

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES AMONG CHILDREN:  
AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF A GENETIC MATURATION MODEL

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by  
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## ABSTRACT

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### Purpose

The objectives of this study were: (1) to determine patterns in the development of attitudes and orientations toward figures of political authority; (2) to determine which variables affect the development of political attitudes and orientations; and (3) to analyze the impact of various stages of childhood and adolescent cognitive development upon those attitudes.

### Methods

The methods employed in this study were: (1) a review of the literature on political socialization; (2) the administration of a questionnaire in order to secure data on the development of political attitudes and orientations; and (3) the use of statistical techniques to determine the effect of the independent variables upon childhood political development.

### Findings

An analysis of the data revealed that:

(1) There is a move from "personalization" of political authority (reverence for the President) on the part of

younger students, toward an "institutionalization" of authority (favorable evaluations of the Congress and Supreme Court) on the part of older students.

(2) The President is not as highly regarded by the respondents in this study as was the case in other socialization research. The President's position is usurped by the policeman. This finding holds when controls are made for party identification.

(3) The Supreme Court receives a uniformly favorable evaluation.

(4) The development of political attitudes and orientations is not largely complete by the eighth grade. There are significant differences between junior high and high school students. This finding challenges the conclusions reported in most socialization research.

(5) The variables of race, religion, sex, political party preference, and SES have little effect, either within or across grades, on political attitudes and orientations.

(6) Blacks and Mexican-Americans are not more cynical toward, and less supportive of, the political system than are whites.

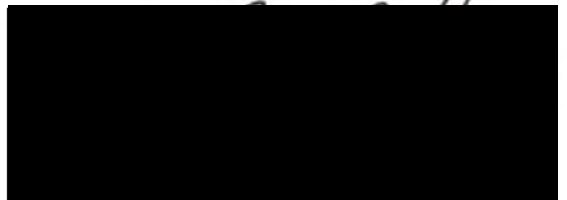
(7) Age is the only variable that significantly influences political attitudes and orientations.

(8) The evidence supports a cognitive development model since students of the same age group are highly similar in their response to figures of political authority. Our data on the development of political attitudes fit the stages of

childhood and adolescent cognitive and moral development suggested in the field of social learning theory.

(9) Political scientists specializing in socialization have largely emphasized an "environmental" approach. Our evidence indicates that environmental variables (race, sex, religion, SES, and party identification) are less important than was previously thought to be the case.

Approved: 



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I am grateful to the faculty and staff of the Fort Bend Independent School District for their assistance in collecting the data for this study. Appreciation is also extended to the students of the district, without whose co-operation this student would still have only a theory in search of some data. I am also indebted to Dr. E. Larry Dickens, the chairman of my thesis committee, whose insights, suggestions, and patience materially contributed to the completion of this study. Thanks also go to Dr. James H. Grisham and Mr. Howard L. Griffin, the other members of the thesis committee.

And finally, no acknowledgement would be complete without mention of that most valuable asset, the graduate student wife. It was her task to provide encouragement by reminding the author that it is better to try and light a candle than curse the darkness.

To the aforementioned individuals goes much of the credit for any merit this thesis might have. They want no part of, and bear no responsibility for, any of the faults that remain.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to criticize the literature in the field of political socialization. Political socialization is a relatively young and rapidly growing branch of the discipline.<sup>1</sup> But attempts at theory building have been too ambitious. Explanations and predictions do not automatically flow from descriptive data. It is the partial task of this paper to argue that many scholars in the field, not content with such description, have undertaken attempts at interpretation and inference that are not justified in terms of the fragmentary and inconclusive nature of the findings. The result of such boldness, at the extreme end of the speculative continuum, has been grand speculations as to the future stability and persistence of the political system, and the generation of models that allege to offer an explanation of human political behavior.

But if political socialization asks that its importance be judged in terms of its potential contribution rather than in light of its past accomplishments, a very good case can be

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<sup>1</sup>American Political Science Association, PS, IV (Summer, 1971), (Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association), p. 432.

made for its continued existence as an area worthy of scholarly investigation. For it is only when one assumes that learned political behavior is unimportant in the affairs of men that a telling argument can be leveled against it. The when, where, why, how, and what of political learning is both a function and a partial determinant of the organization, content, quality and collective aspirations of civilized existence itself. However, the illumination of those agents, institutions, and processes that determine why people behave as they do will require much laborious, painstaking, and cautious research. Our expectations as to the ultimate contributions of political socialization are high; nevertheless, our enthusiasm is tempered by an awareness of empirical constraints.

### The "Child is the Father of the Man" Assumption

Children are the cutest things. Why else would socialization scholars spend so much time on them? The child does, in fact, come first. In one respect, then, childhood would be the logical place to begin. This, however, is where most political socialization studies also end, and most of them end in the eighth grade. All of the major published works in the field by political scientists, with the exception of Kenneth Langton's Political Socialization and Herbert Hirsch's Poverty and Politicization, confine their studies to the elementary and junior high years. Langton and Hirsch are not much more ambitious since their research stops with high school seniors.

Why is this so? The reason that most readily comes to mind is the convenient captivity of public school children. It is a relatively simple task to administer questionnaires and to conduct interviews in a formal school environment. A methodological point should be noted here. Several aspects of the interview and questionnaire process may affect the validity of the findings. Selltitz et al. write that:

The measurement process used in the experiment may itself affect the outcome. If people feel that they are "guinea pigs" being experimented with, or if they feel that they are being "tested" and must make a good impression, or if the method of data collection suggests responses or stimulates an interest the subject did not previously feel, the measuring process may distort the experimental results.<sup>2</sup>

And Eugene Webb et al. note that "It is old news that the characteristics of the interviewer can contribute a substantial amount of variance to a set of findings."<sup>3</sup> It appears that these potential biases are apt to be even more severe in the structured classroom situation.

Another important assumption in the literature is that early learning is highly resistant to change. Fred Greenstein in Children and Politics observes that those attitudes

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<sup>2</sup>Claire Selltitz, et al., Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1959), p. 97, quoted in Eugene J. Webb, Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz and Lee Sechrest, Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1971), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup>Eugene J. Webb, Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz and Lee Sechrest, Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1971), p. 21.

learned early in life are most difficult to displace in later years.<sup>4</sup> David Easton and Jack Dennis in Children in the Political System and Robert Hess and Judith Torney in The Development of Political Attitudes in Children concluded that there was no point in testing beyond the eighth grade since basic political attitudes and orientations had already been formed by this time. The implications of such conclusions are difficult to accept since it logically follows that no significant changes in attitudes will occur after the ages of thirteen or fourteen. If we left the matter at that, the question of whether or not political learning is largely complete by the eighth grade would be an empirical one. And if we read only the work of political scientists, the evidence would indicate that the issue could be resolved in favor of the eighth graders. Two points need to be raised, however. First, testing has been confined to the very age group which is alleged to represent the final stage in the development of political learning. Secondly, the learning theories developed in sociology and psychology tend to refute the political scientists. More will be said about this when we consider the field's theoretical underpinnings.

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<sup>4</sup>Fred Greenstein, Children and Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 53-54.

## The Family versus the School Controversy

Hess and Torney write that "the public school is the most important and effective instrument of political socialization in the United States" and that it plays "the largest part in teaching attitudes, conceptions, and beliefs about the operation of the political system." They also conclude that "the school is particularly important for children who come from working-class or low socioeconomic areas."<sup>5</sup> Dawson and Prewitt observe that "In most societies the school stands with the family and peer groups as one of the most significant agents of political learning."<sup>6</sup> Hess and Torney note that:

. . . the effectiveness of the family in transmitting attitudes has been overestimated in previous research. The family transmits preference for a political party, but in most other areas its most effective role is to support other institutions in teaching political information and orientations. Aside from party preference, the influence of the family seems to be primarily indirect and to influence attitudes toward authority, rules, and compliance.<sup>7</sup>

But Herbert Hyman concludes that "foremost among agencies of socialization into politics is the family."<sup>8</sup> And Kenneth

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<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1967), pp. 120, 247, 249.

<sup>6</sup> Richard E. Dawson and Kenneth Prewitt, Political Socialization (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1969), p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> Hess and Torney, Development of Political Attitudes, p. 247.

<sup>8</sup> Herbert H. Hyman, Political Socialization: A Study in the Psychology of Political Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 51.



Langton found the family to be of substantially more importance than the school in the inculcation of norms of political efficacy. While Hess and Torney agree that political efficacy is, in part, a function of family variables, the classroom teacher is alleged to play a powerful role in this process. Langton disagrees when he writes that ". . . as a direct transmitter of political values, the teacher may be in a relatively weak position."<sup>9</sup> Harmon Zeigler enters the fray when he notes that the classroom situation "reinforces a belief in the desirability of maintaining the status quo. If there is brainwashing of the students, it appears aimed toward the production of optimistic, uncritical citizens."<sup>10</sup>

Langton also questions the generally accepted correlation between educational achievement and political attitudes. He argues that students who plan to continue their education at the college level are already significantly different in "politically important ways" from those students who do not. He contends that to ignore this process is to confuse "the effects of selection and political socialization."<sup>11</sup> Easton and Dennis further confuse the issue when they report that the relative impact of family and school influences cannot

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<sup>9</sup>Kenneth P. Langton, Political Socialization (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 86.

<sup>10</sup>L. Harmon Zeigler, The Political Life of American Teachers (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1967), pp. 113-114.

<sup>11</sup>Langton, Political Socialization, p. 170.



be empirically determined.<sup>12</sup> And Jennings and Niemi found that the family does not exert a significant influence in the transmission of political values.<sup>13</sup>

The controversy extends to the importance of peer groups as socializing agents. Hess and Torney found that "Participation in peer group organizations . . . does not have a significant effect upon the political socialization process."<sup>14</sup> Dawson and Prewitt observed that "Peer groups are a basic form of social relationships and serve as important instruments of social learning and adjustment in all societies," and that "Peer groups are probably the most effective political socialization agents in later life."<sup>15</sup> Langton found that in heterogeneous groups peers influenced those of the lower classes to adopt the attitudes of the upper classes. Homogeneous peer groups and schools reinforced the "political culture of the lower classes," while heterogeneous peer groups and schools "re-socialized in the direction of those attitudes held by higher-status peers." The "resocialization of working class students in mixed schools," was ". . . in the direction of higher class political norms."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>David Easton and Jack Dennis, Children in the Political System: The Origins of Political Legitimacy (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969), pp. 333-379.

<sup>13</sup>M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child," American Political Science Review, LXII (March, 1968), pp. 169-184.

<sup>14</sup>Hess and Torney, Development of Political Attitudes, p. 249.

<sup>15</sup>Dawson and Prewitt, Political Socialization, pp. 127, 137.

<sup>16</sup>Langton, Political Socialization, pp. 171-172.

The difficulty with almost all of these conclusions is that they are more akin to speculations than to empirical findings. The studies of Langton and of Jennings and Niemi are exceptions. But Langton limited his analysis of the family versus the school to a measure of political efficacy while the latter two scholars concentrated on the family. In addition, Hess and Torney, Greenstein, and Easton and Dennis researched only the elementary and junior high grades while Langton emphasized the high school years. While it may not be impossible to measure the relative impact of the family and school, the task does seem to be considerably more difficult than most socialization scholars would allow. It appears likely that the family, school, peer groups, and mass media are apt to exert concurrent rather than isolated influences. While the family is probably of overriding importance in the early years, assumptions as to the relative importance of the major socializing agents in later life appear unwarranted at this time.

#### Tendency Toward a Conservative Bias

There is an emphasis in most political socialization research upon stability and the maintenance of the status quo. Easton and Dennis conclude that:

The period of childhood socialization . . . is not one generally of increasing divergency; it is instead a period of striking similarity of response among children of various basic social categories  
 . . . .<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 378.

Hess and Torney report that:

. . . attachment to the country is stable and shows almost no change through elementary school years. This bond is possibly the most basic and essential aspect of socialization into involvement with the political life of the nation.<sup>18</sup>

And Dawson and Prewitt write that:

Perpetuation of the status quo is not an inevitable outcome of the political socialization process; it is merely a highly probable one. Political socialization usually leads to continuity from one generation to the next because adults try to make sure that the young are taught the "right" political values.<sup>19</sup>

Since most children like the President, respect the policeman, and accord legitimacy to the government, the implication is that all will be quiet on the homefront for a long time to come. The transmission and inculcation of political attitudes and values is alleged to be so effective that, consequently, change will be slow and uneven, gradual and imperceptible. This may be so. But the findings in the area of political socialization obscure rather than illuminate the matter.

First, not all children choose the party of their parents, like the President, and respect the policeman. Merelman notes that the transmission of party identification from parent to child is not as strong as it once was. While Hyman's report on studies conducted over thirty years ago revealed that eighty per cent of children agreed with their parents'

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<sup>18</sup>Hess and Torney, Development of Political Attitudes, p. 242.

<sup>19</sup>Dawson and Prewitt, Political Socialization, p. 207.

political affiliation, Jennings and Niemi found only a .47 correlation between the party preference of high school seniors and the political affiliation of their parents.<sup>20</sup> Greenberg reports that there are ". . . small but significant differences between white and black children's support of the political system, with black children, as predicted, becoming less supportive as they get older."<sup>21</sup> Jaros, Hirsch, and Fleron conclude that "children in the relatively poor, rural Appalachian region of the United States are dramatically less favorably inclined toward political objects than are their counterparts in other portions of the nation."<sup>22</sup>

Further, there are differences among white children. But the emphasis is usually upon the majority which manifests support for the political system rather than upon the uncooperative minority which fails to fall into place. Appropriate questions might be: why don't they agree with the majority? Do they represent a potential source of change in society or does their number contain the makings of a future elite which

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<sup>20</sup>Richard M. Merelman, "Electoral Instability and the American Party System," Journal of Politics, XXXII (February, 1970), p. 135.

<sup>21</sup>Edward S. Greenberg, "Black Children and the Political System: A Study of Socialization to Support," (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1969), p. 19.

