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DO KIDS PICK IT UP?

The kids are the future folk wisdom assumes, as a core tenet, that kids are malleable—they learn from those around them. We've shown that many Americans believe this is true and see parents as the most influential force in children's lives. Moreover, Americans believe that experiences in youth persist into adulthood and that socializing children the right way now can shape their future attitudes as grown citizens.

That people believe these ideas is enough to create the process of politicized socialization we have outlined. Malleability, persistence, and the concept of the future voter do not need to be empirically true to motivate public action. All that is required is that people *think* that what kids learn when they are young shapes their future political behaviors for socialization to be infused with political goals and intentions. We have demonstrated that parents seem to think that what they do matters, on average, and they incorporate political goals intentionally into their parenting.

And yet, one might wonder, does it matter? Do children absorb the lessons of their parents? Are generations shaped by those who raise them?

These questions have been at the heart of political science—and the social sciences more generally—for many decades. Foundational theories of political attitude development often posit that core beliefs form in childhood, primarily through the influence of parents, and persist as a baseline throughout one's life (e.g., Almond and Verba 1963; Campbell et al. 1960; Hyman 1959; Sears 1993). Predicting whether contestation and changes to racial socialization could actually change race relations in the United States requires us to determine whether there is evidence that *children are listening*.

And so, we turn to the kids. Or more accurately, in this chapter, we examine the link between children and their parents. In the modern era, how correlated are kids' attitudes with those of their parents? Does this vary across race/ethnicity? We use an original survey of 500 parent-adolescent pairs (called dyads) to examine whether teens can identify their parents' racial attitudes and positions, the relationship between parental attitudes and teens' behavioral self-reports, and the correlation between parents' and teens' global racial attitudes

(feeling thermometers, racial resentment, and racial policy attitudes). We find remarkably consistent results: American teens across racial groups tend to know their parents' racial attitudes and by-and-large align their own priorities with their parents' views. Parent-offspring global racial attitudes correlate at rates between 0.5 and 0.8—a strong relationship by social scientific standards. We compare our data to dyads measured in the 1960s (Jennings and Niemi 1974) and show that these relationships have, in some cases, tripled in strength.

Importantly, our explorations are not tests of cause: it is difficult using observational data to rule out competing explanations for relationships. Maybe the increased correlation between children's and parents' attitudes is driven by other factors that co-vary, for instance neighborhood segregation (Eubank and Rodden 2020; Gimpel, Newton and Reeves 2025; Goldman and Hopkins 2020). Or maybe parents and children align so closely not because of socialization processes but because of underlying personality or genetic similarities (Hatemi, Alford, Hibbing, Martin and Eaves 2009; Hatemi, Funk, Medland, Maes, Silberg, Martin and Eaves 2009; Settle, Dawes and Fowler 2009). Where we are able to probe for these alternatives, we find robust relationships between parent and adolescent racial attitudes: teens living in zip codes with more Black residents are less racially resentful, but parental racial attitudes are the strongest predictor of teen attitudes. Multiple data points and tests that attempt to triangulate the relationship suggest that the American public might be onto something with their folk wisdom—children, it appears, *are listening* and the strongest predictor of their own racial attitudes are those of their parents.

Any parent knows that it takes many attempts to teach a toddler to put on their shoes. And yet, eventually, children learn to put their shoes on. In a society that is deeply sorted by party (in marriages, in neighborhoods, in social networks), where racial attitudes are tightly tied to partisan trends, and where parents are spending more time with their children than any other prior generation, American children, it seems, are putting on shoes that look a lot like their parents'.

THE FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL LEARNING

In the mid-twentieth century, the advent of survey research gave rise to the modern study of political behavior. For the first time, political scientists were able to systematically document political beliefs in American society. Using this new methodology, social scientists explored what Americans know about politics, their attitudes and policy preferences, and their ideologies. But these foundational political scientists were more ambitious than simply wanting to document a descriptive picture of the American public. They also wanted to leverage their new methods to understand *the sources* of those beliefs. They asked: why do people hold the political attitudes that they do?

Central to this project was Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes's book, *The American Voter*. These authors sought to identify the source of key political orientations like partisanship, political interest, and participation. Using self-reports from their nationally representative survey, the authors came to an answer that would shape the field for decades: people get their political attitudes and orientations from their parents. Along with their contemporaries (Almond and Verba 1963; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954; Hyman 1959), Campbell et al. (1960) concluded that many of the orientations that guide political choice in adulthood spawn from early political learning inside the home.

The American Voter is foundational to the political behavior canon and squarely placed the idea of *political socialization* into its lexicon. Its findings suggested that the ideas we are exposed to in childhood explain how we act as adults—a theory of attitude development that became known as *The Michigan Model* after the authors' home institution.

But, these early studies suffered from a major design flaw: recall bias. The authors lacked over time data and instead relied on a momentary snapshot from the perspective of respondents to support their claims. Adults were asked to report what they thought their parents' opinions had been in the past. Then, this report was correlated with the respondent's current attitude. Skeptics asked: was it possible respondents selectively remembered their parents' past attitudes? Or even, did respondents reflect their own attitudes back onto the memories of their childhood? If this was the case, maybe parents were not so influential on adult attitudes; what we had was simply a case of false reporting.

And so, scientists returned to the question and tried again, as is the nature of science. In the long, slow march toward truth—or at least, toward more certainty—M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi were next to innovate. Their solution to the problem of recall bias was ambitious. They would interview both adolescents *and* parents, collecting attitudes in pairs (dyads), and return to these individuals over time. In their Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study, the researchers started in 1965 with a nationally representative survey of high school seniors and their parents, then continued to capture attitudes for the pairs in 1973, 1982, and 1997.[1]

This incredible longitudinal data has contributed more to our understanding of political socialization than any other source. Jennings and Niemi found that indeed, partisanship and other key political orientations were correlated between parents and children—but only imperfectly so (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974, 1981; Niemi and Jennings 1991). In the first wave of their study, Jennings and Niemi (1968)

1 For a most updated look at this data and a discussion of its provenance, see Bartels and Cramer (2026).

show that parents' core orientations like partisanship and political interest can predict those of their children, with parents and children rarely occupying opposite ends of a measure. On partisanship, for instance, "59% of the students fall into the same broad category as their parents, and only seven percent cross the sharp divide between Republican and Democrat" (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 76).

However, the correlation between parents and their children on less central attitudes—for instance, on policy issues—was much weaker. This seemed to reflect the comparative instability of issue positions compared to partisan identities among the American public (Converse 1964; Converse and Markus 1979). Later waves of the survey showed further that children's reliance on their parents' attitudes appeared to dwindle as they aged into adulthood (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Niemi and Jennings 1991). From their findings, Jennings and Niemi concluded that socialization most approximates a generational model, which posits "strong persistence in general, but...allows for considerable new socialization and/or resocialization with lasting effects" (Jennings and Niemi 1981, 21).

Jennings and Niemi's scholarship launched a cottage industry on political socialization. Scholars explored its processes and persistence (Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2009), whether learning or genetics was at the center of this correlation (Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005; Hatemi, Funk, Medland, Maes, Silberg, Martin and Eaves 2009; Hibbing, Smith and Alford 2013; Settle, Dawes and Fowler 2009), and how family members beyond parents might influence this process (Healy and Malhotra 2013; Urbatsch 2014; for a review, see Stoker and Bass 2011). Summarizing this literature, Robert Urbatsch (2014, 5) argues even a minimal view of parental political transmission must admit that "parents provide political information that children can use as a starting point when they formulate their own political identities" (see also Achen 2002). That is, even if children eventually turn away from their parents' political beliefs, early exposure to political conversations, actions, and lessons appears to inform future interpretation of politics (Bhatti and Hansen 2012; Dinas 2014; Plutzer 2002). This first tenet of the kids are the future folk wisdom appears to have some merit.

