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Family Transmission Reexamined**

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Introduction

Writing over thirty years ago, Jennings and Niemi (1968) questioned the conventional wisdom about the role of parents in the political character of their children. By drawing on data collected independently from adolescents and their parents, they demonstrated that the similarity in orientations between parents and their children was highly variable. Especially when judged against the expectations laid down by reliance on retrospective accounts of parental traits (e.g. Hyman 1959), the results appear to downgrade appreciably the transmission model, wherein parental traits were passed on, wittingly or unwittingly, to their offspring. These outcomes were 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 contingent traits 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 Bengtson 1980; Percheron and Jennings 1981; Tedin 1974, 1980). The presence of politically homogeneous parents, and other agents allied with the parents also influenced substantially the fidelity of transmission (Jennings and Niemi 1974, ch. 6; Sebert, Jennings, and Niemi 1974). Contextual factors such as larger opinion climates (Jennings and Niemi 1974, 81-82, 161-62) and party systems (Westholm and Niemi 1992) were also affected within family consonance.¹

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, Bengtson, 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; Valeri 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 early reports, enhanced by the availability of additional longitudinal data, as described in the next section. We address three main topics. One question endemic to the study of intergenerational transmission consists of how long and in what magnitude the parental legacy persists. There are two aspects to this question. One is the degree to which the parental tradition as of the time the offspring is preparing to leave home is carried forward over the life course of the offspring. How much of the parental imprint "sticks" to the child over time? For this purpose we need a series of subsequent observations of the offspring to complement the original observations.

Another aspect of the duration question is the degree to which the parent-child pairs move in unison over time. If both parents and child pair adjust their orientations in response to the same ongoing secular events and processes in similar fashion, there is at least some support for a continuation of the parental legacy. For this purpose we need contemporaneous observations of each pair component. We already know from previous analysis that considerable decay in parent-child concordance, both lagged and contemporaneous, occurs between the late adolescent years and the mid-twenties for most though not all measures (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Beck and Jennings 1991). But this tells us little about the longer term trajectory. It might be, for example, that persistence

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

to decline, to level off, or even to increase as the offspring enter life stages resembling those occupied by their parents and political landscape shifts.

A second central question about the dynamics of parental influence involves the presence of variations across political orientations and sub-group variations among parent-child dyads. As noted above, certain kinds of parental orientations are more successfully implanted by late adolescence than are others. Are these the ones that survive most readily over time? What properties are associated with these traits? We also noted that certain aspects of the parent-child nexus, especially parental characteristics, enhanced the likelihood of political reproduction. Although a variety of such mediating variables have theoretical credentials, can affect parent-child similarity on particular measures, explicitly political characteristics are of particular interest. After all, the subject at hand is *political* socialization.

In terms of social learning theory, transmission success should vary according to the strength of cue giving and reinforcement by part of the socializer. Our analysis will employ two measures to evaluate this expectation, to be explained in more detail below. One of these mediating variables is traditional: the level of politicization within the family. The second capitalizes on the longitudinal design of the study and is an indicator of parent salience and cue giving with respect to specific political orientations.

The third topic we address is that of replication. One potentially troubling aspect of the Jennings and Niemi reports is that they are based on pairs formed from high school seniors of 1965, a cohort coming of age during such dramatic happenings as civil unrest, disturbances, the Vietnam war, political assassinations, and Watergate. That being so, it has been suggested that our findings are cohort-centric, that preceding and succeeding cohorts would show different patterns of relationships, presumably including less faithful political reproduction of their parents (Sears 1990; Sears and Funk 1999).

Although some partial replications do not support this proposition (Allerbeck, Jennings, and Rosenmayr 1979), a more thorough test would include a replication of the measures with a subsequent cohort of parent-child pairs, one where the offspring were socialized under quite different historical circumstances. To make the test even stronger, these pairs should have the same family lineage as the original pairs. Which is to say, a third biological generation should be added to the two already available. One of our major goals, then, is to ascertain to what extent patterns of parent-child correspondence transcend eras.

Study Design

To address these 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 the 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%.² During the first three waves efforts were also made to interview at least one parent, thereby enabling the construction of parent-child pairs as units of analysis. Altogether there are 636 pairs that have survived over the course of the study.³ We refer to such dyads as being composed of Generations 1 (the parents) and 2 (their offspring).

² All respondents were interviewed face-to-face in 1965, as were the great majority in 1973 and 1982 as well, when an abbreviated mail-back 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; computer-assisted technology was used for each mode.

³ Panel attrition and the absence of an initial parent interview account for the difference between the 935 members of the four wave high school senior panel and the 636 parent-child pairs. The retention rate from the original 1556 pairs is 41%.

In addition to reinterviewing Generation 2 in 1997, we also attempted to obtain self-administered data from (all) their offspring 15 and older. This effort resulted in 778 completed questionnaires out of a possible total of 1435, for a response rate of 54%. Respondents were then paired with their parents, thus making up a new set of parent-child pairs that we will refer to as being Generations 2 and 3. Two important features distinguish these pairs from those based on the first two generations. First, in contrast to Generation 2, but similar to Generation 1, the new generation has a variable age range; the mean age is 23. As described in detail in later sections, the age variation is taken into account for some analytical purposes. A second distinguishing feature is that some of these pairs involve parents with multiple children whereas all of the earlier pairs include only one child. Thus, 32% of new pairs are based on one child, 42% on two, 17% on three, and 4% on four.⁵

Description of Measures

In most of what follows we utilize a common set of measures by which to assess the prevalence and patterning of correspondences between parents and their offspring.⁶ Because of our longitudinal 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 commanding both substantive and theoretical interest. A thumbnail description of these measures follows. Detailed descriptions are contained in the Appendix.

