

THE POLLS—TRENDS

THE MIDDLETOWN REPLICATIONS: 75 YEARS OF CHANGE IN ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES, 1924–1999

THEODORE CAPLOW

HOWARD M. BAHR

VAUGHN R. A. CALL

In 1924, as part of the nation's most famous community study, Robert and Helen Lynd collected questionnaires from three-fourths of Middletown's high school students, obtaining details on "the life of the high school population" from some 800 sophomore, junior, and senior students in English classes and reactions to various "statements of opinion" from 550 juniors and seniors in social science classes. Robert and Helen Lynd's surveys of the opinions of Middletown (Muncie, Indiana) high school students combined the community survey tradition with the emerging specialties of educational testing and attitude measurement. Some of the findings were generalized to the entire community in an innovative application of student data to community ethnography. The Lynds interpreted the 1924 findings in the context of a Middletown experiencing rapid social change: secularization and modernization were eroding traditional ways, albeit at different rates in different institutional sectors. The attitude surveys were replicated in 1977, and again in 1989 and 1999. The present report traces 75-year trends in student attitudes as reflected by 17 original Lynd items for which there are numerical baseline data from 1924.

The Lynds' three-page true-false questionnaire on student opinions was administered in junior and senior social science classes to about 550 respondents. The "statements of opinion" covered many topics, but religious belief was better represented than any other. All of the Lynds' numerical data about

THEODORE CAPLOW is at the University of Virginia, and HOWARD M. BAHR and VAUGHN R. A. CALL are at Brigham Young University. We acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Cassandra Jo Dorius, who helped to direct the 1999 data collection, and of Mindy Judd Pearson and Colter M. Mitchell, who provided administrative support during the recoding and reentry of the 1977 data. The 1977 survey discussed here was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation to the University of Virginia (NSF SOC 75-i3580). Colter Mitchell also provided invaluable assistance in computer analysis and offered helpful advice on statistics. Access to the original questionnaires from the 1977 replication was provided by John B. Straw, Director of Ball State University's Center for Middletown Studies. We are grateful for continuing support for the Middletown Program of Research from Brigham Young University's College of Family, Home, and Social Sciences and also from that university's Office of Research and Creative Activities. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 64th annual meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 18, 2001. Address correspondence to Howard M. Bahr; e-mail: hmbahr@byu.edu.

68:287–313

DOI:10.1093/poq/nfh016

Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 68 No. 2 © American Association for Public Opinion Research 2004; all rights reserved.

student attitudes on public issues derive from this survey. There were 40 items, 33 statements to which students responded by writing "true," "false," or "uncertain," and 7 items on student background, including religious denomination, church attendance, father's occupation and politics, residential location, and duration of residence in Middletown.

The questionnaire did not divide the items by topic, but they can be roughly classified by content. There were 10 items on religion (5 on religious belief or theology, and 5 on religious practice); 5 on international relations; 4 on school life, including 2 on teenage sexuality; 4 on issues relevant to civil rights; 3 on the reliability of information sources; 2 each on patriotism, politics, and social justice; and a single indicator of racism.

There were no ninth graders in the senior high school where the Lynds conducted their surveys, and data from black students were purposefully excluded from tabulation because the Lynds (1929, pp. 5, 509) had decided to confine their study to the native white population.¹

Response distributions for 23 of the 33 statements of opinion were reported in *Middletown*.² For the other 10 items—4 on religious practice and 2 each of the items we have classified under civil rights, politics, and school life—there seems to be no published record of student response. Only a handful of the completed high school questionnaires were deposited in the Lynd Papers at the Library of Congress, so contemporary analysts are limited to the published findings, and the 1924 responses on these remaining 10 items cannot be compared to later responses on the same items.

The Replications

The Lynds' high school surveys were finally replicated early in 1977, as part of the Middletown III project, funded by the National Science Foundation and

1. The decision to simplify their study by minimizing ethnic diversity had been made even before Middletown was selected as a research site. In 1923, when South Bend, Indiana, was the intended target city, Robert Lynd had argued that the study should be limited to the city's "white American stock." He wrote, "The reason for this is obvious. Since we are attempting a difficult new technique in a highly complicated field, it is desirable to simplify our situation as far as possible. The interaction of the material and cultural trends in the city with our native psychology is problem enough without introducing into this initial study the complicating factor of a psychology molded by a foreign environment" (Fox 1983, pp. 118–19). In previous comparisons of the 1977 and 1924 data, researchers, following the Lynds' practice, set aside data from black students. That may have been an appropriate procedure when there were only two data sets to compare. Now, having in hand multiple replications of high school populations in which black students are a substantial and growing part, it makes little sense to continue to exclude them.

2. In the text of *Middletown* the Lynds are careful not to refer to their opinion items as attitudes, and in the appendix on method they emphasize that their questionnaires "were not used to measure any general 'attitudes,'" but rather that their questions merely represented "verbalizations" which, "like the interviews, [are] used not as proof but as suggestion of tendencies" (1929, p. 509). Even so, they seem to have considered their statements of opinion as indicators of attitudes, for across the top of an unused copy of their true-false questionnaire preserved in the Lynd papers at the Library of Congress one of them had penned, "Muncie attitudes."

directed by Theodore Caplow. The two high school questionnaires from 1924 were combined in a single instrument that was administered to the entire student population of the city's four public high schools. The questionnaire was eight pages long, including large portions of both Lynd questionnaires plus additional items on school life, occupational aspirations, family background, and student attitudes. It was designed to fit into a 50-minute class period. In the interests of time the questionnaire was offered in three versions, with attitude items rotated among the three, such that it was possible to obtain responses from at least one-third of all students to 63 different attitude items while burdening a given respondent with no more than 31 items. Among the 63 were 29 of the original 33 Lynd items, the deleted 4 being judged as potentially offensive, archaic, or awkward.³

Rather than framing questions in the true-false-uncertain mode used by the Lynds, the 1977 research team substituted a 4-point response scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. No formal "uncertain" option was offered. For 20 of these 29 items, the 1977 responses could be directly compared to the 1924 findings published in *Middletown*.

From an estimated total student population of 4,000 students, 3,257 completed or largely completed (over 50 percent complete) instruments were obtained, for a response rate (using the American Association for Public Opinion Research [AAPOR 2000] standard definition RR2) of 81 percent. In the interest of economy, only a random half (1,673) of the completed instruments were coded and analyzed by the 1977 research team. In 2001–2002 problems retrieving the 1977 data set necessitated a recoding and rekeying of all 3,200+ questionnaires, and all 1977 comparisons in the present paper use that total population. For further information about the procedures of the 1977 replication, see Caplow and Bahr (1979).

There were subsequent replications in 1989 and 1999. The 1989 replication was conducted in the same manner as in 1977 save that, in 1977, the survey had been part of a two-year program of continuous fieldwork involving all the methods the Lynds had used and generating more than a dozen different surveys, whereas in 1989 the high school replication was the only survey conducted, and there was no resident research team nor ongoing program of research. The 1989 instrument, only slightly changed from the 1977 version, contained the same 63 attitude items, presented as before in three versions.

3. Following a review of the 1924 questionnaire by school district administrators and legal counsel in 1977, researchers were advised to delete three items judged to be potentially offensive or inappropriate. They were the statement intended to assess racism ("The white race is the best race on earth") and two statements about teenage sexuality ("Nine out of every ten boys and girls of High School age have 'petting parties'" and "Most girls allow 'petting' not because they enjoy it but because they are afraid they will be unpopular if they refuse"). The 1977 research team rejected a fourth item for awkward, archaic wording. It read: "Most Wilson High and Central High School pupils who go to Bible Study classes do not do so because they particularly enjoy them, but because it is an easy way to get credit or because of the summer camp, movies, athletic leagues, or other extra features."

