

Effects of family socialization on adolescent identity in West European countries

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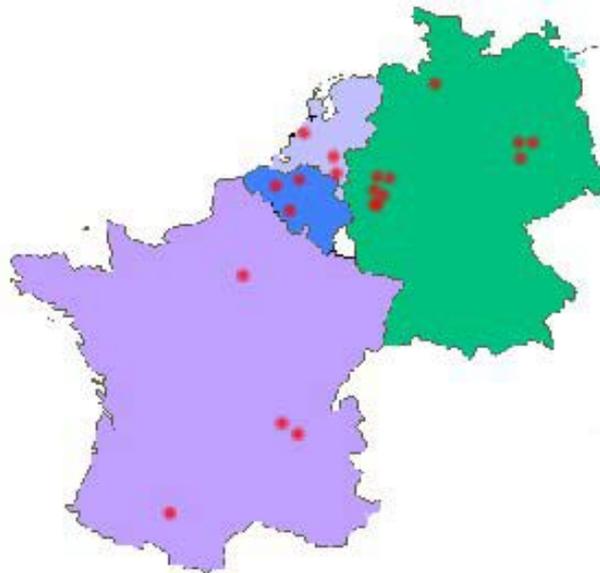
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Introduction

My name is Hella Schick. I am a post-graduate staff-member of the chair of Development and Education of the Psychological Institute of the University of Cologne. My talk is about the effects of family socialization on adolescent identity. I will present some preliminary results of a West European survey. I will start with some information about the sample. Then I will compare two main aspects of family socialization: Educational behavior and educational goals. After that the general values of parents and adolescents will be compared and discussed in respect to generation effects and transmission. The conclusion points out the reported cross-cultural similarities and differences.

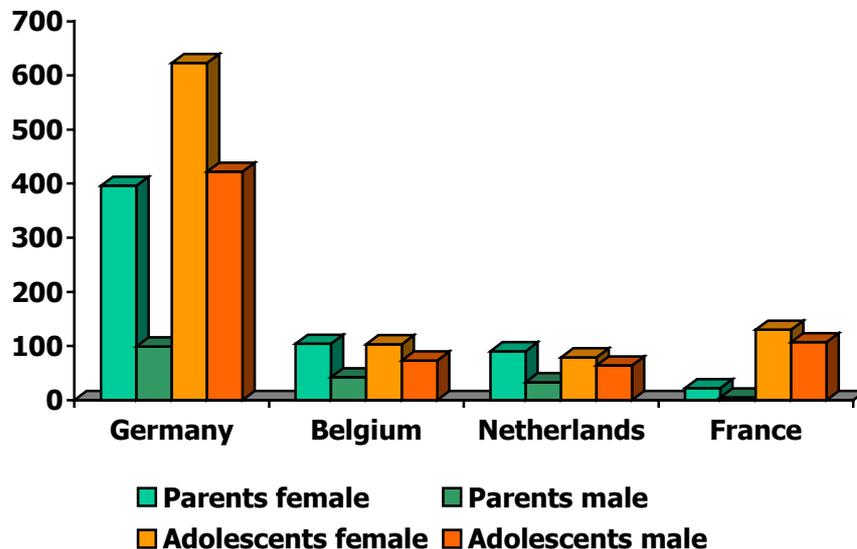
Sample Information

The data is from a West European sample, which includes Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. The results will be described in comparison to the German sample which has been presented before.



The places of data collection are shown on the map. The data was collected between October 2001 and January 2004.

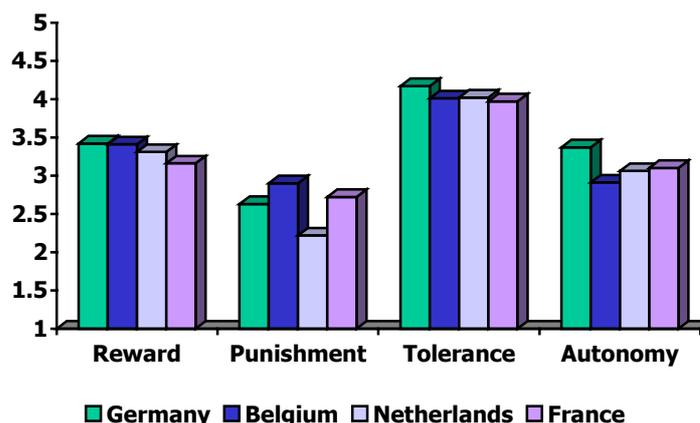
It has to be pointed out that in Belgium data was collected only in the northern part (Flanders) and mostly (60%) from rural areas. In the case of France most data (52%) came from large cities.



