Intergenerational value transmission within the family and the role of emotional relationship quality

Isabelle Albert* and Dieter Ferring

Research Unit INSIDE, University of Luxembourg, Walferdange, Luxembourg

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Emotional relationship quality of adolescents/emerging adults toward their mothers is addressed: (1) as a transmission belt for the intergenerational transfer of general values and (2) regarding the two-step model of value internalization. The sample consisted of $N = 73$ dyads of mothers and their 12–25–year-old children (51 daughters, 22 sons) living in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Mothers and adolescents/emerging adults reported on their general value orientations; in addition, adolescents/emerging adults reported on emotional relationship quality toward mothers. In a subsample of $n = 46$ mother-adolescent/emerging adult dyads, additional information was available regarding maternal socialization goals, adolescents’/emerging adults’ perceptions of these goals, and adolescents’/emerging adults’ perceived value similarity with mothers. Attachment/closeness of adolescents/emerging adults toward their mothers was related to higher, whereas dislike and worry were related to lower value consensus/congruence. Furthermore, dislike was linked to lower accuracy of value perception, whereas closeness/attachment and worry corresponded with higher perceived similarity to mothers.

Keywords: intergenerational value transmission; emotional relationship quality; mothers; adolescents; emerging adults

A crucial aspect of intergenerational relations is the passing on of the social and cultural heritage from one generation to the next – also referred to as generative socialization (Lüscher et al., 2010). Intergenerational value transmission occurs as part of social learning when members of different generations interact with each other. These learning opportunities take place to a large extent in the family as primary socialization agent, for instance, during ordinary interactions, shared activities, or discipline situations which are embedded in family relationships with a specific emotional quality (Padilla-Walker, 2008; Schönpfug, 2009; Trommsdorff, 2009). Although many authors have underlined the importance of emotions of parents and their children toward each other in the context of socialization (e.g. Grusac & Goodnow, 1994; Hoffman, 2000), few studies have directly addressed the roles of emotions in the value transmission process (see also Schönpfug, 2009).

In response to this gap, we focused here explicitly on the role that emotional relationship quality between adolescents/emerging adults and their mothers plays: (1) for the intergenerational transmission of general value orientations (i.e. conservatism and prosocial orientations, as well as self-fulfillment/hedonism), and (2) for the two steps that are supposed to be involved in the value internalization process, that is, adolescents’/emerging adults’ accuracy of perception and acceptance of parental messages.

Emotional relationship quality as transmission belt

A recurrent finding in research on intergenerational value transmission has been that values are not always transmitted in the same way and to the same extent. Rather, several so-called transmission belts – of contextual, sociodevelopmental, or relational nature – may foster or hinder transmission (Schönpfug & Bilz, 2009). Emotional relationship quality has often served as an explanatory variable for the effectiveness of various relational transmission belts such as parenting styles, family climate, or dyadic relationship aspects, although emotional relationship quality itself was seldom directly measured in these studies.

For instance, an authoritative parenting style, characterized by warmth and responsiveness, was found to be an effective transmission belt for various contents; in contrast, a rigid-authoritarian style which has been associated with angry and coercive attitudes of parents in Western societies rather weakened transmission (Rohan & Zanna, 1996; Rudy & Grusec, 2001; Schönpfug & Bilz, 2009). According to these studies, parenting styles that create emotionally positive parent-child interactions increase the openness of family members for each other’s viewpoints, whereas parenting styles that create a negative emotional relationship quality in the family, thereby distancing child and parent, have a reverse effect (see also Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2004).

*Corresponding author. Isabelle.Albert@uni.lu

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Roest, Dubas, and Gerris (2009) have focused more explicitly on family climate variables, namely, family adaptability and cohesion, as a transmission belt for two kinds of values, “work as duty” and “hedonism”. They reported a higher parent-child value similarity in families that were more connected than separate, and concluded that family cohesion and emotional bonding provide a receptive atmosphere which facilitates value transmission between parents and children (and vice versa).

Others have concentrated on dyadic relationship aspects as a transmission belt, reporting that intimacy or self-disclosure of adolescents toward their mothers as well as the adolescents’ perception of maternal appreciation increased mother-child similarity in individualistic and in group-oriented values (e.g. Albert, 2007; Friedlmeier, 2006; Trommsdorff, 2009). Less consistent results were reported regarding the role of conflicts which may, on the one hand, increase communication about values, but on the other hand, may entail negative emotions which decrease the willingness of adolescents to attend to their mothers (see Knafo & Schwartz, 2003).

