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# Childhood Socialization:

## Comparative Studies of Parenting, Learning and Educational Change

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# Introduction

# Studying Socialization: The Anthropology of Educational Processes

The project of documenting and understanding socialization during childhood in culturally diverse human societies was initiated by Margaret Mead in the 1920s and expanded as a systematic endeavor by John and Beatrice Whiting and their collaborators during the 1950s and thereafter. As a student of the Whitings, I participated in that endeavor beginning in 1954, but my research, as represented in this volume, soon took on its own character and directions.

I have selected twelve journal articles and book chapters for re-publication herein as specimens from my extended search for the meanings of parenthood, parent-child relations and child development throughout the world and in human history. My criteria for selection included the interest in them expressed by other scholars and their inaccessibility to a readership that might yet find them interesting; in either case, I thought they might serve as markers in a future intellectual history of socialization studies. I present them in chronological order of original publication, from 1960 to 1996, without changing the original texts so as to preserve the historical flavor of the earlier ones. The newly written commentaries introducing each of the five sections describe the contexts in which the chapters were written and, in some cases, the ways in which I have changed my mind since then.

## What Is Socialization?

"The Socialization of the Child", referring to social learning in childhood, became a convergent interest of sociology, psychology and anthropology early in the 20th century, reaching its peak during the middle of the century, roughly 1940-1970. After that, diverse trends in the academic disciplines diminished interest in the area and in "socialization" as the term for it. Investigators rejected some key assumptions of earlier socialization research and distanced themselves from it. Yet the concept of socialization has not outlived its usefulness, and I believe that it represents as well as any single term can the intentional design of psychologically salient environments for children's development.

In his history of the socialization concept, John Clausen (1968) points out that the term was part of English (and French) vocabulary by the middle of the 19th century.

When the American sociologist E.A. Ross (1896) defined it as "the moulding of the individual's feelings and desires to suit the needs of the group," he was not far from some familiar usages of the time as well as expressing an assumption that was common to Georg Simmel, Emile Durkheim, Franklin Giddings and other founders of sociology as a discipline. In psychology William McDougall (1908) and James Mark Baldwin (1911) formulated similar ideas during the following decade, and the behaviorists, especially John Dollard (1939), elaborated the concept of socialization for psychological research. Margaret Mead (1928, 1930) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1927) described the child rearing practices through which children were socialized in Pacific societies, bringing anthropology into this multidisciplinary area of theory and research before 1930. There was mutual recognition of this confluence during the 1930s, particularly in the culture and personality movement, and many research studies on socialization were published after 1940. Ironically, two major interdisciplinary volumes on socialization, *Socialization and Society* (Clausen, 1968), the report of the Social Science Research Council Committee on Socialization and Social Structure, and David Goslin's (1969) massive *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research*, were published just as interest in the area was waning. Perhaps even more ironically, the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) in Britain published a conference volume, *Socialization* edited by Philip Mayer, in 1970, at a time when hardly any anthropologists in Britain and only a few in America showed an interest in the subject. My own review of the literature some years later (LeVine, 1980) revealed that anthropological research on childhood socialization and child development was being conducted and published almost exclusively by the Whitings and their students. During the following decades (1980-2000), the comparative study of socialization flourished on a small scale as an interdisciplinary specialty of primary interest to child psychologists but with research contributions by anthropologists and linguists (Shweder et al., 1997).

*Education* is the general term for the social processes that facilitate learning in human communities (LeVine, 1997), and the term *educational processes* refers to intentionally guided changes in learning at individual and group levels. *Socialization* can be used to designate those educational processes affecting individuals in particular social environments (including schools) at any period in the lifespan. There is overlap in these terms, and the choice of one over the other is somewhat arbitrary, but in practice *socialization* is often preferable when the processes and the subject matter to be learned are not those specified in advance by an official institutional text but are uncovered by the investigator in a local context. Thus "language socialization" refers to the child's learning in the home and other social contexts before attending school, or outside of school afterwards, or in school beyond the prescribed curriculum, while "language education" is more suitable for learning the prescribed curriculum taught in classrooms.

It is necessary to distinguish *learning* from *education* and *socialization*. Learning, though influenced by intentional social forces, is an individual process not confined to, or predictable from, those forces. *Education* and *socialization* refer to the

processes through which the *intentions* of guiding or facilitating learning in particular directions are formed and implemented. Teachers, parents and educational policy-makers have intentions and try to implement them. Their plans are formulated in terms of cultural conceptions of moral virtue and cultural models of instruction. Thus education and socialization are not equivalent to learning or development in general but represent **programmatic efforts** to direct learning and development along certain pathways rather than others of which humans are capable. An anthropology of educational processes must concern itself with these intentional programs for learning – where they come from, how they are conceptually and socially organized, and how successful or unsuccessful they are in achieving their purposes – at every level of society, including those of homes and schools, where educational activities occur.

The anthropology of educational processes that I have pursued is concerned with the role of education in the transformation of the child from birth to maturity and in the transformation of human societies during the second half of the 20th century – particularly the connections between these two sets of processes. Both have been called "development" (child development and social/economic/political/educational development), but the first, i.e. the influence of socialization on child development, is directly connected with the observable metamorphosis of human ontogeny, while the second is an historical process metaphorically rendered as "developmental" by theorists who believe world history to be directed toward universal goals. Since I do not share this belief, I would rather characterize this massive historical change as social or societal transformation. An anthropological treatment of the connections between socialization of the child and societal transformation grounds them in the full range of human cultural diversity, past and present, and in the experience of individuals and communities available to ethnographic observation. Such an approach is necessarily comparative, cultural, historical and psychosocial.

## Critiques of Socialization Research

Comparative socialization research has been criticized over the last fifty years for (a) its environmentalist biases (presuming that the child is a blank slate and that child rearing determines personality and adult behavior), (b) its functionalist bias (the assumption that customary child rearing practices are necessary, effective and socially beneficial) and (c) its methodological shortcomings (using cross-sectional data when longitudinal data were required and dubious maternal reports rather than observations of behavior). These critiques were among the reasons why psychologists, sociologists and anthropologists began distancing themselves from the socialization paradigm in the 1960s. Psychology was undergoing the cognitive revolution that replaced learning with development as the primary model of childhood experience, and child development research was becoming more sophisticated in its appreciation of longitudinal and observational methods. Sociology and anthropology were becoming disaffected with

the structural-functional theories that had tended to ignore historical change and exaggerate the virtues of existing institutions. Socialization research was seen as embodying all the failings of the past.

Even as some social scientists abandoned socialization studies, however, others took the critiques as valid criticisms that required changes in the theoretical claims and methods of socialization studies – and even in what they were called – without giving up the project of understanding the child's social learning and parental behavior in context. This gave rise to new approaches – variously termed ecological, cultural, ecocultural and sociolinguistic – seeking to relate the diverse environments of children to their developmental patterns. The older consensus that sociology, anthropology and psychology had complementary stakes in socialization research fell away, particularly as sociologists left the area almost entirely, but those remaining interested in socialization in different cultures re-grouped in the child development field, where they have been consistently productive and provocative beyond their numbers.

