

**POLITICS ACROSS GENERATIONS:  
FAMILY TRANSMISSION REEXAMINED**

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**Abstract**

We use four waves of panel data on three generations of Americans to evaluate the character and consequences of political socialization within the family. Three major conclusions emerge. First, parents play an important role in the political education of their offspring. Despite transformations in the political environment and character of family life over the past thirty years, our findings about youth coming of age in the 1990s strongly parallel those based on youth socialized in the 1960s. Second, children are more likely to adopt their parents' political orientations if the family is highly politicized, but they are also more likely to adopt any parental attribute that is clearly and consistently cued. These findings confirm expectations drawn from social learning theory. Third, early acquisition of parental characteristics influences the character of adult political development. Adolescents who enter adulthood without a strong parental imprint tend to manifest more attitudinal instability in their early adult years and less continuity over their life-span than do their more well-socialized counterparts.

## Introduction

Writing over thirty years ago, Jennings and Niemi (1968) questioned the conventional wisdom about the role of parents in shaping the political character of their children. By drawing on data collected independently from adolescents and their parents, they demonstrated high variability in the political similarity between parents and their children. Especially when judged against the expectations laid down by reliance on retrospective accounts of parental attributes (e.g. Hyman 1959), the results appeared to downgrade the direct transmission model, wherein parental attributes were passed on, wittingly or unwittingly, to their offspring. These outcomes seemed all the more surprising in view of the considerable overall aggregate congruence between the two generations.

Somewhat lost in the (over) generalizations flowing out of this and related reports were a number of important qualifications. Transmission rates tended to vary in a systematic fashion according to type of political trait. The more concrete, affect-laden, and repetitive the object in question, the more successful was the transmission. More abstract, ephemeral, and historically conditioned attributes were much less successfully passed on. Salience of the political object for the parents was an important conditioner of successful reproduction, as was perceptual accuracy on the part of the child (Acock and Bengston 1980; Percheron and Jennings 1981; Tedin 1974, 1980). The presence of politically homogeneous parents, and other agents allied with the parents also increased substantially the fidelity of transmission (Jennings and Niemi 1974, ch. 6; Sebert, Jennings, and Niemi 1974). Contextual properties such as larger opinion climates (Jennings and Niemi 1974, 81-82, 161-62) and party systems (Westholm and Niemi 1992) also affected within family consonance.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Issues of measurement have also come to light that help account for variations in dyadic agreement. See Dalton (1980) for an analysis of the original Jennings and Niemi data that uses LISREL techniques to correct for measurement unreliability. A consequence of doing so is to increase the apparent level of parent-child agreement. See Appendix B for further discussion.

These further specifications and qualifications also lent support to social learning theory explanations of how children come to resemble their parents more in some respects than others. Moreover, the political character of offspring tended to be much more reflective of parental political attributes than parental socio-economic status, a prominent rival explanation (Glass, Bengston, and Dunham 1986; Jennings 1984; U.S. Department of Education 1999, 45-56.). Although not in the tradition of the transmission model, but fully compatible with social learning theory, other inquiries revealed the importance of communication patterns within the family in shaping the political make-up of the child (e.g., Chaffee, McLeod, and Wackman 1973; Jennings 1983; Tims 1986; Valentino and Sears 1998; on social learning theory generally, see Bandura 1977).

In this paper we return to the topic of intergenerational transmission informed by scholarship subsequent to the earlier research and enriched by the availability of additional longitudinal data, as described in the next section. We address four main questions, questions raised but not resolved by earlier work. In addressing these questions, we seek not only to contribute to a fresher, more comprehensive understanding of intergenerational transmission but also to add further perspectives regarding the dynamics of attitude formation and change over the life course and across generations.

One question endemic to the study of intergenerational transmission consists of how long and in what magnitude the parental legacy persists. One aspect of this question is the degree to which the parental tradition is carried forward over the life course of their offspring. How much of the parental imprint "sticks" to the child over time? Another aspect of the duration question is the degree to which the parent-child pairs move in unison over time. If both parts of the dyad adjust their orientations in response to the same ongoing secular events and processes in similar fashion, there is at least indirect support for a continuation of the parental legacy. We evaluate the parental legacy using long-term panel data on both parents and children.

A second question is whether past findings about intergenerational transmission are cohort-specific. Virtually all studies of adolescents and their parents originated between the mid 1960s and the

1970s. In particular, the Jennings and Niemi reports were based on pairs formed from high school seniors of 1965, a cohort coming of age during such dramatic events as civil disturbances, the Vietnam war, political assassinations, and Watergate, and witnessed by such broad secular trends as declines in political trust and partisanship, the emergence of the second women's movement, and altered norms of social conduct and morality. That being so, it has been suggested that these findings may be cohortcentric, that preceding and succeeding cohorts would exhibit different patterns of relationships, presumably including more faithful political reproduction of their parents (Sears and Funk 1999). Testing for cohortcentrism requires a replication of the measures with a subsequent cohort of parent-child pairs, one where the offspring were socialized under quite different historical circumstances. We compare parent-child transmission levels for the original Jennings/Niemi pairs with those for a new set of pairs, one where the children were coming of age in the 1990s.

A third question concerns the circumstances under which parental influence is enhanced. As noted above, previous research found that certain aspects of the parent-child nexus, especially parental characteristics, increased the likelihood of political reproduction. In terms of social learning theory, transmission success should vary according to the strength of cue giving and reinforcement on the part of the socializer. We employ two measures, explained in more detail below, to evaluate this expectation. One of these mediating variables is the traditional one of family politicization. The second capitalizes on the longitudinal design of the present study and is an indicator of salience and cue giving with respect to specific political orientations.

The final question involves the long-term consequences of early political socialization. How does the early acquisition of political characteristics, via family transmission, influence the child's subsequent political development? Do those who leave home well-socialized differ later in life from those who do not? These are questions where the expectations are strong, but the existing evidence is weak. At a minimum, well-socialized youth should manifest more over-time continuity in their political orientations, withstanding the forces of change more than their less well-socialized counterparts. Those

who inherit their parents' political views may also show greater political maturity throughout their lives than those who do not. We provide evidence to assess these expectations by examining how patterns of political development over the adult life-span vary according to the success of parental transmission as of late adolescence.

### **Study Design**

To address these four topics we draw on a portion of the longitudinal parent-child political socialization project carried out by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Center and Center for Political Studies. Constituting the original core of the project are interviews with a national sample of 1669 high school seniors from the graduating class of 1965. Subsequent surveys conducted in 1973, 1982, and 1997 resulted in a four wave panel of 935 individuals, which represents an overall, unadjusted retention rate of 56%.<sup>2</sup> During the first three waves interviews were conducted with at least one parent, thereby enabling the construction of parent-child pairs as units of analysis. Altogether 636 pairs, based on Generations 1 (the parents) and 2 (their offspring), have survived over the course of the study. For convenience we will

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<sup>2</sup>All respondents were interviewed face-to-face in 1965, as were the great majority in 1973 and 1982 as well, when an abbreviated mailback questionnaire was used for the more remotely located individuals. In 1997 approximately one-half of the interviews were face-to-face and the other half by telephone.

