

# “Do Not Leave Your Values at Home”: A Study of Value Orientations of Italian Emerging Adults and Their Parents

## “No Dejes tus Valores en Casa”: Un Estudio Sobre los Valores de Adultos Emergentes Italianos y sus Padres

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The aims of this work, involving a convenience sample of 184 emerging adults and both their parents, recruited in universities and worker cooperatives and factories located in northern Italy, were to: (a) compare the emerging adults' and their parents' values to uncover gender and generational specificities, (b) measure value similarities between each emerging adult and his/her parents and between the two parents, and (c) examine the importance of family relationship quality as accounting for value similarities. Participants filled out the Portrait Values Questionnaire and the Network of Relationship Inventory (3 subscales). Through ANOVAs, correlations, and dominance analyses, the results revealed gender-related and intergenerational differences in the importance attributed to values. Within family dyads, on average, a moderate degree of similarity was found between each emerging adult's value profile and his/her own father's and mother's value profiles, but lower than those between father and mother. The family relationship quality explained only a small proportion of variance of parent-child value similarities and slightly larger of mother-father value similarity. Implications of the results for transmission of values and their possible development are discussed.

*Keywords:* value similarities, emerging adults, gender, generations, Italy

Los objetivos del trabajo, en el que participó una muestra intencionada de 184 jóvenes y sus padres, reclutados en universidades y cooperativas de trabajadores y fábricas del norte de Italia, fueron: (a) comparar los valores de jóvenes y padres, para descubrir especificidades generacionales y de género; (b) medir la similitud entre los valores de los jóvenes y sus padres y entre padre y madre y (c) examinar la importancia de la calidad de las relaciones familiares en la similitud de los valores en la familia. Los participantes completaron el Cuestionario de Identificación de Valores Personales y el Network of Relationship Inventory (3 subescalas). A través de análisis de varianza, correlaciones y análisis de dominancia, los resultados relevaron diferencias intergeneracionales y de género en la importancia dada a diferentes valores. En la diada familiar se encontró, en promedio, una moderada similitud entre el perfil de valores de los jóvenes y el de su padre y madre, pero menor que el grado de similitud que se dio entre padre y madre. La calidad de las relaciones familiares explicó solo una pequeña proporción de la variación de valores entre padres e hijos y un poco mayor de la que se dio entre madre y padre. Se discuten las implicaciones de los resultados para la transmisión de valores y su posible desarrollo.

*Palabras clave:* similitud de valores, jóvenes, género, generaciones, Italia

Many psychological studies, although with different approaches and methodologies, focus on value transmission between parents and adolescents (e.g., Barni, Ranieri, Scabini, & Rosnati, 2011; Knafo & Schwartz, 2001). However, another stage of life cycle may be relevant in value development, that is, emerging adulthood. Indeed, establishing a system of values is a very important component of emerging adult identity exploration (Roest, Dubas, & Gerris, 2009).

Emerging adulthood covers the second decade of life, as well as the beginning of the third. It is often characterized as a life stage of quasi-independence during which young people assume some adult roles and responsibilities, but are still dependent on their parents for housing or other forms of financial and emotional support. The slowing down of the transition to adulthood has endowed the family of origin with more influence on children in a period of the life cycle during which, in past decades, it has tended to play only a minor role (Chisholm & Hurrelmann, 1995). Also the parental couple is facing a new form of relationship and

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transmission: the post-parental transmission, which is completely new with respect to preceding generations. Indeed, in the past, when a child left home first, leaving many siblings behind, by the time the last-born left, the nest had begun to fill in the meantime with the next generation, the grandchildren. The couple thus finds itself today more than ever reinvesting in the couple relationship in preparation for the moment in which their children will leave home (Scabini, 1995).

Relying on Schwartz's value theory (1992), the purpose of this study was to examine values among Italian emerging adults and their parents in order to identify gender and intergenerational differences. Then, shifting the focus from generations within families, the family relationships were also analyzed to account for parent-child and father-mother value similarities.

Schwartz (1992) defined values as desirable and trans-situational goals, which vary in importance as guiding principles in people's lives, and grouped them into 10 value types: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security (see the description in Table 1). These value types can be organized along two bipolar higher-order dimensions: openness to change (stimulation and self-direction) versus conservation values (tradition, conformity, and security), and self-enhancement (power and achievement) versus self-transcendence values (universalism and benevolence). Hedonism shares elements of both openness to change and self-enhancement.

