EIGHT

The Socialization of Social Trust: Cultural Pluralism in Understanding Attachment and Trust in Children

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Introduction: Social Trust and Attachment

Research at the intersection of culture and psychology brackets in the cultural learning environments of the communities and people we are studying (Edwards and Bloch 2010; Worthman 2010). It privileges the experiences, beliefs, practices, and goals that are alive in that social world. Of course, comparisons across cultural communities depend on the presumptions of human universals and a common human nature as well. Hence, common biological hardware, constrained variation in cultural ecologies and family systems, and diverse local communities all are relevant in the study of human development. Attachment systems provide an important example of the value of understanding these universal processes in cultural context. Attachment systems around the world have universal features, but with enormous diversity, not uniformity, in their contexts, practices, cultural meanings, and outcomes (Shweder, 2012).

The study of attachment in developmental science has typically been used to claim the universality of social orienting mechanisms, with powerful evolutionary antecedents. The claim is that at least some behavioral processes are similar across societies, and that the attachment system and outcomes are broadly similar as well. In their review chapter, for example, Mesman, van IJzendoorn, and Sagi-Schwartz (2016, 809) conclude that

> the available cross-cultural studies have not refuted the bold conjectures of attachment theory about the universality of attachment, the normativity of

> secure attachment, the link between sensitive caregiving and attachment security, and the competent child outcomes of secure attachment. In fact, taken as a whole, the studies are remarkably consistent with the theory. Until further notice, attachment theory may therefore claim cross-cultural validity.

The measures used and conceptual framework for thinking about attachment have become standardized, and it is this literature using standard methods and designs that Mesman et al. review. (They do not review the extensive ethnographic literature describing attachment, caretaking, and security, for example.) This standardization, of course, can improve systematic comparative research. At the same time, however, reliance on exclusively standard measurement out of cultural context can lead to a false or overgeneralized conclusion that attachment beliefs, behaviors, and outcomes are highly similar across communities. Attachment research is an important field that includes universalism—both a universal mechanism (the attachment-sensitive period in children and the stress-buffering roles of privileged caretakers) and a likely universal developmental goal (security, safety, buffering of stress)—but where there is far less uniformity and far more diversity and pluralism than is claimed in most developmental research on these topics.

Mesman et al. (2016) make a strong claim for the universality of attachment theory and processes, yet at the same time strongly support and recognize the importance of cultural-contextual approaches to attachment: "Attachment theory without contextual components is as difficult to conceive of as attachment theory without a universalistic perspective" (808). They recognize the significance of multiple care and attachment figures, acknowledge variations in the applicability of constructs like "sensitive caregiving," recognize the variety of modalities through which caregiver responsiveness is expressed, and encourage more studies of the important influence of socioeconomic circumstances in particular. With regard to the limited number of diverse, cross-cultural samples, they see clearly that with respect to socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, and other variation around the world, "the current cross-cultural database is almost absurdly small compared to the domain that should be covered" (809). So the awareness of these issues is a part of the attachment research field, yet these concerns are not widely recognized or even admitted, and the implications not often appreciated or acted on in literature reviews, theory, research design, and sampling frames. Popular and journalist versions of "attachment parenting," attachment theory, and its clinical implications are even more remarkably unaware of these criticisms (for example, see Murphy 2017).

I will describe several lines of evidence and conceptualizations of children and developmental processes that challenge the conventional, universalistic understanding of attachment, further modify strong claims about the universality and cross-cultural validity of attachment theory and processes, and suggest ways to encourage pluralist and contextual research in this field. First, there does appear to be a sensitive period in development, with an onset around nine or ten months of age, when infants begin to show preference for their most frequent caregivers and avoid and show fear toward others. Certain caregivers are usually more preferred or privileged and can reduce child distress. The sensitive period for a positive emotional response to these most frequent caregivers, however, is not the only evolved mechanism children use to learn about safety and security in their environment and who can reduce distress. There are many such mechanisms, and children use them to capture social and cultural and linguistic information of all kinds. Children are prepared to seek information from the environment about what is safe, dangerous, and advantageous in that child's world in many ways, not only through the specific attachment-sensitive-period mechanism. Why, then, are all these learning mechanisms and the cultural learning environment around children they learn within, not fully included in understanding attachment?