Partisanship.--Intergenerational transmission of partisanship has been a staple interest 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 partisan identification measure. The second indicator, presidential vote choice, is based on the partisan direction of the votes cast in the elections 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.

Civil liberties and civil rights.--A hallmark of the era in which the class of 1965 began to come 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 discontent and generation gaps evolved out of such movements. Three relevant indicators of attitudes in this area are at hand. One consists of a two-item index assessing the individual's tolerance of non-conformity in the local community. A second registers the respondent's 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 is the one that has undergone the most drastic change at the aggregate level, the relatively high scores accorded the federal government having plummeted over time. The standard five-item index also found in the NES instruments were used to build a political trust index.

⁴ Among the many reasons for a somewhat lower success rate than anticipated were the incorrect addresses given to the interviewers. Of the 778 questionnaires returned, 10 were stripped of identifying information so we were not able to associate them with a G2 respondent. For pairs analysis, then, the maximum N is 768.

⁵ This feature raises the issue of whether the data should be weighted for analysis. We present unweighted analyses here. Coefficients obtained when analyzing the weighted data (where cases are given weights of 1, 1/3, 1/2, and 1/4 depending on the number of siblings in the dataset) are nearly identical. The results of statistical significance tests also agree.

⁶ In Tables 4 and 7 we also report findings for several measures not available in 1965. These measures will be described subsequently.

Political engagement.--Although we have extensive participation histories for each generation, there is obviously no 1965 for Generation 2 inasmuch as they were just finishing high school, well before much activity is to be expected and several to the introduction of the 18-year old vote. Consequently, we rely on two measures that are available throughout. One is the conventional measure of political interest, a self-evaluation of how often the individual thinks "about what's going on in government." A second indicator, by contrast, is very objective and consists of a knowledge index based on the number of answers to five factual questions.

Religious orientations.--A fundamental manifestation of family-influenced socialization is that of religious identification, beliefs, and behavior (e.g., McCready N.d.). In order to ascertain if the processes characterizing the results in the political restricted or more generalizable, we employ two measures of religiosity. Frequency of church attendance is one measure; 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 in which to assess the staying power of parental influence consists of lagging the pair correspondence over time, 1965 soundings as the baseline. This would portray how similar the offspring remain to their parents, as of 1965, as they travel their 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 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). For ease of comparability we have rescaled all the measures to run from 0 to 1.

As Table 1 reveals, and in conformity with previous reports, pair correspondence varied considerably at the beginning point. Our interest lies more in the over-time configurations, but it is worth noting that the highest concordance tends to be on the more concrete, salient, long-lived, and affect laden. Thus 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 will be demonstrated subsequently, certain factors do serve to heighten such that relationship.

Attributes displaying more than a modicum of parent-child agreement (aside from political knowledge) in 1965 underwent declines by 1973. Those declines accord full well with theories (Erikson 1968; Mannheim 1928) and findings (Jennings and Niemi 1999; 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 Generation 2 at age 50, reasonably strong traces of parental influence remain for those measures beginning at a higher level of concordance. Measures with low initial readings tended to remain so.

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 pass through whatever political changes are occurring in the environment and Generation 2 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 neutral attitude objects such as the political parties.

Three measures do show higher contemporaneous associations, so much so in fact 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 prayer--are concrete, contentious issues that have evoked considerable public controversy and polarization during the time span being studied. 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 issue (Jennings and Stoker 1999), 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: 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. Note that members of Generation 2 are now cast in their role as socializers, rather than socialized. Because Generation 3 ranges in age and is older than was Generation 2 at the outset of the study, the comparisons between the two sets of pairs lack exactness. To compensate for that, and to make a virtue out of deficiency, we have focused on two subsets of new pairs, those with children 16-20 years of age and those 24-28. The former have a mean age of 18, which equals that for Generation 2 in 1965, and the latter a mean age of 26, which equals Generation 2 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.⁷

Two types of comparisons command attention. First consider columns 1 and 2, when the offspring are in their late teens. Surprisingly, the more recent pairs resemble the older 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 exception.⁸ Correspondence on the two measures of religiosity also shows some change across generations, being heightened for G2-G3. Rather more surprisingly, correspondence on the fresh pairs essentially equals or surpasses that found in the original pairs. We say surprisingly, due to the generally held belief about the declining solidity of nuclear families over the past three decades. Of special interest to students of political parties is the uncannily similar coefficients for party identification and vote preference, this in the midst of expressed worries about the future of parties in American politics.

The second comparison looks at the dyads in their mid-twenties. Only one of the differences between the two dyads is statistically significant (business vs. labor), which again belies the assumption that weakening familial ties would depress levels of partisan emulation. And to the extent that differences do occur, the more recent pairs are more congruent than the older ones. A comparison of columns 1 and 3 with 2 and 4 indicates more attrition in correspondence on the part of the original pairs and even a few gains by the second set of pairs.