<sup>22</sup>Dean Jaros, Herbert Hirsch, and Frederick Fleron, Jr., "The Malevolent Leader: Political Socialization in an American Subculture," American Political Science Review, LXII (June, 1968), pp. 574-575.

will serve as a catalyst for later change? But let us assume for the moment that the vast majority of school children accepts the legitimacy of the political system and exhibits a highly favorable attitude toward the structure of political authority. So what? Except in Arthur Clarke's Childhood's End and William Golding's Lord of the Flies children do not embark on revolutions and determine the manner in which the affairs of a society are conducted. They will have to endure for a considerable period before they can expect to exert much impact on the political system. The important question is whether or not their attitudes and behavior change in the meantime. And if so, how, why, when, and where?

We shall return to this discussion in the next section. But first, some consideration should be given to the concept of operational definition, for political socialization scholars fail to define what they mean by such terms as stability, system maintenance, change, and legitimacy. Responsibility for this failure can be attributed, in part, to the employment in some socialization research of such paradigms as systems theory and functional analysis. The emphasis of these frameworks upon system maintenance and cultural determinism tends to relieve the researcher of the responsibility for precision in definition. Analytical constructs that proceed by an axiomatic process can be a severe hindrance in empirical investigations. For how can one discuss stability or maintenance without ever specifying what these terms mean? For instance, David Easton defines stability as:

. . . only a special example of change, not a generically different one. There is never a social situation in which the patterns of interaction are absolutely unchanging. If stability is to have any sensible meaning, it must represent a condition in which the rate of change is slow enough to create no special problems due to change. But some change there always is. Hence, the study of stable systems involves a special case of change, one where the rate is slow.<sup>23</sup>

Such a degree of abstraction may be permissible in research willing to sacrifice operational clarity for the sake of efforts at high level theory construction. But when the same vagueness of definition is transferred in toto to an empirical investigation, the endeavor cannot be excused on similar grounds.<sup>24</sup> Responses by school children to a questionnaire may indicate highly favorable attitudes toward figures of political authority, the government and the country. But the researcher can make valid empirical statements about the relationship between those attitudes, and such concepts as stability, only if he has previously defined the term. To do less is sheer speculation. The number of assassinations, strikes, guerrilla wars, purges, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, and domestic killed within a polity is one operational definition of stability.<sup>25</sup> To allege that ". . . it

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<sup>23</sup>David Easton, A Framework for Political Analysis (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 107.

<sup>24</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System.

<sup>25</sup>Douglas P. Bury, "Political Instability in Latin America: The Cross-Cultural Test of a Causal Model," in Macro-Quantitative Analysis: Conflict, Development, and Democratization, ed. by John V. Gillespie and Betty A. Nesvold (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1971), p. 117.



must represent a condition in which the rate of change is slow enough to create no special problems due to change" is not. And until socialization scholars are willing to forego the grand sweep of conceptual abstraction, their work will continue to suffer from its speculative bias.

### The Adult Socialization Process

How does the socialization process operate after the student leaves school? Because research has tended to ignore this stage of political development, only fragmentary evidence is forthcoming. Several pieces of disparate research, however, indicate that substantial changes in political attitudes and orientations do occur during the adult years. Joel Aberbach and Jack Walker found that the black minority in Detroit was significantly more distrustful of the political system than were whites.<sup>26</sup> (It should be recalled that Greenberg reported only small differences between black and white school children.) And Robert Putnam discovered political attitudes to be a function of community social interaction patterns.<sup>27</sup> What is important is that such patterns were found to be more significant in the development of political attitudes than were childhood socialization processes. Herbert

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<sup>26</sup> Joel D. Aberbach and Jack L. Walker, "Political Trust and Racial Ideology," American Political Science Review, LXIV (December, 1970), p. 1211.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Putnam, "Political Attitudes and the Local Community," American Political Science Review, LX (September, 1966), pp. 640-654.

Hyman concluded that social and geographical mobility tends to alter the pattern of political behavior established during the childhood socialization experience.<sup>28</sup> Almond and Verba reach a similar conclusion in regard to the impact of the adult socialization process.<sup>29</sup>

The area of legislative behavior is replete with further examples of the importance of this stage of political learning. Richard Fenno, in his study of the House Appropriations Committee, found that committee members, regardless of their ideology, were socialized into a consensus that stressed budget cutting and economy. Even liberal members from northern and western urban constituencies were socialized in this direction.<sup>30</sup> Donald Matthews, in his discussion of Senate "folkways," reported that individual Senators were socialized toward an adherence to such institutional norms as apprenticeship, legislative work, specialization, courtesy, reciprocity, and organizational loyalty.<sup>31</sup> And Allan Kornberg, in his study of the Canadian Parliament, discovered that legislators were socialized to abide by the "rules of the game" which

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<sup>28</sup> Hyman, Political Socialization, pp. 85-89.

<sup>29</sup> Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

<sup>30</sup> Richard F. Fenno, Jr., "The House Appropriations Committee as a Political System: The Problem of Integration," American Political Science Review, LVI (June, 1962), pp. 310-324.

<sup>31</sup> Donald R. Matthews, "The Folkways of the Senate," in Readings in Congress, ed. by Raymond E. Wolfinger (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 103.



functioned to keep criticism and conflict to a minimum.<sup>32</sup> Wahlke and Ferguson noted a socialization process which promoted predictability of legislative behavior,<sup>33</sup> while Matthews and Stimson concluded that cue-taking from trusted fellow legislators, rather than previous socialization experiences, was the best predictor of legislative voting behavior.<sup>34</sup>

The salient point is that important changes do occur in the political attitudes, values, and orientations of some individuals during their adult years. Yet, as has been previously noted, this stage of political learning has been almost totally ignored by systematic research. It may very well be that the content of early learning will persist only if such learning is not subjected to stress and conflicting demands. Too little attention has been given to the capacity of the "socialized" individual to adapt and adjust to new pressures and stimuli. The most unique characteristic of this allegedly "complete" adult may be his malleability--his continued receptivity to additional socializing processes and agents.

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<sup>32</sup>Allan Kornberg, "The Rules of the Game in Legislative Politics: A Comparative Study," in Political Behavior in America: New Directions, ed. by Heinz Eulau (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 373.

<sup>33</sup>John Wahlke, et al. The Legislative System: Explorations in Legislative Behavior (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1962).

<sup>34</sup>Donald R. Matthews and James A. Stimson, "The Decision-Making Approach to the Study of Legislative Behavior," (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1969).

To date, most socialization research by political scientists has concentrated on the what, when and where of childhood political learning. Scant effort has been expended on the study of the impact of that learning upon actual behavior. One such attempt was made by John Soule and James Clarke in their study of "amateur" and "professional" delegates to the 1968 Democratic National Convention. They concluded that the doctrinaire, dogmatic amateur had been socialized into a participatory role in politics during adulthood, while the devotion to electoral victory and willingness to compromise that characterized the professional delegate was a function of earlier childhood socialization. These authors believe that the political attitudes characteristic of the amateur have been instrumental in the development of the "New Left" movement.<sup>35</sup> James Barber analyzed Presidents on a personality traits continuum and speculated that their actions could be explained in part by these personality variables.<sup>36</sup> Doris Kearns attempts to explain Lyndon Johnson's Presidential behavior through a similar analysis.<sup>37</sup> The difficulty with

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<sup>35</sup>John W. Soule and James W. Clarke, "Amateurs and Professionals: A Study of Delegates to the 1968 Democratic National Convention," American Political Science Review, LXIV (September, 1970), pp. 888-898.

<sup>36</sup>James D. Barber, "Analyzing Presidents: From Passive-Positive Taft to Active-Negative Nixon," Washington Monthly, I:IX (October, 1969), pp. 33-54.

<sup>37</sup>Doris Kearns, "Lyndon Johnson: Personality, Culture, and Politics," (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1971).

these latter two studies is that they are more akin to journalism than to sound empirical investigation. Their value, however, lies in that they do make an effort to relate socialization to actual behavior.

### Interdisciplinary Contributions

It appears that the failure of political scientists to incorporate in their research the child development theories constructed in other disciplines has resulted in both wasted effort and mistaken conclusions. Kohlberg's theory of moral development can serve as an example. He posits that a child passes through three stages of moral growth. The first is designated as a pre-moral level in which punishment, obedience, and rewards are the motivating factors in the learning process. Kohlberg labels the succeeding stages the "conventional rule conformity level," where the child "conforms to avoid disapproval" and censure, and the "morality of individual principles or conscience" level, where the child "conforms to avoid self-condemnation."<sup>38</sup> This final level of development is alleged to occur at about seventeen or eighteen years of age. The salient point is that responses to questions measuring attitudes and orientations were found to vary with each of these stages and that these differences held in cross-national surveys.

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<sup>38</sup> Edmund Sullivan, "Political Development During the Adolescent Years," in Adolescents: Readings in Behavior and Development, ed. by Elliot D. Evans (Hinsdale, Illinois: Dryden Press Inc., 1970), pp. 101-104.

Edmund Sullivan writes that "the ideology in childhood years appears to be concerned with system maintenance and much less with ideas about change in political institutions,"<sup>39</sup> while Joseph Adelson concludes that the child development pattern reveals three distinct changes during adolescence.<sup>40</sup> First, the adolescent's cognitive processes become sophisticated. He achieves the ability to reason abstractly and at the same time becomes aware of the past and future as well as the present. In addition, he begins to comprehend the complexity of human behavior and develops a "hypothetico-deductive" reasoning capacity. Now the adolescent "avoids either/or positions and thinks in terms of contingencies; the hard and fast absolutism of childhood and the first years of adolescence gives way to moral and conceptual relativism."<sup>41</sup> Secondly, the child becomes less authoritarian. Thirdly, he develops the capacity to formulate a political ideology. Richard Merelman also maintains that the development of political ideology is a function of moral and cognitive reasoning processes.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>40</sup>Joseph Adelson, "The Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent," Daedalus, C (Fall, 1971), p. 1014.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 1021.

<sup>42</sup>Richard M. Merelman, "The Development of Political Ideology: A Framework for the Analysis of Political Socialization," American Political Science Review, LXIII (September, 1969), pp. 750-767.

Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan write that the adolescent can now begin to

. . . think about thought, and create thought systems or "hypothetico-deductive" theories. This involves the logical construction of all possibilities--that is, the awareness of the observed as only a subset of what may be logically possible. In related fashion, it implies the hypothetico-deductive attitude, the notion that a belief or proposition is not an immediate truth but a hypothesis whose truth value consists in the truth of the concrete propositions derivable from it.<sup>43</sup>

Merelman concludes that ". . . the benevolent leader syndrome . . . may be explained partly by the inability to reason abstractly, to be self-conscious about thinking, or to relate concrete judgments to general rules."<sup>44</sup>

These are telling criticisms of a major "theory-oriented" study in political socialization. For Easton and Dennis in Children in the Political System concluded that the persistence of the system is insured by the diffuse support that is generated for the structure of political authority in the early years. This diffuse support was measured by the analysis of responses to questions eliciting cognitive and affective attitudes toward such figures and structures of authority as the President, Senator, Policeman, "Government" and Supreme Court. Since these responses were found to be uniformly favorable, the authors concluded that children learn

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<sup>43</sup> Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, "The Adolescent as Philosopher: The Discovery of the Self in a Postconventional World," Daedalus, C (Fall, 1971), p. 1061.

<sup>44</sup> Merelman, "The Development of Political Ideology," p. 764.

to accept the legitimacy of the political system and that this accorded legitimacy accounts for its continuing capacity to persist. However, they ended their testing in the eighth grade. What they have succeeded in generating are responses associated with the "concrete operational thought" stage of childhood rather than with the "formal-operational thought" stage of adolescence.<sup>45</sup> As a result, what they have probably measured is the inability of the child during this first stage to reason abstractly, to understand the complexities of human behavior, to employ "hypothetico-deductive" reasoning, and to manifest a personal political ideology. In addition, responses toward political authority at this stage are apt to be highly authoritarian. Herbert Hirsch notes that "it is possible that what Easton and Dennis have examined is merely another inquiry into the authoritarian syndrome."<sup>46</sup>

### Suggestions for Further Research

There is a real need for longitudinal research. While cross-national studies may be capable of generating limited insights, it does not appear that they can provide much in the way of solid theory development. Donald T. Campbell and Julian Stanley go so far as to argue that "one-shot" case

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<sup>45</sup>Kohlberg and Gilligan, "The Adolescent as Philosopher," p. 1063.

<sup>46</sup>Herbert Hirsch, Poverty and Politicization (New York: The Free Press, 1971), p. 10.



studies "have such a total absence of control as to be of almost no scientific value."<sup>47</sup>

Much greater effort should be concentrated on the isolation of peer group and mass media influences. What to this point has been interpreted as the results of the formal school environment may very well be the effects of informal peer group pressures and stimuli. The role of youth and counter-culture life styles and ideologies has been generally ignored in systematic research. Their impact has been only indirectly measured through concentration on the public school system.

Only speculative statements can be made at this stage about the importance of the mass media as an agent of political socialization. Dawson and Prewitt write that ". . . the mass media serve to reinforce existing orientations rather than to alter old ones or create new ones."<sup>48</sup> They also conclude that:

. . . the media convey, both directly and indirectly, the major consensus values of the society. Media act to reinforce the lessons passed on, probably more effectively, by the family, schools, peers, and other agents of political learning.<sup>49</sup>

Yet the impact of the media, and particularly television, may be much more profound than these authors are willing to admit. Evidence from fields other than political socialization

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<sup>47</sup>Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1970), p. 6.

<sup>48</sup>Dawson and Prewitt, Political Socialization, p. 198.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

suggests that this may be so. One report concluded that children acquired new values and that "a view of life was picked up" from watching television.<sup>50</sup> A number of studies are being conducted as to the effects of television upon human behavior. It is noteworthy, however, that none of these investigations has been undertaken by political scientists specializing in the area of political socialization.<sup>51</sup>

Political socialization scholars should give up their fascination with children, particularly in the "concrete operational stage" when they are restricted "to the concrete realities of what is."<sup>52</sup> In addition, concentration upon the formal public school environment fails to consider either those children who attend private institutions or those who leave school. Further, the socialization process after childhood requires systematic investigation. Allen Lambert notes that "adult cultural consciousness and political orientation are as much, if not more than, a result of events in the individual's biography during late adolescence and early adulthood as of early conditioning."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>J. D. Halloran, The Effects of Mass Communication with Special Reference to Television: A Survey (Leicester, England: Leicester University Press, 1970), p. 14.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-76.