Second, plural caretaking was likely favored in the past and is still today the favored form of care in most of the world. What would have been selected for in the environment of evolutionary adaptation: exclusive socioemotional attachment to the single maternal caretaker, or plural attachments to several caregivers that provided socially distributed care, attention, safety, and security? The selection for socially distributed multiple care is much more likely. Because of the high mortality and harsh, unpredictable, and variable environments that children and caregivers faced throughout our history and still face today, the likely alternative then and still today would be multiple, socially distributed, diverse care (Weisner 2005).

Third, although there clearly are universal processes at work during the attachment period, "all we can ever observe is the particular attachment behaviors that have been organized by what a particular culture expects from and gives to infants" (Gaskins 2013, 59). Greater use of mixed methods, integrating both these local and universal maturational models, should drive attention to local context and cultural diversity in attachment research (Weisner 2014). The methods used to describe, measure, and assess attachment nonetheless continue to be very narrowly defined. Making it a routine practice in research to place a child and caregivers into their local cultural ecology, and bracketing that context fully into the description and

analysis of attachment and security, would put to empirical test conclusions of uniformity across the remarkably diverse contexts children are in. Local adaptation of standard measures also will add value to descriptions and measurement validity. Mixed methods arguably should be the default for a research program on attachment. Inclusion of diverse samples, and careful attention to cross-cultural evidence, should be as well.

Finally, there is an inevitable moral valence when using terms such as *secure attachment*, *sensitive parenting*, or *attuned caregiving and behaviors*. These labels (secure, sensitive, attuned), regardless of the reasons they may have been chosen in the past, are not appropriate, because their opposites inevitably end up being assigned to the non-Euro-American world or to those less educated and resource-advantaged within a country (LeVine and Miller 1990). How can it be justified to characterize individuals, families, and entire cultures and ethnic groups or social classes as insecure, insensitive, and unattuned, without careful attention to *why* caregivers and children are acting as they are and what their opportunities, constraints, and beliefs and goals are in their local environments and communities?

Evolution Prepared Children to Gather Information from the Environment Using Many Learning Mechanisms, Not Only the Attachment Response

The attachment response in infancy is a sensitive period in development, for parents and children alike. It is a mechanism ensuring the orientation of infants and young children to significant social others in their world. A key function of the attachment system is to *guide the child into social learning* through the special influence of their attachment figures, as well as regulating child stress. Consider, however, the nineteen other putative evolved mechanisms that lead to preparedness for the acquisition of social and cultural knowledge proposed by Melvin Konner (2010, 720, table 29.3), in his encyclopedic study of the evolution of childhood. He describes four broad categories of evolved learning, attentional, and emotional/motivational mechanisms in children, and the evolved capacities that are involved in the acquisition of culture. He calls them the cultural acquisition devices: *reactive processes in the cultural surround* (such as classical conditioning, or social facilitation due to reduced inhibition, or instrumental or intentional conditioning); *social learning* (such as scaffolding, mimicry, imitation, direct instruction); *emotional/affective learning processes* (attachment learning appears here, along with positive or negative identification, emotional management and learning through rituals and scripts); and *symbolic processes*

(cognitive modeling, schema learning, narrative and thematic meaning systems). The behavioral expression of security and trust in relationships in community context are influenced by *all twenty of these*—including, but hardly limited to or dominated by, attachment processes. The attachment *system* is the unit for study, and it includes these multiple mechanisms and resources for psychobiological regulation and learning.

