

We identified three components of pronaturalism in our work with innovative American families: (1) a nonmaterialistic, nonplastic orientation to one's home environment, food, possessions, and lifestyle; (2) being warm, affectively expressive, and emotional within the family circle and outside of it where possible; (3) being loose, carefree, laid back—not "laying a trip" on one's child, or others in the family. Pronatural values are often part of a wider family effort to promote a more honest, freer kind of family life. Thus most parents' goals extend beyond changing childrearing practices to include the implementation of broader family ideals.

Here we present data on a large longitudinal sample of over 200 California families, many of whom believe in just these kinds of values. This large-scale study probably represents the broadest collection of family and socialization data on contemporary American nonconventional families available at the present time. We define the values parents describe under the general domain of "naturalism," and also specify the kinds of family lifestyles and settings in which parents attempt to implement these ideals. First, we present data on parents' beliefs and values concerning pronaturalism. Then we describe data on the practices of pronatural and nonconventional families as they try to implement these values. Finally, we compare these families on the social-interactional styles we observed in their homes with their six-month-old babies, addressing the question: Do parents appear to act differently with their babies if they are nonconventional and pronatural in their values?

Our results can be summarized as follows. There is a general pronatural values orientation among the families in our study, with three factors contained within it. Nonconventional families clearly differ from a conventional comparison group on pronaturalism. There are also childrearing practices that are associated with pronaturalism. However, the differences between various family styles on these customs is not always very large. In addition, cross-cultural data on many of these customs show that even the experimental families are not as different from the comparison group as they might have been. Finally, direct observations of mother-child interaction in the home do not show striking differences between these families on most measures. In the discussion section, we offer some interpretations of these findings. Pronatural values and practices are important and fairly consistently implemented. But it is hard to

Putting Family Ideals into Practice:

Pronaturalism in Conventional and Nonconventional California Families

THOMAS S. WEISNER, MARY BAUSANO,
and MADELEINE KORNFEIN

Many American families have the socialization of emotionally aware and sensitive children as a conscious and highly valued goal. These parents believe that an openness to one's own feelings and the feelings of others reflects a more "natural" state of being, which is best encouraged in children by what they see as a freer, more natural style of childrearing in which emotional closeness between family members is stressed. Such parents want to socialize their children unencumbered by the dictates of traditional duties and timetables. These parents also expect that this style of "pronatural" childrearing will result in a closer parent-child relationship and will produce a more sensitive child who can more freely express his or her emotions.

THOMAS S. WEISNER is Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Departments of Psychiatry and Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles.
MARY BAUSANO is a Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles.
MADELEINE KORNFEIN is a Staff Research Associate with the Family Lifestyles Project in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, Los Angeles.

ETHOS 11:4 WINTER 1983
Copyright © 1983 by the Society for Psychological Anthropology
0091-2131/83/040278-27\$3.20/1

put such ideals into practice in the sense of changing interactional styles with one's baby. What parents believe to be natural is paradoxically in many ways a product of cultural categories. The constraints of our own eco-cultural niche (Super and Harkness 1980) have a great deal to do with what "pronatural" families are like, and with how they implement their socialization ideals.

THE CONVENTIONAL AND NONCONVENTIONAL FAMILIES: SAMPLE AND METHOD

These data come from the Family Lifestyles Project¹ (Eiduson 1978; Eiduson and Weisner 1978), which has been following over 200 conventional and nonconventional families with young children since 1974. All the parents are Caucasian and are from middle- and working-class childhood backgrounds. The parents were between 18 and 35 years old at the time their babies were born, and 75% were having their first child. All were living in the Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, or Mendocino County areas of California when first interviewed in 1974-1975. All the mothers were contacted during their third trimester of pregnancy and they, their families, and the babies subsequently born have been followed since then. All the babies were screened for neurological status at birth and given a pediatric exam at one year of age; no babies were physically abnormal or in seriously impaired health.

A quarter of these families comprise a comparison group of two-parent, married, nuclear families, most of whom were selected through referrals from a random sample of California obstetricians—this is the "conventional" family sample ($N = 50$). The remaining 150 "nonconventional" families are defined by a combination of residential and marital criteria. One group of 50 includes single mothers (women who elected to bear their child without a mate); another 50 are social contract families (couples who were not legally married at the time of their baby's birth, but who continue to live together). A final group of 50 consists of families living in

various kinds of communes, including informal domestic arrangements, and formal creedal communities. (Couples in communes can be married or in a social contract relationship, or a single mother could live communally.)

This is a remarkably diverse group of families—in their values, life experiences, work and occupational positions, and in many other ways. They live on farms, in mountain houses, in collective urban houses, and in large and small towns throughout California. Some belong to unusual religious or ideological communities. Some have tried to sustain political activism or make overt efforts to speak out for change and dramatically unconventional kinds of behavior, but others do not do so or have changed in this regard since their children were born.

Within each of these family styles there is considerable diversity. After our contact with the sample during the first year of the study, we identified some qualitative patterns within each group (Kornfein, Weisner, and Martin 1977). *Nestbuilders* are single mothers who intended not to have men live with them, who planned for their child and have tried to sustain a career, work, and social life in their newly made "nest"; these women tend to be older, better educated, with careers or work that provides income and satisfaction. *Post-Hoc Adapters* are single mothers who may not have fully planned for their motherhood, but who adjusted to their pregnancies when it became apparent that they were not going to marry; these mothers have plans to continue on their own but would for the most part consider marriage in the future. These women are frequently in their mid-twenties, and use welfare, parents' support, and some work income. *Unwed Mothers* are women who wanted to and still hope to marry and who are actively seeking a change in their single parenthood when the right mate comes along. These women are younger, with little work experience, and may live at home for a time after their child is born.

Two kinds of social contract couples are: (1) *Committed Social Contract* families, who are not married to their mate as a planned and intended choice, and who believe for a variety of reasons that their relationship will be stronger if each partner retains a certain independence; and (2) *Circumstantial Social Contract* couples, who intend to or might marry if circumstances change, or who might also leave their partner.

¹ This work is supported by the National Institute of Mental Health Grant No. 1-R04-05 MH 24947 and Carnegie Corporation Grant B3694-06. Bernice T. Eiduson is Principal Investigator of the Family Lifestyles Project. Joyce McClarty and Cora Lee Yale of the Health Sciences Computing Facility assisted in data preparation and analysis.

Two kinds of commune chosen by nonconventional families are (Weisner and Martin 1979): (1) *Creedal Communities* with a formal ideology, a large membership that is usually hierarchically organized, clear boundaries, many group activities which take place within the community, and group provision of much subsistence and economic support for its members; and (2) *Domestic Living Groups* with a smaller, unbounded, rapidly changing membership, not living together primarily for ideological reasons, without central leadership, and with members typically participating in work and other activities independently of the group. The creedal communities include families committed to a variety of Eastern religious philosophies, Christian fundamentalist groups, and followers of individual leaders with a variety of ideologies.