<sup>52</sup>Edmund Sullivan, "Political Development during the Adolescent Years," pp. 100-101.

<sup>53</sup>T. Allen Lambert, "Generational Factors in Political-Cultural Consciousness," (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1971), p. 15.



Some attention should be given to the possibility that children may exert a significant socializing influence on their parents. There is also a need to borrow heavily from those disciplines concerned with social learning theory. Research should explore the how and why as well as the what, when, and where of political learning. Merelman suggests areas of theoretical concern that might prove susceptible to the application of social learning theory.

Democracy demands much with its emphasis on openness, flexibility, gradual reform, progress through secular endeavor, and tolerance for those on the margins of society. Most people do not reveal a high enough level of moral or cognitive development to maintain a long-run commitment to such a system.<sup>54</sup>

And,

Left movements . . . appeal to high levels of moral and cognitive development . . . while movements of the right . . . appeal to the earliest inculcated and most natural forms of thought. Therefore, more people are capable of reaction than reform.<sup>55</sup>

New tools need to be developed. Survey and interview techniques are particularly obtrusive and reactive when used with children, and even more so in formal school environments. Fred Greenstein's use of a semi-projective technique in his recent cross-national study appears to represent a distinct improvement over the traditional questionnaire and

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<sup>54</sup>Merelman, "The Development of Political Ideology," p. 766.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

interview methodology.<sup>56</sup> A need for new measures will become more evident with an increase in cross-national research and the advent of the longitudinal approach.

Socialization research must make a serious effort to relate political learning to actual behavior. Inferences and speculations drawn from elicited questionnaire responses will no longer suffice. A participant-observation technique may prove to be of much value in such an approach. And finally, the field of socialization must eventually confront the concept of change before it can hope to develop sound theories of human political development and behavior. Socialization may be a basically conservative process. But change does occur and the research to date has shed little light on the process. Dawson and Prewitt write:

Students of society have long sought adequate explanations of social change, but no satisfactory, comprehensive theory has been developed. In the mid-twentieth century, we are still searching for an explanation of the mechanisms which transform one network of social relations, one pattern of cultural values, into another. Scholars have yet to identify with any precision the units which make for change, which shuffle and regroup the cultural patterns whose mutations are the raw material for new cultural forms. As yet we can present only partial and fragmentary ideas, but political socialization theory points us toward the mechanisms of social evolution.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Fred Greenstein, Political Orientations of Children: The Use of a Semi-Projective Technique in Three Nations (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1970), pp. 530-534.

<sup>57</sup>Dawson and Prewitt, Political Socialization, p. 218.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine and analyze the cognitive and affective attitudes of selected elementary and secondary public school children toward the structure of political authority in this country. This structure of authority is defined as consisting of certain governmental institutions and individuals concerned with political decisions--namely, the President, the "average" United States Senator, the Supreme Court, and the "Government." In addition, the Policeman, Teacher, and "Father" were included in the testing and analysis procedure.

The questionnaire utilized in this study is a condensed version of the one employed by David Easton and Jack Dennis in their work entitled Children in the Political System. (See Appendix I.) But while Easton and Dennis were concerned with the manner in which diffuse support for the structure of political authority is engendered among school children, and either contributes to or is dysfunctional to the persistence of the political system, this investigation will attempt to demonstrate that the Easton and Dennis conclusions cannot be supported by the data. They write that:

... no system can persist, regardless of its specific type of character, without some structure of authority, however limited or unrestrained the powers exercised through this structure may be. There must be some minimal input of support for the structure of authority, and a belief in its legitimacy empirically turns out to be the most dependable and continuing kind of support. Without this structure of authority the system could not sustain the minimal organization necessary to rally and commit, on any kind of recurring basis, the human and other resources of the system for the production and implementation of outputs. There could be no political system.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, this study will argue that Easton and Dennis have erred in several important ways. First, the development of political values, attitudes and orientations is not largely complete by the eighth grade. Rather, it is posited that major changes in political learning will be noted between childhood and adolescence. Secondly, their speculations as to the importance of early political attitudes in regard to the generation of diffuse support for the political system cannot be empirically verified. Responses by children to administered questionnaires cannot be utilized in support of such conceptual abstractions as system maintenance and system persistence. Rather, it will be argued that the responses of public school children can be better explained through the application of social learning theory. Such theory suggests that political learning processes should be conceptualized in terms of various stages of cognitive development.

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<sup>1</sup>David Easton and Jack Dennis, Children in the Political System: The Origins of Political Legitimacy (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969), p. 100.

### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered during the spring of 1971 to 596 students attending four separate schools in the Fort Bend Independent School District. It was assumed that first graders would be incapable of comprehending certain questions. Therefore, this grade was eliminated from the project. Two classes were tested in each grade in grades 2-12. In the elementary grades (2-5), one class was tested in each grade in two separate schools of the district for a total of 213 students. In grades 6-8, two classes were tested in each grade for a total of 172 students. In grades 9-12 the questionnaire was administered to two classes in each grade for a total of 211 students.

The responsibility for the selection of the schools and grades to be tested, and the distribution of the questionnaires, was assumed by the staff of the Fort Bend Independent School District. Both a random selection of grades, as well as a distribution of Anglos, Blacks, and Mexican-Americans that corresponded to the ethnic composition of the district as a whole, was achieved. The actual administration of the questionnaire was conducted by the classroom teacher who was also responsible for coding the racial identity of each student. Teachers were allowed to assist with any methodological or technical difficulties encountered by their students.

### The Independent Variables

The first independent variable employed was that of grade. Joseph Adelson writes that the most important variable in the development of political attitudes is age. He notes that "what does count, and count heavily, is age."<sup>2</sup>

Hypothesis #1 - Age is the best predictor of both the level and content of political development.

The second variable considered was race. Only fragmentary evidence is available concerning the political development of ethnic groups. Greenberg, however, found ". . . small but significant differences between white and black children's support of the political system, with black children, as predicted, become less supportive as they get older."<sup>3</sup> And Aberbach and Walker found that black adults were more distrustful of the political system than were whites.<sup>4</sup>

Hypothesis #2 - The political attitudes of Black and Mexican-American children will differ from those of Anglos, with such differences becoming more pronounced with age.

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Adelson, "The Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent," Daedalus, C (Fall, 1971), p. 1014.

<sup>3</sup> Edward S. Greenberg, "Black Children and the Political System: A Study of Socialization to Support," (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1969), p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Joel D. Aberbach and Jack L. Walker, "Political Trust and Racial Ideology," American Political Science Review, LXIV (December, 1970), p. 1211.



The third variable utilized was the sex of the respondent. Hess and Torney concluded that "girls tend to be more attached to personal figures of the system," but no differences were found in "basic attachment, loyalty, and support of the country."<sup>5</sup> Greenstein reported that girls know less about politics than boys and that boys are more politically interested and aware. It was found that girls are less likely than boys to identify with political leaders of the past and other historical figures. No differences were discovered, however, regarding conception of citizenship duties and feelings of political efficacy. Greenstein maintains that the differences that do exist can be attributed to the aggressive inclinations of boys, to the fact that the family environment and influences result in girls being more concerned with personal relationships, and because politics has traditionally been considered an area of male dominance and specialization.<sup>6</sup>

Easton and Dennis, however, found that sex differences were "too small to be of great consequence for the operation of the system."<sup>7</sup> And Adelson concluded that "there are simply no sex differences."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1967), p. 253.

<sup>6</sup>Fred Greenstein, Children and Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 105-127.

<sup>7</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 342.

<sup>8</sup>Adelson, "The Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent," p. 1014.

Hypothesis #3 - Sex is not an important explanatory variable in the development of political attitudes.

Religion was also included as an independent variable.

Hess and Torney write that "religious affiliation has a strong but limited effect on political socialization. . . . The most marked relationship between religious affiliation and involvement is the socialization of party affiliation and candidate preference."<sup>9</sup> Easton and Dennis reported that the child's affective attitudes toward the President were only "somewhat influenced" by religion.<sup>10</sup>

Hypothesis #4 - Religious affiliation is not an important variable in the political development process.

Socioeconomic status was the fifth variable considered. Such status was determined by responses to the following question: "What does your father do for a living?" The answers were coded according to four categories. The first was designated as "Professional" and included teachers, engineers, doctors, dentists, and lawyers. The second was labeled "Business" and consisted of white collar personnel, individual entrepreneurs, executives, and salesmen. The third division was limited to government employees (excluding teachers), while the final category consisted of laborers.

Hess and Torney found the impact of social status "to be less marked" than that of IQ. Certain differences, however,

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<sup>9</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 249.

<sup>10</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 365.



were noted. First, variations were detected in attachment to figures of political authority. Secondly, higher-status children reported "more parental interest in government and national affairs," and "more frequent participation in political discussions and a greater concern for contemporary national issues." These authors also noticed a "tendency for low-status children to feel less efficacious."<sup>11</sup> Greenstein maintains that low-status children perceive their teacher as more effective than their own parents in transmitting political information.<sup>12</sup> He also notes that upper-status children were more oriented "toward issue and party" than were lower-status children. Further, upper-status students in the seventh and eighth grades were much more apt to characterize themselves as political independents in regard to party affiliation. No significant differences were discovered between the two groups concerning "information about formal governmental institutions." The same held true with respect to "personal willingness to participate in politics" and the importance of politics. However, the "lower-SES child is . . . more deferential toward leaders than the higher-status child."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 256.

<sup>12</sup>Greenstein, "Children and Politics," p. 98.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid... pp. 95-96, 97, 99, 102.

Easton and Dennis, on the other hand, found SES to be unimportant in predicting affective responses to political authorities. And as a predictor of cognitive responses, they found SES to "suggest only a different rate of development rather than substantive differentiation."<sup>14</sup> Adelson also found SES to be of little importance.<sup>15</sup>

Hypothesis #5 - While SES may have some impact as a differentiating variable within grades, it will not be an important predictor of the general political development process.

Party affiliation or preference was the final independent variable included in this study. Hess and Torney reported that "party affiliation in itself has relatively little effect upon the acquisition of basic attitudes and political orientation."<sup>16</sup> Easton and Dennis agree.<sup>17</sup>

Hypothesis #6 - Political affiliation is not an important explanatory variable.

Although intelligence was not considered, some findings regarding its role in the political socialization process are worth noting. Hess and Torney concluded that the "intelligence

<sup>14</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 350.

<sup>15</sup>Adelson, "The Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent," p. 1014.

<sup>16</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes, p. 253.

<sup>17</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 365.

of the child is one of the most important mediating influences in the acquisition of political behavior." Children of high intelligence were more apt to view institutions rather than individuals as representative of government, more likely to "regard the system in less absolute terms," more likely to place less unquestioning faith in governmental institutions and figures of authority, were "less idealistic about the system," had greater feelings of efficacy, and were "more inclined to see voting as an obligation." They were also "less bound to the status quo," were more willing to accept change, and were more apt to participate in political affairs.<sup>18</sup> However, Easton and Dennis<sup>19</sup> and Joseph Adelson<sup>20</sup> found intelligence to be of minor importance.

In general, it is hypothesized that the content of political learning is a function of the particular stage of cognitive development. The "formal-operational thought" stage of adolescence is of the most importance, for it is during this period that the individual first gains the capacity for "formal" thought and develops the ability to engage in "deductive-hypothesis testing."<sup>21</sup> The "concrete operational

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<sup>18</sup>Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes, pp. 254-255.

<sup>19</sup>Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 378.

<sup>20</sup>Adelson, "The Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent," p. 1014.

<sup>21</sup>Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, "The Adolescent as Philosopher: The Discovery of the Self in a Postconventional World," Daedalus, C (Fall, 1971), p. 1063.

thought" stage (ages 6-10) may be of some importance, but its significance has been overemphasized in previous research. As a result, political scientists have tended to concentrate on the content of early political learning while ignoring the how and why of the process. Joseph Adelson writes:

. . . while I would not want to scant the significance of increased knowledge in the forming of adolescent ideology, let me also say that over the years I have become progressively disenchanted about its centrality, and have come to believe that much current work in political socialization, by relying too heavily on the apparent acquisition of knowledge, has been misled about the tempo of political understanding in adolescence. Just as the young child can count many numbers in series and yet not grasp the principle of ordination, so may the young adolescent have in his head many random bits of political information without a secure understanding of those concepts which would give order and meaning to the information.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, it is hypothesized that most of the variables traditionally employed in socialization research will be of little significance in explaining the development of political attitudes. The age and racial identity of the respondents will prove to be the most important predictor variables.

### Methodology

The analysis of the data from the completed questionnaires was performed by the computer centers at Sam Houston State University and Rice University. Two statistical techniques were employed in the analysis. Correlational analysis

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<sup>22</sup>Adelson, "The Political Imagination of the Young Adolescent," pp. 1029-1030.

(Pearson's  $r$ ) was used to determine the extent of association between the independent variables and political attitudes. Factor analysis was employed in an effort to establish the impact of cognitive development upon those attitudes. This technique allows the researcher to discover any underlying "dimensions" in his data.

## CHAPTER III

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ORIENTATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the development of political attitudes and orientations among our sample of respondents. This descriptive account will establish patterns in childhood political development that will provide the basis for the more extensive analysis to be pursued in the following chapter.

#### Characteristics of the Sample

Race - Sixty-nine per cent of the respondents were white, 9.5 per cent were black, and 21.5 per cent were Mexican-American. The only significant exceptions to this general pattern of ethnic percentages occurred in the fifth and ninth grades. In the fifth grade, 98 per cent of the students were white, with no blacks and 2 per cent Mexican-American. In the ninth grade, only 35.5 per cent were white, while 14.5 per cent were black and 50 per cent were Mexican-American.