Hence evolution has ensured that children enculturate to the local world of their caregivers, families, and communities through multiple mechanisms in many different ways—not by relying exclusively or primarily on a single mechanism such as attachment responsiveness (Super and Harkness 1999). The emotional processes of attachment, seen as an evolved mechanism to recruit the child to orient to its primary caregivers, are in conversation with all the other mechanisms. How do all these learning processes form a choir in each local cultural community and in each family situation, a choir with many different songs and lyrics in many different and wonderful cultural idioms, all contributing to the goals and moral directions for life desired in that community, with various scripts for producing a secure and sufficiently trusting person? This surely is an understudied and undertheorized question in the field of attachment.

Attachment processes depend substantially on all these cultural acquisition device mechanisms. Yet how can it be that attachment, as but one of a putative twenty such evolved mechanisms for enculturation, is so disproportionately foregrounded, when so many other mechanisms certainly also have evolved to ensure social learning, stress regulation, and child survival in the context of social relationships? Furthermore, what evidence is there, since there are these nineteen other mechanisms, that early attachment-sensitive periods and child and caregiver preparedness would be uniquely efficacious, in comparison with all the others?

Human communities do not rely on just one of these twenty mechanisms over and above all the others for ensuring a sense of security and social relatedness, either in the development in individual psychological attachment or recognition of social group affiliation. Furthermore, many of these learning capacities come on line right around the same times in infancy and early childhood as the preference for familiar persons and the attachment system. Gaskins points out, for example, that the attachment system matures at about the same time as "locomotion, differentiation between familiar people and strangers, increased memory (including object permanence in the real world), and understanding and sharing attention and [the recognition of others' goals and] intentions" (Gaskins 2013, 58). There may well be an underlying, universal "interactional instinct" to affili-

ate with others in general, a propensity in infancy and early childhood to imitate and model others and seek out verbal as well as nonverbal cues (Joaquin and Schumann 2013).

It also is clearly untrue that cultural groups overwhelmingly respond to and emphasize the dyadic attachment relationship with a single caregiver over all other ways of socializing emotional security and stress reduction. The research question should rather be framed as, How do the many cultural acquisition devices interrelate to produce a sense of relational trust and security in children in diverse cultural learning environments around the world? As Carlson and Harwood (2014) put it in a recent chapter, "the precursors of healthy attachment relationships are not specific, individual behaviors on the part of isolated caregivers, but rather systems of supports that nurture the development of caregivers who are able to successfully protect and socialize their children" (27). As Johow and Voland (2014, 40) argued on the basis of their work on evolutionary anthropology, "If the child has to cope with varying conditions, then conditional development strategies that are able to react to the respective ecological conditions are superior to an inflexible behavior pattern."

Further, these local ecologies produce patterns of lower attention to infants and young children as well as increased attention. For instance, Lancy (2014) reviewed some two hundred ethnographic studies that described beliefs, practices, and ecologies around the world related to infant care and parenting. He described the ecological and other conditions that encourage many communities to maintain a degree of emotional distance from their young children, not necessarily continuous closeness: "Six factors emerged from the survey that militate against or temper the attention paid to infants. These are as follows: high infant mortality rate and chronic illness; the mother's vulnerability; alloparenting and fostering; dysfunctional families; neglect because the infant is unwanted or on probation; abandonment and infanticide; and a utilitarian view of offspring" (70). Hence not showing high degrees of "attuned" and "sensitive" behaviors (as defined by middle-class Western presumptions and associated measurement scales) would be appropriate parenting, because keeping some emotional distance fits with the local environment, parental beliefs, and/or mortality threats children and parents face.

Caregiving behaviors of course differ, sometimes dramatically, around the world (Broch 1990; Keller 2013; Quinn and Mageo 2013a). For example, some cultural communities want young children to show emotional and behavioral calmness and attentional focus when around kin other than their mother, and even around strangers, as Keller and Otto (2009)

describe for the Nso in Cameroon. This pattern occurs widely in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere (LeVine et al. 1994). In many communities, caretakers are anticipating the likelihood of children becoming distressed, and the goal is to minimize the distress that the child shows by interacting with the child before overt stress is shown (by the child crying, for example), while in other communities the child shows distress first and then caretakers respond. Both are common patterns that are each believed in many communities to lead to the child's security, social competence, improved self-regulation and greater independence.