The size of the samples differ in several ways. First of all the German sample is by far the largest. Secondly for the parent-sample there are far less subjects in France, so they could not be included in some of the calculations. Third of all there are nearly 80% women in every parent-sample, in the adolescents samples nearly 60%. In all countries the age of the adolescents ranges from 13 to 19.

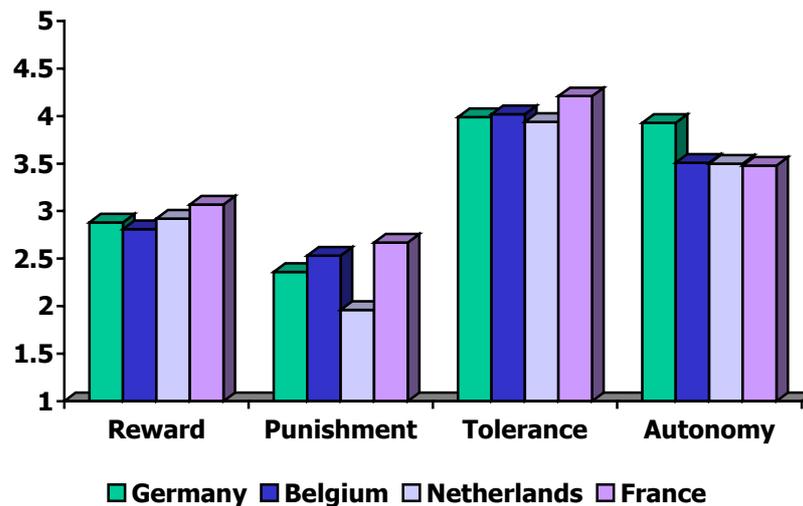
Educational Behavior

As explained before we examined the educational practices "reward" and "punishment" as well as the educational attitudes "being tolerant" and "giving autonomy". The table compares the means for reward, punishment, tolerance and autonomy of parent's education behavior in the four countries. The scale is from "one"- "not correct" to "five"- "correct".



It can be shown that in all countries parents feel themselves as being particularly tolerant and as using punishment to a low degree. There is found the least punishment in the Netherlands and the highest autonomy in Germany.

The fewer significant differences for parents educational background makes clear, that in the four Western Europe countries educational behavior is actually very similar.



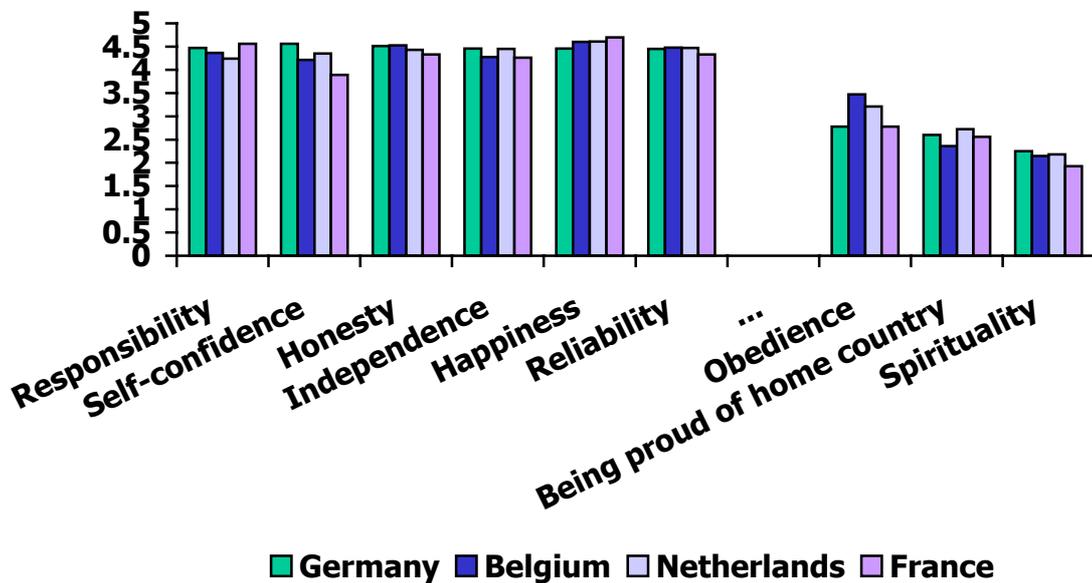
The adolescents perceive their parent's educational background in a similar way: They feel that their parents are being very tolerant and are using punishment only seldom. Even among the adolescents, the German boys and girls perceive the most autonomy and the Dutch the least punishment. This reflects what is reported in the literature: In Germany parents allow a lot of autonomy. But this is bonded with the expectation that the adolescents solve their problems by their own.

