The Tension Between Tradition and Modernity in the Transmission of Identity and Memory within the Family

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Aile İçinde Kimlik ve Bellek Aktarımında Gelenek ile Modernlik Arasındaki Gerilim	The Tension Between Tradition and Modernity in the Transmission of Identity and Memory within the Family

Öz

Makale, geç modernite bağlamında, ailenin kimlik ve kültürel bellek aktarımındaki rolünü nitel ve teorik bir metodolojiyle incelemektedir. Çalışma, modernleşme, kentleşme, bireyselleşme ve dijitalleşme süreçlerinin aile içi bellek pratiklerini nasıl dönüştürdüğünü sorgular. Aile, kültürel sürekliliğin pasif bir taşıyıcısı olmaktan ziyade, belleğin düzenlendiği, bastırıldığı, müzakere edildiği ve yeniden inşa edildiği dinamik bir alan olarak kavramsallaştırılır. Makale dört temel gerilim alanı tespit eder: unutma siyaseti, kuşaklar arası süreksizlikler, performatif bellek rolleri ve kolektif kimlikten bireysel kimliğe geçiş. Aile, geleneğin pasif bir taşıyıcısı olmaktan ziyade; müzakere, duygusal emek ve anlatı seçiciliğiyle biçimlenen bir bellek emeği alanı olarak yeniden tanımlanır. Çalışma, aileyi tutarlılık nostaljisiyle değil, parçalanmış ve çoğul modern toplumlarda belleğin ve kimliğin inşası için etik ve yansıtmalı bir alan olarak düşünmeyi önermektedir.

Abstract

This article examines the role of the family in the transmission of identity and cultural memory within the context of late modernity through a qualitative and theoretical methodology. It explores how processes such as modernization, urbanization, individualization, and digitalization have reshaped familial memory practices. Rather than assuming the family to be a stable site of cultural continuity, the paper conceptualizes it as a contested and dynamic space where memory is curated, silenced, fragmented, or reinvented. The article identifies four major tensions: the politics of forgetting, intergenerational discontinuities, performative memory roles, and the shift from collective to individualized identity. It argues for a rethinking of the family not in nostalgic terms of coherence, but as a reflective and ethical space for memory and identity-making in fragmented, plural modern societies.

1. Introduction

The family, as one of the most enduring institutions of social life, has traditionally functioned as a primary site for the transmission of cultural memory and the formation of personal and collective identity. Through intergenerational narratives, rituals, embodied practices, and affective bonds, families not only reproduce cultural norms but also shape the ontological security of individuals (Giddens, 1991). However, the processes of modernization, urbanization, increased mobility, individualization, digitalization, and the dissolution of traditional social hierarchies have profoundly

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disrupted these mechanisms of continuity. As a result, the family's role as a transmitter of identity and memory has become increasingly contested, unstable, and fragmented.

The modern family is no longer a self-contained unit that reproduces tradition unproblematically. Rather, it is a complex and evolving terrain where conflicting temporalities, values, and subjectivities intersect. Modernization introduces new forms of social organization that challenge traditional structures of authority and memory. In this context, identity formation is no longer the passive inheritance of cultural scripts but rather a negotiated, often discontinuous, and reflexive process. Likewise, memory, understood in both its individual and collective dimensions, is increasingly mediated by external platforms such as digital archives, social media, and globalized narratives, which compete with or displace family-based transmission.

This study is grounded in the premise that these transformations necessitate a critical theoretical re-examination of the family as a memory-bearing and identity-forming institution. Rather than treating the family as a static and homogeneous unit, it is more productive to view it as a site of tension between the forces of tradition and modernity, between the inertia of cultural continuity and the fluidity of late modern identities. The importance of such an inquiry lies in its capacity to illuminate how cultural transmission operates not only through what is remembered but also through what is forgotten, negotiated, silenced, or reconfigured (Assmann, 2008; Foucault, 1980).

This study is designed as a qualitative, theoretical, and interpretive inquiry focused on conceptual analysis rather than empirical data production. Drawing on the foundational work of memory theorists such as Maurice Halbwachs (1992), Paul Connerton (1989), and Jan Assmann (2008), as well as identity theorists including Pierre Bourdieu (1990), Stuart Hall (1996), and Anthony Giddens (1991), the study undertakes a conceptual re-reading of the family through a sociological lens. This approach allows us to examine not only the content of memory transmission but also the sociocultural conditions and power relations that shape its form, visibility, and legitimacy.

The central research questions guiding this inquiry are as follows:

- How has the modernization process transformed the family's role in the transmission of identity and cultural memory?
- In what ways do traditional and modern memory practices coexist, conflict, or hybridize within contemporary family structures?
- How does the shift from collective to individualized identity formation reshape the function of the family as a mnemonic institution?
- What role does forgetting or the intentional erasure of memory play in the restructuring of familial narratives in the modern era?

These questions are crucial for understanding the broader implications of familial change in late modern societies. They compel us to rethink not only what the family transmits but how such transmission is conditioned by shifting social structures, technological affordances, and discursive frameworks. By situating the family within contemporary theories of memory and identity, this study aims to make a conceptual contribution to the sociology of cultural transmission. It argues that the key tension in modern family life is not simply one of loss versus continuity but of transformation: a reorganization of the modalities, agents, and meanings of transmission itself.

2. Theoretical Framework: Family, Identity, and Memory

The intersection of family, identity, and memory constitutes a rich and contested terrain in contemporary sociology and cultural theory. The family is not merely a site of biological reproduction but a symbolic and affective institution that mediates historical continuity, social order, and personal meaning. As such, understanding the family's role in the production and transmission of identity and

memory demands a critical engagement with theories of collective memory, social reproduction, habitus, and cultural representation. In this section, the conceptual groundwork is deepened by drawing on foundational and contemporary thinkers, and the family is situated within the broader dynamics of social transformation and cultural temporality. Halbwachs's concept of collective memory provides a foundational starting point for theorizing the family as a structure that not only bears memory but actively produces and reshapes it. In his seminal works, On Collective Memory (1980) and The Social Frameworks of Memory (1992), he argues that individual memory is never purely internal or autonomous; it is deeply embedded in social frameworks, structured by group affiliations, and shaped by shared cultural codes (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 38; Halbwachs, 1980, p. 24-9).

Within this theoretical schema, the family plays a pivotal role as what Halbwachs terms a milieu de mémoire, a memory environment where individual recollections are generated, sustained, and reshaped through intergenerational communication, affective intimacy, and the repetition of shared narratives (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 39). The family, as one of the earliest and most intimate social frameworks to which individuals belong, constitutes a space where personal memory is always already social. Private memory is thus not entirely individual; it is mediated by familial interpretive categories, norms, and expectations. Halbwachs's crucial insight is that memory does not reside solely in the individual psyche but is contingent upon ongoing interaction with others and the social contexts in which meaning is produced.