Although not directly tested in most of the transmission studies reported above, the implicit assumption that emotional relationship quality is an intervening variable between socialization effects of parents and developmental outcomes of children is well-founded in socialization research (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Hoffman, 2000). Recent empirical support for this assumption stems from a study by Padilla-Walker (2008) on adolescents’ emotional reactions to maternal parenting practices in interaction contexts with positive and with negative contents. Maternal power assertion enhanced adolescents’ negative emotions (e.g. anger, frustration), whereas induction promoted positive emotions (e.g. happiness, relief) but also guilt emotions. More important, emotional reactions were not only determined by specific parenting practices but also by the adolescents’ perceptions of their mothers’ behavior as appropriate and well-intentioned, especially in discipline situations. These findings support Grusec and Goodnow’s (1994) claim that – rather than the mere parental behavior – the child’s interpretation and evaluation of parental practices is relevant for developmental outcomes.

The two-step model of internalization

Where in the process of value transmission can the impact of emotional relationship quality be located? In the current research we incorporated the two-step model of internalization that allows for a more fine-grained analysis of how emotional relationship quality is related to each of two steps deemed crucial for a successful value transmission (Cashmore & Goodnow, 1985; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). This model has served as a conceptual framework for an increasing number of studies on intergenerational value transmission (e.g. Knafo & Schwartz, 2003, 2009; Padilla-Walker, 2007). As suggested by Grusec and Goodnow (1994), in the first step of internalization, parental values can be perceived more or less accurately by children and adolescents, and in the second step, what is perceived as the parental message can be accepted or rejected.

Regarding the first step – accuracy of perception of the parental message – Grusec and Goodnow (1994) propose, from an information processing view, that parental messages should capture the child’s attention and be clear and consistent. Adolescents’ accurate perception of parental messages may, therefore, be facilitated by parenting styles that create emotionally positive parent-child relations, as this should increase the adolescents’ motivation to spend time with parents and it raises their attention to parental value messages, whereas parenting styles that induce negative emotional responses (feeling upset, angry toward parents) might interfere with adolescents’ attention and reduce the clarity of parental messages to the adolescent (Knafo & Schwartz, 2003, 2009). Inconsistent findings are reported with regard to love withdrawal: This parenting technique may enhance anxiety and feelings of guilt which then serve as a motivator to attend to parental messages, but fear of losing parental love can, obviously, interfere with the understanding of parental messages.

The second step – adolescents’ acceptance of a parental value – might be promoted by factors that increase the attractiveness of parents as models (Barni, Ranieri, Scabini, & Rosnati, 2011; Knafo & Schwartz, 2009). The most effective aspect in this regard is likely to be a positive relationship quality to parents (Barni et al., 2011; Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Knafo & Schwartz, 2009). This is in line with social learning theory put forth by Bandura (e.g. Bandura & Huston, 1961) that postulates that nurturing and rewarding models are imitated most readily. The other way round, one could argue with Festinger (1957) that accepting parental values may lead to a change in perception and evaluation of that parent in order to reduce cognitive dissonance.

Values as contents of transmission

Values are defined as abstract goals that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives, and they are involved in the individuals’ selection and evaluation of behavior and situations (Schwartz, 1992). Values are distinguished by the motivational goal they serve, and they differ in their importance for individuals. A higher transmission is expected in particular, if the motivation of parents to transmit these values is high (Schönflug & Bilz, 2009). However, adolescents play an active role in the transmission process (Schönflug, 2009; Trommsdorff, 2009). They might regard their parents as experts for specific values, whereas for other contents they might not accept their parents as legitimate transmitters (Pinquart & Silbereisen,
2004). Apparently, during the process of individuation, adolescents regard increasingly more issues as part of their private domain (Smetana, 1997). Accordingly, Knafo and Schwartz (2009) found that values belonging to the conventional (e.g. conformity and tradition values) or moral domain (such as universalism or benevolence) were accepted by adolescents more readily compared to values from the personal domain, such as hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, and achievement values (see also Roest et al., 2009).