Divested of the biases of extreme environmentalism and functionalism and enriched by constructivist and social-interactionist models of child development as well as by observational approaches, socialization research continues to demonstrate how children acquire communicative competence, social dispositions and intellectual skills through guided participation in the activities of diverse early environments throughout the world (Rogoff et al., 1993; Shweder et al., 1997). The roles of parents have been closely examined (e.g. Harkness & Super, 1996) but so have the roles of others in the child's social world (e.g., Weisner, 1982, 1984, 1987; Goncu, 1998). Comparative research on language socialization (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, 1987; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990; Miller et al., 1990) has provided especially powerful new insights into the child's acquisition of cultural meanings.

Anthropologists in the socialization field have based their research on knowledge from the developmental psychology of the last thirty years concerning the social and communicative responsiveness and learning capacities of infants and young children. What we know now about the readiness of children for social interaction and the development of communicative relationships in the first years of life was not known to Margaret Mead and the Whitings, though sometimes they made good guesses. When I began my research among the Gusii of Kenya in 1955 I had no way of knowing the capabilities for early learning that had been discovered in psychological research by the time we began the Gusii infant study almost twenty years later (LeVine et al., 1994). The vigor of socialization research in recent years is due in large part to this new engagement between psychological and linguistic anthropology and developmental psychology. With a more secure knowledge base for understanding children's age-related capacities, we look back on our earlier research with a shudder, realizing how little we knew then. My own papers in this volume show this progression over the 36 years that separate the first and last chapters, and in that sense they represent the progress of socialization research itself.

Socialization research is not a complete "anthropology of childhood," though it is an indispensable part of one and has laid the basis for the other parts by describing the environments of children throughout the world. With its focus on intentional programs constructed by parents and other educators for directing children's development, and its dedication to examining cross-culturally basic issues about the nature of child development and environmental influence that cannot be settled without looking outside of our own society, socialization research attempts to cover might be studied about children from a variety of cultural, political and ideological viewpoints.

This does not mean, as some have recently proposed, that it treats children simply as objects rather than subjects, suppressing their voices and taking the perspective of the adults who oppress, victimize and exploit children. These allegations come from those who see an anthropology of childhood as a political weapon against injustice like political struggles to end the persecution of women and ethnic minorities, rather than a search for knowledge and understanding. One of the strengths of socialization research is that it has resisted this kind of politicization in its pursuit of a deeper understanding of children and their parents.

## Educational Processes in Anthropological Perspective

In my research of the past forty years, I have examined five processes: (a) parental investment, (b) enculturation, (c) educational mobilization, (d) school experience, and (e) classroom interaction.

The first two of these are processes that occur in the life history of the individual and are particularly important for an understanding of education in the home. The next three have to do with the societal transformation in learning brought about by mass schooling and the diffusion of the Western school across the world. This historical change has, I shall argue, altered the terms in which parental investment and enculturation in early childhood are experienced in many parts of the world, so that my list turns back upon itself, with the processes at the end affecting those at the beginning. Thus life histories are re-shaped by the transformation of society, particularly its educational components.

**Parental investment: cultural goals, reproductive strategies and resource allocations.** Cultural and historical diversity in human parental behavior has been a central focus of my research, taking me, my family (i.e. my wife and collaborator Sarah E. LeVine, and our children) and my students to various sites in Africa, Latin America and Asia and causing us to re-examine parenting in North America, Europe and other places known to ethnography and history. Parenting is a goal-oriented activity, with cultural conceptions of desirable development setting the goals and prescribing the means. Parents invest resources, including their own time and energy, in their children's health, development and learning according to conventional formulas derived from cultural models prevalent in their communities. Following Margaret Mead, John W.M. Whiting and other pioneers in this field, we have de-

scribed these formulas and models in detail, hoping to understand and explain the parents' point of view.

At one time I tried to explain these models for parental behavior in simple ecological terms, as direct adaptations to environmental conditions that require a parental response – the threat of infant mortality, the need for child labor, the pressure of competitive schooling (Chapter 3). This did not work, first because there are diverse cultural responses to each environmental pressure; second, because some human populations ignore the pressures and suffer the consequences (at least for a while); and third, because any particular population of parents faces multiple pressures and responds in ways specific to its cultural traditions and contemporary situations. It became clear that the observable constraints and opportunities surrounding parents, like their reproductive capacities, are *culturally mediated*, that is they are experienced indirectly, through a selective filter of cultural models that endow conditions with meanings (LeVine et al., 1994).

Thus parents' programs for investing resources in children are usually formulated in terms of morality and social conventions as well as awareness of risks and advantages. The consequences of translating such a composite cultural model into action can be assessed in terms of its success and failure in achieving stated goals and its costs and benefits to parents and children alike. For example, in our study of Gusii parents in southwestern Kenya we focused on the moral directions, pragmatic design and conventional scripts for action of their cultural model for allocating maternal attention over the first 30 months of the child's life. We found that in a population with very high fertility in which infant survival was considered to be at risk, many parental practices were organized around protection, feeding and conserving infant energy rather than language and social development, which mother expected the sibling group to promote, beginning around two years of age.

This contrasted sharply with the practices of the middle-class American mothers we studied, who engaged in activities and interactions explicitly designed to stimulate the development of language, cognition and social development in the first year of life through interactions that were more obviously "pedagogical". The African mothers, whom we termed "pediatric" in their model of maternal attention, nevertheless had educational goals for their children during the first three years; they expected them to become compliant, quiet and uncomplaining toddlers, obedient to the commands of the mother and older siblings, and respectful of elders. The focus in this educational program was on the early development of moral virtues that were also useful for participating in the family economy rather than attuned to a future in school.

In fact, however, the Gusii infants we studied in 1974-76, unlike their predecessors whom I had studied twenty years earlier (LeVine & LeVine, 1966), were destined to attend school. Their mothers' practices were in transition from a period in which child mortality and the need for child labor were far greater and the expectation of schooling far lower than they had become by the mid-1970s. Judged by the standards of the past, Gusii reproductive strategies of high fertility and protective and restrictive infant care could be seen as successful in material, moral and develop-

mental terms, but they had already become obsolete in the face of a population explosion, land scarcity and universal schooling – leading to malnutrition and other deprivations for children. Thus strategies of parental investment successful at one time can be disastrous when conditions alter and the cultural models that inspire parents fail to change accordingly. An ecological analysis of parental investment, as indicated in the Introduction to Part II of this book, must avoid an "adaptivist" position (Edgerton, 1992) and identify the failures and lags in customary socialization practices as well as adaptive accomplishments.