Equally significant in Halbwachs's theory is his treatment of forgetting. Forgetting, he contends, is not simply the absence of memory or the passage of time but a consequence of the transformation or disappearance of the social frameworks that once supported specific recollections (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 172). We remember only insofar as the collective contexts that organize our memories remain available to us. When these frameworks dissolve, due to social change, migration, disintegration of family ties, or generational rupture, the capacity to recall particular events may be lost or distorted. Thus, memory and forgetting are two sides of the same social process: both are structured by the dynamic continuity or disruption of the social milieus in which memory is embedded. The family, therefore, is not merely a passive repository of memories but an active site of memory construction and transformation. It provides the relational and symbolic scaffolding that enables individuals to remember, but it also sets the conditions under which forgetting occurs, whether through silence, generational distance, or the reconfiguration of familial narratives. In Halbwachs's framework, to understand how memory operates is also to understand how it can disappear, and the family stands at the center of this dialectic between remembering and forgetting.

Paul Connerton extends this approach by distinguishing between inscribing practices and incorporating practices, highlighting how memory is embedded in bodily routines and performative rituals (Connerton, 1989, p. 72). In family contexts, these practices include everyday rituals such as greetings, commemorative meals, mourning practices, and even gestures of care. Such practices constitute what Connerton terms "habitual memory," a form of non-discursive transmission that embeds cultural norms in the body and secures continuity beneath the surface of verbal narrative. Especially in traditional families, such embodied memory serves as a tacit means of transmitting norms that are resistant to discursive critique or revision.

Connerton's concept of incorporating practices suggests that memory is not merely stored in written texts or verbal recountings (i.e., inscribing practices), but rather embodied through repeated physical actions (p. 72). These bodily routines operate below the level of conscious articulation, thereby making them powerful tools for social continuity. In this framework, family rituals gain significance not only as expressions of emotional bonds but also as mechanisms for reproducing cultural identity across generations. The bodily enactment of shared practices, whether in the form of

sitting together for a weekly meal, enacting specific mourning customs, or engaging in intergenerational gestures of affection, functions as a silent pedagogy through which values, roles, and expectations are internalized.

Importantly, Connerton argues that such embodied memories are often resistant to historical rupture or political change, precisely because they are not anchored in propositional knowledge but in bodily repetition (p. 73). This makes them especially resilient within traditional family structures, where the physical re-enactment of norms often continues even in the absence of explicit justification or reflection. Within these contexts, memory becomes a lived experience embedded in posture, gesture, tone, and ritual, rather than a consciously retrieved narrative.

Moreover, by emphasizing the role of ritualized bodily practices, Connerton underscores how collective memory is sustained even in micro-social settings like the family. These practices do more than commemorate the past; they constitute and reaffirm the present social order by embedding historical consciousness in the flesh. In doing so, they link individual identity with a broader cultural lineage, rendering the past not only remembered but inhabited. Thus, through the lens of Connerton's theory, everyday familial routines should be understood as crucial sites of memory transmission, where social norms and collective identities are preserved not only through stories or teachings, but through the rhythms of daily life, repeated across generations, beneath the surface of speech.

While Halbwachs focused on oral, familial, and generational continuity, Assmann later conceptualized this form of memory as communicative memory, a mode of remembrance typically spanning three to four generations (Assmann, 2008, p. 110). Assmann provides further conceptual clarity by distinguishing between communicative memory, transmitted informally across three to four generations: and cultural memory, which is institutionalized, mediated, and enduring (Assmann, 2008, p. 117). While communicative memory depends on oral transmission and direct contact, cultural memory involves symbolic figures, rituals, artifacts, and texts that preserve meaning beyond lived memory. Families, in this framework, mediate between the two, acting as both dynamic communicative agents and gatekeepers of symbolic-cultural codes. The fragility of this dual function becomes evident in modern settings, where digital media, secularization, and urban mobility undermine the material and symbolic basis of cultural memory.

Theories of identity complement and complicate this picture. Anthony Giddens (1991) describes the self in late modernity as a reflexive project, constantly revised in the face of changing life conditions (p. 52). He emphasizes that ontological security, understood as the sense of having a continuous narrative identity, is closely tied to familial routines and autobiographical memory. Yet, under conditions of rapid social change, this stability is threatened. The family's role becomes less about maintaining fixed identities and more about providing resources for biographical reconstruction and selective appropriation (Giddens, 1991, p. 54-8). This shift from inheritance to reflexivity marks a profound transformation in the function of familial memory and identity. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus adds further depth by focusing on the embodied, pre-reflexive dimensions of socialization. His theory of habitus offers a foundational framework for understanding how cultural environments reproduce their own conditions of production and how this reproduction shapes the perceptions, behaviors, and identities of social agents. Bourdieu defines habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" that are "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (1977, p. 72). These are internalized schemas of perception, classification, and action that operate beneath the level of conscious awareness, allowing individuals to navigate the social world in ways that appear natural, inevitable, or taken-for-granted. As Bourdieu notes, habitus is "subjective but not individual," shared by members of a group or class who are socialized into similar conditions and histories (1977, p. 86).

These embodied structures shape not only what is seen but how it is seen. They construct a world of meaning where certain objects, practices, or attributes are perceived as valuable, while others are dismissed, stigmatized, or rendered invisible. Habitus thus plays a central role in the production and reproduction of cultural capital, determining which bodily traits (e.g., physical strength, elegance, speech patterns) or cultural preferences (e.g., tastes in art, food, or education) are recognized as legitimate or prestigious (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 87). While some of these qualities are socially coded as "good" or "refined," others are seen as "vulgar" or "deficient." Importantly, the most deeply entrenched forms of distinction are those constructed as "natural" or "neutral," such as race, gender, and other bodily markers, precisely because their constructedness is obscured and their social origin is misrecognized as biological or universal. This misrecognition of social arbitrariness as natural necessity is what enables symbolic domination to occur without overt coercion. Bourdieu's concept of doxa, understood as the realm of undiscussed and taken for granted beliefs, explains how power operates through internalized norms and categories rather than explicit mandates. What is perceived as "common sense" is often the product of specific class-based experiences that have been generalized through institutions and discourse. Bourdieu's later work in The Logic of Practice (1980) further deepens this account by emphasizing the pre-reflexive, bodily dimensions of habitus. He writes, "the body believes in what it plays at; it weeps if it mimes grief" (1980, p. 52). Through bodily repetition and performative enactment, individuals come to embody social meanings in ways that do not require cognitive articulation. Practices are thus sedimented into the body, creating durable dispositions that feel instinctive yet are deeply historical.

