)	→	BUY	→	ONA	0.05	0.001	[0.05, 0.14]
FC (CFO)	→	BOY	→	OFA	0.05	***	[0.10, 0.25]
FC (CFO)	→	BOY	→	ONA	0.05	0.001	[0.06, 0.17]
FC (CFO)	→	BUY	→	OFA	0.04	0.004	[0.05, 0.19]
FC (CFO)	→	BUY	→	ONA	0.06	0.001	[0.07, 0.18]

Note. CI: confidence intervals, FC (CVO): family communication – conversation orientation, FC (CFO): family communication – conformity orientation, BOY: boycotting, BUY: buycotting, OFA: offline political activity, ONA: online political activity.

DISCUSSION

Overall, this study aimed to explore the role of the family as a key antecedent to political consumerism. The relationship between political consumerism and engagement in other forms of political activity was also investigated in this study. Through hypothesis testing, the conversation and conformity orientations of family communication were both shown to positively affect different types of political consumption, as well as online and offline political activity. Both forms of political consumption also had positive and significant effects on online and offline political activity. Multiple regression analysis further revealed that gender, political party, and political trust negatively affected boycotting behaviors, while none of the control variables impacted buycotting behaviors. Following multiple regression analysis, the mediation effect of political consumerism was tested via path analysis, revealing that political consumerism mediates the relationship between family communication patterns and political activity. The results and their implications are explored in greater depth in the following sections.

Family Communication as a Key Antecedent for Political Consumption

Both orientations of family communication patterns were found to be positive predictors of boycotting and buycotting. In other words, children raised in high conversation and high conformity homes were likely to engage in political consumption as adults. These results are consistent with the idea that political consumers are prone to participate in political discussions with family and friends, often engaging in these conversations face-to-face. Political consumers often inform others about political consumerism, openly passing along this knowledge to them, meaning that these conversations among family members may involve direct mentions of political

consumption efforts (Kelm & Dohle, 2018). Although individuals can become informed about political consumerism through other networks, like the news media, the present study's findings uphold previous claims that face-to-face communication can increase one's desire or willingness to participate in political consumption activities (Kelm & Dohle, 2018; Shah et al., 2007). Ultimately, this study confirms that interactions within the family context can significantly impact the political development of children by making them more likely to engage in political consumption as adults.

It is interesting to note that families high on either family communication orientation are likely to participate in boycotting and buycotting. Although these findings were consistent with *H1a*, there was no support for *H1b*, as it posited that family communication would be negatively associated with buycotting. While boycotts are often collective endeavors and more prominent in the media, meaning that they may come up more frequently in conversation, family communication can positively promote buycotting, too. Copeland (2014a) offers a possible explanation for these results, arguing that buycotts tend to involve more informal learning; as opposed to the news media, citizens learn about products or companies that uphold similar values through their friends, family members, and social groups. Seeing as buycotting is less visible and rarely linked to any organized efforts, critical information needed to get involved in buycotts may not be readily accessible through more official channels of political information. Additionally, buycotting is typically carried out by more altruistic and politically interested individuals (Copeland, 2014a; Neilson, 2010). Individuals who buycott sacrifice convenience, low prices, and a wider selection of goods or services to make conscious consumption choices that benefit the favorable business as well as contribute to

the greater good. One may not be compelled give up the accessibility or reduced prices of a product after learning about buycotting through the news or on social media, but they may be more motivated to buycott if they learn about it and discuss its implications within the family context. The intimacy and trusted nature of the family environment may promote the sharing of private thoughts, questions, and opinions associated with buycotting-related decisions. In other words, the family unit, a major socializing agent, may be a prime location for learning about buycotting and acquiring the motivation and resources to confidently participate.

Furthermore, it is important to examine the relationship between the two distinct family communication orientations and political consumption. First, the high conversation orientation was positively associated with political consumption. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that the conversation orientation is positively related to numerous political outcomes. Families high in the conversation orientation value the free exchange of ideas and are open to discussing a wide variety of topics, even if they are controversial. Acts of political consumption can be spurred by an array of issues rooted in politics, social justice, economics, or the environment, and high conversation households may be more prone to initiating open and honest conversations about these topics among family members. In turn, this may increase one's knowledge about an issue, help them take a stance on that issue, and determine how they are going to act to improve or resolve the situation. They also involve children in decision-making processes, which may enhance their critical thinking skills when it comes to making consumption choices (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a).