Respondent bias across the four waves appears to be slight. The crucial comparisons are between the 935 four-wave panel respondents and the 734 respondents surveyed in the 1965 study but not included in one or more of the post-1965 waves. The four-wave panelists as of 1965 had slightly higher scores on such measures of political involvement as participating in student affairs; talking about politics with family and friends; expressing higher subjective interest in politics; following politics in the newspapers; and having more factual knowledge about politics. Attitudinally, the panelists tended to be slightly more liberal. However, panel vs. non-panel status never accounts for over 2% of the variance in the scores of these explicitly political measures.

often refer to these generations as G1 and G2, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to reinterviewing G2 in 1997, we also attempted to obtain self-administered data from all their offspring aged 15 and older, i.e., Generation 3 (G3). This effort resulted in receiving useable questionnaires from 768 out of a possible total of 1435 respondents, for a response rate of 54%.<sup>4</sup> Pairing these respondents with their parents yielded a new set of parent-child pairs based on G2 and G3. Two important features distinguish these pairs from those based on the first two generations. First, in contrast to G2, but similar to G1, the third generation has a variable age range, with a mean of 23. As described in more detail below, the age variation proved helpful for certain analytical purposes. It follows that G3, unlike G2, represents only a lineage cohort rather than a high school senior cohort. A second distinguishing feature is that whereas all of the earlier pairs include only one child, some of new ones include parents with multiple children. Overall, 32% of the new pairs were based on one child, 42% on two, 17% on three, and 4% on four.<sup>5</sup>

### **Description of Measures**

In most of what follows we utilize a common set of measures by which to assess the prevalence and patterning of correspondence between parents and their offspring. Because of our longitudinal

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<sup>3</sup>Panel attrition from each generation and the absence of an initial parent interview account for the difference between the 935 four-wave panel members and the 636 parent-child pairs. The retention rate from the original 1556 pairs is 41%.

<sup>4</sup>In assessing possible response bias we compared G2 parents whose offspring (one or more) returned a questionnaire with those whose offspring did not. In all sorts of comparisons, using socio-demographic and political variables, only one statistically significant difference emerged: mothers were more likely to have cooperating offspring than were fathers ( $p < .02$ ).

<sup>5</sup>This feature raises the issue of whether the data should be weighted by number of children for analytic purposes. Because the coefficients and significance tests obtained when analyzing the weighted data are nearly identical to those based on unweighted cases we report only the unweighted results

perspective, we are constrained by the availability of questions that have been asked throughout the project. The ten political measures employed here do not exhaust the available pool, but they do cover a wide range of both substantive and theoretical import. A thumbnail description of these measures follows. Detailed descriptions are contained in the Appendix A.

Partisanship.--Intergenerational transmission of partisanship has been a staple of scholars in the field of political socialization as well as electoral behavior and political parties. One of the indicators used here is the standard 7-point party identification measure. The second indicator, presidential vote choice, is based on the partisan direction of the vote cast in the election most proximate to the survey date.

Group-related attitudes.--Attachments to and images of prominent groups are integral parts of American politics and often serve as shortcuts for individual decision-making. Two measures are based on feeling thermometer scores. One consists of the difference between ratings of Blacks and Whites, and a second of the difference between ratings of big business and labor.<sup>6</sup>

Civil liberties and civil rights.--A hallmark of the era in which the class of 1965 came of age was an emphasis on the doctrines of civil libertarianism as stressed especially by the free speech, civil rights, and anti-war movements. Popular depictions of generation gaps evolved out of such movements. One indicator in this attitude domains consists of a two-item index assessing the individual's tolerance of non-conformity in the local community. A second registers the respondents' opinions regarding prayers in public schools, and the third references the respondents' views about the role of the federal government in school integration.

Political trust.--Of all the measures employed in the project, this one has undergone the most

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<sup>6</sup>We used difference scores for substantive and methodological reasons. Substantively, it is the relative assessment of business and labor, or whites and blacks that is of interest. Methodologically, difference scores control for the possibility that respondents tend to favor high or low scores on the thermometer measures.

drastic change at the aggregate level, the relatively high scores accorded the federal government having plummeted over time. The standard five items also found in the NES instruments were used to build a political trust index.

Political engagement--Although we have extensive participation histories for each generation, no 1965 entry for G2 members exists inasmuch as they were just finishing high school at the time. Consequently, we rely on two measures that are available throughout. One is the conventional self-evaluation of how often the individual thinks "about what's going on in government." A second indicator is very objective and consists of a knowledge index based on the number of correct answers to five factual questions.

Religious orientations--A fundamental manifestation of family-influenced socialization is that of religious identification, beliefs, and behavior (e.g., Glass, Bengston, and Dunham 1986, McCready N.d.). In order to ascertain if the processes characterizing the results in the political realm are restricted or more generalizable, we employ two measures of religiosity: frequency of church attendance and belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. While nominally indicators of religious orientations, these two indicators also have strong political manifestations (e.g., Miller and Shanks 1996, chs. 9-10, Legee and Kellstedt 1993).

### **Patterns of Parent-Child Correspondence across Time and Generations**

One way to assess the staying power of parental influence consists of lagging the pair correspondence over time, using the 1965 soundings as the baseline. This procedure portrays how similar the offspring remain to their parents, as of 1965, as they traverse the life course. To accomplish this we regress the child's score on the twelve measures at the four points in time against the parent's score as of 1965. We use unstandardized regression coefficients instead of the more customary product-moment coefficients due to the wide variation in the marginal distributions that our measures undergo over the course of thirty-two years and four surveys. The regression coefficients are far less sensitive to these

variations (Barton and Parsons 1977).<sup>7</sup> For ease of comparability we have also rescaled all the measures to run from 0 to 1.

As Table 1 reveals, and in conformity with previous reports (Jennings and Niemi 1968), pair correspondence varied considerably at the beginning point in 1965. Our interest lies more in the over-time configurations, but it is worth noting that the highest concordance tends to be on objects that are more concrete, salient, long-lived, and affect laden. Accordingly, measures involving partisanship, religion, race, and cognition lead the way. Perhaps the most inexplicable low relationship is that of political interest, where we might expect higher consonance on the basis of family socio-economic status alone. As we will demonstrate subsequently, certain factors do serve to heighten that relationship.

Attributes displaying more than a modicum of parent-child agreement (aside from political knowledge) in 1965 underwent a falloff by 1973. Those declines accord full well with theories (Erikson 1968; Mannheim 1928) and findings (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Jennings and Stoker 1999) about lability during young adulthood. Such lability should result in lowered parent-child agreement. Much smaller declines characterize the 1982 and 1997 figures. Even by the latter year, however, with G2 now at age 50, reasonably strong traces of parental influence remain for those measures beginning at a higher level of concordance. Nevertheless, the attrition in concordance over time rather effectively undercuts hypotheses about latent or delayed manifestations of parental influence. The 1965 G1-1997 G2 coefficients underscore this point most vividly because the age of G2 in 1997 approximated the mean age

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<sup>7</sup> One other plausible measure of parent-child similarity is the intraclass correlation coefficient (Gonzales and Griffin 2000, McGraw and Wong, 1996). Unlike the Pearson correlation between the parent and child variables, the intraclass correlation taps absolute rather than relative similarity, and does not assume that the relationship between the two variables is linear. Like the Pearson correlation, but unlike the unstandardized regression coefficient, it builds in no assumption about the causal direction between the parent and child variables. That said, the basic findings of this paper are confirmed when using either of these alternative measures of similarity.

of G1 in 1965.

Lagged correspondence of the type just displayed constitutes a demanding test of the transmission model. It assumes a rather constant political environment, to say nothing of life stage permanence. Yet neither of these is constant. Both generations are living through whatever political changes are occurring in the environment and G2 in particular is experiencing dramatic life stage transitions. For this reason alone, we would expect contemporaneous assessments of correspondence to exceed those of a lagged nature, if indeed the children are carrying response predispositions "inherited" from their parents.

These expectations are only partly born out, as a comparison of Table 2 with Table 1 reveals. The 1973 and 1982 parent-child correspondence coefficients differ rather little on a majority of the measures according to whether they are lagged or contemporaneous. Most of these measures involve relatively affect-free properties, such as interest or knowledge, or relatively stable attitude objects such as the political parties.

Three measures, however, do show higher contemporaneous associations, so much so that the prayer in school and business/labor evaluations exceed by a modest margin their 1965 starting points. Two of the measures--school integration and school prayers--are concrete, contentious issues that have evoked considerable public controversy and polarization during the time span being covered. The political terrain has altered and, for the younger generation, the presence of school age children for many of them has altered their life space. Though not as emotive in content, the political environment has also altered with respect to the business/labor nexus, and the occupational progress of the second generation marks a life stage change with the potential for altering views of labor and business. Thus contemporaneous exceeds lagged agreement in precisely the arenas where it should if predispositions are being passed down, arenas marked by alterations in issue space and susceptible to alterations in life space.