Among the institutions that contribute to the formation of habitus, the family occupies a particularly foundational role. The family is a primary site where class-specific dispositions, tastes, and cognitive schemas are acquired through repetition and familiarity (Bourdieu, 1977). These dispositions are not transmitted explicitly through language or ideology alone, but through practices, routines, and embodied interactions that naturalize social difference. The family socializes children into specific perceptions of the world, shaping what is desirable, appropriate, or imaginable, which Bourdieu calls the "sense of one's place." These dispositions are then reinforced and extended through other institutions such as education and labor, but the family provides the original template.

Stuart Hall (2011) intervenes in the debate by rejecting essentialist and fixed conceptions of identity. For Hall, identity is not an a priori essence or a stable inner core; rather, it is a discursive construction - shaped through language, history, and power. He emphasizes that "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think" and urges us to think of identity not as a fact, but as a "production," a process that is "never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall, 2011, p. 16). Crucially, Hall distinguishes between identity and identification. The latter is not a seamless act of self-recognition but a dynamic and unstable process of suturing, "an articulation, a suturing, an over-determination" that never results in a perfect fit (p. 3). In his words, identities are always "multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (p. 4). This recognition opens up identity not as unity, but as fragmentation, where every identification involves exclusion, marginalization, and excess. "Every identity has its 'margin', an excess, its something more," Hall asserts (p. 5). Thus, the formation of identity always entails a politics of boundary-making: what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is included and what is abjected. From this perspective, familial identity transmission is not the mechanical preservation of a collective past, but rather a site of ideological struggle and symbolic labor. Families do not merely hand down values and traditions intact; they engage in the active construction and reconstruction of identity narratives in response to shifting cultural, generational, and political conditions. These processes are marked by silences, omissions, reconfigurations, and strategic re-articulations of memory. As Hall suggests, an "effective suturing of the subject to the subject-position"

does not only require that the subject be "hailed" by discourse, but also that the subject invests in the position (p. 6). This mutual entanglement means that familial identities cannot be understood as linear transmissions, but rather as historically situated attachments that are partial, affective, and often contradictory. In this light, the family becomes a discursive space where identification is negotiated rather than inherited. Memory itself becomes selective and performative; the stories told and untold within families shape not only what members know about their pasts but also how they come to inhabit particular social positions. The family, therefore, should not be seen as a container of cultural continuity, but as a site of discursive contestation where identities are sutured through repetition, affect, and difference.

Feminist scholars have profoundly highlighted the gendered dimensions of memory and identity transmission within the family, emphasizing how these processes are inseparable from relations of power, care, and emotional labor. Marianne Hirsch's seminal concept of postmemory (1997) articulates how the children of trauma survivors do not inherit firsthand experiences, but rather mediated and affectively charged narratives, images, and silences that shape their own identities and memories. Hirsch defines postmemory as a form of "memory" which is "deeply mediated by the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up" and that "constitutes a powerful form of access to traumatic pasts" (Hirsch, 1997, p. 103, 110). This transmission is often embodied through maternal figures, whose emotional and mnemonic labor in remembering and narrating trauma is crucial but frequently overlooked or undervalued in both familial and institutional contexts.

In addition to Hirsch's influential work on postmemory, Adrienne Rich's feminist analyses critically foreground the affective and material labor that women perform within families, emphasizing its foundational role in sustaining familial memory and identity. Rich (1986) elaborates extensively on what she terms the "institution of motherhood," a patriarchally constructed system that governs and controls women's reproductive capacities and roles. She distinguishes between the lived experience of motherhood, "the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children" (Rich, 1986, p. 13), and the institutional framework that seeks to regulate and contain this potential under male dominance (Rich, 1986, p. 13). Rich exposes how motherhood, often idealized as a natural and selfless feminine state, is in fact an artificial construct invented and maintained by patriarchal power structures. She argues that the affective and reproductive labor, comprising caregiving, emotional sustenance, and everyday maintenance of family life, is both physically demanding and politically charged, yet persistently rendered invisible or undervalued within societal and academic discourses (Rich, 1986, p. 14-6). This labor is essential not only for the survival of family members but also for the reproduction of collective and individual identities, as it constitutes the everyday practices through which memory and belonging are transmitted intergenerationally.

Moreover, Rich highlights the historical silencing of women, particularly mothers, whose embodied labor is systematically marginalized despite its centrality to familial and social continuity. The patriarchal system enforces this silencing through institutionalized norms and expectations that obscure the realities of women's lived experiences, thereby naturalizing and mythologizing motherhood as a "given" rather than a contested social institution (Rich, 1986, p. 13-6). By unraveling these myths, Rich's work deepens feminist critiques of family structures and challenges dominant narratives that ignore the gendered nature of memory transmission and emotional labor. Therefore, incorporating Rich's insights allows a more nuanced understanding of how familial memory and identity are not simply passed down intact but are actively produced through the often invisible labor of women. This labor, both affective and material, becomes a critical site where identities are sustained, contested, and transformed within the family and broader social fields.

Similarly, Bell Hooks (1999) foregrounds the centrality of women's emotional labor in maintaining family bonds and transmitting legacies of memory and identity. Hooks describes how women

frequently undertake "the work of love," encompassing caregiving, storytelling, and emotional mediation, often without adequate recognition or support from broader social institutions (Hooks, 1999, p. 89). This emotional labor involves both presence and absence. Silences and unspoken histories become mnemonic devices as powerful as verbalized narratives, shaping the transmission of memory across generations. These feminist insights complicate traditional, abstract models of memory and identity transmission that tend to emphasize linear, conscious, and explicit processes. Instead, they reveal the profound roles of affect, silence, and embodied practices, often gendered and undervalued, in constituting familial memory. Emotional labor, whether expressed through storytelling or through silences and absences, operates as a potent mnemonic force that shapes not only how identities are transmitted but also how they are contested, negotiated, and transformed within families.

Michel Foucault's (1991) analysis of knowledge and power further sharpens our perspective. Foucault reminds us that memory is not neutral; it is regulated by regimes of truth, institutional discourses, and practices of normalization. In this sense, the family functions as a micro-site of power, where memory is curated, censored, or erased in accordance with broader social norms and disciplinary logics (Oscala, 2015). The silence surrounding certain traumas, the elevation of heroic ancestors, or the erasure of dissenting family members are not merely omissions but active operations of power within familial memory regimes (Foucault, 1991, p. 94-6).

Taken together, these theories demonstrate that the family is not a passive vessel for memory and identity but an active, historically situated institution. It is both a site of cultural reproduction and a field of negotiation, where competing versions of the past are remembered, forgotten, or transformed. Modernity complicates these functions by disembedding family from traditional structures of time, place, and ritual, leading to more individualized and selective modes of remembering.