Questionnaires were administered by teachers in homerooms on a given day to the entire student body of the city's three high schools (one had been closed). From an estimated total enrollment of 3,200 students, 2,620 usable instruments were obtained, for a response rate (RR2 [AAPOR 2000]) of 82 percent. All were coded and tabulated.

The 1999 high school survey was conducted as part of the "First Measured Century" project, funded by PBS and the American Enterprise Institute. It was one of two community surveys, the other being a replication of the Lynds' survey of working- and business-class housewives, conducted in Middletown in 1924. The 1999 high school instrument, a moderately revised version of the 1989 questionnaire, was 15 pages long. The pattern of alternate forms having different sets of attitude items was abandoned; all students completed the same instrument. Its final section contained 60 of the 63 attitude items from the 1977 and 1989 surveys. The missing items were three of the original Lynd items dealing with international issues. They were dropped from the 1999 instrument because pretests with college students had shown them to be confusing or meaningless. The international situation in which these particular questions had been framed, a context essential to their meaning, was judged to be alien or irrelevant to contemporary students.⁴ Thus there remained in the 1999 instrument only 26 of the Lynds' original opinion statements, and for only 17 of these are detailed response rates from the students of 1924 available for comparison. These 17 items form the basis of the current report.

Compared to the previous surveys, the 1999 replication was expensive, drawn out, and administratively cumbersome. The Lynds needed only a principal's verbal approval to administer their instrument in the high school of 1924. The 1977 and 1989 surveys required negotiations with officials in the local school district and approvals by school administrators and the district's legal counsel of the questionnaire and the proposed procedures for administering it. These procedures included passive parental consent, that is, advance notification of parents about the project and its purposes and the provision of ample opportunity for parents to return a written notification to the schools if they did not want their children to participate.

By the late 1990s the environment for research in high schools had tightened such that passive parental consent was no longer acceptable. Instead, a signed form granting permission for a child to participate had to be on file at the school before he or she could answer questions, and thereby the project took on aspects of a survey of parents as well as students. Letters describing the project and requesting cooperation were distributed to parents, both by

4. The three items in their 1924 versions are: "Germany and Austria were the only nations responsible for causing the World War" (1977 and 1989 adaptation: "North Viet Nam, China, and the Soviet Union were the nations responsible for causing the war in Viet Nam"); "The Allied Governments in the World War were fighting for a wholly righteous cause" (1977 and 1989 adaptation: "In the Viet Nam war the United States was fighting for a wholly righteous cause"); and "The recent labor government in England was a misfortune for England" (1977 and 1989 adaptation: "The labor governments in England have been a misfortune for England").

direct mail and as handouts sent home from school with the children. Parents were asked to return a signed permission form allowing their children to participate, and a \$2 honorarium was promised, to be paid to participating students when the completed questionnaires were turned in. There were follow-up mailings and, in the last days before the administration of the questionnaire, telephone follow-ups. As in previous years, the questionnaire was administered in homerooms by teachers, but only to students for whom permission forms had been received. Not surprisingly, the completion rate was somewhat lower than in previous replications. A total of 1,570 usable instruments was obtained from an accessible enrollment of 2,200 students, for a response rate (RR2 [AAPOR 2000]) of 71 percent. All usable questionnaires were coded and tabulated.

In addition to the various procedural and questionnaire changes, all the replications differed from the 1924 study in that they included responses from black students. The nontabulation of questionnaires from black students was much less of a statistical distortion of the Middletown student population in 1924 than it is in the replications. In 1924 only about 3 percent of high school students were black, in contrast to over 11 percent in 1977 and more in the later surveys. Following the Lynds' practice in this regard is far more challenging to the accurate depiction of the student populations of the 1970s and later than it was in 1924. The issue is not whether black students are different from other students. Rather, black students are fundamental to a valid portrayal of Middletown high school students, and to neglect them is a distortion rather than a clarification. In fact, it seems to us to make more sense to accept the slight distortion attending comparisons of a white-only sample from 1924 with the more diverse student bodies of later years, than to artificially homogenize the city's students of 1977 and later by throwing out one-eighth or more of all completed questionnaires. The better procedure is to warn the reader that the depiction of Middletown students in 1924 is slightly blurred by the absence of 3 percent of the population who legitimately should have been included and then to go ahead with the full population in the subsequent surveys where black students are a more substantial part of the whole.

In the presentation of findings that follows, first we will review changes in the composition of the Middletown student population with respect to several key demographic characteristics. Then we present comparisons across the 75-year period in student responses to 17 statements of "points of view on certain public questions" (Lynd and Lynd 1929, p. 509)—statements about religion, patriotism, social justice, civil rights, the media, and international issues—for which the Lynds published benchmark figures for 1924. We recognize the possibility that apparent change may reflect changing proportions of students of varying backgrounds as well as real changes in student attitudes when background characteristics are held constant. We also consider differences in student attitudes by gender, occupational class, and race.

Population Characteristics and Changes in Sample Composition

Distributions of selected demographic characteristics of the student populations at each of the survey points are given in table 1. An obvious compositional change is the shift in the sex ratio of the high school student body between the 1924 survey and the replications. In 1924 there were more girls than boys in Middletown's high school, and the 57 to 43 ratio among the Lynds' opinion survey respondents accurately reflects that attendance differential. Among graduating seniors in 1920 there were two girls for every boy, and in the mid-1920s graduating classes were consistently only 42–46 percent male. In contrast, the sex composition in all three replications was well balanced. The unbalanced sex ratio of the 1924 survey is relevant because on items where boys and girls differ, the balancing of the sex ratio in subsequent surveys might produce apparent change in the total rate when in fact only the sex-composition of the sample had changed.

As we have said, there is a steady trend toward greater ethnic diversity. Between 1977 and 1999 the proportion of Middletown's high school students claiming black ancestry increased from 11 percent to 16 percent, and in all three replications the ethnic identities making up the "other" category, neither black nor white, were a larger fraction of the student body than blacks had been in 1924. In numerical terms, at least, ethnic populations are increasingly important in contemporary Middletown.⁵

Another compositional change possibly affecting attitude trends is the gradual upward mobility of the entire work force. In 1924 about 30 percent of Middletown's men held business-class jobs (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 22, 511; Lynd and Lynd 1937, p. 25). Between 1924 and 1977 Middletown's business class expanded at the expense of the working class, such that over one-third of the 1977 students came from families whose fathers were white-collar workers, earning their living in professional, managerial, technical, sales, and clerical occupations. Over the next two decades the representation of the business class in the high school population continued to increase, rising to 44 percent by 1999.⁶

The Lynds suggested that over the first decades of the twentieth century Middletown's class cleavage had become more rigid. However, findings from the various Middletown surveys of 1976–78 pointed to an opposite trend: in

5. The ethnicity item read: "To which racial [1999: racial or ethnic] group do you belong? (1) White, (2) Black [1999: African American, Black], (3) Asian American, (4) American Indian, (5) Chicano or Mexican American [1999: Hispanic, Mexican American, or Chicano], (6) Other (please specify)."