Having observed the dynamics at work in the dyads composed by Generations 1 and 2, we turn next to the dynamics provided by the pairing of Generations 2 and 3. Members of G2 are now cast in their role as socializers, rather than socializees. Because G3 ranges in age and is older on average than

was G2 in 1965, the comparisons between the two sets of pairs lack exactness. To compensate for that, and to make a virtue out of variability, we distinguish two subsets of the new pairs, those including children 16-20 years of age and those 24-28. The former have a mean age of 18, which equals that for G2 in 1965, and the latter a mean age of 26, which equals G2 as of 1973. As the headings in Table 3 make clearer, this enables a comparison of the two dyads based on offspring in their late teens and in their mid-twenties.

Two comparisons command attention. First consider columns 1 and 2, when the offspring are in their late teens. Not too surprisingly, the more recent pairs resemble the original ones in terms of what kinds of attributes are most likely to be matched, the reversal on school integration and business-labor evaluations being the obvious exceptions.<sup>8</sup> Correspondence on the two measures of religiosity also shows some change across generations, being heightened for G2-G3. More surprisingly, correspondence in the fresh pairs essentially equals or surpasses that found in the original pairs. We say surprisingly, due to the generally held notions about the declining solidity of nuclear families over the past three decades. Of special relevance to students of political partisanship are the uncannily similar coefficients for party identification and vote preference, vivid testimony to the centrality of partisanship as a socialization outcome despite contentions about the decline of parties in American politics.

The second comparison (columns 3 and 4) looks at the dyads when the offspring are in their mid-twenties. Only one of the differences between the two sets of dyads reaches statistical significance (business vs. labor), which again belies the assumption that weakening familial ties would depress levels of parental emulation. Moreover, to the extent that differences do occur, the more recent pairs are more

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<sup>8</sup>We say more about these reversals below. Two items are missing from the list of measures involving G3--political knowledge due to the self-administered questionnaire instrument, and the Whites-Black measure due to a grievous oversight.

congruent than the older ones.<sup>9</sup>

Data for the more recent pairs on measures not available in 1965 also bear on the replicability of family transmission patterns across the generations. Although we show results for both younger and older pairs, the comparisons across items stand out (Table 4). As with Table 3, correspondence is highest on measures tapping general partisan orientations. Children are also quite likely to adopt the ideological identification of the parent. As expected, transmission on more specific topics tends to drop off, though remaining quite strong on government aid to Blacks and statistically significant in all but one case (legalization of marijuana, among the 16-20 year-olds).

On balance, the patterns of political reproduction do not differ appreciably across the three generations. In each generation, parents were most successful in passing along their general partisan (and in G2-G3, ideological) orientations to their children. They were modestly to markedly less successful on other political attributes. Despite substantial changes in the aggregate distributions on many of the measures employed here, the rates of transmission from parent to child remained relatively stable. In this respect the 1965 high school graduates do not appear as *sui generis*. Their own children, socialized in a strikingly different social and political era, were about as likely as they were to follow in their parents' political, and religious, footsteps.

At the same time, the political context can affect which political views children acquire from their parents. The diminished correspondence on school integration for G2-G3 relative to G1-G2 makes perfect sense given the changing nature of the political environment. The school integration issue, while not entirely absent from the contemporary political agenda, has lost the center-stage it held in the 1960s. And the greater correspondence on evaluations of business vs. labor reflects the greater significance of

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<sup>9</sup>In addition, a comparison of columns 1 and 3 with 2 and 4 indicates more over-time attrition in correspondence on the part of the original pairs. Strictly speaking, the G1-G2 over-time comparison (columns 1-3) utilizes a true panel (same subjects) whereas the G2-G3 comparison (columns 2-4) involves a pseudo panel (different subjects).

this dimension to politics in the 80s and 90s than to politics in the 60s, as over-time analyses of data on national samples have indicated (Jennings and Stoker 1999). The political selves that parents present to their children reflect the salient political issues of the time.

### **What Increases Transmission?**

Although transmission rates vary systematically across attitudes and across political periods, they also vary systematically across families. In this section, we evaluate two propositions about the circumstances under which transmission rates will be improved. One proposition, derived from social learning theory, is that the transmission of political beliefs and attitudes from parents to children will be higher in more politicized family environments. Political engagement on the part of the parents should generate more opportunities for giving signals within the family, and hence, encourage more learning on the part of the child. Similarly, low levels of parent politicization should leave the child either bereft or relatively open to influence from other socializing agents, which, in turn, should discourage political consonance between parent and child.

We measure family politicization through an index formed from two components (see Appendix A). One component is a six-item index of parental political engagement, which distinguishes those who have participated actively in politics from those who have not. The second is a measure of the frequency of political discussion in the family, as reported by the child--a more direct, albeit subjective, indicator of the strength of political communication flows between parent and child. The analysis contrasts the transmission rates of parent-child pairs across levels of family politicization.

A second expectation also derives from social learning theory, informed by work in the area of belief systems. Parent-to-child transmission rates for any given political (or religious) attribute should be influenced by the clarity and the consistency of the cues that parents provide. As research over the past thirty years has demonstrated, this is likely to vary both across individuals and across political topics. While most citizens tend to form durable views about the political parties, presidential candidates, and issues involving morality, religion, and race relations, individual differences in attitude strength and

stability still persist (Alwin, Cohen, and Newcomb 1991; Converse 1974; Converse and Markus 1979; Sears 1983; Sears and Valentino 1997). Similarly, even on issues that escape the attention and interest of most Americans, small concerned “issue publics” still exist. As Jennings and Niemi (1968, 175) hypothesized, but did not empirically evaluate, this variation should matter to the transmission process.<sup>10</sup>

It seems unlikely that many cues would be given off over matters about which the parents were unsure or held a fluctuating opinion. Even in the event of numerous cues in unstable situations, the ambivalent or ambiguous nature of the cues would presumably yield instability in the child. In either case, the articulation between parent and child beliefs would be tempered.

To measure consistency in cue-giving we constructed an index of the parent's response stability. For the G1-G2 analysis, parent responses from the 1965, 1973, and 1982 waves were used to build an index, for each variable, indicating response stability across the period (see Appendix A). Perfectly stable parents anchored one end of the index while parents with large fluctuations from wave to wave anchored the other. Although stability reflects data gathered well after the child left the parent's home, we use this as an indicator of the consistency of signals while the child was being socialized. Our assumption is that the more stable the attitude from 1965-1982, the stronger the messages provided to the child in the 1950s and 1960s. We follow the same general procedure for the G2-G3 analysis, but here we gauge stability across the 1973-1982-1997 period for the G2 parents, as they aged from 25 to 50 and reared the children that make up G3.

Notice that this measure assesses the consistency of the messages provided by parents to children even on non-attitudinal items. Stability in the parent's pattern of church attendance, for example, indicates a childhood environment building strong habits of religious involvement or non-involvement. Further, even if some of the instability observed across time is true change, as must surely be true given the long panel periods, that does not render the parental stability indicator problematic for our purposes.

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<sup>10</sup>Tedin (1974, 1980), however, demonstrated the significance of parent issue salience and importance in heightening parent-child similarity.

If the parent's political views were in flux, this should mean that more ambiguous messages were being conveyed to the child. Parent-child correspondence should be diminished relative to the case where the parent's orientations were more durable.