Research questions and hypotheses
The assumption that a positive emotional relationship quality enhances transmission of values whereas a negative emotional relationship quality hinders transmission seems intuitively plausible, but a fundamental empirical test of these relations remains lacking to date. Although many studies on the effectiveness of transmission belts have referred to emotional relationship quality as an explanatory variable on theoretical grounds, emotional relationship quality itself was seldom directly measured. In response to this lack in current research, the present study concentrated on the explicit role of emotional relationship quality of adolescents/emerging adults toward their mothers in the value transmission process. We derived specific assumptions from the earlier socialization research outlined above.

First, we examined the role of emotional relationship quality as a transmission belt regarding two different value contents. In line with the findings by Knafo and Schwartz (2009) reported above, we expected a higher congruence between mothers and adolescents/emerging adults for values from conventional or moral domains (conservatism and prosocial orientations, HP 1a) compared to values pertaining to the personal domain (self-fulfillment/hedonism, HP 1b). Earlier studies on the roles of emotions in socialization have demonstrated the effectiveness of distinguishing between different kinds of negative emotions (cf. Bower, 1992; Padilla-Walker, 2008). Therefore, we included one scale measuring positive emotional relationship quality, summarized as attachment/closeness, and two kinds of negative emotional relations, dislike and worry. We expected adolescent/emerging adult-mother value consensus and congruence to be positively related to attachment/closeness (HP 2a), and negatively to dislike (HP 2b). Results in socialization research did not permit for predictions regarding worry; thus an interesting research question arises as to whether emotions of worry enhance or reduce intergenerational value consensus and congruence (Q 1).

Second, we tried to locate the impact of positive and negative emotions on the two steps of internalization suggested by Grusec and Goodnow (1994): (1) the accurate perception of maternal socialization goals by adolescents/emerging adults and (2) adolescents’/emerging adults’ perceived similarity to their mothers as a proxy of the acceptance step. We hypothesized that a positive emotional relationship (closeness/attachment) increases adolescents’/emerging adults’ accurate perception of mothers’ messages (HP 3a) as well as acceptance of maternal values (HP 4a), whereas negative emotions of dislike should reduce accuracy of perception (HP 3b) and acceptance of maternal values (HP 4b). Again, it was an open question of how emotions of worry relate to both steps of internalization, since several relations are possible here. Regarding the first step, worries may increase the willingness of adolescents/emerging adults to attend to maternal messages on the one hand but worries might impede adolescents’/emerging adults’ capacity to accurately understand these messages on the other hand (Q 2). Regarding the second step, worried adolescents/emerging adults might want to please mothers by compliance to maternal values or they might reject maternal values as unpleasant (Q 3).

Method
Participants
A convenience sample was used for the present study with \(N = 73\) dyads of mothers and adolescents/emerging adults living in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Most of the adolescents/emerging adults and their mothers were of Luxembourghish nationality (91.8%).

Participants came from two related studies on intergenerational transmission which had been carried out in the framework of a larger project on “Intergenerational relations in Luxembourg: Solidarity, conflict, ambivalence?” Participants were contacted via two high schools (Lycées Techniques), via an address list from a municipal administration as well as via personal networks.

Adolescents/emerging adults (69.9% female) were between 12 and 25 years old (\(M = 17.86, SD = 2.69\)), their mothers between 37 and 56 (\(M = 47.20, SD = 4.33\)). None of the adolescents/emerging adults was already married or cohabiting, and only five adolescents/emerging adults lived outside the parental home. As a consequence, most of the adolescents/emerging adults (93%) had daily contact with their mothers. Nine participants were already working; the remainder was still in high school or university. The majority of mothers (88%) were married. Mothers had between one and five children (\(M = 2.38, SD = .79\)). Most mothers had attained high school education (68%), but only 8% reported having a university degree. Of the mothers, 70% were gainfully employed, however, only 29% worked full time.

