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Pedagogika Rodziny 5/2, 143-156

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2015

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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OPEN

Pedagogika Rodziny. Family Pedagogy  
nr 5(2)/2015, ss. 143–156  
DOI: 10.1515/fampe-2015-0025

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## Similarities and Differences in Values of Polish Young Women and their parents – the Effect of Value Transmission and Value Change

**Abstract:** The similarities and differences in values between generations reflect both the stability and change of socio-cultural trends prevailing at a specific time point as well as developmental processes occurring across the life span. Intergenerational similarities in values may be the effect of value transmission within family or consequence of sharing the same socio-cultural context, since both these processes are difficult to separate. The aims of the study were: 1) to describe similarities and differences in values preferences between young women and their both parents; 2) to determine which values may be transmitted within families. Ninety nine women aged 19-25 and their both parents filled in the Schwartz' Portrait Value Questionnaire [PVQ-21, Schwartz 2003]. Comparing to older generation young women showed greater preference for achievement, hedonism, stimulation and universalism as well as less preference for conformity and tradition. To assess value transmission two methods measuring similarity between family members were used. According to correlation analysis values representing conservation (conformity, tradition and security) as well as benevolence and power were transmitted in families between women, while security and two values related to self-enhancement (power and achievement) were transmitted between fathers and daughters. According to comparisons of family dyads with pseudo family dyads only mothers and daughters were found to be similar in their preference for tradition, security and power.

**Key words:** values, intergenerational differences, transmission of values.

## Introduction

Values are trans-situational goals that vary in importance and serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or a group [Schwartz 1994]. The similarities and differences in values between generations reflect both the stability and change of socio-cultural trends prevailing at a specific time point [Boehnke 2001]. Intergenerational differences in values could reflect developmental processes across the life span as well as changes in social, economic and political conditions [Grob, Weisheit & Gomez 2009; Albert, Ferring & Michels 2013]. Intergenerational similarities in values may be the effect of value transmission within family or consequence of sharing the same socio-cultural context [Boehnke 2001]. Results of the family studies indicate that families differ in the degree of similarity between parents and children presenting either high or low value congruence [Whitbeck & Gecas 1988; Vollebergh, Iedema, & Raaijmakers 2001].

Personal values change across the life span. These changes could be seen as a result of personal growth as the individual succeeds in fulfilling developmental tasks which are specific to following stages in life [Erickson 1968]. The preferences for universalism and benevolence as well as conformity, tradition and security increase with age, while preferences for power, achievement and hedonism as well as stimulation and self-direction decrease [Schwartz 2006]. However, strong preference for security and low preference for hedonism is specific for Polish late adolescents and emerging adults comparing to young respondents from other European countries [Cieciuch 2013].

Differences in values between generations could be also explained by shift in attitudes and mentality observed after breakdown of the socialism and transition to capitalism [Daab, 1993; Reykowski, 1993]. Polish young adults are the first generation born and raised after the transition in 1989. Parents socialize their children in order to adapt to the demands of the environment, yet during rapid social changes the adaptability of values and behaviour of the old generation may be questioned. Social, political and economic changes which follow the market economy may foster the individualistic orientation. According to Schwartz' study, individualistic orientation corresponds with values such as self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism, while collectivistic with preference for security, tradition and conformity [Schwartz & Bilsky 1990].

Despite the intergenerational differences in values we can still observe similarities between parents and their children, as it is the family which has the primary role in socialisation [Niezgoda 1979; Sabatier & Lannegrand-Willems 2005]. Parents transmit their values via direct (e.g. modeling) and indirect (e.g. emotional climate in the family) processes [Brzozowski 1988]. Psychological mechanisms such as identification with parental figure and internalisation the standards of society are considered to take part in value transmission [Grusec,

Goodnow & Kuczynski 2000]. Similarities in values between parents and children may be both the effect of value transmission and the consequence of sharing the same socio-cultural context, also called a *cultural stereotype*, *Zeitgeist* or *stereotype accuracy* [Cronbach 1995; Boehnke 2001]. According to group socialization theory, the transmission of values important for given culture is more the effect of the intra – and intergroup processes than processes in dyadic relationships, is not direct and takes part both in the parents' and children's groups [Harris 1995]. It is then difficult to say whether the similarities in values between parents and children are the truly effect of transmission within family or the consequence of broader socio-cultural environment. Moreover, different measurement strategies of value similarities implicate different results [Roest, Dubas, Gerris & Engels 2009]. Variable-centered (e.g. Pearson's correlation) and couple-centered (e.g. absolute difference score, profile correlation) methods are the most popular to assess the similarities, however only the couple-centered ones enable to evaluate cultural stereotype bias by applying pseudo-dyads analysis [Kenny, Kashy & Cook 2005]. Such analysis allows to estimate baseline similarities between members of society by using pseudo-family dyads and consequently determine if similarities between actual family members are greater than chance [Glass & Polisar, 1987; Kenny, Kashy & Cook 2005].