Tables 5-7 contain the findings. The results in Table 5 treat the G1-G2 pairs; Table 6 provides comparable results for G2-G3 pairs; and Table 7 provides results on additional variables available only for G2-G3. Each table contains correspondence coefficients for pairs where family politicization is either high or low (column 1), and where the parent's stability on the variable in question is either high or low (column 2). As with earlier tables, these coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients indicating the effect of the parent's response in 1965 (G1-G2) or in 1997 (G2-G3) on their child's response in that year. Statistically significant differences between the "high" and "low" coefficients are highlighted.<sup>11</sup>

Turning first to the results based on politicization, we see rather limited effects on parent-child correspondence for generations 1 and 2 (Table 5, column 1). Congruence is typically higher under highly politicized environments, but only in the case of party identification, vote choice, and views about the Bible are these differences in the expected direction and statistically significant. Indeed, similarity on school integration is significantly lower among politicized pairs. This finding reflects the powerful period forces of the times. Youth in 1965 rendered more support to school integration than did their parents, a discrepancy most common among the more politicized families. Inferentially, the youth from politicized homes were already being shifted away from their parents' views by the civil rights movement that surrounded them.

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<sup>11</sup>These coefficients were generated by multiple regression models that treated the child's response as the dependent variable, the parent's response as the independent variable, family politicization as a second independent variable (or, in turn, the parent's stability), and the product-interaction between the two. Statistical significance is indicated by the test on the interaction term. Coefficients found in the table pertain to the low and high endpoints of the family politicization index (column 1) and the parental stability scales (column 2).

The results for generations 2 and 3 are more consistent (Tables 6-7, column 1). Again we see strong effects for basic partisan orientations: party identification, vote choice, relative evaluations of the political parties, and feelings toward Bob Dole vs. Bill Clinton. In each of these cases, transmission rates are spectacularly higher among the most politicized pairs. Correspondence, in fact, hovers near zero for children emerging from apolitical homes, even on these basic political orientations.

Further underscoring the importance of family politicization are the effects found on other political attitudes for G2-G3. Large differences in parent-child congruence appear for two other general political orientations--political trust and political ideology--as well as for three specific political attitudes: evaluations of business vs. labor, evaluation of the women's movement, and opinions on government job assistance. Greater parent-child congruence on these three attitudes among politicized families springs from the contemporary political environment; these issues loomed large in orienting the partisan and ideological stances of the G2 parents in the 1980s and 1990s (Jennings and Stoker 1999). Overall, then, families marked by parent political engagement and frequent political interchanges are families fostering the transmission of political attitudes and identities from parent to child.

Still, in many respects the differences in levels of parental stability produce the most striking effects (Tables 5-7, second column). When the parent's attitudes are unstable, transmission is weak or nonexistent. But when they are strong and fixed, transmission rates are high, often dramatically so. Among pairs characterized by high levels of parental stability, correspondence levels regarding specific issues are often of a similar magnitude to those for party identification and vote choice. Even when the differences in correspondence are not statistically significant, they typically are in the right direction and sizable in magnitude, with t-statistics approaching statistically significant values.

Moreover, parental stability influences correspondence in a number of cases where family politicization does not, including prayer in the school and civic tolerance for both sets of pairs, and school integration, aid to Blacks, and legalization of marijuana for G2-G3. This patterning presumably reflects the importance of clear and consistent parental messages on political matters not ordinarily the subject of

political conversation in the family. Whereas high levels of parental political engagement and family political discussion encourage parent-child consonance in orientations toward basic political objects such as the political parties and presidential candidates, or in attitudes on issues of heightened significance to the political controversies of the times, its effects are not felt on more peripheral matters. In such cases, what is critical to parent-child transmission is whether the parent holds clear and consistent views.

At the same time, parental stability appears to be inconsequential in some instances. In particular, the estimated effects are trivial or even reversed in direction on political trust (both G1-G2 and G2-G3), and opinion on the U.S. role in Vietnam (G2-G3). Considering the political environment in the periods under investigation, parental instability in these cases most likely reflects true change rather than weak attitudes. Even so, we would expect stable parents to successfully transmit their views to their children, but the magnitude of the events reshaping attitudes on these questions apparently nullifies the parental influence.

Importantly, the effects of family politicization and parental stability documented in Tables 5-7 all remain significant when their effects are estimated simultaneously (results not shown).<sup>12</sup> Family politicization and parental stability are complementary, with each elevating the likelihood that children will adopt the political orientations of the parents. They are unlikely to do so when the family environment is apolitical and the parents have unstable political (and religious) attributes; but similarity across generations is the norm when the home environment is more politicized and when parents provide unambiguous signals about where they stand. In sum, the political texture of the family strongly conditions the reproduction of parental attributes among late adolescents.

### **The Long-Term Consequences of Family Transmission**

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<sup>12</sup>We estimated models treating the child's responses as dependent, with five independent variables: the parent's response, family politicization, parental stability, and the interaction between parent's response and the latter two variables. In each instance, the findings confirm those presented in Tables 5-7, which contains the separately estimated effects of family politicization and parental stability.

In the preceding sections we have demonstrated the trail of parental influence in the customary way, as indexed by the association between parental and offspring attitudes. Now we shift the focus, somewhat, to ask how early socialization experiences affect the offspring as they wend their way through life. Are patterns of adult political development influenced by the early acquisition of parental views? If children are at least partly the product of their parents' role as political socializers, then the degree of continuity among the socializees should represent the residue of parental influence over time

To evaluate this expectation, it is necessary to differentiate parent-child dyads according to the degree to which the child begins the journey through adulthood imbued with parental political attributes. Offspring who most resemble their parents should, according to this argument, exhibit more over-time persistence than those less like their parents. If no differences in persistence emerge, this would seriously undermine any argument about the importance of the early political socialization within the family. Those whose derive their early political views from their parents would be indistinguishable from those whose early political views lack this parental grounding.

The design of the project makes possible such a test of parental influence. We have the initial parent-child agreement patterns as of 1965, which establish a baseline. Because of the four waves of observations on G2, we have three panel periods for purposes of calculating rates of individual-level stability. Thus, we can evaluate the continuity the youth exhibited from 1965-1973 (age 18-26), from 1973-1982 (age 26-35), and from 1982-1997 (age 35-50), comparing those whose initially adopted their parent's view with those who did not. To estimate the degree of initial parent-child similarity we cross-tabulated parent and child scores on each of the individual measures to be examined and divided them according to their level of correspondence (see Appendix A). To gauge over-time correspondence, we calculated Pearson continuity correlations.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> We report Pearson continuity correlations because of their ease of interpretation. All findings in Table 8 (and Table 9, which also presents Pearson continuity correlations) are replicated if we use OLS regression coefficients to gauge continuity, regressing the variable at time 2 upon the variable at time 1.

Table 8 contains the results. Regardless of agreement level, stability tended to increase, often quite substantially, between periods one and two and then to change modestly between periods two and three. This pattern reflects the special impact of young adulthood on individual political development.<sup>14</sup> Of more immediate relevance are the comparisons between the high and low correspondence groups. The results are a bit mixed, but two features stand out.

First, high correspondence was most decisive during the initial panel period, 1965-1973. Adolescents who were initially most like their parents were more stable during this period, though only decidedly so on matters concerning partisanship, race, and religion.<sup>15</sup> The significance of this pattern derives from the fact that the eight years covered by the early panel represent a time of enormous change and challenge to young adults, including new endeavors, personal relationships, residential locations, and "adult-level" contact with the political world. Those young adults entering the time frame more securely attached to the political "apron strings" of their parents were more likely to withstand the novelties they were to encounter. Those less anchored in that way proved to be far more vulnerable, and thus more apt to change.

Second, the differences between the high and low correspondence groups diminish and even sometimes reverse direction during the second and third panel periods. This development is almost completely a function of the much larger gains in stability among those starting out with lower levels of agreement with their parents. Apparently, the added years of political experience give this sub-group an additional basis for the strengthening and hardening of their political views. Of course, those in higher agreement with their parents have also accumulated more political experience, but this increment comes

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<sup>14</sup> See Jennings and Stoker (1999) for a detailed analysis of the persistence phenomena.

