Political learning and political tolerance: how are they connected?

Bachelor Project Political Psychology

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Paper: "Political learning and political tolerance: how are they connected?"

Words: 7.801

In loyalty to their kind
they cannot tolerate our minds.
In loyalty to our kind
we cannot tolerate their obstruction.
Crown of Creation – Jefferson Airplane (1968)

Introduction

Societies change through the years. Our society shows traces of becoming more individualistic and more polarized between different groups than a couple of years ago. Vice-prime minister Verhagen (CDA) and the German Counselor Merkel stated that the multicultural society had failed, and many politicians were not disagreeing with those statements.[1][2] This might imply people became also more intolerant towards other groups in society they do not admire. In electoral terms, this might be a fair conclusion. In Germany the Neo-Nazis gain popularity. In Greece, together with extreme left, the fascist party has won the elections.[3] The economic crisis strengthens feelings of insecurity and intolerance. In the Netherlands, the PVV is major factor in the political landscape. This party can be considered as a far-right party, leaning toward extremism. This party systematically excludes Muslims and East-Europeans as respectable citizens of Dutch society.

During the elections of 2010, a small poll among high school students was surveyed. In the results, The PVV became the biggest political party with 20.6% of the total votes among adolescents aged between 15 and 18 (Scholierenverkiezingen 2011). This might be an indication society is hardening over the years. In the national elections, the PVV became only fourth with 15,5% of the votes (Kiesraad 2010). This might imply the young generation is more intolerant than their parents. If this is true, this might contradicts the findings of Jennings and Niemi (1974), who found that adolescents are generally more tolerant than their parents.

Concerning the extent to which parents influence the tolerance level of their child, academic research so far is limited. The research conducted by Jennings and colleagues is pretty out-dated and was held in a time social cleavages were different. Therefore, parental-child relationship and political learning will be the focused on the

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[1] Jeroen Langelaar, "Maxime Verhagen: Multiculturele samenleving is mislukt," *Elsevier*, 15 February 2011.

[2] "Merkel: Multiculturele samenleving is mislukt," *NRC Handelsblad*, 17 October 2010.

[3] Kate Connolly, "Anti-austerity movements gaining momentum across Europe," *The Guardian*, 27 April 2012.

level of political tolerance in this research. Taking the parental-child relationship and social learning in regard, familial interpersonal communication patterns have an influence on the development of tolerance in children (Owen & Dennis 1987, 560). The Owen and Dennis article appeared to be useful as a theoretical framework, but since the research was taken 25 years ago in Wisconsin (USA), differences in the origins of political tolerance in the Netherlands these days might be possible. Though political tolerance is a contested term, following Kotzé and Steenekamp, the concept in this research is defined as an attitude in which people accept more unfamiliar values of different groups in a democracy and in how far these groups should obtain democratic rights, even if these values of the different groups are incongruent with the own cultural beliefs (Kotzé & Steenekamp 2012).

The most important theory that will be used in this research focuses on political learning theory and development psychology with the focus on parental-child relationship in discussing politics at home. One of the expectations is that in families where politics is frequently discussed, the level of political tolerance between parents and their children will not differ much. With other words, parent-child congruence on identity, political attitudes and alienation will be observable. This indicates the importance of the parents in the adolescent's level of political tolerance. Therefore, the research question offered here is as following: "Does the parent-child socialization in political learning process influences the level of political tolerance?"

Political tolerance

Sullivan and colleagues attempted to examine the determinants of political tolerance level with a content-controlled measure by conducting the 'least-liked' method, which was widely used by researchers over the last 30 years. This method is discussed in the 'Research Design & Methods'-section of this essay (Sullivan et al 1979; 1981). During their research, Sullivan et. al had discovered two predictors to determine the level of political tolerance. The first predictor for political tolerance conducts general norms and the second is the so-called perceived threat of the 'least-liked' group (Sullivan et al 1981, 103). Education and social status are proven to have a correlation with psychological security, which could be used to determine the political tolerance (Sullivan et al 1981, 103). People who are highly educated and who have a higher social status than average, appear to be more tolerant than people with lower education and social status. However, in this research, social status is considered the same as the socialization environment. For this reason it might be interesting to examine in how parents have influences in the forming of their adolescents' political tolerance.

Political Tolerance amongst youth

Several influential sources exist to form an own political identity and a certain level of political tolerance. The main source appears to be social networks, meaning acquaintances or educational institutions. In addition, young whites in Canada with a diverse social network are more likely to express a higher level of tolerance (Harrell 2010, 736). Harrell discussed a form of multicultural tolerance, which means it is acceptable for the respondent to support freedom of speech to at least one group they found objectionable, but did not allow freedom of speech to exclusionary groups (Harrell 2010, 731). Tolerating racist groups is more unlikely. For this reason, young people appear not to be absolute tolerators (Harrell 2010, 736). The general conclusion of her research is that young Canadians who are able to make friends with people from different racial and ethnic groups appear to be more tolerant, on both social and political level (Harrell 2010, 736). Cigler and Joslyn support this study; belonging to a group with pluralistic characteristics does increase political tolerance

(Cigler & Joslyn 2002, 19). This has to do with the sub-culture identity where more tolerant attitudes are more likely to be expressed (Cigler & Joslyn 2002, 19).