3. The Tension Between Tradition and Modernity: A Sociological Transformation Analysis

Historically, the family has served as a principal institution for the reproduction of social order, identity, and memory. It was viewed not merely as a biological unit but as a carrier of cultural continuity, grounded in inherited values, normative stability, and intergenerational cohesion (Parsons & Bales, 1955, p. 17). In traditional societies, familial transmission of identity and memory was embedded in rituals, religious beliefs, gender roles, and oral storytelling. The normative assumption was that memory and identity were linear, stable, and vertically transmitted, from elders to the young, within a clear moral hierarchy (Halbwachs, 1992). The authority of memory was tied to the elder generation, whose narratives were rarely questioned, and silence was often revered as a form of respect and protection.

This traditional structure relied heavily on ritualized repetition as the primary mechanism of memory transmission. As Connerton (1989) emphasizes, memory was enacted through incorporating practices, bodily acts such as commemorative meals, mourning rituals, or religious ceremonies, which functioned to "stabilize memory" through the "habitual structure of the body" (Connerton, 1989, p. 102). Within this schema, familial authority was performative, and identity was not chosen but assumed, shaped by the spatial closeness of extended family systems and reinforced through repetition. However, the structural forces of modernity, including urbanization, technological advancement, secularization, and individualism, have disrupted this architecture in profound ways. First, the transition from extended family forms to nuclear family models has weakened the spatial and generational proximity required for sustained intergenerational memory (Gillis, 1996, p. 18). As families become increasingly mobile and geographically dispersed, their capacity for embodied memory transmission, enacted through face-to-face rituals, shared meals, and co-residence, diminishes (Assmann, 2008, p. 114).

Second, the emergence of reflexive individualism, as theorized by Giddens (1991), undermines the logic of inherited identity. According to Giddens, in late modern societies, identity becomes a "project," constantly revised and negotiated through lifestyle choices and narrative self-construction (Giddens, 1991, p. 54). In such a context, memory is no longer passively received from one's elders but actively curated by the individual through diverse media, peer networks, and educational systems. The past becomes a resource to be reinterpreted or even rejected, rather than a binding foundation.

This change produces what can be termed a mnemonic disjunction, wherein the symbolic universe of the family, rooted in oral traditions and ritual, no longer aligns with the digitally mediated lifeworlds of younger generations (Hoskins, 2018, p. 7). Social media platforms, digital photo archives, and algorithmic timelines increasingly shape how memory is stored, retrieved, and shared, often replacing or contradicting familial memory scripts (van Dijck, 2007, p. 105-10). These platforms encourage what José van Dijck calls mediated memory, a process that "externalizes and privatizes" memory beyond collective rituals (2007, p. 115). Furthermore, the epistemic authority of elders is increasingly challenged in late modernity. Where once oral history and experiential knowledge legitimized familial narratives, they are now often displaced by institutional knowledge, expert discourse, or digital literacy. As Hirsch (1997) notes in her concept of postmemory, younger generations often inherit family trauma or memory not through direct experience but through mediated images and stories, especially from maternal figures (Hirsch, 1997, p. 22). Yet even these forms of memory are unstable, subject to reinterpretation, contestation, and selective forgetting.

The symbolic meanings of silence and ritual also undergo transformation. Silence, previously a marker of respect or sacredness, may be reinterpreted in modern settings as repression or trauma concealment (Verhezen, 2010). Rituals lose their obligatory status, becoming optional or even burdensome. This shift undermines what Assmann calls the normativity of cultural memory, which depends on institutional anchoring and ritual enactment (Assmann, 2008, p. 116). As a result, what was once shared heritage becomes fragmented and individualized memory work.

Modern families thus become sites of negotiation rather than channels of inheritance. Identity is no longer linearly transmitted but constructed at the intersection of competing affiliations - ethnic, professional, gendered, ideological (Hall, 1996, p. 4). As Hall emphasizes, identity is "always in process," constructed through difference and representation rather than discovered as an essence (1996, p. 16). Familial identity becomes hybrid, contingent, and contested, no longer based solely on origin, but on interpretation. Memory in modernity is likewise reframed. It becomes increasingly therapeutic, introspective, and mediated by institutions such as psychotherapy, education, and digital platforms (Olick & Robbins, 1998, p. 111). The family no longer monopolizes memory production; instead, it coexists with multiple other agents and technologies of remembrance. The authoritative past is displaced by plural narratives, often conflicting, and memory itself becomes a political terrain, shaped by visibility, voice, and power (Foucault, 1980).

Ultimately, the tension between tradition and modernity is not a zero-sum conflict but a reconfiguration of the very modalities of transmission. The modern family does not cease to transmit identity and memory, but it does so in more fragmented, reflexive, and negotiable ways. Continuity is no longer achieved through ritual and authority alone but must now be performed - through storytelling, emotional labor, and symbolic reinvention (Butler, 2004, p. 207-9). This transformation suggests that cultural continuity is itself being redefined. Rather than relying on repetition and inherited authority, it now depends on affective engagement, narrative legitimacy, and mediated presence. The family, then, is no longer the unquestioned repository of identity and memory; it is a dynamic arena where the past is not only preserved but actively reconstructed in the face of competing social imaginaries and temporalities.

4. Points of Tension: Crisis or Transformation in Intergenerational Transmission?

While the family continues to function as a symbolic and affective anchor for identity and memory, its capacity to transmit a coherent cultural narrative across generations has come under increasing strain. In this section, four core sites of tension are examined, encompassing the politics of forgetting, generational disjuncture, performative memory roles, and the shifting balance between identity continuity and reconstruction, all of which reflect broader cultural, technological, and epistemological transformations.

4.1 The Politics of Forgetting

In postmodern society, the family can no longer be regarded as a stable vessel for the linear transmission of cultural memory. Instead, it has become a complex site where memory is not only preserved but also curated, contested, and, crucially, forgotten. Connerton's theory of the "seven types of forgetting" offers a valuable lens for understanding how familial memory operates under conditions of fragmentation, reflexivity, and pluralism. Forgetting, in this context, is not simply the absence of memory but an active, structured, and often strategic practice shaped by the emotional, social, and ideological contours of contemporary family life.

One of Connerton's key contributions is the distinction between repressive erasure and prescriptive forgetting, two forms of forgetting that are particularly relevant to familial dynamics (Connerton, 2008, p. 60-3). Repressive erasure refers to the intentional silencing of memories that are politically or morally inconvenient. Within families, this often manifests in the omission of stories that carry shame, guilt, or trauma: histories of collaboration, mental illness, abuse, or migration may be selectively excluded from intergenerational narratives to maintain a sense of dignity, unity, or normalcy. These omissions are not accidental. They are maintained through tacit agreements, euphemisms, or complete silence, shaping not only what is remembered but who is allowed to speak and whose memories are legitimized.