<sup>15</sup> The patterns in Table 8 are even more vivid if we focus only on youth whose parents showed high levels of stability--that is, if we focus only on youth receiving strong parental cues. It should also be noted that we are gauging correspondence with only one parent; here, and elsewhere in the paper, the findings would presumably be stronger if we were able to take both parents into account.

on top of a base already laid down by their greater consonance with their parents as well as levels of higher stability that had already been achieved between 1965 and 1973. By contrast, the gains in the low correspondence group rested but weakly on the bedrock of their parents' stances.

What we see, then, is a different pattern of political development across the groups according to the degree of initial parent/child correspondence.<sup>16</sup> For those who exit childhood without having embraced their parents' views, the early years of adulthood are an especially critical period of political development. As they make the transition to adulthood, they tend to significantly revise their adolescent points of view. By contrast, those who leave childhood bearing the views of their parents show much more continuity across their late-teen to early-adult years. Though still adapting and growing over this period, they are much more likely to retain the views they inherited from their parents and articulated as adolescents.

Table 9 provides another way of looking at this long-term consequence of early socialization. Here, we examine over-time continuity in the two groups across the full 1965-1997 period. Recall that as of 1997 the "children" were now fifty years old, and some thirty-two years beyond the initial recording of parent-child similarity. To what extent does the fifty year-old adult look like the eighteen year-old adolescent? We gauge this over-time correspondence in both relative and absolute terms. Relative correspondence is indexed by a Pearson continuity correlation, calculated across the 1965-1997 period. Absolute correspondence is indexed by the percentage of those taking the same, or a very similar, position in 1965 and 1997 (see Appendix A).

The pattern of findings in Table 9 mirrors that found in Table 8. Early acquisition of parental

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<sup>16</sup> These differences between the low and high correspondence groups do not appear to be due to some other variable, like education, that also varies across the groups. This conclusion is based on the fact that (1) the correlation between the high/low correspondence variables and others, like education, tend to be low; and (2) the patterns evident in Table 8 emerge even when the analyses are run with controls for such variables.

attributes has lifelong consequences, especially for basic attitudes concerning the political parties (party identification and vote choice) and religion (prayer in the school, view of the Bible), as well as in level of political knowledge. In each of these cases, those individuals bearing the trace of parental influence in 1965 showed higher levels of continuity well into middle age. Thus, for example, while over 60% of the “well-socialized” group retained their childhood party identification at age 50, only 40% of their “poorly socialized” counterparts did so. This longitudinal evidence demonstrates the powerful, enduring effects of successful family transmission.

### **Conclusion**

Our findings and conclusions are powered by the longitudinal nature of the study. This applies most obviously with respect to the replication--and confirmation--of results drawn from earlier research. Transmission rates vary in fairly predictable ways across domains and across families. Significantly, and somewhat surprisingly, these conclusions stem from an analysis of one set of parent-child pairs based on a cohort often dubbed the Protest Generation, and a second based on the so-called Generation X. Notwithstanding the dramatic differences in family structure and politics characterizing their socialization, the reproduction of parental attributes was remarkably similar for these two cohorts, as were the important conditioners of that reproduction. Whatever role parents play in shaping the political character of their offspring has not changed appreciably over time.

Equally significant, the longitudinal design permitted us to uncover parental attributes that affect the inculcation of parent-child correspondence. These features have an enormous degree of influence on the political learning that takes place in pre-adulthood. If parents are politically engaged and frequently discuss politics with the child, transmission rates rise substantially, particularly on topics of general political significance and salience. Regular political events such as campaigns and elections provide socialization opportunities for parents (Valentino and Sears 1998), but as is well-known, not all partake in the general political excitement.

Political reproduction across the generations occurs even more frequently when the parental

attitudes are reasonably consistent across time. On virtually all political (and religious) topics, transmission rates diminish when saliency and conviction are lacking--or so we conclude from the impressive findings based on parental stability. As a consequence, families will differ in what political commodities are being passed on; only if the subject matter is central to the parent will the child tend to resemble the parent. A second consequence concerns the circumstances in which parent-child political fidelity is maximized across orientations. Most children may come to resemble their parents in one or another respect. But only if parents are stable on topics spanning the political spectrum will children reproduce their parents' political character to a much broader extent. Selective reproduction becomes, therefore, a likely outcome.

Multi-wave panel data from the class of 1965 also proved invaluable in identifying the legacy of parental influence in a less obvious way. If children's political development is initiated by their parents, this should matter to how they develop subsequently. It does. Children who acquire political predispositions early in life from their parents are more stable in their early adulthood than are those who "leave home without it." Their predispositions, formed early, do persist. They carry that parental legacy forward, never fully losing the initial correspondence despite forces working to change them along the way. By contrast, those whose socialization in childhood is weak show much more instability well into their adult years. They exhibit a delayed pattern of political development, one where crystallized positions are slow to develop, one more susceptible to influences outside the childhood home.

One substantive area included in our analysis is of particular concern to a wider range of scholars. An early and abiding focus found in studies of political socialization has been that of partisan orientations, which play a central role in affecting electoral outcomes and organizing issue stances. The formation of these orientations thus assumes importance. Spanning three generations and over three decades, the results of our analysis demonstrate the continuing centrality of partisanship as an outcome of familial socialization. Children are more likely to adopt the partisan orientations of the parent than any other political trait. They tend to identify with the same party, to evaluate the Republican and Democratic

parties similarly, to assess the presidential candidates representing the major parties similarly, and to vote in a comparable fashion. The high levels of concordance found for partisan orientations compare favorably with those for the religious attributes of church attendance and interpretations of the Bible. Parents are expected to exert a powerful influence on the religious practices and beliefs of their children. That they exert a similar level of influence on the child's partisan predispositions, which are presumably less central to overall character development, is both striking and significant.

Our overall results raise two particularly intriguing questions. We have mapped the lagged parent-child correspondence over time, which provides a sense of how the initial parental legacy persists. But parents do not stop being parents when the child reaches age 18, and may continue to influence the child in subsequent years. And the offspring, no longer "children," may be exerting influences on the parent in turn. Though the rise over time in contemporary correspondence on certain political attitudes suggests the possibility of later-life influence, this dynamic remains to be analyzed carefully. Parents may be influencing their adult children and vice-versa. Alternatively, attributes that the two share, such as socio-economic status or partisan identification, may be shaping in parallel fashion the development of attitudes on new, or newly salient, issues. This scenario suggests a more complex model of parental influence, one wherein parents inculcate basic orientations, which then influence responses to subsequent political stimuli.

A second intriguing question involves the interaction between politicization and the political climate while the child is still at home. We noted in passing that adolescents emerging from highly politicized homes in 1965 were less likely to adopt the parental position on school integration than were adolescents from apolitical homes. This finding reflects the susceptibility of the politicized children to the broader political forces at work in their environment: They were more likely to reject the anti-integration position taken by many of their parents than were the other children. On the one hand, then, having a politicized family environment typically encourages the child to learn from the parent and to adopt the parent's views. On the other hand, it also leaves the child more attuned to outside political

influences. In periods of upheaval like those of the mid-1960s, or in general when the political environment contains forces antithetical to parental inclinations, this politicization may work against within-family congruence. Understanding how political engagement plays out in such cases, and tracing its implications for aggregate intergenerational change, constitutes another important challenge for future research.

### **Appendix A: Question Wording and Index Construction**

Party Identification Standard 7-point measure. Code: 0=strong Democrat, through 1=strong Republican.

Presidential Vote Choice A vote choice index was formed for each generation in each wave. In 1965, it was based on reported 1964 vote for G1 while for G2 it was based on their voter preference in 1964 (since they were ineligible to vote). In 1973, 1982, and 1997, it was based on voters' reported vote in the previous two presidential elections. If a respondent had valid data for only one of the two elections, that vote contributed to the index. With one exception, each election year was scaled to range from 0 (voted for Democrat) through .5 (Independent) to 1.0 (Republican) and then averaged. The exception concerns Wallace voters in 1968. Because of problems with scaling Wallace voters, they were counted as missing data in 1968. Code: 0=voted consistently Democratic, through 1=voted consistently Republican.