A strong feature in the work of Harrell is the distinction between three forms of tolerance, namely (1) intolerance, (2) multicultural tolerance, and (3) absolute tolerance (Harrell 2010, 731). In this, she underlines absolute tolerance barely exists since this would mean that every group, even extremists, would be allowed the right to speak, but it appears to be more likely that extremist groups are considered dangerous or as a perceived threat (Sniderman et al 2004, 45). Therefore it could be considered that everyone has at least one 'least-liked' group according to Sullivan et al (1981).

It might however be interesting to see that Owen & Dennis have found a substantial, significant prove for parental influence on the level of political tolerance of their children (Owen & Dennis 1987, 559). This might be a connection to the findings of Harrell. It appears that in order to function in a diverse social network the parents are rather likely to have taught their children to be tolerant in some manner. An important aspect is an interpersonal communication patron to the development of tolerant norms (Owen & Dennis 1987, 558). In addition to the researches of Tedin and Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers, higher levels of political tolerance occur when children are encouraged to discuss politics and when their political opinion is respected by their parents (Owen & Dennis 1987, 559). Moreover the association of an adolescent with their parents plays an eminent role. Adolescents who identified more with their parents were less likely to be lower in implicit racial prejudice and thus are more tolerant (Sinclair, Dunn & Lowery 2005, 286). Tedin (1980), Owen and Dennis (1987), and Jennings, Stoker and Bower (2009) state that the absence of talking about politics in families increases intolerance. This means that parental influence on the childhood development of politically tolerant attitudes can be quite substantial (Owen & Dennis 1987, 559). This might be true, but their findings do not explain the situation when adolescents appear to be more tolerant than their parents, which was assumed by Jennings and Niemi (1974).

Although the importance of socialization is not neglected in these researches, the specific relationship between parents and adolescents is poorly understood, partly because most researches focuses on the social networks instead of the parent-child socialization relationship. For this reason, it is useful to draw insights from the

political learning literature in order to offer propositions about the parent-child socialization process considering political tolerance.

Political learning and socialization process

Both Sullivan (1981) and Duch and Gibson (1992) have concluded that education is a micro-level determinant for political tolerance. Moreover, based on the research of Harrell (2010) and Cigler and Joslyn (2002) political tolerance is formed by a diverse culturally environment, which can also be connected to the social-status determinant (Sullivan 1981). But Duch and Gibson (1992) did not appear to have taken in account the importance of the home; since it seems unlikely that ideological self-identification is formed in schools or the cultural environment only.

But as argued earlier in this study, parents might have a bigger influence in the level of political tolerance of their children than expected. Therefore it might be useful to outline the importance of political learning. Sears and Levy state that adolescents will assimilate the political preferences of their parents into their own perspective, which is called 'family transition' (Sears & Levy 2003, 77). Jennings et al have emphasized the major role of parents in influencing the political learning of their adolescent children (Jennings, Stoker & Bowers 2009, 795). However they have stated that this phenomenon occurs more substantially in situations where parents are politically engaged and frequently discuss politics with their children (Jennings, Stoker & Bowers 2009, 795; Tedin 1980, 142). In a research conducted 40 years ago, they emphasized the parenting role is as an intervening variable in the perceptions of political learning (Jennings & Niemi 1968, 183). Carlsson and Iovini confirm these findings. During their research, the extent of transmission of racial attitudes from the father towards his son was examined. Throughout their research it became clear that a relationship between white fathers' perceived racial attitudes and white sons' attitudes exists, but black fathers appeared not to have an influence on the racial attitudes of their sons (Carlsson & Iovini 1985, 235). Their study might suggest the relevancy of adolescent's perception and parental attitudes concerning socialization processes (Carlsson & Iovini 1985, 237).

Subsequently it can be questioned where these differences emerge; could this be due to various parenting styles? Authoritarian parenting style proved an alignment among the youth to the political system while authoritative parenting style did not (Gniewosz, Noack & Buhl 2009, 342). Although political alignment in the regression

could be more explained with the transmission model than the parenting style model (Gniewosz, Noack & Buhl 2009, 342). Even in identity formation, a coherence between identity of the adolescent and their parents is yet to be proven and therefore an indication for the parenting style (Knafo & Schwartz 2004, 451). In their research they do not focus on adolescents who strongly reject the parents' values (Knafo & Schwartz 2004, 450). This is a problem in the measurement of the concept. Muldoon et al discussed this issue on the formation of national identification where parents and family were regarded as important sources of socialization, but the intergenerational transmission of identity was viewed as natural and inevitable (Muldoon et al 2007, 579). Tedin states that when their parents engage into conversations about politics in front of their children these adolescents assimilate more political views from their parents than from their friends. (Tedin 1974; Tedin 1980, 152).