The comparison between parents educational behavior and the perceived educational behavior by the adolescents shows, that in all countries the parents feel themselves giving more rewards and assess more punishment but give less autonomy than the youth perceive them as rewarding, punishing and giving autonomy. For tolerance there is no difference in any country. Please notice one effect also shown in this figure, which is typical for all my further results: For all differences which are found between scales of parents and youth it has the same position over all countries.

	GER	B	NL	F
Reward	↓	↓	↓	↓
Punishment	↓	↓	↓	
Tolerance				
Autonomy	↑	↑	↑	

Educational Goals

I will now talk about the results on the differences and similarities in the educational goals of the parents.



This figure shows the rank order of the six most desired and the three fewest desired favorite educational goals of the German parents and the results for this scales in the other West European countries.

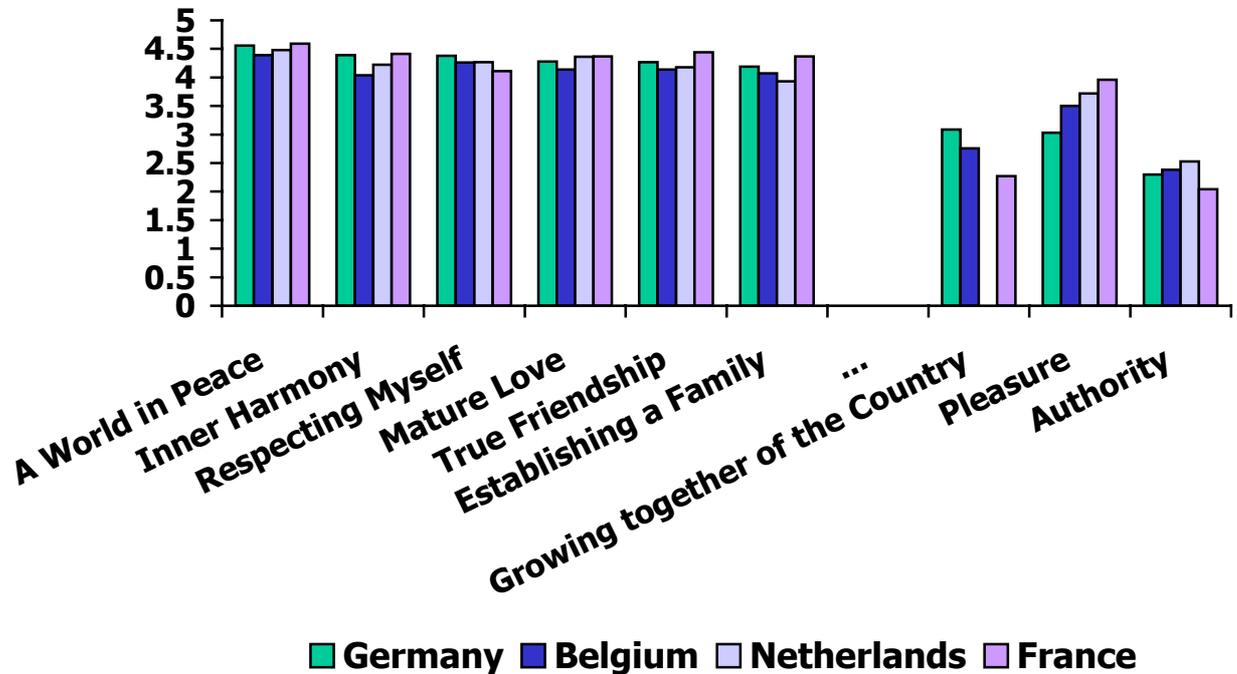
The "top six" in Germany are "responsibility", "self-confidence", "honesty", "independence", "happiness" and "reliability", and the lowest three "obedience", "being proud of home country" and "spirituality". This figure shows clearly that there is not a real rank order for the top six because the agreement to all of them does not differ much. Even the other countries have a little different "rank order", the result is nearly the same. As it is shown in the figure the German top six and lowest three are found in most cases under the top six and lowest three in the other countries too.