Even though high conversation families typically facilitate adolescent political development and lead to frequent political information behaviors, this study revealed that high conformity families can effectively instill political consumption behaviors among children. The positive relationship between the conformity orientation and boycotting and buycotting may be explained by the fact that high conformity families place great importance on the uniformity of attitudes and beliefs. Rather than producing independent thoughts and opinions, children in high conformity environments are expected to adhere to their family's belief system and are largely excluded from the decision-making process, including consumption choices. Even if parents are not political consumers, their viewpoints pertaining to certain political, social, economic, or environmental issues may be transmitted to children, who are expected to agree with their parents' perspective. In turn, these beliefs and stances can motivate political action, including political consumption as many of these issues are tied to products and producers. Further, since individuals from high conformity families are accustomed to expressing viewpoints consistent with their family's beliefs, they may be reluctant to share opinions with outside networks or organizations (Buckner et al., 2013). Therefore, one's understanding of political consumption and related practices may be confined to household discussions and/or observed behaviors, and thus, exclusively, or primarily shaped by family members. In other words, one's consumption choices during adulthood may be enduring choices that reflect their family's belief system.

While the above explanation is plausible, there are other possible justifications for the positive association between high conformity families and political consumption. Recent research has indicated that high conformity families can promote involvement in

political and public affairs, allowing children to foster the confidence and competence to effectively participate in politics. The family communication orientations are broad categories that help distinguish family communication contexts, but families do not fit perfectly within the categories; they all communicate in a unique manner. High conformity families may be overprotective and stifle conversation, which can lead to rebellion against parental authority. However, this is not always the case as high conformity families who promote healthy parent-child conversations can successfully transmit political information and instill political behaviors among children (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005; Ledbetter, 2015). This may explain the relationship between high conformity families and political consumption, as this family communication schema has been proven to effectively promote political information processing behaviors.

Encouraging Offline and Online Political Activity through Family Communication

This study further theorized that family communication during childhood would be positively associated with offline political activity (*H2a*), but negatively associated with online political activity (*H2b*), during adulthood. As expected and consistent with past research, family communication during childhood resulted in high levels of offline political activity during adulthood. Due to having more regular interactions and the exposure to a variety of topics and viewpoints, children raised in this type of environment may participate in discussions about political and social issues, which can help them form an opinion and lead to subsequent participation in various political activities. Adding to this from a cognitive processing standpoint, this type of family environment can teach children how to process complex information with reduced levels of anxiety (Ledbetter & Schrodt, 2008). Given today's polarizing political landscape and the overwhelming

amounts of information available, political discussions can be challenging to participate in and may induce anxiety for some, especially when trying to balance one's own political beliefs and interests with the desire to maintain friendly interpersonal relationships (Pennington & Winfrey, 2021). Yet, having honest and frequent conversations with other family members who may express disagreement can better prepare children to participate in productive political discussions outside of the family. Instead of shying away from politics, children may be more willing to discuss divisive political issues, which may boost feelings of self-efficacy and increase willingness to engage in various political activities.

The positive relationship between high conformity families and offline political participation has also been backed by prior research. Children who must adhere to family norms and expectations are accustomed to refraining from expressing controversial opinions, and thus, may be able to consume political information from various news sources and interpersonal networks outside the family (Graham et al., 2020; Hively & Eveland, 2009). For children growing up in high conformity environments, political discussions may be avoided at all costs, and knowing this, children may seek external sources or social groups to acquire political information and engage in political conversations. Through this action, they may become more inclined to participate in offline political activities, including voting, wearing campaign-related apparel, or working for a political party or candidate. Another reason that high conformity families may encourage greater levels of offline political participation is the idea that these family structures can be overbearing for children who must obey their parents' wishes. This can create a hostile family environment and make adolescents more prone to engage in

deception or rebellion (Bristol & Mangleburg, 2005). If discussions about controversial issues were consistently shut down, and children were expected to adhere to their parents' belief system, they may want to branch off as adults and express their own viewpoints via offline political activity.