Influences from the parents might have more impact than the influences of friends. It might be interesting to distinguish the differences in tolerance between parents and adolescents. What are these differences and, maybe more important, what are the similarities in this relation? To what extent could parents influence their children regarding political tolerance? The political tolerance literature has said social networks and education are the most important indicators, but few researches focused on the role of the parents. In the political learning theory, researchers stated children assimilate much of the political attitudes of their parents, but it has not been directly tied to political tolerance. This research therefore tries to examine the connection between the two existing theories by hypothesizing that the level of political tolerance is for a large part caused by parent-child socialization in political learning process. To be more specific, in families where politics is frequently discussed, the children will appear to be more tolerant than children in families where politics is discussed poorly. The goals of this research are to explain the relationship between the level of political tolerance and political learning and to appoint the differences in political tolerance due to the generation effect to examine if adolescents now are more intolerant than their parents in their youth.

Research Design & Methodology

Before the hypothesis can be investigated, the cases provided in the research itself should be discovered. Since this research primarily focuses on political learning amongst Dutch adolescents and how it influences their level of political tolerance, it appears logical that Dutch high school students are the unit of observation. The cases were collected from high schools through the Netherlands, but mainly from Hilversum and its area around. This town is representative in this research because it is a relatively high multicultural and diverse town with approximately 85.000 citizens with an average of 35% of its citizens who can be considered as immigrants (CBS 2011). The compositions of the classes are therefore diverse with adolescents from different cultures and social statuses. According to Harrell (2010) such highly diverse social networks should increase political tolerance. For this reason, differences in political tolerance amongst these adolescents are more likely to be explained by home environment, in particular the role of the parents.

Five respondents were recruited out of Social Study-classes in HAVO4 to VWO6. Two respondents were out of high school and studied IT and University College. The respondents were all between 15 to 18 years old. At first, the adolescents in these settings were provided a survey based on Sullivan's 'least-liked method' to distinguish different levels of political tolerance. In the Sullivan method, the respondents were asked to identify the group in society they liked the least (Sullivan et al 1979, 785). In the method, respondents were presented with a series of six statements (the parents got seven statements) in an agree-disagree format that elicited their views about a range of activities in which members of that group might participate (Sullivan et al 1979, 785).[4] In this study, the questions were adjusted to the target group. Instead of asking 'Members of my least-liked group should be allowed to teach in the publics schools,' this research asked 'Would you mind if members of your least-liked group would be your teacher?' The respondent provided

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[4] The six statements were to measure political tolerance and differ from 'Would you mind if a member of your least-liked group is in your school, hobby or gym?'. to 'Would you mind if members of your least-liked group will govern the country?' For the first statement, parents got two different statements, namely: 'Would you mind if a member of your least-liked group is your colleague?' and 'Would you mind if a member of your least-liked group is your manager?' The statement 'Would you mind if a member of your least-liked group is your teacher?' was asked as 'Would you mind if a member of your least-liked group will teach your child?' to the parents.

a dichotomous yes-no answer for these questions, but they were able to provide a motivation for this.

This survey also included questions about political learning that measured to what extend the adolescents speak about politics at home and that measured some comparisons with their parents. As an example, one of those questions was "Do you consider yourself as to be more tolerant, just as tolerant or less tolerant than your parents?" At the end of the survey, the adolescent was able to fill in a form in which they could mention if they were willing to participate for the in depth-interview research, with the attendance of at least one of the parents. For the research, the participation of the parents in the interview is important to identify the agreements and the differences in political tolerance

Ideally, for this research it was wished to have nine respondents and their parents within three subcategories: three respondents who were more tolerant than their parents, three respondents who were less tolerant than their parents and finally three respondents who were just as tolerant as their parents. Unfortunately, it appears rather difficult to collect that precise number of respondents for each subcategory. A couple of limitations were faced since it appeared not many adolescents would like to join the follow up research. The respondents included in this research were willing to give the interview but the idea of subcategories has become a bit ambiguous. Nevertheless, this research is not completely biased since there was still enough variation within the respondent group.

The interviews were based on a semi-structured technique. This intended the interviews were conducted with some leading questions, but the interviewees were free to respond in a way they thought they provided useful information. It gave the interviewer also the possibility to go further in depth by interesting matters given by the interviewees. Most of the interviews were held in a for the interviewee comfortable place. This could be at a bar, at the kitchen table or via Skype. The interviewees were asked if they had problems with recording the conversation. During the interviews, questions about both dependent and independent variables were asked. The questions about the dependent variable were about political tolerance. Here was mainly focused on the 'least-liked group' of the parents, to obtain the parents' attitudes towards certain groups in society. The independent variables were measured by questions that applied for political learning and the generation effect. Regards to political learning, the questions provided an interaction between the adolescent and

their parents. They were asked if they knew each other's opinions and how they felt about politics. In this section, questions about the frequencies in which degree politics is discussed at home were also asked. For the generation effect variable, the parents were asked to make a comparison with the time they were at the age of their child and now. The leading questions are included in the appendix of this essay.

