

Abstract for the SOEP 2022: Family conflicts in environmental concerns - within or in between?

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Since 2019 at the latest, the narrative of generational conflict in the context of environmental attitudes and protests has experienced a renaissance in public discourse. However, when analyzing the intergenerational transmission of environmental attitudes based on the SOEP data, a clear lineage effect emerges since the beginning of data collection in 1984, which speaks for a high degree of intergenerational stability (Table 1). This intergenerational stability is predicated, among other things, by a high degree of agreement in environmental attitudes between parents, which can be attributed to the selection effect. This finding links directly to modern findings in socialization research, which no longer sees adolescence as a phase dominated by conflicts between children and their parents.

Table 1: Predicted probabilities of children’s environmental concern conditioned by the mother’s and father’s environmental concern

Variables	(1) Predicted prob.	(2) Standard errors
Child: 1 # Mother: 1 # Father: 1	0.407***	0.0119
Child: 1 # Mother: 1 # Father: 2	0.259***	0.00826
Child: 1 # Mother: 1 # Father: 3	0.176***	0.00699
Child: 1 # Mother: 2 # Father: 1	0.219***	0.00659
Child: 1 # Mother: 2 # Father: 2	0.125***	0.00257
Child: 1 # Mother: 2 # Father: 3	0.0804***	0.00229
Child: 1 # Mother: 3 # Father: 1	0.130***	0.00487
Child: 1 # Mother: 3 # Father: 2	0.0710***	0.00197
Child: 1 # Mother: 3 # Father: 3	0.0447***	0.00139
Child: 2 # Mother: 1 # Father: 1	0.516***	0.00864
Child: 2 # Mother: 1 # Father: 2	0.600***	0.00452
Child: 2 # Mother: 1 # Father: 3	0.612***	0.00369
Child: 2 # Mother: 2 # Father: 1	0.611***	0.00364
Child: 2 # Mother: 2 # Father: 2	0.588***	0.00376
Child: 2 # Mother: 2 # Father: 3	0.523***	0.00531
Child: 2 # Mother: 3 # Father: 1	0.593***	0.00501
Child: 2 # Mother: 3 # Father: 2	0.500***	0.00506
Child: 2 # Mother: 3 # Father: 3	0.404***	0.00584
Child: 3 # Mother: 1 # Father: 1	0.0773***	0.00373
Child: 3 # Mother: 1 # Father: 2	0.141***	0.00535
Child: 3 # Mother: 1 # Father: 3	0.212***	0.00809
Child: 3 # Mother: 2 # Father: 1	0.170***	0.00563
Child: 3 # Mother: 2 # Father: 2	0.287***	0.00425
Child: 3 # Mother: 2 # Father: 3	0.397***	0.00669
Child: 3 # Mother: 3 # Father: 1	0.277***	0.00854
Child: 3 # Mother: 3 # Father: 2	0.429***	0.00617
Child: 3 # Mother: 3 # Father: 3	0.551***	0.00677
Observations	75,588	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

(1) not worried - (2) somehow worried - (3) very worried

NOTE: All predictors at their mean value

Since, according to these initial findings, the family can be understood as a domain of tending homogeneous environmental attitudes, the paper will contribute to the understanding of the conflict over climate protection by attempting to locate the supposed line of conflict between generations within families or between families. The latter argues for the possibility of identifying family lines of tradition in the context of environmental protection.

If such lines of tradition can be identified within families, it is possible to analyze these families for significant differences and to map possible developments over time. In this context, the extensive survey period of the SOEP also allows for a comparison between the period of the fading environmental movement of the 1970s and the emerging protest movement around “Fridays for Future”. In addition, families are examined for differences in how they deal with intra-family heterogeneity. Due to high ideological and moral connotations, heterogeneous environmental attitudes can become a challenge for the family as an emotional support network, can have important implications at the micro and macro levels.