I want to draw attention to two points: First it has to be pointed out, that there is a difference between the most common educational goal: In all countries it is „happiness“, but in Germany it is „to feel responsible“. But the mean-difference for „happiness“ between Germany and the other countries is not significant.

Secondly, in the Netherlands and Belgium there is a significantly higher range for "obedience" than in Germany and France. This may reflect on what was reported before: A significantly lower degree for the parents educational behavior "giving autonomy" in these countries.

General Values

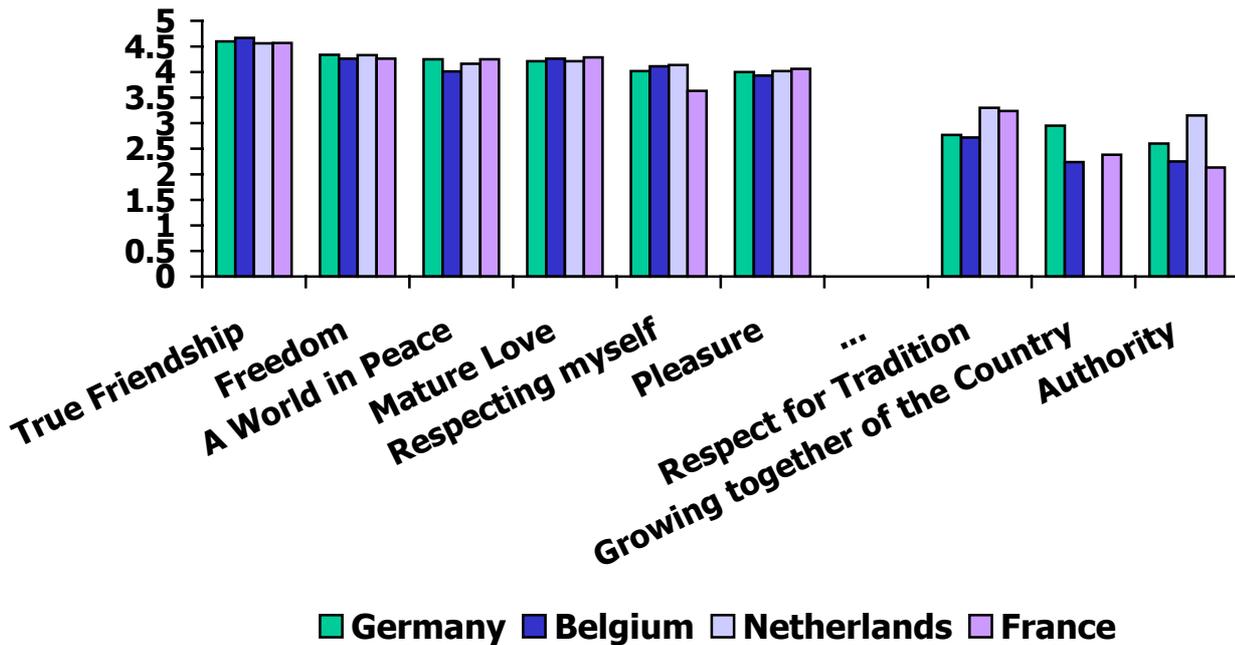
My next topic is the comparison of general values.



In this figure the parents top six and the lowest three general values are shown and the results for this scales in the other West European countries. That is for the "top six" in Germany "a world in peace", "inner harmony", "respecting myself", "mature love", "true friendship" and "establishing a family", for the lowest three "growing together of the country", "pleasure" and "authority".

The figure paints the same picture as for the education goals: There is no real rank order, because there are no significant differences, and this is found for the other countries, too.

In comparison with the other countries it makes clear, that even in the case of the favorite values West European parents are very similar. Cultural diversities are not reflected in the favorite values. But there is one remarkable difference: "Pleasure" is a significantly more favorite value in all countries than in Germany, but in Germany "growing together of the country" is more important, because the reunification is still bonded with a lot of problems.