The present study also found that childhood family communication was positively associated with online political activity during adulthood, thus disproving *H2b*. Although the effect of family communication on offline political activity was stronger, the effect on online political activity was still positive and significant. Previous research points to some possible explanations for this finding. First, prior studies have examined and documented the shift among younger generations from traditional forms of political participation to less conventional methods. The integration of politics into digital mediums can impact teen's political engagement, as well as entire networks of friends and acquaintances (Bode et al., 2014). Young people are taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by technology, and aided by their higher levels of Internet skills, they are choosing to engage with politics using online platforms (Best & Krueger, 2005; Oser et al., 2013). Although scholars have raised concerns about younger people losing interest and becoming less engaged in traditional party-based politics, online political activity seems to be a feasible avenue for them to increase political engagement. Therefore, it is important to recognize that if family communication inspires political participation, that may take root predominantly online for younger generations. This finding may also point to the appealing characteristics of online political activity, including the ease of it and the ability to quickly reach a vast audience. By offering greater convenience, online activities afford citizens greater control over how they choose

to engage in politics. Therefore, if high conversation and high conformity family communication environments promote children's involvement in politics as they get older, these individuals may elect to participate in online forms of political activity because they are less time consuming and can be completed from any location.

Another reason for this finding is that online political participation may be a supplement to offline participation, expanding one's repertoire of political action. Previous research has found that online participation does not serve as an exclusive form of participation, but rather it can cultivate additional participation in other settings (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010; Oser et al., 2013). Therefore, individuals do not necessarily specialize in one form of political activity over the other. Although people may begin to participate in new online political activities, they do not automatically serve as a substitution for disengagement in offline political activity. The present study's results provide evidence for what Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2010) deemed "hybrid participation," which merges the virtual and real-world spaces of political engagement and participation to create a modernized version of democracy (p. 45). Despite the differences between online and offline participation, individuals may find that dual participation is an effective path to engaged citizenship. As family communication can lead children to engage in more traditional modes of political activity during adulthood, the expanding definition of participation means that family communication can also cultivate online political participation.

Political Consumers are Politically Active Citizens

The results indicated that political consumers are generally more active in various forms of political participation. This relationship is upheld by previous literature finding

that political consumers are more active in both conventional and unconventional

participation (Strømsnes, 2009) and online civic participation (Ward & de Vreese, 2011).

However, these findings contradict earlier observations by Stolle et al. (2005), who found

that political consumerism is not exercised together with conventional political acts, as

well as Ward and de Vreese (2011), who asserted that offline political participation does

not have a significant relationship with socially conscious consumption. These findings

suggested a shift away from traditional means to citizenship, where democracy may be

less about political parties, voting, and traditional political knowledge. They also implied

that by engaging in an unconventional political act, political consumers may doubt the

efficacy of more traditional political activities. Yet, the present study found that both

boycotting and buycotting have significant and positive relationships to both online and

offline political activity. It appears that a departure from more conventional modes of

political activity does not necessarily exist among political consumers. Although political

consumers act outside of political institutions, they are not opposed to initiating change

within the traditional political arena.

The link between political consumerism and offline and online political activity

may be explained by the fact that engaging in political consumption can help individuals

develop civic skills and habits of political participation, as well as offer them more

opportunities to be recruited for other political activities (Gotlieb & Cheema, 2017).

Through this process, citizens may begin to believe in their ability to enact political

change and view themselves as valuable participants in the political arena. In particular,

since boycotting is often a collective act, it can serve as a gateway to conventional means

of political participation (Gotlieb & Cheema, 2017). Citizens who have participated in

boycotts may have met other like-minded citizens who express the same concerns. The large and highly interconnected boycotting networks can help connect citizens to other political activities, such as working with a political party or joining a campaign group (Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). In fact, since boycotters are focused on bringing about broad industry change, they may be required to engage in other types of political action to provoke this desired change. For example, environmental protection is a large issue that likely cannot be solved solely by avoiding products or companies whose practices harm the environment. As a result, those who advocate for environmental protection may also speak with public officials about the issue in person, contact the media to speak on the topic and create issue awareness, or work for a political candidate with environmental protection at the forefront of their agenda. Ultimately, the organized and large-scale efforts of boycotters help to explain the link between boycotting and offline political activity.

