PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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CULTURE AND PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS

This chapter aims to contribute to the discussion about the quality of parent-child relations from a cross-cultural perspective. Kuczynski and the other authors in this volume are critical of the traditional and widely accepted assumption that parent-child relations are characterized by a static, asymmetric power structure and unidirectional causality—that is, that parents influence their children's development, but not vice versa. In contrast, the concept of a bidirectional parent-child relation recognizes the influence, agency, and power of the child. In line with Kuczynski, the present chapter starts with the assumption that parent-child relations are bidirectional in many aspects. In addition, however, it points out that parent-child interactions are embedded in a broader sociocultural context and that they therefore differ in quality, function, and meaning in different cultures. Furthermore, the relation of unidirectionality and bidirectionality may also

differ. The present chapter attempts to contribute to an understanding of parent-child relations from a culturally informed perspective in order to avoid ethnocentric theorizing.

Parent-child relations have been studied mostly in Western cultures and by researchers who were socialized in the West and who therefore tend to interpret their data from a Western perspective. Furthermore, researchers previously studying parent-child relations have tried to do so in accordance with the experimental paradigm of natural sciences, using the concept of “independent” variables influencing “dependent” variables. These studies have regarded the cultural context as irrelevant or as a source of error variance; the cultural context was even ignored in order to exclude confounding factors. Therefore, one must ask whether the concept of bidirectionality (Kuczynski & Lollis, in press; Kuczynski, Marshall, & Schell, 1997) is universally valid or instead applies only to the contemporary Western world. This question can be answered only by means of cross-cultural studies.

The present chapter aims to contribute to the discussion about the dynamics of parent-child relations by suggesting a new cross-cultural framework for conducting research on the dynamics of parent-child relations.

In the following sections, we will discuss the importance of the cultural context for parent-child relationships. The general idea is to point out the significant differences between cultures on the basis of available studies. Cultures and their characteristics are usually quite stable for a long period of time. This means that, within cultures, sociocultural systems have been established that have proved successful for long-term adaptation to their ecological conditions and settings. This stability can be achieved only through the successful socialization of the younger by the older generation; that is, systems are successful in the sense that the necessary behavior, skills, competence, values, and so on are developed and enacted, and in turn transmitted to the next generation. Therefore, the parent-child relationship, which is the prerequisite for this process of socialization and transmission of culture over several generations, must be embedded in the specific cultural context and must differ among cultures.

A more detailed study of cultural differences allows for a rough differentiation of relevant dimensions. The most important variations among cultures pertain to ecological differences, differences in the social structure, and the value orientations in the specific culture. In this chapter, the relevance of such differences for parent-child relations will be investigated. The *ecological conditions* can make survival easier or more difficult. Accordingly, one can expect that the parent-child relationship allows for more individual orientations and freedom of choice in the former case of easier survival, whereas conformity and strict control, which aim to ensure that the necessary survival techniques are learned, prevail in the latter case of more difficult survival. With respect to the *social structure*, hierarchically organized societies and totalitarian societies, as compared with egalitarian systems, produce and also need a different kind of parent-child relationship. The family structure is part of the social system; thus, in societies characterized by a predominance of nuclear families, a close parent-child

relationship usually can be observed. This contrasts with societies in which children grow up in rural contexts and in interaction with many adults and older children. Those in turn differ from societies in which children primarily live in peer groups so that the importance of parents is reduced. In addition, societies differ with respect to the role of formal education (schooling), which affects the function of parent-child relations differently than does informal education. Finally, a similar comparative view has to be taken with respect to the specific functions of different *cultural values*. Thus, societies in which obedience or achievement is highly valued differ from those in which living together peacefully and harmoniously is regarded as the most important value.

This global perspective makes it obvious that parent-child relationships are very closely related to the social context and therefore function differently according to the given cultural conditions. Accordingly, the role of unidirectionality or bidirectionality in the parent-child relationship varies.

Unidirectional influences occur in all cultures. For one, they are based on the biologically based dependency of infants on their caregivers, on differences in age, and on the availability of resources. Therefore, in some areas, hardly any indicators exist for children's influence on their parents' behavior. On one hand, this is universal; however, the degree and variability depend on the cultural context. On the other hand, in all cultures, certain effects of children's behavior on their parents and a related bidirectional interaction occur between parents and their children. It is assumed that this is a universal principle; however, the degree and variance of bidirectionality depend on the sociocultural context.

A culturally informed model of parent-child relationships therefore takes into account the cultural differences and the culture specificities and thus must investigate the relations between bidirectionality and unidirectionality under the specific cultural conditions. The results cannot be generalized for all areas and all age groups. This does not mean that we hold a culturally relativistic position; instead, we will also take into account the question of biologically based universal phenomena for both unidirectionality and bidirectionality.

In the following sections, empirically demonstrated intercultural differences will be discussed with respect to their relevance for the question of parent-child relationships and thus for the question of unidirectional or bidirectional relations between parents and children. According to our model, the phenomenon of bidirectionality is not simply a universal and general principle of parent-child relations. Instead, the extent to which children's behavior influences their parents' behavior and thereby affects subsequent interaction circles depends on several sociocultural conditions. This has been ignored by previous theorizing on parent-child relations, which was based on certain axiomatic assumptions about the nature of infant-adult interactions. For example, Valsiner (1989, pp. 203-205) argued that the assumption of face-to-face interactions between infants and parents, of equality of infant and parents as partners, of the infant-adult dyad as the main unit of social interaction, and of infant-adult interaction as a goal in itself may be based on an ethnocentric bias and must be investigated. For example, some parent-child relations are not based simply on face-to-face relations but rather function in more distant interactions.

Valsiner's criticism, however, has to be extended. For example, the question arises whether such "distant" or hierarchical relations are characterized by bidirectionality or unidirectionality. Therefore, from the point of view of the diversity of cultures and the diversity of conditions of parent-child relations, it seems necessary to test the occurrence and relevance of unidirectionality or bidirectionality in detail.

Thus, the concept of bidirectionality does not allow one to sufficiently describe the reciprocal relationship between parents and their children and the effects of parenting on children's development. Rather, bidirectionality may have different characteristics and functions in different cultures. Here, the relevance of developmental age needs to be taken into account. Bidirectionality means something different depending on the age of the children and the parents; and this also varies in different cultures. Furthermore, bidirectionality may mean something different depending on the quality of parent-child relations (e.g., in a conflictual versus a harmonious relationship). Its function for the child's development and the development of the parent-child relation

is different. It will be argued here that the quality of the parent-child relationship is the essential context for understanding the dynamics of bidirectionality, while at the same time the cultural perspective is needed in order to take into account the culture-specific functions of bidirectionality for children's development.

Thus, taking a cross-cultural approach prevents an uncritical ethnocentric generalization of the assumedly universal principle of bidirectionality that has been generated and tested in Western postmodern societies. Through its differentiated perspective, this approach will contribute to a more specific understanding of parent-child relations. Because of space limitations, we will not engage in the ongoing discussion about whether a culture-psychological or a cross-cultural approach is more useful. We believe that an integration of both approaches is most fruitful (Trommsdorff, *in press*). Accordingly, we adopt a culturally informed perspective on the traditional studies in developmental psychology.

The present chapter is organized into three parts. First, we will describe some general aspects of cultural differences to illustrate the wide range of different contexts in which children grow up, referring to earlier studies. Second, we will discuss more specific cultural aspects relevant to parent-child relationships, in particular by applying our model to the case of parent-child relationships in Germany and Japan. It will be demonstrated that both culture-specific and universal biologically based processes contribute to the development of universal motive systems. Third, we will discuss three aspects of development on the basis of cross-cultural research. Starting from examples of parent-child interactions in different cultures, we will focus on their specific function in child development. This illustrates the universality of basic bidirectional processes but nevertheless leaves room for cultural differences and partially unidirectional influences.

1. CULTURE AS A CONTEXT FOR PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

In the following, the significance of differences between cultures will be discussed with respect

to theoretically relevant variables as well as on the basis of influential and well-known studies. Because of space limitations, however, we cannot discuss the historical details more thoroughly (see Trommsdorff & Sprung, 2000).

1.1. Definition of Culture

The many definitions of culture (see Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) hardly clarify the psychological relevance of culture: Cultural anthropologists have defined culture as a *global* construct (LeVine, 1973; M. Mead, 1928). In contrast, cross-cultural psychologists try to “peel the onion of culture” (Poortinga, van de Vijver, Joe, & van de Koppel, 1987) and specify the psychological constructs in order to define theoretically relevant psychological variables. In many cross-cultural studies, culture is used as an independent variable affecting behavior (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1999). In order to specify psychological variables, culture can be seen as “shared symbolic systems” (Boesch, 1991; Geertz, 1973; Lévi-Strauss, 1963; G. H. Mead, 1934). These include norms, rules, myths, symbols, and networks of social relations, knowledge, and language. Even if this seems to complicate things, all this is produced by humans and also affects humans as long as it is operating as an “internal model of reality” (Keesing, 1974, p. 89). According to Bruner (1996), culture can be seen as a meaning system that develops from interaction processes. This approach allows us to regard parent-child relations as a phenomenon resulting from interactions in the given cultural context and at the same time transmitting and transforming cultural meaning. In the present chapter, these aspects of culture are taken into account, leaving open what a precise definition of culture might be. Culture is seen here as including, for example, the ecological setting, the social structure, and value orientations. In this sense, culture is part of the environment in which individual development takes place and that children must adapt to.