Table 1  
*Schwartz's Value Types*

Value type	Description
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life
Self-direction	Independent thought and action: choosing, creating, exploring
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and nature
Benevolence	Preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture and religion provide the self
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and to violate social expectations or norms
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of the self

### **Family Transmissions of Values in Emerging Adulthood**

The family constitutes one of the principal sources of values for children and the most important mediator in the process of socialization and value internalization (Grusec, Goodnow, & Kuczynski, 2000; Scabini, 2006). An important outcome of the process of value transmission—after intergenerational discussion and mutual influence (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2014)—is the degree of similarity between parents and their children. Although differences between parents' and children's values are not indicative of a failed transmission, finding something of oneself in one's child is a more than legitimate expectation of a parent. At the same time, receiving something of value from one's parent is an equally justifiable expectation in a child (Bengtson, 1975).

Changes in the patterns of influences between parents and children are, however, expected across the life cycle, with children taking an increasingly more active role (inside and outside of the family) as they become older (Roest, Dubas, & Gerris, 2010). In this line, emerging adulthood is often described by processes of negotiation between parents and offspring in order to ensure children's independence and acquisition of responsibility (Arnett, 2000, 2006). In this progressive acceptance of responsibility, studies have highlighted the strong relation between, first, parents' effort to transmit values and the possibility for emerging adults to internalize them and, second, the development in young people themselves of a positive attitude toward the social sphere (e.g., Scabini, Marta, & Lanz, 2006).

There is a paucity of empirical studies on the values of emerging adults and on parent-child value similarity. The few studies on this topic, including our recent study carried out with the same participants of the current study (for details see Barni, Alfieri, Marta, & Rosnati, 2013), have pointed out high levels of parent-emerging adult child similarity, higher than those found between parents and children in previous life stages (e.g., adolescence; Roest et al., 2009). For instance, Romero (1994, August) found a correlation of 0.65 between a group of university students and their parents in relation to preferences expressed for conservative political orientations. At the family level, Rohan and Zanna (1996) found an average dyadic correlation of 0.54 between the value profile of emerging adults and that of their parents, but with a high variability across family dyads.

Effects of gender composition of parent-child dyads on value transmission were reported. Daughters appear to be more accurate in perceiving parental values and they are perceived by parents as "repositories" of the family's value legacy, in the sense that they are perceived by parents as less distant in values compared with male offspring (Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988). Furthermore, parent-child relationship quality was found to support parent-child values similarity. According to the two-step (i.e., accuracy and acceptance) model of value acquisition of Grusec and Goodnow (1994), getting the child's attention and the clarity and redundancy of the parents' messages are positively related to accuracy (Knafo & Schwartz, 2003; Okagaki & Bevis, 1999). A positive quality of relationship (low conflict and high closeness) should instead increase children's willingness to comply with parental wishes, because it promotes children's desire to identify with parents as well as children's desire for compliance (Barni et al., 2011; White, 2000).

In addition to parent-child value transmission, the one between parents is possible too. The transmission of values is not only intergenerational (i.e., vertical transmission), but also intra-generational (i.e., horizontal transmission), that is, among people who belong to the same generation (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002; Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981; Chatard & Selimbegovic, 2008). In fact, the parental couple is involved in a double connection: on the axis of vertical relations, as parents and children, and on the horizontal axis, as a couple (Donato, Iafra, & Barni, 2013). Although value similarity may already exist between the couple as a consequence of assortative mating, the socialization process is lifelong and it is likely that parents continue to influence each other (Roest et al., 2009). However, although dyadic family relationships are mutually influential, there is a dearth of information concerning spousal value transmission and no studies have investigated similarities between fathers, mothers, and their children simultaneously.

### Aims of the Study

Based on the above background, this study had three principal goals:

1. The first goal was to describe and compare emerging adults' and parents' values. Both emerging adult and parent genders were taken into account in the descriptive and comparative analyses.
2. Based on a dyad-centered approach (see Luo & Klohnen, 2005), the second goal was to measure value similarities between each emerging adult and his/her own parents, as well as between his/her father and his/her mother. Differently from the first aim, which focused on group comparisons and on values as the unit of analysis, the second aim focused explicitly on family dyads and was concerned with how similar each dyad was in terms of their overall value system.
3. The third goal was to examine the links between family relationships and within-dyad similarities in values. In particular, the following dimensions were analyzed with reference to both parent-child relationship and to couple relationship: conflict, admiration from the parent/partner (i.e., reassurance of worth; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985), and satisfaction with the relationship. Conflict elicits negative emotional reactions (Knafo & Schwartz, 2003), which may reduce motivation to pay attention to parents' or partner's values and undermine the ability to perceive them accurately. By contrast, admiration and satisfaction, reflecting approval from and relatedness to the parent/partners (Albert, Trommsdorff, &

Sabatier, 2011), may support the sharing of values. Through dominance analysis (DA; Azen & Budescu, 2003; Budescu, 1993), it was intended to disentangle the relative contribution of father-child relationship and mother-child relationship dimensions, as reported by emerging adults and parents, in predicting child-parent value similarity and the relative contribution of couple relationship dimensions, as reported by husbands and wives, in predicting father-mother value similarity. Then, the question that guided the research was: Which of the three relational dimensions (i.e., conflict, admiration, satisfaction) and which informant is the most relevant predictor of value similarity?