Important questions arising from the family studies on value transmission are: “which values may actually be transmitted between parents and children?” and “are there gender differences in value transmission?” Studies have shown that families transmit political orientations, religious beliefs and lifestyles [Kohn 1983], work values [Laghi, Pallini & De Sclavis 2012], academic values [Gniewosz & Noack 2012a, 2012b], family values [Sabatier & Lannegrand-Willems 2005] and environmental concern [Meeusen 2014]. According to salience hypothesis only important values are transmitted within families [Pinquart & Silbereisen 2004]. From the evolutionary perspective parents have a particular interest in transmitting values that lead to intergenerational solidarity and cooperation between family members [Schönpflug 2001]. According to this prediction families show greater transmission of collectivistic values [which corresponds with conservatism, Schwartz & Bilsky 1990] than individualistic ones.

Gender is an important factor to consider in family studies on value transmission [Maccoby & Martin 1983; Phalet & Schönpflug 2001; Roest, Dubas & Gerris 2010]. Results of a large cross-cultural study involving 70 countries reveal that women consistently gave higher priority to benevolence and universalism, contrary to men who have higher preference for self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement and power [Schwartz & Rubel 2005]. Given these differences, it can be expected that women and men transmit different values to their children.

In summary, the aims of our study were: 1) to describe similarities and differences in values between young women and their both parents; 2) to determine which values may be transmitted within families and if there are gender differences in value transmission. Two methods of measuring similarities between family members were used to estimate value transmission. We hypothesized that:

1. in comparison to older generation young women show greater preference for values related to openness to change and self-enhancement;
2. within families values related to conservation (conformity, tradition and security) are transmitted more than other values;
3. in family dyads (mothers-daughters, fathers-daughters) women and men transmit different values.

## Method

*Participants.* Ninety nine Polish women 19–25 years old and their both parents participated in the study (a total of 297 respondents). Young women were recruited from students of different major fields in two universities in Krakow. Demographic characteristics of the group are described in Table 1. Young women living in a city differed from their peers living in a small town or village in the preference for conformity ( $t = 2.79$ ,  $p = .006$ ), tradition ( $t = 3.17$ ,  $p = .002$ ) and power ( $t = 2.66$ ,  $p = .009$ ). In the groups of parents there were no significant differences in values due to their residence or education.

*Measures.* To assess values in the study group The Portrait Value Questionnaire - PVQ-21 (Schwartz, 2003) was used. The questionnaire contains 21 short verbal portraits of people's goals, aspirations or wishes that point implicitly to the importance of one of the ten values. For each portrait respondents answer: "How much like you is this person?" from 6 – "Very much like me" to 1 – "Not like me at all". Predictive validity of the questionnaire was proved in the European Social Survey conducted in 20 countries including Poland [Davidov, Schmidt & Schwartz 2008].

*Procedure.* Women who decided to participate signed an agreement form and filled in questionnaire after the study procedure was fully explained to them. Parents received an envelope with questionnaire and agreement form from their daughters and they sent it by mail after filling in. Only these women whose both parents participated in the study were included in data analysis.

## Results

### *Similarities and differences in values in two generations*

Values preferences of young women, older women and older men are presented in Table 2 from most to least preferred value for each group. Benevolence was the most preferred and security the third preferred value in all three groups. Among

the most preferred values were also: universalism, tradition and self-direction, in each group being at a different place in the hierarchy. Power, hedonism and stimulation were three least preferred values.

Comparison of values in two generations (presented in Table 3) revealed six differences between groups of young and older women. Young women showed greater preference for universalism ( $t = 2.68, p = .008$ ), achievement ( $t = 2.93, p = .004$ ), hedonism ( $t = 4.193, p < .001$ ) and stimulation ( $t = 5.097, p < .001$ ). Two of the three values related to conservation: conformity ( $t = 2.253, p = .026$ ) and tradition ( $t = 3.305, p = .001$ ) were preferred less by young than older women.

Comparing to older men young women showed greater preference for two values representing self-transcendence: universalism ( $t = 5.838, p < .001$ ) and benevolence ( $t = 5.234, p < .001$ ). They also differed from older men in greater preference for stimulation ( $t = 4.287, p < .001$ ) and less preference for power ( $t = 2.026, p = .044$ ). No significant differences between generations revealed in preferences for security and self-direction, which were both highly preferred values.