Evaluations of (Big Business-Labor Unions), (Whites-Blacks), (Republicans-Democrats), (Dole-Clinton), and the Women's Movement The difference variables were constructed by subtracting the 0-100° feeling thermometer score for the second group or individual from the score for the first group or individual, and then scaling the resulting variable to range from 0 to 1. E.g., for Business-Labor, 0=most anti-big business/pro-union, through 1=most pro-big business/anti-union). For the evaluation of the Women's Movement, the Feeling Thermometer was simply rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

School Integration "Some people say that the government in Washington should see to it that white and black children are allowed to go to the same schools. Others claim that this is not the government's business. Have you been concerned enough about this question to favor one side over the other? Do you think the government in Washington should see to it that white and black children go to the same schools or stay out of the area as it is none of its business?" Code: 0=stay out, through 1=same schools, with "depends" coded at .5.

Prayer in School "Some people think it is all right for the public schools to start each day with a prayer. Others feel that religion does not belong in the public schools but should be taken care of by the

family and the church. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other?

Which do you think--schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer or religion does not belong in the schools?" Code: 0=religion does not belong, 1=prayers should be allowed, with "depends" coded .5.

Civic Tolerance This variable combines the responses to the following agree/disagree questions: (1) "If someone wanted to make a speech in this community against churches and religion, that person should be allowed to speak." (2) "If a Communist were legally elected to some public office around here, people should allow that person to take office." Each component was scored to range from 0 to 1 and then averaged. Code: 0=least tolerant, through 1=most tolerant.

Political Trust This index is constructed from the five standard NES items used to assess trust in the federal government. Code: 0=lowest political trust, through 1=highest trust.

Interest in Politics "Some people seem to think about what's going on in government most of the time whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, or hardly at all?" Code: 0=hardly at all, through 1=most of the time.

Political Knowledge This variable represents the number of correct responses to five factual questions: (1) "About how many years does a U.S. Senator serve?" (2) "Marshall Tito was a leader in what country?" (3) "Do you happen to know about how many members there are on the States Supreme Court?" (4) "During World War II, which nation had a great many concentration camps for Jews?" (5) "Do you happen to remember whether President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a Republican or a Democrat?" Code: 0=none correct, through 1=all five correct.

Church Attendance "How often do you go to [church/synagogue]? Do you go every week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never?" Code: 0=never, through 1=every week

View of Bible (1) "The Bible is God's word and all it says is true." (2) "The Bible was written by men inspired by God it contains some human errors." (3) "The Bible is a good book because it was written

by wise men, but God had nothing to do with it." (4) "The Bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is worth very little today." Code: 1=God's word; .5=inspired but has errors; 0=good book, or worth little.

Government Job Assistance, Aid to Blacks, Legalization of Marijuana, and Political Ideology These variables reflect responses to questions asking respondents to place themselves on a 7-point scale. The first question in this series was the question on government job assistance, which therefore had a longer stem. The responses were rescaled to range from 0 to 1. Government Job Assistance: "Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Suppose these people are at one end of this scale --at point number 1. Others believe that the government should let each person get ahead on his or her own. Suppose these people are at the other end--at point number 7. And other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?" Aid to Blacks: "Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of Blacks and other minority groups. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves." Legalization of Marijuana: "Some people think that the use of marijuana should be made legal. Others think that the penalties for using marijuana should be set higher than they are now." Political Ideology: "We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative."

Vietnam The wording on this item changed slightly between 1973 and subsequent waves of the study but the response options were constant across time. In 1982 and 1997 the question read: "When you were interviewed in 1973, the Vietnam War was on the minds many people. Looking back, do you think we did the right thing in into the fighting in Vietnam or should we have stayed out?" Code: 0=no, should have stayed out, through 1=yes, did right thing, with "depends" coded .5.

Family Politicization (Tables 5-7) This variable was formed by averaging two components. The first component, a measure of the parent's political engagement, was created by summing the number of "yes" responses to six questions about political participation, including: working for a party, issue, or candidate; attempting to persuade others during election campaigns; attending meetings, rallies, or dinners; displaying campaign buttons or stickers; giving money for campaigns; and voting in the most recent presidential election. Parents were asked if they had participated in any of the non-voting activities in the past ten years (for G1) or since they were last interviewed (for G2). This component was coded to range from 0=no activities, through 1=six activities. The second component was a measure of the frequency of discussion between parent and child. The question was asked of the children in each wave (1965 and 1997), although the wording varied. In 1965 the question read: Do you talk about public affairs and politics with members of your family?" (If Yes) "How often would you say that is--several times a week, a few times a month, or once or twice a year?" This was coded 0=no, through 1=yes, several times a week. In 1997 the question read: "How often do you and your parents talk about any kind of public affairs and politics, that is, anything having to do with local, state, national, or international affairs?" The response options were "very often," "pretty often," "not very often," and "never," which were coded to range from 0 = never, through 1 = very often. Code: 0=lowest level of family politicization, through 1=highest level of family politicization.

Parent's Stability (Tables 5-7) These variables capture the amount of change observed in the parent's responses to a given item over time. Each variable was created in four steps: (1) First, we computed the absolute differences of responses between adjacent waves of the survey; (2) Second, we calculated the average absolute difference across the waves of the survey. We averaged across 65-73 and 73-82 for the 1st Generation, and across 73-82 and 82-97 for the 2nd Generation. Absolutely stable individuals scored 0 and scores increased with instability. (3) Third, we recoded extremely unstable individuals (defined as having z-scores > 3.0 on the index formed from steps 1 & 2), if any, to the next lowest score found on the variable. This was done to reduce the leverage of these outliers on the

analysis. (4) We scaled the variable to range from 0 (completely stable) to 1 (maximal instability observed, caveat from step 3 aside). In the analysis having to do with feelings toward (Dole-Clinton) in Table 6, parent's stability was calculated using evaluations of the presidential candidates running in 1972, 1980, and 1996: evaluations of (Nixon-McGovern) as assessed in 1973, evaluations of (Reagan-Carter) as assessed in 1982, and evaluations of (Dole-Clinton) as assessed in 1997. Code: 0 = very stable (on average, no differences between responses in 3 waves of the survey), through 1 = very unstable (on average, the maximum absolute difference across waves of the survey).

Parent-Child Correspondence (Tables 8 and 9) A separate, dichotomous variable was created for each item to capture the extent of parent-child agreement in 1965. In general, the “high correspondence” group was defined as those where the parent and child had the same response on the variable in question. Except in the following cases, we used the variable as it is described later in this Appendix. For Party Identification, the “high” group was those who articulated the same party preference in response to the root party identification question (“Democratic, Republican, Independent, or what”), even though the analysis makes use of the full 7-point party identification scale (as described below). For Presidential Vote Choice, the “high” group was those who articulated the same candidate preference in the 1964 election. This increases the size of the sample available for analysis in Tables 8 and 9, since it includes voting and non-voting parents. For Big Business-Labor Unions and Whites-Blacks, the “high” group included those whose scores on the original difference scale (which ranged from -100 to +100) were 10 points apart or less.

1965-1996 Absolute Continuity (Table 9) The 1965 and 1997 variables were first recoded, if necessary, to create a meaningful number of distinct categories. Then, people were categorized as stable or unstable on the basis of whether they gave the same or different responses in 1965 and 1997. For Party Identification, we used the 3-category root party identification question (“Democratic, Republican, Independent, or what?”). For Presidential Vote Choice, we first created a variable averaging vote preference in the 1992 and 1996 elections. Respondents were scored as having a

Democratic preference in both elections a Republican preference in both elections, or some other mix. Over-time continuity was gauged by comparing responses to this variable with responses to the 1964 Vote Preference variable. For Big-Business-Labor Unions and Whites-Blacks, the variables were first recoded into 3-point scales (collapsing 0-.44, .45-.55, and .56-1). For Political Trust and Political Knowledge, the original scales were also collapsed into three point scales by combining the two low, the two middle, and the two high categories. The other variables were not recoded prior to gauging over-time continuity.