The nonconventional families were located through snowball and network sampling, including personal staff contact, referrals from obstetricians and clinics where many such parents tended to go, advertisements in appropriate newspapers and newsletters, and so on. Even though this is a very mobile, changeable group of families, there had been only two percent attrition when the data reported here were collected. The project is still following nearly all the available families originally included in the study. Families received nominal payments for each procedure they completed. Their children also received up to \$80 a year in reimbursements for medical care, if the parents used any such care. The families were not chosen because of their values, beliefs, or childrearing plans—only on the basis of marital status and residential arrangements. As a result, a very wide variety of beliefs are represented in the final set of families. The sample was not preselected for “counter-cultural” values.

What do the terms “conventional” and “nonconventional” mean in describing these families? There are two issues. The first is the degree of *statistical frequency* or *demographic oddity* at this particular stage in the life cycle (mothers having their first child), or in this particular American subculture (white, nonpoverty level, etc.). Being single or unmarried while about to have one's first or second child is relatively uncommon for this subpopulation, even though many children live with one parent and many couples live together without marriage.

The second important sense of conventionality is *normative*.

Mothers and fathers having children in these circumstances have to explain why; some sort of cultural account would normally be expected of an unmarried couple about to have a child or a family living in a communal house. That is, nonconventional families would have to provide a rationale for what they are doing and perhaps explain and negotiate their rationale with others. It is not taken for granted. Two-parent, married couples, in contrast, do not have to provide a special cultural account for their family arrangement under ordinary circumstances. This view of conventionality does not in any way presume that the nonconventional families are necessarily deviant, bizarre, or odd.² The term simply refers to a combination of relative statistical rarity and a socially nonnormative family arrangement.

The data presented in this paper were collected in a variety of ways. Information about parents' attitudes and values came from face-to-face interviews and mailed questionnaires. Both methods were used to collect information about specific childrearing practices. Parents rated their own households along a number of affect and pronatural dimensions. Naturalistic observations of each family were also done in the homes when children were 6 and 18 months old; these are described later in the paper.

RESULTS

PRONATURAL IDEALS

What did the parents include under the category of “pronatural” or expressive childrearing patterns? Parents presented a number of ideas to us which indicate their commitment to a more natural, freer, more affectively and emotionally expressive style of family life. For instance, parents were asked to rate a series of important things they want to teach their child and ways they want their family to be. These include the importance of developing feelings for nature, feelings about caring and concern for other people, and whether

² It is worth noting that the families in this sample, including the communes and social contract couples, are far more diverse than the journalistic and popular media accounts of “the hippie communes” and “flakey families” purport to represent as typical. Such characterizations describe only a small portion of our sample.

parents feel they are warmer and more affectionate than their own parents were. Parents also rated their own household and family concerning the control of violence and aggression, the importance of helping others, parental and family emphasis on social-emotional warmth and empathy, and the importance of open expression of feelings in the family and with the child. Some of these indicators focus on the degree of *intensity* in any kind of emotional expression, while others emphasize the importance of *particular* expressions of joy, anger, or excitement. Parents also were asked about economic products and aspects of their daily lives that emphasized "naturalness" over plastic or materialistic practices.

Three summary factors describing parents' values and beliefs concerning pronaturalism and emotional expressiveness were generated through both a content analysis and a factor analysis of these data: (1) *Natural-Organic Beliefs* (dislike of manufactured food products, material possessions, and plastic items); (2) a *Warm, Emotionally Expressive Family* (parents' statements that their families were warm, emotional, expressive); and (3) *Relaxed, Low Conflict Families* (easy going, nonaggressive, "loose," relaxed). In many of the analyses which follow, we will use either the first factor, natural-organic values, or an extracted principal component which reflects each participant's score on all of the measures.

A one-way analysis of variance tested the relationship between family lifestyles and pronatural beliefs. The results were statistically significant at beyond the .01 level, but more importantly, each non-conventional family lifestyle was significantly different from the conventional comparison group by t-test, with the exception of the unwed single mothers.³ The rank order of the family lifestyles on pronaturalism, from lowest to highest, is as follows: conventionally married; unwed single mothers; post-hoc adapter single mothers; nestbuilder single mothers; creedal living group families; domestic living group families; circumstantial social contract couples; and committed social contract families.

THREE ETHNOGRAPHIC VIGNETTES

The statistical and self-report data on pronaturalism do not provide the qualitative flavor of how these homes feel, or the variability

in personal expression of these ideals. We have distinguished the "earthmother" families from others, for instance. The earthmother families try to live as simply, organically, and self-reliantly as possible. They are personally involved in every phase of caretaking, from food preparation to making their own toys for their babies to relatively high frequencies of caretaking, carrying, co-sleeping, etc. Many of these families live in rural or exurban locations.

Andrea, her social contract "old man" Jake, and their daughter Sunrise illustrate the strongly pronatural, "earthmother" lifestyle.⁴ Sunrise was "birthed" at home, in the presence of her father, close friends, and a midwife. The family lives in a small, wooden cabin in a heavily forested area of Mendocino. Both parents come from upper-middle-class homes and grew up in large, metropolitan areas. They left an urban, fast-paced existence in search of a simpler, more natural lifestyle. Their purposely primitive cabin includes a pot-bellied stove, water drawn from a well, and a large garden, chickens, and goats. Sunrise sleeps in her parents' bed at night; during the day she sleeps in the main room in a cradle her father made. Sunrise was nursed on demand until she was 18 months old. Sunrise did not receive solid foods until she was six months old—at that age her parents introduced her to homemade (and often homegrown) food. Andrea strongly believed in quickly gratifying every physical and emotional need or discomfort. When the parents went on outings, Sunrise was carried in a front sling or backpack by her mother or father.

At an opposite, conventional pole are Cynthia, her husband John, and their daughter Joanne. Joanne was born in a hospital, delivered by a medical doctor. The father was present for the birth but went home that night while the mother and daughter remained in the hospital. Joanne was breastfed for a few weeks, but early on was given supplemental bottles. She was introduced to commercial baby foods when she was two months old. Joanne and her family live in a large, suburban house; she has a crib and her own room. For their privacy at night, her parents close the door to her room. Joanne was fed according to a pediatrically prescribed schedule with a concern that she not be spoiled. When her parents went out, Joanne was

³ Bonferroni t-tests calculated using the BMDP7D anova program were used; these take into account the effects of doing the multiple t-test comparisons.

⁴ These ethnographic vignettes are altered in various ways to disguise the families but reflect the character of the original family case.

either left at home with a sitter, or taken along in a car bed or propped in an infant seat or stroller.