Furthermore, this study unexpectedly found a positive relationship between boycotting and online political activity. However, this may be explained by the growth of the Internet and digital forms of communication. Boycotts typically attract greater media attention, and in turn, the media is often a major source of information for boycotters. With the growth of social networking sites and the move by news outlets to online platforms, perhaps boycotters are turning to the Internet to consume and even produce political information. As boycotters become accustomed to gathering information and interacting online, they may become exposed to other means of online political engagement. For example, they may come across hashtags on social media that they want to use related to a political or social issue. There are also key parallels between online

political activity and political consumption. In the same way that citizens can indicate their support for specific political or social causes through changing their social media profile picture, citizens can engage in political consumption to express support for specific causes, such as fair-trade practices, animal rights, and sustainability efforts (Boulianne, 2021; Chapman & Coffé, 2016). Furthermore, the use of hashtags or profile picture frames is typically done collectively to show unified support toward a specific political or social cause. Similarly, boycotts are often employed to collectively express negative sentiments regarding a company's unfavorable policies or practices. Due to the similarities between boycotting and online political activity, as well as the growth of social media and news consumption via the Internet, individuals who engage in boycotting are also likely to be politically active online.

Furthermore, this study confirmed that buycotting is positively associated with online political activity. This finding seems sensible, as buycotting is a more informal and individualistic activity that occurs outside of traditional political institutions and is associated with higher levels of political interest (Copeland, 2014a; Jungblut & Johnen, 2021). Posting to social media to encourage others to take political action is likewise a less formal activity, and it is oftentimes driven by political interest as well as self-motivation. Furthermore, positive information does not promote buycotting to the same degree that negative information causes boycotting (Kam & Deichert, 2020). Citizens must possess an independent desire to engage in buycotting, and they often must do their own research about companies and products that are compatible with their values and political stances. Due to the self-directed nature of buycotting, individuals who partake in this form of political consumption may be prone to engage in further political action

outside of the traditional realm of politics, which may include communicating their political sentiments via online channels.

Although buycotting has more characteristics in common with civic engagement taking place outside of traditional political institutions, the present study found that buycotting positively and significantly predicted offline political activity. Buycotters act more independently, but they still aim to benefit the well-being of others through their conscious consumption, which may explain why they would still be prone to engage in more traditional, offline political activity. They may join others in protesting for a political cause, attend a political rally with others, or encourage others to vote in upcoming elections, as these modes of civic engagement can benefit the public well-being and are necessary for a well-functioning democracy. Although individuals derive a sense of fulfillment through buycotting, they may believe that due to its lack of visibility in the media and the amount of mobilization needed to make buycotting efforts effective, they need to tap into other types of political activity directly within the political sphere.

Political Consumption: A Mediator between Family Communication and Political Activity

Results from the path analysis indicated that political consumption partially mediated the effect of family communication on political activity. Although family communication had a direct effect on offline and online political activity, political consumption amplified this effect. Political consumption can be time-consuming, as people must investigate company practices and policies and research alternative brands or products that operate under favorable conditions. Political consumers are politically interested and committed to using private consumption choices as a vehicle to enact political or social change in the public sphere. Given these defining factors, it is

unsurprising that political consumers would likely be motivated to engage in other forms of political participation. Many of the issues and injustices driving political consumption are large problems with far-reaching consequences, and thus may need to be addressed via other means of political action. This is especially true since political consumerism has limits in its ability to promote political and social change. Oftentimes, boycotts completely fail due to poor planning and a short-lived commitment to a political or social cause (Micheletti, 2003). Even the most dedicated political consumers do not view political consumerism as the most effective means of influencing political and social change (Stolle et al., 2005). Although the perceived efficacy of participants' political consumption is beyond the scope of this study, political consumers likely depend on other avenues of political participation to successfully advocate for political and social change.

The mediation effect of political consumerism implies that unconventional forms of political activity can amplify the effects of family communication on a variety of political activities. Whereas many traditional political activities are magnified during election years, political consumerism and alternative forms of political participation are less confined to election cycles (Feezell, 2016). Their prevalence during and between election years can help citizens develop and fortify their habits of political participation, which in turn, may increase their competency and desire to perform other political activities, especially those that arise during elections such as voting, working for a political candidate, or donating to a political campaign.

Another important aspect to consider is the politicization of everyday life in the form of consumption choices. Politics extend beyond traditional political settings and institutions to include private beliefs, choices, and behaviors, which can be learned via

socialization through the family. Consumption choices exist at the intersection of moral values and ethics of care, often centering on family needs. Political consumers are influenced by the individuals with whom they interact and the societies in which they live. The results of this study suggest that the family unit is an important context for understanding the implications of consumption choices and defining the values that impact these decisions. While buycotting is often learned informally through friends and family, boycotting entails more collective pressures which, similarly, can be applied through friends and family looking to recruit more participants via their own social networks. Repeated, positive social interactions between individuals can provide the necessary information and motivation for effecting social change.