**Enculturation: developing precocious children through early socialization.** How children acquire culture has been a question in anthropology for some 70 years, but it is now possible to offer some insights about the processes involved. First, children are far more capable of learning from experience during infancy and early childhood than was known even forty years ago. Infants form relationships during the first year of life; they learn how to speak and use a particular language during the second and third years; and they acquire at the same time a repertoire of behaviors that reflect the conventions of interpersonal conduct prevalent in their native speech environments as well as the cultural meanings embedded in those conventions.

Second, contrary to a view that long prevailed in academic psychology, there is no single mechanism of learning like reinforcement. Children learn through multiple modalities, including observation of activities in which they are only peripherally involved, so that their exposure to culturally organized activities is crucial to their development. Jean Lave (Lave & Wenger, 1992) has taught us to think about this phenomenon as a form of social participation, and Barbara Rogoff's term *guided participation* is the one I prefer to conceptualize a complex but strongly directional process in which a child becomes increasingly proficient at participating in ongoing activities (Rogoff et al., 1993).

Third, the ideals of a particular culture are translated into the developmental priorities of parents, who expect their offspring to be prodigies, showing signs of valued behavior at very young ages. Their precocity results from the participation of young children in an environment of adults and children who guide them toward the early emergence of communicative competence and moral virtue according to local standards. Just as Gusii children are precociously compliant as toddlers, at least by American standards, and American middle-class children are precociously talkative, at least by Gusii standards, so German children show precocious self-reliance as infants and toddlers (Grossmann & Grossmann, 1981, 1985) and Japanese preschool children precocious tact and diplomacy with their peers (Kelly, 2001). Inhabiting an environment of culturally coded interaction that provides selective scaffolding for particular tendencies, children succeed in meeting cultural priorities during their preschool years.

This precocity in culturally sponsored development is of course only a sign of the beginning of enculturation. It is a reversible process and depends on whether lessons learned earlier are built upon as the child grows older. Enculturation is also a variable process, and depends on the child's temperament, on the changing interpersonal environment of development and on the kinds of cultural symbolism to

which the child is exposed or has access. In other words, enculturation is not a fax or automatic replication process, and it does not assume the child to be a tabula rasa. A realistic concept of enculturation assumes that children acquire, through language and other media, local idioms of emotional regulation, social relationship, moral obligation and self-concept; that the resulting developmental expressions are distributed around a culturally mediated central tendency within a population; and that they exhibit statistical differences across populations.

**Educational mobilization: nation-building through mass schooling.** The advent of mass schooling has changed the lives and the development of the world's children more than any other historical change in the last century and half. Educational mobilization is a set of long-term political and organizational processes involved in making school attendance a permanent and growing part of the lives of children and adolescents in a particular national society (Chapter 8). It includes setting the goals of universal and compulsory schooling as government policy, constructing and staffing the schools themselves as organizations in a bureaucratic hierarchy with uniform standards, and continuing to expand the school system and the population's participation in schools. Between the middle of the 19th century and the late 20th century every country in the world undertook this institutional transformation as part of nation-building. The term *educational mobilization* represents this process as analogous to military mobilization, involving a massive commitment of resources designed to strengthen the nation.

The core unit in this process was the Western school, with a set of particular features (including age-graded classrooms, professionally trained teachers, standard curriculum and formal examinations) that distinguished it from schools in other cultural traditions. Contrary to some notions of modernization, the diffusion of the Western school was not an inevitable stage of history or a prerequisite to human societal development in general. It was a particular historical phenomenon that could have taken a different course. According to John Meyer and his colleagues, who have studied the spread of mass schooling as a case of institutional transfer, there was little re-designing of the organization or curriculum of the Western school by the borrowing nations. They were so eager to catch up with national development in more powerful countries that they borrowed their model of school along with their models of military organization, hospitals and health services, post offices and other bureaucratic structures they perceived to be associated with national power and international respect.

The diffusion of mass primary schooling in the countries of Europe, North America and Japan from 1870 to 1900 was followed by the growth of secondary schooling there during the next 50 years. After 1950, mass schooling spread in Latin America, Africa and much of Asia. The Marxist revolutionary regimes of the Soviet Union and the Peoples' Republic of China adopted the Western school on the largest scale. By the end of the 20th century, a large majority of children aged 6 to 14 attended primary school, with increasing numbers in preschools, secondary schools and universities. There were armies of schoolteachers and school administrators in each country,

and a large part of the national budget in every nation-state was devoted to education. A model of bureaucratic organization designed for rapid expansion and hierarchical control had facilitated the process of borrowing and growth.

**School experience: standardizing communication through literacy training.** I have not conducted research in schools but my research group and I have drawn upon the findings of our colleagues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to understand the effects of women's schooling in Mexico, Nepal, Zambia and Venezuela. Our theory is that schools are, among other things, sites where children learn to communicate in the language of bureaucracies, that they acquire in school the literacy and language skills of a standardized discourse that enables them to participate in other bureaucratic settings later in life. We have assessed the reading and academic language skills of women with varying levels of schooling and found that these skills are retained to a significant degree into adulthood and that they facilitate their comprehension of public health messages. This suggests that literacy is a pathway through which the schooling of women has increased child survival and decreased fertility in developing countries (LeVine, LeVine & Schnell, 2001). Our findings demonstrate that these schools are not only sites of emancipation, status attainment or credentialing – as some sociologists would have it – but that they also – even in poor, rural and non-Western places – have an *educational* impact on women. And the most robust impact seems to be through language socialization in the classroom: the child's increasing proficiency in an academic speech register distinct from normal conversation and using the discourse features of written texts (Snow, 1990, Valdes & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998).

**Classroom interaction: learning to learn (and teach) through scripted participation.** Our theory here, also based on the work of others such as Cazden (1988) and Heath (1986), is that classrooms engage children in heavily scripted, redundant participation from which children internalize an instructional schema involving both pupil and teacher roles. They learn to learn and they learn how to teach. More specifically, they learn to adopt the pupil role in interaction with authoritative experts, and they learn to adopt the teaching role in interaction with obvious novices like children. Thus women with more classroom experience are more likely to attend to public health information in the media and to follow the advice of doctors and nurses, enacting the pupil part of the instructional schema. They are also more likely to engage their babies and toddlers in tutorial interactions, taking the teaching role. This latter part of the model helps make sense of the extensive literature that shows mothers with more schooling to be more **verbally** responsive to their infants and toddlers, in the United States and other places. Heath (1986) claimed that her sample of middle class children in North Carolina had learned the I-R-E (initiation-response-evaluation) script of classroom interaction by the time they were two years old. Most American studies compare high-school-educated mothers with those who have been to college, but in Mexico where we observed mothers with only one to nine years of schooling, we found the same pattern of increased verbal interaction during the first

two years to be associated with more years of maternal schooling, controlling for other socioeconomic factors (Chapter 11).

