



CREST

Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats



# **IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION I THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION**

**FULL REPORT**

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Benjamin Lee and Kim Knott

# IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION I THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION FULL REPORT

Benjamin Lee and Kim Knott  
Lancaster University

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## About CREST

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## THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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#### Purpose and content

This report is the first of a series of synthetic reviews on ideological transmission produced by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST). It focuses on the family as a context for ideological transmission, and includes case studies on extremism and terrorism. Later reports will consider education and peers, and religious and political organisations.

The reviews bring together and summarise open source, social science research on ideological transmission. They draw on literature from religious studies, social psychology, sociology, political science, education, anthropology and security studies, and address the following research questions:

- a. *How* is political and religious ideology passed on between and across generations and to newcomers?
- b. *Who* is responsible for ideological transmission?
- c. *Where* and *when* does ideological transmission take place?
- d. *How* do these issues apply to the transmission of extremist and terrorist ideologies?

This first report synthesizes arguments and findings from more than a hundred books and articles. It is divided into three principal sections, on the theoretical background, empirical approaches, and case studies on ideological transmission and families in the context of extremism and terrorism.

#### Definitions

A deliberately broad approach was taken, with 'ideology' being understood to include religious and political affiliations, beliefs, values, attitudes, traditions and practices.

Various concepts were used in the literature for the process of learning and the passing on of knowledge, behaviours and skills. These ranged from general terms like socialisation, development and education, to more specific ones such as political transmission and religious nurture, and pejorative terms such as inculcation and indoctrination.

Most scholars have focused on inter-generational transmission (principally from parent to child), with increasing interest over time in intra-generational exchange between siblings.

Religious and political groups have their own ideas about how, when and where to communicate their worldviews, and on what role the family should play in this.

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### **THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION**

#### **The direct transmission model**

Families in all times and places socialise their children, pass on family culture and the wider traditions, norms and values of the societies – and in many cases religious and political groups – of which they are a part. This process has been discussed by scholars from a wide range of disciplines.

No single, universal model of ideological transmission could be identified in the literature. However, the majority of authors have focused on parent-child transmission. We refer to this as the ‘direct transmission model’.

The starting point of the direct transmission model is that ideology is passed from generation to generation. Much of the early research assumed an effective transmission relationship between parents and children without detailing causal mechanisms.

The direct transmission model has received mixed empirical support. Specific items, such as political affiliation and religious preference, appear to be more effectively transferred between generations. Less concrete items, such as values and beliefs, are less easily transmitted.

The salience of issues, the agreement of parents on matters of belief and value, and shared family practices can boost transmission.

Mothers are more influential than fathers, particularly where they hold strong partisan views or engage in specific parenting styles.

Grandparents and siblings have also been shown to contribute to effective transmission, though this depends on other factors (e.g. whether the family is nuclear or extended, and the closeness of relationships).

#### **Criticisms of the model**

A major criticism of the direct transmission model was the assumed lack of agency of children. More recent research has shown that children take an active role in their development, asking questions of parents, forming opinions about parental beliefs, and stimulating debates within the household.

The family may be a major player in ideological transmission, but external influences such as school, political and religious organisations and the media are also important.

Families influence ideological transmission directly (as above), but also indirectly, as a result of their social class and status, and economic, political, ethnic and religious background.

Religious and political learning and engagement occurs across the life-course, not just in childhood, and may be affected by high-impact events.

Research on intergenerational transmission conducted in stable democracies with white, middle-class, Christian families is unlikely to hold true for different family types and backgrounds, or for those in other contexts (e.g. migration and post-conflict locations).

Different research designs and methods are suited to answering different questions. Quantitative approaches have been used to test ideological similarity between parents and children, and the effectiveness of intergenerational transmission, particularly of concrete concepts. Qualitative approaches have been used to examine how children learn and what they learn within the family, with the focus being on embodied practices and the 'doctrinal mode' of learning (through repetition and memory work).

### **Transmission in non-traditional families and contexts**

Ideological transmission is affected by minority status and discrimination. Young people, in particular, may feel they must defend their family or group traditions, values and practices.

Being part of a transnational family or a diasporic network also impacts on cultural learning both between and within generations.

It has long been assumed that second generation young people reject the religion of their migrant parents, only for a third generation to return to it. However, many second generation Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus in the West have bucked the trend by becoming more religious than their parents and by turning to 'real' or 'true' religion stripped of cultural and ethnic traditions.

Comparative and cross-cultural research shows that context and family background make a difference. Within a single national context, different religious and/or ethnic groups exhibit differing degrees of success in intergenerational transmission. Across different countries, one factor – income inequality – is seen to predominate in driving religious socialisation.

### **Evidence from case studies on extremism and terrorism**

The cases varied by location, time, group, type of threat and type of source material. Evidence of the role of family in ideological transmission in these cases was mixed and highly dependent on specific contexts.

The family often played a significant role in a subject's account of his or her involvement in extremism or terrorism. However, this was rarely presented as a direct transmission of ideology from parents or other family members to the subject him or herself.

In some cases, the family was seen as consciously or unconsciously providing organisational connections to terrorist/extremist groups.

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### THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION

The family was often presented as bound up in a broader historical or political context. Past family experiences or involvement in extremism sometimes provided a source of grievance or encouragement for involvement in violent extremism or terrorism across generations.

In several cases, subjects engaged with terrorist and extremist groups in spite of the objections of their families. At other times, they concealed their involvement from family members.

Three in-depth case studies (of inter-generational, intra-generational transmission, and barriers to transmission) illustrated the often complex relationships between family and terrorism. In no case was ideological transmission via the family seen as wholly explanatory of involvement.

### Conclusions

The relationship between the family and ideological transmission is complex. There is some evidence that ideology can pass down through the generations, but this is by no means a foregone conclusion. Many factors can intervene and affect this process, and some items are more effectively transmitted than others.

Evidence from real world accounts of terrorists and extremists have tended to see the family either as an organisational connector between individuals and terrorist or extremist groups, or as a potent source of collective memory, grievance and tradition. In some cases, individuals adopted the ideological commitments of their parents; in others they rebelled against them. Some parents shared the grievances of their children, but others criticised and challenged them. In all cases, the role of the family was highly context dependent.

This report is the first of three in which we address the questions of how, what, where and by whom ideology is transmitted, and how this manifests for those involved in extremism and terrorism. In the next, we will turn to education and peer-to-peer transmission.

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## BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

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This document is the first of a series of synthetic research reports on ideological transmission produced by the Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST). It focuses on the family as a context for ideological transmission.

The research questions that inform these reports are as follows:

- (a) *How* is political and religious ideology (beliefs, values, attitudes, and embodied practices) passed on between and across generations and to newcomers?
- (b) *Who* is responsible for ideological transmission?
- (c) *Where* and *when* does ideological transmission take place?
- (d) *How* do these issues apply to the transmission of extremist and terrorist ideologies?

These questions will be addressed across the three stages of the research review, with findings summarised in the final report.

Early analysis of the available research literature suggested an approach to organising the reviews based on the life cycle and the general process of socialisation in and through (a) the family (Report 1), (b) the education system and exposure to peers (Report 2), and via (c) political and religious organisations and the media (Report 3). This life-cycle perspective builds on earlier developmental approaches to socialisation.

How the process of socialisation happens for individuals – who are always interconnected with others in families, communities, groups and networks – depends on a number of variables. These include cultural and geographical context, social position and status, nationality and citizenship, ethnicity, religion, political participation, gender, age, migration history, education, family structure, and media access, as well as physical, cognitive and affective influences.

Many of these variables become more relevant when children and young people are exposed to influences outside the home, and as they move on to adolescence and young adulthood. In this synthesis report, however, the aim is to develop an understanding of how political and religious ideologies are transmitted to individuals within family structures, in childhood but also as they get older and more independent.

# INTRODUCTION - THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY IN IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION

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This report examines the academic literature on the role of families in the transmission of ideology. It sets out the results of a qualitative review, with particular reference to political and religious socialisation, and the transmission of extremist ideologies, but drawing on research from multiple disciplines, including political science, sociology, psychology, cognitive science, educational studies, religious studies and anthropology. More than a hundred books and articles have been reviewed.

No new research has been conducted for this review. Doctoral research on the role of kin and peer networks in the transmission of extremist ideology and involvement in terrorism is currently being conducted for CREST by Simon Copeland (Lancaster University).

## TERMINOLOGY

Ideology has been a difficult academic concept to isolate, with various approaches used to define it and suggest how it should be studied. Here we interpret ideology in a deliberately broad way, incorporating both religious and political values, beliefs, attitudes and practices. We build on Stuart Hall's conception of ideology as:

*...the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representations – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works... [The way ideas] grip the minds of masses, and thereby become a 'material force' (Hall 1996: 25-26; cf. Leader Maynard 2013).*

Different cultural systems and those who have authority within them have their own conceptions of (a) *how* their ideologies can and should be passed on to both the next generation and to newcomers, (b) *what* should be passed on, in terms of practices, ideas, beliefs, norms and values, (c) *who* is responsible for cultural transmission, and (d) *where* and *when* the process should take place.

Although academics do not generally take a normative approach, they too have been interested in the 'how, what, who, where and when' of the socialisation process. They have used a variety of terms, particularly 'socialisation', 'education', 'transmission', and 'nurture', but also 'transition', 'development', 'learning' and 'culture in the making'. Depending on the discipline, scholars concern themselves with social, political, religious and/or cultural processes.

The choice of which term to use is often made on disciplinary grounds with 'socialisation' often used as the more general and inclusive term, and the one favoured by sociologists and psychologists, and with 'transmission' being used in the majority of intergenerational studies using quantitative approaches, especially by political scientists working in a North American context.

'Education' tends to be reserved by all for discussion of formal, largely institutional processes, in schools, colleges and universities (and we will turn to this in the second report), with 'nurture' often the term of choice for scholars addressing issues of religious and spiritual transmission, particularly in the home, place of worship and other religious settings.

In order to unpack the concept of 'ideological transmission', we have considered both political and religious socialisation, noting the common ground but also the differences – in terms of the processes themselves but also how they have been studied. This broad approach is designed to be as inclusive as possible, enabling us to bring together research from a variety of disciplines into a wide range of concepts, from party affiliation to religious practices and traditions in a single review.

Given the range of disciplinary approaches consulted, this review should not be read as a complete analysis of ideological transmission in all its forms, more as a synthetic report drawing together insights from a range of fields. We aim to highlight some of the theory, empirical evidence and specific case studies that are useful for understanding and thinking about the role of family in ideological transmission.

### STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into three main sections, starting with an overview of some of the key theories that have informed the study of families and ideological transmission drawn from a wide variety of literatures. These include social learning theory, which underpins a great deal of research on the transmission of political values and practices (usually described as affiliations), habitus and embodied learning, cognitive transmission and other theoretical approaches to political and religious socialisation.

The second section summarises empirical work relevant to the role of the family in ideological transmission. This ranges from detailed and extensive quantitative studies of political socialisation to in-depth ethnographic approaches that have attempted to document family influence on religious nurture.

The final section focuses on examples of ideological transmission in families involved in political and religious extremism and terrorism. It sets out a number of case studies designed to illustrate specific points. Several of these cases focus on individuals who have been involved in terrorist activities, but the cases also include more typical examples of extremist ideological transmission.

Finally, the concluding section sets out the main findings of this review.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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This section sets out the theoretical explanations for the transmission of ideology. It draws on a range of disciplines, and aims to provide the reader with a broad understanding of how social science has come to explain the transmission of ideology.

Whilst this has been our primary focus, we note that scholars from disciplines outside the social sciences have also considered this question. Cognitive (Whitehouse 2004; Jost & Amodio 2012), evolutionary (Alcorta & Sosis 2005), developmental (Harris 1995), and genetic (Hatemi et al 2009 a; Hatemi et al 2009 b) approaches have been used to explain the transmission of ideology. These are not the main focus of this report, but we have addressed them as and when other scholars have incorporated them (e.g. Kuusisto 2009; Scourfield et al 2013).

Following the life cycle model set out in the introduction, the first external influence on an individual is likely to be immediate family, in particular parents. This is often seen as obvious or common knowledge. Common aphorisms describe the view that a person's family plays a large part in determining later ideological beliefs.

*The apple does not fall far from the tree*

*Like father like son/Like mother like daughter*

*Chip off the old block*

This basic idea has influenced research into political and religious transmission, resulting in research that often implicitly assumes relationships between generations. We refer to this understanding as the direct transmission model.

In this section we discuss the various theories associated with ideological transmission within the family. The material is organised under the following headings:

- Socialisation
- Political and religious transmission
- Religious nurture
- Cognitive transmission
- Social learning theory
- Outside agents and transmission
- The family and social milieu
- Different contexts of family transmission
- Agency in transmission
- Child and adult development and transmission

## SOCIALISATION

Research on socialisation emerged from the argument that behaviours were learned rather than innate. Socialisation is the process by which individuals throughout the life-course learn and internalise the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in the world, and by which society's norms, values and traditions are passed on and reproduced.

Berger and Luckmann (1966: 130) defined socialisation as 'the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it'. Primary socialisation, they wrote, is that process by which significant others define and impose on a child their conception of objective reality, in accordance with their own social location. The learning absorbed and internalised at this stage is emotional as well as cognitive (131): 'But this internalization of society, identity and reality is not a matter of once and for all. Socialization is never total and never finished.' (132) Further 'secondary' socialisations take place as individuals are confronted by and participate in 'new sectors of the objective world of his society' (130).

The term 'socialisation' then is used to refer to the whole process by which people, especially the young, acquire and internalise cognitive and embodied knowledge, practices, skills and traditions. It includes those processes that take place in the family and home (primary socialisation) as well as outside it, especially in school, among peers, and in religious organisations (secondary socialisation). As such it is often seen as including both 'nurture' and 'education'. As learning is now understood to be a life-long process, it is important to note that socialisation is not confined to childhood, but takes place throughout the life-course as we continue to objectify and internalise 'society, identity and reality' (Berger and Luckmann 1966: 132).

Much late-twentieth century work on social, political and religious transmission and learning drew on Berger and Luckmann's theorisation of socialisation, though other theoretical perspectives were also important. For example, how groups reproduce themselves and socialise others was addressed by Bourdieu (1980, 1985, 1988). He introduced the idea of 'a system of durable and transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu 1980: 53) or habitus by which people internalise then produce, understand and evaluate the world and their actions within it.

