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Parent-Offspring Value Transmission in a Societal Context: Suggestions for a Utopian Research Design— with Empirical Underpinnings

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This article attempts to put intrafamilial value transmission into a societal context. It points out that psychological value transmission discourse and sociological/political science discourse about value change are utterly disconnected up to now. Using data from a small value transmission study of 98 university student-parent triads from East Germany as illustration material, the article tries to show why a unified research approach is necessary. All conservation values were more important for the parents' generation than the offspring, whereas the reverse was found for hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction values. Intergenerational value stability was found for self-transcendence versus self-enhancement values. Value change and value transmission are interrelated but not strictly parallel processes. Gender effects seem to be stronger than transmission effects. Finally, this article suggests a somewhat utopian research design that may permit a complete disentanglement of *societal* value change effects from *intrafamilial* value transmission effects.

PARENT-OFFSPRING VALUE TRANSMISSION IN A SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Suggestions for a Utopian Research Design— With Empirical Underpinnings

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In current scientific discourse on values, two important topics have been discussed at length but have hardly ever been addressed together: value change and value transmission. Studies of *value change* deal with societal phenomena. Prominent work in the field is that of Ron Inglehart (1990, 1997; Abramson & Inglehart, 1995) or of Samuel P. Huntington (1996). The term *value transmission* usually pertains to the socialization of values in institutions, predominantly in the family (e.g., Rohan & Zanna, 1996).

In this article, there is first a presentation of some insight into both fields of research value change and transmission. The article then underpins concerns with the unconnectedness of both fields with empirical evidence from a study of value preferences of 98 East German triads of university undergraduates and their parents. Finally, it presents the—somewhat utopian—design of a 27-year cross-sequential study of value change and value transmission that facilitates a unified analysis.

RESEARCH IN VALUE CHANGE

Rarely, if ever, have the processes of value change and their transmission been analyzed in a unified manner. Inglehart's (1990) *Cultural Shift* basically assumes that value change in highly industrialized Western societies is a more or less automatic consequence of increased socioeconomic prosperity. Inglehart argues that increased economic prosperity leads to a better fulfillment of basic needs in the formative years of individuals (the years up to late adolescence), which, in turn, leads to less materialist values from generation to generation. Implicitly, the intrafamilial value socialization process is seen as a mere transmission belt (Schönflug, 2001, [this issue]) of societal change processes. It is described as socially

stratified: Rich families are assumed to raise fewer materialist youth than poor families. This is not conceptualized, however, as a process in its own right.

In Huntington's (1996) work, the change process is described in an even more abstract manner. Societal modernization processes are seen as the source of value change in different societies. Unlike several other authors in the field (e.g., Fukuyama, 1992), Huntington does not see a unidirectional development toward Western values but nevertheless sees value preferences constantly changing as a consequence of societal modernization. The process of how value change is brought about among individuals is hardly discussed. The work is largely governed by a societal determinism. Microprocesses are broadly disregarded. One can infer that Huntington sees "modernized" families as transmitting more "modern" values to their children. A conceptual link between the two levels of the value change process, however, remains undiscussed.

RESEARCH IN VALUE TRANSMISSION

Research in value transmission, particularly in the transmission of the values in the family, usually focuses on value similarity between parents and their children (Rohan & Zanna, 1996; Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988). Most studies have college students and their middle-aged parents as their participants (e.g., Homer, 1993). These studies often focus entirely on value congruence between parents and offspring, and on reasons for high versus low intergenerational similarity. Sometimes, one has the impression that similarity/congruence is a content-free field of research interest, an exemplification for parent-child agreement, as if one were studying the preference for colors. Values studied in transmission research are often selected on an ad libitum basis with little consideration for societal change processes. Society/culture often is not taken into account, and a comprehensive measurement of values is lacking.

Although quite rare, there are exceptions to that rule. Work that does not exclude the broader societal context has been presented by Kohn, Slomczynski, and Schoenbach (1990). Kohn et al. offer cross-cultural (Polish/American) data that show the dependence of intrafamilial value transmission processes on social stratification. Welch (1984) offers anthropological data from preindustrial societies, where he links social structural and economic indicators to societal emphases in childhood socialization as a proxy for parental values. De Graaf and de Graaf (1988) try to bring together Bourdieu's (1979) concept of cultural capital and Inglehart's (1977) *The Silent Revolution* by linking parental lifestyles to the prevalence of postmaterialist values among offspring.