## Method

### Participants

One hundred and eighty-four family triads (composed of one emerging adult and both parents) participated in the study, for a total of 552 participants.

The recruitment of emerging adults, through a convenience sampling, took place during class time in the university departments (psychology, educational sciences, literature, sociology, economics, statistics, architecture, and political science) of the four larger universities located in northern Italy, or through worker cooperatives, associations, and factories. Each emerging adult was asked to complete a questionnaire and to deliver other questionnaires to their parents.

A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to families. Nevertheless, 51 questionnaires were completed by only one or both parents, but not by the emerging adult, and 15, by only one parent along with his/her child. Since the second goal of the study focused on within-family comparisons, those families ( $n = 184$ , 73.6%) for which complete data were available were kept in the analyses, that is, for the emerging adult and both parents. No differences emerged between complete and incomplete triads, either with reference to relationship variables, mother satisfaction,  $t(194) = -0.32$ ,  $p = 0.749$ , father satisfaction,  $t(188) = 0.39$ ,  $p = 0.691$ , mother admiration,  $t(195) = -0.32$ ,  $p = 0.857$ , mother conflict,  $t(195) = 1.15$ ,  $p = 0.249$ , father conflict,  $t(191) = -0.51$ ,  $p = 0.607$ , or to emerging adults' values, conformity,  $t(199) = -0.86$ ,  $p = 0.391$ , tradition,  $t(199) = 1.33$ ,  $p = 0.183$ , security,  $t(199) = -1.33$ ,  $p = 0.184$ , stimulation,  $t(199) = 0.36$ ,  $p = 0.718$ , hedonism,  $t(194) = -1.16$ ,  $p = 0.247$ , benevolence,  $t(199) = 0.01$ ,  $p = 0.985$ , universalism,  $t(199) = -0.87$ ,  $p = 0.385$ , power,  $t(199) = 0.97$ ,  $p = 0.333$ , achievement,  $t(199) = -0.45$ ,  $p = 0.651$ . The only exceptions concerned children's perception of admiration from fathers,  $t(189) = 2.19$ ,  $p = 0.029$ ,  $d = 0.318$ , 95% CI [0.56, 1.05], with emerging adults of complete triads scoring higher than peers of incomplete triads, and emerging adults' self-direction,  $t(199) = -2.11$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ,  $d = 0.299$ , 95% CI [-0.82, -0.28], with emerging adults of complete triads scoring lower than their counterparts of incomplete triads.

The emerging adults (65% females and 35% males), living in northern Italy in their family home, ranged in age from 20 to 25 years ( $M = 22.14$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ). The prevalence of female students was likely due to the several humanistic university departments involved in the study (i.e., psychology, educational sciences, literature, and sociology). Within the emerging adults, 76.7% were students and 23.3% were employed. This data is consistent with national statistics according to which the majority of young Italians live at home with their parents (European Statistical System, 2010) and are engaged in university activities (European Statistical System, 2011).

For each emerging adult, data from both parents was also available. Fathers ranged in age from 36 to 67 years ( $M = 54.21$ ,  $SD = 4.94$ ), while mothers, from 35 to 63 years ( $M = 50.94$ ,  $SD = 4.44$ ). Almost all parents were married (92.8%) and had from one to eight children ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ). Most fathers (74.4%) and mothers (79.6%) were employed.

### Measures

In addition to some questions on socio-demographic characteristics (i.e., year of birth, gender, marital status, occupation), the questionnaire included the Italian version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ; Capanna, Vecchione, & Schwartz, 2005; Schwartz et al., 2001) and three subscales (conflict, admiration, and satisfaction) from the Network of Relationship Inventory (NRI; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985).

**Values.** The PVQ measures the 10 value types described by Schwartz (1992) and is composed of 40 verbal portraits of a person and his/her objectives or aspirations, which implicitly reflect the importance attributed

to a value. For example, “Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him/her. He/She likes to do things in his/her own original way” describes a person for whom self-direction values are important; “It is important to him/her to be rich. He/She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things” describes a person who cherishes power values. The number of items ranges from 3 (for power, stimulation, and hedonism) to 6 (for universalism), reflecting the conceptual breadth of the values. Participant is asked to indicate how much he/she perceives each of the persons described as being similar to him/her on a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *not like me at all*, 6 = *very much like me*). The score for the importance of each value is the average rating given to the items that compose it.