Later scholars (e.g. Scourfield et al 2013; Cushion & Jones 2014) drew on the concept of 'habitus' to further theorise processes of family and professional socialisation with specific reference to embodied practices and their associated ideas and values. In addition to the production of groups and group identities, 'a major function of socialisation', according to Cushion and Jones (2014: 277) in their work on coaching, is 'the imparting of enduring values and an ideology that guides behaviour in accordance with given expectations'. They refer to a 'hidden curriculum' (Cushion and Jones 2014: 276) that is at work in the process of educational transmission and socialisation more generally.

Research on socialisation within political and socio-economic subgroups was based on the assumption that individuals within such groups were in some way modified by their circumstances

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(Hyman 1959: 18). In his foundational study of political socialisation, Hyman (1959: 12) summarised political socialisation as a form of learning in which the individual's 'learning of social patterns correspond[s] to his societal position as mediated through various agencies of society'.

Hyman referenced two potential mechanisms to account for the formation of political attitudes: direct experience which can include refining attitudes in the face of specific information and the impact of specific traumas; and the adoption of attitudes from external 'agencies of socialization into politics' (Hyman 1959: 51). The foremost agency, according Hyman (1959: 51), was the family.

Another early account (Almond & Verba 1963) stressed the importance of the family, in addition to other sources of influence.

*Another valuable insight of the psychocultural approach was that the nonpolitical authority patterns to which an individual is exposed have an important effect on his [sic] attitudes toward political authority. The authority patterns in the family is his first exposure to authority. And it is likely that his first view of the political system represents a generalization from these experiences. (Almond & Verba 1963: 324)*

Almond and Verba described the transmission of 'civic culture' as based on 'training' through engagement with a variety of institutions providing a range of experiences. These could be explicitly political, such as overhearing conversations about politics between parents, or non-political, such as participating in authority structures, for example, parental relationships within the family (Almond & Verba 1963: 499).

The concept of training and the focus on the role of parents were picked up in later studies of political and religious socialisation and transmission.

### POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS TRANSMISSION

Focusing on communication across and between generations rather than on how life-worlds and social individuals are mutually produced, the term 'transmission' has been used by scholars to refer to the means by which political and/or religious identity, ideas, practices and values are passed on, generally from parents to children (Schönpflug 2008a). It is often employed by those whose interests lie in the impact and effectiveness of the inter-generational transmission, and in the variables which affect this (such as gender of parent or child, family role, degree of religiosity or political affiliation of parents, extent of agreement between parents, and salience of what is being transmitted). Jennings et al suggest that,

*'the standard transmission model ... views parent-child similarity as an outcome of social influence and learning processes operating within the home. These processes are assumed to rest on observational learning and its variants of modelling, imitation, and identification, all of which work to heighten reproductive fidelity along political [or religious] lines.'* (Jennings et al 2009: 783)

This model has been exploited repeatedly in studies of parent/child transmission using quantitative approaches that draw on single generation and sometimes longitudinal datasets.

The concept of 'transmission' has been used by scholars researching political and religious learning, but also cultural learning more generally. In a comprehensive and multidisciplinary collection of essays, Schönplflug (2008a) and colleagues (principally from cross-cultural psychology) set out an evolutionary perspective, followed by a discussion of international research on cultural transmission which sought to bring together socio-biological and cultural anthropological approaches.

Schönplflug (2008a) and other contributors to the book considered the transmission of social and cultural orientations, skills, knowledge and behaviours. A key issue they stressed – one which was rarely acknowledged in most twentieth century studies of political and religious socialisation with their focus on white Christian North-American families – was that social and cultural systems place differential value on how and by whom culture is transmitted, with mothers, fathers, teachers, and peers being understood differently within the process (Schönplflug 2008b). They follow earlier theoretical advances (Boyd & Richerson 1985; Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman 1981) in referring to three channels of transmission.

*Vertical transmission includes factors such as personality traits, cognitive development, attitudes, attainments, educational and occupational status, patterns of upward/downward mobility, sex-role conceptions, sexual activity, attitudes toward feminism, political beliefs and activities, religious beliefs, dietary habits, legal and illegal drug abuse, phobias, self-esteem, and language and linguistic usage. Horizontally and obliquely transmitted traits include attitudes; career and social mobility; aspirations; sex role and sexual behavior; adolescent behavior; aggressive behavior; altruistic behavior; morals; social values; conformity; language and dialect; technological innovations; clothing fashions; consumer behavior; and children's games, rituals, stories, and rhymes. As may be seen from these lists, many traits are transmitted either way. Other traits follow a dual-inheritance model: Genetically and culturally transmitted traits include handedness, cerebral dominance, intelligence, and possibly religious and political beliefs. (Schönplflug 2008c: 5)*

What is clear from this is that ideological transmission (whether political and/or religious), whilst generally inter-generational (vertical), can also be bi-directional, and as we shall see later, also intra-generational.

## RELIGIOUS NURTURE

'Transmission' has been the preferred term of North American scholars, especially psychologists, who have used quantitative approaches first and foremost to examine and measure the effectiveness of parental influences on children's political learning and religiosity. 'Nurture', however, has been the term of choice in the UK and Europe, favoured by educationalists who use qualitative approaches.

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Research (particularly on religious transmission) by scholars in both settings – nearly 1,700 books and articles – was reviewed by Hyde (1990).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the American theologian, Horace Bushnell, pioneered the concept of Christian nurture (in his book of the same name), at the heart of which were two key ideas, first that ‘the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise’, and secondly that ‘the organic connection, as regards character, between parent and child, makes it natural to expect that the faith of the one will be propagated in the other’ (Bushnell 1947 [1847]). The first is a matter of identity, beginning for Bushnell before birth with the presence of the divine spirit in the body of the mother, and after birth, in infant baptism. Having this Christian identity as a birth-right, the child is then to develop in a faithful Christian family context. Bushnell was the first to draw extensively on the metaphor of nurture to convey the idea of the child growing up a Christian and the parents propagating faith within the child through such things as family prayer, Sunday observance and teaching. The concept has since been widely used in the context of Christian pastoral care.

The idea of ‘nurture’ was transferred from a Christian pastoral context to other religious contexts by scholars of religious education and socialisation (Hadwen 1995; Jackson and Nesbitt 1993; Nesbitt 2000; Østberg 2003; Scourfield et al 2013). This move has been most clearly associated with WRERU, the Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick in the UK, and with the work of Robert Jackson and Eleanor Nesbitt. They shaped the direction of the study of religious nurture in the 1990s, focusing on a child-centred ethnographic methodology (Jackson 1997; Jackson and Nesbitt 1993; Nesbitt 2004).

In the UK, the term ‘nurture’ has been preferred to ‘transmission’ because the former focuses on children and their learning contexts rather than on the principal agents of transmission (the parent or religious leader) and what is they are trying to transmit (Nesbitt 2000: 1; Østberg 2003: 69; Scourfield et al 2013: 21; Singh 2012a: 30). Nurture ‘necessarily implies attention to micro-level social processes and a more detailed examination – probably via qualitative research – of the relationship between children and their carers’ (Scourfield et al 2013: 21).

Nesbitt noted that religious nurture encompasses both formal and informal types:

*Here ‘formal’ refers to the planned, organised teaching of young people, involving deliberate strategies ... An example is the provision by Sikhs of supplementary classes for Panjabi language and devotional music. ‘Informal’ nurture refers to the many less conscious ways in which adults steep children in aspects of their faith tradition. For example values such as deference or specific behaviours may be intrinsic to family life without being singled out for conscious transmission. In practice these ideal types of formal and informal nurture are inter-related. (Nesbitt 2000: 2)*

This reference to family behaviours suggested that it may be difficult empirically to distinguish ‘religious nurture’ from more general processes of enculturation and socialisation within the family

(and other religious settings). Nesbitt (2000: 2) conceded this, noting furthermore the importance of the dynamic co-creation of the knowledge and practices acquired through nurture. Citing Fox's (1985) concept of 'culture in the making', she stressed that participants in the process were not mere 'carriers' of a stable, unchanging culture (and set of traditions), but makers of culture involved in a continuous process of (re)construction (Nesbitt 2000: 255).

Because 'socialisation', 'transmission' and 'nurture' refer to processes across the life-course, they necessarily intersect with other relevant terms, notably those that refer to particular life stages, such as 'childhood', 'adolescence', 'emerging adulthood' or 'transitions', and others that relate to analogous communications processes, such as 'translation', 'inculcation', 'indoctrination' and 'education'. Relevant books and articles may refer to these or other terms rather than those discussed above: e.g. *Souls in Transition* (Smith and Snell 2009), *Religion in Childhood and Adolescence* (Hyde 1990), 'Inheritance of Religiosity among Muslim Immigrants in a Secular Society' (Van der Pol & Tubergen 2014), 'Keeping the Faith' (Singh 2012b); 'Negotiating Continuity' (Park & Ecklund 2007), 'Growing up within a Religious Community' (Kuusisto 2009).

## COGNITIVE TRANSMISSION

There has been some recognition among those working on religious and political socialisation that cognitive factors need consideration as 'humans are not a blank slate at birth' (Scourfield et al 2013: 206). They have acknowledged the contribution of cognitive anthropologists and psychologists, drawing on theories on the evolution of religion as an adaptive complex (Alcorta and Sosis 2005), transmission through ritual (Whitehouse and Lanham 2014), and different modes of belief and practices and their associated processes of memory and transmission (Whitehouse 2004).

In his cognitive theory of religious transmission, Harvey Whitehouse (2004) argued for two modes of religiosity, the doctrinal and the imagistic, the one focused on the frequent repetition of teaching and ritual, and the other on intense and rare events of high emotion. Although variously criticised (see Whitehouse and Lanham 2014), this distinction has been employed by others to distinguish different modes of learning. For example, Whitehouse's (2004: 65-66) claim that 'ritual action tends to be highly routinized, facilitating the storage of elaborate and conceptually complex religious teachings in semantic memory; but also activating implicit memory in the performance of most rituals' has been used to explain the effectiveness of Islamic learning based on repetition of embodied practices (e.g. prayer, dress and fasting) and rote learning of passages from the Qur'an (Scourfield 2013: 206).

Alcorta and Sosis (2005) addressed the imagistic mode of religiosity in their research on rites of passage among adolescents into the sacred and adulthood. Noting that 'the belief systems and communal rituals of all religions share common structural elements that maximize retention, transmission, and affective engagement' (2005: 348), they argued specifically that 'the brain plasticity of human adolescence constitutes an "experience expectant" developmental period for ritual conditioning of sacred symbols' (2005: 323). This stage of life, the authors stated, constitutes

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a sensitive developmental period for acquiring abstract concepts and symbols, and for internalising the various environmental and emotional stimuli associated with them (2005: 341).

### SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Work on political socialisation and the family, and later religious socialisation, drew on other disciplines to justify its theoretical assumptions. Social learning theory, for example, had a considerable influence on political and religious socialisation research (James et al 2014; Jennings et al 2009; Niemi & Hepburn 1995). 'Social learning' is a social psychological theory which views learning as taking place within a social context. The actions of those around us, including how they are rewarded or punished are often instructive of our own behaviour.

Albert Bandura argued that relying solely on direct experience - individually centred trial and error - as a learning tool, in particular for activities with severe consequences like learning to swim, was insufficient to explain how humans learned (Bandura 1971: 5). Equally, more complex tasks such as speech would be impossible to reason out by isolated individuals without access to examples from those around them (Bandura 1971: 5). As a result, Bandura (1971) developed social learning theory, arguing that humans are able to acquire knowledge without direct experience by observing the actions of others:

*In actuality, virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through observation of other people's behaviour and its consequences for them.* (Bandura 1971: 2).

Social learning theory served to augment existing theories of learning that relied on stimulus and response. A human's cognitive ability, according to Bandura, allows them to learn through observation as well as direct experience (Bandura 1972: 3). Example activities, referred to as models by Bandura, were not seen as merely providing vicarious stimulus and response learning, but the basis for actual reasoning (Bandura 1971: 6).

However, simply observing others was not considered sufficient for learning. Bandura (1971: 6-8) suggested four governing processes that could influence learning. Attentional processes suggested that simple observation alone was not enough: learners would need to pay enough attention to isolate the relevant lessons from actions. Attention was thought to be further influenced by the availability and status of different examples. Some peer groups by virtue of their activities and the prominence of certain individuals were thought to impart different lessons to others. Retention processes governed whether or not a specific model would be retained in memory so it could be reproduced in the absence of the original model. Motoric reproduction processes referred to the specific skills required to reproduce models. For example, observational learning of playing a musical instrument is insufficient without the associated manual dexterity and muscle memory required to form chord shapes. Reinforcement and motivational processes were also seen as governing social learning. Models that were heavily negatively sanctioned were

seen as less likely to be reproduced, while those positively reinforced were seen as more likely. It is important to understand that social learning theory does not see transmission as inevitable. In particular, witnessing destructive behaviours such as domestic violence does not mean that individuals are doomed to repeat them (Mihalic & Elliott 1997: 23).

Social learning theory has been influential in a range of disparate fields including distance learning (Tu 2000), terrorism studies (Pauwels & Schills 2016), marital violence (Mihalic & Elliott 1997), political socialisation (Jennings et al, 2009) and religious transmission (Singh, 2012a). Kellerman (2001), for example, writing about the transmission of Holocaust trauma between parents and children identified social learning theory as a component of an 'integrative view' of trauma transmission, alongside biological predisposition, the family environment and the degree to which it is closed off, and psychoanalytic theories (Kellerman 2001: 265).

In the early 2000s, Bengtson et al summarised three theories of socialization to explain value transmission between parents and children, including the role of social learning theory:

*The first is status inheritance. Parents situate children in a socioeconomic context of family wealth and education which, over time, facilitates parent- child similarity across a range of value orientations and behaviors. The second theory concerns social learning and role modeling. A third involves the moderating influence of parental affection and affirmation .... Research suggests that the degree of affectual solidarity between parents and children is perhaps the strongest predictor of religious continuity across generations. (Bengtson et al 2009: 327-328)*

It would be hard to find a scholar of political or religious transmission today who would not accept social learning theory as part of a suite of explanatory theories on the mechanisms of transmission and learning.

As this discussion of the direct transmission model, social learning theory and other theories of socialisation and transmission has shown, the question of how ideologies are passed on in families has raised a number of issues which, at their centre, seek to understand how humans acquire and embody beliefs, values and related practices. Taken together, these different approaches can all be considered as interpretations of the direct transmission model which argues, loosely, that ideology is passed down between generations, from parents to children.