6. The item on father's occupation read: "What is or was your father's (or male guardian's) [1999: What is your father's (or male guardian's)] main occupation? Please specify occupational title or specific duties, and type of business or industry: [1999: Please specify:]" with blanks to fill in "occupational title/specific duties" and "type of business or industry." In 1999 the question was only asked of students who said that their father or male guardian was presently employed.

contrast to the 1920s, class divisions in Middletown had softened. Whatever the long-term occupational trend, the figures on self-defined class in table 1 suggest a remarkable stability of perception since the 1970s: At three points over more than two decades, 75 percent of students see themselves as part of the middle class, with over half identifying themselves as upper middle class. Consistently, one-fifth of the students see themselves as working or lower class, and the upper-class segment is stable at 6 percent.⁷

With one exception, the item on Sunday movie attendance, the published results from the 1924 attitude survey; do not include occupational class contrasts, and so we have no way of knowing how much of the change in student attitudes between 1924 and 1977 may be attributed to the decline in the proportion of students from working-class backgrounds. However, the stability apparent in students' self-definitions of family social class suggests that not too much should be made of the gradual displacement of the working class by the business class. The relative position of Middletown's population on the hierarchy of occupations may change slightly, but the proportions of students who identify themselves as working, lower middle, or upper middle class seem quite stable.⁸

Finally, there is religion, particularly relevant because one-third of the Lynds' attitude items tap religious attitudes. Despite *Middletown's* four chapters on religion, the Lynds did not provide a statistical breakdown of Middletown's population by religious preference, either for adults or students, offering instead a denominational breakdown by number of congregations. The city, they said, was home to a variety of religious beliefs, but that variety was "overwhelmingly Christian and Protestant," and the dominant religious beliefs were those of mainstream American Protestantism. The Catholic minority was small—only about 1 Catholic for every 15 Protestants, they said—and so Catholic religiosity plays almost no part in the discussion of religious belief and practice in Middletown (Lynd and Lynd 1929, p. 332).

In the replications students were asked to specify their religious preference. As we consider trends in student belief about several core principles of Christian theology, the changing context of denominational preference may have some relevance. As may be seen in the final panel in table 1, judging from student reports, by 1977 there was a Middletown Catholic for every four Protestants. Furthermore, almost one-third of the students claimed no religious

7. The item on subjective social class read: "If you were asked to use one of five names for your social class, which would you say your family presently belongs to: (1) Lower class, (2) Working class, (3) Lower middle class, (4) Upper middle class, (5) Upper class."

8. It may be that self-defined social class is a better indicator than occupation of one's position on one side or the other of that great divide, that class watershed which, more than any other cultural factor, the Lynds (1929, p. 24) said, determined one's life chances and "what one does all day long throughout one's life." Arguably self-definition is a better overall indicator for high school students, who may not know enough about a parent's occupational classification to report it accurately, but who, by the time they reach high school, surely have a sense for where they stand with respect to Middletown's critical lines of social demarcation.

preference. Over the next two decades the Protestant majority continued to decline slowly, while the proportion of students claiming no religious preference increased. By 1999 there were almost as many "no preference" students as Protestants.⁹

Trends in Student Attitudes

RELIGION

To the Lynds, Middletown's religion was "the most slowly changing of all the life activities of the people," an institution that "represented permanence in the face of surrounding change" (1937, p. 295). The rate of change in religious belief and practice might be glacial as compared to progress in the economic or leisure sectors, yet still, comparing their hard data from the students of 1924 with people's recollections and impressions of Middletown past, the Lynds discerned creeping secularization. Doubts about established beliefs seemed more widespread than formerly, if less public. There was evidence, they said, of declining acceptance of the traditional Christian notions of heaven and hell. Especially among the better-educated citizens, the Lynds detected superficial religiosity and quiet skepticism, while the working class, secularizing more slowly, continued to believe more ardently and practice their religion more emotionally (1929, pp. 321, 329–31).

The 1977 replication would show that their impressions of continuing secularization were correct, at least in the long run. As may be seen in table 2, the five indicators of religious belief and the sole usable indicator of religious practice all show a decline in religiosity over the 53-year period, typically a substantial decline. In fact, by 1977 Middletown students had by and large become religious relativists. Their "confidence in the all-sufficiency for all mankind" of the Christian religion, a belief the Lynds found troublesome because its corollary was that "other religions are, therefore, by definition 'wrong' or at best 'inferior'" (1929, p. 316; 1937, p. 311), had eroded such that by 1977 it was a minority position, affirmed by only four students in ten.

Despite the triumph of relativism, most students still affirmed the traditional Christian tenets of the divinity of Christ, the sacredness of the Bible, and the reality of life after death. But that majority was no longer willing to assert that everyone else should believe as they did, and it is in that shift to relativity that the prevailing beliefs of the last decades of the century differ most from 1924. The shift to relativism applies to boys and girls alike, and it is not much influenced by social class. However, as may be seen in table 2, black students were far more likely than other students to affirm that Christianity

9. The religious preference item: "What is your religious preference? (1) Roman Catholic, (2) Protestant (what denomination?), (3) Jewish, (4) Other (please explain), (5) No preference."

was the one true religion. For them, perhaps reflecting their preference for evangelical Protestantism, the relativist position continued to be atypical.

By 1977 the belief that "Jesus Christ was different from every other man who ever lived in being entirely perfect" commanded the widest student support of any of the religion items, with two-thirds of students agreeing. The decline from 1924 was a comparatively modest 17 points; only the item on belief in the hereafter showed a smaller decline.

The surprising finding, apparent on all the religion items, is that whatever the scale of decline in support for the traditional Christian credo, by 1977 it had run its course. Beyond 1977, there continues to be majority support for the core Christian beliefs—again excepting the absolutist "Christianity is the one true religion." There is even some evidence of a reversal of secularization after 1977, with belief in the all-sufficiency of the Bible and in the reality of life after death rising significantly. By the end of the century, 60 percent of Middletown students agreed that "the Bible is a sufficient guide to all the problems of modern life," and 67 percent agreed that "the purpose of religion is to prepare people for the hereafter."

The Lynds (1929, p. 319) described this last item as an indicator of an "extreme form" of the generally held belief in a life after death in heaven or hell. Perhaps they were wrong to characterize it as such, for this is the item that manifests the least decline between 1924 and 1977—a mere 6 percentage points—and with the stabilization and tentative reversal of secularization after 1977, there is a consistent increase in agreement that religion's purpose is to prepare people for the hereafter. By 1999 Middletown's students manifested greater "extremism" in this matter than did the Lynds' respondents of 1924. In fact, this tenet of traditional Christianity—the core belief manifesting the least support in 1924—was, by 1999, the tenet to which students were most likely to agree. Compared to the students of their great-grandparents' generation, the 1999 respondents were less sure of the divinity of Christ or of the all-sufficiency of the Bible, but they were more confident of the continuity of life after death.

The Lynds reported gender differentials on four of the five items on religious belief, showing that the high school girls of 1924 were slightly more apt to affirm the traditional Christian credo and considerably more likely than the boys to see Sunday movie attendance as wrong. Things are more complex in the replications: the pattern of greater female religiosity still shows up, but it is no longer the rule. For the items on Christianity as the one true religion and movie attendance as a violation of the Sabbath, the gender differences disappear. Girls continue to affirm the perfection of Jesus and the all-sufficiency of the Bible at a higher rate than boys, and they are much more likely to reject the theory of evolution as a more accurate origin account than that of the Bible (by 1999, the gender differential on this item is 18 percentage points). But in 1977 and thereafter, it is the boys who are most likely to agree that the purpose of religion is to prepare people for the hereafter.