LEARNING RACIAL ATTITUDES

Where do racial attitudes fall in all of this? Are they core orientations, like partisanship, that seem to be learned early in the home? Or do they resemble policy attitudes which are more unstable?

In addition to partisanship and policy attitudes, Jennings and Niemi also measured "evaluations of socio-political groupings" in the first wave of their study (Jennings and Niemi 1968). Both parents and teens were asked to rate how warm or cold they felt toward a variety of different groups on a scale of 0 to 100—a measurement technique

called a *feeling thermometer*. Two of the feeling thermometers were for Whites and "Negros," and were two of the three total measures of racial attitudes that Jennings and Niemi captured in the first two waves of their study (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974).[2] The other measure of racial attitudes focused on policy. In the first wave, Jennings and Niemi asked respondents whether they thought the federal government should "see to it that white and Negro children go to the same schools" or if they should "stay out of this area as it is none of its business." The question of federal intervention in school desegregation was a visible and contentious question at the time. In later waves, they add to this a question asking about busing, which reflected changes in the salient policies on the issue of racial integration but again dealt with the question of whether the government should ensure racial integration of schools.

Considering the three measures of racial attitudes, the authors find surprisingly weak correlations between parents' and teens' attitudes. They conclude, in their first work on the topic, that "if the child's view of socio-political groupings grows out of cue-giving in the home, the magnitude of the association should exceed those observed here" (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 175). Does this mean that parents do not transmit racial attitudes to their children? How do people form their orientations toward in-group and out-group members? What can strengthen or weaken the effect of parents' attitudes on those of their children?

Moving out of political science and into fields like psychology and sociology can help answer these questions. Psychological research tells us that infants discern race from both skin color and facial features starting as early as 3 months old (Hailey and Olson 2013; Katz 2003). This attention to race is not hard-wired, though, or inevitable. Rather, it emerges as the human cognitive need to categorize meets social context (Roberts and Rizzo 2021).[3] The world is wildly complex and one adaptive strategy the brain uses is to build categories, helping to quickly decide courses of action. In the United States, where people are geographically and socially separated on the dimension of race (Anoll, Davenport and Lienesch 2024; Massey and Denton 1988; Massey, White and Phua 1996; Trounstine 2018) and where interactions are patterned by this feature, skin color emerges as a cognitively salient category (Roth, van Stee and Regla-Vargas 2023). By around five years old, children use race as often as gender or other categories to describe and sort pictures (Pauker, Williams and Steele 2016).

2 After the first wave of the study, "Negros" is switched to "Blacks" in the feeling thermometer questions.

3 There is some dispute as to whether this focus on categories like race is because they identify group-based coalitions and are symbolic markers of group membership (Cosmides, Tooby and Kurzban 2003) or if they instead point to information on similarities shared by people within the group (Sloutsky 2003). Recent work suggests it's both (Jordan and Dunham 2021).

The same process of categorizing that makes race relevant for early social perception also leads children to believe that individuals within a category possess a similar "essence," or the idea that items in the category share characteristics, traits, behaviors, and beliefs (Roth, van Stee and Regla-Vargas 2023). Again, this is not a function of race as race, or assumptions about biology, but rather a feature of how brains construct categories: e.g., tables have four legs; cows act like cows (Taylor, Rhodes and Gelman 2009). By 1 year old, toddlers are more likely to select dolls that look like them on the dimensions of race and gender, and usually prefer same-race playgroups (Katz 2003). By six years old, children from dominant groups exhibit levels of implicit in-group bias similar to adults (Hailey and Olson 2013).

Still, in-group preferences and concepts of essentialism are heavily responsive to intervention and cultural norms. In-group favoritism and prejudice appear to develop separately (Aboud 2003), with explicit same-race preference peaking around 6 to 7 years old but then declining, arguably due to the introduction of cultural norms around bias (Hailey and Olson 2013). By 10 years old, American school children seem to grasp the concept of egalitarianism and argue that groups are equal (Bigler et al. 2008; Hailey and Olson 2013). Experimental work shows how parents talking about race, diversity of early TV, and interracial contact can contribute to racial attitudes (e.g., Vittrup and Holden 2011). Toddlers who were encouraged to watch *Sesame Street*—an early mover in providing child-centered lessons on race while embracing a racially diverse cast—had more positive attitudes toward other racial groups than those who were not encouraged to do so (Bogatz and Ball 1971; Katz 2003). Similarly, elementary school children instructed to either attend to or ignore race follow these cues (Goudeau and Cimpian 2021). One meta-analysis noted that low intergroup contact during childhood seems to be a risk factor for escalating prejudice development (Raabe and Beelmann 2011). Research also suggests that reports of talking about race at home are associated with stronger relationships between parent and child attitudes (Katz 2003).

Collectively, this body of work suggests that the ability of parents to socialize children into particular racial attitudes may be conditional on a number of factors with explicit discussions about race being central among them. Children have to be able to perceive their parents' racial attitudes or positions in order to be influenced by them (Beck 1977). And yet, work on discussions about race in White families from before the summer protests of 2020 suggests that these parents are largely quiescent on this topic (Abaied and Perry 2021; Underhill 2018). White Americans' position atop the American racial hierarchy affords them the privilege to ignore how race shapes their life course (Pratto and Stewart 2012). Interview work suggests that many White families see not talking about race as a way to "protect" their children from unpleasant and unnecessary topics (Abaied and Perry 2021; Underhill

2018). Through discussion that minimizes the impact of race in the United States and other subtle cues, White families' racial socialization has traditionally tended toward replicating ideologies and logics of White supremacy (Abaied and Perry 2021; Hagerman 2018).

Families of color, in contrast, tend to talk about race much more often. In a research tradition that started by considering Black families, scholars have argued that "African Americans families have a special role in buffering the impact of racism and promoting a sense of cultural pride for their children" (Stevenson 1994, 447). Black parents spend much more time talking about race explicitly to navigate American racial systems (Caughy et al. 2002; Lesane-Brown 2006; Stevenson and Arrington 2009; Thomas and Blackmon 2015). Collins (1990) argues that Black mothers engage in politics by striving to protect their children from the harms of American racism through fostering a positive and resilient identity. Gordon (2008, 34) similarly argues that Black parents attempt to transmit "ideologies that resist oppression." These strategies are also prevalent among Latino and Asian American parents who seek to cultivate positive racial identities and prepare their children to deal with discrimination (Ayón 2016; Ayón, Ojeda and Ruano 2018; Ayón, Nieri and Ruano 2020; Hughes and Chen 1997; Juang et al. 2018; Nieri, Yoo and Tam 2024). This childrearing work is important: positive racial identities and cultural pride are related to higher self-esteem and academic success later in life (Constantine and Blackmon 2002; Sellers, Chavous and Cooke 1998; Stevenson and Arrington 2009; Wong, Eccles and Sameroff 2003).

Collectively, this work suggests that Jennings and Niemi (1968)'s surprisingly weak correlations between the attitudes of children and their parents on evaluations of racial groups may not be a constant feature of political socialization—but an artifact of the times and their sample. The Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study was overwhelmingly White, reflecting the composition of the United States at the time. In 1970, 87.6% of Americans were White; today, the number is estimated around 56.3%. Would the average correlation between parents' and children's attitudes be closer today than in 1965?