Whilst the direct transmission model is still highly influential, numerous theoretical accounts of ideological transmission, both political and religious, have sought to critique and modify the basic assumptions within it. This drive in particular has arisen as a result of unconvincing empirical findings (see below) (McDevitt & Chafee 2002: 282).

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#### OUTSIDE AGENTS AND TRANSMISSION

Political and religious socialisation research has not been limited to the family, and has ranged greatly in identifying potential agents of political socialisation.

*The civic culture is transmitted by a complex process that includes training in many social institutions – family, peer group, school, work place, as well as the political system itself.*  
(Almond & Verba 1963: 498)

Researchers have gone on to acknowledge the role of a variety of external institutions and agents (Dennis 1968; Langton 1969: 5), including political events (Sears & Valentino 1997), education (Langton 1967; Campbell 2006; Güngör 2011; Nesbitt 2000; Sedgwick 2015), the media (Rubin 1976; Buckingham 1999), peers (Tedin 1980; Singh 2012a), religious denominations, communities and organisations (Hoge et al 1982; Kuusisto 2009; Smalley 2002; Voas and Fleischmann 2012); and political systems (Westholm & Niemi 1992).

Beck and Jennings (1975) suggested three distinct points at which external influences might act on ideological transmission. First, they pointed out that at one time parents would themselves have been children undergoing political socialisation by their own parents. This made them the 'middlepersons' in the socialisation process rather than the sole instigators (Beck & Jennings 1975: 83). Second, within a family, partners will likely influence one another over time, in particular where subject to different outside forces. At one point, Beck and Jennings argue, this would primarily have been the father as males were more exposed to the outside world, but as gender attitudes and roles have changed, mothers and fathers are both subject to influences outside the home (1975: 85). Third, Beck and Jennings suggest undocumented generational effects, for example, the enfranchisement of women likely altered the socialisation process (Beck & Jennings 1975: 85).

Ultimately, the family is one of a number of possible influences on an individual's political and religious development, and even accounts that privilege the family acknowledge the role of outside influences. However, the family is likely to exert an influence over other potential agents (Reidy et al 2015: 13): e.g. parents often make decisions about where children go to school, which religious institutions they engage with and who children are likely to befriend. While an individual is within the family home, it is difficult to separate out the influence of the family from other potential influences on ideology.

#### THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL MILIEU

The family has often been linked to broader social contexts beyond immediate parental decision-making. Russell Dalton attempted to explain contradictory findings in empirical studies by dividing the pathways of parental influence between attitudinal pathways and the broader social milieu. Attitudinal pathways were:

*...based on direct interpersonal transfer (through imitation, reinforcement, explicit education and similar processes), with children internalizing parental attitudes as a result of these experiences. (Dalton 1982: 140)*

The attitudinal pathway was thought to be largely limited to the years in which a child is living in the family environment, and so wanes as the child leaves the family home and reaches political maturity. Essentially, the family is seen as providing for a period of pre-politicisation in which the child is able to develop values outside of explicitly political situations (Dalton 1982: 140).

In addition to the attitudinal pathway, Dalton also hypothesised that family socialisation was dependent on the circumstances of the family and the family home. Children would be members of similar social groups based on characteristics such as race and socio-economic status, and therefore the effect on political attitudes would likely be similar (Dalton 1982: 141). In summary, even where there is no direct contact between parents and children they are likely to be subject to similar experiences which would promote convergence in terms of political beliefs.

This theme was present in other work critical of the focus on white middle class (American) children in socialisation studies. Writing in 1970, Lyons argued:

*It is obvious, however, that the slum child, particularly the Negro slum child, acquires his political values and beliefs within the milieu of poverty and racial discrimination that differs significantly from that of white middle-class children. (Lyons 1970: 290)*

## DIFFERENT CONTEXTS OF FAMILY TRANSMISSION

The process of political and/or religious socialisation is likely to differ according to context, with more empirical research (followed by comparative studies) needed in diverse contexts in order for the direct transmission model to be fully tested.

For example, the relationship of secularisation and religious socialisation in different contexts is generally assumed without having been systematically researched. Secularisation is understood as the decline of religion in modern societies, as the process by which it is privatised and loses its social significance. Scourfield et al (2013: 10) make the point that, 'if there is a process of secularization, this is in part due to the failure of the inter-generational transmission of religion': i.e. parents fail to pass on religion to their children resulting in them (and ultimately society as a whole) becoming more secular.

This might on reflection seem obvious, but the relationship between the two processes is little theorised or understood. Recent research on both irreligious and secular socialisation (e.g. Merino 2012; Thiessen 2016) and transmission within religious and/or migrant minorities in plural contexts (e.g. Singh 2012a; Scourfield et al 2013; Güngör et al 2013; Maliepaard and Lubbers 2013; Van der Pol and Tubergen 2014; van Eck Duymaer van Twist 2015) may help us to better understand and theorise this relationship. Scourfield et al (2012: 105) have begun this much needed work with their

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secondary analysis of religious transmission in four groups in the UK (Christians, Muslims, those from non-Christian non-Muslim religions and those with no religion). They found much higher rates of intergenerational transmission among Muslims and members of other non-Christian groups which 'may in fact pose a challenge to blanket judgements about the decline of British religion' (Scourfield 2012: 105). On its own, the direct transmission model is inadequate for explaining why, within a single social context, different groups exhibit a greater or lesser degree of success in passing on their ideology.

The cultural specifics of different polities and religious contexts have also been recognised. Jennings and Niemi (1968: 169), for example, drew distinctions between societies in which learning was primarily supported by the family environment and those which had greater social complexity. Kelley and de Graaf (1997) identified the national religious context as critical for the shaping of individual religious beliefs in conjunction with parental socialisation, finding that the transmission of parents' beliefs was more effective in countries that were more secular than those described as more devout. Müller et al (2014) took this further by suggesting that other societal differences, in addition to national religiosity, must impact on transmission. Although they hypothesised that 'a country's former belonging to the communist bloc, levels of economic development, and income inequality' (Müller et al 2014: 739) might be expected to affect the cost of religious socialisation, it was high levels of income inequality that provided the most favourable context, irrespective of the degree of religious transmission within the family. They tentatively offered the following explanation, that 'as long as inequality is high, people have an incentive to invest in relational social capital that might be provided by religious organizations' (Müller et al 2014: 757).

Given the potential role of political and religious socialisation in state building and rebuilding, the question of its cross cultural relevance is of increasing importance for researchers working in this field (Niemi & Hepbrun 1995; Sapiro 2004; Müller et al 2014; Reidy et al 2015). See section 3.7.

### AGENCY IN TRANSMISSION

A further concern about the direct transmission model has been the question of agency. Although Hyman (1959) largely dismissed the idea that children could influence parents, more recent approaches have sought to stress the role of children in seeking information from parents, the impact of this on a parent's own learning, and the importance of a child's perception of parental attitudes.

McDevitt and Chafee (2002) centred their critique on the idea that children were seen as the passive recipients of politics without being able to influence the process. Instead, they argued that political learning and reorientation occurred within families as the result of conversations about politics. Stimulated by civic education (McDevitt & Chafee 2002: 281), news media (McDevitt 2005: 68; Lee et al 2013: 670) and involvement in youth and civic organisations (Terriquez and Kwon 2015: 440), children can initiate conversations with parents and bring about a change in both their own and their parents' beliefs. This was later refined as the concept of 'developmental

provocation' (McDevitt 2005: 67). Whereas direct transmission based approaches tend to envisage a unidirectional relationship, this model centres on greater interaction between the parent and child.

*The give and take of child–parent conversation should allow teenagers to practice opinion expression, to validate views obtained from media, and to express their own political identity in the home. (McDevitt 2005: 68)*

McDevitt and Chafee specify how parental change can occur as a result of conversations with children, highlighting processes that occur before, during and afterwards.

*Once an adolescent has shown an increased desire to talk about public affairs, a parent's interest in politics can be stimulated in processes that occur before, during, or after the next conversation, and during each time period, the processes might take the form of behavioral, cognitive, or affective activity. (McDevitt & Chafee 2002: 288)*

Behaviours in these periods were seen as coinciding with increased information seeking in preparation, attentive listening during conversations and encouragement of children to develop their political ideas following a conversation (McDevitt & Chafee 2002: 297-289).

Turning to religious transmission, young people's agency was proposed as an important factor in Kuusisto's (2009: 47) mixed methods study of Finnish Christian Adventist youth, 'as the phase during which values and memberships are negotiated and constructed with increasing independence from parental values and opinions'. The ecological model, attributed to Bronfenbrenner and further developed by Kuusisto, allowed the interaction of different spheres in the social environment of the individual to be examined (including home, school, religious denomination, peers etc). As well as a coherent Adventist worldview provided by parents and community members, in the school setting young people met with competing worldviews which they negotiated and learned from: 'the individual agency of the youngster ... emerges as the decisive power behind personal value choices and the construction of identity.' (Kuusisto 2009: 64)

Related to the concept of agency, Westholm (1999) suggested that a two-step model had become the basic paradigm in political socialisation research. Rather than simple transmission from parent to child, with the parent serving as a model, an additional step was required in which the child formulates an image of the parent which may or may not be accurate.

*By observing, or interacting with, the parent, the child perceives or infers certain characteristics on the basis of which the child creates an image of what the parent is like. That image then serves as a model according to which the child can adapt his or her own behavior and thinking. (Westholm 1999: 525)*

Agency is perhaps one of the most effective critiques of the direct transmission model, with a range of researchers concentrating less on the wishes and behaviour of parents, and more so on how

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young people can make their own decisions and interact with their parents. From this perspective, the direct transmission model risks reducing ideological transmission to a series of lectures and examples flowing from parents to children, while the reality is likely to be far more interactive.

### CHILD AND ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSMISSION

Niemi and Hepburn (1995) were highly critical of the idea that adult political views were static. Generalised trends had been 'caricatured' into the view that political affiliations do not change during adulthood. This was considered an important oversight given the broader political changes occurring, including the decline of trust in political institutions and government since much of the early empirical work had been conducted (Niemi & Hepburn 1995). Niemi and Hepburn were also critical of the assumed emphasis on early learning in areas of the research, arguing that very young children, with the exception of those caught up in adult domains such as war, were unlikely to take much interest in politics (Niemi & Russell 1995). The period of 'maximum change', as they saw it, was fourteen to the mid-twenties, where many students were directly engaged by civic education efforts (Niemi & Russell 1995).

In contrast, Sapiro (2004: 14) argued that political socialisation theory had largely failed to keep up with developmental psychology literatures. As well as political learning, biological and cognitive development also needed to be incorporated into political socialisation theory. Sapiro (2004: 13-14) suggested that the development required to understand politics, i.e. to link symbolic representations with sensations and consequences, developed slowly over the first six years. However, Sapiro also maintained that politically relevant concepts such as identity and social group categorisation might emerge by the same age (2004: 14). Developing the idea that politics is largely irrelevant to the lives of children, Sapiro (2004) echoed Niemi & Hepburn's (1995) point, suggesting that while this may be the case in relatively stable societies such as the US (the focus of a great deal of political socialisation research) it might be less true in other contexts, for example, those characterised by war, or simply by a different culture that emphasises different roles for children in societal processes (Sapiro 2004: 17).

More empirically-focused accounts also raised the issue of child development and assumptions about the trajectory of socialisation. For example, Sears and Valentino (1997) suggested that socialisation was not gradual, but episodic. Rather than the steady accumulation of knowledge, socialisation was seen as coming in short bursts linked to 'high information events'. Sears and Valentino (1997) suggested the example of a US Presidential election campaign as a high information event. Such events lead to the greater availability of information, emotional engagement and attitude development. Certainly, this approach closely supports the arguments of Sapiro (2004) above that political relevance for young people is context dependent.

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In summary, theoretical accounts related to ideological transmission broadly see the family as occupying an important role in how young people develop. The earliest accounts assumed that direct transmission between parents and children should almost be taken for granted. As theory developed, and empirical evidence was amassed, greater space was carved out to allow for variation in transmission. This included the availability of useful models from diverse disciplines (e.g. Bandura 1971; Berger & Luckmann 1966; Bourdieu 1980 etc; Whitehouse 2004), the role of the family, including grandparents and siblings, in shaping the wider environment (Dalton 1982; Bengtson et al 2009; Copen and Silverstein 2007; Gutierrez et al 2014; Park and Ecklund 2007), the individual's own, perhaps distorted, perception of their parent's politics (Westholm 1999), and more interactive models which saw political and religious learning as a back and forth rather than mono-directional process (McDevitt & Chafee 2005).

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The role of the family in ideological transmission has been studied using empirical analysis based on quantitative and qualitative approaches. The following section highlights some of the key empirical findings regarding the role of family in political and religious development. The following issues will be addressed:

- Why study transmission?
- What is being transmitted?
- The direct transmission of concrete concepts and practices
- The direct transmission of abstract concepts
- The role of different family members
- The role of the social milieu
- Comparative approaches
- Ethnographic approaches
- Methodological critiques

### WHY STUDY TRANSMISSION?

Empirical researchers have shared many of the concerns of the theoreticians, and indeed it has often been their research which has led to critiques of the direct transmission model and applied this and other theories in new and diverse contexts.

In the case of political socialisation, research has been linked to the wider goal of improving participation in democracy and addressing widespread concerns over declining political participation.

Research on religious socialisation has had several objectives. One has been the link between transmission, secularisation and the decline of religion, particularly Christianity, in western societies. The capacity of different religious denominations, organisations and communities to pass on traditions of belief, practice and participation, and under what circumstances, has increasingly come on to the agenda. This has led to diversification in the range of religions and contexts under scrutiny, as well as to a rise in the number of longitudinal or multiple cohort studies. Comparative analysis has also begun to be conducted, though studies are still small in number.

Another major research motivation has been the need to better understand socialisation in the context of migration and settlement, among ethnic and religious minorities, and first and second generations.

## WHAT IS BEING TRANSMITTED?

In terms of both religious and political socialisation, a key question is what is being transmitted. Studies differ depending on whether the focus is beliefs, attitudes, practices, identity, values, or culture or worldview more generally. In the following section, attention will turn to the transmission of extremist ideologies and the move to violence.