It is interesting to note that political consumerism had a stronger mediating effect on the relationship between the conformity orientation and political activity. Those that grow up in high conformity environments may avoid sensitive or challenging political issues, especially since they could spark disagreement. This can negatively impact their direct level of involvement in political activities. However, political consumerism can cultivate political participation habits, build political efficacy, and provide more exposure and opportunities to get involved in different political activities. Therefore, if individuals become motivated to base their consumption decisions on political or social concerns, they may become more inclined to engage in offline and online political activities. Looking at specific indirect effects, buycotting had a strong mediating effect on the relationship between family communication and online political activity. If family communication promotes buycotting behaviors, this can spur similar modes of engagement that take place online, which are typically informal and individualistic as

they occur outside of the traditional political arena. Additionally, boycotting had a strong mediating effect on the relationship between the conformity orientation and political activity. Those who grew up in high conformity environments may be hesitant to share opinions with outside networks, but through exposure to organized boycotting efforts, they may meet other like-minded individuals, be recruited to more political activities, and gain the confidence to participate more in politics.

Additional Antecedents to Political Consumerism: Trust, Political Party, and Gender

With regard to control variables, those who identified with other political parties were less likely to engage in boycotting, as well as offline and online political activity, compared to those who identified with either the Democratic Party or Republican Party. This is consistent with other studies that find that expressive partisanship, or one's enduring identity as either a Democrat or a Republican, influences campaign activity and electoral participation (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017; Huddy et al., 2015). Partisanship can be viewed as a social identity, motivating citizens to take certain political action based on their party's needs (Huddy et al., 2015). The present study inquired about political activity during the 2020 election year, which may explain the link between partisan identity and offline and online political action. The finding that independents and members of other political parties were less likely to engage in boycotting signals the key role of political identity in consumer decisions. Political identity, which can be activated subconsciously at different times, has been shown to affect consumer behavior (Jung & Mittal, 2020). Although political identity extends beyond party affiliation, issues are often framed along party lines, and companies or products can be associated with a

certain party or political figure (e.g., boycotting companies that do business with the Trump family).

In line with previous research, political trust was a significant and negative predictor of boycotting. However, political trust did not have any significant effects on buycotting. The fact that buycotting is reward-oriented and boycotting is punishment-oriented may be the reason for this difference. A lack of trust in political institutions may make citizens feel increasingly cynical, and in turn, more inclined to punish companies who act unfavorably. Boycotts are often part of organized efforts to punish a company and attract negative media attention, which may continue to fuel feelings of frustration and distrust. Although political trust had a negative relationship with boycotting, it was positively related to offline political activity. This difference may exist because those who possess greater trust in political institutions and public officials will be motivated to engage in more direct action within the political system. Whereas boycotters rely on the marketplace instead of political institutions to express their political grievances, citizens engaging in offline political activities are often operating within the traditional political arena.

Regarding political consumerism, there were no significant effects for education, income, political ideology, or gender. This contradicts previous research arguing that political consumers are well-educated individuals earning high incomes. Perhaps political information and product details are becoming more widely accessible in the digital age, allowing more people to consume these facts and make thoughtful consumption decisions. Another reason may be that mediated messages about boycotting efforts are reaching more people of all education levels. Further, as the importance and awareness

surrounding corporate social responsibility efforts increases, ethical and sustainable alternatives that are affordable may be entering the marketplace, thus reducing the importance of having a higher income. There were also no significant effects of political ideology, which is inconsistent with prior research that shows ideological intensity is positively associated with political consumerism. It is possible that political consumerism is gaining more recognition as a viable avenue of political action, and as a result, individuals across the ideological spectrum are finding that they can address specific political or social causes they are passionate about via deliberate consumption choices.

