



Department of Political and Social Sciences

**THE IMPRESSIONABLE YEARS:
The Formative Role of Family, Vote and Political
Events During Early Adulthood**

Elias Dinas

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

Florence, September 2010

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
Department of Political and Social Sciences

THE IMPRESSIONABLE YEARS:
The Formative Role of Family, Vote and Political
Events During Early Adulthood

Elias Dinas

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of
Doctor of Political and Social Sciences of the European University Institute

Examining Board:

Prof. Mark Franklin, European University Institute (Supervisor)
Prof. Cees van der Eijk, University of Nottingham
Prof. Laura Stoker, University of California, Berkeley
Prof. Fabrizio Bernardi, European University Institute

© 2010, Elias Dinas

No part of this thesis may be copied, reproduced or
transmitted without prior permission of the author

The Impressionable Years: the formative role of family, vote and political events during early adulthood

Acknowledgements	6
Abstract	9
Introduction	
1 - The impressionable gaps: why the usual suspects in the study of young voters remain suspects	12
1.1 Family	16
1.2 Elections	19
1.3 Events	22
1.4 Political change and young voters	25
1.4.1 Three stylized patterns of political learning	28
1.4.2 The Problem: how to evaluate these theories?	30
1.5 Implications for the study of partisanship	31
1.6 Plan of the study	33
1.7 A note on case selection	34
Part 1: Family	
2 - The more you try the less it sticks: parental politicization and the endurance of partisan transmission through the family	38
2.1 Parental politicization and the inheritance of partisanship through the family	40
2.2 Previous evidence	45
2.3 Data	49
2.4 Model	51
2.5 Measurement	52

Contents

2.5.1	Measuring family characteristics	52
2.5.2	The dependent variable	53
2.5.3	Parental Politicization	54
2.6	Results	56
2.6.1	Indirect effects 1: new social contexts (college attendance)	64
2.6.2	Indirect effects 2: political events (The Vietnam War)	67
2.6.3	Testing different attitudinal predispositions	70
2.7	Observable Implications: parent-child similarity in vote choice	73
2.8	Out-of-Sample Inference: beyond the Vietnam generation	74
2.9	In the long run: the persistence of this pattern over the life trajectory	78
2.10	The long-term implications of parental politicization on the partisan trajectory of young adults	88
2.11	Conclusion	91
	Appendix 2.A: Measuring family characteristics	94
	Appendix 2.B: Quantifying the PID scale through the ALSOS procedure	95
	Appendix 2.C: The Parental Politicization index	100
	Appendix 2.D: Confounds	103
	2.D.1: Parental stability	103
	2.D.2: Parental politicization and strength of parental PID	104
	2.D.3: Political socialization versus sociodemographic concordance	107
	2.D.3.1 Family socioeconomic indicators	107
	2.D.3.2 Local Political Climates	112
Part 2: Elections		
3	Vote, and vote, and vote again: the direct and indirect effect of the act of voting on future turnout	116
3.1	Turnout and habit formation	118
3.2	Previous findings	120
3.3	Data: the Youth-Parent Socialization Study as a natural experiment	123

Contents

3.4	Eligibility as an Instrument of vote	124
3.5	A graphical representation of the design	128
3.6	Results	129
3.7	Confounds and rivaling explanations	132
3.8	Indirect effects	136
3.9	Conclusion (to be continued)	144
	Appendix 3.A: 1968 eligibility and 1972 vote	146
	3.A.1: Non-zero direct effects with zero direct effects?	148
4	Does Choice Bring Loyalty? Vote and partisanship among young adults and their parents	150
4.1	Political Science: immunization as a seemingly mechanistic process	152
4.2	Psychology: cognitive dissonance and self-perception theory	155
4.3	From turnout to vote choice	160
4.4	Results	165
4.5	Cognitive dissonance versus aging and political knowledge	168
4.6	Unpacking the effect of vote	169
4.7	Out-of-Sample inference	171
4.8	Implications for vote choice	176
4.9	Exploring ceiling effects: the act of voting among established voters	178
4.10	In the long-run: voting effects during the life span	180
4.11	Partisanship and electoral stability: some more (or less) obvious implications	183
4.12	PID and Turnout: two habits formed hand-in-hand	187
4.13	Conclusion	190
	Appendix 4.A: Testing a different method for deriving preferences	193
Part 3: Events		
5	Opening 'Openness to change': period effects and the increased sensitivity of young adults	196
5.1	Political Shocks and generational imprinting	204
5.1.1	Political generations and the role of political events	204
5.1.2	Theories of partisan learning	206

Contents

5.1.3	Realignments versus dealignments	207
5.1.4	Period effects through survey issue scales	209
5.2	Research Design: Wars, scandals and young voters	210
5.2.1	The Watergate	210
5.2.2	Iran, Contras, and the 25th of November 1986	212
5.2.3	The demise of a Democratic candidate	214
5.3	Results	216
5.3.1	Richard Nixon	217
5.3.1.1	Are the results due to the scandal?	222
5.3.1.2	Does the age gap remain?	223
5.3.1.3	Controlling for partisanship and political interest	224
5.3.1.4	Different predictors	224
5.3.1.5	Different outcomes	227
5.3.1.6	More general political implications	230
5.3.1.7	Republican partisanship	232
5.3.1.8	A more refined age comparison	232
5.3.1.9	Robustness checks	234
5.3.2	Ronald Reagan	235
5.3.2.1	Controls	236
5.3.2.2	Essential Choices in the Research Strategy	238
5.3.2.3	'November' as a continuous flow of information	240
5.3.2.4	Accommodating nonlinearities	241
5.3.2.5	<i>Controlling for partisanship and political engagement</i>	242
5.3.2.6	Before and after the 25th of November	242
5.3.2.7	What is the causal mechanism?	245
5.3.2.8	Other outcomes of interest	250
5.3.3	Gary Hart	254
5.3.3.1	Design and measurement	255
5.3.3.2	Results	256
5.3.3.3	Bush as a placebo test	257

Contents

5.3.3.4	Is this because of a (poor) linear approximation?	259
5.3.3.5	Is this because Hart was not a salient feature in 1986?	260
5.3.3.6	Is this because of differences in the strength and direction of partisanship and/or in the levels of political interest/issue weight between young voters and established ones?	260
5.3.3.7	Final remarks	263
5.4	Conclusion	263
Appendix 5.A:	Measurement error and the Heise model	266
Appendix 5.B:	The RDD in the Iran-Contras example	268
Appendix 5.C:	Using the 1982 ANES study as a placebo test for the effect of the November announcements on people's evaluations of Reagan in 1986	272
Conclusion		
6 -	First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.	273
6.1	Family: long-term effects and the role of parental politicization	273
6.2	The act of voting: cognitive dissonance versus a social learning process	276
6.3	Events: establishing the increased sensitivity of young adults	280
6.4	The trajectory of attitudinal stability: the importance of the Impressionable Years	283
6.5	Implications for the study of electoral change	284
6.6	Caveats	285
6.7	Crossing the Atlantic: concerns, problems and opportunities	288
6.8	Towards a theory of partisan engagement	293
6.9	No Country For Old Men: a potentially normative implication of the findings	296
<i>References</i>		298

Acknowledgments

They say every place is its people. I would say a university is its secretaries. We did have problems in some instances, most of the times it was my fault, but all in all, Marie-Ange and especially Gabriella deserve at least a very warm 'thank you' for their patience to my starked inability to meet deadlines and my remarkable capacity to transmit stress. However, it is Amy, 'Mrs Perfect' of my own Pulp Fiction that was being run during the last days of the submission of the thesis, to whom I really need to express my gratitude for managing to convert the pile of papers I initially brought to her into a presentable set of copies in an astonishingly short time. Her efficiency in dealing with problems that arose after the submission was even more helpful.

During all this period, I have worked on the thesis in various countries, many cities and numerous spots. Among them, it is probably *La Cité*, the Libreria-Caffè in Borgo San Frediano, where a great part of the thesis has been written. As a minimum I need to express my gratitude to the people of *La Cité*, especially to Vittorio and Simone, for even waiting sometimes until the matching procedure is run in order to close the place. By the same token, I need to thank Fiamma (a perfect match between the name and the person), Loredana, and Antonella, undoubtedly the most refreshing company among the EUI personel. Ok, maybe Alberto, Roberto Baggio of the EUI, should be also included in this group. The same applies also to Ana Gonzalez, the best librarian of the EUI.

Peter Mair and Alex Trechsel, helped me from the beginning to acquaint myself with the new institutional environment and although our relationship did have ups and downs, it ended up as it started, i.e. they are and they have always been by far the two professors who, apart from Mark Franklin, have always provided an easy-going but at the same time stimulating atmosphere that largely facilitated my work at the EUI. I am also thankful to both of them for their valuable support in crucial stages of this process.

In this group I also need to include Fabrizio Bernardi, who although came to the EUI during my last year, helped me with important job decisions and with whom we shared a couple of memorable nights out in Florence. Needless to say, I am indebted to Fabrizio for accepting to be in the jury and for his comprehensive feedback that kept me busy for the summer. The only thing I can promise is that this year Drink Team will definitely do better (as if it could do worse).

For inspiring discussions and suggestions I am indebted to Josh Angrist, Neal Beck, Paul Beck, Jack Citrin, Bob Erikson, Geoffrey Evans, Kostas Gemenis, Jens Hainmueller, Andrea Ichino, Bill Jacoby, Luke Keele, Guillaume Maze, Ignacio Sanchez-Cuenca, Paul Sniderman, Erik Schickler, Joost van Spanje, Gabor Toka and Josh Tucker. The most influential guidance for the project, however, was provided by Don Green, the first one to make it clear to me that problems should be solved during the research design, and Jas Sekhon, who introduced me to the virtues of nonparametric analysis.

In a more personal vein, I am grateful to Nikos Marantzidis, who was the first one to introduce me in an inspiring way to the comparative politics and political behavior research and who insisted that I should do my Masters Degree in the University of Essex. Things would be probably different, if I had stood firm in my decision to stay in Greece for the postgraduate studies. In a similar vein, I need to thank Takis Pappas for encouraging me to actually apply to the EUI PhD program and to David Sanders for his invaluable help and guidance in my studies in Essex.

Starting a PhD in a new country in an age in which most people begin to settle down always creates socialization concerns. If before arriving to Florence I was told I would have few people to hang out with during all these years, I would be certainly satisfied. Instead, what I found was long-lasting friendships that marked my 'small life' in Florence.

Sergi Pardos, with whom we started together, being the first supervisees of Mark Franklin, was my intellectual 'twin-brother' in the department all these years, to the extent that many times professors would confuse one with the other. We overcame together various crises, both of academic and personal nature, and we will keep on working together at Nuffield. It is, of course, more than a coincidence, that we defend the thesis on the same day. What remains is, as Sergi has pointed to me, to decide in which college to send our children in the future.

Acknowledgments

I know Pedro Riera, one of the three biggest surprises of the last academic term, for only one year. Yet, it feels like knowing him for ages. Numerous memorable experiences accumulated in such a short period reveal how lucky I was to coincide with him in my last year. I would love to have coexisted with him and his Spanish group for a longer period, although this would seriously endanger the completion of the thesis. Juanan, Pablo, Juana, Jeni, Marta (Fernández), Bárbara, Oriana and the others are very nice reasons to visit regularly Florence during the next years.

The other two really big surprises were Luca Niccolini and Irene Martín. The first deleted the myth of the 'arrogant Florentine' and helped me to appreciate the city, the country and its people. The second became almost from the beginning my 'guardian angel' in Florence. With Irene I learnt that Greek onions might actually not be the best ones in the world. It is really a pity that both Irene, as well as Fabrizio and Marta (Fraile), came to the EUI so late.

But life at the EUI started long before the last year. Jøergen, whose stimulating comments were probably the most helpful ones during all these years at the EUI, Ana, Carolien, Kristjan, Luis, Chris, and Till have been a very inspiring group both in academic and in personal respect. I would say that the first 'cult' sessions of the Colloquium will be soon regarded as legendary in the history of the department. All of them together, under Till's leadership and Mark's discrete surveillance, have contributed in the emergence of a dynamic group of quantitative analysis in what has for long been deemed to be a purely qualitatively-oriented institution.

And all this leads us to the core of Florence, people without whom this 'small life' would have been simply 'the life of the others'. I refer to Nikos Skoutaris, Vassilis P. Tzevelekos, Stathis Georgiadis, Sakis Gekas, Giorgos Antoniou and Kostis Kornetis. What follows will probably make sense only to them: Stathi, we will always have our 'too many ninety minutes'. Latreia, we will always have Semites, the 'modern vertical', and *Pallaio* to discuss about them. Skoutair, we will always have Mala Vidra and I although I honestly tried hard, I could not find what could go beyond that. Hermano, we will always have the 'September of our hearts.' Gero, we will always have to decide where to have dinner. Korneti, we will always have *Lola* and *Caffé Bianchi*. In this group I also need to include Viky, Angelos, Cuqui, Ioanna Y., Miky, Nicholas K., and Regina. There is not enough space to express my gratitude to all of them and especially to Vassilis, Nikos and Stathis, for living with me three literally impressionable years.

Alexandros Kokkonidis and Anna Smaragdi-Kokkonidi, who constituted the main bridge in the pre- and post-EUI era are the ideal example of lifetime friends for whom distance is nothing but a trivial concern. In this group I should also include Dimitris Zacharakis, Elias Vasileiadis, Giorgos Mavridis, Giorgos Trifinopoulos, Giorgos Nestoras, Nikos Antonakis, and Lefteris Tsonidis.

Being supervised by Mark Franklin, it is inevitable not to have almost metaphysical respect for some analytical strategies and deep admiration for their inventors. Few people would need from me to name the most prominent of them, Professor Cees van der Eijk. Although I was no exception to this rule, being in the US during the period in which I had to choose the jury, I had thought it would be too much to ask from Mark to investigate whether Cees would be interested - at that point, reading the job-market papers and writing the reference letters seemed more important. Life sometimes creates the most unrealistic scenarios. I am extremely grateful to Cees for accepting to be in my jury despite the very late notice and for providing me with invaluable feedback although he had very little time to read and comment on the thesis.

When I first arrived in Berkeley, I had to register as a visiting scholar in the department. When I went there, I was told that the state fees were already paid by Laura Stoker. Within the first week, Laura took me to departmental registration parties, introduced me to all professors that I would have liked to meet, made sure that I could attend all lectures I wanted to, included me as one of the persons to present in the Political Behavior colloquium, showed me around and even gave me her bike for the period I would be there. Before arriving to Berkeley, I was told that the default in these situations is to meet the professor with whom you are supposed to work once in the first week and thereafter you are on your own. Laura did not only do everything she could to make my stay in Berkeley as pleasant as possible, but she also contributed probably more than anyone else in the final version of the PhD. When I arrived there I thought I had two papers ready to be published.

Acknowledgments

Not only did she read both papers providing me with extraordinary feedback, but she helped me to convert what I thought I was an almost complete paper into two different ones which after being written and revised again by Laura made me realize the difference between my perception of a finished paper and what a complete paper is really about. These two interconnected chapters, chapters 3 and 4, became my job-market papers and I am quite sure that I would have considerably more problems finding a job if I had only sent the initial version of this work. In this respect, I was also told by someone who works in one of the institutions I applied that he (or anyone else in that institution) had never read such a reference letter as the one Laura wrote for me. I could keep on but there is not enough space. Suffice it to say, that neither the thesis nor my job hunting efforts would end up the way they did if I had not had the unique opportunity to work with Laura. As a very minimum sign of gratitude, I promise to replace her bike which was stolen one week before I left the country.

While telling a story about his own supervisor in Paris, a friend of mine once told me that the most important quality a supervisor needs to have is to be a good person. When going to Florence, I had to choose between three potential supervisors and although his seemingly intimidating look made me hesitate about my choice, ignoring my friend's advice, I decided that Mark Franklin's indisputable expertise was worth the cost. Along the way, my friend's phrase came to my mind several times. In all of them, I was speculating on how lucky I was to enjoy the exemplary paradigm of what a good supervisor is, according to this criterion. Whatever I wrote and either published or presented in conferences during all these years is because of Mark. In some cases, this was due to his endless efforts to revise and edit manuscripts and to supervise even the reports I would have to send to the journals. In other occasions, it was simply because he taught me that I always need to think about the reader when I write and that readers are not high-school teachers to whom I had to demonstrate whatever I know about the topic. It is very difficult to overstate his contribution not only with regard to the thesis but more generally with regard to the improvement I have made, compared to how I started, with regard to my research and writing skills. More importantly, Mark, whose last reply, which entailed reading and editing seven pages, arrived at my inbox today at 5:33am, only a couple of hours after my email (and this has for long ceased to be surprising), never hesitated to take risks within the department for my own benefit, allowing me to go to Berkeley being only one such example. In a university in which PhD supervision is left to the patriotism of each professor, having a supervisor who constantly proof-reads and edits all sorts of manuscripts is pure luxury. I am thankful for all his help and I can only promise I will not be late again in early-morning appointments.

All this effort would not have been possible unless I had the abundant support from my family, i.e. my brother, Vassilis Dinas, whose stories have been keeping me company during my short stays in Greece, and my mother, Myrsini Dina, who has always been the first person to whom I resort whenever something goes wrong. Her help during all these years is too big to be expressed with words. As a minimum, I could only dedicate this work to her, but I will not.

Last but definitely not least, I have to thank my partner, Sophie Maze, if not anything else for bearing my stressful reactions whenever the analysis would wrong, which was more often the rule than the exception, my complete lack of organization skills, the lack of schedule in terms of hours and days of work and the idea that we would have to live with this distance for four years. Sophie many times had to play the role of the secretary, the research assistant, even the psychologist if not psychiatrist, as some people have acknowledged. It is once again very difficult to express my gratitude in words. Suffice it to say that from now on, I will do my best to compensate for all her devotion and her invaluable help. Again, this study should be dedicated to her, but it is not.

For being the first one to teach me how to evaluate integrals, for providing me with the first indirect political stimuli which I would later question, for being intuitively interested about the research domain of political science, while still in my undergraduate studies, for making me like statistics by explaining to me what it is really about but most importantly for all that he had done for me that I did not have the time to thank him for, I dedicate this work to the memory of my father, Antonios Dinas.

Abstract

Young adults are deemed to possess common characteristics that make them a relatively homogeneous group, rightly distinguishable from older cohorts. Having as a main toolkit the partisan influence from their family socialization, they gradually develop firm political attitudes as they accumulate political experience. However, this process is typically regarded as a black box, lacking a systematic examination of how it actually takes place. Thus, our knowledge about the political trajectory of young people does not typically go beyond the assertion that parental influence gradually wanes and that young adults progressively develop firm attitudes as they accumulate more experience with the political world. The goal of this study is to open this black box by focusing on three factors that are perceived to affect this process, namely the role of family, elections and political events. In so doing, it tries to address the following questions: what determines the durability of the parental partisan link? Why manifesting preference into actual vote might be important? What is the role of political events in shaping people's attitudes? Regarding the first question, I show that, contrary to conventional wisdom, parental politicization may contribute in breaking the intergenerational transmission of partisan predispositions. A young Republican who comes from a politicized home is used to talk about politics and this is also what she does when she enters new social contexts. In so doing, she becomes exposed to new political forces that may alter her prior partisan beliefs. This is especially true when the political mood during her early adulthood contradicts the partisan lessons of the family. Regarding the second question, I use a natural experiment to estimate the impact of the act of voting on partisan change, showing that its effect in reinforcing prior preferences is important only among the youth. Moreover, by ruling out various alternative explanations, I argue that this is mainly an effect attributed to the psychological forces of cognitive dissonance that stem from the act of voting. Last but not least, by testing three salient political events, I find that their impact among young adults is much stronger than among older age groups. When taken as a whole, the findings speak in favor of a particular pattern of attitudinal crystallization, namely that proposed by the Impressionable Years thesis: there is a developmental process in how people form well defined preferences but the crucial route in this trajectory is early adulthood. This is the period within which preferences are questioned, intensified and eventually crystallized.

*“In this book, everything is true,
but nothing is certain”*

Soti Triantafyllou,
‘Some of Your Blood’

1 - The impressionable gaps: why the usual suspects in the study of young voters remain suspects

According to CNN's exit poll, Obama would have never won North Carolina if it was not for young voters. Those aged less than 30 opted for the American president by 74 per cent. The majority of all other age groups went to McCain.¹ The report from Harvard's Institute of Politics revealed a very similar picture for Indiana. In fact, as was quickly acknowledged in the press, both states went blue 'solely because of the millennials, as 18-to-29-year-olds are known' (Ruggeri Amanda in U.S. News, November 6, 2008). Electoral battles in different periods and in different political settings often unveil an analogous pattern. The socialist victory of 2004 in Spain, for instance, was also the result of an unprecedented mobilization of the youth as a reaction to the government's stance after the terrorist attack in Atocha, Madrid, a few days before polling day (Montalvo 2006). In the 2007 Greek election, held only a week after a long catastrophic series of fires in various parts of the country, the distribution of votes among the parties was remarkably different among first-time voters and the rest of the electorate (Mavris 2007).

One could keep on naming various cases in which an electoral result concealed significant diversity between young voters and all other age cohorts. The point however is already clear and probably well-documented by now. Young people often vote differently than their older counterparts and sometimes this difference ends up being pivotal for the final outcome. There is an indirect implication from this observation, however, that is more interesting but at the same time less appreciated. If Obama owes his victory in North Carolina to the young portion of the electorate, this is not because young voters did not exist in previous elections. Rather, it is because either they changed their vote from previous battles or because they voted in a different way from what would be predicted on the basis of their parental background. This point could be easily generalized. Young voters are more likely to change their preferences and to do so by following the tides of the political periods within which they encounter themselves. Thus, they can be crucial for electoral battles mainly because they are more susceptible to the political circumstances within which an electoral battle takes place. Older cohorts appear more immune to such contextual forces.

¹ These results come from Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press (<http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1031/young-voters-in-the-2008-election>).

To be sure, this pattern has not escaped the attention of either the parties or the media. Spin-doctors and party strategists have frequently emphasized the role of younger generations in determining the electoral fortunes of parties. A party leader with a positive image among the youth is often regarded as an asset for his or her party. Especially in the US, managing to mobilize the youth during the campaign is deemed by the media to be a significant contribution to electoral success.

What however remains a puzzle is the question about what makes this particular life stage appear distinct in various attitudinal and behavioral terms from other periods in people's life trajectories. Not all but at least some political scientists would reply that this is the most interesting stage in one's life cycle. Early adulthood is a period where the individual starts his or her long journey into the world of politics. It is not that people necessarily wait to become adults in order to get involved into public affairs. But it is in this period that they start to live on their own and in so doing they move away from the school and the family environment. In the same time, they start participating in elections. Although some people occasionally also choose other means of political participation, elections constitute for the vast majority the primary means of political involvement. Through this process, young adults receive influences from different and relatively new social contexts (the job environment; the university) and in this way they learn about the parties and about politics in general. Thus, during early adulthood political opinions are formed, prior predispositions are challenged, and more generally the individual creates what constitutes her first encompassing scheme of political attitudes, which serves as a compass that helps her navigate in the political world.

As people begin to settle down in their personal lives so does this process of attitude formation and updating. People accumulate political experiences, their political views become more stable and so additional information becomes gradually less influential. This is so both in attitudinal and in behavioral terms. For example a typical question political scientists have been addressing during at least the last half-century is why young people vote at lower rates than older people. Among various different explanations that have been offered, the one that appears to gain unequivocal empirical support suggests a developmental pattern in turnout (see indicatively Green and Shachar 2000; Plutzer 2002; Gerber et al. 2003; Franklin 2004). Voting in a given election is on its own self-reinforcing. Doing it once increases the likelihood of doing it also in the future. By repeating this act, people, as van der Eijk and Franklin put it (2009:179), get locked into particular voting patterns. To put it differently, voting in each individual election during early adulthood might be the result of various idiosyncratic factors. But as the number of elections accumulates knowing what happened in the previous election becomes an almost perfect predictor of what will happen in the current election. This is the idea of habit formation. People become habitual voters or habit-

ual non-voters (Franklin 2004). No matter what the outcome will finally be, what is important is that this process takes place in early adulthood. This is the period that will determine to a large extent the frequency of future electoral participation. After this period ends, few things can change in the latent propensity to vote or abstain. This is simply because people 'get stuck in their ways' (Franklin 2004:9).

Importantly, people do not only get stuck in their ways when it comes to voting in elections. An analogous pattern applies to how they form their preferences and their attitudes about the political parties. In the electoral studies literature, a key notion in the understanding of how people think about the parties is that of party identification. Its basic implication is that voting behavior can be viewed again as a *habit*: people vote for a party simply because that is also what they (or their parents, if they just enter the electorate) used to do in the past. No matter if partisanship (as party identification - PID - is also referred to)² follows the logic of an affective group orientation towards a political object, as was suggested by its originators (Campbell et al. 1960), or whether it consists of a 'running tally' of prior cognitive evaluations about the parties as was argued by the revisionists of the mid1970s (Robertson 1976; Franklin and Jackson 1983), it does denote a pattern of continuity in vote choice which leads even the strongest advocates of the more dynamic perspective of partisanship to acknowledge that it 'merits the shorthand of habit' (Fiorina 1981:95). The key question however is how such habitual patterns emerge. It is into this exact question that this study delves. More particularly, by focusing on this process of attitude formation and crystallization, which is here called 'political learning', the aim of this study is to examine the impact of some important factors in this process of political learning – factors that primarily take place during early adulthood.³

Although age has frequently captured the attention of electoral students, the literature on young voters is less than impressive. The reason is that when questions about the evolution of political attitudes during the life span were initially posed, there were no data to explore these argu-

² In this study I will interchangeably refer to PID as party loyalty, party affiliation, party allegiance or simply partisanship.

³ Given its primordial importance in shaping attitudes and perceptions about political stimuli, the notion of party loyalty has become the keystone of electoral research. But partisanship can also have important normative implications. The idea of an established attachment with mainstream political parties has been deemed crucial for the consolidation of the democratic regime against totalitarian forces. The weak party ties characterizing Italy and Germany during the interwar period have been frequently reported, by political scientists (Converse 1969; Achen 2002) and historians (Kershaw 1983) alike, as significant factors for the rise of the 1930s authoritarian regimes. The reason for that is that party attachments prevent unconventional activities and impede the rise of anti-establishment parties, since individuals are integrated by the values of the party in the existing political system and thus system-challenging behavior is less likely to occur (Finkel and Opp, 1991:343). For instance, both Inglehart (1977) and Barnes and Kasse (1980) suggested that protests in the 1960s and the 1970s expanded as people became gradually detached from the values and the policies of the existing parties.

ments against the empirical evidence. The fact that electoral research is based on nationwide representative samples, which typically suffer from an under-representation of young voters (Converse 1976:48), made it very difficult to focus on the electorate's youngest age groups. By the time longitudinal data became available these questions were largely forgotten. Thus, as Jennings and Markus (1988:302) point out, apart from using age in the form of successive electoral cohorts, in order to explore the phenomenon of political generations as they march through time, only a small part of existing empirical research has addressed matters related to young voters and how they differ from their older counterparts. This is also apparent from the fact that cohort studies focussing on a random sample from a single cohort traced over time are scarce. In fact, there is only one such cohort study of young voters that has been used extensively in the existing literature and also constitutes the main dataset employed in this study. The result is that initial assumptions have not been adequately tested against the empirical evidence. By the same token, the lack of available data and the inherent difficulty to properly address these issues has created disincentives to build well-founded theoretical accounts. Consequently, the whole research on the formation of partisan habits during early adulthood suffers from under-theorized assertions with only scarce, if any, empirical evidence to support them.

The principal aim of this study is to establish a firm theoretical framework upon which these assertions could be based and to actually examine them in a systematic fashion. But before getting into that, we need to recall the content of these assertions and link them to the questions they have purported to answer. Since the discussion is about young voters, the first question relates to how they form their initial political predispositions. The typical response to this question alludes to the role of family. In effect, by now we know that family provides important partisan cues which at least in the beginning of their own political experience are used by young people as tools for making their own political choices. However, this link is not equally strong and most importantly not equally enduring for all young voters. In some instances young adults follow the partisan legacy of their parents. In others, parental political messages are challenged, leading to a partisan divergence between parents and children. What we do not know is under what circumstances are we most likely to see the breaking of this partisan link between parents and children. The first aim of this study is to shed some light on this exact question.

The next question relates to how do political attitudes crystallize during the period of early adulthood. To put it differently, how does the observed difference between young and old voters in terms of their attitudinal stability gradually evaporate? Two main factors have been used to answer this question, namely elections and political events. The following quotation by Jennings and Markus (1984:1000-01) eloquently summarizes contemporary received wisdom in the political science literature about the process of partisan development:

‘According to [the political-experience] model, the political outlooks of young adults typically rest upon fairly limited experiential base and are therefore particularly susceptible to change in response to attitudinally relevant events. Those events may be societal in nature, such as a war or an economic depression, and induce systematic shifts in the attitudinal makeup of an entire cohort.[...] Or the events may be more idiosyncratic and personal in nature—a college education, geographical mobility, or marriage. Either way, the presumption is that with increasing political experience, political attitudes gradually become imbued with a richer historical precedent and are consequently less likely to change.[...] With the passage of time, an individual’s repeated use of partisan orientations to interpret and organize political information and to guide electoral decisions should reduce the likelihood of those orientations being altered by isolated events or circumstances.’

Thus, young voters are more labile in their attitudinal perspectives because they have less experience with the political world and, for this reason, are more influenced by new information than are older cohorts. This pattern diminishes due to the electoral process. By rethinking their partisan preferences during their decision making process at each election, young voters reconfirm their prior predispositions and in so doing, they also reinforce them.

This means that elections and events are supposed to matter more for young voters than for older cohorts. But is this actually the case? The existing literature, however, provides almost no evidence in the case of the act of voting and only indirect support for the case of political events. Trying to fill this exact gap, the greatest part of the present study tries to disentangle these questions, by examining the role of both these two factors in the process of political learning. In so doing, it also attempts to enrich our theoretical underpinnings about the reasons that would lead us to expect these two factors to be more important among the youth.

In the following sections, I focus on each of these ‘usual suspects’ in the study of young voters, trying to highlight in more detail the problems with the existing literature and set out the ways in which this project aims to address these problems.

1.1 Family

The initial question addressed in this study relates to the first main provider of partisan cues in people’s life trajectories, i.e. the family. Indeed, the industry standard among electoral students is to exalt the role of parental socialization in the process of partisan development. There are reasons, however, to believe that party identification is not perfectly transmitted through family ties. First, transmission of partisanship becomes more difficult when each parent is attached to a different party (see Butler and Stokes, 1974:48). More importantly, however, the socialization outcome also depends on the children. Although parents may disseminate their political preferences within the family, the extent to which these preferences are also adopted by the children remains an empirical

question. Achen (2002:152) states this in a rather straightforward way:

'The social-psychological tradition has too often treated the child as the passive recipient of parental choices. But what child was ever like that? Parents are rarely able to influence their teenage children's hairdos, clothing styles, tastes in popular music, or even more important decisions such as the choice of a life partner. Neither the trivial nor the consequential seem to be under parental control. Why should party identification be any different? Put more precisely, why do teenagers implicitly accept their parents' advice about political parties while they avoid taking it on a great many other topics?'

Hence, partisanship might not '[have] the quality of photographic reproduction' even during early adulthood (Butler and Stokes, 1974:45), and the imprint is certainly is not as impressive as with other social identities, such as religious denomination (Green et al. 2002). That said, choosing a party is not exactly the same as choosing one's favorite music band. Adolescents know much less about politics than about the music they like. Consequently, they may tend to take their parents' opinions more at face value. Moreover, they do not learn about politics through parental lessons but by receiving normative cues about public affairs through the simple process of coexisting. In this way they get to know about the 'goodies' and the 'badies' of the political world (Denver 1994:31). Accordingly, they usually form their partisan preferences without needing to know the actual differences between the parties (Langton, 1969) and without even forming a coherent encompassing ideological scheme about politics. Empirical evidence seems to confirm this pattern (Greenstein 1969, 1970). In general, there is little doubt that family has an impact on the political attitudes of the youth (Easton and Dennis 1969) as it also has on youth's core political values (Alwin 1990). As off-spring grow up, however, the initial impact of parental socialization seems to diminish, although it is often still visible until at least middle age (Niemi and Jennings, 1991; Beck and Jennings, 1975). Under the weight of personal experience, the individual's own past behavior becomes a stronger predictor of current behavior than parental party preferences. People's choices still bear the imprint of their parents but by mid-life this is mostly mediated through their own party evaluations (Niemi and Jennings, 1991:985).

What determines the durability of the partisan link emanated through the family? The most typical response to this question lies on the borders of being tautological since it refers to the strength of parental partisanship. The weaker the partisan attachments of the parents, the argument goes, the less likely is any parental influence to last (Zuckerman et al. 2007). The remaining question that this line of argument does not address, however, is why we find significant variation in the partisan link of the family among equally strongly partisan parents. This is important because most of the variation is observed among strongly partisan families rather than among families where both parents are independents. It is mainly among strongly partisan families that we find some cases of significant breaks in the intergenerational transmission of partisan identifica-

tion, whereas in others we typically observe uninterrupted continuity (Beck and Jennings 1991).

This question cannot be addressed if, as is typically the case in the literature, we confine our focus only on parental partisanship. Children do not only learn which party - if any - to support. By living with their parents they can also learn about politics in a more generic way. The extent to which they actually do so depends on parents' own level of political involvement. In other words, family is not only the provider of partisan cues, but it also serves as the first context within which politics is discussed.

What happens to the endurance of parental partisan inheritance when parents apart from gifting their partisan affiliation provide also a fruitful environment for the development of political interest? A natural response would be that when partisanship is also accompanied by political interest, the political influence of parents becomes even stronger. But things may not be so simple. To see why this might be the case, we first need to acknowledge that parental influence, albeit crucial, is not the only force shaping youth's attitudes. Young adults are also experiencing influences from the world of politics. Given that they are probably not already locked into partisan habits, they can be affected by these extra-family influences. These influences can encompass various political events taking place during their early adulthood as well as the peer groups with whom they might discuss these events and other things about politics (see the examples given the quoted text of Jennings and Markus displayed above). Parents do much to secure their children's well-being but they can do very little to control these external sources of information. The question then becomes what happens in cases where this information contradicts parents' political views and beliefs. Unavoidably, children might be affected by these influences resulting in deviating from parents' partisan legacy. When is this more likely to occur? The most logical response would be that deviation is most likely when children are more open to external channels of information. In turn, this is probably dependent upon children's level of political interest. Events take place, colleagues at work or at the university might provide their own political views but none of this will be decisive if young people are not interested in politics.

Where does political interest among the youth come from? As was indicated above, an important, albeit not unique, predictor of youth politicization is family politicization. This means that if the political messages of any given period contradict or qualify the partisan lessons learnt at home, parents are more likely to see their children deviate from their own partisan influence if politics had been a topic of conversation in the home. If a young adult was used to talking about politics while still living in the parental home, she is likely to continue doing the same even after leaving the parental home. But now the flow of information is beyond parental control. In some circumstances, this might not enhance the partisan link between them and their children, but it might actually break it. Consequently, the main hypothesis linked to the formation of habits and the role of

parental influence in this process can be expressed along the following lines:

If the external influences of early adulthood contradict parental PID, then controlling for the strength of parental party identification, the degree of parental involvement in politics should correlate negatively with the endurance of partisan intergenerational transmission.

By the term external influences I refer to all types of political messages received by young people when they leave their parental home. They might stem from particular social contexts and political events that influence people's perceptions about parties. To be sure, whereas the nature of these messages may vary according to the social context within which the individual interacts, and these contexts might in turn differ according to level of parental politicization, the partisan direction of political events is not conditioned upon individuals' family background. That said, the weight attached to these events, as we will see in chapter 2, might differ systematically according to the level of family political involvement.

Existing literature on the endurance of parental partisan influence and how it might be conditioned on the level of parental politicization is scarce. That said, there is one study that tries to explicitly investigate the joint effect of parental PID and political involvement (Beck and Jennings 1991). I report its findings, explaining also in what ways the analytical approach adopted here extends these results. This is done in the next chapter, when the impact of family on the formation of partisan attitudes is examined.

1.2 Elections

Recent evidence has shown that even electorates in newly established democracies, where the political role of family, if existent, would have been probably outweighed by the transition to the democratic rule and the formation of new party systems, appear to register nontrivial rates of partisan attachments (e.g. Evans and Whitefield 1998; Whitefield and Evans 1999; Brader and Tucker 2001). Evidently, this cannot be the product of parental influence alone. Clearly, there must be something more that serves as a funnel of partisan development. What is it though?

Political scientists have addressed this question mainly by referring to the function of elections. Converse (1969) was among the first to point out that the main difference between young adults and established voters is that the second have had many more opportunities to manifest their preferences into actual choice. By participating in elections, therefore, young voters progressively reinforce their attitudes towards the parties, gradually forming partisan identities.

The idea that partisan preferences arise through participation in elections has found rather widespread support in the literature of partisan development. Initially articulated as the 'immunization thesis' by McPhee and Ferguson (1962) in the US and by Butler and Stokes (1969 [1974]) in Britain, it has since then served as a rather common explanation for age differences in the level of political stability (see also Converse 1976; Jennings and Markus 1984; Clarke et al. 2004:181; Grofman et al. 2009). The logic is simple: by voting for a party they already prefer, people fortify their prior beliefs about this party and the repetition of this act results in the establishment of some sort of attachment with this party. Thus, apart from denoting preference for a given party, the act of voting also serves as factor that further intensifies these prior predispositions.

Although elections have been generally regarded as a key factor in the process of partisan development, there is no clear theoretical understanding of the causal mechanism through which vote choice might buttress prior partisan preferences. Why should we expect the manifestation of a preference into actual choice at the ballot box to have such important implications in people's partisanship? Thus far, there is no reply to this question mainly because the idea that elections matter in the process of partisan formation has yet to be given a rigorous theoretical treatment. It mainly serves as a way to escape a difficult question about the process of partisan development and move forward with other more specific and more tractable questions. This means that the causal mechanism through which elections are supposed to matter remains unknown. Accordingly, we do not know for instance if elections matter because they imply a binding declaration of preferences or whether they simply serve as a funnel of political information. By acquiring the right to vote and by actually going to the polls, people receive partisan cues and information about the parties which might increase their level of political interest and in so doing might confirm their prior preferences about parties, hence leading to increased affiliation with their most preferred party.⁴ Thus, even if elections actually matter for the formation of partisan identification, as common wisdom has it, we do not know which of these two processes - if not both - is mainly responsible for this pattern.

The main reason we still do not know the path through which elections affect partisanship is that we have not actually tested alternative claims against the empirical evidence. And this is where the second problem with this argument emerges. That by voting for a party you also become attached to it, is an idea which can be traced back for at least 40 years but has never been rigorously tested against empirical evidence. This is mostly due to an implicit but very rigid assumption in models of voting behavior. As Mullainathan and Washington (2009) point it, although mod-

⁴ Elections are preceded by campaigns, so the number of elections experienced as an adult is also the number of campaigns experienced as an adult; and it might be the number of campaigns – as mobilizing processes – that really matters.

els of voting behavior vary in many respects, they follow a common structure: a dependent variable of interest, typically of a behavioral nature such as turnout or vote choice, is predicted by a set of indicators most of which of an attitudinal nature. In other words, attitudes lead to behavior. Although this assumption has served as a basis for various voting models that perform very well in predicting the vote, it is not very useful here since what is essentially needed is to reverse this direction of causality or at least allow for a reciprocal relationship. In any case, a model using vote as a predictor rather than an outcome is needed.

The lack of a well-developed theory about the role of elections and the fear of endogeneity have resulted in the appearance of only very few models employing this structure. But what would be the theoretical rationale for actually applying such a model? What would be the theoretical justification for reversing this causality in order to allow a behavioral factor to affect an attitudinal attribute?

Political scientists are not very helpful when it comes to this question, but cognitive psychologists are. Since the emergence in the mid-1950s, of a leading theory in cognitive psychology, cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957), psychologists have repeatedly examined the role of behavioral factors in changing prior attitudes. The main rationale for doing this has been the identification of instances where people's behavior does not fully match or even contradicts their prior attitudes. It turns out that in many of these instances behavior actually beats attitudes, forcing people to change their prior preferences.

The theory is analyzed in detail in chapter four of this thesis, which is the chapter in which the role of elections in increasing partisanship is examined. For now it is important to make two points. First, since we cannot force people to vote contrary to their will, the level of discomfort between behavior and attitudes in elections is typically low. That said, the theory has been shown to work also when the level of congruence between prior beliefs and actual behavior is high. Second, apart from cognitive dissonance, another theory, Bem's self perception theory, asserts that people understand and perceive their own attitudes by simply inferring them from their own overt behavior and the circumstances in which this behavior takes place (Bem, 1972). Thus, Bem's theory leads to the same theoretical expectations about the impact of behavior on people's attitudes without, however, necessitating any dissonance between the former and the latter. The two theories lead to identical predictions and thus cannot be compared in observational terms.⁵ Thus, the aim is not to demonstrate that either of the two performs better than the other. However, taken together, they enrich the theoretical underpinnings about the role of elections in forming partisan identities, justifying the motivation to reverse the direction of causality so that the act of voting helps to predict

⁵ Why this is the case is explained in more detail in chapter 4.

change in party identification. Left to political scientists, the ‘immunization thesis’ works in a seemingly mechanistic manner mostly because the exact way in which the act of voting might affect prior attitudes remains unspecified. However, resorting to the insights from cognitive psychology, we find important theoretical reasons based on the micro foundations of the act of voting, to believe that elections might foster partisanship. In chapter 4 I test this claim against the available empirical evidence, through a dataset that allows the exploration not only of whether elections matter but whether they do so because of the act of voting or because they simply serve as a funnel for political information.

To be sure, finding a theoretical rationale to reverse the funnel of causality does not imply that doing so is not subject to selection bias. Even if vote has an impact on partisanship it is always mainly the outcome of prior preferences and if one ignores this prior preference structure the causal effect of the act of voting on partisan strength cannot be identified. I overcome this important selection problem through the quasi-experimental use of an observational study, which permits the use of vote-eligibility among equally aged respondents as an instrument of actual vote. How this is done is described in full detail in chapter 3.

1.3 Events

Young people do not only face elections during their political lives. Other important events take place and are equally or often more likely to affect people’s partisan predispositions and more generally their opinions about politics (Miller, 1976:29). Wars arise, scandals emerge, important political decisions capture the attention of the media and may well influence the way young people think about politics in general and the political parties in particular.

Political events are the second factor that the literature of political socialization has regarded pivotal in the process of partisan learning. Moreover, although they affect all voters, they are assumed to have an exceptionally strong effect on young adults (see the discussion in Delli Carpini 1989, see also Bartels 2001). This distinction is again so well reported in the literature that it tends to be treated as true, despite hardly any empirical evidence about whether this is actually the case (see as examples of this tendency Grofman et al. 2009:69; Jennings and Markus 1984: 1000-1001).

Actually, the previous statement could be regarded as exaggerated. We do have considerable indirect evidence that period shocks are more influential among the youth. Probably the most prominent application of this argument can be found in the discussion of political generations and realignments. The ‘New Deal’ generation, distinguished by its overwhelming Democratic affiliation, constitutes those cohorts who became eligible to vote during the years of the Great [stock

market] Crash and Great [economic] Depression between 1928 and 1936 (Andersen 1979) and voted in large numbers for the democrat presidential candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt, bringing about a realignment of the party system which had previously enjoyed a Republican hegemony. In this period, of course, age was not the only factor determining whether people were affected by political and economic developments simply because that period was also characterized by a large portion of newly enfranchised voters most of whom were first- or second-generation immigrants and obtained the right to vote for the first time during that period. For this reason it has been possible for scholars to argue that the New Deal realignment need not have been the result of a massive conversion of Republicans since massive political change would have been possible purely on the basis of compositional changes in the US electorate. Even though these compositional changes involved people of all ages, it was still evident that young adults during the 1932 and 1936 elections opted predominantly for Roosevelt (Andersen 1979).

Similarly, Inglehart's argument about the change of values among the youth of the 1960s and the early 1970s was based on the presumption that the turbulent events of this period were particularly influential among those who experienced them while in their early adulthood (Inglehart 1971). Analogously, the Republican realignment of the South starting in the late 1940s and going up to the mid 1980s was mainly sustained by the coming of new electoral cohorts (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009:185-186). Older cohorts did briefly evince a more Republican partisanship but subsequently returned to the Democrats. The gradual conversion of the South from one-party dominance to a competitive two-party system was mainly due to the new cohorts of white Southerners who experienced an increased ideological divergence from the Democrat party and did not hesitate to switch to the much closer (in ideological terms) Republicans (Black and Black 1987, 2002; Carmines and Stanley 1990; Knuckey 2006).

Combining all these examples, one could infer that events that take place during early adulthood are more consequential than those taking place later in life. That said, such findings are only by-products from various studies, each one of which addresses a distinct research question. It seems to me that, if the aim is to establish the increased sensitivity among the youth, a more nuanced and direct approach is needed.

But before going to the empirical evidence in order to answer this question, it is important to clarify what this assertion means. What does it mean to be more responsive to political events? Chapter 5, which is the chapter devoted to this issue makes it clear that it is crucial to speculate on the different observational manifestations that this increased sensitivity might take. As we will see, not all of them appear to gain uncontested empirical support.

The second question that also needs to be addressed, but this time after the main question has been confirmed empirically, is the most intriguing one, and one in which Chapter 5 can only refute

possible answers, it cannot offer new ones. Why would we expect such a pattern to occur? What would be the explanation for this? Young people are generally characterized as 'open to change' (Stoker and Jennings 2008) and this makes them more susceptible to political events. To be sure, if openness to change is only translated into increased weight attached to political events as a result of being young, then it becomes a circular argument. Rather more substantively, the anticipation of an increased effect of political events among the youth could be sustained on the grounds that, by carrying weaker partisan ties, young voters qualify for what Zaller (1992) characterizes as a group likely to accept a political message. To be sure, given their lower average level of political interest and political involvement, it is questionable whether in practice young voters even pass the first stage of Zaller's Receive Accept Sample (RAS) model, i.e. if they actually receive this information. However, for salient events that gain extensive media coverage it is often likely that even small degrees of political interest might be sufficient for getting the message. In Chapter 5, it will be seen that neither political interest nor weak partisan ties are behind the effect of age. It seems, thus, pertinent for future research to delve into this issue so that we can unpack the role age in the differing weight attached to political events.

Thus, the scope of Chapter 5 is three-fold. It first serves as the first explicit theoretical attempt to classify potential empirical manifestations behind the term 'increased sensitivity' among the youth. Second, it offers the first, to the best of my knowledge, narrowly tailored design to study this question. Third, it tests various causal paths through which the effect of age could be manifested.

But why is direct evidence on this topic scarce? To be sure, given the unforeseen character of political shocks we cannot conduct experiments to capture their causal effect. Related to that, since various different events take place within a relatively short period and many contextual or other factors intervene in shaping people's attitudes, it is very difficult to isolate the impact of a particular political event from other events or other idiosyncratic influences in people's political trajectories. To do that one would need data gathered exactly during the time (or at least around the time) that a particular event was taking place. With such data one could convincingly attribute any difference with respect to a characteristic of interest to the impact of this particular event and consequently compare young voters with other groups in order to see whether the first are more likely to change their prior beliefs as a result of this factor.

This is exactly the strategy adopted in this study. I examine three different political events all, of which took place during a period in which ANES interviewers were busy conducting interviews around the country. The events refer to the scandal of Watergate, the announcement that Reagan's administration was involved in the Contras' attempt to overthrow the Sandinistas government in Nicaragua, and the news about the extramarital affair of Gary Hart - until May 1987 candidate for

the 1988 Democratic presidency. Although I explain in full detail the logic of each case study in chapter 5, which is the chapter devoted to the role of events, it needs to be clarified from the outset that all these cases are chosen for data availability reasons and as a way to permit a fully-specified causal examination of the effect of political events on different age groups. Seen in this perspective, these three incidents probably constitute the only occasions offered in all of the ANES surveys in which observational data can capture and isolate (almost as well as if it were through an experiment) the impact of real world political events on American voters. To be sure, the main scope is not to investigate these particular shocks but to use them as examples in trying to evaluate the extent to which political events are more important during early adulthood.

1.4 Political change and young voters

Finding that parental political involvement can qualify the durability of the partisan link between parents and children is important in that it enriches a theory that thus far has been only confined to the contemporaneous relationship between parents and children. Moreover, by focusing not only on partisan transmission but also on the transmission of political interest, we get a more complete picture about the impact of family on the initial political trajectories of young adults. As it will be shown in Chapter 2 parental political interest is important because it enhances the influence of political events or new peer groups. It is through this increased sensitivity to such forces that parental politicization might loosen the partisan linkage between parents and children.

That said, examining the impact of family serves only to identify some sources of heterogeneity among young adults, not to identify differences between the latter and other age groups. Such intercohort comparisons are the main task of the other two parts of this study, which involve examining the role of elections and political events in changing people's political attitudes. Let us now speculate on how evidence on both these factors enhances our understanding about the sources of political change and subsequently the process of political learning.

To see how this is the case we first need to see the problem with the existing approaches in the examination of political change. To motivate the discussion, let us consider the pattern observed in Figure 1.1, which shows the average percentage of strong identifiers (either Democrats or Republicans) from the early 1950s to the early 2000s. Partisan strength follows a quasi-U-shaped trajectory: partisan ties weakened during the late 1960s and the 1970s and started to recover thereafter. To be sure, the particular shape of the partisan trajectory in the US is not of primary interest here. In this example, all that matters is that the proportion of strong partisans varies considerably over time.

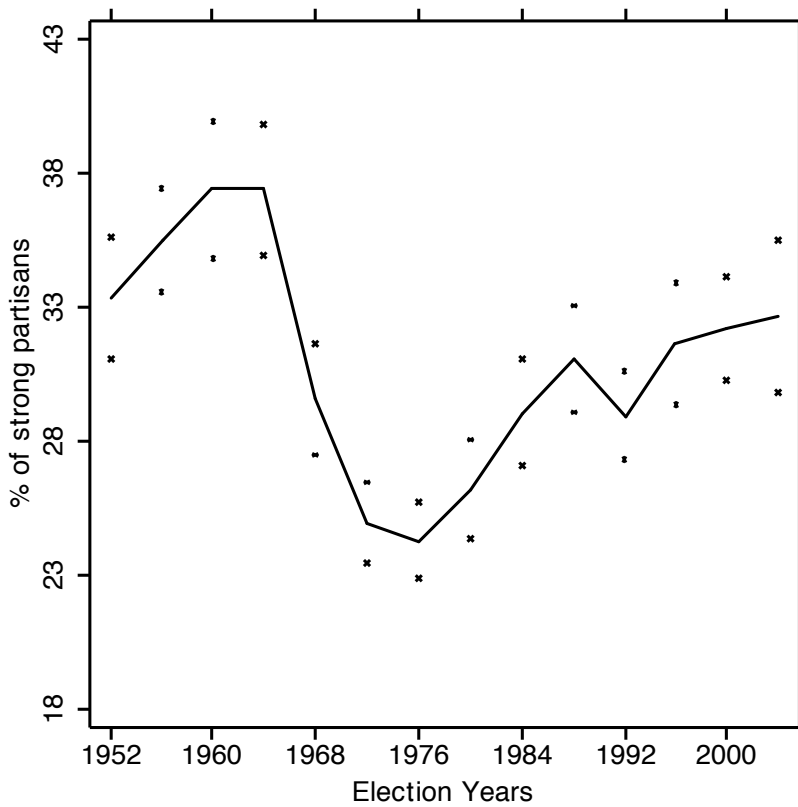


Figure 1.1: Percentage of strong partisans in each cross-sectional ANES survey, 1952-2004.

Note: The solid lines connects the average values of strong partisanship in each Presidential election year, small x's denote the 95% bootstrapped confidence intervals (100 replications run for each estimate).

How much of what we see in Figure 1.1 is due to events that happened and have affected the American electorate as a whole and how much of this change is due to the fact that the American electorate in 1950 has few things in common with the same group by 2000? This translates into the following question: is this fluctuation because of period effects influencing the American public opinion as a whole or is this because social changes and new events affected newcomers who gradually and through generational replacement transformed the whole picture?

A typical way to address this question is displayed in Figure 1.2, which plots the percentage of strong partisans in the US in successive electoral cohorts over time (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009:181). Political scientists have often used this idea of decomposing a general trend across different electoral cohorts. In this case the authors have decided to smooth over time fluctuation by taking overlapping averages of each trio of adjacent cohorts (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009:180). Thus, each line represents a group of respondents from the American National Election Studies (ANES) and each group is defined by its first eligible election. For example the first line starting from the left denotes those who first got the right to vote in 1944 or earlier. Each new line coming up as we move rightwards depicts additional successive cohorts, which enter in the graph as they become of age. There are many interesting aspects in this graph, concisely described by the

authors. What is important for present purposes, however, is the main idea behind this enterprise. And this idea is nothing more than trying to evaluate the different sources of aggregate political change.

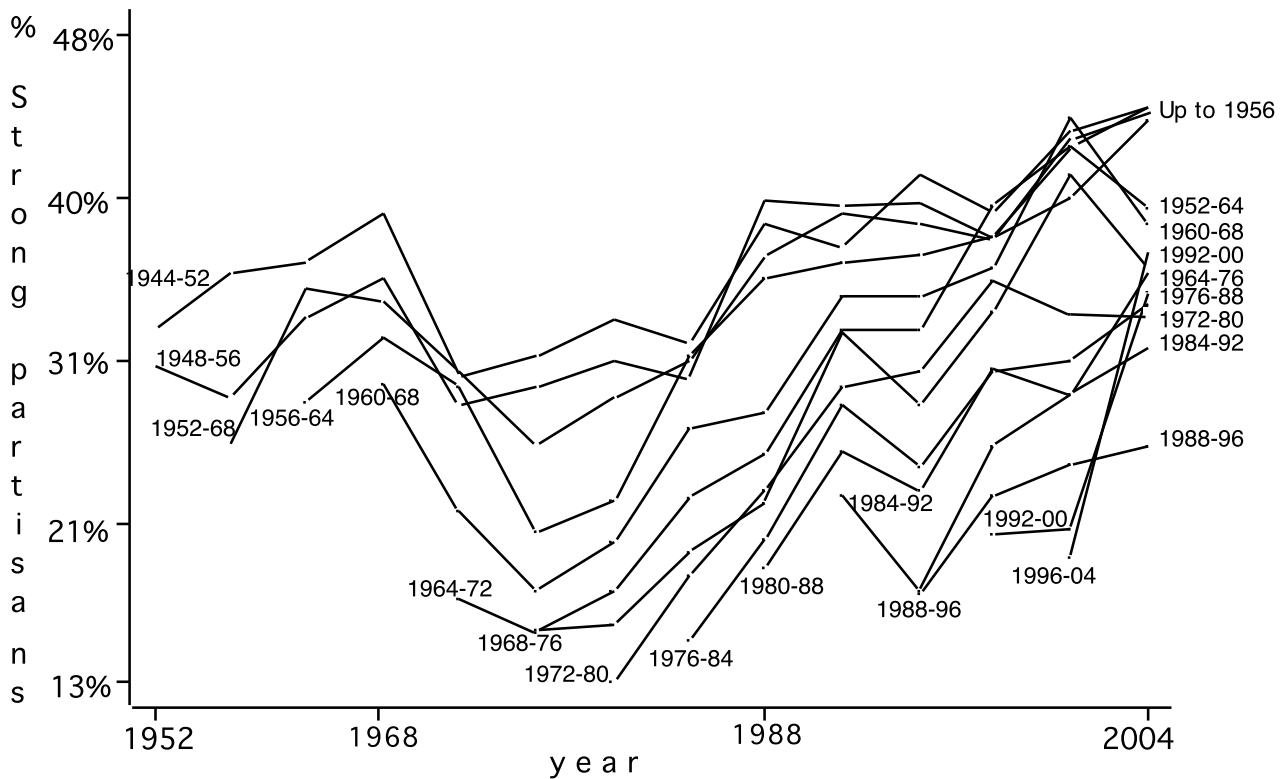


Figure 1.2: Percentage US strong partisans by electoral cohort, 1952-2004

Source: (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009).

So, is this aggregate change shown in Figure 1.1 the result of period effects or is it due to the coming of new generations? As it is shown in Figure 1.2, the pattern in the real world is relatively mixed. Both processes seem to be in play, providing a blurred picture about the mechanisms of political change in different political periods. For instance, although each newly voting-aged cohort is constantly less identified to political parties than the previous one (with few and minor exceptions), and despite the fact that these differences gradually diminish as young cohorts accumulate more elections, indicating in this way a life-cycle effect, they all seem to have responded to the dealigning forces of the 1960s and the 1970s. Even older cohorts were affected by the decline and then revival in American partisanship from the late 1960s to the beginning of the 1980s. Thus, although age seems to matter (and it is noticeable that the oldest cohorts are least affected by the general pattern), so do also 'the forces of the times' (Beck and Jennings 1991).

The main question is to see whether the effect of these forces is inversely proportional to the amount of electoral experience of individuals. As is shown from Figure 1.2 evidence is unclear in this respect. Consequently, both those who see no particular effect of age and those who see in age

a crucial intervening variable could possibly find supportive evidence through this pattern.

But what would be the pattern if evidence was clear? To illustrate how things would be in an idealized world, in what follows I try to classify these arguments about the process of political change into three stylized patterns of political learning. Each of these patterns has been advocated in some way or another in the literature and although none of them has materialized into a well-developed theory, each one is based on important assumptions about how people form their political attitudes over the life span.

1.4.1 Three stylized patterns of political learning

I describe these competing hypotheses with the aid of Figure 1.3, which depicts three different scenarios about the process of attitudinal crystallization during the life span. The figure describes the individual probability of creating stable political orientations - thus the y-axis does not refer to a particular attribute of interest - as people accumulate electoral experience. To be sure, this is only a graphical illustration of the underlying process and thus it essentially provides a rather schematic and deterministic picture of this process.

Drawing on the revisionist approach to party identification (see indicatively Franklin and Jackson 1983), the first theory of partisan learning allows PID to fluctuate at a rather constant rate along people's life span and depending on the particular period forces at any given point in time. This process implies that political shocks are given an equal weight during people's trajectories, giving room for a continuous partisan updating according to the political events taking place during the life cycle. Seen under this perspective, aging has only a marginal role, since people are assumed to be equally prone to change regardless of the amount of accumulated political experience. I refer to this theory as the 'running tally' model of partisan learning. The horizontal long-dashed line parallel to the X axis in Figure 1.3 provides a relatively simplistic graphical representation of this idea, suggesting that the particular age that individuals have reached (and the number of elections they have experienced) have no role in conditioning the impact of external forces in the process of political learning. People react to the political world in the same way no matter at what stage of their life cycle they find themselves.

The second line of argument provides a different picture of the process of political learning. Here, previous political experience is thought to be important and actually it is assumed to have a linear association with people's propensity to change. People are now deemed to differ in their latent propensity to incorporate new information according to the length of their political record. As prior political experience gradually accumulates, people become increasingly immunized from the

forces of the time. Thus, political events are progressively less influential in qualifying prior political attitudes. I refer to this logic as the ‘steady increase’ theory of partisan learning and its graphical illustration is denoted by the short-dashed line in Figure 1.3.

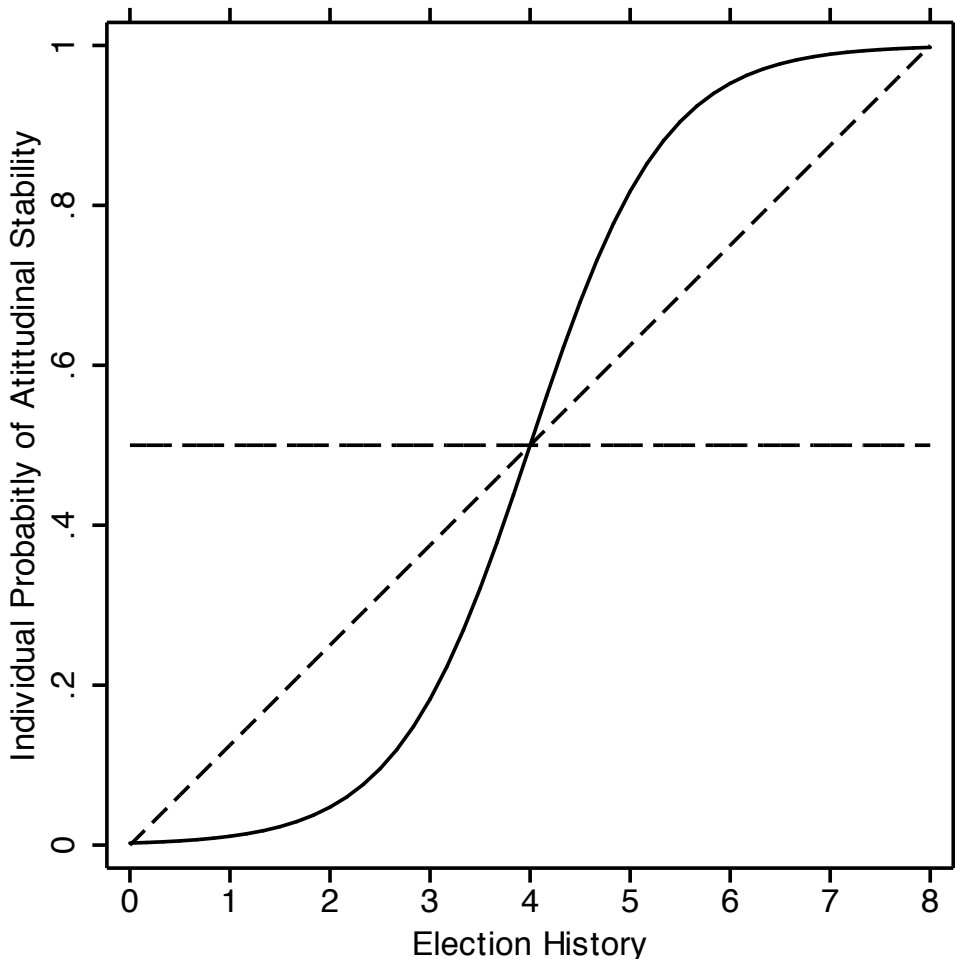


Figure 1.3: Idealized trajectory of attitudinal stability according to the three stylized patterns of partisan learning.

Note: The diagonal broken line represents the ‘steady increase’ theory; the solid sigmoid curve, resembling the logistic function, represents the ‘impressionable years’ hypothesis; and the long-dashed horizontal line illustrates the ‘running tally’ hypothesis. The scenarios are artificial and numbers of elections have only a heuristic meaning. For example, no argument is made about the particular election in which the threshold of attitudinal stability is captured in the ‘impressionable year’ hypothesis. That said, the sigmoid curve pays homage to the literature on habit formation and deliberately sets the threshold at time-point 4, since an almost ‘legendary’ assumption in this literature (Butler and Stokes 1974, Franklin 2004) is that ‘immunization’ takes place after having voted in three successive elections.

The third competing explanation of how initial predispositions are crystallized during the life span bears resemblance to the previous one in that it also finds a monotonic relationship between the process of aging and people’s level of attitudinal stability. Importantly, however, there is now a

particular phase in the life cycle in which the rate of political learning is accelerated. This period is early adulthood, a particularly formative period in people's political orientations. What is generally known as the 'impressionable years' hypothesis asserts that young people are much more sensitive to period forces but cease to be so once the process of partisan anchoring is complete (see for example Delli Carpini 1989). The key difference between the last two theories is that under the 'impressionable years' hypothesis the process of immunization is characterized by a threshold, or at least a more step-wise function, with the cut-off point corresponding to the critical stage at which firm partisan attitudes are established (Alwin and McCammon 2003). From then on, people are much less open to updating their views under the influence of newly occurring political events. The process envisioned by this theory is shown with the solid sigmoid curve shown in Figure 1.3.

Each of these trajectory patterns can be found in various different studies of political socialization. For instance, the 'running tally' hypothesis is implicit both in Fiorina's (1975) first attempt to reconceptualize the Michigan logic of partisanship (Campbell et al. 1960) and in Achen's bayesian model of political learning (Achen 1992). It is also implicit in all studies questioning the life-cycle effect in the strength of partisanship among the American electorate over the 1960s and the 1970s (Abramson 1979; Nie et al. 1976; Miller and Miller 1977). The steady increase approach drives Converse's cohort analysis of party identification (1976) and Miller and Shanks' (1996) argumentation about the role of aging in the level of partisan stability. Finally, the 'impressionable years' thesis appears in various analyses of the role of political generations in aggregate change in public mood (Manheim 1952; Braungart and Braungart, 1984; Steckenrider and Culter, 1989). However, none of these studies has provided either a rigorous theoretical account or systematic empirical evidence that enable one to distinguish between these processes.

1.4.2 The Problem: how to evaluate these theories?

How can we compare and evaluate these three idealized patterns against what happens in the real world? As we saw in the previous sections, graphs such as the one shown in Figure 1.2 are not very informative and to the extent they are they can only provide some hint about the leading mechanism driving change. No causal argument can be based on this type of analysis. Importantly, the problem here is not that the graph is not converted into a table with coefficients and stars. Even if this was done, the conclusions would still be problematic. And there is an important reason for this, namely that they are inherently descriptive, since the analysis focuses on a single attribute of interest and how this attribute changes according to different periods and different age cohorts. The key point, I think, here is that this type of analysis lacks the main component of interest, i.e. the factors that affect the outcome of interest that is depicted in this sort of graph. And this is not a

problem of the graph, but rather a problem of the literature of political learning. We are interested in the differing impact of events across different life stages but we have yet to specify properly which are these events.

Therefore, it seems to me that there is only one way to evaluate these three idealized patterns in a coherent fashion. Finding important factors that affect people's prior predispositions, we could compare their effects in different life stages of the individuals. For instance, political events and elections are assumed to help people crystallize their political predispositions. By comparing their effect among young voters with other age groups, we could at least intuitively grasp whether there is a developmental pattern in the process of political learning and if so which pattern seems to most accurately describe this process as it takes place in the real world. It is in this exact way that the findings about the impact of political events and elections among young adults and their older counterparts can help us grasp more effectively the dominant process of political learning. In so doing, it will permit a more rigorous evaluation of whether and, if so, in what ways and to what extent early adulthood is actually a distinctive period in people's political lives.

1.5 Implications for the study of partisanship

A recently published edited volume on party identification (Bartle and Bellucci 2009) reveals the contribution that this present study aims to make. Gathering representatives from almost all the diverse schools of thought on the origin, meaning and measurement of party identification,⁶ the editors of the volume acknowledged from the introduction of the book that this collection of works serves mainly to remind readers that most fronts in this debate remain open, giving room to competing arguments which can equally well find support from the existing empirical evidence (Bartle and Bellucci 2009:17). To be sure, although party identification is used in this study on the grounds that it is the most appropriate indicator of habitual engagement in vote choice, we are not per se interested in various aspects of this debate, especially those related to its individual level stability. Although the concerns that have been raised about potential problems with this measure are addressed in the analysis, for our purposes it is important to assume that there is no other measure of attitudinal preferences regarding political parties in the US that has proven on average to be more stable and enduring than partisanship. Evidence for this is rather abundant (see indica-

⁶ To summarize these different traditions, the book contains chapters from the following groups: the European critics of the notion of partisanship as the contributors in 'Party Identification and Beyond' (Budge et al. 1976) gradually became known; the British critics of the 'Butler and Stokes vision' of PID in Britain, mainly known as the Essex school with the 'Political Change in Britain' (Clarke et al. 2004); and the defenders of the Michigan school with their social identity approach to partisanship, exposed in 'Partisan Hearts and Minds' (Green et al. 2002).

tively Alwin and Krosnick 1991, Green et al. 2002, Jennings et al. 2009). What is more interesting for present purposes is that the two chapters from this volume that relate to the main scope of this study, namely the origin of party identification, focus on the two of the three factors that are addressed here, namely the impact of family (Kroh and Selb 2009b) and the impact of the act of voting (Grofman et al. 2009).

In the first case, family inheritance is only addressed through the transmission of partisan inclinations, neglecting thus the role of parental political interest. We will see in the next section that many things change when this intervening factor is taken into account. In the second case, Grofman et al. (2009) propose a model aiming to capture the role of vote choice in strengthening prior partisan inclinations. However, the authors do not test this claim calling for the need to have appropriate data in order to disentangle problems of causality. Chapter 4 covers this exact demand and although it does not close at least it addresses the main questions posed by Grofman and his colleagues.

Finding important differences between young voters and older cohorts is important for another reason also, in that it promotes a more developmental perspective in our reevaluation of key assumptions about the way party identification affects behavioral choices. Ever since its initial formulation (Campbell et al. 1954), PID at least in the US is distinguished from actual vote choice. Partisans might sporadically deviate from their party when it comes to elections - typically because of the appeal of the candidate of the other party (Miller 1976). However, in so doing, they do not abandon their partisanship which is based on more enduring and well-established political predispositions formed since early in life through family socialization. This is one of the leading findings of the American Voter which has also frequently been employed as evidence for the fact that this notion works much better in the US than in Europe, where it has been typically found to be largely collinear with actual vote choice. By testing the impact of vote on PID among different age cohorts over time, I show that this conventional belief needs to be qualified. People do change their PID as a result of their actual vote. But they do so only when their partisanship is not yet well formed - that is, when they are still in their early adulthood. Young voters change their PID as a result of a changing vote, simply because PID means less to them than what it does to older voters, while a change in party choice has more important implications for them than for established cohorts.

1.6 Plan of the study

As has been probably made clear thus far, this study is divided into three parts. The first part consists of chapter 2. In this chapter I focus on the impact of family by examining the role of parental politicization on the transmission of partisan preferences from the family to the offspring. As was also indicated, I am not interested in the contemporaneous relationship between parents and children but in how the partisan influence of the former might evaporate under the weight of the 'forces of the times'. I find that this is more likely to occur among strongly politicized families and that, given the political messages of the period analyzed, this effect was stronger among Republican families. Testing the same hypothesis with data collected at a different period under completely distinct circumstances reinforces this finding, indicating that parental politicization makes the link of intergenerational partisan transmission less durable.

The second part of the thesis involves the impact of the act of voting. Chapter 3 examines this impact on turnout and in so doing it also serves as a way to introduce the identification strategy used in the analysis. Apart from confirming previous findings about the impact of previous vote on future turnout, the analysis constitutes the first attempt to explicitly test and eventually rule out competing hypotheses suggesting that this effect could be simply due to increases in political knowledge and political interest as a result of participating in the electoral process. Chapter 4 moves to party identification, where we find important increases in strength of partisanship as a result of voting in a presidential election. There seems to be an age ceiling to this effect, however, since the result holds only among young adults. Although it would be easier to find effects (even spurious ones) among older respondents, we only find a significant effect of vote on partisanship among young adults. Finally, by combining the insights from both chapters, I propose a way to integrate the two literatures, by showing that voting might be self-reinforcing because of party identification. In other words, turnout and vote choice are shown to be two habits formed hand-in-hand.

The third part of this thesis involves the impact of political events and takes us to chapter 5. Three different case studies are examined. The results are quite straightforward in all of them. Political events appear to be influential in changing prior views and opinions about political leaders and political parties only among the youngest group of the sample. For older voters, they are less consequential. As was also the case with vote, the observed pattern provides considerable support for the two developmental theories of political learning and, especially in the case of political events (for reasons that will become apparent when we get there), they seem to give overwhelming support to the 'impressionable years' hypothesis. Taken together, the findings underline the impor-

tance of young adulthood as a unique period in the formation and shaping of political attitudes, which are likely to be preserved through the remainder of people's lifecourse.

The last chapter, Chapter 6 of the thesis, provides some general conclusions about the practical and theoretical importance of the findings and proposes analytical ways of extending this analysis to multiparty contexts in Europe. It also provides real world examples that confirm intuitively the main findings of this study.

1.7 A note on case selection

Before we move to the main body of this research, an explanation needs to be given for why (or better to say how) this study ended up being a study about young Americans. Various seemingly valid ex-post justifications could be given. Instead of that, I decided to simply describe things as they actually happened.

When this study was initially planned, there was certainly no intention of focusing on the US in particular. Perhaps the US could be one of the cases analyzed but it would definitely not be the only one.

More importantly, however, the initial plan for investigating this topic was based on an almost metaphysical belief in the power of advanced statistical methods. Any given dataset that contained the appropriate questions would do. Problems arising along the way would be confronted by what was thought to be an unbeatable recipe: rigorous analytical techniques. Accordingly, data from Britain and from the Netherlands were initially used as ways to examine the impact of the act of voting on change in partisanship. Soon, however, problems began to arise. The most important of them related to the issue of endogeneity. How can you make vote choice exogenous to party identification? There must be a way, in any case analytical techniques nowadays are so powerful that they can certainly address what constitutes an old problem in empirical research. Generalized methods of moments, various variants of Two-Stage-Least-Squares estimation and other estimation methods were tried, but with only little success. The first clouds appeared. It started to seem that advanced statistical methods might not be so powerful, in the absence of appropriate study design.

Consequently, Britain and Holland were abandoned, as was also the strong belief that analytical techniques can on their own produce consistent estimates with problematic data. And all of them were replaced by one thing: the hunt for data that could allow the most appropriate and efficient estimation of the effects of interest. But this is a quite vague characterization. What do this sort of data look like and how can one recognize them?

The answer to this question came by reading the first chapter of *Mostly Harmless Econometrics* (Angrist and Pischke 2009), which, together with some other books also based on potential outcomes approach to causal inference, would constitute the methodological bible of this study: once the question is posed and is clearly articulated, imagine you can run the most awkward and unrealistic manipulations, move countries from one place to the other or in our case control people's vote choices. What would you do? The reply would certainly be, and actually was, simple: run an experiment.

But how to allocate vote choice randomly among a representative group of young adults when it comes to real elections? Lacking this opportunity, I tried to find instances in which the observational world could provide information that could be used for my purposes in a quasi experimental fashion, i.e. so that the treatment variable or a good proxy of it would be distributed in a way that could be characterized as being 'as good as random.' And since the main problem was the endogeneity of vote and party identification, most effort was initially put on this exact relationship. Until something finally came out.

Chapters 3 and 4 of this study investigate the effect of the act of voting on turnout and on party identification. The data used for this analysis have also various other advantages but they would not probably be used for this study unless they incorporated a well-hidden natural experiment. Natural experiments are 'observational studies in which some exogenous process ('nature') assigns units to different types of treatments in a haphazard fashion that is 'as good as random' (Kern and Hainmueller 2009). It is actually questionable whether we could be said to have an exogenous intervention in this case, but the outcome is the same. As will be explained in chapter 3, the use of these data allows the examination of the relationship of interest by deviating only slightly from the experimental ideal, i.e. the randomization principle. This means that now most problems have been solved from the stage of the design. And as Sekhon points out, this is exactly the stage in which identification issues need to be solved. In the author's words (2008:272),

'We use conditional probabilities to learn about counterfactuals of interest—e.g., would Jane have voted if someone from the campaign had not gone to her home to encourage her to do so? One has to be careful to establish the relationship between the counterfactuals of interest and the conditional probabilities one has managed to estimate. Researchers too often forget that this relationship must be established by design and instead rely upon statistical models whose assumptions are almost never defended. A regression coefficient is not a causal estimate unless a large set of assumptions are met [...]. Without an experiment, natural experiment, a discontinuity, or some other strong design, no amount of econometric or statistical modeling can make the move from correlation to causation persuasive. This conclusion has implications for the kind of causal questions we are able to answer with some rigor. Clear, manipulable treatments and rigorous designs are essential.'

This logic makes the findings a lot more transparent. If there is an indicator which measures what it is intended to measure and if this indicator is distributed as if an invisible hand had as-

signed to each respondent a given value at random, unobserved heterogeneity and other similar considerations cease to threaten the robustness of the findings.

The story regarding the chapter on political events is much shorter but otherwise similar. The need to adhere to the experimental ideal meant a very careful selection of the events that would be employed as examples for this task, which led to the identification of three such instances in which we can, I think, legitimately identify (in statistical terms) their causal effect on change in people's attitudes. Here the analysis uses more than differences of means but it would not be much less informative if that had been the only estimation method used. Not all of these natural experiments work as good as if they were randomized experiments but they definitely work far better than if other data, not based on these considerations, had been employed.

Where did all these cases come from? I have no intention of arguing that these are the only data available for present purposes (in fact I now know that they are not) but what I found came from American surveys. Hence, what begun as a comparative study of political learning ended up being a study about young voters in the US. Life is full of tradeoffs, but this one I think is an easy choice. Instead of comparing biased estimates across different political settings, I chose to produce what I believe are consistent causal estimates in the same political context. To put it differently, I chose to tell a more confined story but at least a story I can believe in.

To be sure, this complete victory of the design versus statistical analysis did not occur in an intellectual vacuum. While still in the first stages of this study, trying to use advanced methods for time series cross sectional data, *Political Analysis*, the leading journal of political methodology, published a special issue on this exact topic. Two years later, when I had already taken the path of looking for exogenous interventions in observational data, the same journal came up with a special issue on natural experiments. This is more than a coincidence. Innovative methods of causal analysis have become increasingly prominent in quantitative political research of late. The design used in chapters 3 and 4 and one of the examples used in chapter 5 can be seen as sharp regression discontinuity designs (see Chapter 3). This is a method that very few people would have thought of using before Lee's publication in 2008. By November 2009, however, someone much wiser than the author, who happens to teach methods in one of the world's leading departments, called it the ultimate 'flavor of the month'. But, as he pointed out, this is probably the first time in the history of political science that what is 'trendy' is also the right thing to do.

Family

2 - The more you try the less it sticks: parental politicization and the endurance of partisan transmission through the family

'You shouldn't smoke Kyle, at least not yet,
there is a place for everything, it's called college.'

Kyle's father, South Park, season four, episode seven.

'Don't trust anyone over thirty'

*Mario Savio, leader of the Free-Speech
Movement, UC, Berkeley, November 1964.*

Young people's attitudes and beliefs are influenced by those with whom they interact. This is true in politics as in all other aspects of life. Equally true is that they learn more from those they love or trust (Fowler 2005). These are the people (or at least a subset of them) with whom they interact most frequently and it is their cues they are more willing to receive and more reluctant to question. Typically, young people's parents are given pride of place within this group. If not for all issues that children confront, this is true at least for the most important ones (Steingberg 2001, Steingberg and Silk 2002). That politics belongs to this second class of issues has been established both by research in cognitive psychology (Collins and Laursen 2004) and by the almost unanimous picture of similarity between parents and children in their political preferences. Going back at least up to *The American Voter*, the idea that household members resemble each other in their partisan preferences has found widespread and largely uncontested empirical support in various different political contexts and periods.¹ Given the hierarchical structure in the decision making process within the family and the vast difference in political experience between parents and children, this rela-

¹ Evidence for the American case can be found in Jennings and Niemi 1968; 1981, Niemi and Jennings 1991, Beck and Jennings 1975, Jennings and Markus 1984, whereas parallel results from a comparative perspective are provided in Ventura 2001. For an in-depth analysis of Britain and Germany see Zuckerman et al. 2007, especially ch. 5; Butler and Stokes (1974) also show this pattern in Britain.

tionship is most often treated as predominantly unidirectional, going from parents to their children (but see also Smetana 2005).

A yet another exploration of this well-established pattern would be rather trivial. However, a more interesting question, and much less studied, relates to the endurance of this parent-child partisan similarity. Eventually, adolescents become adults and they leave their parents' home. Accordingly, the context providing political cues also changes. Apart from that, the experience with the political world becomes more direct as young people begin to participate in elections and in other modes of political expression. New political issues emerge or old ones are now given more attention since, as young adults begin to work and make their own family, the link between these issues and their own standard of living is more apparent. These developments are likely to qualify the initial linkage with parents' partisan preferences.² As young people receive new information and as they are still in the process of political learning, some of them might at some point deviate from their parents' party preferences and this break might persist during their life-span. The question then is when is this more likely to occur.

To be sure, parental control on youth's political influences diminishes as soon as the latter leave their family home. As Beck and Jennings (1991:743) point out, "few individuals are insulated from [the] external political world." Thus, differences in the partisan trajectory between parents and children might be simply the result of later-coming idiosyncratic period influences, which are not related to parental political socialization. In other words, since the effect of the family on children's political orientations evaporates by the time they leave their home, any change occurring after this point should not be systematically associated with parents' initial influence. If this is the case, then any question over the endurance of parental partisan ties becomes meaningless.

That this question has interesting theoretical implications, however, becomes evident once we consider an important intervening factor, namely youth's 'openness to change' (Stoker and Jennings, 2008). Although most theories of political learning consider as very important the period of early adulthood in the formation of political attitudes (Delli Carpini 1989, Converse 1969), not all youngsters are equally prone to change due to period effects occurring during that period. Their propensity to do so depends on two distinct factors, the crystallization of their initial orientations and their political interest. An 18-years-old who leaves her home in order to go to college might appear immune to such period effects if she has already established firm partisan orientations or

² It needs to be underlined that although attention here is drawn only on the endurance of partisan congruence between parents and children, this pattern might also entail more encompassing attitudes related to value priorities, or, reversely, might be driven by the accumulation of differences in more specific political issues. Thus, although the introduction refers to partisan similarity, we will see in the part of the analysis that at least some of the variation in the level of partisan convergence is also reflected in diverging stances in various political issues.

simply if she is not interested in politics. In the first case, political influences outside home do become visible but they fail to qualify her initial beliefs. In the second case, period effects remain largely ignorable and thus again do not promote further political learning. Thus, deviations from parental party preferences should be mostly expected when children have not yet fulfilled their political learning process and when they show some interest in politics and public affairs.

The important role of the family comes from the fact that it affects both these factors. Apart from simply being the passive recipients of their parents' partisan signals, children also learn about politics in a more generic way. Parental influence is not confined to the choice of party to support but also extends to the level of interest and involvement in politics. It is on this important last factor that I mainly focus here. Although parental partisanship has been frequently cited as a key predictor of young people's partisan attitudes, the intervening role of parental politicization and how it might qualify this relationship in the long-run has been rather neglected (but see Beck and Jennings 1991 and Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009, about which I say more in the next section). Thus it remains still unclear how parental political interest might influence the durability of the partisan link between parents and children. This is the principal question motivating this chapter.

In the next section I develop the theoretical argument that leads to a seemingly counter-intuitive hypothesis, namely, that controlling for the level and the direction of parental partisan preferences, more politicized parents are more likely to see their children deviate from their family's partisan views in the long-run. After I describe the data used for the exploration of this hypothesis and the measurement strategy followed in the analysis, I move to the empirical findings which indicate that inheriting parents' political interest enhances the chances of abandoning their partisan legacy in the long-run. I also explore the attitudinal implications of this finding for the process of partisan development among young adults. In so doing, I focus on the impact of parental politicization on the weight attached to later political events and contextual influences, and on the consequences of this pattern for young people's vote choice.

2.1 Parental politicization and the inheritance of partisanship through the family

People acquire information about politics long before they reach voting age. This information, typically comes from the family and is not free from partisan bias. Unavoidably, the transmission of political values from parents to children results also in the inheritance of party attachment. Furthermore, sociologists suggest that attitude stability varies according to the degree of 'ego-relatedness and resistance to change' (Alwin and Krosnick, 1991:181). A basic distinction is made

between symbolic and non-symbolic objects (Sears 1983). In contrast with the second, which are more prone to change due to contextual forces, the first refer to attitudes acquired early in life and remaining rather stable thereafter. Party identification has been constantly treated as a highly symbolic attitude. Thus, initial parental influence should persist over later stages in adulthood. This is how party allegiance 'travels' from one generation to the next (Campbell et al. 1960:146-49; Achen 2002). And this, in turn, explains to some extent bewildering differences among otherwise similar geographic groups. Historical events shape political attitudes in a long-standing way. Yet, without intergenerational transmission, these effects could not have manifested themselves long time after they had taken place. Such geographical paradoxes have been largely attributed to the role of parental socialization (see Sundquist, 1973).

The key question, however, which has been scarcely studied thus far, is how durable this impact is. A proper attempt to answer this question involves the consideration of an important intervening factor, that of parental political interest. To be sure, involvement in politics strengthens political attitudes as it is also reinforced by them (Finkel and Opp, 1991; Pattie et al., 2003). Nevertheless, this relationship is only probabilistic, neither is logically required by the other. As Campbell et al. (1960) suggested, PID might also work in an opposite way: instead of fostering participation it might serve as a simple heuristic which permits people to adopt political stances without having further involvement in politics. Thus the picture of a father self-declared as a strong Democrat identifier who would not pay much attention and thus would refrain from discussing politics frequently at home is not necessarily a paradox.

Once parental PID or party preference interacts with the degree of political involvement, however, its impact on off-spring partisan attitudes becomes less obvious. One would expect that the product of this interaction should simply enhance the political influence of parents. A moment's reflection, however, should show why this may not necessarily be so. First, parental socialization is important in shaping political views, but it does not play alone. As Niemi and Jennings (1991) show, its impact is mediated by that of political issues. The question becomes then how these influences will be more apparent to the politicization of the youth. Achen's (2002) Bayesian model suggests that they pull the voter towards the current trend within the society. What this implies is that since the only factors that interact in the formation of PID during early adulthood is parental political socialization and external influences stemming from political events, to the extent that family influence will not be decisive or external political experience does not coincide with the political lessons taught within the family, period shocks will make voters shift towards the general trend, that is, towards the median of the population distribution.

This is only half of the story, however. To complete the picture we need to examine in more depth the role of issues in the formation of PID. To do that, we need to take into account the extent

of the individual's involvement in politics. Since political issues incorporate all possibly salient events taking place in the political system, their impact will be to either qualify or strengthen previous party evaluations. The strength (not the direction) of this influence, in turn, depends on the extent to which youngsters receive political information, thus to their level of political interest. The latter is conditioned upon the degree to which politics was present during early adolescence and childhood.³ A young adult acquainted with political discussions within the family will probably continue to talk about politics in all other social contexts that she enters. This contact probably brings her closer to external influences that might induce her to revise her political worldview and thus to amend her inherited partisan preferences. All this argumentation leads to the main hypothesis related to impact of family in the formation of partisan attitudes, as was also initially framed in the previous chapter:

If the external influences of early adulthood contradict parental PID, then, controlling for the strength of parental party identification, the degree of parental involvement in politics should correlate negatively with the endurance of partisan intergenerational transmission.

Let's elaborate now on how this might be the case. Going back to the example of the 18-year-old student, assuming that she comes from a Republican family background the odds are that she will also identify herself as a Republican. The stronger is parents' affiliation with the Republicans the more obvious the parental cue becomes and, consequently, the more likely it is that the child keeps her Republican loyalty. But things become more complicated when the intervening factor of political interest is taken into account. Once she has left her parents' home, the young adult acquires new peer groups with whom she occasionally discusses about politics. The frequency of doing so depends on her level of political interest, which is in turn a function of the extent to which politics was present at home.

Now, hypothesizing a political environment where politics was not a salient topic, where discussions about politics were not very frequent, but where both parents would constantly vote for the Republicans, would imply that the inheritance of Republican support is also accompanied by lack of interest in politics, which in turn would make new events and influences from different po-

³ A logical precondition for that is that political participation is also to some degree inherited by family values. Although Beck and Jennings (1991) find the link between parent-child participation relatively weak (albeit significant), the findings of Butler and Stokes (1974:46) and Verba et al. (2005) confirm this point. According to the first, politically interested parents are almost twice more likely to have politically interested children than those not interested in politics. According to the second, the level of parental education, often employed as an indicator of political knowledge, is shown to have a large impact on off-spring political participation as well as on off-spring political knowledge. I return to this point later in the chapter.

litical contexts less important. In our example this means that the young student either avoids such discussions or endures them without much enthusiasm. Unless this tendency changes, implying that the link regarding political interest between parents and children breaks, there is little room for deviation from parents' party orientations.

Consider now the case of a Republican family in which both parents are very much involved in politics. In this case, discussions with fellow students (or colleagues or any other new peer group) about politics are both more likely and potentially more influential, since there is much more interest on behalf of the young adult. This, however, makes her more exposed to new political influences which are now more likely to alter her initial political beliefs. The probability of doing so depends on her degree of 'openness to change' and on the degree of discrepancy between her initial beliefs and the cues coming from this new context. In the first case, it might be that parental influence has been so strong that it outperforms newly experienced period shocks. In the second case, new contextual influences might confirm parental political beliefs, thus serving to simply intensify initial partisan inclinations, again without breaking the link between parents and the child. That said, in a case in which there is still room for change, which is typically true for young adults, *and* when new influences contradict parental beliefs, the linkage between parents and the child is likely to break. Interestingly, this is mostly the case when parents apart from bequeathing their own partisan cues, have also gifted the child an interest in politics. In other words, among two equally partisan families, the link between parents and children is more likely to break in the family in which politics is more apparent at home. It is this exact pattern that I try to investigate in the following sections of this chapter.

How likely is that to happen? True, parents cannot do much to determine the public mood within which the child becomes a young adult. Moreover, the sociopolitical structure that provides the framework for youth's political formation is unlikely to change radically from one generation to the other. This, however, does not undermine the intervening role of parental political involvement. The high level of intergenerational continuity implies that for many people political choices are already shaped during the period of childhood and adolescence. The main interest is on those who deviate. The hypothesis formulated above aims to contribute in our understanding of how such deviations take place. These deviations do not need unprecedented events in order to take place. Accordingly, the role of parental politicization in making this change more (or less) feasible is equally pertinent. This will be further clarified as we move forward with the analysis, where it will become apparent that parental politicization is not simply a determinant of parent-child divergence. Rather, it plays an important formative role that needs to be taken into account when examining the process of political learning among young adults.

Related to that, since the analysis is implemented among the full sample of young individuals, thus including also those who do not change their attitudes as they become older, the magnitude of the effects will appear relatively small. This, however, is only half part of the story. First, the null is assumed to be zero. However, prior intuition would probably anticipate a positive effect of parental politicization in the endurance of parent-child partisan similarity. Under this perspective, it is at least worth reporting and trying to account for a significant, albeit small, negative effect. Moreover, this is only the direct effect of parental politicization. The indirect effect, as mediated through the increased importance attached to factors coming along during early adulthood, is much stronger and makes the role of parental politicization a key feature in our understanding of how political events and social contexts affect people's opinions during the early years of adulthood.

Apart from shedding light on the long-term implications of parental socialization in the inter-generational transmission of partisanship, finding empirical evidence in favor of this pattern also helps one to grasp a more generic aspect of partisan development, namely the acquisition and incorporation of political information through various contextual channels. The question of how people of different cognitive, social and motivational characteristics respond to new information has been the focus of a long-lived and rather voluminous literature (see indicatively Huckfeldt et al. 1999; McGraw and Hubbard 1996; Wood 2000). Ever since Converse (1962) and particularly Zaller (1992; 2004), the combination of sufficient interest in public affairs and partisan detachment has been considered to be a necessary and sufficient condition for new political information to produce change in one's partisan attitudes. The first is necessary in order for information to be received and the second essential in order this information to be actually incorporated into individuals' prior belief system. To be sure, the bulk of this literature focuses on media effects, where selection bias typically inhibits a straightforward evaluation of the impact of political information in qualifying pre-established political views (Iyengar and Simon 2000). In our case, period shocks (i.e. political events, e.g. the Vietnam war) and new contextual environments appearing in early adulthood (e.g. college) facilitate the examination of how new information affects people's prior predispositions. The exogenous character of contextual forces such as college or a job environment (neither of which is typically chosen on partisan grounds) enables the examination of the conditions that need to be fulfilled so that these new sources of political cues influence young people's partisan attitudes. The findings reveal that at least for these 'impressionable years' of young adulthood political interest as inherited by the family determines to a notable extent the magnitude of the impact of these new channels of information in further shaping and potentially altering prior political views. Importantly, this effect holds net of the strength of partisan attachment, implying that at least for this period in one's lifecourse in which information suppliers are not fully determined on

partisan grounds, involvement in political affairs, as taught within the family, is an important factor conditioning people's responsiveness to new political messages.

2.2 Previous evidence

One of the most robust findings in the literature of political socialization is that parents bequeath their political preferences to their children. In fact, as Wolak (2009:673) nicely points out, since its first empirical investigation, few qualifications have been made to this point. Back in the days of *The American Voter*, Campbell et al. (1960) found uncontested evidence that “[f]or a large portion of the electorate [...] party identification has its origins in the early family years” (147-148). Five decades later, *The American Voter Revisited* (Lewis-Beck et al. 2008) confirmed this conclusion: among homogeneous partisan families, about 75 per cent of couples appear to transmit their party preferences to their children.

That said, the impact of parental socialization might have been slightly reduced during the last decades (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009), but there is still a remarkable element of continuity in the reproduction of parental partisan attributes (Jennings et al. 2009). Although at least part of this linkage has been also attributed either to genetic consonance (Martin et al. 1986; Alford, Funk, and Hibbing 2005; Fowler and Dawes 2009) or to status inheritance (Dalton 1982; Bengston, Biblarz, and Roberts 2002), previous evidence confirms that early political socialization is the leading force through which children appear to resemble their parents in political terms and that this effect persists even when socioeconomic status similarity between parents and children is taken into account (Tedin 1974, Cassel 1982, Glass et al. 1986, Zuckerman et al. 2007, Jennings et al. 2009). This is also revealed by studies which mainly focused on the role of political campaigns in the formation of initial partisan predispositions during adolescence (Sears and Valentino 1997). Discussions about politics and other communication patterns within the family seem to significantly enhance the impact of elections on the partisan make-up of the child (Valentino and Sears 1998).