Thus we come back to the beginning of our list of educational processes. Parental investment has been re-shaped by mass schooling, especially that of women, who as mothers enact an explicitly instructional schema – one costly of maternal time and attention – in the early care of their children and commit more family resources to the development of each child. By changing the parental agenda for childhood, mass schooling also alters the process of enculturation, putting an increasing premium on skills related to the child's future school career. This has not made enculturation uniform across the world – as some have mistakenly expected – but it does point to the powerful role of education in changing the ways in which we live.

The study of educational processes belongs to no single discipline. This overview of my own work on education has covered studies that bring theories, methods and evidence from many of the social sciences to bear on the transformations involved in education. I call this anthropology because that discipline's global scope, its attention to communities without schools, its historical dimension and its lack of conceptual boundaries in the search for knowledge of human life, make it an appropriate base for understanding education. In anthropology the desire to generalize is balanced by a concern with local variations, and following Darwin, we continue to document those variations without giving up the search for general knowledge. From the transformations of child development and historical change in different cultural settings, we have learned about how educational processes operate over time at individual and societal levels. There is much more to be learned, however, not only about each one of the educational processes I reviewed but also in many other contexts, e.g. in the historical changes brought about by immigration (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) and in institutional settings defined by work that are situated outside both home and school. There is a large agenda for future anthropological research on educational processes, not as a separate disciplinary endeavor but as part of the larger social science project of understanding education.

The twelve chapters of this book are focused on the socialization of the child in comparative perspective, and the five sections into which I have grouped them are not identical to the five educational processes mentioned above. Of the latter, Parental Investment is covered in Part II (especially Chapter 4), Enculturation in Part IV (especially Chapter 9), and Educational Mobilization in Part III (especially Chapter 8). School Experience is not included here (but see LeVine, LeVine & Schnell, 2001), and Classroom Interaction is discussed in Chapter 11.

**Note:** An earlier version of this introduction was presented as an Invited Address to the American Educational Research Association meetings in New Orleans, Louisiana on April 1, 2002.

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# Introduction

These first two chapters are based on my earliest studies, in Kenya and Nigeria, during the period 1955-63. They focused even then on the twin processes of psychological transformation during childhood (Chapter 1) and the historical transformation of parenthood through formal education (Chapter 2). The first paper argues for the political significance of enculturation in East Africa during the colonial period; the second shows how the expansion of schooling and other social changes influenced family life in a Nigerian city in the immediate post-colonial period. Much of my other writing at the time was descriptive ethnography, but these articles are tightly organized around theoretical issues and use a comparative method, examining concomitant variations within a region (as in Chapter 1) or within an ethnic group (as in Chapter 2) to discover the underlying dynamics of change.

"The Internalization of Political Values in Stateless Societies," is based in part on fieldwork among the Gusii of southwestern Kenya from 1955 to 1957. It was the first of three papers on political socialization (LeVine, 1960a, b, 1963) that emerged from my joint appointment in the Departments of Political Science and Anthropology at Northwestern University in 1958-60. My dissertation research among the Gusii had been designed with the twofold purpose of replicating in Africa the Harvard-Yale-Cornell five-culture study of socialization of the child, later known as the Six Cultures Study (B. Whiting, 1963; J. Whiting et al., 1966) and investigating the psychological basis of social control among an African people. I did not think of my investigation as "political socialization" until I found myself in a political science department trying to relate my work to a discipline in which I had no background. The term "political sociallization" had only recently been coined in the context of Americans' orientations to the presidency and political parties during their school years (Greenstein, 1960; Hyman, 1959; Hess & Easton, 1960), and I seized upon it as a way of re-conceptualizing what I was doing in terms broadly relevant to political science.

This article, however, was addressed less to the concerns of political scientists than to Radcliffe-Brownian social anthropology, on which it mounts an attack from a cultural and psychosocial perspective. In the theoretical framework of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1940), which dominated African anthropology in the 1950s, societies were categorized by their pre-colonial institutional structures, particularly whether or not they had a politically centralized state. Those that did not, termed stateless, segmentary or acephalous societies, tended to be seen as egalitarian because at their highest level of political organization, no group or individual was ranked higher than another and because their primary social institutions were lineages embodying the (Radcliffe-Brownian) *principle of the equivalence of siblings* (e.g., the substitutability

of brothers for each other in kinship roles, property rights and blood compensation). The most famous example of a stateless polity was the Nuer of Sudan, as described by Evans-Pritchard (1940), who repeatedly characterized them as democratic.

What I had found among the Gusii is that though they, like the Nuer, were organized as a stateless patrilineal society, they were anything but democratic in the cultural ideology or values that operated within their local communities. I sought to prove that those values varied independently of the total institutional structure (so that a stateless society could be authoritarian or egalitarian), constituted the psychologically salient environment for the growing child, and influenced the ways in which the particular people reacted to colonial rule. The cultural values children internalized at home had a greater influence on their reception of the colonial state as adults than the structure of intergroup loyalties that Evans-Pritchard had so penetratingly described. This frontal assault on the structural-functional approach by a psychologically oriented cultural anthropologist (taking what might be considered a Weberian rather than Durkheimian view of political order) might have stirred up an interesting academic debate had I published it in a British journal or at least a mainstream anthropological journal. Alas, following the path of least resistance, I accepted an offer to publish it in *Human Organization*, the journal of the Society for Applied Anthropology, where it attracted little attention. The article was reprinted in two books of readings – one by Hunt (1967) on psychological anthropology, the other by Sigel (1970) on political socialization – but nevertheless failed to provoke controversy.

I decided to reprint the article here more than forty years later, when Radcliffe-Brownian structural-functionalism is mainly of interest to historians of anthropology, for several reasons: I still consider its major points to be valid, reasonably well argued and in a strange way relevant to contemporary anthropology. Radcliffe-Brown's approach declined because it excluded history, minimized religion and constructed a pretentious "natural science of society" that became less credible over the years. There were few critiques of it from a psychosocial or even cultural perspective, though as this article shows, it was vulnerable to such a critique, particularly in African studies where structural-functionalism reigned supreme. Second, the article exemplifies the "method of controlled comparisons" advocated by my teacher Fred Eggan (1954), which I still regard as a powerful tool for anthropological research. (Fred had been a student of Radcliffe-Brown, but was far more concerned with history and culture than his teacher.) Third, though the article's developmental psychology is dated, the notion that family relationships create prototypes for later relationships in one's life – whether through a process like the Freudian concept of transference or through other forms of internalization – remains promising as a means of connecting microsocial experience with macrosocial institutions. Finally, it may be of interest to contemporary developmental psychologists to learn that the concept of internalization was in use in 1960, many years before its revival with the belated discovery of Vygotsky by American psychologists, and it may be of interest to contemporary anthropologists to learn that – rumors to the contrary notwithstanding – issues of colonial domination were not entirely ignored by Africanists during the colonial period.