Finally, this study revealed no significant effects of gender on boycotting and buycotting. Previous research reported mixed results regarding gender, with some scholars finding that women were more likely to practice political consumption than men. Women were thought to be more active political consumers because they are typically more isolated from the formal political arena (Micheletti, 2003), and they often assume the traditional role of shopping for the family (Neilson, 2010). However, traditional gender norms, including a woman's role in the political sphere, are evolving. As more women work full-time jobs and defy the traditional stereotype of serving as the primary caregiver, men may be shopping for the family just as much or more than women. A growing dependence on the global marketplace has also led to more citizens considering the consequences of their consumption choices, and with this issue becoming more pronounced, gender disparities once apparent in political consumption may disappear.

The path analysis results indicated that men were more likely than women to participate in offline political activity. Notably, there were no gender differences when it came to online political activity, which aligns with the findings of Oser et al. (2013).

Although women have made great strides in the traditional political sphere, perhaps they are taking advantage of the ease and accessibility of online political action. Independents and other political parties negatively predicted offline political activity, as well. Since offline political participation is rooted in many party-based actions, such as donating money to a campaign and working for a political candidate, partisan identity can be a key force driving this engagement. While independent voters and those belonging to smaller political parties are still politically active and invested in election campaigns, strong partisan identity with the two major political parties may provoke greater offline political activity, especially during an election year. Lastly, individuals with higher levels of political trust were found to participate more frequently in offline political activity. As stated earlier, many offline political activities occur within the political system. If citizens feel disappointed, frustrated, or cynical about the government system or the leaders within that system, they will likely want to circumvent them to exercise their political voice. Therefore, higher levels of political trust will make individuals more willing to direct their actions toward political institutions.

Implications

This study provides theoretical contributions by exploring the link between family communication patterns and different types of political activity. The relationship between household communication environments and engagement in political consumerism has been underexplored. Previous research has indicated that face-to-face communication can exert a strong influence on political consumption activity, and political consumers are more likely to discuss politics with family members. Although these findings suggested a

link between parent-child interactions and political consumerism, family communication patterns theory had not been directly applied to studies examining this relationship.

This study reveals that high conversation and high conformity families can encourage children to consider the ethical, social, and political implications of their consumption choices during adulthood. Specifically, family communication can lead individuals to boycott products or brands, an action that involves more collective action and gains greater media recognition. However, this study adds that family communication can also encourage buycotting behavior, likely through a family's ability to serve as a site of informal learning. The family can provide key information related to buycotting that would otherwise require extra research on behalf of the buycotter, and a tight-knit family can apply unique pressures to engage in buycotting. The effect of family communication on political consumption and political activity in general also points to the strong influence of face-to-face interpersonal communication.

Additionally, this study provides that both orientations of family communication can have a positive influence on political consumption. This finding supports prior research that the conversation orientation enhances political development and leads to a variety of political behaviors. This study also finds a positive relationship between the conformity orientation and political consumption, thus lending support to the idea that the conformity orientation does not necessarily hinder political development, which has emerged in recent research. Despite seemingly stark differences between the conversation and conformity orientations, the family is a dynamic social unit that can promote similar outcomes through different communicative approaches.

The main contribution of this study is that it points to the mediating role of political consumerism. Although family political communication can lead to offline and online political activity, the degree of participation is amplified when individuals are also political consumers. These results imply that political consumption is a powerful instrument that inspires political action beyond the marketplace. It entails intentional, thought-out consumption choices that are based on an understanding of the underlying political or social issues at play. It also requires individuals to seek out alternative products, which for many, involves finding those of comparable price and quality. The effort demanded of political consumers, therefore, suggests that they are dedicated to political and social causes and will take additional routes of political action to bring about desired change. These results also support the argument that political consumerism is not an alternative approach to politics, but rather a supplement to other forms of political participation. Rather than expressing frustration with other forms of political action and isolating themselves, political consumers embrace other means of political action, both offline and online. The willingness to engage in offline and online activity suggests that "hybrid participation" may be commonplace in a digital era dominated by social media (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010, p. 45).

The findings also offer practical implications, pointing to the power of political consumerism to revitalize civic engagement. Once thought to be an uncommon and alternative form of political action, political consumerism has become a mainstream form of participation (ANES, 2020). It can appeal to a wide range of people who may be focused on addressing different political or social issues. Engagement in political consumerism can promote additional political action, which is important considering

recent concerns related to reduced voter turnout and political apathy. The ability to send political messages via purchasing decisions presents a creative way for citizens to get involved in political or social causes. Through advocating for political or social change in the marketplace, consumers may be compelled to continue their efforts through other offline and online political activity. In today's globalized society, political consumerism may provide a gateway for citizens to become engaged, or re-engaged, in politics.