Capanna et al. (2005) supported the construct validity and reliability of the scale in the Italian context. In the present study, the internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) of the 10 PVQ subscales was satisfactory ( $\alpha > 0.70$ ), with the exception of tradition (emerging adults:  $\alpha = 0.50$ ; fathers:  $\alpha = 0.53$ ; mothers:  $\alpha = 0.60$ ) and self-direction (emerging adults:  $\alpha = 0.69$ ; fathers:  $\alpha = 0.67$ ; mothers:  $\alpha = 0.69$ ).

**Family Relationships.** The NRI (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) was adapted for the Italian context by Guarnieri and Tani (2011). The NRI concentrates on different relationship aspects to draw a comprehensive picture of the quality of close relationship within the family. We focused on three relational dimensions: conflict, admiration, and satisfaction, which were measured with three items each, all rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *always* for conflict; 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *very much* for admiration and satisfaction). Examples of items are: “How often do you and this person disagree and quarrel with each other?” (conflict); “How much does this person treat you like you’re admired and respected?” (admiration); “How satisfied are you with your relationship with this person?” (satisfaction). Emerging adults were asked to complete these subscales twice, first thinking about their relationship with their father and secondly about their relationship with their mother. Also fathers and mothers responded twice, first with reference to the relationship with their emerging-adult child and secondly to their partner. The scores of relational dimensions were calculated by averaging the corresponding items.

Cronbach’s alphas were all satisfactory, ranging from 0.79 (emerging adults’ perceptions of admiration from father) to 0.92 (emerging adults’ satisfaction with their paternal relationship).

## Procedure

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. Participants were informed about the main objectives of the research. They were also advised that participation was free and voluntary and that the information they provided was confidential. They also signed a consent form.

Fathers and mothers filled out their questionnaires separately, at home, with the opportunity to phone or meet with researchers if any help was needed. Each participant was required to enter their questionnaire in a sealed envelope and return the completed questionnaires to the researchers through a pre-paid envelope.

## Data Analyses

**Emerging Adults’ and Parents’ Values.** The emerging adults’ and the parents’ values were described in terms of mean scores and standard deviations. As the interest was put in the relative position of the individual on one particular value type in relation to the other value types, each participant’s raw scores was centered around his/her mean (i.e., subtracting the overall individual mean from each items’ score). This is consistent with Schwartz’s theory (1992, 2005), according to which the relative importance of multiple values guides actions and choices.

A series of analyses of variance (ANOVAs) with emerging adult gender as between-subjects factor (2 levels: male, female) were performed to reveal differences in value priorities between male and female emerging adults. A series of repeated ANOVAs with family role as within-subjects factor (3 levels: emerging adult, father, mother) were instead performed to compare emerging adults’, fathers’, and mothers’ value priorities.

**Value Similarities Within Family Dyads.** For the measurement of value similarities within family dyads, dyadic correlations (also known as  $q$  correlations) were calculated. Dyadic correlation is the Pearson product-moment correlation ( $r$ ) between two sets of scores and is meant to capture each dyad’s similarity in

terms of patterning of responses (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). It is worthwhile noting that this correlation measures reciprocal association and not directional effects. It can be used with distinguishable dyads, it is sensitive to the shape of response distribution, that is, the peaks (i.e., priorities) and valleys (i.e., not-priorities) common to the two distributions (Furr, 2008), and it ranges from -1 to +1. Direct correlations indicate that respondents are similar in terms of the profiles of their ratings, whereas inverse correlations suggest the opposite. According to Cohen (1988), coefficients (in absolute value) lower than 0.30 are of small/modest size, coefficients between 0.30 and 0.50 are moderate, and coefficients higher than 0.50 are large.

A mixed ANOVA with parent gender as within-subjects factor (2 levels: father, mother) and emergent adult gender as between-subjects factor (2 levels: male, female) was performed to compare similarities found within the child-parent dyads. A repeated ANOVA with family dyad as within-subjects factor (3 levels: father-child dyad, mother-child dyad, father-mother dyad) was made to compare similarities found within the child-parent dyads to that of father-mother dyad. Because similarity scores used as dependent variables were correlations, the analyses were performed on transformed  $r$  to  $z$  scores. Fisher's  $r$  to  $z$  transformation provides exact tests and confidence intervals for comparing two or more correlations (Malloy & Albright, 2001).

**Predicting Value Similarities.** Preliminarily, the associations between study variables were measured by bivariate Pearson correlations ( $r$ ). Dominance analysis (DA; Azen & Budescu, 2003; Budescu, 1993) was then applied to assess the relative importance of relational dimensions (i.e., conflict, admiration, satisfaction), as reported by emerging adults and parents, in predicting parent-child value similarities and father-mother value similarity. DA reveals which predictor is the most powerful overall—or more powerful than other predictors—by comparing the contribution to  $R^2$  of each predictor in all possible subset bivariate and multivariate regression models. Azen and Budescu (2003) identified three levels of dominance: complete dominance, which occurs when a predictor yields a larger increment in  $R^2$  than the other variables across all subset regression models; conditional dominance, which occurs when the average additional contribution within each of the same-size models is greater for one predictor; and general dominance, the least stringent level of dominance, which occurs when the additional contributions of a predictor to  $R^2$ , across all subset models, are on average greater than those of the other predictors. These three levels of dominance are hierarchical in nature, meaning that when A dominates B completely, it also dominates B both conditionally and generally. Because DA provides estimates of importance that sum to the model  $R^2$ , it is possible to evaluate predictors using the metric of their proportionate contribution to the model  $R^2$  (i.e., rescaled relative importance).