Prescriptive forgetting, by contrast, involves a socially sanctioned imperative to forget as a form of reconciliation or renewal (Connerton, 2008, p. 60). In family contexts, this can be observed in efforts to move on from painful pasts such as divorces, estrangements, or identity conflicts without fully addressing their emotional impact. Such forgetting may be framed as necessary for harmony or psychological survival, yet it often leaves unresolved tensions that resurface across generations. For instance, children may inherit emotional atmospheres shaped by unspoken wounds, even if they lack explicit knowledge of the events themselves. This transmission of affect without narrative reflects how forgetting is embedded not only in what families say, but also in how they feel.

Another of Connerton's types, structural amnesia, highlights the role of changing social and institutional structures in shaping what is forgettable (Connerton, 2008, p. 64-6). As the family becomes more dispersed, reconfigured, and digitally mediated, traditional mechanisms of memory - such as oral storytelling, shared rituals, or collective caregiving - are weakened or lost altogether. In their place, new memory practices emerge: digital photo archives, social media storytelling, and individualized therapeutic narratives. While these can serve to preserve aspects of memory, they also produce forms of forgetting by disconnecting memory from shared temporalities and relational contexts. A grandparent's wartime story may exist in a digital file, but its meaning becomes flattened without the intergenerational dialogue that once gave it affective depth.

Forgetting as humiliated silence, a type Connerton describes as rooted in the experience of subjugation or trauma, also resonates within families shaped by migration, colonial histories, or marginalization (Connerton, 2008, p. 67). In such families, certain histories may be present but unspoken, passed down not through narrative but through gesture, silence, or emotional undertones.

This kind of forgetting is not a lack of knowledge but a refusal or inability to articulate pain within dominant frameworks. The silence becomes a form of survival, but also a barrier to recognition and healing.

Forgetting as annulment, understood as the deliberate disassociation from a previous identity, may occur in families undergoing rapid social mobility, conversion, or cultural assimilation (Connerton, 2008, p. 70). Parents may encourage children to abandon old traditions in favor of integration or modernity, often without acknowledging what is being lost. Here, forgetting is a strategy of adaptation, yet it also generates intergenerational dissonance, as younger members seek to recover or reimagine what was dismissed. The act of forgetting thus becomes intertwined with identity reconstruction, where memory is not transmitted but selectively retrieved and reconfigured to fit new self-narratives.

Connerton also identifies forgetting as planned obsolescence, which is especially visible in the role of technology in reshaping memory habits (Connerton, 2008, p. 72). In digitally saturated families, memory becomes increasingly ephemeral, stored in cloud drives, algorithmically filtered, or shared in fleeting digital formats. The result is a culture of memory that favors the present moment, where attention spans are short, and memories are constantly overwritten by new content. In this context, familial remembering must compete with a broader cultural logic of forgetting, making intentional curation and intergenerational dialogue more urgent than ever.

Finally, forgetting as self-defensive repression, the unconscious avoidance of painful or threatening material, remains perhaps the most psychologically charged form of forgetting within families (Connerton, 2008, p. 72-4). Intergenerational trauma, especially in families marked by war, displacement, or abuse, often persists in concealed forms: emotional patterns, relational ruptures, or psychosomatic symptoms. These silences are not chosen but inherited. They point to the limits of narrative alone in addressing familial memory and call for approaches that include the embodied and affective dimensions of remembering and forgetting.

Taken together, Connerton's framework helps illuminate how forgetting is not the opposite of memory but one of its primary modes, especially within the postmodern family. Far from being a stable archive of tradition, the family becomes a fluid and fragile space where memory is constantly reshaped by what is told, what is hidden, and what is let go. In this context, familial memory is not a linear transmission but a complex, negotiated process, deeply embedded in power, silence, emotion, and the cultural logic of forgetting. Understanding this dynamic does not diminish the importance of family in preserving cultural identity; rather, it challenges us to see the family not as a container of heritage, but as a site of memory work, where remembering and forgetting unfold side by side.

4.2 Generational Gaps and Mnemonic Discontinuities

The most visible and intensifying fault line in intergenerational cultural transmission is the growing mnemonic discontinuity between generations, which may be described not as a crisis of forgetting but as one of divergent remembering. While families have historically served as the primary conduit of memory, values, and identity, this role is increasingly destabilized by both structural societal changes and the emergence of new generational formations with distinct worldviews, communication styles, and mnemonic logics.

This disjunction is not new in itself. As Karl Mannheim observed in his essay The Problem of Generations (1952, p. 292), generations are not merely chronological groupings but shared locations in historical time that shape consciousness. Each generation is marked by the socio-political, technological, and cultural conditions of its formative years. Today, however, the speed and scale of technological and epistemological change, especially since the digital revolution, have exponentially

widened these generational cleavages, rendering the familial transmission of coherent cultural narratives more fragile and contested than ever before.

Generation theory provides a helpful conceptual lens for understanding this transformation. Strauss and Howe's (1991) generational schema traces historical cycles and the formative influences of different cohorts. The older generation, typically referred to as the Baby Boomers (1946–1964), came of age in an era of nation-building, collective rituals, and linear historical narratives. Their memory practices were structured by institutionalized and analog modes of recollection, including official histories, oral traditions, and physical archives. The adult generation, often associated with Generation X (1965-1980), was shaped by periods of political instability and cultural skepticism. This transitional cohort maintains analog memory habits such as journals, photo albums, and face-to-face storytelling, while also negotiating the rise of digital technologies. Their position between two epistemological regimes enables a hybrid approach to memory: neither fully analog nor entirely digital. In contrast, the young adult and youth generations, namely Millennials (1981-1996) and especially Generation Z (1997-2012), are digital natives or near-natives. Their memory practices are visual, networked, and algorithmically filtered, embedded within fast-paced digital environments. Familial or national memory is often displaced by peer-generated content, global media flows, and user-curated digital archives. Twenge (2017) emphasizes that Generation Z, raised with smartphones, social media, and a culture of "always now," has developed a distinct temporal sensibility - one characterized by immediacy, fragmentation, and hyperconnectivity (Twenge, 2017, p. 69).

This results in what might be called a mnemonic dissonance: not simply a difference in memory content but a fundamental mismatch in how memory is experienced, valued, and performed. While older generations may perceive memory as something to be preserved and transmitted, younger cohorts are more likely to engage in memory as remix, performance, and aesthetic expression. The rise of "memory as content," a post on Instagram, a TikTok trend that references family trauma, or a curated "photo dump", illustrates this shift toward the ephemeral, fragmented, and self-branded.

Traditional family memory transmission often assumed a genealogical logic in which memory flowed vertically from elders to younger generations, thereby establishing continuity and lineage. Today, this structure is increasingly horizontalized. Instead of receiving narratives, younger individuals construct them, drawing on diverse sources, re-editing fragments, and integrating affective experiences shaped as much by personal therapy culture as by historical continuity. In this context, identity formation becomes less about rootedness and more about narrative bricolage. The family no longer serves as the sole memory anchor but becomes one node among many in a wider ecology of mediated memory sources, including memes, global news events, trauma discourse, and AI-generated content. Memory, in this mode, is no longer inherited but curated.