In her conceptual chapter in Grusec and Kuczynski's (1997) handbook concerned with parenting and the internalization of values by children, Goodnow (1997) points to many aspects of how the social-cultural context influences value transmission within families. However, even her comprehensive review remains somewhat static in that it does not link psychological discourse to the sociological discourse on value change. Also, the subject index of Grusec and Kuczynski's (1997) book does not contain the term *value change* that has been heatedly debated in sociology and political science for quite a while (e.g., Noelle-Neumann, 1998).

Taken together, one can summarize that in general, *value change studies* do not take intrafamilial value transmission processes into consideration, whereas *value transmission studies*—even when they take societal context into consideration—disregard societal *change processes*.

DESIGNS OF VALUE CHANGE STUDIES

In both cases, the source of the respective deficit is a reductionist choice of research designs in combination with a limited measurement of values. Value change studies usually analyze aggregated time-series data. Mean preference scores from consecutive representative surveys with very few—often haphazardly selected—value items are analyzed. Changes over time in the mean score profile of different values are interpreted as evidence for value change. Often, this work even remains within the bounds of one culture or of similar cultures, for example member states of the European Union (Klages, Hippler, & Herbert, 1992). In other instances, a global outlook is taken (Huntington, 1996), but this widening of the perspective introduces an even lesser regard for interpersonal processes. Inglehart (1990, 1997) avoids many of the pitfalls of sociological value change studies. He offers multicultural data and analyzes aggregated data with consideration for cohort, period, and age effects. However, his recent emphasis that value change is a process that advances from generation to generation—and not continuously from year to year—is only vaguely underpinned with longitudinal data, and even less so with data from transmission studies.

When studies do offer long-term multicohort data, as, for example, Mayer's German Life History Study (e.g., Brückner & Mayer, 1998), they are usually monocultural in their organization, and they often do not include families as sampling units but rather individuals. Due to this shortcoming, they can only infer transgenerational transmission processes. When longitudinal studies do incorporate families as sampling units, as, for example, the Socio-Economic Panel in Germany (GSOEP) (Burkhauser, Kreyenfeld, & Wagner, 1997), they tend to be more short- than long-term, again often involving monocultural studies. When studies do offer longitudinal transgenerational data on a long-term basis—as does Elder's (1974) *Children of the Great Depression*—they often are limited to one culture and cohort (of parents), and they are investigating nonrepresentative samples. In addition, the mentioned paradigmatic studies by Mayer, Elder, or the GSOEP are not genuine value studies.

DESIGNS OF VALUE TRANSMISSION STUDIES

The shortcomings of value transmission studies are even more obvious. These studies rarely use representative samples (see, however, Kohn et al., 1990) but usually take college and university (under)graduate students and their parents as participants (Homer, 1993). This is a problem, because including only highly educated participants in a study overemphasizes the homogeneity of values, because highly educated offspring usually come from a similar (middle- and upper-class) social background. This overhomogeneity vis-à-vis society as a whole reduces variation in value preferences among parents and offspring, which may produce artifactual results. Sometimes, parent data even are only inferred through asking the students about them (McBroom, Reed, Burns, Hargraves, & Trankel, 1985).

Undertaking one-shot studies of adult children and their parents has two further implications. First, such endeavors are studies in a particular cohort, a priori unable to incorporate the question of historic change(s) in societal value preferences. Second, such studies probably focus on a life phase of the offspring in which they exhibit least value congruence with their parents, as they stand on their own feet for the first time in their lives without yet sensing the obligations of parenthood and a profession. One-shot studies can only show value congruence or incongruence at a certain time in history and in a particular life phase of the study's participants. Transmission—in the sense of a process where parents get “something

across”—can only be studied in longitudinal research¹ where the process of value socialization is accompanied by the researchers. In one-shot studies, we cannot answer the question whether similarity in parent and offspring values is a result of a socialization/transmission process or of a third variable that determines the values of both parents and offspring. There could be a value climate typical for the time of the data gathering that influences value priorities of both parents and offspring. We might call this the *zeitgeist*.

Also, to conduct transmission studies within the confinements of one culture (or at most two) (Homer, 1993; Kohn et al., 1990) substantially limits the validity of findings. From value studies undertaken with the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS) (Schwartz, 1992, see below), we know that although individual value preferences seem to have a universal structure, preferences of certain values can differ substantially between cultures (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). Thus, studies in one culture may at best only paint a picture of value transmission in one given cultural context and may very well miss the regularities on transgenerational value transmission.