Most pronatal families did not live in rural settings, nor are as unusual in some of their life choices as Andrea and Jake. George and Vicky live in a small house in Los Angeles which they have shared intermittently with one or two other families; they are a social contract couple with some domestic living group residential experience. They take their baby boy Shawn with them most everywhere, use a sling or backpack, and provide a mix of frequent parental attention and involvement and some periods of "independence" — "to get him to explore and be on his own." Vicky breastfed Shawn frequently until he was over 18 months old, and used natural, homemade toys and foods. Both parents cut down on use of alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs during Vicky's pregnancy and afterwards, specifically because of the perceived medical and related risks. The home is an active, lively place, with people, music, and schedules constantly changing. George is involved in childcare, but as a support to Vicky, not as the primary caretaker. Since neither work at conventional careers or jobs, they are available and at home much of the time. This family provides a mixture of pronatal and highly expressive learning environments for Shawn, but with a shifting and changing rationale for it all, one which is affected by changing circumstances in their domestic and residential ecology. This pattern is more characteristic of pronatal families than the Mendocino woods family style.

The parents' own folk rationales for what they are choosing to do with their babies in order to be more natural vary widely. Thus, for example, one mother let her young infant cry for 20 minutes, saying "It was good for him to get in touch with and work through his feelings"; another mother responds immediately to her child's first whimper, believing that this is more "natural" and will "help him to feel loved and secure." Both mothers placed a premium on naturalism and emotional involvement!

One other qualitative report is relevant: these parents are appropriate and responsive parents by current American social and medical standards. There is little evidence of gross neglect or pathology. Baby care is almost always attentive, responsive, and culturally and contextually appropriate, and was not significantly more or less so for pronatal and nonconventional family lifestyle

groups. Home caretaking styles consistently show appropriate expression, positive affect, and attentiveness to babies right across this sample.

CHILDREARING PRACTICES

What kinds of specific childrearing practices did parents in nonconventional families who were broadly pronatal in their ideals choose when their children were infants and toddlers? These practices include: weaning children from the breast late, and a strong preference for breastfeeding versus bottle feeding altogether; reports of feeding babies "on demand," or without any particular schedule; introducing solid foods late; using "natural" or home-prepared foods without any additives, rather than commercial foods; co-sleeping in the same bed or room with the mother; the use of slings or other carrying devices that promote close and direct body or physical contact; and more relaxed or liberal attitudes towards nudity within the family, and with others in the community. This section describes our population on each of these practices — and also compares the Family Lifestyles sample to the available crosscultural data on the same customs.

Figure 1⁵ illustrates this comparative strategy. It compares data on the age at which children were weaned in the conventional and nonconventional samples, with cross-cultural data on the ages at which children were weaned using Whiting's (1968) data. (Barry and Paxson [1971] present similar data on a larger sample.) Clearly, the parents who weaned latest by American standards and in comparison to the conventionally married sample, wean very early when compared to the cross-cultural data. The delay in weaning is relatively small, compared to what these families might have done. Parents believe that they are very innovative, that they have put dramatic and unusual changes into practice. But the significance of

⁵ Each of the figures in this section summarize percentage differences between the conventional and nonconventional family groups. For each figure, the conventional/nonconventional group contrast is statistically significant for most or all age points using either one-way anova or t-test comparisons. In most cases, all or two of the three lifestyle contrasts (e.g., social contract vs. conventionally married, single mothers vs. conventionally married, etc.) are significant as well. The lifestyle classification at each child age takes into account changes over time in each parent's family situation.

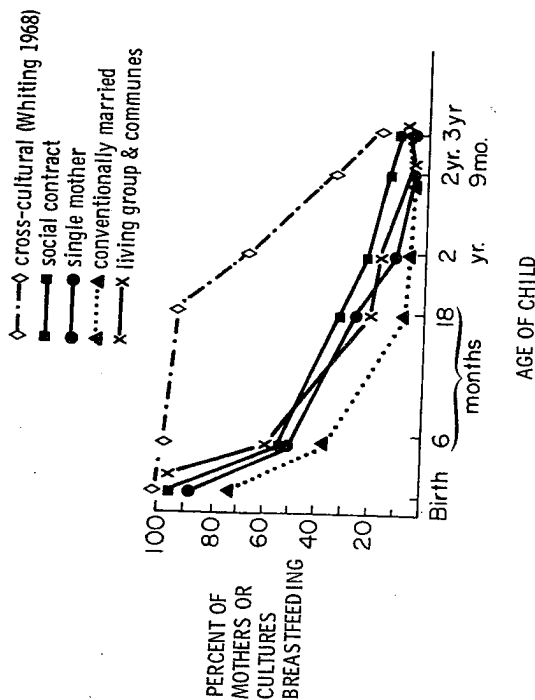


Figure 1. Percent of mothers breast-feeding by family lifestyle and age of child.

the change for behavioral outcomes has to be viewed in light of the magnitude of the shift in weaning age. Given this large cross-cultural contrast, however, conventionally married mothers did wean earlier than most nonconventional mothers; and a small group continue breast-feeding until their babies are two to three years of age.

We have also analyzed data on parents' reports that they feed their babies on demand—that is, whenever they fuss or cry, rather than waiting any length of time or feeding on a schedule or routine. Conventionally married mothers report less "demand" feeding, and end these feeding patterns sooner, than do the nonconventional mothers. There is no cross-cultural contrast worth reporting here; the number of cultures with patterns other than what we would describe as "on demand" is small.

Figure 1 and the other cross-cultural comparisons summarized here, compares *within*-culture mean subgroup differences using the Family Lifestyles sample on the one hand, and reports of the *culturally modal* age at which weaning usually occurs, on the other. Standard deviation differences for the pooled cross-cultural data are not available for these kinds of cross-cultural studies. Thus not all the mothers in the 70% of societies that report a modal age of weaning later than age two are still breast-feeding at age two. However,

without denying that there is surely intracultural variance in every society for such practices, it is safe to say that data on this variance would not change the pattern illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 2 compares the Lifestyle sample groups and a cross-cultural sample (Nerlove 1974) on the introduction of solid foods in to the diet. Conventionally married mothers do this earlier than nonconventional mothers. The cross-cultural data on this point are interesting. They suggest that the American mothers are following current medical advice (which apparently is to introduce foods at three to six months). These mothers for the most part are unconstrained by the seasonal availability of alternative types of food, as are mothers in some other subsistence modes. We also analyzed data on the reported use of "natural" foods, or foods prepared by the mother from previously unprocessed food (not prepared baby foods or formulas). Social contract couples are significantly more concerned with such natural foods than any other group and sustain their preparation of these kinds of food longer (up to three years) than any other family group.