Other things have changed, too, that might suggest a stronger correlation now than in the past. American parents spend significantly more time with their children than in prior decades (Dotti Sani and Treas 2016; Pew Research Center 2013; Sayer, Bianchi and Robinson 2004). While mothers and fathers both spend substantially more time with their children now than in 1965, the gender disparity in childrearing time has also decreased. Fathers now spend half as much time with their children as mothers do compared to only one-quarter of the time mothers spent with their children in 1965 (Pew Research Center 2013). Further, parents have on average adopted new forms of childrearing that prioritize talk and explanation within the boundaries of family rules. These forms of parenting increase opportunities for

transmission and are shown to tighten the correlation between parent-child ideologies (Murray and Mulvaney 2012). The combination of more time and more dialogue may mean that children today know their parents better than did children in the 1960s—and may have stronger relationships that increase replication tendencies.

Further, consistent signals from both parents—rather than competing signals—may strengthen the relationship. Along with the broader realignment in politics (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Kuziemko and Washington 2018; Schickler 2016), American couples have sorted based on political party—an identity that is today, tightly tied to racial attitudes (Engelhardt 2021*b*). Recent work shows that singles seek out and date partners based on party identification, and cross-party marriages have declined (Easton and Holbein 2021; Huber and Malhotra 2017; Iyengar, Konitzer and Tedin 2018). Initial studies suggest that as political polarization has increased, parent-child congruence has tightened with respect to partisan identity and issue positions (Iyengar, Konitzer and Tedin 2018; Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2009; Patterson et al. 2019; Rico and Jennings 2016; Tyler and Iyengar 2023).

In the 2020s, BLM protests and the ensuing backlash made issues of race salient and as we have shown, White parents engaged in new practices designed to communicate particular ideas about race to their children. Black families too reacted with increased race talk (Sullivan, Eberhardt and Roberts 2021; Thomas and Blackmon 2015). In this new era, where parents spend more time with their children, are more likely to agree politically with their partners, and are working to influence their children's attitude development, we expect the correlation between parents and their children on measures of racial attitudes and positions has strengthened compared to 1965.

A MODERN DYAD STUDY

We fielded our own dyad study of parents and teens between December 7, 2023 and January 3, 2024, roughly 3.5 years after the height of the Black Lives Matter protests. We recruited 500 parents with children between the ages of 14 and 17 using the the online platform YouGov. Our sample is comprised of a representative sample of 400 U.S. parents and an oversample of an additional 100 Black parents.[4] Then, parents separately recruited their child to complete a parallel study.[5] To ensure that our youth survey was actually answered by teens, rather than by their parents, teen respondents completed photo

4 We had hoped to oversample Latino and Asian families as well, but YouGov was unable to build a sample with any more parent-child pairs from these groups than emerged in the nationally representative sample.

5 For families with more than one teen in our sampling range, parents were instructed to recruit and answer questions about their teenager with the most recent birthday.

Table 9.1: Characteristics of PADS Sample

Parent Characteristics	
Race	White-only (52.2%), Black-only (24.8%), Asian-only (2.8%), Hispanic, any race (18.0%), Multiracial (1.4%)
Gender	Woman (50.0%), Man (50.0%)
Education	College degree (27.4%), Advanced degree (19.0%)
Party	Democrats (49.8%), Independents (24.6%), Republicans (25.6%)
Teen Characteristics	
Race	White-only (46.6%), Black-only (22.8%), Asian-only (3.0%), Hispanic, any race (21.2%), Multiracial (6.0%)
Gender	Girl (47.8%), Boy (51.0%), Nonbinary (0.8%), Not sure or prefer not to say (0.4%)
Age	14 (25.2%), 15 (28.8%), 16 (23.4%), 17 (22.6%)
Dyad Racial Characteristics	
Matched dyads ($n = 439$), Unmatched dyads ($n = 61$) Matched dyads include: White-only dyads ($n = 230$), POC dyads ($n = 208$) Black-only dyads ($n = 113$), Asian-only dyads ($n = 14$), Hispanic, any race ($n = 76$)	

Partisanship breakdown comes from the initial stem question with independents, not sure, and other categorized as independents. Race is measured as mark one or more. Hispanic ethnicity is measured separately from race. Multiracial category does not include respondents who said they belong to only one racial group and also identify as Hispanic. Matched dyads are parent-teen dyads where both respondents had identical responses as to whether they identify as White, Black, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Hispanic/Latino. Unmatched dyads are those that did not answer identically across those six race/ethnicity variables.

verification of their age at the start of the study.[6] We refer to this study as the Political Attitudes Dyad Study (PADS) and Table 9.1 provides a description of the sample of 500 parent-teen dyads.

Of the parents in our sample, 52% are monoracial White, 25% are monoracial Black, 18% are Hispanic (any race), and 3% are monoracial Asian. Only a very small subset of parents report being multiracial ($< 2\%$). Teens closely match their parents' race, although 6% report

6 At the beginning of the teen survey, the respondents read: *Real teen opinions are important to us. Before we can begin, we need to confirm that you are you (and not your Mom or Dad!) The next page will re-direct you to a website that will help us check you're actually a teenager. You'll take a quick selfie on your phone and our clever tech will check your age. Once your image is processed, it will be instantly deleted. The image is not reviewed by a human and cannot be linked to your survey responses.* While non-face-to-face surveys will always carry some risk that respondents are misrepresenting themselves, emphasizing the importance of teens' opinions to the respondents and including a means of age verification substantially reduces this risk.

they are multiracial compared to only 1% of parents. This aligns with census estimates which suggest the majority of the American multiracial population is under the age of 18 (Davenport 2018).

In total, our sample includes 230 White-only dyads, where both the parent and child report that they are monoracial White (not Hispanic or any other race). We create a second category of dyads to represent non-White respondents, what we call *people of color* (POC) matched dyads (Pérez 2021). Although non-White Americans diverge in culture, language, and historical experiences, they share in their minoritized status—an important element of politics in a majoritarian democracy. These groups face discrimination on the basis of race that may influence how they socialize their children compared to White parents (Ayón 2016; Hughes et al. 2006; Lesane-Brown 2006; McLemore 1975; Pérez et al. 2023; Walton 1985; Zou and Cheryan 2017). Approximately 40% of our sample—208 dyads—are comprised of families of color, where both the parent and the child share a racial identity that is not White. Because of our oversample of Black parents, the majority of these matched POC dyads are made up of Black parents and teens, with 113 dyads where both the parent and teen identify as only Black. The remainder of the matched POC dyads are Asian-only, Hispanic of any race, Native, and multiracial parents and teens. Just over 1 in 10 of the dyads are comprised of parents and teens who do not share a racial identity category ($n = 61$).[7]

Our sample is heavily Democratic compared to national estimates. This is a function of our sampling frame rather than a sign that our data is not representative. As we are sampling parents of teens, our sample is from a particular age group. Our parent respondents are mostly in their 40s (the first to third quartile of respondents by age). Moreover, we have an oversample of Black parents, who are also more likely to be Democrats. In other words, while our sample is not representative of all Americans, it is not designed to be. Instead, it offers us leverage on the attitudes of American parents, and additional ability to explore Black parents' attitudes.