DA should be applied when the predictors are correlated to each other, since it explicitly considers the shared variance by assessing the unique variance and any partial joint variance contributed by each predictor in a multiple regression equation (Stolz, Barber, & Olsen, 2005). Applying to parent-child and couple relationships, DA allows consideration of family relationships' overlapping predictive abilities and may help to isolate and identify their specific contributions to value similarity.

## Results

### Emerging Adults' and Parents' Values

Table 2 displays emerging adults' value priorities, separately for males and females, and parents' value priorities, separately for fathers and mothers.

Although both male and female emerging adults attributed the greatest importance to benevolence, universalism, and self-direction, significant gender-related differences were found in five of the 10 value types. More precisely, male emerging adults gave greater importance to power than females did,  $F(1, 182) = 5.11$ ,  $p = 0.025$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ , 95% CIs [-1.24, -0.68] and [-1.56, -1.15], respectively, and to achievement,  $F(1, 182) = 7.90$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ , 95% CIs [-0.49, -0.07] and [-0.81, -0.50]. In contrast, female emerging adults attributed more value to benevolence than males did,  $F(1, 182) = 9.32$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ , 95% CIs [0.76, 1.01] and [0.38, 0.73], respectively, to conformity,  $F(1, 182) = 7.32$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.03$ , 95% CIs [0.01, 0.23] and [-0.30, 0.01], and to security,  $F(1, 182) = 3.92$ ,  $p = 0.049$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.02$ , 95% CIs [-0.15, 0.13] and [-0.44, -0.06]. No gender differences emerged with regard to hedonism,  $F(1, 182) = 0.98$ ,  $p = 0.323$ , stimulation,  $F(1, 182) = 0.90$ ,  $p = 0.343$ , self-direction,  $F(1, 182) = 3.08$ ,  $p = 0.081$ , universalism,  $F(1, 182) = 0.36$ ,  $p = 0.552$ , and tradition,  $F(1, 182) = 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.710$ .

Table 2  
*Emerging Adults' and Parents' Values: Mean-Centered Scores. Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD)*

Value type	Emerging adult (N = 184)	Male emerging adult (N = 64)	Female emerging adult (N = 120)	Father (N = 184)	Mother (N = 184)
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
Power	-1.22 (1.15)	-0.95 (1.17)	-1.35 (1.12)	-1.19 (1.59)	-1.57 (0.99)
Achievement	-0.52 (0.88)	-0.27 (0.80)	-0.65 (0.89)	-1.03 (0.70)	-1.34 (0.77)
Hedonism	-0.24 (0.90)	-0.15 (0.98)	-0.29 (0.84)	-1.09 (0.86)	-1.09 (0.75)
Stimulation	-0.26 (0.89)	-0.17 (0.91)	-0.30 (0.87)	-0.87 (0.90)	-1.12 (0.84)
Self-direction	0.47 (0.67)	0.59 (0.66)	0.41 (0.66)	0.22 (0.71)	0.22 (0.76)
Universalism	0.60 (0.70)	0.56 (0.75)	0.62 (0.67)	0.96 (0.63)	1.18 (0.63)
Benevolence	0.77 (0.71)	0.55 (0.70)	0.88 (0.68)	0.49 (0.61)	0.88 (0.75)
Tradition	-0.45 (0.81)	-0.47 (0.62)	-0.43 (0.80)	0.06 (0.78)	0.17 (0.68)
Conformity	0.03 (0.64)	-0.14 (0.62)	0.11 (0.63)	0.54 (0.68)	0.56 (0.68)
Security	-0.09 (0.78)	-0.24 (0.82)	-0.01 (0.74)	0.45 (0.82)	0.36 (0.83)