Figure 3 presents data on the ownership and use of carrying

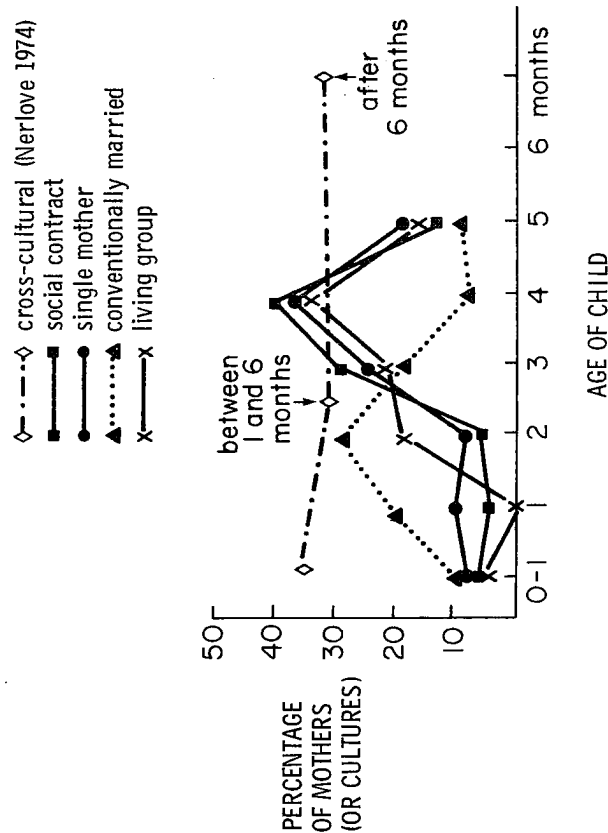


Figure 2. Age of child when solid foods introduced.

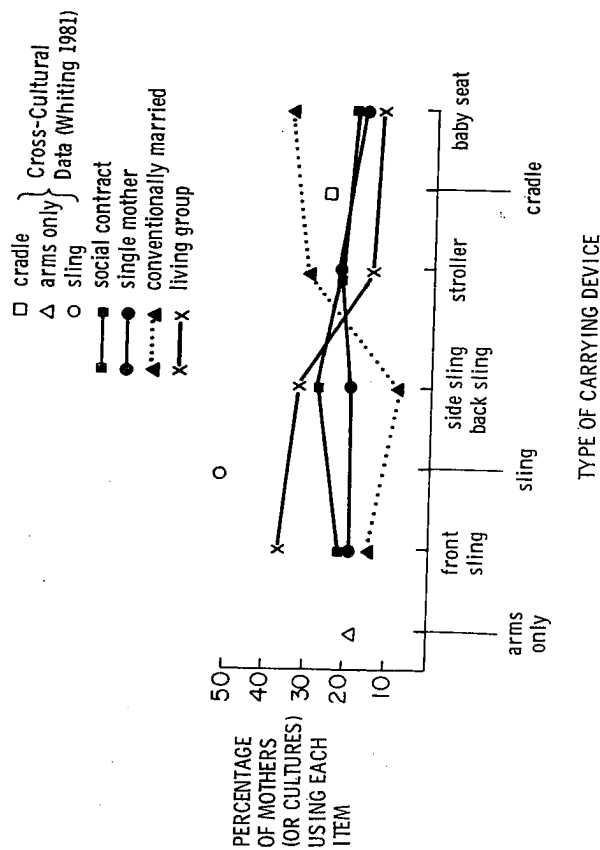


Figure 3. Proportion of mothers using various carrying devices.

devices by our families, along with cross-cultural data on carrying devices available in a sample reported by Whiting (1981). How babies and young children are carried, by whom, and how much of the time, are all important for early attachment, patterns of tactile, visual, and auditory stimulation, and the mobility and access to tasks by the caretaker. Conventionally married parents have and use strollers and baby seats more frequently than do the parents in living groups (this is the only statistically significant difference); use of slings and hip-shelf carrying is significantly more common among living group and social contract families than among the conventionally married couples.

The cross-cultural data on carrying distinguish between cradle-type devices, slings of all types, and reports of no carrying device ("arms only"). The three cross-cultural categories are shown at the bottom of the x-axis of Figure 3, arranged in order of decreasing body contact and orientation to the caretaker. The upper row of the x-axis shows the four categories of baby-carrying devices coded for the Family Lifestyles sample, arranged along the same dimension. These data suggest the following interpretations. First, more

American families have no carrying device, and use "arms only," compared to the roughly 20% of the world's societies with no carrying device reported. Second, although the nonconventional parents use slings more than conventionally married couples, there are proportionally considerably more societies in the cross-cultural sample using sling-carrying. Finally, about the same proportion of our families have stroller/baby seat devices as the proportion of cultures that use cradles. But cradles and baby seats can also be sleeping places for babies. Over 80% of our families have a baby bed or crib for their babies to sleep in. If cribs are included as sleeping places along with other furniture, the American families are far more likely to use separate furniture for sleeping than are cultures around the world.

Data were collected during home observational visits when children were 6 and 18 months old, on the proportion of time children were carried. Visits were between 1½ and 3½ hours long. The range in time children were carried was from only a few moments during the visit, to about 25% of the time. Although precisely comparable cross-cultural data on the percent of time infants and toddlers are carried is not readily available from most cross-cultural materials, the range is far wider, and the average amount of time per day considerably greater. Not a single American mother in the sample carried her child half the day, for instance, although this amount of carrying is common in many societies.