As discussed, dyad studies feature prominently in works investigating parent-teen correspondence because they compare parents' and teens' views using answers to the same survey questions (Jennings and Niemi 1968). But what this design cannot do is demonstrate how much of this correspondence comes from direct transmission of parental beliefs as opposed to other factors that co-vary. For instance, parents' attitudes may align with broader social forces like friends, extended family, school environments, or neighborhoods that influence children's beliefs in an observably equivalent direction. Or, children may be the first movers in the socializing relationship, shap-

7 In our analyses, we often define samples by the race of either the parent or the teen, rather than on the whole dyad. This means that these 61 pairs where parent and child are not perfectly matched on race migrate into different sub-samples depending on the analysis.

ing their parents' beliefs in ways that strengthen correspondence (e.g., Carlos 2018; Pedraza and Perry 2019; Wong and Tseng 2008). Some have even suggested that underlying genetic similarities might produce attitudinal and behavioral correspondence between parents and children—although, the contribution of heritability appears to be at most moderate (Hatemi, Alford, Hibbing, Martin and Eaves 2009; Kleppestø et al. 2019; Kleppesto et al. 2024).

Still, studying parents and their children simultaneously can teach us many things. It can tell us whether teens think they are talking about race and politics as much as parents think they are. It can tell us whether teens know their parents' racial attitudes—that is, whether they correctly perceive socializing racial cues in their environment—and how their attitudes align with these perceptions. And it can let us compare whether parents and their children are more similar to each other now than they were at previous points of comparison. If this is the case, it would suggest that *some kind* of social factor has changed in America that is making families more homogenous in their racial attitudes.

FREQUENCY OF POLITICAL AND RACE TALK

We begin with reports of race talk—this time from the perspective of children. Previously, we showed that White parents think they are talking quite a bit about race with their kids. Further, others show that non-White families talk about race politics even more often (Sullivan, Eberhardt and Roberts 2021). Here, we consider how American teens perceive the frequency of race talk within their homes, comparing White teens to teens of color.

We asked about two general themes of race talk within the home. For each of these questions, we asked about conversations with the parent who participated in the survey. First, kids were asked "how often do you talk about racial discrimination or racism with your parent." Second, "how often do you talk about your racial background and racial identity with your parent." We compare these two measures, *racial discrimination* and *racial identity*, with a more general measure of political talk: "how often do you talk about events in the news with your parent"—*news*.

The questions were measured using a four-point scale that ranged from never to a few times a week. In Table 9.2, we show the percent of White teens and teens of color who report talking about these topics either "a few times a month" or "a few times a week."

The results show that the vast majority of teens in our study report talking about events in the news with their parents regularly. About nine out of ten teens across all racial subgroups say they discuss events in the news at least a few times a month with their parent. Further, approximately 60% of teens in each subgroup say they do so a few

Table 9.2: Percentage of Teens Discussing Topics with Parents A Few Times a Month or More

	White teens ($n = 233$)	POC teens ($n = 264$)	Black teens ($n = 145$)	Latino teens ($n = 106$)
News	91	91	91	92
Racial discrimination	62	75	78	76
Racial identity	45	70	72	72

Each discussion item was measured on a 4-point scale from "never" to "a few times a week." We collapse the top two categories: "a few times a month" and "a few times a week." White teens are teen respondents who identify as only White. POC teens are those who identify as at least one of the following: Black, Asian American, Native American or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino of any race. Black teens are those who identify as Black, but may also identify with other racial/ethnic groups. Latinos are teens who identify as Hispanic/Latino and may also identify with any racial group.

times a week. Only 2–3% of each group say that they never discuss current events with their parents. White teens and teens of color look remarkably similar in their reports of general discussions of news events with their parents.

The majority of teens also say they talk about racial discrimination and identity with their parent often—but here, meaningful differences in magnitude across racial groups emerge. Seventy-five percent of teens of color discuss racism or discrimination with their parents at least a few times a month; 78% of Black teens and 76% of Latino teens report the same. By comparison, just over 60% of White teens say they talk about racial discrimination this frequently with their parent. This 13 to 16-point difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$ for each comparison). This gap is even more stark for discussions of racial identity. Less than half of White teens say they discuss their racial identity with their parents a few times a month or more compared to 70–72% of teens of color ($p < 0.05$ for each comparison). Still, only 22% of White teens report never discussing racial identity and only 10% say they never talk about racial discrimination.

Our results echo prior findings that White families talk about racism and racial identity less frequently than families of color (Sullivan, Eberhardt and Roberts 2021), but it is also remarkable that such large proportions of White families *do* talk about these issues with some regularity. Just as our prior chapter showed that White parents report talking about race with their kids, most White teens say that their families are having these conversations. This frequency of self-reported political and race talk indicates that families are creating opportunities for the transmission of political and racial attitudes to occur, with these opportunities initiated by either the parents or teens.

We also asked teens who typically starts conversations about race in their family. White teens are less likely to say that their parents

initiate these conversations than are teens of color: 40% of Black and Latino teens say their discussions about race tend to be initiated by their parents, while only 29% of White teens say the same. This confirms our analysis of parental behavior in Chapter 6, where we showed Black and Latino parents are significantly more likely to report planning conversations about race with their children compared to White parents.

PICKING UP WHAT THEIR PARENTS ARE PUTTING DOWN

Given that the majority of teens say they talk about politics and race with their parents, do they know their parents' positions on racial issues? Others have shown that an important step of transmission of attitudes is signal reception (Beck 1977; Hatemi and Ojeda 2021; Ojeda and Hatemi 2015; Westholm 1999). For socializing agents to directly affect the attitudes and behavior of their target, the person getting socialized needs to receive and process information from the agent. To test whether teens in the United States today know their parents' racial positions, we created an original battery of questions.

First, we asked parents whether they would approve, disapprove, have mixed feelings, or feel indifferent if their child engaged in one of the following eight activities:[8]

1. Dated someone of a different race
2. Wanted to be a police officer
3. Kneeled during the national anthem as a sign of protest
4. Attended a Black Lives Matter protest
5. Enrolled in a class about the histories and experiences of different U.S. racial-ethnic groups
6. Called someone a racial slur
7. Used a racial slur when singing along with a song
8. Dressed as a Native American for a Thanksgiving school event

These measures capture concrete situations that might lead parents and children to have conversations, providing opportunities to communicate values about race politics more broadly. Our items were drawn from larger salient issues in the political landscape of the moment, from fights over curriculum in schools to protesting at athletic events to more classic measures of social contact and distance. They also capture different positions on racial politics.

Separately, teens were asked to guess how their parent that we surveyed would react if they, the child, did each of the items: would their parent approve, disapprove, be indifferent, or have mixed feelings? We then asked how likely the teen would be to complete the action if given the opportunity.

8 We pre-tested our question wording and items with a small group of teenagers during informational interviews before conducting our survey.

We start by considering the distribution of parental reactions to these items. Figure 9.1 shows the proportion of parents who approve of each action with 95 percent confidence intervals. We subset parents into four categories: White Democrats ($n = 122$), POC Democrats ($n = 152$), White Republicans ($n = 104$) and POC Republicans ($n = 55$), since we have shown previously that partisanship is central to race socialization practices.[9]