The Lynds said the division of Middletown's population into business and working class was "the outstanding cleavage" in the city, and they devoted much of *Middletown* to discussing class differences, as revealed in their surveys of housewives. Although their high school questionnaires had items on father's occupation that made it possible to do comparisons by occupational class, there is only one instance where they report class differences, and that is a discussion of student opinions on Sunday movie attendance where the Lynds see the "differential rate in the breaking down of the taboo on 'Sabbath breaking'" as an example of how new ways of doing things "filter down" from the business to the working class (1929, pp. 342–43). They viewed such "filter down" as the typical pattern of change, "down through various intermediate groups" or from males to females, although occasionally there might also be change in the reverse direction, from working to business class (1929, pp. 343, 496–97). As a result of the filter-down process, business-class students in 1924 were only half as likely as their working-class counterparts to see going to movies on Sunday as wrong (see table 2). By 1977 this class differential had evened out, and only a handful of students in either category thought there was anything wrong with going to the movies on Sunday.

For the other religion items, adding controls for occupational class shows that the class differences the Lynds said were so important in 1924 (although undocumented in their published high school data) have all but disappeared. Where the students of 1977 and later continue to show class differences in religious values is in the slightly greater religiosity of the working class. There are some class-related fluctuations in opinions about religion, and class differentials were a little larger in 1989 than either earlier or later, but on balance, the finding from the 1977 replication that "the religious values of the business class and the working class seem to be nearly identical" still holds (Caplow and Bahr 1979, p. 7).

This convergence in religious belief does not extend to the other significant division in contemporary Middletown—race. In fact, the race differentials are larger in 1999 than in 1977. With the exception of the item on evolution versus the Bible's origin account, to which about half of both white and black students agreed in all three replications, black students are much more supportive than whites of the traditional Christian credo. The differences are consistent and sharp: in the surveys of 1977 and later, three-fifths of black students affirm that Christianity is the one true religion, and four out of five agree that Christ was perfect, that the Bible is all-sufficient, and that religion's purpose is to prepare people for life after death. Black students are twice as likely as whites to see Sunday movie attendance as sinful.

PATRIOTISM

In the chapter "Things Making and Unmaking Group Solidarity," the Lynds saw patriotism as "civic pride writ large," a sentiment that helped "mold

Middletown into common habits of thought and action," gave "stability to life in the present," and served "to bring the vicissitudes of life in the past into line with the habits of thought and action regarded as desirable today" (1929, pp. 488–91). In *Middletown in Transition* they cast patriotism as an important element of "the Middletown spirit," shown in the things that "by and large, Middletown believes," such as "America first is merely common sense," "'American ways' are better than 'foreign ways,'" and "the American democratic form of government is the final and ideal form of government" (1937, pp. 407, 413). In both books Middletown's civic pride and patriotism were portrayed in quotations and anecdotes, but there was little quantitative evidence other than the high school numbers reported in *Middletown*. There, student reactions to patriotic statements appear in the chapter on "the things children learn." These reactions are presented without comment, other than that the numerical distribution of student responses gives insight into "the stamp of the group with which Middletown children complete their social studies courses" (Lynd and Lynd 1929, p. 200).

Students in 1977 were a little less likely than those of their grandparents' generation to agree that the United States was the best country in the world or to affirm commitment to "my country—right or wrong," but at that time the decline in manifest patriotism since 1924 seemed quite modest. In fact, the 1979 report on "half a century of change in adolescent attitudes" suggested that the levels of patriotism indicated in the finding that three-fourths of Middletown students agreed that the United States was the best country in the world and that half affirmed "my country—right or wrong" were surprisingly high, especially "after all the unpleasant episodes of recent years and the disillusion supposedly created by them" (Caplow and Bahr 1979, p. 13).

Adding the findings from the 1989 and 1999 surveys reveals that the levels of patriotism indicated in these two items remained fairly stable over the decade of the 1980s, then declined quite sharply in the 1990s. By century's end the contrast with 1924 is much more dramatic than it was in 1977. In 1924 almost all of the students—92 percent—agreed that the United States was the best country in the world; by 1999 only 59 percent so agreed.

Adding gender controls to the patriotism items reveals an interesting reversal. In 1924 it was the girls who were most apt to give the conventional patriotic response. In 1977 they were less likely to do so, and this pattern of lower patriotism among girls than boys continues in subsequent replications. By 1999 only half of the girls, compared to two-thirds of the boys, agreed that the United States was the best country. From 1977 on, the girls' agreement with "my country—right or wrong" ranged between 44 and 48 percent, consistently 4–10 percentage points lower than the corresponding rates among the boys.

The decline in student patriotism after 1989 was sharpest among children from business-class families. By 1999 there was a sizable class difference, 8 percentage points for the "United States is the best country" item and 17 points for "My country—right or wrong." In fact, as may be seen in table 3,

controlling for occupational class reveals that virtually all of the general decline in support for "My country—right or wrong" takes place among students of the business class.

A similar pattern appears when we partial for race: for the 1977–1999 period, there is no evidence of declining patriotism among black students. In fact, black students of 1999 were more likely to agree that the United States was the best country in the world than were their counterparts of 1977. The erosion of patriotic sentiment in the 1990s occurs almost entirely among white students, and it ends up producing racial convergence for the "best country" item. In 1977 whites were far more likely than blacks to agree that the United States was the best country. By 1999 the difference had disappeared because over the past decade white students had reduced their support for the United States as the best country to the level of the black students of 1977.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Support for the items we have characterized as "social justice" shows divergent tendencies. The first—"It is entirely the fault of a man himself if he does not succeed" (table 4, item 9)—may be seen as a version of the Protestant ethic, an indication of popular support for the economic individualism that characterized the 1920s. The other statement—"The fact that some people have so much more money than others shows that there is an unjust condition in this country which ought to be changed" (table 4, item 10)—expresses the opposing political viewpoint that wealth is not merely a reflection of differences in individual merit or effort and that justice would be served by redistribution, presumably involuntary.

General support for the notion that one has only oneself to blame for failure did not change in the half-century following the Lynds' survey, but this apparent stability overlays considerable realignment by gender. In 1924 girls were more likely than boys to agree that one's lack of success was one's own fault: by 1977 these positions were reversed, and the boys were most likely to affirm the ethic of self-responsibility. In the following 22 years, student support for the notion of self-responsibility increased markedly, and quite rapidly, at a rate of almost 10 percentage points per decade. Support for individual responsibility for personal failure was at its highest recorded level in 1999, up considerably since the 1970s. Almost two-thirds of both boys and girls agreed that failure was one's own doing. The increased support for self-responsibility appears in both business- and working-class children, and among both blacks and whites. The race differentials are inconsequential, and the differences by occupational class are small, in the 4–5 percentage point range.

Although support for self-responsibility has increased, so has support for wealth-redistribution, but not nearly as dramatically. In 1924 30 percent of Middletown's students agreed that something should be done about the inequitable distribution of wealth in the country, with girls more favorable to

the notion than boys. In the replications there are somewhat higher levels of support for the notion that income inequality is wrong and that someone, presumably the government, should do something about that. One is tempted to say that this growing divergence—modest continuing support for entitlements along with a growing tendency to define failure (and success) as due to individual attributes and efforts—reflects one of the contradictions of contemporary culture, but it is possible that it merely indicates a lag in the political socialization of adolescents, as compared to their indoctrination into the prevailing therapeutic individualism.¹⁰

From 1977 on gender differentials for the wealth redistribution item are insignificant, but class and race differentials are substantial and in the direction of self-interest, that is, business-class students and whites are less supportive of the idea of income redistribution than are working-class students and blacks. Over the period 1977–1999 the class and race differentials decline somewhat, from 12 to 5 percentage points for race, and from 16 to 12 percentage points for occupational class. Even so, the conclusion of the 1979 report still holds, that “when it comes to recognizing their own interests, Middletown people are at least as rational as the social scientists who study them” (Caplow and Bahr 1979, p. 14).