Intergenerational differences were found in the 10 value types, while gender differences between fathers and mothers were limited to four value types (i.e., power, achievement, benevolence, and universalism). Emerging adults gave more importance to hedonism than fathers and mothers did,  $F(2, 336) = 62.96$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.27$ , 95% CIs [-0.39, -0.11], [-1.23, -0.96], and [-1.19, -0.96], respectively, to stimulation,  $F(2, 336) = 48.66$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.22$ , 95% CIs [-0.38, -0.10], [-1.02, -0.74], and [-1.21, -0.96], and to self-direction,  $F(2, 334) = 6.45$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ , 95% CIs [0.35, 0.55], [0.12, 0.33], and [0.10, 0.34]. In contrast, they gave less importance to tradition than fathers and mothers did,  $F(2, 336) = 35.19$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.17$ , 95% CIs [-0.54, -0.29], [-0.05, 0.19], and [0.02, 0.28], respectively, to conformity,  $F(2, 332) = 39.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.19$ , 95% CIs [-0.08, 0.12], [0.44, 0.65], and [0.45, 0.67], and to security,  $F(2, 336) = 29.03$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.15$ , 95% CIs [-0.23, 0.00], [0.34, 0.59], and [0.22, 0.48]. Additionally, emerging adults and fathers gave more importance to power than mothers did,  $F(2, 334) = 6.78$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.04$ , 95% CIs [-1.35, -1.00], [-1.37, -1.02], and [-1.70, -1.39], respectively, and to achievement,  $F(2, 334) = 59.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.26$ , 95% CIs [-0.66, -0.39], [-1.15, -0.94], and [-1.47, -1.23], and they gave less importance to universalism than mothers did  $F(2, 336) = 40.96$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.20$ , 95% CIs [0.49, 0.70], [0.87, 1.06], and [1.08, 1.28]. Finally, emerging adults and mothers assigned more value to benevolence as compared to fathers,  $F(2, 334) = 17.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.09$ , 95% CIs [0.67, 0.88], [0.77, 1.00], and [0.41, 0.59], respectively.

### Value Similarities Within Family Dyads

Table 3 presents the means of value similarities within family dyads.

On average, emerging adults and their parents were quite similar in their values but with a great variability across family dyads (see range and standard deviations in Table 3). Differences in the level of parent-child value similarity ( $z$  scores) emerged on the basis of the emerging adult gender: daughters were more similar to their parents than sons were,  $F(1, 167) = 7.98$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.05$ , 95% CIs [0.49, 0.65] and [0.26, 0.49], respectively. Conversely, no difference was found as a function of parent gender,  $F(1, 167) = 1.27$ ,  $p = 0.261$ .

Father-mother similarity was higher than the value similarity between the emerging adult and the father, as well as than the value similarity between the emerging adult and the mother,  $F(2, 336) = 43.90$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.21$ , 95% CIs [0.76, 0.92], [0.42, 0.56], and [0.45, 0.60], respectively.

Table 3  
*Parent-Child and Father-Mother Value Similarity: Means ( $r_{\text{mean}}$ ), Range, and Standard Deviations (SD)*

Dyad	$N$	$r_{\text{mean}}$	Range	$SD$
Father-son	64	0.28	-0.41 0.92	0.36
Mother-son	64	0.34	-0.75 0.89	0.39
Father-daughter	120	0.43	-0.53 0.91	0.34
Mother-daughter	120	0.46	-0.61 0.94	0.33
Father-mother	184	0.69	-0.63 0.96	0.31

Note.  $r_{\text{mean}}$  was obtained transforming the  $r$ s to  $Z$ s, averaging the results, and then transforming them back to  $r$ . All  $r_{\text{mean}}$  are significant at  $p < 0.01$ .

### Predicting Value Similarities

Correlations between variables are shown in Table 4. Mostly, relationship dimensions were correlated to each other. Moreover, several aspects of parent-child relationship were directly correlated with parent-child value similarity: satisfaction with paternal relationship, as perceived by emerging-adults, and admiration and conflict, as reported by mothers. While satisfaction and admiration supported value similarity, the more the mother perceived conflict the lower its similarity to her child in terms of value preferences and vice versa. As far as father-mother value similarity was concerned, satisfaction with couple relationship and conflict, as perceived by both fathers and mothers, were related to value similarity: the more parents were satisfied and perceived less conflict, the more they were similar to each other in terms of value preferences and vice versa.

Table 4  
*Pearson Correlations Between Variables*

Child-father	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Conflict (EA)	–	-0.22**	-0.43**	0.34**	-0.19*	-0.21**	-0.11
2. Admiration (EA)		–	0.53**	-0.19*	0.25**	0.23**	0.02
3. Satisfaction (EA)			–	-0.18*	0.20*	0.27**	0.16*
4. Conflict (FA)				–	-0.38**	-0.57**	-0.13
5. Admiration (FA)					–	0.62**	-0.04
6. Satisfaction (FA)						–	0.01
7. Value similarity							–
Child-mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Conflict (EA)	–	-0.13	-0.31**	0.35**	-0.12	-0.21**	-0.14
2. Admiration (EA)		–	0.55**	-0.24**	0.17*	0.38**	0.07
3. Satisfaction (EA)			–	-0.36**	0.25**	0.39**	0.06
4. Conflict (MO)				–	-0.36**	-0.51**	-0.26**
5. Admiration (MO)					–	0.60**	0.15*
6. Satisfaction (MO)						–	0.10
7. Value similarity							–
Father-mother	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Conflict (FA)	–	-0.18*	-0.44**	0.13	-0.18*	-0.15**	-0.20*
2. Admiration (FA)		–	0.55**	-0.24**	0.38**	0.49**	0.14
3. Satisfaction (FA)			–	-0.26**	0.39**	0.53**	0.23**
4. Conflict (MO)				–	-0.36**	-0.47**	-0.22**
5. Admiration (MO)					–	0.68**	0.03
6. Satisfaction (MO)						–	0.20*
7. Value similarity							–