Chapter 2, "Father-child relationships and changing lifestyles in Ibadan, Nigeria," is based on fieldwork carried out from 1961 to 1963 among the Yoruba of Ibadan. This chapter also has its origins in my experience at Northwestern, for working at the Program of African Studies with Melville J. Herskovits, I came to think of myself as an African specialist for the first time, and I became intrigued by the idea of doing fieldwork in West Africa. After moving to the University of Chicago, I took a year's leave of absence (1961-62) to serve as director of the Child Development Research Unit at the University College, Ibadan (soon to become the University of Ibadan) in western Nigeria. There, among other activities, I organized the Yoruba project described in the chapter (see also Lloyd, 1970) and interviewed the fathers for this chapter in the summer of 1963.

In retrospect, this chapter reveals both strengths and weaknesses of my approach to socialization in the early 1960s. The strengths lie in recognition that child rearing practices change over time in response to socioeconomic and cultural transformation, that fathers play a role – a variable one – in the socialization of children, and that the question of whether there are universal trends in parental care (e.g. the quantity-quality shift) is an empirical one, not yet fully answerable from the evidence then available. In addition, the chapter constitutes early recognition that urbanization and the formal education of parents are influential factors in social change.

If the strengths lie in the chapter's theoretical sophistication for its time, its weaknesses are largely methodological. Comparing two samples at the extremes on women's schooling (unschooled vs. secondary school) guaranteed that other socio-economic factors would be confounded. We argued that the unschooled sample could serve as the baseline from which change could be observed, while the elite sample would represent its ultimate destination, but this design precluded the possibility of disentangling the factors of income, residence and social status as influences on child rearing. (Later studies, represented by Chapters 11 and 12, would use a different research design to solve this problem.)

Another methodological weakness of the Yoruba project was its reliance on interviews with parents to assess childrearing practices. A maternal interview schedule had been central to the Harvard-Yale-Cornell research, including our own work among the Gusii (Minturn & Lambert, 1964), and we were simply using the same approach in Nigeria. But studies in the United States in the early 1960s (e.g., Robbins, 1963) showed that maternal reports were not valid indicators of actual child rearing practices, which led eventually to greater use of naturalistic observations in sociallization studies. In the Yoruba project we had to make use of what we had, and in the chapter we focused on reports we considered less vulnerable to bias. The findings are suggestive but fragmentary – weaker and less reliable than an ethnographic account but with a sample size smaller than an adequate survey. The chapter was originally prepared for a Social Science Research Council conference on "The City in Modern Africa," organized by Horace Miner, who edited the volume of the same name some years later (1967).

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# Introduction

In classic socialization theories, parents were seen as "socializing agents," acting on behalf of society (along with other socializing agencies such as peers, schools and churches) to transmit adult culture to their children and prepare them for participation in social roles (Clausen, 1968). Alex Inkeles (1955) added to this the concept of "parental mediation," in which parents could be seen as the medium through which macrosocial change altered the goals of socialization. In the Six Cultures Study Field Guide (Whiting et al., 1966), we were instructed to collect information on the daily routines of parents, recognizing that women and men who were parents had other responsibilities as well, and that maternal behavior in particular could only be understood in terms of how women managed their multiple roles in cultivation, household tasks and child care. But there was more to be done in conceptualizing parents as having a distinct viewpoint reflecting their concerns for and expectations of their children.

I became a parent myself only in 1970, a month before my 38th birthday, when my wife Sarah gave birth to a daughter, Anna. Seeing the parental role from the inside drew my attention to aspects of the experience that had escaped conceptualization during my previous 15 years investigating socialization cross-culturally. In 1973 the birth of a son, Alex, made the experience considerably more complex and stimulated the thinking that led to my call for a comparative phenomenology of parenthood in the article reprinted here as Chapter 3.

That article was originally intended to respond to John Bowlby's (1969) concept of attachment as "goal-corrected". This referred to the infant's goal of proximity to mother, which Bowlby claimed had been developed by natural selection early in human evolution and transmitted genetically ever since. Bowlby's model left no room for the cultural goals of parental care described by anthropologists and emphasized at that time by my friend and former teacher Bill Caudill (Caudill & Weinstein, 1969). At first I thought of constructing a synthetic model in which phylogenetic and cultural goals could co-exist comfortably in human parents, but the more I thought about Sarah's experience in caring for our two young children at the same time and our joint responsibility for their health care and their futures, the more I could see the need for a more expansive conception of parental consciousness.

There were several other factors that seemed to call for a broader re-thinking of the parental perspective: in our 1969 fieldwork in northwestern Nigeria, we had worked closely with the child health services in Malumfashi, Katsina Province, where infant deaths, particularly from malaria during the rainy season, were more frequent (probably 20-30 percent during the first year) than I had ever encountered. Under

chronic conditions like that, which could be found in many other Third World places, it would seem that survival would become the primary goal of infant care, eliminating any other considerations, yet the Hausa and Fulani mothers failed to show the expectable anxiety about their infants' probabilities of dying. This needed further thought.

Secondly, when the British anthropologist Meyer Fortes taught at the University of Chicago in 1973, he gave me a paper he had written on parenthood among the Tallensi, which suggested other dimensions to be included in a concept of parenthood: how becoming a parent affects a person's position in society and his or her self-concept, and what benefits parents want and expect *from* children (as distinct from parental concern *for* their children). The fact that the Tallensi of Ghana, as Fortes described them, were so similar to the Gusii of Kenya, as I had observed them, led me to realize that parenthood (as he termed it) deserved a fuller sociological treatment from the parent's point of view. Furthermore, economic theories of fertility attempting to explain why agricultural societies like the Gusii (and Tallensi) want large numbers of children (labor and risk insurance) were already being developed at that time, although I don't remember being aware of them. In any event, there were numerous intellectual currents as well as personal experience that led me to expand the concept of parental goals beyond the then-familiar perspective of socialization theory.

The version of the parental goals article reprinted here as Chapter 3 was published in 1974 in a special issue of *Teachers College Record*, "The Family as Educator," edited by Hope Jensen Leichter, and also published as a book. (An earlier and shorter version of the article was published as "Child Rearing as Cultural Adaptation," in *Culture and Infancy*, 1977, edited by Leiderman, Tulkin and Rosenfeld.)

The article has received a good deal of positive and negative attention through the years (Harkness & Super, 1995). Interest in the formulation led some of my students to organize a symposium on it at the 1981 American Anthropological Association meetings, and an amplified version of that symposium was later published as *Parental Behavior in Diverse Societies* (LeVine, Miller & West, 1988). Even in that volume some fundamental criticisms were launched (by Mary Maxwell West, 1988). Subsequent criticisms of my formulation by Hewlett et al. (1998) and of adaptivist positions in general by Barkow (1989) and Edgerton (1996) make me inclined to abandon or drastically modify the position taken in the 1974 article.