Another peculiar shortcoming of a number of value transmission studies is their handling of the gender variable. Some of them handle parents as if they were a unity, not differentiating between mother and father influence in transmission; other studies do not include the gender variable when looking at offspring values (Homer, 1993). Some other studies even are mono-gender studies, as the one by Rohan and Zanna (1996), which looks at male offspring only. At first sight, it may look appropriate to treat parents as a unity. This is because almost all value transmission studies show high correlations between mother and father values. Treating parents as a quasi-unity, however, disregards the fact that in a society where gender roles differ substantially, similar values in mothers and fathers may have vastly different consequences for the children. For instance, a mother who holds exactly the same above-average power values as the father will most probably affect offspring value socialization in a way that differs substantially from that of the father, because in societal mean scores, women tend to have lower power values than men. From a societal viewpoint, the mother would thus be more atypical than the father. The seminal work of Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981), for example, has shown that the intensity of value transmission processes largely depends on the congruity of father values and mother values, so a priori treating them as a monolithic block overlooks an important source of variation.

AN EAST GERMAN VALUE SIMILARITY STUDY

Before proceeding to the—somewhat utopian—summary of how future value transmission studies might best be designed, a few empirical illustrations for the above-mentioned evaluations from a very preliminary study will be presented. The study itself has several of the shortcomings that value transmission studies have had to date, but it nevertheless permits one to untangle in an empirical way a number of the allegations forwarded above. It is a study of 98 triads of East German university undergraduates and their parents, surveyed in 1996. Students were enrolled in various undergraduate disciplines, mainly in the social sciences, but a few students from humanities and from the natural sciences and engineering were also included. Fifty-one of the respondents were males, 47 females. Average ages of students, mothers, and fathers were 22.2 years, 47.7 years, and 50.2 years, respectively. The research was conducted as part of a study by Schwartz and Boehnke (1998).² Participants were administered the SVS (Schwartz, 1992) in a version that included the value privacy instead of detachment and—in addition to older versions—the values self-indulgent and punctual, 58

items in all. As most readers will know, the SVS measures 10 value types: universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction (see also Table 1). Conceptually, the 10 value types are linked to each other in a circular manner. Universalism and benevolence values together form self-transcendence values and are opposed to power and achievement values, which form self-enhancement values. The opposition of self-transcendence versus self-enhancement values constitutes one dimension along which human value preferences can be described and measured. The other dimension is that of openness values (self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism³) versus conservation values (tradition, conformity, and security).

For the present purpose, a selection of those 43 items was used to form the 10 scales that had shown cross-cultural equivalence of meaning in at least 70% of all samples ever included in studies conducted by Schwartz. Beyond the SVS, several other instruments were included, but here only ratings of the family income by students, mothers, and fathers, and years spent in formal education (requested from mother and fathers of the respondents and—from parents—for the generation of the grandparents of the respondents) are reported. Income ratings were obtained by giving the participants of the study the income of an average East German family in the year before the survey and asking for a rating whether the respondent's family had much less, less, about the same amount, more, or much more income.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: VALUE CHANGE

To give a brief impression of the data, Table 1 documents means and ranks of the full offspring sample, plus separate tabulations for males and females as well as ratings of mothers and fathers. It also gives the correlations of the entire set of value preference ratings across the generations.

A look at Table 1 shows that ranks of value types for parents and offspring are most similar for the least popular values. For both genders in both generations, power values and tradition values always rank either 9th or 10th of the 10 value types. Similar ratings (rank difference < 2) were also given for achievement (ranks ranged from 2 to 4), universalism (3 to 5), and stimulation values (6 to 8). Ranks for benevolence values (rank range 1 to 4) and conformity values (5 to 8) both differed by a maximum rank difference of 3. Most substantial rank differences were found for self-direction values (rank range 1 to 6), security (2 to 7), and hedonism (2 and 7) values, which each differed by a maximum rank difference of 5. Self-direction values ranked first for the full offspring sample as well as for the male offspring, whereas it only ranked 6th for the mothers. A similar difference emerged for hedonism values. They ranked 2nd for male offspring, whereas they ranked only 7th for mothers. The reverse situation was obtained for security values. They were ranked 2nd by mothers, whereas they only ranked 7th among the full offspring sample and the male offspring in the sample.