Data for the more recent pairs on measures not available in 1965 also bear on the replicability of family transmission patterns across the generations. Table 4 displays correspondence rates on several additional measures: evaluations of Republicans vs. Democrats and Bob Dole vs. Bill Clinton, liberal-conservative identification, and opinions on specific issues including U.S. efforts in the women's movement, government aid to blacks, government job assistance, and the legalization of marijuana (see Appendix for details). Although we show results for both younger and older pairs, what is most important here are the comparisons across generations. As with Table 3, correspondence rates are highest on measures tapping general partisan orientations. At the same time, ch

⁷ Strictly speaking, the first and second generation pair results are based on a true panel whereas the second and third generation results are based on a pseudo panel.

⁸ We have more to say about these reversals below. Two items are missing from the list of measures involving G3. Political knowledge was not ascertained for G3 because data were obtained by self-administered questionnaires. The Whites-Blacks comparison is missing due to a grievous and inexplicable oversight by the first two authors of the present paper.

also quite likely to adopt the ideological identification of the parent. And as expected, transmission on more specific topics drop off, though remaining quite strong on government aid to blacks and statistically significant on all but one of the measures.

On balance, the patterns of political reproduction do not differ appreciably across the three generations. In each generation were most successful in passing along their general partisan (and in G2-G3, ideological) orientations to their children. There is considerably more slippage between parent and child on other political attributes. Despite marked 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 members of the class of 1965 do not appear to have been *sui generis*. Their own children, socialized in a quite 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 gone from the contemporary political agenda, has lost the centrality it held in the 1960s. And the greater correspondence on evaluations of business vs. labor reflects the greater significance of this dimension to politics in the 90s than to politics in the 60s, as over-time analyses of data on national samples have indicated (Stoker and Stoker 1999). The political selves that parents present to their children reflect the salient political issues of the time.

What Enhances Transmission?

Although transmission rates vary systematically across traits 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 enhanced. One proposition, derived from social learning theory, is that the transmission of political beliefs and attitudes from parents to children will be enhanced if the family environment is politicized. Political engagement on the part of the parents should generate more opportunities for cue-giving within the family, and hence, encourage more learning on the part of the child. Similarly, low parent politicization should leave the child either bereft or relatively open to influence from other socializing agents, which should discourage political consonance between parent and child.

We examine the effects of family politicization through an index formed from two measures (see Appendix). 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 subjective, albeit subjective, indicator of the strength of political communication flows between parent and child. The analysis contrasts transmission rates of parent-child pairs across levels of family politicization.

A second expectation derives from work on belief systems and issue publics. Thirty years of research have provided ample evidence that Americans differ in the extent to which they form strong or stable opinions on political topics. Some political objects and issues elicit strong views in the great majority of citizens -- notably the political parties, presidential candidates, and issues concerning the economy or race relations (Converse 1964, 1974; Converse and Markus 1979), while others generate strong opinions in smaller "issue publics" made up of citizens who are especially concerned about and attentive to the issue (e.g., Converse 1964, Krosnick 1988, 1991, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025). Although political engagement or sophistication may encourage stronger attitudes across the board, issue importance (variously has been called, issue centrality or issue involvement) will still vary across individuals. As Jennings and Niemi (1991) hypothesized, but did not empirically evaluate, this should matter to the transmission process.

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

⁹ The exception is legalization of marijuana for the pairs formed using children who were 16-20 in 1997. The coefficient is small and statistically insignificant, but not so for the pairs formed using the older children. Perhaps marijuana usage is more salient for teens in the 1990s.

nature of the cues would presumably yield instability in the child. In either case, the articulation between parent and child beliefs would be tempered. (p. 175)

Some evidence in support of this hypothesis was provided by Tedin (1974, 1980), who gauged the effect of "issue salience" of parent-child transmission. Parents in his study were asked how important each of a series of issues was to them personally, how often they discussed each issue with their child, and whether it would make any difference if their child adopted an attitude on an issue that was different from their own. Tedin found that parent-child correspondence increased steadily with issue salience.

We evaluate this general idea by focusing not on the parent's self-report of issue importance or salience, but on the parent's attitudinal stability. For the G1-G2 analysis, parent responses from the 1965, 1973, and 1982 waves were used to build an index, for each parent, of how stable the parent was across the period (see Appendix for details). It was anchored at one end by those who were perfectly stable across the period, and at the other end by those who fluctuated greatly from wave to wave. Although stability was gauged by using data gathered well after the child left the parent's home, we use this as an indicator of the strength of the parent's trait while the child was being socialized. Our assumption is that the more stable the trait from 1965-1982, the more central the trait and the stronger the cues 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, when they were aging from 25 to 45, raising the children that make up G3.

