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Family and Human Development Introduction

Bernadette N. Setiadi

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INTRODUCTION

Surpassed only by social psychological topics, themes and issues in human development have been of continuing interest to cross-cultural psychologists. This is clearly shown in the cumulative content of the proceedings volumes resulting from the sixteen biennial international IACCP congresses. In all proceedings volumes since the inaugural meeting in 1972 in Hong Kong until the sixteenth gathering in Yogyakarta, several chapters dealing with various aspects of human development have been a constant fixture. In about half of the volumes containing selected proceedings of the first fifteen congresses, the chapters dealing with different aspects of the behavior and adjustment of either young children, adolescents, or both, were distributed across different sections. In the other half of the volumes such chapters were included in separate sections with titles reflecting the developmental theme either explicitly, such as "Contributions of special relevance to children and youth" (proceedings of the 14th congress, 1999) or implicitly, such as "Cross-cultural research with implications for education" (proceedings of the 3rd congress, 1977).

In terms of content, in the first half of the congresses at least one chapter dealing with the theory of either Jean Piaget or Lawrence Kohlberg has appeared in the proceedings volumes, whereas in the second half of them the apparently popular developmental theme revolved around maternal roles and/or mother-child relationships. Although not many total chapters are involved in this assessment, it does perhaps suggest changes in topical interest over time.

This section, entitled "Family and development" consists of six chapters. In the first chapter Tulviste presents the results of a study which looked into similarities and differences in mothers' conversational styles with their adolescent children within families in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, and the U.S. She concluded that conversational styles are culture-specific and although the country in which the family lives seems to have an understandably large influence on real-life conversational style, the cultural practice of talking seems to be relatively difficult to change.

Schwarz, Trommsdorff, and Chakkarath present a study on the patterns of correlations between a variety of socio-psychological factors and

the quality of the adult mother-daughter relationship in Germany, the Republic of Korea, and Indonesia. They found that similarities across the three cultures prevailed over differences, thereby providing insight into the interrelationships between social change towards modernization and the family relationships in adulthood.

Wenzler-Cremer reports a study on the transmission of cultural standards and behavioral settings in two groups of young women living in a bicultural family. In one group the mother was Indonesian and the family lives in Germany, while in the other the mother is German and the family lives in Indonesia. She concluded that despite the special challenges, difficulties, and inner conflicts with which the young women have to cope, they are neither disturbed nor maladjusted. Most of them view the two cultures as two offers – which we assume they mean as two interesting challenges — and regard bicultural socialization as enriching their lives.

Zheng, Liu, Tang, and Shi focus on the Chinese government's one child policy to control population growth. They present background information on the demographic situation, related psychological studies, and a preliminary investigation on the parent-child relationship and communication patterns. Despite concerns about the psychological effects of being only children, the study, which compared the parent-child relationship and communication as well as the child's adaptation among young adults coming from one-child and non-one-child families who live in a separate place, showed more frequent communication with parents as well as better adaptation among only children than among non-only children.

Jaafar, Kolodinsky, McCarthy, and Schroder report a study which compares the impact of gender and cultural differences on moral judgment as assessed by Kohlberg's moral dilemma among American and Malay adolescents. They found that the Malay adolescents exhibited a slightly higher moral reasoning stage than the Americans. Regarding gender, males demonstrated a higher level of moral reasoning in the American sample, but Malay females showed the highest level. Qualitative analysis of the data showed that the respondents' moral judgment in both cultures reflect values characteristics of their respective socio-cultural milieu.

Boehnke reports a study which compares the impact of fear of social exclusion on achievement in mathematics among adolescents in Germany, Canada, and Israel. It showed that although the "objective" mathematical abilities of the Canadian and Israeli students were lower than those of the

Germans, the fear of social exclusion through being labeled a "Streber" was more closely related to lower grades among the Germans than among both Canadian and Israeli students, who reported better grades and higher self-esteem.