Measures
Adolescents/emerging adults and mothers responded separately to a standardized self-report questionnaire in the German language.
General values. A value list with 28 items was applied to measure general value orientations. Items were rated on a six-point Likert scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 6 (very important). The applied value list is based on the Schwartz Value Survey (Schwartz, 1992), but items have been reformulated to refer more closely to action tendencies and behaviors related to values compared to the original scale (Boll, 1999). The applied list is also shorter than the original Schwartz Value Survey, covering nine abstract value domains by two to four items each. In order to differentiate between different value dimensions, we carried out a principal axis factor analysis for the combined mother-adolescent/emerging adult sample (N = 146). The scree test suggested a two- or three-factor solution (with the first four eigenvalues being 6.16, 3.57, 2.07, and 1.64). In order to avoid cross-loadings, the two-factor solution (with Varimax rotation) was preferred.² The first factor explained 22% of full variance and contained 16 items (“to be always in line with law and order”, “to fulfill duties (in family and work)”, “to be honest and sincere toward others”); highest loading items stemmed from the value types of conformity, tradition, security, benevolence, and universalism. We labeled this factor as conservatism and prosocial orientations in accordance with the suggestions by Boll (1999). Reliabilities were very satisfying with \( \alpha = .85 \) for adolescents/emerging adults and \( \alpha = .80 \) for mothers. Eight items were retained to measure self-fulfillment/hedonism (“to fully enjoy life”, “a high standard of life”, “to organize life according to own ideas”, “to lead a varied life”) with a reliability of \( \alpha = .68 \) for mothers and a reliability of \( \alpha = .76 \) for adolescents/emerging adults. This factor explained 12.7% of full variance. Items loading high on this factor stemmed from the value types of self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism. Notably, both factors can be distinguished by their social versus self-orientation (cf. Schwartz, 2006). Four items were not used for any of the scales due to low factor loadings or in order to increase homogeneity of the scale contents.

Emotional relationship quality. According to Ferring, Michels, Boll, and Filipp (2009), emotions toward a parent refer to an individual’s mental representation of the relation to that parent, regarding both the relevance of the parent for the child (intensity of emotions), and the positivity or negativity of the relationship (valence of emotions). Here, a list of 26 positive and negative statements about emotions that adolescents/emerging adults might feel when they think about their mothers was used. Items were rated from 1 (never) to 5 (always). This list has proved useful in several studies on adult child-parent relations and on relations between adolescents and their grandparents (e.g. Ferring et al., 2009; Michels, Albert, & Ferring, 2011). Padilla-Walker (2008) has distinguished between positive and two kinds of negative emotions in the relation to mothers, namely, anger and guilt. In a similar, yet not identical approach, we distinguished three dimensions of emotions in the present study. Dimensions were obtained on the basis of principal axis factoring (with Varimax rotation). Three dimensions were retained on the basis of a scree test (with the first four Eigenvalues being 8.05, 4.53, 1.83, and 1.38). All but one item (“desperate”) could be clearly assigned to one of the three dimensions. The first factor was termed dislike, containing 14 items (e.g. choked, disappointed, angry) and a reliability of \( \alpha = .92 \); it explained 31% of full variance. The second factor with seven items (e.g. close, secure, proud) was termed affection/closeness; this scale had a reliability of \( \alpha = .88 \); it explained 17.4% of full variance; finally, worry was measured with four items (e.g. worried for her, sympathy, fear for her, sorry/distressed) and had a reliability of \( \alpha = .74 \). This factor still explained 7% of full variance. Although both dislike and worry include emotions with a negative valence, the former pertains to self-focused emotions whereas the latter comprises mother-focused emotions with a strong component of concern. Even though attachment/closeness and dislike were unrelated, both showed positive relations to worry with \( r (73) = .26, p < .05, \) and \( r (73) = .40, p < .01 \), respectively.

Maternal socialization goals. In a subsample of \( n = 46 \) dyads of mothers and adolescents/emerging adults, a list of 12 items was used to assess first how strongly mothers wanted their children to develop certain value orientations (e.g. “cultural interest”, “assertiveness”). Second, adolescents/emerging adults were asked in how far they thought their mothers would like them to develop these values. Items were rated on a six-point Likert scale from 1 (very unimportant) to 6 (very important). Dyadic correlations between each mother’s 12 socialization goals and each adolescent/s’emerging adult’s ratings of perceived maternal socialization goals were computed as an indicator of adolescents’/emerging adults’ accuracy of perception resulting in a total of 46 correlations (see Bernieri, Zuckerman, Koestner, & Rosenthal, 1994). To use the dyadic correlation indicator in further analyses, Fisher’s Z-transformation was applied. Accuracy indicators ranged between \(-.16 \leq q \leq .95 \) with an average dyadic correlation of .67.

Adolescents’/emerging adults’ perceived similarity to mothers. At the end of the questionnaire, adolescents/emerging adults were asked how much they felt (1) to be similar to their mothers and (2) to take over the values of their mothers. Both variables were highly correlated with \( r = .76, p < .01 \), and thus combined to assess perceived similarity. This variable was then used as a proxy measure for adolescents’ acceptance of maternal values.