My proposal that the cultural scripts for childcare are hazard-avoidance formulas reflecting actual environmental threats to the attainment of universal parental goals was speculative. I claimed that customs of infant care in high-mortality societies could be understood as forms of protection against the most immediate causes of death and serious injury, particularly dehydration due to diarrhea in infancy and domestic accidents in which toddlers fell into the cooking fire or were otherwise endangered by their mobility. Extended breast-feeding and back-carrying, as we had observed them in Africa, diminished these risks. I also argued, perhaps more boldly, that this protective regime tended to involve postponement of verbal interaction with

the child or other signs of an "organized concern with the child's behavioral development" until after infancy – another idea based on African fieldwork.

It has been more than a quarter of a century since the theory was published, and negative evidence has accumulated. For example, West (1988), in an intensive study of Fijian infants, showed that mothers were observably more concerned with, and promoted, the infant's development of sociability and social ties with others than with the child's physical development, despite high infant mortality in the past. Hewlett et al. (1998) found, in a quantitative comparison, that the Ngandu agriculturalists of the Central African Republic are no more responsive to infant distress in early infancy (3-4 months) than middle-class Americans, though the Ngandu infant mortality rate is more than ten times that of the United States. Although neither of these studies presents a perfect contradiction to my theory, I believe they are good enough indicators of a much looser fit between environmental hazards and customs of child care than I had supposed from field observations among the Gusii, Yoruba and Hausa.

At another level of comparison, Barkow (1989) found that in a majority of the human societies sampled in a cross-cultural study, mothers did not feed colostrum – the watery fluid in their breasts during the first day or so after giving birth – to their babies, despite its value in saving lives through rehydration and prevention of infection. This contradicts the expectation that customs of peri-natal care are adaptive in the sense of promoting child survival, since the custom of withholding colostrum from vulnerable neonates actually elevates their chances of dying. An adaptive theory of childcare cannot explain findings like that without tendentious twists and turns.

Furthermore, adaptive explanations of customary practices share a variety of weaknesses. They almost always presume a tighter fit between practices and environmental features than can be demonstrated empirically. When the fit proves to be loose or nonexistent, the adaptive theorist resorts to arguing that the fit was once tight but has been loosened through environmental change that destroyed the ecological balance or equilibrium of the past. Such an argument (which may or may not be supported by empirical evidence), however, concedes that there are non-adaptive processes operating, at least in the short run. The short run is significant: if peri-natal practices increase the number of preventable deaths, they are a threat to survival and can hardly be interpreted as adaptive. Furthermore, if we make the reasonable assumption that some populations have maladaptive practices that will cause them to die out over time, then we have to assume also that any community we observe may belong to a dying or declining population rather than a thriving or growing one, with maladaptive practices on display.

To understand childcare practices without the logical and empirical traps of adaptivism, I have come to see them in semiotic terms, as webs of meaning of varying significance only partly interpretable as utilitarian strategies for survival or success (see Chapter 4 and LeVine et al., 1994). It seems to me now that feeding practices are often maladaptive: Mothers in some places relinquish breast-feeding for a less healthy alternative like synthetic milk formula mixed with contaminated water; some post-weaning diets (like cassava in West Africa) may be deficient and lead to protein-calorie malnutrition; nutritious adult foods like meat and beans available to the family

are sometimes kept from the children, who need them most. I have not given up the belief that there is genuine folk wisdom in some of the practices of experienced mothers in many societies around the world, but I believe this needs to be examined in each specific case before it can be accepted. A cost-benefit analysis of infant care practices can be conducted, taking the indigenous perspective into account but going beyond it to examine the consequences of practices for health and education and all other domains of behavior in which we can unambiguously define adaptive goals. We attempted this in the Gusii infant study (LeVine et al., 1994, pp. 256-269); it needs to be done with better data in future studies.

Thus in the twenty years between the original publication (in 1974) of Chapter 3 and the book-length report (in 1994) of the Gusii infant study, I changed my mind about the best way of conceptualizing customs of childcare in all their complexity. In place of adaptation I put *cultural mediation* as the process by through which all factors, including genetically as well as socially transmitted codes, and all pressures, ecological as well as social and economic, are filtered and selected for parental action. This is a way of saying that though a wide variety of innate and environmental features influence parents, the final stop before enactment is in the cultural models that give meaning to each action experienced by the child (LeVine et al., 1994, pp. 16-21).

Chapter 4, originally written in 1979 and published the following year, represents an intermediate position on adaptation and cultural mediation and its (brief) application to American child rearing. I include it here because it was the first time I referred to "parental investment strategies" – a concept I still find valid and useful – and attempted a cost-benefit analysis of American (compared with Gusii) parental practices that many readers appreciated. In re-reading it I feel that my observations on the American side were heavily influenced by the recent experience of being an American parent raising American children in Africa while observing the Gusii doing things differently. As I indicated above, I have departed from the adaptivist position re-stated in this article, but it presents concisely many of the hypotheses spelled out in my research over the next two decades.

Chapter 4 is from the volume *Parenting in a Multicultural Society*, published in 1980. As I recall (and memories can be faulty), the workshop in New Orleans on which it was based in 1977 was the first occasion on which I had heard the word *parenting* or had heard the United States called a *multicultural society*. I found the verb "parenting" hard to accept but used it in my title in order to relate to the central theme of the book. The workshop included American advocates and practitioners of parent education, at least some of whom believed that minority groups could benefit from the kind of parent education they had to offer (or so I remember). Since I considered parent education equivalent to the propagation of a turbocharged version of middle-class American values (with scientific evidence to back it), I wrote my chapter to oppose what I believed was their viewpoint and point out the costs of child rearing the American way.

The concepts of parental investment and parental investment strategies represent a strong recognition on my part that a utilitarian analysis of parental behavior is valid, up to a point. I accept the concept of *resources* as encompassing all the goods and

services, including parental time and energy, provided to advance a child's development or social career. This is a valuable contribution of zoology to our thinking about human parents (Wilson, 1975). I do not agree, however, with the economic perspective that holds these varied resources to be universally convertible through their market values. For example, it is absurd to put a value on the mother's childcare time allocation estimated from the opportunity costs of her labor (based on her school attainment), if there *were* a market for her labor, when in fact she lives in a place where women like her are unemployable (a common situation in many parts of the developing world). For the same reason I object to the concepts of *social capital* and *cultural capital*; they are used metaphorically but definitely encourage the unwarranted assumption of convertibility of resources in monetary or market values. To say that parents invest resources in their children is simply to recognize that they do what they believe is necessary to advance their children's careers according to the standards of their communities, but it is equally important to recognize that the resources invested are not equivalent to each other and vary enormously by time and place. There is no common currency for parental investment, and parental investment strategies are harnessed to culturally formulated goals.

