

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Transmission of moral values between generations of families in conditions of social and economic vulnerability

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** the study sought to determine how the passage of values between generations is processed, in view of the exposure to conditions of deprivation to which these people are subjected, while they carry the obligation to ensure the minimum for their children but do not have the necessary resources. This raises the question of how it is possible to affirm a notion of right and wrong within this social framework. this study analysed the transmission of values between generations in groups of people in unfavourable economic and social conditions.

**Methods:** this is a qualitative descriptive study, interviews were conducted through group meetings to discuss issues related to morals. It was carried out with grandparents, their children, and their grandchildren who are residents of a peripheral neighbourhood of the capital of São Paulo and live in restricted economic conditions and under the daily impact of violence. These discussions involved the three generational components of three families. Different arrangements were made that involved the same generational group in an initial meeting and, in another meeting, the mixture of different generations and different families responding to pre-established themes that involved moral dilemmas focused on the daily cultural and social life of these families. The theoretical basis of this study was psychoanalysis, using the concepts of Identification, Ego Ideal, Ideal Ego, Oedipus, and the dynamics underlying the insertion of the father in the Oedipal triad.

**Results:** the grandfathers were ambiguous because they have a reference to a law of morals transcending space and time. Parents, realising the ambiguity of these grandparents in relation to reality, reformulate these moral questions, basing their convictions on a law that is established within the contingencies of everyday life and, therefore, changeable. The adolescent grandchildren perceive this ambiguity in the parents and in their speech.

**Conclusion:** there is greater identification of moral standards among grandchildren and grandparents than between children and parents. The interviewed parents were ambiguous in the way they act and speak, with the transgenerational reproduction model being more guided between grandchildren and grandparents than in the sequential temporal generational sequence.

**Keywords:** moral development, relationship between generations, psychoanalysis.

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## Authors summary

### Why was this study done?

This work was carried out in order to understand how the relationships between individuals of different generations are processed, as a fundamental part of social events and how the passage of values between generations is processed, in view of the exposure to conditions of deprivation in groups of people in socioeconomically disadvantaged conditions.

### What did the researchers do and find?

Group meetings were held to discuss issues related to morality with grandparents, their children and grandchildren, residents of a peripheral neighborhood of the capital of São Paulo who live in restricted economic conditions and under the daily impact of violence. It is observed that grandchildren do not perceive reality as their parents do; the parents realized the ambiguity between the external reality and the values transmitted by the grandparents, which forced them to reformulate; the grandson perceives this ambiguity, not in the comparison, but in his parents' speech.

### What do these findings mean?

This dynamic evidences a fundamental break in the social bond as there is, in principle, no Law that represents a collective insignia: we have grandparents displaced in time and space; we have ambiguous parents and grandchildren living the passage of several orders of Law.

## INTRODUCTION

In discussions about generational succession, there are different approaches to the same concept. Some authors use the approach to different generations as a way of understanding how a given phenomenon presents itself in different temporal moments, where the examination of generations aims to apprehend the different ways in which the investigated object happens over historical time. In these investigations, the issue of generations is highlighted as a possibility of reference and transposition of models between generations<sup>1-5</sup>. Others seek to approach different generations as a way of characterising relationships and understanding the dynamics of interrelation between individuals through which intersubjectivation and the constitution of the subject and history take place<sup>6-17</sup>.

Focusing on subjectivity in the perspective of generations, Mellins (1993)<sup>18</sup> studied the care of families of psychotic patients and the consequences of their presence in the family. The results point to high tension due to the existence of psychotic patients in the family, leading to uncertainties regarding the future and mental health. Addressing the issue of morality, Thomas *et al.*,<sup>19</sup> point to morality in generations as an important factor of mental health in sustaining the individual's personal development. They criticise the limitations of the cross-generational approach insofar as it cannot explain, but only understand, the moral variations between the oldest and the youngest. Hanks<sup>20</sup> performed a meta-analysis problematising the family's ethical dilemmas in an intergenerational perspective. In general, the author pointed to a lack of commitment from one generation to the other.

This work relates to the field of social psychology, focusing on the possibility of generations to build intersubjective relationships in the psychic formation of the individual, inserting him in the web of social relations and making him a protagonist as a social and historical subject. The question that underlies the discussion is how the relationships between individuals of different generations are processed, as a fundamental part of social events.