1.2. Basic Cultural Differences

The importance of the sociocultural conditions in which parent-child relations are embedded

can best be demonstrated by the remarkable differences between cultures. The most obvious and frequently used dimension is socioeconomic development. Examples of very simple structures are hunter-gatherer cultures, like those of the Kalahari Bushmen (!Kung Bushmen, !Ko Bushmen) (Draper, 1978; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1972) or the Congolese Efe (Tronick, Morelli, & Ivey, 1992). These peoples subsist from the natural environment, gathering edible fruits, vegetables, leaves, roots, and other flora and hunting game. Related activities require a great deal of knowledge, strength, and quick, skillful reactions, and they are often performed in flexible, cooperative groups. Hunter-gatherers have few belongings and require no permanent dwelling. The children in hunter-gatherer societies learn about their environment and all the necessary skills mostly by observing, imitating, and helping their older siblings, and in close company with adults who strive to ensure their safety. It should be noted, however, that differences exist between the Efe and the Bushmen with respect to parent-child relations. Whereas the mother is the most important primary caregiver for the !Kung Bushmen, many female caretakers are available for the Efe infant (Tronick, Morelli, & Winn, 1987).

The conditions for another simple economic structure, the subsistence farming cultures (cf. Edgerton, 1971), are quite different. People in these cultures produce their food; therefore, they need fields, which have to be cultivated and protected; they must sow seeds and wait until the crops can be harvested; and harvested crops must be stored for later use as food and as seeds for the next season. If they have cattle, these need to be raised and guarded. These activities require skills such as foresight and planning, patience, continuity, and keeping property in order. Children learn mostly by living together with adults and older children and are thus taught to do what must be done, step by step, in accordance with their maturing abilities, and to internalize the rules, values, and virtues relevant in their particular cultures. Important to note is that in these two kinds of simple cultures—hunter-gatherer and subsistence farming—children mostly grow up in extended families or other kinds of larger groups, and elderly parents depend completely on their children to maintain the household.

In industrialized and modern cultures (but also in caste societies), the situation is completely different. These cultures are characterized by a complicated division of labor (e.g., between peasants, craftsmen, workers, merchants, day laborers, teachers, civil servants, managers, priests, and others). Each of these subgroups has different living conditions, and their children have different needs and must learn different rules and values. The children have to accept their specific position within the culture and find out different options for their development. They learn this not only within the (often nuclear) family but also by means of various kinds of formal education (in schools, as apprentices, etc.). In many aspects, the functions of parent-child relations are quite different from those in the above-mentioned cultures. In addition, the dependence of elderly parents on their adult children, and in turn the obligation of children to help elderly parents, decreases with the expansion of public welfare systems.

In "postmodern" societies, all these differentiations are developed much further. This results in more ambiguous orientations with respect to lifestyle, values, expectations, demands, and opportunities. The parents' role changes as nuclear families and single parents lose their influence as models and authorities, with the mass media performing a relatively larger role. The plurality of accepted values makes child rearing more difficult for parents and self-orientation more difficult for children.

To conclude, it cannot be denied that parent-child relations must be significantly different in different cultures, depending on the specific socioeconomic and cultural background. Obviously, to date bidirectionality has been studied in "postmodern" Western societies. Therefore, cultural conditions should not be ignored in studying parent-child relations. Aside from these cultural differences, some basic universal processes may exist that also influence parent-child relationships and child development.

1.3. Historical Trends in Research on Culture and Parent-Child Relations

Classical ethnographic studies on entire cultures usually dealt with child-rearing customs. In contrast, the famous "Culture and Personality

School" investigated the functional relations between culture and development. Later on, the eco-cultural approach focused on the "causes" of everyday parenting practices, taking into account differences in socioeconomic systems and their effects on parenting and child development. Most recently, parenting has been conceived of as a co-construction, based on cultural values and parents' theories.

The relationship between culture and parenting was studied in anthropological research from its early stages on. Descriptions of trivial events, informal customs, child-rearing practices, birth rituals, and rites of passage were based on extensive fieldwork. One example is the famous study of the Andaman Islanders by Radcliffe-Brown (1964, based on observations made sometime around 1904). Another example is Malinowski's (1922) research (published in the same year as the original work by Radcliffe-Brown) on the Trobriand Islanders carried out during World War I. Among other things, Malinowski described the way parents indulged their children: Until puberty, they were allowed to play in their peer group without limits or restrictions. They were permitted to observe all their parents' activities, including sexual intercourse. They were allowed and even encouraged to imitate their parents' behavior. Parents did not punish a child, even if the child hit the parent. Children were treated more like equals than in other cultures. Nevertheless, strict rules existed in the culture, and they had to be followed from puberty on.

After World War I, most studies were carried out in accordance within the framework of the Culture and Personality School. These studies, partially initiated by Franz Boas, aimed to demonstrate the (unidirectional) influence of social experience, as compared to biological forces, in reaction against the eugenics movement. Interest thus shifted from the search for universals to studies on culture-specific influences. The development of American cultural anthropology from Boas to Ruth Benedict cannot be described here in detail. A new and influential approach was to identify "patterns of culture" (e.g., Benedict, 1934) and to study their relation to culture-specific personality characteristics. Another stage in the Culture and Personality School was initiated by Kardiner

(1939) and the related studies on the "basic personality structures" and the "modal personality." The underlying idea of human plasticity was also supported by the influence of Sigmund Freud and many psychoanalytic notions that motivated interest in the study of socialization conditions and practices (e.g., weaning, punishments, sleeping arrangements, and gender role socialization) across cultures. Famous authors in this tradition include M. Mead (1928) and LeVine (1973, 1974) (see also Kaplan, 1961). Extensive field studies used various methods, including participant observation and various tests. Many reports discussed global ecological and environmental differences between cultures and their relationship to personality traits. Edgerton (1971), for example, compared four farming cultures with pastoral cultures from the same tribes. His studies showed that people in pastoral cultures displayed more aggressiveness, engaged more in sexual activities, and were more respectful toward authorities in comparison with people from farming cultures. These studies described cultures in terms of global or basic features and the assumedly related "modal personality." Most of these highly generalized descriptions disregarded individual differences within a culture, aiming to find universal relationships across cultures. Despite the interest in socialization, little was said about parenting and nearly nothing about parent-child relations.

The studies by Margaret Mead (1928) number among the few exceptions. For example, she described a cultural pattern in Samoa with loose emotional ties, even between mother and child; a lack of restrictions; and great sexual freedom in child rearing, which she viewed as a precondition for happiness and for uninhibited, nonaggressive, and nonjealous adults. In contrast, she also reported about the Mundugumor, who live in isolation in the mountains of New Guinea. She described them as hostile, rejecting, and uncaring in their child rearing. They are a cannibalistic and aggressive tribe, and infanticide is seen as part of their aggression (M. Mead, 1972). Similar relations between harsh punishment and higher aggression were reported in other studies (e.g., Herdt, 1986; Rohner, 1976).

A specific problem is that the famous descriptions of the Samoan personality and their

socialization are not empirically valid, as Freeman's (1983) careful and detailed studies demonstrated. Dentan (1968) provided more reliable information, describing in detail how Semai parents teach their children to control anger and aggressiveness. For example, they do not provide a model for aggressive behavior and do not use threats to induce self-regulation. They are very permissive; however, they strictly and immediately interrupt any kind of aggressive behavior from children. The whole culture is described as being based on a self-concept of a Semai as a nonviolent person. Even in these reports, the quality of the parent-child relation remains unclear, and nothing is said about any kind of bidirectional interaction.

In these anthropological studies, psychological theories are only partly integrated. In any case, the relationship between child-rearing practices and outcomes (personality characteristics) was in general conceptualized as the unidirectional influence on the child. Hypotheses about how the cultural patterns influence the child's personality, and what processes may underlie this influence, are quite vague, and little is said about the process by which children develop attitudes and beliefs and how they internalize cultural values and social norms.

The decline of the Culture and Personality School was followed by the rise of the "hologeistic" approach, that is, the search for universal patterns in regard to specific human traits or behaviors by comparing ethnographic data collected in many different cultures and archived in the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF). Hypotheses about the impact of early parenting and later development of children were tested, and the relationships found (e.g., between harsh parenting and children's aggression) were assumed to be universal. It was inevitable that very general descriptions resulted.

In the same line of hologeistic reasoning, basic patterns of the economic system were believed to influence child development. Barry, Child, and Bacon (1959) and Barry, Bacon, and Child (1967) and discussed the fact that in agricultural societies, in which storage facilities are important, children learn compliance, nurturance, responsibility, and conformity. In contrast, in hunting and fishing cultures, where livelihood is not based on storage facilities,

children are assumed to learn self-reliance and initiative. However, Jahoda and Lewis (1988) are correct in their criticism that hologeistic studies lacked details on the specific processes concerning how this learning is achieved. A classic example of an early approach to studying the influence of developmental conditions on the development of motives (of achievement, affiliation, and power) in different cultures, and the underlying processes, is the work of McClelland (1961).

To summarize, the above-mentioned anthropological and cross-cultural studies on parent-child relations focused mainly on the unidirectional influence of ecology or parents on child development (see critical comments by Jahoda and Lewis, 1988). A much more differentiated analysis of the eco-cultural approach was carried out by Berry (1976) in his studies on ecological effects on visual and spatial perception.

1.4. Culture Seen as Ecological Context for Parents and Children

In the following, influential theoretical approaches are discussed. One of anthropologists' and psychologists' new interests with respect to the relationship between parent-child relations and culture lies in the causes of cultural differences in parenting and the effects of culturally organized parenting practices on child development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) initiated a specific orientation in ecological research based on his ecological model. This model does not focus explicitly on culture, but it broadens previous ecological approaches through a systematic analysis of the interrelationships between four interconnecting systems: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. In a similar line of reasoning, Hinde (1976) claimed that relationships need to be viewed within a hierarchy of "levels of complexity." Accordingly, we conceive of parent-child relations as embedded in the group and societal structure, and as based on societal and psychological processes.