The information given in Table 1 can be interpreted as an indication for intergenerational value change and value stability among East German university students and their parents. One can argue that value change is visible with regard to hedonism and self-direction values, on one hand, and to security values, on the other hand. In Schwartz's conceptual approach, self-direction values and security values are directly opposed. This means that the data presented here speak for an intergenerational trend from security values (as part of conservation values) toward self-direction values (as part of the openness values). A look at all conservation values (tradition, conformity, and security) shows that all of them had lower means in the offspring sample(s) than in the mother and the father samples. The opposite is true for

TABLE 1
Means and Ranks for 10 Value Types for Offspring, Their Mothers, and Their Fathers

Value Type	Offspring									
	Full Sample		Females		Males		Mothers		Fathers	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Self-transcendence values										
Universalism	4.02	5	4.05	4	4.00	5	4.40	3	3.96	5
Benevolence	4.52	2	4.67	1	4.39	4	4.90	1	4.34	1
Conservation values										
Tradition	1.64	10	1.47	9	1.82	10	2.38	9	2.18	9
Conformity	3.20	8	2.97	8	3.42	8	4.18	5	3.83	6
Security	3.45	7	3.27	6	3.62	7	4.49	2	4.24	3
Self-enhancement values										
Power	1.82	9	1.22	10	2.39	9	1.81	10	2.06	10
Achievement	4.28	3	4.13	3	4.43	3	4.29	4	4.29	2
Openness values										
Hedonism	4.14	4	3.71	5	4.55	2	3.41	7	3.26	7
Stimulation	3.51	6	3.11	7	3.87	6	2.90	8	2.97	8
Self-direction	4.55	1	4.44	2	4.65	1	4.16	6	4.08	4
Correlations										
			Daughters/ mothers (ratings)	Daughters/ mothers (ranks)	Sons/ fathers (ratings)	Sons/ fathers (ranks)	Offspring/ mothers (ratings)	Offspring/ mothers (ranks)	Offspring/ fathers (ratings)	Offspring/ fathers (ranks)
			.87	.71	.78	.58	.81	.52	.85	.72

TABLE 2
Correlations of Parental Value Preferences and Offspring Value Preferences

Value Type	Mother			Father			Mother/Father Correlation
	Full Sample	Daughters	Sons	Full Sample	Daughters	Sons	
Self-transcendence values							
Universalism	.13	.16	.10	-.01	-.04	.01	.29**
Benevolence	-.02	.15	-.13 ^a	.03	.09	-.11	.29***
Conservation values							
Tradition	.29***	.32**	.22	.30***	.36**	.22	.47***
Conformity	-.08	.09	-.37****	.07	.24*	-.13 ^a	.17*
Security	.03	.17	-.19 ^a	.14	.14	.16	.24**
Self-enhancement values							
Power	.37***	.53****	.18 ^a	.22	-.16	.44****	.20**
Achievement	.14	.24	.03 ^a	.06	.25	-.12 ^a	.38****
Openness values							
Hedonism	.34***	.27	.24	.32***	.31**	.09 ^a	.36****
Stimulation	.23**	.36***	.14 ^a	.24**	.17	.28*	.30***
Self-direction	.19	.13	.23	.09	.04	.15	.33****
		<i>Median Male-Female Difference</i>		<i>Median Male-Female Difference</i>			
Median correlation		.17	.22	.12	.17		
		.21	.12	.12	.16		

a. Significant difference ($p < .10$) between females and males.
 * $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$. **** $p < .001$.

openness values. Hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction values all had higher means in the offspring than in the parent samples. Intergenerational value change is obviously strongest for openness versus conservation values, and intergenerational value stability is stronger for self-transcendence versus self-enhancement values.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: VALUE TRANSMISSION

What does this interpretation suggest for an analysis of intrafamilial value transmission? If we use sample covariation between parent and child values as a proxy, the correlations of value preferences should be low for openness and for conservation values, but should be considerably higher for self-transcendence and for self-enhancement values. Table 2 tabulates parent-offspring correlations for the 10 separate value types plus correlations among parents.

Table 2 shows that similarity between parent values and offspring values is fairly low on average. The median correlation is .17 for mother-offspring value similarity and .12 for father-offspring value similarity. Median correlations are a bit higher for same-sex similarity: The mother-daughter median correlation is .21, and the father-son median correlation is .16. Gender differences appear as being very important. For 10 of the 20 possible contrasts (10 son/daughter contrasts for mother-offspring correlations, and 10 son/daughter contrasts for father-offspring correlations), significant ($p < .10$) differences between the parent-

offspring correlations for females and males were found. The average (median) *difference* between the parent-offspring correlations for females and males is larger for mother-offspring correlations (.22 vs. .17) and for father-offspring correlations (.17 vs. .12) than the median parent-offspring correlations themselves. This suggests that on average, gender effects seem to be stronger than transmission effects.