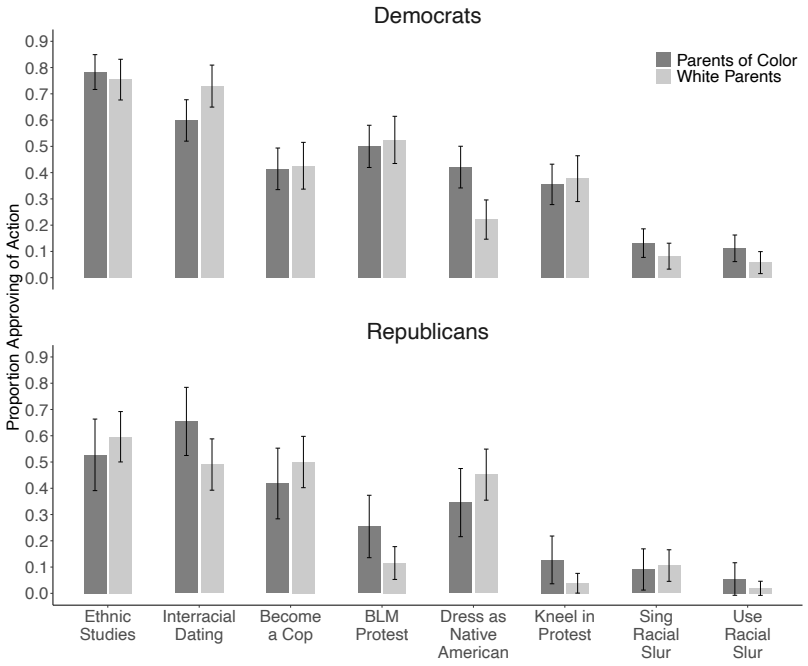
Most parents, it appears, have clear and defined attitudes toward these items; only a minority report having mixed feelings or feeling indifferent about their child taking these actions.[10] Democratic White and POC parents report remarkably similar approval rates on most of the items. The majority say they would approve of their child taking an ethnic studies course (White=75%; POC=78%) and attending a BLM protest (White=52%; POC=50%). Fewer approve of their children becoming police officers (White=43%; POC=41%), kneeling during the national anthem (White=38%; POC=36%), or using a racial slur (White=8%; POC=13% while singing, White=6%; POC=11% against someone else). On only two items do we substantively significant differences between Democratic parents who are White versus POC: White parents are more supportive of their child dating outside their racial group (73% vs. 60%, $p < 0.05$) and less supportive of dressing up as a Native American for a Thanksgiving school event (22% vs. 42%).

We also see similarities among Republican parents across race, but increased uncertainty in the preferences of Republicans of color due to the small sample size makes it more difficult to identify significant differences. It appears the majority of Republican parents also support their children taking an ethnic studies course—although, support is much lower (White=60%; POC=53%) than the three-quarters of Democrats who approved. Far fewer Republican parents compared to Democrats support their child attending a BLM protest or kneeling during the national anthem. While these are less supported among Republicans regardless of race, we can discern racial gaps such that Republican parents of color are more supportive of these actions than their White co-partisans (BLM protest attendance: White=12%, POC=25%, $p < 0.05$; kneeling during the anthem:

9 We code leaners as partisans. White parents are those who identify as only White. The confidence intervals get quite large for Republicans of color given the small sample size, but it is still instructive to examine their attitudes toward these actions.

10 An important concern is that respondents interested in completing our study might be unique, for instance in terms of their overall agreeableness or their political attitudes. We therefore compared responses to our survey items to comparable questions collected in the probability-based 2020 ANES and the YouGov-sampled 2024 ANES pilot study. We find our sample looks descriptively similar to respondents in those surveys who reported having children under 18. While identifying potential selection biases is difficult, requiring ground-truth characteristics (Bailey 2024), we feel confident any biases in our data are related to general challenges faced by survey research today rather than unique to our study.

Figure 9.1: Approval of Potential Actions by Parent Race and Partisanship



Notes: Unweighted proportions with 95% confidence intervals plotted. These are plots of approval, and therefore the proportion not shown are a mix of parents who disapprove, have mixed feelings, or are indifferent to the idea of their teen taking one of these actions. White parents are those who say they are only White. Parents of color are those who say they are Black, Asian American, Native American or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and/or Hispanic or Latino of any race. Leaners are coded as partisans.

White=4%, POC=13%, $p < 0.10$). Even with these racial gaps in support, Republican parents across race are very unsupportive of their children taking these hypothetical actions. In fact, among Republicans, BLM protest attendance and kneeling during the anthem are nearly as unpopular as using racial slurs.

Most importantly, though, parents appear to have clear preferences about their children's actions. The vast majority report that they either approve or disapprove of each action, rather than having mixed feelings or being indifferent. Given this, are teens able to recognize their parents' preferences? Table 9.3 shows the percent of teens who correctly perceive their parent's opinion—that is, when asked to guess their parent's position, they gave exactly the answer their parent provided. The table also shows the percentage of parents who approve of each action and the percentage of teens who say they are somewhat or very likely to take each action.

The estimates in the second column, which show the percentage of teens who correctly perceived their parent's attitude, are striking. Between 60 and 82% of teens know their parent's position across items. On issues for which there appears to be more general normative agreement, teens are more likely to know their parents' attitude. For

Table 9.3: Teens' Awareness of Parental Attitudes and Likelihood of Behaviors

	Accurately Perceive (%)	Parent Approval (%)	Likely to Take Action (%)
Enroll in ethnic studies class	71	69	68
Date someone of a different race	70	62	75
Want to be a police officer	63	44	37
Attend BLM protest	66	38	48
Dress as a Native American for a Thanksgiving event	60	38	41
Kneel during national anthem	68	25	28
Use a racial slur when singing	69	11	31
Call someone a racial slur	82	6	16

Teens are categorized as perceiving their parent's attitude if they perfectly matched their parent's response on whether they approve, disapprove, are indifferent, or have mixed feelings about a given action. Teens are categorized as being likely to take a particular action if they said they would be somewhat or very likely to take a particular action.

instance, only 6% of parents approve of their children using a racial slur (84% disapprove and 10% are indifferent or mixed), and 82% of teens know their parent's position. Similarly, 69% percent of parents in our sample approve of their teens enrolling in an ethnic studies course and 71% of teens accurately perceive their parent's position. But our analysis show that conditional on their parent's position, teens still do better than chance in their guess. For instance, among parents who approve of their teen becoming a police officer or approve of them attending a BLM protest—both positions held by a minority of parents— three-quarters of their teens perceive these positions correctly.

Beyond simply perceiving parents' attitudes, teens' reported likelihood of taking particular actions tend to follow the same patterns as parental attitudes, at least descriptively. Actions that are more approved of by parents—like taking an ethnic studies course or dating someone from a different racial group—tend to be those teens say they'd be likely to do. Of course, these descriptive statistics cannot tell us whether the teens who say they'd take an action are those whose parents would approve. So we next examine teens' willingness to engage in an action, conditional on whether they correctly perceive their parents' position. Our goal is to consider how this information relates to teens' behavioral choices. To do this, we use a linear regression model where the dependent variable is a teen's reported likelihood of taking each action, measured on a four-point scale from very unlikely to very likely which we rescale to range from 0 to 1 with

higher numbers indicating greater likelihood. Our main predictor is the interaction between the parent's attitude and whether the teen accurately perceives their parent's attitude. We anticipate that parental attitudes will be linked to teen's likely behavior, but only if they are accurate in their perception of their parent's attitude.