This approach has several virtues. First, attitudinal stability has long been treated as an indicator of attitude strength, justifying the expectation that individuals reporting "non-attitudes", holding weak internal attitudinal cues, or finding wide ranges of opinions acceptable will manifest more instability in responses across time (e.g., Converse 1974, Krosnick 1991). A second virtue of this approach is that it assesses the general strength of the cues provided by parents to children even on matters unrelated to attitudes toward parties, candidates, and issues. Stability in the parent's pattern of church attendance, for example, indicates a child's home environment building strong habits of religious involvement or non-involvement. Similarly, parents whose political interest or disinterest is persistent across time should have inculcated interest or disinterest in their children much more reliably than parents whose interest in politics waxes and wanes. Finally, even if some of the instability observed across time is true change, as with the long time periods under investigation here, that does not render the parental stability indicator problematic for our purposes. If the parent's political views are in flux, this should mean that a more ambiguous set of messages is being conveyed to the child. Parent-child correspondence should be diminished relative to the case where the parent's orientations are long-held.¹¹

Tables 5-7 contain the findings. The results in Table 5 concern the 1st and 2nd generations; Table 6 provides comparable results for the 2nd and 3rd generations; and Table 7 provides results on additional variables only available for the G2-G3 analysis. In each table, correspondence coefficients are given 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

¹⁰ The literature on attitude strength distinguishes issue salience from issue importance (or centrality). The former concerns how much thought and attention an issue is given, whereas the latter concerns how much the individual cares about the issue. This distinction is useful in that the two can vary independently. Even though issue centrality encourages issue salience, issue salience can also wax and wane over time in response to changes in the political environment. Tedin's index of "issue salience" combines indicators of centrality and salience.

¹¹ The parental stability indicator is also free from the methodological problems that accompany another intuitively attractive measure -- one that distinguishes parents who have extreme attitudes from those who are more in the middle-of-the-road. Using any standard measure of parent-child correspondence, like the unstandardized regression coefficient we have been reporting or the Pearson correlation coefficient, this would tend to produce higher correspondence for the group with extreme scores than for the group with middling scores.

unstandardized regression coefficients indicating the effect of the parent's response in 1965 (G1-G2) or in 1997 (G2-G3) on the child's response in that year. The "high" and "low" pair of coefficients is highlighted if the difference is statistically significant.

Looking first at the results for generations 1 and 2, we see rather limited effects of family politicization on the extent of parent-child correspondence (Table 5, column 1). Correspondence is typically higher when the family environment was highly politicized, but only in the case of party identification, vote choice, and views about the Bible are these differences in the expected direction statistically significant. Indeed, for school integration, correspondence is significantly lower among politicized pairs.¹³ The effects for the 2nd and 3rd generations are stronger (Tables 6-7, column 1). We again see 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, the rates of transmission are spectacularly higher among the most politicized pairs. In fact, correspondence is not zero for children emerging from apolitical homes, even on these basic political orientations.

The importance of family politicization is further underscored by noting the effects found on other political traits for G2-G3. 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 opinion on government job assistance. The fact that parent-child congruence is enhanced by family politicization on these three specific political topics is not surprising. As we have demonstrated in analyses reported elsewhere (Jennings and Stoker 1999), these issues loomed large in orienting the partisan and ideological stances of the G2 parents in the 1980s and 1990s. Clearly, families characterized by high 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 most striking effects are found for parental stability (Tables 5-7, second column). When the parents 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. And even when the differences in correspondence are not statistically significant, they typically are in the right direction and sizeable 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 school and civic tolerance for both sets of pairs, and school integration, aid to blacks, and legalization of marijuana for medical use. This patterning presumably reflects the importance of clear and consistent parental cues on political matters not ordinarily discussed in the family.¹⁴ Whereas high levels of parental political engagement and family political discussion are associated with high rates of transmission, low levels of parental political engagement and family political discussion are associated with low rates of transmission.

¹² These coefficients were generated by multiple regression models that treated the child's response as dependent, the parent's response as an independent variable, family politicization as a second independent variable (or, in turn, parent's stability), and the product-interaction between the two. Statistical significance is indicated by the test on the interaction term. Coefficients for the table are those pertaining to the low and high endpoints of the family politicization index (column 1) and the parental stability scales (column 2).

¹³ The school integration finding reflects the powerful period forces at work at the time. Youth in 1965 were more likely to support school integration than were their parents, and this discrepancy was most common among the more politicized families. One way to think of it is that in 1965 the youth from politicized homes were already being influenced away from their parents by the civil rights movement that surrounded them.

¹⁴ Family politicization does not enhance correspondence for evaluations of whites vs. blacks in 1965 (G1-G2), although the estimated difference is sizeable (.45 vs. .20) and approaches statistical significance. Still, given the controversies over racial matters in the 1950s and 1960s, this weak finding is an anomaly. We expected family politicization to enhance correspondence on all issues that were generally salient, like racial matters in 1965.

encourages parent-child consonance in orientations toward basic political objects like the political parties and presidential 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

At the same time, there are cases where parental stability appears to be inconsequential. In particular, there are two cases where the estimated effect is trivial or even reversed in direction: political trust (both G1-G2 and G2-G3, Tables 5 and 6) and opinion on the U.S. role in Vietnam (G2-G3, Table 7).¹⁵ In light of the political environment in the periods under investigation, these are cases where parental instability is most likely to represent true change rather than weak attitudes. Even on these topics we would expect stable parents to more successfully transmit their views to their children, but considering the magnitude of the events reshaping attitudes on these questions, the lack of differences here is not terribly surprising.

Finally, it is also important to note that the effects of family politicization and parental stability documented in Tables 5-7 are significant when their effects are estimated simultaneously (results not shown).¹⁶ That is, family politicization and parental stability are complementary, with each enhancing the likelihood that children will adopt the political orientations of the parents. Children are unlikely to do so when the family environment is apolitical and the parent has unstable political (and religious) attributes, but when children grow up in an environment marked by parental engagement with politics and frequent political discussions, where parents provide unambiguous cues about where they stand, continuity across generations is the norm.