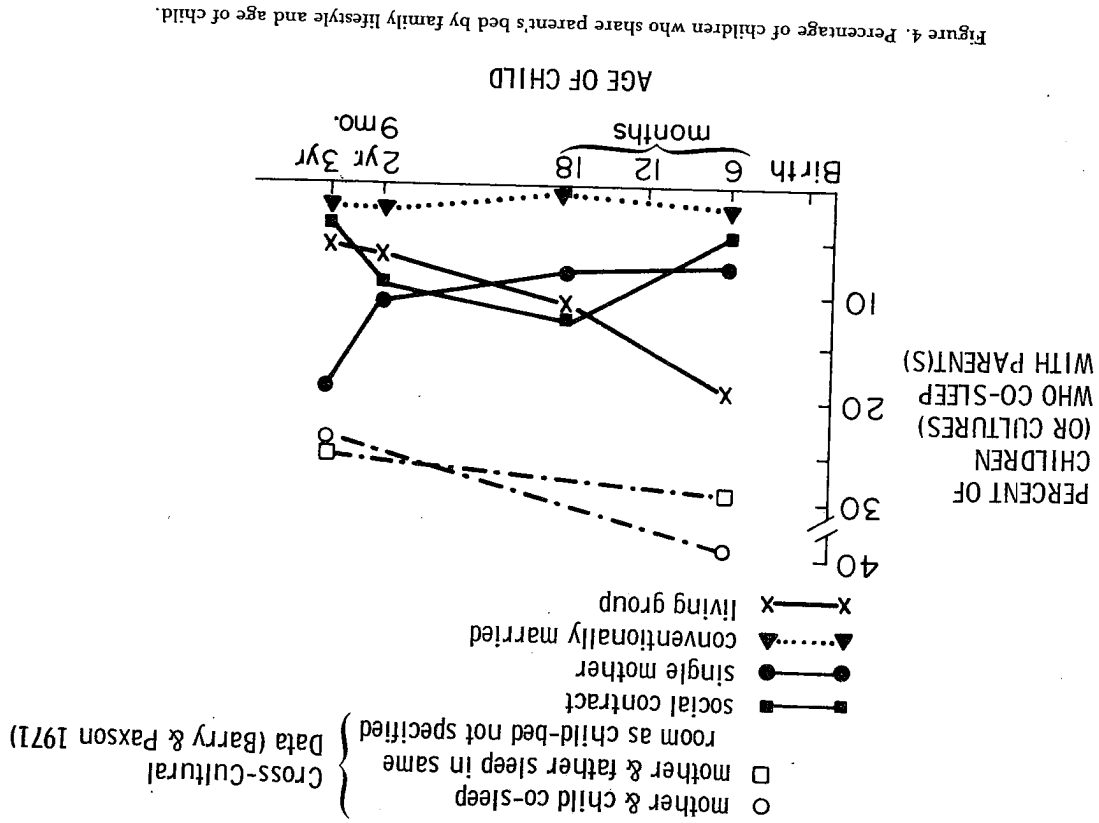
Sleeping arrangements (Figure 4) reflect a similar gap between being unusual compared to the customs in our own cultural niche and being unusual compared to what mothers do around the world. Mother-child co-sleeping in the same room or bed at six months is reported in over 70% of societies where this could be judged (Barry and Paxson 1971) and is still in the 65% range by three years of age. (This aggregate figure adds the codings "co-sleep in same bed," and "co-sleep in same room, bed not specified.") In contrast, 20% of the living group parents in our sample co-sleep with their babies at birth, and less than 10% do so in other groups. The increase in single mothers co-sleeping with their children over time also is notable in our sample, as is the decline over time in co-sleeping in living group families. American *couples* co-sleep in privacy in our culture; but *babies* co-sleep with their mothers or both parents in most of the world.

Figure 5 shows parents' reports concerning nudity within the family when their children were three years old. These are somewhat ambiguous data to assess. Most parents, regardless of lifestyle, say that they try to be "casual" about children going nude in front of parents (65 to 80%). The family lifestyle differences only emerge among the smaller group who say that they "intentionally avoid" or "actively encourage" nudity. Conventionally married parents less often actively encourage and more often attempt to avoid nudity between children and parents by the time the child is three years old. A stronger pattern differentiates parents who allow their children to go nude in front of other children not in their own family. Conventionally married parents are also more likely to say that they actively avoid having their children go nude in front of other children. The cross-cultural evidence? Stephens (1972) reports that *no* society in his sample restricts young children (to age three or four) from going naked.

Each of these childrearing customs has been implemented by at least some of the nonconventional families, and each one has a more natural, expressive, interpersonally involved pattern of early childcare as part of its rationale. But the data also indicate that in most instances the parents in pronatural, nonconventional families have only moved a relatively small distance from their conventional counterparts. Implementation of socialization ideas is constrained by the American eco-cultural niche; by these parents' unwitting adherence to anticipatory socialization practices other than consciously pronatural ones; and by the inevitable conflict of competing and equally valued goals other than pronaturalism. We will return to these issues in the discussion, but now turn to two further questions: the mutual effects of pronaturalism and nonconventional family status, and the implementation of pronatural ideals in direct social interaction with babies.

FAMILY LIFESTYLE, PRONATURAL VALUES, AND THEIR SALIENCE FOR THE CHILD

Not only do more nonconventional families hold pronatural beliefs than do conventionally married families, they are more strongly held still by that portion of the population who appear to explicitly emphasize their nonconventional status in how they label



their children. This is an important issue, since it very well could be true that parents hold pronatural views but have no interest in "laying their adult trip," so to speak, on their children. Perhaps they only hold these beliefs with reference to adult family members. Figure 6 suggests that this is not the case. Nonconventional family status, pronatural values, and a commitment to change the child all appear to be related.

We examined the names that each family gave to their baby, and three judges divided the names into two categories: unremarkable versus unusual or noticeable. Examples of remarkable names include Youthspirit, Chicago, Sunrise, Ganja, Yoniwa, Truth, Solidarity, Maka.⁶ These are names that describe a cultural code or spirit important to the parents, refer to a rock group, rock star, or some other culture hero, or express religious affiliation, a personal philosophy, etc. Nonconventional parents who label their child in a unique way very likely also feel more strongly about their family lifestyle and would be more likely to at least intend to carry their beliefs about naturalness and emotionality into their childrearing practices. Figure 6 shows that unusual naming is in fact associated with a pronatural value orientation for nonconventional families. (There were not enough conventionally married families with unusual names to complete the chart.) A two-way analysis of variance (family style by naming practice) of parents' pronatural values is significant ($p < .05$). There appears to be a synergy between the two factors (values and family style). Not only do nonconventional families hold pronatural beliefs more strongly than do conventionally married families, they are still more strongly held by a subset of nonconventional families that have chosen to explicitly emphasize with their children the importance of their nonconventional family lifestyle (as indexed by unusual naming).

CARETAKER-INFANT INTERACTION IN THE HOME: PUTTING IDEALS INTO PRACTICE

To put some of these ideas into behavioral practice in interaction in the context of regular, ongoing social relationships may be even more difficult than implementing some of the customs we have seen