Cultural goals regarding the display of emotional expression thus vary widely. Children are encouraged to be calm among the Nso; to be socially active and accepting of many other people and caregivers among the Beng (Gottlieb 2004); quiet, respectful, and close to sibling caregivers among the Gusii (LeVine et al. 1994) and Abaluyia (Weisner 1997); lively and "vivace" among Italian families (Axia and Weisner 2002); displaying symbiotic harmony in relationships with anticipatory empathy and relational understanding of others in Japan (Rothbaum et al. 2000); encouraging shared care with multiple and deep emotional attachments to joint family households in North India (Seymour 1999, 2004); and displaying verbal, outgoing, responsive, "independent," and "exploratory" responsiveness (described as parental "concerted cultivation") for many US middle-class families (Lareau 2003). This means that good, appropriate parenting—attuned and sensitive parenting—is not attuned only to the child at hand focused on that child's moment-to-moment interactional needs. *Good, sensitive, security-enhancing parenting is attuned to the cultural expectations for emotional display, and the kind of person and life goals desired, as well as to the particular child at a given moment.*

Socially Distributed Care and Multiple Attachments

Socially distributed childcare and multiple attachments are common, in addition to or instead of monomatric dyadic care with a privileged secure base of a single caregiver. Socially distributed caregivers include siblings, cousins, aunts and grandparents, hired caretakers, and others, along with parents. Multiple caretaking emphasizes less intense affective and maternal ties in favor of relationship nets spread among many people. Learning how to get and give support in such relational networks is part of learning how to survive in often harsh, uncertain, and impoverished circumstances for children around the world today and certainly in the past.

Crittenden and Marlowe (2013, 72) point out that "flexibility in child-

care patterning [alloparenting and multiple care] and subsistence behavior would permit a hominin mother to thrive in any ecological setting, a characteristic highlighting human behavioral diversity." To the extent that evidence from contemporary foraging societies allows reconstruction of past environments, "the pan-forager model of child care . . . involves a wide array of caregivers who routinely provide high-quality investment to infants and children" (73). A careful and detailed study of the Aka foragers in Cameroon, for example, revealed that children show attachment behaviors to multiple individuals in their close-knit community. Most children did not display strong reactions to their mothers' departure; and maternal sensitivity scores (measured by Aka mothers who scored as very responsive and sensitive to their infants) were not related to children's distress at departure. At the same time, children with more sensitive allomothers showed less fussing and crying during their mother's absence.

> Aka children . . . are integrated into the social fabric of Aka life from the moment of birth. It is more likely that multiple attachments form simultaneously rather than sequentially, as they do in Western populations, and children's expectations regarding who will care for and protect them is naturally more distributed. Thus, children's responses to separations and reunions will not fit Western models of child behavior. (Meehan and Hawks 2013, 108)

Sibling caretaking, a widespread feature of socially distributed care (Serpell, Sonnenschein, Baker, and Ganapathy 2002), is a very common context for understanding attachment, trust, and security for children throughout most of the world (Lancy 2014; Weisner 1996; Whiting and Edwards 1988). Sibling care promotes what Margaret Mead long ago called "pivot roles" in childhood, in which developmental pathways afford the child the roles of being taken care of and then becoming the caretaker of other children younger in age. This is an expectable and culturally valorized experience during development in many communities (Weisner and Gallimore 1977). Children learn all sides of receiving and providing nurturance, dominance, and responsibility tasks and roles while young. They recognize that the intimate attachments of caregiving can and will extend to non-care contexts and that such reciprocity is at the center of "socially distributed support" within a wide network of relationships. Children become adults with relational and attachment security different from, but no less socially competent and emotionally appropriate than, what might be a working model of a single-caregiver "secure base" that is then presumably generalized to others.