### **Appendix B: Comment on Indicator Unreliability**

Unreliability varies across indicators and will bias estimates of parent-child correspondence downward. At the same time, when viewed as a property of items and not of respondents, it should not alter conclusions about differences in parent-child correspondence across subgroups (not, that is, unless some form of complex interaction is operating). Worries about measurement error are most obviously important for the conclusions drawn from Tables 3-4 about the ranking of various political (and religious) objects in terms of parent-child correspondence. Following the models laid out by Dalton (1980), we used multiple indicators in a covariance structure model to estimate the relationships between parent and child responses accounting for measurement error in the indicators. We used the following component variables to identify unique factors (1) party identification and vote, (2) evaluations of big business and labor unions, (3a) evaluations of Whites, Blacks, and opinion on school integration (1965, G1-G2), (3b) opinion on school integration and on government assistance to Blacks (1997, G2-G3), (4) the components of the political tolerance scale, (5) the components of the political trust scale, (6) the components of the political knowledge scale, and (7) frequency of church attendance and view of the bible. Doing so resulted in stronger relationships, as expected. Correspondence on partisan orientations and religious attributes remained higher than most other political topics. Correspondence on racial attitudes, however, increased appreciably, and paralleled levels shown by partisan orientations and religiosity.

**TABLE 1**  
**THE PERSISTENCE OF EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS**

Year (Age of Child)	1965 (18)	1973 (26)	1982 (35)	1997 (50)
Party Identification	.56	.31	.33	.23
Presidential Vote Choice	.58	.35	.34	.26
Evaluation of (Business-Labor)	.07	.06	.06	.06
Evaluation of (Whites-Blacks)	.33	.22	.22	.15
School Integration	.35	.08	.12	.08
Prayer in the School	.35	.27	.28	.21
Civic Tolerance	.13	.12	.16	.12
Political Trust	.18	-.01	.00	.03
Interest in Politics	.11	.09	.08	.12
Political Knowledge	.45	.47	.43	.45
Church Attendance	.41	.26	.32	.20
View of Bible	.39	.33	.35	.28

*Note:* Entries are OLS coefficients obtained by regressing the child's attitude or participation response (as obtained in the year indicated in each column) on the parent's response in 1965. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1. Each analysis was based on all pairs for whom we had (a) four waves of valid 2nd generation data and (b) three waves of valid 1st generation data on the variable in question. The Ns range from 342 to 636.

**TABLE 2**  
**CONTEMPORANEOUS PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE OVER TIME**  
**FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS**

Year (Average Age: Parent & Child)	1965 (46 & 18)	1973 (54 & 26)	1982 (63 & 35)
Party Identification	.56	.35	.38
Presidential Vote Choice	.58	.48	.38
Evaluation of (Business-Labor)	.07	.17	.22
Evaluation of (Whites-Blacks)	.33	.26	.20
School Integration	.35	.21	.27
Prayer in the School	.35	.30	.44
Civic Tolerance	.13	.18	.17
Political Trust	.18	.02	.03
Interest in Politics	.11	.10	.07
Political Knowledge	.45	.41	.38
Church Attendance	.41	.31	.34
View of Bible	.39	.35	.34

*Note:* Entries are OLS coefficients obtained from regressing the child's response on the parent's response. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1. The 1st and 2nd generation analysis was based on all pairs for whom we had (a) four waves of valid 2nd generation data and (b) three waves of valid 1st generation data on the variable in question. The 2nd and 3rd generation analysis was based on all available pairs where the child was aged 16-20 (2nd column) or aged 24-28 (4th column). The Ns range from 342 to 636 depending on missing data for the variable in question.

**TABLE 3**  
**CONTEMPORANEOUS PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**COMPARING FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS WITH SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS**

	Youth in Late Teens		Youth in Mid-20s	
	1st and 2nd Generations (1965)	2nd and 3rd Generations (1997)	1st and 2nd Generations (1973)	2nd and 3rd Generations (1997)
Party Identification	.56	.51	.35	.39
Presidential Vote Choice	.58	.56	.48	.43
Big Business-Labor Unions	<b>.07</b>	<b>.27</b>	<b>.17</b>	<b>.36</b>
Whites-Blacks	.33	na	.26	na
School Integration	<b>.35</b>	<b>.11</b>	.21	.16
Prayer in the School	.35	.39	.30	.44
Civic Tolerance	.13	.23	.18	.20
Political Trust	.18	.09	.02	.12
Interest in Politics	.11	.20	.10	.16
Political Knowledge	.45	na	.41	na
Church Attendance	<b>.41</b>	<b>.61</b>	.31	.39
View of Bible	<b>.39</b>	<b>.58</b>	.35	.40

*Note:* Entries are OLS coefficients obtained from regressing the child's response on the parent's response. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1. The 1st and 2nd generation analysis was based on all pairs for whom we had (a) four waves of valid 2nd generation data and (b) three waves of valid 1st generation data on the variable in question. The Ns range from 342 to 636 depending on missing data for the variable. The 2nd and 3rd generation analysis was based on all available pairs where the child was aged 16-20 (2nd column, N=203) or aged 24-28 (4th column, N=288).

**TABLE 4**  
**CONTEMPORANEOUS PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS**

	Youth Aged 16-20	Youth Aged 24-28
Evaluation of (Republicans-Democrats)	.61	.51
Evaluation of (Dole-Clinton)	.55	.51
Political Ideology	.53	.52
Vietnam	.36	.23
Evaluation of Women's Movement	.36	.35
Aid to Blacks	.49	.33
Government Job Assistance	.21	.15
Legalization of Marijuana	.05	.26

*Note:* Entries are OLS coefficients obtained from regressing the child's response on the parent's response. All variables are coded to range from 0 to 1. The analysis was based on all available pairs where the child was aged 16-20 (N=203) or aged 24-28 (N=288).

**TABLE 5**  
**EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**BY FAMILY POLITICIZATION AND PARENT'S STABILITY**  
**FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS**

	Family Politicization	Parent's Stability
Party Identification		
<u>High</u>	<b>.68</b>	<b>.61</b>
<u>Low</u>	<b>.39</b>	<b>.37</b>
Presidential Vote Choice		
<u>High</u>	<b>.69</b>	<b>.63</b>
<u>Low</u>	<b>.42</b>	<b>.45</b>
Big Business-Labor Unions		
<u>High</u>	.16	.17
<u>Low</u>	.00	-.01
Whites-Blacks		
<u>High</u>	.46	<b>.55</b>
<u>Low</u>	.18	<b>.11</b>
School Integration		
<u>High</u>	<b>.24</b>	<b>.47</b>
<u>Low</u>	<b>.52</b>	<b>.16</b>
Prayer in the School		
<u>High</u>	.36	<b>.59</b>
<u>Low</u>	.35	<b>-.09</b>
Civic Tolerance		
<u>High</u>	.19	<b>.21</b>
<u>Low</u>	.04	<b>-.03</b>
Political Trust		
<u>High</u>	.25	.21
<u>Low</u>	.08	.18
Interest in Politics		
<u>High</u>	--	<b>.19</b>
<u>Low</u>	--	<b>-.05</b>
Political Knowledge		
<u>High</u>	.41	.40
<u>Low</u>	.40	.27
Church Attendance		
<u>High</u>	.44	.45
<u>Low</u>	.37	.26
View of Bible		
<u>High</u>	<b>.55</b>	<b>.49</b>
<u>Low</u>	<b>.20</b>	<b>.16</b>

*Note:* Entries are coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1965 response (coded 0-1) on the child's 1965 response (coded 0-1). "High" and "Low" refer to high and low values on the variable named in the column. Highlighted coefficients are significantly different from each other at  $p < .05$  or better. See the text for further details.