Although the amount of empirical evidence on this point is far less overwhelming, parents are also found to contribute to the development of children's political interest (Zuckerman et al. 2007; Wolak 2009; Jennings et al. 2009). Arguably, by fostering the child's interest in politics, politicized parents make their partisan cues more visible and thus strengthen their partisan influence. This reinforcing effect of parental politicization on the family's partisan influence has also been confirmed on various occasions (Jennings et al. 2009).

All this evidence however is only confined to the investigation of the contemporaneous relationship between parents and children. What happens after the offspring leave their family home?

Previous evidence on the formation of partisanship during early adulthood has suggested that as people enter in the political world, contemporaneous events and different social contexts interplay with parental influence in shaping youth's partisanship (Niemi and Jennings 1991). However, the magnitude of this impact is not homogeneous among young adults. At least partially it depends on their level of political interest. There are two important considerations that need to be taken into account at this point, but have not been addressed thus far in the existing literature. First, political interest does not emerge at random. It stems from people's socialization influences which means that family is again a crucial factor. Second, it is not clear whether political interest is only the outcome of strong partisanship and thus whether it simply serves to reinforce the partisan cues received during adolescence from the family or whether it implies greater likelihood of questioning these early political messages as a result of a more committed involvement in new political influences coming during early adulthood. It is these two largely forgotten questions that this chapter aims to address.

That being said, there are a few studies that have (either implicitly or explicitly) addressed the impact of family politicization on the endurance of parental partisan inheritance.⁴ One is a qualitative study on young protestors in the antiwar movement, known also the 'Vietnam Summer' (Keniston 1968). Keniston conducts only fourteen interviews and thus his findings are subject to concerns about external validity. Moreover, his aim was to uncover the psychological underpinnings of commitment in political protest and thus the role of the family is only addressed implicitly in the study. However, it is still evident from his narrative that most of these 'young radicals' did not stem from a predominantly Democrat family environment. Almost all of them were raised in a politicized home, but not necessarily one with predominantly liberal cues. Many of these youngsters actually turned out to be children of Republican parents (Keniston 1968:78-86).

Another study that addressed the impact of parental politicization in the magnitude of parent-child political resemblance is that by Jennings, Stoker and Bowers (2009). Using the same longitudinal study that is employed here, the authors find that parental politicization as well as attitudinal stability among the parents are key intervening factors, boosting the magnitude of partisan congruence between parents and children. This finding might seem to contradict the hypothesis posed in this analysis but it does not necessarily do so. This is because they only look at the contempora-

⁴ There is also a recent study on partisan change in adolescence which is based on a panel survey of high school seniors that took place before and after the 2006 midterm elections (Wolak 2009). According to its findings, politically interested youngsters are more likely to register some party affiliation and to denote strong partisan attachments (Wolak 2009:579). However, Wolak's analysis is not very informative about the relationship between parents and children since there is no information about the partisan preferences of the latter. Moreover, although this is a panel study, it still examines the contemporaneous effect of parental influence on youth's partisanship, since all respondents were still approximately 18 years old during both waves of the survey.

neous relationship between parents and children, as it is manifested when the latter are 18 years old. The logic here is not to evaluate at any given point in time the partisan similarity between parents and children but to see how the initial pattern of increased congruence when offspring still live with their parents changes during their life span. The key question related to this is whether parental politicization makes this link more durable after children leave their parental home. To engage in this developmental perspective, we need to examine how the relationship between parents and children evolves after offspring leave their parental home, that is controlling for the initial level of congruence between parents and children.

This is done in the third study that has attempted to explore empirically the link between parental politicization and the endurance of intergenerational partisan transmission. Actually, given that to the best of my knowledge this study constitutes the only one that explicitly examined the long-term impact of parental politicization on family partisan inheritance, I report its findings in more detail.

In an attempt to explore the joint effects of parental political interest and strength of partisan attachment on off-spring party identification, Beck and Jennings (1991) came up with a rather intriguing finding. Youngsters stemming from highly politicized Republican families were more likely to switch into independence between 1965 and 1973 than children from less politicized Republican families (1991:755). Furthermore, the dealigning trend among the American youth during the late 1960s and the 1970s was found to originate in rather partisan homes, since it was these particular families that saw their children shifting from party support to independence during their first years of adulthood. The basic idea about the role of parental politicization is nicely summarized by the authors in their final discussion about the shifts of children from partisan families towards independence (1991:760):

‘Youth from Democratic and Republican politicized families were alike in their movement to non-partisanship between 1965 and 1973. In deserting family partisan inheritances these youth may be demonstrating, ironically enough, the influence of their families.’

Beck and Jennings 1991 is the departure point in this analysis. By using the same data, the aim here is three-fold. First, I try to explicitly test this idea, which in their analysis emerged as a by-product from a more general attempt to explore the joint effect of parental politicization and partisanship. I also test the generalizability of this finding since the scope is not to focus on independence but rather to explore the difference in the degree of similarity between parents and children. Arguably, this pattern is more general and more inclusive than simply focusing on shifts towards independence. I examine this relationship considering and testing potential competing hypotheses.

As a step towards this direction, I engage in a multi-variate analysis, controlling for various potential confounders in their findings.

Second, in trying to trace empirically the process through which parental politicization results in further deviance between parents and children, I explore its impact on how youngsters are affected by contemporaneous events taking place during these years and new social contexts in which they find themselves after leaving their parental home. In particular, I investigate the extent to which family socialization conditions the impact of college attendance in changing or qualifying prior partisan beliefs. Related to that, I also examine whether the political environment experienced at home helps to predict the impact of later political events, such as the Vietnam War, an undoubtedly salient issue during the period of study. Moreover, I trace the underlying roots of partisan change by showing how parental politicization drives change in attitudinal predispositions of the youth, manifested through various political issues which acquired particular saliency during the period of the study. This helps to enrich our insight into the process through which family affects youth's partisan learning. Furthermore, I consider the observable manifestations of this pattern by examining potential implications for parent-child dissimilarity on vote choice.

Third, I explore the long-term implications of parental socialization in the formation of partisan habits during the life span. Is the trajectory of partisan development similar between offspring of politicized and non-politicized families? Do differences in the impact of political events between these two groups remain over time? What is the role of early partisanship in yielding electoral persistence among politicized and non-politicized families? This part of the analysis is particularly important because it serves two purposes. First, as is shown in my initial analysis the results, youth from politicized families are more likely to deviate from their parental influence (and consequently to change its own initial views) under the weight of political events and contextual influences. The important question then is whether this is a pattern observed only during early adulthood or whether it denotes a more generic and permanent tendency of this group to update its prior views as new political information becomes available. In other words, is this pattern a sign of an increased importance attributed to influences arising during a period of partisan formation or are offspring from politicized families generally less stable in their political attitudes than those coming from less politicized families? As is shown in the last part of my analysis, this increased tendency is largely confined to the period of early adulthood. Offspring from politicized families soon crystallize their views and develop partisan habits to the same (if not greater) extent as those from non-politicized families. The important difference is that this period of early adulthood, which is pivotal for both groups in stabilizing their political views, is particularly crucial for the politicized youth. This means also that if during this process parental politicization drives offspring away from their parental inheritance, this gap might well persist.

The second aspect revealed by the longitudinal analysis relates to the first. By adopting a developmental approach regarding the impact of family on the formation of offspring partisan predispositions, it becomes evident that parental political interest means a lot more than an increased level of contemporaneous similarity between parents and children. To be sure, initial convergence might persist due to inertia. But, given the initial level of parent-child similarity, parental politicization is a poor predictor of how this relationship develops in the long run. It is poor first because it is time-specific: it depends on the partisan direction of the political period during which offspring begin their adult life in the political world. Second, it leaves children more subject to the political forces of the times, making them more likely to reorientate their political views and opinions as they move from adolescence to early adulthood. In other words, parental politicization predicts very well the initial level of parent-child convergence. Its impact on the growth rate of this relationship, however, is far more complicated than the existing literature has led us to believe.

2.3 Data

As was noted above, I use data from the Jennings-Niemi-Stoker Parent-Youth Socialization Study (Jennings and Niemi 1974, Appendix; Jennings and Niemi 1991; Jennings et al. 2004). The first wave of this study took place in 1965 when a nation-wide random sample of high-school seniors (2nd generation), together with one or both of their parents (1st generation), were interviewed.⁵ Both cohorts were reinterviewed in 1973 and again in 1982. The last wave of this study came in 1997 when the initial youth cohort, then aged 50 years-old, was reinterviewed. Although all panels for the class of 65 are used, I mainly employ the first two waves of the study both for the parents and for the children since it is already in this period, from 18 to 26-years-old, that I expect to find changes between parents and children attributed to the level of parental political interest (see also Highton and Wolfinger 2001).

The use of this particular dataset is justified on four important grounds. First, it is one of the very few studies in political science that is based on a nation-wide random sample of young

⁵ Secondary schools (97) were the primary sampling units, selected with a probability proportional to their size. Within each school 15-21 randomly designated seniors were interviewed (N=1669). 1119 of the 1965 respondents were reinterviewed in 1973 and 220 more completed mail questionnaires. This amounts to a response rate of 80.8. For the parental group, the equivalent figure is 75.5. The problem of panel attrition is addressed by constructing a dummy for those respondents who were missing from the second wave. Interacting this variable with all key variables in the analysis showed no significant effects. Importantly, the loss of cases causes no significant distributional changes in any demographic characteristic of the respondents between the waves (see also Jennings et al. 2009).

adults. Having a large-N random sample of youngsters is essential in this analysis.⁶ Second, it is a panel study and thus it allows the examination of change in the level of parent-child convergence as children become older. Importantly, the second wave comes eight years later and finds the young adults in the age of 26, thus permits the investigation of changes during this period after important developments in a person's life have been completed (most respondents have finished their studies, found a job and got married by 1973). Third, this study also interviews the parents of the 1965 generation, thus providing direct measures about the level of political involvement of the parents.

Fourth, it satisfies a crucial criterion for the empirical investigation of the key hypothesis of this chapter. As was also argued above, the degree of family politicization might contribute to breaking the link between parents and children only if period forces contradict the partisan cues stemming from the family. This means that in order to capture this pattern convincingly we need to find a particular period in which the public mood changes clearly from one generation to the next. The period between the first two waves of the study constitutes a landmark of how public perceptions about the parties might change dramatically with regard to the past. Figure 1.2 of the previous chapter helps to illustrate this pattern. Indeed, the period between the mid-1960s and until at least the early 1980s is characterized by an almost unique decline in the strength of partisanship which, as is seen in the Figure, is the outcome of both period and cohort effects. There are many interesting features in this graph (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009) but what is important for present purposes is that this partial dealignment affected also those coming of age in the late 1960s, which constitute the youth sample of our dataset. If there is any impact of 'the weight of the times' in causing deviations from parental influence, this should be identified in this particular period. Needless to say, since the key idea here is that such period forces become more important for young adults coming from more politicized families, and thus are conditional on the level of family politicization, the fact that this period is unique in the strength of its political messages does not imply loss of generalizability about the impact of family politicization when such influences do emerge. I return to this point later in the chapter.

Since our interest is not in the contemporaneous relationship between parents and children at different time points but in how this relationship might be qualified in the long-run, although information about parental characteristics is provided in 1965, in 1973 and in 1982 I primarily make

⁶ The sample is not globally random in that it has high-school seniors as the target population. This means that there is an upward bias in the level of education found among the youth. However, to the extent that higher level of education among the children correlates positively with the level of education among the parents and thus in turn with the level of interest in politics within the family, this would only result in smaller variance in this key variable which in turn would make it more difficult to find differences with respect to this variable.

use of the first wave. It is by 1965, when young adults are 18-years-old, that parental influence at home should most notably manifest its influence on off-spring partisan attitudes. Following Beck and Jennings (1991), I assume that parental influence with respect to politics is much more pervasive and unidirectional during childhood and early adolescence. Thus, it is this political heritage that children would most likely carry with them in their new political contexts and this is also the heritage they would potentially need to question later on.

2.4 Model

I now move to the generic presentation of the model used to examine the key hypothesis of the chapter. The general idea here is that parental political interest is likely to cause greater deviations in the degree of similarity between parents and children when the latter leave their parents' home. The empirical configuration of this statement implies a Difference-In-Difference framework (DD), as denoted by Equation (2.1):

$$DD = \Delta PID[| \text{Politicized Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{73} | - | \text{Politicized Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{65} |] - \Delta PID[| \text{Non-Politicized Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{73} | - | \text{Non-Politicized Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{65} |] \quad (2.1)$$

PID stands for party identification and is measured through the full scale of the ANES question wording (available also here both for the parents and the children) which consists of a 7-point scale.⁷ Finding that $DD > 0$ would provide evidence in favor of the main hypothesis in this study. Equation (2.1) could be directly tested against the data if we could convincingly divide parents in two groups according to their level of political interest. Yet, this would require a rather stringent assumption about the nature of this concept that, although can be manifested empirically through a set of available indicators, remains an underlying latent concept and thus should be allowed to range in a continuous-like fashion. In order to accommodate this logic and to allow the introduction of potentially relevant controls, equation (2.1) leads to:

⁷ Given that this is probably the most crucial and most widely used outcome of interest, it is important to spell out the typical interpretation given to its values. 0: Strong Democrat; 1: Weak Democrat; 2: Democratic Leaner (acknowledged a Democratic preference but only when prompted to do so through a follow-up question); 3: Independent; 4: Republican Leaner; 5: Weak Republican; 6: Strong Republican. Sometimes the folded measure is also used, so that people are distinguished only with regard to the degree of partisanship rather than the direction of their partisan preferences (0: Independent, 1: Leaner, 2: Weak Partisan, 3: Strong Partisan).

$$\Delta \text{PID} | \text{Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{73} | = a + b \Delta \text{PID} | \text{Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{65} | + c \text{Par. Politicization}_{65} + \mathbf{d}\mathbf{x} + e_{is}$$

(2.2)

\mathbf{x} here denotes the vector of control variables, \mathbf{d} denotes the vector of coefficients associated with \mathbf{x} . s denotes clustering of the errors at the school-level (since this was the primary sampling unit) and a , b , c are constants to be estimated. $| \cdot |$ denotes the absolute value of the difference in the PID score between parents and children.

Thus, controlling for the initial level of discrepancy between parents and children (as measured when the latter are 18-years-old), we expect that $c > 0$, reflecting the positive impact of parental politicization on the increase in the level of partisan dissimilarity among off-spring and parents between 1965 and 1973. To be sure, the theoretical model of equation (2.2) can be only tested empirically if we find appropriate measures for each of the key underlying concepts, namely parental-child similarity and parental level of political interest. It is to this topic that I now turn.

2.5 Measurement

There are three points that need to be made about measurement. The first regards all variables related to parental influence. The second refers to the measurement of parent-child partisan congruence. The third involves the measurement of family politicization. I address each of these issues in turn.

2.5.1 Measuring family characteristics

Thus far, family has been treated as a single unitary actor, implying that both the father and the mother provide identical cues to the child. But this may well not be the case. This means that to fully capture the partisan environment during childhood and adolescence we need to employ information about the partisan attitudes of both parents. This is made partially feasible due to the structure of the study. The parental survey is randomly divided in three parts. For one third of the youth sample only the father was interviewed. For another third, it was only the mother that was interviewed and for the last third part both parents were interviewed. In all cases, however, each parent was asked not only about his/her PID but also about the PID of his/her spouse. Accordingly, for the two thirds of the sample for which one of the parents was interviewed, I use this information in order to construct a summarizing indicator about the distribution of partisanship within the family. The resulting family-PID variable ranges again from 0 to 6 with cases in the

midpoints between each set of adjacent integer values (.5,1.5,...,5.5), since it comprises the average of the PID score of each parent. Appendix 2.A provides a short justification for the adoption of this measurement strategy.

2.5.2 The dependent variable

This variable needs now to be combined with the measure of child PID in order to construct the two indicators of parent-child similarity (for 1965 and 1973), which should provide information about the magnitude of partisan correspondence between parents and children. But before doing that the originally ordinal-level character of the PID scale needs to be considered. Indeed, the literature on the measurement properties of PID has been rather voluminous (see for example Weisberg 1980, Jacoby 1982, Green and Palmquist 1990;1994). Although ordinal regression techniques have partly resolved this problem when PID is used as an outcome variable, here it is still important because PID is used as the initial variable employed for the construction of the final dependent variable. If the difference between being a weak partisan and a leaner is not the same as the difference between a leaner and an independent (or the difference between a weak partisan and a strong partisan), assuming that this is the case would lead to a final scale that does not do full justice to the level of congruence between parent and child. To be able to capture such differences, which go beyond the original ordinal-level scale of PID, I need to rescale the PID measure before taking the absolute value of the difference between parents and children. I do that with optimal scaling. Details about this procedure can be found in Appendix 2.B.

An important point that needs to be made is that this difference-in-difference measurement strategy, whereby parental politicization is used as a predictor of increasing partisan disagreement between parents and children is not the only outcome used in the analysis. This variable mainly serves to examine the direct effect of parental politicization. It is chosen instead of more qualitative alternatives because it allows to use all available information about both the direction and the intensity of partisan preferences among the parents and the children. When the analysis moves to the causal path through which this effect might have been manifested empirically, specific scenarios are examined which permit a more qualitative and thus less complicated measure. It is important to note, however, that even using different outcomes of interest, the results converge to the same conclusions.

More importantly, the idea to compare people in terms of their partisan deviation from their parents might be problematic if parental politicization is associated with strong partisan affiliations. As will be further clarified in the part of the results, by construction children from partisan

families have more room for change than those from independent families. Since politicized families are more likely to belong in the first rather than the second category, it might be due to this pattern that parental politicization appears to boost intergenerational partisan divergence. To account for this possibility, parental politicization is always accompanied (in an additive form) by an indicator measuring the partisan strength of the family. If the effect is only an artifact of the measurement strategy, controlling for the level of parental partisan strength (through the folded family-PID measure) should absorb this effect. Thus, what remains should be the outcome of the deviating role of parental politicization as described above. This is further ensured by the fact that all analyses that use different outcomes confirm, as will be seen later in the text, the existence of this negative link between parental politicization and the endurance of parental partisan legacy.

2.5.3 Parental Politicization

The third point relates to the measure of parental politicization. The 1965 parental questionnaire includes many relevant items capturing both subjective interpretations and behavioral aspects of this concept. I distinguish between three sets of indicators, namely subjective evaluations of political interest, actual political involvement and media consumption. Three subscales are constructed corresponding to these three aspects of parental politicization which are finally combined

Table 2.1: Correlations between family politicization and indicators of parent's political relationship with the child and child's political involvement, 1965

	Parental Politicization index
Predicting correctly child's PID (-1,0,1)	.141 (.038)
Talk about politics at home (1-3)	.212 (.03)
Talk about politics with friends (1-3)	.141 (.027)
Political knowledge (1-7)	.245 (.023)
Interest in political affairs (1-4)	.167 (.030)
Definition of ideology (1-5)	.215 (.024)

Entries are polyserial correlations, standard errors in parentheses, all variables coded so as to range from lower to higher values with regard to the attribute they aim to measure.

through factor analysis. The resulting scale ranges from 0 to 8 with mean value 4.57. In cases where both parents were interviewed, the mean value of their politicization scores was used.⁸

Full details about the measurement strategy followed in the construction of the parental politicization index are provided in Appendix 2.C. Here, I evaluate the properties of the resulting scale by engaging in convergent and construct validation. Regarding the first, i.e. the comparison of the key measure against one or more measures of the same or a closely related underlying concept (McDonald 2005:944) the scale correlates significantly with a set of items comprising an indicator of parental political knowledge (.43) and with parental political efficacy (.39). Moreover, the first row of Table 2.1 shows that parents who talk more about politics at home are more likely to predict

⁸ Again there is the problem of those families in which only one of the parents has been interviewed. Here there are no subjective evaluations of the spouse and thus we have to assume that the parent who is interviewed is representing adequately the level of political interest in the family. This assumption might be problematic since the correlation between spouses in families where both parents were interviewed is not remarkably high (.548). The implications of this pattern are potentially crucial. This is not because the level of politicization in families where one of the parents was interviewed is captured with some error (since the politicization score of the other parent not interviewed is ignored) for this error is probably distributed randomly in the sample due to the random selection of families in which both parents were interviewed. The problem, however, arises from the fact that in families in which only one of the parents was interviewed this was either the mother or the father. This means that if there is a gender gap in the level of politicization, it would be reflected in the level of political interest within the family, whose politicization level would be determined by whether the father or the mother was interviewed. Rather expectedly, the mean value of politicization is 5.23 in families in which the father was interviewed and 4.62 in families in which only the mother was interviewed ($p < .001$). This means that among families whose true politicization level is equal, the politicization index might consider the family in which only the father was interviewed as more politicized than the family in which the mother is interviewed. It is not clear why this error would inflate the impact of parental politicization (since the random selection of whether the father or the mother is interviewed makes this probability independent from the level of parental politicization) but I try to account for this pattern in two ways. First, I construct the politicization index by using only the indicators about the extent to which politics is present at home, i.e. those indicators which do not refer to the level of political participation of the respondent but rather evaluate the level of political interest within the family. The new scale produces results which are substantively identical to those presented here. Second, I replicate the analysis among the three types of families separately: those in which only the father was interviewed, those in which only the mother was interviewed and those in which both parents are interviewed. Again, the substantive implications of the findings remain unchanged (although the level of uncertainty especially among families in which only the father was interviewed is remarkably increased). Finally, the results presented below include two dummies denoting whether both parents or only the father was interviewed (having 'mothers' as the reference category). Regarding single-parent families, I have not adopted the strategy followed by Beck and Jennings (1991), of coding a zero value for all indicators related to the missing parent. I rather assumed that political attentiveness (as well as partisanship) is only channeled through the parent with whom the child lives. Thus, instead of assuming that single-parent families produce half of the influence produced by families with both parents (assuming that each parent has the same politicization score) living with the child, I assumed that political interest is simply channeled through the parent with whom the child interacts at home. To test these two competing assumptions I regressed child political interest in 1965 against a dummy denoting single-parent families, controlling for the level of politicization of the parent interviewed (or the mean values if both were interviewed). The dummy showed no significant effect, denoting that once the level of parental political interest is taken into account, there is no remaining difference between the two types of families.

correctly the partisanship of their child.⁹ To evaluate the construct validity of the scale (i.e. to examine if “the empirically observed outcomes are consistent with the theoretical predictions”, Carmines and Woods 2005:936), I focus on the off-spring. Children stemming from families with high politicization levels should display some particular characteristics. They should be more knowledgeable about politics, have the tendency to talk more about politics with their families and also with their friends and generally show greater interest in politics. It is by enabling the development of such properties among their children that politicized families might be more likely to experience future parent-child deviations. Evidence for that is also provided in Table 2.1. The second and the third rows show that children from more politicized families talk more about politics both at home and with their friends. Finally, rows four and five show that parental political interest is indeed a significant predictor of off-spring political interest and political knowledge. As a last check, I examine whether the extent to which politics is present at home helps the child acquire a coherent understanding of the ideological underpinnings of the observed differences between the parties. I use the ideology index provided in the student survey, which is based on Converse’s model of mass perceptions about political issues (Converse 1964). Importantly, row six shows that children coming from more politicized families are more likely to have a consistent understanding of the ideological differences between the parties than children coming from less politicized families.

2.6 Results

Before moving into the estimation of Equation (2.2) it is necessary to describe the set of controls included in the equation. Given that there is a clear causal pattern imposed by the longitudinal structure of the data, the unbiased estimation of the causal impact of parental politicization should avoid including predictors that are temporally posterior to this influence. Thus, changes in people’s life trajectories after 1965 and until 1973 are not taken into account in the beginning, because they cannot have caused any influence on our key independent variable. Doing so, would make the findings susceptible to post-treatment bias (King and Zeng 2006:144). I later examine whether these later events modify this relationship and whether they do so in a way consistent to my argumentation.

⁹ Parents were asked about whether they think that their child considers itself as a Democrat or as Republican and if so they were asked to name the party to which they believed their child was attached. Since we know the exact responses of the child in this question, I code as right (1) parental responses that find either the correct party or correctly perceive the child as independent. Parents who think that their child has not yet decided whereas the child has given a positive answer regarding him/herself as a Democrat or a Republican take the score of zero. Predicting affiliation with a different party given by the child implies a score of -1. This variable was then correlated with the degree of parental politicization. This is the figure displayed in the first row of Table 2.1.

Table 2.2: The impact of parental politicization on change on partisan similarity between parents and offspring.

	$ \text{ParPID}_{65} - \text{ChildPID}_{73} $	$\text{DD} = \text{Parent}_{65} - \text{Child}_{73} - \text{Parent}_{65} - \text{Child}_{65} $	$\text{DD} = \text{Parent}_{65} - \text{Child}_{73} - \text{Parent}_{65} - \text{Child}_{65} $
$ \text{ParentPID}_{65} - \text{ChildPID}_{65} $.263 (.048)		
Parental Strength of PID	.120 (.020)	.094 (.025)	.097 (.024)
Politicization Index	.040 (.014)	.061 (.029)	.062 (.027)
Age	.006 (.010)	.010 (.014)	.010 (.014)
Gender	.016 (.088)	-.022 (.101)	-.001 (.116)
Parental Partisan Homogeneity	-.032 (.022)	-.056 (.028)	-.053 (.028)
Mother only interviewed	-.058 (.073)	-.102 (.077)	-.106 (.078)
Both parents interviewed	.141 (.085)	.159 (.102)	.162 (.104)
Black	-.229 (.155)	-.505 (.176)	.506 (.172)
Talk Politics with Friends	-.012 (.050)	-.055 (.066)	-.041 (.067)
Married			-.079 (.107)
Education			.085 (.055)
Housing Mobility			.028 (.025)
Employed			-.075 (.135)
Constant	.423 (.301)	-.351 (.386)	-.451 (.425)
Rsq	0.105	0.072	0.081
N	1111	1111	1099

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, standard errors, clustered at the school-level, in parentheses. The observations are weighted according to whether both parents or only one of them were interviewed.

Adopting this logic, the following controls are included in the first part of the analysis. First, given that my interest is in the effect of parental politicization net from the strength of partisan attachment, the latter needs to be controlled for. Further controls include race, gender, the level of political agreement between the parents in the household (measured by the absolute partisan difference between the father and the mother, see also Appendix 2.A) and child age, measured from 1

to 24, denoting the particular month and year of birth.¹⁰ I also include two dummies denoting whether the father or the mother of single-interviewed families was interviewed and whether both or one of the parents was interviewed. Finally, to control for the possibility that discussion about politics at home is not uni-directional and thus not only dependent on parental political interest, I include an indicator for the extent to which children talk about politics with their friends, that is outside the family. Although this tendency should be mainly the result of talking about politics within the family, if it were more the result of the child's own political interest, any effect of the family should effectively disappear once we control for the child's inclination to talk about politics in contexts in which the family has no or only limited control. That said, it is most likely that the causality here goes the other way, but I choose to take a conservative view and include this variable to capture the, admittedly less likely, possibility that it is the child's own political interest that brings politics into home.

The results appear in the first column of Table 2.2. I start with a brief presentation of the control variables. First, the strength of parental partisan sentiment causes greater divergence between parents and children when the latter leave home. This is an interesting finding which implies an effect analogous to the one expected for parental political interest and confirms the bivariate findings in Beck and Jennings (1991). What it says is that children coming from more strongly partisan families are more likely to deviate from their parents relative to how much they deviated in 1965 than children coming from less politically attached families. That said, as was also indicated in the section of measurement, given that parental strength of PID is essentially constructed from the parental 1965 PID scale, from which the dependent variable also stems, further investigation would be needed in order to assess whether this finding is not simply an artifact of how the two variables are constructed.¹¹

Furthermore, the initial level of dissimilarity in 1965 is, rather expectedly, a good predictor of their level of divergence eight years later. None of the other control variables has an effect above zero at a .05 level. Thus, I now move to the key indicator of parental political interest. Its effect is positive denoting that a one-point increase in this scale causes an increase in the degree of diver-

¹⁰ To mediate problems with influential cases and potential outliers I have only included those high-school seniors who were born between January of 1947 (24) and December of 1948 (1). These comprise over the 85 per cent of the youth sample and have the expected year of birth for a typical 1965 high-school senior.

¹¹ To see how this might be a problem consider that the dependent variable ranges from 0 to 6. Since stronger partisans anchor the two ends of the scale, there is more room for change in their level of parental similarity from 1965 to 1973. For example, for a Democratic family that scores 1 (5 in the partisan strength scale), whereas the child in 1965 scores 2, the absolute difference will be 1. If the child moves to independence by 1973, the difference will become 2. It can be easily seen that without assuming any difference in the effect of parental PID on children but simply accepting that offspring are in general more likely to denote lower levels of partisan strength than parents are, a family that scores 0 in 1965 in the PID scale will appear to deviate more from the child by 1973.

gence between parents and children of .04 points. Given the quasi-continuous measure and the quasi-normal distribution of parental political interest, a better way to grasp the magnitude of its effect is to refer to changes from particular points of its density function. A move from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile of this variable causes a change in the level of agreement between parents and children of .14 points in a 0-6 scale. This is certainly a modest effect, and at least partially this should be expected for statistical reasons.¹² That being said, it is interesting that the effect runs contrary to prior intuition. Parental politicization does not seem to enhance family-child congruence after the children leave home. Rather, once its contemporaneous impact while children are still at their end of adolescence is taken into account, any further change due to parental politicization seems to be towards divergence rather than convergence. Adopting the developmental logic suggested above, parental politicization might enhance the initial level of intergenerational transmission of partisanship. However, it seems to work in the opposite direction regarding the growth curve of this relationship, as young people enter their early adulthood. In the last section of the chapter before the discussion, I explore the long-term implications of this pattern and the extent to which it persists during the life trajectory of the class of 1965. For now, it is important that this effect holds true when we control for the level of partisan strength, thus confirming the hypothesis of the chapter: for a given level of partisan attachment among the parents, the more politics is apparent at home the less likely it is for the child-parent partisan link to persist.

An alternative way to gauge this pattern is to focus explicitly on the impact of parental politicization on the change in the level of agreement between 1965 and 1973, by moving the ‘lagged’ dissimilarity variable to the left hand-side of equation (2.2), thus estimating:

$$\Delta\Delta[\text{PID} | \text{Parents}_{65}\text{-Children}_{73} | - \text{PID} | \text{Parents}_{65}\text{-Children}_{65} |] = a + c \text{ Par. Politicization}_{65} + \mathbf{dx} + e_{is}$$

(2.3)

Although this new specification assumes that the two agreement terms are linked with a coefficient of 1, which is clearly not the case as shown in the first column of Table 2.2, it is useful here in showing more explicitly the effect of parental political interest on the change in the level of congruence between parents and children between the two waves. Moreover, it solves a skewness problem of the dependent variable used in the first column of Table 2.2. Note that constraining the coefficient of the 1965 agreement variable to such a higher level than empirically found could only suppress

¹² Given that more than one third of the youth sample takes the same score of PID both in 1965 and in 1973, any change is confined to the rest of the sample. Since I do not exclude these people from the analysis (who are predicted perfectly by the lagged term), it is logical to expect that all variables trying to capture change in the level of similarity will be downwardly biased (see Wooldridge 2002:559).

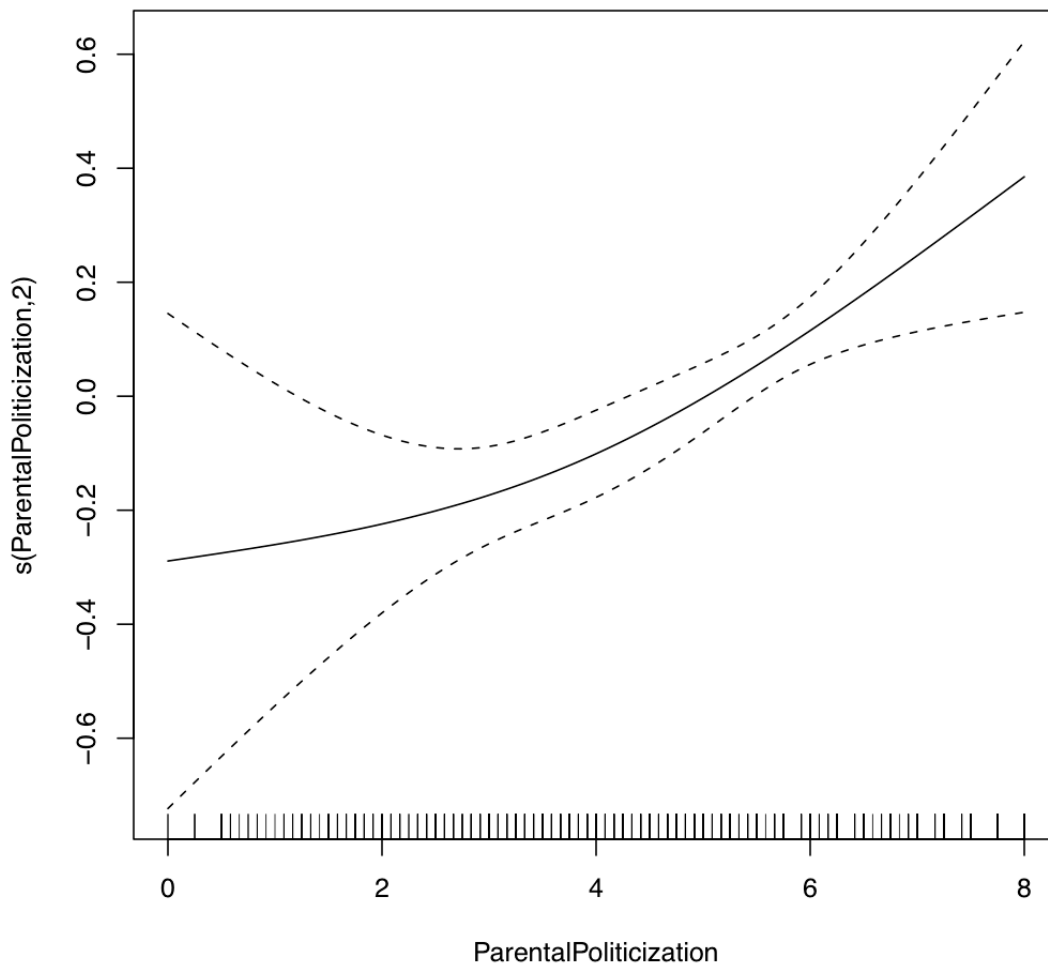


Figure 2.1: The effect of parental politicization on 'DD' estimated with a Generalized additive model.

Note: The solid curve presents the penalized regression spline representing the impact of parental politicization on change in parent-child similarity from 1965 to 1973; the effect all other covariates is estimated parametrically, through a linear function form, similar to Table 2.2. The smooth term is significant at .0027.

the variance in the resulting dependent variable and thus make it more difficult to find a systematic pattern between partisan intergenerational agreement and parental political interest. Apart from that, given that the level of similarity between parents and children by 1965 does not literally classify as the lagged dependent variable in that I only take children's PID values in 1973 to construct the dependent variable but retain the 1965 PID of parents, there is a clear theoretical motivation for subtracting the two terms: doing so brings about a continuous measure which provides information about the direction and the magnitude of change in the level of partisan similarity between parents and children during this period. By employing this measure I examine the extent to which greater deviations from parental PID in 1973 than in 1965 are systematically related to the

level of parental politicization. The results appear in the second column of Table 2.2. The new dependent variable varies from -6 to 6. Again, the politicization variable exerts a positive effect, significantly higher than zero. The .06 increase in the partisan gap between parents and children for a unit increase in the scale of family politicization shows that although the effects are again modest in terms of magnitude, they do contribute in our explanation of change in the level of agreement among parents and children between the two waves.

Is this result simply an artifact of a poor linear approximation of how parental politicization affects parent-child divergence? Given that the treatment indicator is seen as a continuous variable with a homogenous effect over the full range of its values, the effects hold only under the assumption of a global linear relationship between this variable and the dependent variables used in Table 2.2. If this global linearity is strongly violated, the OLS coefficients represent only a poor approximation of the real effects. To relax such functional form assumptions I estimate the effect of parental politicization through a Generalized Additive Model (GAM, Beck and Jackman 1998) in which the effect of parental politicization is allowed to be nonlinear and determined by the data. In particular, a cubic smoothing line with 2 knots (i.e. two points of intersection between the local curves) is used for the estimation of the effects. In this way, the estimates are allowed to vary across the range of the predictor variables (Wood 2006; Keele 2008). Figure 2.1 shows how parental politicization increases parent-child divergence in the long run. The effect is clearly monotonic and for the most part linear. The standard error bands and the approximate test of statistical significance (reported in the note of the Figure) clearly suggest that this increase in parent-child divergence is not simply random error.

As a second step in the analysis I introduce factors that might affect the link between parents and children and intervene after the latter leave home. Four potentially relevant variables are employed: whether or not the individual went to college (1:No;2:Some;3:Yes); the extent to which s/he has changed a place of residence during these years; whether s/he got married and whether s/he works. All these four indicators imply changing contexts that might have affected the child's political views in ways that cannot be foreseen by their parents. To estimate these effects, I employ the second specification based on Equation (2.3) although the substantive implications of the findings remain unchanged to both specifications. The results appear in the last column of Table 2.2. The impact of family political socialization remains largely unchanged. Importantly, none of the new variables appears to exert a significant improvement in the model. The only factor that appears to correlate with change in parent-child partisan divergence is whether the child continued

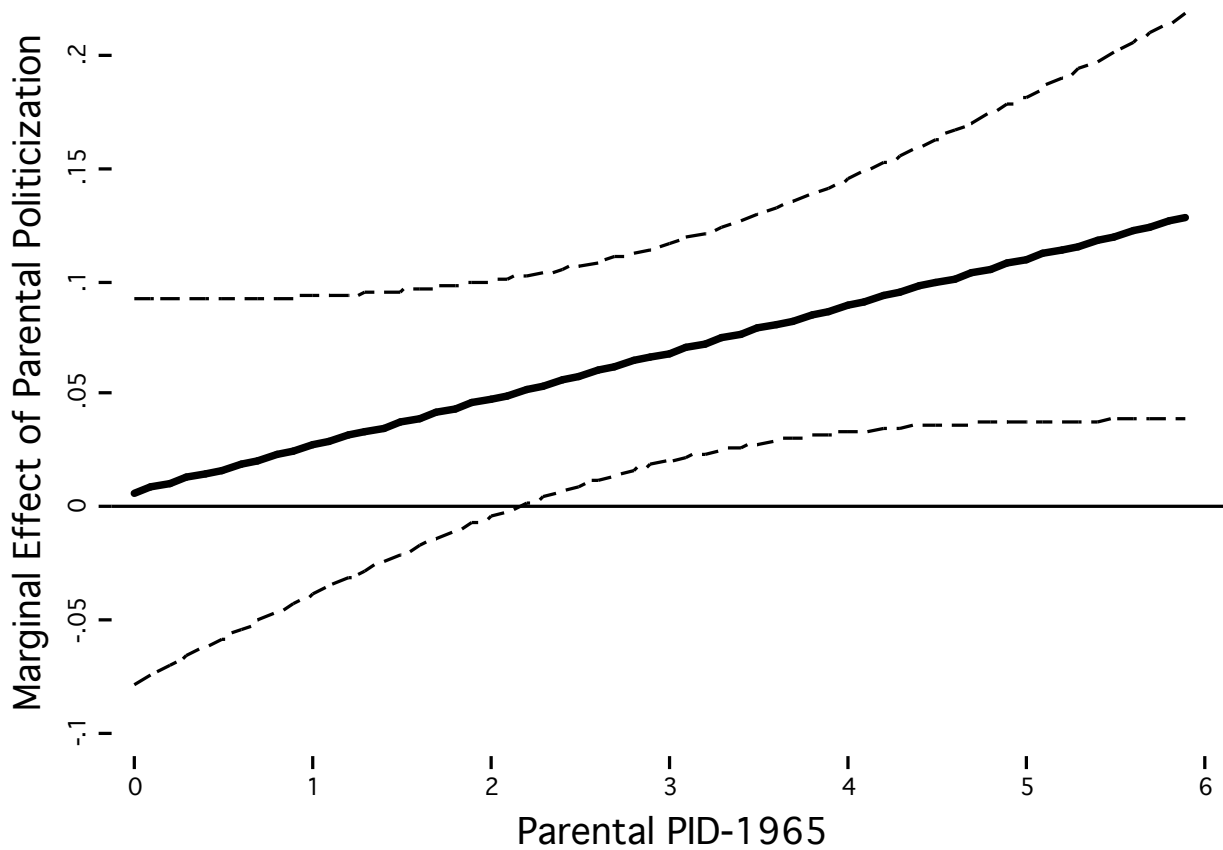


Figure 2.2: Marginal effect of parental politicization on parent-child dissimilarity in 1973 according to parental PID in 1965.

Note: The solid line presents the change in the coefficient of parental politicization across all points of the family PID scale (coded in a 0-6 scale with cases in the midpoints between adjacent integer values: .5-1.5...5.5). Dotted lines display the associated 95% confidence intervals.

its education by going to college.¹³ Although its standard error is relatively large, the positive coefficient implies that going to the university is associated with a decrease of the parental imprint in ones' partisan preferences. I check whether each of the new factors exerts a conditional effect dependent upon the level of parental politicization. According to the theoretical argumentation developed above, parental politicization is important because it qualifies the weight given later by the individual to period shocks. Thus, the confrontation of new social settings might influence the

¹³ Given that attending college is itself the outcome of prior sociodemographic factors which are not properly accounted for here (Jennings and Stoker 2008), I refrain from attributing a causal interpretation on the effect of education. As is shown below, college attendance is an important predictor of partisan shifts from 1965 to 1973 but the magnitude of the coefficient attached to this variable differs according to the level of parental politicization. It is by allowing this comparison between politicized and non politicized families that college attendance is useful in this case. In other words, I am not making a strong claim about the impact of university education in forming partisan trajectories among the youth, but in how this factor works among children stemming from more politicized and children stemming from less politicized families.

Table 2.3: Predicting the probability of a child becoming a Democrat by 1973 if s/he and his/her family were Republicans in 1965.

	Becoming a Democrat by 1973 if he/she and his/her family were Republicans in 1965		
	The direct effect of parental politicization on shifts from the Republicans to the Democrats	Controlling for post-adolescence developments	The conditional role of parental politicization in the effect of attending college
Politicization Index	.104 (.046)	.070 (.045)	-.090 (.108)
Age	-.004 (.016)	-.005 (.017)	-.004 (.016)
Strength of family PID	-.001 (.037)	-.003 (.039)	-.006 (.039)
Both	-.010 (.165)	-.024 (.170)	-.030 (.170)
Only female interviewed	-.070 (.128)	-.086 (.127)	-.096 (.128)
Gender	-.023 (.148)	-.023 (.163)	-.021 (.165)
Parental Homogeneity	.039 (.046)	.040 (.044)	.041 (.045)
Education		.158 (.085)	-.208 (.263)
Employed		-.291 (.159)	-.283 (.159)
Housing Mobility		.043 (.035)	.045 (.033)
Married		-.094 (.157)	-.091 (.160)
Education*Parental Politicization			.076 (.051)
Constant	-1.94 (.400)	-1.90 (.449)	-1.16 (.673)
N	1101		1099
Log-likelihood	-261.29	-255.89	-254.58

Note: Entries are rare-events logit coefficients (King and Zeng 2001), clustered standard errors in parentheses.

initial political beliefs only among those youngsters who have been used to talk about politics. No significant interaction effects are found, however. This might raise questions about the argumentation developed above regarding why we should expect parental politicization to induce further deviation between parents and children. It is to this exact point that I turn in the next section, exploring with more scrutiny the role of college attendance in the formation of youth's partisan attitudes.

2.6.1 Indirect effects 1: new social contexts (college attendance)

Leaving home at the start of adulthood could be either because of going to college or because of finding a job and starting a family. Here I focus on the first option. The university is a traditionally liberal institution, also in the US. However, this was probably never more the case than in the 1960s, especially in its second half (Light and Spiegel 1977; Holsti and Rosenau 1980; Jennings 1987, 2002; Horn 2007). Engaging in a predominantly liberal context such as college during that period could mainly affect one's initial political views in a liberal direction. Although at that point the link between ideology and parties was not as strong as it appears to be in the beginning of the 21st century (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009), a liberal context should certainly work more in favor of the Democrats than the Republicans.¹⁴ If this is the case, any change in political views resulting from going to college should be greater for those who had a more conservative background. In partisan terms, this means that if parental influence is questioned within the university, we should expect greater effects for those who start as Republicans, thus coming from a Republican or in any case non-Democrat family background. Even if the university makes even the Democrat youth question its family influence, this should not be towards a Republican direction and thus in spatial terms its effect on parent-child similarity should be again smaller.¹⁵

The important question now has to do with the role of parental influence. If children from more politicized families are more likely to question their parental cues because of being more attentive to the contrasting partisan cues within the university, without controlling for the latter we should expect greater effects among Republicans than among Democrats. Since more than half of the 1965 high-school seniors went at least for some period to college, the university is a key intervening factor for many of the young adults between the two waves. Assuming that its main influence is towards a more liberal political perspective, it constitutes the only intervening factor about which we can have rather homogenous expectations regarding the direction of its impact. Thus, if parental politicization works by increasing the political weight attached to post-family contextual influ-

¹⁴ To confirm that this is indeed the case I regress the ideological self-placement of the youth in 1973 (it is not available in 1965) against the 7-point PID scale and a folded (squared) PID-strength indicator. If extreme liberal views in the late 1960s and early 1970s simply drive people to independence, the impact of squared PID should easily outweigh the effect of the 0-6 PID scale. However, the latter seems to be the only significant predictor of actual self placement in ideological terms, implying that being more liberal in 1973 is more the result (or the cause, no causal argument is made here) of being more Democrat than of being less attached to either of the two parties.

¹⁵ Even if college challenges Democrat views in favor of more liberal alternatives, given the lack of such political alternatives in the US party system, the final outcome should be independence. However, since moving from parents' partisanship to independence implies a smaller shift than changing party affiliation, we should expect a difference between Republican and Democrat families.

ences, this should be manifested by exerting a higher effect among the Republican youth than youngsters coming from a Democratic home.

To test the impact of parental politicization according to the partisan background of the family, I interact the key variable of parental politicization with parental PID, measured on the usual 0-6 scale (where 0 means strong Democrat and 6 strong Republican). Although I do not present the full results here, Figure 2.2 shows the marginal effect of parental politicization on the change in the degree of similarity between parents and children from 1965 to 1973 according to the partisan affiliation of the family. The results seem to confirm the pattern anticipated above. It is only among non-Democrat families ($PID > 2$) that we find an effect of politicization on parent-child divergence.¹⁶ It is mainly among Republican families that talking about politics at home causes a deviation from parental partisan preferences.

In Appendix 2.D I address three competing hypotheses that could potentially account for the observed impact of parental politicization on parent-child partisan resemblance and for the fact that this impact seems to hold mainly among Republicans. Here, I proceed by exploring how the impact of college attendance and political events taking place during this period is conditioned upon prior levels of parental politicization.

If the pattern shown in Figure 2.2 is even partially because of the liberal influences transmitted within the university, parental politicization should qualify the impact of education on switching from the Republicans to the Democrats. This hypothesis is tested in Table 2.3. The dependent variable is a dummy denoting whether an individual coming from a Republican background moved from a Republican to a Democrat PID between 1965 and 1973. The first column of the Table shows that parental politicization increases this probability. Column two shows that this effect is largely mediated through the set of variables denoting developments after late adolescence. Among them, the most influential one seems to be education. Again, continuing your studies at college during that period increases the probability of switching from the Republicans to the Democrats, even among those who come from a Republican family. The last column shows the marginal effect of education according to the level of parental politicization. This is depicted visually in Figure 2.3. Although its causal effect might be overestimated here by failing to consider prior factors predict-

¹⁶ As is also addressed in appendix 2.D, I do not take at face value the pattern of Figure 2.2 since it is based on the assumption that the marginal effect of parental politicization changes linearly across the variable measuring family partisanship. It might be the case that this pattern is not precisely replicated if a non-parametric estimation of this marginal effect is implemented. That being said, the parametric analysis presented in Figure 2.2 provides unequivocal evidence that there is an important difference at least on average in the impact of parental politicization on parent-child partisan similarity between Republican and Democrat families. This is already sufficient for the theoretical argumentation upon which the hypothesis is based. Appendix 2.D shows also that the deviating effect of parental politicization holds across all level of partisan strength among Republican families.

ing college attendance among the youth, education seems to be an important factor producing partisan change towards a more Democrat direction. But it is only influential among those who came from rather politicized families. Only young Republicans coming from politicized Republican families switched to the Democrats as the result of their experience in the university during a period in which it got predominantly liberal connotations.¹⁷

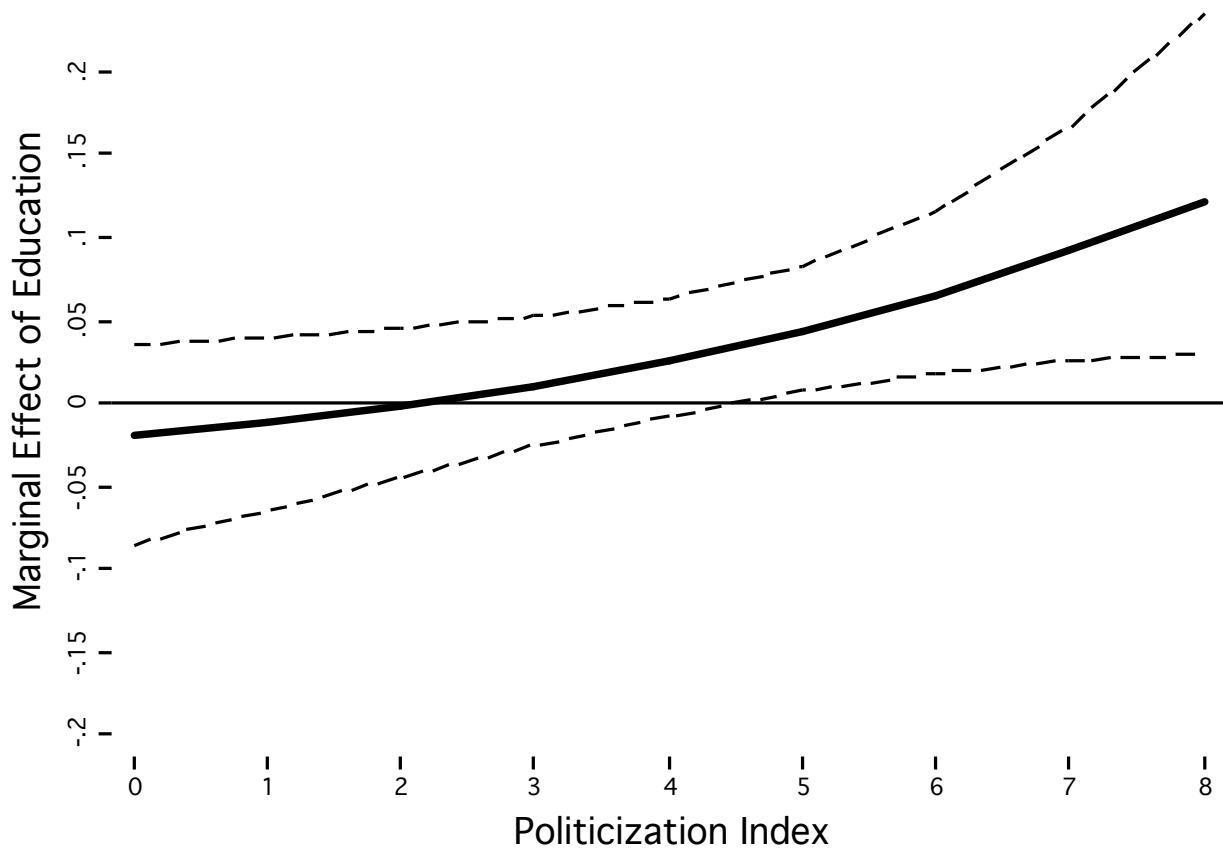


Figure 2.3: The marginal effect of education on the probability of switching from the Republicans to the Democrats between 1965 and 1973 for those coming from a Republican family according to the level of parental political interest.

Note: The solid line presents change in the probability of switching as a result of not going to college (1) versus completing college education (3). Dotted lines display the associated 95% confidence intervals.

This finding has also some further implications about the seemingly zero conditional effect of parental politicization on other developments during early adulthood, as was reported in the pre-

¹⁷ When the analysis is replicated only for children stemming from Democratic families and switching towards the Republicans, I find the exact opposite pattern. Although I do not display the results to save space, it is interesting to briefly summarize them. Going to college decreases the probability of switching to the Republicans but again it does so only among Democrat families used to talk about politics at home. Combining the two effects we see both aspects of parental influence. It fosters shifts from initial views if they contradict new contextual influences but it might also reinforce them if these new contexts confirm or at least do not qualify these initial beliefs.

vious section (non-significant interactions between various indicators of post-adolescence developments and parental political involvement). It might be that these effects do have an important impact at the individual level, which is significantly conditioned upon the prior levels of family politicization. Yet, these effects cancel out due to the fact that there is no way to specify the partisan direction of these developments. It is also on these grounds that college attendance was chosen as a mediator to be tested in the analysis of the indirect effects. The partisan direction of its influence is on average more easily predictable than that of getting married or changing geographical locations. Probably, more detailed and focused research on such developments could disentangle these effects. However, the focus here is to draw attention on the factors whose partisan messages are more likely to be relatively homogenous so that they do not cancel out. In terms of new social contexts, the best suited determinant for present purposes is undoubtedly college attendance (Astin 1977; see also Jennings 1975, 1993).

2.6.2 Indirect effects 2: political events (The Vietnam War)

Thus far, parental politicization seems to increase future parent-child deviations but this is mainly the case for children coming from a Republican background. At least to some extent, this is because a channel through which parental politicization induces later qualifications from initial partisan preference is college education.

To complete the evidence about the function of parental politicization we need to explore its effect on how political events coming later in one's life-cycle affect the process of partisan development. Do people from more politicized families weight more contemporaneous events taking place during their early adulthood? In the political context of the period covered in our data, such an event that achieved high level of salience and endured during the whole period between the two waves of the study is the US involvement in the Vietnam War. The military intervention of the US had already started by early 1965 but actually peaked in 1968 and went on until 1975. During this period it constituted a chief political issue which remained high on the public agenda and engendered polarizing sentiments especially among the young (Gartner and Segura 2000). Although it caused a severe decline in the support of both parties it mainly affected the Republicans since they were in office from 1968 and until 1976. Reaction against US foreign policy in this respect was thus translated into disapproval of Nixon's record. On the contrary, support of the US intervention should cause further approval of Nixon's administration. This means that by 1973, when the second wave of the study takes place, young adults who approved the US policy in Vietnam should increase their Republican identification whereas young adults protesting against the War should

Table 2.4: The impact of views towards the Vietnam War in partisan change between 1965 and 1973 according to the level of parental politicization.

	PID-73	Did Vietnam change your beliefs?(0,1=Yes)	PID-73
PID-65	.527 (.044)		.561 (.048)
US should stay away from Vietnam	-.386 (.115)	.705 (.132)	.486 (.375)
Age	.011 (.012)	-.010 (.020)	.021 (.016)
Liberal-Conservative	.366 (.058)	-.276 (.074)	.375 (.061)
Gender	-.033 (.114)	-.536 (.153)	-.036 (.127)
Black	-.759 (.205)	.297 (.265)	-.905 (.224)
PID-73		-.088 (.048)	
Politicization Index		.107 (.044)	.118 (.053)
Both		-.033 (.142)	-.012 (.120)
Mother only interviewed		-.108 (.118)	-.058 (.114)
US stay away from Vietnam*Politicization			-.195 (.075)

Note: Entries are ordinal logit coefficients in the first column, binary logit coefficients in the second column and OLS-coefficients in the third column. No constants and cut-off points are shown to save space. Parentheses display standard errors, clustered at the school level in the first two columns. Bootstrapped standard errors are shown in the ALSOS (categorical-regression) results of the third column. For the first column, the proportional odds assumption is confirmed with respect to the two key variables with the Brant test.

develop a more pro-Democrat identification. That this is the case is shown in the first column of Table 2.4. In the second wave of the study, respondents from the youth panel were asked whether they approved or disapproved of US's role in Vietnam. Accordingly a dummy was constructed, where 1 denotes disapproval and 0 support of of the US involvement. Party identification in both waves is measured in a 0-6 scale ranging from strong Democrat (0) to strong Republican (6). Controlling for other possible confounding factors, it is seen that reactions regarding this issue caused change in the partisan orientations of the young adults.

Now the question is whether change of political views as the result of the Vietnam war is systematically related to the level of parental political interest. If the findings shown in Table 2.2 are a firm indication about how political interest in the family increases political interest later on in one's life-trajectory, thus potentially leading the young individual to change his/her initial beliefs, we should observe this issue to be accorded more importance by young adults coming from more politicized families. The first way to explore whether this is the case is to make use of a question from the second wave of the survey which explicitly asks whether this issue changed respondents'

political beliefs during that period. Controlling for various confounding factors - importantly, among them the exact position of the respondents regarding the US role in the Vietnam War - it is apparent that children coming from politicized families are more likely to question their initial political views as formed within the family. This is shown in the second column of Table 2.4.

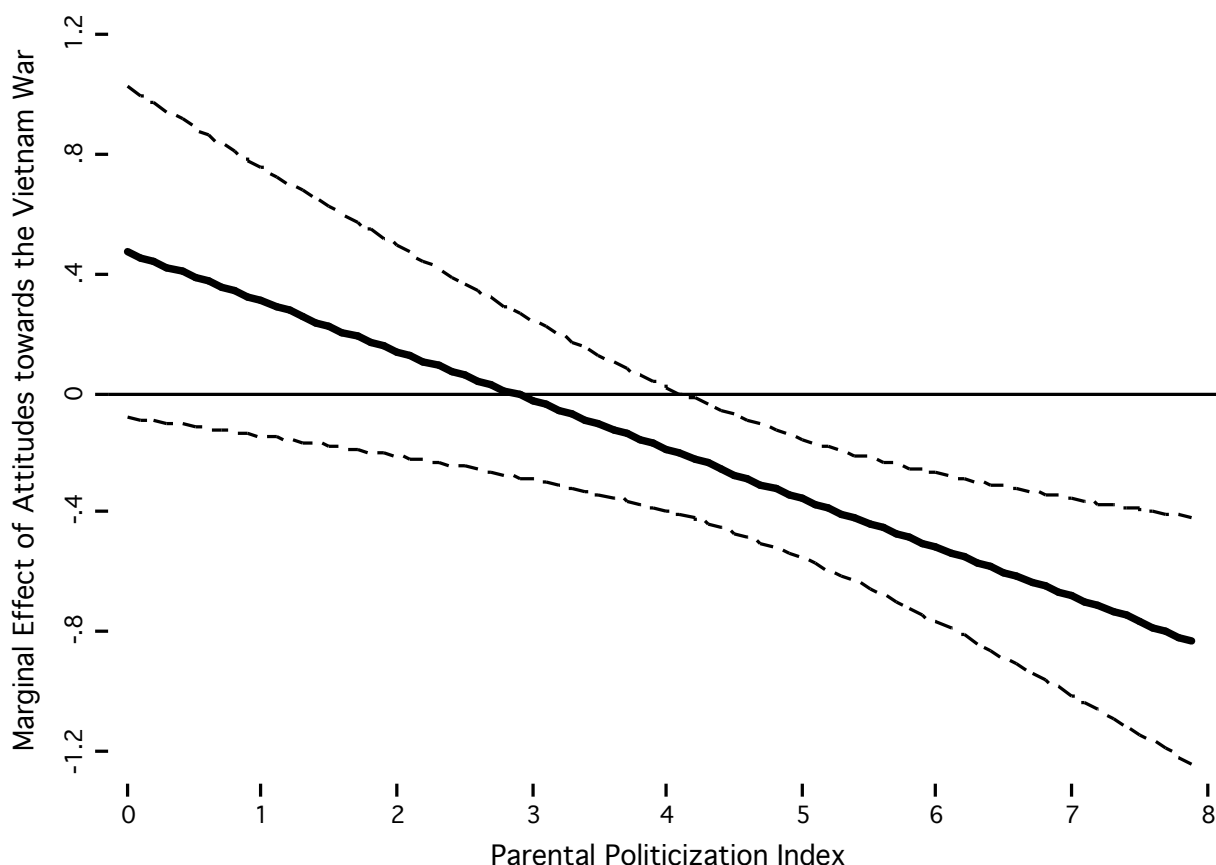


Figure 2.4: The marginal effect of being against the Vietnam War on change in party identification between 1965 and 1973 according to the level of parental political interest.

Note: The solid line shows the range of values the Vietnam War coefficient takes along the parental politicization index, the dotted lines depict the associated 95 % confidence intervals.

The second way to test this pattern is shown in the third column of Table 2.4. Controlling for PID in 1965, we found in the first column of Table 2.4 that attitudes towards the war cause change in PID in the expected (pro-Democrat) direction. The important point, however is whether and to what extent this impact is stronger for youngsters who come from more politicized families. This is shown by an interaction between the Vietnam dummy and the level of parental politicization. The significant negative effect of the interaction confirms the logic regarding the role of parental political interest. The marginal effect of attitudes towards Vietnam across all levels of parental politicization, shown in Figure 2.4, indicates that the war was not equally weighted by young individuals. It

emerged as an important challenging factor only for those coming from houses where politics was already present. This effect, importantly, is net of the strength party attachment among the parents. Clearly, parents do not only teach their children which party to support, but by talking about politics they also prepare the way for an eventual confrontation and questioning of these initial beliefs. The extent to which this is going to take place depends also on the nature of political shocks taking place during early adulthood. The weight attached to these events however, is also partially the result of the political background within which the youngster grew up. Parents are not only responsible for the transmission of political preferences. They also contribute in fostering youth's political interest. It is this tendency that then makes the partisan heritage of the family more susceptible to the external influences arising after the children leave their parental home.

2.6.3 Testing different attitudinal predispositions

Another way to see *how* parental politicization might lead to partisan divergence in the long run is by considering the attitudinal change taking place during the period between 1965 and 1973 among the youth with respect to other political issues besides the Vietnam war. In the case of Vietnam, we saw that being against the war is likely to cause a pr-Democrat shift but only among politicized families. However, the war becomes salient after 1965 and thus we cannot see whether youngsters from more politicized families are more likely to change their views about this issue. We only found that the issue acquires more weight in their partisan considerations. At this stage, it is important to see if apart from attaching more weight to political events, offspring from politicized families are more likely to also change their attitudinal predispositions and in so doing abandon the political messages of their family. Partisan change should probably arise as a result of attitudinal change, manifested through opinions on political issues which become salient during early adulthood. If children from more politicized families are more likely to deviate from their parents' partisan legacy because they are more susceptible to the political messages they receive during their early adulthood, they should also be more likely to change their attitudinal postures in a way consistent with the political mood of their generation. To explore whether this is the case, it is essential to examine issues for which there is information both in 1965 and in 1973.

As shown in Stoker and Jennings (2008) and Jennings et al. (2009), apart from the Vietnam war, racial discrimination and the role of church in public high-schools were also two issues which - especially the first - engendered public discussion particularly among the youth. Both these issues are covered in the Socialization study with a pair of items included in both waves of the survey. These survey items are available both for the parents and the children. The first asks respondents if

they think the government should take measures to motivate school integration so as to confront problems of racial discrimination. The second asks whether public schools should start every day with a prayer. Respondents could only state whether they agreed or disagreed with these statements, with-out giving an indication of how strongly they felt about each issue. Each variable is coded 0 if respondents believe government should not induce school integration/schools should start with a prayer and 1 otherwise (with .5 being an intermediate point corresponding to ambiguous responses such as 'it depends').

Table 2.5: Attitudinal change towards more liberal positions from 1965 to 1973.

	Attitudinal change from 1965 to 1973			Change in attitudinal child-parent similarity	
	School Integra- tion	Start school with prayer	All should be like US	School integra- tion	Start school with prayer
<i>Baseline: The dependent variable meas- ured in 1965</i>	.120 (.037)	.362 (.038)	.251 (.031)	.571 (.034)	.487 (.037)
Parent at- tended college	.309 (.073)	.392 (.097)	.206 (.066)	.218 (.099)	.244 (.108)
Parental Politi- cization	.017 (.016)	.054 (.017)	.047 (.016)	.008 (.020)	.045 (.018)
N	885	793	827	818	734
<i>Only Republican families</i>					
<i>Baseline: The dependent variable meas- ured in 1965</i>	.152 (.057)	.333 (.056)	.236 (.045)	.607 (.044)	.490 (.058)
Parent at- tended college	.290 (.114)	.476 (.121)	.254 (.082)	.180 (.157)	.456 (.151)
Parental politi- cization	.047 (.020)	.066 (.024)	.049 (.024)	.052 (.031)	.048 (.020)
N	388	338	387	351	311

Entries are OLS coefficients, ordinal regression produces substantively identical results. The proportional odds assumption tested and confirmed for the case of parental politicization in all three issues. Robust standard errors, clustered at the school level, in parentheses.

The first two columns of Table 2.5 explore whether the youth stemming from a more politicized context was more likely to move towards a more liberal position. Given that people might change

their attitudes during this period as a result of attending college and since more politicized families are also more likely to be more educated, it might be that any effect of parental politicization is simply an artefact of the difference in the probability of the child attending college in either of the two groups. To address this possibility (without introducing post-treatment bias), I also include a dummy denoting whether the parent interviewed (any of the two if both were interviewed) attended college. If parental politicization works only as a proxy for family education which largely determines the relative position of each child within the distribution of education levels, its effect should be diminished when parental education is taken into account. As can be seen, although the effect of parental political interest is not significant in the case of school integration, it works as anticipated (by moving respondents towards a more liberal position) with respect to the issue of school prayers.

Table 2.6: Parent-child similarity in vote choice in 1973 as a function of 1965 similarity, parental politicization, their joint effect and other controls.

	1973-vote similarity
1965-vote similarity	1.08 (.475)
Parental Politicization	.154 (.072)
65 Similarity*Politicization	-.159 (.102)
Strength of parental PID	.003 (.047)
Family Partisan Homogeneity	-.056 (.053)
Education	.197 (.126)
Married	.187 (.166)
Housing Mobility	-.020 (.039)
Employed	.224 (.181)
Gender	.282 (.165)
Only mother interviewed	.081 (.130)
Both parents interviewed	-.027 (.192)
Constant	-1.38 (.562)
N	983
Log-Likelihood	-648.48 [Chi-sq(12)=22.12]

Entries are marginal effects from probit coefficients, clustered standard errors in parentheses.

Given that the issue scale does not distinguish between different grades of agreement or disagreement with each of the two statements, ceiling effects especially for the case of those coming

from Democratic families would make it difficult to find any significant change in youth's attitudinal attributes. As is shown in the lower part of the Table, when the analysis is confined to the Republicans parental politicization appears to move people towards more liberal positions on both issues.

The last two columns present the same pattern but this time exploring the extent to which children from more politicized families become more liberal with respect to their parents from 1965 to 1973. Thus, the dependent variables (and the baseline covariates) are constructed by subtracting the score of the parent (measured as described above for the children) from the score of the child. The resulting measure ranges from -1, which implies that the parent is liberal and the child conservative, to 1 (which is interpreted in the opposite way). Again, families in which politics was present at home see their children deviate from their parents' opinions towards a more liberal position both in the case of school prayers and, for Republican families, in the case of school integration.

The third column uses a different dependent variable. The question is whether the American system of government is one that all nations should have. Although this question does not represent a specific issue concern, it is still useful in denoting how the events of the late 1960s and the early 1970s made young people more critical towards the political system of their country. This question is only available for the youth and thus I can only gauge the extent to which the youth from politicized families becomes more likely to question the superiority of the American political system. Again, parental politicization seems to work as anticipated both when no distinction in the partisan affiliation of the family is made and when only Republican families are considered. Offspring from politicized families are more likely to abandon the idea that other countries should imitate the US political system than those coming from less politicized families.

2.7 Observable Implications: parent-child similarity in vote choice

As a next step, I explore the empirical implications of parental politicization on the endurance of intergenerational continuity in vote choice. Do these attitudinal parent-child dissimilarities also manifest themselves in actual vote choice? If this is the case, then knowing whether young adults voted or would have voted like their fathers when they were still at home should not be as a good predictor of parent-child similarity in vote choice in later elections for those families in which politics was more present at home. I test this last hypothesis in Table 2.6. The key point here is again an interaction, this time between parental politicization and a dummy denoting vote-choice similarity between parents and children in the 1964 election. Of course, the youth panel was not eligible to vote in 1964. Therefore, as an indicator of their vote choice if they had the right to vote, I employ a question in the 1965 panel about youth's hypothetical vote in 1964. As it is seen in the Table, the

interaction is negative indicating that initial similarity in vote choice is less influential among more politicized families. It does not achieve statistical significance, however, which implies that level of uncertainty associated with estimate is quite high.¹⁸ Given that the dependent variable does not distinguish between Republican and Democrat voters, no distinction is made in this analysis between the parties. The marginal effect of 1964 vote choice similarity are shown in Figure 2.5. The decrease in the magnitude of change in the predicted probability of voting like your parent in 1973 as the result of having the same party choice regarding the 1964 election according to the level of parental politicization shows how much more fragile is the link between parents and offspring among families in which politics has played an important role in the child's early socialization. This is another signal, albeit a noisy one given the wide confidence bands surrounding the point estimates, that inherited political interest causes parents' partisan influence to be more susceptible to the weight of the times.

2.8 Out-of-Sample Inference: beyond the Vietnam generation

A potential caveat in this analysis is that the youth sample enters into early adulthood during a very turbulent period in American politics. Since the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, American youth experienced various dramatic events that provided a common bond that helped this cohort to develop into an actual generation (Mannheim, 1952). Consequently, the findings might be cohort-specific and if this is the case their external validity becomes ambivalent. To be sure, it is not very clear why parental politicization would work in a different way if the offspring experienced a

¹⁸ To paraphrase the quotation introducing this work, the effect is probably true but not certain. For readers who regard as zero any effect that does not capture the 95 per cent rule, this is a good opportunity to acknowledge that this practice, i.e. commenting on findings that do not achieve this threshold, is repeated in numerous occasions throughout this study. This is done for two reasons. First, most of the times these coefficients refer to interactions. Thus, the confidence intervals give only the uncertainty with regard to the degree of variation of the effect of one variable (X) conditional on the other (Z). This is important information. However, since we can estimate the marginal effect of X (with its associated level of uncertainty) across all levels of Z, the level of significance of the interaction (which only gives the point estimate evaluated at the mean of Z) becomes redundant. This is also confirmed by the fact that the standard errors might change when one or both of the parent terms are trivially rescaled (e.g. centered). As Kam and Franzese show (2007:87-92), centering only changes the quantity of interest to which the coefficients and the associated t-tests provide an estimate. It changes, however, nothing substantial in the effects that are of interest. This is because what changes is merely the point at which the effect of X conditional on Z is evaluated. This effect can differ across the levels of Z, as Figure 2.5 clearly indicates. Thus, since these graphs provide a more complete picture of the variation of the effect of X conditional on Z, I prefer to take this as primary evidence about the marginal effect of any variable of interest. The second reason for not always treating non-significant coefficients as zero is that I prefer to examine the hypothesis of interest in various distinct ways that could help to extract a systematic pattern, despite instances of seemingly zero effects, rather than base my conclusions on a single test in which the 95 per cent rule apply. To be sure, this is simply a methodological choice, which could be equally (or even more heavily) criticized as any other inferential rule that might be applied in quantitative analysis.

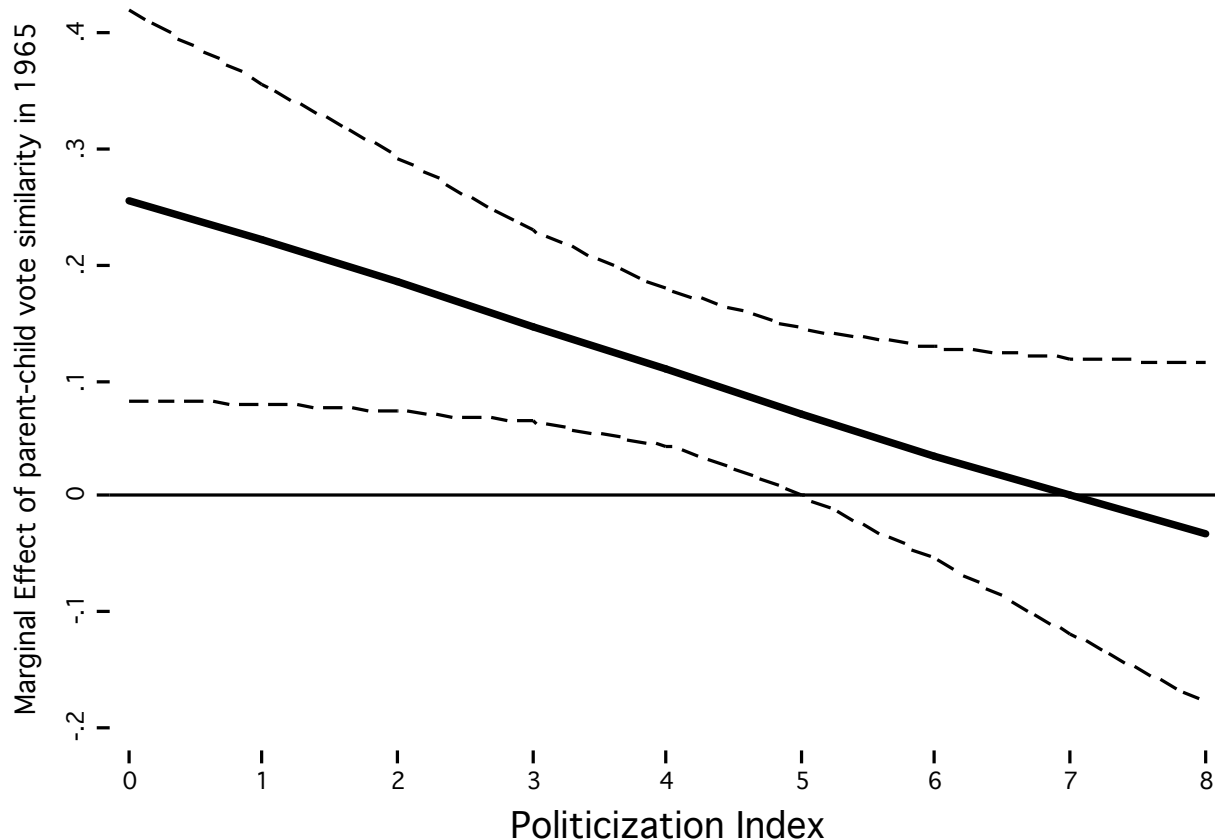


Figure 2.5: The marginal effect of parent-child vote-choice similarity in 1965 on parent-child similarity in the 1972 election according to the level of parental political interest.

Note: The solid line shows the change in the probability of a child voting like his/her parent in 1973 as the result of having the same preference regarding the 1964 election according to the level of parental politicization. Dashed lines display the 95% confidence intervals.

more conventional political scene after leaving their parental home. Presumably, the impact of political events would be less imperative and thus differences in the influence of parental inheritance would probably be less striking. The important question however is not exactly in the magnitude of this relationship. It is rather in its direction. Does parental politicization induce long term parent-child similarity, as the conventional wisdom has it, in the absence of the 1960s turmoil?

Since the class of 1965 is the only young cohort traced through time, it is difficult to replicate the longitudinal analysis for a different cohort. That said, we can still explore this pattern - albeit in a non-dynamic fashion - for the third generation of the study. In 1997 the children of the initial youth sample - then aged 50 - were also administered a questionnaire. In total 769 children of the class of 1965 completed the questionnaire. These offspring differ from their parents in that they do not constitute a year-cohort, i.e. they vary much more in terms of age than their older counterparts. Although this might seem an inconvenience, it can be actually helpful for present purposes (see also Jennings et al. 2009). I divide the 3rd generation sample into two categories. The first includes

offspring between 23 and 29 years old, with a mean age of 25 (N=370). This is approximately the age of the 1965 generation in 1973. The second group comprises those between 16 and 21 years old (N=203), with a mean age of 18, i.e. the same age as the original youth sample in 1965.

Table 2.7: The role of parental politicization in the effect of parental PID on child PID among two cohorts of the 3rd generation, 1997 wave.

	Old Cohort (Average age 25)	Young Cohort (Average age 18)
Parent PID (0-6)	.477 (.126)	.298 (.175)
Parental Politicization (0-8)	.1184 (.0608)	-.013 (.073)
(Parent PID)(Par. Politicization)	-.036 (.023)	.039 (.028)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients with robust (clustered at the family level) standard errors. N=346 for the first column and 184 for the second.

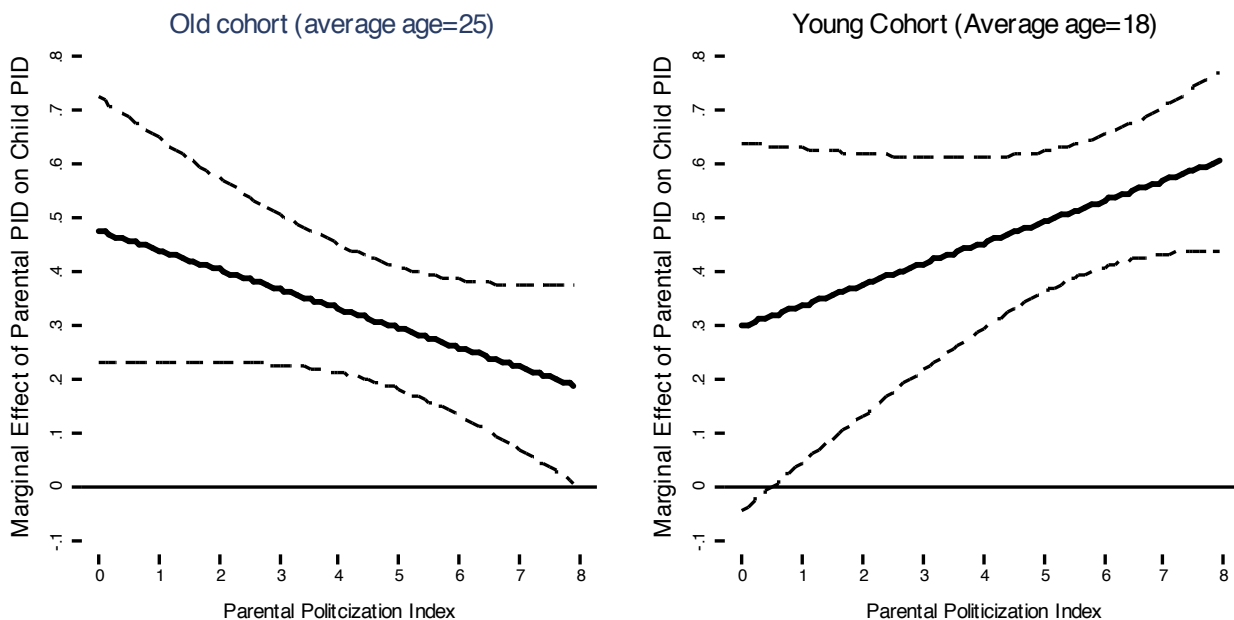


Figure 2.6: The marginal effect of parental PID on child PID for two age cohorts of the 3rd generation (wave of 1997) across all levels of parental politicization.

Since the third generation is only interviewed in 1997, we cannot possibly examine the dynamic development in the level of similarity between parents and children as a result of parental politicization. However, we can still explore the applicability of the previous findings in different political circumstances by comparing the impact of parental politicization between the two cohorts. The relationship between parental PID and child PID for those with average age of 18 would correspond to the 1965 parent-child similarity of the previous analysis. The relationship between parental PID and child PID for those with an average age of 25 would correspond to the level of parent-child similarity in 1973. The older cohort was raised in a more Republican context, since it

was already 21 years-old (on average) when Clinton ended the Republican dominance which had dated since 1980. Accordingly, it seems to be slightly more Republican than the younger cohort.¹⁹ That said, given that they were both raised in a rather placid political period which certainly did not resemble the exceptional circumstances of the 1960s, it is probably safe to assume the two groups to be exchangeable in terms of the political interest inherited from their parents. Doing so, we should expect that if the pattern observed in the previous sections exists only because of the particularities of the era that was examined, parental politicization (as measured in 1997 for the parental sample, that is the second generation) should boost the partisan similarity between family and children. If the results, however, represent a more general tendency of politicized families to see their influence disappear in the long run, we should find a pattern analogous to that presented in the previous sections. Needless to say, the fact that for the older group we cannot observe the initial level of similarity while it was approximately 18 years old would only result in underestimating the deviating impact of parental politicization in the growth curve of this relationship since we cannot control for the initial level of similarity between parents and children.

To examine the impact of parental politicization, I simply regress child PID (in a 0 to 6 scale) on parental PID, parental politicization,²⁰ and the interaction of the last two terms. The analysis is implemented separately for each of the two age cohorts. The results are displayed in Table 2.7 and the marginal effect of parental politicization is presented in Figure 2.6. As it is seen, for the young group parental partisan imprint is enhanced when accompanied by interest in politics. However, for the older group, the pattern is reserved. Partisan similarity drops as a result of parental politicization. To be sure, this stark difference could not be attributed to the age gap between the two groups, since it does not refer to whether parent-child similarity works unconditionally better for the younger group than the older one.²¹ It rather refers to the impact of parental politicization on the success of intergenerational partisan transmission and is a difference exactly along the lines expected in this study. What the figure says is that the coefficient of parental PID drops to almost half in the case of the older group (from .5 to almost .25, i.e. a point-increase in the family PID scale creates up to a half point increase in the PID scale of the child among non politicized families but only a point .25 increase among the more politicized families), whereas it doubles (from .3 to .6) among the young group. Lacking baseline indicators parental PID appears to be a positive predictor of child PID along all values of parental politicization. The important finding, however, is that, opposite to prior intuitions, the magnitude of this effect changes substantially according to the

¹⁹ The mean PID score (on a 0-6 scale) for the young group is 3.02 whereas for the older group it is 3.19.

²⁰ Parental politicization is measured in the same way as in 1965 and again ranges between 0 and 8.

²¹ The unconditional impact of parental PID on child PID is .509 (.061) for the young group and .372 (.050) for the older group.

level of parental political involvement. True, the small number of observations create high levels of uncertainty accompanying these estimates, as was also indicated by the large standard errors of the interaction terms in the Table. However, the evidence is supportive of the results provided thus far. The tendency found for the 1960s generation seems to signal a more generalizable phenomenon. In other words, we see that even when a different cohort with completely distinct political experiences is analyzed, the pattern identified in this study is repeated.

2.9 In the long run: the persistence of this pattern over the life trajectory

At this point I return to the class of 1965 and examine the persistence of the findings in the previous sections over the youth's life trajectory. Do these differences attributed to the level of parental politicization persist after 1973 or do they evaporate as the class of 1965 grows older? Again, the analysis remains subject to the particularities of the specific period under examination but it is at least interesting to see if the patterns identified in 1973 wear off when the political environment of the late 1960s and the early 1970s is replaced by that of the 1980s and the 1990s. As will become apparent later on, apart from grasping the degree of persistence of these differences and thus of the long-term impact of early politicization in youth's development of political orientations, this analysis can also shed light on the importance of events taking place in early adulthood on the process of partisan learning during people's life span.

As a first step, I examine how parental politicization qualifies the degree of partisan convergence between parents and children over people's life trajectories. In the previous sections we saw that people coming from more politicized families are more likely to deviate from their parents' partisan inheritance than those coming from a less politicized parental environment. Moreover, this pattern seems to be more evident among non Democrat families. Importantly, two intervening factors have been identified that explain why this is the case. First, college attendance during the late 1960s implies entering in an environment transmitting liberal political cues. As it was shown, these cues appeared to be more influential among those coming from a more politicized home. Analogously, the Vietnam war seemed more influential for those youngsters originating from a family background which encouraged political discussions. I now explore whether these three patterns persist beyond 1973, i.e. whether differences attributed to the level of parental politicization are evident even when youngsters become 35- and 50 years old.

To explore these long-term patterns I make use of all four waves of the Youth socialization panel. The third wave comes in 1982 and the fourth wave takes place in 1997. To estimate the long-

term impact of parental politicization I employ a growth curve model.²² The logic behind growth curve models (Raudenbush and Bryk 1992) is that any attribute of interest develops as a function of time. Accordingly, determinants of this attribute might work in a different way and to a different extent at different points in time. More specifically, factors which causally precede the attribute of interest might have a different impact on the starting point, i.e. on the genesis of this attribute than on its growth rate. In our example, parental politicization induces partisan similarity between parents and children during adolescence and at least until the latter leave their parental home. Assuming that the starting point here is the level of similarity when the youngsters are 18-years-old, the scope is to see whether and how parental politicization affects this pattern in its starting level and in how it affects its evolution over the youth's life trajectory. Thus, in principle we are interested in two parameters, i.e. the impact of parental politicization on the starting level of parent-child similarity and its impact on the growth rate of this relationship.

How do we distinguish between the two effects? The basic intuition behind growth curve models is that they imply an interaction between the predictor of interest and a function of time. By coding the function of time accordingly, the main effect of parental politicization would represent its effect on the starting level whereas the interaction term would indicate its effect on the growth rate of this relationship. The problem here is to find a suitable function of time. To achieve that, before the estimation of the conditional model it is typical to try various unconditional models of the attribute of interest, trying to explore the one that best captures the developmental pattern in the response variable (Raudenbush and Bryk 1992). This is not needed here because I choose to avoid such functional form assumptions regarding how parental-child similarity evolves through time by specifying time through a set of dummies denoting the (modal) age of the respondents in each wave of the panel. This means that instead of one parameter indicating the growth rate of parental-child convergence, I estimate three such parameters, each one corresponding to a given wave of the panel study. Although this specification might make the interpretation of the impact of parental politicization on the growth rate more difficult to summarize, it ensures that the patterns identified are not due to an artificial (and potentially inadequate) linear or quadratic specification of the function of time.

²² The problem of panel attrition when all four waves of the study are used has been already addressed in Jennings, Stoker and Bowers (2009:793). The random-effects estimation through Super-Mix (about which I say more below) allows the inclusion of respondents who did not necessarily provide complete information in all variables of interest during all four waves of the study. This means that people who only responded in one, two or three waves are also included in the analysis. Individuals are automatically (through the EM algorithm) weighted according to the number of repeated measures they provide (See also Raudenbush and Bryk 1992:133; Plutzer 2002:56).

The dependent variable is substantively the same as the one used in the previous analysis but it is somewhat simplified in order to facilitate the interpretation of the results. Instead of using the difference in the (quantified) PID scales between parents and children, I simply use a dummy denoting whether parents and children find themselves in the same partisan camp at each point in time: Republicans; Democrats; or independents.²³ 1 denotes similarity, 0 denotes divergence. This specification permits another exploration of whether the findings in the previous section are only due to differences in the strength of PID between parents and children or whether they actually imply a greater likelihood among politicized families for shifts from parents' party either towards independence or towards the other party. The model used in the analysis is of the following form:

$$\ln\left(\frac{P_{tis}(PID_{par} = PID_{child})}{1 - P_{tis}(PID_{par} = PID_{child})}\right) = a_{0is} + a_{1is}(Age_{is} = 26) + a_{2is}(Age_{is} = 35) + a_{3is}(Age_{is} = 50) + e_{tis} \quad (2.4)$$

where $i = 1, \dots, n$ denotes the trajectory of a given individual among the sample of N observations, $t = 0, \dots, T-1$ indexes the number of observations for each individual and α_{ki} is the growth curve parameter for i with $k=0, \dots, K$ denoting the sequence of panel waves after the 1965 baseline, where $K=3$. I use a logistic link function and assume a simple error structure, such that $e_{it} \sim (0, \sigma^2)$.

Growth curve models are based on the idea that the baseline and growth curve parameters vary across individuals. This means that by obtaining estimates for α_{ki} for each i , we have N different values for these parameters, which we can then treat as random variables. This leads to an intercept- and slopes-as-outcomes model, represented by the level 2 equations, given below:

$$\alpha_{0is} = \gamma_{00s} + \gamma_{01s}X + u_{ois} \quad (2.5)$$

$$\alpha_{1is} = \gamma_{10s} + \gamma_{11s}X + \gamma_{12s}Z + u_{1is} \quad (2.6)$$

$$\alpha_{2is} = \gamma_{20s} + \gamma_{21s}X + \gamma_{22s}Z + u_{2is} \quad (2.7)$$

$$\alpha_{3is} = \gamma_{30s} + \gamma_{31s}X + \gamma_{32s}Z + u_{3is} \quad (2.8)$$

X here represents the set of covariates occurring before our first wave of observations and are thus assumed to influence both the starting level (α_0) and the growth rate ($\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3$). Z includes the factors taking place after the first wave of observations, i.e. after the age of 18 and are thus assumed to

²³ The Republican/Democrat category includes also leaners. Results are unchanged when leaners are included in the 'independence' category.

affect only the growth rate. As is also shown in Plutzer (2002:45), substituting (2.5), (2.6), (2.7) and (2.8) in (2.4) and rearranging the terms, we take:²⁴

$$\ln\left(\frac{P_{tis}(PID_{par} = PID_{child})}{1 - P_{tis}(PID_{par} = PID_{child})}\right) = \gamma_{00s} + \gamma_{01s}X + \gamma_{10s}(Age = 26) + \gamma_{10s}(Age = 26) + \gamma_{11s}X(Age = 26) + \gamma_{12s}Z(Age = 26) + \gamma_{20s}(Age = 35) + \gamma_{21s}X(Age = 35) + \gamma_{22s}Z(Age = 35) + \gamma_{30s}(Age = 50) + \gamma_{31s}X(Age = 50) + \gamma_{32s}Z(Age = 50) + u_{1is}(Age = 26) + u_{2is}(Age = 35) + u_{3is}(Age = 50) + u_{0is} + e_{tis} \quad (2.9)$$

As it is seen from the notation, a three-level mixed effects model is estimated.²⁵ Level-3 units represent the school clusters. Level-2 units represent the respondents available in any of the four waves and level-1 units consist of the repeated observations (individuals stacked within the four waves of the study). In other words, repeated measures of observations are nested within individuals who are nested within high-schools. Therefore, there are two types of random effects, those that represent the school-specific effects and those that represent the individual-specific effects.

Before proceeding with the results, it is important to clarify the substantive interpretation of the four parameters of the level-1 equation (2.4). α_{0iss} denotes the level of parent-child partisan similarity when individuals are 18-years-old. Accordingly, γ_{01s} estimates the impact of X on the starting level of parent-child convergence, that is, before individuals leave their parental home. α_{1i} measures the growth rate of this relationship by the time youngsters are 26 years old. α_{1is} and α_{1is} present any change in the level of parent-child similarity by the time the class of 1965 becomes 35- and 50-years old respectively. All three growth curve parameters should be evaluated in comparison to

²⁴ Given that individuals are themselves nested within high-schools (as denoted by the 's' subscript used in the parameters) γ 's could also be further modelled as school means, deviating randomly around an initial-level mean. For instance, γ_{00s} is further evaluated as $\gamma_{00s} = \phi_{000} + r_{00s}$, where γ_{00s} represents the mean initial status within school s while ϕ_{000} denotes the overall mean initial status and r_{00s} denotes the deviation of school s 's mean from the initial overall mean (Raudenbush and Bryk 1992:186). Again these effects are assumed to be normally distributed with a mean of 0 and variance σ_γ . I refrain from unpacking the coefficients in (2.5) to 2(.8) by substituting them with their third-level equations in order to keep some simplicity in the equation. The model assumes only random intercepts both at the individual and the school level.

²⁵ The correlation of the random disturbances and the multiplicative terms between Age and u_{kis} imply that a simple ordinal regression cannot produce consistent estimates for (2.9). I rather use a doubly iterative procedure whose first step is the estimation of the variance of the disturbances and the second step is the estimation of the γ 's. So I first run the model as shown in equation (2.9), I take these values as the starting values and use the EM algorithm and the Fisher scoring solution in order to estimate the coefficients (Hedeker 2004; 2010). Following Plutzer, I also use an updated version of MIXOR, namely Super Mix (Hedeker 1999) for the estimation of equation (2.9).

Table 2.8: The impact of parental politicization on the starting point and the growth curve of parent-child partisan concordance, 1965-1997.

	α_0	α_1	α_2	α_3
Parental Politicization	.203 (.077)	-.114 (.084)	-.237 (.084)	-.132 (.084)
<i>Random Effects</i>				
School intercept		.459 (.138)		
Individual intercept		1.807 (.111)		
<i>Model Diagnostics</i>				
AIC - Schwarz Criterion		5252.62 (5361.45)		

Note: Entries in the first row are log odds, standard errors in parentheses. Level-3 N: 97; Level-2 N: 761; Level-1 N: 3044.

the level of similarity in 1965 (given by α_{0is}) which represents the baseline category. Thus, γ_{11s} and γ_{12s} estimate the impact of X and Z on the change in the probability of parent-child partisan congruence from 1965 to 1973 and γ_{21s} and γ_{22s} and γ_{31s} and γ_{32s} estimate the same effects but in causing change from 1965 to 1982 and 1997 respectively.