CIVIL RIGHTS

Support for civil rights, as indicated in support for free, even revolutionary speech and a willingness to tolerate pacifists in wartime (table 5, items 11 and 12), manifests a drift toward tolerance not unlike that in religious attitudes. Furthermore, as with support for the core values of traditional Christianity, in civil rights the trend toward increased tolerance seems to have largely run its course by 1977, although the evidence from the two indicators is not entirely consistent. Over the first 53 years of the 75-year span, a willingness to prosecute conscientious objectors in wartime declined 17 points, from 55 percent to 38 percent. After at least a decade of stability, it then dropped another 7 points, to a low of 30 percent in 1999. There is no way of knowing whether the decline has bottomed out or will continue.

For the other item, a statement of support for free speech even in the face of incitement to violence, a substantial increase in support for free speech, from 19 percent in 1924 to 50 percent by 1977, was followed by a stabilizing of the trend line at the 1977 level for the next two decades. As things stood in 1999,

10. It is in such matters of interpretation, on the advisability of using data from high school boys and girls as a basis to generalize, however vaguely, about the adults of Middletown, that it would be helpful to be able to cite, and evaluate, the Lynds' position in the light of more recent work. But the issue was never confronted explicitly in *Middletown*. The Lynds, illustrating their depiction of the city's religious and political attitudes with numbers from student surveys, let the high school numbers “speak for themselves” across the threshold between adolescence and adulthood, thereby sidestepping issues of the probable incongruity of adolescent and adult attitudes.

about one-third of Middletown's students favored the prosecution of pacifists in wartime, down slightly from the 1977 and 1989 surveys.

On both civil rights items there are clear sex differentials that show little evidence of convergence over the years. In 1924 there was no difference between boys and girls in support for the prosecution of pacifists in wartime, but in each of the replications boys are far more willing than girls to prosecute, the greatest difference being a 23-point differential in 1989. In 1924 it was the boys who were more willing to allow free speech, and the direction of that sex differential has not changed, although it shrank to almost nothing in 1989, then peaked in 1999, when 57 percent of boys and only 44 percent of girls indicated support for free speech as defined in the statement.

There are continuing class differentials for both items: working class students are consistently more willing to prosecute pacifists and less willing to tolerate the advocacy of violence. Race differentials are generally small and inconsistent, and the two instances of race differentials of 10 points or more are in opposite directions: in 1989 black students were more willing than whites to tolerate inflammatory speech (67 percent versus 51 percent); a decade later blacks were more willing than whites to prosecute pacifists (38 percent versus 28 percent). On balance, while there has been little change since the 1970s, the increase in support for civil rights over the 75-year period is notable. In 1924 over half of the students would have supported the prosecution of pacifists whereas in 1999 fewer than one-third would do so; in 1924 80 percent of students would have denied free speech to those who advocated violent revolution, compared to only 49 percent in 1999.

INFORMATION SOURCES

The Lynds concluded their brief chapter on "Getting Information" in *Middletown* with a statement of the biases and shortcomings of the city's press, an institution whose function in communicating information to the individual citizen was frequently compromised by its other functions: shaping public opinion, making a profit for its owners, and protecting the interests of people who bought advertising. In the Lynds' view, one of the reasons that Middletown's working class seemed to "lag behind" the business class was that its access to information was both limited—left to the "whim and economic status of the individual whether he shall see a paper at all"—and biased by "obstructions, political, economic, and personal, [that] are thrown at many points in the way of the newspapers' gathering and publishing . . . the facts needed by the citizens" (1929, p. 477). Sometimes the net effect of the various obstructions, distortions, and interests was to misrepresent or suppress information that voters needed to govern themselves intelligently.

Having portrayed Middletown's problems of information access in terms of the needs of adult voters and the class differentials in their access to accurate information, the Lynds turned to their survey of nonvoting high school

students for numerical support. Here, as with the religion items, the data from students were generalized to the world of Middletown's adults. Student responses to the statement, "The Middletown *Star* presented a fair and complete picture of the issues in the recent election," were presented as "possibly reflecting this situation," that is, reflecting information sources that misrepresented or withheld essential news from voters at election time. In a footnote on the same page, the Lynds offered student responses to a second item on information sources, introducing it simply, "Attention should be called in passing to the answers by the same boys and girls to the statement, 'It is safe to assume that a statement appearing in an article in a reputable magazine like the *Saturday Evening Post* or the *American Magazine* is correct'" (Lynd and Lynd 1929, p. 477).

In both instances, the Lynds seem to suggest that student responses on these items say something about the community's differential access to information, or about people's opinions on the accuracy of the local press as compared to national magazines, but the reader is not told what the Lynds think about the numbers reported—whether they feel that the findings indicate student cynicism, student ignorance, both, or neither. The text implies that the high school data are relevant to the situation facing the city's voters, and to the situation of the working class in particular, but it offers neither comment nor interpretation beyond the suggestion that the numbers are worth paying attention to, as "possibly reflecting" the unfortunate local situation (Lynd and Lynd 1929, p. 477).

Yet these numbers do not speak for themselves. What does it mean that about one-third of the 1924 students said that the local newspaper presented a fair picture of the issues, about one-fourth disagreed, and the others were uncertain or didn't answer? Or that students seemed to have less faith in the correctness of stories in national magazines than in election coverage in the local papers?

Somewhat clearer in "speaking for itself" was student response to a statement about the credibility of politicians at election time. Here again, the students were made to serve as proxies for Middletown's adults. In the chapter "The Machinery of Government," a discussion of political campaigns and party speeches includes a single sentence where the high school data are once again cited as relevant to the opinions of Middletown's adults. "It is possibly significant of the way Middletown regards political speeches," it reads, "that less than 5 per cent. of 556 high school juniors and seniors wrote 'true' after the statement, 'Voters can rely upon statements of fact made by candidates in campaign speeches,' while 37 per cent. answered 'false'" (Lynd and Lynd 1929, p. 419). On the face of it, a 5 percent vote of confidence in politicians' campaign statements indeed does seem to reflect a very low level of faith in political promises, an interpretation supported by subsequent surveys of Middletown's students that would reveal much higher levels of confidence in the truthfulness of office seekers. In fact, there is a distinctly positive trend: at each replication students are less critical of political speeches. By 1999 over

one-third of Middletown's young people would agree that candidates' campaign statements could be trusted (see table 6).

Boys are more trusting of politicians than girls, although the sex differentials are small, in the range of 3 points (1989) to 7 points (1977). For race and class the differentials are also consistent in direction, and larger: more working-class than business-class students say that one can believe the campaign statements of political candidates, and black students are much more trusting than white students (48 percent versus 32 percent, respectively, in 1999).

The numbers on trust in the local newspaper, or in national magazines, are much less interpretable. Given the Lynds' description of the problems of getting accurate news reports especially at election time, the finding that 60 percent of the 1924 students who had an opinion one way or the other thought the local coverage was fair and complete suggests that the students of the time were truly naive, unaware of the biases in their newspaper. Yet the Lynds, perhaps because they lacked comparative data, did not make this point. Supporting the same interpretation of student blindness or naiveté about biases in the local newspaper (and therefore, perhaps, lowering the value of data from students as representative of the city's adults, who might be expected to be manifest more of the cynicism that comes with age and experience) is the students' consistent rating of the local newspaper as a more trustworthy source than national magazines. This finding is consistent across all four surveys; indeed, the percentage point difference between those who agree that the local newspaper provides fair and complete coverage of issues and candidates in elections and those who agree that you can trust the correctness of what you read in the national news magazines is much larger in 1977 and thereafter than it was in the 1920s. That is, Middletown's students in the last decades of the century had less confidence in the national media, and more in their local newspaper, than did their counterparts of the 1920s. The replications reveal a surprising confidence in the local paper, ranging between 66 percent and 75 percent positive, while over the same period the percentage of students agreeing that national news magazines report things correctly never rises above 46 percent.