Many examples in the cross-cultural record show the connections between attachment security and socially distributed caretaking. For example, Gottlieb (2004; 2014) described the world of the Beng, in which strangers are not to be feared, and training across a wide range of social mechanisms is directed at the cultural goal of encouraging sociality and multiple caretaking, with the moral goal of valorizing community and extended kin ties. Religious beliefs, economic trade, and cultural history all influence why the Beng think about strangers, caregiving, and trust in these ways, and hence what secure attachment relations mean in their world.

Not only do multiple caregivers not place children at risk, they can offer advantages to the parent, child, and family, such as protecting against the consequences of maternal mortality or other health risks. For example, Gaskins recognizes the universal attachment processes from around nine to twelve months among the Yucatec Maya, but emphasizes the nonuniform expression of security and social trust. Gaskins (2013) summarizes the contrast between the presumption of single maternal dyadic care and the preponderance of multiple caretaking found around the world and in the West today: "by coming to place their trust in multiple people, they are more likely to generalize that the world is a benign and giving environment they should explore. . . . [and] with multiple partners, they have to develop a much more complex working model of social relations, since people's interactions with them are quite different based on personality, age, roles, status and so forth" (50).

Mageo also contrasts the cultural ideals of group care in Samoa and one-to-one bonding in the United States: "Samoans view secure group bonding and a willingness to serve elders as the ideal outcome of proper child rearing. In the middle-class Northwest [United States], a capacity for secure one-to-one bonding and a willingness to explore the environment are developmental ideals" (Mageo 2013, 209). These different cultural ideals regarding children's abilities direct widely varying practices around attachment. Mageo, like Lancy, also presents evidence on the widespread use of distancing practices by caregivers—such as ignoring children, explicitly pushing them away toward others, and physical or psychological punishment (in Samoa). In Mageo's view, a focus only on sensitivity, responsiveness, and providing succor and security is insufficient for understanding attachment in any community. She also points out that we have to study culturally organized attempts to detach, separate, punish, monitor negatively, criticize, and push away children through *detachment*.

The Murik are marine foragers in the mangrove regions of the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea, a complex and difficult ecology (Barlow 2013).

Understanding this cultural ecology is essential for understanding the meanings and practices surrounding culturally desirable forms of attachment, which include cultural goals of interdependence, respect for social and gender hierarchy and discipline, sibling caretaking, and the use of food as a reward:

> Murik child rearing develops and values both independence/autonomy and interdependence/identification with group(s). . . . The qualities of a "good" person are developed through cultural forms of discipline that shape attachment orientations. . . . For example, Murik punish sibling rivalry in older siblings in order to instill caregiving qualities that extend to all senior–junior relationships. . . . food and feeding are a crucial material basis for conveying and shaping the emotional commitments of attachment. Giving food expresses maternal caregiving, while going without food expresses feelings of separation and loss. . . . Attachment emotions and behaviors are differentiated by gender in cross-sex relationships and in romantic, marital ones. (Barlow 2013, 166–67)

The different cultural emphases given to goals of autonomy, interdependence, and dependence illustrated by these ethnographic studies of culturally organized attachment systems, the different ways stress is regulated (and by whom, particularly multiple caretakers), and different goals for organizing social learning are all recurring themes throughout cultural studies of attachment. All communities require some versions of autonomy, interdependence, and dependence, but the degree of cultural elaboration or suppression of one or another differs widely, as do the contexts, ages, genders, and other circumstances in which one or another is emphasized or required. Felt security and autonomy of the child, emerging out of a secure base from a dyadic relationship, is the presumptive universal outcome in conventional attachment theory, yet empirical studies abound with evidence of other attachment systems.

Nuckolls's chapter (in this volume), for example, points out the prevalence of duality and ambivalence in the emotional attachments to human and supernatural figures in his essay on religion: "Attachment theory suggests that humans develop opposed and competing tendencies, the one toward dependency and the other toward autonomy. . . . Ambivalence arises chiefly as a result of the developmentally natural assumption that childhood dependencies, formed in relation to primary caregivers, will continue forever" (see Nuckolls, this volume). Even using the standard attachment

theory, the emotional experience of ambivalence (both wanting and not wanting something or someone) appears in religious beliefs, rather than a unitary independence and felt security.