Preserving the Parental Legacy (or Retarding the Decay)

As the preceding section demonstrated, the political texture of the family conditions the reproduction of parental political orientations in adolescents and young adults. Reproduction in this instance represented the customary way of thinking about the trail of parental influence -- as indicated by the association between parental and offspring traits. From another perspective we can think of parental influence as it affects the continuity of offspring orientations as they wend their way through life. If children are at least partially the product of their parents' role as political socializers, then the degree of continuity among the socializees should represent the strength of parental influence over time.

To show such effects, however, it would be 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 at the start, according to this argument, exhibit more over-time persistence than those less like their parents. Lack of differences in persistence according to initial parent-child congruence would indicate the equal likelihood of carrying on the parental tradition regardless of how much the offspring resembled their parents.

The design of the project makes possible such a test of parental influence. We have the initial parent-child agreement pattern from 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 continuity. In order to estimate the degree of initial parent-child similarity we cross-tabulate parent and child scores on *each* of the individual measures to be examined and divided them according to their level of

¹⁵ In other cases where parental stability is statistically insignificant, the estimated effect is sizeable, in the right direction, and is often approaching significance at the $p < .05$ level.

¹⁶ We estimated models treating the child's response as dependent, with five independent variables: the parent's response to family politicization, parental stability, and the interaction between the parent's response and the latter two variables. In each case the findings confirm those found in Tables 5-7, where the effects of family politicization and parental stability are estimated separately.

correspondence.¹⁷ Continuity coefficients (unstandardized) were then calculated for these two groups, for each measure, at three panel periods. Two religion-related variables will again be employed as comparison points.

Regardless of agreement level, continuity tended to increase, often quite substantially, between periods one and two and then change modestly between periods two and three (Table 8).¹⁸ 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. Without exception, those adolescents like their parents were more stable during this period, and usually quite markedly so. 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. New endeavors, personal relationships, residential locations, and "adult-level" contact with the political world. Those young people 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. Much the same can be said for the two religion measures.

A second feature is that the differences between the high and low correspondence groups diminish and even reverse direction in the second and third panel periods. This development is almost completely a function of the much larger gains in stability for those starting out with lower levels of congruence with their parents. What seems to be at work here is that the added years of political experience give this sub-group an additional basis for the strengthening and hardening of their political traits. Of course, those in higher agreement with their parents have also accumulated more political experience, but this increment comes on 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. Again, the similarity in the religious realm suggests a more general process at work.

These two features -- much higher continuity in the early years on the part of the *high* correspondence group and much greater continuity during the two subsequent periods by the *low* correspondence group -- offer strong presumptive evidence as to which group is best preserving the family tradition.¹⁹ Even more persuasive would be over-time replications. Do those most similar to their parents in 1965 continue to be more like them over the next thirty-five years? If so, then the case is all the stronger that the continuities for the high congruence group presented in Table 8 bear considerably more of the parental imprint than do those of the low congruence group.

To gauge the long-term persistence (or decay) of early parent-child concordance, we tracked the extent to which the child's subsequent responses (1973, 1982, 1997) continued to resemble the parent's initial (1965) reading, again comparing initial high and low-correspondence groups.²⁰ As shown in Table 9, the results of this operation are stunning. Without a single excep-

¹⁷ High correspondence was defined as cases lying along the main diagonal in the parent-child cross-tab. Discrepancies were indexed by taking the absolute value of the difference between the parent's and the child's responses. See the Appendix for a description of the measures.

¹⁸ See Jennings and Stoker (1999) for a detailed analysis of the persistence phenomena.

¹⁹ Contrary to the general lack of differences by correspondence level by the third panel stage (Table 8), a replication using only those parents having high stability on each of the respective measures shows that high initial levels of correspondence predict significantly higher *offspring* continuity in the areas of party identification, vote choice, evaluations of business/labor, civil liberties tolerance, interest in politics, and views of the Bible.

²⁰ By virtue of the way that initial concordance was measured, one would expect to see lowered relationships in subsequent waves. Regression-to-the-mean effects will ensure that those initially concordant will become less so, and those initially discordant will become more concordant. Still, what matters here is the relative discrepancy between the two groups -- does it eventually

children most like their parents in 1965 continued to resemble those 1965 parents during each subsequent survey. Virtually all differences between the high and low correspondence groups are statistically significant.

Recall that as of 1997 the "children" were now fifty years old, and some thirty-two years beyond the initial recording of parent-child concordance. Nevertheless, those having higher agreement scores in 1965 continued to reflect the parental legacy well into adulthood, with most of the relationships being statistically significant at .001 or better (not shown). In absolutely striking contrast to the majority of the parent-child relationships for the low correspondence have negative signs! Despite ample room for improvement given their low starting point, these pairs seldom moved out of their original state. Ironically, this too represents persistence -- the persistence of *not* carrying forward the parental tradition.