Religion - Thirty-six and one-half per cent of the sample identified themselves as Catholic, 56 per cent as Protestant, and 7.5 per cent expressed no religious preference. In the second grade, 31 per cent of the students maintained that they had no religious affiliation. It appears that the

children in this grade may not have accurately responded to the question, for this percentage is far higher than for any of the other grades in the sample. It may be, however, that the parents of these younger children do not, in fact, belong to established churches or profess a religious preference. In any event, these deviations from the general pattern will be taken into consideration in an analysis of the data. No student in the fifth grade selected the "No religion" category. But in the remaining grades more and more of the students made this choice.

Sex - Forty-eight per cent of the sample was male and 52 per cent was female.

Occupation - The sample can generally be characterized as lower middle class. The vast majority of the respondents' parents are employed either as laborers or white collar workers. There is, however, a small but significant portion engaged in business activities as executives or individual entrepreneurs. Few of the students classified their fathers as professionally employed.

Political Party - Twenty-two and one-half per cent said that they were Republican, 34 per cent expressed a preference for the Democrats, and 43.5 per cent chose an independent label. There is no consistent pattern of a steady movement toward political independence asserting itself with an increase in age. In the second grade, again, there is some doubt as to how well this particular question was understood.



The Findings: A Descriptive Account

Question: "Here are some people and things that tell what our government is. Pick the two people or things that tell best what our government is. Circle the two numbers of your choice."

TABLE I  
IMAGE OF GOVERNMENT

Grade	Policeman	George Washington	Uncle Sam	Voting	Supreme Court	National Capitol	Congress	Flag	Statue of Liberty	President	Don't Know
2	31%*	42%	13%	22%	9%	5%	4%	5%	11%	36%	15%
3	16	33	2	14	29	24	27	2	4	29	20
4	13	25	19	17	13	10	13	2	8	31	38
5	4	5	16	5	31	18	65	0	0	25	18
6	7	4	13	22	30	4	52	13	6	26	15
7	3	5	31	28	18	8	44	10	10	34	3
8	16	0	12	28	9	4	53	16	11	35	14
9	17	2	38	6	17	0	35	0	6	46	21
10	13	6	27	25	20	3	34	14	14	33	6
11	11	4	22	18	11	11	31	13	20	27	16
12	7	0	15	33	33	6	39	13	15	20	11

\* Per cent responding

Only the flag fails to be chosen by at least 20 per cent of the students. This in itself is interesting. For one might expect the flag to be chosen with substantially greater

frequency if only because of the furor surrounding it as a symbol of political authority. This emotionally charged attention has not, however, succeeded in making a significant impression on the respondents in this sample. Only 5, 2 and 2 per cent, respectively, in the second, third and fourth grades pick the flag as one of the two symbols that best represent the government. While this percentage rises to 16 per cent in the eighth grade, it declines to zero in the ninth. The flag possesses little salience as a symbol of government.

Further analysis reveals a similar finding in regard to the Policeman, National Capitol, and the Statue of Liberty. Only in the second grade is the Policeman the choice of more than 20 per cent of the grade tested (31 per cent). The same is true for the Capitol in the third grade (24 per cent), and the Statue of Liberty in the eleventh (20 per cent). We are left with seven symbols that receive more than 20 per cent of the vote on more than one occasion.

Second graders are most apt to identify with personalities such as the Policeman, George Washington and the President, rather than with institutions such as the Supreme Court and Congress (see Table II). Voting occupies the fourth rank order in this grade. It will not again achieve as high a position until the sixth grade. Even as late as the eleventh its rank is only fifth. Although the second graders' identification with the Policeman is consistent with these children's association with personal figures of authority, this identification represents a deviation from the

TABLE II  
IMAGE OF GOVERNMENT - Rank Order

Grade	Policeman	George Washington	Uncle Sam	Voting	Supreme Court	National Capitol	Congress	Flag	Statue of Liberty	President	Don't Know
2	3	1	6	4	8	9.5	11	9.5	7	2	5
3	7	1	10	8	2.5	5	4	10	8	2.5	6
4	7	3	4	5	7	9	7	11	10	2	1
5	9	7.5	6	7.5	2	4.5	1	10.5	10.5	3	4.5
6	8	10.5	6.5	4	2	10.5	1	6.5	9	3	5
7	10.5	9	3	4	5	8	1	6.5	6.5	2	10.5
8	4.5	11	7	3	9	10	1	4.5	8	2	6
9	5.5	9	2	7.5	5.5	10.5	3	10.5	7.5	1	4
10	8	9.5	3	4	5	11	1	6.5	6.5	2	9.5
11	9	11	3	5	9	9	1	7	4	2	6
12	9	11	5.5	2.5	2.5	10	1	7	5.5	4	8

pattern evident in the other grades. Almost twice as many second graders select the Policeman as do students in any of the other age groups.

As early as the third grade, the respondents have begun to reject personal figures of authority in favor of institutions. Although George Washington retains the top rank in this grade, the Supreme Court moves into a tie with the President for the second position and Congress takes over the fourth spot. And although both the Court and Congress decline to the seventh rank in the next grade, they reassert their

dominance in the fifth. Thereafter, the pattern remains relatively stable. The President and Congress alternate between the top rank while the Court occupies the second position in the fifth, sixth and twelfth grades.

Voting appears as the fourth most dominant symbolic association, occupying the fourth position in the sixth, seventh and tenth grades, the third in the eighth, and tying for third with the Supreme Court in the twelfth. One unexpected symbol emerges in the later grades. Uncle Sam is the third selection of seventh, tenth and eleventh graders and the second choice of those in the ninth grade.

In general, these students follow a definite pattern. In the early grades, they are most apt to choose personal figures such as the President and George Washington as most representative of government. By the fifth grade, the Court and Congress join the President as the dominant selections. Later additions include voting and Uncle Sam. The President maintains a consistently high rank throughout. This symbol undergoes the least fluctuation, although the President's rank does decline to the fourth position by the twelfth grade.

It is the Congress which overall is the most durable and salient of governmental symbols. In response to the question, "tell best what our government is," the emphasis in general is upon the Congress, President, and Supreme Court, with particular support for the legislative body. An individual act of participation such as voting ranks behind the three branches of government, and on occasion, even behind

the figure of Uncle Sam. It is significant, however, that in the earliest grade surveyed Congress occupies the lowest rank order, while the President is second. It is not until the fifth grade that Congress achieves dominance. There is, we can maintain, a definite movement from personalization to institutionalization.

Question: "Who makes the laws?"

TABLE III

DEVELOPMENT OF AN AWARENESS OF THE CHIEF LAWMAKER

Grade	Congress	President	Supreme Court	Don't Know
2	5%*	49%	11%	35%
3	24	43	20	14
4	13	27	29	33
5	51	15	20	15
6	48	6	30	17
7	75	5	10	10
8	75	4	11	11
9	52	13	31	4
10	70	14	9	6
11	87	2	2	10
12	78	4	9	9

\* Per cent responding

In the first two grades, the child again sees the President as dominant. The Congress, outpolled by both the Supreme Court and the "Don't Know" category, ranks a distant last in the second grade. In the fourth, the Supreme Court moves

into the second spot behind the "Don't Know" choice and is followed by the President and Congress. In the fifth grade, however, the Congress assumes a commanding lead that it never relinquishes. The Court assumes the second rank and is followed by the President.

Question: "Who does the most to run the country?"

TABLE IV  
DEVELOPMENT OF AN AWARENESS OF  
WHO DOES THE MOST TO RUN THE COUNTRY

Grade	Congress	President	Supreme Court	Don't Know
2	3%*	49%	9%	31%
3	20	75	0	6
4	6	48	15	31
5	20	67	7	5
6	13	72	7	7
7	26	61	7	7
8	25	58	5	12
9	15	58	11	17
10	34	55	0	11
11	33	49	4	13
12	41	39	9	11

\* Per cent responding

These students agree that the President runs the country. Only in the twelfth grade does the Congress outpoll him. However, Congress steadily increases its percentage throughout the grades tested, with the Supreme Court ranking last behind the "Don't Know" responses.

Question: "Think of the Government as it really is: do you agree that it almost never makes mistakes, that it would always want to help you if you needed it, that it makes important decisions all the time, that it can punish anyone, that it knows more than anyone? Answer yes or no."

(The item "almost never makes mistakes" refers to the characteristic of infallibility, while the statements "makes important decisions all the time" and "knows more than anyone" refer to leadership. The item "can punish anyone" is a measurement of power and "would always want to help me if I needed it" refers to the trait of benevolence.)

TABLE V  
RATINGS OF QUALITIES OF GOVERNMENT

Grade	Mistakes	Help	Decisions	Punish	Knows
2	65%*	89%	93%	91%	71%
3	71	65	96	45	12
4	44	48	67	37	27
5	42	69	76	31	16
6	30	70	67	33	11
7	25	52	72	38	8
8	18	51	68	39	5
9	27	31	56	46	23
10	19	34	56	48	9
11	18	22	58	67	9
12	9	30	59	46	19

\* Per cent agreeing with statement



In the second and third grades, a majority believe that the government is infallible, that it almost never makes mistakes. The decline in the extent of approval, however, is rapid. By the eighth grade only 18 per cent agree with this statement. The decline continues. Only 9 per cent of high school seniors agree that the government almost never makes mistakes.

These students are willing to concede the benevolence of the government to an astonishing degree. Even as late as the eighth grade 51 per cent agree with the statement that the government would always want to help them if they needed it. This is particularly interesting since Easton and Dennis found only a 14 per cent agree response to the item "would always want to help me." It should also be noted that the question is weighed in favor of a negative response. If it had been phrased so as to include the options of "almost, usually, and sometimes would want to help me," the indication is that the percentage of favorable responses would have been overwhelming.

The government also scores high on the characteristic of leadership. A majority in all grades agreed with the statement that the government makes important decisions all the time. While the earlier grades express almost complete agreement with this statement, the extent of approval drops to 56 per cent by the ninth grade. The same pattern holds true for the statement that the government knows more than anyone. The positive evaluation registered in the second

grade (71 per cent) rapidly declines to only 9 per cent in the tenth and eleventh grades.

It is only when these students assess the power of the government that the extent of approval increases, rather than decreases, with age. While 37 per cent in the fourth grade agree that the government can make anyone do what it wants, 67 per cent agree with this statement by the eleventh. The average rate of agreement with this statement is 37 per cent for grades three through eight. This figure rises to 52 per cent for grades nine through twelve. It appears that this assessment of the power attribute may bear some relationship to the attitudes expressed regarding the benevolence of government. While an average of 59 per cent in grades two through eight agreed that the government would always want to help them, this average declined to 29 per cent in the latter four grades. It may be that as the student grows less certain of the benign nature of government, he is more apt to place additional emphasis upon its ability to punish. His increasing awareness of the government's capacity to inflict punishment might well tend to diminish his estimation of its benevolent qualities.

TABLE VI  
QUALITIES OF GOVERNMENT

Grades	Mistakes	Help	Decisions	Punish	Knows
2-5	56%*	68%	83%	51%	32%
6-8	24	58	69	37	8
9-12	18	29	57	52	15

\* Average per cent agreeing by grades

The government gets consistently high marks on one attribute of leadership (it always makes important decisions), and on the item of power (it can make anyone do what it wants). It also fares surprisingly well on the trait of benevolence. Although the government also initially receives high marks on both infallibility (almost never makes mistakes), and the second attribute of leadership (knowledge), both items suffer a rapid decline in the extent of approval. One would have expected a considerably more favorable assessment of the government's knowledgeability. But by the fifth grade a majority (84 per cent) disagree with the statement that the government knows more than anyone. This finding may be indicative, in some vague manner, of a cynical attitude toward the concept of government in general. But such speculation is supported in only the most tenuous of ways. One might conceivably attempt to find evidence for this allegation of cynicism in the corresponding increase in acknowledgment of the government's ability to inflict punishment. Such an interpretation would be predicated on the assumption that a powerful government dispensing punishment without adequate knowledge is one that invites cynicism. However, the relatively high rate of approval in the area of benevolence contradicts even this farfetched possibility.

Saliency of Political Authorities

Question: "Who helps you and your family the most? Circle the two who help you and your family the most. (1) Policeman; (2) Soldier; (3) Father; (4) Teacher; (5) President."

TABLE VII

RELATIVE SALIENCE OF SELECTED AUTHORITY FIGURES

Grade	Policeman	Soldier	Father	Teacher	President
2	55%*	11%	49%	27%	58%
3	55	10	78	29	27
4	52	13	73	40	21
5	55	5	73	18	49
6	43	6	90	15	48
7	44	7	98	21	33
8	33	16	89	46	14
9	21	10	96	58	15
10	36	16	86	25	11
11	31	11	82	11	22
12	41	24	78	30	7

\* Per cent responding

If the father option had been eliminated from the available choices, the policeman would have ranked first in every grade except the sixth, eighth and ninth. In these three grades, he would have held the second position behind the President in the sixth and the teacher in the eighth and ninth. The consistency of the responses is noteworthy. The rank order of the policeman is the same in the second and

twelfth grades. The percentage of students selecting the policeman drops only 14 points (from 55 to 41) between the second and twelfth grades. In contrast, the President suffers a decline from a second grade high of 58 per cent to only 7 per cent in the twelfth. While an average of 32 per cent of all high school students choose the policeman as one of the two authority figures who help them and their family the most, only 14 per cent of the same students select the President.

After the father and the policeman, the teacher is evaluated as the most helpful. But the teacher's rank order and percentage of the total vote is erratic. This figure declines from a rank order high of second in the eighth and ninth grades to a low of a tie for last in the eleventh. The drop in percentage points is from a high of 58 in the ninth grade to a low of 11 per cent in the eleventh. The support for the policeman is much more consistent.

The soldier, with only three exceptions, occupies the lowest rank in all grades. Only in the eighth and twelfth, where he outranks the President, and in the eleventh where he ties with the teacher for last place, does this pattern not prevail.

