



## Me and My World: Parental Influences on Children

10 March 2021

By James S, Owen F and Charlie B



We are all currently trapped in our homes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, most likely spending more time with the people we share our homes with: friends, family, carers, and many more. Possibly so much so that we may forget about how much these people influence

our lives and our views.

It is almost impossible to live alongside someone and not, at least to some extent, be exposed to their views; political and social.

There are many ways in which this can influence the development of children's worldviews and experience of the world around them.

There have been many tests and experiments to determine the nature of parents' impact on children, for example the "Bobo Doll" experiment, carried out in 1961 by Albert Bandura which concluded that parents had a large influence on children's views. Specifically, this revealed that children will act in a way presented to them by adults as correct. But not just by adults.

Another source of information from Developmental Neuroscientist Jean Decety revealed that when two groups of children were shown two different cartoons, one group saw characters sharing and helping while the other saw the characters snatching and stealing. When the two groups were then put in

a room together they mirrored the characteristics of the cartoons they had seen almost exactly.

When younger children observe this in adults it may be things like tidying or helping but as children mature they may become involved in more interactions involving strong social and political views. And these conversations follow the same pattern as many of the others that took place in the past however this time instead of a child deciding that they should keep their room tidy they're deciding who they're going to vote for in the next election.

When children are small infants they rely entirely upon the truth of adults' words, as they discover a lot of their knowledge from this source, knowledge which is key to their development in all stages of life. However, when personal views become involved adults often present their opinions as facts and children take them as such.



Some examples of this would be: when we were young many members of our group were taken to church without them being asked if they wanted to, and perhaps not understanding the situation, this action immediately enforces the view that Christianity is correct and we individually must be Christian. Often parents may not realise how much this affects their child and their future with religion and this can lead to their child being conflicted in later life.

Another example of this is supporting a sports team, though less controversial and potentially less meaningful than the church example it is still demonstrative. A child may grow up supporting, say Arsenal, because their parents did and though this seems harmless the child never actually gets to choose for themselves.



So just be aware, the people around you may have more of an influence on you than you think.