Although the high correspondence group continues to reflect the parental dispositions as of 1965, the reflections tail off after 1965 for six of the eight political measures. As argued earlier, the extended lagged associations constitute a stringent test of transmission partly because they do not allow for systematic changes that the parents themselves may be undergoing over time. If the children move in the same direction as their parents do in response to external events, then a continuation of the parental legacy can be inferred from contemporaneous patterns of agreement. Assuming that is true, it follows that those most like their parents in 1965 would also be most like them at later points. Utilizing data from the 1982 survey shows this to be true. Contemporaneous parent-child congruence in 1982 was higher among the high correspondence pairs for all but one of the twelve measures, significantly so for seven of them (not shown). Combining these various pieces of evidence, then, demonstrates the powerful, enduring effect of a "successful" transmission.

Conclusion

Our findings and conclusions are powered by the longitudinal nature of the study. This applies most obviously with respect to replication -- and confirmation -- of results drawn from earlier research (e.g., Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974). Transmission rates vary in fairly predictable ways across domains and across families. Especially impressive is the fact that these conclusions are based on an analysis of one set of parent-child pairs based on a cohort often dubbed the Protest Generation, and a second based on a cohort 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 concordance. 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 are substantially enhanced, particularly on topics of general political significance and salience. Regular political events such as campaigns and elections provide socialization opportunities for parents, but as is well-known, not all partake in the general political excitement. If they do, they enhance the likelihood that their own partisan and ideological inclinations will be passed along to their children.

Still, political reproduction across the generations is even more successful if the parental traits are reasonably consistent across time. On virtually all political (and religious) topics, transmission rates diminish when saliency and conviction are lacking -- or, to conclude from the impressive findings based on parental stability. One consequence of this is that families will differ in what political traits 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. Children may come to resemble their parents in one or another respect. But only if parents are stable on topics spanning the entire spectrum will children reproduce their parents' political character to a much broader extent. Selective reproduction thus becomes a likely outcome.

disappear? -- and the absolute level of concordance retained by the high correspondence group.

Multi-wave panel data from the class of 1965 also proved invaluable in identifying the legacy of parental influence in a less direct way. If children's political development is initiated by their parents, this should matter to how they develop subsequently. Children who acquire political predispositions early in life from their parents are more stable in their early adulthood than those who "leave home without it." Their predispositions, formed early, do persist. They carry that parental legacy forward, never 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.²¹

One substantive area included in our analysis is of particular concern to a wider range of scholars. An early and abiding finding 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 family socialization. Children are more likely to adopt the partisan orientations of the parent than any other political trait. They 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 are comparable to those for the religious attributes of church attendance and a literal interpretation of the Bible. These attributes are expected to exert a powerful influence on the religious practices and beliefs of their children. That they continue to 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.

Among the intriguing questions raised by our overall results are two of particular interest. 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 influential when the child reaches age 18, and may continue to influence the child in subsequent years. And the offspring, no longer dependent, may be exerting influences on the parent in turn. Though the rise over time in contemporary correspondence that we noted in political attitudes suggests the possibility of later-life influence, this dynamic remains to be analyzed carefully. One possibility is that parents are having an influence on their adult children and vice-versa. Another possibility is that attributes they share, such as socio-economic status or partisan identification, are shaping in parallel fashion the development of attitudes on new, or newly emerging, issues. This would suggest a more complex model of parental influence, one where parents inculcate basic orientations, which in turn, influence responses to subsequent political stimuli.

A second intriguing question involves the interaction between politicization and the political climate while the child is still in school. 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 child 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 open 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 may work against within-family continuity. Understanding how political engagement plays out in such cases, and tracing its implications for *aggregate* intergenerational change, constitutes another important challenge for future research.

²¹ We know that family politicization and parental stability play important roles in determining what is transmitted and the durability of early parent-child correspondence. What remains to be seen, however, is whether these attributes that influence family transmission are themselves passed along from parent to child. Our study enables us to evaluate such questions concerning the political socialization of socialization mediators, and hence to trace patterns and dynamics of socialization across multiple generations.

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

Year	1965	1973	1982	1997
(Age of Child)	(18)	(26)	(35)	(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	1965	1973	1982
(Average Age: Parent & Child)	(46 & 18)	(54 & 26)	(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 Ns range from 342 to 636.

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	.07	.27	.17	.36
Whites-Blacks	.33	.na	.26	.na
School Integration	.35	.11	.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	.41	.61	.31	.39
View of Bible	.39	.58	.35	.40

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients obtained from regressing the child's response on the parent's response. All variables are standardized 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 data on the variable in question 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 parent was aged 16-20 (column 2, max. N=203) or aged 24-28 (column 4, max. N=288). Highlighted coefficients are significantly different from each other at $p < .05$ or better.