The most extensive and systematic cross-cultural study on socioeconomic and cultural differences in family systems, parenting, and child development was carried out in the 1950s

by B. B. Whiting and J.W.M. Whiting (1975) in their famous "Six Cultures Study." The aim was to study the relationship between characteristics in child personality, on one hand, and socioeconomic and cultural differences in family systems, parenting, and other aspects of the family system, on the other, by means of extensive observations of child behavior. Whiting and Whiting chose samples of children aged 3 to 11 years from agricultural subsistence families in India, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, and the Philippines (that is, samples that were embedded in societies with different degrees of complexity) as well as 24 urban families in the United States. The basic assumption, which was confirmed, was that simpler societies, without hierarchical structure and without a superordinate, clearly defined authority, usually require a high degree of cooperation within the family; complex societies, in contrast, usually socialize their children to be competitive and achievement oriented. Accordingly, the children in the six cultures varied along the dimension "egoistic-caring/responsible." Other differences were found with respect to household structure (nuclear/extended/polygynous). However, although more detailed studies on parenting were also reported (B. B. Whiting, 1963), parent-child relations and how children acquire those traits (in other words, egoistic or caring and responsible) remains unclear. Therefore, Jahoda and Lewis's critique of holocultural (hologeistic) approaches is partly relevant here, too.

For many years, Super and Harkness studied the Kipsigis of Kenya, who get their living as herders and farmers. Based on their observations, they developed a new conceptualization of the relationship between culture and individual development, thus narrowing the rather general concept of ecology. They introduced the concept of the developmental niche, whose three basic features are (a) "the physical and social settings in which the child lives," (b) "culturally regulated customs of child care and child rearing," and (c), most important and innovative, the individual "ethnotheories of child behavior and development as well as the commonly learned affective orientations that parents bring to their experience of parenting" (Super & Harkness, 1986, pp. 552, 556). These ideas challenged previous studies on culture and development.

To summarize, according to eco-cultural approaches, parent-child relations are influenced by broader contextual variables such as the family, the neighborhood, the socioeconomic system, and the culture. Thus, parent-child relations can be conceived of as micro-structural contexts and, as such, as part of a broader eco-cultural system.

1.5. Focus on the Value System and Cultural Context

As demonstrated above, cultures typically have been differentiated according to their socioeconomic conditions and development. Cultures with similar socioeconomic development, however, may differ in parenting because of differences in values. Cross-cultural studies on value orientations either focus on the specification of a universal value system (e.g., Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) or attempt to distinguish cultures according to their value orientations. Hofstede (1980, 2001) suggested that it is necessary to differentiate between five major dimensions: individualism-collectivism, femininity-masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term/short-term orientation. The distinction between individualism and collectivism has been very fruitful in cross-cultural studies. It is problematic, however, in that it seems to suggest that entire cultures can be characterized by a specific psychological construct.

Instead, it should be taken into account that in different cultures, cultural values that seem to be different may have the same meaning (and sometimes the same function); this can depend on the cultural (and socioeconomic) context, which gives a certain meaning to the specific value. The Protestant ethic may be an example of this, as it has been conceived of as functionally equivalent to traditional Japanese (Confucian) values of filial piety, diligence, and achievement motivation (cf. Bendix, 1966/1967).

Another problem is that intracultural differences in values and practices usually exist: Cultures are rarely homogeneous entities. Israel, for example, is very much influenced by a Western individualistic orientation; on the other hand, the kibbutz, based on collectivistic values,

was an influential social institution for several decades. The values of kibbutzim affected parent-child relations, for example, by requiring communal sleeping arrangements for children, apart from their mothers. This practice was abandoned in the early 1990s as a result of ongoing social change and obvious negative effects on children's attachment security (see section 3.1) (van IJzendoorn & Sagi, 1999).

Furthermore, one cannot simply assume that cultural values on the aggregate level are identical with value orientations on the individual level, and the assumption of one-dimensionality underlying the concept of individualism-collectivism may be erroneous or at least too simple. In some societies, especially in times of social change, individualistic values can coincide with collectivistic values, and processes of autonomy and relatedness can operate *in the same individual* together (Kagitcibasi, 1996a, 1996b; Trommsdorff, 1999b). The complex and heterogeneous nature of the concepts was described by Kim and Choi (1994). Hofstede (1980) himself did not favor such a simple dichotomization of societies. Instead, he pointed to the other four dimensions, which can combine in various ways with individualism/collectivism. In many cross-cultural studies, however, the multidimensionality of these value orientations and their different cultural meanings have been ignored. In the next section, we discuss how cultural values may affect parent-child relations.

2. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONS

In the investigation of parent-child relations within the cultural context, we assume that parent-child relations are based on an intergenerational chain of relationships, including several generations of a family (Trommsdorff, 2001). Parent-child relations in one generation are affected by parent-child relations of the previous generation, and at the same time they will affect the child's development and parent-child relations of the next generation. Thus, parent-child relations can be seen as an integral element of intergenerational relations in a specific culture. They are affected by the cultural context, and at the same time they contribute to the

stability of the context by processes of transmission of values. The intergenerational relations are also affected by present and past experiences of parent-child interactions and the expected development of parent-child relations in the future. These subjective experiences and expectations include activities (e.g., investments, affection, support) by the parents and their children. Thus, parent-child relations are affected by contextual conditions (e.g., socioeconomic conditions, cultural values, practices, and their ongoing changes), by person variables (e.g., value orientations), and by interpersonal relations (Trommsdorff, 2001). These assumptions about the conditions and functions of parent-child relations are presently being studied in the cross-cultural and interdisciplinary project on "Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations" in three generations of a family (Nauck, 2001; Trommsdorff, 2001; Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2001). In the following sections, we will focus on some selected theoretical aspects of this approach. First, we will describe some selected cultural values and related parental beliefs that may serve as models or "scripts" for parent-child relations; and second, we will focus on selected aspects of parent-child interactions that may affect further individual development.

2.1. Cultural Values and Parent-Child Relations

In a study of the long-term effects of parent-child relations, taking value orientations into account is regarded as important, as they and related attitudes underlying parent-child relations are assumed to affect parent-child interactions. The transmission of values across generations is influenced by the quality of parent-child relations. Parents' values and goals depend on their own socialization experiences and relationships with their parents. A high level of consistency between parents' and children's values, along with less influence from others, can be expected in a close parent-child relationship. Thus, the development of the child's value orientations presumably is affected by proximate factors such as the family context and parent-child interactions, which in turn are structured by distal factors such as

cultural values and socioeconomic and ecological conditions.

Parent-child relations are shaped by cultural values, which in turn are transmitted and modified by formal and informal systems on the macro and micro levels of the society. In order to clarify culture-specific phenomena of parent-child relations and to understand their function for the child's development, it is therefore necessary to study cultural values and to ask if and how they are related to parental beliefs, goals, and practices. Cultural values can be seen as culturally shared orientations that give meaning to the person's relationship to the environment and that serve as goal dispositions affecting individual thinking and behavior. They give meaning to the context that structures parent-child relations, including child-rearing theories, goals, and practices, thereby affecting individual development. Accordingly, the effects of economic conditions and the sociopolitical system cannot be regarded as isolated from cultural values.

2.2. Independence and Interdependence in Parent-Child Relations

One of the central issues in parent-child relationships is the question of how the child learns to relate to the environment. Does the child learn to perceive such relations as more structured by the values of independence and autonomy, or those of interdependence and relatedness? Depending on the priority given to either goal, development and socialization follow different paths. Accordingly, Markus and Kitayama (1991, 1994) differentiated between the *independent* and *interdependent* self in describing the way one relates to one's environment. The independent self is described as being free, coherent, and stable, transcending relationships and situations. In contrast, the interdependent self is described as being connected, flexible, fluid, contextualized, committed, and bound to others as part of the social unit. The social unit may be the parent-child triad, the larger family, or other social groups.

The concept of independence and interdependence has proven very fruitful in cross-cultural research (cf. Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). To date, however, it has rarely been applied to studies on parent-child relations.

In line with this theorizing, one may assume that parent-child relations vary with respect to separateness and connectedness—that is, independent and loosely connected relations contrast with interdependent and closely connected parent-child relations. (Both types of relationships may have either a hierarchical or an egalitarian structure.) In general, one may assume that, depending on the parents' self-construal, different interactions take place between parents and their children.

Some authors use collectivism/individualism and interdependence/independence as interchangeable concepts (Greenfield, 1994). This seems to be a rough simplification; however, it may be useful as a starting point in analyzing parent-child relations in cultural contexts. Numerous cross-cultural studies in the most recent decades have been guided by the *individualism-collectivism* concept (e.g., Gudykunst, Ting Toomey, & Chua, 1988; Triandis, 1987, 1995). Individualism is usually understood as a primary focus on individual goals; the group's goals are subordinated to the individual's goals. Collectivism is understood as the subordination of personal goals to the goals of a collective, such as the (extended) family. In societies in which collectivistic values prevail, the individual is defined by his or her group membership and position in the family; the relevant social norms are based on seniority and authority rules. In many traditional collectivistic societies, authority is confined to the eldest male, and to a certain extent to the wife after she has given birth to a male child, who is the successor and continues the family line. The individual is not supposed to "stand out," achievement should be confined to the group's interests, and cooperation is highly valued (Triandis, 1995).

The values of individualism and collectivism have been measured on the individual level as *ideocentrism* and *allocentrism* (cf. Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). Allocentric individuals are described as tending to sacrifice personal advantages for the good of the group and even as enjoying such sacrifice because their self-identity is largely tied to the group, in contrast to ideocentric individuals, who prefer hedonistic self-focused rewards.

If we conceive of cultural values as part of the cultural context, parent-child relations

should be affected by the respective dominant values. Parent-child relations in collectivistic societies are often characterized by hierarchical power relations based on obedience to the parents. In several collectivistic cultures, however, the parent-child relationship focuses not only on the children's obedience but also on the parents' responsibility for their children's well-being. Punishment of children can be perceived as a necessary act to help children grow up and learn to follow social rules. Thus, the power relation—even if hierarchically structured—contains certain elements of bidirectionality.