One consequence of these shifts is the erosion of mnemonic authority within families. As can be seen in the works of Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992), late modernity is characterized by reflexivity: traditions are no longer taken for granted but are subjected to critical evaluation and individual choice. Familial stories of national service, gender roles, or intergenerational duty may be met with skepticism or even outright rejection by younger family members who prioritize authenticity, emotional labor, and social justice over obedience to inherited scripts.

This reflexivity can create painful silences or ruptures within families. Conversations that once centered on pride and continuity may now focus on trauma, accountability, or revision. The intergenerational transmission of memory thus becomes a site of negotiation rather than passive reception. These tensions can be particularly visible around contested or marginalized histories, for example stories of migration, political persecution, or domestic violence, which younger generations may seek to recover, reinterpret, or publicize despite family reluctance.

However, this is not merely a story of rupture. Even as older models of transmission falter, new grammars of intergenerational communication are emerging. Platforms like Ancestry.com, StoryCorps, and even TikTok are being used to reclaim and remix family histories in unexpected ways. There is a palpable desire, especially among Millennials and Gen Z, to recover a sense of continuity - but on their own terms. They may reject rigid inheritance but seek relationality; they may question official family lore, yet remain emotionally attached to their grandparents' voices, photographs, and culinary rituals. In this sense, the intergenerational field is not collapsing but mutating. What we are witnessing is not a crisis of memory, but a reconfiguration of mnemonic legitimacy, a renegotiation of whose stories matter, how they are told, and what forms they can take. As can also be seen in M. Öz's recent study Identity and Cultural Memory Construction in Family-Based Tourism: A Conceptual Approach, families remain mnemonic communities (Öz, 2025, p. 154), though no longer hierarchical or static ones. They are increasingly dialogic, dynamic, and digitally entangled.

4.3 Performative Memory Roles

As shown in detail in Ergün's study Narrative Identity and Intergenerational Narrative Identity (Ergün, 2020, p. 476), individuals first acquire the foundations of their identity within the family, and memory transmission plays a crucial role in this process. However, memory transmission within social structures entails more than the mere transfer of content; it also requires an analysis of who transmits this content, how it is transmitted, and through which mediums. In this regard, the family constitutes one of the most fundamental and stable institutional environments where such transmission occurs both symbolically and functionally. Within this framework, gender operates as an organizational component of the transmission process. Gender roles do not only delineate personal identities; they also function as mechanisms for the social allocation of knowledge, values, and practices.

The internal structuring of roles within the family directly affects the types of content that are transmitted, as well as the modes of their transmission. Roles such as "mother," "father," "child," or "grandparent" signify not merely biological positions but also culturally assigned functions. For instance, the regulation of emotional relationships, the preservation of rituals, and the communication of daily practices are often attributed to specific gender roles. These role allocations are less a result of individual preferences and more a reflection of the reproduction of normative cultural frameworks.

The carriers of transmission are not solely conveyors of knowledge or experience; they also serve as mediators in the shaping of collective memory. This mediation is facilitated through a variety of symbolic forms, including narratives, objects, behavioral patterns, and silences. Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory is particularly salient in this context, as it addresses the intergenerational dimension of such transmission. Postmemory refers to the emotional and cognitive internalization of a past not directly experienced by the individual, but mediated through images, stories, and everyday practices (Hirsch, 1997, p. 24). In this process, the role of the transmitter extends beyond narration to include the structuring and filtering of memory itself.

Gender roles function as regulatory filters within this memory structuring process. The dynamics of who has access to which narratives, who remembers what, and which memories remain suppressed are often correlated with the gendered distribution of roles within the family. Practices related to daily life, the reproduction of emotional norms, or strategies of silence are typically embedded within gender-based role configurations. Accordingly, what is transmitted includes not only content but also the interpretive frameworks through which that content is understood.

Processes of modernization have reshaped the regulatory function of gender in the organization of transmission. Rising educational attainment, diversification of occupational roles, and transformations in family structures have altered both the figures involved in memory transmission and the strategies by which transmission occurs. This shift has not only disrupted traditional role distributions but also

introduced greater flexibility into the mechanisms of memory transmission. For example, the increasing prevalence of digital tools for recording and sharing memories has generated alternative modes of transmission that may operate more independently of gender-based constraints.

Nonetheless, the influence of gender in shaping the carriers of memory has not been entirely displaced. Cultural transmission practices within families continue to be largely structured through socially defined roles, leading certain individuals to become more prominent or influential within the transmission process. In this sense, gender constitutes not merely a category of identity, but a structural element integral to the organization of memory.

4.4 Identity: Continuity or Reconstruction?

The most fundamental tension in contemporary familial transmission concerns identity itself. Is familial identity still something to be inherited, or is it increasingly something to be assembled, chosen, or even resisted?

As Stuart Hall (2011) argues, identity is not discovered but constructed through discourse, difference, and temporality. From this perspective, familial identity is less a stable inheritance than a resource to be mobilized in ongoing acts of self-narration. Modern individuals often draw on fragments of family memory, such as stories, photos, rituals, not to reaffirm a static identity but to craft a coherent narrative in the face of existential fluidity. This reconstruction is selective by necessity. As Connerton notes, all memory is structured by forgetting; what is retained is shaped by what is excluded or suppressed (Connerton, 1989). Families transmit not only what they remember but also what they choose, consciously or unconsciously, to forget. These omissions can be ideologically driven (e.g., erasing political dissenters), trauma-based (e.g., suppressing memories of war or migration), or structurally imposed (e.g., colonial or patriarchal silencing).

Modern memory practices thus involve not only reception but critical engagement, where past events are re-evaluated, reinterpreted, and sometimes resisted. Foucault's (1991) insight that power "produces reality" (p. 183) is apt here: familial memory is not simply reflective but constitutive, shaping what is imaginable, sayable, and legitimate within family discourse. In this context, the family becomes a site of memory politics, where identity is negotiated not only across generations but also across narratives, silences, and symbolic capital. What remains, then, is not a coherent legacy but a mutable archive, open to reinterpretation and yet vulnerable to rupture.

5. Conclusion

This study has examined how the family, once regarded as a stable institution for the intergenerational transmission of identity and cultural memory, is being reconfigured under the pressures of modernization, individualization, and digital transformation. The central aim was to interrogate the transformation of memory and identity practices within familial structures, and to understand how traditional forms of cultural continuity are either preserved, disrupted, or rearticulated in contemporary contexts. Theoretical memory studies have often emphasized the durability of collective frameworks, but this research has argued that such frameworks must now be reinterpreted in light of fragmentation, negotiation, and silence within family life.