TABLE 4
CONTEMPORANEOUS PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE
SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS ONLY (1997)

	<u>Youth Aged 16-20</u>	<u>Youth Aged 24-28</u>
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 standardized to range from 0 to 1. The analysis was based on all available pairs where the child was aged 16-20 (max. N=203) or aged 24-28 (max. 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>	.68	.61
<u>Low</u>	.39	.37
Presidential Vote Choice		
<u>High</u>	.69	.63
<u>Low</u>	.42	.45
Big Business-Labor Unions		
<u>High</u>	.16	.17
<u>Low</u>	.00	-.01
Whites-Blacks		
<u>High</u>	.46	.55
<u>Low</u>	.18	.11
School Integration		
<u>High</u>	.24	.47
<u>Low</u>	.52	.16
Prayer in the School		
<u>High</u>	.36	.59
<u>Low</u>	.35	-.09
Civic Tolerance		
<u>High</u>	.19	.21
<u>Low</u>	.04	-.03
Political Trust		
<u>High</u>	.25	.21
<u>Low</u>	.08	.18
Interest in Politics		
<u>High</u>	.--	.19
<u>Low</u>	.--	-.05
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>	.55	.49
<u>Low</u>	.20	.16

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1965 response (coded 0-1) on the child's 1965 response (coded 0-1). 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>	.75	.48
<u>Low</u>	.06	.24
Presidential Vote Choice		
<u>High</u>	.74	.48
<u>Low</u>	.12	.24
Big Business-Labor Unions		
<u>High</u>	.50	.39
<u>Low</u>	.13	.13
Whites-Blacks		
<u>High</u>	.na	.na
<u>Low</u>	.na	.na
School Integration		
<u>High</u>	.10	.24
<u>Low</u>	.14	-.04
Prayer in the School		
<u>High</u>	.57	.56
<u>Low</u>	.38	.05
Civic Tolerance		
<u>High</u>	.15	.32
<u>Low</u>	.18	-.01
Political Trust		
<u>High</u>	.28	.09
<u>Low</u>	-.02	.14
Interest in Politics		
<u>High</u>	.--	.38
<u>Low</u>	.--	-.06
Political Knowledge		
<u>High</u>	.na	.na
<u>Low</u>	.na	.na
Church Attendance		
<u>High</u>	.54	.54
<u>Low</u>	.31	.10
View of Bible		
<u>High</u>	.48	.64
<u>Low</u>	.46	.33

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1997 response (coded 0-1) on the child's 1997 response (also coded 0-1). 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>	.83	.82
<u>Low</u>	.08	.06
Evaluation of (Dole-Clinton)		
<u>High</u>	.76	.81
<u>Low</u>	.15	.13
Political Ideology		
<u>High</u>	.72	.58
<u>Low</u>	.26	.40
Vietnam		
<u>High</u>	.37	.16
<u>Low</u>	.07	.22
Evaluation of Women's Movement		
<u>High</u>	.71	.50
<u>Low</u>	.28	.08
Aid to Blacks		
<u>High</u>	.44	.54
<u>Low</u>	.27	.13
Government Job Assistance		
<u>High</u>	.50	.33
<u>Low</u>	-.05	.06
Legalization of Marijuana		
<u>High</u>	.30	.34
<u>Low</u>	.23	.02

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1997 response (coded 0-1) on the child's 1997 response (also coded 0-1). Highlighted 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
Party Identification			
<u>High</u>	.49	.72	.74
<u>Low</u>	.26	.54	.67
Presidential Vote Choice			
<u>High</u>	.41	.46	.45
<u>Low</u>	.01	.40	.27
Big Business-Labor Unions			
<u>High</u>	.31	.53	.51
<u>Low</u>	.20	.68	.44
Whites-Blacks			
<u>High</u>	.39	.55	.41
<u>Low</u>	.34	.80	.53
School Integration			
<u>High</u>	.24	.28	.41
<u>Low</u>	.03	.36	.44
Prayer in the School			
<u>High</u>	.49	.57	.58
<u>Low</u>	.10	.51	.56
Civic Tolerance			
<u>High</u>	.34	.57	.61
<u>Low</u>	.29	.53	.48
Political Trust			
<u>High</u>	.26	.27	.30
<u>Low</u>	.05	.43	.43
Interest in Politics			
<u>High</u>	.51	.41	.55
<u>Low</u>	.26	.42	.38
Political Knowledge			
<u>High</u>	.83	.74	.77
<u>Low</u>	.40	.68	.64
Church Attendance			
<u>High</u>	.45	.67	.70
<u>Low</u>	.08	.67	.52
View of Bible			
<u>High</u>	.59	.67	.62
<u>Low</u>	.35	.57	.68

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients obtained by regressing the child's response as of the 2nd time point named in the column on their response as of the 1st time point named. All variables are coded from 0 to 1. The "High" and "Low" correspondence categories distinguish cases by the level of parent/child agreement in 1965. Highlighted coefficients are significantly different from each other at $p < .05$ or better. See the text for further details.

TABLE 9
THE PERSISTENCE OF EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE,
BY LEVEL OF EARLY PARENT-CHILD CORRESPONDENCE
FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS

	1973	1982	1997
Party Identification			
<u>High</u>	.48	.46	.30
<u>Low</u>	-.18	-.10	-.04
Presidential Vote Choice			
<u>High</u>	.41	.38	.27
<u>Low</u>	-.02	.08	.09
Big Business-Labor Unions			
<u>High</u>	.23	.24	.37
<u>Low</u>	-.03	-.13	-.24
Whites-Blacks			
<u>High</u>	.42	.42	.26
<u>Low</u>	-.04	-.06	-.09
School Integration			
<u>High</u>	.22	.21	.15
<u>Low</u>	.02	-.06	-.12
Prayer in the School			
<u>High</u>	.47	.39	.24
<u>Low</u>	-.09	-.07	.11
Civic Tolerance			
<u>High</u>	.38	.40	.31
<u>Low</u>	-.20	-.12	-.12
Political Trust			
<u>High</u>	.19	.22	.09
<u>Low</u>	-.13	-.30	.05
Interest in Politics			
<u>High</u>	.34	.36	.36
<u>Low</u>	-.10	-.14	-.04
Political Knowledge			
<u>High</u>	.91	.83	.78
<u>Low</u>	-.16	-.11	-.05
Church Attendance			
<u>High</u>	.37	.43	.38
<u>Low</u>	-.06	-.09	-.29
View of Bible			
<u>High</u>	.59	.59	.57
<u>Low</u>	.04	.01	-.08