This proposal is based on Freud's social texts and, as a result, on the possibility of understanding the social through a psychoanalytic vision<sup>21-27</sup>. It was also

assumed that both the "said" and the "unsaid" of the parents find expression in their relationship with their children, based on the psychoanalytic reference, in the process of formation of identifications and of the children's subjectivity. The questions that surrounded the construction of the present study are whether only the values and moral principles explained in the parents' discourse ("the sayings") are involved in the formation of subjectivity in the intergenerational relationship or if, conversely, also those that remain at the implicit level of this discourse (the "unsaid") are an essential part.

Thus, the panorama that is configured in the relationship between parents and children includes the following elements: the father is the one who offers principles and values, which constitute identification models based on culture, but at the same time, he is placed in a position of incapacity to position himself and enjoy a privileged position vis-a-vis capital and consumption. The son finds in the father the possibility of identification, but at the same time, he is subjected to a condition of less value that the father carries with him.

This study focuses on a concrete collective problem, highlighting subjectivity in its social possibility and understanding it in the historical relationship (between generations) and in the processes of intersubjectivity in the formation of the collective and culture. Thus, the objective is to analyse aspects of the transmission of moral values between generations of families in conditions of social and economic vulnerability.

## METHODS

This is a qualitative descriptive study carried out with grandparents, parents, and grandchildren of the same kinship in a tri-generational lineage from three different family nuclei. The subjects are grandparents, parents, and children who are residents of the periphery and exposed to conditions of economic limitation and potential violence in everyday life. They are residents of the Capão Redondo region in the South Zone of São Paulo, specifically in the neighbourhoods of Jardim São Luiz, Pró Morar Jardim São Luiz, Parque Santo Antônio, Jardim Capelinha, and Parque Otero. These neighbourhoods are all close to each other, with the delimitations between them being almost

imperceptible, hence the impossibility of naming just one neighbourhood.

A total of nine subjects participated in group discussions in two stages. The subjects of this research were three young teenagers (grandchildren) between 15 and 18 years old; their parents, within the age group of

37 to 45 years old; and their grandparents, aged between 59 and 63 years old. The groups participated in semi-structured thematic discussions<sup>28,29</sup> in two stages, the first with groups of the same generational lineage:

In the first stage, individuals were grouped as follows:

1st Group	Grandfather 1	Grandfather 2	Grandfather 3
2nd Group	Father 1	Father 2	Father 3
3rd Group	Grandson 1	Grandson 2	Grandson 3

The numbers indicate a kinship relationship between the individuals: for example, Grandfather 1, Father 1, and Grandson 1 are relatives.

Secondly, grandparents, parents, and grandchildren of different kinship ties were merged:

4th Group	Grandfather 1	Father 2	Grandson 3
5th Group	Grandfather 2	Father 3	Grandson 1
6th Group	Grandfather 3	Father 1	Grandson 2

The kinship ties mentioned here are of consanguinity, where the family structure contemplates the roles of generations in the development process; that is, the parents directly educated their children within a family nucleus. This inclusion condition pointed to the need to have, in the transposition of generations, accountability for the socio-educational process and insertion in larger social relationships. The interviews were semi-structured with everyday themes and the issuing of judgements about the validity or understanding of the proposed themes.

In a third stage, individual interviews were carried out with all nine subjects in order to question the expectations (they had or have) regarding adult life, the projects and plans, the ideals, the agreement with the questions related to the law, the social rules, and, above all, the confirmation of elements from the interviews in the first two stages. The interview at this stage took place in the form of free speech and was not recorded. The first two stages, conducted in groups, were recorded and transcribed in order to return later, in the individual interview, to the likely unanswered or insufficiently answered questions in the first stages.

It was proposed for the groups to discuss some moral dilemmas in an attempt to understand the opinions and attitudes of the participants in relation to these issues. The objective is to verify if there is a typical pattern of response to these dilemmas and how they manifest themselves in the said and unsaid views of the generations. Another question posed regarded the way in which individuals consider their social situation in society. The interpretation that the individual attributes to his social position was also questioned.

The theoretical basis for this study was psychoanalysis, utilising the concepts of Identification, Ego Ideal, Ego Ideal, Oedipus, and the dynamics underlying the insertion of the father in the Oedipal triad. This theoretical axis served as support for the content analysis and was added by the concept addressed by Rosa<sup>30</sup> about the said and unsaid. The intergenerational issue, another structuring point of the analysis, is not addressed directly in the psychoanalytic work. For this, the contributions of Käes<sup>31</sup> and Eiguer<sup>32</sup> guided the analyses presented.