Tables 2.8 to 2.10 display three different sets of results. Table 2.8 makes no distinction between Republican and Democrat families. Tables 2.9 and 2.10 present the results for Republican and Democrat families separately. To save space, I only present the coefficients of interest, i.e. those related to the impact of parental politicization.

As shown in the first column of Table 2.8 parents interested in politics are more likely to see their children holding similar partisan preferences when the latter are still 18 years old. However, as the politicized youth grows older, this pattern of increased similarity vanishes. Each of the coefficients attached to the three interactions should be seen in comparison with the main effect of parental politicization (α_0), i.e. the marginal impact of this variable when the youth is at the age of 18. This means that even by 1982 the difference in partisan similarity between politicized and non-politicized families disappears, since both groups are approximately equally likely to resemble their parents in partisan terms. Finally, by 1997, one could probably see a slightly greater likelihood of parent-child convergence among politicized families, although this difference according to the level of parental politicization is certainly less clear than what it was in the beginning of youth's adult life. Although this finding might seem to qualify prior evidence, it is completely compatible with earlier findings of this chapter. From the difference-in-difference model of the first

two waves we saw that politicized youth is more likely to deviate from their parents relative to their initial level of similarity. Here, we see that parental political interest is an important converging factor only in the short-run. Conditional on this initial level of similarity, youth from politicized families are more likely to shift from their parents' inheritance than youngsters who did not experience a strongly politicized adolescence.

Table 2.9: The impact of parental politicization on the starting point and the growth curve of parent-child partisan concordance among Republican families, 1965-1997.

	α_0	α_1	α_2	α_3
Parental Politicization	.202 (.112)	-.220 (.122)	-.274 (.124)	-.297 (.124)
<i>Random Effects</i>				
School Intercept		.666 (.190)		
Individual Intercept		1.717 (.153)		
<i>Model Diagnostics</i>				
AIC - Schwarz Criterion		1864.39 - 1955.77		

Note: Entries in the first row are log odds from a mixed-effects logit model, standard errors in parentheses. Level-3 N: 88; Level-2 N: 399; Level-1 N: 1596.

Table 2.10: The impact of parental politicization on the starting point and the growth curve of parent-child partisan concordance among Democratic families, 1965-1997.

	α_0	α_1	α_2	α_3
Parental Politicization	.207 (.104)	-.072 (.115)	-.276 (.117)	-.155 (.117)
<i>Random Effects</i>				
School Intercept		.575 (.169)		
Individual Intercept		1.65 (.147)		
<i>Model Diagnostics</i>				
AIC - Schwarz Criterion		2041.68 (2135.33)		

Note: Entries in the first row are log odds from a mixed-effects logit model, standard errors in parentheses. Level-3 N: 94; Level-2 N: 456; Level-1 N: 1824.

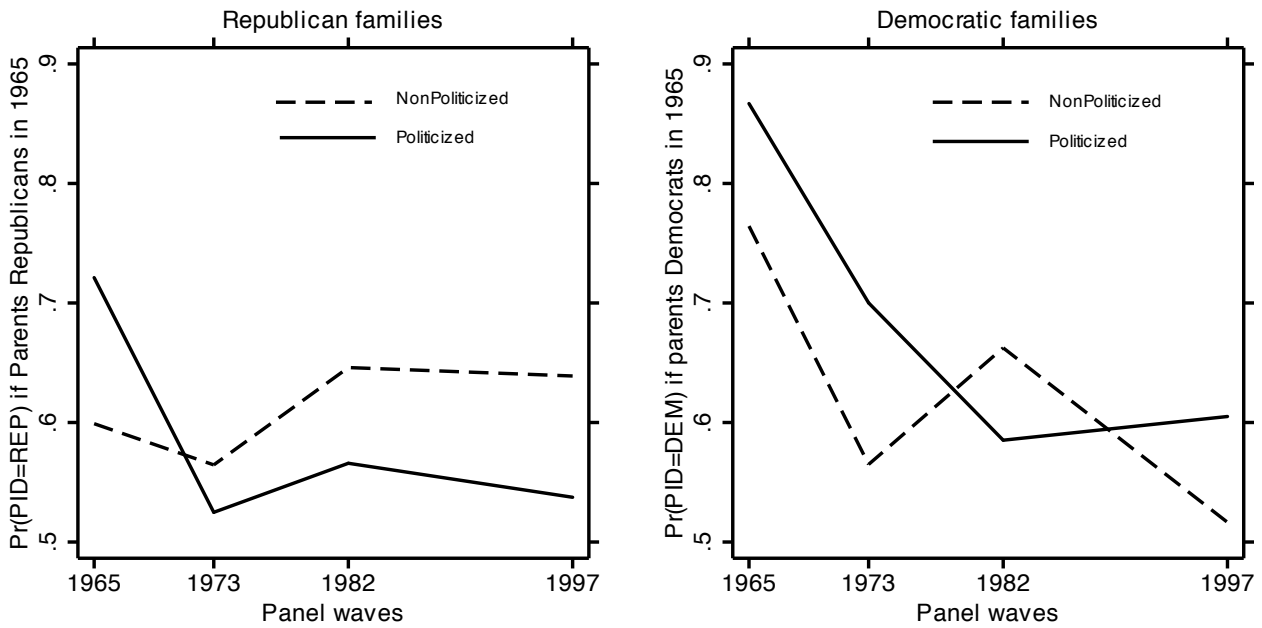


Figure 2.7: Predicted probability of young adults registering the same partisanship as their parents during their life trajectory.

Note: The solid curve presents the growth curve of parent-child partisan consonance for children stemming from politicized families (75th percentile of the empirical distribution). The dashed curve presents the equivalent pattern for non-politicized families (25th percentile of the empirical distribution). Confidence intervals are omitted to make the graph easier to read. Differences between the two types of families are not significant at 95 per cent in most cases. However, the over time change within each curve is significant in all cases until 1973 (with the exception of the 1965 to 1973 move among non-politicized Republican families) and with the exception of the pro-Republican move of the non-politicized group from 1982 to 1997 non-significant thereafter.

As was shown in the previous section, there are important reasons to expect that parental politicization leads to increased divergence in the long run more among Republican than among Democratic families. Table 2.9 confirms that this is the case. Initial convergence between Republican parents and their children evaporates already by 1973 and continues in the same direction and by slightly increasing its magnitude up to 1997. Offspring from more politicized families seem to be more likely to change their views from 1965 onwards and in so doing their increased level of initial similarity with their parents disappears. Confirming the previous analysis that exceeded only up to 1973, politically involved parents are more likely to see their children deviating from this partisan legacy after they leave their home than less politically interested parents.

Table 2.10 presents the results for the Democrats. Here the pattern is more ambiguous. There seems to be no discernible decline in the similarity between parents and children by 1973 as a result of stemming from a politicized family. However, by 1982, when the political atmosphere of the period favors the Republicans and young adults are still in their mid 30s, we do find increased divergence among politicized youngsters stemming from Democrat families. This pattern is medi-

ated, although retaining its negative value, by 1997, when the public mood turns in favor of the Democrats.

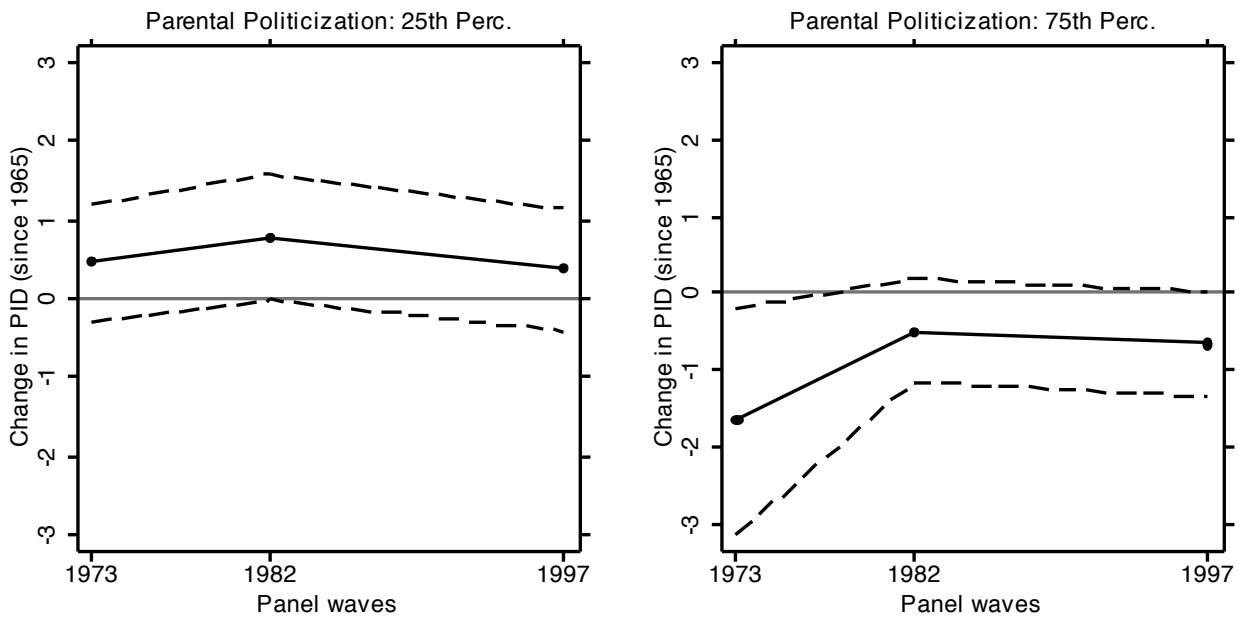


Figure 2.8: Change in party identification (0 to 6 scale) from 1965 as a result of attending college minus change in PID if not having attended college among children from politicized and non-politicized families.

Note: The solid connected curve represents the difference in the change in party identification between those having completed college and those not having attended college for politicized and non-politicized families. This difference is calculated by taking first the predicted partisanship from 1973 onwards for those having completed college and for those who have not attended college. Then, the second is subtracted from the first. PID is measured in a 0 to 6 scale, ranging from strong Democrat to strong Republican. Dashed curves denote the 95 per cent confidence bands and the grey line denote the zero point in order to enable the inference from these patterns. The y-axis indicates the difference in PID scale from 1965, hence its possible range goes from -6 (from strong Republican in 1965 strong Democrat in 1973/82/97) to 6 (from strong Democrat to strong Republican).

Figure 2.7 visualizes the results from the last two tables. The first panel of the Figure corresponds to the Republicans whereas the second panel corresponds to the Democrats. In each panel there are two curves. The solid curve corresponds to those coming from a politicized home, i.e. are located at the 75th percentile of the parental politicization index. The dashed curve corresponds to the less politicized group, i.e. those located at the 25th percentile of the empirical distribution of the variable. Starting with the Republicans, it is seen that the strong anti-Republican forces between the first two waves are more visible among politicized than among non-politicized families. This difference is retained and actually increased as we move from 1973 to 1982 and finally to 1997, when the offspring of 1965 are already 50 years old. The pattern for those stemming from Democrat families is different. Until 1982, politicized families were more likely to see their children hold-

ing pro-Democrat political views. This changes by 1982, when offspring from politically interested families are more likely to identify themselves as Republicans, still following the political pressures of the times. Finally, by 1997 the slight pro-Republican move of the non-politicized group makes those coming from a more politicized background appear more likely to register a Democrat partisanship than those coming from a less politicized family.

On the whole, the results largely confirm the pattern found in the previous section. Increased parental politicization under particular political circumstances might lead to an increased deviation of the children from their parental partisan inheritance. In our case, this seems to have happened among politicized Republican families. Already by 1973, parental politicization decreases the growth rate of parent-child similarity. What is new from this analysis and crucial for the appreciation of the importance of the 'impressionable years' in shaping people's partisan profiles, is that this difference formed during early adulthood largely persists over the life span. I come back to this topic in the next section.

I now turn to the two factors serving as mediators of parental influence, namely college attendance and the Vietnam war. In the previous section we saw that both factors caused a pro-Democrat shift in 1973 but only among politicized families. Do these effects hold until 1997? The growth curve model estimated in this case is very similar to the one presented above but there are three important differences. First, a three-wave interaction is introduced (together with the two-level 'main effects') between parental politicization, college education (or the dummy about attitudes towards the Vietnam war) and each of the three dummies denoting the wave of the panel study. Moreover, since both these factors take place (or achieve high saliency for the case of Vietnam) after 1965, only their effect on the growth rate rather than the starting level is examined. Third, the dependent variable is now child PID, ranging from 0 to 6.

To save space, I only present the graphs denoting the impact of each of the two factors on youth's PID. Figure 2.8 shows the results for the impact of college attendance. The first panel of the graph focuses on those stemming from less politicized families. The solid line denotes the difference in the predicted PID scale between those having completed college (coded 3) versus those not having attended college (coded 1). For instance, for those coming from a non-politicized family, by 1973 those having attended college appear approximately half a point more Republican than those not having attended college. The dashed lines surrounding the solid line represent the 95 per cent confidence intervals. The grey line indicates the zero point in the scale. Evidently, given that each point estimate is not bounded away from zero, the difference attributed to college is not statistically significant for the non-politicized group. That being said, by 1982 the more-Republican shift of those having attended college seems to marginally achieve statistical significance. In all instances, however, the effect of education among non-politicized families appears to be a shift to-

wards a pro-Republican direction. The pattern for those offspring coming from a politicized family (75th percentile of the scale distribution) is reversed and more in accordance with prior expectations. For these children university means a pro-Democrat move and although its magnitude diminishes by 1982, it always remains in the same direction.

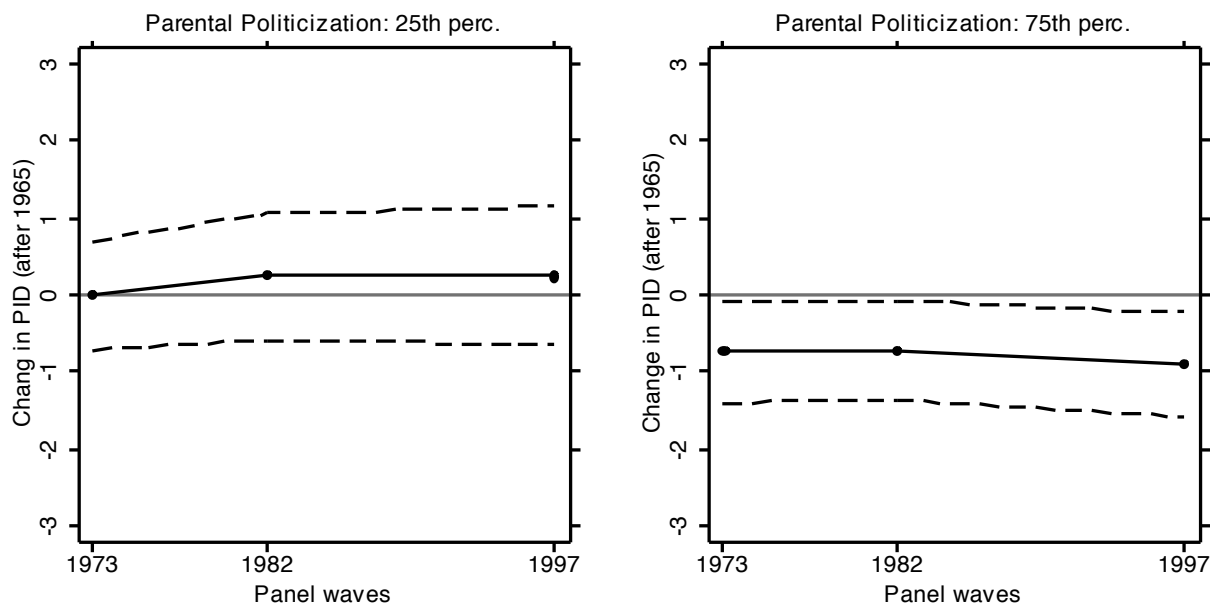


Figure 2.9: Relative change in party identification (0 to 6 scale) as a result of disapproving the US policy in Vietnam among children from politicized and non-politicized families.

Note: The estimation of the difference in the predicted probabilities follows exactly the logic described in the note of the previous figure. Again, the solid curve presents the difference in the change in PID over time between those opposed to the war versus those who thought it was a good idea. Confidence bands shown with the dashed curves.

The results for the impact of the Vietnam war, shown in Figure 2.9, are quite similar. For less politicized families, the impact of reactions towards the war is always bounded within zero. For more politicized families, believing that the US should have stayed out means a move towards a pro-Democrat direction. In this case, the effect seems to hold at about the same level across people's trajectories. Again, we see that factors affecting partisan attitudes during early adulthood are more important for those stemming from a more politicized family. Importantly, their impact appears to hold during the life span, indicating again the importance of this formative period of early adulthood in shaping people's partisan views and in creating persisting partisan profiles. In other words, the influence of parental inheritance does not simply disappear during the life span and as a result of a long series of accumulating political experiences over one's life trajectory. It is more likely that this heritage is tested during early adulthood and once blended with influences stemming from political events and experiences during this formative period, it creates a new partisan profile which remains thereafter relatively immune to political forces. The impact of parental poli-

Table 2.11: The impact of initial PID (as of 1965) and the growth rate of electoral persistence among politicized and non-politicized families.

	Politicized families		Non-Politicized families	
	α_0	α_1	α_0	α_1
Initial PID (1965)	.371 (.125)	-.042 (.031)	.346 (.166)	-.016 (.043)
Prior Vote	.738 (.152)	.188 (.037)	.808 (.233)	.087 (.058)
Intercept	-.153 (.238)		-.369 (.250)	
Random Effects				
School intercept	.669 (.115)		.475 (.141)	
Individual intercept	.995 (.128)		.609 (.219)	
Model diagnostics				
AIC-Schwarz criterion	2464.974 - 2510.938		2020.787 - 2064.791	

Note: Entries are log odds, standard errors in parentheses. For politicized families Level-3 N: 87; Level-2 N: 475; Level-1 N: 2311. For non-politicized families Level-3 N: 82; Level-2 N: 261; Level-1 N: 1122.

ticization relates to the ‘dose’ of political events and new contextual influences relative to parental inheritance in this blend.

2.10 The long-term implications of parental politicization on the partisan trajectory of young adults

In this last section before the conclusion I explore the implications of these patterns for the process of partisan learning. In particular I focus on two different but interrelated questions. First, how well can initial partisanship, as developed during adolescence, explain the voting history of individuals among politicized and non-politicized parental environments? If youth from politicized families weigh political events more, at least during their adolescence, and if it is through these events and other contextual influences that they form their partisan preferences, initial PID (as built during early political socialization) should become less important as years goes by, i.e. as political experience accumulates. On the other hand, the pattern for those coming from less politicized families should be more ambiguous. If political events are not given the same weight as for the politicized group, it is likely that time should not be so important in diminishing the influence of people’s initial partisan preferences.

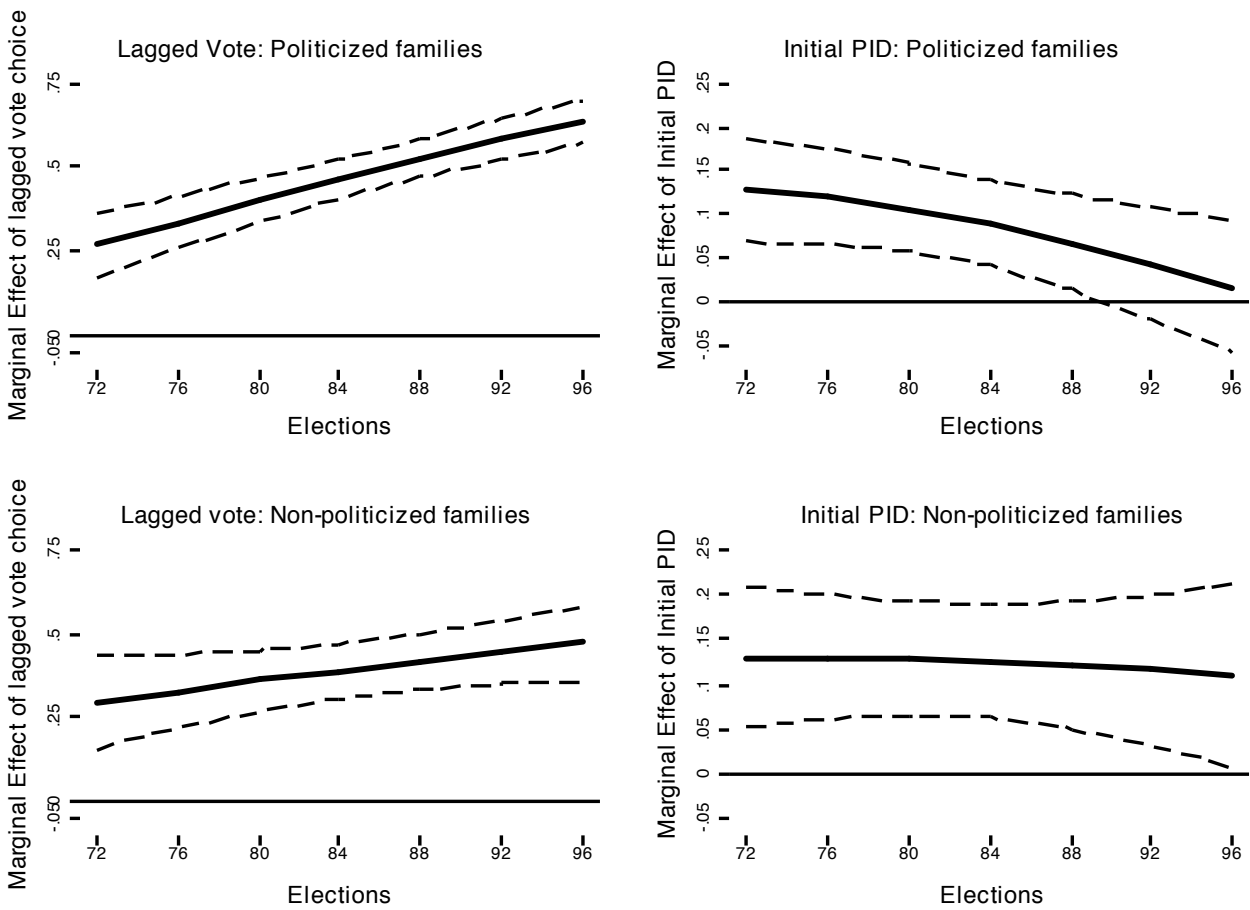


Figure 2.10: The impact of initial PID and lagged vote on current Presidential vote choice over people’s life trajectories.

Note: The bold solid curves present the marginal effect of initial PID (a dummy denoting Republican partisanship measured in 1965) or lagged vote choice (a dummy denoting Republican vote) on actual vote choice (a dummy denoting Republican vote). Convergence between prior and actual vote is not given a causal interpretation, it is only used as a way to denote the presence of inertia in voting behavior. Dashed curves denote the 95% confidence bands.

But then how does political persistence come about for each of the two groups? As was indicated in the previous chapter and as will be further analyzed in the next chapters, no matter what it stands for, the process of aging leads to an increased level of political stability. People crystallize their political orientations as they age. This was also implicitly indicated in the previous section where we saw that patterns established through early adulthood largely remained constant thereafter. Should we expect any difference in how this process of political crystallization takes place between the two groups? If parental political interest means that political events are weighted more during early adulthood, we should expect that the politicized youth would start from a lower basis but develop its partisan orientations at a higher rate than the non-politicized group. If, on the other hand, this process of partisan updating among the politicized youth that also caused deviations from parental partisanship is constant through the life span, we should find that elec-

toral persistence does not develop in a progressive fashion among the politicized youth. Rather, electoral choices are mainly driven by the given political mood of each point in time.

To test these competing claims, I use again a growth curve model. This time the dependent variable is Republican vote in either of the eight elections (from 1968 to 1996) for which we have information for the youth sample. Given that the data are now stacked with respect to the Presidential elections, I choose to model time in a more parsimonious way (instead of having a series of dummies), that is, by simply introducing a linear trend. This is also the specification employed by Plutzer in his model of electoral persistence in turnout (2002). We need to test the impact of initial PID and lagged vote in the growth rate (and the starting level) of people's vote choices. To measure the first, I use a dummy denoting Republican partisanship as measured in 1965. This dummy is also interacted with the time trend. For the second, I use lagged vote which is also again interacted with the linear trend. The main effects denote the impact on the probability of voting Nixon in 1972 of being a Republican in 1965 and of having voted this party (and this candidate) in 1968.²⁶ The interaction of this variable with the linear trend sheds light on the question regarding the process of political learning. If electoral persistence comes with the accumulation of electoral persistence for either of the two groups, as the number of elections increases, previous vote should be a better predictor of actual vote.²⁷ If time is of no importance, this interaction should be zero. If this process is more visible in one of the two groups, the slope of this variable on the growth curve of Republican vote should be steeper for that group.

Table 2.11 presents the results for the two groups. I distinguish politicized from non-politicized groups by considering those below or equal to 4 as the non-politicized group and those above 4 as the politicized group. The impact of initial PID on the starting level of electoral choice is approximately equal for the two groups. What differs is the impact on the growth rate. Among the politicized group, initial partisanship loses its significance as the number of elections accumulates. No such pattern seems to emerge for the non-politicized group. The slope for the former is approximately the triple than for the latter. Lagged vote (as a proxy of electoral persistence) denotes the opposite pattern. Again the effect of prior vote is relatively the same between the two groups. However, it seems to increase more rapidly among the politicized group. This indicates that devia-

²⁶ Although they only differ very little in terms of age, some of the youth were not exactly 21 years old by the time of the election of 1968. This makes them non-eligible to vote in that election. I say a lot more about these people and how useful they can be for research purposes in the next two chapters. For now, to avoid either losing one election or confounding turnout with eligibility, I simply exclude them from the analysis.

²⁷ It needs to be born in mind that no causal effect of prior vote on current electoral choice is assumed here. Problems of unobserved heterogeneity would clearly inhibit such a causal evaluation of the effect of lagged vote. Rather, this variable is used as a proxy denoting partisan anchoring: the more people become locked in partisan patterns, the more likely we are to find continuity in their electoral choices. It is this exact process that I intend to explore through the use of lagged vote (see also Kroh and Selb 2009a).

tion from parental preferences during early adulthood is not simply a sign of higher level of instability among the youth. Children coming from politicized families also establish partisan habits and in fact they seem more likely to do so during their life span than those coming from less politicized families. This finding is important for two reasons. First, it highlights the importance of factors coming along during early adulthood. These influences seem to be pivotal for the youth since it has not yet established firm partisan habits. This is so irrespective of the level of parental politicization, since both groups adhere to this developmental pattern. The important difference, however, is that if politicized youth attaches more weight to these events, this period of early adulthood becomes for this group even more crucial for the establishment of its partisan habits. In so doing, it puts into risk the continuity of the partisan link between parents and children, not by making the youth less stable in its partisan preferences, but by making the influences of early adulthood more decisive in this process of partisan development.

Figure 2.10 visualizes the effects of both variables for each of the two groups. The impact of initial PID is shown in the right panel of the Figure. Partisan inclinations formed during adolescence are not as good predictors of vote choice for the politicized group as for the non politicized group in the long run. The pattern for the lagged vote appears in the left panel of the figure. Aging seems to bring electoral stability. This is true for both groups, implying that there is certainly a lot more going on apart from the inheritance of political values from the family. Stability is built as people accumulate electoral experience. The next chapters will serve to unpack this process. To be sure, given that time is coded as an election counter, the linear increase in the level of stability can be also an artifact of the linear specification used in the estimation. That being said, what is of interest here is the comparison between the two groups. Importantly, this evolutionary pattern is more evident among the politicized than among the non-politicized group. This implies that although they start from a slightly lower starting level, these youngsters gradually develop partisan habits which in turn lead to continuity in vote choice. In other words, the fact that these people weight more political events and other developments in early adulthood does not necessarily mean that they are more volatile in their vote choices. This might be true in their early voting experiences, but events and experiences during their formative period are important in shaping their partisan orientations. The next chapters are devoted in the investigation of the factors driving partisan stability. Here, it is important to see that neither politicized nor non-politicized youth are excluded from this pattern.

2.11 Conclusion

Citing Greenstein (1969:23), Achen (2002:151) starts his important article on parental socialization and party identification with the following quote:

‘All I know is we are not Republicans. My father isn’t’ - Judith

The question to which I have tried to shed some light here involves the conditions under which Judith, 10 year-old at that time, would ever vote for the Republicans. The basic finding regarding this question is that under certain circumstances, the more Judith learnt from her parents about politics from then on and until she left her family home, the more likely it was that she would eventually vote for this – probably disliked during her childhood – party. To be sure, in the period covered by our data, this would be much more probable if Judith came from a Republican rather than a Democrat family. In any case, this seemingly counter-intuitive conclusion depends on an important conditional factor, namely the direction of the ‘tide of the times’. Parents prepare the boat for the youth’s journey into the political world. In some cases, the toolbox merely contains the party label, which is enough for a safe but rather short trip. In others, apart from partisanship, it also contains an inherent interest in politics. Then, the trip is usually longer but along the way the current might drive the boat to a different route than initially planned. The direction of the current is unknown and thus cannot be easily predicted. But currents are only a concern when you are in deep waters. And this depends on how well one has learned to sail in the sea of politics.

Is this just the story of the Vietnam War generation? Since 1980, Judith (21-years-old by then) would have experienced a predominantly pro-Republican shift in public mood. Period shocks might have never been more influential for young adults than they were in the 1960s and probably the early 1970s. However, the robustness check regarding this point showed clearly that the findings are not cohort-specific. An analogous pattern is found also in the case of those entering in early adulthood by the mid1990s, a period which definitely did not resemble the 1960s in the severity and polarizing forces of the political events surrounding it.

How exactly does this pattern emerge? Analyzing two (probably among many others) factors that might have driven attitudinal change among the youth, namely entering into a college environment and experiencing the US intervention in Vietnam and the anti-war movement it created, we saw that these factors have more weight among the youth that comes from a more politicized family background. In so doing, it creates more room for eventual deviations from parents’ partisan legacy. Moreover, exactly as a result of a more intense contact with the political messages of

their generation, those politicized youth are also more likely to qualify and even alter their prior attitudinal predispositions about important political issues of that period. Importantly, this change is largely consistent (and thus again helps to trace this process) with the direction of their partisan change.

The main lesson from these findings is not that politically interested parents are likely to lose track of their children's partisan trajectory. It is rather that parental politicization is more important than simply boosting the contemporaneous similarity between parents and children during late adolescence. By enhancing the impact of political events taking place during people's adult lives, politically interested families introduce their offspring to the political world and create the fundamental structure for the development of firm and well-reasoned political attitudes. Children of more politicized families are not simply driven by the forces of the times. They also adhere to the developmental process of partisan learning that creates partisan habits. The difference between them and less politicized young adults is that political events taking place during adulthood acquire more importance in this process than the partisan bequest of the parents. Importantly, the persistence of the effect of these events and these life-changes over the life span implies that these years following adolescence become particularly crucial for this process of partisan learning. In other words, the 'impressionable years' are mainly so for politicized youth.

In the next part of this study, I will try to shed light on factors affecting this process of partisan anchoring, namely elections and political events. However, the distinction will be mainly between young voters and older cohorts. Thus, it is important bear in mind that young voters are not a completely homogenous group. Although this period of early adulthood is important in shaping and crystallizing political attitudes, it is more important for those coming from a politicized environment.

The findings also serve to remind us that political attitudes do not simply emerge but rather evolve during people's life trajectories. Although this developmental perspective is occasionally used in trying to interpret empirical findings, it is only very rarely taken into consideration at the time of the empirical design and analysis. As was shown in this chapter, failing to do so results in significant distortions in our inference about the causal mechanism governing relationships of interest. In this case, parental politicization enhances the magnitude of parent-child agreement while children are still at home. This pattern might largely persist due to inertia. But, if we are interested in those people who diverge from their parental outlook, and how this pattern evolves during people's life trajectories, then this initial level of agreement is not very useful information. Actually, implementing this longitudinal analysis as was done in this chapter, focusing on the growth curve rather than on the initial level of parent-child similarity, we found that parental politicization is more likely to cause parent-child divergence in the long-run. In the period that was mainly in-

vestigated here, such differences become apparent in the case of Republicans already by the time youngsters are 25 years old and they largely persist over their life span.

Finally, the results provide a supportive case for the potential influence of political information in attitude formation. I focused on young adults in a still formative period of partisan learning, for whom important changes in their life-trajectories are not imposed on partisan grounds and who thus do not suffer from selection bias. For these young adults, new sources of political cues (either new contexts or political events) appear to exert a remarkable impact leading to attitude change. Importantly, however, a precondition for these effects is that such people need to have been raised in an environment in which politics was a common, if not salient, topic. It is by learning about politics in such a genuine fashion that those young people become susceptible to new political information. Importantly, by accumulating electoral experience, young people are gradually anchored to partisan habits, thus becoming more immunized to these sources of political information (Stoker and Jennings 2008). Moreover, as they settle down through aging, they are more in position to control their sources of political cues (both in terms of media consumption and peer-group discussions). These two processes may result in the gradual evaporation of differences resulting from the level of parental politicization. However, it is still important that among the portion of the electorate that is more susceptible to change, i.e. the youth, a necessary precondition for the decisiveness of new information is not so much a lack of party loyalty but the level of political interest. Even when people inherit their parents' partisanship, they might still shift their preferences under the weight of new information. To do so, however, they need to also inherit their parents' interest in political affairs.

Appendix 2.A: Measuring family characteristics

Inferring parental partisanship by spouse's responses might appear to be problematic due to the presence of projection bias. Among single-interviewed families, the parent called to predict the PID of his/her spouse might do so by projecting his/her own partisanship in his/her response. That this is indeed the case here is confirmed empirically through the following procedure. Focusing only on families in which both parents were interviewed (which were also asked about the partisanship of their spouses), I regress the partisanship of the parent as given by his/her spouse, against his/her 'true' partisanship as revealed by him/herself. I then regress the residuals of this regression (which effectively constitute the error made by the parent in predicting the PID of his/her spouse) against his/her own partisanship. The significant positive correlation between this predicted residual and parents' own PID indicates that there is a systematic component in this pat-

tern. Democrat parents move their spouses towards a more pro-Democrat direction and Republican parents towards a more Republican direction.

Although this pattern might cause problems in the construction of the key parental PID variables, it is unlikely that it creates bias in the final results. This is because of the random selection of single-interviewed families. Given this random process, there is no reason to suspect any non-orthogonal relationship between single-interviewed families and the degree of family politicization, our treatment variable. In fact, there is no mean difference in the level of parental politicization between single-interviewed families and families in which both parents were interviewed.

Another way in which this measurement error might affect the analysis is by making single-interviewed families appear more homogenous in partisan terms. Again, however, this pattern is unlikely to distort the findings. To test this empirically, I construct a variable called 'parental homogeneity' which constitutes the absolute value of the difference between the two spouses in their PID (measured in a 0-6 scale). The bivariate correlation between this variable and parental politicization is effectively zero (polyserial correlation of $-.03$ with a std. error $.03$).²⁸ However, to account for a potential correlation once other controls are included in the estimation, I also included this variable in the model. When excluded, results are substantively identical.

Appendix 2.B: Quantifying the PID scale through the ALSOS procedure

The aim is to come up with interval-level information from the original PID scales in order to use this information for the construction of the dependent variable and the 1965 variable of partisan congruence. First, I establish the transitivity of the original PID 0-6 scale both for parents and for the children. A way to do this would be to follow Weisberg (1980, see also Franklin 1984; 1992) in comparing the average score in people's feeling thermometers between Republicans and Democrats. Given the quasi-continuous range of this variable (typically ranging from -100 to 100) and its close relationship to PID (Markus and Converse 1979), I could use these scores to explore the existence of an at least ordinal structure in the 0-6 PID scale. The problem is that these items are only available in the 1973 study and can be thus used only for the measure of off-spring PID in 1973. For parental and off-spring PID in 1965 other proxies need to be used. For that reason I employ party preference in the 1964 Presidential election. To be sure, the youth sample was not eligible to vote in

²⁸ This finding is also important because it justifies the use of the average value between the two parents as the summarizing indicator of the family's partisanship. Again, this measure remains blind about the potential divergence between the two parents. However, since the degree of parental divergence does not seem to correlate with parental politicization, any error caused by this measurement strategy is ignorable with respect to the level of parental political interest.

1964. However, a question regarding hypothetical vote choice in 1964 provides a good indication of youth party preferences and should thus provide clues regarding the transitivity of the PID scale. The results are shown in Table 2.B.²⁹ As is shown there, transitivity is violated only in one instance, namely between weak Republicans and Republican leaners in the parental 1965 scale. With the exception of this instance, however, weak transitivity does seem to hold, implying that the original PID scale allows an ordinal ranking of preferences. Even in this case, the difference between the two groups does not achieve statistical significance.³⁰ Thus, I make the assumption of weak transitivity, allowing leaners and weak partisans to have up to equally strong partisanship.

Table 2.B: Testing the transitivity of the PID scale among parents and children in 1965 and 1973.

	PID-73	PID-65	Parental PID 65	Spouse's PID 65
	Mean Rep-Dem thermometer score	Percentage of voters (would-be voters) of Lindon Johnson in 1964		
Fairly Strong Democrat	-28.37	0.956	0.936	0.879
Not very strong Democrat	-11.93	0.902	0.818	0.772
Democrat Leaner	-7.86	0.87	0.778	0.739
Independent	-0.462	0.745	0.577	0.554
Republican Leaner	5.23	0.435	0.295	0.483
Not very strong Republican	9.5	0.432	0.342	0.455
Fairly Strong Republican	17.77	0.16	0.098	0.207

Having established the weak transitivity of PID, I now move to the assignment of values that would reflect the relative difference in the characteristic of interest between each point in the scale. How much more Republican is a strong Republican from a Republican leaner or an independent? To do that I use optimal scaling, a technique which allows the assignment of numbers to empirical

²⁹ Given that the feeling thermometer questions are available in 1973, I choose to use them rather than vote choice in 1972, as proxies for the PID scale. I prefer this measure for two reasons. First, its continuous-like metric provides more detailed information about the relative difference in party preferences between the PID-scale points. Second, it is an attitudinal measure and thus can grasp more explicitly the also attitudinal character of the PID question. Moreover, since it was asked in the same time point, namely in 1973, it can grasp the structure of partisan preferences more adequately than the 1972 vote recall.

³⁰ A t-test of mean differences between the two groups fails to reject the null of equal means with a p-value of .12.

objects through a model-fitting process (Jacoby 1999:280). What optimal scaling does is to assign numeric values to the observations with respect to a variable of interest in such a way that simultaneously fulfills two conditions: (1) the assigned scores maintain the measurement characteristics given to the data. So, in this case, assuming weak transitivity, the ordinal level nature of the PID scale implies that no matter what numbers are given to the original values, they should retain their pre-specified measurement hierarchy; and (2) they fit the statistical model as well as possible (Jacoby 1999:281). Therefore, rather than assuming that there are no differences between individuals of different adjacent PID scores (2-1=4-3=6-5), I recognize that these values have no intrinsic value apart from denoting hierarchy in the empirical manifestation of the measured attribute and thus try to find these values which provide the best empirical fit to the data. Thus, if being a strong Republican implies greater difference in related attitudes than being a weak Republican, compared with the difference between weak Republican and Republican independence (leaner), this should be reflected in the empirical fit of the model.

Following Jacoby (1999) I use the ALSOS (Alternated Least Squares, Optimal Scaling) approach. The logic behind this approach is that the theoretical model is fitted to the data allowing the alteration of the numerical values of the variables up to the extent that they do not violate the pre-specified measurement characteristics of the indicators. An iterative OLS regression approach (through Kruskal's monotone transformation formula) is applied which leads to the recoding of the variables included in the model up to the point that further changes cause no further improvement to the model's fit (and always up to the extent that the pre-determined assumptions about the measurement properties of the indicators are not violated). Had I allowed for violations of intransitivity in the PID scale, for instance, I would essentially treat the original scale as a nominal-level scale, allowing ALSOS to recode the original variable in a way that could for instance attach greater values to leaners than weak partisans. Given that the ordinal-level character of the variable is predetermined, what is left for ALSOS is to identify the optimal scores for each point in the scale such that the model fits the data best.

The question now is which model to fit to the data. Although Jacoby (1999) explains very convincingly why and how this approach is not a tool for boosting the probability of achieving statistically significant results for theorized relationships between variables, I do not estimate the final model with ALSOS. I refrain from doing so because I am aware of the particularistic nature of the final dependent variable. Whereas there is great theory about what affects PID, there is little available theory about what moves further apart children from parents in their partisan views. Thus, I simply use ALSOS as a measurement tool, which enables the quantification of the original PID variables, since it is for these variables that model fit can be based on appropriate theory. I only use ALSOS to identify the optimal scores for the four variables of interest: parental PID and spouse's

PID in 1965 and child PID in 1965 and 1973. Once these variables have been recoded, I subtract the corresponding scores and take the absolute values from these subtractions. This procedure will yield the measurement values of the two variables of main interest: $\Delta\text{PID} | \text{Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{73} |$ and $\Delta\text{PID} | \text{Parents}_{65} - \text{Children}_{65} |$.

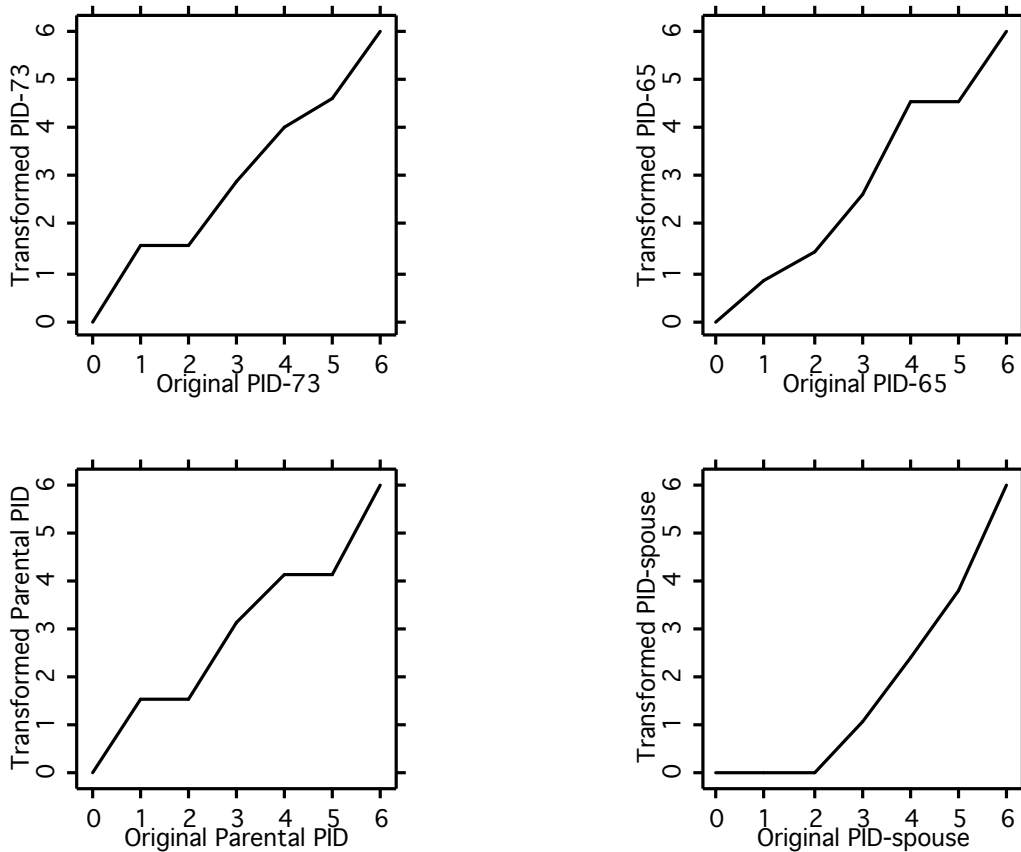


Figure 2.B: The relationship between the transformed and the original 0-6 PID scale.

Note: The quantification is based on Kruskal's monotone transformation through the ALSOS formula.

This implies that I need to construct a regression model for each of the four variables. For the PID-scale for children in 1973, I use the difference in the thermometer scales between Republicans and Democrats and the 1-7 (liberal-conservative) ideological scale as predictors. None of these predictors is available in the 1965 questionnaire and thus different predictors are needed. For the 1965 youth-PID variable I use parental PID, a variable constructed by subtracting the thermometer score towards 'big business' from the equivalent score towards 'labor unions', and a dummy about whether the child would have opted for Johnson in 1964. For the two parental terms (parents' own PID and spouse's PID for single-interviewed families), again I use the difference between big business and labor unions, the feeling thermometer about 'blacks' and actual vote choice in 1964. All

variables during the estimation are treated as ordinal. Although I do not provide the results here because they are not of substantive interest, I show the relationship between the original PID scales and the new ones, as transformed through the ALSOS formula.³¹ This relationship is displayed in Figure 2.B. If, for example, the PID-73 scale provided interval-level information, we would simply observe a 45-degree line, indicating no difference between the two variables. However, this is clearly not the case, implying that differences between adjacent points of the scale reflect differences of different extent in the attribute of interest. Analogous results are shown for the PID-65 scales, both for the parents and for the children.

Although optimal scaling is a sensible way to assign values to ordinal scales, it is certainly not without pitfalls. In general, optimal scaling is quite sensitive to the model specification used while exploring the values of the dependent variable that maximize explained variance. This problem is exacerbated here because I use different predictors for the parent- and the child-PID scale. This implies that the assigned values are not comparable between the PID variables. All this might create suspicions about the ad-hoc character of the resulting dependent variable. Are we simply capitalizing on chance?

To be sure, optimal scaling is useful when the original item is measured through a categorical scale. But categorical scales are far from being ideal, and this is where the main problem originates. Magnitude scaling (Lodge and Tursky 1979, 1981; see Tillie 1995 and Sulfaro and Crislip 1997 for political science applications), which allows respondents to differ in their perceptions about the magnitude of the stimulus represented by each category and do not confine respondents to choose between a pre-defined finite set of integers, is a certainly superior way to construct ratio- or interval-level scales (magnitude scaling creates ratio-level scales by construction). This is not possible here, because magnitude scaling starts by denoting a reference category (a line that serves as a reference-point) and exploring how people perceive stimuli of different magnitude (lines of different length) with respect to this reference category. To the best of my knowledge, this procedure cannot be adequately implemented later at the stage of the analysis.

Among the remaining alternatives, optimal scaling is believed to be a good way to proceed. When the same set of variables (partisanship of the father as recalled by the respondent) is used for all PID scales, the ALSOS procedure produces quantified PID scales which correlate with the those presented in Figure 2.A at a minimum of .93.³² The results in Table 2.2 remain almost identical

³¹ More than half of the total variance of the dependent variable is accounted for by each of the four models.

³² It needs to be also pointed out that in practice magnitude scales, albeit superior, are often highly correlated with categorical scales measuring the same concept (see the graphs provided in Lodge 1981). That said, these analyses also indicate that there is important variation in the degree of partisanship within each PID category (especially among the strong partisans), which cannot be captured through categorical scaling (Lodge and Tursky 1979:61).

when these scales are used for the construction of the dependent variable. This is not to say that the resulting measure is without flaws, but at least the findings do not seem to be highly sensitive to the measurement strategy employed in the analysis.³³ This is also confirmed by the fact that even when more qualitative variables are used as outcomes, the role of parental politicization appears equally important.

Appendix 2.C: The Parental Politicization index

Here I provide further details about the construction of the key independent variable, stemming from three different subscales, namely subjective evaluations of political interest, actual political involvement and media consumption.³⁴ Regarding the first I start with the two items which from a theoretical point of view seem most relevant, namely the level of interest about public affairs and the frequency of political discussion within the household, measured by the frequency with which each parent talks about politics with his/her spouse. To those, I also add the child's own perceptions about the level of political interest of his/her parents.³⁵ Since the scope is to measure how parental politicization creates a context which familiarizes the child with the political world, this last item is deemed to be useful in that it should reflect the degree to which parents' interest in politics takes forms which are directly observable to the child (see also Jennings et al. 2009).

Since each of these indicators aims to capture a different aspect of parental level of politicization, it is important to examine whether they can be encompassed under a single scale measuring the same underlying dimension. The key precondition for that is that they are monotonically related to each other (Jacoby 1991). A rough-and-ready way to examine whether this criterion of monotone homogeneity is satisfied here is to run correlations between each item and the scale constructed by the two remaining items. Yet, since correlations measure linear functions which constitute a stricter assumption than monotone functions, this is a quite problematic diagnostic test for the scalability of each item. The approach adopted here is thus somewhat different and less formal but probably more informative. A locally weighted regression curve (loess) has been fitted

³³ Actually, even when the original PID scales are used to construct the dependent variable, there is no substantive change either in the magnitude or in the statistical significance of parental politicization. What changes, as would be expected, is the proportion of explained variance, which slightly reduces when the ordinal-level scales are interpreted, without further elaboration, as interval-level.

³⁴ Importantly, the robustness of the results conditional on different measurement strategies regarding the parental politicization index is remarkable. The analysis has been replicated when only a single subscale or various combinations of them (including always one or more of the subjective evaluation items) is used for the construction of the parental politicization variable and the findings remain substantively unchanged.

³⁵ I take the average value given by the child for her father and her mother.

onto a scatterplot between each item and the scale consisting of all other items. As with all non-parametric regression methods, the basic idea behind the loess curve is to trace the salient features of the mean response making only minimal assumptions about its distribution (Jacoby 2000, Fitzmaurice et al., 2004:69). Thus, a loess curve showing a monotonic pattern can be considered as a good indication that a given item fits the scale (see also Dinas and Gemenis 2010, Gemenis and Dinas 2010). The graphs generated from this procedure (see Figure 2.C) show that the assumption of a monotone relationship is satisfied for all three items.

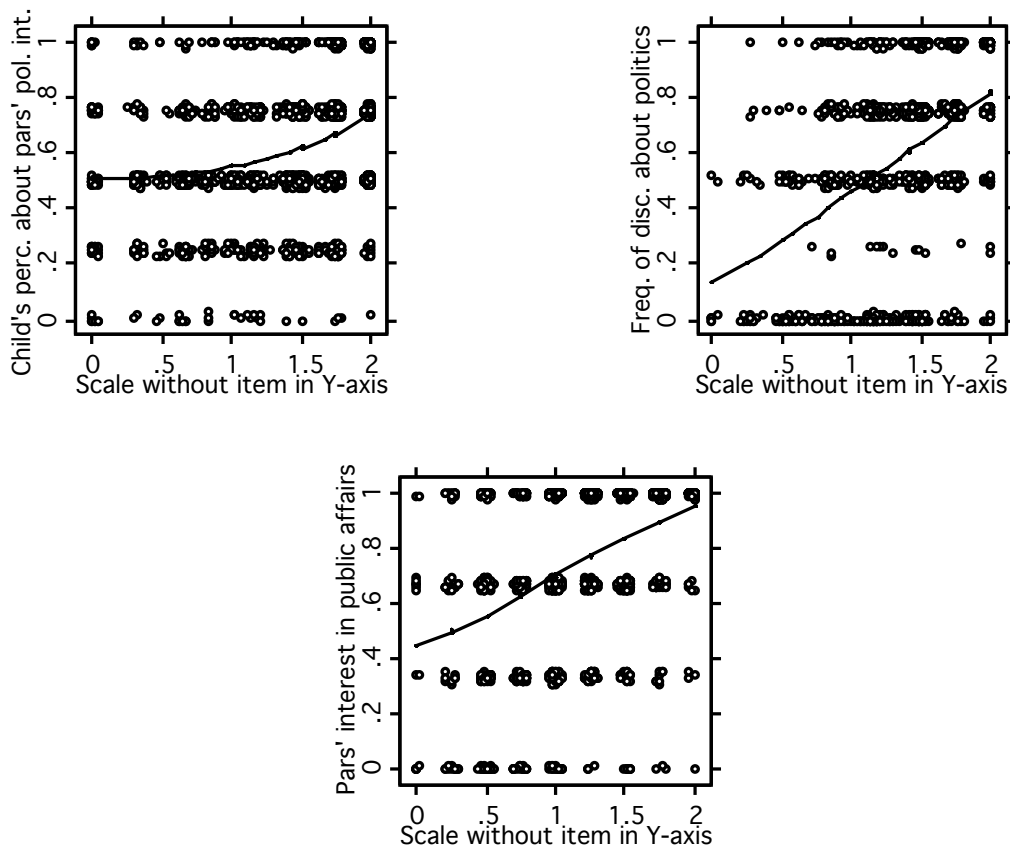


Figure 2.C: Testing the assumption of monotone homogeneity among the three indicators of subjective political interest.

Note: Loess curves are fitted into scatterplots which show the relationship between the items denoted in the y-axis and a scale comprising of the two other items. Random noise has been introduced in the scatterplots (dots jittered by a factor of 1.5) to facilitate the visual observation of the differences in the relative distributions of the items.

The second set of items captures the behavioral implications of parental political interest. Politics should be more apparent within the household when parents spend time in various modes of political participation. The most typical of these modes is, essentially, voting, here measured through a dummy about whether the parent voted in the 1964 presidential election. But political

participation can go far beyond voting. Accordingly, I have also included a set of dummies denoting whether the individual participated in rallies, was active in campaign activity, belongs to a club related to one of the two parties, donated money to a particular party and tried to persuade others about how to vote. Again, all these binary indicators should be tested regarding the extent to which they can be treated as equivalent measures of the same underlying dimension. Since people might choose more than one way of participating in politics and since the amount of political involvement associated with each of these activities varies, it is important to examine the extent to which the resulting scale measuring actual political involvement adheres to this pattern. To do that I use Mokken scaling (van Shuur 2003), a semi-parametric technique primarily designed as an extension of the classical Guttman scaling for dichotomous or polytomous variables which adds a probabilistic aspect into the ranking of the items. If the probability of errors in ranking is significantly lower compared to the probability of such a ranking occurring by chance, this is a good sign that the items of each scale form a common underlying dimension (Oppenheim, 1992:202). Although the results are not provided to save space, the overall scale coefficient, Loevinger's H-coefficient, which tests the extent to which the items follow an ordinal sequence (i.e. engaging in one type of such activities implies also engaging in all activities classified below this one) is .53. None of the items appears to fit poorly in the scale (denoted by the fact that none of the item-specific coefficients takes a value below the conventional limit of .3). Accordingly, I construct the second subscale by adding up all participation dummies.

The third set of variables involves the extent and the means through which respondents acquire political information. Four types of media consumption are examined, namely TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. Following the same type of analysis as in the previous set of items, however, I find that only the last two of them appear to measure the same latent construct. Radio and TV load very poorly in a four-item scale and do not seem to form a separate scale either. Thus, the resulting measure about media consumption includes only reading newspapers and magazines related to politics and ranges from 0 to 2 (H-coefficient .452).

To combine the three subscales in a single overall scale measuring parental politicization I use factor analysis. The results are shown in Table 2.C.³⁶ The three subscales seem to load on a single factor, which captures more than a third of their common variance. Given that only one factor is

³⁶ To ensure that factor analysis is an appropriate technique for summarizing the information among the three subscales I estimate Bartlett's statistic of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. Both tests provide evidence about whether the original correlation matrix is appropriate for the application of factor analysis. The first tests the null of zero correlation between the set of original variables. The second tests the degree of multicollinearity between the items. The chi-squared statistic produced from Bartlett's test is 815.3 which with 3 degrees of freedom is significant at $p < .00001$. The KMO average value is .67 with no item having a value lower than the conventional limit of 0.5.

Table 2.C: Pattern Matrix and Commuality values of the three politicization indicators resulting from a factor analysis with one extracted factor (Iterated Principal Factor method).

	Pattern Matrix	Commuality
Media	0.606	0.504
Actual Participation Index	0.569	0.45
Subjective evaluations	0.794	0.631
Ratio of common variance captured by first factor to total variance		0.44
Sum of Squared Residuals		0.0001

Note: The first column presents factor loadings, portion of variance shared among each indicator shown in the second column. Eigenvalue from 1st factor: 1.32.

extracted, the reliability of the extracted factor can be evaluated by its observed variance, which here is .78 (Kim and Mueller 1978). Therefore, the resulting politicization scale has a rather high reliability score, which is important in that it captures the underlying dimension without much noise.³⁷

Appendix 2.D: Confounds

2.D.1 Parental Stability

The first potential explanation for the findings could be that children from more politicized families do follow their parents more in political terms than off-spring from apolitical families but this pattern is obscured due to the fact that parents are assumed to hold constant preferences during this period. In other words, it might be that more politically interested individuals are more prone to change in the weight of period forces and thus parents who are more interested in politics might have well changed their political views during this period. By following their parents in this move, children from more politicized families would falsely appear to deviate from them if we only take into account initial parental predispositions, as measured in 1965. To see whether this is

³⁷ As another informal diagnostic tool, I examined how well the one-factor solution reproduces the observed correlations between the three indicators. The sum of squared residuals between observed and estimated item correlations is .0001, which indicates that factor analysis reproduces the observed correlations between the three politicization items almost perfectly. Finally, when I tested whether the one factor solution fits the data well with Confirmatory Factor Analysis, I also come up with the same answer [RMSEA: .048 without adding correlations between the disturbances, no competing model tested for comparison]. Detailed results from the CFA are not provided to save space but can be made available upon request.

the case it is sufficient to examine whether those parents who were more interested in politics in 1965 were more likely to change their partisan preferences than less politically interested respondents from the parent sample. The empirical evidence does not seem to confirm this alternative explanation, however. Splitting the sample of parents in two halves, with one group representing families whose level of political interest is below the mean (4.59) and the other group including families with political interest at and above the mean value of the politicization index, I find that the polychoric correlation of PID between 1965 and 1973 is .77 for the first and .82 for the second.

This finding also rules out the hypothesis that the results are driven by differing levels of parental stability. Jennings et al. (2009:789) find that for some political attributes (although not in the case of party identification) parental attitudinal stability (measured by averaging absolute differences in the responses of the parental group between 1965 and 1973 and between 1973 and 1982) is a better predictor of (contemporaneous) parent-child congruence than level of parental politicization. If more politically interested parents hold less stable political views than less politically involved parents, the offspring of the first might fail to acquire firm partisan cues and hence deviate in the long run from family's partisan inheritance. Since the more politicized are not less stable in their political attitudes, it cannot be lack of attitudinal stability that drives the results.

2.D.2 Parental politicization and strength of parental PID

Another potential criticism to the main findings is that the results are driven by politicized families which are not particularly attached to one of the two parties. Figure 2.2 showed that parental politicization induces divergence between parents and children only among non-Democrat families. However, given that the results are based on a linear interaction between family partisanship and parental politicization, it is unclear whether the latter works in the same way for all non-Democrat families. It might work particularly well for independents or Republican leaners but its effect may be diminished among more strongly affiliated Republicans. To be sure, this is in itself an interesting pattern, but it is important to see whether the impact of parental politicization holds only when partisanship is largely absent or whether it exerts an impact regardless of the strength in partisan attachment.

To test whether the effect of parental politicization changes across different levels of Republican partisanship, I focus only on Republican families (since the results seemed to hold mainly among this group) and interact parental politicization with strength of parental partisanship. Given that restricting the analysis to the cases satisfying the criterion of non-Democrat partisanship might lead to selection bias, in that those cases might well not be missing completely at random, parame-

Table 2.D2.1: The joint impact of parental politicization and partisan strength on parent-child partisan similarity in 1973 among non-Democrats in 1965 and the impact of parental politicization among families with perfect degree of similarity in 1965.

	DD= Parent ₇₃ -Child ₇₃ - Parent ₆₅ -Child ₇₃
Parental Strength of PID	.050 (.034)
Politicization Index	.092 (.048)
(Parental Strength of PID)(Parental Politicization)	.003 (.009)
Age	.011 (.020)
Gender	.009 (.128)
Parental Partisan Homogeneity	-.053 (.034)
Mother only interviewed	-.106 (.105)
Both parents interviewed	.139 (.122)
Black	.068 (.230)
Talk politics with friends	.064 (.077)
Constant	.291 (.578)
<i>Selection Equation</i>	P(Y=1:Family PID ₆₅ <2)
Parental Strength of PID	-.385 (.030)
Politicization Index	.094 (.030)
Age	.062 (.073)
Gender	.161 (.102)
Parental Partisan Homogeneity	.057 (.032)
Mother only interviewed	.062 (.073)
Both parents interviewed	.024 (.099)
Black	-.677 (.185)
Father of parents Non-Democrat	1.07 (.103)
Constant	-.572 (.287)
ρ (intracorrelation coefficient)	-.478 (.099)
chi-sq (1) (H0: equations independent)	16.3 (p<.0001)
N	1112
Censored Obs.	493

Note: Entries are ML estimates, standard errors, clustered at the school-level, in parentheses. Observations weighted according to whether both or one of the parents were interviewed.

ters of interest are estimated with a Heckman sample selection model (Heckman 1979). The selection part is determined by whether observations satisfy the binary condition specified by the model. In this case, observations are censored if parental PID \leq 3.

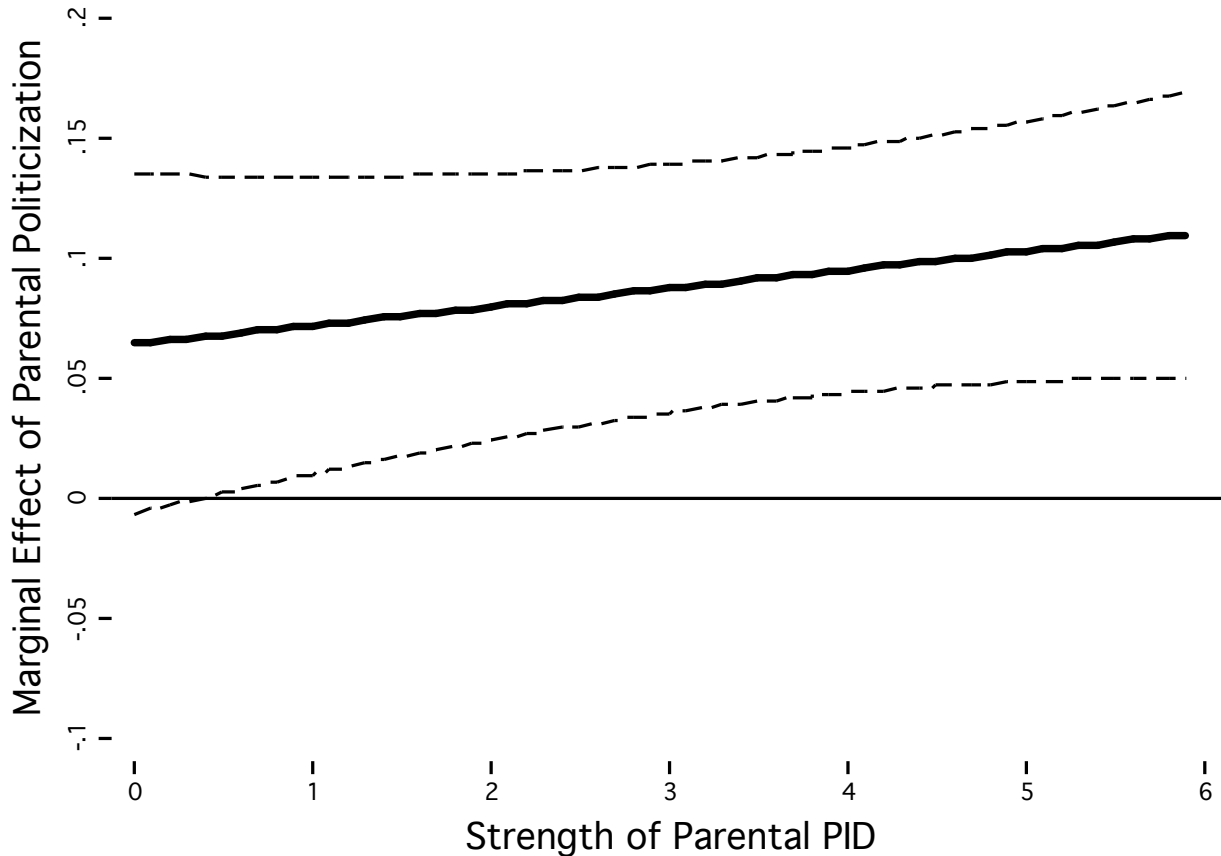


Figure 2.D2.1: Marginal effect of parental politicization on change in parent-child dissimilarity between 1973 and 1965 according to the level of parental partisan strength among non-Democrat families.

Note: Parental strength is measured in a 0-6 scale because it encompasses the midpoints of the original parental PID scale (0-6=6, 0.5-5.5=525/3.5=1, 3=0).

The identification of the model needs at least one covariate that only exerts a direct effect on the selection process, without directly influencing the dependent variable of the outcome model. The variable included here is a dummy denoting whether the father of the parent was also a Democrat (0) or not (1). That this dummy exerts no influence on the outcome variable makes intuitive sense and is also confirmed empirically.³⁸ Its non-zero impact on the selection criterion [P(PID \leq 3)] is shown in Table 2.D2.1, which presents the results. The significant value of the intracorrelation coefficient indicates the interdependence of the two equations, which makes their combination through the Heckman model necessary. The marginal effects of parental politicization along all

³⁸ When this variable is used as a predictor in the full-sample model of equation (3) it exerts a zero effect on parent-child dissimilarity.

levels of partisan strength are shown in Figure 2.D2.1. Parental politicization appears to exert a rather homo-genous effect along the scale of partisan attachment. Republican parents were more likely to see their children deviating in partisan terms the more they talked about politics at home. This was the case, no matter their degree of attachment to their party. In fact, if there is any difference regarding the level of partisan strength, parental politicization seems to work even better among more partisan families.³⁹

2.D.3 Political socialization versus sociodemographic concordance

2.D.3.1 Family socioeconomic indicators

Another potential explanation could be that children ‘may resemble their parents via status inheritance and a shared social milieu, independently of transmission processes’ (Stoker 2007; Jennings et al. 2009:790). As previous research on parental transmission of political attitudes has suggested, one of the pathways through which family might matter is by reflecting common socioeconomic conditions which lead to the same partisan preferences (Bengtson et al. 2002). This argument mainly affects the social learning hypothesis about the relationship between parents and children, since it states that once such sociopositional similarities between parents and children are taken into account the effect of parental politicization is reduced. Jennings et al. find little evidence for this argument when it comes to party identification. Even when various parental sociodemographic factors are taken into account, parental partisanship seems the best predictor of child (contemporaneous) PID (Jennings et al. 2009:791).

The important question for present purposes is whether parental politicization remains an important factor affecting the long-term partisan similarity between parents and children once family sociodemographic characteristics are taken into account. Three such characteristics are included in the analysis: family income, parental level of education and the anticipated Duncan Decile Score which classifies parents in terms of their occupational status (see also Stoker 2007; Jennings et al.

³⁹ Another way to test the extent to which the impact of parental politicization varies according to the level of partisan attachment without making any linearity assumption is by factorizing the partisan strength indicator and including a series of interactions between parental politicization and each of the 6 dummies (since parental partisan strength takes integer values from 0 to 6 as explained also in Figure 2.D). When this specification is used, the impact of the main effect of parental politicization (denoting the effect for those located at point 0 of the partisan strength scale) is positive and significant. None of the interaction terms is statistically significant and with the exception of the category 4, all have a positive sign.

2009).⁴⁰ Given that these indicators presumably affect parental political engagement and not vice versa, controlling for the former should not bias the findings for parental politicization.

Table 2.D3.1: Replicating Table 2.2 by adding also three sociodemographic indicators.

	DD= Parent ₆₅ -Child ₇₃ - Parent ₆₅ -Child ₆₅
Parental politicization	.229 (.113)
Family Income	-.034 (.032)
Parental education level	.446 (.160)
Duncan Occupation Classification	.137 (.121)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors clustered at the school-level in parentheses, N=1101.

As a first step in this analysis, Table 2.D3.1 presents the effect of parental political interest on change in parent-child partisan divergence (the dependent variable used in columns 2 and 3 of Table 2.2) when the three parental background characteristics are taken into account. Controls included in the previous analyses are also included here but not shown to save space. The four variables examined are all coded so that they range from 0 to 1. As is shown in the Table, parental politicization remains a key predictor of parent-child partisan divergence although the magnitude of this effect remains relatively low: the difference in the magnitude of parent-child divergence between minimum and maximum levels of parental politicization is .229 points in a scale that ranges from -6 to 6. To be sure, given that the dependent variable has a rather kurtotic sample distribution (almost half of the sample is located at point zero), it becomes more difficult to find a remarkable, in terms of magnitude, effect on intergenerational partisan dissimilarity.⁴¹

What is more striking from Table 2.D3.1 is the effect of parental education level. Parents who have attended college are more likely to see their children deviate from them in partisan terms in the long run than those who have not continued their education after high-school. The effect is on the same direction as parental politicization, and although the impact of the latter indicates that there is still room for an effect of talking about politics at home even when parental education is

⁴⁰ Parental education is measured by first creating two trichotomous variables, corresponding to the father and mother, distinguishing between three education categories: no college, some college, completed college or higher. The average value is used as an indication of the family education level. Family income is a 10-category indicator of the family anticipated income for that year. The indicator of occupational status is a 10-category variable, describing the anticipated occupation Duncan decile code. It ranges from low to high occupational status.

⁴¹ When off-spring with no change in their PID between the two waves are excluded (thus scoring zero in the resulting dependent variable), the effect of parental polarization becomes .512.

taken into account, it is also important to notice that the tendency of deviating from parents' initial partisan beliefs is more apparent among families with higher education levels.

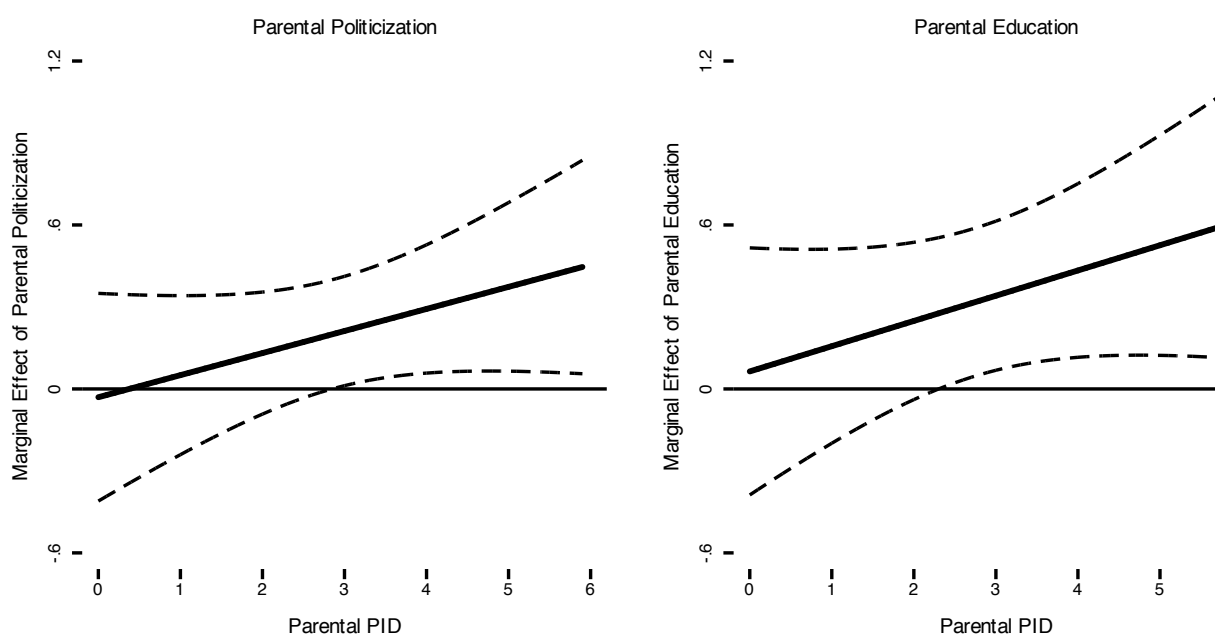


Figure 2.D3.1: The left graph replicates Figure 2.2 by adding also family sociodemographics. The right graph shows the marginal effect of parental education across levels of family PID.

Note: The solid line presents the change in the coefficient of parental politicization (parental education) across all points of the family PID scale. Dotted lines display the associated 95% confidence intervals, N=1101.

Figure 2.D3.1 combines the marginal effects of parental politicization and parental education on parent-child partisan dissimilarity across all levels of parental party identification. In other words, Figure 2.D3.1 replicates Figure 2.2 but controlling for family sociodemographics. Importantly, the three indicators shown Table 2.D3.1 are included here both as main effects and in interaction with parental partisanship (see Stoker 2007). The first panel of the figure indicates that the effect of parental politicization remains largely robust, although it now acquires statistical significance almost from point 3 of the scale. The effects are quite similar for parental education - the only sociodemographic which appears to exert a significant effect on difference in party-child partisan divergence between 1965 and 1973. At any given point of the parental PID scale, the marginal effect of parental education outweighs the effect of parental political engagement, as was also indicated by the unconditional effects presented on Table 2.D3.1. Once again, taking as a whole the findings imply that although talking about politics at home increases the likelihood that the off-spring deviate from parental partisan preferences, this likelihood is already enhanced among families with higher levels of education. To put it differently, educated parents transmit this tendency to their children and this process is not simply mediated through parental political engagement. Other features of these

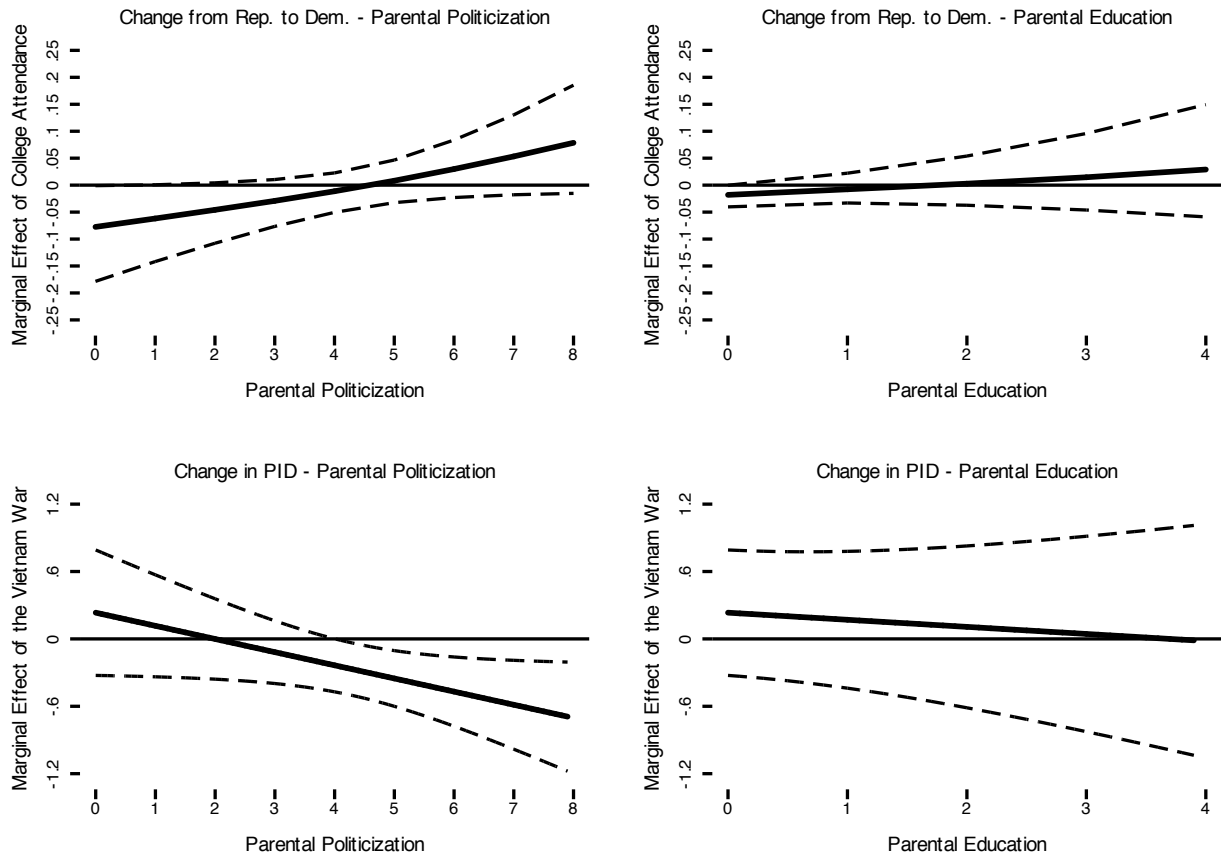


Figure 2.D3.2: Replicating Figures 2.2 and 2.3 by adding also family sociodemographics.

Note: The two graphs of the left replicate the results of parental politicization by adding information about parental educational and socioeconomic background. The two graphs on the right present the equivalent findings for the sociodemographic indicator that appears to exert the highest conditional effect on the impact of college attendance and attitudes towards the Vietnam War, i.e. family education level, N=1101 in the two upper graphs and 1007 for the two lower graphs.

families, presumably related to the selection of school, the attention given to school performance and the interaction with other peer groups, contribute also in this process.

The last step in this analysis is to examine whether the mediating role of parental politicization in the effect of changing social contexts and experiencing critical events on partisan change is cancelled out when the parental sociodemographic background is taken into account. In order to properly rule out the effect of these background characteristics, the analysis follows the logic implemented above: family income, education level and occupational status are interacted with offspring college attendance and with offspring attitudes towards the Vietnam war. Full results are not provided to save space. Figure 2.D3.2 highlights the key findings from these analyses. The upper-left graph of the Figure presents the effect of children’s education level conditional on parents’ level of political engagement. This graph is equivalent to Figure 2.2 and it shows that when parental sociodemographic conditions are taken into account college attendance ceases to exert a significant shift to Democrats across all levels of parental political engagement. That said, the con-

ditional effect of parental politicization remains almost intact. Although the marginal effect of having attended college does not increase significantly the probability of switching to the Democrats among those stemming from a Republican environment, the variation of the effect is approximately equal in magnitude and again in the anticipated direction.⁴² Having attended college seems more likely to move people against the Republicans if they come from a politicized environment than among those coming from a less politically engaged family. In all instances, there is more than five per cent probability (two-tailed) that this effect comes from a true null. Yet, it is much more likely that a positive effect exists for politically engaged families. It is on this conditional effect that we are primarily interested both here and in the main text of the chapter.

The lower-left part of the Figure shows the effect of attitudes towards the Vietnam War across all levels of parental politicization. Here, the pattern is very similar with that presented in Figure 2.3. Even when parental sociodemographic indicators are taken into account, parental politicization qualifies significantly the effect of this critical event in shaping youth's partisan preferences.

Among the three sociodemographic indicators used as controls, it is only parental education that seems to exert some conditioning effect on either of the two factors predicting partisan change. These effects are shown in the right part of the Figure. In none of these cases, however, do we observe a significant effect across any level of parental education. More importantly, the variation of the marginal effects is much smaller. This confirms the main argument made in the chapter, that one of the key processes through which parents create a favorable ground for further elaboration of political attitudes and evaluations during early adulthood is by making politics apparent at home during childhood and adolescence.⁴³

⁴² That the intervening role of parental politicization on the effect of college attendance in causing a shift to the Democrats remains largely unchanged when college attendance is also interacted with parental sociodemographics is also apparent from the magnitude of the corresponding coefficients. The interaction term depicted in Figure 2.2, when sociodemographics are not included in the model, is .073 with standard error .049. The equivalent coefficient in Figure 2.D3.2 is .072 with standard error .052.

⁴³ One could argue that parental socioeconomic background might exert a confounding effect on the impact of parental political engagement in the endurance of the link between parents and children that is not captured by the analysis presented here. If, for example, offspring from politicized families are more likely to change social status as compared with their parents, in so doing they might also deviate from their family inheritance in partisan terms. To see whether this is the case, I examine the correlation between children's education level, subjective class identification and family income by the time they are 35 years old (from the 1982 wave) with the corresponding figures of their parents (given in 1965). Two sets of correlations are generated, one for families below the mean of parental politicization and one for those above the mean. In the case of education, the polychoric correlation is .40 for the first and .56 for the second. This means that children from non-politicized families are more likely to differ from their parents' educational status and thus if this was what was driving parental politicization's long-run effect, we should find more partisan dispersion among this group. In the case of subjective class identification, the equivalent figures are .28 and .35 respectively. The only case in which a lower correlation between parents and children for the politicized group is found, is that of family income, for which the Pearson correlations are .195 and .075 respectively. However, even when income is included (even in a fully factorized form) the impact of parental politicization remains intact.

A related set of factors, that, like parental socioeconomic status, might account for the effect of parental politicization is what Jennings et al. (2009:791) refer to as ‘local political climates’. It might be that parental politicization is simply the outcome of the partisan and socioeconomic characteristics prevalent in the local communities in which these families reside. These same tendencies might also influence the political formation of the youth and in so doing they might also account for their increased likelihood to deviate from their parents’ partisan legacy once they leave their parental home. For instance, it might be that offspring living in predominantly conservative areas become more interested in politics than those residing in more balanced - in ideological terms - neighborhoods. Changing social context, by going, for example, to the university, they may be equally influenced by the political structure of this new environment and consequently qualify their prior partisan beliefs. Thus it remains to be seen whether it is these structural school- or community-level factors that produce this pattern rather than parental transmission of political interest.⁴⁴

Table 2.D3.1: Replicating Table 2.2 by adding three aggregate measures of the socioeconomic and political context within which the child grew up.

	DD= Parent ₆₅ -Child ₇₃ - Parent ₆₅ -Child ₆₅
Parental politicization	.281 (.125)
Aggregate political interest	.215 (.389)
Aggregate partisan distribution	.666 (.314)
SES index at the school-level	.253 (.421)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors clustered at the school-level in parentheses, N=807.

Using the 1965 Seniors Cohort Study (ICPSR #7575), which contains aggregate-level information for various attitudinal and demographic characteristics among 77 schools of the originally 97 schools included in the 1965 youth sample, I test the effect of three contextual indicators: political interest (aggregating the responses on the ‘interest in political affairs’ question administered to all seniors of each school, a school-level socioeconomic index (constructed as described in Jennings et al. 2009: 797) and an aggregate measure of partisanship (the percent identifying as Republicans minus percent identifying as Democrat, Jennings et al. 2009: 792). Again, each of these indicators is also interacted with all key covariates with which parental politicization is interacted.

⁴⁴ As Jennings, Stoker and Bowers (2009:791) point out, there is much room for compositional effects and most importantly for selection bias that inhibits a straightforward causal interpretation of these effects. However, such selection issues are likely to overestimate the effect of contextual characteristics, thus making the test for the impact of parental politicization a more difficult one.

Table 2.D3.2 presents the results for the effect of parental politicization and all three aggregate indicators in parent-child divergence. All covariates range from 0 to 1. Again, the impact of parental politicization remains largely unaffected by the inclusion of community- or school-level indicators. The only aggregate-level covariate that seems to exert a significant shift from parental views is the percentage of Republicans versus the percentage of Democrats in the neighborhood. As was also indicated by the findings of the main part of the text, the endurance of parent-child similarity was lower among pro-Republican families, which here is also confirmed in a more aggregate context.

The pattern is quite similar when we move to the examination of the indirect effects. As was also the case with family-level socioeconomic indicators, parental politicization is again the main mediator of the effect of college attendance and attitudes towards the Vietnam war. It is only aggregate political interest that seems to have a mediating role in the effect of college attendance (but no effect when it comes to the Vietnam war), but this effect, as was also the case with parental education, is much less reliable than that of parental politicization.⁴⁵

In sum, taking as a whole, the findings from the two sections of this appendix provide two valuable conclusions. First, parental politicization is not the only engine driving partisan change during early adolescence. Sociodemographic differences among families and the political atmosphere of the region within which each young individual grows up help to shape initial political predispositions which seem to affect the process of partisan development in the long run. Educated parents are more likely to see their children abandoning their partisan legacy irrespective of the level of political involvement within the family. It seems that parental education level embeds various unobservable factors which to a large extent determine or at least influence the political trajectory of the children. Youngsters from more educated families are more likely to acquire the skills to receive political information and qualify their political views on the basis of this information. By the same token, the contextual political messages emanated from a politically engaged community do not only affect the political stances of the offspring while still residing with her parents, but are also important funnels through which these children learn to update and gradually crystallize their political preferences under the weight of new information.

All that said, it is equally interesting that, even when these encompassing indicators of socioeconomic status are taken into consideration, political engagement within the family remains an important force of parent-child partisan divergence. Probably more interesting is the fact that the

⁴⁵ The graphs displaying the indirect effects are not shown to save space. The interaction coefficient for parental politicization and offspring education is .291 (.192). The equivalent coefficients for aggregate political interest, partisanship and high-school socioeconomic status are .514 (.492), .336 (.497) and .277 (.666) respectively.

causal process through which this partisan change takes place - that is, through the change of social contexts and the occurrence of political events - seems to be mainly funneled by the political environment provided within the family. If not anything else, the results presented here indicate that parental politicization does not merely function as an artifact of contextual stimuli and parental demographic characteristics. Talking about politics is not completely determined by the education level of the parents. Nor is it redundant as a factor inducing further elaboration and reconsideration of the family partisan legacy once the socioeconomic and educational status of the latter is taken into account.

Elections

3 - Vote, and vote, and vote again:

the direct and indirect effect of the act of voting on future turnout

Why is it that young adults in the previous chapter, regardless of their politicization background, appeared to register greater electoral stability as they aged? Why did factors coming at play during early adulthood witness a gradual weakening of their impact on people's partisan profiles? Why did differences according to the parental level of political involvement progressively peter out? The scope of this and the following chapter is to investigate one of the factors that might contribute in this process, namely electoral participation.

To be sure, this developmental pattern of electoral stability is anything but ignored in the existing literature. Much of the research on political learning is motivated by a rather common pattern across different contextual settings and political periods: older cohorts are constantly more likely to vote in elections (Franklin et al. 2004) and to also feel attached to a particular party (Butler and Stokes 1974). A typical but rather tautological explanation for this pattern draws on the role of aging. Young cohorts, it is argued, are more vulnerable to contextual influences and thus less stable in their attitudinal and behavioral political characteristics because they have not yet become anchored to habitual patterns. The problem with this argument is that it assumes that anchoring is a deterministic destination for those entering the political world and thus it leaves unexplained the most theoretically interesting question, i.e. how does this anchoring process take place and what are the factors that lead to it?

In trying to unpack the black box of aging, political scientists have occasionally referred to the function of elections. In the case of turnout, voting in a given election is deemed to facilitate the repetition of this behavior in subsequent elections. Thus, elections in this case function in a seemingly mechanistic manner, whereby a repeated behavioral response to the same contextual stimulus gives rise to the formation of habitual engagement (Green and Shachar 2000). In the case of party identification the explanation is analogous but the link between elections and habits does not pass simply through participation but rather arises through actual choice: the difference between established and non-established voters is presumed to stem from the fact that the first have had the

opportunity to express their preferences in actual party choice more than the second (Andersen 1976:76).

Although this line of argument has served as the basis for various theoretical attempts to explain age differences in political participation (Miller and Shanks 1996; Plutzer 2002; Franklin et al. 2004) and partisan affiliation (Sears and Valentino 1997; Jennings and Markus 1984), it has been scarcely tested against the available empirical evidence. The reason for that is simple. As Meredith (2007:2) points out, 'individuals choose whether to participate [and how to vote] in elections, making it difficult to separate the effects of early voting experiences from the forces that caused individuals to participate [and make their party choices] at first place'. This means that the causal effect of the act of voting on future turnout and partisan attachment remains unestimated. In the case of voting, various underlying factors provide a latent inclination to either vote or abstain from elections. Thus, it is very difficult to identify the effect of the act of voting at time t on the probability of voting at time $t+1$. Unobserved heterogeneity prohibits the use of lagged voting decision as a predictor of the causal impact of the act of voting on future turnout. The problem in the case of party identification is similar: unobserved factors, that might have led individuals to particular voting choices, may also drive differences in their level of partisan loyalty. Since what we can generally observe are voters' (recalled) party choices and their partisan preferences, it is impossible to disentangle the flow of causality, which runs either way: from preferences to vote and vice versa.

Although the proliferation of field experiments addressing the impact of mobilization on turnout have enabled the systematic examination of the inertial feature of the act of voting, these studies are essentially limited to the analysis of turnout. Thus, they cannot be also employed to answer the question of how partisanship is formed during people's life trajectories. Even in the case of turnout, however, there are potential flaws which make further investigation vital. This is because apart from the potential contamination of voting effects with mobilization effects, attributed to the design of the experiments (I say more on that later), the analysis often combines a large sample of potential voters, without however distinguishing between young cohorts and older ones. Ideally the study of the act of voting on future behavioral and attitudinal predispositions would require one to trace those individuals who are most likely to provide information about the process of habit formation, i.e. voters who are still experiencing their 'formative years' (Stoker and Jennings 2008). Thus, longitudinal data on young voters which would enable an exogenous variation in turnout and would also contain information about competing explanations of the same phenomenon would be most appropriate for the study of the 'immunizing' impact of the act of voting on young individuals.

Using a rich dataset which combines all these aspects, the aim of these two chapters is to examine the role elections play in these two important processes, namely the formation of voting and

partisan habits. Again, whereas the second question has not been addressed in a systematic way in the literature, there is by now important evidence regarding the first. Even in the case of turnout, however, I try to enrich previous findings in two important ways. The first is by explicitly adhering to the underlying theory of persistence in voting, which suggests that habitual voting arises in a progressive manner, thus being the result not only of the previous election but also of a voter's full prior electoral record. Although there is a ceiling in this process, it is important to recognize that an implication of the theory of path dependence in voting is that each election does not only cause a direct effect on the next election but, through this effect, it also exerts an impact on people's propensity to vote in subsequent elections. I test this claim by distinguishing between direct and indirect effects. The second contribution is that I try to combine the insights from two seemingly different literatures under a unifying account of voting and party identification. Although the two phenomena are analyzed separately, the underlying objective is to show how they are interrelated and how one leads to the other. However, before reaching to this point, which comes in the last part of the next chapter, it is essential to explore the role of voting as a common explanation for the formation of both. In this chapter I focus on turnout, whereas the following chapter is devoted to PID.

3.1 Turnout and habit formation

Among various different explanations of turnout, one that helps to account for the observed difference in the level of participation among young voters and older cohorts is that of inertia (Plutzer 2002). Resources acquired during early socialization are important determinants of people's latent propensity to vote in their first elections, typically encountered during early adulthood. Thus, indicators of parental political involvement, level of education and income constantly emerge as important predictors of turnout in individual-level cross sectional studies (Verba et al. 1995). However, their effect is gradually diminished as the number of elections in one's record increases (Plutzer 2002; Aldrich et al. 2007). This is because as people repeat the same choice when confronting the same contextual stimulus, prior behavior becomes an almost deterministic predictor of future behavior. Voting in a given election is simply the outcome of having done so in the previous elections one has experienced. Under this logic, there is a particular self-enforcing function of the act of voting which makes future turnout more predictable. Irrespective of which exact forces lead to actual turnout at first place, it is this act as such that then facilitates future participation and converts voting into a matter of 'habit' (Miller and Shanks 1996; Franklin 2004), 'consuetude' (Green and Shachar 2000) or else, 'state dependence' (Achen 2006).

Various studies with observational data (Green and Shachar 2000; Plutzer 2002; Brody and Sniderman, 1977, for a cohort-level analysis see Franklin 2004) have provided important evidence in favor of this developmental process of turnout. The psychological underpinnings of this process have been also explicated in recent work, giving rise to the so-called habitual element of voting (Aldrich et al. 2007). Although this pattern is by now well studied, there are still important questions that require further examination. The first has to do with how to address the imperative selection problem which prevents a straightforward application of a regression model in predicting current voting through previous voting decisions.

This well known identification problem has led to the proliferation of experimental (Gerber et al. 2003) or quasi-experimental (Meredith 2007) studies aiming to isolate the impact of vote from unobserved factors which might have led to this decision. Although this is a very important development in the study of turnout, it still leaves some issues unresolved. First, the lack of information about other attitudinal characteristics makes inference more questionable because of potential design effects. The reason is that experiments typically work in the following fashion: an exogenous information shock which promotes turnout is randomly distributed to a targeted group. The behavior of this group in comparison with the control group is then used as evidence for the habitual element of voting. Although the shock explains increased participation in the ensuing election, observing a continuing difference in the level of turnout between the two groups in future elections (and despite the absence of any further intervention) is presumably attributed to the self-enforcing pattern of voting. This, however, cannot preclude the impact of information effects: people receiving the treatment might vote in increased rates and in this fashion also increase their political knowledge. In so doing, it might be this side-effect of the treatment design rather than the mere act of voting that explains future differences in turnout. Thus, apart from lacking a systematic analysis of the causal path through which vote affects future turnout, many of these studies are also potentially vulnerable to such information effects. In this chapter I address these issues through a quasi-experimental use of an observational study. I use the Parent-Youth Socialization Panel study (waves I and II, 1965-1973), which offers the possibility for a natural experiment, through the use of vote eligibility as an instrument of actual vote.