In modern East Asian societies, such as China, Japan, and Korea, certain basic collectivistic orientations are shared as the result of a common cultural heritage based on *Confucian* ideas. Here, the guiding principle governing parent-child relations is represented by the ethic of *filial piety*. This includes "obeying and honoring one's parents, performing the ceremonial duties of ancestral worship, taking care to avoid harm to one's body, ensuring the continuity of the family line, and in general conducting oneself so as to bring honor and not disgrace to the family name" (Ho, 1994, p. 287). In contrast to Western socialization and parent-child interactions, these Confucian values imply lifelong obligations and children's obedience to their parents. The parent-child relationship is based on the obligation to reciprocate. Traditionally, children are expected to compensate for their parents' support and investment in their socialization by taking care of their aging parents later on.

Parents need not give reasons for their demands in order to achieve compliance from children, as is the case in many Western societies. Elders (parents and teachers) are seen as models for culturally accepted behavior; they therefore have the unquestioned authority to set rules. Parental demands are accepted because parental authority and compliance with rules are highly valued. Here, harmonious relations are conceived of as most important. To achieve harmony, individual needs have to be controlled (Triandis, 1995; Trommsdorff, 1995, 1997).

In contrast, in societies in which individualistic values of independence prevail, conflictual parent-child relations are accepted as a normal part of everyday experience. In individualistic societies, even young children are expected to

demonstrate their individuality, their own will, and their independence. Individual partnership between parents and their children is the cultural model, even though parent-child relations are asymmetrical because of unequal levels of competence and an unequal amount of resources (cf. Kuczynski, Chapter 1, this volume; Kornadt, 1999, in press).

It is problematic, however, to assume that collectivism/individualism and interdependence/independence constitute a single dimension (either in the aggregate or on the individual level). Significant differences with respect to the parent-child relationship can be observed among societies favoring collectivistic or individualistic values. For example, the "collectivistic" values of the former Soviet Union differ from those of the Israeli kibbutzim or from certain Asian countries or traditional African tribes. In some socialist countries, a child was seen as a *tabula rasa* until socialized according to communist goals (cf. Schmidt, 1996). In contrast, in several Asian countries, children are regarded as developing "naturally" according to their innate features and a natural program.

On the individual level of parental goals, one can observe differences in parent-child relations when comparing samples from two "individualistic" societies that partly share a history and partly have experienced different political and ideological leadership, as is the case for the former East and West Germany (Trommsdorff & Chakkarath, 1996). In a similar line of reasoning, individualistic and collectivistic values and child-rearing goals can combine in societies undergoing rapid and extensive transformations, as has been the case in the former East Germany (Trommsdorff, 1999b, 2000), or in societies in transition to modernity, as is the case in Brazil and in the Republic of Korea (cf. Schäfermeier, Trommsdorff, & Friedlmeier, 2000). How individualistic and collectivistic values combine and change in modern societies undergoing massive socioeconomic changes, such as Japan, needs further research (Ölschleger et al., 1994; Trommsdorff, Friedlmeier, & Kornadt, 1998).

According to these and other results from cross-cultural research (e.g., Greenfield & Cocking, 1994; Super & Harkness, 1997),

parent-child relations vary considerably according to cultural values. This challenges the above-cited assumption that bidirectionality in parent-child interactions is a universal phenomenon. To give an example, in many traditional cultures compliance with social rules is considered the normal goal for children's social development and the normal basis for social interactions, including parent-child relations. Social norms and the culturally transmitted belief in their value and legitimacy can thus limit the extent of critical evaluation of parents' behavior. This also implies limits to the children's influence on their parents; the parents must follow the social norms and cannot give in very much to their children's needs or react to their behavior (except during very early childhood, when parents are engaged in fostering their children's security and attachment in order to enhance children's internalization of social norms). Conversely, parents' influence on their children is limited by social rules that define constraints on children's and parents' behavior. This example may illustrate the limits of bidirectionality in parent-child relations in other cultures. Thus, cross-cultural research warns against assuming that a symmetric power structure is universal as part of bidirectionality in parent-child interactions. To date, however, too little research has been carried out on this issue for it to be included in a theoretical model of cultural values and parent-child relations.

One can assume that children's influence on their parents is much greater in individualistic as compared with collectivistic societies. In individualistic societies, in which independence and autonomy are highly valued, children have specific rights (see Kuczynski, Chapter 1, this volume). Children are encouraged to develop their "own will" and engage in negotiations with their parents to achieve their goals. In contrast, in collectivistic societies, children learn to obey social rules and norms, which are represented by their parents.

Although it provides insights, this dichotomy between individualistic and collectivistic values is too simple a view. First, it must be remembered that factors affecting the extent of bidirectionality are also *economic and sociostructural* conditions, and these can constrain the degree of freedom for children to

exert influence on their parents. Second, further *cultural values* affect the extent of bidirectionality. Mutuality and egalitarian interactions in parent-child relations seem to be encouraged in specific cultural contexts. Hewlett (1992), for example, described the Aka (African hunter-gatherers) parents as very sensitive caregivers; their infants learn mutual reciprocity in intimate interactions with their parents, establishing a sense of autonomy and cooperation that is encouraged by the cultural context. Infants are accustomed to both extensive multiple caregiving and intimate face-to-face interactions with both parents.

Furthermore, cultural values are usually effective in combination with other factors, such as the *developmental age* of the child, which can affect the extent of influence of parents on children and vice versa. For example, Japanese and Indonesian children are given considerable freedom in their first years of life, influencing their parents to fulfill their wishes and needs. This obviously strengthens their attachment and security. Only at a later age are they expected to develop conformity to social norms (Kornadt, in press; Kornadt & Tachibana, 1999; Lebra, 1994; Mulder, 1992; Trommsdorff, 1995). Children thereby lose much of their former direct influence on their parents. Thus, bidirectionality is no static phenomenon; it is a dynamic process that may change over time during development, depending on the cultural context.

2.3. The Value of Children and Parent-Child Relations Across Generations

The traditional view that socioeconomic conditions directly affect childbearing and child rearing was refuted by the original cross-national "Value of Children" (VOC) study (cf. Arnold et al., 1975; Fawcett, Arnold, & Stalb, 1975). Including psychological variables (such as enjoying children and self fulfillment through children) allowed the researchers to regard the value of children as a mediating variable between socioeconomic conditions, fertility, and parenting (Hoffman, 1987; Kagitcibasi, 1982, 1996b). However, these studies have not investigated how the value of children affects parent-child relations over several generations

of a family (including grandparents, parents, and their children) or the role of other values in this process (Trommsdorff, 2001). Such studies are necessary in order to understand universalities and culture specificities in parent-child relations and their function for individual development and social change.

It has been shown that, in rapidly changing countries, such as the People's Republic of China, significant changes occur in the value of children: Their economic value falls and their emotional value rises (e.g., experiencing joy in interaction with the child) (Trommsdorff, Zheng, & Tardif, 2002). The policy of one child per married couple presumably will bring about essential transformations in the kinship structure, including parent-child relations. The Chinese society is seen as increasingly child-oriented, and children are more highly valued than ever before (cf. Ho, 1994). How this will affect parent-child relations will have to be seen; however, it should be remembered that in a society in which children are highly valued, there need not necessarily be a very close parent-child relation. According to Radcliffe-Brown's (1964) observations of the Andaman Islanders in the first decade of the 20th century, young children were valued highly and nursed by everyone in the village, not primarily by the parents. Thus, much of child care was transferred to the whole village. This may again illustrate that the concept of bidirectionality is not universal.

In general, there has been a decline in the economic utility of children in industrialized societies (Kagitcibasi, 1996b; Nauck, 2001). This includes changes in parent-child relations, including expectations with respect to the future quality of the relationship. For example, results from our pilot study show that in Indonesia, the economic utility of children is still high, and Javanese mothers expect more help from their children in old age than do German mothers (Schwarz, Chakkarath, & Trommsdorff, 2002; Trommsdorff, Zheng, et al., 2002). A decrease in the economic utility of children usually is related to a decrease in fertility, an increased psychological value of children, and changes in parenting (e.g., decrease in conformity demands) (cf. Hoffman, 1987; Kagitcibasi, 1982, 1996b). However, this value change may also be related

to an increase in the negative (or ambivalent) value of children. Our pilot study shows that German mothers see more negative aspects in having children than do Japanese mothers, who expect their children (especially their daughters) to bring them joy and fun. At the same time, Japanese mothers see more disadvantages in having a child than do their own mothers (Makoshi & Trommsdorff, 2002). Later, we will refer back to these results as indicators of social change and changes in parent-child relations.

2.4. Parental Goals and Practices, Parent-Child Interactions, and Child Development

According to Harkness and Super (1995), parents' theories, goals, and child-rearing practices are constitutive elements of the eco-cultural niche in which individual development takes place. They therefore influence parent-child interactions (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992). Parental goals are linked to cultural values to the extent that parents normally want to foster the development of certain abilities in their child that are adaptive in their particular cultural context (LeVine, 1977). Parental goals usually focus on the child's development and are influenced by the underlying philosophical and folk theories of the specific culture. For example, "tolerance" and "independence" as parental goals have different meanings for Brazilian and German middle-class mothers (Schäfermeier et al., 2000). Developmental timetables, which define the developmental stage at which behaviors should be learned, differ from culture to culture. For example, that children become independent and socially responsible are important parental goals in many cultures, but parents attach different meanings to these aspects of social competence, and they have culture-specific views about the appropriate developmental stage at which they are attained as well as the kinds of behavior that should be displayed. The relationship between independence training, developmental age, and achievement in different cultures was demonstrated by McClelland (cf. Kornadt, in press). Parents' concepts of appropriate child behavior have been examined less frequently by

psychologists in the West, whereas numerous studies have dealt with the concept of the "good child" in Japan (Olson, Kashiwagi, & Crystal, 2001). Highly valued qualities of Japanese children (the "good child") show high consistency over time (Kojima, 1986).