When we look at single values, we come across the observation that significant parent-offspring correlations were found for power values (maximum correlation .53 for the mother-daughter correlation and .44 for the father-son correlation), for hedonism values (.34 for mother-offspring, .32 for father-offspring), for tradition values (maximum correlation .32 for the mother-daughter correlation and .36 for the father-daughter correlation), and for stimulation values (maximum correlation .36 for the mother-daughter correlation and .28 for the father-son correlation). Correlations between parents are medium to high; they vary from .17 for conformity to .47 for tradition values.

The analysis of the sample means documented in Table 1 nourished the expectation that correlations would be low for openness and for conservation values, and considerably higher for self-enhancement and self-transcendence values. The expectation only was fulfilled with regard to self-enhancement values, where the median parent-offspring correlation is .18, thereby being higher than the average parent-offspring value similarity. For self-transcendence values, data did not concur with the expectation: The median parent-offspring correlation is only .03. For openness values, the median parent-offspring correlation is relatively high, .24, whereas for conservation values it is .11. The analysis of the means has shown evidence for value change from conservation values to openness values. This finding suggested that parent-offspring similarity should be lowest with regard to openness and conservation values. As this is not the case, we have to conclude that value change and value transmission seemingly are two probably linked, but different processes. Between generations as entities, values shift from conservation to openness values. Within families, particularly *openness* values and to a certain degree *self-enhancement* values are transmitted successfully, that is, parents and offspring have fairly similar value orientations. Societal change obviously has a separate import.

There is one more point that should be highlighted. When we look at the preferences of values among mothers and among fathers (see Table 1) and then look at the parent-offspring correlations (see Table 2), we see that the four value types least preferred by fathers and mothers (hedonism, rank 7; stimulation, rank 8; tradition, rank 9; and power, rank 10) are the only ones where we find significant correlations. The ranks of the 10 values for fathers and for mothers are highly correlated with the sizes of the parent-offspring correlations, varying between $\rho = .70$ (for the correlation of father preferences and father-offspring similarities) and $\rho = .84$ (for the correlation of mother preferences and mother-offspring similarities).⁴ This means that the higher parent-offspring similarity was in a particular value, the less a value was preferred in the parent generation. This finding sheds interesting light on the value transmission process. One may tentatively infer that value transmission seems to be strongest for values that parents *dislike* and not so strong for values that parents rank highly.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: ZEITGEIST AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

The last illustration pertains to the zeitgeist aspect mentioned above and to the influence of social stratification. *Zeitgeist* in this context means that both parents and offspring (when

they are surveyed at the same time) are influenced in their ratings by the particular value climate of the time at which they are asked to give their value preference ratings. How can one take into consideration this effect, even in a one-shot study as the one used for illustrative purposes here? One suggestion could be the following:⁵ If one adds to the data of a student *S*, his or her mother *S'*, and his or her father *S''* the value preferences of a randomly selected other student *X*, of a randomly selected mother *Y* (who is neither the mother of *S* nor *X*), and of a randomly selected father (who is neither the father of *S*, nor of *X*, and not the partner of *Y*), we can take the correlation between student, mother, and father data with mock student, mock mother, and mock father data as an estimate for zeitgeist. If student value preferences correlate positively with value preferences of randomly selected other students and unrelated representatives of the parent generation, this cannot be a consequence of value transmission processes but likely is a consequence of all respondents living in the same societal context at the same time.

Another influence on value transmission processes is that of social stratification. To quantify that influence, we formed indices (sum scores) for self-reported family income from students, mothers, and fathers, and for the educational background of the family (by summing the years spent in formal education by the parents and the grandparents of the responding students).

We then calculated zero-order correlations for parent-offspring value similarity (already reported in Table 2) and semipartial correlation coefficients, where we partialled the parent-offspring correlations for the three unrelated scores for the same value and for the two status indicators. Finally, we calculated proportions of explained variance in student value preferences by entering parent value (Bloc 1), other parent value (Bloc 2), the three unrelated value variables (Bloc 3), and the two status indicators (Bloc 4) into a regression analysis.⁶ Table 3 documents the results.