#### *Similarities in values in family dyads – correlation analysis*

To determine which values may be transmitted within families we compared values in dyads of mothers and daughters, as well as fathers and daughters. Because in frequentist inference it is inconclusive to find no significant difference and our hypotheses concerned similarities we used correlation tests to establish which values are significantly similar in dyads of family members. Since we performed several correlation tests we used correction for multiple comparisons [Benjamini & Yekutieli 2001].

Significant similarities in dyads of mothers and daughters revealed in all three values representing conservation: conformity ( $r = .39, p = .005$ ), tradition ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ) and security ( $r = .47, p < .001$ ), as well as preferences for benevolence ( $r = .36, p = .028$ ) and power ( $r = .36, p = .023$ ). Significant similarities in dyads of fathers and daughters revealed in preferences for security ( $r = .35, p = .023$ ) as well as two values related to self-enhancement: power ( $r = .38, p = .01$ ) and achievement ( $r = .36, p = .02$ ). There were no significant correlations in dyads of parents and daughters in values representing openness to change: stimulation and self-direction, as well as values which are located close to them on the Schwartz' value model: universalism and hedonism. All results are presented in Table 4.

#### *Similarities in values in family dyads and pseudo family dyads*

Using strategy similar to suggested by Glass & Polisar [1987] we compared similarities in values in family dyads (mother – daughter, father – daughter) with similarities in values in pseudo family dyads (random mother – daughter, random father – daughter). For each value its mean absolute difference between parent and their daughter was compared to distribution of mean absolute differences

between randomly paired parents and daughters. As mean of the distribution is an estimation of a base level of difference and standard deviation of the distribution is estimation of a standard error, we can state if the observed difference between parent and daughter is significantly lower than random. Since several tests were performed we used correction for multiple comparisons [Benjamini & Yekutieli 2001].

Significant differences between mother – daughter dyads and pseudo dyads revealed in preferences for three values: tradition ( $r = 96.5, p = 0.009$ ), security ( $r = 73.5, p = 0.002$ ) and power ( $r = 90.5, p = 0.029$ ). It means that similarity between mothers and daughters in preferences for these values was estimated to be higher than in random intergenerational women dyads. We did not find significant differences in preferred values between father – daughter dyads and pseudo dyads. All results are presented in Table 5.

### Discussion

Results of our study on values of young women and their both parents are consistent with those obtained by S. Schwartz in large cross-cultural research [Schwartz 2006; Schwartz & Bardi 2001; Schwartz & Sagie 2000]. Benevolence, universalism and self-direction were highly preferred values (with the exception of older men who prefer universalism less), while hedonism, stimulation and power were located on the bottom of the hierarchy. Strong preference for security which is specific for Polish adolescents [Cieciuch 2009] was also confirmed in our study.

In accordance with the first hypothesis young women showed greater preference for achievement (related to self-enhancement), stimulation (related to openness to change) and hedonism (belonging to both dimensions) in comparison to older women. They also preferred stimulation more than older men. Preference for conformity and tradition was particularly strong in generation of older women and significantly weaker in young adults. Unexpectedly, preference for universalism of young women was revealed to be stronger than in the older generation.

Intergenerational differences in valuing achievement, stimulation and hedonism as well as conformity and tradition could be explained by developmental change, which has been demonstrated by Schwartz (2006) in studies on values preferences in a lifetime perspective. According to Schwartz' interpretation preference for conservation increases with age, while preference for self-enhancement decreases because people become more rooted in their social relationships, less exposed to change and together with the achievement of stable professional positions are less absorbed by their aspirations. Another possible explanation of these intergenerational differences could be increasing individualistic orientation due to socio-economic change after Polish transition to capitalism. As the individualism corresponds with preference for stimulation

and hedonism [Schwartz & Bilsky 1990] the differences observed are in line with this relationship.

Greater preference for universalism in young women in comparison to older generation is in opposition to developmental perspective, according to which preference for self-transcendence increases with age [Schwartz 2006; Ciecuch 2009]. However, it could be explained as a part of broader social trend indicating the intergenerational shift from materialistic to post-materialistic values which characterize Western societies with increasing economic prosperity [Inglehart 1971; Inglehart & Welzel 2005]. Post-materialistic values are expressed in the pursuit of harmony in personal relationships, quality of life, solidarity and tolerance which could be ascribed to the value of universalism defined by S. Schwartz as “understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature” [Schwartz 2003, p. 268]. Moreover, post-materialism manifests in personal autonomy, intellectual openness, changes and self-indulgence which corresponds with openness to change dimension in Schwartz’ value model.

