

Are Spouses more Genetically Similar for Ideology?

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Abstract

Over the past 25, twin, kinship, adoption, and molecular DNA studies have shown that genetic transmission accounts for a great deal of variation on political attitudes and behaviors (Martin et al 1986; Hatemi et al 2010). That is, regarding attitudinal transmission, the longstanding assumption that the familial correlation on attitudes was due to socialization was simply untrue. Instead, regarding attitudes, children resemble their parents largely because of their genetic relatedness and not their social upbringing. In this way, whom individuals choose to procreate with is much more important for attitudinal transmission than how they raise their children. Indeed, spouses assort on political predilections almost more than other social, behavioral, psychological, or physical trait (Alford et al 2011; Eaves and Hatemi 2008). However, the question of whether spouses are more genotypically similar for political preferences remain unknown. If true, the implications for genetic diversity, attitude polarization, and research is profound. Here, using a genome-wide analysis of spouse pairs phenotyped for political preferences, we explore if spouses are more genetically similar regarding the top 1000 genetic loci for political ideology (Hatemi et al 2010). Results to be discussed.