The questions proposed in the first stage, which comprised groups 1, 2, and 3, were as follows:

A1) What are the most important moral principles and values that a person of character should possess? And what are the most negative moral defects of a person? I would like you to discuss this using examples that you know or by imagining situations that exemplify what they mean. If someone disagrees with someone else's point of view, I would like this to be said and debated and for everyone to have the opportunity to clarify what they think, even if someone thinks differently from everyone else.

A2) I would like you to discuss now what, in your lives, you consider accomplished and what has not been accomplished. I refer to what you would like to be or what you would like to have; that is, what has or has not been achieved?

A3) What made it possible or prevented you from achieving or not achieving your desires and accomplishments in life? What were the obstacles, the impediments? Why and how did they arise in your life?

In the second group meeting, where the subjects were confronted between generations, what was "circled" in the previous meeting was discussed, asking each individual to take a position, saying whether he agrees or disagrees.

## ■ RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The generations, seen as specific temporal cuts, when observed within the same group, showed peculiar ways of dealing with values and laws.

Among all human groups, the family plays a primary role in the transmission of culture. If spiritual traditions, the preservation of rites and customs, the conservation of techniques and heritage are

disputed by other social groups, the family prevails in the first education, in the repression of instincts, in the acquisition of language [...] it presides over the fundamental processes of psychic development, over this organization of emotions according to types conditioned by the environment, which is the basis of feelings... it transmits structures of behavior and representation whose play goes beyond the limits of consciousness<sup>33</sup>.

Grandparents have demonstrated stability in the way they interpret reality and position themselves towards it. They have stable and structured values through which they establish the entire judgement of reality as a whole, regardless of whether this reality presents extreme conditions of deprivation, which suggests that it is a resilient group that adapts to the conditions of everyday life.

Grandfather 1, even when exposed to the cold and hunger, remained in the subordinate position, respecting his boss in the episode he describes in the first meeting:

My biggest problem was when I came to São Paulo. Here I faced many barriers, many really... I went through difficulties, people, hunger hurts too much. I already felt hungry. I already felt cold... when I came here, I was living in a shack taking care of a house. In the shack it was one of those Brasilite screens... it was three degrees below zero. I had come with a blanket from Bahia... because of the cold... I wanted to say that I did something without his order. He was a lawyer. I took his blanket so he wouldn't freeze to death... so I'm alive by the grace of God because three days without eating is a lot... I worked a lot. I worked with livestock. I took care of pigs... when the doctor or I have a problem at home, we go and solve it because I'm honest. That's what I say so....

Grandfather 2 shows the same stability when he ponders the mistakes he has made and the corrections he should have made in his behaviour as a young man:

"I used to drink; I smoked; I gambled; I threw my money away. I took it with this hand, and I played it with this other one, but there came a time when I said, "This is foolish. I'm going to be ashamed of my life from now on. From today, I'm not going to smoke anymore; I'm not going to drink anymore; I'm not going to gamble, and you're going to make my money with it." So these are the things... one has one's flaws, but we just have to look for the fix for you. I managed to correct your mistakes because to err is human, but staying in the mistake is stupid... Well, I have only one child. That guy over there can't even walk straight. He has six children, and God is with me and not with him...."

Grandfathers 1 and 2 also commented that even in the face of the desire to smoke, they were able to "listen" to the external reference of their doctor, a child, and an

elderly person who did not consider smoking addiction to be a good thing.

"I went to the doctor and told him it was happening, and he asked me if I smoke. I said yes, and he said that if I didn't stop, I would die. If you can't see that you're feeling sick... I started smoking half a cigarette at meals, and then I tried to stop when I went back to the doctor. I said, "Doctor, I won't lie to you." I said I was smoking half a cigarette at meals, and he said I was joking about serious stuff.... (Grandfather 1)...

"...I kept thinking something, goddammit, the little kid said he's no good; an old man says he's no good. And I'll say what, I know it's no good. Then I let go, alone, that if it is, you have to put it in your mind; otherwise you can't...." (Grandfather 2).