Although I will later explain the logic of the design, it is important to state in which ways this analysis contributes in this debate. First, eligibility induces exogenous variation in turnout and thus helps the identification of the causal effect of voting at one election on the probability of voting at the subsequent election. Moreover, using a panel study of a random sample of young individuals, I focus on the group of voters which is of more interest regarding the mechanism of habit formation, i.e. young people, still finding themselves in their 'formative years' (Stoker and Jennings 2008). Furthermore, employing information about various attitudinal and background char-

acteristics of the respondents, it is feasible to address alternative explanations for the observed patterns, such as differences due to levels of political knowledge and interest. More importantly, information about people's electoral record in various elections permits a more nuanced and detailed examination of the developmental feature of habit formation. This is done by taking into account the impact of vote at time t on time $t+2$, as mediated through its impact on voting at time $t+1$. This does more justice to the underlying theory of turnout, since it enables the examination of a gradual formative process.

The last contribution related to turnout will emerge only at the end of the next chapter. It is in the next chapter, and once the logic of the design has been explained, that I shift from turnout to vote choice. In so doing, I examine the role of vote in strengthening party identification among young adults. This effect is in turn linked to actual turnout, providing evidence for a particular causal path through which vote increases participation in future elections. Voting also implies some sort of party preference and it is through the manifestation of preference into actual behavioral choice that the act of voting gives rise to the formation of habitual electoral participation.

3.2 Previous findings

Since under the term of habit we can incorporate behavioral patterns which adhere to specific neural processes and are commonly characterized by a particular set of attitudinal aspects, a full grasp of this notion requires an interdisciplinary approach so that the insights from electoral sociology can be supplemented by the psychological findings about the process of habit formation in other behavioral contexts. Following this strategy, Aldrich et al. (2007) tried to unpack the notion of habit and apply it in the case of turnout. As they note, there are two key elements that reflect the presence of habitual behavior. The first is repetition: people give repeatedly the same response in a particular context. This creates associations in memory between the outcome of the response and stable features of the performance context. Repetition, under this perspective, creates associations between contextual features surrounding a given event and the outcome of the individual's response to this event. This results in automaticity which in turn makes the decision making process less demanding, since it now requires less conscious attention. Thus, the event per se can cue the response.

The other identifiable characteristic of habitual behavior is that it does not require activation of goal representation in memory. When the behavior is old, well-learned and has occurred many times before during the life cycle, it becomes more under the control of habit rather than behavioral intentions (Triandis, 1977 quoted in Aldrich et al. 2007). Previous findings of psychological

experimental studies show that as a given response acquires habitual characteristics, it also ceases to depend on goals and behavioral intentions (Triandis 1980, Ouellette and Wood 1998).

Adhering to this theoretical setting, in their analysis of electoral participation, Aldrich et al. (2007) constructed a variable denoting habitual behavior which, apart from including past voting behavior (see also Green and Shachar 2000) encompassed also an indicator of residence mobility. In their analysis they found considerable diversity in the effects of most conventional predictors of turnout (interest in the election, partisanship, parental political involvement) between habitual and non-habitual voters. Although these findings, which parallel Plutzer's growth curve analysis (2002), confirm that there is a difference in the decision making process between habitual voters and voters for whom voting is not yet formed as a habit, it is still questionable how exactly this habit is formed and, most importantly, the extent to which the act of voting as such contributes to this process once latent characteristics which favor participation among individuals are taken into account. The same is also true for Franklin's comparative analysis (2004) which clearly shows how contextual shocks and election characteristics or other institutional mechanisms are more important for cohorts who are still confronting their first three elections, and thus, as the author puts it, are yet to get 'stuck in their ways.' Again, although the differences between this group and older cohorts are unequivocal, we lack evidence about the actual impact of the act of voting in creating this observed pattern.

As a way to address this question from an observational point of view, Denny and Doyle (2009) use longitudinal data and employ a two-step estimator to account for unobserved heterogeneity and the associated initial conditions problem (Arulampalam et al. 2000). Although they find a remarkable effect of the act of voting in one election on the probability of voting in the subsequent election (a 13 per cent increase), their results are dependent on their identification strategy, which was based on the use of housing mobility between 16 and 23 as an instrument of voting in early adulthood but not later. As Meredith points out (2007:6), housing mobility in that age might affect schooling decisions which in turn may well affect future turnout patterns.

Experimental (and quasi-experimental) data have provided more unambiguous evidence regarding this last question, since they explicitly build upon an exogenous intervention causing variation in turnout and using this intervention as an instrument of actual vote. For instance, Gerber, Green and Shachar (2003) set out a randomized field experiment which shows how 'voting may be habit forming': having assigned a random portion of New Haven registered voters Get-Out-The-Vote signals prior to the 1998 midterm election, they find that this group continues to vote with higher propensity not only in that election but also in the 1999 local election, although be-

tween these two elections no personal or mail contacts were made.¹ Thus, an exogenous shock which serves to increase turnout in a given election may produce long-lasting boosts in electoral participation, attributed to the habitual feature of voting. Meredith (2007) uses voting age restrictions and compares cohorts of voters in California, showing that cohorts eligible to vote in 2000 are significantly more likely to vote in 2004 than those born only some days later making them ineligible to vote in 2000.

Although the present study draws upon these findings, it also departs from them in several important respects. To start with, using eligibility as an instrument of actual vote I enable the identification of the model by accounting for the selection problem. This is achieved through the use of individual-level data, thus allowing a more in-depth understanding of the causal mechanism at work. Moreover, information about people's observed attitudinal characteristics helps to discern whether the effects are driven by the act of voting as such or by information effects. Thus, we can rule out competing hypotheses related to differences in political knowledge and interest, which could not be explicitly addressed in previous studies due either to the assignment of treatment (in the case of Gerber et al. 2003) or to the use of cohort as the unit of analysis (in the case of Meredith 2007). The chosen design is also appropriate for exploring the indirect effect of voting at one's first eligible election on voting in future elections, as mediated through intervening elections. Thus, we can also explore the actual causal path through which prior election history affects future turnout. In the next chapter, where I shift to party identification, I elaborate more on the attitudinal underpinnings of this causal process. In so doing, I show how partisan and voting habits are developed hand-in-hand and how both are simultaneously driven by the act of voting.

¹ The first article by Gerber and Green (2000) on the impact of non-partisan mobilization to turnout - upon which their 2003 article on habit formation was based - resulted in the rebirth of experimental designs in political science through the implementation of field experiments. Yet, it has been severely criticized on the grounds of implementation deficiencies that when taken into account lead to partly contradictory conclusions. More particularly, Imai (2005) finds that when proper matching methods are used to account for incorrectly identified treatment and assignment groups, the negative effect of telephone-canvassing is converted into a non-zero positive effect, as one would expect. These caveats might also affect the validity of their results about the reinforcing role of the act of voting on future turnout. However, Imai (2005) also found significant personal canvassing effects which justify the use of random assignment to personal canvassing as an instrument for the estimation of the effect of voting in one election on the probability of casting a ballot in the next election. That said, it is important to stress the importance of proper statistical techniques that can correct for misclassifications and other problems that might arise during the design of field or survey experiments.

3.3 Data: the Youth-Parent Socialization Study as a natural experiment²

For the most part of this chapter I use data from the first two waves of the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study, 1965-1997 (Jennings and Niemi 1991). Details about the data can be found in the previous chapter. Here, it is important to illustrate the aspects of this study that make it particularly useful for present purposes. This is done in Figure 3.1, which displays graphically the structure of the panel.

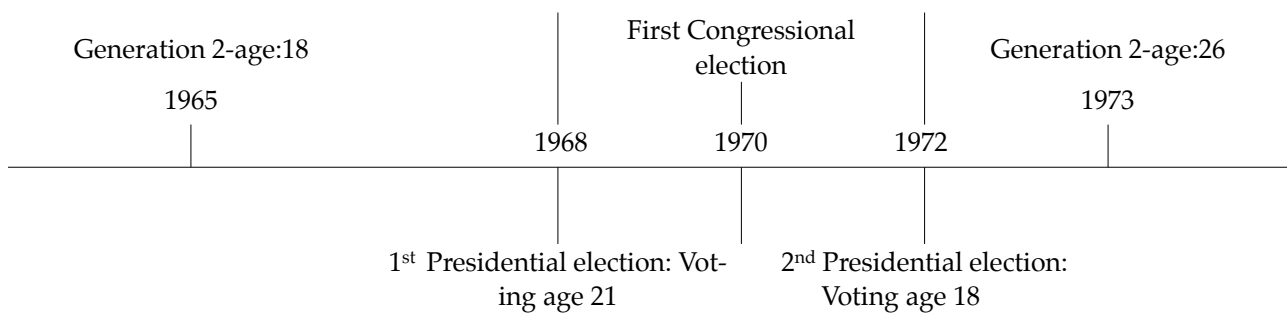


Figure 3.1: The structure of the panel study and how it helps the identification strategy in the analysis.

A particular feature of the data requires highlighting. In 1965 98 per cent of the youth sample (from the 1965-1973 panel) were born between 1946 and 1948, with the great majority (76.02 per cent) born in 1947. To minimize age differences I only focus on those individuals born either in 1947 or in 1948 (88.5 per cent). All of them were approximately 18 years old during the period of the first wave. When they were reinterviewed eight years later, they were approximately 26 years old. During this period, three elections have intervened. The 1968 election was the last Presidential election in which voting age was 21. This is exactly the age all respondents had reached or were still approaching by that year. In the 1970 Congressional and the 1972 Presidential elections there was no voting-age restriction for any of the respondents, since all were older than 21. The

² It is probably wrong to refer to this design as a natural experiment, since the latter is defined as ‘an observational study characterized by an exogenous process assigning units to different types of treatments in a haphazard fashion that is as good as random’ (Kern and Hainmueller 2009, see also chapter 1). Here, I take a particular feature of an observational study in order to identify the effect of vote on future turnout and party identification, namely the ‘accident’ that among a year-of-birth cohort sample, few of the respondents were not eligible to vote in a given election. As is shown in the part of the analysis, this identification strategy provides results that resemble those taken from a randomized experiment, i.e. they are remarkably robust to different specifications and combinations of control variables. However, this ‘accident’ does not constitute an intervention (unless we want to treat as intervention the date of birth which should not probably be very informative). That being said, I will refer to this design as a natural experiment on the grounds that it operates in the exact same way: the identification problem is taken care from the design and the estimates remain largely unaffected by the observables, which is what we would expect from a true experimental study.

interesting variation, however, comes in the 1968 election. Importantly, not all high-school seniors were eligible to vote in 1968. Despite their small (few months on average) age differences, a few of them (179, 16.88 per cent) had not reached voting age at the time of that election. This is the pattern that I exploit here. Since we have information about individual attitudes and characteristics before the elections, and we have their electoral record as provided by the 1973 panel, we can examine the impact of the act of voting in 1968 on turnout in 1970 by distinguishing between those who were eligible to vote in 1968 and those who were not.

3.4 Eligibility as an Instrument of vote

The scope of the analysis is to examine whether those who did not vote in 1968 would be more likely to vote in 1970 under the counterfactual situation of having voted in 1968. Following the conventional terminology in the Neyman-Rubin framework of causal inference (Neyman 1923[1990], Rubin 1974; 2006, Angrist et al. 1996, see for a review Sekhon 2008), this effect is the Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT, where treated here are those having voted in 1968).³ To be sure, by using eligibility as an IV of actual vote in 1968 in order to account for the selection problem, the treatment effect parameter becomes what is known as the Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE).⁴ To get an unbiased estimate of the LATE, however, we need to establish the validity of vote-eligibility as an IV of vote.

Before I turn to the identification assumptions, it is useful to clarify the notation. Following standard convention, I let T_z denote the treatment status (having or not voted) given the eligibility status $Z \in \{0,1\}$. Thus, $T_0=0$ implies that non-eligibles did not vote, whereas $T_1=1$ means that eligibles actually voted in 1968. Although the first case is always true, the second is not. This is how the actual treatment and the IV differ. Both these groups represent the compliers. Defiers here are only the so-called never takers: $T_1=T_0=0$: those who did not vote even if eligible to do so. Always-takers (non-eligibles voting in 1968) are ruled out by the design. Finally, Y_{zt} represents the potential outcome if $Z=z$ and $T=t$. For instance, Y_{10} denotes the probability of voting in 1970 for a respondent who was eligible to vote in 1968 but did not do so.

³ The key idea and the starting point of the Neyman-Rubin (or also referred to simply as the Rubin framework of causal inference, eg. Holland 1986) is that each unit of interest has two potential outcomes, one if treated and one if not treated. A causal effect is then defined as the difference between the two potential outcomes. The problem, of course, originates in that we can only observe one of the two potential outcomes (Sekhon 2008).

⁴ 'Local' in that it applies only to compliers (those whose treatment status can be changed by the instrument): those assigned and receiving the treatment and those not taking the treatment without being assigned to do so (Morgan and Winship 2007:202). In our case the first groups corresponds to the eligibles voting in 1968 and the second to the non-eligibles not voting in the same election.

For eligibility to provide a consistent IV of actual vote in 1968, it needs to satisfy the following criteria (Abadie 2003):⁵

1. Independence: The IV is ignorable to potential outcomes and treatments. Formally, this means that, conditional on a vector of observables X , $[Y_{00}, Y_{01}, Y_{10}, Y_{11}, T_0, T_1] \perp Z$.
2. Exclusion: knowledge on eligibility should not help us predict vote in 1970 once actual turnout in 1968 is taken into account. In other words, were both groups eligible to vote in 1968, eligibles should not be more prone to vote than non-eligibles. Formally, $[Y_{0t}=Y_{1t}] \mid X$ for $T \in \{0,1\}$.
3. Non-zero causal effect of the IV on the treatment: knowledge on eligibility should help us predict actual turnout in 1968: $0 < P(Z=1 \mid X) < 1$ (not everyone is eligible) & $P(T_1=1 \mid X) > P(T_0=1 \mid X)$ (eligibles more likely to vote in 1968 than non-eligibles).
4. Monotonicity (Imbens and Angrist 1994): there are no defiers and there is at least one complier: no-one is discouraged from voting because of being eligible to do so: $[T_1 - T_0] \mid X \geq 0$.

I examine each of these assumptions in turn. Assumptions (3) and (4) are relatively easy to establish. Regarding the first, knowledge of eligibility clearly helps to predict actual turnout in 1968: a point biserial correlation of 1968 eligibility and 1968 turnout confirms that the two dummies are closely related (.491, t-value:14.84). I later provide more evidence on how this relationship holds even when pre-treatment characteristics are taken into account. Monotonicity is implied by design: non-eligibles had no right to vote and thus did not do so. Thus, the only type of 'defiers' here are 'never-takers', i.e. people who had the right to vote but abstained. This implies, as will be also noted later, that the LATE here is equivalent to the ATT (Angrist and Pischke 2009:162).

The two assumptions that require more scrutiny are assumptions (1) and (2). First, ignorability, which implies that eligibility is 'as good as randomly assigned', could be violated if parents had calculated the date of birth of their child so that the latter could vote in 1968. If these families are more politicized, which would be likely to be the case, 1968 non-eligibles might be simply less likely to vote in 1970 because of differences in background political interest rather than because of

⁵ The assumption of stable unit value treatment (SUTVA), which requires that potential outcomes and treatments of individuals are unrelated to the treatment, assignment or outcome status of other individuals (Angrist et al. 1996:446) should also hold in order the IV estimator to provide the LATE of vote on change in PID. However, given that this is a more general assumption which is not explicitly related to the choice of the IV (and is implicitly made in all types of regression analysis) I do not explicitly refer to it here (see also Morgan and Winship 2007:37). One way in which SUTVA could be violated here is if eligibility increases political interest which in turn might lead to differences in partisan orientations. This pattern could be transmitted to non-eligibles through peer effects. However, given that school clustering refers to 1965 and the actual election of interest takes place three years later, even if such information effects exist, they should not manifest themselves by 1965. To test this assumption the average level of political interest among non-eligibles is correlated with the percentage of eligibles found in each high-school. This correlation is .05, a figure which could be easily found by chance ($p > .396$).

not having voted in 1968. This, rather unlikely, process cannot be explicitly tested. However, it could be traced by comparing the level of parental political interest between the two groups. This is shown in Table 3.1, and, rather expectedly, there seems to be no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Table 3.1: Summary statistics for control and treatment group, 1965-1973

	Eligibles 1968 (1)	Non-Eligibles 1968 (2)	p-value for Ha: (1)≠(2)	p-value for Ha: PDF(X Eligibles) ≠PDF(X Non-eligibles)
PID-65 (0-6)	2.56	2.57	0.969	1
Strength of PID-65 (0-3)	1.74	1.75	0.848	0.947
Black (1=Yes)	0.083	0.074	0.684	
Male (1=Yes)	0.504	0.553	0.335	
Was in college preparation course (1=Yes)	0.534	0.627	0.036	
Mother PID (0-6)	2.76	2.41	0.172	0.34
Father PID (0-6)	2.66	2.31	0.203	0.288
Father Political Interest (1-3)	1.63	1.60	0.533	0.985
Mother Political Interest (1-3)	1.91	1.97	0.237	0.913
Father did not vote(1=Yes)	0.043	0.039	0.785	
Mother did not vote(1=Yes)	0.11	0.09	0.145	
Age (1-24)	18.49	12.15	0	0

Note: N for eligibles 179; N for non-eligibles: 894. Third table presents the p-value for a test of difference of means. To capture potential differences in the distribution of the covariates apart from differences in means across the groups, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov non-parametric test is presented in the last column. PID is always measured through the 0-6 scale where 0: Strong Democrat - 6: Strong Republican. Strength of PID is measured as 0: Independent - 3: Strong partisan. Age is measured as month and year of birth, thus ranging from 1 (December 1948) to 24 (January 1947), parental PID and parental level of political interest are taken by respondents' evaluations; when parents' own responses are used, the results are very similar.

Exclusion postulates that if eligibles are fundamentally different from non-eligibles in various attitudinal respects related to turnout, eligibility status could have an impact on the propensity to vote in 1970 irrespective of whether people voted or not in 1968. Exclusion depends merely on how well eligibility works as a randomization device in distinguishing between the two groups. To the extent that the age-gap between eligibles and non-eligibles is small enough so as not to encompass systematic attitudinal differences, a simple institutional restriction could not possibly

cause self-selection bias in the comparison between the two groups. Later in the paper I test whether the results are driven by age-differences without finding any support for this alternative explanation. For the moment, it is sufficient to examine whether and the extent to which the two groups differ in terms of pre-treatment observables. The results are shown in Table 3.1. Reassuringly, but hardly unexpectedly, the two groups are indistinguishable in terms of potential confounds measured before 1968. There are only two exceptions and one of them is determined by the design: eligibles are always older than non-eligibles and, as Table 3.1 shows, the average age-gap is almost eight months.⁶ The other is a proxy of respondents' level of education, as measured in 1965.⁷ Non-eligibles are on average more likely to follow a college preparation course program. These two variables, along with all other variables shown in Table 3.1, are used as controls in the estimation of the effects.

Given that, with the exception of these two variables, all other covariates are orthogonal to eligibility, adding them as controls primarily serves to decrease the variance of the outcome variable, thus increasing the precision of the estimates (Angrist and Pische 2009:176). Thus, it needs to be acknowledged from the outset that all key findings hold either when other controls are also included or in the case in which only age (as the underlying factor serving for the instrumentation) and education are included in the model.

Evidence in Table 3.1 does not constitute a formal proof that assumption (2) is satisfied. Such a proof is not feasible since exclusion refers to quantities that can never be jointly observed. What it says is that if non-eligibles voted, eligibility would make no difference later turnout. Although intuitively this appears very plausible, its formal examination requires observing the counterfactual of non-eligible voters.⁸ That said, Pearl (2009:274) provides a test, albeit weak, for the validity of an instrument regarding the exclusion condition. The test is based on bounding analysis (Balke and

⁶ Actually, this is an overestimation of the actual difference between respondents of each group, because the average age of non-eligibles is affected by few observations which have been born after February 1948 (10 per cent of the non-eligible group). Excluding these observations leaves the results largely unchanged (and when it changes them this is only by reinforcing the conclusions), but I choose to keep them given that the number of observations for the non-eligible group is already much smaller than the eligible group. To be sure, this difference in terms of the number of observations comprising each group affects only the precision (by decreasing it) of the estimated causal effects (Josh Angrist, personal communication).

⁷ An important point needs to be made with respect to the education level of the respondents, a potentially key predictor of their turnout rates. The problem with education is that it is measured in 1973, thus including it as a control would introduce post-treatment bias, since its effect might be temporally posterior to 1968 vote (King and Zeng 2006:147; see also Angrist and Pischke 2009:64-65). Moreover, Wooldridge (2005) has shown how controlling for post-treatment covariates violates the ignorability-of-treatment assumption. To account for potential pre-treatment confounds related to the level of education, I use as a proxy of college attendance a dummy denoting whether high-school seniors attended a college preparation course program at school (measured in 1965). The tetrachoric correlation between these two variables is .746 (std. error: .023).

⁸ We can only have a hint about this assumption later, when we test the impact of eligibility on future turnout, once 1968 turnout is taken into account. See also the discussion in Angrist and Krueger 1994.

Pearl 1997) and in the case of no always-takers (no non-eligibles who voted, which is of course the case here) involves the following set of inequality constraints:

$$P(Y = y, T(1) | Z = 1) \geq P(Y = y, T(1) | Z = 0) \quad (3.1)$$

and

$$P(Y = y, T(0) | Z = 0) \geq P(Y = y, T(0) | Z = 1) \quad (3.2)$$

for all $y \in \{0,1\}$. Again, Y is vote in 1970, T denotes vote in 1968 and Z denotes 1968 eligibility.⁹ In calculating the sample frequencies of these quantities, we can easily see how all these conditions are satisfied:

(3.1) for $y=1$: $.381 - 0 > 0$; for $y=0$: $.261 - 0 > 0$

(3.2) for $y=1$: $.307 - .062 > 0$; for $y=0$: $.692 - .295 > 0$

Although this evidence does not establish the exclusion criterion, at least it serves to reassure us that eligibility works as anticipated when used as an instrument of actual vote.

3.5 A graphical representation of the design

Before we move to the results, it is useful to provide a more intuitive illustration of how eligibility works as an IV of actual vote. This is shown graphically by Figure 3.2, which presents the proportion of 1970 voters across different groups of respondents, according to their month and year of birth. Seen in this way, the research set-up follows a sharp regression discontinuity design (RDD),¹⁰ with the 5th of November –the day the 1968 Presidential election was held– serving as the time-point which distinguishes between the two groups. Since the assignment of the treatment (vote) depends only on passing the preset threshold (eligibility) on a continuous selection variable

⁹ Following standard notation, upper-case letters are used to denote random variables, whereas lower cases denote realized values of these variables. Furthermore, 1 always asserts realization of the condition denoted by each binary variable (vote for T, Y and eligibility for Z) whereas 0 denotes its negation. Moreover, the notation throughout the analysis assumes large-sample properties, which permit the straightforward replacement of population distributional characteristics with their sample analogs.

¹⁰ Sharp in that the threshold distinguishes potential takers from non-takers in a deterministic fashion. Since there is no possibility to have voted in 1968 if one is born after the 5th of November 1947, there is no need to assume an interval around the threshold point for never takers. This is only needed for potential takers and in order to minimize age differences. I only focus on the age factor because date of birth constitutes the only information used for the construction of the two groups. Since some restrictions have been made in the selection of the observations in order to reduce the age gap between eligibles and non-eligibles, I use bootstrapped standard errors for the main part of the analysis. To account for the clustering of the observations at the school level, school is used as the strata identifier, so that the bootstrap samples are taken independently within each school-level unit.

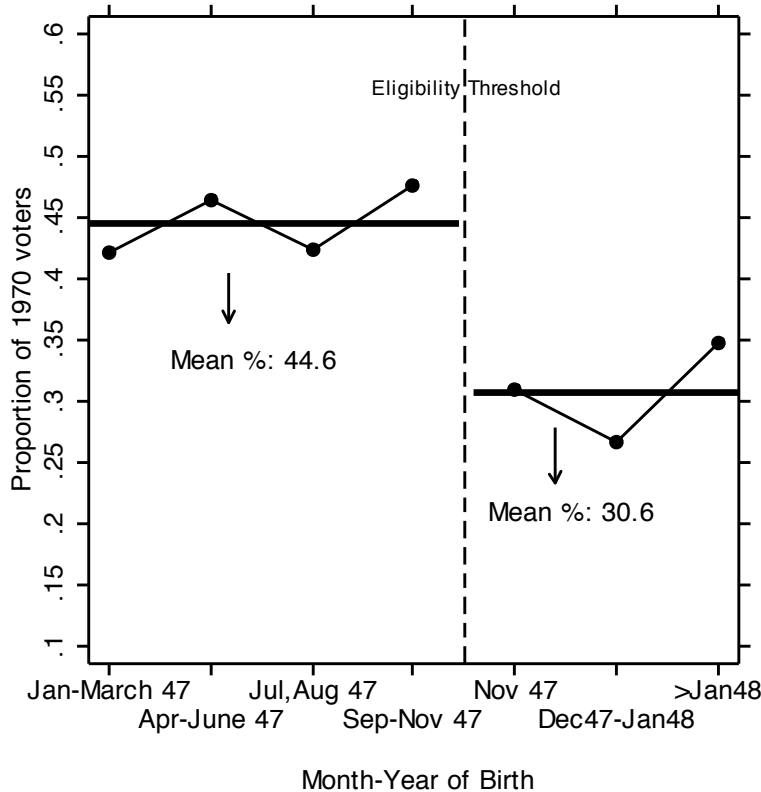


Figure 3.2: Percentage of 1970 voters according to the year and month of birth.

Note: Each dot represents a group of voters born in the same month-interval, as defined in the x-axis. The time intervals are chosen so as to balance the number of cases summarized with each data point.

(birth date), observations clustered around the threshold (election date) are assumed to differ with respect to the outcome only due to whether they have been assigned to the treatment, which in the neighborhood of the threshold is assumed to be assigned randomly (Butler 2009:124, Lee 2008). Thus, non-eligibles in our case provide the counterfactual group for the eligibles. Figure 3.2 shows how this is the case. It displays the average percentage of voters in the 1970 election as we move from older to younger groups. Although there is some fluctuation within each group, we can clearly observe a cut-off point which corresponds to the distinction between 1968 eligibles and non-eligibles. In the next section I show that this difference remains relatively unchanged even when controlling, among others, for age differences among individuals.

3.6 Results

Using eligibility as an IV of actual vote, the average causal effect of 1968 vote on the probability of voting in the 1970 Congressional election can be defined as follows:

$$LATE_{1968Vote} \equiv \frac{P(Y = 1 | Z = 1) - P(Y = 1 | Z = 0)}{P(T = 1 | Z = 1)} = [P(Y = 1) - P(Y = 0)] | T = 1 \equiv ATT \quad (3.3)$$

where Y is vote in 1970, T is vote in 1968 and Z is 1968 eligibility. As equation (3.3) implies, given the lack of always-takers [$P(T=1 | Z=0)=0$], the LATE in this case corresponds to the ATT, the effect for those who actually voted. Calculating the corresponding proportions of the ratio in equation (3.3), we find that $ATT=(.444-.307)/.645=.212$. The interpretation of this finding is that eligibles were 21.2 per cent more likely to vote in 1970 than non-eligibles. In other words, if non-eligibles had voted in 1968, the chances of voting also in 1970 would have increased by approximately one fifth.

Controlling for the observables of Table 3.1 and assuming a linear functional form the ATT is estimated through the following 2SLS procedure:¹¹

$$Voted68_i = \alpha + \beta_1 Eligible68_i + \gamma_1 X_i + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (3.4)$$

$$Voted70_i = a + \beta_2 E(Voted68_i | Eligible68_i, X_i) + \gamma_2 X_i + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (3.5)$$

where X denotes the set of controls, s indicates clustering of the observations at the school-level and β_2 represents the IV estimand of 1968 vote on 1970 vote.

Table 3.2 presents the results, while also evaluating the role of eligibility as an IV of 1968 vote. The first column presents the ‘naïve’ model which includes 1968 vote as a predictor of 1970 turnout. Ignoring unobserved heterogeneity, voting in 1968 appears to exert a very strong impact on the propensity to vote in 1970. The second column provides an indication regarding the exclusion assumption by showing that eligibility causes no impact on 1970 vote when actual 1968 vote is taken into account. This implies that there seems to be no other path through which being eligible to vote in 1968 would affect turnout in 1970 apart from actually voting. Column three presents the first stage in the presence of controls: turnout in 1968 is regressed on 1968 eligibility status together

¹¹ Evidently, I do not estimate the causal effect of 1968 turnout through a regression discontinuity framework, i.e. I do not try to (minimally) extrapolate the difference in turnout on the exact date of birth that would correspond to the day the 1968 election took place. The reason for this is that given the small age gap between the two groups, it seems more intuitive to compare the mean levels of the two groups. Eligibles who were two or three months older than other eligibles would not be significantly more likely to vote as a result of this age difference. This is also indicated by Figure 3.2. In effect, the findings are higher when the estimation follows an RDD interaction model (see more on this technique in chapter 5) because among non-eligibles the older group voted in lower levels than the younger group. Other studies using eligibility follow the same estimation procedure used here (Meredith 2007; Mullainathan and Washington 2009).

with the group of predictors shown in Table 3.1. The results, shown in column 3, confirm the bivariate correlation reported above.

Table 3.2: Using 1968 eligibility as an IV of voting in 1968 in predicting 1970 turnout.

	The impact of 1968 vote on 1970 vote	Zero effect of eligibility on 1970 when 1968 vote is included	Predicting 1968 vote with 1968 eligibility (1st-stage)	2SLS	LARF	Logit (eligibility only)
Voted-68	1.65 (.205)	1.66 (.175)				
Eligible-68		-.233 (.311)	.690 (.054)	.232 (.074)	.221 (.081)	.899 (.303)
N	806	806	915	811	811	811

Note: Entries are log-odds in the first, second and last column, OLS coefficients in the third, fourth and fifth column, bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses, clustered at the school level. In the last column, eligibility is used as an IV in a logit estimation of vote in 1970, without adjusting for imperfect compliance.

The fourth column presents the 2SLS results, which also largely confirm the bivariate finding presented above.¹² If the bivariate results had come from a randomized experiment, controls should cause only trivial changes to the estimation. This is exactly what we observe here. As if it were a randomized experiment, the effect of 1968 vote on the propensity to vote in 1970 remains approximately equal with what was found above. In specific, when controlling for observables, vote in 1968 increases the probability of voting in 1970 by 23.2 per cent.

Moreover, given that in the presence of covariates 2SLS provides an unbiased estimation of the LATE only under the assumption that treatment effects are constant within strata of X (see Kern and Hainmueller 2009:388; Abadie 2003; Morgan and Winship 2007), I estimate the effects by allowing for heterogeneous treatment effects through the semi-parametric Local Average Response Function estimator (LARF) proposed by Abadie (2003).¹³ The results, which are very similar to those found with 2SLS (see also Angrist and Pischke 2009:180), are presented in the fifth column of the table. 1968 eligibles appear to be 22 per cent more likely to vote in 1970, even when the constant treatment effects assumption is relaxed. Finally, the last column of Table 3.2 shows the results from a logit, in which eligibility replaces directly (that is, without a first-stage) actual vote. The reason for this last estimation is to compare the effect of 1968 eligibility with the effect of 1968 vote, as

¹² To ensure the orthogonality of the residuals, each stage is estimated with OLS, which provides a linear approximation of the probability density function of the outcome variable (see Angrist and Pische, 2009).

¹³ I am indebted to Jens Hainmueller for making the code for the LARF estimation in R available to me.

presented in the first column (both entries in the two columns represent log-odds from two dummies and are directly comparable). Although the OLS analogue of this regression is more conservative than the 2SLS estimate, because it assumes that $P(T=1 | Z=1)=1$,¹⁴ it serves to illustrate the difference in the magnitude of the effects when unobserved heterogeneity is taken into account. Once again 1968 eligibility - as an IV of 1968 turnout - increases the log likelihood to vote in the congressional elections of 1970 by .899 points. The difference in the predicted probability of voting in 1970 as a result of being eligible to vote in 1968 is 19 per cent [95% CI: 6.8 - 30.2].¹⁵ Although this is a stark difference between the two groups, its magnitude is not as large as would be indicated by the use of actual vote as a predictor of 1970 turnout, which according to the estimates of column 1 would be 36 per cent [95% CI: 29.4 - 42.9]. In effect, the difference in the estimates of the first and the last column provides some indication about the magnitude of the bias associated with the use of actual vote as a proxy of habit, at least without taking into account the problem of unobserved heterogeneity (see also Shachar 2003; Fowler 2006:338).

3.7 Confounds and rivaling explanations¹⁶

At this stage three competing explanations for the observed findings are examined. The first refers to the extent to which the results are due to vote eligibility or simply due to the age gap between the two groups. Although existing age differences are relatively small, the fact that all respondents enter in an 'impressionable period' in their political lives means that even those small differences might be crucial for changes in their political orientations. To see whether this is the case, I focus only on the sample of eligible voters. As a placebo test, I distinguish between voters who were born before the end of July of 1947 and those born since August of the same year. All voters in both groups were eligible to vote. The same coding strategy is imposed, regarding the younger sample as non-eligible to vote in 1968 and the older sample of eligibles as eligible to vote in both elections. If differences related to age generate the observed pattern, we would have to observe similar findings for the placebo test. Table 3.3 presents the results. There is no indication

¹⁴ To grasp how this is the case, suffice it to say that the equivalent estimate from an OLS is .154, i.e. very close to the nominator of the ratio in equation (3). Given that $P(\cdot) < 1$, it is straightforward that $\beta_{OLS} < \beta_{2SLS}$. In other words, the implicit assumption made in the last column is that there is perfect correspondence between assignment to treatment and actual treatment status, which of course, if it were the case, would imply that the denominator of equation (1) equals unity.

¹⁵ Throughout the chapter, predicted probabilities are calculated with Clarify (King et al. 2000).

¹⁶ In this section I group both competing explanations that could account for the increased likelihood among eligibles to vote in 1970, thus proper confounds in the effect attributed to the eligibility status, and competing explanations about the role of elections, i.e. whether it is by voting or by simply experiencing an electoral campaign that eligibles appear more likely to vote in the next election.

whatsoever that the older cohort votes in significantly higher rates in the 1970 election. The coefficient of eligibility is essentially zero. Evidently, it cannot be age that accounts for the observed differences.

Table 3.3: Placebo test for the impact of age on the change in PID in 1973: analysis limited to eligibles

	Voted ₇₀ log-odds (Robust std. Error)
Eligible ₆₈	-.046 (.822)

Note: Eligibles are those born before August 1947 and non-eligibles are those still eligible to vote but born after July 1947, N=698, eligibles: 340, non-eligibles: 358, results very similar when analogous ratio of eligibles and non-eligibles (as in the original test) is used: -.083 (std. error: .282)).

Table 3.4: Testing the impact of 1968 eligibility on various indicators of political sophistication in 1973.

	Political Knowledge ₇₃	Interest in public affairs ₇₃	Political Activity ₇₃	Political Trust ₇₃	Internal Political Efficacy ₇₃	Ideological consistency ₇₃
Eligible ₆₈	-.095 (.148)	.073 (.102)	-.400 (.261)	-.040 (.173)	-.022 (.082)	-.151 (.199)
Political Knowledge ₆₅	.633 (.025)					
Interest in public affairs ₆₅		.249 (.047)				
School Political Activity ₆₅			.236 (.040)			
Political Trust ₆₅				.254 (.037)		
Internal political efficacy ₆₅					.287 (.030)	
Ideological consistency ₆₅						.368 (.031)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses. Political activity in 1973 is measured in a 0-9 scale and involves all modes of political participation excluding voting in elections. Since in 1965 the youth is only 18 years old, school political activity is used as a baseline variable. Political knowledge is a 7-point index. Ideological consistency and political trust are 1-6 and 1-5 scales respectively. All variables are coded so that higher values denote higher levels of the attribute in question. Ordinal logit produces very similar results in all cases.

Another potential explanation for the effect of vote is that it increases the probability of future voting but it does not do so through a simple process of habitual engagement. It rather works indirectly either by stimulating political interest or by promoting a sense of civic duty. Rather than being the act of voting that causes this effect it might simply be that people who are eligible to vote

become more informed about the coming election since they are more easily targeted by the local party campaigns or simply because knowing that they will vote, they pay more attention to the media. Alternatively, by voting in 1968, people might feel more embedded in the political system. This sense of taking part in a nation-wide decision making process may increase their level of trust in the political institutions of their country, which in turn may drive their decision to vote in 1970.

To examine all these alternative causal paths through which voting in one election might encourage voting in the subsequent election, I examine the mean difference between eligibles and non-eligibles in terms of their change from 1965 to 1973 in each of the following attributes: political interest, knowledge, trust, activity, internal efficacy and a measure of ideological consistency, which is based on Converse’s model on mass perceptions about political issues (Converse 1964, see also chapter 2). If any of these alternative explanations works, eligibles should acquire this characteristic more than non-eligibles. The results, displayed in Table 3.4, show that in no instance do we find significant differences between the two groups. This evidence rules out competing explanations about the indirect role of elections, thus making more credible the attribution of the effect of 1968 vote on the habitual fashion in which the act of voting triggers future participation. That said, an important causal path, namely through the increase of partisan strength, has remained unexamined. I return to this issue in the next chapter.

Table 3.5: Testing the impact of 1966 eligibility on Political interest, activity, trust and efficacy in 1997.

	Voted ₉₆	Interest in public affairs ₉₇	Political Activity ₉₇	Political Trust ₉₇	Internal Political Efficacy ₉₇	External Political Efficacy ₉₇
Eligible ₉₆	.538 (.060)	.042 (.267)	.592 (.459)	.073 (.335)	.041 (.105)	.088 (.223)
N	214	209	213	210	211	208

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses. Political activity is measured in a 0-9 scale and involves all modes of political participation excluding voting in elections. Political interest and political trust are 1-5 and 1-6 scales respectively. Internal and external political efficacy are measured in a 1-3 point scale. All variables are coded so that higher values denote higher levels of the attribute in question. Ordinal logit produces very similar results in all cases. Results control for age.

A potential criticism to this finding could be that these are all weak tests for the identification of the indirect effect of elections in future attitudinal characteristics. This is because of the time length between the outcome of interest (vote in 1970) and the variables used as proxies of political interest and efficacy. People may have acquired political information which leads them to vote in 1970. However, this effect might have worn off once everyone in the sample got the chance to vote. In

other words, since we cannot measure these behavioral and attitudinal characteristics at the same period at which the outcome of interest takes place, it might be argued that it is more difficult for these alternative hypotheses to be confirmed than for the main hypothesis tested in the previous section.

Table 3.6: Testing whether voting in 1968 influences Republicans more than Democrats in voting in 1970.

	Voted-70
Eligible ₆₈	.950 (.320)
Republican	.426 (.480)
Eligible ₆₈ *Republican	-.366 (.519)
Controls	<i>Not shown</i>

Note: Entries are log-odds, robust standard errors in parentheses, N=692, controls include all covariates in Table 3.1.

Given the lack of data in 1970 we cannot test empirically this alternative hypothesis. However, a test of the immediate impact of eligibility on these indicators is provided by the fourth wave of this study, which also interviewed the children of the 1965 youth cohort, when the latter was around 50 years old. As was also noted in the previous chapter, this last wave took place in 1997, one year after the 1996 election. Since the range of age among the 3rd generation is much more dispersed (year of birth ranging approximately from 1968 to 1984), it is difficult to isolate and compare two different age cohorts in a way similar to the class of 1965. Therefore, I distinguish between respondents who were 16-18 years old in 1997 and had no right to vote in 1996 and those aged 19-21 and were eligible to vote in that election. To be sure, the fact that the age gap in this case is much wider could only enhance the likelihood of finding significant differences in favor of eligibles (since older people are on average more interested in political affairs). The results appear in Table 3.5. Although the smaller number of observations might increase the level of uncertainty in the estimates, the pattern is straightforward. The first column shows that 1996 eligibility predicts, as would be expected, vote in the presidential election of that year. The next five columns show that eligibles were not more likely to register higher level of political interest, activity, trust, or efficacy. Although this is not the same cohort as in 1968, these results still indicate lack of effects due to the acquisition of political information or the alignment to the political system, stemming from the act of voting.

As a last competing hypothesis, I examine whether there is inter-party heterogeneity in the effects of 1968 vote. Previous research suggests that people who voted for the winning candidate in a given election are more likely to appear in the polls in the coming election (Bendor et al. 2003; Fowler 2006). If this is the case, this implies that the act of voting is again influential but only when vote goes to the winning party. That said, Meredith (2007) finds the opposite pattern when comparing Democrat and Republican cohorts in California. Despite the fact that Republicans won the 2000 election, areas with more Democrat voters showed higher turnout rates than areas with more registered Republican voters.

An ideal way to test these two competing claims would be to interact eligibility with a dummy denoting respondents' party preference at the time of the election. The problem is that individuals are only interviewed in 1965 and in 1973, not in 1968, when the actual election takes place. Moreover, although one could simply use 1968 vote choice, as recalled in 1973 for the eligibles who actually voted, vote choice for non-eligibles would still re-main unknown. To address this problem, the dummy used for the interaction denotes individuals who declared a Republican partisanship both in 1965 and in 1973. Although it might seem counter-intuitive, conditioning also on 1973 PID is important because people might have changed their partisanship either from 1965 to 1968 or from 1968 to 1970.¹⁷ This is not rare since party preference during early adulthood is more volatile than when people age (Jennings et al. 2009). By conditioning on people's partisan preferences in both waves, we can be more certain about their actual preferences at the time of the election.¹⁸ The results appear in Table 3.6. As it is seen, there is no indication that voting in 1968 has been more crucial for 1970 turnout either among Republicans or among Democrats. The interaction between eligibility and party is statistically indistinguishable from zero.¹⁹ Thus, the effects attributed to the 1968 election should most likely stem from the act of voting as such rather than this act in combination with the final outcome of the election.

3.8 Indirect Effects

Thus far we have seen that having voted in one's first presidential election increases significantly the likelihood of casting a ballot in the coming congressional election. The next question that

¹⁷ Importantly, using PID in 1965 and 1973 for all respondents I derive the party preference of the two groups (eligibles and non-eligibles) in the same way. This logic will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

¹⁸ Although the 1973 wave asks respondents whether they have changed their partisanship between the two waves, excluding those respondents (57) who have declared changing their PID between 1968 and 1970 leaves the result unchanged.

¹⁹ Calculating the marginal effect of eligibility for the two values of the party dummy leads also to the same conclusion since the magnitude of the coefficient does not vary significantly between the two groups.

naturally emerges is whether this effect is also apparent in the next Presidential election. There are two ways in which 1968 vote might have an effect on 1972 turnout. The first is directly, that is, without taking into account its effect on 1970 vote. The short analysis presented in the Appendix shows that this effect is actually zero and points out the reasons for this pattern. The second way, which is more interesting for present purposes as will be explicated below, is indirect, that is, as mediated through voting in the 1970 congressional election. Vote in 1968 increases the likelihood of casting a ballot also in 1970. Taken together, how do these events affect future turnout in presidential elections?²⁰

Although largely ignored in the existing literature, examining this pattern is important because it provides a more complete test about the theoretical implications of the habitual voting literature. Voting habits are formed progressively, through the repetition of the same behavior under repeated analogous instances provided by one's social context. This implies that forming habitual patterns in terms of voting is the result of a process in which any given election reinforces the repetition of the same behavior in the following ones. Although there is a ceiling in this process, once the habit of voting (or of not voting) is established (Franklin 2004), it is very likely that if prior behavior plays a role in the establishment of electoral persistence, this should be apparent not only in the first election people encounter but rather, and even in a gradually decreasing level, in a series of elections taking place during people's formative years. Thus, in our application, voting in a Presidential election in a way introduces the young individual with the political world and thus facilitates further engagement. Given that Presidential elections are more salient and capture higher levels of media attention than congressional elections, actual participation is less likely to take place when people encounter a congressional election as their first election. Nevertheless, voting actually for this election, should also contribute in the formation of habits by making further participation in future elections appear more natural and, most importantly, making non-participation appear less normal than what would be the case in the instance of prior abstention. Thus, we should expect an impact of 1968 vote on the likelihood of voting in 1972, mediated through vote in the 1970 congressional election. Expression (3.6) defines this Average Causal Mediation Effect (ACME) and enables a more precise understanding of its content (see Imai et al. 2009:7).

$$ACME \equiv E\{Y_i(t_i, M_i(1)) - Y_i(t_i, M_i(0))\} \quad (3.6)$$

²⁰ It might seem strange to explore indirect effects in the absence of direct effects. This issue is also addressed in the Appendix of this chapter.

where Y is voting in 1972, M is voting in 1970, T is voting in 1968 and t is a realized value of T [0,1]. Equation (3.6) refers to the following counterfactual question: how more (or less) likely would it be to vote in 1972, if one changes the probability of voting in 1970 under the realized condition of not-voting in 1968 to the probability of voting in 1970 that corresponds to the 1968 voting condition?

To be able to estimate this effect, however, we need to make a rather stringent assumption, i.e. that both the treatment and the mediator are ignorable to prior characteristics (which implies also that the mediator is ignorable given the observed value of the treatment). Formally, the following set of equations present the sequential ignorability assumption, essential in order to identify indirect effects of 1968 eligibility mediated through vote in the 1970 congressional election (Imai et al. 2008).²¹

$$\{Y(1), Y(0), M(1), M(0), D(1), D(0)\} \perp Z \mid X = x \quad (3.7)$$

$$\{Y(1), Y(0)\} \perp M \mid Z, X = x \quad (3.8)$$

where Z denotes 1968 eligibility and X serves as a set of potential pre-treatment observed confounds.

To satisfy equation (3.7), that is, to ensure the ignorability of the treatment, I use explicitly eligibility rather than (instrumented) vote in 1968. One could incorporate the instrumentation of 1968 vote into the identifying restrictions, but this will make the estimation more complicated. Thus, I simply employ eligibility at the cost of adding a downward bias in the estimates.

The problem, however, relates to the mediator (M): turnout in the 1970 congressional election is unlikely to be ignorable to potential confounders and, of course, the RD design does not apply in this election since all the youth were eligible to vote in that election. This means that although equation (3.7) holds, equation (3.8) probably does not. Thus, as a last step in this part of the analysis, we need to address the sensitivity of the results based on assumption (3.8).

Assuming sequential ignorability, the ACME of vote in 1968 on 1972 turnout, as mediated through turnout in 1970, is first estimated non-parametrically but without accounting for control variables. To add them, I employ a typical Structural Equation Model:

²¹ Starting with Pearl (2001), there have been various efforts to explore the identifying assumptions for the estimation of the ACME (see also Robins and Greenland 1992; Robins 2003, for a review see Imai et al. 2009). Among those, the only one that achieves identification without the assumption of the ignorability of the mediator is Sobel (2008), who works mostly from an IV perspective on indirect effects. The problem however with his framework is that it pre-assumes a zero direct effect of the treatment on the dependent variable, when the mediator is taken into account. Although this is indeed the case here, there is no a priori reason to make this assumption, especially in a case in which each electoral occasion is seen as a setting which can contribute to the formation of voting habits. Thus, I choose the Imai et al. (2008, 2009, 2010) approach which is especially appropriate for this case since its underlying hypothesis is that the treatment is ignorable but the mediator may not be so. Using eligibility instead of 1968 vote, this is exactly the case here.

$$1972Vote = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 1968Eligibility + \gamma_1 X + \varepsilon_1 \tag{3.9}$$

$$1970Vote = a_2 + \beta_2 1968Eligibility + \gamma_2 X + \varepsilon_2 \tag{3.10}$$

$$1972Vote = a_3 + \beta_3 1968Eligibility + \gamma_3 X + \delta 1970Vote + \varepsilon_3 \tag{3.11}$$

where X denotes a set of pretreatment covariates and γ the associated vector of coefficients.²² $ACME = \beta_2 \delta$ (Baron and Kenny 1986; Imai et al. 2009).²³ The results are shown in Table 3.7, which presents both the parametric and the nonparametric estimation of the ACME.²⁴ As it is seen, the effect in all cases is positive and significant, implying that vote in 1968 increases the likelihood of vote in 1972 through 1970 turnout by approximately 5 per cent. In other words, the probability of voting in 1972 among 1968 non-eligibles would be by 5 per cent higher if their probability of voting in 1970 was equal to that of eligibles.

Table 3.7: The Average Causal Mediation Effect of Vote in 1968 in the probability of voting in 1972, mediated through vote in the 1970 congressional election.

	LPM	Binary Mediator	Binary Outcome	Both M,Z binary	Non-parametric
ACME	.056 [.012-.110]	.048 [.007-.086]	.056 [.009-.109]	.055 [.011-.100]	.045 [.010-.091]

Note: Bootstrapped confidence intervals are presented in the parametric results, for the nonparametric estimation, confidence intervals are based on the standard error of the estimate, calculated through the exact variance formula (Goodman 1960). N=811.

Turning to the sensitivity analysis, equation (3.7) implies that $\varepsilon_2 \perp Z$ and $\varepsilon_3 \perp Z$. This can be easily justified given the RD design. Equation (3.8), on the other hand, implies that $\varepsilon_2 \perp \varepsilon_3$. Since the design does not guarantee that the probability of voting in 1970 is ignorable to unobservables, this

²² Given the non-ignorability of the mediator, the choice of pre-1968 controls becomes a crucial issue. I include various 1965 indicators apart from those specified in Table 3.1: internal efficacy, political knowledge, the degree of housing mobility of the family, whether both parents live with the child, level of education of the family, whether parents voted in 1964, whether friends are interested in politics, family income, frequency church attendance, political and interpersonal trust, participation in high-school activities and other type of organizations, and Converse’s measure of ideological consistency. Importantly, the results are very robust to different specifications and actually, as Table 3.4 shows, ACME is somewhat higher when all these controls are included in the model.

²³ Although equation (3.9) is redundant for the estimation of the ACME, it is included here because it is needed in the part of the sensitivity analysis, as explained later in the text.

²⁴ Given the binary nature of both the treatment and the mediator, the non-parametric estimation is given by the following formula (Imai et al. 2009:26):

$$ACME = \{P(Y_i = 1 | M_i = 1, T_i = t) - P(Y_i = 1 | M_i = 0, T_i = t)\} \{P(M_i = 1 | T_i = 1) - P(M_i = 1 | T_i = 0)\}$$

which is calculated for both $T=0$ and $T=1$. The parametric estimation is implemented with the “mediate” package (Imai et al. 2010) in R.

last expression may not hold because there might be an unobserved factor that influences the likelihood of voting in both instances. Thus, a way to test the robustness of the results in potential violation of equation (3.8) is to examine the magnitude and the sign of the ACME across various values of the following sensitivity parameter:

$$\rho \equiv \text{Corr}(\varepsilon_2, \varepsilon_3)$$

This correlation is non-zero when there is a set of pre-1968 attributes related to both the observed value of the mediator (1970 vote) and the potential outcomes (vote/not vote in 1972). Imai et al. (2009:10) show that if equation (3.7) holds, the ACME is identified for a given value of ϱ , and is given by the following formula:

$$ACME = \frac{\beta_2 \sigma_1}{\sigma_2} \left\{ \rho' - \rho \sqrt{(1 - \rho'^2) / (1 - \rho)^2} \right\} \quad (3.12)$$

where $\sigma_1^2 = \text{Var}(\varepsilon_1)$, $\sigma_2^2 = \text{Var}(\varepsilon_2)$ and $\rho' \equiv \text{Corr}(\varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_2)$.

Equation (3.12) is zero when $\rho' = \rho$. Moreover, the ACME is monotonically increasing or decreasing in ϱ . This means that by simply calculating the observed correlation between the residuals of equations (3.9) and (3.10), we can obtain ρ' , which, in turn, gives the level of the correlation between ε_2 and ε_3 at which ACME is zero. This implies that although this last correlation is actually unknown, we can grasp the magnitude and the sign of ACME for any given value of ϱ , following the formula in equation (3.12). This is easy to see because with the exception of ϱ , all other terms in equation (3.12) are known. Thus, by setting ϱ at various values along the interval (-1,1), we take the range of possible values of the ACME. This is depicted in Figure 3.3, which shows how the ACME changes across ϱ . The solid line represents the value of the average mediation effect for any level of ϱ . As it is seen, this effect remains positive until $\varrho = .45$, which is a rather generous departure from the ignorability assumption. Even when the sampling variability is taken into account, ACME is still above zero for a ϱ value of .34. At least as an indication of how safe is this interval of ϱ for concluding that ACME is higher than zero and that the results are not only driven by the assumption of mediator ignorability, it is useful to note that the sampling correlation of the corresponding residuals of ε_2 and ε_3 is .12, clearly within the interval for which ACME is found to be significantly higher than zero.

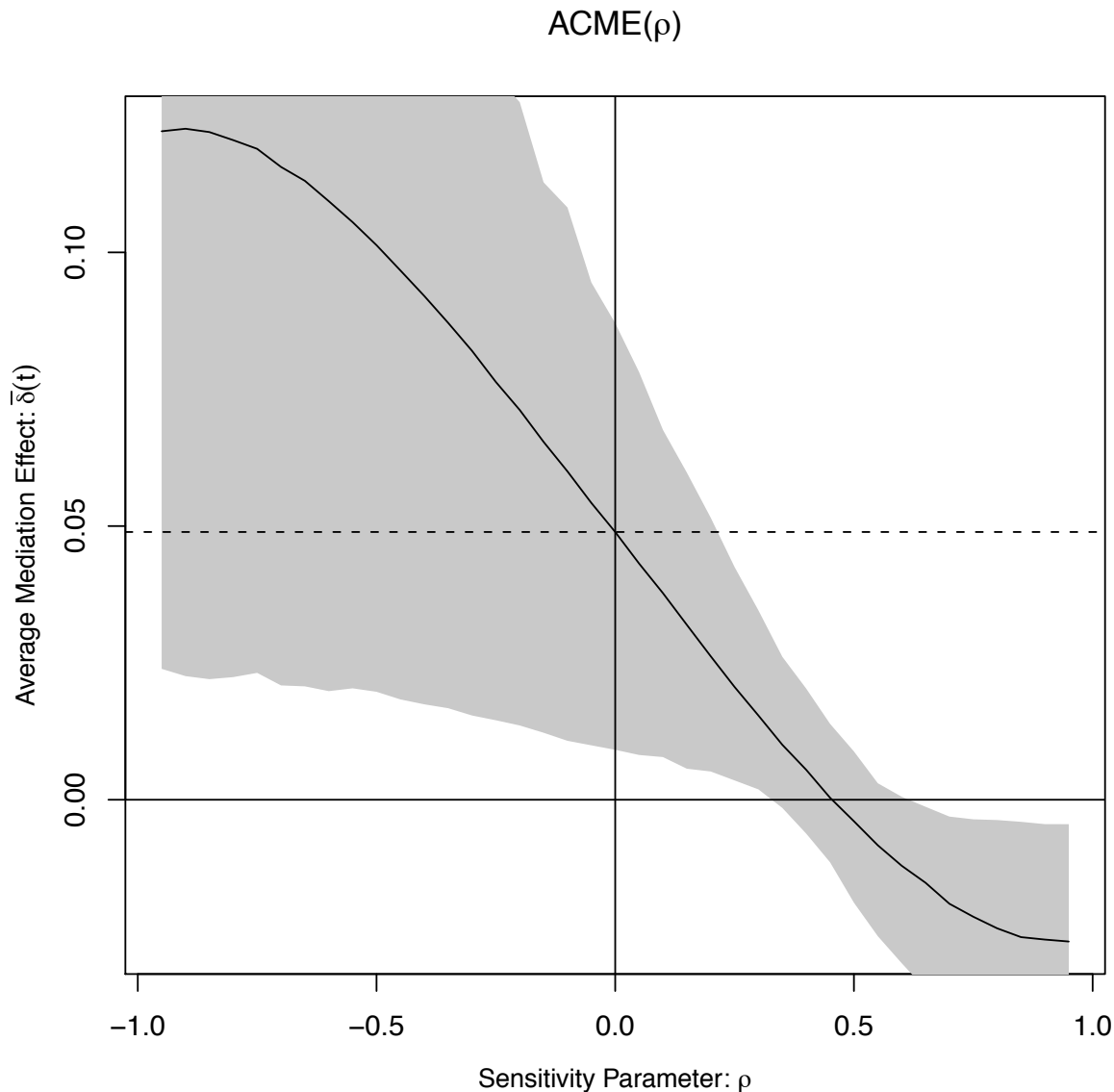


Figure 3.3: Sensitivity Analysis for the Average Effect of eligibility on 1972 vote, mediated through voting in 1970.

Note: The solid line represents the estimated ACME for differing values of the sensitivity parameter, the gray region represents the 95 per cent C.I., calculated with the Delta Method (Imai et al. 2008).

The sensitivity parameter can also take a different and more substantial interpretation, seen as the proportion of variance in the dependent variable and the mediator, accounted for by an unobserved confounder which operates prior to the treatment.²⁵ To see how this is the case, consider the following decomposition of the error terms of equations (3.10) and (3.11) respectively, as shown by Imai et al. (2008:11):

²⁵ An important caveat to have in mind is that this sensitivity analysis can only detect the robustness of the results given a pre-treatment confounder. It cannot, however, apply to the presence of a confounder between 1968 vote and 1970 vote.

$$\varepsilon_{i2} = \lambda_2 U_i + \varepsilon_{i2} \quad (3.13)$$

$$\varepsilon_{i3} = \lambda_3 U_i + \varepsilon_{i3} \quad (3.14)$$

Let U be the unobserved confounder predicting the status of both the mediator and the outcome. Using the corresponding coefficients of determination for each of the two equations, Imai et al. (2008:11) come up with the following relationship:

$$\rho = \text{sgn}(\lambda_2 \lambda_3) R_M^* R_Y^* \quad (3.15)$$

where sgn is the sign of the product of λ_2 and λ_3 and R_M^* and R_Y^* are the proportions of variance explained by the unobserved confounder in the mediator and the outcome respectively.²⁶ Thus, by pre-specifying the sign of the product of λ_2 and λ_3 and by examining the variation of the ACME across various values of the two coefficients of determination, we can grasp the portion of unexplained variance that needs to be accounted for by U , so that ACME becomes zero.

This interpretation makes the sensitivity analysis more intuitive. For instance, imagine that voting in 1970 and in 1972 is partially explained by a latent normative perception about the function of elections, i.e. by a sense of civic duty, which is formed already by late adolescence and although it may be partially accounted for through indicators of internal efficacy and political knowledge, there might still be some portion of this covariance that remains unspecified. This unobserved confounder would be positively correlated with both the mediator and the outcome ($\lambda_2 \lambda_3 > 0$). Thus, it is interesting to examine how much of the variance in the outcome and the mediator (that is left unexplained by the treatment) this unobserved confounder needs to account for so that the ACME becomes zero. Figure 3.4 shows how the magnitude of ACME varies according to the level of variance explained by this (unspecified) pre-treatment confounder.²⁷ Each contour represents a given level of the ACME, across all possible combinations of R_M^* and R_Y^* that give the same product. So, counting from the left, the third contour represents the values of $R_M^* * R_Y^*$ for

²⁶ This variance is defined as $1 - \frac{\text{Var}(\varepsilon'_{i2})}{\text{Var}(\varepsilon_{i2})}$ and $1 - \frac{\text{Var}(\varepsilon'_{i3})}{\text{Var}(\varepsilon_{i3})}$ for the mediator and the outcome respectively.

When the outcome or the treatment are estimated with probit, the Pseudo R^2 of McKelvey and Zavoina is used for the calculation of these proportions (Imai et al. 2010).

²⁷ Although Figures 3.3 and 3.4 come from the estimation of the binary-mediator model, the pattern is almost identical for the sensitivity analysis of the other models. Sensitivity analysis cannot be implemented for the 'both-binary' model (see Imai et al. 2010).

$$\text{ACME}(R_M^{2*}, R_Y^{2*}), \text{sgn}(\lambda_2\lambda_3) = 1$$

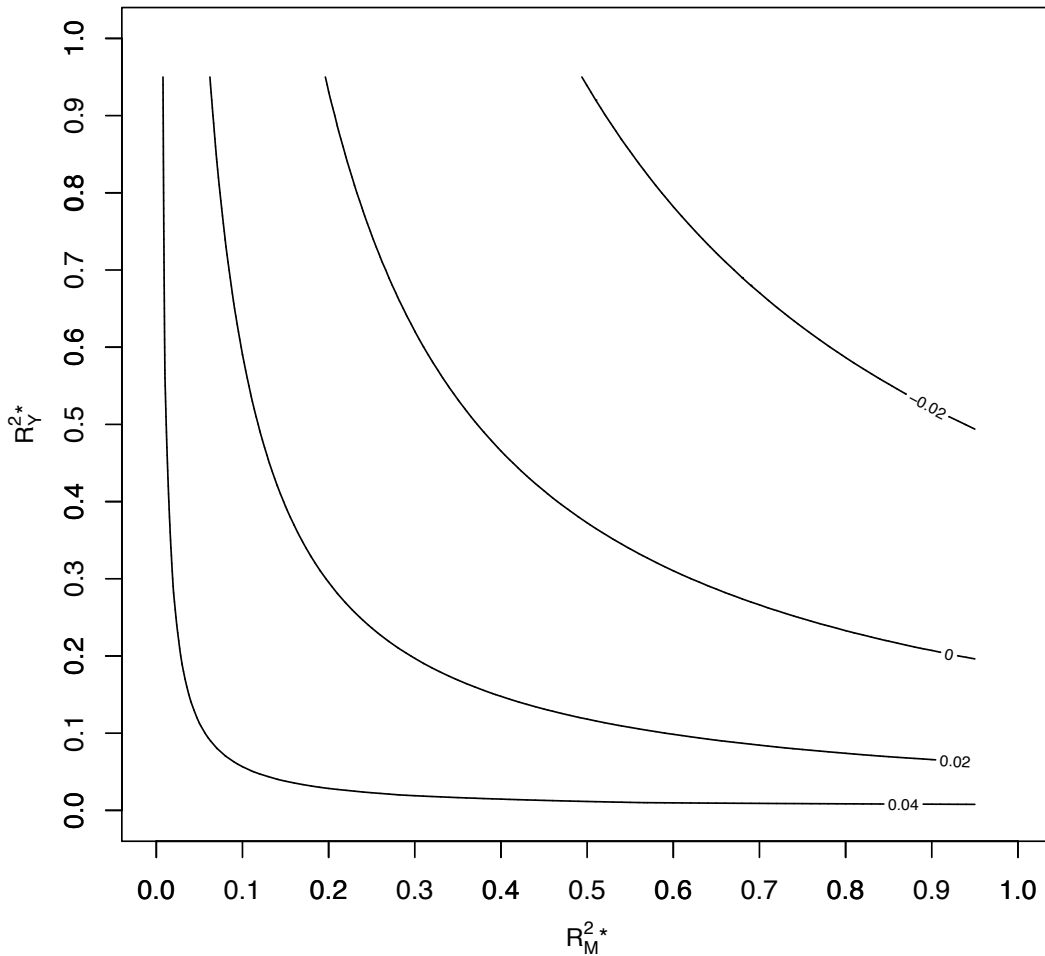


Figure 3.4: An alternative interpretation of the Sensitivity Analysis: Proportion of unexplained variance explained by an unobserved confounder.

Note: Each contour line represents the estimated ACME under various values of R_M^* and R_Y^* (Imai et al. 2008). Here, I assume that e_2 and e_3 are positively correlated. If they are not, the ACME is always higher than zero.

which ACME is zero. Under the most conservative interpretation, the ACME is guaranteed to be positive if the unobserved confounder explains less than 20 per cent of the variance either in the mediator or in the outcome. Assuming that this set of unobservables captures approximately the same amount of variance regarding the two elections (or at least does not only explain 1970 vote without accounting also for 1972 vote and vice versa), we can allow for a much higher level of explained variance (greater than 30 per cent) until ACME becomes zero. To be sure, for any unobserved factor for which $\lambda_2\lambda_3 < 0$, ACME is bound to be positive and to increase progressively as the magnitude of this correlation increases. This pattern provides further evidence about the robustness of the indirect effects on possible violations of the mediator ignorability assumption.

3.9 Conclusion (to be continued)

Turnout is probably the most frequently studied electoral phenomenon in the last half century both in American and in comparative politics. There is a good reason for that. Electoral participation is justifiably regarded as a necessary condition for the quality of representative democracy. Thus, understanding what drives turnout might potentially have important policy implications. If institutional elites have unequivocal evidence about the determinants of voting, they can potentially allocate resources in trying to bring these conditions into being.

But providing resources in order to boost the level of education, income and political interest among the electorate, although noble, is essentially a costly task with ambiguous short-term outcomes. By the same token, although knowing how important the competitiveness of an election might be for the overall turnout, there is little room for manipulation.

What, however, appears to give fruits in the short-term with potentially lasting consequences for the increase of turnout is political mobilization. Exogenous shocks encouraging turnout seem to have a significant short-term effect in increasing people's propensity to vote (see Arceneaux and Nickerson 2009), especially when they invoke social pressure (Gerber et al. 2008) and are not combined with partisan connotations (Gerber et al. 2003). The good news is that this propensity can either remain stable or even increase in the long run, without further intervention. This is due to the reinforcing function of voting. In investigating this particular aspect of the act of voting, the findings from this chapter largely confirm this pattern. Without confounding the act of voting with any type of exogenous shock, the analysis shows that voting in one election increases the likelihood of voting in the subsequent election. In turn, this next election helps predict participation in the election that follows. This pattern presumably continues until voting becomes simply a matter of a standing decision. The examination of the indirect effect of 1968 vote on 1972 turnout, as mediated through voting in the 1970 election, illustrates this gradual process of habit formation and shows how even short-term effects taking place in one's first elections might have lasting implications for future electoral participation.

Finding that this function of elections does not stem from a more indirect process of political learning might seem disappointing among those who have posed high expectations on the function of elections. Voting does not seem to make people more knowledgeable or even more interested in public affairs. Nor does it boost political trust or a sense of internal efficacy. What it does is simply encourage voting again. And the bright side of this finding is that at least in policy terms, encouraging voting in one election is enough for boosting turnout in the future.

That said, this conclusion should be seen with some caution. An important caveat of the analy-

sis is that we cannot observe attitudinal differences at the exact same time point at which we observe differences in the level of turnout between eligibles and non-eligibles. As the effects of 1968 seem to evaporate by 1972 (see appendix), it might also be the case that indirect information effects stemming from the act of voting are also apparent by 1970 but they also vanish as the 1972 election comes into play. We only observe individuals before 1968 and after 1972. However, it is still indicative that there is no sign for an indirect path of the act of voting in 1968 on various attributes that could be potentially affected by participating in that election. Moreover, although coming from a different cohort, the evidence provided by the fourth wave of the panel study confirms this finding. 1996 eligibles are neither more interested nor more politically efficacious than non-eligibles, even when these differences are measured in 1997, i.e. only one year after the election. To be sure, more research on this exact feature of elections, which could more appropriately disentangle the path through which voting drives further turnout seems to be needed. I return with more evidence on this pattern in the next chapter. From the existing findings it seems that this mechanistic logic governing voting in elections is a more likely explanation for this phenomenon than arguments about the indirect effects of elections through increasing political knowledge. In the next chapter, I try to shed some more light on this issue by combining the evidence on turnout of this chapter with evidence about the role of voting in strengthening prior partisan attachments.

The non-significant direct effect of 1968 vote in 1972 (see appendix) might raise questions regarding the durability of the effect. Although it merely points to the presence of inherent factors which are mainly at play in the decision to vote and are well developed before young individuals acquire the right to vote, it also touches upon an important limitation of the design. The instrument in this case is eligibility. This means that it only holds for one election. Non-eligibles eventually become eligibles and thus the treatment is assigned to everyone, unlike when an exogenous information shock is distributed. This is exactly the case already by 1972. Remaining differences between the two groups would only be due to the differences in the amount of the treatment received by each group. Although this is still an important distinction which could give room for differences in the level of electoral participation (Meredith 2007), not finding them here does not necessarily imply lack of voting effects. It simply implies that the schematic but mostly symbolic rather than realistic picture of any given electoral cohort being slightly more likely to vote in each election, and at least until some predefined threshold of habit is passed, than the next cohort does not always come out in such a deterministic fashion in the real world.

A related caveat with the research design has to do with the mirror image of the scenario analyzed in this and the next chapter. Eligibility can tell us what happens when people vote, isolating this act from unobserved confounders that determine the decision to vote or not. It cannot tell us much, however, about those who do not cast a ballot. In our case, the group of 1968 eligibles who

did not vote in that election, the never-takers in the terminology of the IV approach adopted in the analysis, is not very useful for further elaboration. True, they continue voting at lower rates in future elections. However, given that no institutional restriction imposed their initial abstention, it is impossible to rule out unobserved factors that have driven their initial decision and continued influencing also their later decisions not to vote in future elections. Thus, eligibility is not a well-suited strategy to examine the formation of habitual non-voters. Different instruments, such as the low competitiveness of the first election and individual experiences or the type of first eligible election (parliamentary, congressional, local, European) would be more adequate to explore the long-term impact of not-voting in future turnout patterns.

The next chapter shifts to the role of voting in shaping or reinforcing prior partisan predispositions. Although this function of elections has deeper roots in the early literature than its effect on turnout, the difficulty to conduct field experiments in order to address this question implies that there is much greater lack of systematic evidence about this pattern than in the case of turnout. Examining how vote bolsters partisan attitudes during early adulthood helps to complement the existing evidence provided in this chapter about the importance of the 'impressionable years' (Delli Carpini 1989) in forming stable political attributes with increasing age. Moreover, in this case a clear distinction between younger and older cohorts can be made, giving credit to the argument that attitudes are formed in a rather step-wise fashion whereby initial voting experiences seem to be more prominent in the process of political learning than those coming later in one's age trajectory. Finally, trying to combine the insights from chapters 3 and 4, an alternative path through which the act of voting increases turnout is considered. Apart from denoting a seemingly mechanistic process of state dependence, it is argued that the act of voting also implies some sort of choice and it is the manifestation of this choice through elections that also increases the likelihood of future turnout. In other words, the act of voting in a given election also exerts an indirect effect on voting in subsequent elections, which passes through the reinforcement of partisan predispositions.

Appendix 3.A: 1968 eligibility and 1972 vote

I briefly examine whether there are voting effects from 1968 vote on 1972, without accounting for prior turnout in 1970. The 1972 election is the first Presidential election for non-eligibles and second Presidential election for eligibles. The estimation of the effect of 1968 eligibility follows precisely the analysis implemented in the main text, with the only difference being in the outcome variable, i.e. Y now is vote in 1972.

Table 3.A: The direct impact of vote in 1968 on the probability of voting in 1972

	2SLS	Difference in P(Vote=1) among first-time voters between 1968 and 1972
Vote in 1968	-.032 (.082)	
Percentage of first-time eligible voters in 1968		64.7
Percentage of first-time eligible voters in 1972		76.1

Note: Entry in first column is a 2SLS coefficient, bootstrapped standard error, clustered at the school level in parenthesis. Only the bivariate coefficient is shown, the effect is also zero when covariates are included. N=1073. Rows 2 and 3 present the difference in the percentage of first-eligible voters due to the age gap at which the first eligible election takes place.

Table 3.A shows that this effect is practically zero. This result is also verified from the bivariate analysis, following equation (3). The ATT in this case is -.030, indicating that in average non-eligibles voted 3 per cent more than eligibles in 1972. To be sure, if previous research on turnout was not enough, this pattern is a clear sign that there are more things affecting voting than only habit. However, there are also two particular reasons for this finding.

The first has to do with the fact that for non-eligibles first eligible vote comes when they are much older than 1968 eligibles, i.e. circa 25 years old. Turnout increases with age. That this is the case, even when relatively small age differences are at stake, has been also demonstrated by the effect of the lowering of voting age across various countries during the second half of the twentieth century (Franklin 2004). The older young people are when they come up with their first eligible election, the more likely they are to actually vote. Thus, even small decreases of voting-age (from 21 to 18 for instance) have led to a considerable drop in overall turnout rates simply because this meant that young people found themselves facing their first eligible election in a lower age than in the past (Franklin 2004). This is exactly the case here, not because of the lowering of the voting age in 1972 but simply because of the eligibility threshold in the group. All 1968 eligibles were 21 years old, thus were exactly of age in the 1968 election. Non-eligibles were marginally below this threshold. In the next presidential election they are almost four years older than eligibles were in 1968. This makes non-eligibles more likely to actual vote in 1972 than eligibles were in 1968. This is exactly what column 2 of Table 3.A shows. Whereas only 65 per cent of 1968 eligibles actually voted in that election, 76 per cent of 1968 non-eligibles voted in their first eligible Presidential election, i.e. in 1972. Thus, as can be also inferred by the coefficient of Table 3.A, although 1968 eligibles do vote at higher rates in their second election (73 per cent), any impact of previous vote in this increase is probably swamped by the age-gap between the two groups with respect to their first eli-

gible Presidential vote.

The second reason relates to the skewed distribution of the sample towards high levels of electoral participation (mean percentage of voters among eligibles in 1968 and 1972: 70 per cent). Given that observations stem from a sample of high-school seniors, thus with expected education level probably much higher than average during the period of the study, and given the close relationship between education and turnout both in a comparative perspective (Verba et al. 1987) and in the US in particular (Jackson 1995), it comes as little surprise that the youth sample of the Socialization panel votes at relatively high rates. This implies that there is little room for variation, making the act of voting even less likely to register a significant effect.

Actually, these two factors justify also why we do find effects for the 1970 congressional election. Although by 1970 all seniors in the sample had the right to vote (since they were born at the latest the end of December 1948), the difference in the age at which the first eligible election is experienced for 1968 eligibles and 1970-eligibles is not as big as in the case of the 1972 Presidential election. Moreover, there is more room for effects to be found, since even among this relatively highly educated sample, the percentage of turnout in mid-term elections is much lower (43 per cent in 1970) than the percentage of turnout in Presidential elections.

3.A.1 Non-zero indirect effects with zero direct effects?

How should we interpret the indirect effect of approximately 5 per cent in the light of a zero direct effect of having voted in 1968? What seems to be the problem here is that what is accounted for by the increased likelihood of voting in 1970 is already captured by unobservables taking place after 1970. Attending college or finding a job and leaving the parental home implies a closer relationship of young adults with political affairs that makes voting more probable. That was also revealed by the increased percentage of first-time voters between the 1972 and the 1968 eligibles. As we saw in Table 3.A, accounting for 1968 eligibility as an IV of 1968 vote reduces this difference by almost 9 percentage points. This reduction is at least partially accounted for by voting in 1970. To be sure, what is not accounted for by the model, and clearly obscures this effect, is the set of factors that create the initial 11 per cent difference in turnout among the two first-eligible groups (see Rubin 2004 for a similar seemingly paradoxical scenario, see also Morgan and Winship's discussion (2007:226) of Figure 8.3).

Moreover, it should be born in mind that this is not a randomized study with perfect compliance. Eligibility is an IV of turnout in 1968. With 25 per cent non-compliance, the true effect without adjustment is clearly underestimated. The true effect for turnout in 1970 is substantially high to

overcome this problem. This, however, does not seem to be the case with voting in 1972. Yet, the result is still important because it provides a better insight regarding the roots of the 1970 turnout effect. The latent probability of voting in 1970 as a result of having voted in 1968 (estimated through an IV approach that allows a causal interpretation of the effects) does not stop there. It rather funnels the impact of further voting decisions in the creation of habitual voting pattern. It is this developmental process of forming voting habits that is illustrated through the indirect effects analysis. Under this perspective, this 5 per cent indirect effect that is found in the text is interpreted as follows (Pearl 2009:356): it is the increase we would see in the probability of voting in 1972 while holding the 1968 probability to vote constant and increasing the probability to vote in 1970 from its value under the 1968 non-eligible status to the 1968 eligible status.

4 - Does Choice Bring Loyalty?

Vote and partisanship among young adults and their parents

The previous chapter mainly served as a way to introduce the identification strategy that will be also employed in this chapter. In so doing, it helped to enhance our knowledge about a research topic that has recently acquired increased salience in the literature of voting turnout, namely how voting in one election enhances the likelihood of casting a ballot in the next election. Moreover, it served to examine how this habit is formed among the group of individuals which constitute the scope of this study, i.e. young adults. Now, I shift to the most important question of this part of the study, passing from turnout to party identification: do we become more partisans by voting for a given party, or, as Mullainathan and Washington (2009) call it, do we 'stick with our vote'? Moreover, are there ceiling effects in this process as people accumulate electoral experience? Thus, does partisan anchoring during early adulthood occur at least partially as a result of manifesting our preferences into actual behavioral choices? If so, what psychological mechanism appears most likely to account for this pattern? This is the series of questions this chapter will focus on.

As was also the case with turnout, these questions are anything but new in the literature of political socialization. Answers, however, are scarce here. In effect, an ongoing puzzle in the study of electoral behavior revolves around the question of how party identification (PID) develops during the life course. A quite voluminous literature has thus far identified important gains in the consistency and stability of partisan attitudes as people accumulate political experiences through aging (Converse 1976; Markus 1979; Jennings 1989; Jennings, Stoker and Bowers 2009; Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Carlsson and Karlsson 1970). This process, however, is not assumed to be linear (Abramson 1979; Glenn and Hefner 1972). Initial acquaintance with the political world is perceived as considerably more influential in the crystallization of political attitudes, than experience coming later in one's life-cycle. Although there is some – but not uncontested (Bartels 2001) – empirical support to this argument (Delli Carpini 1989; Plutzer 2002; Franklin 2004; Stoker and Jennings 2008), there are two important and largely unresolved issues, both related to the role of time. The first refers to the time-length of the partisan formation process and how this is affected by the starting level of political orientations acquired through early socialization during childhood and adolescence. The second refers to the specification of those factors that relate to the process of aging

and whose effects are rather vaguely attributed to the role of the life-cycle. This last issue, which is the main focus of this chapter, typically manifests itself through a set of interrelated questions: what is it exactly that helps enduring partisan ties come into being as people age and what accounts for the common pattern whereby, at any given point in time, older age groups appear on average more stable in their party preferences than younger ones?

A rather typical response to these questions alludes to the function of elections. Voting for a given party is thought to place an imprint on one's future behavior, since it is seen as an explicit expression of commitment regarding one's political preferences. Under this perspective, the act of voting for a particular party in a given electoral battle is assumed to strengthen voters' beliefs about this party and its leader (Meredith 2007; Mullainathan and Washington 2009, but see also Franklin and Jackson 1983). Given, however, that there are ceiling effects in this process, the incremental impact of a given election gradually diminishes as the number of elections in one's record increases. Consequently, although elections are generally important, they are not all of equal importance: the first ones in people's political trajectories are thought to have more powerful and long-lasting implications than the ones that are to follow (Butler and Stokes 1974:57).

As was explicated in the previous chapter, the empirical investigation of this argument is very difficult because of the intimate relationship between vote choice and partisanship. The selection problem analyzed in the case of turnout is equally prominent here. To make matters worse, field experiments are less helpful in this case since randomly assigned information shocks can boost participation but unless they have a partisan connotation, they do not help in investigating the role of actual vote choice in the strength of partisanship.¹ Consequently, existing evidence is only limited (Jennings and Markus 1984; Franklin 1984) and even in these instances it cannot be taken at face value since it typically disregards this selection problem, hence the null of no voting effects is simply too weak so as not to be rejected.

To solve this identification problem it is important to find a way to instrument vote choice so that its impact on partisan attachment is not confounded by voters' prior or contemporaneous preferences. However, given the close relationship between the two, we cannot find from the pool of available survey questions indicators that predict vote choice without also predicting partisan preferences. Such indicators would either do both or neither. Instrumentation through the use of lagged vote choice is also problematic due to unobserved heterogeneity and the initial conditions problem: unobserved factors, which might emerge even before our initial wave of information, may drive both the level of PID and people's vote choices, producing in this way bias in the esti-

¹ See Gerber et al. 2008 for a field experiment in which partisanship is randomly assigned through partisan registration, as a way to predict the causal effect of PID on vote choice. The aim here is the reverse, i.e. to examine the causal effect of the act of voting in the formation of partisan preferences.

mation of the effect of the second on the first (Denny and Doyle 2009).

Thus, identification here calls for a different solution. Drawing on the strategy employed in the previous chapter, this selection problem is solved by employing eligibility as an IV of 1968 vote. Here, however, the analysis is adjusted to incorporate information about party preferences of the two groups. How this is done is explained in detail later in the text. The important message however is that eligibility still works in a similar way as in the previous chapter: whereas it accounts for variation in turnout, it remains orthogonal to party preference. So it allows for the unbiased estimation of the effect of the act of voting on the reinforcement of partisan attitudes.

The findings suggest that whereas vote choice appears to strengthen prior partisan attitudes among young voters by at least half a point in a 0 to 6 scale, it fails to exert any significant impact among their parents, i.e. a cohort with a much longer record in elections. Thus, the results confirm the ‘impressionable years’ hypothesis of partisan learning (Delli Carpini 1989): attitudes regarding the parties are intensified during early adulthood through voting, among other potential factors, but they eventually reach a ceiling above which further manifestations of partisan preferences through electoral participation seem to have no further consequences for partisanship.

4.1 Political Science: immunization as a seemingly mechanistic process

At least since Converse’s major work on the sources of partisan stability (1969), the observation of increasing attitudinal and behavioral consistency with increasing age has been largely attributed to the role of learning through political socialization (eg. Converse and Pierce 1992, Westholm and Niemi 1992, Leithner 1997, Sears and Funk 1999, Dalton and Weldon 2007). But what exactly is it that drives more consistency and stability in people’s political orientations as they age? One response could be that this is simply the outcome of the weight of the times (Beck and Jennings 1991:743). The accumulation of political shocks during one’s formative years helps to reaffirm or qualify prior and not yet well defined predispositions, driving gradually to the crystallization of one’s political views (Stoker and Jennings 2008).

Although this is undoubtedly an important process through which young individuals gradually acquire consistency in their political views, it still leaves unexplained how this consistency in political postures is also accompanied by increased partisan constraints. Older people are not only less likely to change their pre-established views due to successive political events, but they are even less likely to switch in their partisan preferences. If it was only a matter of political learning through accumulated experience, we would see at least an equal propensity to change partisan preferences as people altered their evaluations about parties and their own political stances on

various issues. However, the latter seem considerably more volatile than the first (e.g. Green et al. 2002), hence there must be something else that contributes in the formation of partisan predispositions and distinguishes this process from the evolution of attitudinal consistency in more general terms.

One way of explaining this age gap in the levels of partisan stability is by drawing on a functionalist view of partisanship. Older people, it is argued, create partisan inclinations as a way to adjust for the fact that they have limited information-processing capacities (Kroh and Selb 2009b:109). Under this perspective, partisanship serves as a heuristic device that enables people to retain consistency in their political opinions and electoral choices without continually updating their information about parties' stances and policies. Thus, less educated people are considered to be more likely to create affectively-laden predispositions towards a party, which in turn functions as a compass in people's political experiences (Miller 1976, Shively 1979).

But even if partisanship is more useful for older people than for younger generations, forming partisan identities is not simply a matter of making a cognitive decision to support a particular party on such utilitarian grounds. Previous evidence has suggested that partisan identities are linked to more encompassing social identities, typically rooted in group affiliations and perceptions about where one feels she belongs in societal terms (Greene 2002; 2004, Green et al. 2002). As Green and Shickler put it, the idea that partisanship is generated because it serves as a heuristic cue conflates its function with its etiology. In the authors words (2009:196):

'Our religious identities help us save time in figuring out which holidays to celebrate, but that is hardly how we came to acquire or maintain these identities. Our linguistic, ethnic, or class identities shape the ways in which we evaluate people, but these identities take root early in life, well before we become aware of the *dramatis personae* of politics.'

Thus, the question remains. How do partisan identities strengthen during the life span? It is in trying to answer this exact question that the role of actual electoral participation is deemed here to be particularly important.

When young adults are initially confronted with the political world, they are typically 'armed' only with influences from childhood socialization. Nevertheless, regardless of the extent to which the starting point in an individual's political experience is colored by parental political socialization, in order for party preference to be transformed into a 'standing decision' (Fiorina, 1981), the individual's own vote history also needs to conform to these contextual influences.² Since for most

² As Kroh and Selb (2009b:108) point out, if the acquisition of partisanship was solely the outcome of family socialization, we should not observe the rates of partisan sentiments found in new democracies (Miller and Klobucar 2000, Brader and Tucker 2001). Evidently, one's own voting history and experience with the political world should also contribute in this process of partisan formation.

people voting constitutes the primary systematic mode of political participation, the principal type of behavior that shapes future attitudes is that of voting (Markus and Converse 1979, Grofman 1989 (referred to in Grofman et al. 2009), Cassel 1993, Marcus 2003). According to this argument, partisan identities arise by 'the repeat of the vote for the same party' because '[this] makes [people] justify this behavior to [themselves]' (Clarke et al., 2004:181). It is to this exact mechanism that Butler and Stokes (1974) refer as the *immunization* process, also seen as *inertia* in the case of turnout (Plutzer, 2002): either because of increasing experience (Butler and Stokes, 1974:57) or due to the fact that 'the repeated reiteration of any particular behavior lays down tracks in a person's personality' (Franklin, 2004:21), initial inclination under the first years of electoral eligibility is likely to strengthen with the number of elections that each individual confronts. It is this same logic that governs Grofman's and his colleagues quasi-bayesian approach to party identification: voting for a party creates constraints that reinforce people's priors (Grofman et al. 2009).³ Without being systematically examined, this idea has been around in electoral research at least since McPhee's and Ferguson's 'political immunization' thesis (1962), according to which the observed difference in political stability between young and old is simply the outcome of different levels of electoral experience. In other words, partisan attitudes are increasingly stabilized as people vote for a given party.

To be sure, there is nothing deterministic in this seemingly mechanistic process. The decision to vote and the choice of party depend on individual evaluations, which take into account both expressive and instrumental motives. Therefore, updated information might overcome the inertial forces stemming from previous voting behavior. In doing so, it might also lead to different political choices, weakening the impact of past behavior on present political beliefs. Unless this fluctuating pattern vanishes, aging on its own is unlikely to produce partisan anchoring. However, if repeated initial behavior has an immunizing effect, 'the weight of the times' will need to be higher in order to overcome the establishing trend. The greater the continuity, the more difficult it would become to deviate. In other words, if some number of elections is sufficient for inertia to develop, so long as the same choice is repeated, this is because there is an impact of some kind from each successive election (Andersen, 1979:76).

³ Although not tested empirically, the theoretical model presented by Grofman et al. is an interesting attempt to encompass the logic of partisan anchoring within a formal framework of Bayesian updating. To be sure, this idea originates in Jennings and Markus' (1984) attempt to model the dynamics of partisanship as a function prior electoral choices. Moreover, an important inconsistency in Grofman's et al. (2009) theoretical formulation is that although they suggest a quasi-Bayesian thinking about parties and vote choices, they seem to adhere to a coarse-classification view of partisanship, which, as a theoretical model of human inference, works as an alternative to the Bayesian ideal (Mullainathan 2002; Mullainathan et al. 2008).

4.2 Psychology: cognitive dissonance and self-perception theory

Why is it that we only have very few studies attempting to uncover the effect of elections on the formation of partisan identities? There are two main reasons for this pattern. The first relates to the way the literature on voting behavior has evolved. As Mullainathan and Washington (2009) point out (see also Chapter 1), neglecting the theoretical underpinnings of the behavioral tradition, analysts of electoral behavior have employed a variety of statistical models which however share a common feature: vote choice, or any other behavioral outcome of interest, is predicted by a set of indicators most of which are of an attitudinal nature. In other words, the structure is rather straightforward: attitudes lead to behavior.

Although this logic is clearly useful for the explanation of vote choice, it makes it difficult to think of vote choice itself as an explanatory factor in shaping party preferences. To conceive of this possibility, it is essential to reverse the flow of causality so that a behavioral factor such as vote choice could be used as a predictor of an attitudinal attribute, in this case partisanship. But what would be the theoretical justification for taking this step? This brings us to the second reason for which the idea of immunization has been scarcely examined in a systematic way. As was also pointed out in the first chapter, although it has been frequently used as a way to describe a process of partisan anchoring, the idea that actual vote choice can affect partisan orientations has never been developed theoretically by political scientists. This implies that this process of gradual crystallization has been mainly attributed to a seemingly mechanistic mechanism, without further investigation about the psychological underpinnings of this pattern.

To find a more rigorous theoretical framework for the argument that behavior might lead to changes in the strength of preferences one should resort to the insights from cognitive psychology. The leading theory in this respect is undoubtedly Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). According to this theory, 'if an individual performs an activity that is antithetical to his beliefs, the individual may unconsciously change his beliefs to alleviate the discomfort of having inconsistent attitudes and actions' (Mullainathan and Washington 2009:86-87). In a way, cognitive dissonance has its roots in Aesop's fable of the fox that tries to grasp some grapes but failing to do so ends up deciding that they are still sour.⁴ Festinger's initial formulation was based on this exact pattern: facing a reality that cannot change, people might change their attitudes in order to conform to this reality. He first elaborated this idea in a controversial study (Festinger et al. 1956)⁵

⁴ This metaphor, originally coined to John Elster, with his homonymous book, has been taken from the corresponding entry on cognitive dissonance in Wikipedia, which also served as an initial source for the development of this concept in the literature.

⁵ See Stone (2000) for a review of both critical and supportive essays related to the book.

based on the infiltration of a group led by a housewife from Michigan who claimed receiving automatic messages from aliens residing in planet Clarion which were informing humanity that the world would be destroyed in a great flood by December 21, 1954. Whereas the group initially avoided any contact with the media, once the deadline passed without the world being actually damaged, it changed immediately its policy, seeking media coverage in an effort to pass the message that the world was finally secured due to the efforts of this group. In other words, in front of an unchanging reality which cannot be questioned, people change their beliefs (expectations about the world destruction in this case) as a way to maintain consistency.

The important contribution of Festinger was that he advanced this idea by examining not simply how people react to an observed and unequivocal reality that disconfirms prior expectations, but rather to their own behavior when the latter does not conform to their preferences. In what by now is a classic experiment, Festinger and Carlsmith (1959) invited a group of people to implement a rather boring task (place knobs on pegs). After the subjects passed some time with this task, the investigators asked them if they could convince a group of potential recruiters (actors) that the task they had been doing was actually entertaining. A random portion of this group was given 20\$ (circa 150 \$ in 2009 currency) for this task whereas the other part of the groups was given only 1 \$ (approximately equal to 7\$ in 2009). Both groups were later asked to fill a questionnaire in which they were called to evaluate their experience. Interestingly, the group that received a small financial reward found the experiment more interesting and entertaining than the control group. This is exactly what would be expected if cognitive dissonance was into play: people want to be consistent and truthful unless they have strong incentives not to be so. The group that received higher financial reward had such incentives. The other group, however, did not. Consequently, in order to achieve consistency between its beliefs (the task was boring) and its behavior (advertising the task as an entertaining one) it was led to alter the first so that it matches the second.

Various analogous experiments followed from this one and in most cases they confirmed the presence of cognitive dissonance. Still, this evidence is not sufficient to apply the same logic to vote choice. The reason is that if behavioral choices generate attitudinal change in the presence of some sort of incoherence between attitudes and behavior, given that in free elections vote choice is typically the outcome of free will, the level of discomfort is typically low. However, extending the empirical implications of the cognitive dissonance argument, researchers in experimental psychology have found consistent evidence about the role of behavior in the reinforcement of prior attitudes, even when the first conforms to the second (Aronson et al. 1991). For instance, presence of cognitive dissonance was also found in post-decision bias. In an experiment run by Brehm (1956, see also Egan et al. 2007), subjects were given a series of presents which they had to rate. They were then free to choose one of them. Once having done so, they were called to rate the presents again.

Interestingly, people rated the present they actually chose higher in the second round than in the first. Conversely, they rated all other items less positively than in the first round. This logic can be directly applied in the case of elections. Even when people are almost certain about which party to vote, having opted for one of the parties leads them to think of this party more positively than before the election.⁶

Evidence for the presence of cognitive dissonance in vote choice has been rather scarce, although the theory is increasingly capturing the attention of students of political behavior. Besley and Joslyn (2001) and Huber et al. (2009) use it as a way to explain vote choice in Presidential and local elections respectively. Mullainathan and Washington (2009) employ it as a way to show how people become more favorable to a given candidate after having voted for him/her in a Presidential or Congressional election. Last but not least, a new 'revisionist' wave of research on economic voting suggests that rather than being the reason for voting for the incumbent, positive economic evaluations after the election are simply the outcome of cognitive dissonance: feeling the need to maintain consistency in their survey responses, people who declare having voted for the incumbent are also more likely to evaluate positively the economic performance of the government (Anderson et al. 2004; Evans and Andersen 2006; Anderson 2007). Analogously, analysts of the link between issue perceptions and party preferences have argued that subjective agreement as observed through people's responses can also be the outcome of cognitive dissonance: having expressed preference over a particular party, when asked about an issue with which the respondent does not agree with that party, she might feel the necessity to distort the party's true position by bringing it closer to her own ideal point (Eiser 1992; Sherif and Hovland 1961). However, empirical evidence through a natural experiment has not confirmed this 'assimilation' process predicted by the theory (van der Brug 2001).⁷

Another theory that emerged as a rival theory to cognitive dissonance is Bem's self perception theory. According to this theory, intrinsic motivations lead to an over-justification of behavioral choices which in turn leads to the reinforcement of the attitudes originally driving the observed behavior. Quoting its originator,

⁶ As Aldrich et al. (2009) point out, psychologists have also found important neurological effects stemming from actual behavior, which become intensified when such behavior acquires a more cognitive basis (see the literature provided in Aldrich et al. 2009). Although the act of voting or other forms of political behavior have not been tested within this context, this evidence enriches the theoretical underpinnings of the main hypothesis tested in this chapter.