Early language socialization in many communities also has a sociocentric pattern of practice and belief and a cultural goal that complements multiple caretaking systems. For example, Ochs and Izquierdo (2009) describe early socialization practices that orient the child outward toward others, in order to emphasize to children the importance of reading social cues and learning social responsibility. This is important for a child's sense of security and interactive competence, and a base for social trust. They describe communities (Matsigenka, in the Peruvian Amazon, and Samoa) in which socialization for "respectful awareness of and responsiveness to others' needs" and anticipation of the needs of others is learned early as a key component of emotional security and social belonging. In many African, Meso-American, and Pacific societies children learn at an early age their place in a complex social network, and adults orient the child to focus outward toward the community, not primarily to the parent, for how and when to respond appropriately and feel secure. Conversational skills, social positioning and referencing, attentional orienting, and prompting are key early sociolinguistic routines closely tied to sociocentric developmental training (Weisner 2011).

Finally, multiple caretaking itself depends on the fundamental and universal human cognitive ability to grasp the fact that others' minds are like our own—that is, the human capacity for intersubjective awareness of other minds and intentions, the capacity for joint attention, and engagement with others. Neither trust nor attachment nor sociality itself would exist, nor would any form of socially mediated attachment or sense of social security, absent these shared human social abilities. Hrdy (2009) proposes that this capacity for intersubjective awareness itself evolved along with joint care and alloparenting of offspring during human evolution. To share the care of children in a primate group, for example, requires this awareness. The mothers must have the capacity to grasp that the other mothers understand the nature of care and reciprocity, for example, just as the mother herself understands it. Hence it is likely that multiple attachments and shared caretaking evolved along with the capacity for intersubjective understanding. Security, as well as stress buffering (an important function of those privileged caretakers of a child), therefore, may have been achieved through sharing of childcare within a trusted social group, not primarily through dyadic attachment to a single primary caretaker. The adaptive

advantage of ensuring security and trust may well have been multiple caretaking practices, not exclusive mother–child dyadic care.

Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Attachment Research

Although cultural and ecological context clearly influence attachment processes and outcomes, measurement practices in the study of attachment remain remarkably narrow. The Strange Situation Procedure, the Q-Sort Attachment Interview, the Adult Attachment Interview, and similar measures are considered the gold standards for measurement. It is fair to say that absent these kinds of measures, or some newer equivalents, many would not say that "attachment security" had been measured at all. The ethnographic, fieldwork-based descriptions of attachment, caretaking, and managing child distress are very rich and provide essential new evidence (LeVine et al. 1994; Lancy 2008; Otto and Keller 2014; Quinn and Mageo 2013b). Incorporating these data into our evidence regarding attachment opens a marvelous additional source of understanding.

The world certainly is not linear or additive or decontextualized, though it sometimes can usefully be modeled as if it were (Weisner and Duncan 2014). For good *analytic* reasons, there can of course be scientific value in bracketing context out—to isolate specific behaviors in an experimental design to understand the attachment system, measured in an experiment or other structured interview, or questionnaire paradigm. But these analytic methods and research designs do not replace the importance of incorporating context. The items on the questionnaire or assessment procedures carry historical and contextual limitations in measurement. To then claim that the results can be interpreted absent equivalent scientific attention to diverse cultural contexts misses the value of the analytic approach and methods, which is to use systematic measures and designs, and then reinsert and interpret them in context.

In addition, social attachments to groups and to plural caregivers are unmeasured by scales that rely exclusively on individual dyadic psychological attachment measures. As David Lancy has pointed out from the ethnographic record, "social attachment, including attachment to collectives like the extended family and clan, is of far more importance in cultural models of human development than psychological attachment" (2014, 81). A widely shared goal in socialization beliefs described around the world is to ensure that children understand how to interpret and display appropriate *social trust* of others. Social trust requires the understanding of connections

to kin and social groups, in addition to individual/dyadic attachments. These social group connections also deserve measurement in studies of the development of security and social trust.