Table 3 shows that in 18 of 20 cases, the correlations between parent value preferences and offspring value preferences are reduced when attenuating for other parent, zeitgeist, and socioeconomic status (SES) influence. Second, Table 3 shows that mother influence is stronger than father influence. Most prominent, however, Table 3 shows that the influence of the zeitgeist is as strong as that of the mother and stronger than that of the father. Furthermore, a comparison of proportions of variance explained by zeitgeist with mother-father correlations for the 10 values (last column of Table 2) shows that these proportions are low when mother-father agreement on a value is high ($\rho = -.68, p < .05$). The latter finding may suggest that whenever mother and father strongly agree on a value, the influence of the zeitgeist on offspring values is below average.

The influence of income and educational background on offspring value preferences is very low.⁷ Again, however, there is one regularity: The influence is lowest for values most preferred by offsprings and fathers. Sample means of the 10 values and proportions of variance explained by SES are correlated negatively for offspring ($\rho = -.70, p .05$) and for fathers ($\rho = -.80, p < .01$).⁸ This means that SES is more important for values with low general endorsement than with high general endorsement. Social classes obviously do not differ much with regard to the values that have a high priority in society but more so for values that are not rated as positively. Table 3 documents proportions of variance for mother and father values when the respective values were entered first.

Summarizing the analyses of an admittedly in itself imperfect data set, one can draw several conclusions of importance for further research.

TABLE 3
Correlations of Parental Value Preferences and Offspring Value Preferences
Partialed for Influences of Other Parent, Zeitgeist, and Socioeconomic Status

<i>Value Type</i>	<i>Mother</i>		<i>Father</i>		<i>Percentage Variation in Offspring Value Preferences Explained by</i>			
	<i>Zero-Order Correlation</i>	<i>Semipartial Correlation</i>	<i>Zero-Order Correlation</i>	<i>Semipartial Correlation</i>	<i>Mother Value Preferences</i>	<i>Father Value Preferences</i>	<i>Zeitgeist</i>	<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>
Self-transcendence values								
Universalism	.13	.13	-.01	-.05	1.6	> 0.1	0.9	0.6
Benevolence	-.02	-.04	-.03	-.04	> 0.1	0.1	5.8	1.1
Conservation values								
Tradition	.29	.17	.30	.16	8.2	8.8	2.1	2.7
Conformity	-.08	-.12	.07	.13	0.7	0.5	9.7	2.3
Security	.03	-.06	.14	.12	0.1	2.1	8.6	3.7
Self-enhancement values								
Power	.37	.34	.22	.14	13.8	4.6	4.9	0.9
Achievement	.14	.10	.06	.02	1.9	0.4	1.3	0.1
Openness values								
Hedonism	.34	.25	.32	.18	11.8	10.2	0.6	0.4
Stimulation	.23	.14	.24	.18	5.2	5.9	1.8	0.8
Self-direction	.19	.14	.09	-.00	3.6	0.9	3.4	0.1
Median correlation/ explained variance	.17	.14	.12	.13	2.8	1.5	2.8	0.9

1. There is an indication that societal *value change* and intrafamilial *value transmission* are separate processes. The values that show high stability across generations in the sample are not the ones that also show high similarity between parents and children. Values that the parent generation as a whole negates are transmitted fairly well. Fairly well in this context means that parents and children have similar preferences for these values, not that parents foster high preferences for these values among their children.
2. Gender influences are most important. Mother influence in value transmission always is somewhat larger than father influence, but, more important, gender differences in the sizes of similarities between parents and offspring are of about the same size as the average parent-offspring similarity itself.
3. The influence of the zeitgeist should not be overlooked. On average, its influence on offspring values is as sizable as the influence of the more influential parent (the mother) and larger than the influence of the less-influential parent (the father).
4. The influences of social stratification have to be taken into account, particularly for values with low prestige in a society.

Furthermore, demanding to put value transmission studies into a societal context means all studies have to mention explicitly of which values they speak. Intrafamilial value transmission is most successful (in the sense of parents and offspring having similar—either lower or higher—preferences for a value) for values that are not endorsed by the societal mainstream, particularly when mothers and fathers have little disagreement in value preferences. Only cross-cultural studies can show whether the greater “success” of parent-offspring value transmission for the less endorsed values is a matter of the lower endorsement per se or of the precise content of these less endorsed values. In our case, hedonism, stimulation, tradition, and power values were the ones transmitted most successfully, at the same time being the ones ranked lowest by parents. Only a comparison with cultures where these values are ranked highly—for example, Fiji, where tradition ranks second (see Boehnke, Regmi, Richmond, Chandra, & Stromberg, 1996)—would allow an answer to the question of whether successful transmission is a matter of contents (tradition values fostering great similarity) or of society-wide popularity (low average ratings fostering great similarity).