⁷ Another theory of attitudinal change, balance theory, could also be of interest here, because it anticipates that people try to maintain balance between their attitudes and preferences. I do not refer to this theory in the main text because it does not directly relate to the impact of actual behavior. Balance theory is a more general theory of how people update their perceptions so as to preserve balance in light of new information about the stimulus of interest (Heider 1958).

'Individuals come to know their own attitudes, emotions and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or the circumstances in which this behavior occurs. [When] internal cues are weak, ambiguous, or uninterpretable, the individual is [...] in the same position as the outside observer' (Bem 1972:2).

The main difference between the two theories is that the second one is more parsimonious in that it postulates the same reinforcing effect of behavior on attitudes without making use of any sort of discomfort between the two. That said, an early study using laboratory experiments seems to give more support to cognitive dissonance than to Bem's self-perception theory (Zanna and Cooper 1974). To be sure, the aim here is not to compare the two theories. This is simply infeasible because they both lead to identical predictions about the attitudinal implications of behavioral choices.⁸ That said, self-perception theory is also useful here in that it provides a hint about the differing impact of behavior according to the level of prior attitudinal consistency: people are more willing to resort to their behavioral choices for the interpretation of their attitudinal outlooks when the underlying attitudinal patterns are not yet firmly established.⁹ This should be more likely to be the case among young adults.

Despite the potentially important theoretical implications attributed to the act of voting, there have been relatively few attempts to explore this process in a systematic way. To be sure, the most difficult task in this attempt is to identify the causal effect of voting for a given party or candidate net of self-selection. That said, there are two studies that have explicitly addressed this problem, both using eligibility as an IV of actual vote. In his cohort analysis Meredith (2007) shows that cohorts eligible to vote in 2000 are significantly more likely to register a political affiliation than those born only some days later making them ineligible to vote in that year. Mullainathan and Washington (2009) pool respondents from midterm ANES surveys aged 18 to 21, with those 18 and 19 being 16 and 17 in the year of the Presidential election and thus ineligible to vote and those aged 20 and 21 being 18 or 19 in the year of the election and thus having the right to vote. They compare feelings towards the incumbent president and find substantially greater polarization in respondents' preferences among those in the second group.

Although this study draws on the insights from this quasi-experimental literature, it extends

⁸ Actually, the two theories are compared on the basis of whether post-decision attitudes are accompanied by what psychologists refer to as arousal, an unpleasant tension generated by the activation of the endocrine system and identified through increased heart rate and blood pressure (Larsen and Buss 2005). However, these characteristics can be only revealed through laboratory tests, which cannot be made in the case of survey respondents, hence there is no way we can compare the two theories here.

⁹ See Tavis and Aronson (2007) for a popular science study about how people justify and rationalize past mistakes in their social interactions. Both cognitive dissonance and self-perception are given pride of place in the formation of the analytical framework upon which the book is based.

and qualifies previous findings in various ways.¹⁰ To start with, the focus is shifted to party identification examining individual- rather than aggregate-level dynamics. The analysis examines changes in party identification, both in terms of direction and in terms of strength. Undoubtedly, partisanship is a more enduring attitude, which has longer-lasting implications for actual voting behavior than leadership evaluations (that was examined by Mullainathan and Washington 2009). Furthermore, it is much more stable than contemporaneous party and leadership evaluations and thus it constitutes a much harder test of the causal effect of the act of voting on people's political predispositions. Moreover, the analysis makes use of a panel study that tracks the same individuals over a long time period instead of looking at static differences (as in the case of Mullainathan and Washington). By comparing the two groups in terms of how they change their partisanship from one wave to the next (rather than only comparing their post-treatment levels of partisanship) the findings are robust to unobserved factors that might cause baseline differences at the level of PID. Moreover, we can examine competing hypotheses related to differences in political knowledge or interest, as in the case of turnout in the previous chapter. The chosen design is also appropriate for exploring the differing impact of elections between established and non-established voters. Given that the same longitudinal data are available at the same time points for two different cohorts (the 1965 generation and their parents), we can compare the impact of the act of voting across young voters and established ones. Furthermore, the use of this dataset allows for comparisons not simply between non-eligible and first-time voters but, more interestingly, between individuals able to vote only once and those able to vote twice. Although this comparison is also enforced by the structure of the data, it is an interesting step forward in the examination of voting

¹⁰ In this brief overview of the literature, I only refer to previous studies using a (quasi-)experimental design to model the attitudinal or behavioral impact stemming from the act of voting. To be sure, there are many studies based on panel data in which vote is assumed to account for the difference observed in the variable of interest between the two waves (e.g. Franklin and Jackson 1983; Franklin 1984; Jennings and Markus 1984). Among these studies, the one most closely related to the scope of this paper is Shachar (2003), who models instrumented lagged vote choice as a predictor of vote choice in the subsequent election. He finds evidence of habitual pattern of vote choice, which appears to strengthen as the number of elections increases. Apart from the fact that his model only predicts future vote choice, thus not explicitly addressing the extent to which the act of voting intensifies a feeling of belonging to a particular party, as this is captured by the notion of party identification, it is based on the traditional structural equation approach which essentially works only under strict assumptions regarding the relationship between IVs and the structural disturbances (Holland 1988:458). Here, I follow the potential outcomes tradition in the IV literature (Angrist et al. 1996), by simply replacing the treatment variable (vote) with a proxy determining random assignment to this treatment (eligibility). The difference between the two approaches is that whereas the first solves the statistical problems impeding causal inference in the part of the analysis, the second does so in the phase of the research design. Apart from the marked difficulty of the traditional IV approach to reproduce experimental results (Lalonde 1986), another reason for preferring, when this is feasible, experiment-like IV designs is that instead of basing the analysis on rather firm assumptions about quantities whose data generation processes are largely unknown (the disturbances), it allows a more intuitive understanding and a more straightforward evaluation of the plausibility of the assumptions upon which the identification of the model is based (Angrist et al. 1996, see also the quoted text from Sekhon in Chapter 1).

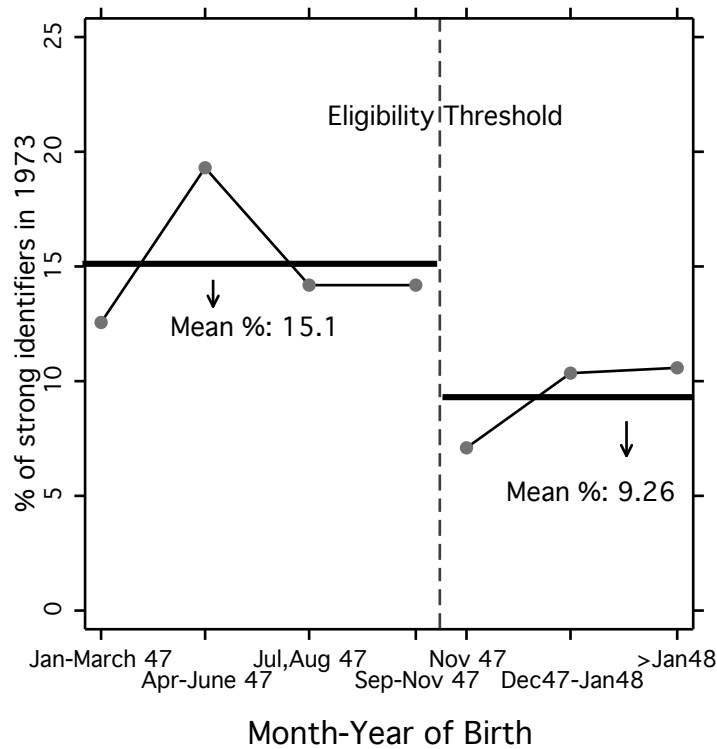


Figure 4.1: The RDD in the case of partisan strength: percentage of very strong identifiers in 1973 according to the year and month of birth.

Note: Each dot represents a group of voters born in the same month-interval, as defined in the x-axis. The time intervals are chosen so as to balance the number of cases summarized with each data point.

effects, which have been thus far constrained to the comparison between first-time voters and non-eligible individuals (Mullainathan and Washington, 2009; Meredith 2007).

4.3 From turnout to vote choice

Moving the discussion from turnout to party identification poses an added difficulty in the identification strategy, since eligibility is a good instrument of turnout but says nothing about people’s preferences. That said, to grasp how the design is still useful in disentangling the effect from the act of voting, we need to focus, for the moment, on the strength of attachment without taking into account the party brand. This is done in Figure 4.1, which presents the percentage of strong identifiers (without distinguishing between the parties) in 1973 according to the month and year of birth of respondents. Again, despite the variation across the respondents, there is clear cut-off point which corresponds to the distinction between 1968 eligibles and non-eligibles.

Although this pattern is important in illustrating the role of vote on the strengthening of partisan attachment, it prevents a more detailed examination which can take into account not only the

Table 4.1: Tetrachoric correlations between vote choice (for eligibles) and vote preference (for non-eligibles) in 1968 with alternative baseline-indicators, Republicans.

	Republican PID	Both parents Repub- licans	Would vote Republi- cans in 1964	Vote Republicans in 1972
Eligibles68 (actual vote)	.410 (.051)	.444 (.051)	.400 (.053)	.520 (.045)
Non-Eligibles68 (potential vote)	.627 (.112)	.448 (.153)	.614 (.122)	.540 (.125)

Note: standard errors in parentheses. N is 894 for the correlations of the eligibles and 100 for the correlations of the non-eligibles. For one-parent families, the PID of that parent is used for the correlation.

Table 4.2: Tetrachoric correlations between vote choice (for eligibles) and vote preference (for non-eligibles) in 1968 with alternative baseline-indicators, Democrats.

	Democrat PID	Both Parents Demo- crats	Would vote Demo- crats in 1964	Voted Democrats in 1972
Eligibles68 (actual vote)	.796 (.078)	.572 (.059)	.593 (.133)	.641 (.045)
Non-Eligibles68 (po- tential vote)	.654 (.047)	.688 (.115)	.630 (.052)	.641 (.111)

Note: standard errors in parentheses. N is 894 for the correlations of the eligibles and 100 for the correlations of the non-eligibles. For one-parent families, the PID of that parent is used for the correlation.

strength but also the direction of change in people's PID from 1965 to 1973. To do that it is essential to distinguish between Republican and Democrat voters.¹¹ Consequently, we need to derive actual 1968 party choice both for eligibles and non-eligibles (this is known for the first but unknown for the second). For that, a baseline covariate is needed, serving to predict vote in 1968 for both groups.

Since this baseline-indicator is to be used for both groups, it is important that it satisfies two criteria: be orthogonal to eligibility (thus not predict actual vote better for one group than the other) and predict actual vote preference as well as possible. To avoid any bias due to this 'imputation' strategy, the first criterion is given more weight than the second. There are various potential indicators, all of which are depicted in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. We cannot of course observe 1968 vote for non-eligibles. However, given that all 1968 non-voters were asked about their vote choice had they voted in 1968, we can use this information for non-eligibles in order to gauge potential differ-

¹¹ There are also two apriori reasons for distinguishing between the two parties. The first is that by 1965 there is a clear pro-Democrat distribution in respondents' partisanship which may make it more difficult to find important effects on the growth rate of Democrat PID, simply because the starting point for this party is higher (54 per cent of the respondents declared Democrat partisanship in 1965, whereas 33.4 declared Republican partisanship). Second, the fact that the Republicans won both these elections under Nixon's candidacy may also produce stronger effects for this party, insofar as the act of voting becomes more important when it is associated with the winning candidate and thus can be more easily linked in people's minds with actual policy outcomes.

ences in how each of these indicators predicts vote for each group. Looking at the results for each party, it is rather straightforward that vote in 1972 performs best in terms of the ignorability criterion (predicts preferences equally well for the two groups) without this coming at the cost of introducing much noise in the estimation, since in both instances the polychoric correlations are similar in magnitude to those found, on average, for the other indicators. Consequently, this is the variable that I employ as a way to derive 1968 vote for each group.

Using this variable, the interpretation of the results acquires also a potentially more interesting interpretation, since the comparison is based on the eligibility status in the first election while controlling for party choice in the second election. In other words, I examine the change in PID between 1965 and 1973 among those who cast identical votes in 1972 but differed in whether they had been able to vote four years earlier. Importantly, at least according to their own responses, had non-eligibles the right to vote in that election, they would have voted the same party at an approximately equal rate as the eligibles.

Employing actual vote in 1972 as the baseline indicator, I adopt a difference-in-difference (DD) framework, comparing the change in PID from 1965 to 1973 as the result of voting for the same party both in 1968 and in 1972 as opposed to voting only in 1972. Following the causal logic used in the case of the turnout, I estimate how non-eligible's PID would have changed from 1965 to 1973 if, apart from voting for their party in 1972, they had also the chance to vote for that party in 1968. Since party preferences are taken into account, we need to distinguish between Republicans and Democrats:

for the Democrats:

$$DD_{DEM} = \Delta PID_{73-65}[ELIGIBLE_{68} \text{ and } DEM_{72}] - \Delta PID_{73-65}[NON-ELIGIBLE_{68} \text{ and } DEM_{72}] \quad (4.1)$$

and for the Republicans:

$$DD_{REP} = \Delta PID_{73-65}[ELIGIBLE_{68} \text{ and } REP_{72}] - \Delta PID_{73-65}[NON-ELIGIBLE_{68} \text{ and } REP_{72}] \quad (4.2)$$

In calculating the DD for each party we have:

$$DD_{REP} = [PID_{73 \text{ if Eligible}_{68} \text{ and Nixon}_{72}} - PID_{65 \text{ if Eligible}_{68} \text{ and Nixon}_{72}}] - [PID_{73 \text{ if Non-Eligible}_{68} \text{ and Nixon}_{72}} - PID_{65 \text{ if Non-Eligible}_{68} \text{ and Nixon}_{72}}] = (3.691 - 3.048) - (3.183 - 2.933) = .643 - .250 = .393$$

$$DD_{DEM} = [PID_{73 \text{ if Eligible}_{68} \text{ and McGovern}_{72}} - PID_{65 \text{ if Eligible}_{68} \text{ and McGovern}_{72}}] - [PID_{73 \text{ if Non-Eligible}_{68} \text{ and McGovern}_{72}} - PID_{65 \text{ if Non-Eligible}_{68} \text{ and McGovern}_{72}}] = (4.590 - 3.953) - (4.489 - 4.319) = .636 - .170 = .466$$

PID ranges from 0 to 6 in both cases. In the case of the Republicans it runs from strong Democrat
162

(0) to strong Republican (6). In the case of the Democrats it runs from strong Republican (0) to strong Democrat (6). The first figure implies that assuming a linear effect of vote across all PID categories, those who voted Nixon in 1972 and were eligible to vote in 1968 increased their Republican partisanship by .393 points more than those who voted Nixon in 1972 but were not eligible to vote in 1968. The equivalent figure for the Democrats is .466. In other words, if non-eligibles who voted for McGovern in 1972, had been also eligible to vote for Humphrey in 1968, they would have increased their PID in a pro-Democrat fashion by almost half a point more than what they actually did.

Although expressed in a seemingly distinct way, equations (4.1) and (4.2) represent the LATE for each party without adjusting for imperfect compliance among eligibles. To see how this is the case and to account for imperfect compliance, I use again equation (3.3) from the previous chapter, making however an important qualification, which is to condition on 1972 vote choice:

$$LATE_{REP} = \frac{E(Y | Z = 1, REP_{72} = 1) - E(Y | Z = 0, REP_{72} = 1)}{P(T = 1 | Z = 1, REP_{72} = 1)} = \frac{.643 - .250}{.723} = \frac{.393}{.723} = .543 \quad (4.3)$$

$$LATE_{DEM} = \frac{E(Y | Z = 1, DEM_{72} = 1) - E(Y | Z = 0, DEM_{72} = 1)}{P(T = 1 | Z = 1, DEM_{72} = 1)} = \frac{.636 - .170}{.735} = \frac{.466}{.735} = .634 \quad (4.4)$$

where $E(Y)$ represents the average difference in respondents' PID between 1973 and 1965, i.e. $Y = PID_{73} - PID_{65}$. As it is seen, adjusting for imperfect compliance, the impact of 1968 vote is slightly increased, denoting for each party a difference between eligibles and non-eligibles which exceeds half a point in a 0-6 scale. Again, the LATE here coincides with the ATT, since there are no always takers. To be sure, both estimates apply only to the subpopulations defined by their 1972 vote choice.

Although useful in clarifying the logic of the analysis, equations (4.3) and (4.4) share a common problem, in that they are confined on the subgroups of Republican and Democrat voters of 1972. This produces an unbiased but rather inefficient estimation of the causal effect of the act of voting, especially when further controls are included in the model. This is because the relatively small number of non-eligibles is drastically reduced if only subsets of the sample are separately analyzed. A way to expand these results across the sample is to use a different conceptualization of the design, focusing on the indicator that provides information about voters' preferences, i.e. vote choice in 1972. Given the assumption that vote in 1972 signals 1968 vote choice, a crucial difference between eligibles and non-eligibles should be captured by the differing effect of this variable be-

tween the two groups. If the act of voting for a particular party implies some sort of commitment, we should observe a difference in the magnitude of this coefficient between the two groups. For non-eligibles it should simply denote the impact (not to be causally interpreted) of voting for this party in 1972. For the eligibles it should also incorporate the impact of voting the same party also in 1968 (this can be interpreted causally given the IV design). Thus, using eligibility as an IV of actual 1968 vote, we ensure that any difference found in the magnitude of this coefficient should be because of the act of voting in 1968. To account for prior covariates and to distinguish between Republicans and Democrats, I employ a simple interaction model to estimate this effect:

For the Republican vote:

$$PID_{Rep73} = \alpha_{Rep} + \gamma_{Rep}PID_{65} + \beta_{1Rep}Eligible68 + \beta_{2Rep}Nixon72 + \beta_{3Rep}Eligible68 \cdot Nixon72 + \gamma_{Rep}X + \varepsilon_{is}$$

(4.5)

and for the Democrat vote:

$$PID_{Dem73} = \alpha_{Dem} + \gamma_{Dem}PID_{Dem65} + \beta_{1Dem}Eligible68 + \beta_{2Dem}McGovern72 + \beta_{3Dem}Eligible68 \cdot McGovern72 + \gamma_{Dem}X + \varepsilon_{is}$$

(4.6)

X represents the set of control variables (the same as in Table 3.1 of the previous chapter) and s denotes clustering of the errors at the school-level. Eligibility in 1968 and vote for the candidate of the corresponding party in 1972 are dummies coded 1 if they hold and zero otherwise. Again, since I explicitly use eligibility without adjusting it for imperfect compliance, and since defiers are only never-takers, there is a downward bias in the results. The coefficients of main interest are b_{3R} and b_{3D} . These two coefficients measure the difference in the direction and the strength of PID between 1965 and 1973 between those voting for the Republican (b_{3R}) or the Democrat (b_{3D}) candidate in 1972 while being eligible to vote in 1968 and those opting for the same candidate in 1972 but not being eligible to vote in 1968.¹² Given the ordinal nature of the dependent variable, both OLS (through the ALSOS formula) and ordinal logit are used for the estimation of the parameters.¹³ I

¹² Despite the slightly more complicated structure of this model, coefficients b_{3R} and b_{3D} in equations (4.5) and (4.6) respectively still serve to extract the ATT, i.e. the effect of voting in 1968 for a given party among those who voted for that party in 1972. To see how this is the case, one should only consider that an equivalent but less efficient way to estimate b_3 for each party is to split the sample according to 1972 vote and estimate the effect of eligibility on PID in 1973 controlling for X and PID in 1965. This effect is .577 [.249] for the Republicans and .377 [.211] for the Democrats.

¹³ See the appendix in Chapter 2 for a brief description of the ALSOS transformation.

also examine the robustness of the results when accounting for measurement error in reported PID.

4.4 Results

Table 4.3 presents the results for the impact of 1968 eligibility on the change in Republican PID between 1965 and 1973 (equation 4.5). Of primary interest here is the interaction denoting eligibility in 1968 and vote for Nixon in 1972. The results in the first column display OLS coefficients estimated through the ALSOS formula. The result can be interpreted as the difference in the strength of Republican PID among those who were eligible to vote twice for Nixon and did so in 1972 against those who could only vote in 1972, and did so by voting this candidate. Controlling for possible demographic and attitudinal differences, the first group registers a .564 points greater increase (in a 0-6 scale) in the direction of a more Republican ID when compared to the second group. This figure represents the direct effect of having potentially voted twice rather than only once for the same party in the strength of PID. Actually, for those opting for the same party in both elections, this estimate represents the direct natural effect of 1968 vote, once 1972 vote is taken into account. This is an important finding because it shows the gradual process through which partisanship is formed during people's first elections, thus confirming the idea that, either due to cognitive dissonance or due to the tendency to infer their attitudes from their behavioral choices, party identification is reinforced as the level of continuity in one's electoral record accumulates.

Two further adjustments are made to this finding. Since the dependent variable has an ordinal nature, the equation is estimated with ordinal logit. The results are displayed in the second column of Table 4.3. According to the estimates, the log odds of being in a higher (Pro-Republican) point in the PID scale are .764 points higher for those who voted Nixon in 1972 and were eligible to vote in 1968 as opposed to those who opted for the same candidate in 1972 but were not of age four years earlier.¹⁴ Since the estimated effect comes from an interaction between 1972 vote and 1968 eligibility, to gauge its magnitude in more substantive terms, I estimate the marginal effect of voting for Nixon in 1972 both for eligibles and non-eligibles (see Brambor et al. 2005). Given the large difference in the number of observations between the two groups, far less precision is expected in the estimate for non-eligibles than for eligibles. However, apart from larger standard errors, we also find a substantive difference in the magnitude of the coefficient, which is 1.69 (.164) for the second

¹⁴ The parallel lines assumption is tested with the Brant test and shows that neither the effect of the interaction nor the effects of the main effects varies significantly across the PID scale. When Generalized Ordered logit is used for the estimation of the parameters (Williams 2006), the model that fits the data best also allows constant effects both for the interaction and the main effects.

Table 4. 3: The impact of vote for Nixon in 1968 on the strength of PID in 1973

	PID _{Rep} (0-6) ALSOS	Ordinal-Logit	Errors-In-Variables Reg. (Rel. PID ₆₅ :.85)
PID ₆₅ (0-6:Strong Rep.)	.381 (.022)	.509 (.041)	.426 (.027)
Eligible ₆₈	.029 (.181)	.016 (.216)	.056 (.176)
Nixon ₇₂	.925 (.208)	1.07 (.227)	.891 (.202)
(Eligible ₆₈)(Nixon ₇₂)	.564 (.249)	.764 (.341)	.559 (.243)
Controls		<i>Not shown</i>	
Constant	1.63 (.242)		1.47 (.256)
<i>Thresholds</i>			
Cutoff-1		-1.16 (.897)	
Cutoff-2		1.05 (.892)	
Cutoff-3		2.02 (.880)	
Cutoff-4		3.40 (.871)	
Cutoff-5		4.42(.883)	
Cutoff-6		6.16 (.886)	
R-sq. / McKelvey-Zavoina Rsq.	0.396	0.128	0.429
N (N of clusters)		865 (97)	865 (97)

Note: entries are OLS (ALSOS) coefficients in the first and the third column. The second column presents the log-odds of the ordinal logit, bootstrapped standard errors, clustered at the school level, in parentheses. The Brant test confirms the proportional odds assumption for the interaction and the main effects.

and .971 (.306) for the first group. The cumulative probability of registering a pro-Republican PID ($PID_{Rep73} > 3$) in 1973 as the result of voting for Nixon in 1972 and controlling for all other observables is 35.1 per cent [95%CI: 25.6 - 44.9] for eligibles and 15.3 per cent [95%CI: 4.9 – 30.6] for non-eligibles. This implies that voting twice for the Republicans as opposed to voting only once creates a 20 per cent difference in the probability of having a Republican party identification in 1973. Given the high level of uncertainty in the estimate of the effect of vote for non-eligibles it comes to no surprise that the two estimates overlap. However, in average there seems to be a remarkable difference in voters’ PID in 1973 among the two groups of interest. Moreover, given that the assignment to the treatment (eligibility) is only affected by those who had the right to vote but did not do so, the true magnitude of vote can be only higher than what is found here. In other words, if there is a bias in these results this only works in underestimating the true impact of vote choice.

Alternatively, one might suggest that the impact of 1968 vote on PID might be an artifact of measurement error. Given that measurement error exacerbates the fluctuation of PID at the individual-level (see Green and Palmquist 1994; 1990), it might be the case that when this error is taken into account, the impact of vote vanishes. To check for this possibility, I set the reliability of PID₆₅ at .85, a figure which should underestimate the true reliability of the measure (see Green et

al. 2002).¹⁵ The results are displayed in the last column of Table 4.3. Even when one allows for imperfect reliability in the estimate of lagged party identification, 1968 vote exerts a significant and still substantively large impact on the strength of PID in 1973.

Table 4.4: The impact of vote for the Democrats in 1968 on the strength of PID in 1973

	PID (0-6) ALSOS	Ordinal-Logit	Errors-In-Variables Reg. (r:.85)
PID ₆₅ (0-6: Strong Democrat)	.289 (.039)	.395 (.054)	.417 (.046)
Eligible ₆₈	-.192 (.207)	-.236 (.268)	-.211 (.181)
McGovern ₇₂	.962 (.225)	1.16 (.369)	.908 (.237)
(Eligible ₆₈)(McGovern ₇₂)	.522 (.242)	.717 (.335)	.529 (.258)
Controls		<i>Not shown</i>	
Constant / <i>Thresholds</i>	3.78 (.599)		2.36 (.642)
Cutoff-1		-3.46 (.931)	
Cutoff-2		-1.76 (.928)	
Cutoff-3		-.785 (.915)	
Cutoff-4		.567/ (.919)	
Cutoff-5		1.55 (.925)	
Cutoff-6		3.81 (.936)	
R-square / McKelvey and Zavoina Pseudo-Rsq.	0.417	0.138	0.441
N (N of clusters)		865 (97)	865 (97)

Note: entries are OLS (ALSOS) coefficients in the first and the third column. The second column presents the log-odds of the ordinal logit, bootstrapped standard errors, clustered at the school level, in parentheses. The Brant test confirms the proportional odds assumption for the interaction and the main effects.

Table 4.4 presents the results for the Democrats (equation 4.6). The findings are quite similar, although the magnitude of the effect is slightly reduced. 1968 eligibility increases Democrat ID by .522 points. The observed difference between the two groups is significant and remains relatively robust even when the assumptions interval-level information and zero measurement error in PID are relaxed (columns two and three of Table 4.4 respectively). Focusing on the ordinal regression,

¹⁵ Accounting for imperfect reliability does not solve another problem that has been alluded to regarding the American PID scale, namely the problem of dimensionality. In this analysis, I adopt the unidimensional conceptualization of party identification that is assumed in almost all studies of American partisanship. Things could change, however, if a multidimensional conceptualization of the PID scale is made (as is convincingly done by Weisberg 1980, 1983). Jacoby's unfolding analysis reinforces this view (Jacoby 1982). However, as the same author later argued (Jacoby 1998), optimal scaling, though the ALSOS procedure, brings the two approaches closer, since PID appears to be largely unidimensional, although the assigned scores of the original scale do not correspond to the underlying differences reflected in the latent concept that is measured. As was shown in Chapter 2, at least in this case the monotonicity assumption seems to be largely confirmed. Regarding the two PID scales used here, although the difference between weak partisans and leaners is often very small, it does not follow the pattern that was found in Weisberg (1980). Moreover, later in the analysis I break the unfolded 0-6 measure in various ways, but the results remain remarkably robust.

the log odds of being in a more pro-Democrat PID category are .717 points higher for those who voted Democrats in 1972 and could vote in both elections as opposed to those who did not have the right to vote in 1968 but voted Democrats four years later. In calculating the marginal effects for the 1972 vote conditional on the eligibility status of 1968, we find that the cumulative probability of a Democrat PID in 1973 ($PID_{Dem73} > 3$) is 42.2 per cent [95% C.I.: 31 – 55.2] for the eligibles and 27.1 per cent [95% C.I.: 0.2 – 50.9] for the non-eligibles. 1968 eligibles who opted for McGovern are more likely to be in a pro-Democrat point of the scale than non-eligibles who opted for the same candidate in 1972. Again, despite the high level of uncertainty among non-eligibles, there is a clear indication that, by incorporating also vote for Humphrey, voting for McGovern has generated a greater pro-Democrat partisan shift among eligibles than among non-eligibles.

4.5 Cognitive dissonance versus aging and political knowledge

Are the results driven by the age gap between eligibles and non-eligibles? Table 4.5 provides the same placebo test employed in the previous section. Again, when the analysis is confined to the eligible group no difference between the older and the younger group in terms of partisan strength is observed. Replicating the analysis based on equations (4.5) and (4.6) only for the eligibles, leads to the same conclusion, no difference between the two groups is observed.

Table 4.5: Placebo test for the impact of age on the change in PID in 1973: analysis limited to eligibles

	Republicans (0-6)	Democrats (0-6)
PID ₆₅ (0-6)	.358 (.072)	.310 (.067)
Eligible ₆₈	.022 (.094)	-.039 (.313)
Nixon ₇₂ /McGovern ₇₂	1.83 (.228)	1.82 (.247)
(Eligible ₆₈) (Nixon ₇₂ /McGovern ₇₂)	-.198 (.264)	.224 (.326)
Controls-constant	<i>Not shown</i>	

Note: Eligibles are those born before August 1947 and non-eligibles are those eligible to vote but born after July 1947, entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses (N=698, eligibles: 340, non-eligibles: 358. Ordinal logit produces very similar results.

The second potential explanation, as was also explored in the previous chapter, could be that elections only work by offering information to voters, which then helps to reinforce their existing partisan predispositions. The evidence provided in Table 3.4 of the previous chapter is sufficient to show this is not the case. Actually, the test presented in that Table is a more appropriate test for this analysis, since the competing outcomes are measured at the same time point as partisanship, i.e. in 1973. What it showed was that voting in 1968 does not boost the level of political knowledge, trust

and efficacy by 1973. This implies that such potential developments cannot account for the stronger partisan predispositions observed by 1973 as the result of having voted in 1968.¹⁶

4.6 Unpacking the effect of vote

Using the encompassing PID scale, the effect of vote was about a half-point change in people's partisanship in the direction of the party opted for. This effect does not seem to be driven either by information effects or by age differences. An important next step is to unpack this effect so as to disentangle the extent to which it applies to one, some or all of the following processes: causing shifts from one party to the other; inducing movements from independence to some sort of affiliation; reinforcing prior partisan attachments. The task of this section is to address this question. As it will be seen, in so doing, the findings serve to also confront another competing explanation for the observed findings.

To examine whether vote increases prior attachments or simply causes shifts from independence to partisanship I examine the impact of eligibility in 1968 only on change in the strength of PID (measured in a 4-point scale, ranging from independence to strong partisanship) without taking into further account the party label (and thus without having to 'infer' vote choice). A first indication about this effect was also provided in Figure 4.1, described above. The difference here is that apart from adding covariates, I also employ the folded PID scale (not simply a dummy denoting strong partisans) and I control for the 1965 level of partisan strength.

The results, displayed in the first column of Table 4.6, are obtained by using generalized ordered logit for the estimation of the parameters (Williams 2006). The use of generalized ordered logit helps to also answer whether the effect applies only to movements from independence or is also apparent in reinforcing prior partisan affiliations. This is because this technique does not make the proportional odds assumption, upon which ordinal logit is based. This means that if any of the variables exerts an heterogeneous effect across the outcome categories, its effect is represented with the corresponding number of coefficients (equal to the number of the outcome categories minus one). In this case, if for example vote only drives people from pure independence into a partisan affiliation, this heterogeneity would be captured by denoting a significant effect in this particular transition and non significant effects across all other categories. In other words, the effect of eli-

¹⁶ To ensure that the results are not due to misspecification, instead of using only eligibility as a predictor of change among all outcomes shown in Table 3.4 of chapter 3, I used the actual models analyzed in the previous section, that is, those based on equations (4.5) and (4.6) of this chapter. Again, the interaction between eligibility and 1972 vote not only appeared non-significant in all cases, but it also showed no consistent pattern.

gibility would be represented by three different coefficients (as if it were a multinomial logit or probit), each one denoting the effect of vote in moving people from a given category (and those below it) to all categories above it (i.e. from independence to all levels of partisanship; from independence or leaning to weak or strong partisanship; and from the three first categories to strong partisanship). If this is the case, then although vote would still be a key process in the creation of partisan attachments it might not be considered important for those entering the political world with some inherited partisanship.

Table 4.6: Exploring potential ways in which vote in 1968 causes change in PID: increases in partisan strength; partisan shifts; movements from independence to partisanship

	Strength of PID (0-3)		PID73:	PID73:
	Treatment	Placebo test	1=Rep; -1=Dem	1=Dem; -1=Rep
StrengthPID ₆₅	.660 (.066)	.604 (.082)		
Eligible ₆₈	.523 (.201)	.064 (.287)	-1.03 (.724)	-.709 (.734)
PID ₆₅ : (-1;1)			1.76 (.321)	1.62 (.308)
Nixon/McGovern ₇₂			1.19 (.782)	.952 (.969)
(Eligible ₆₈)(Nixon/ McGovern ₇₂)			2.16 (.878)	4.68 (1.52)
N	854	698	355	355
Controls	<i>Not shown</i>			

Note: Entries in the first two columns are log-odds from a generalized ordinal logit. For the last two columns they are log odds from a logit analysis. Bootstrapped standard errors in parentheses. For the placebo test, again only eligible voters are included and the eligible group consists of those respondents born before June 1947.

However, as the first column of Table 4.6 shows, this is not the case here, since eligibility appears to exert a homogenous impact across all levels of partisan attachment, hence there is only one coefficient to represent its effect. This coefficient, which denotes the log-odds of increasing prior partisan strength due to voting, is almost as high as in the previous analysis, .523 points. In total the probability of registering a party ID (PID>2) is 54.4 per cent [95%CI: 48.9 - 61.1] for the eligibles and 41.6 per cent [95%CI: 31.6 - 52] for the non-eligibles.¹⁷ The placebo test shown in the second column of Table 4.6, which examines only eligibles distinguishing them as was described in Table 4.5, confirms that it is eligibility rather than age that produces this pattern.

The next two columns of Table 4.6 show how voting for a particular party in 1968 helps in ob-

¹⁷ As one would be led to expect, controlling for Wallace voters, probably the most influential third-party candidate in the 20th century of American politics (Carter 1995:468), the eligibility coefficient grows even larger [.712], showing that it is actually through the act of voting for one of the two main partisan candidates that eligibility increases the strength of PID.

serving partisan shifts from one party to the other. The dependent variable in both cases is a dichotomous measure of PID, where -1 denotes Democrat (Republican) partisanship and 1 denotes Republican (Democrat) affiliation. The corresponding 1965 variable is also coded in the same way. Independents and leaners either in 1965 or in 1973 are excluded from the analysis. As it is seen, voting for Nixon or Humphrey in 1968 increases the likelihood of shifting partisan support towards the party voted for in that election. Put differently, 1968 vote choice increases the chances of a partisan shift more than what would have been observed if people had only voted for that party in 1972.

All this evidence completes the results shown initially in Tables 4.3 and 4.4 and illustrates that when we unpack the effect of 1968 vote on PID, we find that it encapsulates all three processes: changing party support, reinforcing prior partisanship and moving people from independence to partisan affiliation. An important side-effect of these findings (columns 1 and 2 of Table 4.6) is that since eligibility strengthens prior partisan attachments without accounting for the party brand, the results cannot be simply driven by the baseline indicator used for deriving party preferences (1972 vote choice). The Appendix provides more evidence on how this is not the case using a different logic for the distinction between the two parties than the one employed here.

4.7 Out-of-Sample inference

Another concern regarding the effects of vote on party identification could be that the 1968 election was particularly salient, giving rise to new realigning forces. If this is true, having voted in this particular election might have effects that would not be found in regular elections. Thus, the results might be simply due to the fact that we capitalize on the extraordinary salience of 1968. To test this competing argument, it is necessary to shift our focus from 1968 to another election. The problem is that it is very difficult to find another study that provides the opportunity to use eligibility as an IV of actual vote among respondents with almost no age differences. Given that electoral studies typically sample eligible voters, there are only very few cases within a single age group so that we could compare young voters in terms of their eligibility status in the previous election. To circumvent this problem, I make use of the Cumulative ANES dataset, which pools all post-election ANES studies from 1952 to 2004.¹⁸ I distinguish between two groups with only a two-year gap in terms of age. The older group (aged 25 and 26 until 1968, the last election in which voting age was 21, and 22 and 23 since 1972) was eligible to vote in the previous election. The younger group (aged 23 and 24 until 1968 and 20 and 21 since 1972) was not. Admittedly, the age gap here

¹⁸ I do not use the 1948 study because the PID set of questions is not included.

is more than double of the age gap between 1968 eligibles and non-eligibles. That said, the distinction is made in such a way that a placebo test for the role of age can be implemented, as it will be explained above. The dummy distinguishing between the two groups is interacted with vote choice, i.e. a dummy denoting vote for either the Republicans or the Democrats depending on which party is examined (again I distinguish between the two parties to maintain consistency in the results). Unfortunately, in this formulation of the test there is no lagged PID available, so we can only grasp changes in the level of partisanship as given by the respondents in each postelection study. Empirically, the following model is estimated:

$$PID_{it} = \alpha_t + b_1 Eligible_{i(t-1)} + b_2 VoteRe p_i + b_3 (VoteRe p_i \cdot Eligible_{i(t-1)}) + cX_{it} + \varepsilon_{its} \quad (4.9)$$

where α_t denotes year fixed effects, s denotes clustering of the errors at the state level, X presents a vector of controls and b_1 - b_3 constants to be estimated. The model for the Democrats is analogous. PID is again measured in a 0-6 scale, ranging only from strong Democrats to strong Republicans. To be sure, voting for a Republican candidate is bound to be associated with higher levels of Republican partisanship. The important coefficient here is b_3 . Taking the example of the 1968 Presidential election, assuming that those interviewed in 1968 and were 25 and 26 years old (thus eligible to vote also in 1964) voted for the same party to the same extent as would have done those aged 23 and 24 years old (and thus not eligible to vote in 1964), we expect the second group to demonstrate higher levels of Republican PID than the first. This is the effect encapsulated in b_3 . With the only exception of not having the baseline PID of the two groups (thus examining only difference in levels of PID), the logic is clearly analogous to that applied in the previous analysis of 1968 eligibility. The results are displayed in the first two columns of Table 4.7. As can be seen, although the pattern is more evident for the Democrats, in both cases the findings echo those presented above. Having voted for the same party not only at time t but also at time $t-1$, yields greater strength of partisan affiliation with either of the two parties. This implies that it is most unlikely that what was found in the previous section was simply the artifact of an extraordinary election.

Are these results driven by the age gap? The placebo test shown in the last two columns of the table compares two cohorts with the same age difference on average but who were both eligible to vote in the previous Presidential election. This implies comparing those aged 26 and 27 (24 and 25 after 1968) against those aged 24 and 25 (22 and 23 after 1968). Although the two groups have also a 2-year difference, they were all eligible to vote in the same number of Presidential elections. Columns 3 and 4 display the results. Clearly, there is no indication that the findings are due to the age gap between the two groups. In either case, b_3 is practically zero, denoting no difference in the level of PID between the two groups. Again, it seems that it is rather the act of voting than age as

such that accounts for this pattern.

Table 4.7: The difference in the strength of PID between eligibles and non-eligibles in time t-1 among those voting for the Republicans/Democrats in time t, ANES postelection surveys, 1952-2004.

	Base regression		Placebo regression	
	Republicans	Democrats	Republicans	Democrats
Eligible _{t-1}	.104 (.087)	.337 (.103)	-.102 (.091)	.105 (.081)
Rep./Dem.Vote _t	1.61 (.128)	-1.41 (.111)	2.01 (.137)	-1.92 (.108)
(Eligible _{t-1})(Rep./Dem.Vote _t)	.378 (.199)	-.415 (.134)	-.020 (.196)	.126 (.167)
Age groups compared	Before 1972: 25/26 vs. 23/24 After 1968: 22/23 vs. 20/21		Before 1972: 27/28 vs. 25/26 After 1968: 24/25 vs. 22/23	
N	1421		1646	
Concept tested	Eligibles _{t-1} vs. Non-eligibles _{t-1}		Eligibles _{t-1} vs. Eligibles _{t-1}	

Note: The first two columns compare those who were eligible to vote in the previous Presidential election vs. those who were not eligible to do so. The last two columns compare two groups with equal mean age difference but with both being eligible to vote in the previous Presidential election.

As was also the case above, it also needs to be examined whether elections drive partisan polarization through increase in political knowledge and interest rather than through a mechanism of cognitive dissonance stemming from the act of voting. Following the analysis implemented in the previous chapter, I use a series of indicators available in many (if not all) of the ANES surveys, displayed in Table 4.8. The main question of interest is not to simply examine whether the older group registers higher levels of political interest but whether this is because of having the opportunity to participate in more presidential elections than the younger group, rather than because of the age gap. If political knowledge is a confounder driven by electoral participation, the difference in levels of political interest should be greater between 20- and 21- and 22- and 23-year-olds than 22- and 23- and 24- and 25-year-olds.¹⁹ Moreover, the pattern should be apparent only during Presidential election years. Finding differences in political interest among the same age groups in non-Presidential election years would constitute evidence for increased political knowledge as a result of the age-gap or of participating in a midterm election, but would not constitute evidence that would question the results found above, since each group would have been eligible to vote in the same number of presidential elections. This implies that there are two placebo tests that can be

¹⁹ As was also indicated above, these age groups relate only to the analysis after 1968. For all surveys before 1972, the comparison involves 23- and 24- and 25- and 26-year-olds for the treatment group and 25- and 26- and 27- and 28-year-olds.

Table 4.8: Difference between eligibles and non-eligibles in terms of political interest and knowledge, Presidential and Congressional election years.

Political Information		Media Exposure		Interest in the election		Discuss politics		Interest in politics		
Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	
Age-groups compared: (before 1972) 23/24 vs. 25/26; (after 1968) 20/21 vs. 22/23										
	-.074 (.072)	.013 (.049)	-.038 (.085)	.009 (.169)	-.014 (.034)	-.004 (.035)	-.054 (.044)	-.035 (.048)	.091 (.054)	.075 (.054)
N	625	1204	1161	333	1458	1294	446	460	1043	1089
Age-groups compared: (before 1972) 25/26 vs. 27/28; (after 1968) 22/23 vs. 24/25										
	.122 (.074)		.002 (.062)		.015 (.032)		.074 (.028)		.047 (.053)	
N	668		1320		1694		495		1176	

Read daily newspaper		External efficacy		Knows house majority before election		Knows house majority after election		Recalls House Candidate name and party		
Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	Pr.El. Year	Midterm Election Year	
Age-groups compared: (before 1972) 23/24 vs. 25/26; (after 1968) 20/21 vs. 22/23										
	-.031 (.034)	-.061 (.034)	.525 (1.91)	-3.93 (2.31)	.080 (.026)	.050 (.020)	.012 (.035)	.048 (.035)	-.045 (.024)	.048 (.034)
N	586	457	1356	1128	1044	1194	678	735	643	735
Age-groups compared: (before 1972) 25/26 vs. 27/28; (after 1968) 22/23 vs. 24/25										
	.020 (.030)		-2.99 (1.76)		.002 (.030)		.039 (.035)		.016 (.018)	
N	684		1562		1178		772		720	

Note: All entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors, clustered at the state level, in parentheses. All dependent variables ranging from lower to higher values of the attribute in question: political information (0-4); media exposure (1-5); interest in election (1-3); discuss politics (0,1); interest in political affairs (1-4); read daily newspaper (0,1); external efficacy (0-100, 4-point scale); house majority before/ after election (0,1); recalls House candidate (0,1).

implemented, both shown in Table 4.8. For each attribute of interest, the first column presents the results for the treatment group and the placebo group, thus a first comparison that needs to be

made involves the two entries in each 'Presidential Years' column. If political knowledge is driven by electoral participation and if this is the main channel through which elections boost partisan affiliation, the coefficient found in the upper cell should be significantly higher than the coefficient of the lower cell in each of these columns. For instance, when comparing the two groups in terms of their level of political information as evaluated by the interviewer (the first indicator of the Table), we see that no significant difference is found between the two age groups of the treatment pair. Conversely, the older group of the placebo test seems to denote greater levels of political information than the younger group, a pattern which as a whole definitely rules out the idea that the findings are driven by increased political knowledge. In total, among the ten indicators used in Table 4.8, there are only two in which the older group of the treatment comparison denotes higher levels of political interest, namely a indicator of political interest and a question about whether the respondent knows which party had the majority in the House before the election. In all other instances the difference between younger and older respondents among the treatment group are statistically insignificant and most of the times they seem to lean towards an opposite direction. Moreover, the placebo comparison shows a similar pattern: the older group appears to denote higher values also in two indicators, namely 'political information' and 'discuss about politics'. This implies that on average there seems to be no difference between the two sets of comparisons, or, to put it differently, eligibility to vote in one more presidential election does not seem to increase political interest more than what would be attributed to the age gap between the two groups.

The second comparison is shown in the second column of each indicator, denoting the equivalent age-group comparisons but in non-Presidential election years. This comparison serves to show that even in those cases in which a significant difference is found for the treatment pair, it is unlikely to be due to the Presidential election: in both items ('know House majority' and 'interested in political affairs') the difference between the older and the younger group of the treatment comparison is also apparent in midterm election years, in which both groups could have voted in the same number of Presidential elections.

Given that no baseline values of political interest are available, the comparison between the two columns of the first row (Presidential and non-Presidential election years) is useful because it helps to explore potential changes due to eligibility that would otherwise be masked by baseline imbalances between the two groups. For example in the case of political information, we see that the negative coefficient among the treatment group is not due to initial (potentially even greater) imbalances in their politicization levels. This ensures that political knowledge, measured through the interviewer's evaluations, does not intervene as a confound. This pattern is largely repeated across all other indicators. The only exception is 'external efficacy'. Here, the treatment comparison

shows that the older group starts as significantly less efficacious than the younger group and during the election year it becomes slightly more efficacious. However, even in this case, the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant.²⁰

In sum, it seems difficult to interpret the findings of the ANES surveys as stemming from selective campaign targeting effects. Even if elections foster political information, it seems that this is only a marginal contribution in increasing partisan polarization. It appears more likely that elections are important in the process of partisan development mainly through the mere act of voting for a party, serving to manifest political preferences into actual behavioral choices. Importantly, the pattern does not seem to be confined only to the 1968 election, but it is rather generalizable to different electoral settings and political periods.²¹

4.8 Implications for vote choice

As a next step, I return to the youth sample of the Panel Socialization study and I examine whether the constraints implied by the act of voting apply also in actual party choice. Strengthening partisanship should be accompanied by increased continuity in vote choice. This is also the basic premise of cognitive dissonance, the primary psychological underpinning for the ‘immunization’ thesis: opting for a given party at time t , increases, *ceteris paribus*, the chances of opting for it in the future. To see whether vote brings behavioral continuity apart from increases in partisanship, I use again eligibility as an IV of 1968 vote. However, given that vote in 1972 is now treated as the dependent variable, we cannot use it as a baseline indicator. Instead and from the pool of available indicators in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, I choose vote choice in 1964.²² Thus, people voting for Johnson in 1964 are also deemed to vote for the same candidate in 1968. Analogous is the logic for deriving Republican vote in 1968. The model employed for the estimation of the parameters is very similar to equations (4.7) and (4.8):

$$Nixon_{72} = \alpha_{Rep} + \beta_{1Rep} Eligible68 + \beta_{2Rep} Re\ p64 + \beta_{3Rep} Eligible68 \cdot Re\ p64 + \gamma_{Rep} X + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (4.10)$$

²⁰ This is indicated by the interaction of eligibility with a dummy denoting presidential election year in a regression of external efficacy across the pooled dataset containing both midterm and Presidential election year surveys. The interaction coefficient is .691 with a standard error .511.

²¹ It is important to note that when the analysis is implemented separately for the two sets of elections (until 1968 with voting age 21 and since 1972 with voting age 18) the results remain substantively unchanged. In the case of the Republicans, the effects are stronger after 1968, whereas for the Democrats they are slightly stronger before 1972. In neither case, however, is this difference statistically significant.

²² The choice of vote in 1964 is on the grounds that the other two variables (own and parent PID) are stronger predictors of vote in 1972 once introduced as controls in the model. I thus prefer to simply include them as covariates in the equation. The results are substantively identical when each of the other indicators is used.

and

$$McGovern_{72} = \alpha_{Dem} + \beta_{1Dem} Eligible68 + \beta_{2Dem} Dem64 + \beta_{3DEM} Eligible68 \cdot Re p64 + \gamma_{Dem} X + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (4.11)$$

As discussed earlier, there are reasons to anticipate a greater effect for the Republicans than for the Democrats, related to the fact that the Republicans won in 1968. Furthermore, in this case the fact that Nixon was the Republican candidate in both elections (and thus could be voted for twice) whereas McGovern was only a candidate in 1972, implies that to the extent that cognitive dissonance is in work, it should be more apparent in the case of the Republican candidate rather than the Democrat (see also Mullainathan and Washington 2009). Table 4.8 shows the results. The dependent variable is a dummy denoting vote for Nixon in 1972 by Republicans and vote for McGovern in 1972 by Democrats. It seems that vote in 1968 increases the probability of voting for the same party in 1972 only for Nixon. In the case of McGovern, the effects are considerably lower and fail to achieve statistical significance at conventional levels. That said, the difference between eligibles and non-eligibles is also evident for the Democrat candidate when the marginal effect of 1964 vote preference (as a proxy of 1968 vote preference) is estimated for each of the two groups. In the case of Nixon, the log-odds of 1964 preference are .774 [std. error .194] points for the eligibles and -.266 [std. error .461] for the non-eligibles. The equivalent figures for McGovern are .841 [.227] and .483 [.506] respectively. Despite the difference between the two parties, those who were eligible to convert their preference for the Democrat candidate into actual vote choice in 1968 were more likely to repeat the same choice also in 1972.

Table 4.9: The effect of 1968 vote on the probability of voting for the same party in 1972.

	P(Nixon ₇₂ =1)	P(McGovern=1)
Eligible	-.175 (.286)	-.368 (.444)
Vote Choice in 1964	-.207 (.401)	.387 (.424)
Eligible*Vote choice in 1964	.964 (.422)	.422 (.453)
Controls-thresholds	Not shown	

Note: Entries are log-odds from a logit, robust standard errors, clustered at the school-level in parentheses. N=853. Controls include all variables shown in Table 1 of chapter 3.

To be sure, in this case there is substantial inter-party difference, which apart from the reasons given above could be also due to particular features of the 1972 election: given McGovern's extreme liberal image, often referred to as the candidate of "amnesty, abortion and acid" (Hart [whom we will see again in Chapter 5] 1973), initial pro-Democrat predispositions might have been intensified by voting this party in 1968 but not sufficiently to bring votes for a strategically

poor choice for the Democrats in 1972.

4.9 Exploring ceiling effects: the act of voting among established voters

Is this effect attributed to vote choice equally apparent in every succeeding election? Although eligibility (essentially applied only to young voters) makes it difficult to explore the effect of vote across different age cohorts, theory on the formation of partisanship indicates that this effect - as is also the case with all other potential determinants of PID - should gradually evaporate as people age. Once firm partisan identities are formed, vote choice should become more the outcome of prior partisan preferences rather than a path through which people reinforce their prior attitudes. This is because when vote is simply a matter of habit, the level of discomfort is effectively zero. Automatic behavioral responses to the same contextual stimuli should provide less room for cognitive dissonance (or self-perception considerations) and, consequently, for post hoc elaboration of attitudinal preferences. In other words, if PID evolves in a progressive fashion, the role of the act of voting in partisan anchoring should be confined to those who are still in the process of developing partisan habits. It should, however, be of little use for those already 'stuck in their ways'.

Table 4.10: Testing the impact of 1968 vote on change in PID between 1965 and 1973 among parents

	Republicans	Democrats
<i>Specification analogous to equations (4.5) and (4.6)</i>		
PID ₆₅	.681 (.025)	.691 (.022)
Voted ₆₈	-.150 (.137)	-.226 (.144)
Nixon ₇₂ /McGovern ₇₂	.632 (.410)	.738 (.251)
(Voted ₆₈)(Nixon ₇₂ /McGovern ₇₂)	.026 (.437)	-.053 (.261)
<i>Dummies</i>		
PID ₆₅	.594 (.025)	.658 (.023)
Rep ₆₈ – Rep ₇₂	.279 (.470)	
Dem ₆₈ – Dem ₇₂		-.365 (.236)

Note: For the dummies specification, the reference categories are for Republicans: NotVoted₆₈ – Rep₇₂; and for the Democrats: NV₆₈ – Dem₇₂. All other possible combinations of voting history in the two elections are incorporated in a single variable included in the model for each party. Entries for both models are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors, clustered at the family level, in parentheses. The results remain unchanged when further controls are added. Ordinal logit produces substantially identical results. N=1081.

To examine whether this is the case, I focus on the first generation of the panel study, i.e. the parents of the class of 1965. To be sure, there is no age-restriction that can be imposed for the case of parents, since all were eligible to vote in 1968. Thus, the only distinction that can be made is between voting for one of the two parties, voting for another party and non-voting. I use this last category as an instrument, interacting a dummy denoting turnout in 1968 with vote for each of the

two candidates in 1972, hence the specification is similar to that shown in equations (4.7) and (4.8) with the difference being that instead of eligibility I use turnout in 1968. Of course, since not voting in 1968 is the outcome of reasons other than age restriction and since these factors are likely to correlate with parental PID, there is no way to overcome the identification problem in this case. This endogeneity, however, is assumed to work only contrary to the main argument, since it makes it more likely to find effects for parents than to find effects for the children. As a second and more explicit way to test the impact of vote among the parents, I use a set of dummies distinguishing between those who opted both in 1968 and 1972 for the same party and those who voted for this party in 1972 but did not vote in 1968 (the baseline category). The results of both specifications are shown in Table 4.10. The pattern is rather straightforward for each of the two parties. No significant effects are observed. Voting in 1968 causes no change in parents' PID, once vote choice in 1972 is taken into account.

This finding has some important implications. First, it gives credit to the idea that elections are of differing importance between established and non-established voters. Given that for the youth cohort 1968 was the first election in their life span, we would expect them to weight it more than their parents, all of whom had been eligible to participate in more than three Presidential elections before 1968. As it has been already explicated, both cognitive dissonance and self-perception theory could justify this gap. Another way to see why this should be expected is to compare the magnitude of lagged PID in each of the two cohorts (compare the first row of Table 4.10 with the first row of Tables 4.3 and 4.4). Clearly, parents denote a considerably higher level of partisan stability than their children. The coefficient attached to PID in 1965 is almost double in the case of the old cohort as compared to the youth sample. Taken as a whole, this pattern gives empirical support for the 'formative years' hypothesis: initial political experiences are more pivotal for the formation of political attitudes than those coming later in the life span, an idea that has recently attracted much attention without yielding, however, unambiguous findings (Stoker and Jennings 2008; Achen 2002; Grynaviski, 2006). Previous research based on voting-age restrictions was essentially limited to the examination of new voters. However, no particular claim was made about potential heterogeneity between established and non-established voters, preventing thus a more direct connection of these micro-level findings with the general questions of how PID develops over the life-course. Here, by examining two different cohorts we find remarkable diversity, which indicates the presence of ceiling effects in the attitudinal implications of behavioral choices. To be sure, it still remains unclear how smoothly and when exactly these effects of the act of voting start to diminish as the result of increasing electoral experience. But, at least there is clear evidence about the differing importance of factors affecting partisan learning during people's life trajectories. Turning to the main question of this study, as described in the first chapter and as depicted through Figure 1.3,

the finding at least rules out the ‘running tally’ logic of partisan formation. To be sure, it is unclear which of the remaining two hypotheses best describes this process. In the next sections (as well as in the next chapter) I provide more evidence about this question, which largely favors the ‘impressionable years’ as opposed to the ‘steady increase’ hypothesis of partisan learning.

4.10 In the long-run: voting effects during the life span

In the previous section, we saw that even when the selection problem is not properly addressed, the act of voting does not seem to be consequential for older cohorts. The next logical step would be of course to ask how long does the effect of vote last. If the accumulation of electoral experience brings about partisan stability, the difference between eligibles and non-eligibles should gradually evaporate as they both add more and more elections in their partisan profiles. Previous literature in the case of turnout has suggested that voting habits arise after the repeat of vote in three consecutive elections (Franklin 2004). Although we cannot examine differences in partisan anchoring as occurring at each coming election, we can at least make use of the last two waves of the panel (1983 and 1997, see also chapter 2), in order to examine the extent to which we can still trace any effect of 1968 eligibility even after 1973. Moreover, by looking at how this effect changes (presumably diminishes) with the passage of time, we can also grasp the process of partisan learning comparing it with the two developmental hypotheses that gained most empirical support from the analysis of the first generation in the previous section.

To explore the long-term effect of the act of voting, I employ all four waves of the panel study and I use 1968 eligibility as an instrument of vote in predicting partisan strength, measured through the folded PID measure ranging from 0 (independent) to 3 (strong partisan), thus without distinguishing between the two parties.²³ To examine the role of eligibility in the development of strong partisanship during people’s life trajectories I estimate the effects by using again a growth curve model. Since the practicalities of the model were explained in the second chapter, I only present the model in its generic form, as shown below:

$$\ln\left(\frac{P_{is}(PID = c)}{1 - P_{is}(PID = c)}\right) = \gamma_c - [a_{0is} + a_{1is}(Age_{is} = 26) + a_{2is}(Age_{is} = 35) + a_{3is}(Age_{is} = 50) + e_{is}] \quad (4.10)$$

As can be seen, following the justification given in the second chapter, I specify time as a set of dummies, thus without imposing any polynomial structure. Subscripts and coefficients are the

²³ This is mainly done to save space, since the pattern for both parties is very similar to the one found for the folded PID measure.

same as given in chapter 2. The outcome category of the t -th measurement of the i -th individual is represented by $c = 1 \dots C-1$, and γ represents the threshold parameters. Again, a three-level mixed effects model is estimated, with repeated observations nested within respondents in turn nested within high-schools. The further unfolding of the growth curve parameters in their second- and third-level slopes and intercepts is also analogous to equations (2.5) to (2.9) of chapter 2. Using the same set of covariates employed also in the previous part of the analysis (those in Table 3.1 of chapter 3), the main variable of interest is 1968 eligibility. Since the election comes after 1965, the variable is included in the Z vector of covariates (see chapter 2), thus, it is allowed to affect only the growth curve of partisan strength, not the initial level. The parameters are estimated with mixed effects ordinal logit, using SuperMix (Hedeker 2004).

Table 4.11: The impact of 1968 eligibility on the growth curve of partisan strength, 1965-1997.

	α_1	α_2	α_3
Wave	-.800 (.137)	-.644 (.170)	-.001 (.180)
Eligible68	.339 (.152)	.365 (.190)	.105 (.196)
Random effects			
School intercept		.162 (.029)	
Individual intercept		.494 (.020)	
<i>Model Diagnostics</i>			
AIC - Schwarz Criterion	9332.807 - 9419.522		

Note: Entries are log-odds, the parameterization assumes no constant and calculates all cut-off points. A logit function is used. Level-3 units: 97; Level-2 units: 721, Level-1 units: 2,884.

The results are presented in Table 4.11 and displayed graphically in Figure 4.2. Apart from the coefficients attached to eligibility, the first row of Table 4.11 shows the evolution of partisan strength among the 1965 cohort. As could be expected from Figure 1.2 of chapter 1, the semi-curvilinear trend apparent among the American electorate during the last half of the 20th century is also affecting the class of 1965. The average level of partisanship is lower both in 1973 and in 1982 and captures the levels of 1965 only by 1997.²⁴

²⁴ To be sure, partisanship presumably recovers its initial levels earlier than in 1997 (when our sample becomes 50-years old) but this is when the next wave of information is available.



Figure 4.2: The growth curve of partisan strength among eligibles and non-eligibles, 1965 - 1997.
 Note: The solid curve presents the predicted probability of registering weak or strong partisanship, dashed curves denote the 95% confidence intervals.

1968 eligibility works as expected in 1973 and, interestingly enough, retains most of its effect until at least 1982. By 1982 young adults are already 35 years old and the difference between eligibles and non-eligibles in the number of Presidential elections each group has encountered is still relatively meaningful: 3 versus 4. When more elections are incorporated in people's records, however, this initial difference evaporates, as shown also in the graph, which presents the predicted probability of registering either weak or strong partisanship with either of the two parties. As Figure 4.2 shows, both groups are subject to the dealigning forces of their times. Moreover, given the smaller number non-eligibles, the intervals around the point estimates clearly overlap. However, although they naturally - by construction - start from the same point, eligibles do not experience as notable a decline in their PID as non-eligibles. Both in 1973 and in 1982 there is a clear difference in the predicted percentage of partisans between the two groups. This pattern becomes more interesting when compared to the almost equal level of partisanship found in 1997. Although many idiosyncratic and period-specific events account for most of this pattern of gradual increase in people's partisanship since 1973, the message of the figure is that the act of voting contributes to this process (especially if we consider that imperfect compliance among eligibles underestimates the effect of vote): people do get more polarized in partisan terms the more they vote. This effect, however, seems to be important only during the period of partisan formation. As people get stuck in their

ways, the act of voting for a party becomes again more the outcome than the source of partisan attachment.

4.11 Partisanship and electoral stability: some more (or less) obvious implications

If vote strengthens partisanship and if the latter implies greater electoral stability, we should be able to capture some intuitive yet hardly ever acknowledged patterns in people's voting history. In the second chapter we saw that parental politicization is an important mediator of influences coming in early adulthood. However, both these influences and the effect of parents gradually diminishes as people accumulate electoral experience. Eventually children from both politicized and non-politicized families register high levels of electoral stability at some point during their life trajectories. The findings are analogous in the case of the act of voting. Inertia eventually comes into place, making prior determinants of partisan preferences less important in shaping people's political orientations.

All this indicates that there is a process of partisan anchoring which should be presumably accompanied by increased continuity in voting patterns as people age. This pattern should help us predict when we are more likely to observe people switching between elections. Fluctuations in vote choice should be more apparent during the first years of political involvement and decrease steadily as people age. I test this proposition by examining the probability of shifting from one party to the other. I use as a dependent variable a trichotomous variable measuring whether an individual voted in a given presidential election for a candidate who belongs to a different party than the candidate voted for in the previous election. Shifting from one major party to the other takes the score of 1. Shifting to a third-party candidate or refraining from voting takes the value of .5. Voting the same way as in the previous election takes the value of 0. If an individual abstains in two successive elections s/he is excluded from that corresponding wave. I regress this variable on a linear trend variable, ranging from 1 (the 1968 election) to 8 (the 1996 election).²⁵ The results are shown in the first column of Table 4.12. As can be seen, there is a clear linear downward trend, de-

²⁵ Recall that the dependent variable is whether the individual voted the same way as in the previous election. Thus, to identify switches in the first election, that of 1968, we need to infer vote choice in 1964. To do so, I use information from individual's partisanship in 1965, i.e. from the first wave of the study. I assume that people declaring some sort of PID with respect to one of the two parties, would vote three years later for that party. Independents are assumed to abstain. Although this coding might fail to reflect the actual voting behavior of individuals, had they had the opportunity to vote in 1964, it matches well with their relative leadership evaluations of the two presidential candidates in 1964, as measured in 1973. Furthermore, using the question about people's hypothetical vote choice in 1964 produces almost identical results and correlates very highly with the variable I employ here (polychoric correlation of .93).

noting increased continuity in voting patterns as the number of elections increases.

Table 4.12: The relationship between vote and PID from a developmental perspective

	Switch(0,,5,1)	PID73 (0-6)	PID82 (0-6)	PID97 (0-6)
Election counter	-.183 (.053)			
Election counter Squared	-.0007 (.005)			
PID ₆₅		1.34 (.026)		
PID ₇₃			1.94 (.032)	
PID ₈₂				1.84 (.031)
Switch ₇₂		-.977 (.104)		
Switch ₈₀			-.210 (.076)	
Switch ₉₆				-.125 (.110)

Note: Entries are log-odds from a random-intercept ordinal logit (standard errors in parentheses). Estimates for the random effects cut-off points and model diagnostics for each model are suppressed to save space. In the first column the number of pooled observations is 4,935. N in columns 2, 3, and 4 is 935, 811, and 692 respectively.

But there are more implications from these findings than simply identifying electoral shifts during early adulthood. Combining the findings about PID and vote choice, I pose a further question that I try to explore with the available data. According to the logic of the Michigan school, American voters distinguish between PID and current vote choice. This means that potential shifts to a party different than the party to which a voter feels attached should not be accompanied by a change in voters' PID. Following the developmental view of partisan formation, I argue that this would mostly be the case for those voters who have 'got stuck in their ways'. In other words, switching during a voter's early elections is not qualitatively the same phenomenon as shifting in later elections, being mainly the outcome of the partisan formation process and an indication that this has not been yet completed. Thus, changes in vote choice during the early years of adulthood should generally be accompanied by equivalent change in PID. Conversely, switching later in the life course, should be seen more probably as a period effect which, however - as Campbell et al. (1960) noted for the 1956 shifts of Democrat voters to Eisenhower - should not be accompanied by a shift in PID.

I test this hypothesis by regressing PID (measured now in a 7-point scale) against its lagged value, as taken from the prior adjacent wave, and a variable denoting whether an individual voted in the most recent election for a different party than at the previous election. I repeat the analysis for each of the final three waves in our data. Thus, PID as measured in 1997 is regressed against

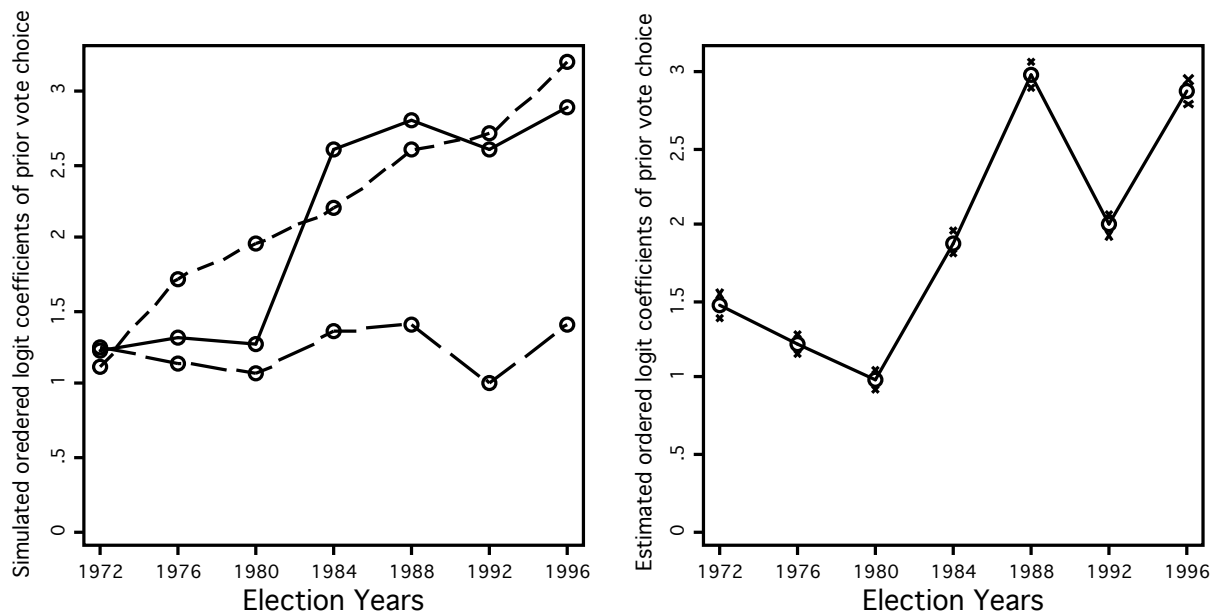


Figure 4.3: Simulated and estimated log odds of the impact of prior vote choice on actual vote choice 1972-1996.

Note: For the first graph, the solid line represents the third simulation scenario, the long-dashed line the 'running tally' scenario and the dashed line the first simulation scenario. Simulations run in STATA. They have been also run in MATLAB²⁶ which allows the evaluation of different error structures. The final results are identical no matter the particular distributional assumptions made for the simulated parameters. Bootstrapped 95% C.I. presented with crosses in the second graph confirm that differences in the magnitude of the coefficients are not due to sampling variability.

PID in 1983 and a dummy denoting switching in 1996. PID in 1982 is regressed against PID in 1973 and a switching dummy for the 1980 election. In a final model, PID measured in 1973 is regressed against PID in 1965 and a dummy denoting switching in 1972. The results are presented in the last columns of Table 4.12. As can be seen, the impact of actual voting behavior on PID is very strong in 1973 but much less strong in 1982 and not even significant in 1997. Conversely, PID denotes much higher levels of stability between adjacent waves as people become older. So shifts between elections are not only more common early in a voter's adult life, as shown in the first column of Table 4.12, but they also have greater implications for people's partisan preferences. PID is affected more by swings while people are still experiencing their first elections. The two variables become more distinct, however, as the number of elections increases.

As a last empirical implication building on the existing findings, I try to explicitly examine the three prevailing scenarios on the process of partisan learning, namely the 'running tally', the 'steady increase' and the 'impressionable years'. I do that by focusing on patterns of voting continuity.

²⁶ I am indebted to Guillaume Maze for helping me out with the code in MATLAB.

The logic is the following: if the constraints produced by partisan anchoring on vote choice become stronger as people accumulate political experiences, we should observe a progressively increased impact of prior vote on current vote choices. This is not a causal impact, as was identified through eligibility status above. It is simply using prior vote as a proxy of electoral stability (see also chapter 2). If people become immunized as their record of experienced elections lengthens, prior behavior should become more helpful in predicting current behavior. To grasp this point empirically I first run three sets of simulations corresponding to three different scenarios (for a similar way to disentangle the pattern of partisan learning through PID-issue constraints see Stoker and Jennings 2008). According to the first, which draws on the view of PID as a running tally of prior evaluations, I assume that the autoregressive parameter remains constant during people's life span and depends only on period shocks, associated with given elections.²⁷ I model such shocks as a linear function of the magnitude of aggregate switches between two adjacent elections. This factor serves to control for period effects which, if correlated with the developmental process of partisan anchoring, might produce a spurious relationship between time and vote continuity. The second scenario posits an increment in the magnitude of prior choice whose magnitude is in turn a function of the number of prior elections. Thus, scenario 2 anticipates a constant increase in the effect of prior vote choice as the number of elections goes up. The third simulation differs from the second in that the incremental factor appears only after the third election and remains constant thereafter. It thus anticipates a more step-wise progress in the pattern of vote continuity.

I plot the results from these simulations in the first part of Figure 4.3 and compare them with the actual results, as shown in the right-hand graph of the figure. The actual results are taken from an ordered logit of current vote on prior vote (0: vote for the opposite party; 1: not vote or vote for a third party; 2: vote for the same party as in t-1). As can be seen, the observed findings give credence to the second and the third scenario, since there is a clear progressive increase in the magnitude of the log odds, which however starts only after the third election faced by the individuals. Although, the impact of previous vote is dependent on period effects, as indicated by the sharp fall of the coefficients in the two election years in which the greatest aggregate shifts between the two parties are observed, in 1980 and 1992, there is also a remarkable increase in the observed continuity. The true data generation process clearly cannot have been produced simply by period effects,

²⁷ This implies that I do not simply assume an AR(1) process, since the particular electoral context is taken into account in a rather post-hoc but still comprehensive way, i.e. through the degree of aggregate-level shifts. This is not to say that election-specific factors are effectively specified, but, as a minimum, an effort is made to control for these factors. Importantly, unless these election-specific shocks do not follow a pattern that favors a particular scenario, they only provide noisy estimates and thus could only obscure a systematic trend in the analysis.

as would be advocated on the basis of the 'running tally' hypothesis. Moreover, at least intuitively, the sharp increase in the level of electoral stability after the third and especially the fourth election and its rather stable pattern thereafter, resembling the sigmoid curve of Figure 1.3, clearly favors the idea that attitudes and preferences are not simply developed in a progressive fashion over the life span but they are largely determined by various factors taking place during early adulthood. In other words, it seems that it is during those 'impressionable years' that most interesting developments in people's political profiles take place.

4.12 PID and Turnout: two habits formed hand-in-hand

Thus far, we have found considerable evidence for two important functions of the act of voting. In the previous chapter we saw that vote increases the likelihood of turnout in future elections. In this present chapter we have seen that considerable evidence supports the idea that the act of voting also reinforces prior partisan predispositions. In this last section, I try to combine the two findings by exploring a pattern through which voting in elections can be self-reinforcing. Although the literature on habitual voting implies a seemingly mechanistic process, whereby prior behavior bears an imprint on people's future reactions under similar contextual stimuli, I propose an alternative path through which vote might lead to electoral persistence. Voting in a given election implies also a choice. As much as the act as such is self-reinforcing, the actual choice of the party also has important attitudinal implications, as we saw, for people's partisan preferences. When taken together, these two processes imply an indirect path from vote at time t to vote at time $t+1$ through the reinforcement of partisan predispositions. We saw that vote in 1968 increases the strength of affiliation with a particular party, which in turn is generally regarded as a key predictor of turnout in partisan elections. At this stage, I examine the indirect effect of vote in 1968 on the probability of voting in 1976, as mediated through increased partisanship. The reason for focusing on the 1976 election is that this is the first election that is posterior to our information about people's partisan strength, which is measured in 1973, the year the second wave of the study takes place. Information about turnout in 1976 comes from the third wave of the panel study, which takes place in 1982. Adopting again the SEM framework of the previous chapter, the set of equations used to estimate the Average Causal Mediation Effect of the act of voting in 1968 on turnout in 1976 is given below:

$$Vote76 = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 Eligible68 + \gamma_1 X + \varepsilon_1 \quad (4.12)$$

$$StrengthPID = \alpha_2 + \beta_2 Eligible68 + \gamma_2 X + \varepsilon_2 \quad (4.13)$$

$$Vote_{76} = \alpha_3 + \beta_3 Eligible_{68} + \gamma_3 X + \delta Strng.PID + \varepsilon_3 \quad (4.14)$$

Again, ACME is given by the product of β_2 and δ . As was the case in the analysis of turnout, the identification of the ACME presupposes sequential ignorability, which once again, is probably violated because of the non-ignorability of the mediator, in this case, strength of partisan attachment. Thus, again apart from controlling for all covariates shown in Table 3.1 of chapter 3, I also test the sensitivity of the results upon this crucial assumption. The method through which the estimation and the sensitivity analysis is implemented is directly analogous to the one described in the previous chapter.

Table 4.13: The Average Causal Mediation Effect of Vote in 1968 in the probability of voting in 1976, mediated through its role in strengthening peoples prior partisan attitudes.

	Linear Model	Ordered Probit for the mediator	Binary Outcome	Non-Parametric
ACME	.024 [.006-.045]	.023 [.005-.042]	.022 [.004 - .04]	.020 [.003-.041]

Note: Bootstrapped confidence intervals are presented in the parametric results, for the nonparametric estimation, confidence intervals are based on the standard error of the estimate, calculated through the exact variance formula (Goodman 1960). N=753 for the non-parametric (bivariate) estimation, 620 for the other columns.

Table 4.11 shows the ACME of vote in 1968 (as instrumented through eligibility) on the probability of voting in 1976. As it is seen, those who voted in 1968 were approximately 2 per cent more likely to vote in 1976 as a result of their strength of partisan attachment, increased through the act of voting. Although this might appear a small indirect effect, it is almost half of the effect found in the previous chapter, where it was only assumed that the process goes from one election to the other without any attitudinal mediator. Moreover, this effect needs to be interpreted as the effect of 1968 vote on the probability of voting also in 1976 as the result of a unit increase in the strength of PID. Given the proportional effect of 1968 vote across all four categories of partisan strength (as was found to be the case above), this effect could increase up to 8 percentage points. Moreover this is not the effect of 1968 vote on 1972 but on the 1976 election, since our measure of partisan strength comes after the 1972 election.²⁸ This result remains robust under different estimation procedures, as shown in Table 4.11.

²⁸ Voting in 1976 will presumably also have been boosted by voting in 1972, but we cannot test that.

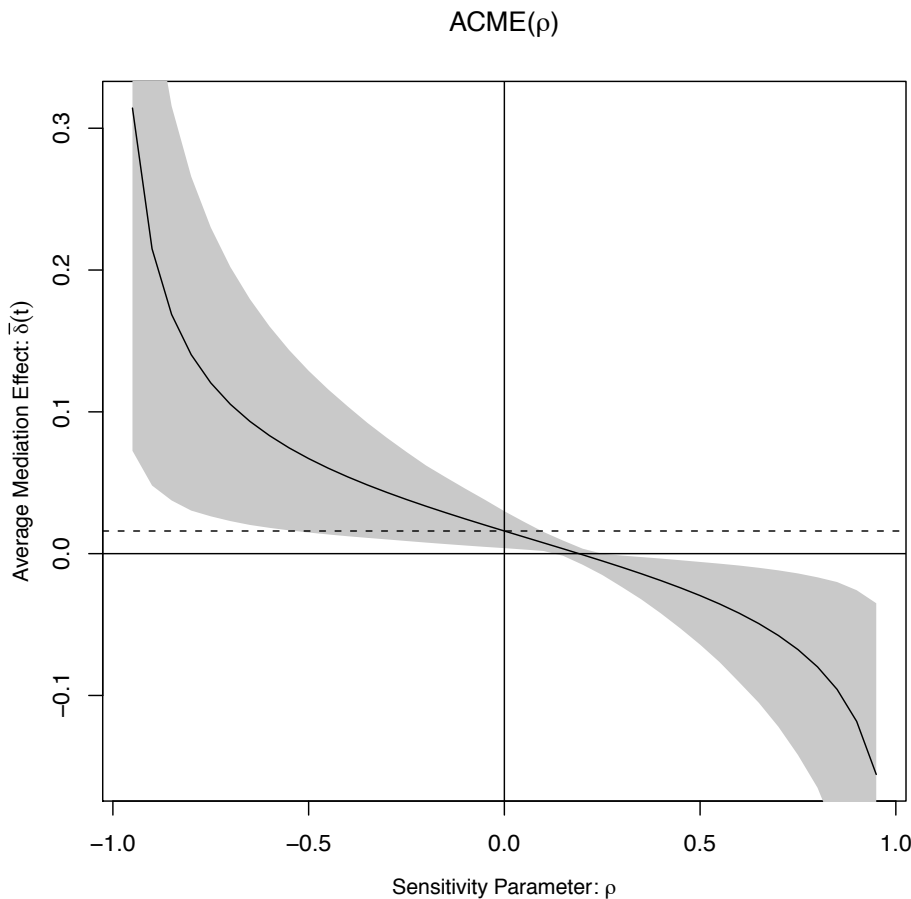


Figure 4.4: Sensitivity Analysis for the Average Effect of eligibility on 1976 vote, mediated through increases in partisan strength by 1973.

Note: The solid line represents the estimated ACME for differing values of the sensitivity parameter, the gray region represents the 95 per cent C.I., calculated with the Delta Method (Imai et al. 2008).

Figure 4.4 shows the sensitivity of this finding on the assumption that strength of partisanship is ignorable to unobservable confounders. The rigid line presents the ACME across various values of the ρ parameter, measuring the correlation between ε_2 and ε_3 (the notation is the same as in the previous chapter). Its intersection with the dashed horizontal line denotes the level of the ACME when the ignorability assumption holds (when $\rho=0$). For all negative values of this correlation, the ACME is significantly higher than zero. That said, unlike the analysis in the previous chapter, in this case ACME becomes zero for a relatively low positive value of the ρ parameter (.198). However, the findings are still indicative of the possibility of a significant causal path from vote to habitual voting through increased strength of PID, in a case where although vote is randomly assigned, partisan strength is not. Moreover, in this case (and unlike the case of 1968 and 1970 vote) unobserved heterogeneity regarding the partisan strength equation (equation 4.13) is taken into account in a more comprehensive fashion since partisan strength in 1965 is included as a control

variable. This creates a more rigid basis for arguing that there is no obvious unobserved confounder explaining both 1968 vote and 1973 strength of partisanship. In other words, this implies that the actual sample estimate of the correlation between the empirical residuals of equations (3.14) and (3.15) could be regarded as a relatively credible indicator for the true ρ parameter.²⁹ This correlation is $-.01$, i.e. clearly within the interval of ρ in which ACME is significantly positive.

4.13 Conclusion

Questions regarding the formation of partisan attitudes have a long record in voting research. As is often the case, much of the discussion has been driven by the relative availability of empirical evidence. Thus, although the early literature focused on three independent factors, namely the role of family, political issues, and the act of voting, the vast majority of the empirical research was confined to the evaluation of the first. Consequently, when the act of voting as such was not ignored, it was mentioned mainly as the result of intuition, without being accompanied by systematic empirical support. The result of this tendency, mainly caused by the inability to estimate the causal effect of vote on PID based on traditional analytical methods, is that the conditions under which this factor influences partisan attachment have remained largely unknown.

Trying to fill this gap by focusing on the attitudinal consequences of voting behavior, voting-age-restrictions have been used as a way to estimate the causal effect of voting in one's first election on change in their partisan attachment. Adopting a Difference-in-Difference strategy, I examined how much stronger the PID of voters who opted for Nixon or McGovern respectively in 1972 would have been, had they enjoyed the opportunity to also vote for the same party in 1968. There is on average a half-point movement towards the party opted for in that first election. This effect has been estimated using two different conceptualizations of the LATE, both of which lead to substantively similar results. This pattern is robust to different estimation methods. Even when PID is assumed to be measured with considerable error, the results still indicate a significant causal effect of 1968 vote. Moreover, examining the same hypothesis with a different dataset, not confined to a

²⁹ An important caveat in this analysis relates to the role of 1970 vote. In the previous chapter we saw that 1968 eligibility is not orthogonal to 1970 vote. The latter might in turn affect partisanship in 1973. This is also confirmed empirically through a regression of 1973 partisan strength on 1970 vote, controlling for the observables of equation (4.13). To see how this confounding factor, which cannot be addressed with this sensitivity analysis since it is posterior to the treatment (eligibility), biases the estimate, I replicate the analysis for those who voted in 1970 and those who did not vote. The average estimate of the ACME of 1968 eligibility in 1976 vote through change in 1973 partisan strength is $.024$ for the first group and $.018$ for the second. In both cases, the 95 % lower bounds of the bootstrapped confidence intervals are marginally above zero under sequential ignorability. Moreover, when vote in 1970 is instrumented through 1968 eligibility and then used as the treatment for the identification of the ACME, its effect as mediated through partisan strength as measured in 1973 is also very similar, i.e. $.023$.

particular election, we come up with substantively very similar results. This clearly enhances the generalizability of the findings presented in this chapter.

Competing hypotheses related to the role of age, political information and the salience of the particular election examined here, have been tested without gaining any empirical support. Trying to unpack the effect of vote on PID, we find that it does not only consist of movements from independence but it also accounts for partisan shifts as well as increase in people's prior partisan predispositions. It is not only the case that voting creates some sort of affiliation. It is also that feeling attached to a particular party, expressing this affection through the act of voting for this party increases the feeling of affiliation towards this party. This is how partisan habits are formed during adulthood. Moreover, the effects seem to hold at least until young adults reach their mid30's, diminishing however thereafter under the weight of increasing electoral experience. This is also why no effects were found for the older cohort, constituting the parents of the 1965 class.

The theoretical implications from this study are relevant for the on-going research on political socialization in two important respects. First, they highlight the important contribution of behavioral factors on the development of partisan identities. Although much of the existing literature exalts the role of family influence and period effects, driven by issue-party constraints, I show that apart from these well-established factors, there is also a significant contribution made by the very act of voting itself. Second and related to the first, although PID in the US has been shown to remain stable despite sporadic shifts in party choice (Campbell et al. 1960), implying that vote makes no difference for the partisan preferences of individuals, this is most probably the case only among already established voters. For young voters who are still in the process of forming their partisan identities, however, vote affects both the direction and the strength of partisan affiliation. Although the aspects of social group identification linked to particular parties might be present before even the individual gets the chance to vote for her party, once she does so, this sense of commitment becomes intensified.

The combination of these findings gives credence to yet another well documented but hardly tested intuition regarding the decreasing weight of political events during the aging process (for an analogous argument regarding issue constraints see also Stoker and Jennings 2008). People seem to be more affected by their voting choices when they are still in the process of partisan formation. They identify with particular parties more as they continue voting for them. Without arguing that there is a clear cut-off point in this process, as the amount of previous behavior accumulates, current and previous choices cause less change in people's feelings about the parties. As psychologists suggest, behavior influences attitudes in politics as in many other aspects of life. However, this pattern is not constant during the life-cycle. The conditioning role of the amount of prior political experience shows that behavioral choices are more influential when the act in itself is given more

importance. This is the case for voters who are yet to 'get stuck in their ways' (Franklin 2004).

This finding might also have important implications about the way psychological theories are used in political behavior research. Although we are not in position to evaluate the impact of cognitive dissonance versus self-perception in voting choices, it is at least informative to recognize that what has been treated as a generally automatic process of habit formation might have substantial cognitive or perceptual roots. Moreover, it would be an interesting contribution coming from political scientists to establish this increased impact of behavioral choices while these choices are still taken in a more cognitive fashion. How much of this impact is gradually lost through repetition of behavioral choices? Needless to say, more research that could enable a more explicit treatment of the two competing theories in the field of electoral behavior would shed more light on this exact issue.

Finally, there seem to be also downstream effects of the act of voting in a given election on the probability of voting also in subsequent elections. Voting means also voting for a party. Thus, apart from increasing habitual constraints, which facilitate further participation, the act of voting for a given party also increases the probability of voting for it also in the next election. Partisans are more likely to vote not only because they are more interested in politics, but also because they want to manifest their support into actual vote. This means that as vote strengthens partisanship, it also indirectly fosters turnout.

A last question, that naturally follows is of course how we can account for electoral change within such a framework of gradual partisan anchoring. Given that voting shifts appear to become increasingly more frequent, focusing on the formation of firm partisan predispositions might seem like looking the tree but losing the forest. To be sure, continuity is still the forest, since only a small portion of the electorate, at least in the US, seems to shift from one partisan camp to the other between adjacent elections. Moreover, this analysis reminds us something that although is largely confirmed from survey data is still often neglected: young voters are more likely to switch in their preferences, as was also demonstrated here. This pattern fits very nicely with the developmental idea of partisan learning. That said, however, it is still important to bear in mind that electoral choices are always choices. Various short-term factors might take place and create temporary shifts. Moreover, by focusing on the American case, we enjoy remarkable continuity in the party system. Such continuity, which of course is a precondition for electoral stability, is often absent from various European political systems. As a minimum, new parties emerge or old ones disappear. Such developments, clearly undermine the picture of continuity presented in this chapter.

Appendix 4.A: Testing a different method for deriving preferences

The finding of the first column of Table 4.6 that 1968 vote strengthens prior partisan attachments does not condition on the exact party brand and thus indicates that the effects are not dependent on the baseline-indicator (1972 vote choice). That said, given that the main part of the analysis examines each party separately, it is useful to confirm this pattern by distinguishing also between the two parties. To do that I focus directly on 1968 vote preference, without conditioning on 1972 vote choice. This is achieved by making use of a question asking respondents who did not vote in 1968 what their vote choice would have been had they voted in that election. I use responses in this question in combination with the actual vote choice recalled by those respondents who voted in 1968. Importantly, the ‘what if’ question was directed to all non-voters without distinguishing between eligibles and non-eligibles. Preferences for Nixon are combined in a single dummy, comprising those who actually voted for him and those who would have voted for him, had they voted in that election. I interact this variable with eligibility. Thus, the only way to distinguish actual vote choice with preference is again eligibility status, which implies that no information about who actually voted is taken into consideration. The logic for the Democrats is analogous.

Table 4.A: The effect of eligibility on change in PID among supporters of Nixon/Humphrey in 1968.

	PID ₇₃ : Republicans (0-6)	PID ₇₃ : Democrats (0-6)
PID-65 (0-6)	.400 (.058)	.363 (.060)
Voted-would have voted: Nixon68/Humphrey	.446 (.361)	.185 (.369)
Eligible68	-.085 (1.09)	-.459 (.931)
(Voted-would have voted: Nixon68/Humphrey)(Eligible ₆₈)	.793 (.372)	1.47 (.389)
Thresholds/Controls	Not shown	
McKelvey and Zavoina Rsq	0.123	0.137

Note: Entries are log-odds from an ordinal logit, robust standard errors, clustered at the school-level in parentheses. N=865.

The design is far from flawless and this is also why it is not used in the main part of the analysis. The most crucial problem is that recollection bias might work differently for those who voted than for those did not vote. This is important because it needs to be recalled that this information is

taken from the 1973 wave of the panel, that is secure years after the actual election. Importantly, changing preferences from 1968 to 1973 might be also reflected in false recollections about party preferences in 1968. But this bias is more likely to appear for those who did not vote than for those who actually voted in that election. Even if preferences have changed, actual behavior is more binding than a recollection of preference, as reflected through a hypothetical vote question. Actually, the correlation between 1972 vote choice and 1968 hypothetical vote is higher (.55 for the Republicans and .64 for the Democrats) than between 1972 and 1968 actual vote (.49 and .52 respectively). This pattern signals a potential bias in recollection of preferences which might work in favor of non-eligibles (thus, against the argument), so long as their 1972 choice reflects also their PID as measured in 1973, which is very likely to be the case.

That said, the design is still useful because it constitutes the only way we can actually make use of the available information regarding actual vote choice in 1968. With all other coding schemes there is some random error because choice is derived through a measure that does not refer to people's actual preferences in that election. Although this error is ignorable to eligibility, it still might cause some noise in the findings. By using this information together with the eligibility status we can more explicitly address the counterfactual question of how youth's PID would have changed had they voted for their preferred candidate in 1968. More importantly, finding similar results by using a different strategy for deriving preferences (than simply employing any other of the very much interrelated measures shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2) strengthens the validity of the argument made in the main part of the text. The presumption is that if the actual act of voting matters, for those who actually voted in that election the effect of their choice should be greater in shaping their partisanship than among those who did not manifest their preference through the election. Again, the problem of selection bias is addressed by distinguishing simply between eligibles and non-eligibles.³⁰ The following model is used for the estimation:

$$PID_{Rep73} = \alpha_{Rep} + \beta_{1Rep} Eligible68 + \beta_{2Rep} Nixon68 + \beta_{3Rep} Eligible68 \cdot Nixon68 + \gamma_{Rep} X + \varepsilon_{is} \quad (4.A1)$$

$$PID_{Dem73} = \alpha_{Dem} + \beta_{1Dem} Eligible68 + \beta_{2Dem} Humphrey68 + \beta_{3Dem} Eligible68 \cdot Humphrey68 + \gamma_{Dem} X + \varepsilon_{is}$$

(4.A2)

³⁰ This means that when constructing the 1968 vote choice dummy, we include in the 1's all respondents who either said they voted for this candidate or would have voted for him had they voted in that election. This last group does not only contain non-eligibles but also eligibles who did not vote. Thus, interacting this variable with eligibility status, again we avoid the problem of selection bias in people's decision to vote or not in 1968.

Nixon68 and *Humphrey68* denote respondents who either voted or would have voted for this candidate if they had voted in that election. The results appear in Table 4.A. As can be seen, the interaction between eligibility and party preference in 1968 is positive, denoting that for those who did vote, opting for Nixon (Humphrey) increases their pro-Republican (Democrat) partisanship by .793 and 1.47 points respectively. This finding cross-validates the results from the main analysis and provides further evidence that voting in 1968 had a significant effect on change in people's partisanship between 1965 and 1973.

Events

5 - Opening ‘Openness to change’: period effects and the increased sensitivity of young adults

‘Learn as much as you can while you are young, since life becomes too busy later.’

*Dana Stewart Scott,
Emeritus Professor of Computer Science,
Philosophy, and Mathematical Logic*

In the previous chapter we examined how the act of voting for a party in a presidential election influences prior partisan preferences. One of the main messages revealed from the findings was the contrasting pattern between the young cohort experiencing its first two elections and the older cohort comprising voters with an average age of 50 years. The aim of this chapter is to explore whether such inter-cohort differences emerge also in the effect of period shocks which take place during people’s political lives. Finding such differences would enrich the picture about the process of attitude formation during the life span, providing more evidence in favor of the developmental theories of political learning. The main question on which this chapter hopes to shed some light is, thus, the following: are young people more susceptible to political events than older people?