The Valence and Moral Direction in Judgments of Attachment Security, Sensitive Caregiving, and Attuned Parenting

A number of authors who have examined the constructs of secure attachment in a wide range of other communities have directly critiqued the explicit moral or evaluative claim being made by arraying societies or mothers or children along a unilinear scale where the label "insecure" or "insensitive" (or avoidant or resistant or disorganized) or "not attuned to the child" anchors one end of the scale—especially where this is done without consideration of the threats, resources, and opportunities characterizing these communities and families (for discussions see, e.g., Gottlieb 2014; LeVine 2014; Quinn and Mageo 2013b; Scheper-Hughes 2014). Members of these communities have questioned this as well.

For instance, the exclusive use of unilineal scales to assess sensitivity and security is unjustified, absent rich contextual understanding of the contexts of care. Comparative assessments based on describing the ideal mother using standard questionnaire items about sensitive mothering are insufficient for capturing the nature and valence of parenting within the context of the world's diverse attachment systems. The concept of attunement, which is one of the components of secure-base attachment caretaking, is now recognized as only a part of a wide-ranging set of conditions that influence attachment—only one part of a nurturing ecocultural environment. Leaving aside chaotic or pathological circumstances (which surely are found in all communities and require additional assessment and appropriate intervention), attunement and sensitivity is a blend of contextually and behaviorally appropriate practices. And like measures claiming to assess children who are secure, scales claiming to assess sensitive or attuned caretaking include their unidimensional opposites: insecure or insensitive or not attuned, without putting such assessments into appropriate context. These terms classify communities that enjoy different ways of ensuring trust and social and emotional sensitivity as inherently lesser along whatever scales or assessment systems are used to define those other socialization patterns and the parents who follow them.

It is an instructive exercise, for example, to construct scales assessing interactional quality that are based on the desired characteristics of social and emotional interaction among mothers in a different cultural commu-

nity (the Nso in Cameroon being one example) and then use both that scale and a Western scale to assess interactional "quality" or "sensitivity" (Yovsi, Kärtner, Keller, and Lohaus 2009). The German contrasting sample in the Yovsi et al. study has "low quality" interactions with young children using the Nso scale, for example, while the Nso are "lower in quality" using the Western scale. Actually, both communities have, on average, appropriate interactions that fit with their different scripts and goals, along with some components of the other caregiving script revealed in their interactions or questionnaire responses.

Similarly, attunement is not only an assessment at the scale of microinteraction with an individual child. What kind of person a parent hopes to shape through caretaking their child, influences the behavioral patterns parents will be attuned to. Parents are attuned to their cultural learning environment, their family system (not only to that individual child at hand at a given moment), their cultural ecology and resources, and other circumstances that matter for sustaining their lives in their local community. There certainly are caregivers not as effectively attuned to this broader task as others in a cultural community, and differences in children's sense of social trust and cultural competence do result. The objection to the moral valence in the current terminology and assessment of security, attunement, or sensitivity in parenting is not that such evaluations cannot or should not be made between individuals, within a cultural group or across groups. It is that the contexts that matter for security, attunement, or sensitivity should be incorporated into such measurement descriptions and comparisons before, during, and after making them.

Conclusion

A sense of security and social trust is an important component of well-being, which cannot be only an individual assessment, but rather emerges from the engaged participation of a child in the cultural activities deemed desirable in that community, and the psychological experiences, including but not limited to the experience of stress reduction or security, produced by such participation. Whom should children trust and learn from, and how will they learn how to appropriately feel, show, and receive security, trust, and social competence? Diversity, not uniformity, in these socialization activities exists around the world. Incorporating this diversity into attachment theory, methods, and research designs will only improve our scientific understanding of attachment systems.

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