As the principal concern of much of the research in this area has been either the effectiveness of transmission or the family context, it has sometimes been hard to identify just what it is that is being transmitted in the process. In the discussion below, it will become clear that some things can be passed on more easily and effectively than others, and that this may differ according to the agent and recipient of transmission, their gender and wider context.

In an early study of political socialisation, Hyman sought to explain its impact in two ways: participation in politics and the types of political goals sought (Hyman 1959: 18). Hyman also provided a useful retrospective on studies of inter-generational agreement between parents and children. He noted that studies had focused on both beliefs and attitudes, including belief in the likelihood of war, ethnocentrism and authoritarianism, and party affiliation (Hyman 1959: 53). Discrete attitudes, according to Hyman, were only components in developing a wider political outlook; they were not the overall outcome of political socialisation:

*Any single correlation between parent and child in one of these studies simply establishes a correspondence between parent and child with respect to a discrete [emphasis in the original] attitude. By contrast, our concern is with the socialization of the child on a larger realm of attitudes, since only then would he be equipped with a sufficiently general orientation to cope with the variety of future political issues. (Hyman 1959: 55)*

Almond and Verba were concerned primarily with democratic stability, which they saw as tied to a broader concept of 'civic culture' (Almond & Verba 1963: 473). They too recognised a division between an individual's beliefs and attitudes towards democracy, such as their ability to influence decision making, and their actual political behaviour, suggesting that, although citizens of stable democracies often felt able to exercise influence (agency), they did not always do so (Almond & Verba 1963: 480).

Jennings et al (2009: 796) argued that political socialisation research had been heavily driven by interest in electoral outcomes, a constant area of concern for political scientists which had clearly guided much of the work in the area, in particular, concern over party affiliation.

In the case of religious socialisation, somewhat akin to the transmission of party affiliation, early quantitative approaches found that religious preference was more effectively passed on by parents than more abstract concepts and values (Jennings & Niemi 1968; Hoge et al 1982). Hayes and Pittelkow (1993), in an Australian study, focused on religious beliefs, analysing the intergenerational transmission of five tenets of the Christian faith, on God, the afterlife, the devil,

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hell and heaven. As in a further Australian study from two decades later (Voas & Storm 2012) – on the parental transmission of churchgoing – the effectiveness of the process depended on the parents themselves, their relationship and level of agreement, and the nature and strength of their own beliefs and participation.

Ethnographic researchers of religious socialisation – because of their qualitative methodology – have been able to adopt a more holistic approach to what is being transmitted within families. Ethnography has facilitated the observation of children's imitation of family religious practices, for example, whilst interviewing has provided the opportunity for researchers to hear directly from parents about their intentions and children about their knowledge and understanding of belief and practice (e.g. Jackson & Nesbitt 1993; Nesbitt 2000; Østberg 2003; Scourfield et al 2013). Within a religious context, Van Eck Duymaer van Twist (2015: 104-105) sets out markers for the successful socialisation of a child within religious sectarian groups (e.g. the Unification Church, ISKCON, and the Family). These include successfully passing on 'the explicit and implicit norms, values, codes of behavior, and social roles,' and knowledge of the boundary between acceptable and deviant conduct.

### DIRECT TRANSMISSION OF CONCRETE CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES

There has been recognition amongst scholars of political and religious socialisation that not all values and attitudes are equally transmitted between parents and children. Hyman (1959: 56), writing on political socialisation, observed that the available evidence suggested that party affiliation was much more likely to be transmitted than more nebulous political attitudes. In 1968, Jennings and Niemi sought to analyse what they termed secondary and tertiary values in their analysis of 1,562 child-parent pairs in the US based on children in school aged 17-18. Their study largely confirmed the high degree of similarity between parents and children in the area of party affiliation, but not in other areas.

The relative success in the transmission of party affiliation was explained largely in terms of its ease of access for young children. Parties serve to provide useful shortcuts to political learning that can be readily grasped by young people.

*Parties are concrete. Before they can understand much else of political life, young children can grasp the notion that in politics, as in other areas, there are groups and teams fighting each other and that some are to be liked more than others. Parties are visible. In most countries, they dominate the political news and discourse during, as well as between, election times. Because parties are concrete and visible, partisan feelings are easily communicated. The chances that party preferences will be aired in family conversations and that they will be correctly understood by the child are likely to be higher than for other political attitudes. (Westholm & Niemi 1992: 30)*

Turning to religious socialisation, in their formative study, Jennings and Niemi (1968), had not only noted the similarity between parents and children in respect of party affiliation, but also religious preference (1968; 172). Whilst this similarity was borne out in a later study by Hoge et al (1982), on the transmission of values from parents to teenagers in Catholic, Southern Baptist and Methodist churches (data from 254 mother-father-youth triads), abstract values were not found to be effectively transmitted:

*The topics on which parent-child agreement has been found to be strongest are those which are visible, concrete, and of lasting concern to the parents. Abstract conceptions of values, transient issues, and issues of little concern to the family have been found to have little or no parent-child transmission. (Hoge et al 1982: 570)*

Furthermore, only parents' creedal assent (agreement with a statement of belief in salvation) was found to be significant for effective transmission of values. Even then this was true principally for transmission to daughters (not sons) and only when parents were in agreement (Hoge et al 1982: 576-578). In fact, the authors found a slightly stronger effect from denominational membership than parents' values on the values of young people (578).

## **DIRECT TRANSMISSION OF ABSTRACT CONCEPTS**

Beyond religious and party affiliations the empirical picture is much weaker and more confused.

In investigating attitudes to specific political issues of the day, Jennings and Niemi (1968: 175) had found much lower correlations than they had expected, and they suggested that more abstract issues would find even less agreement. Likewise, thermometer ratings of specific groups produced largely similar mean values but low levels of correlation between parents and children. As a whole the children and parents felt the same, but within parent and child pairings there was considerable variation (Jennings & Niemi 1968: 176).

Summarising the field of political socialisation in 1972, Connell gave a broad overview which suggested high levels of group correlation, but low levels of pair correlation, with the exception of party affiliation. As a result, Connell believed that inter-family processes were 'irrelevant' to shaping politics (Connell 1972: 330). The lack of correlation between parents and children outside of party affiliation set the tone for much of the research on political socialisation, described as a 'wilderness of near zero correlations' (Connell 1972: 323). The field of political socialisation was abandoned by a great many in the 1980s, disillusioned over the lack of a firm connections (Niemi & Hepburn 1995).

Despite negative findings and weak correlations, later research returned to the idea that parental influence was a key factor in the transmission of political and religious beliefs, attitudes and values. Researchers justified this on the basis of improved methodology and access to longitudinal and

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comparative data. In addition, new theories, methods and data allowed for more complex and sophisticated models of ideological transmission.

More recent studies of family transmission of political values and attitudes have been able to revisit some of the questions raised by earlier research and add further nuance. Jennings et al's 2009 research, based on a multi-generational panel study (783), concluded that a number of factors could serve to enhance the transmission of political learning between parents and children. Jennings et al found that, where topics were frequently discussed, relevant and engaged with political events such as elections, then transmission could be high. Where parents' attitudes were consistent between parents and across time, the effects were further strengthened. While acknowledging the role of social context as a challenge to the social learning model, Jennings et al suggested that, where values were inculcated by parents at an early age, they would likely persist after leaving the family home.

*By contrast, those whose socialization in childhood is weak show much more instability well into their adult years. They exhibit a delayed pattern of political development, one where crystallized positions are slow to develop, one more susceptible to influences outside the childhood home (Jennings et al 2009: 796)*

However, others have suggested that the longer term impact of parental socialisation may be more dynamic than thought. Dinas (2014) suggests a more counter intuitive approach to party identification specifically. Where parents are politically engaged during childhood children are more likely to adopt their parents' point of view, but they are also likely to pay greater attention to political developments later in life which may act to alter their point of view (Dinas, 2014: 828).

Access to cross-cultural data, particularly for migration locations, has enabled researchers to compare intergenerational learning between different groups in a single context. GÜNGÖR et al (2011) drew on data from 'The Integration of the European Second Generation' surveys to compare Turkish Belgian and Moroccan Belgian Muslims. They found that transmission was not limited to religious affiliation/identification, but was also confirmed for beliefs and practices, noting that 'both formal religious education (sending children to Koran lessons) and parental religious practice (father's mosque visits) contributed to effective transmission' (Güngör et al 2011: 1368). This was more strongly evidenced for second generation Turkish Belgians, for whom the maintenance of heritage culture was particularly important (leading, for example, to parents choosing co-ethnic peers and partners for the children). Maliepaard & Lubbers (2013) reported a similar pattern for Turkish Dutch Muslims (as compared with Moroccan Dutch), as a result of their stronger cultural maintenance and social cohesion.

Comparing different minority groups within a single setting allowed researchers to identify factors which might contribute to effective intergenerational transmission, not only of religious identification but also of beliefs and practices. A similar approach (Scourfield et al 2012) – which compared transmission among different religious groups in the UK and found Muslims to be the

most successful – then contributed hypotheses for a larger, more in-depth ethnographic analysis of how Muslims in a European minority context learn to be religious, a study to which we will return later.

## THE ROLE OF DIFFERENT FAMILY MEMBERS

As we noted in section 2 above, critics of the direct transmission model questioned the lack of consideration not only of external influences but also of relationships and agency within the family. A number of studies of religious and political transmission have reported different roles for different family members, especially mothers.

A positive affirmation of the efficacy of intergenerational religious transmission – and this time in relation to beliefs rather than religious preference – was offered by Hayes and Pittelkow (1993) on the basis of their analysis of a nationally representative Australian sample of adult respondents and their parents. Unlike Hoge et al (1982), they found that parental influence – particularly from devout mothers – remained the principal predictor of the current beliefs of respondents. They accounted for their positive findings – in a context where negative correlations and unsupported hypotheses had more often been the norm – on the basis of their advanced methodology: nationally representative sample; increased number of measures of family intimacy, parental religious commitment and denominational congruency; and controls for various sociodemographic variables (Hayes and Pittelkow 1993: 765).

The impact of mothers was noted elsewhere, in studies using a variety of approaches. On the basis of responses to a social survey in urban areas in the American Mid-West and North-East, Gutierrez et al (2014) found that African American respondents reported the particular influence of mothers, and to a lesser extent grandparents and siblings. In a qualitative study based on interviews with 73 college-age Asian Americans (Park and Ecklund 2007), mothers were referred to more often than fathers as strong influences on religiosity, but extended kin, siblings, and relatives were also mentioned, with Park and Ecklund classifying them as ‘reinforcers’, ‘substitutes’, or ‘contrasts’ to parents.

Beck and Jennings (1975) analysed interviews conducted with 430 ‘high school seniors’ and both their parents in 1965, concentrating on party affiliation as an outcome. They found that, when taking into consideration grandparents’ party affiliation, the addition of a spouse’s affiliation greatly increased the amount of variation explained by their model, suggesting that partners do indeed have a significant impact on one another’s politics measured by party affiliation (Beck & Jennings 1975: 91). But they also found different roles for fathers and mothers. Where mothers were politically neutral, fathers were found to be more influential on children’s party preference; where mothers were political partisans, however, children were more likely to accept her preference (Beck & Jennings 1975: 95). This was also true for situations where both parents were partisan and disagreed (Beck & Jennings 1975: 98). However, the mother’s preference was also seen as being

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more influenced by the fathers, as well as being further from her own parent's preference, resulting in overall a dominant paternal influence in the sample (Beck & Jennings 1975: 97).

Similarly, Murray and Mulvaney (2012) investigated the role of different parenting styles in political transmission, focusing specifically on the role of the mother. Based on an analysis of 161 mother-child pairs recruited from university students (a convenience sample), the resulting analysis distinguished between three parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive, and evaluated their contribution to transmitting both political ideology measured on a liberal-conservative scale, and party identification. The results showed that, for the sample, ideology was transmitted more effectively by authoritative mothers, while party identification was also transmitted slightly more effectively by authoritative mothers than either authoritarian or permissive mothers (Murray & Mulvaney 2012: 1121). The authors reasoned that this was down to the way in which children perceive the choices with which they are presented, with authoritative mothers seen as allowing children to believe they have arrived at their own political beliefs independently. They also believed that there was a greater affinity between authoritative mothers and their children leading to the latter wanting to emulate their parents' politics. Finally, the authoritative mother was seen as cultivating a more reciprocal relationship in which both parent and child could potentially influence one another, thereby leading to greater political similarity (Murray & Mulvaney 2012:1121-1122).

Moen et al (1997) specifically analysed the transmission of gender attitudes between mothers and daughters. Based on a sample of 246 mother daughter pairs and surveys conducted in the US between 1956 and 1986, Moen et al (1997) found that mothers with traditional or egalitarian attitudes in 1956, were likely to have daughters with corresponding attitudes in 1986 (291), but also that a daughter's own beliefs very much depending on her own experiences. Interestingly, a mother's own work status was not found to significantly impact a daughter's beliefs, suggesting that gender roles were transmitted verbally and through discussion, not by mothers acting as role models (Moen et al 1997: 291).

The availability of resources for longitudinal study have also enabled researchers to examine the role of grandparents in the transmission process. Analysing data for the period 1971-2000 from the Longitudinal Study of Generations, Bengtson et al (2009; cf. Copen and Silverstein 2007), asked whether grandparents exercised a different role to parents in religious socialisation and whether or not such a role might be changing. They concluded that there was a significant degree of influence across three generations, with grandparents seen to be active contributors to young people's religiosity (2009: 325). Independent of parents, they influenced all three dimensions – 'frequency of church attendance, self-reported religiousness and religious belief orientation' (2009: 340) – though their impact on the transmission of attendance and religiousness had weakened somewhat over time (between 1971 and 2000). Of particular note was transmission from grandmothers to granddaughters. In our discussion of the ethnographic study of family religious socialisation below, we return to impact of different family members in the transmission process.

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MILIEU

In addition to isolating the impact of specific family members in transmission, as we saw in section 2, research has also attempted to explore the interconnections between families and the broader social milieu in which they live.

Russell Dalton (1982: 140-141) attempted to explain contradictory findings in political socialisation research by differentiating between direct influences (attitudinal), and influences brought about by shared circumstances (social milieu). Building on the same data as Jennings & Niemi (1968), Dalton tested this hypothesis, concluding that values typically inculcated early on, such as racial and partisan attitudes, were transmitted primarily through the attitudinal pathway, i.e. direct contact. Political efficacy, knowledge and civic tolerance were, on the other hand, seen as products of the social milieu, and therefore more open to change over time. Values transmitted through the attitudinal pathway were seen as less likely to change in later life, while those shaped by the social milieu were thought to be more malleable as individual circumstances change (Dalton 1982: 154).