Addressing this question might seem redundant if one considers the amount of literature on political change that is based upon this assumption. However, few of these studies have attempted to justify this assumption at least from a theoretical point of view. Even in these cases, the justification often evolves through circular argumentation. For example, many accounts of partisan learning assume either a ‘heightened sensitivity’ (Markus 1983) of young cohorts in political stimuli simply as a result of the formative character of this life stage or an inclination of the youth to ‘new ways of thinking’ (Delli Carpini 1989; Bennett 2009). The key question, however, is why such attitudinal characteristics should be more evident among the young, causing them to weight political events more than older age groups. As Bartels puts it, ‘to argue that “heightened sensitivity” or “openness” account for distinctive responsiveness to political stimuli is a not-very-enlightening tautology’ (2001:13).

That said, various case-specific explanations have been provided. One such explanation is that young people are less likely to use ideological heuristics while interpreting a given political shock (Merelman 1969:753) and this might cause greater deviations from prior political beliefs (Converse

1964). As Adelson and O'Neil (1966:298) put it, 'the growth of cognitive capacity allows the birth of ideology [...]. What passes for ideology in younger respondents is a raggle-taggle array of sentiments.' Lack of cognitive constraints engenders attitudinal lability, which is typically driven by the 'forces of the times'.

However, existing evidence about the process of political socialization during adolescence qualifies this expectation. Youngsters learn from their older peers in a rather deductive fashion, which enables them to construct a more holistic political schema (Beck and Jennings 1975). This might explain how young people can come to identify themselves either in partisan or in ideological terms without yet engaging in the specifics of every-day politics. Consequently, if the only driving force of age-related differences in the weight attached to political events stems from the presumed difficulty of young adults to build a cohesive and consistent ideological profile to confront political stimuli, it is questionable whether this pattern is as straightforward and universal as it is usually presumed.

Other potential explanations have been also provided. For instance, building on the seminal work of Mannheim (1952), developmental psychologists have based an expectation for increased resilience of aging individuals to new events on neurological changes taking place across the life cycle (Botwinick 1973). Moreover, as Glenn (1977:59) points out, 'the accumulative effects of attempts to resolve cognitive dissonance [and] ego involvement in publicly espoused views' might also lead older cohorts to become more reluctant in updating their political opinions and beliefs as a result of newly arriving information. Differences in the nature and amount of contextual stimuli between different age groups might also account for this expectation. For instance, increased geographical mobility during early adulthood should result in a more versatile social context that would presumably induce attitudinal change through potentially contradicting funnels of political conversation.

Although some of these arguments can probably justify why in some occasions young people appear more volatile in their political opinions and stances than their older counterparts, they do not constitute a general theory in principle applicable to all instances in which such inter-cohort differences are observed. It seems that the argument that comes closest to justifying why we should expect young people to weight new information more than older cohorts is also the simplest one. Political events arrive successively across the life cycle. Following a Bayesian updating logic, one could simply argue that if people update their priors under the light of a given event, then, *ceteris paribus*, the more established these priors are the less likely it is to expect a significant deviation as a result of a given event. Thus, the marginal effect of a given shock on people's attitudinal profile is probably inversely proportional to the number of prior events that have already occurred during their life trajectory (Glenn 1977:59, Achen 1992, Bartels 2001, Dinas 2008a). Under

this perspective, it seems that events might be more powerful among young adults simply because they impinge on a smaller number of previous stimuli than for older people.¹

Is this actually the case? Unfortunately, with the exception of very few cohort analyses (Glenn 1974; Cutler and Kaufman 1975), which have not yielded unequivocal support, there has been almost no attempt to explicitly test this idea empirically. That said, it would be an exaggeration to argue that this claim, so deeply rooted in various accounts of political psychology, has merely constituted an untestable assumption, that still waits to be examined 'from scratch'. The accumulation of cohort studies have provided considerable indirect evidence for this thesis. For instance, the fact that youth partisanship and voting tendencies are much more likely than those of older people to reflect national tides could be interpreted as the product of the increased susceptibility of younger cohorts to the current political streams. This sort of evidence is actually abundant in the older and more recent literature. What, however, seems to be missing, is a more narrowly tailored testing of this idea, which rather than deducing this inter-cohort difference from aggregate attitudinal and behavioral patterns, would explicitly examine the sensitivity of the youth relatively to older cohorts in front of real-world events. This striking lack of such empirical works is also what led Glenn (1977:64) three decades ago predict that:

'The most important cohort studies in the next few years are likely to deal with the issue of whether aging individuals tend to become so inflexible in their attitudes and behavior that they respond little or not at all to influences for change-or whether substantial change is even possible among the elderly.[...] this issue is very important for both theoretical and practical reasons.'

Even a brief perusal of the ensuing literature makes it clear that Glenn's vision has not been confirmed.

Apart from enriching prior indirect evidence about the increased sensitivity of young adults, providing an empirical framework that allows the direct testing of this hypothesis enables also a more nuanced theoretical elaboration of this idea. To see how this is the case, imagine the following scenario: an important event that harms the popularity of the president takes place. Young people appear to be more affected by this event. What does this mean?

1. They are equally likely as their older counterparts to hold their relative position in the distribution of preferences about the President as before the event. What makes them differ is that, as a whole, they react more to the event in directional terms, i.e. the magnitude of change is

¹ One could argue that the reverse pattern is true. When new information is received and when this information contradicts people's priors, they might become more susceptible to forthcoming shocks since their initial assertions have been questioned. This might be true in various instances but it does not invalidate the Bayesian logic summarized above. Again, this tendency to qualify prior views is likely to be more apparent among those who have not yet experienced many analogous shocks.

higher, although the 'weight of the past' (the importance of prior information) is equally strong (or weak).

2. They are equally responsive to the event as their older counterparts - thus, they do not react more than the latter in directional terms - but they are less easily predictable: knowledge on their prior perceptions about the President is less helpful in predicting these evaluations after the event.

3. They are less likely to base their evaluations on their prior preferences (the hand of the past is weaker) and they are more responsive - in directional terms - to the event (thus, both scenario 1 and scenario 2 are true).

By only observing aggregate trends in attitudinal or behavioral indicators of political stability, it is impossible to actually disentangle these potentially complementary mechanisms that might engender such an inter-cohort difference. It is thus important to focus explicitly on this question so that a suitable research design can be found in order to examine whether, and if so through what observational manifestations, young people are more responsive to political events.

To be sure, confining the analysis on these questions does not help much in explaining what the underlying factors that cause this increased sensitivity are. To be sure, indirect tests of aggregate trends in electoral or attitudinal stability are not well-suited to shed light on this question either. What is needed here is to delve into the direct testing of this thesis but going beyond a simple comparison between age groups so as to incorporate in the same equation potential mediators. What are the particular characteristics evident among the youth that distinguish them from their older counterparts in the weight given to political events?

Without, of course, being the only potential factors that could drive such inter-cohort differences, political interest and strength of partisanship are two attributes that can be readily tested in order to unpack the notion of increased responsiveness among the youth. Both can be safely treated as mediators, since they are likely to stem from age (being endogenous to it) than vice versa. With regard to political interest, young people are on average less interested in political affairs. Political involvement is known to be an important precondition for an event to affect people's opinions about the political world since it facilitates exposure to political stimuli (Sniderman 1975; McClosky et al. 1985). Although this relationship might be curvilinear (Zaller 1987, 1992), there is a minimum threshold of political knowledge and interest that is probably needed in order for an external informational shock to alter or at least qualify people's priors. Lacking this characteristic, 'openness to change' (Stoker and Jennings 2008) might not manifest itself as an increased weight attached to political events. That said, lower levels of political knowledge might also reflect greater propensity to accept the political messages that are being received. Thus, when events are salient enough to become noticeable among less politicized groups, they may have more conse-

quential implications among these exact groups, because the existing burden of political information is simply too weak to absorb this effect.

Party identification is likely to operate in a less ambiguous fashion. Weaker partisan ties, which as was also shown in the previous chapter are more frequent among the youth, create a more fertile ground for political change, presumably because new information is received and evaluated without strong partisan lens (Zaller 1987). Accordingly, it remains to be seen whether this inter-cohort difference is mainly the product of the imbalance between young and old in terms of partisan strength.

All these still pending questions indicate that a direct examination of the 'increased sensitivity' thesis, through a research strategy that would allow a systematic and causally interpretable empirical analysis that could also shed some light on the underlying factors generating this pattern, is largely missing from the existing literature. This is mainly due to the inherent difficulty of capturing the net effect of political events. There are two reasons for this. First, unless the data come from a period that coincides with the time in which the event took place, it is very difficult to capture its impact in people's attitudinal and/or behavioral change net of various unobservable influences. Political shocks are not assigned randomly to a population of interest. For example, although the implications of the Civil Rights Act on the partisan geography of the American South became gradually apparent through the accumulation of survey data after 1964, its causal impact on partisan change at the individual level cannot be identified unless we dispose of data right before and after the event. Without this luxury, the attribution of any change to a given event is problematic simply because no steps were taken to 'stop the world from running'. And as the world keeps running, things continue happening, not only at a global level but also in each individual's life trajectory. Unfortunately, it is impossible to separate these effects afterwards at the analysis stage.²

A typical solution to this problem is to explicitly ask people about various events and correlate their responses with outcomes of interest. This is where the second problem arises. Given that attitudinal responses are frequently the outcome of prior predispositions and that people react differently to new information according to their prior beliefs, the results are bound to be contaminated by selection bias. In other words, we can only be sure that we do not capitalize on unobserved heterogeneity if we are ready to believe that each individual's survey response is the outcome of the influence of a given event, when controlling for observables. To avoid such strong assumptions two criteria need to be met. First, the chosen political event should be salient enough to give rise to

² There are of course studies that explicitly try to model the effect of particular events (see for example Newman and Forchimes 2010). However, they do so without addressing whether these shocks exert a differing influence according to people's prior level of political experience. Moreover, the way the effects of these events on attitudinal change are usually estimated overlooks the fact that these shocks have not been assigned randomly to a population of interest. Accordingly, self-selection problems are not addressed.

some sort of change in people's attitudinal or behavioral patterns and should of course relate in one way or another to politics. Second, data should be found for these events which would enable us to capture their effect in a quasi experimental fashion, without, that is, needing observational evidence about the reactions of people to this exact event. Following the previous example, observing the same individuals right before and after the Civil Rights Act, we could have a good measure about the immediate impact of this event in changing people's partisanship.

To be sure, even in this case we would not have a complete story because people need a period of adjustment in the face of policy changes or any other type of new information (Bartels 2006), as recent research on the effect of 9/11 on presidential approval has shown (Schubert et al. 2002). Thus, adopting this approach, the long-term consequences of the Act, for example, cannot be captured. However, it would be at least a first step to examine whether young people react differently to period events even if this difference relates only to their immediate reactions. This is also because the idea about young people being more susceptible to period effects does not seem to be conditioned on the time span passed after the occurrence of these shocks. To put it simply, no prior theory adverts that young voters need less time to react than their older counterparts. Consequently, it seems unlikely that any difference found in the magnitude of the effects between the youth and older age groups would be because one of the comparison groups reacts more quickly than the other. Granted, the influence of any new information gradually vanishes as additional informational cues come into play. That said, it is at least important to see whether this impact before these new cues come along is higher among young voters than among the old. In sum, the idea here is to achieve a comparison between two otherwise (conditioning if necessary on observables) exchangeable groups with one having been treated (having received the 'political shock') and the other not. The next step is to compare the difference between the two groups across different age cohorts: is the difference between treated and controls greater among the youth?

Following this logic, I focus on three events with different political connotations and for which there are data that allow to effectively capture their impact drawing on the causal approach employed in earlier chapters. The first refers to the revelation of Nixon's involvement in the Watergate scandal, which starts as a salient national issue in the end of 1972 and ends up with Nixon's resignation in August 1974. What facilitates the examination of this event is the 1972-74-76 ANES panel study, which contains information about Nixon right before the scandal breaks out and right after his resignation. Given the vicinity of our information with the period of interest, there is no need to rely on people's responses about Watergate in order to capture its effect. It is probably safe to assume that differences observed between 1972, when Nixon, as we saw in the previous chapter, achieved an easy landslide, and 1974, when he appears as the least popular political figure of that time period, are, at least in large part, due to the revelations about his role in Watergate. Interest-

ingly, by additionally employing available information from the 1976 wave of the panel, we can also examine the extent to which the differences in the magnitude of the effects remain robust in a more long-term perspective.

The second case relates to the US government support to the Contras in Nicaragua during Reagan's second term in office. The Iran-Contras affair unfolds during November 1986, which is exactly the fieldwork period of the 1986 ANES study. Thus, by comparing those interviewed in the beginning of the month who thus had only little if any information about Reagan's involvement in the Iran-Iraq war and the Contras effort to achieve a *coup d'état* in Nicaragua, with those interviewed later, when this information has become publicly known, we can again grasp the impact of this event on Reagan's approval rating and other personality traits. To be sure, this comparison is based on the ignorability assumption regarding the time point in which a given respondent is interviewed. Potential attitudinal and other factors might account for the date of interview (whether this takes place earlier or later during the fieldwork) and may correlate also with the outcome of interest. This possibility is addressed in detail later in the analysis section of this chapter.

The third case is of a different nature altogether. It involves the 1984 Democratic candidate, Gary Hart, who although he was considered a frontrunner for the 1988 Democratic leadership until at least the beginning of 1987, was forced to withdraw from the race for the Presidential nomination a few days after it was revealed that he was having an extramarital affair with a Florida model called Donna Rice. This scandal came about at the very beginning of May 1987 - just before the ANES 1987 pilot study went into the field, re-interviewing a subset of the 1986 ANES study respondents. Again, the closeness of the two waves (November/December 1986 - May 1987) and the fact that both contain information about people's evaluations of Hart enables a causal examination of the extent to which that event influenced voters' attitudes towards the Democratic candidate.

The main question in all these cases is whether these events influenced the youth more than the older electoral cohorts. I proceed to a more detailed description of the research design after summarizing the existing literature on the impact of political events on the process of political learning, which follows in the next section.

5.1 Political Shocks and generational imprinting

5.1.1 Political generations and the role of political events

The idea that political events are potentially more crucial for younger cohorts is embedded in various theories of political socialization. We first find it in the discussion of political generations.

Young cohorts, i.e. groups of 'individuals who pass some crucial stage at approximately the same time' (Carlsson and Karlsson, 1970:710), are typically assumed to be the carriers of the messages of their times. Differences in behavioral and attitudinal terms between them and their predecessors are deemed to have powerful cumulative consequences through the process of generational replacement. Deviations of new cohorts in terms of value orientations or other attitudinal aspects might generate a whole shift in the society as these dissimilarities persist and the process of replacement is continued. This is due to the emergence of a 'critical mass' that makes it possible for these age-related subcultures to dominate and spread gradually within the society (Delli Carpini, 1989:43). The important question, therefore, is whether and to what extent should we expect such outstanding variations among cohorts to develop. This exact question has motivated discussion about the distinction between generations and cohorts.

Although the two terms are generally used interchangeably (see, for example, Alwin, 1990:347), there seems to be a subtle difference between them, implied also by the definition of generation as 'a birth cohort (or adjacent birth cohorts) internally homogeneous in some important respect and distinctly different from persons born earlier or later' (Glenn, 1977:9). Thus, generations are subsets of the more general set of cohorts. The latter is generated by a mechanistic process through human development. In and by itself each new cohort can be treated as a *potential* new generation. However, not every new cohort necessarily develops into what is referred to as a 'social generation' (Braungart and Braungart, 1980; see also Elser 1982). The distinction is a small one but is probably important. A defining property of a cohort is a *single* common characteristic of its members, typically the year (or interval of years) of birth. A generation, in contrast, implies that from this common characteristic, other important political attributes are also common to its members and distinct from members of other cohorts. Thus, an age cohort may fail to develop into an 'actual generation' if it lacks this common bond (Mannheim, 1952).

The important point here for our purposes is the underlying hypothesis, embedded in this distinction between cohorts and generations, that there is a possible interaction between age and people's experiences. This interaction can be understood in two ways. First, people of particular age are exposed to the same historical, social, political and cultural influences. Second, people of different ages are not equally responsive to the same influences (Delli Carpini, 1989: 18-19). It is this last question that is of primary interest here. True, both cross-sectional and panel studies have shown that older people are usually less labile than young people in their attitudes, no matter whether these refer to party identification (Alwin and Krosnick, 1991; Jennings 1979; Jennings and Markus 1984), ideological predispositions (Glenn 1980) or their value priorities (Sigel, 1989:5).³

³ There is, however, some evidence of increased volatility in late maturity, associated with more general attitudinal instability, typically attributed to retirement from the job market (Jennings and Markus, 1984).

Presumably, the reason is that they have had more opportunities to retest and re-evaluate their attitudes. Doing so, they have gradually decreased their level of uncertainty about these attitudes, yielding political beliefs more resilient to counter-evidence. This is probably the most often-cited effect of aging on people's attitudes and it stems from what is usually known as the process of routinization (Delli Carpini, 1989; Steckenrider and Culter, 1989).

The question here is whether, and before this routinization process is completed, increased volatility also means increased sensitivity. To this question there is no explicit answer. At the most, there are studies showing the persistence of attitudes formed during this 'impressionable period' over the life span (Jennings and Niemi 1975;1978). Although this sort of evidence is helpful to illustrate the long-term implications of initial attitude formation in young adulthood, it still leaves unexplained the role of period influences in this process. Are political events more influential for young people? Finding supportive evidence for this pattern would serve to provide further indication about the puzzle initially framed in chapter one and depicted in Figure 1.3, suggesting a more step-wise process of political learning.

5.1.2 Theories of partisan learning

The idea of a differing effect of political events among young adults is also prominent in theories of partisan learning that use a bayesian updating framework. The key question again is how people incorporate political information during their life span. In most cases individual responses in any political indicator of interest are modeled as a function of a series of period effects either by assuming a constant weight for all events taking place during people's life trajectories (Achen 1992) or by imposing a discounting factor to allow older events to be weighted less than those taking place more recently (Gerber and Green 1998). These models, however, fail to take into account the particular impact of events at specific periods of one's life span. This is also acknowledged by Gerber and Green (1998:815) who recognized that:

'[A]ny such model must account for the 'period effects' that stamp different generations with distinctive partisan coloration[...]. Learning models that stress the influence of contemporaneous information have difficulty explaining the persistence of early formative experiences.'

Bartels' encompassing model (2001) compares these two models against a third one that allows for such exceptional effects in any particular period of people's life trajectories. In so doing, he tries to model the effect of elections (used as proxies for period events) through a non-linear model that simultaneously estimates the weight given to each election as a function both of individual's age and her particular cohort. Although the mathematical framework he proposes is path-breaking in

analytical terms, since it overcomes the well-known identification problem of the traditional age-cohort-period (ACP) approach and tries to simultaneously model both the marginal and the incremental impact of period effects in people's partisanship, it fails to estimate explicitly the impact of political events since it only uses elections as the point of reference to which differing weights are attached. Thus, elections are used as proxies for political shocks. But, of course, the political world is full of events that are more important than elections in shaping people's partisan outlooks. Moreover, the findings are very ambiguous, making the author conclude with the following remark (2001:21):

'Given a choice between an implausible theory that fits the data well and a plausible theory that does not, I would suggest looking for a new theory.'

Here I do not propose a new theory since the purpose is much more modest and the question is a more elementary one. That said, the question is worth pursuing since addressing it constitutes a contribution to the existing literature in four important respects: first I examine real world events rather than proxies, through a design that enables the identification of their causal effect in such a way that their impact is not contaminated by unobservables. Second, it is the first explicit attempt to compare these effects across different age cohorts. Third, the analysis tries to distinguish between two different ways in which increased sensitivity of the youth might manifest itself in observational terms, thus helping to clarify what is to be meant by 'increased sensitivity'. Fourth, a first step is made to unpack the role of age by testing potentially crucial mediators that might account for such inter-cohort differences.

5.1.3 Realignments versus dealignments

The argument about the exceptional weight attached to political events during early adulthood is also implicit in the discussion about political dealignments and realignments. Various cohort analyses have tried to explore the sources of aggregate change in partisan strength and direction, trying to assess the role of generational replacement and conversion forces. The findings however are quite ambiguous. In the case of Britain, Crewe et al. (1977) found hardly any support for the argument that the decline in partisanship among the British electorate is primarily due to the entrance of new cohorts in the electorate, a view however which was challenged by Abramson both for the American (1979) and for the British (1978;1992) case. Johnston (1992) finds similar evidence of conversion against replacement in the case of Canada, with the important, though, exception of Quebec. On the other hand, Franklin et al. (1992) have shown that the decline in the importance of

positional and sociological factors is particularly evident among the new cohorts. Change in turnout levels was also found to be mostly due to the portion of the electorate with short history in politics (Franklin and Wessels, 2002). This echoes the results from various American studies of the mid-1970s, which suggested that the partial dealignment in American politics was primarily driven by the entrance of young voters (Nie and Anderson 1974; Nie et al. 1976; see also Jennings and Markus, 1984).

The distinction between period and cohort effects was also employed for the analysis of critical electoral battles. Churchill's notorious defeat in 1945, for instance, was attributed more to the coming of age of a new cohort, which was raised during the period of Labor upsurge, rather than to pure period influences (Franklin and Ladner, 1995). As the authors put it (451-52),

'Conservatives would have probably won a comfortable victory if the electorate of 1945 had been limited to those who had voted in the general election of 1935. Churchill did not enjoy that luxury.'

By the same token, the 1932 landslide of Roosevelt, seen as the archetype of a realigning election, has engendered an important debate, regarding whether it was primarily the result of the mobilization of an until then inactive part of the electorate (Campbell 1985) or the outcome of Republican conversion (Erikson and Tedin, 1981, 1986).

Although it has provided ambiguous findings regarding the relative contribution of generational effects versus period forces affecting homogeneously the electorate, this type of analysis has been particularly useful because it has shed light on the dynamic patterns leading to aggregate electoral change. However, although it provided a general picture about these processes, it failed to address the causal mechanisms engendering these patterns. Thus, the question about the relative impact of political events remained again largely unanswered.

This is also due to the inherently descriptive nature of cohort analyses employing the APC framework (Dinas 2010a). As Markus (1983:720) has pointed out:

'[T]he APC framework is primarily an accounting equation rather than an explanatory one. That is, its purpose is to partition variation into distinct bundles (age; period; cohort); it is rarely purported to represent in mathematical form the underlying process generating the observed data.'

A related limitation of this approach is that it is strictly additive, i.e. unless we impose further assumptions on the model the interaction between age and period effects is not identified. Second, by not specifying particular events taking place during people's trajectories, we cannot be sure about whether the observed pattern is due to the exceptional weight given by young generations to the forces of the times. To have an unambiguous insight regarding this question, it seems to me,

we need to sacrifice this general picture in order to investigate the micro-foundations of the theory. If, for instance, the Republican realignment in the South was due to the new cohorts coming of age during the 1960s (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009), this must be because events taking place during that period affected this portion of the electorate more than other cohorts. But this is again something that needs to be examined and replicated in different political contexts so as to disentangle aging effects from pure cohort effects.

An important step towards this direction was Franklin's (2004) comparative study on turnout, in which the author explicitly interacted an indicator of young cohorts (those facing up to their third election) with exogenous characteristics of elections, i.e. the margin of the winner and the majority status (size of the first party). Although the findings indicate a rather increased level of sensitivity of young voters on such contextual characteristics, the problem is that again the operationalization of political events is confined to electoral factors which might be very useful for explaining turnout but fail to encompass more generic political shocks that we all face during our political lives. What is the role of these shocks in shaping our views during early adulthood? It is to this question that the following case studies try to shed some light.

5.1.4 Period effects through survey issue scales

The most explicit attempt to model the intervening role of age in the effect of political events comes from the use of issue scales, which are employed as predictors of change in people's partisan attitudes. In their study about the evolution of partisanship, Niemi and Jennings (1991), Jackson (1975) and Franklin and Jackson (1983) have proposed a specification that allows the impact of political issues to vary among people of different age. The findings however are still ambiguous. Whereas Jackson (1975) and Niemi and Jennings (1991) find considerable differences in the weight adjusted to political issues between young and old voters, Franklin and Jackson (1983) come up with non-significant interactions. The main problem with this type of analysis, however, relates again to the way it treats political events. The latter are not simply political issues as measured with survey scales. These scales measure attitudinal responses to general issue concerns and are often evaluated through partisan lens (Markus and Converse 1979; Johnston et al. 2003). Moreover, although people respond to these survey items it is unclear whether they actually adjust their attitudes on the basis of these issues. Problems of rationalization bias and cognitive dissonance prohibit a causal interpretation of such findings. Moreover, most of these issues are chosen from a pool of items that are generally used in electoral studies without necessarily acquiring particular salience during the period of examination.

The approach adopted in this chapter is fundamentally different. Instead of using survey scales, I choose data gathered while real-world events were taking place, trying to estimate their impact on attitude change in a much more experimental-like fashion. It comes, I believe, much closer to the theoretical idea about the increased sensitivity of the youth on period shocks to employ such period events than simply make use of people's responses to survey scales.⁴ The exact way these real-world events are analyzed with the use of observational data is described in the following section.

5.2 Research Design: Wars, scandals and young voters

5.2.1 The Watergate

The scandal effectively starts in June 1972 when five men are arrested and charged with attempted burglary and attempted interception of telephone and other communications in the Democratic National Committee's headquarters (White 1975). However, it is only in the spring of 1973 that the scandal begins to have important political implications, with Nixon being forced to ask for the resignation of his two closest assistants. By December 1973, the investigation on the issue starts to provide quite unequivocal evidence about Nixon's actual involvement in the scandal (White 1975). His position becomes increasingly precarious leading to his forced resignation from the Presidency on August 9, 1974.

Given that Nixon is the first President who did not complete his term for reasons not related to problems of health, it is probably difficult to overestimate the saliency of the particular event during that period. Suffice it to say that since then political revelations which are thought to lead to scandals always take the term '-gate' at the end.

The key idea here is that at the time of the 1972 ANES study Nixon's popularity was still unaffected by the scandal. By November 1974 however, everything had changed and it is more than likely that this is because of the Watergate. Thus, this case provides two (in fact more than two but I get to that in the next paragraphs) waves of information about people's evaluations of Nixon covering the exact period in which the news emerged. Thus, any lack of continuity in people's attitudes about Nixon should be largely attributed to the scandal. What is interesting for our purposes

⁴ There have been few studies that have employed political events taking place during the data collection procedure as natural experiments (eg. van der Brug 2001). In fact, two of the three cases that are analyzed here have been already examined in the literature, namely the case of the US involvement in Nicaragua (Krosnick and Kinder 1990) and the scandal related to Gary Hart (Stoker 1993). None of these studies, however, has made use of these events in order to test the idea that young people are more susceptible to new information.

is to see whether young people were more prompted to adjust their opinions about the President and about the political system and the political parties in general as a result of this new information.

The fact that we have two waves of information, before and after the scandal, facilitates the examination of all possible scenarios described above. To see how this is the case, consider the following equation:

$$Nixon_{74} = a + b_1Nixon_{72} + b_2Young + e \quad (5.1)$$

'Nixon' could stand for any indicator denoting preferences or evaluations of the American President, before and after the scandal. Thus, assuming that young people are different from older people but homogenous in their reactions about Nixon regardless of how favorable they were to the President before the scandal, an OLS estimation of b_2 provides the effect of being young in the magnitude of reactions about the President. Assuming that people's evaluations about the President deteriorate as a result of the revelations about his involvement in Watergate, b_2 measures whether young people (how these are coded is explained later) reacted, on average, to a greater extent than older cohorts as a result of the scandal.

But this specification would only address one of the two possible scenarios through which increased youth sensitivity might manifest itself. To fully grasp both scenarios simultaneously, one needs to interact the two covariates, as shown in the following formula:

$$Nixon_{74} = a + b_1Nixon_{72} + b_2Young + b_3Nixon_{72} \cdot Young + e \quad (5.2)$$

In Equation (5.2), b_3 denotes the difference in the degree of continuity between the young and the old, thus it addresses scenario 2. Centering $Nixon_{72}$, b_2 also provides evidence for Scenario 1, at least as evaluated at the mean values of the pre-scandal measure of people's perceptions about Nixon. That said, finding that $b_3 \neq 0$ would not only provide evidence about the difference in the level of continuity between the youth and the old, but it would also indicate that young respondents are not homogenous in their reaction towards Nixon. Thus, addressing scenario 1 would require the examination of the variation of b_2 across all values of $Nixon_{72}$.

An important concern in the attempt to estimate the difference in the direction of the effect of the scandal between young adults and older cohorts (scenario 1) is that there is a significant baseline difference between young voters and older ones, as observed already by 1972. Either due to his rigid stance against marches and demonstrations or because of his commitment to bringing an

'honorable end' to the Vietnam War, Nixon was less popular on average among young people than among older people.⁵ Given that the estimates are based on finite-end scales and that no adjustment is made to account for ceiling effects (see for such adjustments van der Brug 2001), there is a conservative bias in the estimates. That said, the examination of scenario 2, i.e. of whether young respondents are less predictable in their reactions about the scandal, is largely unaffected by this initial difference in the distribution of preferences about Nixon between them and older cohorts.

The case of Watergate is the only case in which we can even remotely examine whether differences in the weight attached to political events between young people and older cohorts evaporate soon after the first shock of the new information is gone. There is no way to examine this in the other two examples because we only observe respondents in two states, i.e. once before and once after the event. In this case study, respondents to the 1972 and 1974 waves are also interviewed in 1976, allowing us to grasp the durability of intercohort differences after the initial shock has evaporated.

5.2.2 Iran, Contras, and the 25th of November 1986

The second case relates to an event that took place at the aftermath of the 1986 mid-term election. Interviews for the National Election Study of that year started at the beginning of November, right after the election, and they lasted until approximately the end of January 1987. During the same period, the American public would experience a series of revelations about the involvement of the US government in the Iran-Iraq war and, much more consequentially, in the fight of the Contras to overthrow the Sandinistas government in Nicaragua. No detailed account is provided here since this can be found in Krosnick and Kinder's (1990) concise summary of the events. Suffice it here to only underline the important dates in the story.

The story starts in November 3, when a Lebanese magazine reported that the US government was selling arms to Iran as part of an agreement for the return of American hostages from Lebanon. President Reagan goes public on 13 November to emphasize that 'we did not - repeat, did not - trade weapons or anything else for hostages, nor will we' (Krosnick and Kinder 1990:498). The big news however broke on November 25. At noon of that day, Attorney General Meese announced to a national television audience that funds obtained from the sale of weapons to Iran had been given to the Contras in order to support their attempt at a *coup d'état* in Nicaragua. The news spread almost immediately since the issue became headline news in newspapers and monopolized

⁵ Among the youth, the average score in the feeling thermometer scale for Nixon, which is the main indicator used in the analysis since it is available in all waves, in 1972 (after the election) is 59.37. The equivalent figure for older individuals is 67.70 (how young and older cohorts are defined is explained below).

TV broadcasts for several weeks (Krosnick and Kinder 1990:499). Opinion polls run during that period register a significant decline in Reagan's popularity (Krosnick and Kinder 1990:500). Although the sequence of the events during November make it difficult to estimate the causal impact of a particular episode of the scandal on the decline in Reagan's popularity, it is hardly contested that when these revelations are taken together, they did affect his public image during that period.

A quick browse through the headlines of the New York Times during that period leaves no doubt about the saliency of the issue after Meese's announcement and until at least the middle of December of that year (Krosnick and Kinder 1990). Both the tone of the media coverage related to the US intervention in Nicaragua and the apparently unequivocal fact that the American president had lied to the American public makes it very likely that the event had a rather homogenous effect across the electorate, primarily damaging Reagan's until then invulnerable public image. This is not to say that Reagan's decision to aid the Contras was not favored by a portion of the electorate. However, for the vast majority the news caused negative reactions against the President's profile. This is important because, as was also the case for Nixon, at least in principle this relatively homogenous pattern does not make it necessary to infer people's attitudes from survey responses in order to identify in which direction the event affected the public's opinion of the president. That said, information provided in the questionnaire helps to classify people in terms of their predispositions about the US involvement in Nicaragua, without making any explicit reference to the events of November. Moreover, the random selection of the 1986 ANES respondents enables (under certain conditions that will be discussed below) the attribution of differences in assessments of Reagan between people interviewed early and those interviewed later to the revelations that took place during the fieldwork.

Since no panel data are available in this case, it is impossible to gauge the level of continuity in people's perceptions about Reagan. Accordingly, the analysis in this case is only limited to the estimation of the magnitude of people's reactions about the American President. That said, this case study is still valuable because it provides a more fertile ground for the examination of scenario 1. This is so for several reasons. First, the fact that the events take place during the data collection procedure helps to justify more convincingly that any observed change is simply capturing the effect of the news. Moreover, in this case, there is no significant baseline difference in the distribution of preferences regarding the President.⁶ More importantly, it enriches our insight about the role of political events in qualifying people's priors by providing a completely different case in

⁶ To avoid contaminating the results with the scandal, which essentially starts only few days after the data collection procedure began, we can see whether young and old respondents differed in their initial evaluations about Reagan by using the 1982 ANES survey. In effect, 49 per cent of those aged more than 30 years old approved Reagan's record. The equivalent figure for the youth is 52 per cent ($p > .05$).

which new information does not cancel people's prior beliefs about the President. It was already known that Reagan was in favor of the Contras in Nicaragua and, in effect, his popularity quickly returned to its prior high levels only few weeks after November 1986. Thus, it is interesting to see if we can still find important differences between age groups when the event under examination is not devastating for the President's popularity. To put it differently, whereas analogous incidents have already taken and will continue to take place in various settings and political periods, scandals of the magnitude that the 'Watergate' assumed are undoubtedly less frequent. Thus, finding inter-cohort differences in the magnitude of change in people's perceptions about Reagan would have more important practical implications since the results could be more easily generalizable to other real-world occasions.

5.2.3 The demise of a Democratic candidate

The third case study comes only a couple of months later but involves a completely different story. With the Republican supremacy being challenged for the first time in six years, primarily due to the Iran-Contras crisis, the race for the Democratic presidential nomination that had started at the aftermath of the 1986 election emerged as a potentially pivotal factor for the fortunes of the two parties in the coming presidential election. Among the candidates for the post, at least by early January, the one who appeared to stand the best chances to win the race was Florida's Senator, Gary Hart (E.J. Dionne 1987). But things did not exactly go as expected. On May 3, the Miami Herald uncovered a sexual affair between the Democratic Presidential candidate and a model from Florida, Donna Rice (Stoker 1993:195). The news quickly escalated, forcing Hart to resign from the race only five days later, on May 8. Once again, this is a case that has been already analyzed in the literature. Stoker (1993) provides a comprehensive chronicle of the events and analyzes the way in which Hart's image was damaged by the media revelations about his personal life. Thus, apart from employing this event to examine whether young voters are more likely to change their views when confronted with new information, I will not focus further either on the details of the story or the causal mechanism under which the event proved disastrous for his political career. In the next section I briefly refer to Stoker's findings as a way to justify the model specification used in my analysis.

Why is this particular case useful for our purposes? Once again, the reason is that it provides a fruitful setting for a natural experiment, essential in our effort to isolate the causal impact of political events on people's political attitudes. Where does the natural experiment come from? The answer lies in the sequence and timing of some electoral surveys taking place in the real world. More

specifically, the 1986 study asks respondents to evaluate Hart in a 'feeling thermometer' scale. A random portion of these respondents were also interviewed in May 1987, constituting the sample of the 1987 ANES pilot study. The interviews for the 1986 ANES study start in early November 1986, right after the election, and end in early February of 1987. The ANES pilot study interviews people from May 5 to June 1. It includes the same question in which people are asked to express their feeling about Gary Hart in a 0-100 thermometer scale. The proximity between the two waves and the fact that the scandal breaks out right before the fieldwork for the 1987 study begins, enables the attribution of any change in people's feelings about Hart from the end of 1986 to the spring of 1987 to the media allegations about his marital infidelity. Thus, again we have an exogenous shock coming into the public agenda, generating a largely homogenous reaction among the electorate. This provides an ideal setting for the examination of whether young people were more prone to update their views as a result of this new information.

Moreover, the fact that the same respondents are interviewed at two points in time, and since the event takes place in the period between the two waves, the analysis can grasp both observational manifestations of increased youth sensitivity (scenarios 1 and 2), as was also described in the case of Nixon. Accordingly, the analysis draws again on Equation 5.2, making however an important qualification, related to the nature of this particular scandal. We would not expect from all respondents change their posture towards Hart - especially given the fact that Hart resigned almost immediately after the news were revealed in the press - since the scandal is not of the nature and the magnitude of the Watergate, not even the 25th November revelations of 1986. We should, however, expect significant reactions among those people who advocate moral values and hold strong opinions on moral standards. Thus, in this case, we do have an important mediator that should largely determine the degree and even the direction of change regarding people's evaluations about Hart. Accordingly, it is upon this decisive factor that scenario 1 is to be tested. With that in mind, Equation 5.2 is slightly modified as follows:

$$Hart_{87} = a + b_1Hart_{86} + b_2Young + b_3Hart_{86} \cdot Young + b_4Moral + b_5Moral_{86} \cdot Young + e \quad (5.3)$$

Now, attention is drawn on b_3 as well as on b_5 . b_3 has the equivalent interpretation as given in the case of Nixon. b_5 is the coefficient that provides evidence about whether it was mainly the moral youth rather than older people with moral standards that altered their opinion about Hart. To avoid any post-treatment bias (the news might have reinforced people's moral values and might have done so in differing degree between young and old), 'Moral' is measured through a set of

items about particular behavioral standards asked in the 1986 study, hence the corresponding year-subscript. How this index is constructed is explained later in the chapter.

A last point needs to be made before we move to the results. There is no intention here to argue that Hart's adventure, Reagan's plans for Central America and even the release of the tapes about Nixon's role in Watergate were especially influential in shaping people's and especially young people's partisan attitudes (though they may have been). These cases simply constitute examples of events that actually take place during our political lives and serve to illustrate how more likely we are to be affected by such events when we are still in our early adulthood. Evidently, the choice of these particular events was only based on data availability criteria.

That being said, it is important that none of these events could be characterized as an issue particularly salient to young people. One of the reasons, for example, that I did not continue using the Socialization Panel that was used during the previous chapters is that apart from the fact that the large intervals between the waves would make it much less credible to attribute changes between any two waves to a single event (unless a survey question is used which then leads to selection problems as explained above), the only salient event that could be feasibly employed would be the Vietnam war, which however initialized the Anti-War movement of the 1960s, thus making the issue probably more important among the young. No such assertion regarding any of the three events analyzed here has been made in the literature, to the best of my knowledge.

5.3 Results

The analysis will proceed in the following way. First, only the key covariates are included in the models in order to explore whether there is a pattern that denotes increased sensitivity among the youth. As a next step, indicators of political interest as well as the typical measure of party identification are added in order to examine whether it is any of these two factors that mainly drives the effect of age - when such an effect is found. To be sure, the particularities of each case make this overall scheme a very simplistic one, since in each example several placebo tests or complementary analyses are performed. What needs to be acknowledged from the outset, however, is that the introduction of causally posterior variables as mediators, without employing structural equation modeling in order to take into account the causal sequence in the covariates of interest, might produce a downward bias in the estimates regarding the role of age. However, this is not an important problem for present purposes for two main reasons. First, even by simply controlling for these factors, it will be seen that the effect of age largely remains intact. Moreover, even in those cases where inter-cohort differences diminish after the introduction of potential mediators

in the model, it is relatively evident which one is mainly absorbing the effect of age. Since the aim is not to estimate the impact of age on political interest or strength of partisanship, a simple additive structure is believed to be sufficient in order to detect the main hypothesis of this chapter, that is, whether young adults are more responsive to political events and if so whether this is because of differences in the level of political interest, the strength of partisan affiliation or another attribute that remains unspecified.

5.3.1 Richard Nixon

The 1972-1976 ANES study consists of five waves. The first two take place before and after the 1972 Presidential election, the third comes right after the 1974 congressional election and the last two appear before and after the 1976 Presidential election. Although all waves are used, we start with those which are most important for present purposes, namely those taking place in 1972 and in 1974.

The case of Watergate is the one with the most notable gap in the available information before and after the event of interest. Most importantly, between Nixon's resignation in August and the 1974 study we find the congressional elections of that year which might have diverted public attention away from the scandal. Thus, before going to the results it is important at least in this case to assess the validity of the design by exploring the distinctiveness of the electorate's evaluations of Nixon between 1972 and 1974, relative to other periods and other political figures. This is done in Figure 5.1. The upper two graphs of the Figure present an OLS which assumes a zero constant so that both lines of each graph meet the y-axis at point zero. Starting with the upper-left graph, the dashed line presents the slope of Nixon's evaluations in 1972 (measured through a feeling thermometer from the post-election wave) as a predictor of the same indicator as given by the respondents two years later. The solid line presents a placebo test. It shows the slope of Nixon's feeling thermometer before the 1972 election (taken from the 1972 pre-election wave) as a predictor of the same feeling-thermometer scale after the election (that is, as given at the 1972 post-election wave). As it is seen, the slope is much higher, denoting considerably greater level of continuity, for the case of the pre- and post-election waves of 1972 than from 1972 to 1974. This is exactly what we would expect if information about the Watergate and Nixon's role comes out after the 1972 post election survey and before the 1974 ANES study.

Is this because of the bigger time interval from 1972 to 1974 than between the two waves of the 1972 election? The upper right graph suggests that this difference plays no role here. It presents the equivalent analysis for the only other politician for whom we have the same information available

in all three waves, namely George Wallace. Since the Watergate did not involve any revelations for Wallace we would expect the two slopes to be very similar. This is exactly what we find. This makes it even more likely that the observed change in the case of people’s evaluations about Nixon comes as the effect of the particular event, which causes respondents to update their prior perceptions.

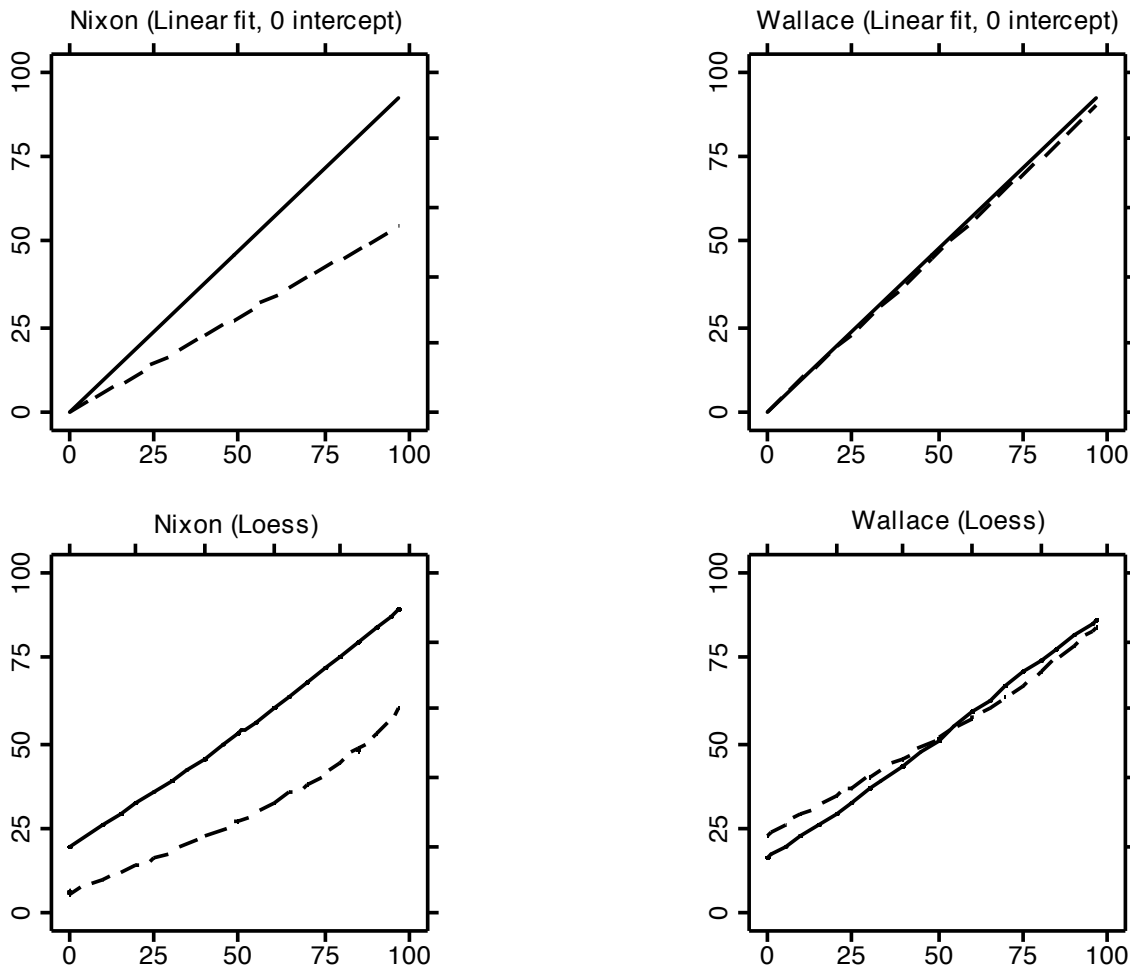


Figure 5.1: Continuity in people’s assessments of Nixon and Wallace between the two waves of 1972 and between 1972 and 1974.

Note: The dashed line in the upper two graphs represents the OLS slope of the feeling thermometer of Nixon (left) or Wallace (right) in 1972 (post-election wave) on the same variable as measured in 1974. The solid line presents the slope of the feeling thermometer of Nixon (left) or Wallace (right) in 1972 (pre-election wave) when used as a predictor of 1972 (post-election wave) evaluations of the same politician. The lower graphs present the same analysis but using a local regression to capture the effect and thus making no functional form assumption about the impact of prior evaluations of Nixon/Wallace on posterior measures of the same covariate.

The lower part of the Figure qualifies this conclusion but only partially. It presents the same slopes but now through a local regression, thus without any functional form assumptions imposed on the model. In so doing, we see that the pattern is very similar to that found above. The only difference is that when the intercept is allowed to vary from zero, it incorporates much of the differ-

ence found between the two slopes. Even in the 1972-1974 analysis we see that, despite a homogeneous decline in Nixon’s popularity, in general those who liked Nixon more in 1972 also liked him more in relative terms (i.e. they retain their position in the sample distribution) in 1974. That said, the fact that the gap in the two slopes becomes almost double as we move from lower to higher values of the x-axis, implies that apart from this global decline in Nixon’s evaluations, feelings about the former president in 1972 constitute a considerably worse predictor of feelings about him in 1974 (even in relative terms) than what is found when comparing people’s responses between the two 1972 waves.⁷ The comparison with Wallace again confirms this distinctiveness in people’s perceptions about Nixon.

Table 5.1: The impact of prior evaluations about Nixon on people’s evaluations of the same politician after the scandal, focusing on the difference between young voters and older cohorts.

	Nixon74	Nixon74	Nixon72	Wallace74	Nixon76
Nixon72post	.556 (.024)	.591 (.029)			.541 (.032)
Wallace72post				.621 (.020)	
Young	2.33 (1.45)	1.93 (1.46)	-4.81 (.853)	.233 (1.14)	.398 (1.63)
(Nixon72post)(Young)		-.117 (.048)			-.163 (.063)
(Wallace72post)(Young)				-.030 (.039)	
Nixon72pre			.706 (.017)		
(Nixon72pre)(Young)			.093 (.033)		
N	1541	1541	2108	1475	1257
M. Squared Error	25.23	25.2	17.6	19.16	25.5
R-squared	0.251	0.255	0.554	0.457	0.207

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses. All models include demographics (gender; race) and a constant.

⁷ For affiliates of numbers, the coefficient of ‘Nixon72post’ on ‘Nixon74’ is .545 and this variable on its own explains 24.7 per cent of the total variance. When ‘Nixon72pre’ is regressed on ‘Nixon72post’ the coefficient is .755 and it accounts for 55.6 per cent of the variance in the dependent variable.

Testing scenario (1): the direction of change as a result of the Watergate

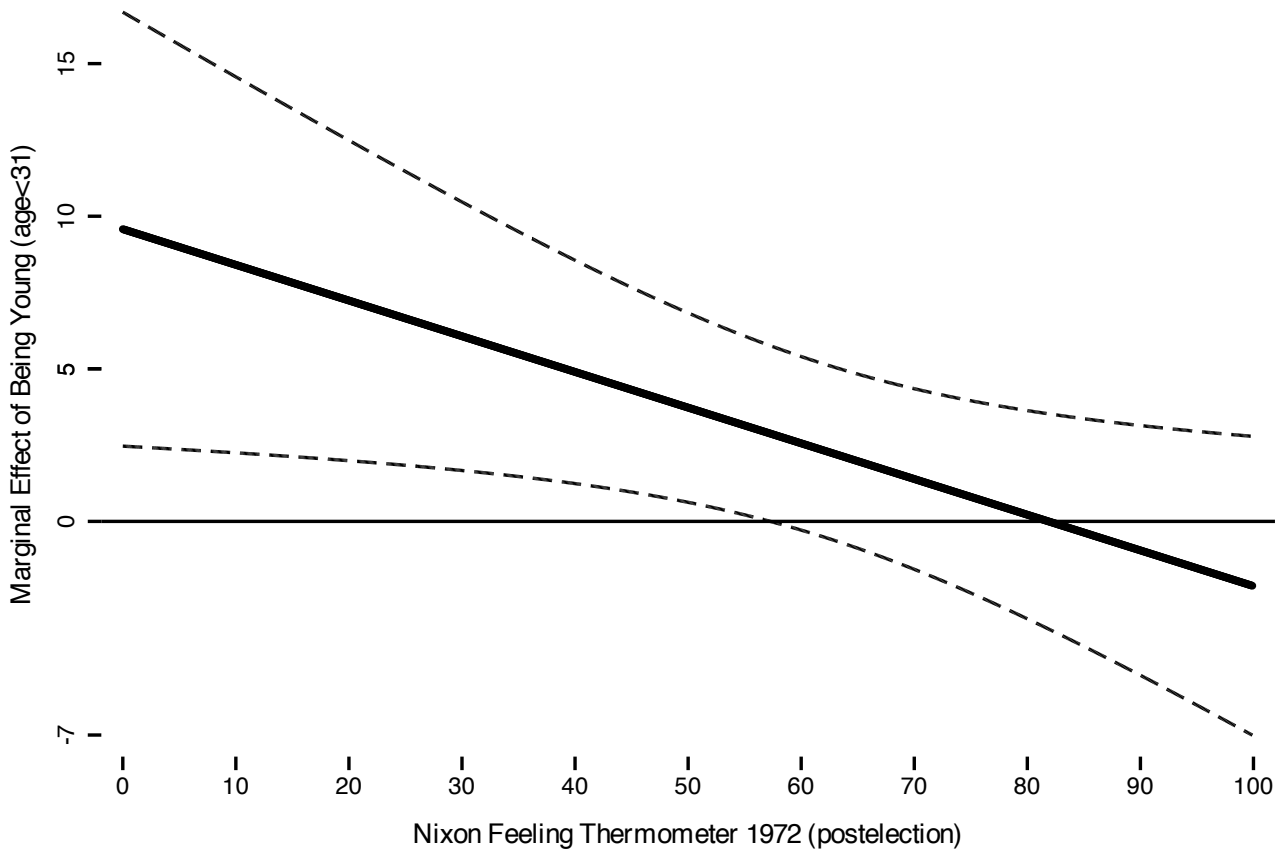


Figure 5.2: The difference between young and old in change in people’s evaluations about Nixon across all levels of ‘Nixon72’.

Note: The solid bold line depicts the marginal effect of ‘young’, whereas the two dashed curves denote the 95% CI.

With that in mind I turn to the results. The first column of Table 5.1 estimates Equation (5.1). Evaluations about Nixon are measured through the typical thermometer scale, which is available both in the two 1972 waves (pre- and post-election) and in the 1974 wave. Controlling for the pre-scandal evaluations about Nixon, any variable entering the right-hand side of the equation denotes change in people’s perceptions about President as a result of the events that took place in the intermediate period. The variable of interest is a dummy denoting young voters. The problem of course here is how to define young respondents. Lacking the luxury of two separate samples of two different cohorts, we need to apply some arbitrary rule for distinguishing people in terms of age. Two criteria would need to be met: the age interval for the main group of interest should not be very wide, retaining on the other hand a sufficient number of observations. The rule I follow in this and the next two case studies is to treat as young those respondents equal to or less than 30

years old. Those aged more than 30 are treated as the older group. The first group comprises 452 observations whereas the second group consists of 1089.⁸

Assuming no variation in the difference between young and old according to the pre-scandal level of evaluations about Nixon, the results from the first column of Table 5.1 provide no evidence that young adults became more negative towards Nixon as a result of the scandal. Either due to floor effects, since young people were already before the scandal less positively orientated towards Nixon, or simply because the importance of the events forced everyone to assume a much more negative posture about him, the non-significant coefficient attached to the 'young' dummy indicates that the augmented sensitivity of the youth does not manifest itself through scenario 1.

The second column of Table 5.1, presents the results when Equation 5.2 is estimated, that is, when the 1972-level thermometer score of Nixon is interacted with the youth dummy. The 1972 Nixon thermometer score is centered and thus the main effect of the youth denotes again the average difference between the two age groups in their evaluations about Nixon in 1974, controlling for their initial pre-scandal preferences. This difference seems to be again non-significant, thus confirming the results of the previous column. The interesting pattern however comes from the interaction of the two covariates. The negative coefficient implies that for young people (coded 1 in the age group dummy) prior evaluations of Nixon are a weaker predictor of their evaluations about him in 1974. The magnitude of the interaction term implies that prior feelings for Nixon were approximately 20 per cent less important (.117 out of .591) in shaping young people's feelings about the former president as compared to those aged more than 30. When the analysis is replicated separately for each group, the coefficient of 'Nixon72' for the older group is .590 with confidence intervals running from .539 to .642. For the younger group the equivalent figure is .440 with 95 per cent C.I. between .355 and .525. Thus, we do find evidence about the increased sensitivity of the youth but only through the second scenario: young people appear less predictable in their evaluations about Nixon as a result of the scandal. Their relative position in this distribution is more likely to have changed due to the news.

Figure 5.2 displays the difference between young and old in their reactions against Nixon across all levels of the prior feeling thermometer scale. The unidirectional reaction of young respondents towards Nixon appears to be smaller than for the old among those who were less positive to Nixon than average (mean value of Nixon pre-thermometer score: 65.31). This is hardly surprising since young respondents were already less positively oriented towards Nixon. This difference, however, evaporates gradually as the room for change augments (as we move to higher 1972 thermometer scores). Combining these results with the previous findings from the Table indi-

⁸ These numbers refer to the bivariate analyses mentioned above using the 1972(post) and 1974 wave. The exact numbers change according to which waves and which variables are used in each model.

cate that it is primarily through scenario 2 that young adults appeared more responsive to the scandal.

5.3.1.1 Are the results due to the scandal?

A way to examine whether the findings capitalize on unobserved heterogeneity is by providing two placebo tests. Column three replicates the analysis in column 2 but now the dependent variable is Nixon's thermometer scale as given in the post-election wave of 1972 and predicted by the same indicator measured at the pre-election wave of that year. It seems that when people were still unaware of Nixon's involvement in Watergate, prior feelings about him were in fact stronger predictors for the youth than for the older cohort. This implies that the magnitude of the difference between old and young respondents is even greater than what was found in Column 2, since the baseline situation was not an equal weight of prior evaluations of Nixon between the two groups but rather an increased weight of this predictor among the youth. Column 4 provides a second placebo test, this time using Wallace in 1974 and 1972 instead of Nixon. As it is shown, the difference between young cohorts and old voters in this case is statistically zero as we would expect if the findings from Nixon are due to Watergate. Wallace did not provide news during this period and, consequently we do not find any discernible difference between the two groups in this case. Taken as a whole these null findings address another potential criticism, namely that increased sensitivity is simply an artifact of the more noisy and thus less reliable preferences of the youth. We see that in the absence of new information about the two politicians, the group of young respondents is not characterized by lower levels of continuity in their attitudes.

5.3.1.2 Does the age gap remain?

Do the results hold until 1976? The last column of Table 5.1 implies that they do. Actually, by 1976 the difference between the two age groups is increased, reaching a 30 per cent decrease in the level of the continuity coefficient among those aged 30 years or less in 1972. This implies that what is captured is not a simple exaggerated instant reaction among those with less experience in politics but a more consequential difference regarding the weight people attach to political events in their process of forming and updating their political stances. To be sure, the effects again refer to scenario 2, since scenario 1, as shown by the main effect of the youth, is not confirmed. There is effectively zero difference in the magnitude of the (presumably unidirectional) reaction between young and old.

Table 5.2: Testing whether the age-related differences in the impact of prior evaluations of Nixon are due to inter-cohort differences in the level of political interest and the strength of partisan attachment.

	Nixon74
Nixon72post	.417 (.055)
Young	1.99 (1.46)
(Nixon72post)(Young)	-.137 (.048)
Political Interest - 2	2.64 (1.45)
Political Interest - 3	6.62 (1.95)
Political Interest - 4	4.39 (2.47)
(Political Interest - 2) (Nixon72post)	.010 (.049)
(Political Interest - 3) (Nixon72post)	.073 (.071)
(Political Interest - 4) (Nixon72post)	.055 (.074)
Weak Democrat	2.55 (2.54)
Leaning Democrat	-3.13 (2.96)
Independent	5.66 (2.87)
Leaning Republican	5.42 (2.96)
Weak Republican	5.89 (2.96)
Strong Republican	7.36 (4.57)
(Weak Democrat) (Nixon72post)	.014 (.073)
(Leaning Democrat) (Nixon72post)	.025 (.077)
(Independent) (Nixon72post)	.151 (.085)
(Leaning Republican) (Nixon72post)	.413 (.105)
(Weak Republican) (Nixon72post)	.120 (.112)
(Strong Republican) (Nixon72post)	.462 (.176)
N	1524
M. Squared Error	24.72
R-squared	0.293

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses. All models include demographics (gender; race) and a constant. Reference category for the PID and the political interest scales: strong Democrat; 'very much interested in politics'.

5.3.1.3 *Controlling for Partisanship and political interest*

At this stage I examine whether the effect of the scandal appears higher among the youth simply because of differences the level of political interest and strength of partisanship. Does this remarkably lower predictability among the youth evaporate once we account for their differing level of interest in political affairs and their more loose partisan ties? To see whether this is the case, both party identification and political interest are included in a fully factorized fashion - thus no linearity assumption is made - both as main effects and in interaction with the 1972 Nixon feeling thermometer. Since age-related differences seem to emerge only with regard to scenario 2, I apply this mediation analysis to the scenario that best suits the data. If the inter-cohort difference were due to either or both of these two mediators, no discernible age difference in the continuity of people's perceptions about Nixon would be observed. However, controlling for these potential mediators Table 5.2 does not seem to alter the pattern observed in the previous table. Under the weight of the scandal, young respondents remain remarkably less likely to base their evaluations about Nixon on their prior opinions.

5.3.1.4 *Different predictors*

As a next step I examine the generalizability of this finding. To do so, I employ four indicators included in the preelection wave of the 1972 ANES study aiming to tap people's evaluations about Nixon as a president. The first two questions are more encompassing in nature and relate to his presidential profile. In particular, they ask people to locate themselves on a 7-point scale, where 1 stands for strongly disagree and 7 for strongly agree, with respect to the two following statements: *Nixon can be trusted as a President* and *Nixon has a Presidential personality*. These two items are used as predictors of evaluations of Nixon in 1974, measured again through the feeling thermometer scale. Following the logic of the previous analysis, each of these predictors, once centered, is interacted with the youth dummy.

The results are shown in the first column of Table 5.3. The negative coefficient of the interaction term indicates that again evaluations about Nixon before the scandal broke up are weaker predictors of young people's post-Watergate evaluations of the former president. Although there is some imprecision with respect to the estimate, the magnitude of the interaction coefficient implies that regarding Nixon as a trustful President or as one having a Presidential personality is a 25 and 30 per cent less important predictor of people's evaluations of Nixon in 1974 respectively for the young group. To better grasp the role of the scandal in generating this difference, the second column of the Table shows the equivalent results but using as a dependent variable Nixon's feeling

Table 5.3: The impact of prior evaluations about Nixon on three different outcomes related to his personal appeal, as measured after his resignation

	Nixon74	Nixon72post	Nixon74-Adding PID and Political Interest
<i>Nixon can be trusted as President</i> _{72pre}			
Young	.790 (1.46)	-6.35 (.984)	.512 (1.52)
Nixon trusted as President	4.61 (.418)	6.29 (.261)	5.38 (.876)
(Young)(Nixon trusted as President)	-1.04 (.675)	.671 (.458)	-1.01 (.681)
N	1517	2056	1517
<i>Nixon has Presidential Personality</i> _{72pre}			
Young	.623 (1.46)	-6.48 (1.01)	.707 (1.53)
Nixon Presidential Personality	4.72 (.411)	5.76 (.269)	4.97 (.896)
(Young)(Nixon Presidential Personality)	-1.33 (.702)	.885 (.485)	-1.37 (.757)
N	1494	2034	1494
<i>Nixon can control Crime</i> _{72pre}			
Young	.409 (1.50)	-.694 (1.09)	.475 (1.57)
Nixon would control Crime	3.25 (.464)	4.50 (.303)	3.47 (1.01)
(Young)(Nixon would control Crime)	.025 (.771)	.448 (.569)	.455 (.858)
N	1481	1988	1481
<i>Nixon can bring peace</i> _{72pre}			
Young	.702 (1.48)	-5.99 (1.06)	.607 (1.56)
Nixon would bring peace	3.54 (.421)	4.56 (.273)	3.62 (.944)
(Young)(Nixon would bring peace)	-.370 (.697)	1.49 (.496)	-.314 (.748)
N	1488	2010	1488

Note: All entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses. All models include an intercept, demographics and in the last column a set of dummies for political interest and the PID scale, fully factorized together with their interactions with each of the 1972 predictors of evaluations towards Nixon.

thermometer scale in the post election 1972 wave. By November 1972 the scandal was still largely unknown and Nixon’s involvement completely ignored. Thus, we should expect no difference be-

tween young voters and older ones. Actually, what we find is that both these leadership aspects were more important for the youth than for the older cohorts, although this difference is clearly non-significant when the question is whether Nixon can be trusted.

The other two items are more specific in nature. The first refers to whether Nixon can control crime and the second asks respondents whether Nixon can bring peace to Vietnam. As the third panel of Table 5.3 shows, we find no difference in the effect of 'Crime' between young people and older cohorts when Nixon's feeling thermometer is measured either in 1974 or in 1972. It seems that this particular issue works independently of the scandal. People who evaluate positively Nixon in this respect are likely to be relatively more positive to him than those who evaluate him negatively. Importantly, the impact of this issue does not seem to decrease among the youth once the scandal has broken out. Regarding people's perceptions about whether Nixon can bring peace, we see that it is a much more important indicator for the youth before the scandal comes out. This is indicated by the vast difference in the effect of this indicator in the placebo test, shown in the second column of the Table. This difference evaporates, however, presumably under the weight of the scandal, resulting in no discernible difference between the two age groups. Thus, although attitudes towards the way Nixon handled Vietnam constituted a considerably more important concern among the young, once the scandal emerges, this factor largely loses its importance, becoming equally salient between the two age groups.

In sum, relative to the baseline findings of the second column of Table 5.3, the results shown in the first column of the Table indicate that three out of four indicators of feelings about Nixon became less important among the youth after Watergate was revealed. True, it is only 'Presidential Personality' that appears to be significantly less important among the youth (one-tailed). That said, with the exception of crime protection, the difference between the placebo test and the actual test is at least suggestive that the increased volatility of the youth, is due to the effect of the Watergate. The only issue, crime protection, that does not follow this pattern is also the one that is least effective in shaping people's overall evaluations of Nixon. When all four indicators are included to predict feelings towards Nixon through the thermometer-score, as measured in 1972 (that is without any intervening effect of the Watergate), this variable is not significant among the youth and only marginally significant among the old. It is mainly the two first and more generic issues that are more important in predicting people's evaluations of Nixon already by 1972. Especially among the young cohort, peace keeping is also an important concern in 1972. It is among these three most prominent indicators that we find a pattern that suggests that the impact of the Watergate scandal forced primarily the youth to update their attitudes about Nixon.

The last column of the Table shows that the results remain unchanged when partisanship and political interest, interacted with each of these predictors, are included in the model. Again, it is

quite unlikely that the observed, albeit modest, inter-cohort differences are simply the outcome of differences between young and old in their partisan orientations or in their interest about political affairs. Evidently, the idea of an increased sensitivity among the youth needs to be further elaborated in future research, since the typical explanations used to justify this presumption do not seem to account for the role of age.

A last point that needs to be made is that even when different predictors are used the reaction of young respondents in front of the event did not seem to manifest itself through a uni-directional change of higher magnitude. Once again, the main effect of the dummy distinguishing people in two age groups indicates that, on average, both cohorts were equally prone to attach a lower thermometer score to Nixon after the scandal. What is different, however, is the relative position in the distribution of preferences regarding the American President within each group. It is in these terms that young respondents appear to have been affected more than their older counterparts by the news regarding Nixon's involvement in the Watergate.

5.3.1.5 Different outcomes

As a next step in the attempt to test the generalizability of the findings, I focus on the difference in the continuity levels between young and old respondents (scenario 2, which is the only one that has found considerable empirical evidence thus far) by examining different outcomes of interest. In so doing, I also test the potential mediating role of party identification and political interest. In other words, the mediation analysis is applied to the scenario that appears to best suit the data, namely scenario 2.

I use items about the event itself, employing them as dependent variables instead of the feeling thermometer scale. Respondents to the 1974 wave were asked whether: a) they were pleased with Nixon's resignation; b) Ford should have pardoned Nixon; and c) the committee's decision to impeach Nixon was right. The realization of each outcome is coded one and its negation zero. The aim now is to examine whether people's evaluations about Nixon's resignation and Ford's intention to pardon him from criminal accusations are conditioned on previous evaluations about the President as denoted by people's responses given before the outburst of Watergate. I use three different predictors, namely the feeling thermometer as used in the previous two tables and the two generic and encompassing predictors used in Table 5.3, i.e. whether Nixon can be trusted and whether he has a presidential personality.

Instead of presenting the interaction term, Table 5.4 shows the marginal effect of each predictor for young and old groups separately. I first focus on the first three columns. Column 1 shows that regardless of which predictor is used for the estimation of the impact of prior evaluations of Nixon

Table 5.4: The difference in the impact of pro-Watergate evaluations of Nixon on various outcomes about the end of his presidency among young voters and older cohorts

	Pleased ₇₄	Pardoned ₇₄	Impeachment ₇₄	Pardoned ₇₆
<i>Feeling thermometer</i>				
Young	-.0005 (.001)	.003 (.001)	-.003 (.008)	.004 (.001)
Old	-.003 (.0006)	.005 (.0006)	-.005 (.0005)	.005 (.0007)
<i>Nixon Trusted</i>				
Young	-.012 (.012)	.015 (.012)	-.033 (.010)	.033 (.014)
Old	-.030 (.007)	.064 (.007)	-.053 (.006)	.037 (.008)
<i>Nixon Presidential Personality</i>				
Young	-.012 (.012)	.010 (.012)	-.019 (.010)	.042 (.014)
Old	-.033 (.007)	.045 (.007)	-.047 (.007)	.053 (.008)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, clean from heteroskedasticity according to the Breusch-Pagan test. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Both logit and probit analyses produce substantively identical results. Each pair of coefficients represents a different regression. Models include the same controls as described in the previous table. ‘Pleased’ scores one if people were pleased with Nixon’s resignation. ‘Pardoned’ is one if people agreed with Ford’s decision to pardon Nixon. ‘Impeachment’ is one if respondents agreed with the judges’ decision to impeach Nixon.

on whether the respondent was pleased with his resignation, young people are always less likely to base their responses on their perceptions about Nixon as a President prior to Watergate. It is indicative that none of these indicators is a significant predictor of young people’s feelings about Nixon’s ousting from the presidency. The results for the other two outcomes, as shown in columns two and three are very similar. Older people who either liked Nixon or thought he was a trusted president before the scandal were more likely to agree with Ford’s decision to release him from further accusations. This is also true for those who believed that Nixon had a presidential personality. For the young group, the equivalent coefficients are always smaller, and with the exception of the 1972 feeling thermometer scale (the only indicator which achieves statistical significance among the youth) the difference is more than double. To be sure, given the much smaller number of observations, it is logical that the level of imprecision is greater among the youth. However, the difference in the magnitude of the point estimates is indicative of the lower weight attached among this age group to prior considerations about the ousted President. The case of whether people agreed with judges’ decision to impeach Nixon is analogous. Again, younger people were

Table 5.5: The impact of prior attitudes about the political system and people’s partisanship on post-Watergate measures of the same covariates

	Dishonesty74	Trust74	Republican74	Republican76
Young	.204 (.101)	.091 (.149)	.737 (.019)	.021 (.027)
Dishonesty ₇₂	.195 (.026)			
Young*Dishonesty ₇₂	-.086 (.053)			
Trust in Government ₇₂		.322 (.023)		
Young*Trust in Government ₇₂		-.035 (.077)		
Republican ₇₂			.733 (.019)	.741 (.022)
Young*Republican ₇₂			-.084 (.034)	-.185 (.045)
N	1466	1476	1568	1265

Note: OLS coefficients in parentheses with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. Binary dependent variable techniques generate substantively identical estimates of the parameters of interest. Controls are those mentioned in the previous tables (excluding of course PID from the Republican PID models). ‘Dishonesty’ is 1 if people think there is a lot of dishonesty in Washington, ‘Trust’ is one if respondents believe the government always or often does the right thing. Republican PID is one if people are Republican leaners, weak or strong Republicans. When leaners are coded as 0s, the difference between the two groups is even larger.

affected more by the scandal and as a consequence their prior evaluations of Nixon mattered less for whether they approved or not the judicial decision to impeach Nixon.

The last column of the Table indicates that the findings remain relatively robust after the passing of two years. The only indicator also available in the 1976 wave is that about whether Ford should have pardoned Nixon. The pattern remains approximately the same, although now differences between young cohorts and older ones are largely reduced. In total however, we have 12 comparisons in all of which the magnitude of the coefficient related to feelings about Nixon before the scandal is higher among the old. At least implicitly, this pattern shows how the scandal had a more decisive effect on the less established group of the the electorate.

As a last way to see whether these effects are channeled through differences in party identification and political interest, these two scales are included as controls in each of these regressions. This, however, does not fully account for the conditional role of these two potential mediators. To fully grasp their potentially intervening role, which however has not been manifested empirically thus far, I test whether the coefficients denoting the interaction between each predictor and the age dummy are modified by introducing the set of interactions and main effects included also in pre-

vious analyses. Although these results are not shown to save space, it needs to be underscored that there is almost no change in the conditional role of age when these indicators are controlled for. The results are practically identical.⁹

5.3.1.6 More general political implications

Did the scandal affect also people's more general attitudes about the presidency and the political system in general? The results shown in the first two columns of Table 5.5 are quite ambiguous. The first column shows that young people were more likely to change their beliefs about whether there is dishonesty in the political system. This indicator is available both in 1972 (postelection wave) and in 1974. Interacting the first term with the dummy denoting young voters, we see that its impact on people's beliefs about the level of dishonesty in the government after the scandal is much smaller for the youth. Given the particular conditions during the period between the two waves, it is most likely that this difference is due to the stronger effect of the scandal among the youth in their evaluations of the general level of transparency in the political system. The second column uses level of trust 'that the government in Washington will do the right thing' as an outcome of interest. This variable is also available in the 1972 postelection wave. In this case, however, the interaction of this variable with the youth dummy denotes a negative but clearly not significant result. This lack of differentiation between the two age groups is also confirmed by the marginal effect of the key independent variable across the two groups. Thus, although there is some indication that young people seem to have been more prone to update their views about the level of transparency in the American administration, the pattern is more ambiguous than what was found when the focus was on the main protagonist of the scandal, namely Richard Nixon. Importantly, these findings remain unchanged when partisanship and political interest dummies are interacted with the indicators of dishonesty and trust in the government.¹⁰

⁹ Indicatively, in the case of 'Pardoned' the interaction term when the feeling thermometer is used as a predictor is: -.0019 (.0008) without controls and -.002 (.0008) with controls. Using 'Nixon can be trusted' as a predictor the equivalent figures are: -.040 (.012) without controls and -.039 (.012) with controls. For the 'Presidential Personality' item: -.029 (.013) without controls and -.028 (.013) with controls. Although the interactions are not always significant, the difference in their magnitude with and without controls when different outcomes are regressed is analogous to the (non) differences found here.

¹⁰ For instance, the interaction term appearing in the first column becomes .120 (.071) when political interest and party identification, both interacted with 'Dishonesty72' and as main effects, are included in the model.

Table 5.6: Replicating the analysis using three age categories

	Nixon₇₄	Pleased₇₄	Pardoned₇₄	Impeachment₇₄
<i>Feeling thermometer</i>				
Nixon _{72post}	.509 (.041)	-.002 (.001)	.008 (.001)	-.007 (.001)
Young	9.56 (4.14)	.095 (.076)	.135 (.074)	-.058 (.068)
Intermediate	-1.45 (4.22)	.192 (.078)	.081 (.078)	-.034 (.071)
(Young)(Nixon _{post})	-.119 (.059)	.002 (.001)	-.003 (.001)	.002 (.0003)
(Intermediate)(Nixon _{post})	.007 (.059)	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)
N	1524	1532	1478	1465
<i>Nixon can be trusted as President_{72pre}</i>				
Nixon trusted as President _{72pre}	4.51 (.495)	-.020 (.008)	.084 (.008)	-.050 (.008)
Young	-3.22 (2.88)	.022 (.051)	-.195 (.091)	.079 (.047)
Intermediate	-2.20 (2.78)	.004 (.050)	-.035 (.050)	.031 (.045)
(Young)(Nixon trusted as President _{72pre})	-1.11 (.769)	.007 (.014)	-.039 (.013)	.010 (.012)
(Intermediate)(Nixon trusted as President _{72pre})	.168 (.754)	-.016 (.013)	.001 (.013)	-.003 (.012)
N	1517	1523	1467	1437
<i>Nixon has Presidential Personality_{72pre}</i>				
Nixon Presidential Personality _{72pre}	4.63 (.507)	-.024 (.009)	.065 (.008)	-.044 (.008)
Young	-4.74 (3.16)	.050 (.057)	-.175 (.058)	.110 (.053)
Intermediate	-2.50 (3.03)	.005 (.054)	-.023 (.056)	.036 (.050)
(Young)(Nixon Presidential Personality _{72pre})	-1.23 (.802)	.005 (.014)	-.029 (.014)	.018 (.010)
(Intermediate)(Nixon Presidential Personality _{72pre})	.089 (.769)	-.012 (.013)	-.002 (.014)	.0001 (.013)
N	1494	1500	1450	1436

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses, all variables measured as indicated in the main text in the previous set of analyses.

5.3.1.7 *Republican Partisanship*

The last question relates to the impact of the scandal on people's partisanship. Did the scandal cause a change in an anti-Republican direction? To answer this question, a dummy denoting Republicans is constructed both for 1972 (preelection wave) and 1974. The third column of Table 5.5 displays the interaction between the 1972 dummy and the youth binary indicator. What it implies is that for the youth being Republican before the scandal is a weaker predictor of Republican ID after the scandal. Again, given the small time interval between the two waves, it is rather safe to attribute this difference to the scandal. In other words, young people were more prone to update their partisan views as a result of the Watergate than those aged more than 30. This is exactly what we would expect if early adulthood is a period of increased sensitivity to period shocks. Importantly, the last column of the Table shows that the pattern lasts and is even increased by 1976, where again Republican PID in 1972 is used to predict the same outcome four years later.

5.3.1.8 *A more refined age comparison*

The comparison between those aged 30 years old or lower and all other respondents serves to highlight potential differences between young people and older ones. However, the age variation among the older age group makes it difficult to examine whether the observed pattern is actually because of particular characteristics of the youth or whether it is due to the incorporation of people at various life stages within the same (older) group. In other words, are the results presented thus far the outcome of an increased sensitivity among the youth or is this pattern mainly because of old respondents who are more stuck into their prior beliefs? To shed some light on this question, I split the group of older respondents in two subgroups, namely those aged between 31 and 45 years and those who are 46 years old or more. Comparing these two groups with the cohort of young voters (18-30), we can also explore whether 'openness to change' diminishes in a monotonic fashion, as advocated by the 'steady increase' hypothesis of political learning, or whether it follows a pattern closer to the 'impressionable years' thesis.

I examine the three main predictors that were used in the previous analysis (feeling thermometer; Nixon has Presidential personality; Nixon can be trusted) and all outcomes available in 1974. The results are shown in Table 5.6. The interaction between the young group and any of the predictors employed to estimate the level of continuity in people's attitudes about Nixon has always the opposite sign from the main effect of the indicator of people's predispositions about Nixon. Given that the reference category is the oldest age group, this pattern implies that prior attitudes about Nixon are always a worse predictor of people's responses after the scandal came into play for the

Table 5.7: Change in Republican PID as a result of the scandal among three age groups.

	Republican74
Republican72	.725 (.024)
Young	-.015 (.024)
Intermediate	-.011 (.024)
(Republican72) (Young)	-.095 (.041)
(Republican72) (Intermediate)	.022 (.039)
N	1568

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses, Republican PID is one if people are Republican leaners, weak or strong Republicans.

young cohort. That said, the difference in the effects is significant in half occasions but even in those cases in which the interaction does not achieve statistical significance, the magnitude of the coefficient usually reveals a remarkable decrease in the effects among young people. Interestingly, the main distinction here appears to be between the young group and the other two cohorts. There is no instance in which the two older groups differentiate significantly between each other. When the marginal effects of each predictor are calculated for each group (not shown to save space) the pattern is even more straightforward. In most cases, feelings towards Nixon before the scandal are twice as important for the older groups than for the youth. Neither does it seem to be the case that it is only the intermediate group that denotes higher levels of continuity, making the youth similar to the old. In this respect, the main pattern is rather unequivocal: if there is any age-related effect, this does not seem to manifest itself through a linear-like increase in the continuity coefficients.¹¹ It seems that rather than observing a gradual decline of sensitivity to political events, we are closer to the pattern advocated by the 'impressionable years' hypothesis: the main difference is among those in their early adulthood and all other adults. In all cases, the results remain substantively identical when party identification and political interest are also included as main effects and in interactions in the models.

Table 5.7 replicates the analysis presented above about the effect of the scandal on people's partisanship. Again, only the young group registers a pro-Democrat shift after the Watergate scandal. The difference between the two older groups seems to be infinitesimal.

¹¹ In fact, although differences between the two older groups are very small, in most cases, monotonicity is violated since the coefficient attached to the intermediate group is larger than that for the older group.

In sum, considerable evidence has been provided about the increased tendency of the youth to update their feelings towards Nixon and their partisan attachments in the light of the unfortunate manner of his exit from the presidency. All available information was used from a rich dataset which comprises five waves taken within four years. Although various different analyses were performed, the findings seem to converge to the same conclusion. Young people are more responsive to political events, but this augmented sensitivity is manifested by making prior evaluations about Nixon a less useful predictor of their evaluations about the same politician after the news broke out. It does not appear, however, to reflect a greater unidirectional reaction against the President. This finding, however, needs to be evaluated with some caution, since it might be simply due to the fact that older respondents had on average more room to express their disapproval of Nixon's last record in office. Importantly, scenario 2, which is the only one mainly confirmed by the data, does not seem to be due to lower levels of political interest or weaker partisan loyalties among the youth.

As a robustness check it needs to be noticed that the findings remain very similar when different upper bounds for the group of young respondents are used (from 27 to 34). Moreover, one would argue that using Nixon's thermometer scale after the election, which resulted in a landslide, might favor the observed difference since people might have been more positive towards the re-elected president as a result of his victory. Although it is unclear why this 'honeymoon' effect would be more evident among the youth (because it otherwise does not bias the estimates) all analyses using Nixon's thermometer scale in the post election wave of 1972 as a predictor have been replicated replacing this variable with the equivalent term as given in the 1972 pre election wave. Importantly, when the feeling thermometer of Nixon of the preelection wave is used instead of the postelection wave as a predictor of all outcomes analyzed above and measured either in 1974 or in 1976 the difference in the effects between young respondents and older cohort is even more striking on average.¹² Last but not least, one could argue that the findings are simply due to the fact that attitudinal stability is seemingly lower among the youth because of lower reliability in their response patterns. Although the placebo tests refute this alternative explanations, I address this issue in more detail in Appendix 5.A, where I provide evidence supporting the idea that the findings cannot be simply due to more noisy responses among the youth.

¹² The reason the main results use the postelection wave as a predictor of feelings about Nixon in 1974 is that it is temporally closer to the 1974 wave, thus creating more confidence that the change in people's attitudes between the two time periods is the result of the scandal.

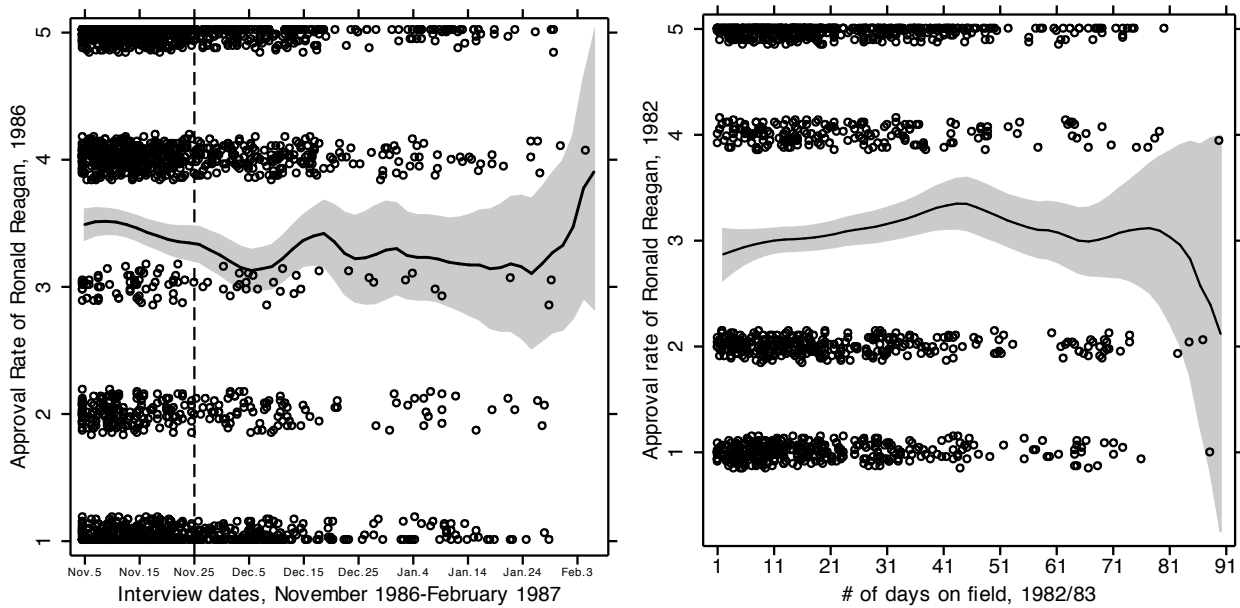


Figure 5.3: Approval rate of Ronald Reagan during the data collection procedure of the 1986 ANES study and the comparison with the 1982 ANES study.

Note: The first graph shows the trend of Reagan’s popularity in 1986 whereas the second shows the same pattern in 1982, used as a placebo test. The solid curve presents the local average in the 1-5 Presidential approval scale, the shaded area denotes the 95% C.I. and the small empty circles comprise the scatterplot to which the local regression is fitted. Circles are jittered (5) to enable a visual evaluation of their density along the fieldwork.

With that in mind I proceed to the next case study, which relates to another Republican president who also suffered from unfavorable news during his second term in office although this time not so devastating for his popularity. More specifically, the next example refers to Reagan’s notorious involvement in the Iran-Iraq war and, most importantly, in the attempt of the Contras to gain power in Nicaragua by trying to overthrow the legally elected in 1984 government of the Sandinistas.

5.3.2 Ronald Reagan

The first part of Figure 5.3 plots the local average of Reagan’s approval rate (in a 1-5 scale ranging from strongly disapprove to strongly approve) over the period in which the interviews for the 1986 ANES took place, that is from 5 November 1986 to 7 February 1987. The shaded area depicts the 95% confidence bands of each local estimate. As it is seen both by the density of the dots and the width of the gray area, the level of uncertainty associated with the average estimate of Reagan’s approval at each time point increases considerably after the first 40 days of the data collection procedure, i.e. after approximately 15 December. By then, 90 per cent of the sample had been

already interviewed. The remaining 10 per cent of the interviews were implemented in a much wider time interval, going up to February 1987. The dashed vertical line represents the date in which the revelation of the US involvement in Nicaragua was officially made.

Before delving into specification and estimation issues it needs to be acknowledged from the outset that the news did not appear to exert a remarkable change in Reagan's approval rate. The downward trend is relatively weak and despite the uncertainty surrounding the local average of the observations after November, it seems to evaporate very quickly. This is surprising if one considers the salience of the issue and the number of headlines devoted to it in the press (Krosnick and Kinder 1990). To be sure, we will see later in the analysis that apart from age differences in the importance of the event, there is also another important source of heterogeneity, namely people's preferences regarding the US involvement in Nicaragua. Moreover, apart from the unique opportunity that this coincidence offers in estimating the impact of the event in a quasi-experimental fashion, it is also interesting to focus on this case, because, as it has been already argued above, it comes closest to a typical scandal of the magnitude and the importance that we usually see taking place during a party's session in government. That said, it is already known that despite the revelations of November Republicans had little difficulty to renew their term in office two years later.

5.3.2.1 Controls

The scope here is to take advantage of the events that took place during November 1986 so as to examine the extent to which young voters updated their views according to these events more than older cohorts did. To do that, of course, we need to assume that the main source of systematic variation in people's responses during this period stems from the revelations of the US role in the Iran-Contras case. This could be easily justified if we disposed of a rolling thunder survey, which would repeatedly draw samples across the population in different points in time. Instead of that we have a single sample which although is random as a whole, cannot be treated as a collection of random samples taken from each day's interviews. Systematic differences both in terms of respondents' locations and in terms of their attitudinal characteristics might cause differences in their response patterns. To the extent that these differences correlate with Reagan's approval rating or other related outcomes of interest, they would confound the estimates aiming to capture the Contras effect.¹³

¹³ That being said, it needs to be born in mind that such biases will only be a problem if they correlate with age, i.e. if they are more or less apparent among the youth. Since the eventual scope is not to measure the causal effect of the scandal on the decline in Reagan's approval, but to compare the weight attributed to this event by different age cohorts, potential confounders will be problematic only if they are particularly present among a specific age group.

The difference between respondents according to the date of interview can be detected by some indicators, typically included in ANES studies, which describe the conditions under which each interview is implemented. For example, respondents interviewed later during the fieldwork are more likely to have needed a persuasion letter and more calls before they actually accept to be interviewed. Typically, these people are younger, less likely to have a permanent residence and probably less interested in politics. If this difference in the attitudinal profiles of these people also affects their evaluations about Reagan, they could potentially confound the impact of the 'Contras revelations'.

Under which circumstances would such differences in the attitudinal profiles of the respondents confound the analysis? I start with the possibility that a higher percentage of young people are interviewed in later days of the fieldwork. Given that the effect of the events is estimated conditioning on the age group each individual belongs, finding more young people during the end of the fieldwork would not be a problem unless there is an intracohort pattern: since the comparison is among a group of young people, only if there is variation within this group would this pattern affect the results. Importantly, no such variation appears to exist.¹⁴

Moreover, it is unclear whether other attitudinal characteristics such as political interest and political sophistication would make it easier or more difficult to find an effect of the event on Reagan popularity. To start with, lower levels of political knowledge decrease the likelihood of receiving this information. However, it is uncertain whether people who are less interested in politics are more likely to evaluate negatively Reagan or any Republican president. Actually the second graph of Figure 5.3 shows that this is probably not the case. The same graph is presented as above with the only difference being that now the data come from the 1982 ANES study. As it is seen, in the absence of any salient news about Reagan's administration, we do not observe a downward trend in people's evaluations about the incumbent president until we reach to the very last week of the fieldwork, in which the small number of interviews make the estimates unreliable, as is also indicated by the width of the confidence bands. This makes it more likely that the pattern observed in the first graph of Figure 5.3, albeit modest, is not due to an inherent tendency among those interviewed later to be more critical of the Republicans or of the incumbent in general.

To capture potential confounds due to level of political interest, I control for the following indicators: political knowledge; education; interest in the campaign; discussion about politics with friends and/or family; frequency of reading the newspapers in general; frequency of watching the news on TV in general; and frequency of reading the newspapers and watching the news especially during the campaign. To mediate the problem of unobservable differences between respon-

¹⁴ Although I later define the age groups used in the analysis, suffice it so say that the mean age difference within each cohort before and after the 25th of November is less than a year ($p > .4$ or higher).

dents, I only focus on the interviews that took place until December 20, which comprise more than 90 per cent of the sample.¹⁵

The last check for differences between respondents according to their date of interview relates to geographical variation in people's residence locations. Those living in more rural areas are more difficult to interview. They are also more likely to support the Republicans. This would presumably make it more difficult to find any effect due to the events of November. On the other hand, they might be more critical to the incumbents during the midterm period in general. To accommodate such differences, primary-area-code fixed effects are included in the models.¹⁶

5.3.2.2 *Essential Choices in the Research Strategy*

And this is where the main question emerges. How are we to estimate the effect of the events taking place during November 1986 on Reagan's approval? One could simply distinguish between those interviewed before 25 November (73.52 per cent of the total number of respondents used in the analysis) and those interviewed after this date (and until the 20th of December, as noted above). This is also the strategy adopted by Krosnick and Kinder (1990), on the grounds that it is on that date that the intervention of the US in Nicaragua is officially revealed. However, as indicated by Figure 5.3, although public opinion in average declines after this date, the downward stream in people's evaluations of Reagan's record already starts much earlier. Given that the stream of the events begins by early November, gradually escalates until the official announcement of November 25, and continues until the beginning of December, this steadily decreasing pattern is not contradictory to prior expectations. To be sure, the trend seems to be exacerbated after the 25th of November signaling a possible downward jump in Reagan's popularity. To accommodate both patterns I examine the impact of 'November' in two ways. The first is by simply assuming a linear trend beginning the 5th of November (the day which the ANES starts and also coincides with the initial revelations about the American sale of weapons to Iran) and continuing during the whole period under examination. The second is by following Krosnick and Kinder (1990) in comparing the average values between those interviewed before the 25th of November and those interviewed after this date. In both cases, the purpose is to see whether the disclosures about the external role of the US had a stronger impact among young voters than among older ones.

¹⁵ Until that date the number of interviews implemented in a daily basis is always a two-digit figure, ranging from 10 to 101 (average 47.69 std. deviation 28.16). After that date, with the exception of only few days the number of interviews is no greater than 9.

¹⁶ The results remain robust to even finer distinctions of people's place of residence as, for example, when congressional-district fixed effects are used (61 categories).

Table 5.8: The decrease in Reagan's approval rate during the data collection procedure across the three cohorts.

	Evaluations of Reagan	Marginal Effects of trend across the three age groups	
Trend	-.007 (.006)	Young N=410	-.018 (-.030 .007)
Young	.603 (.164)	Intermediate N=503	-.006 (-.017 .005)
Intermediate	.276 (.156)	Old N=541	-.006 (-.018 .005)
Trend*Young	-.011 (.008)	Placebo test: Is there a trend among the youth in 1982?	
Trend*Intermediate	.001 (.008)	Young N=223	.001 (-.017 .015)
		Intermediate N=503	-.010 (-.024 .005)
		Old N=541	-.011 (-.023 .001)

Note: Dependent variable is approval of Reagan, measured in a 1 (strongly disapprove) to 5 (strongly approve) scale. Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses. Trend always ranges from 1 (5 of November) to 45 (20 December). Controls include all variables mentioned in the 'Controls' section plus race, education and gender. All covariates are fully factorized, missing values are treated as a separate category. N=1454.

Regarding the classification of respondents in age groups, I use the codification used in the previous case. The youth comprises those until 30 years old. However, drawing on the last part of the analysis related to Nixon, I start directly with three distinct groups, thus without comparing first the young with all others.¹⁷ The three following groups are considered: a) those aged between 18 and 30 and whom I treat as the young cohort; b) respondents between 31 and 45 years old, whom I treat as the intermediate cohort; and c) those aged more than forty five. The first group comprises 551 respondents, the second 642 and the third 767.¹⁸

The last point that needs to be clarified before moving to the results relates to the type of effects that the particular design in this case enables us to explore. As was already mentioned, the lack of panel data does not permit the examination of whether prior attitudes about Nixon among the youth became worse predictors of people's evaluations about the President as a result of the events. What can be only captured is whether young people appear increasingly opposed to Nixon as the likelihood of being interviewed after the news were spread augments. In the typology de-

¹⁷ This is done because there are various outcomes that will be analyzed and the similarity between intermediate and old voters this time is not as clear as in the previous case. Thus, it would require a lot more space if the analysis was initially implemented as a two-groups comparison.