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# Introduction

These four chapters present a cultural history of childhood, parenthood and schooling, beginning with the context of socialization in agrarian societies and followed by the great socioeconomic transformation of the last 150 years that included mass schooling and changed the course of childhood throughout the world. Originally written with Merry I. White, a Japan specialist, the chapters appeared consecutively in our book *Human Conditions: The Cultural Basis of Educational Development* (1986). The book was one of four volumes reporting the findings of the Project on Human Potential of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, sponsored by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Our purpose in that book was to provide an alternative to neo-classical economics in thinking about educational development in Third World countries. At the time, human capital and other economic models, as formulated in documents such as the World Bank's *World Development Report 1980* (which was devoted to education), were overwhelmingly influential in the policy analyses and proposals of governments, United Nations agencies and other organizations. Their reduction of the ends of education to measurable economic returns struck us as dangerously narrow, requiring a coherent response from the social sciences as a whole.

We surveyed the social science literature and found that the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf (1978), drawing on Max Weber's concept of *life chances*, had provided the alternative framework for which we were searching – one that had room for variability in cultural conceptions of human development and in ends formulated as relationships rather than returns.

In attempting to conceptualize the potentials of societies for providing their members with meaningful and satisfying lives, Dahrendorf proposed life chances as the joint product of the options (choices) and ligatures (social attachments) made available by the social structure. At any given historical moment it is (theoretically) possible to identify an optimal balance between these two structural factors, and that balance defines the maximum of life chances attainable for members of that society at that time. Unlike income or even happiness, life chances cannot be clearly defined in the abstract or precisely measured in particulars. To say, as Dahrendorf does, that they are "possibilities to realize needs, wants and interests in, at times against, a given social context," (p. 53), is rather vague and general. In specific cases, however, the balance or imbalance is often clear. Where options have been expanded at the expense of ligatures, the likelihood is increased that individuals will face lives of isolation and loneliness; where ligatures have been developed at the expense of options, it is more likely that individuals will suffer restriction and coercion. Liberal political theory has favored extending options and demolishing ligatures, and the processes of moderni-

zation have brought this about in the West, but Dahrendorf suggests that it has gone too far.

Dahrendorf viewed educational development as a potential for increasing life chances through strengthening both options and ligatures, but he was concerned that the massive expansion of schooling at all levels might be destructive to social relationships. Rather than following this line of argument, we took his conception of life chances as a charter for exploring the problem of options and ligatures across the world and in historical time. We began by asking how ligatures contribute to life chances, and we argued that this contribution can be conceptualized in terms of the benefits persons receive from the social linkages made available to them in their societies – benefits classifiable as support, structure and motivation.

1. *Support*. The social interdependencies organized by kinship, neighborhood and other forms of affiliation provide ties on which individuals count for goods, services and emotionally significant symbols of permanence, particularly at times of crisis and deprivation. This kind of support provides a minimal sense of long-term security which most individuals need, particularly where government programs do not anticipate their needs.

2. *Structure*. A normative order publicly defines virtue and vice, establishes a predictable moral environment and provides unambiguous conditions for interpersonal trust and positive self-regard. This kind of order can give the individual both the satisfaction of living a good life according to community standards and the comfort of being able to trust others in the community.

3. *Motivation*. Relationships define the purposes of adult activities, motivating individuals to direct their efforts toward the benefit of others (e.g. their families), toward the approval of them whom they respect (e.g. their sponsors) and toward recognition within groups they value (e.g. their communities). Such motivation can benefit society (e.g. in improved production and political leadership). It benefits the individual by setting personal achievement in a collective context that gives it additional meanings (e.g. pride, moral credit).

Thus personal security, community trust, positive self-regard and group morale are all benefits possible from social linkages, through the support, structure and motivation they provide for individuals of a given society. These benefits are conditions of the good life by anyone's definition – their importance can be assessed by imagining life without them – and their increase must be counted as improvement in life chances as much as an increase in the options made accessible by income, education and a longer life expectancy. Social linkages, however, are not as control-

lable by policy-makers as income, education and health; hence they have not received the attention they deserve.

To assess the ways in which ligatures as well as options affect human welfare required the comparative and historical overview of the life course, parenting and schooling that appears in these chapters. In Chapter 5 we present an ideal type of agrarian culture without citing in detail its many sources in the literature of social anthropology and social theory. As we stated in a footnote, however, some of the more direct influences have been the works of Robert Bellah, Peter Berger, Morton Fried, Clifford Geertz, Robert Redfield, Edward Shils and Max Weber. Apart from this alphabetized list, I would say that the most direct influence was Clifford Geertz, my colleague at the University of Chicago during the 1960s. The spirit of these chapters is borrowed from that of the Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations in which we both participated, along with Shils, Lloyd Fallers and many others at Chicago during those years. In the Harvard Project on Human Potential itself, we benefited from discussions with many scholars from different countries; one of special help was Fei Xiaotung, China's premier anthropologist, during his time at Harvard in the early 1980s.

In a project as ambitious as our overview in these chapters, omissions may be inevitable. One I regard as particularly serious is our failure to take account of the work of S. N. Eisenstadt.

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# Introduction

These chapters are concerned with the psychology of childhood socialization, conceptualizing it in terms of the acquisition of cultural meanings. I assess the state of the evidence concerning childhood environments, learning and psychological development in human societies and launch cultural critiques of developmental psychology (Chapter 9) and Freudian psychoanalysis (Chapter 10) during the late 1980s. Both papers are concerned with the question of what difference it makes that children grow up under different conditions – and that they are *socialized* differently – in different parts of the world. Both are concerned with the experience, processes and outcomes involved, and both are critical of psychological and psychoanalytic formulations for leaving cultural diversity out of account.

This cultural critique of developmental psychology and psychoanalysis was of course initiated by Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict and systematized by John W.M. Whiting during the first half of the 20th century. It has continued in recent years as the "cultural psychology of development" by the Social Science Research Council Committee on Health and Human Development (Shweder, Goodnow, Hatano, LeVine, Markus & Miller, 1997), in which I participated. Personally, I have been involved in the child development field during most of my career and was trained in psychoanalysis at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis (1964-71), teaching there and subsequently at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. Yet I have always been opposed to mainstream positions in developmental psychology and psychoanalysis and considered it my duty and desire to point out the culture-bound nature of their theories and empirical generalizations.

In both papers this critique is accompanied by efforts to reconstruct the psychology of childhood experience in cultural terms, i.e. in terms consistent with the growing evidence of diversity in the cultural meanings of relationships and activities in which children are engaged. Chapter 9 tries to do this through consideration of the "early experience hypothesis," i.e. the notion that conditions experienced in infancy and early childhood have a lasting psychological impact, which came under attack during the 1970s and 1980s. I conclude that our knowledge of population-specific ecological and cultural patterns provides strong circumstantial evidence for presupposing such an impact – but that it should be thought of as *enculturation* rather than individual personality.