The growth of political consumption and its ability to be cultivated through family discussion also has important implications for businesses. Aside from relying on their own knowledge and experiences with a company, consumers often learn about brands through word-of-mouth. Within the family setting, family consumption choices are visible (e.g., where parents choose to grocery shop) and negative and positive information related to brands can be shared easily. Given the positive relationship between family communication and political consumption, it is crucial for companies to consider their political brand communication and how it could be perceived by consumers (Jung & Mittal, 2019). Companies should continually review their practices, monitor employee and consumer discourse, and remain responsive to any complaints. It is also wise to reflect on their positions regarding social issues and be prepared to communicate their stance. In an era of growing CEO activism, there are increasingly more expectations placed on business leaders to speak out on political and social issues. The positions articulated by CEOs can garner greater support from consumers or repel consumers from a brand; at the same time, staying silent on issues can be even more consequential for companies. The growth of political consumerism can encourage more civic engagement and enhance the functioning of democracy by holding companies

accountable for their business practices and by mobilizing political consumers to engage in additional political activities.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has certain limitations that should be addressed. First, the survey questions for offline and online political activity were associated with the 2020 election year, which may have conflated respondents' amount of participation. Moreover, the survey instrument for political consumption asked participants if they had ever engaged in boycotting or buycotting behaviors. In retrospect, it would have been effective to measure political consumerism within a specific time period, such as over the span of a year, or for participants to rank their political consumption tendencies on a frequency scale. Individuals may be motivated to boycott when there is clear public outrage and/or extensive media coverage, but other than that, they might not actively practice political consumerism. Those who are infrequent political consumers should be separated from the moderate to regular political consumers to achieve a richer analysis.

Furthermore, the measure of political consumption is broad; while it is important to differentiate between boycotting and buycotting, studies could break down political consumption even further. Certain industries, as well as specific products and services, may be boycotted or buycotted by different people due to their unique circumstances (Baek, 2010). There could be fascinating associations between one's household environment growing up, which influences a large part of their worldview, and their patterns of political consumption. Dualcotting should also be examined in future research, since those who boycott and buycott may be more politically active than individuals who specialize in one form of political consumption. Dualcotters possess

higher levels of political knowledge, follow politics more closely, and have higher levels of external efficacy (Baek, 2010; Copeland, 2014a). Those who keep up with current political news will likely have a good understanding of relevant political issues and feel better equipped to participate in politics. By possessing strong external efficacy, dualcotters will also be inclined to take political action because they believe the government will be responsive to their needs.

Furthermore, the effects of social desirability might have factored into participants' responses (Ward & de Vreese, 2011). For example, when asked whether they considered the social or political values of a company when purchasing their products, participants may be tempted to answer "yes," due to the human tendency to want to present themselves in a positive light. Future studies can mitigate this effect by asking additional questions related to political consumption, such as whether participants check company websites for information on company ethics or philanthropy work. Rather than framing political consumption as a catch-all behavior based on political, social, ethical, or environmental considerations, more specific questions regarding the motives for consumption choices could be employed, as well. This would allow researchers to gain further insight into the unique behaviors of each political consumer.

Although this study controlled for certain socio-demographic variables, future research should pay specific attention to the relationship between race and political activity. Due to their history of political marginalization and distrust in the government, racial and ethnic minority groups have been found to participate less in traditional politics (Diemer & Li, 2011; Hope et al., 2016; Verba et al., 1995). Instead, unconventional routes of political action, such as boycotting and buycotting, may be effective ways for

marginalized groups to influence political and social change by acting outside of political institutions. At the same time, racial and ethnic minorities may be hesitant to engage in political activism and advocacy. For example, in the sports context, Black athletes may be silent on social and political issues because they believe their views will subject them to hateful responses, invoke racial stereotypes, and lead to organizational pushback (Sanderson et al., 2016). Thus, it is important to consider how race and ethnicity might factor into one's degree of political participation and the type of political action taken.

Furthermore, inequalities in political participation are shaped across generations, making it critical to examine how family background influences political activity. For example, Verba et al. (2003) found that, due to disparities in parental education, White children are more likely than Latino and Black children to experience politically stimulating home environments and become well-educated, which creates better prospects of political involvement. While some studies have found that political consumerism is practiced predominately among White individuals (Stolle et al., 2005), others have revealed insignificant findings (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017). Nonetheless, as political consumerism expands as a viable tool of political action, the relationship between race and ethnicity and political consumerism demands further exploration.