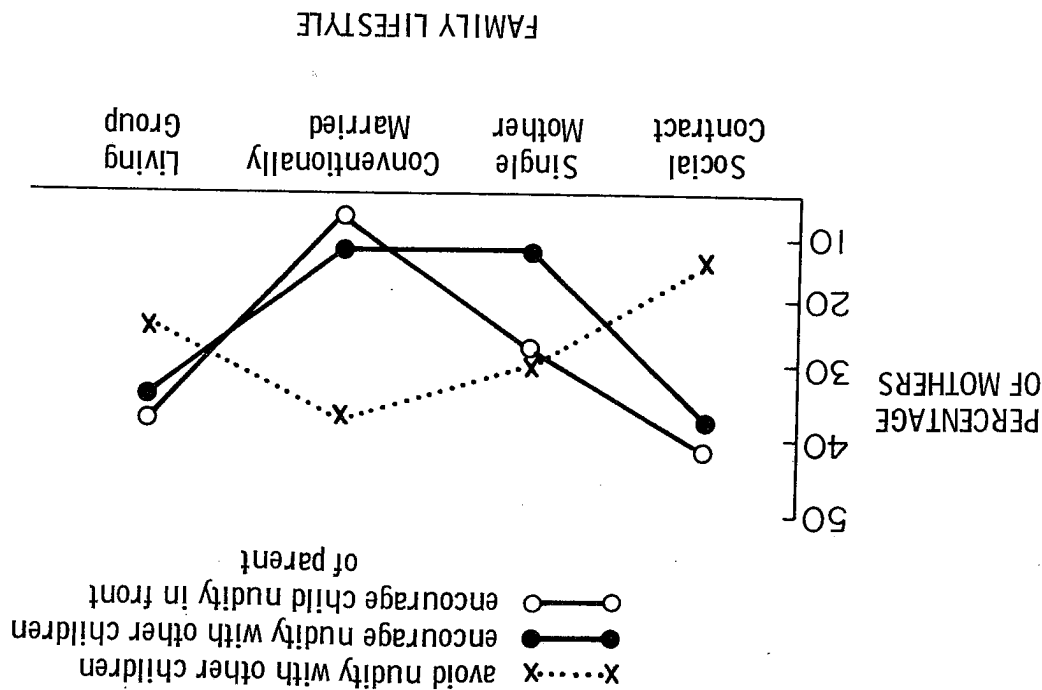


Figure 5. Mother's beliefs concerning nudity with adults or children.

⁶ These are all pseudonyms, but analogous to the real names.

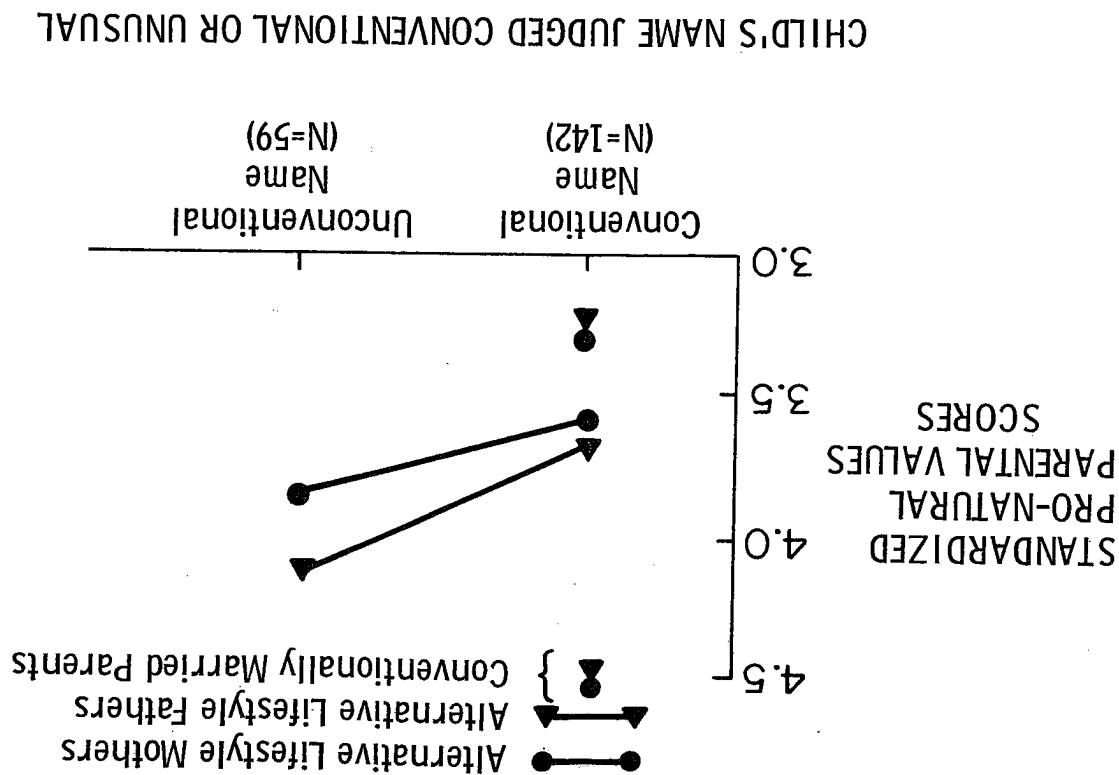


Figure 6. Overall natural—organic values, family lifestyle, and parent's naming practices.

CHILD'S NAME JUDGED CONVENTIONAL OR UNUSUAL

up to now. There are many possible reasons for this. Values developed by adults before their babies were born may have reflected hopes for adult interaction styles that cannot easily be transferred to baby care. The values sometimes conflict when parents try to apply them. Several months of interacting with one's own baby and comparative evidence from other new parents can alter one's initial ideas. More microscopic, fine-grained behavior is less subject to conscious control or to continual monitoring and comparison with generalized ideas that parents might hold. Children's individual temperamental differences and maturational state around six months also shape parents' behaviors. The eco-cultural niche also affects availability of caretakers, parents' workload, their daily routines, and so on. All these constraints restrict the range of behavioral styles that can be substantially altered in the service of expressing new, highly valued caretaking styles.

To study naturalistic caretaker-child interaction, every available family in the study ($N = 184$) was visited when their baby was six months old. The visits were planned to fit into each family's characteristic weekday morning schedule. The home observers focused on naturalistic caretaker-child interactions during the typical weekday schedule. All visits did include a feeding, and nearly all included some typical caretaking—changing diapers and clothing, getting the child up out of bed or into bed, and other tasks. And nearly all visits included nontask time—babies creeping around on the floor, in or out of play pens, carried around by mothers, or whatever occurred during the visits.

A variety of data were collected during these visits. One hour of direct caretaker-child interaction data was collected using a behavior checklist procedure with 15-second time samples of baby's and others' behavior. These were scored for frequencies and patterns of dyadic interaction. In addition, five-minute time samples were collected on the caretaker's and baby's affect, and the immediate environment around the child. All the data reported here had percent agreement reliability scores across observers over 70%, and most were over 80%. Ratings, field notes, and other qualitative data on baby-caretaker interaction also were gathered, and some are used in the interpretations, but this section is limited to direct behavioral interaction data.

Fifteen different measures of caretaker-infant affect and ex-

TABLE 1

VOCALIZATION-RELATED MEASURES^a OF AFFECT-RELATED BEHAVIORS
BY FAMILY LIFESTYLE AND PRONATURAL VALUES

<i>Vocalization-related</i>	
*Amount of mother talk to child	
*Amount of verbal interaction	
Amount of baby watching or verbalizing with positive affect	
Child babbles (rating)	
Verbal response by baby to mother's vocalization	
Caretaker responds to child's vocalization with verbal response (rating)	

* $p < .05$ for main effect of nonconventional or pronatural values, and/or two of three nonconventional lifestyle groups have significant interactions with pronatural values (all analyses are two-way anovas).