The rank orders for all five authority figures remain constant between the elementary and junior high grades. (See Table VIII). When the father is eliminated, the policeman ranks first in all three grade categories. In high

TABLE VIII

SALIENCE OF SELECTED AUTHORITY FIGURES  
 "Who helps you and your family the most?"

Grades	Policeman	Soldier	Father	Teacher	President
2-5	54%*	10%	68%	29%	39%
6-8	40	10	92	27	32
9-12	32	15	85	31	15

\* Average per cent by grades

school, the teacher assumes the second position occupied by the President in elementary and junior high. The latter drops into a tie for last with the soldier.

The President

As regards the President, on every item tested there is a decline in the percentage of agreement from the elementary to the junior high, and from the junior high to the high school. (See Appendix II, Tables XXI-XXV.) This drop is substantially more significant between the elementary and junior high grades than it is between junior high and high school.

The President fares the poorest on the attribute of attachment. Only 21 per cent of elementary school children express agreement with the statements measuring this affective attribute. These percentages decline to 3 per cent for junior high and high school students. The President does better on one measure of the attribute of benevolence. Even junior high students believe that the President would always

want to help them if they needed it. Forty-six per cent express agreement with this statement. It is interesting to note that these respondents accord higher marks to the government on the attribute of benevolence than they do to the President.

On the second measure of benevolence ("He protects me more than anyone"), the President receives a lower rate of approval than he does on any of the other items.

The President receives a more favorable evaluation on the measures of leadership than he does for any of the other attributes. Forty-four per cent of all students agree with the statements measuring Presidential leadership. When responses to the statement "He knows more than anyone" are eliminated, this average rises to 55 per cent. The government also received its lowest rating on this statement.

When the statement "He protects me more than anyone" is eliminated from the measurement of benevolence, the percentage of all respondents agreeing that the President would always want to help them rises to 41 per cent. It may be that the way the student feels about the President is a function of party loyalties. Since a Republican President held office during the administration of the questionnaire, it could logically be hypothesized that those children maintaining a Republican affiliation would tend to express a higher affective orientation.



TABLE IX

CORRELATION BETWEEN PARTY PREFERENCE  
AND AFFECT FOR THE PRESIDENT  
("I like him more than anyone.")

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Independents</u>
3	-.17	.10	.06
4	-.23	.04	.18
5	.14	.02	-.16
6	-.09	.14	-.06
7	.0	.0	.0
8	.0	.0	.0
9	-.07	.18	-.15
10	.14	.05	-.16
11	.0	.0	.0
12	-.04	-.08	.10

TABLE X

CORRELATION BETWEEN PARTY PREFERENCE  
AND AFFECT FOR THE PRESIDENT  
("He is my favorite of all.")

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Independents</u>
3	-.12	.11	.18
4	-.23	.17	.06
5	-.20	-.12	-.11
6	.07	.04	-.12
7	.0	.0	.0
8	.22	-.17	-.03
9	-.07	.18	-.15
10	.14	.05	-.16
11	-.03	-.18	.20
12	-.04	-.08	.10

It can be seen, however, that affect for the President is not associated with party preference. In none of the grades surveyed do any of the correlations achieve statistical significance.

### The Policeman

The respondents were asked the following question:  
Which is the most important for the policeman to do?

- (1) Make people obey the law.
- (2) Help people who are in trouble.
- (3) Catch people who break the law.

The results are tabulated below:

TABLE XI

#### CHILD'S VIEW OF THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB OF THE POLICEMAN

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Make people obey the law</u>	<u>Help people who are in trouble</u>	<u>Catch people who break the law</u>
2-5	23%*	26%	51%
6-8	34	41	24
9-12	31	47	22

\* Average per cent responding by grades

A majority of all elementary students emphasize the apprehension function. This emphasis changes, however, during the junior high and high school years. Forty-one and 47 per cent, respectively, of these students select the "help people who are in trouble" option. This choice received only 26 per cent of the responses in grades two through five. When the law enforcement aspect of the policeman's duties is

combined with the apprehension function, the two choices account for 74 per cent of the responses among elementary school children. This combination receives only 58 and 54 per cent of the vote among junior and senior high school students.

Here is another bit of evidence in support of our contention that the high affect expressed by young children toward authority figures can be largely attributed to their authoritarian orientations. It might be expected that these younger students would be most apt to emphasize the "help" aspect of the policeman's role. However, this is not the case. Only 28 per cent of them select the "help" item, while 23 per cent choose "make people obey the law" and 51 per cent opt for "catch people who break the law." It is in the elementary school curriculum that attention is given to the policeman as a "community helper." Yet a majority of the children exposed to his alleged benevolence choose to emphasize the enforcement and apprehension functions of his job. It is only in the later grades, when one might expect that the law enforcement aspect would emerge as most salient, that the students begin to accord high marks to the "helpful" item.

On the "power" attribute, elementary students are much more apt to attribute to the policeman the capacity to punish and coerce than are older children. (See Appendix II, Table XXVI.)

When compared with the President, there are no statistically significant differences in responses to the item,

"he can punish anyone." When the policeman is compared with the government, however, a different picture emerges. Fifty-one, 37, and 52 per cent of elementary, junior high and senior high school students are willing to attribute this capacity to the government. Thirty-nine, 16, and 21 per cent, respectively, believe that the government can punish anyone. Forty-seven per cent of all the students tested responded that the government has unlimited authority to inflict punishment. Twenty-five per cent attribute this power to the policeman and 27 per cent concede it to the President. One might have expected that the visibility and salience of the policeman, replete with badge, uniform, and weapons, would rank ahead of the government and President in his ability to inflict punishment. However, this is not the case.

Item: Which of these is it most wrong to disobey? Mother, Teacher, Father, Policeman.

TABLE XII

CHILD'S PERCEPTION OF RELATIVE NEED FOR  
OBEDIENCE TO VARIOUS AUTHORITY FIGURES

Grade	Mother	Teacher	Father	Policeman
2	7%*	11%	16%	65%
3	8	4	4	84
4	10	8	13	69
5	13	0	22	65
6	4	2	13	81
7	13	3	26	57
8	9	5	18	68
9	25	4	27	44
10	23	3	23	50
11	22	2	31	42
12	19	0	37	43

\* Per cent responding

In every grade category the policeman occupies the top rank order, followed by the father, mother, and teacher. In the elementary grades, five times as many children think it is more wrong to disobey the policeman than it is to disobey their father. And over twice as many respondents believe that it is more wrong to disobey the policeman than it is to disobey the three other figures combined. Again, however, the number of children who express this attitude steadily declines with age. While three times as many junior high students continue to choose the policeman as select the father, this figure drops to one and one-half times as many in the senior grades.

Four findings stand out so far about the policeman. First, he ranks only behind the father on the item of who helps the student and his family the most. Secondly, a plurality of the total respondents evaluate the single most important job of the policeman as helping people. However, when the law enforcement and apprehension functions are combined, their cumulative total is greater than that registered for the assistance aspect. It should also be noted that elementary students are more apt to choose the "catch people who break the law" item and less inclined to select the "help people" item than are the older students. Thirdly, 62 per cent of all students surveyed expressed the opinion that it is more wrong to disobey the policeman than it is to disobey their parents or teacher. Again, elementary school children are slightly more inclined to hold this opinion than junior

high students and substantially more likely to do so than high school students. Fourthly, the policeman's capacity to punish and coerce is equal to the President's but lags behind the assessment of the government in this regard.

On the other attributes for the policeman, the positive evaluations of the earlier grades again decline with age. The top rank order is occupied by the benevolence attribute. It is the only attribute to receive a majority of the total vote cast. And again, it is the assistance aspect of the policeman's role that is emphasized. Seventy-nine per cent of all the respondents agreed that the policeman would always want to help them if they needed it, while only 31 per cent agreed that he protects them more than anyone. The attachment attribute occupies last place. Only 24 and 15 per cent, respectively, of the total sample, respond that the policeman is both their favorite and that they like him more than anyone. (See Appendix II, Tables XXVII-XXVIII.)

#### Differences in Orientation Between Younger and Older Students

Between the second and eighth grades, the percentage of "agree" responses declines for every one of the qualities of government. (See Table XIII.) While a decline of only 25 points occurs on the "makes important decisions" item, a drop of 66 points is noted for the "knows more" item. The same pattern holds true for the President. Every item receives a lower percentage with the exception of the "gives up" item. And it appears that the phenomenon known as

TABLE XIII

DIFFERENCES IN RATINGS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITIES  
BETWEEN SECOND AND EIGHTH GRADES\*

Set Name (Item)	Government	President	Policeman	Senator	Court	Father
Attachment is my favorite like him		-.40 -.47	-.44 -.35	-.27		-.12 -.15
Benevolence would want to help me protects me	-.36	-.29 -.29	-.09 -.25	-.32	-.28	+.03 -.01
Dependability keeps promises makes mistakes gives up	-.47	-.53 -.44 +.18	-.59 -.12 +.17	-.46	-.33	-.27 -.21 +.24
Power can make others do can punish	-.52	-.37 -.46	-.28 -.38	-.40	-.15	-.19 -.07
Leadership knows more makes important decisions works harder is a leader	-.66 -.25	-.40 -.06 -.22 -.29	-.34 +.17 -.23 -.08	-.31 -.16	-.50 +.02	-.20 +.12 -.16 +.04

\*  $\angle$ (-) indicates decline in ratings, (+) indicates increase

response set in survey research can be held accountable for the responses to this particular statement. The lowest decline for the President occurs with regard to "makes important decisions," (6 points), while the greatest declines are noted for "keeps promises" (53), "is my favorite," (40), "I like him," (47), "makes mistakes," (44), "can punish," (46), and "knows more" (40). The major declines are sustained in



the areas of attachment, dependability, and power. The descents in approval are substantially lower for the attributes of benevolence and leadership. Even here, however, 29 percentage points separate the second and eighth grades on "would want to help me" and "protects me."

The policeman also sustains the greatest decline on the attributes of attachment, power and dependability. And the President follows an identical pattern. While the average drop for the President on both measures of benevolence (would want to help me and protects me) is only 17 points and for the attribute of leadership it is 20 points, a decline of 40 points is sustained on the attribute of attachment. There is a decline of 29 points in the area of dependability, and 33 are lost on the power attribute.

The Senator declines the most in the areas of dependability and power and the least on the attributes of benevolence, attachment and leadership.

The most striking finding about the Supreme Court is that a decline of only 15 points is noted on the "can punish" item. In the second grade, 55 per cent of the students agreed that the Court can punish anyone. In the eighth grade, 39 per cent continue to agree with this statement. This contrasts significantly with a drop on the same item of 52 points for the government (from 91 per cent to 39 per cent), 46 points for the President (from 65 to 19 per cent), 38 points for the policeman (from 56 to 18 per cent), and 40 points for the Senator (from 44 to 4 per cent). The same

holds true for the item, "makes important decisions." There is an increase of 2 percentage points for the Court while there is a decline of 25 points for the government, 6 for the President, 17 for the policeman, and 16 for the Senator.

Father fares better than any of the figures of political authority. The percentage of approval for father increases by 3 points on the item "would want to help," 12 points on "makes important decisions," and 4 points on "is a leader." With the exception of "makes mistakes," the decline for father on every item is lower than the drop sustained by the other figures and institutions. Along with the President and policeman, the greatest decline in agreement occurred in response to the item "he always keeps his promises."

In general, it can be concluded that the extent of approval declines substantially for every figure of political authority. There is only one exception. On the item "makes important decisions," the Supreme Court is rated 2 percentage points more favorably in the eighth than in the second grade. Several patterns can be discerned. The greatest decline in approval is noted for the "keeps promises" item while the lowest is found for "makes important decisions." In addition, the respondents from grades two through eight are much more consistent in their evaluation of the policeman's benevolence and dependability than they are in their appraisal of these two attributes for the other figures. The percentage of agreement with the statement "would always want to help me" declined by only 9 points for the policeman, while the

percentage for the other figures (minus the father) dropped an average of 31 points. For the item "almost never makes mistakes," the decline was 12 points for the policeman and an average of 43 for the other figures.

It is in the areas of benevolence and leadership that the lowest overall declines occur. The "knows more" item is an exception. (The decline for this item on the leadership scale is among the sharpest.) But for the statements "he would always want to help me," "he protects me more than anyone," "he is always a leader," "he works harder than almost anyone," and "he always makes important decisions," the drop is much less.

The eighth grader is much less attached to these political authorities than is the second grader. He also views them as significantly less dependable and powerful. (The Supreme Court is an exception. While the Court declined 15 points on the "can punish" statement, the other figures dropped an average of 44 points.) However, the eighth grader is as willing to accord them benevolent leader status as is the much younger student. There are anomalies here. Why should the eighth grader assess political authorities as less powerful than the second grader without registering a significantly less favorable assessment of their leadership qualities as well? And why should he see these political authorities as less dependable but not as less benevolent? These are questions that we will explore in the next chapter.

The differences between the eighth and twelfth grades are less substantial than the differences between second and eighth graders. However, we cannot agree with Hess and Torney or with Easton and Dennis that political attitudes and orientations do not change after the eighth grade. High school seniors are less apt to accord benevolence to political authorities. (The Supreme Court is an exception. Twelfth graders give a significantly higher rating on the statement "would always want to help me" than do eighth graders.) They are also less inclined to give high marks on the attribute of dependability.