Another limitation involves the framing of family communication patterns as a one-way transfer of beliefs and attitudes from parents to children. Family communication involves an agreement between family members, and it is important to recognize children's agency in the socialization process (Liebes & Ribak, 1992; York, 2019). Political socialization is a bidirectional process, and family communication can collectively benefit from adolescents' increased desire to discuss public affairs (Flores et

al., 2020; McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002). Children can gather political information and different viewpoints from external sources and pass this along to parents, which can stimulate parent-child political conversations (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; York, 2019). This "trickle-up" perspective is particularly important to examine considering social media's ability to quickly connect youth to massive amounts of political news and information, even if it occurs through incidental news exposure (York, 2019). Political consumers are active on social media, and these platforms can be used to seek out and transmit information related to political consumption efforts (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2014a). Therefore, future research should recognize children's agency in the family political socialization process by examining their influence on parental political consumption.

The prevalence of social media also offers new opportunities for political information sharing and political activity. Compared to traditional media, where discussions are typically scripted and unidirectional, social media channels provide an arena for individuals to reinforce and challenge group norms and values (Sanderson et al., 2016). Through online political activism, like-minded individuals can collectively rally behind certain causes to alter the status quo instituted by those in power (Dynel & Poppi, 2021). Considering the growth of online political activism, future research should examine family political information seeking behaviors to glean insight on where families acquire the majority of their political information and how their information sources shape their participatory habits, including political consumption.

Additionally, the RFCP scale treats the family as a cohesive unit and does not account for different family structures. When examining political socialization through the family, it is important to consider the separate effects exerted by each parent.

Previous research by Shulman and DeAndrea (2014), for example, investigated the independent influences of the mother and father on children's political similarity. Since mothers and fathers often differ in their communication styles, their influence on children's political attitudes and political consumption habits could vary. Family communication patterns research could also be expanded by looking at the influence of siblings. Siblings share a special bond, which would make it interesting to explore this familial aspect in greater depth. To what degree do sibling relationships affect the family communication environment and help shape one's political attitudes and behaviors?

Moreover, studies often regard the family as a traditional unit composed of heterosexual parents and blood-related children. Yet, this limited definition fails to account for nontraditional familial bonds such as those between children and LGBTQ parents, stepparents, adoptive parents, and more (Flores et al., 2020). Among racial and ethnic minority groups, the family also has a particularly profound influence due to the shared experience of being a cultural minority. Within these families, parents and children can engage in mutual education, sharing racial, linguistic, and cultural resources with one another (Flores et al., 2020; Yoo, 2020). Ultimately, future research on political activity should pay greater attention to political socialization in families with members of marginalized communities, as well as in families with nontraditional relationships.

Future research should also consider the impact of political interest on the relationship between family communication and political consumerism. Individuals with greater political interest and stronger political opinions are more likely to be political consumers, as this mode of participation is activated by political values (Copeland & Boulianne, 2020; Neilson & Paxton, 2010). Although scholars have posited that political

interest predicts political consumption, the potential of political interest as a moderator variable merits future investigation. In the context of this study, while family political discussions could encourage political consumption, low political interest could nullify this effect since those with low political interest pay less attention to politics. Conversely, individuals with high political interest may be more aware of political consumption efforts, familiar with their underlying political issues, and motivated to research and seek out alternative products, thus strengthening the relationship between family communication and political consumerism.

Finally, survey research can oversimplify political consumption as these choices are complex and "can be represented by diverse and sometimes incompatible motives" (Atkinson, 2015, p. 2061). Considering this limitation, future research could benefit from examining the connection between family communication and political consumption through a qualitative lens. For example, political consumers could describe their family political discussions, including the types of topics commonly discussed and how the interactions typically went (e.g., there was a lot of disagreement or agreement). If consumption choices were explicitly discussed in the family setting, participants could detail those discussions and how they processed that information. It would also be interesting to interview political consumers about the perceived efficacy of their actions, and how that affects their degree of involvement in political consumption, as well as their desire to engage in other political activities. This could shed more light on why political consumers are often involved in additional offline and online political activities.

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