In response to the first research question *- how has the modernization process transformed the family's role in the transmission of identity and cultural memory -* the findings suggest a fundamental shift from a model of transmission grounded in repetition, authority, and ritual to one shaped by fragmentation, reflexivity, and choice. The family's role as a memory-bearing institution is no longer self-evident; it is increasingly precarious and unevenly distributed across generational and gendered lines. Modernization, particularly through urbanization, education, mobility, and media, has

introduced discontinuities that disrupt traditional patterns of inheritance, both in narrative and identity formation.

Regarding the second question *- in what ways do traditional and modern memory practices coexist, conflict, or hybridize within contemporary family structures -* this study has found that families are often sites of mnemonic hybridity. Rituals may persist, but they coexist with digital storytelling, selective disclosure, and ironic detachment. For example, a family may continue to celebrate religious holidays while simultaneously negotiating new values around gender or personal autonomy that challenge those very traditions. In this context, memory is neither fully traditional nor entirely modern; rather, it becomes a space of negotiation where older and newer scripts compete, overlap, and occasionally fuse into hybrid practices.

The third research question *- how does the shift from collective to individualized identity formation reshape the function of the family as a mnemonic institution -* points to a transformation in the epistemology of identity itself. Where families once served as anchors of collective belonging and ontological security, today's individuals are increasingly expected to craft, edit, and even curate their identities independently. The family still offers symbolic resources, but these are now filtered through personal narratives and often challenged or reinterpreted. This undermines the assumption of unidirectional inheritance and reframes identity as something constructed through memory work, an ongoing, often contested process of selection, narration, and omission.

Finally, in relation to the fourth question *- what role does forgetting, or the intentional erasure of memory, play in the restructuring of familial narratives in the modern era -* this study emphasizes that forgetting is not merely an absence but a formative practice. Forgetting functions as a mechanism of narrative control: certain stories are silenced to maintain coherence, protect emotional stability, or align with social respectability. Connerton's categories of repressive erasure and prescriptive forgetting are particularly useful here. Families do not forget by accident; they often forget by design, especially in cases of trauma, political shame, or deviation from normative expectations. In this way, forgetting is not opposed to memory but entangled with it; it shapes what can be remembered and by whom.

In conclusion, this research has shown that the family in late modernity can no longer be understood solely as a vessel for stable cultural transmission. It is a site of contested memory, shifting identity formations, and uneven power dynamics. Traditional models of memory, grounded in repetition and continuity, must be recalibrated to account for fragmentation, hybridity, and the performative nature of identity within familial contexts. Transmission, rather than a linear passing down of heritage, now functions as a negotiated, selective, and sometimes fractured process; one that reflects the broader social condition of reflexive modernity.

6. Discussion and Evaluation

If, as this study has argued, the family in late modernity is no longer a stable vessel of cultural transmission, what then is its role in the contemporary and future social world? While the decline of traditional forms of familial memory may signal rupture, it does not imply the disappearance of the family as a memory institution. Rather, it calls for a rethinking of what it means for the family to "remember," and more importantly, what kinds of futures such remembering can help construct.

The challenge is not simply to restore the past or mourn its erosion, but to understand how the family might adapt to become a reflexive space, one that does not reproduce memory passively, but actively curates it in response to the complexities of modern identity, plurality, and trauma. In this context, familial remembering becomes a practice of navigation: between inherited narratives and present values, between silence and expression, between stability and openness.

This requires acknowledging the affective, ethical, and political dimensions of memory. Families must increasingly negotiate between remembering too little, leading to detachment, alienation, or historical erasure, and remembering too much, a condition that can cause paralysis, guilt, or a re-traumatization of past wounds. In either case, what is needed is a praxis of selective continuity: a capacity to carry forward meaningful memory without rigid fidelity to normative scripts. This also implies rethinking who holds authority over memory. Historically, women, particularly mothers, have been positioned as emotional archivists, often tasked with preserving tradition through care and ritual. Yet in modern contexts, this role must be redistributed and reimagined as a shared intergenerational responsibility, not one grounded in essentialist gender roles.

To sustain itself as a relevant mnemonic institution, the family must also become more inclusive in both structure and content. This means making space for non-normative historical narratives such as different religious and national identities, political ruptures, or experiences of loss, and resisting the tendency to censor or silence difference in the name of "harmony." Families that embrace narrative pluralism, even when uncomfortable, will be better positioned to foster resilience, mutual recognition, and authentic belonging across generations.

Moreover, the tools of memory are no longer confined to oral tradition or embodied practice; they are increasingly shaped by digital infrastructures. Social media, cloud archives, and digital storytelling platforms have the potential to democratize memory, but they also carry the risk of fragmentation and surveillance. Here, families must learn to navigate digital memory ecologies consciously: to curate, contextualize, and sometimes protect memory from both technological excess and erosion. This involves a degree of digital literacy that sociologists, educators, and policymakers alike must take seriously when discussing familial continuity in the 21st century.

Ultimately, the family must be reimagined not only as a site of inheritance but as a site of interpretation, negotiation, and ethical memory work. In this role, it may not guarantee coherence, but it can cultivate reflexivity; it may not offer continuity, but it can nurture accountability. This vision of the family resists both nostalgic idealization and dismissive pessimism. It insists that the family, precisely because of its intimacy, its ambivalence, and its historical weight, remains a uniquely powerful space for engaging the past in the service of shaping the future.

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Extended Summary

The Tension Between Tradition and Modernity in the Transmission of Identity and Memory within the Family explores how the family, long conceptualized as a stable institution for the intergenerational transmission of cultural memory and identity, is being restructured under the transformative pressures of late modernity. Processes such as urbanization, increased mobility, digitalization, individualization, and the erosion of traditional authority have introduced a range of disruptions to the familial role as a memory-bearing structure. Whereas earlier theories of collective memory emphasized continuity, ritual, and repetition, this study argues that memory in contemporary family life is increasingly shaped by fragmentation, reflexivity, strategic forgetting, and discursive negotiation.

The central problem addressed in this study is the increasing precariousness of the family as a site of cultural continuity. No longer the unquestioned carrier of inherited traditions, the modern family finds itself in flux, functioning less as a vessel of stable narrative and more as a field of mnemonic struggle. The aim is to analyze how memory and identity are produced, contested, and reconfigured within this changing familial landscape. This inquiry seeks not to lament the loss of tradition but to critically examine how new forms of remembering and forgetting emerge in response to shifting sociocultural realities.

The research is driven by four central questions: How has the modernization process transformed the family's role in the transmission of identity and cultural memory? In what ways do traditional and modern memory practices coexist, conflict, or hybridize within contemporary family structures? How does the shift from collective to individualized identity formation reshape the function of the family as a mnemonic institution? And finally, what role does forgetting - or the intentional erasure of memory, play in the restructuring of familial narratives in the modern era?