¹⁸ Again, these are the frequencies without accounting for missing cases in responses regarding the dependent variable.

scribed in the first part of the chapter and used extensively in the case of Nixon, such a finding would provide evidence in favor of scenario 1: increased sensitivity among the youth is manifested through a higher unidirectional change in people's responses regarding the government record of Reagan. That said, given that respondents are compared in terms of when they were interviewed, attention is drawn on over time comparisons and thus potential intercohort baseline differences cannot bias the findings.¹⁹

5.3.2.3 'November' as a continuous flow of information

Table 5.8 presents the results for the three groups. The date-of-interview trend is interacted with the young and the intermediate group (old group used as a reference category). The main effect of 'trend' indicates that for the older cohort the revelations of November were not very influential in changing people's views about Reagan. For the youth, however, this effect appears to be more than double, although the level of uncertainty associated with this estimate requires some caution when evaluating the reliability of this estimate. That said, as was also indicated in the last section of the analysis regarding Nixon, if there is any age-related difference, this seems to be between those aged up to 30 and all others. The interaction of the intermediate group denotes no discernible difference in the effect of 'trend' between that group and the older cohort. The last column of Table 5.8 presents the marginal effect of 'trend' across the three age categories. The continuing flow of information about the US involvement in the Iran-Iraq war and its relation with the American intervention in Nicaragua has had a decisive effect on the young (under the linearity assumption imposed in the model, Reagan appears to have lost .18 points in the 1-5 scale every week after the start of the fieldwork) but no important effect on the other two cohorts. Differences in the number of observations in each category make comparisons less straightforward but the fact that the young group contains less observations than either of the two other cohorts suggests that if the measures of uncertainty surrounding the point estimates are not very reliable, they will most probably work towards a conservative direction, i.e. generating wider confidence intervals for the youth. Accordingly, although the confidence bands in the last column overlap, I think it would go too far to say that the observed pattern is simply the product of sampling variability.

As a way to test whether such a pattern would emerge even at the absence of the events of November, the lower-left part of Table 5.8 presents a simple placebo test. The same analysis is implemented but using data from the 1982 ANES survey. As it is seen, there is effectively no trend among the youth, whereas there is a slight trend among the two older groups towards a direction

¹⁹ This is true only if there is no trend in such differences that cannot be accounted for by the event. I return to this issue with a placebo test in the following subsection.

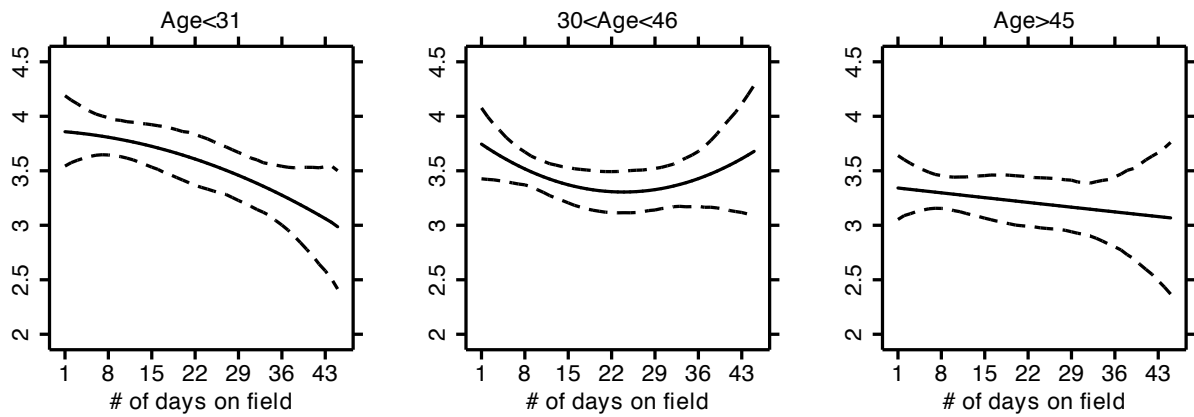


Figure 5.4: Change in Reagan's approval rate during the interview process of the 1986 ANES study.

Note: Point estimates for each day of the fieldwork (shown with the solid curve) and their associated confidence bands (denoted with the dashed curves) are calculated at the mean realizations of all other controls. Estimates taken from CLARIFY (King et al. 2000). The predicted level of Reagan's approval is estimated by letting a linear and a quadratic term of time (number of days on field) vary simultaneously.

that would make it easier to also find an effect of time towards the anticipated direction in 1986. If not anything else, this finding suggests that the modest effect found in Table 5.8 is probably driven by the events that coincided with the data selection procedure in November 1986.

5.3.2.4 Accommodating nonlinearities

Is this finding an artifact of misspecifying the role of time? Following Figure 5.3, one could think that a simple linear trend cannot approximate well the semi-curvilinear pattern observed in the graph during this period. To address the possibility of a nonlinear trend, a quadratic term is also included in each analysis.²⁰ However, now the estimates become more difficult to interpret. For this reason, I summarize them in Figure 5.4, which presents the level of Reagan's approval over all days of the fieldwork among the three groups. As can be seen, it is only among the youngest group that a clear and significant decline in Reagan's approval rate is observed. For those in their 30s and early 40s, there is a curvilinear pattern, which on average indicates only a slight decrease in Reagan's record approval. For the older cohort, there is a monotonic decline but the slope is much smaller than for the youth. Thus, even when non-linearities are taken into account, it is still mainly among the young group that we observe a clear downward trend in Reagan's popularity as a result of the 'Contras revelations'.

²⁰ This is the higher significant polynomial (up to a fourth degree polynomial was tested) in either of the three groups.

5.3.2.5 Controlling for partisanship and political engagement

Following the logic of the previous analysis, I examine whether what is hidden behind the modest but apparent effect of age is differences in the levels of political involvement and partisan attachments. To test these potential mediators, the question that is essentially asked is the following: were those who were less strongly attached to the Republicans or the Democrats and/or those who were less interested in political affairs affected more by the events of November? To address this question, I employ the strategy used also in the previous analysis. First, party identification, fully factorized, is included in the model interacted with the trend variable. Since various different indicators have been used to account for differences in the degree of politicization, it is not practical to interact each of them with the trend, which would also entail the risk of capitalizing on chance. Accordingly, I constructed a summarizing measure by factor analyzing all indicators of interest in the election and political knowledge. This index was also interacted with trend.²¹ The findings from this analysis largely confirm the pattern found in Table 5.8. The interaction between 'young' and 'trend' is now .012 with a standard error .0078. Again, the effect is not significant. But the difference, as shown in the marginal effects, between the three groups remains (the pattern is very similar to the one presented in Table 5.8). Although there is more than 5 per cent probability that these differences come from a null (no intercohort gap), the estimates, albeit imprecise, suggest that this gap is not due to the fact that young adults differ in terms of their level of politicization from the older respondents.²²

5.3.2.6 Before and after the 25th of November

A second way to examine the impact of the political disclosures during this period is to follow Krosnick and Kinder in trying to estimate the effect of the 25 November announcement. Although the US intervention in Nicaragua was relatively known even before this revelation, its confirmation on that day acquired increased media attention and raised considerably the salience of the issue. Thus an interesting question is whether this event on its own affected public opinion towards Reagan. I investigate this possibility in two ways, only one of which is presented in the main part of the text. The analysis follows the same logic as the one described above with the only difference being that instead of looking at the trend in people's evaluations about the president I now

²¹ The index is not fully factorized since it includes non-integer values. When it is recoded so as to take integer values and included a set of dummies together with the corresponding interactions the finding is almost identical: .012 (.0086).

²² Since the aim here was to unpack the effect of age, and since the effect of November appears to be monotonic in Figure 5.4, I simply use the linear specification employed in Table 5.8.

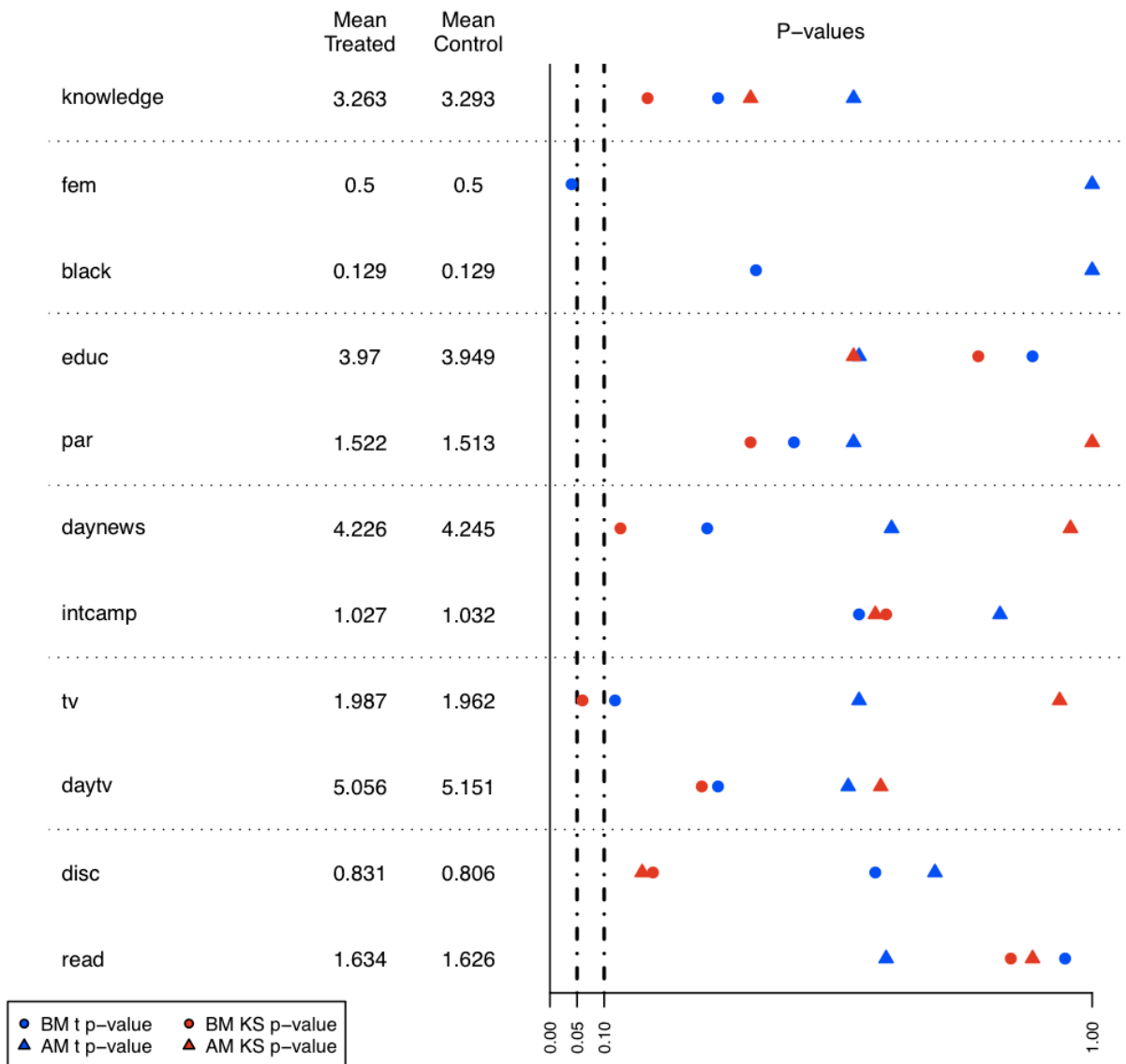


Figure 5.5: Average values and level of balance achieved between those interviewed before (controls) and those after (treated) the 25th of November with respect to the observables.

Note: Circles report the p-value before treatment. Triangles show the corresponding level of significance after treatment. Blue signs report the p-value of a t-test whereas the red signs show the p-value of a (bootstrapped) Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of difference in the distributions between treated and controls (see also chapter 3). Although the .1 and .05 thresholds are shown, the figure does not provide a formal hypothesis testing for imbalance because no measure of balance is a monotonic function of balance in the estimand of interest (we wish to maximize balance without limit) and because multiple tests are being undertaken (Sekhon and Grieve 2009:7).

simply compare their mean responses before and after this event. Moreover, given the binary nature of the treatment (whether respondents were interviewed before or after the 25th of November) I use matching as a way to account for observable differences between the two groups. Given that matching with respect to a binary treatment is computationally much less expensive than with a

continuous variable, I use this method for covariate adjustment because it is non-parametric (thus, not dependent on functional form assumptions) and makes the analysis more transparent (Eggers and Hainmueller 2009:9). In particular, I use genetic matching as a method to match respondents before and after the announcement in terms of the covariates used in the previous analyses (Diamond and Sekhon 2008).²³

Table 5.9: The difference in the mean approval rate of Reagan between those interviewed before and those interviewed after the 25th of November.

	Marginal effect of 'After' on Reagan's approval
Young (N=325)	-.279 (.154)
Intermediate (N=428)	-.093 (.140)
Old (N=461)	-.265 (.159)

Note: Entries represent the average difference in Reagan's approval rate before and after November 25, estimated with genetic matching. Abadie-Imbens (2006) standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 5.5 shows that genetic matching had little difficulties finding a portion of the data that provides balance in terms of the observables. The results appear in Table 5.9.²⁴ The picture now is not as clear as it was before. Again, the announcement of November 25 appears to have influenced mostly the youth but in this case, the difference between that group and the older cohort is small and clearly within the bounds of sampling variability. For the intermediate group we find no significant difference in their evaluations of Reagan's record between those interviewed before and those interviewed after the 25th of November. Appendix 5.B, which examines the effect of the event within a regression discontinuity framework leads to a similar pattern but this time much closer to that found when a linear trend approximation was used to model the effect of the events.

Thus far, we have seen that young people are more likely to have reacted to the news of November, although when the distinction is made between those interviewed before and after the 25th of November their difference with the older group practically disappears. In order to further clarify the differing effect of the events among the three groups, I devote the next section in the explo-

²³ Genetic matching is a generalization of propensity score and Mahalanobis distance matching that uses an evolutionary search algorithm to determine the weight given to each baseline covariate (Mebane and Sekhon 1998; Sekhon and Mebane 1998). Genetic matching has shown to outperform in terms of Mean Squared Error alternative matching methods both when the Equal Percent Bias Reduction assumption holds and when it does not. In the latter case, it also performs much better in terms of bias (Diamond and Sekhon 2008).

²⁴ Residence-location fixed effects are not used in this estimation. To see whether the results change when they are included, I regressed each of the presidential traits on 'after' using the (weighted) matched dataset and adding fixed effects. No substantial difference in the magnitude of the coefficients was observed.

ration of the causal path of this effect, focusing on a particular portion of the respondents that - if the date-of-interview logic applied here works as a proxy of how people react to new information - should be most likely to be affected by the news spreading during the period of the 1986 field-work, i.e. those advocating a decrease of public spending to aid the Contras. In so doing, I also address a potential criticism on these findings, i.e. that it might simply be that young respondents are more likely to be against the US external intervention than older cohorts. If this is the case, then the increased sensitivity among the youth might simply be due to different preferences across different age categories. The next section shows that when preferences are taken into account (thus, relaxing the assumption that everyone was negatively influenced by the news) the distinction between young and old cohorts actually becomes far more striking.

5.3.2.7 What is the causal mechanism?

If this change in how people perceived Reagan during the course of the data collection process is because of the news about the US involvement in Nicaragua, this pattern could be attributed to both or either of the two following processes. People might have changed their views about this issue and in so doing they might also qualify their attitudes about Reagan. Alternatively, people might have not changed their views about what the role of the US in Central America should be but the unfolding of the news during that period might have resulted in them placing more weight to this issue in their presidential evaluations. In other words, if the news of November were important in qualifying people's leadership evaluations and partisan perceptions, this change should be funneled through their perceptions about the US role in Central America. Thus, this issue should function as a mediator through which November 1986 affected people's political orientations.

To explore whether this is the case and to explore inter-cohort differences with respect to the role of people's attitudes about Reagan's involvement in Nicaragua, I proceed in two steps. First, I examine whether people changed their opinions about this issue during the period. To do that I use as a proxy an item referring to whether federal spending on financing the Contras should be increased (1); remain the same (2); or decreased (3). Table 5.10 presents the results for each age group. The first column of the table shows the effect of 'after' in generating more views against further spending in favor of the Contras. The second row replicates this analysis replacing the 'after' dummy with the day-of-interview counter ('trend'). The results are quite similar in both cases. In general, no difference is found among any of the three groups. This indicates that people do not seem to have changed their views on this issue as a result of the news regarding the financial aid of the Reagan administration to the Contras. To be sure, among the youth we do find some indication

Table 5.10: Change in people’s preferences on public spending in Nicaragua during the fieldwork.

	After	Trend
Young	.110 (.094)	.004 (.003)
N	306	365
Intermediate	.099 (.072)	.002 (.002)
N	411	459
Old	-.108 (.070)	-.002 (.003)
N	417	467

Note: Entries in the first column represent the average difference in people’s attitudes on financing the Contras before and after November 25, estimated with genetic matching. Abadie-Imbens (2006) standard errors in parentheses. OLS coefficients with bootstrapped standard errors in parenthesis in the second column.

Table 5.11: Examining how the effect of attitudes towards spending to aid the Contras in Nicaragua changes (1) during the fieldwork and (2) before and after November 25.

	Young	Intermediate	Old
Trend	-.002 (.009)	.0001 (.001)	-.002 (.009)
“Decrease spending on Nicaragua”	-.168 (.246)	-.392 (.230)	-.781 (.208)
(Trend) (“Decrease Spending”)	-.026 (.012)	-.007 (.011)	-.009 (.011)
“After”	.066 (.240)	.033 (.255)	-.160 (.233)
“Decrease spending on Nicaragua”	-.434 (.178)	-.494 (.156)	-.864 (.146)
(“After”) (“Decrease Spending”)	-.594 (.309)	-.072 (.303)	-.255 (.308)
N	410	503	541

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses.

of a shift against further spending in Central America. Yet, even in that case the effects are quite small and fail to achieve statistical significance at conventional levels. It seems that under either of the two specifications used here our best guess would be that the event did not do much in altering people’s views on the issue of Central America.

Did the issue become more salient during this period, forcing people to update their views about the president? If so, was this effect equally prominent in all age groups? In other words, are

the observed differences shown in the previous analyses about Reagan mediated by an increased salience of this issue, which gradually became an important predictor of people's presidential evaluations?

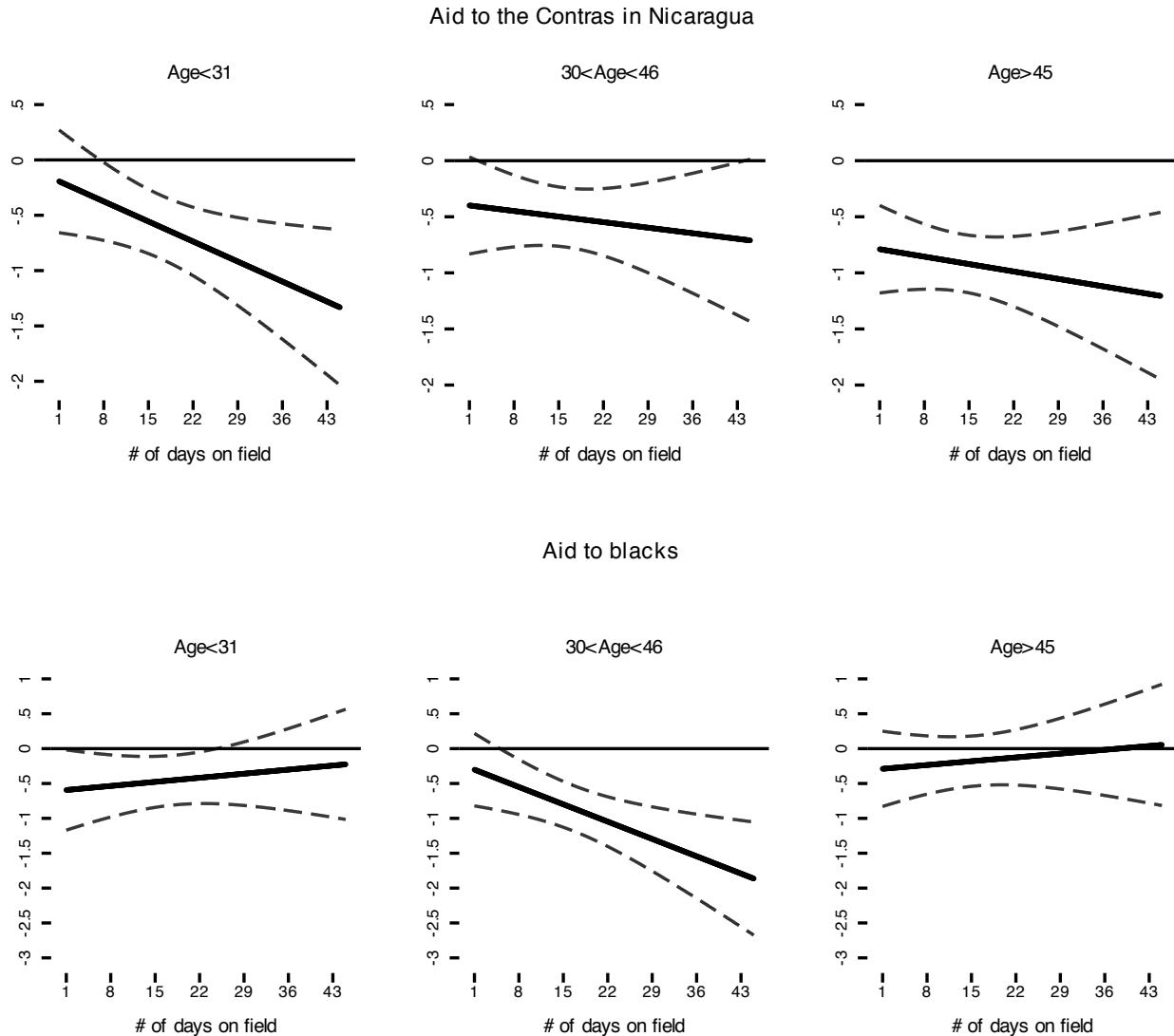


Figure 5.6: The impact of attitudes about spending to aid the Contras (upper panel) and the blacks (lower panel) on party identification during the fieldwork.

Note: The upper three graphs denote the effect of attitudes regarding the Contras on Reagan's approval rate, whereas the lower panel presents a placebo test, using aid to blacks (which was not affected by the news of November) as a mediator between date of interview and the same outcome of interest. Again, solid lines are marginal effects, dashed curves 95 C.I.

I address this possibility in two ways. First, the indicator referring to spending in Central America is interacted with the time trend and with the 'after' dummy, anticipating an increased marginal effect (in absolute terms) as the days of fieldwork pass by or simply before and after the announcement of November 25. Again, the crucial question is whether this pattern is observed primarily among the youth. Table 5.11 presents the results. The first three rows display the interac-

tion with ‘trend’. This interaction is only significant among the youth. Its magnitude is more than twice as high as the equivalent effect for the other two groups. Figure 5.6 presents the marginal effects of attitudes towards governmental spending on Central America on evaluations about Reagan across the days of the data collection process and starting from November 5 (denoted day 1 in the graphs). The effects are again decomposed into the three age cohorts of interest. As it is seen, concerns about federal spending in Central America did acquire an increased weight in people’s evaluations of Reagan. However, this is mainly the case among the young. The slope of the line representing the marginal effect of attitudes towards ‘Spending in Nicaragua’ is clearly higher for the youth than for the other two groups. It might be that these concerns were always present among older voters but it is only among the young that a significant difference during the fieldwork is found.

Table 5.12: The marginal effect of attitudes towards financial aid to the Contras, before and after November 25.

	Young	Intermediate	Old
The effect of ‘Spending on Nicaragua’ before November 25th	-0.425 (-0.832 -0.018) N=285	-0.572 (-0.910 -0.235) N=359	-1.02 (-1.35 -0.687) N=422
The effect of ‘Spending on Nicaragua’ after November 25th	-0.929 (-1.61 -0.246) N=125	-0.482 (-1.12 0.154) N=144	-1.20 (-1.86 -0.541) N=119

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, bootstrapped confidence intervals in parenthesis.

The lower part of Figure 5.5 presents the findings from a placebo test. If there is something particular about young people related to their day of interview we should find analogous results for an issue that did not acquire particular salience during that period. The issue used in Figure 5.6 refers to people’s attitudes about spending on aid to blacks. 1 is increase spending; 0 otherwise. Not surprisingly, people who favor an increase in spending to aid the Blacks are more likely to be Democrats, as shown by the fact that the slope is mostly negative throughout the whole period of the fieldwork. But in this case, it is only among the intermediate group that we find a significant increase of the importance of this factor. For the other two groups, the line is relatively flat. Evidently, the results related to the Contras cannot be simply the artifact of unobserved factors making young respondents react differently to political issues according to their date of interview.

Let's go back now to Table 5.11. The lower panel of the Table displays the results for the interaction between 'Spending in Nicaragua' and the 'after' dummy. The findings are analogous to those presented in the upper panel. The impact of this attitudinal indicator becomes double after the 25th of November among respondents until 30 years old. For the other two cohorts, the difference in this effect does not change significantly between the two periods of the fieldwork. Table 5.12 shows the marginal effect of 'spending to aid the Contras' before and after Meese's official revelations. Again, for older cohorts, attitudes towards this issue shape more clearly preferences towards the President. That said, it is only among the young cohort that the importance of this issue changes dramatically after this event. This is exactly what we should expect if young people are more vulnerable to new flows of information.

Table 5.13: Change in Reagan's approval rate during the fieldwork (or before and after the 25th of November) among those who favor decrease in public spending for the Contras.

	Young	Intermediate	Old
Trend	-.028 (-.044 -.012)	-.008 (-.023 .006)	-.011 (-.027 .005)
N	215	290	284
After	-.508 (-.928 -.088)	-.089 (-.439 .261)	-.407 (-.835 .021)
N	248	325	316

Note: entries in the first row are OLS coefficients, controlling for the covariates mentioned in Table 5.7, bootstrapped standard errors in parenthesis. In the second row, entries represent the Average Treatment Effect of 'after' on Reagan's approval with Abadie-Imbens standard errors in parenthesis.

The second way to address the increased salience of the issue during this period is by shifting our focus from one component of the interaction term to the other. Rather than examining the impact of attitudes regarding public spending in Central America in judging the President and the parties, we can also think of the product term as the impact of time (i.e. of the events) for those who advocated the decrease of spending for the Contras. The news of November might have been particularly important for those suggesting a decrease in the budget devoted to financial aid for the Contras. This means that time becomes an increasingly stronger predictor of evaluations about Reagan as we move forward but that this is so primarily among those who disagree with the amount of money spent on Central America. As was reported above, preferences regarding this issue seem to vary only modestly during this period, despite the revelations about US involvement. That said, it might be that the event as such acquired particular salience which however is masked by the fact that for some people who were in favor of the US intervention in Central and

South America during that period, the news did not do much to hurt (if they did not help) Reagan's approval rate. To be sure, more than half of the respondents (68 per cent) seem to advocate a decrease in spending for such purposes. For the remaining portion, however (9.22 per cent suggested an increase of the budget to help the Contras and the remaining 22.26 per cent were satisfied with the existing portion of the federal budget), it is unclear whether not finding any effect of the events is the result of more established views about the parties and Reagan in particular or whether it simply reflects a neutral if not positive stance towards Reagan on this issue. If this tendency is more evident among one of the three groups, the previous results might simply stem from this confounding pattern.

To examine this alternative interpretation of the interaction between time and attitudes towards Central America, I focus only on those respondents who favored a decrease in the amount of public expenditure spent to operations in Central America. The results are presented in Table 5.13. As is seen, focusing only on those who advocated a decrease in public spending on Nicaragua, the distinction in the magnitude of the effects across the three age groups is evident. Young people seem to have been affected more than the other two cohorts and even when we only distinguish between those interviewed before and those interviewed after the 25th of November, the difference between the old and the young is considerably higher. It seems that it is for those people who are most likely to register some change in their evaluations of Reagan as a result of the events of November, i.e. those against the further spending in Central America, that we find the most remarkable difference between the three age cohorts.

It is interesting to see whether among this group of people, namely those against further spending in Central America, the intercohort differences found in Table 5.13 are mediated through differences in political knowledge and party identification. Following the same logic that was explicated above, I compare the magnitude of the product term (consisting of the trend variable and the 'young' dummy) before and after the inclusion of these two sets of variables. In the first case, the coefficient of the interaction is -.018 (.011). In the second, it is -.019 (.011). In both cases the interaction of the intermediate group and the trend variable is effectively zero: .003 (.010) and .002 (.011) respectively. Again, age does not seem to serve simply as a proxy of different levels of political involvement.

5.3.2.8 Other outcomes of interest

To examine the generalizability of these findings related to Reagan's approval, I draw on the last analysis presented above, testing a variety of indicators related to people's evaluations about the American President. In this respect the 1986 study is particularly

Table 5.14: The impact of ‘trend’ on a long series of characteristics related to Reagan and on PID

	Reagan			Is Reagan...				
	Feeling-thermometer)	Decent	Knows	Intelligent	Leader	Competent	Cares	Inspiring
Young	-.420 (.137)	-.015 (.005)	-.016 (.006)	-.015 (.006)	-.014 (.007)	-.021 (.006)	-.018 (.006)	-.011 (.007)
N	245	121	121	122	121	122	121	122
Intermediate	-.037 (.131)	-.003 (.005)	-.001 (.006)	.006 (.006)	-.012 (.008)	.003 (.006)	.005 (.006)	.003 (.006)
N	320	153	156	155	155	153	155	153
Old	-.317 (.141)	-.002 (.006)	-.012 (.008)	-.007 (.007)	.002 (.007)	-.002 (.007)	-.006 (.007)	-.007 (.008)
N	309	154	151	156	154	152	151	152

	Is Reagan...		Does Reagan make you feel...			PID
	Moral	Proud	Hopeful	Afraid	Angry	(0-6)
Young	-.008 (.004)	-.008 (.004)	-.003 (.004)	.002 (.004)	.006 (.004)	-.025 (.009)
N	122	123	123	123	123	246
Intermediate	-.011 (.005)	.001 (.003)	.001 (.004)	.004 (.003)	.006 (.004)	-.003 (.009)
N	150	156	155	155	156	324
Old	-.007 (.006)	-.0002 (.004)	.008 (.004)	.009 (.003)	-.0004 (.004)	-.002 (.010)
N	154	157	157	157	157	314

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, 95% bootstrapped standard errors in parenthesis. PID ranges from strong Democrat (0) to Strong Republican (6).

useful since it administered to a random half of the sample a set of items aiming to evaluate the extent to which various leadership qualities and emotional states apply to Reagan’s presidency. Table 5.13 summarizes the results based on a linear trend specification. Table 5.14 presents the equivalent analysis but replacing ‘trend’ with the ‘after’ dummy. In total we have 13 different outcomes related to Reagan. Among them, nine indicators about his personality traits and four indicators regarding emotional stimuli that his leadership might provoke (‘hopeful’; ‘afraid’; ‘angry’; ‘proud’). All items have been coded so as to range from lower to higher values attached to the

characteristic referred to in the question.²⁵ Thus, for negative emotional stimuli ('angry' ; 'afraid') we expect a positive trend coefficient, implying a greater likelihood for such reactions as days go by. For all other indicators, the positive connotations of the items create an expectation for a negative coefficient attached to the linear trend. Again, the results are decomposed into the three different age cohorts. Given that with the exception of the feeling thermometer, only half the sample was asked this set of items, N is now substantially lower. Controls include the same covariates described in Table 5.8.

The findings are quite straightforward. Starting with Table 5.14, among 13 items, 'trend' is more important for the youth in 9 occasions. Most of the times these differences are large (decent; intelligent; competent; cares; proud) whereas in other cases they are quite smaller (feeling thermometer; knowledgeable; leader; inspiring). Sometimes the second group is the intermediate group and others the older cohort. In only two cases are the effects higher for a different group than the young, namely 'moral' and 'afraid'. Regarding the item about whether Reagan makes people feel hopeful, the events did not seem to have altered systematically the reactions of respondents in either of the three groups. Finally, for the item 'angry' the effect of the 'trend' appears to be precisely the same between the two younger cohorts. In total, however, the pattern is quite clear. Among those people who are more likely to be affected by the events, i.e. those against spending to aid the Contras, the events seem to have been particularly influential among the youth. If not anything else, examining a variety of different items, the conclusions drawn in the previous section seem quite robust to different outcomes of interest. Finally, the last column of the Table employs party identification as the dependent variable of interest. As is seen, it is only among the youth that we find a significant anti-Republican shift during this period. For the other two cohorts, the effects are far smaller and away from achieving significance at conventional levels.

Table 5.14 presents the equivalent results but using 'after' instead of 'trend'. Although the age gap is not as notable as in the previous table, the pattern converges to the same conclusion. Again, the effects are on average stronger among the youth. Importantly, Appendix 5.C presents the equivalent analysis using the 1982 ANES study. Employing all analogous items available in that survey, it becomes apparent that what is captured here does not relate with unobservable inter-cohort differences associated with the date of interview. When nothing important has occurred, time of interview appears to be largely irrelevant on how people respond to questions about Reagan. If there is any pattern, this works only against this analysis, i.e. in a more conservative direction. When differences are not simply zero, older cohorts seem to become increasingly more hostile to

²⁵ The four emotional stimuli referred to above are dummies, since people were asked if Reagan produces this sentiment or not. All other traits range from 1 to 4, since respondents had to answer how well ('extremely well'; 'quite well'; 'not so well'; 'not at all well') each of these characterizations describes Reagan.

the American President than the young group. If this is the baseline, the results displayed here acquire even more importance, since what we find here is the exact opposite pattern.

Table 5.15: The impact of ‘after’ on a long series of characteristics related to Reagan and on PID

	Reagan		Is Reagan...					
	Feeling-thermometer	Decent	Knowledgable	Intelligent	good leader	Competent	Caring	Inspiring
Young	-7.02 (3.61)	-.266 (.130)	-.348 (.175)	-.320 (.153)	-.258 (.160)	-.330 (.168)	-.305 (.164)	-.275 (.186)
N	210	105	102	105	105	106	105	103
Intermediate	.810 (3.23)	-.115 (.130)	-.106 (.162)	.077 (.135)	-.300 (.151)	.059 (.145)	.128 (.151)	.021 (.165)
N	285	111	112	113	110	112	112	113
Old	-9.14 (3.72)	-.066 (.158)	-.267 (.192)	-.212 (.173)	.155 (.182)	-.114 (.181)	-.158 (.193)	-.166 (.203)
N	271	120	120	120	120	121	119	119

	Is Reagan...		Does Reagan make you feel...			PID
	Moral	Proud	Hope	Afraid	Angry	(0-6)
Young	-.147 (.150)	-.167 (.087)	-.048 (.105)	.029 (.093)	.013 (.106)	-.431 (.218)
N	102	103	103	102	99	208
Intermediate	-.294 (.128)	.018 (.079)	.001 (.082)	.035 (.075)	.095 (.087)	-.025 (.214)
N	112	112	111	112	112	311
Old	-.219 (.165)	-.054 (.108)	.139 (.102)	.162 (.092)	-.003 (.102)	-.063 (.275)
N	120	120	120	118	117	202

Note: entries represent the Average Treatment Effect of ‘after’ on Reagan’s approval with Abadie-Imbens standard errors in parenthesis.

A last point that needs to be made before moving to the story of Gary Hart is that the results are, as it would be expected, remarkably robust when different dates are used as criterion to include observations in the analysis. The findings presented here are based on observations interviewed until December 20. Sensitivity analysis with different closing dates (from December 5 to December 25) produces very similar results. The intercohort differences identified here hold and in most cases (especially when ‘trend’ is used as a linear approximation of the events) they are even

more noticeable. In other words, the effects found here are not dependent on the exact date of interview that is chosen as the criterion to include respondents in the analysis.

5.3.3 Gary Hart

The third case takes place only a couple of months after the second one. As was briefly discussed in the 'research design' section, the disclosure of Gary Hart's affair with a Florida model a few days before the fieldwork of the 1987 Pilot ANES study began and the fact that respondents of the 1987 study constitute a random portion of the 1986 ANES study that took place only few months earlier enable the examination of how a particular event that explodes in the media causes different age cohorts to reevaluate their prior opinions.

Similarly to the *Contras* example, the 'Demise of Gary Hart' has already been studied in the literature. In a comprehensive account of people's reactions to the scandal, Stoker (1993) examines several complementary hypotheses about how the scandal might have affected different types of voters according to their partisan predispositions and other attitudinal characteristics. Importantly, the age factor was not taken into account and it is in this respect that I try to elaborate her analysis in this example.

The hypotheses confirmed by the analysis implemented by Stoker can be summarized as follows: (1) political involvement works as an intervening factor as suggested by Zaller (1989): among Democrats, we find a curvilinear pattern with those scoring either low or high on the corresponding index being least affected by the issue, the first because of lack of interest, the second due to increased partisan resilience. For the Republicans, there is a monotonic downward trend associated with higher levels of political information, since there are no countervailing effects stemming from partisan resistance; (2) moral considerations appeared to be the most important predictor of change in people's beliefs about the Democrat politician. As expected, the more respondents advocated traditional moral standards the more likely they were to provide negative evaluations of Hart in the aftermath of the scandal; (3) on average, the scandal affected more the Republicans than the Democrats.

Drawing on these results, the aim here is again to examine whether there are differences between young voters and older cohorts. I do that in two ways. The first is by following the logic of the analysis of the Watergate, i.e. by examining the extent to which prior assessments of Hart, as provided by respondents in the 1986 study, help to predict their evaluations about the candidate in May 1987 and after the scandal came to light. Essentially, higher continuity levels imply greater level of stability and thus higher degree of resilience in the face of unfolding events. The second is

by focusing on the factor that emerged from Stoker's analysis as the most pronouncing one in producing a relatively unanimous effect on people's evaluations about Hart - i.e. respondents' views on moral issues and modes of family life. Moral conservatism appears to constitute the clearest predictor of whether the news about Hart's sexual life affected people's evaluations of him. This makes intuitive sense, since it is primarily among people who hold strong views in favor of traditional moral standards that we would expect the events to affect their prior opinion about the Democratic senator. Accordingly, the important question is whether this factor is more important among young advocates of traditional values than among their older counterparts. Thus, as was also reported in Equation (5.3) both possible scenarios through which the increased sensitivity among the youth might be manifested empirically are examined. Scenario 1 is tested by drawing attention to the extent to which young advocates of moral standards become, on average, less positively orientated towards Hart (scenario 1). Scenario 2 refers to the level of continuity in people's attitudes about the Democratic candidate.

5.3.3.1 Design and measurement

The reason why the Pilot study can be employed in combination with the 1986 ANES study is that it combines the same people who were asked in both instances to report their feelings towards Hart through the same thermometer scale. Using the 1987 item as the dependent variable and controlling for baseline evaluations, all other covariates are used to explain change in these evaluations between November 1986 and May 1987.

To avoid problems of post-treatment bias, moral conservatism, the other variable of interest, is measured with a set of items available in the 1986 ANES survey.²⁶ It consists of eight items about sexual freedom and tolerance on new life modes. Since I construct a simple summated rating scale by adding the scores of respondents in each item, the monotone homogeneity assumption is tested and confirmed with local regressions fitted into scatterplots as was described in detail in the appendix of chapter 2. The final scale is an unweighted average of all these items and ranges from 1 (low level of traditional values) to 8 (high level of traditional values).

The age distinction follows the strategy adopted in the previous two cases. The youngest group incorporates people up to and including 30 years old (N=119). The intermediate group includes

²⁶ Stoker (1993:216) employs a more detailed index, based on two subscales. The first is the same as the one used here, whereas the second measures people's views about abortion, divorce, homosexual rights, pre-marital sex and having children before marriage. I do not use the second subscale because it is only available in the 1987 survey and thus people's responses might be contaminated by the news.

those aged between 31 and 45 (N=153). People aged 46 and older are all included in the old cohort (N=185).

5.3.3.2 Results

Table 5.16 presents the results. The two main interactions of interest are those between the young group and the two covariates of interest. With regard to scenario 1, morality, as the main factor conditioning whether people reacted against Hart after the news broke up, appears to be better predictor of change among the youth. To put it differently, young adults who favor traditional values became remarkably opposed to Hart when compared to their pre-scandal values. Actually, it seems that this factor was only important among the youth. A one-point increase in the scale means 7 points decrease in the thermometer score between the two waves. The equivalent figure for either of the other two age groups is zero.

Table 5.16: The impact of prior evaluations of Hart (as given in 1986) and moral conservatism on people's evaluations of the Democratic politician in May 1987.

	Hart ₈₇
Hart ₈₆	.277 (.086)
Moral ₈₆	-.505 (2.55)
Young	39.50 (15.53)
Intermediate	-21.06 (20.21)
(Young)(Hart ₈₆)	-.157 (.101)
(Young)(Moral)	-7.29 (3.63)
(Intermediate)(Hart ₈₆)	.543 (.202)
(Intermediate)(Moral)	-2.40 (4.17)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses.

Scenario 2 also seems to find empirical support. 'Hart₈₆' appears to be a significant predictor of people's post-scandal evaluations of the Democratic candidate both among the older group and, especially, among the intermediate group. Its effect, however, reduces to less than half among the young respondents. True, the small number of cases make the estimation of the difference in the

magnitude of the coefficients less precise. However, the point estimates clearly support both scenarios through which the increased responsiveness of the youth is empirically manifested.

Table 5.17: Decomposing the effects across the three age groups.

	Gary Hart			George Bush		
	Youth	Intermedi- ate	Old	Youth	Intermedi- ate	Old
Hart86	.120 (.109)	.820 (.183)	.277 (.093)	.407 (.065)	.629 (.092)	.493 (.051)
Moral Con- servarism	-7.80 (2.45)	-2.91 (3.33)	.877 (2.88)	5.53 (4.89)	3.83 (7.61)	9.79 (5.98)
N	81	115	143	103	143	169

Note: Entries in the first two rows are OLS coefficients, heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Controls not shown to save space.

The first three columns of Table 5.17 decompose the effects across the three age groups. Controls, not shown, include race and gender. The first column displays the results for the youngest cohort and the second and third column presents the findings for the intermediate and the old cohort respectively. The findings seem to provide unequivocal evidence concerning the role of age in weighting new information. Prior evaluations of Hart are not significant for the youth, whereas they drive responses of the two older cohorts. In contrast, moral conservatism appears to shape youth’s reactions towards Hart, indicating an increasing deterioration of his image among this group according to the level of adherence to moral standards. For the older generations, moral conservatism does not appear to exert a significant effect, indicating that the scandal did not do much in changing older people’s orientations towards Hart.

5.3.3.3 Bush as a placebo test

The last three columns of Table 5.17 serve as a placebo test. It might be that young voters are simply more labile in their evaluations about politicians in general, allowing otherwise irrelevant covariates to appear as important funnels of attitudinal change. Given that both the 1986 and the 1987 study provide a set of feeling thermometer items for various Democratic and Republican politicians, it is easy to see whether the results found for Hart apply also to cases where nothing important took place during this period. Although here I only present evidence for George Bush the elder, then Reagan’s vice president, the results are substantively identical for all other political figures. Two important patterns are observed. First, as was also shown by Stoker (1993), in the ab-

sence of new information about them, the continuity in people’s evaluations about other politicians was much higher than that observed for Hart. In this case, this is true both for the young and the old group, as indicated by the much larger coefficient of the 1986 baseline indicator. To be sure, the continuity slope is steeper for the oldest group also in the case of Bush, but the difference now is much less. The coefficient attached to the 1986 feeling thermometer scale for Hart in the case of the youth was almost half of that for the older group, whereas now the difference in the corresponding coefficients is less than 20 per cent.

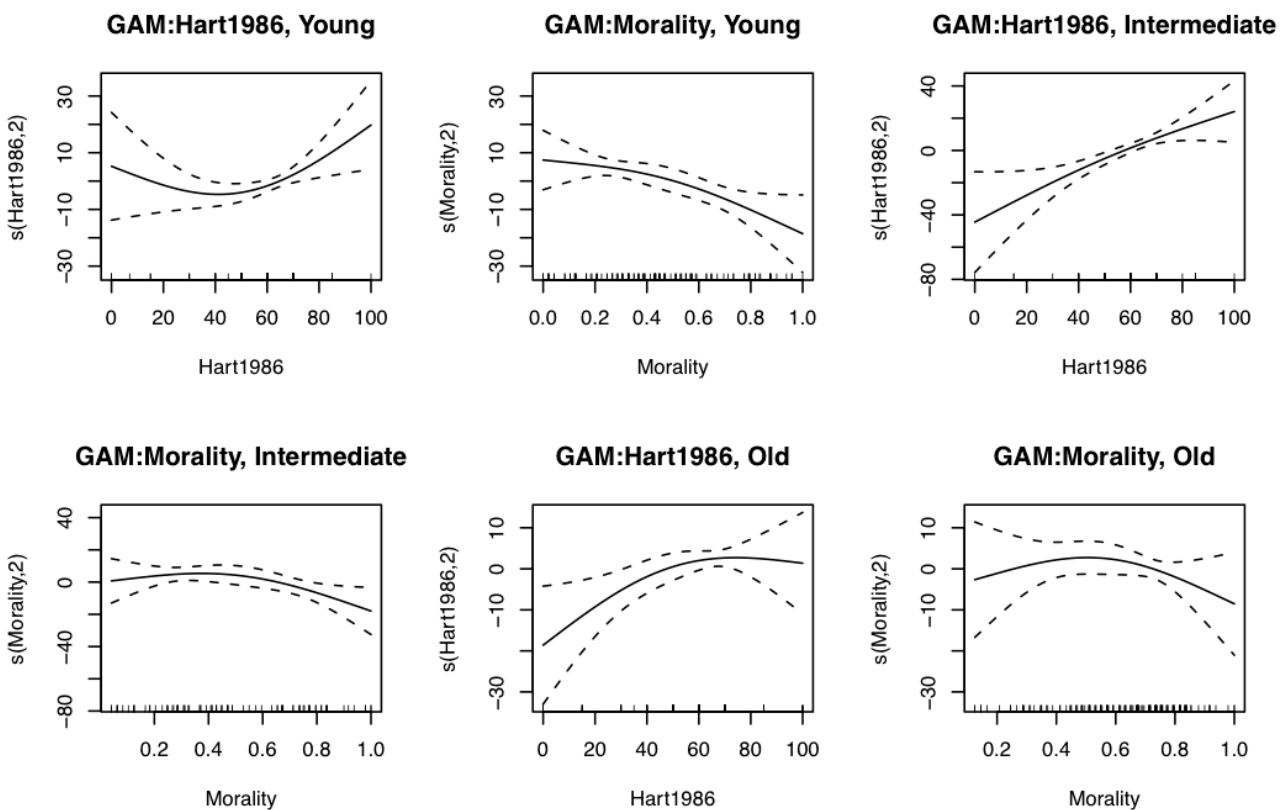


Figure 5.7: The effect of ‘Hart1986’ and ‘Morality’ on people’s evaluations about Hart in 1987 through a Generalized Additive Model.

Note: The two upper graphs denote the impact of the two predictors among the youth. The lower two graphs denote the same effect for the older groups. Solid curve represent splines which present the impact of each variable across all range of the Xs, and dashed curves indicate the 95 % confidence bands. The approximate p-values for the smooth terms of ‘hart1986’ is .15, .00001 and .005 for the young, the intermediate and the old group respectively. For the smooth terms of ‘moral’ the equivalent figures for the youth and the old are .00003, .217 and .221 respectively.

By the same token, since no moral sin was revealed for Bush during that period, morality is not a significant predictor of change in people’s attitudes about this politician between the two waves. This is equally true for all three groups. Clearly, change in youth’s perceptions about Hart relates to the scandal revealed during that period and is not due to different evaluation criteria inherently present among that particular cohort.

5.3.3.4 Is this because of a (poor) linear approximation?

A technical criticism could be that the findings are artifacts of a global linear specification imposed on the model. Given that both the feeling thermometer for Hart in 1986 and the index of moral conservatism are treated as continuous variables with a homogenous effect over the full range of their values, the effects hold only under the assumption of a global linear relationship between each of the two variables and Hart’s feeling thermometer in 1987. If this global linearity is strongly violated, the OLS coefficients represent only a poor approximation of the real effects. To relax such functional form assumptions I estimate these effects through a Generalized Additive Model (see also chapter 2) in which the effect of 1986 level of Hart evaluations and moral conservatism is allowed to be nonlinear and determined by the data.

Table 5.18: Replicating the results of Table 5.14 but using PID in 1986 instead of evaluations about Hart as a predictor of attitudinal continuity.

	Young	Intermediate	Old
PID (0-6)	-1.02 (1.14)	-3.02 (1.04)	-2.11 (.802)
Morality	-14.07 (6.71)	-11.84 (8.57)	-2.91 (10.61)
N	110	141	169

Note: Entries in the first two rows are OLS coefficients, heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors in parentheses. Controls not shown to save space.

Figure 5.7 shows the effect of the two key variables using this non-parametric technique. The first two graphs at the upper part of the Figure show the results for those aged 30 or lower. The next two graphs represent those aged from 31 to 45 years old. Finally, the last two graphs at the lower part of the Figure display the effect of prior evaluations about Hart and moral standards among the older group. Even when no linearity assumption is made, the two covariates work largely as in the previous model. On one hand, the continuity coefficient shows a monotonic pattern only among the two older groups. On the other hand, increased moral standards seem to generate a monotonic decline in people's assessments for the Democratic candidate only among the youth. For the other two groups, the effect is curvilinear, with a maximum approximately around the centre of the scale. Measures of statistical significance, reported in the note of the figure, reinforce this age-related diversity in the effects.

5.3.3.5 Is this because Hart was not a salient feature in 1986?

By November 1986, the race for the Democratic presidency was still in an early stage. People asked about candidates for that chrism might either be unaware about the qualities of the runners or might simply use their partisan heuristics. If this is the case, then it might be that people's responses about Hart before the scandal were not very reliable since the stimulus related to this item was relatively weak. This is probably true for all respondents but mostly so for the young, since they are less interested in politics and thus less likely to have established a coherent opinion about Hart by that time. It might be this exact feature that drives the results in Table 5.17. To address this potential criticism, I replace 'Hart1986' with the party identification scale, as measured in 1986. If the lower level of continuity observed among the youth is because of their more noisy responses in 1986, the use of PID should make such intercohort differences disappear. The results are shown in Table 5.18. The pattern is very similar. PID is a significant predictor of post-scandal evaluations of Hart only for the two older cohorts. For the youth, its effect is much smaller and does not achieve statistical significance at conventional levels. Reversely, the effect of morality is still higher among the youth, although this time the difference with the intermediate group is much smaller. That said, even when a different predictor of continuity is used, the picture remains relatively robust.

5.3.3.6 Is this because of differences in the strength and direction of partisanship and/or in the levels of political interest/issue weight between young voters and established ones?

As a last step, I repeat the analysis implemented above but in this case I test the potential mediating effect of the two usual suspects, namely degree of politicization and party identification. As a measure of politicization I use the index provided by Stoker (1993:214-15). Partisanship is measured with the typical 0-6 scale. To avoid linear form assumptions, both variables enter through a set of dummies together with the corresponding interactions. The results are shown in Table 5.19. The first column of the Table replicates the analysis implemented in Table 5.16 including political involvement through a set of dummies and their corresponding interactions (both with 'Hart86' and with 'Moral86'). These coefficients are not shown to save space. The effects appear relatively robust to this new specification. This is both for the modest effect of 'Hart86' and for the differing weight attached to the event by young advocates of moral standards.

As another way to address whether the age gap is reflecting differing levels of politicization, I also use an index of opinionation, which was also employed as a potential intervening variable by Stoker(1993). This variable could also address whether the observed pattern is due to the different criteria that young people might employ while evaluating party candidates. If older voters are

more likely than younger voters to base their evaluations about politicians on their issue stances, by not accounting for this difference it is likely that we leave room for the scandal to appear more important among the youth. To address this potential competing explanation, I examine the extent to which observed differences disappear once we condition on the extent to which people's evaluations are based more on policy criteria rather than candidate characteristics.

The first step in addressing this competing hypothesis is to construct a scale indicating the weight individuals give to political issues. Here, I adopt the 'issue weight' index proposed by Stoker. Full details about the exact coding can be found in Stoker (1993:215-16). The logic behind this measure is that issue-based respondents are those who: (1) are in position to name at least one issue in a question about the single most important issue related to the 1986 election; (2) avoid DK/DA and middle-point positions on three scales referring to prominent political issues (defense spending; aid to blacks; government social services); (3) hold strong ideological stances in the liberal-conservative 7-point scale. The resulting scale ranges from 0 to 1 in a quasi-continuous fashion and correlates with the measure of political knowledge but not to an extent that would raise suspicions about whether the two are synonymous ($r=.285$ s.e. $.045$). However, evidence on this potential confounder is limited. When the issue-weight (opinionation) index is included in the model (with the corresponding interactions), there is only a trivial change in the coefficients of interest.²⁷ The fact that both 'opinionation' interactions are effectively zero confirms that it is not through decreased weight attached to political issues that young adults appear to have been affected more by the scandal.²⁸

The last column of Table 5.19 partially qualifies the results. When the direction and strength of partisanship are taken into account, the difference between the young and the old in their level of continuity becomes effectively zero, although the increased weight attached by the youngest group to moral values remains unchanged. It seems that at least in this case it is mainly the difference in people's partisan ties that accounts for the less predictable reactions towards Hart, as a result of the scandal, among the youth.

But is this because of weaker partisan loyalties or is it the result different partisan preferences? Findings reported by Stoker (1993) indicate that there was a clear partisan bias in how people updated their assessments of the Democrat candidate in the light of his 'womanizing' activities. Democrats were unconditionally less likely to change their views about Hart during this period.

²⁷ The '(Young)(Hart86)' coefficient becomes $.168$ ($.106$) and the '(Young)(Moral)' coefficient becomes -7.66 (3.66).

²⁸ The '(Opinionation)(Hart86)' coefficient is $.153$ ($.290$) and the '(Opinionation)(Moral)' coefficient is -2.14 (7.54).

That said, it is also possible that respondents not anchored to partisan ties are affected more by the news, unconditionally of their partisan label.

Table 5.19: Are the age-related effects channeled through intercohort differences in political interest or partisan preferences?

	Hart87-controlling for politicization	Hart87-controlling for partisanship
Hart86	.245 (.198)	.208 (.088)
Moral86	1.91 (4.81)	1.32 (3.75)
Young	35.75 (15.21)	37.42 (15.58)
Intermediate	-21.63 (19.77)	-25.78 (21.08)
(Young)(Hart86)	-.149 (.104)	-.091 (.146)
(Young)(Moral)	-8.25 (3.68)	-8.97 (3.54)
(Intermediate)(Hart86)	.639 (.200)	.557 (.203)
(Intermediate)(Moral)	-.952 (4.33)	-1.08 (4.36)

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, robust standard errors in parentheses.

It seems that both strength and direction of partisanship might account for the decrease in the difference between young and old respondents in their levels of continuity. The average partisan strength (using the folded measure of the PID scale that ranges from 0: independent to 3: strong partisan) among the group of young respondents is 1.59, whereas the equivalent figure for the intermediate and the old group is 1.75 and 2.01 respectively. By the same token, whereas 40 per cent of the youth declare themselves as Republicans (including leaners), the equivalent figures for the two other groups are 32 and 36 per cent respectively.

To explore whether the decline in the coefficient of the product term denoting the continuity among the youth relatively to the corresponding continuity level among the old, is due to decreased partisan strength or a more Republican partisan distribution among the youth, I first interact the variable denoting partisan strength with the thermometer score of Hart measured in 1986. The product term between ‘Hart86’ and ‘young’ does not change much (.161, std. error: .101). When the ‘Republican’ dummy is interacted with ‘Hart86’, however, this effects essentially evaporates (.100, std. error .098). Thus, it is probably due to the fact that Republicans were more responsive to the event, as suggested by Stoker, rather than due to weaker partisan predispositions that young people initially appeared less predictable in their responses about Gary Hart after the scandal broke up. Importantly, the fact that the augmented effect of ‘morality’ among the youth re-

mains robust after the introduction of party identification in a fully factorized fashion indicates that at least with regard to scenario 1, the increased sensitivity of the youth does not simply conceal the effect of intercohort partisan differences.

5.3.3.7 Final remarks

In both examples analyzed above we saw that the events that were examined caused also a shift in people's partisanship. This is not the case here. Neither morality nor any other indicator that could denote change in people's attitudes (e.g. political knowledge or political interest) seems to produce a significant change in people's partisan attachments between the two waves. This finding, which holds for all three age groups, is not very surprising if one considers that Gary Hart was nothing more than one of the candidates for the Democrat leadership. Hart is neither Nixon nor Reagan. Admittedly, an event that might cause people to update their views about him is less likely to also drive change in people's partisan attachments. Actually, Hart's story did not affect people's partisanship even among those who appeared to prefer this candidate over the other two Democratic politicians for whom there was also a feeling thermometer item in the 1986 ANES study (Jackson and Cuomo). This is equally true for all cohorts.

A final point that needs to be made is that the results presented here are again relatively robust to different categorizations of the young age group. Given the small number of observations, the uncertainty surrounding the point estimates for the youth increases considerably as we limit the group to those aged less than 30. Importantly, however, the findings are more favorable towards the main hypothesis tested in this chapter as we increase the upper-bound of the youth age group up to 35 year-old respondents. When people up to 35 years old are included in the young cohort (transferring those aged until 50 to the intermediate group) the difference in the magnitude of the effects increases substantially. These effects gradually diminish as we move to 50 year olds. Although the number of observations does not permit a more in-depth exploration of how people's susceptibility to political shocks develops along aging it is at least interesting that in all three cases the effects identified for the youth hold also when this group is allowed to incorporate those aged until 35 years. In all three cases, it was only when people older than 35 were included in the young group that intercohort differences began to diminish.

5.4 Conclusion

The initial aim of this chapter was to close a probably not very interesting topic by providing evidence about a question that is largely believed to have been already answered, namely whether

people are more responsive to political events while they are young. As was argued in the introduction, however, the existing evidence supporting this claim was much more scarce than one would think. More importantly, it was primarily indirect. Thus, this chapter attempted to serve as a reference point by explicitly testing whether age constitutes an important factor in the weight attached to political shocks. In trying to answer this question, however, new questions appeared during the way, revealing complexities and unresolved issues that have been, thus far, largely ignored. It is probably by searching and finding the seemingly almost-closed box wide open that this chapter has mainly contributed to the discussion about how people react to period shocks during their life-trajectory.

Going back to the question, if a single answer were to be given, this should probably be affirmative: there seems to be considerable evidence supporting the idea that young people are affected more by political events. Moreover, the intercohort differences seem to be primarily because of the distinctiveness of the youth. No linear-like pattern was found. Neither did the older groups appear remarkably different from the intermediate groups in the analyses performed here. Young voters appear to be more willing to update their views in the light of new information. In some instances we also found an analogous tendency among respondents in their 30s and 40s. In other instances, it was the older group that resembled the pattern found among the youth. That said, there was no occasion in which respondents in their early adulthood appeared less responsive to the new information than their older counterparts. Three different examples are examined, each one representing a distinct stimulus for the electorate. However, the findings reveal a rather common pattern, largely unaffected by the particular character of the event in question: young adults appear more susceptible to shocks taking place in the political world than older cohorts. In other words, as was the case with the previous chapter, taken as a whole, the findings of this chapter confirm the idea of the 'impressionable years', as it was described in chapter 1. But there is more than that.

In the first section of this chapter two scenarios through which the increased sensitivity of the youth could be manifested empirically were spelled out. Not all case studies offered the opportunity to test both scenarios, but even so the findings are quite suggestive. Yet, they are far from being unequivocal. On the one hand, in front of the news about Nixon's involvement in the Watergate, young adults, already less affiliated to the President than the older ones, did not have much room to manifest a greater unidirectional change. They did, however, provide indirect evidence about how influential the event was for their presidential evaluations by showing to us that their prior preferences were not as good hints for their posterior preferences as was the case for the older cohorts. In the case of Reagan, on the other hand, where such floor effects were not apparent, they appeared more responsive in their attitudes towards the Republican president. Last but

definitely not least, both types of increased sensitivity were largely apparent among the youth in the case of Gary Hart, although in this case the tendency among the youth not to retain their relative position in the group-distribution of preferences towards Hart seems to conceal, at least in part, partisan imbalance. It seems questionable whether this lower level of predictability would be maintained unless young respondents were not on average more inclined to the Republicans than their older counterparts. All in all, although both aspects of increased sensitivity seem to gain at least some empirical support, more research is needed in order to clarify how this pattern is primarily manifested empirically, i.e. what exactly are the observational implications of these age-related differences.

A second question that emerges from the findings seems even more pertinent. What does 'being young' stand for? In the previous two chapters we saw that the main differentiating factor was the amount of electoral experience. Here, age largely remains as a 'residual'. The typical explanations, namely lack of politicization and weaker partisan ties, do not seem to account for the observed age-related differences. To be sure, deficiencies in the measurement of the corresponding indicators might conceal the true effect of these factors. That said, the fact that different measures of political interest and knowledge were employed and that partisanship was always tested by applying the most agnostic approach (in a fully factorized fashion) and by using the most established measure, indicates that it cannot be simply a problem of an inefficient measurement strategy. There seems to be something else about young people, probably related to distinct psychological features and their effect in how people react to political stimuli, that generates this pattern. This question will also need to be further addressed preferably through an experimental framework in future research. Moreover, it is still ambiguous whether what is found corresponds to an immediate reaction towards a contextual stimulus or whether it creates long-lasting attitudinal implications among the youth. Essentially, the need to capture effectively the causal impact of a given political event creates limitations in the analysis of the durability of these effects in the long run and although the evidence in the case of Richard Nixon supports the idea that these differences manifest themselves also in the long run, more research on this exact issue is certainly needed.

That being said, it is important that the existing findings complete the puzzle about the process of attitudinal crystallization and partisan stability during early adulthood. In the two previous chapters we saw that the act of voting is more consequential for the formation and the reinforcement of partisan preferences among young adults. A similar pattern is observed here when we focus on the impact of political events. If nothing else, the results from this last chapter, when combined with the findings of the previous three chapters, justify the decision made in this study to focus on the earliest stage in people's political trajectories. This seems to be the period characterized by less path dependence, maybe simply because the path has been shorter. Be that as it may,

this lack of persistence makes change more feasible. Examining the behavioral and attitudinal sources of this change provides an unparalleled opportunity to shed light on one of the most intriguing and still puzzling questions of empirical political research, namely how people form and change their political orientations during the course of their political lives.

Appendix 5.A: Measurement error and the Heise model

Previous research assessing attitudinal stability net of measurement error has been guided by the work of Heise (1969) and Wiley and Wiley (1970). The basic idea of this procedure is that any response trait follows an AR(1) process, such that its current value is a function of its previous value plus some random disturbance. Heise's model of inter-item reliability is based on correlation matrices as opposed to Wiley and Wiley's (1970) covariance matrices. The difference between the two models refers to the identifying restrictions that need to be imposed to the model. Whereas the Heise model sets reliabilities constant across the waves, Wiley and Wiley constrain the measurement error variances (Green and Palmquist, 1990). Applying the Heise model without making this restricting assumption requires at least four waves in order to estimate the parameters of interest (Schickler and Green, 1997).

Although the panel study contains four waves with the same indicator (Nixon's feeling thermometer), I will not use the Heise model as a way to evaluate the stability and the reliability of people's responses about Nixon. The reason for that stems from a defining assumption of the model, i.e. that change in the attribute of interest follows a Markovian AR(1) process. In our case this means that at any given point in time evaluations of Nixon are predicted by the same evaluations at the previous point in time plus a random disturbance. From that the following important assumption follows: whatever forces have led people to change their views towards Nixon from before the election of 1972 to after that election are orthogonal to what caused them to change their views in 1974 and also in 1976.

It is intuitively straightforward to see how this assumption does not hold in a case where an external shock with respect to the attribute of interest appears at some point during these four waves in which the same indicator is available. Drawing on the test-retest logic of examining attitudinal stability and item reliability, the Heise model serves as a method that provides true (disattenuated) correlation patterns without distortion due to measurement error, but only if an AR(1) process is assumed. As Green and Schickler (2009: 183) point out, test-retest assessments are useful when the aim is to measure the attribute of interest at two (or more) adjacent points in time, 'before any appreciable true change has occurred'. Here, the case is different. An important source of atti-

tudinal change comes to light after the second wave and remains until the fourth wave. This means that the AR(1) process breaks from wave 2 (1972 postelection) to wave 3 (1974).

That the Heise model is not very useful in the case of Nixon can be also shown in practice. The assumption of no correlation between the errors can be evaluated empirically (see also Klingemann et al. 2007:92). To do that I proceed as follows. I regress Nixon72post (people's evaluations of Nixon in the 1972 postelection wave) on Nixon72pre (the same indicator measured in the pre-election wave) and take the residuals. I then regress Nixon76 on Nixon74 and take these residuals as well. One of the assumption of the Heise model is that the correlation between these two residuals is zero. This is not the case here, however, since we find a correlation of .33 (s.e. .0003). This finding highlights the problem of applying the Heise model in a case that clearly does not correspond to a simple Markovian process.

What would have happened if instead of Nixon we had another politician for whom public opinion did not change drastically during this period? Apparently, if the results are driven by measurement error, this should be because youth incorporates more noise in their responses than older cohorts. This should be equally true regardless of the particular politician of interest, essentially because it constitutes a feature of the respondents themselves, not of the political figure to which the survey question refers. Therefore, if young people are significantly more noisy in their responses causing this short-term instability in their attitudes regarding Nixon, we should observe this pattern also for other political figures, as for example with George Wallace. Wallace is the only other politician for whom we have the same thermometer scale available in (the same) four waves. Given that no critical event took place for Wallace, the Heise model in this case could be a fairly good test for the comparison of the level of attitudinal stability between young cohorts and older ones. The AR(1) process implied by the Heise model is justified both intuitively (the best predictor of people's evaluations about Wallace at time t is their evaluations at time $t-1$) and from the data. When the same procedure that was implemented for Nixon, is replicated for Wallace, the two residuals are this time practically orthogonal, i.e. they correlate at .03 (s.e. .312).

So, what happens when the Heise model is applied in a case in which its underlying assumptions seem to be satisfied? The stability in people's responses (i.e. the disattenuated correlation) is .88 for the older group and .85 for the youth. The equivalent figures for the item reliability from waves 1 to 3 are .78 and .79 respectively. For waves 2 to 4 the results are almost identical (.77 and .79 respectively). It seems that when the model applies to a response trait that follows a Markovian process, young people are only trivially less stable in their opinions and, most importantly, the

survey item does not seem to be less reliable for this particular group. This implies that the findings are not simply the artifacts of differing measurement error between the young and the old.²⁹

Appendix 5.B: The RDD in the Iran-Contras example

One could also advocate the use of a sharp Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) as a way to capture the effect of the announcement of November 25. As was described in Chapter 3, the logic behind the RDD is that we minimally extrapolate the effect of some forcing variable on some (unobserved) cut-off point. Typically the continuous forcing variable which works as a deterministic function of treatment assignment, correlates also with the outcome of interest in ways other than simply by denoting treatment status. The classic RDD example in political science relates to the incumbent's advantage in congressional elections. Since having won an election at time t means also acquiring particular qualitative characteristics that probably predict also winning the election at time $t+1$, Lee (2008; see also Hainmueller and Kern 2008) suggested examining only those who marginally lost or marginally won. In this way, unobservable factors accounting for losing or winning a constituency become meaningless. This is because, as was also explained in chapter 3, the assignment of treatment (in this case winning a constituency) is treated as random at the region of the threshold.

However, there are two problems with the application of an RDD in this case. First the announcement did not exactly come out of nowhere, the support of the US for the Contras was already known. This means that the 25th of November does not correspond to a clear-cut jump in support for Reagan. Moreover, unlike typical RDD designs and as was also argued in chapter 3, being interviewed right after or many days later than the 25th of November should not presumably make much difference in how likely people were to dislike Reagan for reasons other than the disclosure. Day of interview is not exactly the same as vote share. Finding that an incumbent who won her first election with 60 per cent of the vote also won her next election would be less informative about the role of incumbency than finding an incumbent who won the first election by 50.1 per cent and also won the next election. But this logic does not apply directly to the days of inter-

²⁹ Given that the derivation of the correlation coefficients net from measurement error has been already extensively analyzed in the literature (see indicatively Green and Palmoquist 1990; 1994; Green et al. 2002), I do not elaborate on the mathematical foundations of the formulas used in the calculations. That said, it needs to be noticed that with four waves of information and without assuming either the reliabilities or the measurement error variances as constant, the Heise model gives the disattenuated correlation between wave 2 and wave 3. It is for these two intermediate waves that we can only have a measure of attitudinal stability for people's evaluations about Wallace. The estimation assumes interval-level covariates and is implemented through a structural equation model (in AMOS 7.0), as shown in Palmquist and Green 1992 (see also Green et al. 2002:233).

Table 5.B: The RDD estimation of the impact of November 25, results include both a polynomial and a local linear regression.

	Polynomial regression			Local Linear Regression		
	Young	Intermediate	Old	Young	Intermediate	Old
After	-6.22 (3.78)	-.162 (.522)	.055 (.493)	-.534 (.312)	-.034 (.445)	-.111 (.572)
Trend	-.432 (.380)	-.010 (.021)	.014 (.018)	-.018 (.020)	.002 (.022)	-.010 (.012)
After*Trend	3.56 (1.56)	.003 (.00009)	-.043 (.039)	-.007 (.037)	-.063 (.041)	-.043 (.025)
Trend ²	-.114 (.076)					
After*Trend ²	-.343 (.219)					
Trend ³	-.009 (.005)					
After*Trend ³	.034 (.012)					
Trend ⁴	-.0003 (.0001)					
After*Trend ⁴	-.0002 (.0002)					

Note: entries are OLS coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. Local linear regression estimation is implemented with the ado.file RD (Nichols 2007) in STATA 11,0. Controls include all covariates used in the previous analyses. Trend is centered to the 25th of November. N=210, 405, 420 for the young, intermediate and old group respectively.

view. Why would someone interviewed 20 days after the announcement be more critical of Reagan than someone interviewed right after the announcement? To be sure, it is likely that events are gradually forgotten and their impact diminished. On the other hand, one could argue that increasing media focus on the issue helps to reinforce opinions about the events and since this might take time, people interviewed later are likely to be more affected by the disclosure than those interviewed right after the event. It is on these grounds that I employed the ‘after’ dummy in the main part analysis. However, I will also use this appendix to show that the findings are very similar even when an RDD is chosen for the estimation of the causal effect of the news on people’s attitudes towards Reagan.

Following the conventional strategy in RDD, I adopt a polynomial model to specify the effect of the announcement on people’s perceptions about Reagan’s approval record. The model looks as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Approval} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{After}_i + \beta_2 \text{Trend}_i + \beta_3 \text{After}_i \cdot \text{Trend}_i + \\
 & \beta_4 \text{Trend}_i^2 + \beta_5 \text{After}_i \cdot \text{Trend}_i^2 + \beta_6 \text{Trend}_i^3 + \beta_7 \text{After}_i \cdot \text{Trend}_i^3 + \\
 & \beta_8 \text{Trend}_i^4 + \beta_9 \text{After}_i \cdot \text{Trend}_i^4 + \gamma X + e_i
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{5.B1}$$

The idea here is the following: by using a fourth order polynomial we account for nonlinearities in the pattern before and after the threshold. The trend variable is centered with respect to the threshold point. Due to this centering, the average causal effect of the announcement of the 25th of November is captured by β_1 . This parameter gives the effect of the event at a time point 0, that is, on November 25. This estimate shows the (extrapolated) difference between those interviewed before the event and those interviewed after the event.

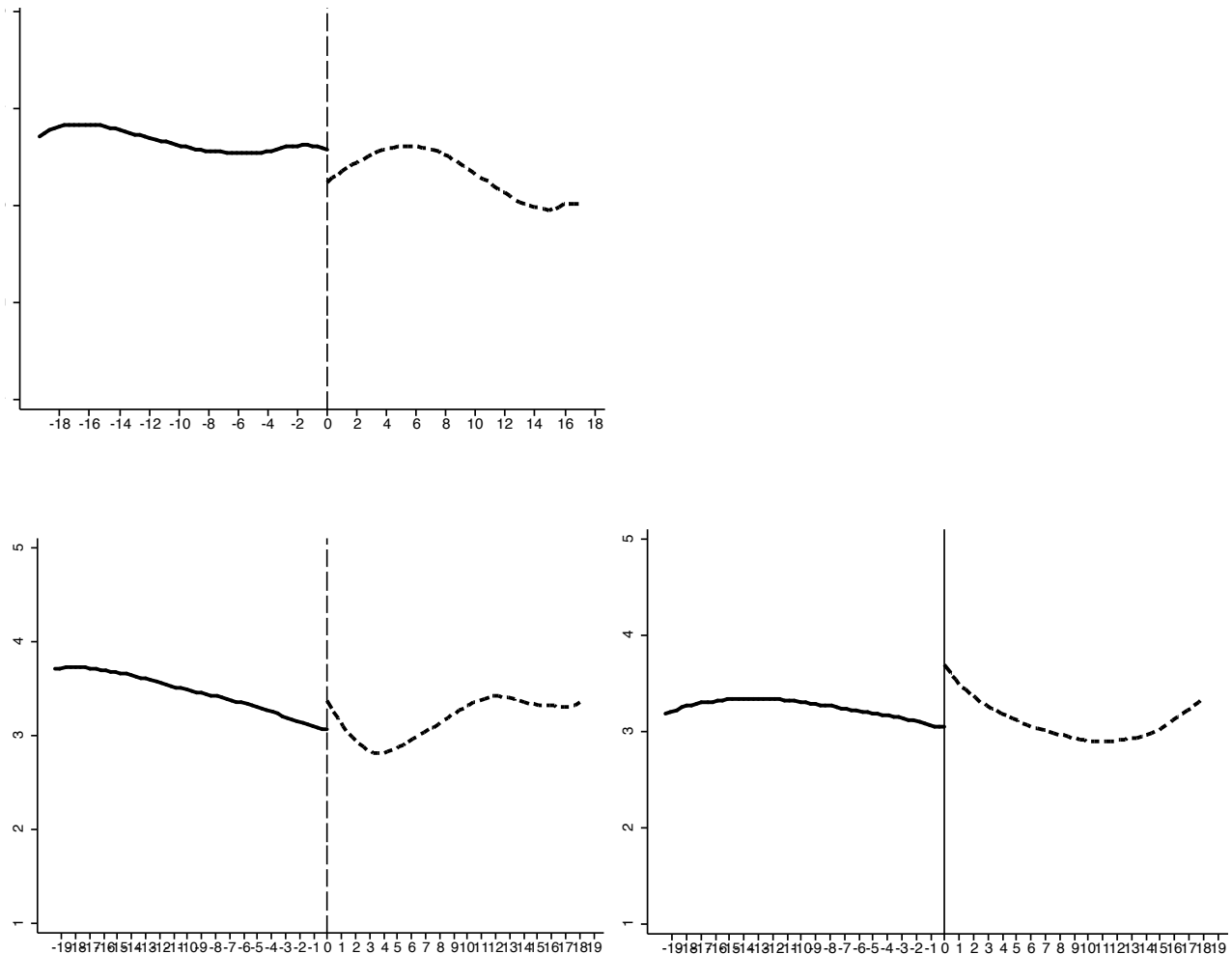


Figure 5.B: The local polynomial curves before and after the threshold.

Note: Solid line presents the fit before the 25th of November, dashed line presents the fit after that date. The first figure up on the left shows the pattern for the young group. The two figures at the lower part of the graph denote the pattern for the intermediate and the old group.

To select the bandwidth (the distance between 25 of November and the date of interview before and after that date) I use Imbens and Kalyanaraman's (2009) data-driven exploration of the optimal bandwidth, which here is almost the whole period under investigation, i.e. 19 days before and after the 25th of November. The results for each group are shown in Table 5.A. Following Imbens and Lemieux (2008), apart from using this polynomial specification, the Table also shows a local linear regression that excludes higher order terms:

$$Approval = \beta_0 + \beta_1 After_i + \beta_2 Trend_i + \beta_3 After_i \cdot Trend_i + \gamma X + e_i \quad (5.B2)$$

Again, the parameter of interest is β_1 , the effect of the treatment (the 25 November announcement) evaluated at the point of discontinuity (see also Green et al. 2009:410; Eggers and Hainmueller 2009). As it is seen in the Table, again we only find some pattern for the youth. The first three columns of the Table present the estimates from the polynomial regression. Following Green et al. 2009, I include the highest significant polynomial. This is the fourth for the young group and only the first for the intermediate group. None of the parameters is significant in the case of the oldest group. As it is seen, β_1 , the coefficient associated with the 'after' dummy, is much higher for the youth than for the other two groups and approaches statistical significance at .1 level. However, the magnitude of the coefficient is inflated by the extreme collinearity in the estimates and by the fact that it refers to an estimate at a point where there are no data (minimal extrapolation). That being said, it is again only for the youth that the announcement of the 25th of November seems to be important. For the other two groups it seems that there is no jump in how they evaluated Reagan as a result of the disclosures. The results from a local linear regression, as shown in the last three columns of Table 5.B, confirm this finding. Figure 5.B shows graphically the local curves for each group before and after the threshold. Although differences are only small, the pattern again shows that it is mainly among the young that we find a downward jump in Reagan's popularity.

Appendix 5.C:

using the 1982 ANES study as a placebo test for the effect of the November announcements on people's evaluations of Reagan in 1986

Table 5.C: A Placebo test: the impact of date of interview (trend) on Reagan evaluations in the 1982 ANES study.

	Feeling				Is Reagan...		
	Thermometer	PID	Moral	Dishonest	Weak	Knowledgeable	Reckless
Young	.063 (.130)	-.001 (.003)	.004 (.004)	-.002 (.004)	-.001 (.004)	.001 (.004)	-.006 (.005)
N	334	229	227	227	229	229	226
Intermediate	-.160 (.109)	-.009 (.003)	-.003 (.004)	.002 (.003)	-.003 (.004)	.005 (.004)	-.002 (.004)
N	372	257	255	252	254	254	251
Old	-.234 (.092)	-.001 (.003)	-.0001 (.003)	.002 (.003)	-.001 (.004)	.008 (.003)	.007 (.004)
N	587	346	338	330	337	342	332

	Is Reagan...			Does Reagan make you feel...				
	Inspiring	Strong leadership	foreign affairs	Angry	Proud	Disgusted	Sympathetic	Uneasy
Young	.0001 (.005)	.001 (.004)	.001 (.004)	-.010 (.010)	-.001 (.009)	-.008 (.010)	.0006 (.010)	.001 (.011)
N	227	228	224	228	228	229	229	229
Intermediate	-.009 (.004)	-.004 (.004)	-.004 (.004)	.012 (.009)	-.012 (.009)	.012 (.009)	-.012 (.009)	.008 (.009)
N	257	256	251	257	257	257	257	257
Old	-.005 (.004)	-.002 (.003)	-.001 (.003)	.014 (.008)	-.006 (.007)	.003 (.008)	-.005 (.008)	.001 (.008)
N	336	341	331	343	346	346	345	345

Note: Entries are OLS coefficients, standard errors in parenthesis. The placebo test works as expected: among young voters there is no instance in which we find a significant difference according to the time of interview. For the other two cohorts, we do find some instances which suggest a gradual decrease in Reagan's evaluations as we move along with the fieldwork. Interestingly, some but not all of these coefficients lose their significance when the Bonferroni adjustment is used to correct for the number of comparisons being tested (multiple-hypothesis testing). It seems that if the 1982 ANES study can be used as a baseline, young people who are interviewed late after the fieldwork starts are, else equal, less likely to be critical to Reagan than their older counterparts.

6 - Conclusion: first we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.

Writing fifteen years ago, Niemi and Hepburn argued that political socialization research, which ‘began in the late 1950s and died a premature death in the 1970s’ (1995:7), would only succeed in establishing a new and sustainable rebirth if researchers working on this field focused on what presumably constitutes the most interesting period of political learning, i.e. adolescence and early adulthood. In the authors’ words (1995:9),

‘To gain knowledge of how people learn about politics and to understand how they change their views in response to their political environment [researchers] would do well to focus on the fourteen to twenty-five age range. Note that we do not suggest an exclusive emphasis on preadults. Just as political learning does not begin at eighteen, it does not end there either. However they are categorized legally, individuals probably experience more change in their political views between ages of fourteen to twenty-five than at any point later in their lives. Yet, just how and why youth is a time of great change during these years is still somewhat hazy.’

Focusing on the precise period of early adulthood, this study has attempted to shed some light on this - admittedly still hazy - research question, articulated however, in a slightly different way: how do young people form their political attitudes during their life trajectories? Three factors have been examined, all of which are already present in one way or another in the existing literature: family, elections, and political events. In this final chapter I will assess in what respects this present study has enhanced our understanding of the role of these factors in the process of habitual engagement and partisan anchoring.

6.1 Family: long-term effects and the role of parental politicization

Parental transmission of partisan inclinations is probably the most frequently cited source of early political orientations. Although youngsters also experience influences from their school environment or other social contexts in which they find themselves during adolescence, the role of family in shaping their political views is primordial and easily outweighs potentially contradictory messages (Levin 1961, Jennings and Niemi 1968; 1974).

As Niemi and Hepburn (1995) note, although important in providing early partisan cues, parental influence gradually diminishes as children begin to accumulate their own electoral

experiences. Despite early suggestions to the contrary (Campbell et al. 1960), young people did appear to change their partisan inclinations to a considerable extent as they aged, thus weakening the partisan linkage between parents and children. This, in turn, raised questions about the practical implications of focusing on early stages of the life span. If initial predispositions change under the weight of new political experience, focusing on these early years becomes a poor predictor of future political orientations. This view resulted in increasing neglect for the role of family in establishing partisan identities during adolescence and early adulthood (for instance, questions about family political views become less available in more recent election studies both in American and in European electoral surveys). This is one of the reasons for the down-playing of political socialization research within the more encompassing field of political behavior.

The findings from this study strongly suggest that this neglect has been unfortunate. The impact of family is not homogenous among parents otherwise identical in terms of partisanship. This is because the latter do not simply disseminate their partisan preferences to their offspring. They also provide a context which determines to a large extent whether children will leave the parental home with an interest in political affairs. Youngsters coming from a more politicized environment are more likely to desert their parents' partisan legacy after they have experienced the first years of adulthood. According to the results from Chapter 2, this is mainly because of the particular partisan flavor of new socializing contexts in which young adults typically find themselves and in the partisan bias emanating from whatever political shocks occur during this period of early adulthood. When these events are salient, political interest proves a more important aspect inherited by the family than the party label. Young Republicans were more likely to desert their parents' party during the late 1960s and the early 1970s if they had come from a more politicized environment. This undoubtedly turbulent period influenced mainly those coming from highly politicized homes. Interestingly, this pattern appears to hold when a different generation is examined. When we examined the youth of the mid-1990s, what we found is that in the long-run parental political interest weakens the partisan link between parents and children.

If nothing else, these findings suggest that the role of family should be further examined but through a different lens. It is not simply that in general youngsters abandon views inculcated by their parents as they build their own life structures after leaving home. It is, more importantly, that some of them are more likely to do so and this propensity largely depends on the role of parents themselves. From this perspective, parental influence is still worth examining, since it helps to predict the process through which young adults will later form their own partisan orientations. However, a less simplistic viewpoint, which goes beyond the contemporaneous relationship between parents and children and uses information about both the level of parental partisanship

and the level of parental political interest seems to be more appropriate for capturing the impact of this undeniably key factor in the formation of partisan identities during early adulthood.

Another finding that justifies the decision to revisiting the role of family in the formation of partisan identities is that the different attitudinal patterns observed between children from less politicized homes and those coming from more politicized families tend to remain relatively stable in the long-run. Thus, the increased sensitivity among the latter to contextual factors and shocks taking place during early adulthood implies that this period becomes even more important for the process of crystallizing one's political preferences. Both groups progressively, and regardless of their initial level of parental politicization, appear to form stable partisan profiles. However, for those coming from the more politicized group, the period between 18 and 25 appears considerably more crucial in forming their partisan profiles.¹ People do change during later years but the rate of change seems to be considerably lower. This means that among those coming from less politicized families, we are more likely to find traces of parental influence even while the offspring become older. It is much less likely that such effects will survive under the weight of new and gradually accumulating political information among those coming from a politicized background.

These results match nicely with the findings from Kroh and Selb (2009b). In their analysis of German longitudinal data, the authors found that partisanship is more stable among less politically interested respondents. In their empirical formulation, instability means naming a different party than the party initially referred to in late adolescence. Although the rate of change gradually declines as would be expected given the widespread evidence of greater partisan stability as people age, there is a remarkable difference between the politicized and the non-politicized youth. Accounting for their findings, Kroh and Selb attributed this pattern to the possibility that partisanship can be a more useful heuristic device among less politicized voters, whereas it is not needed to the same extent among politically knowledgeable citizens. An alternative explanation could be that party support at the age of 18 simply reflects parental influence. This influence is more evident in youth's partisan orientations in the long run among offspring coming from less politicized homes than among those coming from more politically involved families.

In a companion paper, Kroh and Selb (2009a) come up with another interesting side-effect of parental partisan heritage. In particular, the authors suggest that for those inheriting the partisanship of their parents, PID is predominantly based on an affective attachment to political parties (Campbell et al. 1960), whereas in those cases where partisan imprinting through the family is absent, PID acquired later in one's trajectory resembles the revisionist view of PID, based on the cog-

¹ It needs to be remembered that the age interval of 18 to 25 captures also a period of late adolescence in institutional terms, since in the period that was mainly examined here the voting age was 21.

nitive evaluations of parties' records. The findings of chapter 2 challenge this conclusion. In their analysis, Kroh and Selb do not take parental political interest into account, thus distinguishing only between partisan and non-partisan families. Adding political interest as another feature inherited from early socialization within the family, we saw that it is mainly parental politicization rather than the strength and direction of partisan attachment that generates such differences in the stability and the strength of children's partisan attitudes. To be sure, both political interest and strength of party attachment among the parents produce greater similarity with their children's contemporaneous partisan orientations. However, greater deviations from this initial pattern of resemblance as children grow older are observed among those who stem from more politicized families. This is because of the differential weight attached to period forces among young people of more politicized family environment. By forming their partisanship according to the influence of period effects, without basing their attitudes only on the partisan heritage of their family, the youth coming from more politicized families establishes party preferences which are based more on their own evaluations about the parties' record than the partisan lessons taught in the family. Thus, it is not only that lack of partisan inheritance might give more room for the formation of PID according to the 'running tally' logic of partisan learning. Even youngsters from strongly partisan families might soon qualify their initial views according to the forces of the time, so long as they have also inherited their parents' interest in political affairs.

In sum, I think that by trying to explore a particular mechanism related to the role of family, this study contributes in a very recent but seemingly flourishing wave of literature about the importance of parental influence in the formation of partisan habits. In so doing, it also highlights a need for the new political socialization research to revisit the family as an institution that not only gives rise to initial partisan predispositions but also determines the path through which offspring will eventually establish their own firm orientations in their life trajectories.

6.2 The act of voting: cognitive dissonance versus a social learning process

Perhaps the most well established intuition among researchers of partisan learning is that voting continuity and partisan habits are brought about in a rather mechanistic way, through the repetition of the same electoral choices (Converse 1969; Markus and Converse 1979; Cassel 1993, Grofman et al. 2009). One could actually argue that one of the reasons for which political socialization fell from favor during the 1970s (the period when the formal expression and systematic and rigorous examination of hypotheses becomes a vital concern among political scientists) is that it did not attempt to address in a formalized and, more importantly, causally

interpretable way assumptions upon which important explanations about the nature and process of habitual engagement and partisan stability are further developed. One such intuition was the 'immunization thesis' (Butler and Stokes 1974), i.e. the idea that voting for a given party increases the likelihood to vote again in the next election and to do so by opting for the same party.

By refraining from actually testing this idea, researchers of partisan learning essentially failed to provide convincing evidence about another, probably more important, question, namely the causal mechanism through which elections are important in this process - if they are at all. Do elections serve as funnels of political information or is it that the act of voting creates a mechanism of cognitive dissonance (or self-perception), whereby manifestation of political preferences into actual behavioral choices strengthens prior partisan attitudes? By using a dataset that gives the opportunity to use eligibility as an IV of actual vote, we saw that voting in a given election facilitates future turnout and in so doing it gives rise to habitual voting. More importantly, it increases prior partisan inclinations by approximately half a point in a 0-6 scale. These effects continue to manifest themselves, so that increases in partisanship appear to cumulate with each successive manifestation of political preferences at successive elections, until people reach their mid-30s and diminish thereafter, having little further effect on partisanship after the fourth election or so. Furthermore, when the findings from both PID and turnout are combined, we see that an important portion of the effect of voting for a given party at a given election on the likelihood of voting again in the next election is mediated through an increase in partisan strength. Voting is also voting for a party and this feeling of manifesting a political preference into actual choice accounts for an important part of the effect of the act of voting in one election on the probability of voting again in the next election.

There are two important implications for the study of political socialization stemming from these findings. The first might seem trivial but is probably the most intriguing. Voting seems to play an important role in the process of partisan anchoring, confirming the intuition from early studies of political change (McPhee and Ferguson 1962; Butler and Stokes 1974). More importantly, it seems that this is not because by participating in elections people acquire more political information. It rather seems to be the result of the act of voting as such, denoting a psychological process of partisan anchoring at least partially fueled by the process of electoral participation. This means that at least in part the answer to the question about how people form firm partisan identities is by voting repeatedly for the same party. Due to the quasi-experimental design employed here, we can isolate the impact of repeated vote choice without confounding it with people's prior partisan preferences. And still, we do find a substantial effect of the act of voting in strengthening prior partisan preferences.

The second implication arising from this finding goes back again to the premises established by *The American Voter*. According to Campbell et al. (1960), American partisanship is so immutable that it remains unchanged even when people occasionally opt for a different party. On the other hand, scholars embracing the revisionist school of PID argue that partisanship travels with vote (Fiorina 1981, Franklin and Jackson 1983, Franklin 1984). Some of the findings reported in Chapter 4 qualify but at the same time encompass both these views. PID seems to be more labile but only among the youth, i.e. those not having established firm partisan patterns. Those already 'stuck in their ways' are not only less likely to switch their vote between elections but even when doing so, they are less likely to accompany this switch by a shift in their partisan affiliation.

There are also some practical implications from this finding. Some elections are shaped by extraordinary events and these events might boost turnout and, in case the event relates to one or more parties in particular, a marked change in the support of a given party. According to the analysis of chapters 3 and 4, such a pattern should also have an indirect long-term effect on future electoral participation and on the partisan equilibrium in the electorate. Is this really the case?

It seems that such instances can be traced to real-world events. The terrorist attack in the 'Atocha' train-station in Madrid a few days before the 2004 general election resulted in an increased participation among the youth, who appeared at the polls at much higher rates than in previous elections. Part of this effect was also apparent, albeit through less marked intercohort differences, in the 2008 election. According to the 2000 Spanish Election Study, 67 per cent of first-eligible individuals actually voted in that election. In 2004, this percentage increased by ten points, going up to 77 per cent. The long-term implications of this increase can be traced in 2008. In that year, the cohort that was eligible to vote both in 2004 and in 2008 continued to vote at a rate of 77 per cent. The equivalent cohort in 2000 (that eligible to vote both in 1996 and in 2000) voted in the 2000 election at a rate of 71 per cent. Figur 6.1 shows these two effects, comparing young and old respondents. The short-term effect of the Attocha attack in boosting turnout in 2004 is displayed in the left panel of the figure, which shows that those up to 30 years old (lower part of the graph) and those older than 30 (higher part of the graph). The right panel of the Figure presents preliminary evidence on the long-term consequences. It excludes first-time voters in 2008. It compares those who were eligible to vote in up to four elections with those who were eligible to vote in more than four elections. What we observe is the difference in turnout rates before and after the attack (thus comparing the 2000 with the 2008 election) between the two groups. Focusing on the most adjacent election with respect to the event, we minimize period effects. Age is also accounted for since each over-time comparison includes the same age-groups. As we see, having voted in 2004 as a result of the turbulent circumstances in which that election took place, boosted turnout also in the next election but mainly among the young. Probably also

because of ceiling effects (the baseline rate is always higher among the old) this effect is much smaller among the older cohorts. Although this is only an illustrative example, it is interesting that at least some of this initial boost remains despite the erosion of the initial effect.