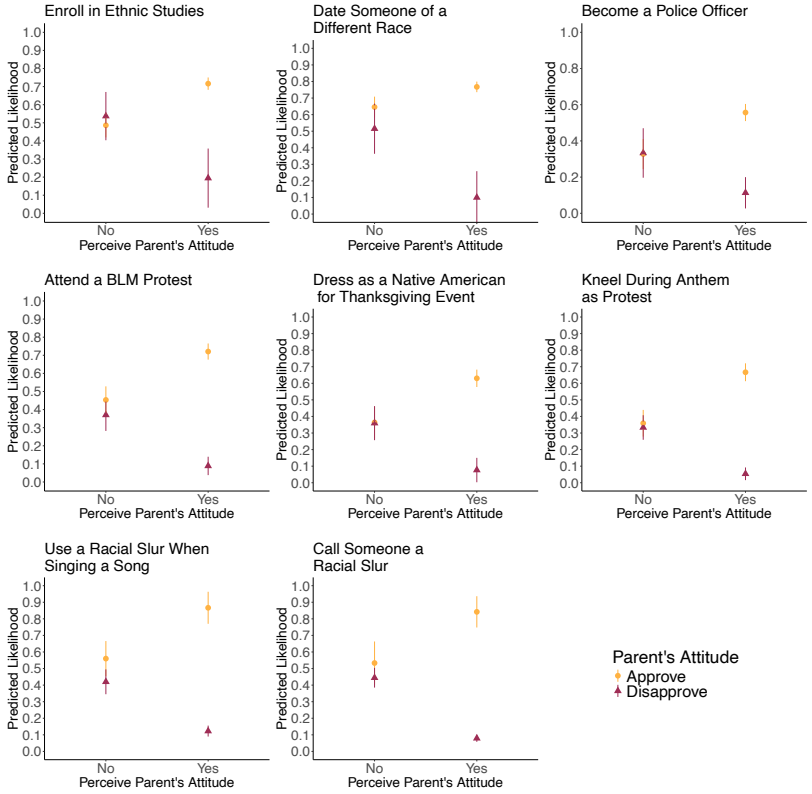
For clarity, we restrict these models to parents who have an unambiguous opinion. That is, we model only those teens whose parents report either approving or disapproving of an action, dropping the minority of teens whose parents say they are indifferent or have mixed feelings.[11] This approach allows us to gauge the likelihood of teens' action for four different subsets: teens who know their parents approve, teens who inaccurately believe their parents approve, teens who know their parents disapprove, and teens who inaccurately believe their parents disapprove.

Figure 9.2 shows these results. We find that for every potential action, the effect of a parent's attitude on the likelihood their teen says they would take an action *is conditional* on whether the teen correctly perceives their parent's position. Take, for instance, teens' likelihood of attending a Black Lives Matter protest. For teens whose parents approve but the teen misperceives that approval, they are predicted to report a likelihood of attending a BLM protest of 0.45—slightly closer to somewhat unlikely than somewhat likely. When the parent approves and the teen correctly perceives this approval, the likelihood increases to 0.72. These teens report being likely to engage in a BLM protest, if given a chance. The parallel but oppositely-signed relationship emerges for teens whose parents disapprove. Teens who misperceive their parents' disapproval are statistically indistinguishable in their likelihood of saying they'd attend a BLM protest from teens who misperceive their parents' approval at 0.37. Teens who accurately perceive that their parents' disapprove of them protesting are expected to score 0.09 on the reported likelihood of attending a protest: they say they are very unlikely to attend one.

We see identical patterns for each of the other measures. When a teen knows their parent's position, they are much more likely to align their behavior with their parent's attitudes. Among teens who misperceive their parents' position, parental attitudes have no predictive power over teens' reported likely behavior. These findings suggest underscore the important role that children play in socialization processes as they interpret the political signals in their environment (Ojeda and Hatemi 2015).

11 Our results are robust to the inclusion of ambivalent parents as well. We also find that our results are nearly identical when we include a host of possible covariates (an indicator for whether parents are unified in their partisanship, teens' reported closeness to their surveyed parent, parent partisan identity, how much teens say they talk about politics with their parent, how important parents report it is to talk about race with their teen, parent education, and whether parents identify with a minoritized racial/ethnic group).

Figure 9.2: Teen's Likely Actions By Parent's Attitudes and Whether Teen Accurately Perceives Parent's Attitude



Notes: OLS estimates, and 95% confidence intervals, of teens' reported likelihood of taking an action on a four-point scale from 0 (very unlikely) to 1 (very likely). Model is restricted to only teens whose parents expressed a firm opinion on the action being modeled. The plot shows the interaction of whether their parent approves of them taking the action and whether the teen accurately perceived the parent's position. The results replicate nearly identically if we include control variables for whether the teen's parents share partisanship, teen's reported closeness to their parent, parent's partisan identity, teen's reported frequency of talking about the news with their parent, how important the parent thinks it is to discuss racism with children, parent's education, and whether the parent identifies with a minoritized racial/ethnic group.

The measures we examine here focus on concrete situations. We can determine how parents feel about specific behaviors and whether teens align with their parents in these imagined situations. We next consider the relationship between parents and their children on global racial attitudes—how one feels toward groups generally or one's attitudes toward the American racial order. As people can have difficulty mapping particular issues to abstract ideas (Converse 1964), this is a more difficult test of racial attitude correspondence within families.

FROM SITUATIONAL TO ABSTRACT RACIAL ATTITUDES

Measuring racial attitudes is complex. Early measurement strategies often focused on capturing attitudes about social distance—whether Americans wanted people from other racial groups in their neighborhoods, schools, or families. As new measures were developed and refined, scholars showed that abstract racial attitudes do important political work (Bobo 2011; Engelhardt and Kam 2025; Huddy and Feldman 2009; Huddy, Feldman and Sen 2025; Kinder and Kam 2010).

Here, we rely on three kinds of measures to capture abstract racial attitudes among teens and their parents: feeling thermometers, racial resentment, and attitudes on explicitly race-focused policies. Each has unique value. First, *feeling thermometers* capture people's general judgments of groups and have a well-established track record of predicting a range of policy positions (Kinder and Kam 2010). Feeling thermometers ask respondents to indicate how warmly or favorably they feel toward different social groups. We capture evaluations of Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, White Americans, and Black Americans, with responses recorded on a 0-100 scale. Jennings and Niemi included feeling thermometers toward both Black and White Americans in their classic dyad study, which allows us to compare how correlations between parent-child pairs on two of the groups differ from the 1960s.

Second, we measure *racial resentment*. The racial resentment scale was developed after Jennings and Niemi's foundational work and captures the idea that Black Americans have received unearned advantages since the end of de jure segregation and demand too much from government (Kam and Burge 2018; Kinder and Sanders 1996). Despite criticisms about the construct and its measurement (Carmines, Sniderman and Easter 2011; Davis and Wilson 2022; Feldman and Huddy 2005; Sniderman and Piazza 1993; Sniderman and Tetlock 1986), racial resentment is widely used in studies of American adult behavior and robustly predicts a host of policy attitudes and other political judgments (Kam and Burge 2019; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Tesler 2016). To our knowledge, it is rarely used to explore attitude transmission across generations (for an exception, see Maxwell and Schulte 2018). The racial resentment scale includes four items that are averaged together into a single score, where lower numbers suggest the respondent thinks more systemic reasons explain racial inequality in society and higher numbers indicate a sense that personal failings explain this gap.[12]

12 Respondents are asked, How much do you agree or disagree with each statement? Then, they evaluate four items on a 0-4 scale where higher numbers indicate more resentment: 1) Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve (reverse coded); 2) Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for Blacks to work their way out of the lower class (reverse coded); 3) Irish, Italian, Jewish, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and

Finally, we measure two policy attitudes related to race and public education. Attitudes toward specific race-focused policies are commonly used as a measure of racial attitudes in political behavior research (Davenport 2016; Kuziemko and Washington 2018; Schuman et al. 1997). The first question assesses respondents' attitudes toward busing to achieve racial integration of schools, where higher scores indicate more support for busing.[13] This question was fielded by Jennings and Niemi in the 1973 wave of the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study (Jennings and Niemi 1981). And so, we too capture this policy attitude to allow for a direct comparison, using a seven-point scale that's anchored on either side with "Keep children in neighborhood schools" and "Bus to achieve integration."[14]

When Jennings and Niemi fielded this question in 1973, busing was an important political issue that divided America—but today, after a series of court rulings that limited judicial oversight of integration plans and eventually prohibited the use of race in school assignment plans, it may be more outdated. So, we developed a parallel question that captures contemporary fights around race in public education. We asked:

> There is much discussion about the best way to deal with racial problems. Some people think schools should teach children about difficult topics like racism and discrimination. Others think it creates division when schools discuss these topics. Where would you put yourself on this scale?