The relationship between the effects of the family and the shared social environment has increasingly been considered in studies of migrant minorities and intergenerational religious transmission. For example, one of the questions asked by Maliepaard and Lubbers (2013) in their study of Moroccan-Dutch and Turkish-Dutch Muslims was 'Does the social and structural integration of the children into Dutch society hamper parental religious transmission? Although Turkish-Dutch parents were found to be the more effective of the two groups in transmitting Islam to the second generation, for both groups having Dutch friends and higher levels of education were found to have little influence on the transmission of religious values from parents to children (2013: 438). However, in another Dutch study of these two communities, Van der Pol and Tubergen (2014: 102) concluded that 'support, control and influence from like-minded people are less available when parents are in a minority position and this makes it harder to transmit one's norms and values'.

With a focus on the impact of extra-community friendships and secular education (Maliepaard & Lubbers) and minority location (Van der Pol & Tubergen), these studies demonstrate that research on the intergenerational transmission of beliefs and values needs to take seriously the multiple effects of the wider social context in which families are situated. This was endorsed by Voas and Fleischmann (2012) who, in a review article on religious change among first and second generation Muslim migrants in the West, concluded that 'Western culture has an influence, but structural integration does not necessarily reduce religiosity' (2012: 525). Among the second generation, this influence (impacted by secular education, individualism, and Western hostility to Islam) contributes to a desire to pursue the 'real Islam' uncontaminated by ethnic and cultural accretions (2012: 534). External influences join with those of the family to encourage increased religiosity.

Other approaches have similarly introduced new considerations into models of family transmission. In an example of the kind of two step-process envisaged by Westholm (1999), Acock and Bengtson (1980: 512), working on a sample collected through health insurance data, argued that attitudes to specific issues attributed to parents by children, rather than attitudes that were reported by adults

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themselves, were more predictive of the views of their children than expected. They also found that children were likely to overestimate how conservative their parents were, and to overestimate the level of agreement between their parents (Acock & Bengtson 1980: 512).

### COMPARATIVE APPROACHES

One of the core early critiques of socialisation research was the focus, driven largely by the availability of data, on stable and relatively prosperous societies, especially the US. In keeping with the broader theoretical interest in the role of political and religious socialisation in post-conflict societies (Sapiro, 2004: 2), migration contexts (Sedgwick 2015; Voas & Fleischmann 2012), and different socio-political systems (Müller et al 2014), there have been a number of studies that have sought to compare parental influences across a number of contexts, as well as case studies of specific contexts.

Westholm and Niemi (1992) developed the idea of non-US approaches to political socialisation. Concentrating on party affiliation as their dependent variable, they found that the political context made a significant difference to the transmission of political beliefs. Party affiliation, the mainstay of political transmission in the US, was found to be less relevant in countries that had multi-party systems. Instead, multiparty systems resulted in a much greater focus on positioning within the ideological spectrum e.g. the left-right scale (Westholm & Niemi 1992: 31).

Reidy et al (2015) worked with a range of children and parents (although not related pairs) from both Serb and Croat backgrounds in Vukovar, Croatia. Those interviewed felt that parental influence was key in how young people came to understand both the war and their own ethnic identity. Parents from different backgrounds were noted as having contrasting approaches to explaining the war, Serb parents preferring not to talk about the broader context of the war, Croats were more keen to discuss the war with their children. Both groups sought to retell stories of the family's experiences during the war (Reidy et al 2015: 15).

In terms of in-depth analysis in specific locations, Westholm (1999: 526) was able to analyse a large socialisation study conducted in Sweden, conducted between 1981 and 1985 which included both children aged 15-20 and their parents (surveyed in 1981 only). Westholm distinguished between young people who reported a clear idea of their parents' views and those who did not, and found lower correspondence where young people could not report their parents' views (535). The ability of young people to report their parents' views was also dependent on their own ability to hold clear views (534). A similar finding was reported for party affiliation, where young people with strong affiliations were more likely to accurately report their parents' affiliations (538). Westholm concludes by suggesting that children's perceptions of their parents' political positions are 'of great but not universal importance' (Westholm 1999: 547).

Data from Mexico provides an interesting alternative perspective. Huerta-Wong (2013) analysed survey responses from 1,544 11-12 year-olds collected through schools. The analysis was heavily

influenced by the more active transmission model, and the questionnaire included items about parents' political engagement, the frequency of family discussions and TV news viewing. The results suggested that parents were important determinants of attitudes to future political participation, and that parental discussions had an important indirect effect on political socialisation (Huerta-Wong 2013: 22).

Comparative cross-cultural research on religious socialisation has generally been conducted within a single national or regional location such as the Netherlands, Scandinavia or the UK. In addition to several intergenerational studies comparing migrant Moroccan and migrant Turkish Muslims (Güngör et al 2013; Maliepaard & Lubbers 2013; Van der Pol & Tubergen 2014) and the comparative review article by Voas and Fleischmann (2012), recent work by Sedgwick (2015) and Scourfield et al (2012) is noteworthy. Sedgwick (2015) brought together research by a range of scholars on Islamic transmission in Europe. Although many focused on Scandinavia, they examined different groups (e.g. Danish Pakistanis and Swedish Somalis) and different transmission processes (e.g. within Religious Education in Finland and Denmark). Although contributors' findings were diverse, in general it was found that 'Muslim children must navigate different and sometimes contradictory expectations and demands on their way to negotiating a European Muslim identity' (Sedgwick 2015: cover).

Drawing on data from the Home Office Citizenship Survey (of adults in England and Wales) and its accompanying Young People's Survey, Scourfield et al (2012) examined and compared patterns of religiosity across the generations in four groups: Christians, Muslims, those from non-Christian non-Muslim religions and those with no religion. Significantly higher rates of intergenerational transmission were found in Muslims and members of other non-Christian non-Muslim religions. The authors suggested that this may 'pose a challenge to blanket judgements about the decline of British religion' and may be further evidence of the importance of religion for migrant minorities as they establish themselves in a new location over a period of several generations (Scourfield et al 2012: 105).

Muslims, particularly those in lower social classes, were found to be the most successful transmitters of the four groups. They 'remained almost twice as likely as Christians to report practising the same religion they were raised in' (Scourfield et al 2012: 106). Young Muslims' involvement in religious organisations and in supplementary Islamic education, including Qur'an and Arabic learning, were suggested as reasons why Muslims differ to other groups (106). The role and importance of both education and religious organisations for transmission will be discussed in later reports.

## **ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES**

This account of empirical findings on political and religious socialisation would be incomplete without specific consideration of the advances made through ethnographic research. In UK research from the 1990s, and increasingly in Nordic studies (see papers in Sedgwick 2015), qualitative approaches to religious socialisation have been preferred to quantitative studies, with

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the disciplinary focus shifting from psychology to education studies and the study of religions, and the terminology from 'transmission' to 'nurture'. To date, we have not been able to identify ethnographic studies of political socialisation within family contexts.

Children as well as parents have been research participants (e.g. Nesbitt 2000; Østberg 2003; Scourfield et al 2013). The research focus has been directed to the life-world of childhood (and in some cases adolescence and emerging adulthood), to children and young people as active agents in the socialisation process, and to the family relationships which support learning.

Typically, studies of this kind are mixed-method, with the research presented in the form of thick description, followed by analysis. Participant observation and the use of video diaries, visual ethnography, games and online methods have been used alongside interviewing. Studies often treat a single religious group or community, sometimes more than one, in a specific location: e.g. Pakistani Muslim families in Oslo (Østberg 2003), Hindu children in Britain (Jackson & Nesbitt 1993) and second generation Pakistani and Khoja Muslims in the English city of Peterborough (Smalley 2002). Because a qualitative approach is favoured, authors tend to be cautious of generalising their findings to other religious communities or other contexts.

As most of these studies focus on minority religious groups or communities; they examine religious socialisation in relation to migration and transnational family practices, minority/majority issues and the 'secular' context, as well as the transmission of beliefs, practices and values, and the impact of the specific learning traditions of the religious group or community in question. In the discussion that follows, the major study by Scourfield et al (2013), on Muslim childhood in the city of Cardiff, will provide the focus, with reference being made to other work where relevant.

Scourfield et al (2013) open up some of these issues by asking:

*How do we learn to be religious? To make sense of this process should we emphasize the habitual reinforcement of bodily rituals or the active role of individuals in making decisions about faith at key moments? Or should we turn to cognitive science to explain the universal structures on which religiosity is built? And how does a relatively devout minority pass on religion in a generally secular Western context? What significance does religion have for family life in this situation? Scourfield et al (2013: 1)*

Having established through secondary analysis of UK survey data across three generations that Muslims show higher inter-generational transmission (of Islam) than Christians, those from non-Christian, non-Muslim religions, and those who have no religion, Scourfield et al use an ethnographic approach to establish what influences a Muslim child's religiosity. In their examination of nurture in the home, supplementary school, state education and wider society, four factors are identified: cognitive transmission, embodiment and habitus, minority defence, and the role of religious organisations. These are not only mutually reinforcing, but are all conditioned by the context in which Cardiff's Muslims – largely second or third generation, from a variety of ethnic heritage communities – live, work and bring up their children.

Their traditions of Islamic and cultural (e.g. Yemeni, Somalian, Pakistani) socialisation are potentially informed by the modernising forces of secularisation and individualisation, and the impact of racism and Islamophobia. Indeed, the authors (Scourfield et al 2013: 13) note the power of 'minority defence' to shape the transmission of Islam within families, but this turns out to increase religiosity rather than encourage secularisation. One participant said:

*I think as Muslims we're going more and more towards our religion rather than going away from it. I think it's become more important especially in the Western world even more so. I think we're more focused on it than people are in Pakistan (Scourfield et al 2013: 209).*

Whether through the need to preserve cultural heritage, to support and identify as a minority under threat, or to provide a moral framework in the context of the dominant secular culture, Cardiff Muslims saw minority defence as a contributory factor. Nesbitt (2000) too noted that westernisation and racism acted as contributory factors in turning young British Sikhs towards their religion.

The impact of minority status on inter-generational Islamic transmission was also discussed by Voas and Fleischmann (2012: 535-537). In their review of both quantitative and qualitative studies, they identified three distinctive trends, all of which were affected by migration and minority settlement. The first saw the reassertion of old forms of social control in the context of a new and threatening moral climate. The second witnessed the children of Muslim migrants, as a result of western education and individualism, searching for a 'real Islam' stripped of cultural accretions, and the third saw them standing up for their religion in the face of western suspicion of Islam. These variously impacted on parents and older children as participants in the transmission process.

Voas and Fleischmann (2012) found that children of Muslim immigrants in Europe did not behave as earlier migration scholars had expected them to. Rather than becoming less religious and more Western, they sought to reclaim the religion of their parents, albeit in a form free from ethnic customs.

But being a minority in an alien milieu is not the only factor to influence transmission processes among migrant families. Smalley (2002), in comparative research on parenting among second generation Pakistani and Khoja Muslims in the UK, distinguished between the impact of the transnational family and visits to villages in Pakistan on the former, and of diasporic identification with the global Khoja Shi'a network on the latter. Despite many similarities (e.g. in prayer, fasting and recitation of the Qur'an), parents in the two communities employed different approaches in accordance with the families and networks they belonged to.

Whilst all the ethnographic studies consulted drew attention to the importance of family and home for religious socialisation, the roles they attributed to these depended on the age of the children, and the migration and settlement pattern of the parents. Scourfield et al (2013: 213) favoured an approach that made space for children's agency in the transmission process, but found such agency to be rather limited because routines in middle childhood were largely set by parents. Singh

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(2012a), however, researching young adult Sikhs, understandably found them to have a higher degree of choice in the religious learning process. If anything, the problem came from navigating the plethora of sources of Sikh knowledge on offer (within families, and from Gurdwaras, student societies, peers and online). In light of all this, young adult Sikhs sought out figures of authority – including older family members – to test various claims.

In his qualitative research on religious and secular socialization among Canadian marginal affiliates and nonreligious individuals, Thiessen (2016) found that giving children the choice to decide on matters of religious or nonreligious belief and affiliation was asserted as important by all parents interviewed. However, the more secular (as opposed to marginally religious) the parents, the more likely they were in practice to defer to their children in these matters (Thiessen 2016: 9). In doing so, Thiessen suggested, parents were reinforcing the dominant Canadian cultural narrative that religion should be confined to the private realm and should remain a matter of personal choice.

Another feature of ethnographic studies that is rarely considered by those using quantitative approaches is the particular inflection given to the transmission process by the religion itself. The question is not just ‘How do we learn to be religious?’, but ‘What do different religions teach about religious learning, and how do families from different religious backgrounds do things differently?’ For example, religious groups may have distinctive teachings about the life cycle and what it is fitting to learn and practically acquire at different life stages, in adulthood as well as childhood. Furthermore, they may have specific concepts for religious education and learning, and for the passing on of tradition.

The importance of education is stressed in Islamic teachings, and ‘covers individual development and God-consciousness, the transmission of knowledge, and the development of an understanding of society and its social and moral rules’ (Scourfield et al, 2013: 22). In their work on Muslim childhood, Scourfield et al make reference to two key Arabic terms, *tarbiya*, ‘the development of individual potential, and ... the process of nurturing and guiding young people to maturity’, and *talim*, ‘the imparting and receiving of knowledge, usually through training, instruction, or another form of teaching’ (2013: 22). Theoretically, these concepts inform the process of transmission that occurs in Muslim families.

However, as many ethnographers point out, there is no typical Muslim childhood and there are many ways of being Muslim. Not all Muslims are devout or obedient, and books about Islam and Muslims tend to over-exaggerate normative or proper Islamic practice (Sedgwick 2015: 4). Context is always important. There has been a greater focus on proper behaviour among minority Muslims in the West than in the majority Muslim world (Sedgwick 2015; cf. Østberg 2003). This has been noted for diaspora Sikhs too. Nesbitt (2000: 243; cf. Singh 2012a) observed a two-way movement in her work on Sikh children, both towards and away from a *Khalsa* or ‘proper’ Sikh identity.