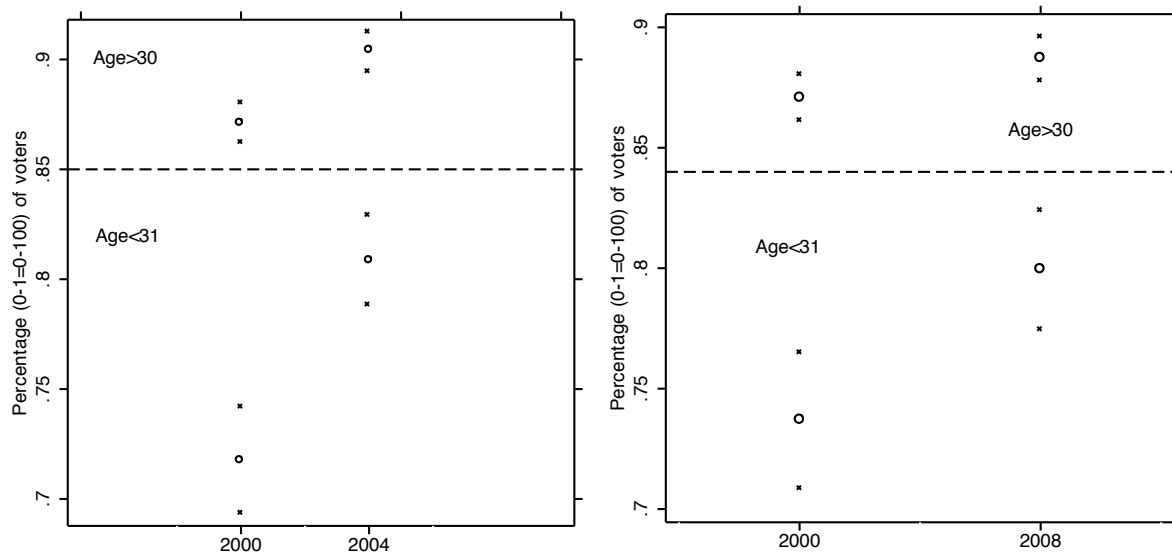


Figure 6.1: The short- and long-term consequences of the Atocha attack in March 2004 on turnout among young and old voters, only an illustrative and exploratory example.

Note: The left panel presents the average difference in the percentage of voters among those age less than 31 and those who are older than 30. The second panel shows the difference between the same age groups comparing their turnout rates in 2000 and in 2008. Empty circles present sample averages, whereas small x's denote the 95% bootstrapped C.I. The horizontal dashed line distinguishes between young and old respondents. Source: Spanish National Election Studies (I am indebted to Pablo Barbera for making available to me a cumulative dataset, which included all important variables for this example).

The effects on party support are even more telling. According to the 2000 Spanish election study, 56.9 per cent of first-time voters opted for the then incumbent right-wing Popular party (PP). The equivalent group in 2004 voted for the same party at a rate of only 27.8 per cent. This is the highest inter-election difference of any electoral cohort, providing also some evidence of the practical implications of the findings of Chapter 5. However, what happened in Spain in 2008 is even more interesting and supports the findings of chapter 4. In 2008 first-time voters opted for the Popular party by 37 per cent. Only 31 per cent of those who had also voted (for the first time then) in 2004 (those 21 to 25 years old) cast a ballot for the right-wing Spanish party. In 2000 election (that is, before the attack) the equivalent group (that was eligible to vote in 1996 and in 2000) had opted for PP at a rate of 62 per cent.

An analogous pattern was also experienced in the 2009 Greek election. With the 2007 election being held on the ashes of the catastrophic wild-fires that exploded all over the country two weeks

before polling day, the marked inefficiency of the public sector in handling the situation was interpreted as a clear case of incumbent failure. Thus, despite the fact that the right-wing governing party actually regained a majority in the parliament, it lost for the first time its primacy among the youth (those aged less than 30), where it actually ended as a third party. This pattern was repeated two years later, in an election that gave rise to a comfortable socialist majority (Dinas 2008b;2009).

One could argue that something similar is taking place with the Obama Presidency. Even by January 2008, David von Drehle (2008), writing in *TIME*, foresaw that the coming election would be characterized by an unprecedented mobilization among the youth. Indeed, this ended up being, as he correctly anticipated, 'The Year of the Youth Vote'. In fact, the young portion of the American electorate registered an impressive increase in turnout and a remarkable involvement in the campaign at that election. It will thus be interesting to see whether this pattern will be repeated in the next presidential election (in 2012) and, more importantly, whether it will also manifest itself as continued support in this cohort for the Democratic President.

Such continuity in youth voting is not really an implication of this study, however. Young voters move with the times, and the times could turn against President Obama while the youth who supported him in 2008 are still young enough to move against him. Whether they do so or not is contingent on factors to which we now turn.

6.3 Events: establishing the increased sensitivity of young adults

Another long-lived but hardly tested (at least in a direct fashion) assumption in the political socialization literature is that young people are more responsive to political events. As was elaborated in Chapter 5, this argument features either implicitly or explicitly in various theories of political change, from models of political learning to dealignment and realignment theories. As was also the case with the role of elections, an important criticism made against theories of political socialization based on the developmental logic regarding responsiveness to new information was that there is no firm theoretical basis and hardly any explicit empirical evidence supporting this claim (Bartels 2001). That was also recognized by Niemi and Hepburn (1995), as is revealed by the last sentence of the text quoted in the beginning of this chapter. In other words, those researching political socialization were deemed to base their mechanism of political learning upon the assumption that age is an important mediating factor accounting for the differing weight attached to political events, without actually testing this assumption in a systematic way and without providing a strong theoretical argument about why we should expect this to be the case.

The essentially modest goal of Chapter 5 was to partially fill this gap. Finding three salient instances in the recent history of American politics that could be traced with observational data in a way that would enable the identification of the causal effect of each event on people's political attitudes and beliefs, the aim was to compare the magnitude of the reaction caused by each political shock among different age cohorts. To do this in a clear-cut way, two different but potentially complementary scenarios were formulated, both referring to people's reactions in front of unfortunate news about the President. Each one represented a different way in which this pattern of increased sensitivity could be manifested in observational terms. According to the first scenario, young adults become on average more negatively oriented towards the President. According to the second, they change their relative positions in the distribution of preferences (within this age group) about the President, as a result of this new information.

The results show that both scenarios are likely to coexist although there were also instances that this pattern was not clearly revealed from the data. That said, it would be probably safe to argue that, taken as a whole, the results provide considerable evidence supporting the idea that young people seem to be more likely to update their views about a given party or a particular politician when new relevant information comes into play. In particular, we saw that people that have not yet reached (or just did so) the age of 30 changed their views about Nixon and the Republican party after it became publicly known he was involved in the Watergate scandal. They seemed to be also more affected by the news about the secret involvement of the US government in the Contras affair in Nicaragua and they appeared more responsive to the news about Gary Hart's extramarital affair. Although generalizations based on these findings should bear in mind that these are nothing more than three examples chosen on data availability grounds, it seems quite likely that they indicate a more general pattern. None of these events was particularly associated with the youth. Yet, in all instances we did find at least some confirmation of the idea that young people are more likely to react to new political information. What however remains to be further explored is which of these two scenarios, and under which circumstances, reflects the most typical manifestation of young sensitivity.

Taken at face value, this finding also implies a need to alter our models of electoral behavior. Although it might seem only a modest correction, the findings of Chapter 5 suggest the need for an interaction between a key covariate that is thought to produce change in people's attitudes and an indicator denoting respondents' (in observational research) or subjects' (in experimental studies) age. It is probably not only scandals and wars that make people change their views. Other factors related to the parties also influence voters' preferences. The logic however should apply equally well. Thus, events such as electoral debates or important administrative decisions should matter more for those people with less electoral experience, i.e. young voters (see also Franklin 2004).

The practical implication of this analysis touches also on the campaign strategies of the competing political parties. In the previous section, we saw in the Spanish case how young voters are particularly responsive to salient events occurring shortly before elections. This suggests a more general pattern regarding conversion effects in political campaigns. It is almost consensually accepted among scholars working on campaign effects that if parties' campaign strategies have any impact on electoral outcomes this is mainly the case when they focus on mobilizing the support of their own sympathizers. Attempting to convert supporters of other parties or independents is much harder and frequently does not pay off (Finkel 1993; Schmitt-Beck and Farrell 2002). That said, it seems that there is room to attract new supporters from younger generations. Political information appears more influential among the youth. Thus, by targeting this portion of the electorate, campaign managers can in appropriate circumstances gain new votes from this more labile age-group. Needless to say, young voters are less interested in politics and more likely to abstain. Nevertheless, they are also those who are more likely to be affected by parties' campaign messages. Again, the 2008 Presidential election, which witnessed a massive level of electoral participation and a skewed support for Obama among the youth, is a recent example of how this idea could work in the real world.

To be sure, the analysis did not focus on the causal mechanism generating this inter-cohort distinction in the weight attached to political events. However, the findings indicate that the difference between the youth and the old is not simply a question of differing levels of political interest or partisan strength. Even when both these potential mediators were taken into account, the difference among different cohorts in the effect caused by any of the three events was, if not anything else, sustained. This implies that there is something more than this difference in the degree of politicization that accounts for the findings. 'Openness to change' does not seem to imply simply lower partisan affiliation. It rather seems that the importance of these first years of early adulthood, when most important changes in people's life trajectories take place, is associated with an increased level of sensitivity towards political affairs. What exactly accounts for this differing level of sensitivity is, I believe, a question that should be addressed in more systematic way in future research, combining insights from cognitive psychology with findings about the role of life developments in people's political attitudes stemming from political socialization research (Stoker and Jennings 1995).

A last but certainly important implication from the findings of Chapter 5 goes back to the idea of how people react to new information at different life-stages. Sociologists and social psychologists (Glenn 1974, Cutler and Kaufman 1975) tend to address this issue from a different angle, i.e. by focusing on how people become increasingly 'stuck in their ways' as they age. The difference between this logic and the one employed here is more semiotic than substantial but still

worth noting. It involves the age-group that is given particular attention. Whereas most studies of this sort have tended to focus on the 'immunized old', questioning whether 'change is even feasible among the elderly' (Glenn 1977:64, see also chapter 5), the age-driven distinctions analyzed in the previous chapter imply that the group that merits most attention is not the old but rather the very young. In most cases we did not see a monotonic decrease in the weight attached to political issues. In a way, confirming prior evidence by Niemi and Jennings (1991), the results indicate that the main distinction is between the youth and the others. Intermediate groups, when examined, did not show substantive differences from the older group and when the two were encompassed in a single cohort, the contrast between them and the younger group was rather striking. Thus, it seems that more insight is to be gained by focusing on this particular group of people entering their 'impressionable years' than on a more general tendency among older groups to become more rigid in their political opinions.

6.4 The trajectory of attitudinal stability: the importance of the Impressionable Years

This study began by posing a puzzle, graphically displayed in Figure 1.3 of Chapter 1. The basic question can be formulated along the following lines: what is the developmental process through which people achieve attitudinal stability when it comes to politics? Three different schematic trajectories were depicted, i.e. the 'running tally'; 'the steady increase' and 'the impressionable years'. To briefly summarize them here, the first sees no age-related difference in how people accumulate political experience. People are thus seen as simple Bayesian updaters, constantly incorporating new information in their response profile. The other two theories suggest that partisan outlooks are formed in a developmental manner. As was explained in the introduction, it is very difficult to explicitly compare the three potential trajectories depicted in the figure. In a way, the most important contribution this study has tried to make is to find benchmarks that would enable even an implicit evaluation of the three theories. In particular, by specifying particular political events and by also examining the role of the act of voting at various life stages, I tried to test at least some of the factors that might contribute in this process of attitudinal crystallization. Now, taking the results as a whole, it becomes, I think, more feasible than it appeared to be the case in the introduction, to assess these models. Instead of basing our inference on cohort-based descriptive curves, we can assess differences in the magnitude of the effects of factors influencing this process. In this case these factors are elections and political shocks.

To start with, intercohort differences in the effects of elections and political shocks indicate that there is indeed a developmental pattern in the process of political learning, which makes the 'running tally' hypothesis a not very accurate representation of how people solidify their political views during their life span. In effect, the main message taken from the findings is that there is a progressive increase in levels of attitudinal stability as people age. Voting in 1968 appeared to have an impact on people's partisanship only among the youth, and this effect seems to have remained until the mid-30s. People's reaction to the news about Nixon, Reagan and Hart was characterized by a similar pattern: the events seemed to have affected more those aged under 35 than all other age groups.

I think that by reading the results, if we need to distinguish between the two developmental theories of political learning, we would opt for the one that has been already implicitly referred to throughout this study: it seems that it is through this period of early adulthood that most change is observed, leading to a more step-wise process of partisan anchoring. The alternative process would have showed itself as a linear-like trend in how people acquire attitudinal stability, and we found no sign of any such trend. It is true that the evidence provided here does not constitute an explicit test regarding the two theories. That said, it is still interesting that judging from the differences in the magnitudes of effects across different age groups, there seems to be a clear contrast between the youth and all the other groups. This implies that it is during these 'impressionable years' that beliefs and opinions are challenged, intensified and eventually crystallized.

6.5 Implications for the study of electoral change

The findings are also important for our understanding of electoral swings. Although people who shift parties between one election and the next determine to a large extent electoral outcomes, they have hardly been studied. The main findings from this scarce literature are that people who shift from one party to another between elections are independents, ideologically moderate people who are not very interested in politics (Dalton 2006; de la Calle 2007). The findings in this study about the impact of political events and elections provide a different picture about the nature of electoral swings. Following the developmental model suggested earlier, we can classify shifters in three ideal types. The first category includes young people and is probably the largest one. Given their incomplete state of habit formation, young voters are more likely to be affected by current political events and thus more likely to shift their preferences from one party to another. The second group constitutes of older voters who, however, failed to develop partisan habits. These peo-

ple simply move according to the political wind of the times, giving rise to the 'running tally' model of political learning. Finally, we find people who actually break their habits under the weight of political events. These people, quite contrary to the mainstream literature on electoral swings, are not less interested in politics than average, in fact they are probably more interested and this is why political information might be consequential for them. In effect, future research on this exact group would be very informative. Taken as a whole, the findings about the impact of political events and the act of voting bring to the discussion of electoral shifts the role of age as a proxy for political experience. Thus, rather than referring to shifters as necessarily apolitical moderates who move from one party to another according to the 'forces of the times', we can also refer to them as non-habitual voters and thus people who are otherwise similar in attitudinal terms to those holding constant partisan preferences but who have yet to establish firm partisan ties.

6.6 Caveats

Any study that attempts to explore causal relationships in the social world is bound to suffer from several flaws. This study is no exception. In most cases, addressing a causal question with observational data creates problems of endogeneity. Although the big picture is effectively captured, it remains uncertain whether the effects are driven by selection problems that are always present in any post-hoc observation of human behavior. Here the problem is quite reversed. To enable a causal interpretation of the findings, the analysis is essentially focused on micro-instances of political behavior that were used as examples of a more general pattern of interest. This is true both with regard to the act of voting (where, for instance, the need to identify the causal effect of the act of voting resulted in comparing only eligible versus non-eligible voters and thus failing to broaden the empirical analysis to cover more age groups) and with respect to the impact of political events (where the analysis focused on three particular instances). In a way, this micro-level picture is the price to be paid for a research design that takes care of selection problems in a straightforward manner. That being said, the fact that most of the analysis was based on a single dataset, the 'class of 1965', makes it vital to attempt to replicate these findings in different political contexts and at different political periods. This effort was already initiated here, since in all cases the findings were corroborated by more than one sources of data. In general, out-of-sample inference worked remarkably well in those cases where it was attempted in this study. Of course, these analyses were largely based on the American case. It is essential to go beyond the US and properly test the full gamut of patterns related to the stabilizing forces of

political attitudes among the youth in a context outside the US. I return to this issue in the next section of this last concluding chapter.

Leaving other potential fallacies aside, it is at least essential to point out some theoretical issues related to this study and more particularly to the exploration of the causal path resulting in some of the relationships of interest. This is mainly a problem for chapters 3, 4 and 5. With regard to the act of voting, although potential alternative explanations have been extensively tested and quite easily ruled out, the effect stemming from the act of voting still appears as a residual that needs to itself be accounted for. This is because it is inherently difficult to trace the impact of cognitive dissonance (or self-perception) in a way that would make it completely obvious that it is because of such a psychological mechanism that voting for a party strengthens prior preferences. I think the only way this effect can be further unpacked is by complementing the existing findings with pure (laboratory) experimental analyses (analogous to the post-decision experiment described in chapter 4), which could unmask the reinforcing effect of vote choice on prior political attitudes. This is one of the future tasks that need to be performed in this line of research.

An analogous argument could be made regarding the findings of chapter 5. Here, more theory is certainly needed. What is it that make young adults more susceptible to political shocks? Why is it that young voters are more likely to qualify their beliefs about political parties or politicians in the face of scandals and other salient events? This is a question that Chapter 5 did not actually give an answer to. The import of Chapter 5 was to make this question even more pertinent by establishing that there is actually such a tendency among the youth. Moreover, since the difference is not simply due to a differing level of political interest or partisan attachment, more theoretical development is needed, borrowing insights from cognitive psychology, on what accounts for this increased 'openness to change' observed during early adulthood. Again various possible explanations have been proposed but with the available evidence it is difficult to evaluate them since they all lead to identical predictions. Thus, it seems that in this case some more qualitatively-based research could be useful, at least in an exploratory way, in generating more concrete theoretical priors about what is it that makes these years 'impressionable'.

Again, however, the most important next step is how to evaluate competing theories leading to identical predictions through either experimental or observational analysis. To do that, it seems to me, side-effects from each theory need to be identified in order to examine whether there is a particular path that, more than any other, explains this increased sensitivity among the youth. This is also a task that has to be deferred to future research on this intriguing topic.

Last but not least, the present study has failed - actually, it has not even tried - to explore whether there has been any change in the process of partisan formation during recent decades. Previous research has suggested that, at least in Europe, parties have lost their key role in society,

as indicated by increasing levels of political cynicism and electoral volatility (Mair 2002; 2005, Dalton and Wattenberg 2002). The sources of this development have already been the focus of a voluminous literature whose aim has been to identify the reasons for partisan decline, pointing to the decreased level of party unity (Grynaviski, 2006); the ideological shift of core left supporters (Crewe et al.1977); the decreased importance of traditional cleavages (Franklin 1992) and particularly the decline of class politics (Franklin 1985, 1992; Sarlvik and Crewe 1983); the change in value priorities (Inglehart 1977); the general decline of ideologically-based issues leading to an increased attention given to managerial effectiveness (Sanders 1995) and the decrease in political trust (Pharr and Putnam 2000; Norris 1999) or simply the proliferation of political indifference (Mair, 2005). Typically, these findings provide a similar picture: from an era of cleavage politics, where parties were useful for the representation of those cleavages, we have passed to an era where the importance of parties has decreased since the structuring forces of social cleavages has fallen drastically thus making distinctions between political choices less easily observable (Franklin, 2007). From this perspective, it would be interested to explore whether the causal mechanisms identified in this study have changed through the passage of time. For instance, parental influence appears to have declined albeit only modestly in the US (Bafumi and Shapiro 2009), and the findings about Europe are still ambiguous. Franklin (1985:71,78) suggested a decrease in the level of parental influence, a point that was, however, challenged by Heath et al. (1991:43-44) who show that the impact of parental socialisation on individual vote choice had not declined – at least until 1987. To be sure, fewer politically-interested parents through time would probably give rise to a less successful contemporaneous transmission of partisan preferences. This however could only be one way of looking at this development. According to the findings from Chapter 2 this pattern could also yield a more durable link between youngsters and their parents in the long run, since lower levels of parental political interest might imply a decreased impact of political events during early adulthood. It is certainly worth examining this possibility. Moreover, it is important to see if either political events or the act of voting influence to a lesser extent the process of partisan anchoring simply because there is less political interest on the part of new electoral cohorts. If this is the case, age-related differences should gradually diminish.

In effect, this study has served as a first step towards examining in a systematic way the role of these three factors in the process of partisan learning. Again, next steps that evidently cannot be taken in this thesis should include the exploration of such patterns of change over time in the effect of factors studied here.

6.7 Crossing the Atlantic: concerns, problems and opportunities

How should one proceed if instead of asking how a young American comes to the point of calling him/herself a Republican or a Democrat, the question referred to a young Swede, Briton or Spaniard? From the outset, there is no reason the same logic should not apply. Again, family, elections and events should be among the primary factors affecting this process. However, important considerations need to be taken into account. In what follows, I attempt to briefly shed some light on potential caveats in trying to replicate this analysis in a European context, proposing also a way to address some of these issues.

The most prominent problem, it seems to me, relates to the use of partisanship as a benchmark in order to assess attitudinal stability. Focusing only on the American case, concerns about the meaning, importance and stability of the PID measure are less relevant given that previous research in the US has established the primordial importance of this notion in American electoral behavior (Campbell et al. 1960, Converse 1969;1976, Bartels 2000, Green et al. 2002, Green and Schickler 2009). As was also suggested in the introduction, parties in the US represent two different worlds and their distinction is not simply an issue of left and right. No such distinction is even nearly as useful as partisanship to understand political attitudes and behavior in that country. Even a liberal-conservative bipolar depiction of American politics is somewhat redundant when it comes to the parties. To the extent that these differences are not already incorporated into the party names, they tend to follow from partisanship rather than lead to a partisan affiliation (Miller 1976:27, Jacoby 1988). People learn about parties as they learn about politics. This is true in all democracies. But it is mainly in the US that learning about parties helps understand the meaning and the significance of more encompassing ideological or value-based differentiations (Converse 1975, Bartels 2002, Dalton 2007). In other words, rather than choosing a party on ideological grounds, it is more likely that people learn how to see the world in ideological terms through their relationship with the parties (Denver 1994:31).

Probably with the exception of Britain (although the pattern seems to gradually change in this country as well), European politics is not simply about party identification. The existence of multi-party systems means that the main ideological cleavage does not exactly coincide with the party system structure. More than one party coexists on the same side of the ideological continuum and this implies that ideology does not necessarily coincide with party choice. Thus, it is important to decide from the outset whether the question is how people become SPD supporters or whether the question is how they become 'Left-wing'? In the first case, it is important to account for the potentially confounding effect of ideology and most importantly allow for the possibility

that ideological stability might coexist with party choice fluctuations. In the second, it is essential to change the outcome of interest, focusing on how people form stable ideological predispositions (see Jennings 1984).

In effect, the difficulty with which the concept of partisanship travels across the Atlantic (see Thomassen 1976, van der Eijk and Niemöller 1983, van der Eijk and Franklin 1996:343) has raised issues about whether the notion has any validity at all. Drawing on these findings, Budge questions the usefulness of party identification as an indicator of attitudinal stability, suggesting a shift towards other measures, such as continuity in ideological predispositions. In the author's words (2009:29),

'[...] Another conceptualization and measure of predispositions may be found in ideological tendencies that inhibit parties from straying too much from previous policy. Electors attached to such policies might well vote for the same party all the time because it is always the one which matches up to their preferences [...] Affective attachments are far from being the only kinds of predispositions related to vote choice [...]. Still less is party identification the only measure of such predispositions. There are other conceptualizations and indicators with better theoretical claims - which makes it all the more puzzling that most [...] studies have stuck to party identification.'

In a way, what is needed for transferring the analysis to a European context is not to essentially examine partisan stability if this feeling of belonging to a particular party is much less present in European electorates, but to find [if there is one] a measure that could exhibit the level of attitudinal stability found in the case of PID in the US. Indeed, it is, I think, worth at least keeping the idea of partisan identification as a concept that in the American context has proven to be more stable throughout life than many other political orientations, attitudes and behaviors (Converse 1964, Searing et al. 1976, Sears et al. 1980, Sears and Funk 1999, Kroh and Selb 2009b:107). If ideology proves a more theoretically meaningful and empirically stable concept in Europe, then probably future research should indeed move forward in this direction.

Be that as it may, the interaction between ideological self-placement and partisan loyalty implies significant complications that apply to all three factors examined here. In the case of parental transmission, it would be important to know whether parents are more effective in bequeathing their ideological orientations rather than their partisan preferences. Accordingly, possible differentiation with respect to the level of parental politicization need to take this distinction into account. However, once this differentiation is taken into consideration, it will be important to attempt replicating the analysis of the long term effect of parental politicization on the level of parent-child partisan similarity in a European setting. Both the British and the German

Household Panel studies can be employed for this purpose. Although they do not cover such a long period in people's life span as the Niemi-Jennings Socialization study, both panels cover by now a period of more than two decades, which permits examining the main hypothesis of Chapter 2 in both these countries.

Going back to the problem of how to distinguish partisan anchoring from ideological stability, the effect of both voting and experiencing political events might vary between partisan and ideological crystallization. That said, despite adding complications in the existing analysis, this question can also open new directions in the investigation of the underlying process through which these factors affect political learning. For instance, given that a vote is always a vote for a party, it seems more likely that the impact of voting, at least if this is due to a psychological process of cognitive dissonance, should be more influential in shaping partisan preferences without, however, this effect having also important implications in ideological terms. On the other hand, it might be interesting to see whether there are also more general implications from the act of voting. In the US, for instance, partisanship seems to be the result of some sort of social-group identification process, based on what each of the parties represents in the American political culture (Green et al. 2002). Is it also the case that voting for the Spanish socialists creates some sort of consciousness of belonging to the left? Again, this sort of analysis necessitates a more careful thinking about potential confounds between party and ideology but is feasible and intuitively interesting. For instance, examining whether voting for a given party leads also to differences in how people place themselves in an ideological perspective, apart from enhancing their likelihood of voting again for the same party, is an empirical question with a non-trivial null hypothesis that, I think, deserves to be further explored. Importantly, at least in principle, this can be done with the two panel studies I just mentioned, since both of them interview also preadult members of a given household (thus, under specific but testable conditions eligibility can be still used as an instrument of actual vote). The same logic, albeit through possibly different data, applies for the impact of political events.

Another opportunity offered in the European electoral context, involves a more explicit investigation of whether the act of voting produces a reinforcing effect as suggested by the cognitive dissonance hypothesis. The main problem with the empirical examination of this question, as was clearly explained I hope in chapters 3 and 4, is that it is difficult to isolate the impact of the act of voting from prior factors that might have led to this act and which are also likely to correlate with post-behavioral attitudes. Now take the example of Britain, where the first-past-the-post electoral system creates incentives for tactical voting, i.e. voting for a second preference as a way to avert a victory for the least liked party (Fisher 2004). One could use this characteristic of multi-party systems as a way to address the selection problem. This can be done

by simply using tactical voting as an instrument of actual vote choice. If a good measure of tactical voting is found so that tactical voters can be correctly identified, one could pool various British Election Studies in order to examine the extent to which feelings towards the party and the leader opted for on tactical grounds become more favorable as compared to the party which constitutes people's first choice.

There are of course other important caveats apart from the potentially confounding effects of ideology that cause further complications in most analyses of this kind in Europe. For instance, an important precondition for the formation of voting and partisan loyalties that was not emphasized in this study is party system stability. There are few countries in Europe with even half of the stability and continuity of the American party system. Of course, we cannot expect the creation of a stable partisan profile among voters in an unsettled and probably still mutable party system (Converse 1969, Achen 2002, Brader and Tucker 2001, 2009). But this type of problem does not stop here. Even in otherwise stable party systems new parties emerge (eg. extreme right) and old parties either diminish (communist parties in the post1989 era) or change their ideological profile (socialist parties). All these changes make the link between age and electoral experience less straightforward. In so doing, however, they also provide new ways of testing some of the hypotheses examined here. For example, in the case of new parties, support should mainly stem from new voters, who are not anchored to particular voting patterns (to the best of my knowledge this has not been studied thus far in the anti-immigrant parties literature, despite frequent reference to the observed fact that many of the supporters of these parties are young). In the other two cases, we should expect higher volatility among the old, who simply see their parties either disappearing or changing. For instance, Franklin and van Spanje (2010) show that young voters were more capable of adjusting themselves to the the post-1994 Italian party system than their older counterparts who were already socialized in a different electoral setting. Moreover, the fact that democratic rule has been disrupted in the European South (Greece, Spain and Portugal experienced dictatorships until the mid1970s) could also provide fertile ground for a set of natural experiments: do we still find age-based differences in electoral and partisan stability among different age-cohorts that share the same amount of electoral experience? Related questions can of course applied to all new Democracies and there are already some very recent attempts to exploit this exact lack of continuity in the political systems of various European societies. For instance Neundorf (forthcoming) shows that left-right self-classification in former Eastern Germany has been slower to arise among older cohorts that were socialized in the communist tradition than the younger portion of the population. Analogous results related to the strength of partisan attachments between the two areas are reported in Kroh and Selb (2009b:112).

In sum, although multi-party systems call for more caution when examining the process of political learning among young adults, these problems can be tackled with existing data, yielding at the same time many opportunities for a more in-depth examination of the underlying causal mechanisms identified in this thesis. Moreover, particular historical features of various political systems provide a nice setting for various potentially useful natural experiments.

That being said, a serious practical concern that needs to be taken into account is measurement. This has also been regarded as a problem in the American case (Weisberg 1980, Jacoby 1982) but at least in this case there is by now substantial consensus about the validity of the indicator used to capture the notion of party identification (Green et al. 2002, Bartels 2002, Green and Schickler 2009), unavoidably the most prominent outcome of interest in any analysis of political learning in that country. The multi-facet structure of most European party systems make the use of this measure quite problematic (Shively 1972, LeDuc 1981:267). Various different operationalizations have been proposed. Some have emphasised the need for a filter question, which vastly deflates the percentages of identifiers (Budge et al, 1976; Clarke et al., 2004; ch.6). Others have focused on the sequence that is followed in the questionnaires of the BES surveys and whether party identification is asked before or after vote choice (Heath and Pierce, 1992). Finally, others have attributed the observed differences between US and Britain to differences in question wordings (Bartle, 1999).² In fact, there is still an issue about whether the measure is simply another measure of ideological proximity (for instance in most European Electoral surveys partisanship is measured through a question about how close one feels towards a particular party, leaving thus room for an ideology- or issue-based interpretation of the resulting scale, eg. see Schmitt 2009:78 or the critique of Green and Schickler (2009:186) on the Dutch survey item used to capture this notion). Alternatively it might be just another way to denote vote choice (Sanders et al. 2002). This is an important caveat because a volatile measure of PID would lead to false inference about whether there exists a developmental process of partisan learning in multi-party systems.

As a way to address this potential caveat, I propose here a very simple and easily implementable way of measuring partisan anchoring in such a setting, so that we can distinguish it from a pattern of firm ideological orientations that might coexist with multiple party preferences (a right-wing voter opting with high probability for two or more parties in the same part of this ideological spectrum). The idea behind this measure is that in multiparty systems it is essential to have a measure that allows a simultaneous *comparative evaluation of all parties*, leading to a general

² A crucial difference between the two items is that whereas the American gives the opportunity for someone to refrain from showing identification with a particular party, in Britain this is replaced by a phrase which prompts people to select a party, causing thus problems of reliability to this measure.

template of preferences which can provide information about the level of attachment to a particular party. To find such a measure, I use the following formula:

$$MPD_{i,1} = U_{i1} - \frac{1}{k-1} \sum_{k=2}^K U_i \quad (6.1)^3$$

MPD is what I call the Mean Party Differential. U is a measure of voter's i utility with regard to the party k , where $1 \leq k \leq K$. Previous research on this topic has suggested that the best measure of electoral utilities (or more modestly preferences) is a set of items denoting the 'Propensity to ever vote for Party X?' (van der Eijk and Franklin 1996, Tillie 1995, Oppenhuis 1995, van der Eijk et al. 2006). In most studies in which this set of questions (Propensities to Vote, or PTVs) are available, X covers all important parties in the political system. To be sure, other relevant indicators can be used (sympathy scores; feeling thermometers etc.) but empirical evidence seems to suggest that the PTVs outperform other alternatives (van der Eijk and Marsh 2008; Dinas 2010b).

Thus, the equation simply denotes the PTV score given to the first (most preferred) party minus the average of the score given to all other parties. Previous analysis shows that this measure outperforms both repeated vote choice and party identification measures in terms of convergent validity: it better predicts two types of voters that are more likely to be classified as habitual voters, namely those having decided a long time before the election what party they will vote for and those giving a habitual response in a 'reasons-for-vote-choice' question ('I always vote for this party').

This is not the place to describe the properties of this measure in full detail. Suffice it to say that it predicts better than all previously used alternatives turnout both in Britain and in the Netherlands. It varies in a quasi-continuous fashion and thus it provides important variation with respect to the strength of partisan affiliation (Dinas 2010b). What is important here is that despite differences in the party system structure, we can still find a functional measure of partisan anchoring that would help investigate the process of political learning and attitudinal stability in a European context.

6.8 Towards a theory of partisan engagement

As was also mentioned in the introduction, while this study was being written, one of these not very rare but always, initially at least, not very pleasant events happened: a collective comparative

³ Subtracting simply the score of the second from the score of the first preference gives a very similar distribution at least in the Netherlands and in Britain.

volume on party identification was published (Bartle and Bellucci 2009). Although a book published in the middle of a thesis seemingly related to the same topic is frequently disappointing news, this particular publication I think serves in justifying the rationale behind the choice of the topic and the research strategy followed in this study. Regarding to the topic, as was also explained in the introduction there are two chapters that relate to what constitutes the main question of interest here, namely the formation and origins of partisan attachments. One of these two chapters, Kroh and Selb (2009b), mainly focuses on the role of parental transmission of partisan attitudes. Although the authors do a very good job in trying to incorporate various different accounts of partisan stability, they only refer to family as a source of partisan label, without considering the potentially important intervening role of parents in transmitting their political interest. As we saw here, doing so has important implications about the long-term trajectory of partisan development. In other words, although the main origin of partisan attitudes is traced also here on the role of family, the contribution of this study is to highlight a diverse and potentially more influential way through which this factor operates.

The other chapter, Grofman et al. (2009), proposes a Bayesian model which at least in its basic form builds on the idea that voting brings loyalty. The way authors build their theoretical argument is based on Bem's self-perception theory and on the rather simplistic analogy of the popular saying: 'You are what you eat' (Grofman et al. 2009:67). Although the authors seem to assume the credit for this idea, on the grounds that it was Grofman in 1989 that had conceived it, as we saw in chapters 1 and 4 the assumption that choice brings loyalty had been already articulated by the early 1960s with McPhee and Ferguson's (1962) 'immunization thesis' (see also Jennings and Markus' (1984) attempt to model PID as a function of voting history). The most important caveat, however, is that, like their precedents, the authors do not test this idea and the reason for that is the imperative selection problem. As they recognize,

'even with long-term panel data [...], disentangling causality is a very difficult task in that there are issues of multicollinearity (and reciprocal causation), making it hard to separate out effects of party identification from issue preferences, demographic characteristics of voters, voter socialization history, etc. Still without panel data we are sceptical that there is any way of surmounting these methodological hurdles' (Grofman et al. 2009:74, endnote 20).

This study has tried to move forward this discussion by using panel data in trying to estimate the effect of the act of voting in strengthening partisan predispositions. It did so however mainly by accompanying observational information with a natural experiment that enabled the identification of the causal effect of voting on partisan change. Under this perspective, this study

has implemented some of the steps that other authors of this volume have suggested for future research in party identification. For example, this is how Green and Shickler conclude their 'spirited defence' of the Michigan approach to party identification:

'Building complex structural models and controlling for various background factors is ultimately unsatisfactory, because these approaches still rely on untestable modelling assumptions [...] Social scientists should be on the outlook for instances in which otherwise similar individuals are separated by arbitrary boundaries or jurisdictions [...] The extensive non-experimental literature on partisanship has much to contribute to our understanding of partisan change, but returns to this type of research are beginning to diminish. The experimental frontier, by contrast, remains wide open and full of promise' (Green and Shickler 2009:197-99).

It is this exact frontier (though the use of natural experiments, since apart from being costly for a PhD student, laboratory or field experiments have difficulties in exogeneously manipulating vote choice without changing partisanship (Rahn 1993, Cowden and McDermott 2000, McDermott 2003, see also Barabas and Jerit 2010 for a convincing critique on survey experiments)), that this study has purported to exploit. Under this perspective, I think I have at least shed some light on two of the most intriguing questions regarding the formation of stable partisan predispositions, namely the relationship between PID and vote and the impact of political events in changing people's political attitudes. In so doing, this study has focused on one of the main questions that Grofman et al. have suggested as a guide to further research on this topic, namely 'what forces act to change party identification' (Grofman et al. 2009:72).

The take-away point from a theoretical perspective is that partisan formation is characterized by a chain process. Events affect youth's preferences, especially if the individual comes from a politicized background. These preferences are likely to be manifested in actual vote choice and in so doing these still not well established attitudes are reinforced. New events might come along and affect individuals towards an opposite direction, which can cause change in behavioral patterns leading to a longer process of attitude crystallization. Gradually however, some continuity in the political messages received by the individual is likely to appear, bringing also continuity in behavioral choices. This in turn makes prior attitudes more stable and creates a more enduring profile of preferences. As this process continues, new information is increasingly weaker in altering prior predispositions. Attitudes become crystallized and vote becomes more and more a pure manifestation of prior well-defined preferences. Gradually, this process leads to the formation of partisan and voting habits. Without making any argument about how long this process takes (since there are bound to be systematic forces affecting diverse types of people), this very simplistic

trajectory summarizes the process of partisan development suggested from the findings. Events might not coincide with vote and one is likely to exert a stronger effect than the other, most probably the first. However, so long as the stimuli generated by these two factors converge, individuals are in the road of partisan anchoring. And this seems to be mainly true for those coming from a politicized environment.

6.9 No Country For Old Men: a potentially normative implication of the findings

What follows is an example of what Lacan thinks of social science, that it is mainly useful for social scientists themselves, as a way to overcome their own Oedipal complex (Leupin 1991). Put more simply and more accurately, this is a personal note.

In what has probably been one of the most controversial Academy Award winner for Best Picture and Best Director, the Coen Brothers, drawing on the notorious novel of Cormac McCarthy, 'shoot' three of the seemingly exemplary archetypes of the American society: a welder and hunter Vietnam veteran in rural Texas, a soon to be retired laconic Sheriff, and a seemingly gifted ex-Special Forces officer. Each one of them faces at some point, the 'beast', Anton Chigurh [Javier Bardem], an unemotional killer with a unique murder weapon at his disposal. There is no mystery in how the psychopathic killer finally wins, apart from the fact that he uses his weapon to dispassionately murder nearly every rival, bystander and even employer in his pursuit of his quarry and the money. As the farmer desperately attempts to keep one step ahead, the blood from this hunt begins to flow behind him with relentlessly growing intensity as Chigurh closes in. In the meantime, the otherwise - but not in this move - bound to win in the final scene old Sheriff [Tomee Lee Jones] starts to reflect on how America he was used to, had gradually changed.⁴

Since March 2010, Greece, even if unofficially (but still widely recognized by the international press), is bankrupt, the first of the initial 12 member-states of the European Union to find itself in this situation. 'The Beast' this time is simply the sheer financial reality. And, even if slowly, it starts to threaten various long-standing archetypes of the Greek culture, all of whom fruits of a narrow-minded socialization process that was based on the self-perception of 'underdog' who at the same time devotes resources to take personal advantage of the inherent inefficiencies of the public sector and of the inability of the judicial, bureaucratic and political institutions to ensure that the law is abided by. Odd though this might look, I think there is some relation between the political prospects of Greece and the findings from this study. Before getting to that, I will very briefly summarize the events.

⁴ Parts of this synopsis have been taken from: www.imdb.org.

By February 2010, the Greek Prime Minister, elected few months earlier, announced in a clear but diplomatic way that the country was effectively bankrupt. Since then, a marathon began so as to gain financial help from the other EU member states. Despite his efforts, the ending was (and still is) rather unfortunate. By the end of April 2010, Greece enters into the stability mechanism of the International Monetary Fund. This is a rather disappointing evolution for a country that in 2004 was celebrating (with a particular nationalistic if not racist flavor) its elusive prosperity seemingly reflected in the successful organization of the Olympic games and accompanied by the national team's unprecedented victory in the 2004 European football cup. Since then many things have changed. A series of events took place and made it quite obvious that the political and party system that developed after the transition to democracy had failed. Since 2005, the public agenda was overbooked by scandals and instances of clear inefficiency of the public administration (Dinas 2008b;2009). The shock has been so deep that increasingly many voices in the media question the very basic principles upon which the social and political culture of the Greeks has been based. More importantly, however, it has deleted any doubt about the systemic problems of the current party system and the associated institutional apparatus of the state. Young people, and according to the definition given in chapter 5 the author, albeit marginally, still belongs to this group, have experienced an unparalleled series of events that clearly question the partisan messages of their families, raised in a very polarized environment that was the product of a still young party system that incorporated parties building upon the historical prejudices of the past. It would be very positive, I think, if the results presented here for the American youth, hold also for their Greek counterparts. On average, parental politicization for this generation was relatively high, much higher than the European average (Martín 2004). That should make the impact of these currents shocks even more powerful. Hopefully, taken together, these factors should promote a clear rejection of the traditional partisan politics within which this generation has grown up. If this is done, the next step is easier. Given that the level of education is much higher among this cohort than it was for their parents, and since the portion of young people who have travelled and lived abroad is much higher, it is safe to expect that this change will only take place towards the right direction, that is, opposite to the populist and clientilistic ideals of the past.

References

- Abadie, Alberto. 2003. 'Semiparametric Instrumental Variable Estimation of Treatment Response Models.' *Journal of Econometrics*, 113:231-63.
- Abadie, Alberto and Guido Imbens. 2006. 'Large Sample Properties of Matching Estimators for Average Treatment Effects.' *Econometrica*, 74(1): 235-267.
- Abramson, Paul. 1978. 'Generational Replacement and Partisan Dealignment in Britain and the United States.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 8(4): 505-09.
- Abramson, Paul. 1979. 'Developing Party Identification: A Further Examination of Life-Cycle, Generational, and Period Effects.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 23:1, 78-96.
- Abramson, Paul. 1992. 'Of Time and Partisan Instability in Britain.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 22(3):381-95.
- Achen, Christopher. 1992. 'Social Psychology, Demographic Variables, and Linear Regression: Breaking the Iron Triangle in Voting Research.' *Political Behavior*, 14:3, 195-211.
- Achen, Christopher. 2002. 'Parental Socialization and Rational Party Identification.' *Political Behavior*, 24:2, 151-70.
- Achen, Christopher H. 2006. 'Expressive Bayesian Voters, their Turnout Decisions, and Double Probit. Empirical Implications of a Theoretical Model.' Princeton University manuscript.
- Adelson, Joseph and Robert P. O'Neil. 1966. 'Growth of Political Ideas in Adolescence : The Sense of Community.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4:3, 295-306.
- Aldrich, John, Jacob Montgomery, Ashley Taylor and Wendy Wood. 2007. 'Repeated Turnout as a Habit.' Paper Presented at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 12-17.
- Aldrich, John, Wendy Wood, Christopher DeSante, and Jacob Montgomery. 2009. 'Voting as a Habit: an Experimental Study.' Paper Presented at the 32nd ISPP Annual Scientific Meeting, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland.
- Alford, John R., Carolyn R. Funk and John R. Hibbing. 2005. 'Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?.' *American Political Science Review*, 99:153-67.
- Alwin, Duane F. 1990. 'Cohort Replacement and Changes in Parental Socialization Values.' *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52:2, 347-60.
- Alwin, Duane F. and Jon A. Krosnick. 1991. 'Aging, Cohorts and the Stability of Sociopolitical Orientations Over the Life Span.' *The American Journal of Sociology*, 97:1,169-95.
- Alwin, Duane F. and Rayan J. McCammon. 2003. 'Generations, cohorts, and social change.' in Jeylan T. Mortimer & Michael J. Shanahan eds. *Handbook of the life course*, New York: Plenum Publishers. pp. 23-49.

- Andersen, Kristie. 1979. *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928-1936*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Anderson, Cristopher J., Sylvia M. Mendes and Yuliya V. Tverdova. 2004. 'Endogenous Economic Voting: Evidence from the 1997 British Election.' *Electoral Studies*, 23, 683-708.
- Anderson, Christopher J. 2007. 'The end of Economic Voting? Contingency Dilemmas and the Limits of Democratic Accountability.' *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10, 271-296.
- Angrist, Joshua D. and A. Krueger. 1994 'Why Do World War II Veterans Earn More Than Nonveterans?' *Journal of Labor Economics*, 12(1), 74-97.
- Angrist, Joshua and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Angrist, Joshua, Guido Imbens and Donald Rubin. 1996. 'Identification of Causal Effects using Instrumental Variables.' *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 91, 444-72.
- Astin, Alexander W. 1977. *Four Critical Years. Effects of College on Beliefs, Attitudes and Knowledge*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Arceneaux, Kevin and David Nickerson. 2009. 'Who is Mobilized to Vote? A Re-Analysis of Eleven Randomized Field Experiments.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 53 (1): 1-16.
- Aronson, Eliot, Came Fried and Jeff Stone. 1991. 'Overcoming Denial and Increasing the Intention to Use Condoms Through the Induction of Hypocrisy.' *American Journal of Public Health*, 81, 1636-8.
- Arulampalam, Wiji, Alison L. Booth and Mark P. Taylor. 2000. 'Unemployment Persistence.' *Oxford Economic Papers*, 52(1):24-50.
- Bafumi, Joseph and Robert Shapiro. 2009. 'A New Partisan Voter', *Journal of Politics*, 7:1, 1-24.
- Balke, A. and Judea Pearl. 1997. 'Bounds on Treatment Effects from Studies with Imperfect Compliance', *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 92(439): 1172-76.
- Barabas, Jadon and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. 'Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?' *American Political Science Review*, 104: 226-42.
- Baron, R. M. and Kenny, D. A. .1986. 'The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(6):1173-1182.
- Barnes, Samuel H. and Max Kasse et al. 1980. *Political action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*. BeverlyHills:Sage.
- Bartels, Larry. M. 2000. 'Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(1):35-50.
- Bartels, Larry. M. 2001. 'A Generational Model of Political Learning.' Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco.
- Bartels, Larry M. 2002. 'Beyond the Running Tally: The Partisan Bias in Political Perceptions.' *Po-*

Bartels, Larry, M. 2006. 'Three Virtues of Panel Data for the Analysis of Campaign Effects.' in Henry E. Brady and Richard Johnston, eds., *Capturing Campaign Effects*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006, 134-163.

Bartle, John. 1999. 'Improving The Measurement of Party Identification in Britain.' in Philip Cowley, David Denver, Justin Fisher and Andrew Russell, eds., *British Elections and Parties Review*, 9, 119-35.

Bartle, John and Paolo Bellucci. 2009. *Political Parties and Partisanship*. New York: Routledge.

Beck, Nathaniel and Simon Jackman. 1998. 'Beyond linearity by default: Generalized additive models.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(2):596-627.

Beck, Paul Allen and Kent M. Jennings. 1975. 'Parents as 'Middlepersons' in Political Socialization.' *Journal of Politics*, 37: 83-107.

Beck, Paul Allen and Kent M. Jennings. 1991. 'Family Traditions, Political Periods and the Development of Partisan Orientations.' *The Journal of Politics*, 53:3, 742-63.

Bem, Daryl. 1972. 'Self-Perception Theory' in Leonard Berkowitz ed. *Advances in Experimental Social psychology*, Vol. 6, 1-62. New York: Academic.

Bendor, Jonathan, Daniel Diermeier, and Michael Ting. 2003. 'A Behavioral Model of Turnout.' *American Political Science Review*, 73(2): 261-280.

Bengston, Vern L., Timothy J. Biblarz, and Robert E. L. Roberts. 2002. *How Families Still Matter: A Longitudinal Study of Youth in Two Generations*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Bennett, Lance, Allison Rank and Chris Wells. 2009. 'Young Citizens and Civic Learning: Two Paradigms of Citizenship in the Digital Age.' *Citizenship Studies*, 13: 103-118.

Besley, Ryan and Joslyn Mark. 2001. 'Cognitive Dissonance and Post-Decision Attitude Change in Six Presidential Elections.' *Political Psychology*, 22(3): 521-540.

Botwinick, Jack. 1973. *Aging and Behavior*, New York: Springer.

Black, Earl and Merle Black. 1987. *Politics and Society in the South*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Black, Earl and Merle Black. 2002. *The Rise of Southern Republicans*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brader, Ted and Joshua A. Tucker. 2001. 'The Emergence of Mass Partisanship in Russia, 1993-1996', *American Journal of Political Science*, 45:69-83.

Brader, Ted and Joshua A. Tucker. 2009 'What's Left Behind When the Party's Over: Survey Experiments on the Effects of Partisan Cues in Putin's Russia', *Politics and Policy*, 37 (4): 843-868.

Braungart, Richard G. and Margaret M. Braungart .1980. 'Political Career Patterns of Radical Activists in the 1960s and 1970s: Some Historical Comparisons.' *Sociological Focus* 13, pp. 237-54.

- Braungart, Richard G. and Margaret M. Braungart .1984. 'Generational Politics.' *Micropolitics*, 3:349-415.
- Brehm, Jack W. 1956. 'Post-decision Changes in Desirability of Alternatives', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 52(3): 384–389.
- Brody, Richard A., and Paul M. Sniderman. 1977. 'From Life Space to Polling Place: The Relevance of Personal Concerns for Voting Behavior.' *British Journal of Political Science* 7:337-360.
- van der Brug, Wouter. 2001. 'Perceptions, Opinions and Party Preferences in the Face of a Real World Event: Chernobyl as a Natural Experiment in Political Psychology', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 13:1, 53-80.
- Budge, Ian, Ivor Crewe, and Dennis Farlie. 1976. *Party Identification and Beyond*, New York: Wiley.
- Budge, Ian. 2009. 'Deconstructing Party Identification' in John Bartle and Paolo Bellucci eds. *Political Parties and Partisanship: Social Identity and Individual Attitudes*, Ruhr University Bochum: Routledge, 21-41.
- Butler, David and Donald E. Stokes D. 1974. *Political Change in Britain, 2nd Edition*, London: MacMillan.
- Butler, Daniel M.. 2009. 'A Regression Discontinuity Design Analysis of the Incumbency Advantage and Tenure in the U.S. House.' *Electoral Studies*, 28:123-28.
- De la Calle, Luis. 2007. 'Swing Voting and Economic Performance: When Voters Become Swingers.' European University Institute, Unpublished Manuscript.
- Campbell, Angus, Gerald Gurin and Warren E. Miller. 1954. *The Voter Decides*, Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Campbell, James E. 1985. 'Sources of the New Deal Realignment: The Contributions of Conversion and Mobilization to Partisan Change.' *Western Political Quarterly*, 38, pp. 357-76.
- Carlsson, Gosta and Katarina Karlsson. 1970. 'Age, Cohorts and the Generation of Generations.' *American Sociological Review*, 35:4, 710-18.
- Carmines, Edward G. and Harold W. Stanley. 1990. 'Ideological Realignment in the Contemporary South: Where Have All The Conservatives Gone?' in Robert P. Steed, Laurence W. Moreland, and Tod A. Baker, eds. *The Disappearing South? Studies in Regional Change and Continuity*, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 21-33.
- Carmines, Edward G. and Woods, J.A. 2005. 'Validity assessment.' In K. Kempf-Leonard ed., *Encyclopedia of social measurement*, vol. 3, Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Carter, Dan T. 1995. *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

- Cassel, Carol A. 1982. 'Predicting party identification, 1956-80: Who are the Republicans and who are the Democrats?' *Political Behavior*, 4: 265-282.
- Cassel, Carol A. 1993. 'A Test of Converse's Theory of Party Support.' *Journal of Politics*, 55:664-81.
- Clarke, Harold, David Sanders, Marianne Stewart, and Paul Whiteley. 2004. *Political Choice in Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Collins, Andrew W. and Brett Laursen. 2004. 'Changing relationships, changing youth: Interpersonal contexts of adolescent development.' *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 24, 55-62.
- Converse, Philip E. 1962. 'Information Flow and the Stability of Partisan Attitudes.' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 26: 578-99.
- Converse, Philip E. 1964. 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics' in David E. Apter ed. *Ideology and Discontent*, Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.
- Converse, Philip E. 1969. 'Of Time and Partisan Stability', *Comparative Political Studies*, 2, 139-71.
- Converse, Philip E. 1975. 'Public Opinion and Voting Behavior' in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (eds.) *Handbook of Political Science*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Converse, Philip E. 1976. *The Dynamics of Party Support: Cohort-Analyzing Party Identification*, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Converse, Philip E. and Roy Pierce. 1979. 'Partisanship and the Party System.' *Political Behavior*. 14:3, 239-59.
- Cowden, Jonathan A. and Rose M. McDermott. 2000. 'Short-term Forces and Partisanship.' *Political Behavior*, 22:3, 197-222.
- Crewe, Ivor, Robert Sarlvik, and James Alt. 1977. 'Partisan Dealignment in Britain 1964-1974.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 7, 129-190.
- Cutler, Stephen D. and Robert L. Kaufman. 1975. 'Cohort Changes in Political Attitudes: Tolerance of Ideological Non-conformity.' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 39:69-81.
- Dalton, Russell J. 1982. 'The Pathways of Parental Socialization.' *American Politics Quarterly*, 10(2): 139-57.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2006. *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, 4th Edition, Washington, DC:CQ Press.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2007. 'Partisan Mobilization, Cognitive Mobilization and the Changing American Electorate.' *Electoral Studies*, 26:274-86.
- Dalton, Russell J. and Michael Wattenberg. 2002. *Parties Without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (eds.) New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dalton, Russell J. and Steven Weldom. 2007. 'Partisanship and Party System Institutionalization.'

Party Politics, 13:2, 179-96.

Delli Carpini, Michael. 1989. 'Age and History: Generations and Sociopolitical Change', in Robert Sigel eds. *Political Learning in Adulthood*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 11-56.

Denny, Kevin and Orla Doyle. 2009. 'Does Voting History Matter? Analyzing Persistence in Turn-out.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 53:1, 17-35.

Denver, David. 1994. *Elections and Voting Behavior in Britain*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Diamond, Alexis and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. 2008. 'Genetic Matching for Estimating Causal Effects: A General Multivariate Matching Method for Achieving Balance in Observational Studies', Working Paper, University of California, Berkeley.

Dinas, Elias. 2008a. 'Big Expectations, Small Outcomes: The Impact of Leaders' Personal Appeal in the 2004 Greek Election.' *Electoral Studies*, 27: 505-17.

Dinas, Elias. 2008b. 'The Greek General Election of 2007: You Cannot Lose if your Opponent Cannot Win.' *West European Politics*, 31:3, 600-7.

Dinas, Elias. 2009. 'The Greek General Election of 2009: PASOK - The Third Generation.' *West European Politics*, 33 (2):398-98.

Dinas, Elias. 2010a. 'Cohort Analysis' in Bertrand Badie, Dirk Berg-Schlosser, and Leonardo Morlino eds. *The Encyclopedia of Political Science*, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Dinas, Elias. 2010b. Measuring Party Identification In Europe: Beyond the American Analog. European University Institute. Unpublished Manuscript.

Dinas, Elias and Kostas Gemenis. 2010. 'Measuring Parties Ideological Positions with Manifesto Data: A Critical Evaluations of the Competing methods', *Party Politics, Forthcoming*.

Dionne, Eugene Joseph (E.J.) Jr. 1987. 'Poll Gives Hart and Bush Clear Leads for Nominations.' *New York Times*, January 25, 1987, pp. 18.

von Drehle, David. 2008. 'The Year of the Youth Vote', *TIME MAGAZINE*. January, 31. Easton, D. and J Dennis. 1969. *Children in the Political System*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Egan, Louisa C., Laurie R. Santos, and Paul Bloom P. 2007. 'The origins of cognitive dissonance: Evidence from children and monkeys', *Psychological Science*, 18, 978-983.

Eggers, Andrew C. and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. 'MPs For Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics.' *American Political Science Review*, 103:4, 513-33.

van der Eijk, Cees and Mark N. Franklin. 1996. *Choosing Europe? The European Electorate and National Politics in the Face of Union*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

van der Eijk, Cees and Mark N. Franklin. 2009. *Elections and Voters*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

van der Eijk, Cees and Michael Marsh. 2008. 'Comparing the Validity of Non-Ipsative Measures of Party Support in CSES and EES.' Paper Presented at the Elections, Public Opinion and Parties An-

nual Conference, Manchester, UK, September.

van der Eijk, Cees and B. Niemoller. 1983. *Electoral Change in the Netherlands: Empirical Results and Methods of Measurement*, Amsterdam: CT press.

van der Eijk, Cees, Wouter Van der Brug, Martin Kroh and Mark Franklin. 2006. 'Rethinking the dependent variable in voting behavior: On the measurement and analysis of electoral utilities.' *Electoral Studies*, 25:424-47.

Eiser, Richard J. 1992. 'Attitudinal Judgement: The To and Fro of Assimilation-Contrast' in D. Granberg and G. Sarup eds. *Social Judgement and Intergroup Relations. Essays in Honor of Muzafer Sherif*, New York: Springer.

Elser, Anthony. 1982. *Generations in History: An Introduction to the Concept*, Williamsburg: William and Mary College Press.

Erikson, Robert and Kevin Tedin. 1981. 'The 1928-1936 Partisan Realignment: The Case for the Conversion Hypothesis', *The American Political Science Review*, 75(4):951-62.

Erikson, Robert S. and Kent L. Tedin. 1986. "Voter Conversion and the New Deal Realignment." *Western Politics Quarterly*, 39: December, pp. 729-731.

Evans, Geoffrey and Robert Andersen. 2006. 'The Political Conditioning of Economic Perceptions', *Journal of Politics*, 68: 194-207.

Festinger, Leon, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter. 1956. *When prophecy fails*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Festinger, Leon and James M. Carlsmith. 1959. 'Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance.' *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58(2): 203-210.

Festinger, Leon. 1957. *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

Finkel, Steven and Karl Dieter Opp. 1991. 'Party Identification and Participation in Collective Political Action.' *Journal of Politics*, 53(2):339-72.

Finkel, Steven E. 1993. 'Reexamining the 'Minimal Effects' Model in Recent Presidential Elections.' *Journal of Politics*, 55(1), 1-21.

Fiorina, Morris P. 1975. 'Formal Models in Political Science.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 19: 133-159.

Fiorina, Morris. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fisher, Steven D. 2004. 'Definition and Measurement of Tactical Voting: The Role of Rational Choice.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 34: 152-166.

Fitzmaurice, Garrett, Nan M. Laird and James H. Ware. 2004. *Applied Logitudinal Analysis*, New Jersey: Wiley.

Fowler, James H. and Christopher T. Dawes. 2009. 'Partisanship, Voting, and the Dopamine D2 Re-304

- ceptor Gene.' *Journal of Politics*, 71(3): 1157-71.
- Fowler, James. H. 2005. 'Turnout in a Small World.' in Alan Zuckerman ed. *The Social Logic of Politics*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 269-88.
- Fowler, James. 2006. 'Habitual Voting and Behavioral Turnout.' *Journal of Politics*, 68(2): 335-44.
- Franklin, Charles and John Jackson. 1983. 'The Dynamics of Party Identification.' *American Political Science Review*, 77:4, 957-73.
- Franklin, Charles. 1984. 'Issue Preferences, Socialization and the Evolution of Party Identification.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 28(3): 479-78.
- Franklin, Charles. 1992. 'Measurement and the Dynamics of Party Identification.' *Political Behavior*, 14(3):297-309.
- Franklin, Mark. N. 2004. *Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Franklin, Mark N., Patrick Lyons, and Michael March. 2004. 'Generational Basis of Turnout Decline in Established Democracies.' *Acta Politica* 39: 115-151.
- Franklin, Mark et al. 1992. *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Franklin, Mark N. and Bernard Wessels. 2002. 'Learning (Not) to Vote: the Generational Basis of Turnout Decline in Established Democracies, with implications for the study of party choice.' *Paper Presented at the 2002 Convention of the American Political Science Association*, Boston.
- Franklin, Mark N. and Michael Ladner. 1995. 'The Undoing of Winston Churchill: Mobilization and Conversion in the 1945 Realignment of British Voters.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 25(4): 429-52.
- Franklin, Mark N. 2007. 'Social Cleavages and Political Change.' Paper Presented at the Workshop on *Politicizing Socio-Cultural Structures: Elite and Mass Perspectives on Cleavages*, at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Helsinki, 7-12 May.
- Franklin, Mark N. 1985. *The Decline of Class Voting in Britain: Changes in the Basis of Electoral Choice, 1964-1983*, Oxford: Clarendon.
- Franklin, Mark N. and Joost van Spanje. 2010. 'How Do Established Voters React To New Parties? The Case of Italy, 1968-2008.' Paper Presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Muenster 2010 Workshop 14 *Electoral Change in the 21st Century: Dealignment or Realignment?*
- Gartner, Scott Sigmund and Gary M. Segura. 2000. 'Race, Opinion, and Casualties in the Vietnam War.' *The Journal of Politics*, 62(1): 115-146.
- Gemenis Kostas and Elias Dinas. 2010. 'Confrontation Still? Examining Parties' Policy Positions in Greece.' *Comparative European Politics*, forthcoming.
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 1998. 'Rational Learning and Partisan Attitudes.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 42, pp. 794-818.

- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2000. 'The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment.' *American Political Science Review*, 94: 653–63.
- Gerber Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Matthew Green. 2003. 'Partisan Mail and Voter Turnout: results from randomized field experiments.' *Electoral Studies*, 22(4):563-579.
- Gerber Alan, Donald Green, and Christopher Larimer. 2008. 'Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment.' *American Political Science Review*, 102(1):33-48.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green and Ron Shachar. 2003. 'Voting May Be Habit-Forming: Evidence from a Randomized Field Experiment.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 47:3, 540-50.
- Glass, Jennifer, Vern L. Bengtson, and Charlotte Chorn Dunham. 1986. 'Attitude Similarity in Three Generation Families: Socialization, Status Inheritance, or Reciprocal Influence?' *American Sociological Review* 51 (5): 685–98.
- Glenn Norval D. 1980. 'Values, Attitudes and Beliefs' in Oliver G. Brim Jr. and Jerome Kagan eds. *Constancy and Change in Human Development*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 596-640.
- Glenn, Norval and Tedd Hefner. 1972. 'Further Evidence on Aging and Party Identification.' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36:31-47.
- Glenn, Norval D. 1977. *Cohort Analysis*, Series: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Sage University Paper, 5, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications.
- Glenn, Norval D. 1974. 'Aging and Conservatism.' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (3): 176-86.
- Goodman, Leo A. 1960. 'On the Exact Variance of Products.' *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 55:292, 708-13.
- Green, Donald P., Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Green, Donald P. and Eric Schickler. 2009. 'A Spirited Defense of Party Identification against its Critics' in John Bartle and Paolo Bellucci, eds., *Political Parties and Partisanship: Social Identity and Individual Attitudes*, Ruhr University Bochum: Routledge, 180-199.
- Green, Donald P. and Bradley Palmquist. 1994. 'How Stable is Party Identification?' *Political Behavior*, 16(4):437-466.
- Green Donald P. and Bradley Palmquist. 1990. 'Of Artifacts and Partisan Instability.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 34(3): 872-902.
- Green, Donald P. and Ron Shachar. 2000 'Habit Formation and Political Behavior: Evidence of Custom in Voter Turnout.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 30(4):561-73.
- Green, Donald P., Terence Y. Leong, Holger Lutz-Kern, Alan S. Gerber and Christopher W. Larimer. 2009. 'Testing the Accuracy of Regression Discontinuity Analysis Using Experimental Benchmarks.' *Political Analysis*, 17:400-17.

- Greene, Steven. 2002. 'The Social-psychological Basis of Partisanship.' *Political Behavior*, 24 (2): 171-90.
- Greene, Steven. 2004. 'Social Identity Theory and Party Identification.' *Social Science Quarterly*, 85:136-53.
- Greenstein, Fred I. 1969. *Children and Politics [revised edition]*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Greenstein, Fred I. 1970. 'A Note on the Ambiguity of 'Political Socialization: Definitions, Criticisms, and Strategies of Inquiry.' *The Journal of Politics*, 32:4, 969-78.
- Grofman, Bernard, Frank Wayman, and Matthew Barreto. 2009. 'Rethinking Partisanship: Some thoughts on a unified theory' in John Bartle and Paolo Bellucci, eds., *Political Parties and Partisanship: Social Identity and Individual Attitudes*, Ruhr University Bochum: Routledge, 60-73.
- Grynaviski, Jeffrey. 2006. 'A Bayesian Learning Model with Applications to Party Identification.' *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 18:3, 323-46.
- Hainmueller, Jens and Holger Lutz-Kern. 2008. 'Incumbency as a Source of Spillover Effects in Mixed Electoral Systems: Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design.' *Electoral Studies*, 27: 213-27.
- Hart, Gary W. 1973. *Right From the Start: A Chronicle of the McGovern Campaign*, New York: Quadrangle.
- Heath, Anthony et al. 1991. *Understanding Political Change: The British Voter 1964-1987*, Oxford: Pergamon.
- Heath, Anthony and Roy Pierce. 2002. 'It Was Party Identification All Along: Question Order Effects on Reports of Party Identification in Britain.' *Electoral Studies*, 14: 93-105.
- Heckman, James. J. 1979. 'Sample Selection Bias as a Specification Error.' *Econometrica*, 47:1, 153-61.
- Hedeker, Donald. 2010. 'Multilevel Models for Ordinal and Nominal Variables' in Jan de Leeuw and Erik Meijer eds. *Handbook of Multilevel Analysis*. Springer, New York, forthcoming.
- Hedeker, Donald. 2004. 'An Introduction to Growth Modeling' in David Kaplan ed. *Quantitative Methodology for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.
- Hedeker, Donald. 1999. MIXNO: a computer program for mixed-effects nominal logistic regression. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 4 (5): 1-92.
- Heider, Fritz. 1958. *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Heise, David. R. 1969. 'Separating Reliability and Stability in Test-Retest Correlation.' *American Sociological Review*, 34(1): 93-101.
- Highton, Benjamin and Raymond E. Wolfinger. 2001. 'The First Seven Years of the Political Life Cycle.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (1):202-209.

- Holland, Paul W. 1986. 'Statistics and Causal Inference.' *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 81:945-70.
- Holland, Paul W. 'Causal Inference, Path Analysis, and Recursive Structural Equations Models' in Clifford C. Clogg ed. *Sociological Methodology*, Washington DC: American Sociological Association. pp. 449-84.
- Holsti, Ole R. and James N. Rosenau 1980. 'Does Where You Stand Depend on When You Were Born? The Impact of Generation on Post-Vietnam Foreign Policy Beliefs', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 44:1-22.
- Horn, Gerd-Rainer. 2007. *The Spirit of '68: Rebellion in Western Europe and North America, 1956-76*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Huckfeldt, Robert, Jeffrey Levine, William Morgan, and John Sprague. 1999. 'Accessibility and the Political Utility of Partisan and Ideological Orientations.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 43: 888-911.
- Huber Gregory, Alan Gerber, and Joseph Sempelinski. 2009. 'Using Ballot Order to Test for Cognitive Dissonance: Results from a Natural Experiment.' Paper Presented at the 2009 APSA Annual Meeting, Toronto, 3-6 September.
- Imai, Kosuke. 2005. 'Do Get-Out-The-Vote Calls Reduce Turnout? The Importance of Statistical Methods for Field Experiments.' *American Political Science Review*, 99:2, 283-300.
- Imai Kosuke, Luke Keele and Teppei Yamamoto. 2008. 'Identification, Inference, and Sensitivity Analysis for Causal Mediation Effects.' Department of Politics, Princeton University.
- Imai Kosuke, Luke Keele, and Dustin Tingley. 2009. 'A General Approach to Causal Mediation Analysis.' Department of Politics, Princeton University.
- Imai Kosuke, Luke Keele, Dustin Tingley, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2010 'Causal Mediation Analysis Using R' in *Advances in ed. H.D. Vinod, Social Science Research Using R*, New York: Springer.
- Imbens, Guido and Karthik Kalayanaraman. 2009. *Optimal Bandwidth Choice for the Regression Discontinuity Estimator*. Unpublished Manuscript, Department of Economics, Harvard University.
- Imbens, Guido and Thomas Lemeieux. 2008. 'Regression Discontinuity Designs: a Guide to Practice.' *Journal of Econometrics*, 142:615-35.
- Imbens, Guido and Joshua Angrist. 1994. 'Identification and Estimation of Local Average Treatment Effects.' *Econometrica*, 62:467-76.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1971. 'The Silent Revolution in Europe: Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies.' *American Political Science Review*, 65:991-1017.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Iyengar, Shanto, and Adam S. Simon. 2000. 'New Perspectives and Evidence on Political Communication Campaign Effects.' *Annual Review of Psychology* 51:149-69.
- Jackson Robert. 1995. 'Clarifying the Relationship between Education and Turnout.' *American Poli-*

tics Research, 23:3, 279-99.

Jackson, John E. 1975. 'Issues, Party Choices, and Presidential Votes.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 19: 161-85.

Jacoby William. 1999. 'Levels of Measurement and Political Research: An Optimistic View.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 43: 271-301.

Jacoby, William. 1982. 'Unfolding the Party Identification Scale: Improving the Measurement of an Important Concept.' 1982. *Political Methodology*, 8: 33-60.

Jacoby William. 1991. *Data Theory and Dimensional Analysis*, Sage University Press.

Jacoby, William G. 1988. 'The Impact of Party Identification on Issue Attitudes.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 32:643-61.

Jacoby, William G. 2000. 'Loess: A Nonparametric Graphical Tool for Depicting Relationships Between Variables.' *Electoral Studies*, 19: 577-613.

Jennings, Kent M. and Richard G. Niemi. 1974. *The Political Character of Adolescence: The Influence of Families and Schools*. Princeton:Princeton University Press.

Jennings, M. Kent, Gregory B. Markus, Richard G. Niemi, and Laura Stoker. YOUTH PARENT SOCIALIZATION PANEL STUDY, 1965-1997: FOUR WAVES COMBINED. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies/Survey Research Center, Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 2004.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. YOUTH-PARENT SOCIALIZATION PANEL STUDY, 1965-1973. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies. 2nd ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1991.

Jennings, M. Kent and Gregory B. Markus. 1988. 'Political Involvement in the Later Years: a Longitudinal Survey', *American Journal of Political Science*, 32:2, 302-316.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Gregory B. Markus. 1984. 'Partisan Orientations over the Long Haul: Results from the Three-wave Political Socialization Panel Study.' *The American Political Science Review*, 78:4, 1000-18.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1991. YOUTH-PARENT SOCIALIZATION PANEL STUDY, 1965-1973. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies. 2nd ICPSR ed. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.

Jennings, Kent. M., Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers, 2009. 'Politics Across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined.' *The Journal of Politics*, 71: 782- 99.

Jennings, M. Kent. 1989. 'The Crystallization of Orientations.' in Kent M. Jennings et al. eds. *Continuities in Political Action*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 313-48.

Jennings, M. Kent and Richard Niemi. 1968. 'The Transmission of Political Values between Parent and Child.' *American Political Science Review*, 62, 169-84.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1981. *Generations and Politics: A Panel Study of Young*

Adults and Their Parents. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jennings, M. Kent and Gregory B. Markus. 1984. 'Partisan Orientations over the Long Haul: Results from the Three-Wave Political Socialization Panel Study.' *American Political Science Review*, 78(4): 1000-1018.

Jennings, M. Kent, and Richard G. Niemi. 1974. *The Political Character of Adolescence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jennings, M. Kent. 1987 'Residues of a Movement: The Aging of the American Protest Generation.' *American Political Science Review*, 81, 367-382.

Jennings, M. Kent. 2002. 'Generation Units and the Student Protest Movement in the United States: An Intra- and Inter-generational Analysis.' *Political Psychology*, 23 (2), 303- 24.

Jennings, M. Kent. 1984. 'The Intergenerational Transfer of Political Ideology in Eight Western Nations.' *European Journal of Political Research*, 12, 261-76.

Jennings, M. Kent and Richard G. Niemi. 1975. 'Continuity and Change in Political Orientations: A Longitudinal Study of Two Generations.' *American Political Science Review*, 69(4): 1316-1335.

Jennings, Kent M. and Richard G. Niemi. 1978. 'The Persistence of Political Orientations: An Over-time Analysis of Two Generations.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 8(3): 333-363.

Jennings, Kent. M. 1979. 'Another Look at the Life Cycle and Political Participation.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 23 (4): 755-771.

Jennings, Kent. M. 1975. 'Discontent with Schools: Some Implications for Political Socialization and Behavior.' *Youth and Society*, 7, 49-68.

Jennings, Kent M. 1993. 'Education and Political Development among Young Adults.' *Politics and the Individual*, 3:2, 1-24.

Jennings, Kent M. and Laura Stoker. 2008. 'Another and Longer Look at the Impact of Higher Education on Political Involvement and Attitudes.' Paper Presented at the 2008 MPSA Annual Conference. April.

Johnston, Richard. 1992. 'Political Generations and Electoral Change in Canada.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 22:1, 93-115.

Johnston, Richard, Patrick Fournier, and Richard Jenkins. 2003. 'Party Location and Party Support: Unpacking Competing Models.' *Journal of Politics*, 62:4, 1145-60.

Kam, Cindy D. and Robert J. Franzese Jr. 2007. Modeling and Interpreting Interactive Hypotheses in Regression Analysis: A Refresher and Some Practical Advice, Unpublished Manuscript.

Keniston, Kenneth. 1968. *Young Radicals*, New York: Harcourt Brace and World.

Kern, Holger Lutz and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. 'Opium for the Masses: How Foreign Media Can Stabilize Authoritarian Regimes.' *Political Analysis*, 17:4, 377-399.

- Kershaw, Ian. 1983. *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich*. Oxford:Oxford University Press.
- Kim, Jae-On and Charles W. Mueller. 1978. *Factor Analysis: Statistical Methods and Practical Issues*. Sage University Paper.
- King, Gary and Langche Zeng. 2001. 'Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data.' *Political Analysis*, 9 (2):137-63.
- King, Gary and Langche Zeng. 2006. 'The Dangers of Extreme Counterfactuals.' *Political Analysis*, 14:131-59.
- King, Gary, Michael Tomz and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. 'Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 44:2, 341-55.
- Klingemann, Hans-Dieter, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, Ian Budge and Michael D. McDonald. 2007. *Mapping policy preferences II: estimates for parties, electors and governments in Central and Eastern Europe, European Union and OECD, 1990–2003*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Knuckey, Jonathan. O. 2006. 'Explaining Recent Partisan Changes Among Southern Whites.' *Political Research Quarterly*, 59(1): 57-70.
- Keele, Luke. 2008. *Semiparametric Regression for the Social Sciences*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Kroh, Martin and Peter Selb. 2009a. 'Inheritance and the Dynamics of Party Identification.' *Political Behavior*, 31:4, 559-74.
- Kroh, Martin and Peter Selb. 2009b. 'Individual and Contextual Origins of Durable Partisanship' in John Bartle and Paolo Bellucci (eds.) *Political Parties and Partisanship: Social Identity and Individual Attitudes*, Ruhr University Bochum: Routledge, 107-20.
- Krosnick, Jon A. and Donald P. Kinder. 1990. 'Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming.' *American Political Science Review*, 84:2, 497-512.
- Lalonde, Robert. 1986. 'Evaluating the Econometric Evaluations of Training Programs.' *American Economic Review*, 76:604-20.
- Langton, Kenneth P. 1969. *Political Socialization*, New York: Oxford University Press. Larsen, Randy J. and David M Buss. 2005. *Personality Psychology: Domains of Knowledge About Human Nature*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- LeDuc, L. 1981. 'The Dynamic Properties of Party Identification: a four nation comparison.' *European Journal of Political Research*, 9:257-68.
- Lee, David S., 2008. 'Randomized experiments from non-random selection in U.S. House elections.' *Journal of Econometrics*, 142(2): 675–697.
- Leithner, Christian. 1997. 'Of Time and Partisan Stability Revisited: Australia and New Zealand 1905-90.' *American Journal of Political Science*. 41:4, 1104-27.
- Leupin, Alexander. 1991. *Lacan Today: Psychoanalysis, Science, Religion*, New York: The Other Press.

The Impressionable Years

Levin, Martin L. 1961. 'Social Climates and Political Socialization.' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 25:4, pp. 596-606.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., Helmut Norpoth, William G. Jacoby, Herbert F. Weisberg and Philip E. Converse. 2008. *The American Voter Revisited*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Light, Donald Jr and John P. Spiegel. 1977. *The Dynamics of University Protest*, Chicago IL: Nelson-Hall.

Lodge, Milton. 1981. *Magnitude scaling: quantitative measurement of opinions*. Series: Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, Sage University Paper, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Lodge, Milton and Bernard Tursky. 1979. 'Comparisons between Category and Magnitude Scaling of Political Opinion Employing SRC/CPS Items.' *American Political Science Review*, 73:1, 50-66.

Lodge, Milton and Bernard Tursky. 1981. 'On the Magnitude Scaling of Political Opinion in Survey Research.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 25:2, 376-419.

Mair, Peter. 2002. 'In the Aggregate: Mass Electoral Behavior in Western Europe, 1950-2000.' in H. Keman, ed., *Comparative Democratic Politics*. London: Sage, 122-140.

Mair, Peter. 2005. 'Democracy Beyond Parties.' Working Paper, 05'06, Center for the Study of Democracy, University of California, Irvine.

Mannheim, Karl. 1952. 'The Problem of Generations.' in Paul Kecskemeti, ed., *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge, 276-320.

Marcus, George E. 2003. 'The Psychology of Emotion and Politics.' In David O. Sears, Leonie Huddy, and Robert Jervis, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, New York: Oxford University Press. 182-221.

Markus, Gregory. 1979. 'The Political Environment and the Dynamics of Public Attitudes: A Panel Study.' *American Journal of Political Science* 23, 338-59.

Markus, Gregory B. 1983. 'Dynamic Modeling of Cohort Change: The Case of Political Partisanship.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 27: 717-739.

Markus, B. Gregory and Philip E. Converse. 1979. 'A dynamic simultaneous equation model of electoral choice.' *American Political Science Review*, 73: 1055-1070.

Martín, Irene Cortes. 2004. Significados y orígenes del interés por la política en dos nuevas democracias: España y Grecia, PhD Thesis, Centro de Estudios Avanzados en Ciencias Sociales: Madrid.

Martin, Nicholas G., Lindon J. Eaves, Andrew C. Heath, Rosemary Jardine, Lynn M. Feingold, and Hans J. Eysenck. 1986. 'Transmission of Social Attitudes.' *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 83: 4364-68.

Mavris, Yannis. 2007. 'Intraparty swings in the 2007 General Election', *Kathimerini*, September 18.

McClosky, Herbert, John R. Zaller, and Dennis Chong. 1985. 'Social Learning and the Acquisition of Political Norms' in Herbert McClosky and John Zaller eds. *American Ethos*. Cambridge, MA:

Harvard University Press.

McDermott, Rose. 2003. 'Experimental Methods in Political Science.' *Annual Review of Political Science*.5:31-61.

McDonald, Michael P. 2005. 'Validity, data sources', in Kimberly Kempf-Leonard ed. *Encyclopedia of social measurement*, vol. 3, pp. 939–48. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

McGraw, Kathleen M., and Clark Hubbard. 1996. 'Some People Some of the Time: Individual Differences in Acceptance of Political Accounts.' In Paul M. Sniderman Diana C. Mutz, and Richard A. Brody eds. *Political Persuasion and Attitude Change*, Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

McPhee, William and Jack Ferguson. 1962. 'Political Immunization' in William McPhee et al. eds. *Public Opinion and Congressional Elections*, Glencoe: The Free Press.

Meredith, Marc. 2007. 'Persistence in Political Participation' Working Paper, Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Merelman, Richard M. 1969. 'The Development of Political Ideology: a Framework for the Analysis of Political Socialization.' *American Political Science Review*, 63(3):750-67.

Miller, Warren E. and J. Merrill Shanks. 1996. *The New American Voter*, Cambridge Mass: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, Warren. 1976. 'The Cross-National Use of Party Identification as a Stimulus to Political Inquiry.' in Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe and David Farlie *Party Identification and Beyond*, London: John Wiley and Sons, 21-31.

Miller, Arthur H. and Warren E. Miller. 1977. 'Partisanship and Performance: 'Rational' Choice in the 1976 Presidential Election.' Paper presented at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.

Miller, Arthur H. and Thomas Klobucar. 2000. 'The Development of Party Identification in Post-Soviet Societies.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 44: 667-86.

Montalvo, Jose Garcia. 2006. 'Voting After Bombing: Can Terrorist Attacks Change the Outcomes of Democratic Elections?' Working Paper, Pompeu Fabra University.

Morgan, Stephen L. and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mullainathan, Sendhil. 2002. *Thinking Through Categories*. MIT & NBER, Unpublished Manuscript.

Mullainathan, Sendhil, Joshua Schwartzstein, and Andrei Shleifer.2008. 'Coarse Thinking and Persuasion', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 577-619.

Mullainathan, Sendhil and Ebonya Washington. 2009. 'Sticking With Your Vote: Cognitive Dissonance and Political Attitudes', *Applied Economics*, 1:1, 86-111.

Newman, Brian and Andrew Forcehimes. 2010. 'Rally Round the Flag' Events for Presidential Ap-

proval Research', *Electoral Studies*, 29(1):44-54.

Neyman, Jerzy. 1923 [1990]. 'On the Application of Probability Theory to Agricultural Experiments. Essay on Principles. Section 9.' *Statistical Science* 5 (4): 465–472. Trans. Dorota M. Dabrowska and Terence P. Speed.

Nichols, Austin. 2007. rd: Stata module for regression discontinuity estimation.

<http://ideas.repec.org/c/boc/bocode/s456888.html>.

Nie, Norman H. and Kristi Andersen. 1974. 'Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure.' *The Journal of Politics*, 36: 540-91.

Nie, Norman H., Sidney Verba and John R. Petrocik. 1976. *The Changing American Voter*, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Niemi, Richard G. and Mary A. Hepburn. 1995. 'The Rebirth of Political Socialization,' *Perspectives on Political Science*, 24:7-16.

Niemi, Richard G. and Kent M. Jennings. 1991. 'Issues and Inheritance in the Formation of Party Identification.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 35:970-88.

Norris, Pippa. 1999. *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ouellete, Judith A. and Wendy Wood. 1998. 'Habit and Intention in Everyday Life: The Multiple Processes by which Past Behavior Predicts Future Behavior', *Psychological Bulletin* 124: 54-74.

Oppenheim, Abraham N. 1992. *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London: Pinter.

Oppenhuis, Erik. 1995. *Voting Behavior in Europe*, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.

Palmquist, Bradley and Donald P. Green. 1992. 'Estimation of Models with Correlated Measurement Errors from Panel Data.' *Sociological Methodology*, 22, pp. 119-46.

Pattie, Charles, Patrick Seyd and Paul Whiteley (2003) 'Citizenship and Civic Engagement: Attitudes and Behaviour in Britain', *Political Studies*, 51, 443-68.

Pearl, Judea. 2001. 'Direct and indirect effects', in Morgan Kaufmann, ed., *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Conference on Uncertainty in Artificial Intelligence*, San Francisco, CA: 411–420.

Pearl, Judea. 2009. *Causality: Models, Reasoning and Inference, Second Edition*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pharr, S. and Robert Putnam. 2000. *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Plutzer, Eric. 2002. 'Becoming an Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources and Growth in Young Adulthood', *The American Political Science Review*, 96:1, 41-56.

Rahn, Wendy M. 'The Role of Partisan Stereotypes in Information Processing about Political Candidates.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 37:2, 472-96.

- Raudenbush, Stephen and Anthony S. Bryk .1992. *Hierarchical Linear Models. Applications and Data Analysis Methods*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Robertson, David. 1976. 'Surrogates for Party Identification in the Rational Choice Framework.' in: Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe, Dennis Farlie, eds. *Party Identification and Beyond. Representations of Voting and Party Competition*, London et al.: John Wiley & Sons, 365-381.
- Robins, James M. 2003. Semantics of causal DAG models and the identification of direct and indirect effects. In Peter J. Green, Nils L. Hjort, and Sylvia Richardson eds. *Highly Structured Stochastic Systems*, 70–81. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Robins, James M. and Sander Greenland. 1992. 'Identifiability and Exchangeability for Direct and Indirect Effects', *Epidemiology*, 3(2):143-55.
- Rubin, Donald B. 1974. 'Estimating Causal Effects of Treatments in Randomized and Nonrandomized Studies.' *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 66 (5): 688–701.
- Rubin, Donald B. 2006. *Matched Sampling for Causal Effects*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Ruggeri, Amanda. 2008. 'Young Voters Powered Obama's Victory While Shrugging Off Slacker Image.' in *U.S. News and World Report*, November 6, 2008.
- Sanders, David. J. 1996. 'Economic Performance, Managerial Competence and the Outcome of the Next General Election.' Working Paper 124, Barcelona.
- Sanders, David, Jonathan Burton and Jack Kneeshaw. 2002. 'Identifying the True Identifiers: A Question Wording Experiment.' *Party Politics*, 8, 193-205.
- Särnlvik, Bo and Ivor Crewe. 1983. *Decade of Dealignment*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sherif, Muzafer and Carl I. Hovland. 1961. *Social Judgement: Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Communication and Attitude Change*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Schickler, Eric and Donald P. Green. 1997. 'The Stability of Party-Identification in Western Democracies: Results from Eight Panel Surveys', *Comparative Political Studies*, 30, 450-83.
- Schmitt, Hermann. 2009. 'Partisanship in Nine Western Democracies' in John Bartle and Paolo Bellucci (eds.) *Political Parties and Partisanship: Social Identity and Individual Attitudes*, Ruhr University Bochum: Routledge, 75-87.
- Schmitt-Beck, Rudiger and David M. Farrell. 2002. 'Do Political Campaigns Matter? Yes, but it Depends.' in David M. Farrell and Rudiger Schmitt (eds.) *Do Political Campaigns Matter? Campaign Effects in Elections and Referendums*, London: Routledge.
- Schubert, James N., Patrick A. Stewart and Ann Margaret Curran. 2002. 'A Defining Presidential Moment: 9/11 and the Rally Effect.' *Political Psychology*, 23:3, 559-83.
- Stone, Jon R. 2000. 'Introduction' in Jon R. Stone (ed.) *Expecting Armageddon: Essential Readings in Failed Prophecy*, New York: Routledge, pp. 1-30.

- Van Schuur, Wijbrandt H. 2003, 'Mokken Scale Analysis: Between the Guttman Scale and Parametric Item Response Theory.' *Political Analysis* 11: 139-63.
- Searing, Donald, Gerald Wright and George Rabinowitz. 1976. 'The Primacy Principle: attitude change and political socialization.' *British Journal of Political Science*, 6:83-113.
- Sears, David O., Richard R. Lau, Tom R. Tyler and Harris M. Allen. 1980. 'Self-interest vs. Symbolic Politics in Policy Attitudes and Presidential Voting.' *American Political Science Review* 74:670-84.
- Sears, David O. and Carolyn L. Funk. 1999. 'Evidence of long-term Persistence of Adults' Political Predisposition.' *Journal of Politics*, 61:1-28.
- Sears, David O. 1983. 'The Persistence of Early Political Predispositions: the Roles of Attitude Object and Life Stage.' in Lad Wheeler (ed.) *Review of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 79-116.
- Sears, David O. and Nicholas A. Valentino. 1997. 'Politics Matters: Political Events as Catalysts for Preadult Socialization.' *American Political Science Review*, 91:1, 45-65.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet. 2008. 'The Neyman-Rubin Model of Causal Inference and Estimation via Matching Methods.' in Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brody, and David Collier, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 271-299.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. and Richard Grieve. 2009. 'A Nonparametric Matching Method for Covariate Adjustment with Application to Economic Evaluation.' University of California, Berkeley, Unpublished Manuscript.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. and Walter R. Mebane, Jr. 1998. 'Genetic Optimization Using Derivatives: Theory and Application to Nonlinear Models.' *Political Analysis* 7: 189-203.
- Shachar, Ron. 2003. 'Party Loyalty as Habit Formation.' *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, 18:251-69.
- Shively, Philips W. 1972. 'Party Identification, Party Choice, and Voting Stability: The Weimar Case.' *American Political Science Review*, 66, pp. 1203-25.
- Shively, Philips W. 1979. 'The Development of Party Identification Among Adults: Exploration of a Functional Model.' *American Political Science Review*, 74:4, pp. 1039-54.
- Sigel, Robert. 1989. 'Introduction: Persistence and Change,' in R. Sigel eds. *Political Learning in Adulthood*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1-10.
- Smetana Judith. 2005. 'Editor's Notes.' *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, Summer 1-3.
- Sniderman, Paul M. 1975. *Personality and Democratic Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sobel, M. E. 2008. 'Identification of causal parameters in randomized studies with mediating variables.' *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, 33(2): 230-251.
- Steckenrider, Janie and Neal E. Cutler. 1989. 'Aging and the Adult Political Socialization: The Im-

- portance of Roles and Role Transitions in Political Learning' in Robert Sigel (ed.) *Adulthood: A Sourcebook of Theory and Research*, 56-88. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Steingberg, Laurence. 2001. 'We know some things: Adolescent-Parent Relationships in Retrospect and Prospect.' *Journal of Research in Adolescence*, 11,1-19.
- Steinberg, Laurence and Jennifer S. Silk. 2002. 'Parenting adolescents' in M. H. Bornstein (ed.) *Handbook of parenting: Volume 1. Children and parenting* (2nd ed.), Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Stoker, Laura. 1993. 'Judging Presidential Character: The Demise of Gary Hart.' *Political Behavior*, 15:2, 193-223.
- Stoker, Laura. 2007. 'Growing Up with Politics.' Paper prepared for the Festschrift honoring David O. Sears, Presented at the 2007 American Political Science Association Convention, Chicago.
- Stoker, Laura and Kent M. Jennings. 1995. 'Life-Cycle Transitions and Political Participation: the Case of Marriage.' *American Political Science Review*, 89:2, 421-36.
- Stoker, Laura and Kent M. Jennings. 2008. 'Of Time and the Development of Partisan Polarization.' *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(2): 619-35.
- Sundquist, James. 1973. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Tavris, Carol, and Elliot Aronson. 2007. *Mistakes Were Made—But Not by ME: Self-justification in public and private life*. New York: Harcourt.
- Tedin, Kent L. 1974. 'The Influence of Parents on the Political Attitudes of Adolescents.' *American Political Science Review* 68 (4): 1579–92.
- Thomassen, Jacques. 1976. 'Party Identification as a Cross-National Concept: Its meaning in the Netherlands', in Ian Budge et al. eds. *Party Identification and Beyond*, London: John Wiley.
- Tillie, Jean. 1995. *Party Utility and Voting Behavior*, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.
- Triandis, Harry C. 1977. *Interpersonal Behavior*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Triandis, Harry C. 1980. 'Values, Attitudes, and Interpersonal Behavior.' in Herbert E. Howe, Jr. and Monte M. Page (eds.) *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, 1979: Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values*. Lincoln, NE: Univ. of Nebraska Press, pp.195-259.
- Valentino, Nicholas, and David O. Sears. 1998. 'Event-Driven Political Socialization and the Preadult Socialization of Partisanship.' *Political Behavior* 20 (2): 127–54.
- Ventura, Raphael. 2001. 'Family Political Socialization in Multiparty Systems.' *Comparative Political Studies* 34(6): 666-91.
- Verba, Sidney, Key L. Schlozman and Nancy Burns. 2005. 'Family Ties: Understanding the Intergenerational Transmission of Political Participation.' in Alan Zucherman (ed.) *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 94-114.

The Impressionable Years

- Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-o Kim. 1987. *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-Nation Comparison*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Weisberg, Herbert. 1980. 'A Multidimensional Conceptualization of Party Identification.' *Political Behavior*, 2(1): 33-60.
- Weisberg, Herbert. 1983. 'A New Scale of Partisanship', *Political Behavior*, 5(4): 363-76.
- Westholm, Anders, and Richard G. Niemi. 1992. 'Political Institutions and Political Socialization.' *Comparative Politics* 25 (1): 25-41.
- White, Theodore H. 1975. *Breach of Faith: the Fall of Richard Nixon*, New York: Atheneum Publishers.
- Williams, Richard. 2006. 'Generalized ordered logit / partial proportional-odds models for ordinal dependent variables', *Stata Journal*, 6: 58-82.
- Wiley, David E. and James A. Wiley. 1970. 'The Estimation of Measurement Error in Panel Data.' *American Sociological Review*, 35(1): 112-17.
- Wolak, Jennifer. 2009. 'Explaining Change in Party Identification in Adolescence.' *Electoral Studies*, 28:4,573-83.
- Wood, Wendy. 2000. 'Attitude Change: Persuasion and Social Influence.' *Annual Review of Psychology*, 51: 539-70.
- Wood, Simon N. 2006. *Generalized Additive Models: An Introduction with R*. Chapman and Hall / CRC, Boca Raton.
- Wooldridge, Jeffrey M. 2002. *Econometric analysis of cross section and panel data*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Wooldridge, Jeffrey M. 2005. 'Violating Ignorability of Treatment by Controlling for Too Many Factors.' *Econometric Theory*, 21, 1026-1028.
- Zaller, John R. 1987. 'The Diffusion of Political Attitudes.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 821-833.
- Zaller, John R. 1989. 'Bringing Converse Back In: Modeling Information Flow in Political Campaigns.' *Political Analysis*, 1: 181-234.
- Zaller, John R. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zaller, John R. 2004. 'Floating Voters in U.S. Presidential Elections, 1948-2000.' In Willem Saris and Paul M. Sniderman (eds.) *Studies in Public Opinion: Attitudes, Nonattitudes, Measurement Error, and Change*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Zanna, Mark P. and Joel Cooper. 1974. 'Dissonance and the pill: An attribution approach to studying the arousal properties of dissonance.' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 29, 703-709.
- Zuckerman, Alan, Josip Dasovic and Jennifer Fitzgerald. 2007. *Partisan Families: The Social Logic of Bounded Partisanship in Germany and Britain*, New York: Cambridge University Press.