Controlling for gender yields mixed results. In 1924 girls were more favorable toward the local newspaper than boys, and in the replications, where there are gender differences, that pattern continues, but in two of the three replications there is no gender differential. In both 1924 and 1977 girls were also more supportive of national newsmagazines, but by 1989 that differential had also disappeared, and in 1999 the situation was reversed, with boys somewhat more favorable than girls.

Class differences also seem to wash out over time. In 1977 and 1989 working-class students were more supportive of the local paper than business-class students; by 1999 this class differential had disappeared. The same trend toward convergence appears in attitudes toward the national newsmagazines; by 1989 differentials by class are miniscule. Controls for race reveal essentially

the same pattern: in 1977 black students were more willing to trust the local paper than whites; by 1989 the differential had disappeared. Race differences in agreement that the national newsmagazines get things right are also small, in the 5 to 7 point range in all three replications.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

The statement, "The United States was entirely right and England was entirely wrong in the American Revolution" (table 7, item 16) could also be considered under the "patriotism" category. In fact, it is in a discussion of local patriotism in their chapter "Things Making and Unmaking Group Solidarity" that the Lynds raise the issue of Middletown's attitudes toward the Russian Revolution in contrast to the American Revolution; they quote a political candidate who makes a distinction between the violent change and "real revolution" then occurring in Russia and the simpler, less threatening, "confirming a situation which was already existing" revolution by American colonists against England (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 489-90). This would seem to have been an ideal place for some interpretative discussion about student attitudes on American responsibility for the Revolutionary War and on American policy in recognizing a foreign government emerging from a contemporary national revolution. Unfortunately, the Lynds chose not to introduce their findings on student opinions about revolution and international rights and wrongs at that point. Instead, the two "international issues" items are among the 11 for which student responses are summarized in tabular form, without comment, and presented simply as items providing further insight into the stamp of the group with which Middletown children complete their social studies courses" in the chapter "The Things Children Learn" (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 200-201).

The 75-year trend in student agreement that England's position in the American Revolution was "entirely wrong" suggests a continuity, perhaps even an increase, in the "pure national chauvinism" (Caplow and Bahr 1979, p. 11) expressed in the item. In 1924, 40 percent of students having an opinion agreed with this extreme statement of American righteousness; by 1977 agreement was somewhat higher, at 49 percent. Over the next two decades students were slightly less likely to define their nation as entirely blameless; by 1999 rates of agreement were back down almost to their 1924 level.

Among the Lynds' respondents, it was the girls who most often saw the United States as entirely in the right. Some time later that sex differential was reversed, such that by 1977 boys were much more likely to interpret the Revolutionary War in stark terms of "American right." That pattern continued through 1999, when over half of the boys but only about one-third of the girls, were willing to interpret the conflict in such absolutist terms. Neither occupational class nor race seems to have much consistent effect on the sentiments of national chauvinism exemplified in this item. Given the concurrent substantial increases in tolerance for diversity, as indicated in the statements

on religion and civil rights, the stubborn stability of national chauvinism evident here is surprising.

In 1924 fewer than one student in ten agreed that the United States should officially recognize the "Russian Bolshevik government." By the 1970s there was far more support for official relations with a revolutionary Communist government. The much changed international situation dictated that a different revolutionary nation, China, be named in the 1977 version of this statement, and the adjusted wording, "fully recognized," was intended to allow for variations in China's diplomatic status vis-à-vis the United States over the years.

The 43 percent approval among the students of 1977 for full diplomatic recognition to China is a dramatic, five-fold increase over the students of 1924 in acceptance of a Communist revolutionary government. In light of that favorable shift, and independent of the question of whether the 1977 statement about Communist China is truly comparable to the 1924 statement on Russia, the relative stability over the next two decades of student approval for the full recognition of China at about 45 percent is unexpected and somewhat puzzling. For this attitude, as with the others noted above, by 1977 things seem to have leveled out.

There is a consistent gender differential for this item, with boys more favorable than girls to the proposed full relations with China. Occupational class seems to make no difference, but race has a substantial effect. Beginning at 43 percent in 1977, black students are increasingly supportive of Communist China at each survey point, while among white students support continues at about the 1977 level, in the 42–47 percent range. As a result, by 1999 there is a 13-point race differential, with black students much more supportive than whites of full recognition for the Chinese government.

Conclusions

The 1979 report on the first replication concluded that "in this one middle-sized Midwestern city, some of the religious, political, and social attitudes of the post-World War I era have persisted with remarkable tenacity" (Caplow and Bahr 1979, p. 15). However, it also pointed to a number of significant changes, including a distinct weakening of religious conviction and increased tolerance of religious and political dissent. Support for traditional religious beliefs had declined somewhat since 1924, although only one, the belief that Christianity was the only true religion, had declined markedly. Thus students of 1977 were much more tolerant of others who disagreed with them about religion, but between half and two-thirds of them expressed support for the core beliefs in the divinity of Jesus, the sufficiency of the Bible, and the existence of life after death.

Our interpretation of conditions at the end of the century is not markedly different. Overall, in the interval between 1977 and 1999, the general pattern is stability, with that stability in the total student population masking some

shifts among particular components of the total. The relative stability of these attitudes might be attributed to the immaturity of the respondent population, were it not for the fact that the responses of adult Americans to similar items also display surprising continuities. In a review of opinion items used in General Social Survey questionnaires between 1972 and 1974 and repeated with identical wording in 1984 and again in 1994, there are virtually identical responses in the three surveys to statements on abortion, gun control, criminal justice, illegal drugs, foreign aid, life after death, extramarital sex, homosexual relations, and justifiable aggression, and only minor changes in responses to statements on healthcare spending, interpersonal trust, the state of the nation, and the Protestant ethic, although all of these issues were widely debated during the same interval (Caplow 1997).

Demographically, Middletown is far more diverse today than it was in 1924, when the overwhelming majority of its people were native whites of northern European descent. African Americans are a much more important presence in Middletown high schools now than in 1924 or even in 1977, together with a growing number of Hispanics, Asian Americans, and many recent European, Caribbean, and African immigrants. During the same interval, Middletown's industrial economy has been transformed to a service economy and its class system modified beyond recognition (Bahr and Caplow 1991).

The high school population has changed in other ways, too. In 1924 nearly all high school students lived with both natural parents. In 1977 two-thirds of them did. In 1999 only 52 percent lived with both parents, 24 percent with a single parent, 18 percent with a parent and step-parent, and 6 percent with no parent. In 1924 fewer than one out of ten Middletown students were preparing for college; in 1977 it was one out of four; in 1999 one of two.

Yet their behavior—as well as their responses to attitude surveys—show numerous continuities. The finding from 1924 that about half of the students had been away from home for four or more of the past seven evenings, cited by the Lynds in support of the diminishing place of the home in children's lives, turns out to apply across all four surveys. In other words, today's students are about as likely to spend evenings at home as were their great-grandparents. Asked to name the qualities most desired in a father, "spending time with his children" led the list in 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999, with 64 percent, 64 percent, 63 percent, and 69 percent, respectively. (There was more variety in the qualities desired in a mother.) Asked about sources of disagreement with their parents, the students of 1999 identified mostly the same issues as those of 1924, 1977, and 1989.