Grandparents' way of dealing with reality comes from a code of principles that does not break, but that crystallises and does not update itself, creating an important shift in time and space: of time, insofar as it does not update values in history, and space, in the sense that these principles have no application in this social space. Therefore, a set of well-established laws remains, but which is not practical to apply beyond their own lives. These grandfathers are parents in the sense of castrating and being castrated, enforcing a law where the desire can only be exercised if the other is inevitably taken into account. They do not know in their lives the corruption of those who make use of the law for their own benefit, as in the case of the head of the primitive horde or even in the case of the São Paulo City Hall and all kinds of mafias. They recognise castration itself as the possibility of castration of the other. These grandparents are bearers of a law that is no longer in effect, a law that only serves their time (from 40 years ago) and for another space of life (in Bahia and in the interior of São Paulo). The efficiency of the law they convey is only valid in a few cases within the family nucleus. The law on which they are based is supported by alienation in religion, an alienation that provides a minimum of a posteriori narcissistic satisfaction of life, or rather, the promise that through faith, one acquires eternal life.

"...The Bible is the word of God. The word of God is everywhere, and I don't know a single case that you can't get a query out of the Bible... the Bible says like this: teach the boy on the path that he should walk, for which when he grows up, he will not judge me. I doubt that a son forgets to remember what his father said to him, because I do it from an early age. Today my children do not. It's soft, but I'm sure that if I call him you ask, about me with him, because I always call him, my son, "Look at the world today is like this, like this, like this, like this, but I'm your father. I don't want you bad. I want the best for you, as long as you go for me, you'll get along well... so you have to understand...". (excerpt from Grandfather 1's speech in agreement with Grandfather 2)

This connection with religion also points to the overcoming of the state of helplessness, caused by the inclusion of the Law of the Father, as Freud<sup>26</sup> (1927) puts it:

“In this [protective] role the mother is soon replaced by the stronger father, who retains this position for the rest of childhood. But the child’s attitude towards the father is tinged with a peculiar ambivalence. The father himself constitutes a danger to the child, perhaps because of her previous relationship with her mother. Thus, she fears him as much as she longs for him and admires him...when the growing individual discovers that he is destined to remain a child forever, that he can never do without protection against strange superior powers, lends to these powers the characteristics belonging to the figure of the father; he creates for himself the gods whom he fears, whom he seeks to propitiate, and to whom he nevertheless entrusts his own protection”<sup>26</sup>.

Therefore, through identification with the father figure, the affection one has from the father is transposed, through the need to overcome helplessness, to the religious figure. Through this identification, as we have already seen, the satisfaction of narcissistic nostalgic needs is also sought, and every type of praise of the religious figure is an indirect form of narcissistic satisfaction of the characteristics identified and copied from the father.

On the other hand, the connection with religion, which imposes a postponement of the fulfilment of the desire for another existence, provides an alienation in the psychoanalytic sense: alienation from the possibility of a wish fulfilled, mediated by a law. Therefore, in the connection with religion, there is the alienation of desire, which, in turn, provides for the maintenance of the continuity of civilisation and the social. On the renunciation and maintenance of civilisation, Freud<sup>26</sup> (1927) explains:

“Rather, it seems that every civilization must be built on coercion and the renunciation of instinct; it does not even seem certain whether, if coercion were to cease, most human beings would be prepared to undertake the work necessary to acquire new wealth. I think one has to take into account the fact that destructive and therefore antisocial and anticultural tendencies are present in all men, and that in a large number of people these tendencies are strong enough to determine their behavior in human society.

This psychological fact is of decisive importance for our judgment of human civilization”<sup>26</sup>.

This way of living and transmitting a law, in the case of grandparents, was the way they tried to educate their children: the parents of this research. Parents, even receiving guidance from their parents (grandparents), managed to capture the ambiguity resulting from the displacement of time and space of the guidelines they

conveyed when compared with contingency demands imposed by the modernity they experience. Upon realising this, parents reformulate their way of understanding the world, even having received a value from their grandparents; these values conveyed by the grandfather serve, in situations that demand a definition of posture, as a possible alternative. In other words, what is experienced for the grandparents, for the parents, is part of a conceptual plan, “an archive” of options to be used if daily life requires it. This interpretation is based on the bulk of the parents’ discourse, which, in addition to marking a Manichean position in relation to the proposed moral issues, also shows an enormous plasticity to reformulate their opinions, according to the angle they observe and act in the situation.