As Scourfield et al (2013) argued, several factors contributed to learning to be a good or proper Muslim, and these included cognitive and behavioural processes. In the case of the former, it was

not just a question of what Islam teaches, but its understanding of how children and young people should learn, i.e. its mode of teaching and learning. Following Whitehouse (2004), they identified Islam as using a 'doctrinal' rather than an 'imagistic' mode of memory transmission, focused on repetition of ideas, beliefs and rituals:

*Frequent repetition of religious teachings at home, in formal classes and through informal social interaction with Muslim friends and wider family members allows for the storage of these messages in semantic memory. (Scourfield 2013: 206)*

This cognitive process was reinforced with embodied practices – of prayer, dress, eating and fasting, iconography – that embedded Islamic values in the young learner. Østberg (2003: 223) too observed how young Pakistanis in families in Oslo internalised rules, for example on modesty, gender roles, and what is *halal* or *haram*, permitted or prohibited.

Proper religious belief and behaviour is only part of the picture of what children in minority communities learn, however. Jackson and Nesbitt (1993), Nesbitt (2000) and Østberg (2003) stressed children's 'multiple cultural competence', their ability to learn the various cultural tools and signals associated with their diverse contexts and relationships, and to switch between them as required. This is a subject to which we will return in the next report, on ideological transmission between peers and in educational settings.

## METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUES

Empirical research on the transmission of ideology has been subject to a number of critiques on methodological grounds. These have included: the choice and size of the sample, an over-reliance on correlations (in earlier work), data collection based on a single point, and questions of representativeness and generalisability.

In quantitative work in particular, many scholars have noted an over-reliance on data collected in stable and functioning democracies, particularly the US (e.g. Jennings & Niemi 1968). The use of samples of convenience, based around school or religious attendance, for example, is likely to exclude individuals less-engaged with institutions, often those from more disadvantaged backgrounds (Lyons 1970). This has, to some extent, been corrected as researchers have been able to conduct studies outside of these environments and populations (e.g. Güngör et al 2011; Huerta-Wong 2013; Gutierrez et al 2014; Reidy et al 2015). Nevertheless, especially given the growing interest in transmission in both migration and post-conflict environments, it is important to understand that findings based on US data are unlikely to be replicated elsewhere.

A further methodological concern has centred on the over reliance on correlations as evidence of transmission. Connell (1972) highlighted the tendency of much early empirical work in political socialisation (less evident in later work e.g. Jennings et al 2009) to rely heavily on correlations as evidence of transmission. In Connell's account, he stresses that in the context of political

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socialisation, correlations can relate to specific pairs (parents and children), or the group as whole (1972: 324).

A further prominent critique of the analysis of the political and/or religious similarities of parents and children stems from the availability of data. Panel studies in particular are difficult to conduct, requiring many years of commitment. Some (Connell 1972: 324) have also distinguished between the use of panel data collected over a period of years and collected from multiple participants (e.g. Jennings & Niemi 1968; Dalton 1980), as compared to single survey analysis which relies on recall and perceptions of a single subject (e.g. Huerta-Wong 2013; Reidy et al 2015). Westholm (1999: 526), for example, acknowledged the huge cost in time and resources to develop sophisticated panel data required for political socialisation research, but also cautioned against reliance on studies that drew only on the child's perceptions, suggesting they may be inaccurate.

Researchers who utilised national datasets (Hayes and Pittelkow 1993; Scourfield et al 2012) and longitudinal datasets (Copen and Silverstein 2007; Bengtson et al 2009) claim to have resolved some of the problems of earlier studies (narrow population sampling; single point data collection).

Scholars who opted to use qualitative methods to research religious or political socialisation have criticised earlier studies for their focus on samples of white, middle-class, American Christians (Nesbitt 2000; Scourfield et al 2013). Their interests have focused not on the effectiveness and conditions of intergenerational transmission, but on how children learn about religion or politics, and their beliefs, practices and values. This has led to the use of observational methods and to the interviewing of children as well as parents. The use of mixed methods has been a feature of ethnographic studies, with key examples being Singh (2012a), and Scourfield et al (2013), but see also Kuusisto (2009) for a combination of surveys and interviews in an 'ecological approach'. Typical problems with qualitative approaches are the small size of the sample, its unrepresentativeness, and the difficulty of generalising to larger populations or other groups.

Reviewing research on religious change in first and second generation Muslim migrants in the West, Voas and Fleischmann (2012: 534) noted that quantitative and qualitative research found different results on the question of whether 'religious identities gain primacy over or become detached from ethnic or racial identities in the second generation'. Survey data showed a close association between them, whilst qualitative research revealed the appropriation of 'an Islam that is separate from the ethnic culture of the parental generation' (2012: 533). This finding raises several questions: Why do different methods generate different findings on the same issue? Do the methods used impact on the results obtained? In the case of research on ideological transmission, do the methods actually address different issues and answer different questions? Is one method more useful than another, or is a mixed method approach likely to generate the most reliable results?

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# CASE STUDIES ON FAMILIES AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION: TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDIES

In addition to social science theory on transmission drawn from a range of fields, research specifically on terrorism and extremism has also identified the role of family. Primarily, this research has focused on case studies centred on individual accounts, or aggregating multiple accounts.

As with empirical work on political and religious transmission discussed above, case study approaches offer a number of benefits and drawbacks. On the positive side, case studies offer in-depth and specific information about cases, and they are often rich in detail that is missing from more quantitative approaches. However, these details come at the cost of narrowing the representativeness of the sample; case studies are often highly individual, and it is difficult to draw wider conclusions from them. Additionally, case study material is often based on motivated accounts. In some cases this comes from open source reporting (Andre & Harris Hogan 2013), in others it can come from organisations with specific goals and agendas (Manning & Bau 2015). Even where first-hand accounts are available, they are often either retrospective, or they are influenced by political bias and concerns (Taylor & Quayle 1994). Overall, case study research introduces an unavoidable measure of subjectivity into accounts of ideological transmission. It needs to be seen as an addition to, not a substitute for, more objective but less detailed empirical work.

Case study-based research that has focused specifically on either terrorism or extremism has identified a role for the family, but this is not always seen as being directly linked to ideological transmission. The family has itself been presented as a source of grievance, with individuals dissatisfied as a result of their experiences of the wider family. It is also noteworthy that very often the family is tied to the broader context, providing a backdrop for a subject's own politics. In some counter-cultural contexts, the family may be seen as a symbol of wider society and its ills (e.g. in the case of left wing radical movements of the 1960s and 1970s). Equally, the wider context is often linked to the role of the family, with accounts of subjects from the Palestinian refugee camps, for instance, differing markedly from those of subjects in the UK.

What follows aims to highlight these and other themes in a range of case study approaches to extremism and terrorism. In addition, three more detailed case studies are provided at the end of the section to illustrate in greater detail the differing roles of family within ideological transmission.

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In some cases, the role of the family has been seen as ideological. Post (2005) identifies what he terms generational dynamics in his interview subjects, arguing that specific types of terrorism are defined by different relationships between terrorists and their families. Those he identifies as *social*

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revolutionary terrorists, terrorists of the left and some religious extremists, are presented as being in rebellion against the previous generation:

*... social revolutionary terrorists are rebelling against the generation of their parents who are loyal to the regime. They are disloyal to the generation of their families that is loyal to the regime. Their acts of terrorism are acts of revenge against the generation of their family, which they hold responsible for their failures in this world. (Post 2005: 618)*

By contrast, *national-separatist terrorism*, Post argues, is driven in part by fealty to the family, and terrorism is a response to harms done to family members and the previous generation (Post 2005). Post describes this as 'when hatred is bred into the bone'. Using the example of secular terrorism in Palestine, Post relays an account by one member of Fatah which placed the refugee experience as a key catalyst for involvement (Post 2005: 622). A further account from Mohammad Rezaq, a terrorist involved in the hijacking of an Egypt Air flight 648 in 1985 by the Abu Nidal organisation, references family memories of refugee experiences as a motivation. Rezaq's mother told him how:

*...her family was forced to flee their home in Jaffa in Israel. They left for the West Bank, where Rezaq was raised. When young Rezaq was eight, the family fled their pleasant West Bank existence during the 1967 war, ending up in a crowded Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. His mother told him bitterly that this was the second time such a thing had happened to her. (Post 2005: 624)*

*The defendant [Rezaq] epitomized the life and psychology of the nationalist-separatist terrorist. The defendant assuredly did not believe that what he was doing was wrong: from boyhood on Rezaq had been socialized to be a heroic revolutionary fighting for the Palestinian nation. Demonstrating the generational transmission of hatred, his case can be considered emblematic of many from the ranks of ethnic/nationalist terrorist groups, from Northern Ireland to Palestine, from Armenia to the Basque region of Spain. (Post 2005: 624)*

There are other prominent examples of cases in which the family plays a clear role in transmitting ideology and subsequent involvement in terrorism. Alberto Franceschini was one of the three founders of the Italian Red Brigades in September 1970. Franceschini was steeped in politics almost from birth. His grandfather was a founder of the Italian Communist Party and was exiled by the Italian fascists and later fought as a partisan (Orsini 2012). Franceschini's home life was marked by tensions between a Stalinist grandfather, and a father who supported Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation policies. The home environment was highly politicised, and media exposure was restricted to Communist-supporting radio stations (Radio Prague & and Radio Moscow) (Orsini 2012: 681).

Orsini writes of Franceschini's childhood:

*[His] childhood was defined wholly by politics. At age five he was taken to a Communist Party branch, where he spent his free time with the children of other militants. Everybody wore the uniform of the youth party. (Orsini 2012: 680)*

Orsini continues, describing a grandfather keen to see his grandson pick up where he had left off:

*Alberto was powerfully affected by the influence of his grandfather—who he considered the most important figure in his life—especially his glorification of revolutionary violence. (Orsini 2012: 681)*

However, even here, where transmission from father and grandfather to son and grandson appears to be direct, ideological communication is presented as dependent on external and coincidental factors, including a fatal anti-fascist protest held in Genoa in 1960, attended by a thirteen year-old Franceschini, during which five youths died at the hands of the police (Orsini 2012: 682).

Other cases have also provided examples of social revolutionary views in which participation occurred over and above the objections of family. Connect Justice, described as a social enterprise, undertook a series of case studies based on former supporters of the extreme right and extreme Islamist movements in the UK (Davies et al 2015: 10). These made reference to family members. The analysis reports observed differences between Islamist extremist and far-right cases. In the case of Islamist extremists there appeared to be no common pattern. Although a minority reported 'dysfunctional family relations', this was not universal and all had siblings that did not become involved in extremism (Davies et al 2015: 12). For the far-right subjects, families were observed to be more politicised. In two cases families were reported to be left-wing voters, and their children's resulting involvement in far-right politics was both a shock and interpreted as a form of rebellion (Davies et al 2015: 12).

*His [Kevin's] family was political, but left wing, with both parents trade unionists and shop stewards, organising strike action. Key left wing figures visited their house. Kevin's parents left the Labour party in the 1980s, and the father was in the Northern Ireland Independent Orange Order (a split from the main Orange Order, supporting Protestantism but promoting Liberty of Conscience and the right to think independently). His parents later joined the Communist party. They were mortified when Kevin joined the YNF [Young National Front], and thought he had been brainwashed. (Davies et al 2015: 11)*

However, the role of the family was very much downplayed by the subjects in these cases in terms of both entering and leaving extremism (Davies et al 2015: 13-16).

Likewise, Acharya and Muldoon (2015) focused on the declared reasons for participation in violent action by analysing accounts written by activists in Maoist cadres involved in violence in Nepal prior to a 2006 peace agreement. They identified four major themes in accounts of the conflict: socio-

political context, political ideology, family relations, and friendship. Ideologically, the combatants were found to be relatively limited in their understanding of party ideology, and no reference to family is made in this context. Family members' primary role in activists' accounts was found to be antagonistic, either in the form of 'latent resentment or 'outright objection' (Acharya and Muldoon (2015: 10). One account reads:

*I said to my mother, "Mother, Maoist party is very good, right? Should I also do politics?" I had only said this much, when my mother said irately, "What are you talking; neither your father nor your brother did it. Being a daughter, do you want to shame yourself? If you do, I won't call you my daughter. Do you recall how much your brother has advised you? He has been hankering after a job so as to educate you. My daughter, don't talk like this, everyone will disown you." (Extract 10, quoted in Acharya & Muldoon 2015: 11)*

In their discussion, Acharya and Muldoon, emphasise the role of the family in this context as 'proscribing' (2015: 14). They further link their findings to claims about the role of family in party attachment, suggesting that the transmission of affiliation was not occurring in the Nepalese case.

Muldoon et al (2007) analysed the sense of 'national belonging' embedded in texts created by 261 young people (ages 13-16) living along the border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. In particular, Muldoon et al question universal theoretical accounts of child development that include relationships with country, taking the position instead that development of national identity is influenced by the wider milieu, in which they include family (Muldoon et al 2007: 580). Responses to a specific question frequently mentioned family as an important influence on shaping beliefs and opinions, with transmission between generations seen as 'common and inevitable' (Muldoon et al 2007: 587). Accounts included references to parents incarcerated for their role in the IRA. Muldoon et al (2007: 588) identify a distinction between the transmission of positive values, which are seen as being proactively inculcated by parents, and negative values, which are seen as inevitably transferred between the generations. Muldoon et al (2007) similarly identify increased understanding of personal choice in the essays of older subjects.

There has also been limited quantitative work on the role of family in providing support for engaging in militant activity. King et al (2011: 403) set out to test a hypothesis that family support provides the basis for 'anti-normative' terrorist political violence. Based on semi-structured interviews with family members of Jema'ah Islamiyah, a South-East Asian militant Islamist group, King et al found some evidence to suggest that family members were aligned on the use of violence, although the direction of causality was not always clear. Given that King et al were working with the families of known, convicted and often deceased people, there was more than likely a pressure on family members to retroactively support the activities of their offspring. However, where subjects had been killed carrying out suicide attacks, family support was often diminished (King et al 2011: 411). The authors acknowledge both the wider political context of Indonesia, and the specific noted religiosity of Jema'ah Islamiyah as likely influences on the findings (King et al 2011: 412)

Asal et al (2008) conducted a quantitative analysis of family support and refusal for a child engaging in militancy in Pakistan. Based on a survey of 141 families with children who had died as 'mujahadeen', Asal et al (2008: 977-981) tested a range of economic and religious economic theories about the rationality of either consenting or refusing consent for a child to join a militant group. Better off households were found to be less likely to consent to a child's participation and more likely to actively refuse. In the same vein, unemployed children were less likely to be refused permission. There were also significant findings around Madrassa attendance, with greater intensity of Madrassa attendance increasing the likelihood of consent. This was interpreted however as a product of religiously motivated families preferring Madrassas for their children's education as opposed to the effect of Madrassa attendance in and of itself (Asal 2008: 990).