To collect the data that tests the hypothesis, this research is built on a descriptive in depth-analysis technique called 'process tracing'. Process tracing is a systematic evaluation of evidence selected and analysed in the light of the given hypothesis (Collier 2011, 823). Since this research is only a bachelor thesis, no sufficient evidence for affirming the causal inference can be provided; it is not possible to follow the adolescents in different times of their lives and to check how their political opinions have changed over time. Though the outcome of this research is slightly important for affirming the causal inference. In this essay, we therefore follow the 'straw-in-the-wind'-tracing test for causal inference. This test affirms relevance of the provided hypothesis but does not confirm it (Collier 2011, 825). It can only increase the plausibility of the hypothesis (Collier 2011, 826). In the 'straw-in-the-wind' tracing test, no necessary or sufficient criterion for accepting the hypothesis can be provided, and it can only slightly weaken other consisting hypothesis about the formation of political tolerance (Collier 2011, 826). In this case it might mean that even if evidence supporting the hypothesis regarding political learning is found, this method lends weight to the hypothesis, but is not by itself a decisive piece of evidence. This method fits to the purpose of this research. The consisting theory should not be abolished, but more attention should be given to the importance of the parenting role in becoming political tolerant.

Analysis / results

It was hypothesized that in families where politics is highly discussed, the children will appear to be more tolerant than children in families where politics is discussed poorly due to parent-child socialization political learning process. This hypothesis appears to be plausible in several of the collected data. Overall, a tendency in the adolescence's level of political tolerance in equations with the level of tolerance of the parents is observable. Adolescent and parents have mutual least-liked groups in most cases, even in those families where politics is not discussed very often. In the conversations, some interesting things occurred. Some might fit in to the theory, but some others might not. In the following chapter, these differences will be discussed below. The composition of the different respondents can be found in table 1.

TABLE 1 HERE

Political tolerance

The very first thing that strikes is that all parents appointed extremists or a specific form of extremism as their least-liked group. Almost all parents gave as an explanation the fact extremists tend to abolish democratic values with violence and therefore those groups could be considered as undesirable. Neo-Nazis were the extremist group that was mentioned the most. This might indicate a reliable threat for this group is still present. The parents mentioned less often leftist extremists as their least-liked group. As said before, the least-liked group of the adolescents matched in some way with those of their parents. Some slightly differences occurred for this matter. Whereas the father of respondent 1 mentioned to be slightly feared for all kinds of extremists, his son only mentioned Muslim extremists as his least-liked group.

In general, the parents appeared to be rather tolerant towards the extremist groups. Although they consider them as undesirable, they all share the opinion that when the extremist groups were chosen via the democratic rules, it should be accepted and there is nothing they could do about it. The mother of respondent 2 put it in a different way:

Table 1: overview composition respondent group

	Respondent 1		Respondent 2		Respondent 3	
	Son	Father	Son	Mother	Daughter	Mother
Age	17	48	18	55	16	55
Profession	4-vwo	Manager	IT student	Food quality controller	5-vwo	Psychologist
Least-Liked Group	Muslim-Extremists	Extremist (in all forms)	Muslim-Extremists	Neo Nazis	Neo Nazis	Right-Extremists (PVV-voters)
Own group*	Atheist, Stoner**	Atheist, Liberal	Atheist	Pacifistic	Leftist	Leftist
Party preference	Unknown	D66/VVD	Animal party	SP	PvdA	GrLi

	Respondent 4			Respondent 5		
	Daughter	Father	Mother	Son	Father	Mother
Age	17	51	45	17	55	54
Profession	5-havo	Administrative assistant	Unemployed	5-havo	Photographer	Teacher English
Least-Liked Group	Neo Nazis	Moroccans	(Muslim-) Extremists	Neo Nazis	Neo Nazis	Neo Nazis
Own group	Socialist	Socialist	Socialist	Leftist	Left-Liberal	Green
Party preference	PvdA/D66	SP	SP	GrLi	PvdA/GrLi	GrLi

	Respondent 6			Respondent 7		
	Daughter	Mother	Father	Son	Father	Mother
Age	18	47	48	17	51	53
Profession	Student University College Utrecht	Human Resources Advisor	Consultant	5-vwo	Accountant	Interior advisor / nurse
Least-Liked Group	Right-Extremists (PVV-voters)	Right-Extremists	Right-extremists (PVV-voters)	Right-Extremists	Extremists	Extremists
Own group	Student	Social-Democrat	Intellectuals	Bourgeois	Liberal	Entrepreneurs
Party preference	GrLi	GrLi	D66	VVD	VVD	VVD

	Respondent 8		Respondent 9		* The parents and adolescent were asked to identify the own group. They were free filling this in; this might explain the diversity in the mentioned own groups. ** As stoner can be identified as a calm, relaxed person. This is a sub-culture among teenagers
	Daughter	Father	Son	Father	
Age	18	47	17	44	
Profession	Future student Political Science	Teacher History and Social Studies	5-havo	Researcher / technical advisor	
Least-liked group	Fascists	Fascists	Extortionists	Right-Extremists	
Own group	Highly educated youth	Progressive, Green	Centrum-right	Centrum-left highly educated	
Party preference	GrLi	GrLi	D66/Brinkman	D66/GrLi	

"I think I might not have problems with my least-liked group chosen in parliament. I would regret it, because it means that a substantially minority of society has those objectionable opinions. I think I would suffer more problems if my least-liked group would come to government office, because I think if

that will happen, something is wrong with our society. But I still have faith that people will come to insights and will not vote for such a party. At least I shall make a strategic vote, to make sure that the extremist party will not end up in government."