“...My father raised me so rigid, right in that old system, which had to respect the eldest, the uncle, respect your father as a man like that. If an acquaintance saw someone on the street doing something wrong, he could come and talk. Do it come back, I would still tell our father, otherwise... [hinting at physical punishment: beating]... it’s not like today. Today, if someone’s son I had on the street doing something wrong and the neighbour was going to say the same. Boy, what are you going to say? “You’re not my father. what if...” (Father 1)

That’s what I’m saying in general. The children don’t answer the fathers today; they don’t follow the father. I learned from my father. It’s no use learning from my father. Just like he’s saying there, I was raised being beaten. I was beaten that only an old mule to drop a stick... but also beating doesn’t educate anyone. [Nowadays] many people usually do the opposite. My father is saying that, and I will do it differently from what he is saying... this is what is happening today....” (Father 2)

While for grandparents the law was exterior to the individual, in children this law is subject to the contingency dictates of everyday life. While for grandparents this law imposed a model to be followed by both the father and the grandchild, with the parents the models are based on a law that oscillates and changes according to changes in daily life.

Regarding modernity that imposes rapid changes, Ruffino<sup>34</sup> (1993) explains:

“By modernity we mean the age at which Western civilization managed to achieve what seemed to be its vocation for a long time: the massive production of universalizing and cosmopolitan effects on the way of life of the largest urban centers under its dominion, to the detriment of traditional ties. and communities that linked each social group to its specific historical and cultural origins”<sup>34</sup>.

These oscillations of the law in everyday life resulting from the universalisation of habits and the loss of traditional ties produce the effect that, many times, this

law is reformulated and, in this way, personalised in the one who modifies it. The law then loses its characteristic of being built around an insignia, of a greater possibility of a social bond to be established around particularised contingencies. This leads to the uninterrupted emergence of new laws, new ethics established around the individual. This law, established in the individual, then provides for the personalisation of the law for the individual, not the collective. Thereby, one can perceive in the social realm the exercise of public functions exclusively based on corruption.

Recently, through the press, several instances of corruption were witnessed that revealed a wide network of corruption exercised by the public power. By definition, the public power should look out for the common good of all, but what we can see is that in the exercise of public function, men have transformed working for compliance with the law into working for compliance with “my” law. In this sense, Morgado<sup>35</sup> (1997) puts:

“Probably taking as a paradigm the practices of the state authorities themselves, Brazilian civil society arbitrarily relates to the Law. Often, interests affecting subgroups and groups of individuals are more taken into account than interests that extend to the collectivity as a whole”

Parents, then, faced with the ambiguity and the need to define a law, practice the implicit and ambiguous discretion of recreating new laws to adapt.

“...So I am a person who is a worker, who messes with one thing, messes with another. I can't; I go to the side — thank God I got where I am — with a stall in Santo Amaro [camelô stall which he leased to someone else]. I have my business here in the village [Clandestine Real Estate]... you understand, so all this we have to put into practice. Our mind has to work, because it shouldn't just work with the arm....” (Father 1).

These parents, faced with situations of economic deprivation, use means that are not in accordance with the laws and that range from operating with buses and clandestine lines to keeping an irregular real estate company functioning. In the case of real estate, they sell “shacks” that definitely do not belong to the people who buy and sell, all of which are risky and illegal operations. However, this, perhaps, is the only alternative in a social situation as serious as the one experienced today and without the possibility of improvement. With the impossibility of a way out, perhaps, the only alternative would be theft as a form of subsistence, since their social equals also practice it.

These parents, as well as their teenage children (grandchildren), have to constantly reformulate their way of seeing the world as if they were in a continuous state of impact by a bewildering real and without defined rules. The grandchildren, in turn, faced with an ambiguous and stunned father, add to their stunning inherent in their adolescence and remain silent. The only values they can

glimpse, in the attempt at stability, are more related to identifications with grandparents than with parents.

“...Avoiding the bad company, you know, if you know you don't have company that people don't like very much... bar doors... work”.... (Grandson 2).

Grandson 1 refers to having stayed in bars and spent nights away from home, but he has now moved and joined an evangelical church. This option for religion seems to go back to the same option of the grandfather, who is a religious person. Still, in his speech, he says that he went against his parents' instructions and left home, living alone for some time, and during this period he ended up having a continuous relationship with a girl. From this relationship, they had twin children who died. After a while, he returned to his parents' house repentant, had a son with his new wife, and soon after they separated. This account makes it clear that Grandson 1 considers he made a mistake when he did not pay attention to the limits imposed by his parents, having suffered a lot as a result of his decision:

“... Yeah, some things are kind of complicated... I'm rebuilding my life today because of disobedience. Now I'm going to try to be what I wasn't before, obey my parents more...”.