^a Behavioral measures from naturalistic home observations of six-month olds, done during awake morning hours.

pressiveness were used. Each measure had been used in at least one other published study. Each is *context-specific*, and they are grouped here into three general categories: expressive behaviors in the context of *vocalization*; in the context of generalized *attention or smiling*; and in the context of *holding*. A series of analyses of variance were done on each of the behavioral measures to look for the influence of pronatural values and family lifestyles, as well as interactions between these variables.⁷ Table 1 shows that two of six vocalization-related measures of affective expression were significantly related to pronaturalism and/or nonconventional family styles: *mother talking to child*, and *overall verbal interaction between mother and child*. However, only one of eight measures of expressiveness in the context of gazing, attention, and watching was significant (Table 2), and neither of two holding/touching measures was related (Table 3). With the exception of two mutual vocalization and one attention measure, the results are that actual interac-

⁷ These same 15 measures were run against parents' and grandparents' economic status, maternal education, and the baby's sex. None of these other three background variables had consistent effects on the 15 social interaction measures, or in statistical interaction with pronatural values or lifestyles; what effects there were remained scattered and inconsistent. There does not appear to be a major confounding effect masking family lifestyle or pronatural differences in interactional style.

TABLE 2

ATTENTION AND SMILING-RELATED MEASURES^a OF AFFECT-RELATED BEHAVIORS
BY FAMILY LIFESTYLE AND PRONATURAL VALUES

<i>Attention and smiling-related</i>	
*Child smiles in response to caretaker (rating)	
Amount of mother-to-child watch/look with positive affect	
Amount of mother-baby positive touch	
How affectionate was caretaker (rating)	
Amount of mutual gaze	
Amount mother and baby both watch	
Amount of visual interaction	
Amount of mother watch baby	

* $p < .05$ for main effect of nonconventional or pronatural values, and/or two of three nonconventional lifestyle groups have significant interactions with pronatural values (all analyses are two-way anovas).

^a Behavioral measures from naturalistic home observations of six-month-olds, done during awake morning hours.

tion styles between babies and their mothers at six months are not strongly differentiated by nonconventionality or pronatural values.

DISCUSSION

Let us summarize the pattern of results. First, there are family values and beliefs that cluster together under a general concept of encouraging naturalness and the open expression and acceptance of emotions. Second, there are a number of specific childrearing practices linked to these beliefs and to nonconventional family lifestyles. Third, intentions to socialize for emotional sensitivity and expressiveness in a natural way do not seem to produce extensive group differences in caretaker-infant social behaviors related to affect. Only mother-initiated verbalizations, vocalization, and smiling and talking to the baby are related to a pronatural, nonconventional familial orientation. Our concluding comments offer some interpretations of this pattern of findings.

"NATURAL" AND "CULTURAL" CARETAKING

LeVine (1977) has suggested that those childcare practices that are most resistant to change due to their significance for cultural

TABLE 3

HOLDING-RELATED MEASURES^a OF AFFECT-RELATED BEHAVIORS
BY FAMILY LIFESTYLE AND PRONATURAL VALUES

<i>Holding-related</i>
Proportion of time mother held
Distal vs. proximal holding

* $p < .05$ for main effect of nonconventional or pronatural values, and/or two of three nonconventional lifestyle groups have significant interactions with pronatural values (all analyses are two-way anovas).

^a Behavioral measures from naturalistic home observations of six-month-olds, done during awake morning hours.

evolution and survival are often the *least* clearly culturally articulated or conscious. Indeed, the mothers in the Family Lifestyles sample did not reflect on or talk a great deal about many things with their babies that they actually *did* do (e.g., provision of warm, attentive "stimulation" specific to babyhood, or frequent vocalizing). On the other hand, they did *not* do other things that they did not consider to be in their range of possibilities (such as continuous carrying over half the day). Thus these parents' concerns for naturalness and emotional expressiveness need to be seen in the context of other aspects of childcare where these same parents by and large implicitly followed wider American cultural expectations for infant care without a great deal of overt rationalization.

However, it is also important to observe that *in every instance where the nonconventional parents tried to be "pronatural" in some domain of childrearing, they did in fact move in the direction of the modal nonindustrial societal pattern, with the exception of more frequent vocalization*. The fact that the nonconventional families did not move very far in that direction should not obscure the finding that parents did move away from the industrial society model.

For our parents, "naturalness" implies more parental carrying and personal contact, more frequent breastfeeding, etc. Infant-care practices like these appear to be associated cross-culturally with environments where children are exposed to environmental risks sufficient to induce mothers to carry their children continuously, co-sleep with them, offer the breast on demand, etc. These practices

have been seen as evolutionarily adaptive for infant survival in high-mortality environments (LeVine 1977; Konner 1981). Were there objective conditions in the immediate environmental circumstances of the nonconventional and/or pronatural families that are like those faced by parents in nonindustrial societies? If so, these American families may have changed their baby-care practices to promote their babies' survival. In domains such as feeding practices, the pronatural parents did explicitly feel that the dangers of processed foods could have long-term deleterious effects on their children and on themselves. And there may have been certain parents, living in unusual circumstances—on a houseboat, in an isolated rural setting—who may have adjusted their infant-rearing patterns as a result of their ecology. But for the most part, parents' rationales were related to socioemotional outcomes desired by parents than to health. In any event, there is no indication that there were substantial differences in the objective dangers surrounding sufficient numbers of these children to have produced the observed differences in childrearing.^a Pronatural beliefs appear to have been the outgrowth of a conscious, intellectualized adult decision about what is natural and healthy rather than an immediately necessary life-ensuring adaptation to their environment. What is seen as "natural," then, is due primarily to certain *cultural* beliefs of American parents about what is "natural," rather than to immediate survival threats.

CULTURAL AND MATURATIONAL INVARIANCE

The pronatural mothers indeed differed in their ideals and in some childrearing patterns as compared to conventionally married families. But in cross-cultural perspective, they were not dramatically different. Thus, some of the parents breastfed relatively often and weaned late—but nonetheless did so far less often and considerably sooner than the great majority of cultures around the world. Some parents used carrying slings, but only occasionally—whereas their use is very common elsewhere, and babies

^a A series of chi-square analyses comparing a home-observational rating of overall environmental dangers to these childrearing behaviors did not reveal any differences due to danger.

might be carried much of the day. Some parents did co-sleep with their babies—but most did so only when they (the parents) slept, according to their own schedule, and not usually all night every night (no evidence of a postpartum sex taboo could be found!). In other words, the differences in infant-care patterns within the Family Lifestyles sample are small when compared to other cultures. “Pro-natural” mothers appear to be very limited in the range of variation in the pronatural practices they attempted. Innovations that are contingent on schedules, routines, local ecology, learned cultural conventions (of one’s own parents or others), or technology are less easily manipulable by parents.