The father of respondent 5 reacted slightly different on these questions:
"I would really have problems when my least-liked group is chosen in parliament. There is nothing I can do about it, because of the democratic values we have. But I actually think I might move out of the Netherlands when that party comes into power."

The father of respondent 6 reacted a bit more tolerant, but also mentioned he would like to emigrate when his least-liked group comes to power:
"I do not think they should be banished from parliament or government. But when that party initially comes to office, I really want to move out of the Netherlands. If I did not have three school-going children, I might even have emigrated in 2010. What bothers me the most is not in so much the fact that the party is in government, but that fact so many people have voted for the PVV. I should not be comfortable knowing that."

The parents of respondent 7 stated emigration was the most plausible option when the least-liked group comes to power:
"Then it is time to move. If that happens in this country, it is not the country with the values I want to see."

The father of respondent 1 was the most tolerant about this matter:
"Even someone like Breivik should keep his right to vote.[5] This means that if a majority will choose for such government, they should be able to govern. I would not like it, but I don't think such things will ever happen here. The reasoning will eventually win."

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[5] In the summer of 2011, Anders Breivik murdered 69 young people who were members of the Norwegian Social-democrat party during their summer camp. He did this to prevent the Norwegian society from multicultural values and further Islamization, which are in his views due to the Social democrats.

Only respondent 4 and her parents appeared to have a different view about the least liked groups. In this family, the parents appeared to be just as intolerant as the daughter, but the father is slightly more tolerant than the mother and the daughter. The father of respondent 4 stated:

> "I do not mind if members of my least-liked group are in parliament or in government. But I do think they should have one nationality. I believe one cannot be loyal to more than one country. But again, when they function properly, I really do not mind when they govern the country."

The mother of respondent 3 is the one who has the most difficulty when her least-liked group would come into parliament, although she also recognized the importance of democracy:

> "I think it is a bad thing that a party like the PVV is in parliament because of the fact that this party simply excludes people from society. I would very much have difficulties when this party governs the country. I truly do not understand why people would vote for such party. To give an example, fifteen years ago the Centrum Democrats got a high election percentage in our neighbourhood.[6] Personally, I experienced that with high inconvenience."

The mother of respondent 6 can be considered as the most intolerant parent towards her least-liked group. Just like her husband, she would emigrate from the Netherlands when this party comes to office. Unlike the other parents, she did not mention the democratic values, which she truly supports, as a factor to tolerate her least-liked group. She fully answered the questions based on feelings and for that matter was sincere. The father of respondent 9 did also not answer from the perspective of democratic values, although in an earlier stage of the conversation he stated it is important to him.

Following this quotes, it can be said that most parents appeared to be quite tolerant on the institutional level. Therefore they can be considered as multicultural tolerant (Harrell 2010). Some parents even lean more towards absolute tolerant, although none of them can be really considered as such. In certain ways it can be assumed that parents are indeed more tolerant than their child. The most important

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[6] The Centrum Democrats was the precursor of the LPF and the PVV. Although the points of views of this political party were far less extreme than the views of the PVV, in its time it was considered as the most extreme-right party.

reason lies in the fact that the adolescents have a different view on how a democracy should work and how people should act within. Where the parents are more nuanced, the adolescent is more direct in stating they have problems with their least-liked group in parliament. Respondent 4 appears to have the most troubles with her least-liked group:

> "Even from the perspective of freedom of speech I would abolish this group. Their opinions are not tolerant, so why should I be tolerant towards this group? When I hear about excluding people from society with violence, I even get a bit violent myself. If I will run into someone with those thoughts, I really feel like punching him."

Whereas the father of respondent 8 has no problems with his least-liked group chosen into parliament, his daughter has more troubles with it:

> "Apparently people vote for this party when they come into parliament. That is really inconvenient."

In one interview, respondent 5 was more tolerant than his mother. Both respondent 5 and his parents had objections when that group comes to office to govern the country. The son is not completely more tolerant than his mother, but respondent 5 had no problems with his least-liked group in parliament, but his mother believes that:

> "This party should not be included in parliament, because they exclude certain groups from society and that is against the constitutional law. Therefore this group should be excluded from parliament."

Respondent 9 also appeared to be rather tolerant. However, the assumption cannot be made in this case, since the son chose a somewhat different least-liked group in comparison to the other respondents:

> "Members of my least-liked group should be in parliament, but since I have chosen extortionists as my least-liked group I do not think they will ever be in parliament."

Where the mother of respondent 6 was considered to be least tolerant, her daughter can be considered as the most tolerant respondent:

"I would not have problems when my least-liked group will govern the county. Those are the rules of democracy. But I would have one restriction: I should be able to protest against it.