How Do Parents Achieve Their Goals?

Unidirectional influence of parents on children is not the way internalization develops. Studies focusing on child-rearing practices show inconsistent results regarding the way they affect internalization. The *internalization of parental values* requires active construction on the part of children. Presumably, this is based universally on specific conditions, as described in Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) model of internalization processes. According to this approach, internalization is achieved through the child's understanding and acceptance of values and norms that are transmitted by the parents. Internalization of parental goals can be seen as the co-construction of cultural meaning in the process of the child's development. Here, the effects of attachment, which result from specific qualities of parent-child relations, are relevant (cf. Kochanska, 1997; Kornadt, in press, 2002). However, studies on parent-child relations as a factor for internalization have thus far ignored a cross-cultural perspective.

Little is known about possible cultural differences with respect to *parents' direct and indirect influence* on child development. (This distinction is not necessarily related to formal or school-related and informal or observational learning, with informal learning being more important in traditional societies; cf. Trommsdorff & Dasen, 2001). Grusec and Goodnow's (1994) model of internalization describes direct and indirect influence as practiced in contemporary Western cultures. Direct influence (e.g., instruction by parents, complaints by child) is based on both the parents' and the child's behavior and can change into mutual direct influence or bidirectionality, affecting the self-concept of both the parents and the child. In contrast, indirect influence, such as observational learning (imitation), does not necessarily imply bidirectionality. The child can observe the mother and learn the mother's

behavior and norms “vicariously” without necessarily letting the mother know about the (internalized) outcome of this learning experience.

Observational learning requires that the child take an active role (observation, imitation). Certain conditions must be fulfilled for the child not only to observe the model’s (e.g., parents’) behavior (vicarious learning) but also to be motivated to imitate it. Here, characteristics of the model and of the child—and, moreover, their relationship—are relevant. Western theories have focused primarily on characteristics of the child and of the model (e.g., the model’s power, which is positively related to the probability that the child will imitate the model’s behavior). Cross-cultural studies show that the model’s power is less important than the specific value of the *relationship* between the model and the child. For example, the Japanese mother deemphasizes her own authority and sensitizes her child to the consequences of the child’s actions for their relationship (cf. DeVos, 1986).

Not included in Grusec and Goodnow’s model of internalization are other culture-specific forms of learning such as the children’s “guided participation” in parents’ or other adults’ activities, which *indirectly influences* child development, or parents’ structuring of their children’s environment (by setting rules and by structuring children’s physical and social environment and their daily activities) (cf. Super & Harkness, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). Thus, another indirect means of parental influence is the way in which parents *structure their child’s environment*. Here, direct parent-child interactions are less relevant. Caretakers structure the children’s learning experiences, and children are expected to develop through their own activities (cf. Piaget, 1965; Vygotsky, 1978). Studies in traditional societies show that children can be socialized very effectively by “guided participation” in activities with adults (Rogoff, 1990). This view underlies the Six Cultures Study (B. B. Whiting & J.W.M. Whiting, 1975). J.W.M. Whiting (1981) suggested that the cultural “maintenance system” is linked to the child’s environment and affects both parents and their children as well as their relationship. Culture was seen as a “provider of settings,” while parents were seen as organizers

of these settings for their children’s development (B. B. Whiting & Edwards, 1988). As mentioned in part 1, in traditional agrarian societies, children develop most abilities by helping in the field and with housework. Children in modern societies spend less time on these activities. Thus, parent-child interactions are sometimes less important than the parents’ structuring of the child’s daily activities and environment. Parents’ bodily contact with their children is another environmental aspect. Japanese mothers have much more physical closeness with their children than those from the United States and Germany. This is seen in sleeping arrangements; traditionally, parent-child co-sleeping and co-bathing (and co-soaking) are normal, as is still the case in Japan. This physical proximity seems to be an important factor in the emotional quality of Japanese mother-child relations.

To summarize, in some cultures bidirectionality in parent-child relations is not a necessary condition for child development. Successful learning and internalization vary according to the kind of parent-child interactions and relations, which again depend on the culture-specific preference of direct or indirect influence.

2.5. The Culture-Specific Meaning of Parenting and Parent-Child Relations

Certain dimensions of parent-child interactions may have similar meanings across cultures. However, even if the meanings of broad dimensions of parent-child interactions (such as stimulation and responsiveness) are similar, cross-cultural studies make it clear that a closer look at narrower aspects (such as verbal stimulation vs. physical stimulation, or responsivity to an infant’s vocalization vs. responsivity to exploration) is necessary in order to understand culture-specific functions (Bornstein, Tamis-LeMonda, et al., 1992; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993; Wachs et al., 1992).

Methods of cross-cultural research must therefore deal with the problems of the functional equivalence of measurements (cf. Kornadt, in press; Trommsdorff, in press; van de Vijver, 1997). To illustrate, Bradley, Corwyn, and Whiteside-Mansell (1996) reviewed more than 70 studies conducted

outside the United States that utilized an instrument (the HOME Inventory) designed in the United States to measure the quantity and quality of stimulation and support available to a child in the home environment. The inventory was quite useful in parenting research in the United States, but in studies in other countries, many items had to be dropped because they turned out to be inappropriate for other cultures. For example, items from the Responsivity Subscale were not useful in several Asian cultures, and the Acceptance Subscale turned out to be inappropriate in the Yoruba culture (Nigeria), in which independence is not highly valued.

The need to consider the culture-specific meaning of parenting also becomes obvious from studies on adolescents' perception of their parents' behavior. The classical dimensions of parenting, control and warmth, have a culture-specific meaning: Japanese adolescents feel rejected by their parents, and they miss parental warmth when they report low parental control, whereas German adolescents feel accepted and respected in their autonomy when they report low parental control (Trommsdorff, 1985, 1995). Rohner and Pettengill (1985) reported similar findings when comparing Korean adolescents living in Korea with Korean adolescents living in the United States. In cultural contexts in which independence and autonomy are highly valued, parental control obviously has a different meaning than in cultures in which interdependence is highly valued (Rudy & Grusec, 2001). Authoritative (warm and firm control) and authoritarian (restrictive) parenting as analyzed in Western contexts (cf. Baumrind, 1989) have different effects in individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

The value of harmony and interdependence underlies parent-child relations in some cultures, for example, in South East and East Asia. This value is socialized in early parent-child interaction and serves as a mediating process even in periods of developmental transition, such as during adolescence. Here, cooperation, accommodation, and relatedness are regarded as indicators for social competence and maturity. The emphasis on cooperation rather than competition fosters emotional security for both parents and their children.

In contrast, the value of independence characterizes parent-child relations in many Western cultures, such as the United States and Germany. Here, individuation is one of adolescents' developmental tasks, and conflicts between parents and children are mostly seen as normal phenomena (Trommsdorff, 1995, 1999a). Therefore, control and regulation in parent-child relations have a negative meaning in many Western cultures. Cultural values thus affect parent-child relations and the subjective meaning and psychological function of parenting.

2.6. The Culture-Specific Meaning of Parent-Child Relations: The Japanese Case

The Japanese case allows us to illustrate many culture specificities that have not sufficiently been taken into consideration in Western theories of development and socialization. In the following, we will focus on the Japanese mother-child relationship, which has been studied in cross-cultural research most intensively in the last two decades. Using the results of these studies, we will demonstrate some theoretically relevant features of parent-child relations and point out possible cultural differences in order to caution against an ethnocentric bias in theorizing about parent-child relations. However, due to space limitations, only a broad outline can be presented, even though this implies the risk of stereotyping when contrasting the Japanese case with Western cultures.

Parent-child relations in Japan are a combination of empathic and "positional" interactions. On one hand, nurturance and egalitarian relations prevail in intimate personal relations (*uchi*, or inside), and patriarchal hierarchy defines social roles and official codes of conduct (*soto*, outside). In a similar way, inside the family, open communication is encouraged (*honne*, private self), whereas outside the family, formal communication is practiced (*tatemae*, public self). Parent-child relations in Japan usually are based on principles of Confucian ethics; however, the child is allowed much freedom in early childhood.

Japanese socialization can be characterized by a primacy of mother-child relations. Lebra (1994) describes the mother-child dyad in Japan as a "cultural trope." She regards the mother-child

relationship as a model for many other relationships, including husband and wife, managers and employees in companies, customers and service industries, and institutionalized elderly and staff members in the nursing home. Even parent-child relations in Japan seem to be reduced to mother-child relations as the nucleus and model for other relationships and socioemotional development of the child. The quality of the mother-child relationship in Japan can be seen as a "naturalistic symbiosis" ("one-ness"; "*ittaikan*") (Azuma, 1984), an inseparability of mother and child, whereas the American dyad is conceived of as a purposeful interaction between separate and independent persons (Lebra, 1994, p. 260). The culturally valued features of motherhood in Japan include empathy, selflessness, and sacrifice for the well-being of the child (Kornadt, 1989). A mother transmits the value of empathy to her child, thus sensitizing her child to her own feelings and goals. This is the means by which she can induce her child to comply. "Thus the child's egocentric, free, and natural behavior, although tolerated and indulged as an age-specific propensity, can come under control through the exchange of empathy with the mother" (Lebra, 1994, p. 263). The empathy-based indirect type of influence is typical of the mother-child relationship in Japan. The naturalistic and empathy-based mother-child interaction is followed later in development by "positional socialization" and "boundary training," that is, behavior required to fulfill a certain social role or, later on, a cluster of roles. Through the exchange of empathy between mother and child, the child develops sensitivity to the mother's goals and thereby to the expectations of other people.