What we have here, of course, are snapshots taken at four points over three-quarters of a century. It should not be confused with a continuous series. There is no way to tell what fluctuations in the attitudes of Middletown adolescents occurred between 1924 and 1977, or between 1977 and 1989, or 1989 to 1999. It is likely that significant fluctuations accompanied the Depression, World War II, the Korean War, the baby boom, the Vietnam era, the Nixon and Clinton impeachments, and other events that flashed across the public screen.

The 1979 report on the first replication concluded, "We cannot assert that the values expressed by Middletown adolescents are typical of their peers throughout the United States or that the long-term trends discerned in Middletown can be generalized to any larger aggregate. What we do report is that in this one Midwestern community, selected originally for its lack of unusual features, we have been able to find little trace of the disintegration of traditional social values that is commonly described by observers who rely on their own intuitions" (Caplow and Bahr 1979, p. 17). The present report comes out at about the same place: there have been some shifts, but the predominant pattern over the past 22 years is stability, and there are about as many changes suggesting increased commitment to traditional values as there are indications of decline.

Appendix

1. Percentages of students represented in 1924 Lynd sample and 1977, 1989, and 1999 replications

	<i>1924 Lynd Sample:</i>			
	<i>Grades 11-12</i>	<i>1977</i>	<i>1989</i>	<i>1999</i>
% of Total Students	95	80	80	70
Sex				
Male	43	50	52	50
Female	57	50	48	50
Total (<i>N</i>)	(556)	(3,189)	(2,620)	(1,568)
Grade ^a				
9th	0	30	26	28
10th	0	28	24	28
11th	61	24	25	25
12th	39	17	25	19
Total (<i>N</i>)	(556)	(3,211)	(2,621)	(1,569)
Race				
White	97	84	82	77
Black	3	11	13	16
Other	—	5	5	7
Total (<i>N</i>)	(573)	(3,147)	(2,586)	(1,561)
Occupational Class (father)				
Business	23	37	42	44
Working	77	63	58	56
Total (<i>N</i>)	(328)	(2,624)	(2,044)	(1,353)
Social Class (self-defined)				
Lower	—	2	2	2
Working	—	18	15	16
Lower middle	—	21	23	22
Upper middle	—	53	55	54
Upper	—	6	5	6
Total (<i>N</i>)	—	(3,083)	(2,564)	(1,548)

Religion				
Catholic	—	14	11	11
Protestant	—	53	51	44
Jewish	—	1	1	1
Other	—	3	3	3
No preference	—	29	35	42
Total (N)	—	(2,939)	(2,546)	(1,512)

SOURCE.—For 1977–1999, the replication surveys described in the text; for 1924 *Middletown* (Lynd and Lynd 1929), as noted below.

* For 1924 the Lynds (1929, p. 183) report a total high school-level (grades 9–12) enrollment of 1,349. The estimated numbers of students represented in the estimated total enrollments for grades 9–12 are, respectively, 760, 486, 367, and 236, or 41 percent, 26 percent, 20 percent, and 13 percent.

2. Student opinion on religion items, 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999

Item Wording	1924	1977	1989	1999
1. Christianity is the one true religion and all peoples should be converted to it.	94%	41%	37%	42%
Sex (male / female)	90 97	42 40	39 36	43 41
Class (business / working)	— —	41 41	32 39	41 43
Race (whites / blacks)	— —	39 57	34 59	39 56
2. Jesus Christ was different from every other man who ever lived in being entirely perfect.	83%	66%	65%	64%
Sex (male / female)	82 84	63 68	63 68	61 67
Class (business / working)	— —	64 67	61 69	63 64
Race (whites / blacks)	— —	65 75	63 78	62 78
3. The Bible is a sufficient guide to all the problems of modern life.	74%	52%	54%	60%
Sex (male / female)	69 77	51 54	55 53	57 63
Class (business / working)	— —	49 53	46 58	59 62
Race (whites / blacks)	— —	50 78	50 82	57 78
4. The purpose of religion is to prepare people for the hereafter.	60%	54%	59%	67%
Sex (male / female)	57 62	58 52	61 57	71 64
Class (business / working)	— —	49 58	54 63	65 69
Race (whites / blacks)	— —	53 71	57 78	65 82
5. The theory of evolution offers a more accurate account of the origin and history of mankind than that offered by a literal interpretation of the first chapters of the Bible.	28%	50%	49%	52%
Sex (male / female)	— —	53 47	52 46	61 43
Class (business / working)	— —	51 50	48 48	50 53
Race (whites / blacks)	— —	50 48	49 49	53 48

6. It is wrong to go to the movies on Sunday.	29%	9%	6%	13%
Sex (male / female)	23 40	10 8	7 5	17 10
Class (business / working)	16 33	6 8	4 6	10 14
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	7 15	5 14	12 18

NOTE.—Published figures from 1924 (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 204–5, 316, 318–20, 342–43) were recalculated to delete “uncertain” responses and missing data. Number of cases varies from item to item, due to differential response rates by item and, for 1977 and 1989, differential exposure due to alternate forms of the questionnaire. Totals, respectively, for items 1–6, by year, are—1924: 521, 526, 480, 493, 373, and 556; 1977: 2,769, 1,795, 1,785, 1,859, 1,669, and 1,943; 1989: 2,527, 1,626, 1,631, 1,642, 1,579, and 1,677; 1999: 1,539, 1,517, 1,519, 1,534, 1,500, and 1,541. Table 8 provides percentage bases (*N*s) for the percentages given above.

3. Student opinion on patriotism items, 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999

<i>Item Wording</i>	1924	1977	1989	1999
7. The United States is unquestionably the best country in the world.	92%	75%	74%	59%
Sex (male / female)	89 94	79 71	79 69	68 51
Class (business / working)	- -	78 75	76 74	55 63
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	77 54	75 66	59 59
8. Every good citizen should act according to the following statement: “My country—right or wrong.”	61%	50%	49%	45%
Sex (male / female)	54 66	52 48	54 44	47 43
Class (business / working)	- -	40 54	44 54	35 52
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	50 50	50 48	44 50

NOTE.—Published figures from 1924 (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 65, 200–201) were recalculated to delete “uncertain” responses and missing data. Number of cases varies from item to item, due to differential response rates by item and, for 1977 and 1989, differential exposure. Totals, respectively, for items 7–8, by year, are—1924: 484 and 478; 1977: 979 and 868; 1989: 817 and 803; 1999: 1,521 and 1,519. Table 8 provides percentage bases (*N*s) for the percentages given above.

4. Student opinion on social justice items, 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999

<i>Item Wording</i>	1924	1977	1989	1999
9. It is entirely the fault of a man himself if he does not succeed.	47%	48%	55%	65%
Sex (male / female)	41 51	55 42	60 50	66 63
Class (business / working)	- -	52 47	58 54	63 67
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	48 49	56 55	65 64
10. The fact that some people have so much more money than others shows that there is an unjust condition in this country which ought to be changed.	30%	40%	38%	44%
Sex (male / female)	26 33	40 41	39 36	44 43
Class (business / working)	- -	29 45	28 41	35 47
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	39 51	37 46	43 48

NOTE.—Published figures from 1924 (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 65, 200–201) were recalculated to delete “uncertain” responses and missing data. Number of cases varies from item to item.

due to differential response rates by item and, for 1977 and 1989, differential exposure. Totals, respectively, for items 9–10, by year, are—1924: 481 and 522; 1977: 2,841 and 1,818; 1989 : 2,544 and 1,643; 1999: 1,547 and 1,538. Table 8 provides percentage bases (*Ns*) for the percentages given above.