This figure shows the top six and lowest three rank order of values for the adolescents and the results for this scales in the other West European countries. This is for the "top six" in Germany "true friendship", "freedom", "a world in peace", "mature love", "respecting myself" and "pleasure", and for the lowest three "respect for tradition", "growing together of the country" and "authority". The most favorite values of the adolescents themselves differ in an expected way from the most favorite of the parents: The adolescents favor "freedom" and "pleasure" where the parents favor "establishing a family" and "inner harmony".

Now let's take a look at these values in the other countries:

The most favored value ("true friendship") is the same in all countries, but now there is a significant difference to the choice of the second most favored one. The values number two to six ("freedom", "a world in peace", "mature love", "respecting myself" and "pleasure") are also very similar in all countries. Significant cross-cultural differences are found for the last few places: "Respect for tradition" is preferred by Dutch and French adolescents, "growing together of the country" is more important for German adolescents and the value "authority" is rated highest in the Netherlands. It can be summarized, that even though there are differences between parents and adolescents concerning their favored values, parents and adolescents in West European countries on the whole agree in their choice of favorite. Differences are found for less important values.

Generation Effects

Now I will discuss the generation effects.

Value	GER	B	NL	F
Inner harmony	↓	↓	↓	
Social order	↓	↓		
National security	↓			
Respecting myself	↓			
A world in peace	↓	↓	↓	
Tradition	↓	↓		
Social justice	↓			
Establishing a family	↓			↓
Protecting nature and animals	↓			
Growing together of the Country	↓	↓	—	
Duty, diligence, order	↓	↓		

This figure shows the generation effects and puts together the values which are less important for the adolescents than for the parents. It makes clear, that there are many differences, but over all countries the tendency is the same. Obviously in Germany the most generation effects are found and in France hardly any, but this may be an effect of the sample-size: In France we included just 27 individuals. Considering the scales themselves it can be said, that in most cases the adolescents favor values in a lower degree than the adults which are aimed at the "social existence" and belong to categories which can be called societal, traditional, and familial: For example "social order", "a world in peace", and "establishing a family".

Value	GER	B	NL	F
Pleasure	↑	↑	↑	
Freedom	↑	↑		
Social recognition	↑	↑	↑	
A life full of variety	↑	↑	↑	
Authority	↑		↑	
True friendship	↑	↑	↑	↑
Engagement third world				
Mature love				

Considering the values, which are more important to the adolescents it becomes clear, that it concerns scales which are aimed at "personal existence" and belong to categories which can be called self-developmental and materialistic: For example "pleasure", "freedom", and "authority". These findings mirror typical characteristics of adolescence which are adequate for the development status.

At least there is to point out that there are only two scales for which no generation effects were found: "Engagement for the third world" and "mature love".

Transmission Effects

The new we come to the transmission effects for values. This table shows the transmission effects for the first half of the required values. For this calculation we could not include France, because we had too few cases.

Value	Germany N = 441	Belgium N = 122	Nether- lands N = 100
Inner harmony	X		X
Pleasure	X		X
Freedom			
Social order			X
National security	X		
Respecting myself			X
A world in peace	X		X
Respect for tradition	X	X	
A mature love			X
Social recognition			X

The table shows that there is no pattern of transmission effects that is the same for all countries. But they are noticeable in a number: There are dramatically less significant partial correlations for Belgium, and by far the most for the Netherlands.

Nearly the same results were found for the second half.

Value	Germany N = 441	Belgium N = 122	Nether- lands N = 100
A life full of variety	X		
Authority		X	X
True friendship			
Social justice			X
Establishing a family	X		X
Protecting nature and animals	X		
Engagement third world	X	X	
Growing together of the Country	X	X	-
Duty, diligence, order	X		X

To summarize, transmission effects can in general be found to a large extent. But as shown on the Belgium sample there are cultural differences to a degree.

Conclusion

To sum things up, it can be safely be assumed, that there is hardly any difference between West European countries in central aspects of family socialization: Neither is there a difference between education background, nor between education goals and nor also between the range of favorite values as central aspects of adolescent identity.

But there are differences between generations and transmission effects, not in the general direction, but in degree and number.

These results reach the conclusion, that differences in adolescent identity, which are found between the countries, are not brought about by family socialization. They probably can be traced back to the cultural background. So our intercultural approach has proved to be a fertile methodological way. Further research is needed to identify the relevant cultural variables.

Thank You for Your Attention