TABLE XIV

DIFFERENCES IN RATINGS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITIES  
BETWEEN EIGHTH AND TWELFTH GRADES\*

Set Name (Item)	Government	President	Policeman	Senator	Court	Father
Attachment						
is my favorite		-.03	-.10			-.01
I like him		+.02	-.09	-.02		-.06
Benevolence						
would want to						
help me	-.21	-.13	-.23	-.06	+.17	-.11
protects me		0	+.02			-.08
Dependability						
keeps promises		-.14	-.08			0
makes mistakes	-.09	-.07	-.17	-.07	-.06	-.04
gives up		-.01	-.04			+.04
Power						
can make others						
do		-.10	-.04			-.02
can punish	+.07	0	-.03	0	-.01	-.11
Leadership						
knows more	+.14	0	+.02	-.04	+.06	-.01
makes important						
decisions	-.09	-.11	-.43	-.12	-.04	-.22
works harder		-.10	-.02			+.17
is a leader	+	+.10	0			+.04

\* (-) indicates decline in rating; (+) indicates increase

TABLE XV

DIFFERENCES IN RATINGS OF POLITICAL AUTHORITIES  
BETWEEN SECOND AND TWELFTH GRADES\*

Set Name (Item)	Government	President	Policeman	Senator	Court	Father
Attachment						
is my favorite		-.43	-.54			-.13
I like him		-.45	-.44	-.29		-.21
Benevolence						
would want to						
help me	-.59	-.42	-.32	-.38	-.11	-.08
protects me		-.29	-.23			-.09
Dependability						
keeps promises		-.67	-.67			-.27
makes mistakes	-.56	-.51	-.29	-.53	-.39	-.25
gives up		+.17	+.13			+.28
Power						
can make others						
do		-.47	-.32			-.21
can punish	-.45	-.46	-.41	-.40	-.16	-.18
Leadership						
knows more	-.52	-.40	-.32	-.35	-.44	-.18
makes important						
decisions	-.34	-.17	-.26	-.28	-.02	-.10
works harder		-.32	-.25			+.01
is a leader		-.19	-.08			+.08

\* (-) indicates decline in rating; (+) indicates increase

Rank of All Objects of Authority  
on Each Attribute by Grade  
(See Appendix II, Tables XXIX-XXXIII.)

In every grade but the fifth, the policeman outranks the President on the item "he is my favorite." The President also does poorly on the second measure of attachment. In every grade but the third and fifth, the President ranks either third or last on the item "I like him more than anyone." In four grades, he ranks last behind the Senator and in two others he ties for last with the Senator. Again, it is the

policeman who scores surprisingly well on the attachment attribute. He ranks second behind the father in every grade with the exception of the third and fifth. This finding is contrary to the one reported by Easton and Dennis. They found the father ranked first in every grade, followed by the President, policeman, and Senator. We find that the President's position in the rank order is consistent. He does not, as was expected, fare best in the early grades. On the item "he is my favorite," he occupies the last position behind the father and policeman in the first three grades. On the "I like him" statement, the President ranks third in the second grade, second in the third, and fourth in the fourth grade. The respondents in this sample appear to be strongly attached to the policeman but are no more attached to the President than they are to the Senator. In fact, tenth and eleventh graders give a higher rank to the Senator than they do to the President. The President declines from a low rank order in the early grades to an even lower one by the high school years.

On the benevolence attribute, the results are also surprising. These students' perception of the policeman is highly favorable and their perception of the President is unfavorable. In all but two of the grades tested, the policeman ranked only behind the father on the "would want to help me" item. And in those two grades he is tied for the first position. On the second measure of benevolence, the policeman also ranks behind the father in all but one of the grades. In that grade, he again ties for first.



The President fares poorly on both benevolence items. In grades seven through twelve he ranks last on the "would want to help" statement. His position in the earlier grades is not much better. On the "he protects me" item, the President occupies the last position in every grade. In one respect, these findings are in accord with those reported by Easton and Dennis. Those authors also found the President in last place on the "protects me" item, and on "would want to help" the President ranked behind the policeman in every grade. However, on the "would want to help" statement Easton and Dennis found the President to rank third among the six objects of authority. In this study, the President ranks last in most grades and only occasionally does he rise as high as fourth or fifth position. Among our respondents, the government, Senator, and Supreme Court alternate in holding the third rank. The government most often occupies the third spot. It does so on six occasions although its rank declines with grade. In contrast, the Supreme Court improves its position with age. There is evidence in this finding of a move toward institutionalization of authority on the part of the child as he grows older. But it is the father and policeman who hold the top ranks on the benevolence attribute. Even the Senator tends to be held in higher regard in the high school grades than the government and Supreme Court. The Court achieves the third position only among seniors.



As was true on the attachment and benevolence attributes, the President again ranks last behind the father and policeman on the "promises" item measure of dependability. In the first two grades, the policeman is seen as more apt to keep his promises than the other two figures. By the sixth grade, however, a consistent rank order of father, policeman and President has been established.

A similar pattern is evident on the second measure of dependability. The President is generally seen as the least persistent of the three figures. From grades six through twelve the President is evaluated by these students as most apt to give up when things are hard to do. On the third measure of dependability, however, the pattern changes. Again, the President does not fare especially well. But neither does the policeman or father. It is the institutions that dominate the top rank orders. The government occupies the first rank in the first two grades and although it declines to last in the ninth, it improves its position in the last three grades. It is the Supreme Court, however, which achieves preeminence. From an alternation in rank between fourth and second in the first four grades, the Court jumps to first in the sixth. It holds the top position in grades nine through twelve.

Again, these findings conflict with the evidence reported by Easton and Dennis. They found that on the trustworthiness item (keeps promises) the President ranked first in every grade tested. In this study, the President is

scored a consistent third. On the persistence measure (gives up), Easton and Dennis found the President least apt to give up, with the policeman most inclined to do so. We concluded just the opposite. On the infallibility measure of dependability, the findings are more in accord. In the later grades, both studies have the Supreme Court in the top rank.

The highly positive evaluation accorded the policeman is again evident on the "can make anyone do what he wants" item. In the first two grades, the policeman is ranked behind the President. But by the fourth grade he occupies the top spot. He is seen as more capable of controlling others than is the President. A definite pattern is evident during the high school years, with the policeman ranked first and followed by the President and father.

The policeman again ranks higher in this study than in the investigation conducted by Easton and Dennis. Those researchers found the President in the top position in every grade on the "can make others do" item. It should be noted that the findings of the two studies are more in agreement during the earlier grades than in the later ones. But the fact that the policeman does not consistently occupy the top rank in this study until the high school years, is additional evidence in support of the contention that political orientations are susceptible to change after the eighth grade.

On the "can punish" item, (where all six political objects are included), the President fares slightly better

than the policeman. However, the power of the policeman vis-a-vis the President is still significant. In two grades, the policeman is seen as more capable of invoking sanctions than the President and in two others he is tied with the President.

It is the government and Supreme Court that emerge as dominant on the "can punish" measure of power. In seven of the eleven grades tested, the government holds undisputed claim to the top rank, and after the first two grades the Court is either first or second. Easton and Dennis tested in only the fourth and eighth grades for this item. They found the Court in the top position in both grades with the government in third place in the fourth grade and second place in the eighth grade.

On the two measures of leadership, (knows more and makes decisions), the Supreme Court again emerges as dominant. It ranks especially well in grades six through twelve while the other institution (government) consistently occupies the top position in grades two through five. On the knowledgeability item, the government ranks second behind the Court in the later grades. However, on the decision-making measure the second position in the later grades is occupied by the President. These findings agree with those reported by Easton and Dennis who also found the President, government and Supreme Court occupying the first three ranks in the last grade tested. However, they discovered the President in first place, followed by the government and

Court. We find the Court in undisputed possession of the top rank with the government a weak third.

On the third measure of leadership, (diligence), the father is seen as a harder worker than either the President or policeman. Easton and Dennis discovered the President in the top rank in all grades surveyed with the father and policeman occupying the second and third positions. We find the father in first place with the President holding the second rank.

The President is generally dominant on the "is always a leader" item. The policeman again comes in last. Easton and Dennis reached a similar conclusion in regard to the President. However, their second rank was occupied by the policeman. The respondents in this sample tend to rate their fathers substantially higher than the students in the Easton and Dennis study.

When the father is eliminated from the analysis, the policeman is seen as the most benevolent of all of the objects of authority. He is followed by the government, Supreme Court, and senator. The President is last. This pattern holds among age groups. The policeman is ranked first by every group although the government declines to fourth among high school students. The Supreme Court and senator improve their positions with older students.

In the aggregate, the Supreme Court is chosen as the most dependable. The other institution (government) is second with the President and senator occupying the last

two positions. When age groups are analyzed, it is seen that the government and President are most popular with younger students while the Court, policeman, and government are most often chosen by older respondents.

The government and Supreme Court are regarded as the two most powerful political objects. Only during the junior high grades does the government relinquish the top rank. The Court is seen as more powerful by older students while the President and policeman are seen as less so.

Overall, the two institutions occupy the first two rank orders on both measures of the leadership attribute. The government is first and the Court is second on the knowledgeability item and the positions are reversed on the decision-making item. When the age groups are analyzed, however, it is seen that the Court is held in substantially higher regard on both measures. The best rank that the government can manage on the knowledgeability item is a tie for first in the elementary grades with the President. The Court is third within this age group but rises to the top position among junior and senior high students. On the decision-making measure, the government drops to third place in junior high and fourth among high school respondents. The Court holds the first rank order within both these age groups.

The two institutions are the most highly regarded of the five objects of political authority. We find little evidence, overall, of an especially favorable evaluation of

the President. That figure ranks behind the policeman and only slightly ahead of the senator. The move from personalization to institutionalization of authority, on the part of these respondents, is rapid. Even in grades two through five, the government is seen as the most benevolent, dependable, and powerful of political objects. The Supreme Court is rated third. Although the President is ranked second by these younger students, he declines to a permanent fourth, thereafter. The rankings remain stable from junior high through high school. The Supreme Court is the most highly regarded on the four attributes considered (benevolence, dependability, power, leadership), while the other institution (government) occupies the second position. The policeman ranks third and the President is fourth.

Several findings are particularly noteworthy. First, there is a noticeable trend, with age, toward an institutionalization of political authority. Secondly, there are significant differences between junior high and high school students. Thirdly, the Supreme Court and policeman are held in particularly high regard while the President is not as highly rated as previous socialization research had led us to expect. And finally, it is the respondents' fathers rather than any of the political authorities who are the most favorably evaluated on many of the attributes.

We will now turn to a consideration of the relative importance of the independent variables in predicting to political attitudes and orientations.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE DETERMINANTS OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND ORIENTATIONS

In the previous chapter, several patterns were noticed in the development of political attitudes. We saw that as the child grows older he becomes both less favorable in his assessment of political authority and moves away from a personalization of such authority toward institutionalization. We also saw that the highly favorable evaluation of the President reported in other socialization research is not manifested here. Rather, the President's position is usurped by the policeman. In addition, the greatest change in attitudes and orientations occurs between elementary and junior high school, although some change continues to take place after the junior high years. We are now interested in determining if the independent variables have any effect, either within or across grades, upon the political attitudes expressed by the respondents.

A correlational analysis revealed that age was the only variable with any significant explanatory power. Sex, religion, SES, race, and political preference had little effect upon attitudes and orientations, either within or across the grades surveyed. Although a few significant correlations were noted between the independent and dependent variables, these coefficients were not of such a direction and consistency to infer support for the argument that these variables



can explain differences in political development. It is interesting to note that black and Mexican-American students were not less favorable than white respondents in their evaluation of political authorities. In fact, blacks and Mexican-Americans tended to rate the various objects higher than their white counterparts. It may be that these ethnic groups are more cynical toward, and less trustful of, political authority than Anglos.<sup>1</sup> However, we find no evidence in support of that contention among this sample of respondents. Indeed, the little cynicism that is expressed is voiced by the white students.

We are left with the age of the respondents as the most significant predictor variable. Students who belong to the same age group but who differ on the basis of race, religion, sex, party preference, and SES are apt to respond in a uniform way to figures of political authority. On the other hand, students who are similar on these characteristics but who differ on the basis of age are likely to respond in different ways to these same authorities. Why? Why do children move from personalization to institutionalization? What accounts for the abrupt change in orientations between elementary school and junior high? It is not enough simply to

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<sup>1</sup>Edward S. Greenberg, "Black Children and the Political System: A Study of Socialization to Support," (unpublished paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, 1969), p. 19, and Joel D. Aberbach and Jack L. Walker, "Political Trust and Racial Ideology," American Political Science Review, LXIV (December, 1970), p. 1211.

discover the content of political learning. Richard Merelman writes that most socialization research shares "a preoccupation with preferences and feelings; investigators rarely consider modes of political perception and cognition."<sup>2</sup> We agree. We also intend to present additional evidence in support of our hypothesis that political attitudes and orientations are largely a function of cognitive development.

Richard Merelman writes:

My concern with adolescence proceeds from a belief that articulate modes of political evaluation and cognition do not reveal themselves until childhood is surmounted. Hence, adolescence may be a crucial period for the development of policy thinking. Basic orientations and identifications may develop during childhood, but styles of thought are more likely to crystallize during adolescence.<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Adelson and Robert O'Neil note an authoritarian syndrome among children. They write that "younger subjects are more likely to approve of coercion. . . . They find it hard to imagine that authority may be irrational, presumptuous, or whimsical; thus they bend easily to the collective will."<sup>4</sup> They also found that:

As the youngster begins to understand the structure and functioning of the social order as a whole, he

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<sup>2</sup>Richard M. Merelman, "The Development of Policy Thinking in Adolescence," American Political Science Review, LXV (December, 1971), p. 1033.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Adelson and Robert P. O'Neil, "Growth of Political Ideas in Adolescence: The Sense of Community," in Adolescent Behavior and Society, ed. by Rolf E. Muuss, (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 191.

begins to understand too the specific social institutions within it and their relation to the whole. He comes to comprehend the autonomy of institutions, their need to remain viable, to sustain and enhance themselves. Thus the demands of the social order and its constituent institutions, as well as the needs of the public, become matters to be appraised in formulating political choices.<sup>5</sup>

As the child grows older, he develops an increased "ability to weigh the relative consequences of actions, the attainment of deductive reasoning. The achievement of these capacities . . . allows him to escape that compulsion toward the immediate, the tangible, the narrowly pragmatic which so limits the political discourse of younger adolescents."<sup>6</sup>

David Ausubel writes that:

. . . the elementary school pupil is still dependent upon current or recently prior concrete empirical experience: when such experience is not available, he finds abstract relational propositions unrelatable to cognitive structure and hence devoid of meaning. This dependence upon concrete-empirical props self-evidently limits his ability meaningfully to grasp and manipulate relationships between abstractions, since he can only acquire those understandings and perform those logical operations which do not go beyond the concrete and particularized representation of reality implicit in his use of props. Thus, where complex relational propositions are involved, he is largely restricted to a sub-verbal, concrete, or intuitive level of cognitive functioning, a level that falls far short of the clarity, precision, explicitness, and generality, associated with the more advanced abstract stage of intellectual development.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 191-192.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>David P. Ausubel, "Implications of Preadolescent and Early Adolescent Cognitive Development for Secondary-School Teaching," in Studies in Adolescence, ed. by Robert E. Grinder (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 467.