In an attempt to overcome adolescence, Grandson 1 leaves the passive position and considers the possibility of occupying a space in the world. He presents a discourse that, at times, approaches his grandfather's values and, at other times, the typical individuality of modernity proposed in his father's discourse.

The grandchildren do not perceive reality as their parents did: The parents perceived an ambiguity between the external reality and the values transmitted by the grandparents, which forced them to reformulate. The grandson perceives this ambiguity not in the comparison, but in his parents' speech. This dynamic reveals a fundamental break in the social bond, as there is, in principle, no law that represents a collective insignia. If this is the space for perversions, it is also the climate conducive to the establishment of tyranny and despotic arbitrariness.

This view is not completely pessimistic. The plausible way out of a situation of this nature lies in the possibility of man founding a political practice, appropriating his own history and building the progress of this history through collective ties of interest. The political possibility would pose to man the attempt to appropriate and exercise an ethics based on his desires, which are not necessarily arbitrary, but founded on a law, and these desires and this law are fundamentally oriented towards the truth.

As a limitation of this study, a very homogeneous and small sample was observed in relation to family structure and home context. Future research should consider the role of this diversity for the narrative features examined here. In addition, analysis of maternal intergenerational influence would also be important for the

analysis of moral development, given that several studies address maternal influence as a factor of behavioural repetition<sup>36,37</sup>.

## ■ CONCLUSION

Grandparents displaced in time and space, under the aegis of an ethics of alienation grounded in anachronistic values; the ambiguous parents, personifying a law and an inconsistent set of moral values, based on the will of desire, of the perverse order, compared with the contingencies of reality; we have the ambiguous grandson, experiencing the passage of various moral orders, having to reiterate, following his father's example, all morals, and when in doubt, he resorts to the models of his grandparents.

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## Author Contributions

All authors contributed to the manuscript. Gilson Parra: Participated in data collection, data analysis, statistical analysis and writing of the text. Hugo Macedo Jr: Participated in the study design, discussion of results and final version of the text. Raul Albino Pacheco: Participated in the general orientation of the research, definition of the study design, statistical analysis, discussion of results and final version of the text. Renata M.M. Pimentel: Participated in the general orientation of the research, design and final revision of the text.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Resumo

**Introdução:** o estudo procurou averiguar como se processa a passagem de valores entre gerações, face à exposição a condições de privação a que são submetidas estas pessoas, enquanto carregam a obrigação de assegurar o mínimo aos filhos mas não dispõem dos recursos necessários. Isso levanta a questão de como é possível afirmar uma noção de certo e errado dentro dessa estrutura social. Este estudo analisou a transmissão de valores entre gerações em grupos de pessoas em condições econômicas e sociais desfavoráveis.

**Métodos:** trata-se de um estudo qualitativo descritivo, foram realizadas entrevistas por meio de encontros grupais para discussão de questões relacionadas à moral. Foi realizado com avós, filhos e netos moradores de um bairro periférico da capital paulista e que vivem em condições econômicas restritas e sob o impacto cotidiano da violência. Essas discussões envolveram os três componentes geracionais de três famílias. Diferentes arranjos foram feitos envolvendo o mesmo grupo geracional em um encontro inicial e, em outro encontro, a mistura de diferentes gerações e diferentes famílias respondendo a temas pré-estabelecidos que envolviam dilemas morais centrados no cotidiano cultural e social dessas famílias. A base teórica deste estudo foi a psicanálise, utilizando os conceitos de Identificação, Ideal do Ego.

**Resultados:** os avós se mostraram ambíguos pois possuem uma referência de Lei, de moral, deslocada no espaço e no tempo; os pais percebendo a ambiguidade destes avós em relação à realidade reformulam estas questões morais pautando suas convicções em uma Lei que se estabelece dentro das contingências do cotidiano e, portanto, mutável; os netos adolescentes percebem esta ambiguidade nos pais e nos seus discursos.

**Conclusão:** há maior identificação de padrões morais entre netos e avós do que entre filhos e pais. Os pais entrevistados se mostraram ambíguos na forma de agir e de discursar, sendo o modelo de reprodução transgeracional mais pautado entre netos e avós do que na sequência geracional temporal sequencial.

**Palavras-chave:** desenvolvimento moral, relação entre gerações, psicanálise.

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