A UTOPIAN DESIGN

To summarize the argument presented so far, somewhat utopian suggestions are presented for the design of a study that simultaneously takes into consideration value change *and* value transmission. What is needed is a prospective longitudinal, cross-cultural study of parent and offspring values. Figure 1 depicts the possible design of an “ideal” study.

In this design, Samples A, D, and G are representative samples of 18-year-old nonparents. Samples A', D', and G' are samples of the parents of Samples A, D, and G (where parent should be understood socially, i.e., as the person with whom the offspring lived for the majority of years). These samples would be about 45 years of age on average (depending on the culture-specific ages for childbirth). Samples B, E, and H—surveyed for the first time at Time 2—are representative samples of 9-year-olds.⁹ Samples B', E', and H' are samples of parents of Samples B, E, and H. These samples would be about 36 years of age. Samples A, D, and G are 27 years old at Time 2; their parents are approximately 54. It may be assumed that at Time 3, there will be a sufficient number of children of members of Sample A with a minimum age of 9 years. This offspring sample is Sample A". Samples A, D, and G now are 36 years old, and their parents are about 63 years old. Samples B, E, and H are 18 years old at Time 3, and their parents are about 45 years old. At Time 4, new samples of 18-year-olds are

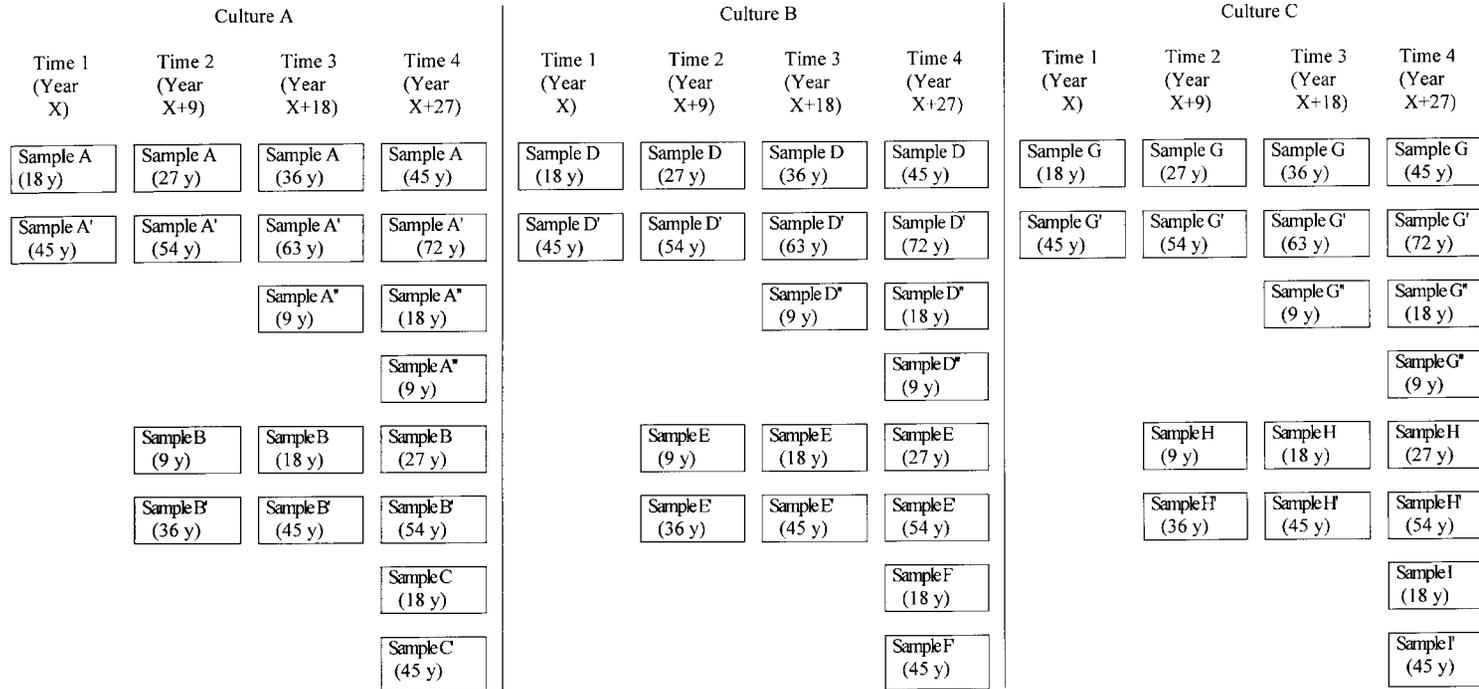


Figure 1: Design for a Unified Value Change/Value Transmission Study

to be surveyed in the three cultures (C, F, I) as are their approximately 45-year-old parents (C', F', and I'). The samples A, D, and G are 45 years old at Time 4, and their parents are 72 years old. Samples B, F, and I are 27 years old, and their parents are about 54 years old. The "early" children of Sample A (A'') now are at least 18 years old, and, finally, "late" children—Sample A'A'' (those who turned 9 after Time 3)—now have a minimum age of 9.

Why this design? Because it enables researchers to distinguish between parent-offspring value similarity and value transmission, value change and value development. Value similarity in this context is the covariation of parent and offspring values at a certain time, value transmission is the covariation of parent and offspring values across time, value change is the change in societal (=sample) mean preference of values, and value development is the intraindividual change of value preferences over time. The design would also make possible a test of cohort effects, and the comparison of intraindividual changes at different times for the same age-group would make it possible to look for period effects. In particular (putting aside the cross-cultural comparisons for a moment), the three-sided comparison of samples A/A', C/C', and A/A'' is of special interest. Comparing Time 1 data of Samples A/A' and the Time 4 data of Samples C/C' allows to quantify the degree of societal value change. This degree of societal value change can be contrasted with value transmission from