Our evidence supports the above statements. And in order to test the developmental hypothesis further, we decided to engage in an additional comparison between the affective and cognitive orientations of our respondents. According to developmental, or "genetic maturation"<sup>8</sup> theory, elementary school children (concrete-operational thought stage) should differ considerably from those students at a higher level of cognitive development (formal-operational thought stage). We have already seen that young children are both more favorable toward political authorities and are more apt to select personal figures over institutions. But this evidence is not sufficient to reject the thesis of Easton and Dennis, for they discovered a similar pattern of development. However, although these researchers agree that the child becomes less approving of political authority as he ages, they maintain that the great store of good-will built up in earlier years will persist. This diffuse support will endure, albeit in a modified form, and will contribute to the persistence of the political system.

If we can demonstrate, however, that there is little consistency to the child's orientations and attitudes, if they are erratic, if they "tend to be self-contradictory, or loosely held and hence easily abandoned,"<sup>9</sup> and if "abstract

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<sup>8</sup>Merelman, "Development of Policy Thinking," p. 1044.

<sup>9</sup>Adelson and O'Neil, "Growth of Political Ideas," p. 191.

relational propositions" appear to be "devoid of meaning,"<sup>10</sup> then we will have provided additional evidence in support of a developmental, genetic maturation perspective.

The factor analytic method was chosen for our purposes. Factor analysis provides a means whereby underlying dimensions, if any, may be discovered in a body of data. Donald Veldman writes that:

The general goal of factor analysis is the reduction of a set of variables used to gather data from subjects to a smaller set of new, uncorrelated variables which are defined solely in terms of the original dimensions, and which retain the most "important" information contained in the original data. Factors, then are variables or dimensions of the same general nature as those variables from which they were derived. They may be used to describe subjects also, but at a higher level of abstraction. In some situations, factor analysis may be considered a procedure for exposing the essential determining constructs behind a set of observable behaviors.<sup>11</sup>

The principal components solution, which continues to generate factors until the eigen value falls below one (at least one variable is "explained"), was selected from a number of solutions available. (The principal components technique, because of the indeterminacy of factor analytic solutions, incorporates a number of arbitrary assumptions.) Fifteen separate factor analyses were conducted of the data. First, an analysis was made of all thirteen responses over all grades for each of the following figures: President,

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<sup>10</sup>Ausubel, "Early Adolescent Cognitive Development," p. 467.

<sup>11</sup>Donald J. Veldman, Fortran Programming for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: Holt, Rinehard and Winston, 1967), p. 206.

policeman, and father. Separate analyses were then conducted of the five responses over all grades to the government, senator, and Supreme Court. Then, in order to insure comparability, additional analyses were made of the same five responses for the President, policeman, and father. Finally, all responses for the President, policeman, and father were broken down by grade level (elementary, junior high, high school), and separate analyses were conducted at each stage.

In their study Children in the Political System, David Easton and Jack Dennis maintained that each statement eliciting affective and cognitive orientations toward political authorities measured one of five attributes: attachment, benevolence, dependability, power, and leadership. The factor analysis of our responses to all political objects over all grades reveals, however, that these thirteen statements do not, with any consistency, measure the attributes they should. Or, put another way, over all grades the five attributes do not appear to represent separate and distinct dimensions. A few examples will suffice to demonstrate.



TABLE XVI

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ALL RESPONSES TO PRESIDENT - ALL GRADES  
(Includes factor loadings .40 or better)

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>
Like			.74	
Favorite			.78	
Help				
Protects			.58	
Promises				.76
Mistakes				.53
Gives Up	.41	-.47		
Make Do	.79			
Punish	.78			
Decisions		.74		
Leader		.69		
Knows	.47		.42	
Works		.46		

TABLE XVII

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ALL RESPONSES TO POLICEMAN - ALL GRADES

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>
Help		.54		.42
Promises				.59
Decisions		.57		
Knows	.51			
Make Do			-.81	
Favorite	.74			
Gives Up		-.74		
Mistakes				.86
Leader		.41		
Works		.42		
Protects	.66			
Punish			-.78	
Like	.82			

The other factor structures reveal a similar pattern. The dimensions are not intuitively pleasing; they exhibit no internal consistency. Leadership variables do not appear together and dependability and benevolence variables do not each load on two separate factors. Rather, when all grades are included in the analysis, variables that should load



together appear to cluster at random. At least two reasons may account for this situation. First, it may be that these variables would not load together under any condition. Statements that allegedly measure leadership, for instance, may actually be measures of several different attributes. There is some evidence in our other factor analyses to indicate that this may be a partial answer. However, we hypothesize that the responses of elementary school children are responsible for the distortion and apparent randomness of variable loadings. Adelson and O'Neil maintain that there are substantial differences between eleven, thirteen, and fifteen-year-old children. The eleven-year-old "cannot comfortably reason from premises; he has not attained hypothetico-deductive modes of analysis," while the thought of the thirteen-year-old is "an uneasy mixture of the concrete and the formal." The fifteen-year-old, however, "has an assured grasp of formal thought."<sup>12</sup> Therefore, we hypothesize that children in grades two through five will be most apt to give answers, in response to statements measuring political orientations, that are contradictory and inconsistent. Junior high students will be less inclined to do so. Ansubel writes that beginning in junior high school the child

. . . becomes capable of understanding and manipulating relationships between abstractions, directly . . . without any reference whatsoever to concrete, empirical reality. He can now transcend the previously achieved level of sub-verbal,

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<sup>12</sup>Adelson and O'Neil, "Growth of Political Ideas," p. 192.

intuitive thought and understanding, and can come to grips in more general terms with all possible or hypothetical relations between abstract ideas.<sup>13</sup>

We do not mean to imply that these various stages of cognitive development will be clear-cut and distinct. Some children develop their cognitive abilities at a slower pace than others. There will be considerable overlap between the termination of one stage and the beginning of another.

The factor analyses of the three separate grade levels for all responses for the President and policeman support our developmental hypothesis. Elementary school children are significantly less consistent and substantially more contradictory in their responses to these authorities than junior high and high school students. We would have expected the comparisons to reveal even greater differences if the transition between the various cognitive stages was not characterized by considerable overlap.

Two measures of power and two of leadership load on the first factor. (See Table XVIII). A dependability item and a leadership measure cluster on the second while two affect items and one measure of benevolence load on the third. However, all three loadings are negative. The final factor also reveals contradictory elements. A benevolence item (he protects me more than anyone) loads positively with a measure of dependability (he always keeps his promises), which loads negatively. Included on this factor is a positive

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<sup>13</sup>Ausubel, "Early Adolescent Cognitive Development," p. 467.

TABLE XVIII

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ALL RESPONSES TO PRESIDENT - GRADES 2-5  
(Includes factor loadings .40 or better)

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>
Like			-.78	
Favorite			-.81	
Help			-.62	
Protects				.51
Promises				-.57
Mistakes		.79		
Gives Up				.71
Make Do	.84			
Punish	.85			
Decisions		.68		
Leader	.47			
Knows	.60			
Works				

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loading for "He almost always gives up when things are hard to do." Since a positive response to this statement indicates a negative evaluation, and since children in this age group are generally favorable toward the President, we must interpret this loading as further evidence of response inconsistency.

When we look at the results of the factor analysis for junior high students, a more consistent pattern begins to emerge. A distinct "power" factor is evident. And three of the four significant loadings on the fifth factor are leadership items.

TABLE XIX

## FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ALL RESPONSES TO PRESIDENT - GRADES 9-12

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>	<u>Factor 5</u>
Like			-.72		
Favorite			-.78		
Help					-.64
Protects			-.45		-.49
Promises					-.66
Mistakes				.47	
Gives Up	-.69				
Make Do		.80			
Punish		.87			
Decisions	.72				
Leader	.53				
Knows				.84	
Works	.61				

The responses of high school students provide a clear factor structure. The "power" factor (#2) is again evident. In addition, both a distinct "leadership" factor (#1) and a "negative benevolence - affection" factor (#3) emerge. We label #4 an "omnipotent" factor and #5 a "negative benevolence - dependability" factor.

When all responses for the policeman are analyzed, we discover that two of the four factors in grades two through five are recognizable. One is a "negative benevolence - dependability" factor and the other we label a "powerful leader" factor. As predicted, the factor structures become

TABLE XX

## FACTOR ANALYSIS OF ALL RESPONSES TO POLICEMAN - GRADES 6-8

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>	<u>Factor 5</u>
Help			.78		
Promises				-.70	
Decisions					.80
Knows					
Make Do		.69			
Favorite	.77				
Gives Up		.55	-.57		
Mistakes				-.74	
Leader					.68
Works	.67				
Protects			.51		
Punish		.79			
Like	.78				

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more consistent with age. Among junior high students all five of the factors are recognizable.

The five factors correspond remarkably to the five attributes of affection, power, benevolence, dependability, and leadership. The factors derived for grades nine through twelve are not as neat as we expected. However, the responses of this age group reveal a consistency that is absent in the elementary grades.

At the outset of this study we posited that the variables traditionally employed in socialization research would prove to be of little importance. It was hypothesized that

sex, religion, SES, and political preference would not predict to differences in political attitudes and orientations. Our evidence supports these hypotheses. It was also hypothesized that race would exert an impact upon the development of political attitudes. However, the data do not support that expectation. Age was the only variable that predicted to political attitudes and orientations.

Social learning theory suggests that childhood attitudes and orientations are strongly conditioned by the stage of cognitive development. It was decided, therefore, to conduct a factor analysis of the data in order to determine if the responses of the students coincided with the various stages of cognitive development. The analysis revealed that the younger students are likely to respond to political authority in an erratic and contradictory fashion. Older students are much more consistent in their attitudes and orientations. Therefore, it was maintained that the differences between elementary and older students could be attributed to the particular stage of intellectual development rather than to environmental factors.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

It has been customary in previous socialization research to concentrate investigative efforts upon young children. We feel that such an approach has been overemphasized. We do not mean to imply that the basic orientations and preferences expressed by these children are unimportant and therefore unworthy of further research; however, it is felt that these attitudes and feelings are largely a function of the particular stage of cognitive development. And if our hypothesis is valid, these orientations will tend to be erratic, contradictory, inconsistent, and only tenuously adhered to. During this period the child does not possess a sufficiently well-developed reasoning capacity to allow him to deal with abstractions, distinguish between and choose from among conflicting hypotheses, give consideration to the obligations of community, engage in deductive reasoning, and deal with future contingencies. He is limited to a reference point that is dependent upon the concrete realities of what is. Therefore,

. . . there is an impressive difference between the younger and older adolescents in the orderliness and internal consistency of their political perspectives. What passes for ideology in the younger respondents is a raggle-taggle array of sentiments. . . . When younger subjects are cross-questioned, however gently, they are



ready to reverse themselves even on issues they seem to feel strongly about. When older subjects are challenged, however sharply, they refute, debate, and counterchallenge.<sup>1</sup>

The moral reasoning of the child is characterized by an immaturity that stresses obedience to authority, hedonism, and rewards and punishment. And how he reasons (or fails to reason) will condition his responses to a set of political authorities of whom he knows very little in a substantive sense. This is not to maintain that the orientations an individual expresses during childhood will disappear with adolescence. That is an empirical question and the evidence (including our own) tends to indicate that at least for affective and cognitive orientations the changes, while quite substantial, are not dramatic. But the adolescent is dramatically different in another respect. He can change. It is during this period when at least some students are no longer predictable in either attitude or action. The favorable orientations of childhood may linger and continue to be expressed in response to lengthy questionnaires, and continue as well to comfort socialization scholars who marvel at the persistence of political preference and feelings. But the cognitive powers of the adolescent bear little resemblance to those of the child. And the same meaning cannot be imputed to the two sets of orientations, attitudes, and preferences.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Adelson and Robert P. O'Neil, "Growth of Political Ideas in Adolescence: The Sense of Community," in Adolescent Behavior and Society, ed. by Rolf E. Muuss (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 191.

We do not suggest that the results of our factor and correlational analyses provide conclusive evidence in support of our developmental thesis. In fact, many would argue that environmental influences such as peer groups, family, school, and socioeconomic variables are of more importance. Merelman writes that:

A genetic-developmental interpretation presents peculiar inferential difficulties because its major variable is time, which catalogs the maturation of abilities. But men are social creatures. Hence, environmental forces constantly interfere with and contaminate genetic maturation. It is therefore impossible to determine the true extent to which such maturation regulates policy thought. Only if we could observe wholly uncontaminated subjects as they age would such an estimation become possible.<sup>2</sup>

We agree. But an identical argument can be leveled against the environmentalists. The debate becomes tautological. One cannot parcel out the effects of either age or environmental factors for two reasons: first, because of the high multi-collinearity between the independent variables; and second, because of the nature of the subject matter--the individuals being researched. Indeed, Merelman compromises by noting that "our findings demand a developmental theory that allows room for environmental effects and that permits uneven maturation of skills,"<sup>3</sup> and by maintaining that "most political thinking results from a combination of genetic-

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<sup>2</sup>Richard M. Merelman, "The Development of Policy Thinking in Adolescence," American Political Science Review, LXV (December, 1971), p. 1045.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1046.

maturational and politically related environmental factors."<sup>4</sup> Ausubel responds to these points by noting that "actually, developmental stages imply nothing more than identifiable, qualitatively distinctive sequential phases in an orderly progression of development; and from the standpoint of this definition, all of the . . . cited arguments disputing the legitimacy of Piaget's concrete and abstract stages seem quite irrelevant."<sup>5</sup>

We do not deny the possible importance of environmental factors. However, this thesis has pursued a developmental hypothesis for reasons of theoretical parsimony and because we wished to develop a counterpoise to the overemphasis in political socialization research upon childhood and environmental variables. We feel our thesis has been vindicated.