At the same time, changes in schedules, routines, environments, and other features of the local niche were among the very circumstances that distinguished the nonconventional and conventional family groups in the first place. It is beyond the scope of this paper to disentangle values from setting differences and assess their separate effects on socialization practices. To some extent, they remain firmly confounded for many of our families. The values orientations of our nonconventional families influenced how they established their daily routine. Loose scheduling, a highly variable and changing home environment, and a choice of social networks and schools that support these kinds of orientations are all associated to some extent with pronaturalism and nonconventional family lifestyles. The point for cross-cultural contrasts is that whatever within-culture differences there are in the niches of these families, they remain relatively small compared to those other parents experience around the world (cf. Lewis and Ban 1977; Whiting and Whiting 1975).

WHY IS AFFECTIVE EXPRESSION RELATED TO VERBALIZATION?

What might account for the differences in affect-related socialization associated with mother-initiated verbalizations, which did not appear for other affective behaviors? Our hypothesis is that behaviors related to childcare and socialization that are most easily generalizable from other domains of adult and community life are more likely to be directly transferred to child-socialization tasks. Some behaviors appear to be transferred more easily than others from the level of a value or ideological commitment to actual

behavioral differences in interaction with the child. Maternal verbal expressiveness, for instance, appears to be an area of adult maternal and family life that can more readily be transferred to the contexts of baby-care we observed in our home visits. In contrast, in the context of tasks or situations unique to infant care (carrying, feeding, holding, etc.), it is less easy to readily transfer existing adult behavioral styles to child-adult behaviors.

Verbal responsiveness is a comfortable American adult interaction mode. American families already talk a great deal with each other and with their babies; they engage in frequent face-to-face mutual smiling, including long and intense bouts of mutual play and vocalization. These American parents are already unusually articulate and explicit in their reflectiveness about family styles and values; and they talk about these matters a great deal. This accepted American cultural style of verbal expression of affect perhaps is transferred to the style parents use for “pronatural” baby stimulation. Verbal expressiveness, which is already culturally available to American parents, may be more readily transferred to child caretaking.

WHAT, THEN, IS “NONCONVENTIONAL”? DON’T WE ALL DO THIS?

These infant-care practices are clearly part of a recent secular trend towards more natural baby care within some segments of American society. However, the Family Lifestyles sample families are more fervent and intense in their commitment to many of these childrearing practices. These parents typically began their new practices earlier and continued them longer than would be expected merely from secular trends. But most successful adaptations in fact have the character of being only somewhat different from what went before and from what others do. These families *are* “like us”—just more so.⁹ They have managed to selectively intensify their commitment to certain childrearing patterns, but not generally in a dramatic or extreme way. This process of trying to put new ideals in to practice, and then coming to terms with the constraints of one’s

⁹ Thanks to Professor Jim Turner of UCLA for this phrase, borrowed from a quite different context.

cultural niche, is precisely the mechanism of cultural evolution at work.

REFERENCES

- BARRY, HERBERT, and LEONORA PAXSON. 1971. Infancy and Early Childhood: Cross Cultural Codes 2. *Ethnology* 10:466-508.
- IDUSON, BERNICE. 1978. Child Development in Emergent Family Styles: A Research Update. *Children Today* 7:24-31.
- IDUSON, BERNICE, and THOMAS S. WEISNER. 1978. Alternative Family Styles: Effects on Young Children. *Mother/Child, Father/Child Relationships* (J. Stevens and M. Mathews, eds.), pp. 197-221. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- KONNER, MELVIN J. 1981. Evolution of Human Behavior Development. *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Human Development* (R. H. Munroe, R. L. Munroe, and B. B. Whiting, eds.), pp. 3-51. New York: Garland Press.
- KORNFEIN, MADELEINE, THOMAS S. WEISNER, and JOAN MARTIN. 1977. Women into Mothers: Experimental Family Lifestyles. *Women into Wives: The Legal and Economic Impact of Marriage* (J. R. Chapman and M. Gates, eds.), pp. 259-291. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- LEVINE, ROBERT. 1977. Child Rearing as Cultural Adaptation. *Culture and Infancy* (P. Leiderman, S. Tulkin, and A. Rosenfeld, eds.), pp. 15-27. New York: Academic Press.
- LEWIS, MICHAEL, and PEGGY BAN. 1977. Variance and Invariance in the Mother-Infant Interaction: A Cross-Cultural Study. *Culture and Infancy* (P. Leiderman, S. Tulkin, and A. Rosenfeld, eds.), pp. 329-355. New York: Academic Press.
- NERLOVE, S. 1974. Women's Workload and Infant Feeding Practices: A Relationship with Demographic Implications. *Ethnology* 13:207-214.
- STEPHENS, WILLIAM. 1972. A Cross-Cultural Study of Modesty. *Behavior Science Notes* 7:1-28.
- SUPER, CHARLES, and SARA HARKNESS, eds. 1980. *Anthropological Perspectives on Child Development: New Directions For Child Development*, No. 8. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- WEISNER, THOMAS S., and JOAN C. MARTIN. 1979. Learning Environments for Infants: Communes and Conventionally Married Families in California. *Alternative Lifestyles* 2:201-242.
- WHITING, JOHN W. M. 1968. Methods and Problems in Cross-Cultural Research. *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. 2, 2nd ed. (G. Lindzey and E. Aronson, eds.), pp. 693-728. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- _____. 1981. Environmental Constraints on Infant Care Practices. *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Human Development* (R. H. Munroe, R. L. Munroe, and B. B. Whiting, eds.), pp. 155-180. New York: Garland Press.
- WHITING, JOHN, and BEATRICE WHITING. 1975. *Children of Six Cultures: A Psycho-Cultural Analysis*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Emotions in Personality and Culture

C. E. IZARD

I'm delighted with the attention differential emotions theory is getting in anthropology and happily indebted to you for inviting me to do this commentary. I felt this invitation to serve as a discussant here today as a real challenge. Regrettably, I couldn't turn to the mainstream of American psychology for much help in discussing the contemporary research of anthropologists on emotion and socialization. I did find an inspirational and psychologically radical thought in philosophy. I refer to the work of Susanne Langer (1967) in her book *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*:

The central problem of the present essay is the nature and origin of the veritable gulf that divides human from animal mentality. . . . For animals have mental functions, but only the human being has a mind, and a mental life. Some animals are intelligent, but only human beings can be intellectual. The thesis I am about to develop here is that the human being's departure from the normal pattern of animal mentality is a vast and special evolution of *feeling* in the hominid stock. This deviation from the general balance of functions usually maintained in the complex advances of life (this vast unfolding of feelings and emotions) is so rich and so intricately detailed that it affects every aspect of our existence, and adds up to the total qualitative difference which sets human nature apart from the rest of the animal kingdom as a mode of being that is typified by language, culture, morality, and consciousness of life and death. [pp. xvi-xvii]

CARROLL E. IZARD is Unidel Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology, University of Delaware.

ETHOS 11:4 WINTER 1983

Copyright © 1983 by the Society for Psychological Anthropology
0091-2131/83/040305-08\$1.30/1