As far as an assumption can be made here, it can be assumed that parents and their child are both almost all very political tolerant with the exception of respondent 4, who appears to be much less tolerant than her parents. But a wide variation in levels of social tolerance is visible. Most of the parents would like to find a new job when it appears that their manager is one of their least-liked group. Most parents also have troubles when a member of the least-liked group teaches their child. As well the fathers of respondent 1, 5 and 8, the mothers of respondents 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 said basically the same:

"If my child is taught by someone out of my least-liked group, I would not mind. I would have troubles with that if they were trying to endorse their point of views to my child."

The father of respondent 9 added:

"As a parent, I do not raise my son alone. The teacher is another educator in my son's life. His opinions will also be influenced by his teachers."

The mother of respondent 5 experienced a member of her least-liked group as a teacher herself:

"In the third grade my daughter had a right-extremist teacher who gave lower grades to classmates who were Muslims, while they deserved much higher grades. This kind of racism is objectionable. He got fired after he exposed his opinion in the KRO's broadcast 'Brandpunt'.[7]"

Although the parents of respondent 6 experienced troubles with their least-liked group, in this family something interesting occurred that was not told or visible in the other interviews. One of the family members of respondent 6 openly voted for the

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[7] The KRO is a Dutch public broadcaster with Catholic roots. In their broadcast 'Brandpunt' politically sensitive issues are being discussed. The teacher came to that show to promote a book about the ignorance of the Islamic culture.

PVV during the last elections, while this party was concerned to be the least-liked group of all three interviewees. The father stated:

> "I am not sure my mother-in-law votes for the PVV, but her partner is openly committed to that party. For this reason, the contact with them is somewhat unpleasant. All the three of us are very sensitive to his illogical reasoning but out of politeness I will not discuss these matters with him. Much energy is needed to tolerate his thoughts."

Political learning

One of the goals of this research is to find a relationship between the level of political tolerance and the parental-child socialization political learning process. As seen in the previous section of this analysis, it appears adolescents are somewhat less tolerant than their parents, which slightly contradicts the findings that stated that children used to be more tolerant than their parents. Owen and Dennis stated that higher levels of political tolerance occur when children are encouraged to discuss politics and when their political opinion is respected by their parents (Owen & Dennis 1987, 559). The collected data showed prove for the findings of Owen and Dennis. In families that frequently discussed politics and in which the opinions are mutually respected, the adolescent showed some higher level of political tolerance than in families where talking about politics moderately occurs. In the families of respondent 1, 4 and 7, little active political discussion is taken place. In these families it is seen that adolescents are less tolerant compared with respondents from the other families. This is not true for respondent 9. In this father-son household, politics is not discussed frequently, but the son appeared to be one of the most tolerant respondent and very politically involved. It might be possible to consider the role of the mother who lives separately. In the families of respondent 5, 6 and 8 politics is discussed on a daily basis. The father of respondent 5 stated: "We talk more often about politics than about soccer at home". Here it appears to be proven that the adolescents are somewhat more tolerant than at least one of their parents. In the case of respondent 6, she appeared to be more tolerant than both parents She appointed more frequently the importance of democratic values. For her, this implies to extend democratic values to all groups in society, even those groups that intend to abolish the democratic values. Respondents 2 and 3 are not very much into politics, but they show a moderate interest in political issues. This is due to the political commitment of the parents. Respondent 2 said:

"Especially my dad is interested in politics and talks about it often. My mum is somewhat less interested but is able to catch up. I listen to the conversations, but I do not participate in it. But I feel like I am learning from those conversations."

The mother of respondent 3 said that she could see that her daughter is shaping her political opinions, mostly due to the Philosophy-course she attends at school. Respondent 3 herself said about it:

"I am pretty interested in politics, but I would not take the initiative to speak about it. But at regular base my parents discuss political issues. Sometimes I participate in the conversation, sometimes I just listen."

The father of respondent 9 saw a same pattern in the shaping of the political thoughts his son experiences:

"One can clearly see my son is more into politics as I am. He is still young, but I think his interest will grow even more. It is like a seed that evolves into a plant. I think he can rationally shape his thoughts on politics."

In families where politics is discussed on regular basis, the parents generally know the party preference of their child. Most of the respondents are in the leftist/green area of the political spectrum. Only respondent 1 had no clue what he should vote for. His father was not certain about his son's party preference, but he expected the PVV as a considerable option for his son to vote for. The son rejects this, but did not provide another political party in favour.

When the adolescents were asked to place their parents on the political spectrum, most of them did not know the preference of their parents in fully detail, but they knew the direction of what the parents will vote. Just as the parents placed their children in the leftist area, the adolescents also placed their parents in the leftist area. Respondent 7 is an exception; he and his parents place themselves on the rightist area. Respondent 9 and his father are both in the middle of the political spectrum, but the son on the right side and the father on the left side of it. Respondent 6 knew exactly the party preferences of her parents. In this family politics is frequently discussed and the daughter was active for a political youth movement. Respondent 1 did not know his fathers political choice. In the families of respondents 4 and 7, were politics is also

discussed poorly; the adolescents did know their parents' party preference. In the household of respondent 9 the son knew the party alienation of his father, but the father did not manage to tell the party preference of his son.