Even in therapy, reference is made to the mother-child relations. The Japanese Naikan therapy attempts to restore the mother-child relations by having the client reflect on his own misbehavior and the sacrifices and suffering of the mother; in contrast, in Western psychoanalytically oriented therapy, childhood recollections focus on the parents as a major source of the child's suffering. Thus, empathy is the basis of this type of Japanese therapy, while acceptance of personal decisions is the basis in the West.

Through the *exchange of empathy* between mother and child, the child develops sensitivity,

not only to the mother's feelings but also, through her, to other people's needs. The Japanese child's empathy with the mother's needs and goals seems to be the basis for intrinsic motivation and compliance with developmental demands. The child's compliance may also be induced by feelings of guilt and fear of separation from the mother in case of disobedience. The mother does not need authority or power assertion but rather achieves compliance by granting her child a secure base for attachment. Children are indulged as part of the *amae* relationship (Doi, 1973). *Amae* refers to one's "inclination to depend on or accept another's nurturant indulgence, including one's dependency wish, typically applied to the mother-child relationship" (Lebra, 1994, p. 261).

Compliance is induced not by direct techniques (such as power assertion) but by an empathic interdependence between mother and child. Of course, we have to be aware of intra-cultural differences and the risk of simplification (e.g., such an empathy-oriented technique can characterize certain mothers' behavior and related children's voluntary compliance also in Western cultures). However, one may summarize on the conceptual level that the mother-child relationship in Japan indicates a kind of power structure different from the one we know from Western cultures: The mother represents authority but at the same time acts as a servant and refrains from alluding to her authority. Reciprocity also means that the superior in an institution is in the position of power while his subordinate reciprocates as a caregiver, and vice versa.

Accordingly, developmental goals differ in Japan and in Western individualistic societies. In Western societies, like in the United States or in Germany, individuation is the important developmental goal, and parent-child relations are based on independence (Trommsdorff, 1995). Children are socialized as separate beings, and independence training starts during infancy. Individualism and independence during adolescence are tied in with the formation of sexual partnerships. Transitions over the life span are steps toward further individuation. In contrast, in Japan, "the goal of each transition is even to reconfirm the primary ties, either literally or metaphorically" (Lebra, 1994, p. 272).

The quality of mother-child interactions described above is the basis for the *internalization* of parental values and goals. Taking our own and several other studies into account, one may conclude that the quality of the mother-child interaction in Japan is based on an exchange of feelings. In the context of the empathic mother-child relationship, the child learns to control his or her social behavior. Japanese children's self-regulation is based on self-reflection, empathic understanding, and high motivation for "secondary control" (accommodation and self-control) (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982; Trommsdorff, 1989). The child's close and empathic interdependence with the caregiver provides for the effectiveness of modeling. Thus, acceptance of the message (without experiencing any self-derogation) and the internalization of social rules can occur.

Contrary to parent-child relations in the West, the child's motivation to imitate a model is not weakened by the experience of separateness or by the fosterage of independence and autonomy. The Japanese parent-child relationship, which is the basis for an empathy-based interaction process, does not foster simple obedience but instead encourages the child's compliance with cultural norms, accompanied by the positive feeling of satisfaction upon fulfillment of the parents' goals, wishes, and expectations. The quality of mutual sympathy and *amae* underlying mother-child relations makes compliance easier. Thus, Japanese parent-child interactions do not imply the *unidirectional enforcement of social rules* and their acceptance but instead lead to voluntary acceptance of and compliance with these rules. Successful parenting thus means inducing children to voluntarily continue fulfilling social norms and role requirements.

Empirical Studies

Results from several empirical studies are in line with this picture, which is simplified for the sake of clarity and accentuation of theoretically relevant aspects. Even though most studies were carried out two to three decades ago, and Japan is undergoing considerable change (e.g., Ölschleger et al., 1994; Trommsdorff, Friedlmeier, & Kornadt, 1998), these studies are useful for demonstrating the empirical basis for

some culture-specific theoretical notions about differences in parent-child relations. Observational studies have shown that Japanese mothers calm their infants by means of physical stimulation, whereas mothers in the United States use more verbal stimulation to calm their infants and induce more physical activity and exploration of objects (Caudill & Weinstein, 1969). However, these studies have been criticized for their focus on summary frequency accounts and the neglect of analyses of interaction processes. Therefore, the investigation of sequential processes during mother-child interactions are of special relevance (cf. Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1999; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993). Fogel, Stevenson, and Messinger (1992) reported significant differences in communication processes of Japanese as compared to American mother-child dyads. Japanese mothers communicated in a more affect-salient way with their preverbal infants, using more baby talk. These cross-cultural differences in the interactions between mothers and their infants persist into early childhood (Caudill & Schooler, 1973) and have also been shown in comparisons of German and Japanese mother-child dyads (Kornadt, 1989, 1999; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993, 1999).

The next question concerns how such differences in mothers' behavior are related to children's behavior. Cross-cultural studies showed that Japanese (Bornstein, Azuma, Tamis-LeMonda, & Ogino, 1990; Caudill & Weinstein, 1969; Otaki, Durrett, Richards, Nyquist, & Pennebaker, 1986) and Chinese infants (Freedman, 1979) differed from European and American babies with respect to temperament and excitability, the Japanese and Chinese infants showing less active and less exploratory behavior. The inconsistent results reported by Bornstein (1989) with respect to the early temperament of Japanese and American infants cast doubt on simple unidirectional influences and point out possible interactions between genetic factors and the caregiver's behavior. One has to ask whether the differences in the child's activity are related to genetic factors that parents adapt to, or whether this is a result of parent-child interaction processes starting very early, perhaps during prenatal development (Kornadt, 2002). So far, no biologically based evidence exists for genetic differences in temperament between children

from different cultures. Presumably, parents observe certain genetically based infant behavior, evaluate it, and react according to the prevalent cultural values and their own temperament.

Thus, the continuity and change in mothers' and their infants' behavior, especially the sequence and quality of mother-infant interactions in the first months of the infant's life, can give important insight into these processes. This is the period in early childhood in which attachment (see below, section 3.1) develops. Although the caregivers' sensitivity is the basic condition for fostering attachment, the quality of sensitivity can vary interculturally. In our own studies, Japanese mothers acted before the child expressed a need, whereas German mothers reacted after the child's articulation of a need (Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993). The experience of one-ness (*ittaikan*) allows a mother to anticipate her child's needs and to calm her child effectively. The prevalence of proactive instead of reactive sensitivity is part of the Japanese mother-child relationship, which is based on interdependent empathy.

The belief that the caregiver should not use authority or power assertion to induce the child to comply with cultural norms and values is part of the culture-specific Japanese parent-child relationship. This may explain the relative lack of discipline and the considerable indulgence of Japanese children, especially in their first years of life. However, this does not mean that restrictive parenting is absent in Japan. It is employed at a later developmental stage, has a different functional quality, and is accepted on the basis of the feeling of one-ness (which has been established in early childhood). This contrasts with parenting in Western cultures, in which independence, not interdependence, is typical of developmental goals (Trommsdorff, 1995).

In the same line of reasoning, the famous comparative study by Hess, Azuma, Kashiwagi, Dickson, Nagano, et al. (1986) underlines the culture-specific function of restrictive parenting. The mother's use of certain kinds of restrictive parenting and allusion to her authority in dealing with her noncompliant preschool child was found to be positively correlated with academic achievement 7 years later in Japan and negatively correlated with the same in the United States. The different function of restrictive

parenting can be explained by the Japanese mother's security about her relationship with her child, which is characterized by symbiotic interdependence. Confrontation and conflict escalation are unusual in Japanese parent-child relations (see section 3.3); its potential occurrence in the context of harmony is therefore instrumental in inducing the child's compliance.

Besides doing observations of mother-child interactions (see above), we interviewed mothers about their reactions in typical situations of mother-child conflict (Kornadt & Trommsdorff, 1990, 1997; Trommsdorff, 1989). Using a theory-based coding system, the answers were assessed with respect to the mothers' subjective theories on child rearing and development as well as child-rearing goals and practices. The results of our analyses demonstrated significant cultural differences concerning several aspects of mother-child interactions. First, the results from the interviews showed that Japanese and German mothers used different strategies based on primary and secondary control orientation in conflictual interactions with their preschool-aged child. More secondary control strategies (understanding and empathy with the child, giving in) were observed for Japanese than for German mothers in dyadic situations; however, when a third party (a peer) was involved, Japanese mothers tried to convince their child to empathize with the peer. In contrast, German mothers tended to instruct their child to be assertive. In general, it was more important for Japanese mothers to establish and support harmony in interactions with their preschool child. Japanese mothers tended to discontinue pursuit of their own goals and showed understanding and empathy with their child's needs, attributing their preschool child's misbehavior to a natural phase of development and not to negative intentions. Second, our observations of the interactions between mothers and their children showed significantly more physical contact (Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993), more empathic behavior, more mutuality, and more one-ness (cf. Kornadt, 2002; Kornadt & Eisler, 1998; Kornadt & Trommsdorff, 1990, 1997) in the Japanese as compared to the German dyads. Thus, Japanese mothers represented a model of cooperation and interdependence, whereas German mothers represented a model of self-assertion, individuality, and independence.

To summarize, even if this is an ideal-typical description, one may characterize the parent-child interactions in Japan, as compared to those in many Western societies, as being based more on interdependence, connectedness, empathy, and caring, and less on independence, self-reliance, self-assertion, and autonomy. In Western cultures, parent-child interactions are in general based more on the mutual influence of two *independent*, separate individuals; in contrast, interactions in Japan are guided by the establishment and maintenance of *interdependence* or one-ness, *amae*, mutual trust, and attachment. This means that bidirectionality in parent-child relations has a very different meaning in the two cultures.