Boys and girls did not differ on any of the described indicators and age of adolescent/emerging adult did not correlate with any of these indicators.
Results
Mean differences and correlations in value importance ratings between mothers and adolescents/emerging adults

First, we addressed possible similarities and differences in value importance ratings between mothers and adolescents/emerging adults by carrying out ANOVAs for repeated measures and computing Pearson correlations (r). In all analyses, we controlled for adolescents’/emerging adults’ age and gender to account for possible effects of developmental phase (Padilla, 2009) or of gender on the transmission process (see Boehnke, 2001). Mothers did not differ from adolescents/emerging adults regarding ratings on conservatism and prosocial orientations; self-fulfillment/hedonism was, however, more adhered to by adolescents/emerging adults compared to mothers. Further, mothers’ and adolescents’/emerging adults’ ratings of conservatism and prosocial orientations were correlated with each other (HP 1a), but no significant intergenerational value correlations were found with regard to self-fulfillment/hedonism (HP 1b; see Table 1).

Correlations between emotional relationship quality, value consensus, and value congruence

We used two methods to obtain indicators of value consensus or congruence (cf. Roest, Dubas, Gerris, & Engels, 2009). First, we calculated dyadic correlations to assess profile similarities over the whole set of value items to obtain an indicator of general value consensus for each mother and her respective adolescent/emerging adult. Second, we calculated absolute difference scores between mothers’ and adolescents’/emerging adults’ ratings of each of the two value dimensions separately to obtain indicators of congruence for each of the two value orientations.

Dyadic correlations ranged between −.35 ≤ q ≤ .77, with an average dyadic correlation of .41. Dyadic correlations as indicators of value consensus for each mother-adolescent/emerging adult dyad were used to further examine relations between value consensus and emotional relationship quality (see Table 2).

As expected, the higher adolescents’ feelings of attachment/closeness to mothers, the higher was their general value consensus with their mothers (HP 2a), whereas the higher dislike and, notably, also the higher worry concerning mothers, the lower was the value consensus between them (HP 2b).

Furthermore, the relations between emotions toward mothers and congruence on specific values were examined by computing absolute value difference scores with regard to the two value dimensions assessed and then correlating these scores with emotions toward mother scores. Absolute difference scores ranged between .06 ≤ d ≤ 1.50 with a mean of .73 for conservatism and prosocial orientations, and from .25 ≤ d ≤ 2.38 with a mean of 1.05 for self-fulfillment/hedonism. Although no significant relations were found, results showed a tendency of higher closeness/attachment scores corresponding with lower discrepancies regarding conservatism and prosocial orientations, whereas higher worry scores tended to correspond with higher discrepancies on conservatism and prosocial orientations.

Correlations between emotional relationship quality, adolescents’/emerging adults’ accuracy of perception of maternal goals, and perceived similarity

For a subsample of n = 46 mother-adolescent/emerging adult dyads, further information about maternal socialization goals and perceived similarities was available. The age range of adolescents/emerging adults was more narrow (15–20 years; M = 17.48, SD = 1.50) than in the full sample and gender distribution was almost balanced (52.2% female). Here, we tested whether different kinds of emotional relationship quality are related (1) to the accuracy of perceived maternal parenting goals by adolescents/emerging adults and (2) to the perceived similarity to mothers (see Table 2). Adolescents’/emerging adults’ accuracy of perceived maternal socialization goals was lower with greater dislike emotions of adolescents/emerging adults toward their mothers (HP 3b). Perceived similarity to mothers was higher with stronger feelings of attachment/closeness to mothers (HP 4a). Further, feelings of worry also tended to be related positively to the perception of being similar to mothers (p < .10; see Q 3).

Table 1. Intergenerational mean differences (ANOVAs for repeated measures) and correlations between general values of mothers and adolescents/emerging adults

| General values                        | Mothers          |                  | Adolescents/emerging adults |                  | F(1, 70) | r   |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|----------|-----|
|                                       | M                | SD               | M                           | SD               |          |     |
| Conservatism & prosocial orientation  | 4.86             | .40              | 4.65                        | .50              | 1.91     | .29* |
| Self-fulfillment/hedonism             | 4.30             | .48              | 4.88                        | .54              | 5.08*    | .02  |

Note: All analyses are controlled for age and gender of adolescent/emerging adult. **p < .01; *p < .05; +p < .10; Two-tailed.
Finally, we calculated Pearson correlations ($r$) between the indicators of accuracy and perceived similarity with the indicator of value consensus regarding general values. Perceived similarity was significantly correlated with overall value consensus with $r (39) = .34, p < .05$; also, the relation between accuracy and overall value consensus reached significance ($r (39) = .27, p < .05$, one-tailed).