From this perspective, it appears reasonable the adolescents assimilate the party preferences of their parents. These findings appear to fit into the theory of Jenning et al that emphasized the role of the parents in the political learning process (Jennings, Stoker & Bowers 2009, 795). It was stated this phenomenon occurs more substantially in situations where parents are politically engaged and frequently discuss politics with their children (Jennings, Stoker & Bowers 2009, 795; Tedin 1980, 142). This might be assumed for most of the respondents. However, respondents 4 and 7 appears to be an exception in the theory since the parents are not highly politically engaged and the discussion about politics are poor at home, but the respondents place themselves in the same political area as her parents.

Generation effect in political tolerance

The main conclusion when asking the parents about their least-liked groups in the time they had the age of their child is that one's least-liked group can change. It appeared that the fathers of respondent 1 and 5 still have exactly the same least-liked group. For all the other parents this was different. Both the mother as the father of respondent 6, Germans could be considered as their least-liked group:

> "We were really suffering the World War Syndrome. Everything where Germans were involved was negative. The lost of the soccer world series in 1974 and how the Germans react, caused ten more years of negative feelings towards that group.

For the mother of respondent 2 and the father of respondent 4 the Moluccans were considered to be a least-liked group.[8] The mother of respondent 2 stated that young people of this group caused troubles because of segregation, not because they were dangerous. The father of respondent 4 stated the opposite because he actually had

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[8] The Moluccans suffered social inequality after the independence of Indonesia and whished the government would recognize the Southern Moluccas as an independent state. Therefore they tried to focus attention peacefully on the government. At one point in 1975, the young Moluccans became desperate and so they hijacked a train at Wijster and two years after that a train at De Punt, both in province of Drenthe, with several deaths involved. In 1975, young Moluccan also attempted to hostage queen Juliana.

friends who were Moluccan, but a small group terrorizing the neighbourhood was what he feared. The fathers of respondents 6 and 8 became more moderate. These parents considered themselves as more extreme in their youth. As the father of respondent 6 stated:

> "In my own youth I was far more radical than I am now. I was more like an activist. I participated in demonstrations against nuclear weapons. I occupied buildings. I even considered the VVD-voters as my least-liked group. If I compare myself to my daughter, she is much more nuanced than I was at her age."

The mothers of both respondents 3, 4 and 7 did not know their least-liked groups in their youth anymore. An explanation may be the absence of political discussions in the homes of the mothers. As the mother of respondent 4 stated:

> "We discussed politics not very often. I knew my parents voted PvdA, but it never got any further. Since my oldest son is interested in politics, I know a little bit more. I got more concerned about politics over the years."

The mother of respondent 7 said politics was not something to discuss with your parents:

> "My parents never talked about politics in front of us. We were not allowed to know their party preference. It was really not my business to discuss these things with my parents."

In the previous section, party identification of the respondents with the party identification of their parents appeared to be quite similar. Although they generally did not choose the same party, they were at least in the same area of the political spectrum. By examining the generation effect, the opposite evidence can also be provided. The mothers of respondent 3 and 6 and the father of respondent 5 told their parents were Catholic and therefore voted KVP and later CDA. The parents do not consider themselves as to be religious anymore. The mother of respondent 3 said:

> "I grew up in a highly catholic village. The cleavage between the Protestants and our denomination was really big. Before I attended high school, I barely had friends outside the Catholic Church. My mother had acquaintances with only one Protestant, our neighbour. She used to say; 'She might be a

Protestant, but she is really nice!' For me, that totally changed when I got in contact with more people from different cultures in my new high school in the city. I learned new insights in there. My political opinion does not agree with the political opinion of my parents."

The father of respondent 5 also came out of a small village, but here the cleavages were less visible because of the small Catholic part of citizens. Both the parents of respondent 3 and 5 now identify with the left area of the political spectrum. Those two parents are an example of how one did not assimilate the parents' political views. But other examples are also possible. The father of respondent 8 is now active for GroenLinks, while his father was VVD. The father of respondent 6 was raised in a CPN family, but is now more liberal and votes D66. A party like the VVD is still a bridge too far. The mother of respondent 2 is raised in a very diverse political environment:

"My father voted VVD, but my mother voted CPN. In our family lots of political discussions were held. I have learned a lot from these discussions. I took over more political views from my mother than I did from my father."

The fathers of respondent 1 and 7 are a confirmation of the theory; they did assimilate the political views of their parents in some ways. The parents of respondent 1's father were in the middle of the political spectrum and, it appears, so is he. The parents of respondent 7's father were liberals, and so is he. An interesting matter occurred in the family of respondent 9. The son thinks he acquainted the political views of his granddad more than he did of his father. The father himself said the same:

"I think I look more like my granddad. My parents are far more on the right side of the political spectrum than I am. I identify more with the views my granddad had in a way."