Chapter 10 approaches the cultural reconstruction of developmental theory in psychoanalysis by focusing on culture-specific communicative behaviors that serve as entry points for the child's experience of meanings in relationships – the representations that become internalized in the course of development. Using evidence

from our Gusii study of the 1970s, I go on to consider the issue of autonomous ego functions as conceptualized in psychoanalytic ego psychology. Comparison of middle-class Americans with Gusii indicates that though Americans value personal autonomy and Gusii do not, Americans are actually far more dependent on external systems in the way they live their lives. It is the selective, culture-specific meanings of autonomy or independence (or self-esteem) that make a difference to the development of the self – an essential point for a cultural psychoanalysis of the future.

A major point in both articles is that non-pathological development of self and ego in humans comes in the wide variety of cultural forms on which we increasingly have evidence. Child development specialists and psychoanalysts are strongly inclined to see difference in terms of normal *vs.* pathological, and these chapters were designed to counteract that tendency and persuade them to make a place for cultural diversity.

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# Introduction

When I was a student in the early 1950s I had entertained the idea of working in India, China or Japan but set it aside when the opportunity arose to join the East African Institute for Social Research, then directed by the British anthropologist Audrey I. Richards. In 1982, at the age of 50, after being involved with African studies for 27 years, I acted on the desire (which my wife shared) of getting first hand experience on another continent, and we landed in Mexico. I continued to think of myself as an Africanist, but my interest in the comparative study of socialization, family life and educational change, in Third World societies required a broader range of knowledge and research.

Chapters 11 and 12 represent our Project on Maternal Schooling, the fieldwork for which – carried out by Sarah LeVine and numerous Harvard students and research associates – went on for 15 years, from 1983 to 1998 and was eventually extended from Mexico to Nepal, Zambia and Venezuela. The problem for this project came not from anthropology, psychology or educational research, but from demography, where by 1980 there were bodies of evidence showing a statistically independent impact of women's schooling on reduced fertility and child mortality. These demonstrations that a woman's school attainment was not simply a proxy for other socioeconomic variables opened a door for educational research that could illuminate the pathways through which the demographic effects of schooling were mediated. Most educational researchers were not interested, inasmuch as the findings were from developing countries (although there are strong relationships between women's school attainment and demographic variables in the United States) and perhaps also because the findings seemed to show that even inadequate schools have highly beneficial effects.

In any event, Sarah and I were interested, partly because we had learned through the World Fertility Survey that the Gusii had one of the highest total fertility rates in the world (see Chapter 9) – which made us think about the impact of high fertility on child care – and partly because connections between women's schooling and patterns of child care had already become evident in urban Africa many years before (see Chapter 2). Investigating fertility decline, however, led us away from Africa and toward those parts of Asia and Latin America where the fertility transition was well under way. The Population Council funded us to study these connections, initially in India, but when we could not get government permission to do research there, in Mexico. Fortunately, we had contacts there through Mexican students at Harvard and we undertook the ambitious study that is reported in Chapter 11 and 12.

That study combined demographic with child development approaches to interview more than 300 mothers from low-income neighborhoods of Cuernavaca and

observe a sub-sample of 72 at home with their infants and young children. Chapter 11 also includes interview material from a study in the rural community of Tilzapotla thirty miles south of Cuernavaca by F. Medardo Tapia Uribe for his doctoral dissertation at Harvard. Our reason for including observations of mother-infant interaction was our hypothesis, derived in part from our Gusii research of the 1970s (see Chapter 10 and LeVine et al., 1994) that more schooled women would be more likely to engage their infants and small children in verbal interaction, as opposed to protective and soothing caregiving, that was more demanding of their attention. This kind of labor-intensive child care would produce a verbal toddler whose demands for interaction continuing into the second and third years of life would make the mother less inclined to bear another child, regardless of her original planned family size. This hypothesis owes something to Caldwell's (1982) argument that unschooled parents whose children attend school will curtail their fertility, due to their experience of how much it costs to send each child to school – not in fees, but in the ancillary costs of clothing, school supplies, providing a place at home for homework, loss of the child's labor contribution to the household, and anticipated costs of a child whose career comes before duty to parents. In our argument, the mother with more schooling, who brings from her classroom experience a model of adult-child interaction in which verbal communication is paramount, sets in motion during the child's infancy a chain of communicative expectations that is so demanding of her time and attention as to convince her to bear fewer children than her mother. The mother-child observations in Cuernavaca, where fertility was already in decline, showed that a mother's schooling predicted her verbal responsiveness, particularly at 15 months, when the child's language development is well under way.

The question of whether the verbal responsiveness of the mother affected the language development of the child is answered in Chapter 12, which shows the results of our follow-up study of the children at 31 months of age. This is the only longitudinal data on the effects of socialization practices on child development that I can show from the various cross-cultural studies in which I have been involved. Longitudinal studies are expensive, and the resources needed to sustain them in developing countries have been available for a small number of biomedical investigations of childhood disease and nutrition but not for educational investigations of infancy and early childhood. This will only change when child development researchers in the developing countries take the initiative and launch longitudinal investigations of behavioral development that can attract domestic and international support.

In Chapter 12 we began to answer the question of what happens to culture and the perspective of enculturation when the focus is on a process conceptualized in transcultural terms, viz. the expansion of schooling. We found it difficult to focus on local culture and macrosocial process simultaneously, and we cannot claim to have optimal depth of field – when one dimension is in focus, the others are blurred. In this chapter we place the parents of a rapidly changing urban setting at the intersection of parameters of *tradition* with those of *transition*; the former refers to local cultural models of reproduction and childcare received from forebears, the latter to the factors of socioeconomic change affecting the current generation. The ways in which a

particular generation of parents in a particular place resolves these multiple influences on their behavior cannot be anticipated theoretically but requires empirical observation. Our focus on school attainment as a determinant of individual differences in maternal care in these Cuernavaca neighborhoods does not mean that the mothers there did not share beliefs and norms regardless of schooling. Our findings on mothers, though limited by being cross-sectional, suggest that as the average schooling of mothers continues to increase in urban Mexico, the socialization of young children will change toward increased verbal interaction.

The Project on Maternal Schooling continued, as indicated above, with another study in Tilzapotla (Dexter, LeVine and Velasco, 1998), two in Nepal (Joshi, 1994; LeVine, LeVine & Schnell, 2001), and one each in Zambia (Stuebing, 1997) and Venezuela (LeVine, LeVine & Schnell, 2001). These are cross-sectional studies, but focused during the last decade on women's literacy skills acquired in school as a pathway mediating between school attainment and the health behavior of mothers.

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