Note. EA: Emerging adult's perception; MO: Mother's perception; FA: Father's perception. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .



In Table 5 the results of DAs are reported in terms of general dominance, that is, each predictor's average additional contribution to  $R^2$  across all subset models, and of rescaled dominance, that is, the percentage of the total explained variance contributed by each predictor. All in all, relational dimensions explained a small proportion of variance in both father-child value similarity ( $R^2 = 0.054$ ) and mother-child value similarity ( $R^2 = 0.091$ ), and slightly higher in father-mother value similarity ( $R^2 = 0.137$ ).

Table 5

*Dominance Analyses: Predictors' Average Additional Contributions to Total  $R^2$  for Value Similarities*

Relational dimensions	Child-father		Child-mother		Father-mother	
	General dominance	Rescaled dominance (%)	General dominance	Rescaled dominance (%)	General dominance	Rescaled dominance (%)
<i>Emerging adults' perceptions</i>						
Conflict with father	0.005	9.3				
Admiration from father	0.003	5.5				
Father-child relationship satisfaction	0.025 <sup>a</sup>	46.3				
Conflict with mother			0.008	8.5		
Admiration from mother			0.003	3.5		
Mother-child relationship satisfaction			0.003	3.5		
<i>Fathers' perceptions</i>						
Conflict with child	0.017	31.5				
Admiration from child	0.004	7.4				
Father-child relationship satisfaction	0.000	0.0				
Conflict with wife					0.026	19.0
Admiration from wife					0.006	4.6
Couple relationship satisfaction					0.034	25.3
<i>Mothers' perceptions</i>						
Conflict with child			0.055 <sup>a</sup>	60.4		
Admiration from child			0.014	15.6		
Mother-child relationship satisfaction			0.008	8.5		
Conflict with husband					0.029	20.9
Admiration from husband					0.019	13.6
Couple relationship satisfaction					0.023	16.6
Total $R^2$	0.054	100	0.091	100	0.137	100

Note. <sup>a</sup> Predictor that completely dominated other predictors.

The emerging adults' satisfaction with paternal relationships gave the strongest contribution in predicting father-child value similarity (contribution of 46.3% of total  $R^2$ ), dominating other predictors in all the subsets of regression models (i.e., complete dominance). As far as maternal relationship is concerned, mothers' perceptions of conflict with their children completely dominated in predicting mother-child value similarity (contribution of 60.4% of total  $R^2$ ). Regarding father-mother value similarity, none of the predictors dominated the others completely, but fathers' satisfaction with the couple relationship (contribution of 25.3% of total  $R^2$ ) and mothers' conflict with husband (contribution of 20.9% of total  $R^2$ ) generally dominated by giving the highest overall average contributions.

## Discussion

Values of benevolence, universalism, and self-direction were particularly important in the emerging adults' value system. In other words, care for intimate relationships and the possibilities for personal expression seem to acquire a strong salience in this life cycle stage. It is worthwhile noting that the

principal developmental task in emerging adulthood revolves around self-fulfillment in study/work and in the establishment of intimate relationships (Scabini, 1995). Values such as benevolence, universalism, and self-direction are probably those that most promote the achievement of these goals. Moreover, these three values are the most closely linked with parental and social generativity, which implies not only commitment to raising own offspring but also social concern for the younger generation (McAdams & de St Aubin, 1998).

In general, there was evidence that male emerging adults gave more importance to instrumental values (i.e., power and achievement) than females did. Females, instead, were characterized by values connected to caring for the relation with the other (i.e., benevolence). Similar results were also found among parents, comparing fathers and mothers. These findings are consistent with the literature, in which power, achievement, and benevolence are defined as gender-specific values (Di Dio, Saragovi, Koestner, & Aubé, 1996).

Clear differences emerged between family generations in the importance given to the 10 value types. They concerned all value types and were larger than were the gender differences. The biggest differences were found along the conservation versus openness to change dimension, which is the dimension most closely connected to the developmental tasks of the two phases: emerging adults gave more importance to openness to change values and less to conservation values than parents did. Emerging adults find themselves in a period in which building and sharing represent fundamental tasks; in contrast, parents find themselves in a period characterized by the tasks of conserving and transmitting what has already been built (Scabini et al., 2006).