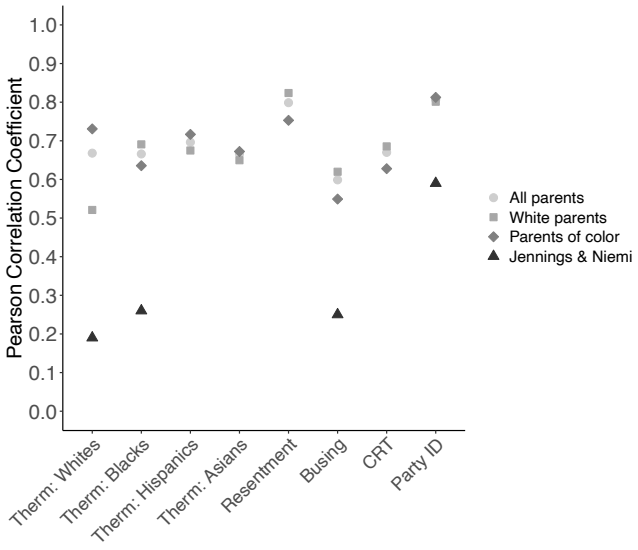
Respondents were then given a scale of 0–6 anchored on one side with, "Schools should teach topics like racism and discrimination" and on the other, "Schools should NOT teach topics like racism and discrimination," and coded such that higher scores indicate more support for teaching about racism. In the three years before our survey, many states enacted so-called "anti-Critical Race Theory (CRT)" legislation designed to limit teaching about race and racism in public schools. Our measure attempts to capture these pro- or anti-CRT attitudes.

worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors; 4) It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as Whites.

13 Question wording: There is much discussion about the best way to deal with racial problems. Some people think achieving racial integration of schools is so important that it justifies busing children to schools out of their own neighborhood. Others think letting children go to their neighborhood schools is so important that they oppose busing. Where would you put yourself on this scale? Respondents were then given a seven-point scale anchored on either side with "Bus to achieve integration" and "Keep children in neighborhood schools."

14 We did not use the other race and education question Jennings and Niemi asked because it focused on federal intervention to ensure school integration. We felt this question was less comprehensible to today's teens and so opted to use the question about busing. In our pre-tests of the busing question, teens told us they could think through their opinion on busing even though they hadn't really thought about it much before.

Figure 9.3: Pearson Correlations Between Parents and Teens



Notes: Pearson Correlation Coefficients. We calculated the coefficients for Jennings and Niemi's data using their data house at ICPSR. Each of their estimates is from the 1965 wave except for the busing question which is from the 1973 wave. For our data, racial subsets are defined by parent's race: White parents are those who identify as only White while parents of color are those who say they are Black, Asian American, Native American or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and/or Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Together, these two policy questions let us determine whether correlations between parent-child pairs are weaker or stronger when applied to specific political problems compared to general assessments of a group or abstract attitudes about racial inequality.

For each of our seven racial attitudes measures, we calculate the Pearson correlation between parents' attitudes and those of their teenage children. We also provide an estimate of the correlation between parents and children on partisanship for comparison. Figure 9.3 shows these relationships for our sample as a whole, then for dyads subset by whether the surveyed parent identifies as White only or with a minoritized racial/ethnic group. Alongside our data, we plot a re-analysis of correlations from Jennings and Niemi's work. We use the 1965 data for the feeling thermometers and partisan identity correlations and the 1973 data for the busing question as it was only asked then. It is important to note then, that the dyads are slightly different for Jennings and Niemi on the busing question compared to ours. By 1973 their youth sample was in their 20s while ours are still teens.

The most striking finding is that the correlation coefficients from Jennings and Niemi's study are consistently lower than those from our 2023 survey—and by a lot. The feeling thermometer correlations toward Black and White Americans in 1965 were 0.26 and 0.19, respec-

tively. As Jennings and Niemi (1968) note, these are weak relationships by social scientific standards. By contrast, the correlations in our 2023 sample range between 0.52 and 0.73. Interestingly, we find slightly higher correlations on outgroup feeling thermometer measures than ingroup ones. When we subset to White parents, the correlation coefficient for the feeling thermometer toward Black Americans is 0.69. Subset to parents of color, the correlation for the White feeling thermometer is 0.73.

Parent-teen congruence on racial resentment is higher still. The correlation between parents of color and their teens is 0.75. Among White parents and their kids, the relationship grows to 0.82—a correlation that shows a *very strong* correspondence within dyads.

In their first publication on the topic, Jennings and Niemi (1968) report their strongest correlation in partisanship. American parents and their teens correlated with each other at 0.59 in 1965. More recent work shows that this relationship has strengthened over time, likely due to increasing polarization in the nation as a whole and sorting across families (Iyengar, Konitzer and Tedin 2018; Tyler and Iyengar 2023). We too find this strengthened relationship with a sample-wide correlation of 0.81.

And yet, while the correlation for partisanship has increased in strength by 0.22 in 58 years, the correlation for the feeling thermometer toward Black Americans has strengthened by 0.41, nearly double the size of the change for partisanship. Further, the correlation between parents and teens on racial resentment is as strong as the correlation on partisan identity. No longer does it appear, as Jennings and Niemi (1968, 177) reported, that "intra-pair correlations on group evaluations are at best moderately positive." Instead, if you know a parent's attitude on measures of abstract racial concepts, you almost certainly know their child's as well.

Finally, congruence on racial issues in public schools is also notable in our data. We find in 2023 that parent-teen dyads have stronger correlation on both a salient racial education policy issue (support for "CRT") and on a non-salient issue (busing to achieve integration) than did Jennings and Niemi's dyad sample in 1973. In our sample as a whole, parents and teens attitudes are correlated at 0.60 on the question of busing and 0.67 on attitudes toward teaching about racial discrimination in school, compared to 0.25 on busing in 1973. Given the salience of that issue at the time, we might have anticipated more congruence between parents and offspring. It is, of course, possible that our dyads will show less similarity as the teens enter their 20s as Jennings and Niemi's youth sample did by 1973. However, given that our dyads are consistently more correlated regardless of whether we compare to the 1965 wave or the 1973 wave, and Jennings and Niemi's dyads show a great deal of continuation in the level of racial attitude correlation between 1965 and 1973, we think this is likely indicative of

a shift in parent-offspring attitude formation rather than an adolescent blip.

It is, however, important to note differences between Jennings and Niemi's dyad study and ours. Jennings and Niemi collected their data using face-to-face interview techniques; our study was collected through internet surveying. Their adolescent sample included only graduating seniors in 1965; ours includes children as young as 14 years old. Their sample was almost entirely White; ours oversampled Black respondents and about half of our dyads are families of color. Our survey took place more than two years after the height of a protest movement, while theirs occurred in the middle of a racialized crisis.[15]

Still, we think these updated correlations—and our comparisons to the past—are instructive. Our analyses indicate that parents and teens today have largely similar global attitudes on race. These similarities far eclipse those identified in the middle of the 20th century when the leading scholars concluded that "the child's view of socio-political groupings" does not grow "out of cue-giving in the home" (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 175). Whether these strengthened correlations are due to broader, sorted social cues, or from parental transmission is difficult to know. But the evidence now, compared to 1965, suggests it is at least possible that children's racial attitudes are heavily influenced by their parents.