Intergenerational differences observed in our study support the interpretation of the post-materialistic transformation of values across generation as the young women are focused both on values belonging to self-transcendence and openness to change. Greater preference for universalism in younger than older generation must be, however, confirmed in further studies, especially since we do not have data on young men values.

To determine which values may be transmitted within families we used two different methods measuring similarity between parents and their daughters: correlation analysis and comparisons of family dyads and pseudo family dyads. Results obtained by these methods proved to be different. According to correlation analysis mothers and daughters were significantly similar in their preferences for five values (benevolence, conformity, tradition, security and power) while fathers and daughters were significantly similar in their preferences for three values (security, power and achievement). Comparisons of family and pseudo family dyads revealed only three similarities in values being significantly higher in parents – daughters dyads than in random intergenerational dyads. These similarities occurred between mothers and daughters in their preferences for tradition, security and power. Such results indicate that pseudo dyad comparisons are more restrictive method of measurement similarity between family members than correlation analysis, which is consistent with the results of Roest, Dubas, Gerris & Engels [2009]. In family studies it is therefore not indifferent which method will be applied and what is considered as an indicator of value transmission.

According to second hypothesis conservation would be transmitted within families more than other types of values. This hypothesis was confirmed mainly



in mother-daughter dyads showing significant correlations in all three values related to conservation (conformity, tradition and security). Similarities between mothers and daughters in preferences for tradition and security were also higher than those estimated in pseudo family dyads. In father-daughter dyads only one value from conservation dimension (security) was significantly correlated. However studies with same-sex dyads of fathers-sons reveal more significant similarities of collectivistic than individualistic values [Schönpflug 2001]. Because of the fact that we have different sex dyads we could not directly replicate these results.

Third hypothesis stated that the value transmission within families is influenced by parents' gender. According to results of correlation analysis we could say that values representing conservation as well as benevolence and power were transmitted between women, while two of the three values related to self-enhancement (achievement and power) as well as security were transmitted between fathers and daughters. However, these results should be interpreted with caution as they do not arise from pseudo dyad comparisons. It is therefore possible that women and men may transmit values which are more important to them, consistently with salience hypothesis proposed by Pinguet & Silbereisen [2004]. Cross-cultural studies revealed that there are gender differences in values, including higher priority of benevolence for women and achievement for men [Schwartz & Rubel 2005]. Young women may be differently influenced by mothers' and fathers' values and internalize selected values relevant to parent gender. The only values transmitted between daughters and both parents are security and power. It is noteworthy that although significant similarities in values between family members are considered to be signs of value transmission, the causes of these similarities, in fact, may be different (e.g. common socio-cultural context). Pseudo dyad comparisons, by estimating the base level of intergenerational similarity allow to assess whether the similarity in family dyads is higher than random, thus serving as a proxy of a *cultural stereotype* [Roest, Dubas, Gerris & Engels 2009]. However, it should be remembered that only studies involving cross-cultural dyads allow a better understanding of the role of cultural factors in value transmission.

The results of this study shed some light on the process of value change and value transmission in two Polish generations. Young women born and raised in particular political and economic environment differ from their parents in preferred values, which assures adaptability to cultural context they live in as well as fulfilling developmental tasks specific to young adulthood. At the same time values which are of significant importance for family members are transmitted within families. Some limitations of the study must be pointed out. The value transmission is influenced by gender, which means that mothers transmit their

values more to their daughters, whereas fathers to their sons [Vollebergh, Iedema, & Raaijmakers 2001]. Although we included both parents in the study, it focused only on daughters. Therefore different patterns of value transmission from parents to young men should be expected. Furthermore we consider only the results of triad (daughter-mother-father) in the analysis, excluding the single-parent family from the sample. That could have biased the results as the double-parent families may be prone to cultivate conservatism and family values in a higher extent than single parents. Finally, it is widely acknowledged that value transmission between parents and children may be bidirectional [Grusec & Kuczynski 1997; Peters 1985; Pinquart & Silbereisen 2004; Roest, Dubas, Gerris & Engels 2009]. It is especially true when it comes to young adults who can effectively influence parental attitudes in many areas. On the basis of value similarities analysis we have made, the question whether parents transmitted their values to daughters or whether transmission had the opposite direction remains open. This question may be only answered in longitudinal studies.