Although emerging adults and parents as groups reported different value priorities, from the comparison of each emerging adult to his/her own parents, a certain degree of parent-child similarities were found with respect to their value systems. Daughters showed a value system that was more similar to that of their parents (both father and mother) as compared to sons. In line with the literature (e.g., Knafo & Schwartz, 2003; Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988), it can be speculated that sensitivity to relations, which is typical of the female gender, and the value attributed to relations facilitate parent-daughter similarity.

On average, there was a moderate level of parent-child value similarity, but definitely higher than that reported by studies on families with adolescents (e.g., Barni, Ranieri, & Scabini, 2012). A prevailing parent-to-child value transmission pattern is changing, with children increasingly influencing their parents as they make the transition to emerging adulthood. However, this higher similarity is not reducible to family dynamics. The results suggest that family relationships, at least the dimensions analyzed (conflict, admiration, and satisfaction), were not very important in predicting the level of parent-child value similarity. However, some age-comparative studies (e.g., Schönplflug, 2001; Vollenbergh, Iedema, & Raaijmakers, 2001) reveal more parent-to-child value influences for younger adolescents than for emerging adults and report that in a less-autonomous stage of development, such as adolescence compared to emerging adulthood, family relationships play a more important role in the transmission process. Moreover, in one of our recent studies (Barni et al., 2013), aimed at estimating the cultural stereotype effect on parent-child value similarity in adolescence and in emerging adulthood, it is highlighted that the parent-emerging adult value similarity is to a great extent socially derived. After all, helping children to acquire adult responsibilities and mediating the effects of the social context are crucial tasks for parents with emerging adult children. It is likely that the progressive entrance into the adult world on the part of young people makes children and parents more similar in their value priorities.

The level of value similarity between fathers and mothers was high, decidedly higher than that between parents and emerging adults, and it was also more related to couple relational dimensions. Fathers and mothers share the same generational belonging, which carries with it specific developmental tasks. Moreover, during the child's emerging adulthood, parents are in turn moving through a transitional phase: in fact, the parental couple must adapt to the change and be able to renew itself mainly by reinvesting in the couple dimension (Scabini, 1995). This again could contribute to the increase in value similarity.

To the initial question raised in the study, "Which of the relational dimensions and which informant is the most relevant predictor of value similarity?", it can be replied that conflict and satisfaction are *dominant* with respect to admiration, or rather, they were more powerful in predicting the value similarity between parent-child and father-mother. Interestingly, the conflict in the perception of parents, mainly the mother, had a particular relevance in determining the level of value similarity. As the correlations suggest, the perception of a relationship with the own child as characterized by tensions and arguments accompanied a lesser degree of value sharing. Notably, the perceptions of the emerging adults, instead, had little importance in predicting the level of value similarity, with the exception of being satisfied with paternal relationship.

Regarding the similarity between father and mother, many predictors had a similar weight in predicting the outcome, so, there was not a completely dominant variable. In other words, different dimensions of the couple relationship help to define the level of father-mother value similarity.

This research had several strong points. First, it considered the life cycle stage. As a matter of fact, emerging adulthood has been rarely considered by the literature on values and the intergenerational transmission within the family, focusing instead on adolescence. Second, this research broadened its focus to include also the parental dyad for which there is a near complete absence of information. Third, the study was based on a multi-informant sample and on relatively new analytic approach to value similarity and transmission. Dyadic correlation, used to measure value similarity, is indeed appealing in at least three ways: (a) it allows to investigate the outcome of the transmission process, giving prominence to the fact that processes of influence within the family are not unidirectional (from parents to children), but bidirectional (both from parents to children and from children to parents) (Bengtson & Troll, 1978; Knafo & Schwartz, 2004; Schönplflug, 2001); (b) it reflects similarity across a wide range of characteristics, providing a holistic perspective on similarity, and at the couple-level rather than at a sample-level; and (c) in predicting value similarities, DA allows to assess the differential importance of family members' perceptions simultaneously (Stolz et al., 2005).

Despite the forgoing, the research also had some limitations. First, the sample was extracted only in northern Italy, was prevalently composed of college students, had a predominance of female students, and did not fit the representative sampling criteria. In future studies, further types of university departments should be considered (with more men or a balance between both genders), as well as comparative studies investigating differences between students' and workers' value orientations. Second, the study used a cross-sectional design. A longitudinal perspective would be useful for an in-depth understanding of value pattern development over time. This work indeed seems to suggest the idea of a progressive shift of children toward the adult world and its values. From this perspective, what would be problematic is the child's lack of evolution and the persistence of a value system incompatible with those tasks that an adult must be able to face. More than the outcome, it is the capacity itself to make the transition that is important.

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