**TABLE 6**  
**EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**BY FAMILY POLITICIZATION AND PARENT'S STABILITY**  
**SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS**

	Family Politicization	Parent's Stability
Party Identification		
<u>High</u>	<b>.75</b>	<b>.48</b>
<u>Low</u>	<b>.06</b>	<b>.24</b>
Presidential Vote Choice		
<u>High</u>	<b>.74</b>	.48
<u>Low</u>	<b>.12</b>	.24
Big Business-Labor Unions		
<u>High</u>	<b>.50</b>	.39
<u>Low</u>	<b>.13</b>	.13
Whites-Blacks		
<u>High</u>	na	na
<u>Low</u>	na	na
School Integration		
<u>High</u>	.10	<b>.24</b>
<u>Low</u>	.14	<b>-.04</b>
Prayer in the School		
<u>High</u>	.57	<b>.56</b>
<u>Low</u>	.38	<b>.05</b>
Civic Tolerance		
<u>High</u>	.15	<b>.32</b>
<u>Low</u>	.18	<b>-.01</b>
Political Trust		
<u>High</u>	<b>.28</b>	.09
<u>Low</u>	<b>-.02</b>	.14
Interest in Politics		
<u>High</u>	.--	<b>.38</b>
<u>Low</u>	.--	<b>-.06</b>
Political Knowledge		
<u>High</u>	na	na
<u>Low</u>	na	na
Church Attendance		
<u>High</u>	<b>.54</b>	<b>.54</b>
<u>Low</u>	<b>.31</b>	<b>.10</b>
View of Bible		
<u>High</u>	.48	<b>.64</b>
<u>Low</u>	.46	<b>.33</b>

*Note:* Entries are coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1997 response (coded 0-1) on the child's 1997 response (also coded 0-1). "High" and "Low" refer to high and low values on the variable named in the column. Highlighted coefficients are significantly different from each other at  $p < .05$  or better. See the text for further details.

**TABLE 7**  
**EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**BY FAMILY POLITICIZATION AND PARENT'S STABILITY**  
**SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS -- ADDITIONAL VARIABLES**

	Family Politicization	Parent's Stability
Evaluation of (Republicans-Democrats)		
<u>High</u>	<i>.83</i>	<i>.82</i>
<u>Low</u>	<i>.08</i>	<i>.06</i>
Evaluation of (Dole-Clinton)		
<u>High</u>	<i>.76</i>	<i>.81</i>
<u>Low</u>	<i>.15</i>	<i>.13</i>
Political Ideology		
<u>High</u>	<i>.72</i>	.58
<u>Low</u>	<i>.26</i>	.40
Vietnam		
<u>High</u>	.37	.16
<u>Low</u>	.07	.22
Evaluation of Women's Movement		
<u>High</u>	<i>.71</i>	<i>.50</i>
<u>Low</u>	<i>.28</i>	<i>.08</i>
Aid to Blacks		
<u>High</u>	.44	<i>.54</i>
<u>Low</u>	.27	<i>.13</i>
Government Job Assistance		
<u>High</u>	<i>.50</i>	.33
<u>Low</u>	<i>-.05</i>	.06
Legalization of Marijuana		
<u>High</u>	.30	<i>.34</i>
<u>Low</u>	.23	<i>.02</i>

*Note:* Entries are coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1997 response (coded 0-1) on the child's 1997 response (also coded 0-1). "High" and "Low" refer to high and low values on the variable named in the column. Italicized coefficients are significantly different from each other at  $p < .05$  or better. See the text for further details.

**TABLE 8**  
**THE STABILITY OF THE CHILD'S POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS OVER TIME,**  
**BY LEVEL OF EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS**

	1965-1973	1973-1982	1982-1997
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>			
High Correspondence	.55	.64	.67
Low Correspondence	.32	.63	.58
<b>PRESIDENTIAL VOTE CHOICE</b>			
High Correspondence	.39	.52	.42
Low Correspondence	.02	.47	.26
<b>BIG BUSINESS-LABOR UNIONS</b>			
High Correspondence	.19	.44	.55
Low Correspondence	.25	.53	.51
<b>WHITES-BLACKS</b>			
High Correspondence	.41	.61	.58
Low Correspondence	.46	.56	.53
<b>SCHOOL INTEGRATION</b>			
High Correspondence	.21	.28	.38
Low Correspondence	.08	.36	.42
<b>PRAYER IN THE SCHOOL</b>			
High Correspondence	.38	.55	.60
Low Correspondence	.15	.55	.56
<b>CIVIC TOLERANCE</b>			
High Correspondence	.36	.56	.60
Low Correspondence	.34	.54	.60
<b>POLITICAL TRUST</b>			
High Correspondence	.18	.33	.30
Low Correspondence	.18	.35	.38
<b>INTEREST IN POLITICS</b>			
High Correspondence	.39	.44	.57
Low Correspondence	.30	.43	.46
<b>POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE</b>			
High Correspondence	.82	.82	.81
Low Correspondence	.58	.72	.71
<b>CHURCH ATTENDANCE</b>			
High Correspondence	.29	.61	.70
Low Correspondence	.27	.65	.60
<b>VIEW OF BIBLE</b>			
High Correspondence	.52	.64	.64
Low Correspondence	.35	.61	.63

*Note:* Entries are Pearson correlation coefficients, calculated across the waves named in each column. The High and Low correspondence categories distinguish cases by the level of parent/child agreement in 1965. Highlighted coefficients are significantly different at  $p < .10$  (party identification, school integration) or  $p < .05$  (all others). See the text for further details.

**TABLE 9**  
**RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE CONTINUITY IN POLITICAL ORIENTATIONS OVER TIME (1965-1997),**  
**BY LEVEL OF EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE**  
**FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS**

	Relative Continuity, 1965-1997 (Pearson Rs)	Absolute Continuity, 1965-1997 (% Taking Same Stance)
<b>PARTY IDENTIFICATION</b>		
High Correspondence	.31	61.5%
Low Correspondence	.18	40.3%
<b>PRESIDENTIAL VOTE CHOICE</b>		
High Correspondence	.28	51.0%
Low Correspondence	-.10	29.3%
<b>BIG BUSINESS-LABOR UNIONS</b>		
High Correspondence	.13	37.5%
Low Correspondence	.20	42.6%
<b>WHITES-BLACKS</b>		
High Correspondence	.31	54.7%
Low Correspondence	.35	52.4%
<b>SCHOOL INTEGRATION</b>		
High Correspondence	.13	51.5%
Low Correspondence	.04	43.8%
<b>PRAYER IN THE SCHOOL</b>		
High Correspondence	.19	66.3%
Low Correspondence	-.06	36.2%
<b>CIVIC TOLERANCE</b>		
High Correspondence	.32	51.5%
Low Correspondence	.25	50.2%
<b>POLITICAL TRUST</b>		
High Correspondence	.16	16.5%
Low Correspondence	.17	20.9%
<b>INTEREST IN POLITICS</b>		
High Correspondence	.37	56.7%
Low Correspondence	.25	45.5%
<b>POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE</b>		
High Correspondence	.73	72.8%
Low Correspondence	.55	57.9%
<b>CHURCH ATTENDANCE</b>		
High Correspondence	.28	44.1%
Low Correspondence	.29	33.9%
<b>VIEW OF BIBLE</b>		
High Correspondence	.50	64.9%
Low Correspondence	.30	57.2%

*Note:* In the first column, entries are Pearson correlation coefficients for the variable named in the row, calculated across the 1965 and 1997 waves. In the second column, entries indicate the percent of respondents taking the same position on the row variable in both 1965 and 1997. High and Low correspondence categories distinguish cases by the level of parent/child agreement in 1965. See the text, and Appendix A, for further details.

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