De-pillarization might be the reason for the differences in party identification between the respondents' parents and their parents. But the least-liked group appeared to be more stable through the years. Because of the Second World War, many of the parents had Germans, more specific Nazis and fascists, as their least-liked group. This is a certain tendency in which it is visible with the parents of the respondents, who generally choose extremists as their least-liked group. Extremists can be considered to

be the same as Nazis or fascists, because they both wish to exclude certain groups from society and generally are anti-democratic.

Discussion

The analysis provided is very exploratory. One of the implicit goals of this research was to highlight the underestimated importance for parent-child political learning socialization process by other scholars, not to reject all other theories formed about political tolerance. This research merely attempted to provide an addition to the existing theories and findings. From this research no hypothesize-rejecting or hypothesize-confirming can be drawn. The conclusions drawn out of this research can increase the plausibility of the given hypothesize in this research because of the process tracing technique.

Another problem that occurred during this research would be the shortfall of respondents. Since this research is only built upon only nine respondents and their parents, no general conclusions could be drawn. This sample was also too small to trace the level of political tolerance in a statistic test. The answers given during the in-depth interview indicated a certain level of political intolerance. But since this was only for the least-liked group, only the level of tolerance towards that group was measured. General tolerance was not measured in this examination, while it could be untrue to respondents who in the analysis appeared rather intolerant towards the least-liked group, but who might be very tolerant in general. The outcome of the analyzes is therefore uncertain and not generalizable to the whole society.

Although this research suffers some implications, it is still valuable for its research field. In the analysis some interesting findings occurred. For the interviewed respondents, democratic values appeared rather important as an indicator for someone's level of political tolerance. This phenomenon occurred by most of the respondents and even more by their parents. Some strength was provided for the theories about political learning. In this research it became visible that children assimilate with their parents' political opinions. Concerning political tolerance, children appeared to assimilate the least-liked group as well. Only in families where politics is discussed poorly, tendencies of lower levels of political intolerance are visible. This is also conforming to already existing theories on political learning and political tolerance.

All the findings in this research appear to strengthen almost all provided theories but one. The hypothesis that children are generally more tolerant then their

parents appeared rather unlikely because in this research only two respondents appeared to be more tolerant than their parents. For all the rest, at least one of the parents can be considered as more tolerant than their child. This might indicate that young people in this time are less tolerant than their parents. How can this be fitted into the theory that states political tolerance level increases when at home there is spoken about political tolerance? One explanation can be the more individualistic and hardened society, as mentioned by all parents in the interviews.

Leaving society determinants out of consideration, it is still feasible parents have substantial influence in the thoughts of their children, since a certain level of political tolerance is formed at home. If the findings in this research might be plausible, it might imply certain implications for the other findings of previous researches, which partly neglected the importance of parent-child political learning socialization process. A bigger analysis should be done to examine the precise role of the parents in the political tolerance theory. After such research the importance of parent-child political learning in political tolerance can be widely assumed instead of just being visible, as in this research. It might include a more advanced analysis when other researchers examine the determinants of political tolerance to involve political learning process.

The goals of this research were to discover the relationship between the level of political tolerance and political learning and to appoint the differences in political tolerance due to the generation effect to examine if adolescents now are more intolerant than their parents back then. Leaving out the implications, this research was managed to explain these differences by some interesting findings. Therefore a further, more confirmatory, research about these possible correlations should be examined in the future.

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Appendix 1: Basic questions in the in depth interviews

Questions to measure the dependent variable "political tolerance":

1. If you had to choose a group in society you consider as your 'least-liked group', what group would that be? Could you tell why?
2. To which group in society would you encounter yourself? Could you tell why?
3. Would you mind if:
   a. Members of your least-liked group would be in your school, hobby, job or gym?
   b. Members of your least-liked group would be your manager?
   c. Members of your least-liked group would teach your son or daughter?
   d. Members of your least-liked group would demonstrate in your neighborhood?
   e. Members of your least-liked group would manifest their political opinions in public?
   f. Members of your least-liked group would be represented in parliament?
   g. Members of your least-liked group would govern the country?
4. How often do you come in contact with members from outside your own group? Do you come in contact with members of your least-liked group?

Questions to measure the independent variable "political learning":

1. Are you interested in politics? If yes, in how far are you interested? If not, why are you not interested?
2. What is your party preference?
3. How often is spoken about politics or is held a discussion at home?
4. Do you know the party preference of your child? (to child: did you know the party preference of your parents before this interview?)
5. Do you know the opinions about politics of your child?
6. How often is spoken at home about groups in society whom are not accepted?
7. In how far match your point of views with those of your child?

Questions to measure the control variable "generation effect":

1. Has your opinion about politics changed since your youth?

2. Do you still have the same least-liked group?

3. What were/are the least-liked groups of your parents? Do you identify with that?

4. How often was spoken about politics at home when you were at the age of your child is now?

5. Do you think to have assimilated the political views of your parents?

6. How would you describe the social context in the time of your youth? In how far society has changed?