One way to further interrogate the strength of this relationship is to consider a statistical relationship where we control for factors that might co-vary with parents' attitudes. We do this in Table 9.4. Here, we report a series of linear regression models where teens' attitudes on racial resentment and teaching about race in public schools are the dependent variables. The matching item for parents is our main independent variable. We rescale all variables in the models to range from 0 to 1.

The first models for each dependent variable show that parents' attitudes are significantly associated with teens' racial attitudes. Moreover, the coefficients are large. For racial resentment, the coefficient is 0.72, meaning that teens whose parents are the most racially resentful are expected to score 0.72 points higher on the 0 to 1 scale than teens whose parents are the least resentful. Similarly, teens whose parents are most supportive of teaching about race are expected to score 0.65

15 The 1965 interviews began two weeks after Bloody Sunday; one week after President Johnson declared that "There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no Northern problem. There is only an American problem" before promising to send what became the Voting Rights Act to Congress; and on the same day the Selma to Montgomery march started. To be sure, we did not collect our contemporary data in a quiescent period. Fall 2023 saw continued backlash to general efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion, including, as we saw last chapter, public school curriculum. That issues of civil rights and race were likely quite prominent for 1965 respondents, and concerns with race likewise loomed in the background for our 2023 interviews, provide important context to parent-teen correspondence in both data collections.

Table 9.4: Modeling Teens' Racial Attitudes

	Racial Resentment			Pro-"CRT"		
	Mod.1	Mod. 2	Mod. 3	Mod. 4	Mod. 5	Mod. 6
Parent's attitude	0.72*	0.72*	0.70*	0.65*	0.64*	0.66*
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Parent PID		−0.01	−0.01		−0.02	−0.01
		(0.02)	(0.02)		(0.03)	(0.03)
Parent education		0.00	0.00		0.03	0.02
		(0.02)	(0.02)		(0.03)	(0.03)
Parent of color		−0.00	0.00		0.03	0.03
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.02)
Teen girl		0.01	0.01		0.06*	0.06*
		(0.01)	(0.01)		(0.02)	(0.02)
Teen age		−0.02	−0.01		0.04	0.05
		(0.02)	(0.02)		(0.03)	(0.03)
Prop. Black in zip			−0.08*			−0.04
			(0.03)			(0.06)
Biden vote share			0.00			−0.00
			(0.00)			(0.00)
(Intercept)	0.12*	0.13*	0.15*	0.24*	0.18*	0.17*
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
N	500	494	450	500	494	450
Adj. R^2	0.64	0.63	0.61	0.45	0.45	0.46

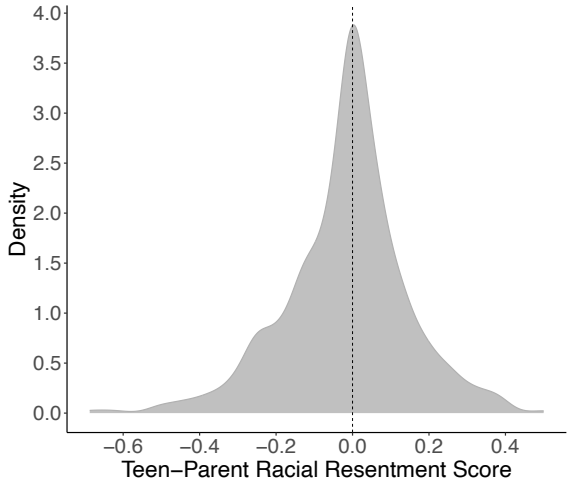
*$p < 0.05$. All variables scaled to range from 0 to 1. Parent's attitude indicates parent's response on the same racial attitude measure as the dependent variable in the model—i.e. racial resentment or support for teaching about race. Proportion Black in zip code comes from the 2023 US Census API. Biden vote share is the average two-party vote share in the 2020 presidential election for the zip code. We use the average of congressional districts mapping onto the zip code.

points higher on the 0 to 1 pro-"CRT" scale compared to teens whose parents are least supportive of race education.

When we layer on potential covariates, our results are suprisingly sticky. In the second model of each teen racial attitude, we add controls for parents' partisan identity, education level, and race along with teens' gender and age. For the model of teen racial resentment, these controls are all insignificant while parent racial resentment remains significant and the coefficient is once again 0.72. The effect of parent attitudes toward teaching about race also holds with the coefficient barely decreasing to 0.64. In this model we do find a gender effect, with teen girls 0.06 points more supportive of teaching about race compared to teen boys. In both models parents' partisanship, education, and race are insignificant.

Finally, we add covariates to capture teens' racial and political context, as contextual variables are often linked to political attitudes (Anoll, Davenport and Lienesch 2024; Anoll, Epp and Israel-Trummel 2022). We have two zip code contextual measures: the proportion of

Figure 9.4: Teens' Distance from Parents on Racial Resentment



Notes: We rescale the 0 to 20 racial resentment scale to range from 0 to 1 for both teens and parents. Then, we subtract parents' scores from teens' scores. This means that positive scores on this difference measure indicate that a teen is more resentful than their parent. The mean score on this scale is -0.02.

Black residents and Biden presidential vote share in 2020. In these models, parents' attitudes remain strong and significant predictors of teens' attitudes. For the teaching about race measure, we don't find any significant contextual effects. For teen racial resentment—a measure explicitly capturing attitudes about Black Americans—we do find a relationship between racial context and racial attitudes. Teens who live in zip codes with a higher proportion of Black residents have significantly lower racial resentment scores. All else equal, a teen who lives in a zip code with a Black population at the third quartile in our sample (19.8% Black residents) is expected to score 0.013 points lower on the 0 to 1 racial resentment scale compared to a teen who lives in a zip code that is in the first quartile for proportion of Black residents in our sample (2.7% Black residents). This suggests that racial context exerts a significant though small effect independent of parental racial attitudes.

Figure 9.4 underlines the tight linkage between parents and teens on racial attitudes. The figure plots the distance between parents and teens on the 0 to 1 racial resentment scale by subtracting parents' scores from teens' scores. The figure shows a sharp peak around 0, where teens and parents have identical scores. Theoretically, this difference measure could range from -1 to 1. However, the actual scores range from only -0.69 to .5, and fewer than 5% of teens are more than one-third of the scale away from their parents' score. Racial resentment is also not unique in terms of parent-child distance. Each of the other racial attitudes measures looks nearly the same, where teens have very similar attitudes to their parents and cluster around 0.

CONCLUSION

The majority of this book has examined the beliefs and behaviors of adults. We have argued that adults believe that what kids learn will shape their attitudes and ultimately their political orientations when they become adults. Because adults think this matters for political outcomes in the future, they see children's education as a political battle, particularly over clashing racial orders. During times of disruption, adults then seek to inculcate particular racial attitudes in children.

In the background of these chapters has been a lurking question: Does any of this matter for children's attitudes? Early work on political socialization found that parental attitudes predict children's attitudes, but that this relationship is strongest for partisanship and that issue attitudes are less strongly correlated between parents and offspring. We revisited this classic work by fielding an original dyad survey of parents and teens. Contrary to the findings from the mid-1900s, we show that parents and teens are now closely aligned in not only partisanship but also racial attitudes. Moreover, we show that most teens know their parents' racial attitudes and that when teens know their parents' atitudes they are more likely to report that their actions will align with parental preferences.

In total, this chapter suggests that adults aren't wrong in their belief that the kids are the future. Adolescent attitudes are shaped by the socializing behaviors of adults.