Similarly, Botha (2014) carried out interviews with 137 individuals either 'associated' with al-Shabaab, or related to someone associated to al-Shabaab, in 2013 in Kenya. Of the sample, 73% informed another person of their decision to join al-Shabaab. However, only 11% informed a parent and 4% a sibling (Botha 2014: 899). This strongly suggests that, in this context, parental involvement in direct ideological transmission was low, with peers playing a more important role in decisions to join.

### THE FAMILY AS ORGANISATIONAL CONNECTIONS

More commonly, the family has been analysed in the academic literature as a source of organisational connections to formalised terrorist groups. Most notably, the analyses of Sageman (2008) and Bakker (2006) have used large datasets of terrorist subjects, arguing that family support is organisational, providing links into terrorist organisations more than ideological support. Significantly, for Sageman, ideological affinity is a less persuasive explanation for engaging in terrorism than social connections with those already engaged (Sageman 2008: 157).

*About a fifth of the people in the sample were close relatives—sons, brothers, first cousins—of people already in the global Islamist terrorism social movement. There are some families of terrorists, such as the al-Khadr family from Toronto, where the father, an al Qaeda leader, encouraged his four sons to join. The wife and daughter were also strongly supportive of their male family members. In the sample, which describes a largely diaspora community many terrorists married the sisters of fellow terrorists. Kinship bonds cemented friendship bonds. (Sageman 2008: 67)*

Bakker (2006) built on Sageman's earlier approach to understanding terrorist networks, looking at a range of variables based on data known about 242 subjects identified as part of 31 violent Islamist extremist plots in Europe. The influence of family in this analysis was largely limited to family status, meaning the marital status of the subject, as well as a measure of affiliation with specific geographies e.g. family background. However, Bakker did single out one case – the Benchellali family – who were associated with an attempt to attack the Eiffel Tower, among other targets in France and Russia, as part of the 'Chechen network' (Bakker 2006: 20). This was cited as an

example of a close knit group, and not as an example of ideological transmission. Certainly, family relationships in this case were not seen as predictive of engaging in violent Islamist extremism:

*Even the conclusion that many would-be terrorists join the jihad as groups of friends or relatives does not provide clear signs that would make it easier for the intelligence community to spot jihadi networks at an early stage. There are uncountable groups of friends and family members and our sample also includes groups of persons that lack pre-existing social ties. Moreover, there are examples of persons that seem to have operated almost entirely on their own. (Bakker, 2006: 53)*

In another account, of women in the US involved with organised racism, Kathleen Blee (2002) offered a mixed view of the role of the family. Blee largely discounted ideology as a factor driving involvement with organised racism, although ideology clearly was important within formal movements.

*By constructing a racial sense of self and self-interest, and by learning racist group ideologies ... fairly ordinary women, most from typical families and places, become wedded to dangerous and bizarre racist agendas. (Blee 2002: 34)*

At various points family was mentioned in Blee's study, although not specifically in the context of ideological transmission. The family was seen, in some accounts, as providing an opportunity for organisational involvement rather than inculcating ideology. One aspect of Blee's account was the role of chance in involvement with organised racism, often in the form of encounters with activists. Family involvement was seen as increasing the chances of such encounters (Blee 2002: 29).

In one case, organised racism represented a continuation of parental views. Amanda, then on death row in a Southern US state, was described as having been 'taught racism' by her parents. However, she chose not to act on those views until a car crash left her hospitalised under the care of African American nurses (Blee 2002: 39). In this case family ideological transmission seems to have been latent, but to have become more influential following a life-changing event. Another subject in Blee's study described an emotionally stable home life with left-leaning and racially tolerant parents (Blee 2002: 26). In this case, the subject's subsequent involvement in organised racism, in this case a skinhead group, was presented as an act of rebellion. On shaving her head, one subject reported:

*My parents had always known, "She's just rebelling but she's keeping up her grades and she's still working part-time and there's no problem. You know we can't control her life." Then I shaved my head. People that I worked with, you know, obviously gave me a hard time. They never said I could no longer work there, they were just teasing me, [but] I quit. My grades started to drop. My parents gave me the ultimate, "No more of this."... And I made the choice to leave [home] and join [the skinheads]. (Jill, quoted in Blee 2002: 26)*

Similarly, taken from Quilliam's 2010 report, Sohail's account presents the role of his family as drawing him in to extreme Islamism. Religion was not a large part of Sohail's upbringing, but, upon

his family befriending a family of Salafists, Sohail was exposed to extreme interpretations of Islam through a local mosque.

*Soon Sohail was “banned from listening to music and from watching TV”, and was regularly “taken out of assemblies” to prevent the mixing of the sexes. At this time, Sohail also began attending after school classes where charismatic preachers would indoctrinate the audience. Sohail actively studied a Salafi interpretation of Islam, which further indoctrinated him into extremism. Championing hatred for all non-Muslims soon became a strong feature of Sohail’s upbringing. (Manning & Bau 2015: 35)*

### THE FAMILY AS A REPOSITORY OF GRIEVANCE

A final common theme in the terrorism literature is the family as a source of grievance. In these accounts the family provides a basis for extremism and/or terrorism by offering up examples of injustice and ill-treatment, convincing subjects of the rightness of their cause, but not necessarily describing the grievance in explicitly ideological terms. This can also take the form of providing a wider context for an individual and a set of shared experiences by virtue of the family’s geographical and social status.

Ferguson et al’s (2008) analysis of those involved in paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland identified what they termed a ‘critical incident’ in each of the interviewee’s accounts. These were described as ‘unjust victimisation at the hands of an outgroup’ (Ferguson et al 2008: 133). Critical incidents were usually presented as attacks on the subject, the subject’s family, or the wider community. Subject responses were not ‘mindless’, rather these incidents provided a rationale for deciding to become involved in paramilitary activity (Ferguson et al 2008: 134). Involvement also typically followed a period of reflection on incidents rather than an immediate reaction (Ferguson et al, 2008: 135). In this analysis, the family acts as a wider net, opening up an individual to offences committed against others.

In the case of Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh – the British man who kidnapped and murdered US journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002 – the role of the family was not seen as directly ideological by Sageman (2008: 3). However, the decisions made by Omar Saeed Sheikh’s family can be interpreted as influencing Sheikh’s interest in *jihad*. Specifically, this interest developed (according to newspaper reports) while he was attending school in Pakistan as a result of his family relocation to Lahore from the UK in 1987 (Sageman 2008: 6). So, whilst the role of the family here is not in the direct transmission of ideology, the decision to relocate, beyond the control of Omar Saeed Sheikh, may have played a part in his later involvement in terrorism. Sageman (2008: 6) does, however, go on to suggest that many of the factors that predisposed Sheikh to his eventual involvement in terrorism were evident in his youth, including a need to defend Islam from detractors.

## CASE STUDIES ON FAMILIES AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION: TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM

### THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION

Taylor and Quayle (1994: 26) provided a dramatic account of an interview with a 'self-acknowledged terrorist' in Northern Ireland. The account did not contain any information on specific organisational affiliations, but nevertheless showed the importance of family in shaping his development.

*But quite clearly from early childhood he had been aware of the tensions and problems his community had faced. He was clearly proud of his father and the fact he had been involved in the troubles, of his family, and of the sense of tradition which he saw himself as belonging to. (Taylor & Quayle 1994: 27)*

*Sectarianism was clearly a fundamental, almost unspoken element of his childhood, but mainly present in the background to his life and only occasionally surfacing. (Taylor & Quayle 1994: 27)*

In this instance, the family was seen as a key influence on the individual's beliefs and involvement in terrorism, but the subject saw this through the lens of pride and tradition rather than explicit political or religious ideology.

Post et al (2003) conducted interviews with 35 imprisoned subjects in Israel, both secular and religious, from a range of organisations. The interviews focused in particular on the subject's perspectives on the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups. Many of the questions, however, asked the subjects about their motivations, how they had come to join organisations and the role of their families. Post et al noted a strong family connection running through these particular groups, suggesting that:

*Clearly, families that were politically active socialised their sons at a young age and were supportive of their involvement. (Post et al 2003: 172)*

Post et al also noted that some of the subjects came from non-activist families but joined regardless (Post et al 2003: 172). Family activism was high for subjects in both secular and religious groups, with nearly 85 percent of secular subjects, and 68 percent of religious subjects reporting some level of family activism. For a subset of 30 percent of religious subjects reporting radical levels of activism, all joined militant branches of the same organisation. This was not the case for the 15 percent of secular subjects reporting radical family activism (Post et al 2003: 172-173). In many cases there was also a direct familial role in recruitment. Although the majority of both secular and religious subjects were the first to join organisations, where family members such as brothers were already members, they joined either the same organisation, or where they joined another organisation they were invariably more radical (Post et al 2003: 172). Rather than ideology, Post et al (2003: 174) suggested that the main motivation for joining amongst subjects was their social environment growing up. Joining a terrorist organisation was effectively normalised amongst peer groups. Only 30 percent of secular subjects, and 20 percent of religious subjects reported their family as their main influence for deciding to join.

*For both groups joining the terrorist group seemed only natural. In effect, everyone was joining. Some from religious families joined a secular group, and vice versa. (Post et al 2003: 177).*

In particular, for subjects that were members of Fatah, the experience of being refugees was a common thread in accounts of joining (Post et al 2003: 182).

## INDIVIDUAL CASE STUDIES

These illustrations have shown that, in cases of extremism and terrorism, the role of the family is not limited to ideological transmission. Although there is some evidence, in the form of collective memory and ideological support for involvement, the family has also been the source of grievances, and has in some cases provided organisational connections to extremist or terrorist groups.

Several more developed case studies offer further insight into the role of family in the transmission of extremist ideologies. Three biographical portrayals are presented here as examples of how family members influence the political and religious beliefs and practices of subjects: intra-generational transmission in the case of Mohamed Merah; Ken's account of both inter- and intra-generational transmission; and the absence of family influence in the case of Roshonara Choudhry.

None of the cases presents clear cut evidence of ideological transmission by family members as the sole factor in engagement with extremism or terrorism. Instead, they serve to demonstrate the often complex array of factors that influence political and religious learning.

### **Mohamed Merah- Intra-generational transmission**

Mohamed Merah killed seven people in France over a 10-day period in 2012. Beginning on 11 March 2012, Merah killed a French-Muslim paratrooper in Toulouse. Four days later he killed two more uniformed French-Muslim soldiers and injured a third at a shopping centre in Montauban. On 19 March Merah killed four people, three of them children, at the Ozar Hatorah Jewish day school, killing a Rabbi, his two sons and the daughter of the school director (Sayare & Erlanger, 2012).

Merah was identified through an internet address he used to contact one of the paratroopers about buying his motorbike, a ruse to lure him into a trap (Irish, 2012). French investigators surrounded his apartment on 21 March. Following a firefight Merah was killed by a police sniper while jumping from a window. During the siege Merah claimed he was 'acting under instruction from Al-Qaeda' although this has not been confirmed (Andre & Harris Hogan 2013: 314-5). Merah was 23 at the time of his death.

With respect to ideological transmission, and in contrast to Choudhry (below), Merah seems to have been exposed to a wide variety of actors who may have influenced his political and religious beliefs. He was born in Toulouse in October 1988. His parents divorced when he was five and Merah's upbringing was characterised by involvement in petty crime. His family came from Algeria

and included supporters of both the Islamic Salvation Front and the Armed Islamic Group of Algeria (GIA) (Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 310). Merah's brother subsequently described their experiences visiting family in Algeria:

*Islamic terrorists and security forces taking turns exhibiting the bodies of those they had killed during the night or early in the morning in the village square; one day it was a policeman or a decapitated civilian; the next day it was the body of a terrorist. (Abdelghani Merah, quoted in Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 310)*

Anti-Semitism was normalised among family members and in 2003 Merah's brother – Abdelkader - stabbed his other brother, Abdelghani, seven times for refusing to end a relationship with a Jewish girl (Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 310).

Merah was jailed in 2007 over a violent theft and while in jail he was described by his sister as having 'rediscovered Islam', in this instance Salafism (Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 309). After his release from prison in 2009, he travelled extensively, briefly entering the custody of American forces in Afghanistan in 2010. He was also connected to the Toulouse group, a militant network led by a Syrian imam formed in 2006. The brothers (Mohamed and Abdelkader) organised for their mother to marry a member of the group – Sabri Essid (Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 311).

The Merah case demonstrates the complexity of ideological transmission. It is not always immediately apparent, even to those involved, where ideas originate and how they come to affect individuals. From the perspective of socialisation, there were many possible ideological influences on Merah, and it is difficult to establish any kind of hierarchy. Abdelghani, who subsequently wrote a book about his brother (*Mon Frère, Ce Terroriste*), argued that Abdelkader and Mohamed's sister, Souad, were responsible for radicalising other members of the family including their mother, and for the attempted radicalisation of Abdelghani's own children (Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 311). In the words of one 'family friend' interviewed on French television:

*It was Kader [Abdelkader] who was full on in it [radical Salafism]... He then played the role of the man. He indoctrinated [Souad] in this. It was a spiral... All three were radicalised. (Quoted in Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 310)*

Both Souad and Abdelkader were known to French authorities as a result of their involvement with Islamist extremism (Andre & Harris-Hogan, 2013: 311). Following the attacks, Abdelkader was arrested for complicity and Souad was subsequently filmed in secret (by Abdelghani) praising her brother Mohamed's actions (Lichfield 2012).

In addition to sibling influence, early experiences in Algeria also played a role, setting the tone for Merah's subsequent attraction to radical Salafism, as did Merah's stint in prison, characterised by his sister as a return to the family religion. He is described as emerging from prison as 'fully radicalised' and openly interested in the concept of violent *jihad* (Andre & Harris-Hogan 2013: 314).

Where the Merah case is clear is that family-based transmission is not always vertical, but sometimes horizontal. The studies reviewed in this synthesis have tended to concentrate on transmission as inter-generational, passing from one generation to the next. However, evidence from the Merah case, as well as from other analyses of individuals involved in terrorism (e.g. Sageman 2008), suggests that intra-generational or horizontal transmission, between siblings and relatives of similar ages and statuses, is at least as important in some cases.