5. Student opinion on civil rights items, 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999

<i>Item Wording</i>	1924	1977	1989	1999
11. A pacifist or conscientious objector in war time is a "slacker" and should be prosecuted by the government.	55%	38%	37%	30%
Sex (male / female)	54 56	44 32	47 24	36 24
Class (business / working)	- -	29 41	31 40	23 33
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	37 40	37 35	28 38
12. A citizen of the United States should be allowed to say anything he pleases, even to advocate violent revolution, if he does no violent act himself.	19%	50%	53%	51%
Sex (male / female)	22 17	53 48	54 52	57 44
Class (business / working)	- -	47 51	46 56	47 52
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	50 51	52 67	50 52

NOTE.—Published figures from 1924 (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 65, 200–201) were recalculated to delete "uncertain" responses and missing data. Number of cases varies from item to item, due to differential response rates by item and, for 1977 and 1989, differential exposure. Totals, respectively, for items 11–12, by year, are—1924: 380 and 503; 1977: 862 and 1,787; 1989 : 771 and 1,646; 1999: 1,521 and 1,534. Table 8 provides percentage bases (*Ns*) for the percentages given above.

6. Student opinion on information sources items, 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999

<i>Item Wording</i>	1924	1977	1989	1999
13. The Muncie STAR presented a fair and complete picture in covering the issues and the candidates in the recent election. (1924: "...picture of the issues in..."; 1977: "...in the recent presidential election").	60%	71%	75%	66%
Sex (male / female)	54 64	70 71	72 80	66 67
Class (business / working)	- -	65 74	71 80	67 68
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	70 80	76 77	67 66
14. It is safe to assume that a statement appearing in an article in a reputable magazine like TIME or NEWSWEEK is correct. (1924: "...like THE SATURDAY EVENING POST or THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE is correct").	50%	43%	46%	45%
Sex (male / female)	45 54	41 45	45 46	49 42
Class (business / working)	- -	47 41	47 46	48 45
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	44 39	45 50	44 51

15. Voters can rely upon statements of fact made by political candidates' campaign speeches.	5%	24%	26%	35%
Sex (male / female)	- -	28 21	27 24	37 32
Class (business / working)	- -	16 27	21 26	28 37
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	23 32	24 41	32 48

NOTE.—Published figures from 1924 (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 200–201, 419, 477) were recalculated to delete “uncertain” responses and missing data. Number of cases varies from item to item, due to differential response rates by item and, for 1977 and 1989, differential exposure. Totals, respectively, for items 13–15, by year, are—1924: 318, 512, and 441; 1977: 967, 916, and 964; 1989: 782, 802, and 813; 1999: 1,466, 1,527, and 1,529. Table 8 provides percentage bases (*Ns*) for each of the percentages shown above.

7. Student opinion on international affairs items, 1924, 1977, 1989, and 1999

<i>Item Wording</i>	1924	1977	1989	1999
16. The United States was entirely right and England was entirely wrong in the American Revolution.	40%	49%	47%	44%
Sex (male / female)	35 45	57 41	54 39	52 35
Class (business / working)	- -	50 48	48 48	41 45
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	50 44	49 36	43 45
17. The Chinese Communist government should be fully recognized by the United States government. (1924: “The Russian Bolshevist government should be recognized by the United States Government.”)	8%	43%	47%	44%
Sex (male / female)	10 7	45 40	55 39	48 41
Class (business / working)	- -	45 42	46 49	42 45
Race (whites / blacks)	- -	43 43	47 51	42 55

NOTE.—Published figures from 1924 (Lynd and Lynd 1929, pp. 200–201, 419, 477) were recalculated to delete “uncertain” responses and missing data. Number of cases varies from item to item, due to differential response rates by item and, for 1977 and 1989, differential exposure. Totals, respectively, for items 16–17, by year, are—1924: 435 and 422; 1977: 955 and 1,690; 1989: 795 and 771; 1999: 1,486 and 1,487. Table 8 provides percentage bases (*Ns*) for each of the percentages shown above.

8. Percentage bases (Ns) for Tables 2-7

<i>1924 Item</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>
Total	521	526	480	493	373	556	484	478	481	522	380	503	318	441	512	435	422
Sex																	
Male	222	224	203	203	—	241	188	210	200	229	178	217	142	193	—	205	195
Female	299	302	277	290	—	315	296	268	281	293	202	286	176	248	—	230	227
Class																	
Business	—	—	—	—	—	74	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Working	—	—	—	—	—	254	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
 <i>1977 Item</i>																	
Total	2,769	1,795	1,785	1,859	1,669	1,943	979	957	2,841	1818	862	1787	967	964	916	955	1690
Sex																	
Male	1,303	871	868	904	832	942	475	458	1,348	888	429	876	474	463	448	478	859
Female	1,431	904	898	935	822	977	490	487	1,459	911	421	892	479	487	456	465	814
Class																	
Business	908	579	578	599	554	622	315	312	924	583	278	576	312	318	306	313	536
Working	1,461	941	923	959	854	995	512	504	1,501	945	446	927	501	500	473	491	882
Race																	
White	2,474	1,577	1,568	1,626	1,468	1,691	868	849	2,534	1596	765	1569	854	857	813	843	1485
Black	250	177	179	191	161	205	91	88	259	178	77	176	92	87	81	91	164
 <i>1989 Item</i>																	
Total	2,527	1,626	1,631	1,642	1,579	1,677	817	803	2,544	1,643	771	1,646	782	813	802	795	771
Sex																	
Male	1,296	854	858	858	842	878	440	433	1,308	858	430	867	422	438	436	432	428
Female	1,219	766	768	779	734	793	371	364	1,224	779	337	773	354	370	361	357	337

Class	835	533	531	538	516	545	283	277	841	540	271	534	275	286	281	280	268
Business	1150	751	759	762	737	778	379	373	1158	759	354	768	360	375	371	372	356
Working																	
Race	2,153	1,406	1,409	1,419	1,361	1,450	703	694	2,166	1,421	665	1,424	674	702	692	685	668
White	331	193	195	196	193	200	95	91	335	194	89	195	92	94	92	91	86
Black																	
1999 Item																	
Total	1,539	1,517	1,519	1,534	1,500	1,541	1,521	1,519	1,547	1,538	1,521	1,534	1,466	1,529	1,527	1,486	1,487
Sex																	
Male	761	750	756	759	745	769	759	754	769	765	762	764	741	763	758	746	748
Female	775	764	761	772	752	769	759	765	775	770	756	767	722	763	766	737	736
Class																	
Business	589	579	583	582	572	593	575	581	594	589	584	584	543	587	583	567	559
Working	742	732	733	743	752	740	739	734	745	742	731	744	721	739	739	715	724
Race																	
White	1,295	1,276	1,283	1,290	1,260	1,300	1,282	1,283	1,302	1,296	1,281	1,295	1,230	1,289	1,285	1,254	1,253
Black	244	241	236	244	240	241	239	239	245	242	240	239	236	240	242	232	234

References

- American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR). 2000. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*. Lenexa, KS: AAPOR.
- Bahr, Howard M., and Theodore Caplow. 1991. "Middletown as an Urban Case Study." In *A Case for the Case Study*, ed. Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum, and Gideon Sjoberg, pp. 80-120. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Caplow, Theodore. 1997. "How Fast Are American Attitudes Changing?" *Social Change Report* 7(1):1-4.
- Caplow, Theodore, and Howard M. Bahr. 1979. "Half a Century of Change in Adolescent Attitudes: Replication of a Middletown Survey by the Lynds." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 43(1):1-17.
- Fox, Richard Wightman. 1983. "Epitaph for Middletown: Robert S. Lynd and the Analysis of Consumer Culture." In *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, pp. 103-41. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Lynd, Robert S., and Helen M. Lynd. 1929. *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.
- . 1937. *Middletown in Transition: A Study in Cultural Conflicts*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.