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## Declaration of interest

We have no financial, consulting or personal relationships with other people or organizations that could influence this work. Support for this study was provided by Pedagogical University, Krakow. Presented study is a part of the project "Intergenerational transmission of behaviours, attitudes and values" led by dr hab. Krzysztof Mudyń, prof. UP.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of demographic variables**

Group	Medium age	Residence	Education
Young women (99)	20.92 (SD = 1.5)	City (48) Small town & village (51)	University students (99)
Older women (99)	47.74 (SD = 5.01)	City (33) Small town & village (66)	University (26) High school (42) Basic & vocational (31)
Older men (99)	50.24 (SD = 7.8)	City (37) Small town & village (62)	University (19) High School (39) Basic & vocational (41)

Source: own study.

**Table 2. Estimated means and standard deviations (SD) of values in compared groups**

Young women			Older women			Older men		
Value	Mean	SD	Value	Mean	SD	Value	Mean	SD
Benevolence	5.17	.68	Benevolence	5.11	.86	Benevolence	4.51	1.04
Universalism	4.68	.69	Tradition	4.69	1.11	Self-direction	4.38	1.09
Security	4.43	.97	Security	4.54	.97	Security	4.33	1.11
Self-direction	4.35	1	Universalism	4.37	.92	Tradition	4.25	1.12
Achievement	4.16	.92	Conformity	4.34	1.03	Conformity	4.02	1.06
Tradition	4.15	1.14	Self-direction	4.28	1.07	Achievement	4	1.15
Conformity	3.99	1.16	Achievement	3.72	1.18	Universalism	3.93	1.07
Stimulation	3.92	1.12	Power	3.17	1.15	Power	3.62	1.25
Hedonism	3.65	1.47	Stimulation	3.09	1.15	Hedonism	3.29	1.34
Power	3.28	1.04	Hedonism	2.83	1.28	Stimulation	3.21	1.18

Source: own study.

**Table 3. Statistically significant differences in values between generations**

Young women – Older women	Self-transcendence Universalism ( $t=2.68, p=0.008^{**}$ ) Benevolence ( $t=0.589, p=0.555$ )	Conservation Conformity ( $t=2.253, p=0.026^*$ ) Tradition ( $t=3.305, p=0.001^{***}$ ) Security ( $t=0.81, p=0.419$ )	Self-enhancement Power ( $t=0.712, p=0.477$ ) Achievement ( $t=2.93, p=0.004^{**}$ ) Hedonism ( $t=4.193, p<0.001^{***}$ )	Openness to change Stimulation ( $t=5.097, p<0.001^{***}$ ) Self-direction ( $t=0.492, p=0.623$ )
Young women – Older men	Universalism ( $t=5.838, p=0.001^{***}$ ) Benevolence ( $t=5.234, p<0.001^{***}$ )	Conformity ( $t=0.192, p=0.848$ ) Tradition ( $t=0.574, p=0.567$ ) Security ( $t=0.667, p=0.505$ )	Power ( $t=2.026, p=0.044^*$ ) Achievement ( $t=1.073, p=0.284$ ) Hedonism ( $t=1.8, p=0.074$ )	Stimulation ( $t=4.287, p<0.001^{***}$ ) Self-direction ( $t=0.188, p=0.851$ )

Source: own study.

**Table 4. Statistically significant similarities in values in family dyads**

	Mothers - Daughters		Fathers - Daughters	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Universalism	0.256	0.816	0.207	1
Benevolence	0.355	0.028*	0.196	1
Conformity	0.394	0.005**	0.148	1
Tradition	0.479	0***	0.246	1
Security	0.474	0***	0.345	0.039*
Power	0.358	0.023*	0.376	0.01*
Achievement	0.223	1	0.362	0.02*
Hedonism	0.207	1	0.274	0.471
Stimulation	0.089	1	0.159	1
Self-direction	0.243	1	0.163	1

Source: own study.

**Table 5. Statistically significant differences in values between family dyads and pseudo family dyads**

	Mothers – Daughters vs. pseudo family dyads			Fathers – Daughters vs. pseudo family dyads		
	mean	$\Delta$	<i>p</i>	mean	$\Delta$	<i>p</i>
Universalism	90.98	75.5	1	116.5	107.33	1
Benevolence	80.18	61.5	1	105.96	96.5	1
Conformity	123.29	96	0.143	122.94	109.5	1
Tradition	133.06	96.5	0.009*	126.25	107.5	1
Security	106.77	73.5	0.002**	114.41	88	0.16
Power	121.64	90.5	0.029*	130.75	102.5	0.14
Achievement	121.23	106	1	114.81	90	0.173
Hedonism	157.84	143.5	1	149.11	124.5	1
Stimulation	145.69	133.5	1	142.64	130	1
Self-direction	112.84	94.5	1	112.59	102	1

Mean – mean of the distribution of absolute differences in pseudo-dyads

$\Delta$  – observed absolute difference within family-dyads

Source: own study.