**Discussion**

The present study has provided empirical evidence for the often assumed – but seldom tested – involvement of emotions in the intergenerational transmission of values within the family. These emotions might constitute a common factor that explains, at least partially, the effectiveness of relational transmission belts such as parenting styles, family climate, or other aspects of relationships (see, e.g. Schönflug & Bilz, 2009). The effects of emotional relationship quality on the extent of value consensus and congruence between mothers and adolescents/emerging adults (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). Results showed that emotions of dislike were negatively linked to adolescents/emerging adults’ accurate perception of maternal values but were not related to the acceptance of maternal values. In an information processing perspective, negative emotions might distract attention or occupy capacity that could otherwise be allocated to learning and memory processes regarding maternal values and goals (see, e.g. Bower, 1992).

In contrast, positive emotions were more important for adolescents/emerging adults’ presumed acceptance of maternal values as measured by their perceived similarity to mothers. This was in line with the well-founded postulation of social learning theory that maintains, in general, that one wants to be similar to those models that are nurturant and rewarding (e.g. Bandura & Huston, 1961). We cannot exclude that stating similarity with one’s mother may lead to more positive emotions as well. Interestingly, emotions of dislike were not related to adolescents’ acceptance of maternal values. In a similar vein, several studies have failed to demonstrate a link between adolescent-parent conflicts and value transmission (Knafo & Schwartz, 2003). Apparently, negative emotions toward a parent do not necessarily entail a complete rejection of parental values, especially if positive emotions are present at the same time, as proposed by the ambivalence approach (see Lüscher et al., 2010).

Also notable was the finding that adolescents/emerging adults seemed to perceive their values as more similar to their mothers’, the more worried they were. Worry is an empathy-related emotion: Adolescents who are worried and concerned for their mothers might be particularly keen to please mothers, to take over their mothers’ perspectives, and consequently, to be in line with maternal value orientations (cf. Hoffman, 2000; Knafo & Assor, 2007).

But actual similarity does not necessarily result out of the wish to be similar to mothers. In fact, perceived similarity and overall value consensus were moderately related, but did not fully explain each other. The perception to be similar to another person might be a mere indicator of relationship closeness (see also Cashmore & Goodnow, 1985).

| Table 2. Correlations between value consensus and congruence, accuracy of perception, perceived similarity, and emotional relationship quality between mothers and adolescents/emerging adults (Pearson correlations $r$) |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                   | Attachment/closeness | Dislike | Worry |
| **Full sample ($N = 73$)** |                          |              |       |
| Adolescent/emerging adult-mother consensus$^a$ | .24$^*$          | −.26$^*$     | −.24$^*$  |
| Value discrepancy$^b$: conservatism & prosocial orientation | −.23$^+$ | .16     | .23$^+$ |
| Value discrepancy$^b$: self-fulfillment/hedonism | .07              | .14       | .14     |
| **Subsample ($n = 46$)** |                          |              |       |
| Accuracy of perception of maternal socialization goals$^c$ | .06              | −.36$^*$     | .05     |
| Perceived similarity | .60$^{**}$ | .01       | .30$^+$ |

Note: $^a$Higher values indicate higher consensus; $^b$higher values indicate higher discrepancy; $^c$higher values indicate higher accuracy. All analyses are controlled for age and gender of adolescent/emerging adult. $^{**}p < .01; ^*p < .05; +p < .10$; Two-tailed.
Apart from our main research questions, we were able to reproduce findings – reported earlier by others – regarding selectivity of transmission in families with adolescents/emerging adults (e.g. Knafo & Schwartz, 2009; Roest et al., 2009): Adolescents’/emerging adults’ ratings of conservativeness and prosocial orientations, both stemming from the conventional and the moral domain, were correlated with those of their mothers, but this was not the case for ideas regarding self-fulfillment/hedonism, a value orientation clearly stemming from the personal domain. The younger generation ascribed also significantly more importance to self-fulfillment/hedonism than mothers did. During the process of individuation, adolescents and emerging adults typically try to explore their own identity independently from their family (Grotevant & Cooper, 1985). Apparently, values from the personal domain are most prominent in this process (see Smetana, 1997).