Today, Japan is undergoing significant socioeconomic and value change, including increasing economic and social insecurity. However, a recent nationwide study on value changes has demonstrated a significant increase in the subjective importance of family ties and feelings of interdependency between parents and children (cf. Sakamoto, Tsuchiya, Nakamura, Maeda, & Fouse, 2000).

3. SELECTED CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES ON BIDIRECTIONALITY IN PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS

In the following, we will present results from cross-cultural research demonstrating the fundamental relevance of bidirectionality in parent-child interactions. Parent-child interactions are the basic process for the development of motives and abilities of the child. These interaction processes are shaped by culture-specific influences on the parent-child interaction and on the child's development. The concept of bidirectionality has become a central element of respective theories.

3.1. Attachment

A classic example of dynamic processes in parenting and what Kuczynski (see the Introduction in this volume) called "model of context: interactions within relationships" is the mother-child interaction in early childhood. Moreover, much is known from attachment

research about the "construction capacity" of children in later childhood based on the "inner working model." The attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) and the empirical studies implementing the "Strange Situation Test" (cf. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) have laid groundwork for the study of processes of parent-child interactions and their long-lasting effects on the child's development. Cross-cultural research demonstrates universal and culture-specific patterns of the interaction sequence in the "Strange Situation." Under normal conditions, infants show very early attachment to their caretakers, mostly their mothers. They seek their mothers' support when a stranger approaches. In their mothers' absence, they are irritated and fearful, and they interrupt their ongoing activities. According to attachment theory (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1969), attachment is an expression of a specific motive system in children who strive to gain or maintain security, and who therefore try to be physically close and gain contact with and the shelter of a caregiver. From an ethological point of view, this behavior has the function of an inborn motive system: The ways in which the child can acquire psychological security in a strange situation are at the same time the external conditions for the real experience of safety, namely the protection given by the caretaker. The fulfillment of the universal need for security from the caretaker allows for the development of secure attachment. This in turn allows for successful coping in stressful situations and the exploration of new situations. In the caretaker's absence, exploration is blocked; after the caretaker's return, the child happily initiates interactions. Insecurely attached children hesitate, mainly on account of uncertainty about the caretaker's reaction. In the case of unclear responsiveness of the caretaker and the related ambivalent attachment of the child, the separation situation induces conflicting reactions on the part of the child, who in part demands attachment and in part rejects the caretaker, even aggressively. The prerequisite for a secure attachment is "responsiveness" on the part of the mother or the caregiver (i.e., the sensitive, adequate, consistent, and prompt reaction to and fulfillment of the child's attachment needs). The quality of responsiveness affects the child's

development of secure or insecure (or ambivalent) attachment. According to the individual experience of attachment, the child intuitively develops an affect-based representation of the self, his or her own abilities, and relations between self and environment. The world is thus perceived as secure and friendly or as insecure, frightening, and threatening ("inner working model," Bowlby, 1969). The attachment theory further assumes that a secure attachment allows for more competence to develop positive social relations, cognitive abilities, and effective regulation of negative emotions. Thus, the attachment theory consequently describes a basic interaction process between mother and child. This has been confirmed by numerous studies (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999).

It is obvious that this interaction process is affected by interactions between biological preconditions and manifold experiences of both caretaker and child. The expression of responsiveness by the mother and experiences of support and attachment on the part of the child depend on various individual and contextual factors. To be responsive and to establish secure attachment is easy for the mother if the child is healthy, well-adjusted, and easy to please. However, responsiveness may be very difficult with a sick or irritable child. Mothers likewise differ in their level of irritability, patience, or aggressiveness.

Because the attachment theory was developed mainly in the West, questions arise about whether it is ethnocentrically biased or universally valid, and about the extent to which the cultural context is relevant. Cross-cultural research has contributed to three basic questions: (a) Do children universally develop attachment to the mother or caretaker? (b) Is the function of responsiveness for differences in attachment security universal? (c) What influence does the cultural context have on this interaction, its form, and its outcome? Here, one of the questions is whether the competence (or working model) that develops (depending on the attachment quality) is effective until adult age.

The *universality of attachment behavior* has been supported by a considerable number of cross-cultural studies (van IJzendoorn & Sagi, 1999). Consequently, the interaction quality of

attachment is universal. Because the ecological conditions are different for mothers and their children in different cultures (see above), and furthermore, culture-specific values, traditions, and beliefs are relevant for the mothers, it can be expected that related differences can occur in the attachment behavior. To give an example, Hausa children who live in a very restricted environment do not express their need for attachment by locomotion (e.g., turning and clinging to the mother), as is the case for children in Western societies; rather, they give signals (Marvin, van Devender, Iwanaga, LeVine, & LeVine, 1977). For the Gusii, affection is not expressed by clinging and hugging, but by shaking hands; children stretch their hands toward their mother when they need comfort (Kermorian & Leiderman, 1986). Japanese children, who are accustomed to closer body contact (Caudill & Weinstein, 1969, and see above) than are children in the United States and Germany, seek more frequent and closer body contact with their mother (Mizuta, Zahn-Waxler, Cole, & Hiruma, 1996).

The child's *exploratory behavior* also varies in different cultures according to the mother's expectations and her reinforcement of the child's behavior. Mothers in Western societies value independence highly and encourage their children to actively move away from their mother in order to explore novel objects, and children willingly behave accordingly. In contrast, for Hausa children, this behavior arouses disapproval; thus, children manipulate objects that they can reach without moving around.

Moreover, the hypothesis that secure attachment depends on *responsiveness* is supported by Zevalkin (1997) for Indonesia and results from an experiment in nature. Until recently, the Israeli kibbutzim constituted a context that allowed for the comparison of two kinds of children's developmental condition. Home-based children slept in their parents' home, so their caregivers could respond promptly to their needs. Other children were raised in communal sleeping arrangements, according to the collectivistic value system underlying the early kibbutz idea. These communal sleeping children who were lacking consistent caring and responsiveness of their mothers showed higher rates of attachment insecurity than did family sleeping

kibbutz infants (van IJzendoorn & Sagi, 1999). All these culture-specific forms are affected by the kind of mother-child interaction.

Another form of interaction beyond the mother-child interaction develops on the basis of the "inner working model," the cognitive-motivational system used to interpret the world and self-other relations. This becomes increasingly relevant in interaction with peers. The child does not simply react to unfamiliar situations in a fearful, suspicious, or trusting way; he or she actively interprets such situations according to the working model. Approach or avoidance behavior thus occurs, which in turn can evoke friendly or unfriendly reactions from the social partner. Moreover, the child actively chooses those situations or people to whom he or she can adapt most easily, and he or she avoids those that seem to be aversive or frightening (cf. parent-child relationship and peer influence; Parke & Buriel, 1998). Moreover, the child internalizes those values and norms in the social environment that fit best with the child's own experiences, expectations, and interpretations, whether they support altruism or aggression, or values of independence or interdependence. Through the child's behavior that develops on the basis of previous interactions, new interaction circles with the environment will be established. Thereby, the child's abilities and motive systems will develop, which in turn will influence parts of the environment. Kornadt (2002) has suggested a theoretical model of development of motivation which assumes that the effectiveness of these long-lasting interaction processes is based on the primary quality of attachment; the model also includes genetic conditions.

With respect to the attachment of Japanese children, a debate about culture-specific interactions has begun. Because the quality of the mother-child relation in Japan fosters high responsiveness on the part of mothers (see above), a higher proportion of securely attached and a relatively lower proportion of insecurely attached children can be expected to be observed in Japan. Miyake, Chen, and Campos (1985), however, have reported a relatively high rate (32%) of ambivalently attached Japanese children. Miyake (1990) explained this result by criticizing the Strange Situation as an inadequate

method for testing Japanese children and by assuming differences in temperament. Grossmann and Grossmann (1996) showed that the differences observed had resulted from special interactions in the experimental situation. Contrary to the instructions, the Japanese children were left without comfort when separated from their mothers, crying two or three times longer than the German children did. Thus, these data on attachment are not comparable. Careful reanalysis demonstrated that the percentage of ambivalent and insecurely attached children was as low as in Germany. Moreover, a higher percentage of Japanese children were securely attached. Further qualitative analyses showed that the Japanese children reacted in a more friendly and trusting manner toward a stranger than did the German children. They also showed more effective coping with the separation situation. Thus, these results confirm the importance of mothers' responsiveness for the Japanese children.

In a recent analysis, Rothbaum, Weiss, Pott, et al. (2000) held that the attachment theory is an ethnocentric Western theory. The authors denied the universality of responsiveness; they disagreed with the concept of the attachment figure as a secure base and with the "competence hypotheses," for example, citing the results by Miyake et al. (1985). But Miyake et al.'s (1995) results have been disconfirmed by Grossmann and Grossmann (1996). Our analysis of Rothbaum et al.'s (2000) arguments leads us to the conclusion that they focused on culture-specific modes of behavior. The authors do not dispute the biologically based central function of the child's need for security, which is the basis for the development of attachment and the development of an attachment style corresponding to the caretaker's responsiveness. Rothbaum et al. (2000) argued that mothers in the United States foster the development of independence in their children, whereas Japanese mothers encourage the development of relatedness; the children therefore developing different behavior. However, this only means that the mothers in both cultures fulfill their children's attachment needs in different ways. We maintain that the only way mothers can realize their culture-specific parental goals is by means of a mode of interaction that promotes security and attachment.

Basically, Rothbaum et al.'s (2000) arguments are in line with our assumption that the genetically based central need for security can be fulfilled in different context-related ways in the mother-child interaction. Different cultures may address somewhat different aspects (e.g., providing a secure base for physical locomotion or the feeling of one-ness). Additionally, the importance of infant-mother attachment in most cultures should not blind us to the fact that infant-father attachment is very important in some cultures, such as for the Aka pygmies (Hewlett, 1992). Therefore, attachment theory has to be placed in cultural context. This broadens the view to different qualities of attachment. Even if culture-specific differences exist with respect to the kind of bidirectional interactions, as has been shown above, one may not go so far as to ignore the biological basis of security in parent-child relations. Cross-cultural research on attachment thus shows the universal function of interactions in attachment and the culture-specific processes of developing attachment.