Rather than adopting an empirical or ethnographic methodology, this study employs a theoretical and interpretive approach grounded in cultural sociology and memory studies. The conceptual framework draws from Maurice Halbwachs's (1992) theory of collective memory, which positions memory as a socially embedded phenomenon shaped by group affiliations and interpretive norms. The family, in this framework, operates as a milieu de mémoire, a social environment where memory is generated, reinforced, and reshaped. Paul Connerton's (1989, 2008) insights into incorporating and inscribing practices, as well as his typology of seven types of forgetting, provide analytical tools for exploring how forgetting is structured, not incidental. Jan Assmann's (2008) distinction between communicative and cultural memory situates the family as both an informal agent of oral transmission and a gatekeeper of broader symbolic codes.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1980) theory of habitus reveals how memory and identity are reproduced through embodied, pre reflective practices, including rituals, gestures, and norms that sediment over time and shape one's perception of the social world. Stuart Hall's (2011) theory of identity as a discursive and unfinished process underscores the performative nature of familial identity transmission, in which memory is not preserved passively but continually constructed and contested. Feminist scholars such as Marianne Hirsch (1997), Adrienne Rich (1986), and bell hooks (1999) further enrich this analysis by highlighting the gendered dimensions of memory work, especially the role of maternal figures in mediating trauma and emotional labor. Michel Foucault's (1991) analysis of

knowledge and power provides a critical lens through which to understand the family as a micro-site where discourses are curated, regulated, and often silenced.

Central to this study is the tension between tradition and modernity in mnemonic practices. In traditional contexts, memory was vertically transmitted through stable, often sacred familial hierarchies - elders told stories, set moral frameworks, and maintained the rituals that linked past, present, and future (Halbwachs, 1992; Parsons & Bales, 1955). Modernization disrupts this structure, replacing linear inheritance with reflexive, horizontal, and digitized modes of engagement. In today's families, the narrative authority of elders is frequently contested, and memory is filtered through personal experience, peer networks, and digital archives rather than fixed ritual or normative expectation. Thus, memory becomes a site of negotiation rather than obedience; tradition is no longer inherited, but selectively rearticulated.

The study identifies four major sites of tension in familial memory transmission. The first is the politics of forgetting. Connerton (2008) offers a powerful typology of forgetting, which includes repressive erasure, prescriptive forgetting, structural amnesia, annulment, humiliated silence, planned obsolescence, and self-defensive repression. Within the family, forgetting is not simply an absence of memory but a social and emotional strategy. Stories of trauma, shame, or marginalization, such as those involving abuse, political complicity, or migration, are often silenced in order to preserve emotional stability or family honor. At the same time, digital culture introduces new forgetting mechanisms: memories that are stored in the cloud may lose their affective depth when detached from the embodied rituals and face-to-face exchanges that once gave them meaning.

The second tension revolves around generational gaps and mnemonic discontinuities. Each generation, shaped by its own socio-technical milieu, develops distinct memory habits. Older generations (e.g., Baby Boomers) often rely on analog forms of memory - oral storytelling, photo albums, commemorative rituals, while younger generations (e.g., Millennials and Gen Z) are immersed in visual, ephemeral, and digitally curated environments (Twenge, 2017; Strauss & Howe, 1991). This divergence creates mnemonic dissonance: older family members may emphasize preservation, while younger ones engage memory as content, remix, or aesthetic performance. Traditional top-down memory transmission gives way to a horizontalized, personalized memory ecology, where authority is displaced and narratives are reassembled from fragments.

The third tension concerns performative memory roles, particularly the role of gender. Memory work within the family has historically been gendered, with women, especially mothers, tasked with preserving rituals, maintaining emotional atmospheres, and transmitting cultural values through care and repetition (Hirsch, 1997; Rich, 1986; hooks, 1999). These roles are not merely personal choices but structural assignments shaped by patriarchy. While modernization has diversified and challenged traditional gender roles, emotional labor remains unevenly distributed. Even digital tools, which promise democratized memory practices, often replicate these gendered patterns. The performativity of memory thus involves not only what is transmitted, but who transmits it, how, and under what affective and institutional conditions.

The fourth and most foundational tension is between identity continuity and reconstruction. Is familial identity something to be inherited, or something to be composed and edited? Stuart Hall (2011) argues that identity is never finished; it is a process of suturing, involving exclusion, excess, and symbolic labor. Familial identity becomes less about rootedness and more about coherence - crafted through acts of storytelling, silence, and emotional alignment. Foucault's (1991) insight that power produces reality underscores how memory within the family does not simply reflect the past but constitutes the range of socially viable identities. Forgetting, then, is not merely loss, it is an instrument of narrative control that structures identity as much as memory does.

In responding to the research questions, the study finds that the family's role in cultural transmission has shifted from one based on repetition, authority, and ritual to one grounded in fragmentation, reflexivity, and choice. Modernization has introduced discontinuities that have destabilized the mechanisms by which identity and memory were once inherited. Yet this does not mean that memory transmission has disappeared, it has been transformed. In contemporary families, traditional and modern memory practices coexist in complex hybridity. Religious rituals, for instance, may persist, but they are often practiced with ironic detachment or adapted to align with current values on gender, justice, or autonomy. These hybrid practices reflect a mnemonic pluralism that resists dichotomous thinking. The shift from collective to individualized identity formation has also repositioned the family's mnemonic function. Identity is now curated as a reflexive project (Giddens, 1991), rather than received as a fixed inheritance. Family stories, artifacts, and practices are drawn upon selectively, incorporated into personal narratives that may diverge from the family's intended self-image. In this process, individuals become their own memory workers, choosing what to remember, reinterpret, or discard. Regarding forgetting, the study emphasizes that it is not an absence but a formative presence. Families often forget by design, silencing memories that threaten cohesion or challenge dominant narratives. Connerton's distinctions between repressive erasure and prescriptive forgetting help explain how memory and forgetting are co-constitutive forces. Forgetting regulates identity just as much as remembering does; it shapes the boundaries of what can be said, by whom, and in what context.

Ultimately, this study argues for a new understanding of the family in late modernity, not as a static vessel of cultural inheritance but as a dialogical and ethical space of memory work. Remembering becomes an act of navigation: between inherited stories and contemporary values, between silence and voice, between obligation and choice. The family is reimagined as a site not of nostalgic continuity but of reflexive reconstruction. It remains uniquely potent due to its intimacy, emotional charge, and historical depth. Yet to remain relevant, it must embrace pluralism, redistribute mnemonic labor, and adapt to the digital architectures that now mediate memory. In doing so, the family does not cease to matter; it becomes something new: not a guardian of fixed identity, but a laboratory for making meaning across generations.