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients reflecting the effect of the parent's 1965 response (coded 0-1) on the child's response (also coded 0-1) for the year named in the column. The "High" and "Low" correspondence categories distinguish cases by the level of parent/child agreement in 1965. Highlighted coefficients are significantly different from each other at $p < .05$ or better. See the text for further details.

Appendix: 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 (that is, unless some form of complex interaction is operating). Concerns about measurement error are most obviously important for the conclusions drawn from Tables 3-4 about the ranking of various political (and religious) traits in terms of parent-child correspondence. In 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) 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 enhanced relationships, as expected. Correspondence on partisan orientations and religious attributes remained higher than most other political topics. Correspondence on racial attitudes, however, was particularly enhanced, and levels shown by partisan orientations and religiosity. At present, we are working on replicating our analyses of the effect of family political orientation and parental stability, and of the long-term consequences of initial parent-child correspondence, using models that take into account indicator unreliability.

Appendix: Question Wording and Index Construction

Family Politicization

This variable was formed by averaging two components. The first component, a measure of the parent's political engagement, was formed 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 signs 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 scored on a 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 you talk about public affairs 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 that you do with local, state, national, or international affairs?" The response options were "very often," "pretty often," "not very often," "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

A separate variable was created to capture the amount of change observed in the parent's responses to a given item over time. This 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 step 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) Fourth, 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

(1st and 2nd Generations Only) A separate variable was created for each item to capture the extent of parent-child agreement in responses. This variable was created in three steps: (1) First, we computed the absolute differences of responses given by the parent and the child.

1965. Each component variable was scored to range from 0-1. Hence, absolute agreement was scored 0 and scores increased with difference in the responses given by the parent and child, to a theoretical maximum of 1.0. (2) Third, we recoded extremely discrepant pairs (defined as having z-scores > 3.0 on the index formed from step 1), if any, to the next lowest score found on the variable. This was done to reduce the leverage of these outliers on the analysis. (3) Third, we scaled the variable to range from 0 (complete agreement) to 1 (maximal discrepancy observed, caveat from step 2 aside). Code: 0 = perfect agreement, through 1 = maximal disagreement.

Party Identification

"Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?" (strongly, or not so strongly) [If Independent: "Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or to the Democratic party?"] 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, for the 1st generation it was based on their reported vote in the 1964 (among voters), while for the 2nd generation it was based on their reported 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. For the 1973 wave these were the 1968 and 1972 elections, for the 1982 wave these were the 1976 and 1980 elections, and for the 1997 wave these were the 1992 and 1996 elections. With one exception, each component was scaled to range from 0 (voted for Democrat) through .5 (voted for Independent) to 1.0 (voted Republican) and then averaged. The exception concerns Wallace voters in 1968: because of problems scaling Wallace voters, they were counted as missing data in 1968. If a respondent had valid data for only one of the two elections, the vote in that one election was recorded in the index. Code: 0 = voted consistently Democratic, through 1 = voted consistently Republican.

Evaluations of (Big Business-Labor Unions), (Whites-Blacks), (Republicans-Democrats), (Dole-Clinton), and (Women's Movement)

The difference variables were constructed by subtracting the Feeling Thermometer for the 2nd Group or individual from the Feeling Thermometer score for the first group or individual, and then scaling the resulting variable to range from 0 to 1 (e.g., for Business-Labor Unions = 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 or 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 in separate areas 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 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 or 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 in the schools, through 1 = schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer, with "depends" coded at .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 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 variable combines the responses to the following questions: (1) "Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are dishonest, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are dishonest?" (2) "Do you think that people in the government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?" (3) "How much of the time do you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right -- just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?" (4) "Do you feel that almost all of the people running the government are smart people who usually know what they are doing, or do you think quite a few of them don't seem to know what they are doing?" (5) "Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?" Each component was scored to range from 0 to 1, then averaged. Code: 0 = lowest political trust, through 1 = highest political 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. You 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 State 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 month, or never?" Code: 0 = never, through 1 = every week

View of Bible

"On page 17 are four statements about the Bible, and I'd like you to tell me which is closest to your own view. You can just tell me the number of the statement you choose." Code: 1.0="the bible is God's word and all it says is true;" 0.5="the bible was written by men inspired by God it contains some human errors;" 0.0="the bible is a good book because it was written by wise men, but God had nothing to do with it" or "the bible was written by men who lived so long ago that it is worth very little today."

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 section was the question on government job assistance, which therefore had a longer stem. The responses were rescaled to range from 0 to 1. Question wording is given below.

Government Job Assistance: "Some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a 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. (And other people have opinions somewhere in between). Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"

Legalization of Marijuana "Some people think that the use of marijuana should be made legal. Others think that the penalties for

marijuana should be set higher than they are now. (And other people have opinions somewhere in between). Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"

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. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"

Vietnam

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

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