### Ken - Inter-generational and intra-generational transmission

Ken was a member of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and admits committing murders as part of his involvement (Crawford 2003: 63). An interview with Ken was reported in the book *Inside the UDA: Volunteers and violence*, which features interviews with several 'UDA men'. Ken spent time in prison, and is reported to now suffer from 'remorse, clinical depression and suicidal tendencies' (Crawford 2003: 63).

Ken was born in 1962, and lived in Brown Square at the bottom of the Shankhill Road in Belfast, Northern Ireland (Crawford 2003: 64). Ken describes a good relationship with his parents growing up, although a difficult time at school (Crawford, 2003: 65-66). From 1969 onwards he describes the arrival of the British Army at the Brown Square barracks, as well as the emergence of vigilantes and constant attacks by 'republicans/Catholics' (Crawford 2003: 67). At the age of 12 (1974-5) Ken describes being used as a messenger to set up a shooting in a bar (Crawford 2003: 68).

Ken's account highlights the strong sectarian overtones of the Northern Ireland conflict:

*I was a Protestant, the Catholics were killing us, they were Catholics, so Protestants would kill them in retaliation.* ('Ken', quoted in Crawford 2003: 69)

Ken mentions several events in his account that he believes had a hand in leading to his hostility to Catholics. His account highlights the murder of three soldiers from the Royal Highland Fusiliers in 1971 by the IRA. Ken describes a 'profound impact' from their deaths, exacerbated by his own good relationships with the local British soldiers in Brown Square, also Fusiliers (Crawford 2003: 69).

There is also a strong sense that Ken's involvement with the UDA arose as a result of both geographical and familial factors.

*When I was growing up, 14, 15, 16 I looked around and all my friends, every one of them, were joining paramilitary organisations, either the UDA, or the UVF.* (Ken, quoted in Crawford 2003: 69)

*There were very strong links between my family and the paramilitaries. --- [a UDA commander] and --- [a prominent loyalist] they would have been in the extended family. It was already a personal thing, between me and Catholics, but then, after the INLA*

*[Irish National Liberation Army] murdered --- [an uncle] it became really personal, they'd started to kill my family. (Ken, quoted in Crawford 2003: 69-70)*

There is little ideological content in Ken's account, suggesting that his involvement may have stemmed from the perceived threat of Republican violence and social expectation rather than ideological commitment.

### Roshonara Choudhry - Non transmission

The case of Roshonara Choudhry is much-cited, and often used as an example of online self-radicalisation. Born in East Ham, London to a family of Bengali heritage, Choudhry was a celebrated student studying at King's College London (Dodd, 2010). In May 2010 Choudhry, then 21, attempted to murder Labour MP for Newham, Stephen Timms, stabbing him twice in the abdomen at a constituency surgery. Under questioning, Choudhry claimed that she stabbed Timms because he voted in favour of the Iraq war (Dodd, 2010b). Choudhry also claimed that she developed her beliefs in secret as a result of accessing material online, including listening to the lectures of Anwar Al-Awlaki:

*Because nobody would understand. And anyway I didn't wanna tell anyone because I know that if anybody else knew, they'd get in trouble 'cos then they would be like implicated in whatever I do, so I kept it a secret. (Roshonara Choudhry quoted in Dodd, 2010b)*

Roshonara Choudhry is the first and only UK women convicted of a violent Islamist attack (Pearson, 2016). She is also often presented as an example of self-radicalisation, in contrast to the current consensus which views radicalisation as an interactive process (Pearson, 2016: 6). However, too great a focus on the role of Awlaki in the Choudhry affair has been seen as ignoring the decisions being made by Choudhry herself, thus denying her agency (Pearson, 2016: 11).

There was no family tradition of extremist Islam, but Choudhry would undoubtedly have been nurtured in a similar way to her Bangladeshi-British Muslim peers. Her parents knew nothing of her self-radicalisation. In her account, Pearson highlights Choudhry's place as a daughter within the family. Her father was unemployed at the time of the attack, and the family was dependent on state benefits. Choudhry was partially supporting the family through part-time tutoring work whilst at university, so overturning the gender norms of her community (Pearson, 2016: 14). A gendered reading of the Choudhry affair, according to Pearson, which emphasises the different lived reality for women in the Islamic context, can help to explain why Choudhry stands out as an unusual case.

Many of the types of behaviour predicted by radicalisation theory, such as joining an extreme group, participating in public protests and actions, and consorting with male activists, were simply not possible for a Muslim women (Pearson, 2016: 17). Such restrictions were not present in the online environment, and were avoided by Choudhry's decision to act alone.

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The accounts above – both the detailed accounts of specific subjects, and the wider accounts aggregating the experiences of multiple subjects – are useful sources of rich information. By definition, however, they deal with a very small subset of most populations. The cases presented here are the exceptions, not the rules. Research, such as that of Sageman (2008), relies heavily on the experiences of subjects who confirmed their active involvement in terrorism. It deals only with subjects willing to talk to academics (e.g. Davies et al 2015). Where first-hand accounts are used, authors are likely to give a subjective view of their actions and motivations. These may differ considerably from those of subjects unwilling to engage with academic research, for example those who are still engaged in terrorism and or extremist politics.

Equally, these accounts are all highly context specific, offering as they do insights into terrorism and extremist politics in a variety of settings ranging from stable pluralistic democracies to impoverished refugee camps. King et al (2011) in particular make the point that it is difficult to extract generalised conclusions on the basis of context specific data such as that presented here.

Returning to the findings of the theoretical and empirical research review on political and religious socialisation, we conclude that these case studies provide little support for the direct, inter-generational transmission of ideology. Parents and siblings may have an influence, but not in every case, and the context and other factors are also important. The cases bear out earlier observations that young people sometimes follow in family footsteps whilst at other times rebelling against the family. Furthermore, there is some evidence that families pass on historical memories and grievances and may, in some cases, normalise involvement in extremist activism as well as connecting family members to relevant networks.

## CONCLUSIONS

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This has been a far-ranging review, incorporating a wide variety of academic perspectives on ideological transmission and the family. For this report, ideological transmission was defined broadly, based on the inclusive definition developed by Stuart Hall. Theoretically, the process of ideological learning and the passing on of traditions, beliefs, values and practices has been discussed under different guises, including political and religious socialisation, transmission and nurture.

### The direct transmission model

We have organised these diverse perspectives into a single, social explanation of ideological transmission, the direct transmission model, and the various critiques developed as a response to it. The model builds on what were once commonly held assumptions about the transmission of ideology that developed around religion and politics. The idea that, 'the apple does not fall far from the tree' has had a lasting influence on much work in this area. Early research in particular relied on largely untested assumptions about the transmission of ideas through the generations (Hyman 1959). This was later augmented with more in-depth theoretical accounts of transmission that viewed it as a lifelong process (Berger & Luckmann 1966), or as the result of embodied practices (Scourfield et al 2013). Albert Bandura's social learning theory has been especially influential in political socialisation research, suggesting that learning is inextricably linked to our social world and that individuals around us are instructive in developing our own behaviour patterns (Bandura 1972).

### Beyond the direct transmission model

The notion of direct transmission has not gone unchallenged, however. Early empirical results were disappointing, resulting in numerous attempts to codify, develop or amend the model. Researchers have repeatedly questioned early assumptions about the role of parents in ideological transmission, suggesting that other family members including grandparents and siblings (e.g. Bengtson et al 2009; Gutierrez et al 2014) or various external agents may be equally or even more important (Dennis 1968; Singh 2012a). The role of the latter will be examined in more depth in subsequent reports (see Background, p.6).

Other critiques have centred on the difficulties in extracting the influence of family members from the wider social milieu (Dalton 1982). Related to this has been a persistent concern that research on ideological transmission has focused disproportionately on white, middle-class and politically and religiously stable contexts (Jennings & Niemi 1968; Kelly & de Graaf 1997). There are good methodological reasons to explain this bias; conducting research, especially long term panel studies, in war-torn states or areas of rapid social change is a daunting prospect. More recent work has begun to address these issues (e.g. Scourfield et al 2013). Some have also raised concerns rooted in research on child development, suggesting that the processes of transmission are more complex and attenuated than often assumed (Niemi & Hepburn 1995; Sears & Valentino 1997).

Perhaps most powerfully, some researchers have suggested a more complete overhaul of the direct transmission model. McDevitt & Chafee (2002) argued for greater consideration of a child's own agency in transmission processes. Direct transmission, they argued, risks relegating children to the role of a passive sponge, soaking up information handed down from more engaged and knowledgeable elders. Instead, children should be acknowledged as having the capacity to ask questions, demand information and provoke action from their parents.

### **Direct transmission - empirical support**

Much of the theoretical hand-wringing around the direct transmission model has been caused by unimpressive empirical results. Early work found empirical support for direct transmission of concrete concepts such as religious preference and party affiliation (Niemi & Jennings 1968). Less concrete concepts, such as values or attitudes to specific groups and issues were less successfully transmitted (Connell 1972; Hoge et al 1982). This led to some researchers rejecting the role of the family altogether. Other research has attempted to test more developed models, and differential effects have been found based on relationships within the family, with mothers taking on an important role in transmission (Beck & Jennings 1975; Hayes and Pittelkow 1993). Attempts have also been made to further isolate the influences of different contexts on the transmission of ideology (e.g. Müller et al 2014), with a particular focus on transmission within transnational communities and religious diasporas (Smalley 2002; Maliepaard and Lubbers 2013). Empirical research has also started to investigate the effects of dramatic events such as wars (Reidy et al 2015).

The use of ethnographic approaches has shifted the focus from direct intergenerational transmission to the life-world of the child and the learning that takes place in the family and beyond (Nesbitt 2000; Østberg 2003). In a study of religious nurture in a minority context, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, Scourfield et al (2013) explored why Muslims were more effective transmitters than other religious and non-religious groups, and raised the issue of the different modes of learning employed by different groups.

### **Ideological transmission and terrorism/extremism**

More in-depth case study approaches have allowed researchers to assess the role of the family in relation to terrorist activities and extremism. Family has not been the main focus of the research, but there are a number of themes that emerge. First, examples of direct and conscious inculcation are seemingly rare. Post (2005), for example suggests the role of the family depends on the type of terrorism being engaged in: national separatists are seen as continuing traditions, social revolutionaries defying them. Certainly in a number of cases, participation in extremist politics occurred despite the views of family members (Acharya & Muldoon 2015; Davies et al 2015). However, family was often presented as playing a role in supplying grievances for individuals, opening them up to a wider array of injustices, often historic or affecting another family member rather than the individual him or herself. Ferguson et al (2008) describe 'critical incidents' as happening to individuals, the family and the wider community. Support was also found for claims

## CONCLUSIONS

### THE FAMILY AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSMISSION

that the family played a more organisational role, connecting individuals to networks of terrorists and/or extremists (Sageman 2008). In some cases this was unintentional, with family networks increasing the likelihood of the kind of casual encounters that could lead to involvement (Blee 2002).

#### Future research

This review has not included original research; rather, it is a synthesis of existing work available on the transmission of ideology. Although it has referred readers to a large number of often contrasting accounts of ideological transmission, by default it has also revealed gaps in the available literature, particularly from the perspective of the study of terrorism and extremism.

A prominent gap is the lack of literature dealing in detail with the mechanics of ideological transmission between family members of similar ages (intra-generational transmission). The case of Mohamed Merah, for example, raised the potential influence of siblings on political development in extreme contexts. There has been no theoretical or empirical work to take this further, however.

A second gap has been the issue of non-transmission and/or barriers to transmission. Research has understandably focused on the process of transmission, often from the perspective of the intergenerational reproduction of social goods through religion and politics. There has been less interest in identifying the mechanisms that may prevent ideology from being transmitted in families. In cases where ideologies are linked to social harms such as terrorism, an important question is 'How can ideological transmission be prevented?' This raises the issue of the role of parenting in a prevailing climate of political extremism and terrorist involvement. How do parents discuss terrorism and extremism with their children, in particular where there is a shared sense of being part of a suspect community based on ethnicity, religion or politics? How can the political and/or religious grievances that may contribute in part to violent extremism or terrorism be discussed in a constructive way? What roles do families play in intervening in or countering adherence to extreme ideologies?

Finally, there has been a great deal of well-developed quantitative research on ideological transmission. However, in the context of terrorism and extremism, much of this work is difficult to apply. It is not clear if the patterns established for mainstream political affiliations are readily applicable to more extreme political groups. Equally, although the role of specific high-information events has been noted, the impact on socialisation of the 2001 attacks on the United States and the ensuing wars and public debates over security has not, to our knowledge, been assessed. A child aged five in 2001 would be turning twenty in 2016. How might exposure to such events and debates – in the media and in family discussions – have impacted on the beliefs, values and attitudes of such young people in diverse majority/minority contexts?

One likely explanation for the absence of work in these areas is the lack of data from within such contexts. Traditional ethnographic approaches such as participant observation are difficult in the context of extremism and terrorism. This can be further exacerbated where families feel vulnerable,

defensive or over-researched, and where the surrounding political context makes research risky, e.g. unstable political climates. Furthermore, where researchers have obtained access to accounts by current, convicted or ex-extremists and terrorists, they are generally reliant on data from interviews in which subjects remember and reflect back on their motivations, family relationships and exposure to extremist beliefs and practices. Retrospective narratives may reveal more about current identity and sense of self than the state of affairs at the time in question.

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Overall, ideological transmission in families is extremely variable. Given the right set of circumstances, children are very likely to take on the views of their parents. The influence of parents and grandparents is likely to be much stronger where they frequently discuss religious or political matters, and where there is both an ideological consensus and a high degree of saliency. In particular, older family members can act as repositories for historical grievances against ideological outgroups. Family can also provide practical links to extremist and or terrorist organisations, even unintentionally. Most of these links are a good deal more subtle than direct ideological inculcation.

In addition, a number of factors may intervene in the transmission of ideology between parents and children. Where ideology is less important, where there is disagreement, and where the circumstances of the child differ significantly from their parents, ideologies are probably more likely to differ. Equally, any number of external factors, including a child's own experiences beyond the family, may influence their beliefs, values and practices.

Finally, ideology is not something that simply happens to people, and nothing about ideological transmission or the barriers to it is inevitable. Young people have agency and, in accordance with the limits of age and gender, they make their own decisions. These may of course be influenced by the religion or politics of family members, with elders providing either confirmation and support, or something to rebel against. Nevertheless, an ideology ultimately serves the individuals that hold it.

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