Sample A to their offsprings (Sample A'') in the same historic period of 27 years. Independent parent-offspring similarity can be studied for 9-year-olds and their parents in a comparison across time (Time 2/Time3; Samples B/B' and A/A'). It can also be studied for 18-year-olds and their parents (Time 1/Time 3/Time 4; Samples A/A', B/B', and C/C') and for 27-year-olds and their parents (Time 2/Time 4; Samples A/A' and B/B'). Comparisons of intraindividual value development can be made for the age-group 9 to 18 years and 36 to 45 years (with measurement overlap at Time 3) and for 18 to 27 years and 45 to 54 years (without measurement overlap). To conclude, the design presented in Figure 1, of course, appears utopian, but as a cooperative enterprise, it may be put into effect.

NOTES

1. Here again Kohn, Slomczynski, and Schoenbach (1990) are paradigmatic in that they offer longitudinal data, at least for the U.S. part of their cross-national comparison.

2. The study Values and Well-Being was funded by Grant I-241-065 from the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF).

3. In certain cultures, hedonism values are more aligned with self-enhancement values, but for our purposes, we include them in openness values.

4. Nonparametric correlation coefficients must be used here for all analyses; otherwise, one cannot be sure whether the findings are artifacts of the constellation that low mean values at the same time also have lower standard deviations (which could unduly increase product-moment correlation coefficients).

5. Technically, this is best accomplished by first bringing the sample into a random order and then using the lag *n* option of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS) COMPUTE command, for example, COMPUTE PEERPO = LAG (SPO), for power values of unrelated student respondents; COMPUTE MPEERPO = LAG (MPO,2) for power values of mothers unrelated to student respondents and to unrelated peers; and COMPUTE FPEERPO = LAG (FPO,3) for power values of fathers unrelated to student respondents, to unrelated peers, and to unrelated mothers.

6. In the analysis of mother-offspring correlations, the mother's value preference was entered before the father's value preference; for father-offspring correlations, the order was reversed. Table 3 documents proportions of variance for mother and father values when the respective values were entered first.

7. This finding may be sample specificity. East Germans saw major shifts in "educational inheritance." In the 1950s and 1960s, the government prevented children of the academic elite from getting university qualifications.

This may have loosened the ties between status and education. Also, income varied little in the former German Democratic Republic so that it, too, may be less than a perfect indicator for social status.

8. For mothers, the direction is the same, but the correlation is insignificant.

9. Nine is the maximum age at which the revised version of the Schwartz Value Survey (SVS), the so-called portrait version, can be used.

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