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1047.

<sup>5</sup>David P. Ausubel, "Implications of Preadolescent and Early Adolescent Cognitive Development for Secondary-School Teaching," in Studies in Adolescence, ed. by Robert E. Grinder (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1965), p. 468.

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## APPENDIX I

### QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire takes from twenty minutes to one hour to complete.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a boy or a girl? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a: Catholic Protestant Jew Other No Religion

What does your father do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a: Republican Democrat Sometimes Republican

Sometimes Democrat Other

Is your father a: Republican Democrat Sometimes Republican

Sometimes Democrat Other

Is your mother a: Republican Democrat Sometimes Republican

Sometimes Democrat Other

Here are some people and things that will tell what our government is. Pick the two people or things that tell best what our government is. Circle the two numbers of your choice.

- |               |                      |                      |
|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Policeman  | 2. George Washington | 3. Uncle Sam         |
| 4. Voting     | 5. Supreme Court     | 6. National Capitol  |
| 7. Congress   | 8. Flag              | 9. Statue of Liberty |
| 10. President | 11. I don't know     |                      |

Who makes the laws? Circle the number of the one who does the most to make the laws.

- |             |              |                  |                 |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Congress | 2. President | 3. Supreme Court | 4. I don't know |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|

Who does the most to run the country? Circle the number of the one who does the most to run the country.

- |             |              |                  |                 |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Congress | 2. President | 3. Supreme Court | 4. I don't know |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|

Think of the Government as it really is. Circle the answer of your choice.

The Government almost never makes mistakes.-- Yes No

It would always want to help me if I needed it.-- Yes No

It makes important decisions all the time.-- Yes No

It can punish anyone.-- Yes No

It knows more than anyone.-- Yes No

Who helps you and your family the most? Circle the numbers of the two who help you and your family the most.

1. Policeman 2. Soldier 3. Father 4. Teacher 5. President

Think of the President as he really is. Circle the answer of your choice.

I like the President more than anyone.-- Yes No

He is my favorite of all.-- Yes No

He would always want to help me if I needed it.-- Yes No

He protects me more than anyone.-- Yes No

He always keeps his promises.-- Yes No

He almost never makes mistakes.-- Yes No

He almost always gives up when things are hard to do.-- Yes No

He can make anyone do what he wants.-- Yes No

He can punish anyone.-- Yes No

He makes important decisions all the time.-- Yes No

He is always a leader.-- Yes No

He knows more than anyone.-- Yes No

He works harder than almost anyone.-- Yes No

Think of the Policeman as he really is. Circle the answer of your choice.

The Policeman would always want to help me if I needed it.  
-- Yes No

He always keeps his promises.-- Yes No

He makes important decisions all the time.-- Yes No

He knows more than anyone.-- Yes No

He can make anyone do what he wants.-- Yes No

He is my favorite of all.-- Yes No

He almost always gives up when things are hard to do.--  
Yes No

He almost never makes mistakes.-- Yes No

He is always a leader.-- Yes No

He works harder than almost anyone.-- Yes No

He protects me more than anyone.-- Yes No

He can punish anyone.-- Yes No

I like him more than anyone.-- Yes No

---

Think of your Father as he really is. Circle the answer of your choice.

I like my Father more than anyone.-- Yes No

He protects me more than anyone.-- Yes No

He almost always gives up when things are hard to do.--  
Yes No

He works harder than almost anyone.-- Yes No

He almost never makes mistakes.-- Yes No

He is always a leader.-- Yes No

He can punish anyone.-- Yes No

He would always want to help me if I needed it.-- Yes No

He is my favorite of all.-- Yes No

He always keeps his promises.-- Yes No

He makes important decisions all the time.-- Yes No

He knows more than anyone.-- Yes No

He can make anyone do what he wants.-- Yes No

---

Think of the Average United States Senator as he really is. Circle the answer of your choice.

A United States Senator almost never makes mistakes.--  
Yes No

He would always want to help me if I needed it.-- Yes No

He makes important decisions all the time.-- Yes No

He can punish anyone.-- Yes No

He knows more than anyone.-- Yes No

I like him more than anyone.-- Yes No

Think of the Supreme Court as it really is. Circle the answer of your choice.

The Supreme Court almost never makes mistakes.-- Yes No

It would always want to help me if I needed it.-- Yes No

It makes important decisions all the time.-- Yes No

It can punish anyone.-- Yes No

It knows more than anyone.-- Yes No

Disobey means to do something someone tells you not to do. Which of these is the most wrong? Circle the number of the one that is the most wrong to disobey.

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. To disobey your <u>mother</u> .  | 3. To disobey your <u>father</u> .   |
| 2. To disobey your <u>teacher</u> . | 4. To disobey the <u>policeman</u> . |

If you think a policeman is wrong in what he tells you to do, what would you do? Circle the number of the one that tells what you would do.

1. Do what he tells you and forget about it.
2. Do what he tells you but tell your father about it.
3. Do what he tells you but ask the policeman why.
4. Do what he tells you but tell the policeman he is wrong.

Which do you think is the most true? Circle the number of the one that is the most true.

1. People who break laws always get caught.
2. People who break laws usually get caught.
3. People who break laws usually get away.
4. People who break laws always get away.

Which is the most important for the policeman to do? Circle the number of the one that is the most important.

1. Make people obey the law.
  2. Help people who are in trouble.
  3. Catch people who break the law.
-

## APPENDIX II

### TABLES



TABLE XXI

EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF ATTACHMENT

Item: "I like him more than anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	23	77
6-8	3	97
9-12	3	97

Item: "He is my favorite of all."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	20	80
6-8	3	97
9-12	3	97

TABLE XXII

EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF BENEVOLENCE

Item: "He would always want to help me if I needed it."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	54	46
6-8	46	54
9-12	22	78

Item: "He protects me more than anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	16	84
6-8	7	93
9-12	5	95

TABLE XXIII

EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF DEPENDABILITY

Item: "He always keeps his promises."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	61	39
6-8	22	78
9-12	8	92

Item: "He almost never makes mistakes."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	52	48
6-8	19	81
9-12	17	83

Item: "He almost always gives up when things are hard  
to do."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	20	80
6-8	15	85
9-12	28	72

---

TABLE XXIV

EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF POWER

Item: "He can make anyone do what he wants."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	36	64
6-8	16	84
9-12	14	86

Item: "He can punish anyone."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	41	59
6-8	16	84
9-12	23	77

---

TABLE XXV

EVALUATION OF THE PRESIDENT ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF LEADERSHIP

Item: "He makes important decisions all the time."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	74	26
6-8	69	31
9-12	65	35

Item: "He is always a leader."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	60	40
6-8	47	53
9-12	49	51

Item: "He knows more than anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	25	75
6-8	7	93
9-12	4	96

Item: "He works harder than almost anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	58	42
6-8	41	59
9-12	30	70

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TABLE XXVI  
EVALUATION OF THE POLICEMAN ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF POWER

Item: "He can punish anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	39	61
6-8	16	84
9-12	21	79

Item: "He can make anyone do what he wants."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	32	68
6-8	16	84
9-12	21	79

---

TABLE XXVII  
EVALUATION OF THE POLICEMAN ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF BENEVOLENCE

Item: "He would always want to help me if I needed it."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	90	10
6-8	85	15
9-12	63	37

Item: "He protects me more than anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	36	64
6-8	28	72
9-12	30	70

---

TABLE XXVIII

EVALUATION OF THE POLICEMAN ON  
THE ATTRIBUTE OF ATTACHMENT

Item: "He is my favorite of all."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	39	61
6-8	21	79
9-12	13	87

Item: "I like him more than anyone."

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Per cent agreeing</u>	<u>Per cent disagreeing</u>
2-5	24	76
6-8	11	89
9-12	9	91

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TABLE XXIX

RANK ORDER OF ALL OBJECTS OF AUTHORITY  
ON THE ATTRIBUTE OF ATTACHMENT

Item: "He is my favorite."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	3	2	1
3	3	2	1
4	3	2	1
5	2	3	1
6	3	2	1
7	3	2	1
8	3	2	1
9	3	2	1
10	3	2	1
11	3	2	1
12	3	2	1

Item: "I like him more than anyone."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Senator</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	3	2	4	1
3	2	3	4	1
4	4	2	3	1
5	2.5	2.5	4	1
6	3	2	4	1
7	3.5	2	3.5	1
8	4	2	3	1
9	3	2	4	1
10	4	2	3	1
11	4	2	3	1
12	3.5	2	3.5	1

---



TABLE XXX

RANK ORDER OF ALL OBJECTS OF AUTHORITY  
ON THE ATTRIBUTE OF BENEVOLENCE

Item: "He would always want to help me if I needed it."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Pres.</u>	<u>Police.</u>	<u>Sen.</u>	<u>Court</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	3	6	1.5	4	5	1.5
3	3.5	5	2	3.5	6	1
4	3	6	2	5	4	1
5	3	4	1.5	6	5	1.5
6	3	4	2	6	5	1
7	4	6	2	5	3	1
8	3	6	2	4	5	1
9	5	6	2	3	4	1
10	3	6	2	5	4	1
11	5	6	2	3	4	1
12	5	6	2	4	3	1

Item: "He protects me more than anyone."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	3	2	1
3	3	2	1
4	3	2	1
5	3	1.5	1.5
6	3	2	1
7	3	2	1
8	3	2	1
9	3	2	1
10	3	2	1
11	3	2	1
12	3	2	1

---

TABLE XXXI

RANK ORDER OF ALL OBJECTS OF AUTHORITY  
ON THE ATTRIBUTE OF DEPENDABILITY

Item: "He always keeps his promises."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	2.5	1	2.5
3	2.5	1	2.5
4	2.5	2.5	1
5	3	1.5	1.5
6	3	2	1
7	3	2	1
8	3	2	1
9	3	2	1
10	3	2	1
11	3	2	1
12	3	2	1

Item: "He almost never makes mistakes."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Pres.</u>	<u>Police.</u>	<u>Sen.</u>	<u>Court</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	2.5	6	2.5	4	5
3	1	4	6	5	2	3
4	4.5	2.5	6	4.5	2.5	1
5	1	4.5	2.5	6	4.5	2.5
6	4.5	6	4.5	2	1	3
7	2.5	6	1	4.5	4.5	2.5
8	4	5	1	6	2	3
9	6	5	3	4	1	2
10	2.5	2.5	5	6	1	4
11	2	6	4	4	1	4
12	4	4	4	6	1	2

Item: "He almost always gives up when things are hard to do."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	3	2
3	2.5	2.5	1
4	1.5	3	1.5
5	2	2	2
6	1	2	3
7	1	2.5	2.5
8	1	3	2
9	1	2	3
10	1	3	2
11	1	2	3
12	1	2	3

TABLE XXXII

RANK ORDER OF ALL OBJECTS OF AUTHORITY  
ON THE ATTRIBUTE OF POWER

Item: "He can make anyone do what he wants."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	2	3
3	1	2	3
4	2	1	3
5	3	1.5	1.5
6	1.5	1.5	3
7	2	1	3
8	1.5	1.5	3
9	2	1	3
10	2	1	3
11	2	1	3
12	2	1	3

Item: "He can punish anyone."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Pres.</u>	<u>Police.</u>	<u>Sen.</u>	<u>Court.</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	2	3	5	4	6
3	3	2	1	4	5	6
4	1	5	6	2.5	2.5	4
5	1	4	4	6	2	4
6	2	3	4	6	1	5
7	1.5	3.5	3.5	6	1.5	5
8	2	3	4.5	6	1	4.5
9	1	3	4	6	2	5
10	1	3	4	6	2	5
11	1	3	4	6	2	5
12	1	3	4	6	2	5

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TABLE XXXIII

RANK ORDER OF ALL OBJECTS OF AUTHORITY  
ON THE ATTRIBUTE OF LEADERSHIP

Item: "He knows more than anyone."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Pres.</u>	<u>Police.</u>	<u>Sen.</u>	<u>Court</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	3	4	5	2	6
3	5	1	4	2.5	2.5	6
4	1	2.5	5	4	6	2.5
5	1	2	5	5	3	5
6	1.5	3	4.5	4.5	1.5	6
7	3.5	2	5.5	3.5	1	5.5
8	1.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	1.5	4.5
9	2	4.5	6	3	1	4.5
10	2	4	5.5	3	1	5.5
11	2	5.5	4	3	1	5.5
12	1	5	3.5	6	2	3.5

Item: "He always makes important decisions."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Pres.</u>	<u>Police.</u>	<u>Sen.</u>	<u>Court</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	3	5	4	2	6
3	1	2	5	4	3	6
4	1	6	3.5	3.5	5	2
5	1	2	5.5	4	3	5.5
6	4.5	6	2	4.5	1	3
7	2	3	6	4	1	5
8	5	3.5	2	6	1	3.5
9	4.5	2.5	6	4.5	2.5	1
10	6	4.5	4.5	2	1	3
11	4	2	4	4	1	6
12	3	2	6	5	1	4

Item: "He works harder than almost anyone."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	3	2
3	1	2	3
4	2	3	1
5	1	2.5	2.5
6	2	3	1
7	2	3	1
8	2	3	1
9	2	3	1
10	3	2	1
11	2.5	2.5	1
12	2	3	1

TABLE XXXIII (cont.)

Item: "He is always a leader."

<u>Grade</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Policeman</u>	<u>Father</u>
2	1	3	2
3	1	2	3
4	1	3	2
5	1	2.5	2.5
6	2	3	1
7	1.5	3	1.5
8	1	3	2
9	2	3	1
10	1.5	3	1.5
11	1	3	2
12	1	3	2

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