**Caveats**

Due to the small sample size it was not possible to carry out analyses for male and female participants separately or to focus on specific developmental phases. We controlled all analyses for gender and age of adolescents/emerging adults, but it would be interesting to address these issues in more detail in future studies.

As our study design was cross-sectional, we could not draw any conclusion with regard to the direction of effects. Our results might suggest that a positive in contrast to an aversive or tense emotional relationship climate provides a fertile context for the transfer of values. However, the emotional relationship climate itself may again depend on success or failure of transmission (see also Trommsdorff, 2009). Longitudinal studies would be needed to further elucidate these mechanisms. The same holds for bidirectionality of transmission: Not only may mothers transmit values to their children, but also mothers’ values might be influenced by those of their children (Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2004).

It has to also be noted that the two-step model of value internalization was taken here as a theoretical framework addressing the transmission process in general and not with respect to specific value orientations. One might argue that we measured identification with the mothers rather than acceptance of parental values; however, identification and acceptance of parental values are closely related as shown, for instance, by Knafo and Schwartz (2004) and it seemed therefore justified to take perceived similarity as a proxy measure for the overall acceptance of maternal values. Different results may be found if one assesses the adolescents’ accurate perception of specific maternal values or by asking if adolescents accept specific values of their mothers.

Finally, mothers may differ in their (intentional) use of emotions in transmitting values, for instance, by emphasizing empathy of their children or by pointing explicitly to their own emotions in discipline situations, and it would thus be interesting to study emotions involved in concrete socialization interactions, too (Padilla-Walker, 2008).

**Conclusions**

The presence of positive emotions and the absence of dislike emotions are two effective transmission belts that enhance intergenerational value consensus and congruence. Dislike emotions can impede the accurate understanding of messages; positive emotions seem to enhance the acceptance of values. Whereas these mechanisms regarding positive and dislike emotions seem rather intuitively plausible, emotions of worry need special attention: The results underline the importance of differentiating between different kinds of negative emotions as Padilla-Walker (2008) already pointed out, but more research is needed for a deeper understanding of the underlying processes. Apparently, worry is negatively related to actual value congruence, similar to negative emotions of dislike, but worried adolescents/emerging adults might identify more readily with their mothers, and this is similar to the effect of positive emotions. We propose a tentative explanation for this – seemingly contradictory – pattern: Given that adolescents’/emerging adults’ willingness to be similar is enhanced by worry emotions, actual differences in their value orientations, in particular from the moral and conventional domain, may give rise again to adolescents’/emerging adults’ emotions of worry. Difficulties to balance needs of autonomy (exploration of new ideas and values) and relatedness toward mothers in the individuation process could be involved here (see also Albert, Trommsdorff, & Sabatier, 2011). Also, mothers might use specific emotions to transmit values that prescribe social rules of behavior and social harmony. Emotions have a crucial role in the transmission process, and this role is much more complex than it first seems. More research is therefore needed to further explore this central transmission belt.

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**Notes**

1. Inconsistent findings may also be attributed to different definitions of the term “conflict” itself which may comprise manifest versus latent conflicts, acute or chronic.
2. A similar factor solution has been reported by Boll (1999). He applied the present value list to two subsamples: in the first subsample with N = 236 participants, he extracted two factors, namely, prosocial orientations and conservatism as well as hedonism, whereas in the second subsample with N = 295 participants, these factors were further subdivided into a four-factor solution with conservatism, prosocial orientations, self-fulfillment, and hedonism.

3. Correlations were computed across all items of the two value dimensions. Thus, mother and adolescent/emerging adult ratings on items measuring conservatism and prosocial orientation as well as self-fulfillment/hedonism were correlated resulting in 73 correlations altogether (see Bernieri et al., 1994). To use the dyadic correlation indicator in further analyses, Fisher’s Z-transformation was applied.

4. For each dyad, the sum of the absolute differences between scores of mothers and adolescents/emerging adults was calculated for each of the two scales and divided by the number of items per value scale. The difference score could theoretically range between 0 (perfect similarity) and 5 (no similarity).

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