3.2. Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is understood here as a kind of self-regulation that affects the subjective experience and the expression of emotions in a given context. Emotion regulation may include the focus of attention, the interpretation of the emotion and situation, or the choice of display rules. Emotion regulation is often conceived of as part of socioemotional competence (Saarni, 2000). Even though universality of some basic emotions can be assumed (Ekman, 1973), sufficient empirical data are at hand to demonstrate significant cultural differences in the experience and expression of emotions (cf. Wierzbicka, 1999). These may be related to specific socialization conditions, especially with respect to parent-child relations.

In line with theories on the development of emotion regulation (cf. Friedlmeier, 1999; Sroufe, 1996), a two-step process is assumed: As the first step, the mother takes care of the infant's emotion regulation; she regulates the infant's arousal by satisfying the infant's needs (interpersonal regulation). As the second step, the child learns to regulate his or her arousal by him- or herself (intrapersonal regulation). The

development of emotion regulation is based on interaction processes between mother and child. By "emotional referencing," the child learns to validate his or her subjective emotional experience; the mother guides the child in interpreting a situation with respect to its emotional relevance (e.g., as threatening or as neutral). Presumably, both processes are influenced by cultural and genetic (e.g., temperamental) factors.

In the following sections, we will focus on some cultural factors and on the role of parent-child relations in the development of emotion regulation. Cross-cultural studies show universals as well as significant differences among cultures with respect to the value of specific emotions and their expression (Wierzbicka, 1999). Accordingly, values and developmental goals for achieving the desired social-emotional competence in the display and experience of emotions, including emotion regulation, can be assumed to differ among cultures. It can be assumed that in line with the value of harmony, the expression of positive emotions is rewarded in many Asian cultures, and the expression of negative emotions such as sadness and anger is discouraged. Although this hypothesis is related to the culture-specificity of display rules, it may also be assumed that certain cultural conditions affect the subjective experience of emotion. For example, in cultures in which harmony and interdependence prevail, children may develop a feeling of security and learn to interpret situations as less threatening, as compared to cultural contexts where conflicts prevail and security needs of children are less fulfilled. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that differences in cultural values with respect to self-control may induce different processes of emotion regulation. It is unclear, however, whether and how self-control is related to differences in the experience of emotions or to differences in the display of emotions (e.g., the ability to mask the expression of certain emotions). For example, in Confucian societies, the value of self-control is more important than in individualistic Western societies. According to Confucian tradition, children are socialized to achieve early self-control; mastery of impulse control is highly valued. Therefore, children socialized in the Confucian tradition may experience a situation

that induces strong emotions differently from children socialized in Western societies: They may focus their attention more on coping strategies that shift their focus of attention away from the emotion-eliciting situation.

How are cultural goals and values concerning emotion regulation transmitted to the child (Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 2002)? Children learn to experience certain emotions differently in the course of their socialization. For example, in his description of the Semai, Dentan (1968) referred to the collective self-image of these nonviolent people: "We never get angry." Briggs (1978) described the management of anger and aggression in two Canadian Inuit societies. "Reason" (*ihuma*) is conceived of as the ability of good and mature people to remain in control of their emotions and act in a considerate and nonviolent way toward others under all circumstances. Inuit children experience the affection of their parents through biting, slapping, and other painful actions. For example, by teasing a child, parents test the extent to which he or she has developed emotional control. Anger emotions that usually are preconditions for aggression are effectively discouraged in this culture by the parents' provision of an ambiguous fusion of affection and pain. Through interactions with their parents, children learn to fear affection as well as the loss of affection. This is an interesting culture-specific case in which aspects of attachment, emotion regulation, and aggression inhibition are connected. In other cultures, other techniques for the socialization of emotion regulation prevail. These also may involve the induction of emotions, such as guilt and shame (cf. Lebra, 1994).

Cross-cultural studies also show cultural differences in self-control of children (cf. Hess, Azuma, Kashiwagi, & Holloway, 1987), which can be conceived of as an important aspect of emotion regulation. Japanese mothers expected earlier emotional maturity, self-control, and courtesy of their children as compared with mothers in the United States, who expected earlier mastery in verbal assertiveness and social competence in interaction with peers. Longitudinal studies showed that maternal expectations and behavior had culture-specific (reverse) effects on the children over time. Maternal expectations and related behavior

were significantly associated with school-related performance in both cultures. This association increased for the Japanese samples during further development, and it declined in the United States. Depending on the cultural context, parental behavior that affects child development in a positive way at an earlier age can turn out to have undesirable effects in the long run. This study thus also demonstrated that longitudinal studies are needed to study development over time.

In our own cross-cultural (and also partly longitudinal) studies on mother-child interactions and the development of emotion regulation in Germany and Japan, we started from the assumption that important factors contributing to cultural differences in emotion regulation can be seen in the culture-specific value of self-control and the culture-specific prevalence of independence or interdependence. The method used was observation of mothers and their children (2- and 5-year-old girls) in different quasi-natural, semistructured situations (free-play, task completion, creative work, frustrating experience). Also, the children were observed in interaction with a confederate playmate who displayed sadness when a mishap occurred. The mothers of the 2-year-olds were present; those of the 5-year-olds stayed in a separate room (Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1999; Kobayashi, 1995; Trommsdorff, 1994; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993, 1999).

The results of our microanalytic studies showed no significant differences between Japanese and German 2-year-old girls with respect to the extent of distress when they were observing the misfortune of the playmate. However, cultural differences occurred with respect to the quality of mother-child interaction, and the duration and the end of the child's emotional reactions differed between children. Sequential analyses showed that Japanese toddlers calmed down earlier during interaction with their mother. They also sought more help from their mothers, and they initiated more physical contact with their mothers than did German toddlers. In the course of the child's emotion regulation when experiencing frustration, the Japanese mothers reacted differently to their children's arousal than did German mothers. They distracted their child when the child

started to be negatively affected, they avoided eye contact more, and they played down the significance of the frustrating situation by guiding the child's focus of attention toward the mother-child interaction.

For the older children, the 5-year-old girls, again significant cultural differences were observed with respect to both the quality of interaction with their mothers and their regulation of negative emotions in a frustrating situation. Japanese as compared to German mothers were more involved in the emotion regulation of their 5-year-olds because Japanese girls regulated their negative emotions by seeking their mothers' support. In contrast, the German 5-year-olds demonstrated independence in the regulation of negative emotions even though this was not always successful. Even though the time until the mothers' intervention was about the same in both cultures, Japanese mothers showed more proactive than reactive sensitivity to their daughter's negative emotion; they seemed to anticipate their child's frustration and tried to distract their child, whereas German mothers guided the focus of their child's attention to the situation and the experience of frustration, thus underlining the negativity of the experience.

Furthermore, significant situational effects were observed. When the negative emotions were induced by the frustration of personal goals, the Japanese 5-year-olds showed less negative emotions (frustration) than the German 5-year-olds did. However, when the negative emotions were induced by observing another person's distress, the Japanese girls showed more personal distress as compared to the German children (Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1999; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993, 1999).

From a cultural value point of view, these results are not surprising. First, the differences with respect to the experience and the regulation of negative emotions (more frustration of German as compared to Japanese children) were predicted on account of the specific cultural context in which children's development takes place. German children grow up in a cultural context of independence, inducing self-orientation and assimilation ("primary control"—acting on the environment). This is related to authentic expression including negative emotions; when

their own needs are frustrated, negative emotions are more prominent. By contrast, Japanese children grow up in a context of interdependence that requires self control, feeling with the other person (empathy), and accommodation to the situation, even if this means giving up one's own goals or the experience of frustration ("secondary control"—acting on the self). Furthermore, in the German culture, the mother-child interactions have a different function with respect to emotion regulation: Japanese as compared to German mother-child dyads interact less on the basis of separateness and independence; this pattern also is valid in the case of the child's frustration. In contrast, mother-child interactions in Japan are focused more on the positive aspects of their interdependence, mutuality, and togetherness. This may help the Japanese child to experience less frustration. The Japanese mother's proactive sensitivity allows for sharing emotions before they are felt by the child in full strength. This allows for the joint regulation of negative emotions in mother-child interactions. Here, the culture-specific effects of the specific qualities of bidirectionality in mother-child relations on the emotion regulation abilities of the child can be seen: Bidirectionality based on independence increases and bidirectionality based on interdependence reduces the experience of frustration.

Second, even though Japanese children are brought up in a cultural context in which negative emotions are highly regulated and seldom shown in public, they seem less able to regulate the expression of their negative emotions (distress) related to the misfortune of another person. This reaction may be due in part to their mother's absence and the lack of comfort otherwise provided. However, it also may be due to the empathy-inducing situation, which is more compelling for the Japanese children, who have been experiencing their mother's empathic model since infancy. The empirical result that this specific quality of distress is related to prosocial behavior for Japanese but not for German girls supports the following interpretation: The Japanese girls' more intense expression of empathic distress can be viewed as part of their emotion socialization in the course of empathy-based mother-child interactions; this

socialization allows for the expression of emotions in case of empathy but blocks the expression of emotions in case of self-focused needs.

To summarize, cross-cultural studies on emotion regulation show that the regulation of emotion experience (decoding of internal indicators of emotions and interpretation of the situation) and the regulation of the expression of emotions (display rules) are related to culture-specific parent-child interactions. In contrast to previous cross-cultural studies, we have shown that there are intercultural differences in the expression of emotions and in the regulation of emotions by children of different developmental ages. More specifically, we have shown that mother-child interactions differ in the two cultures with respect to interdependence and independence and that these differences are related to differences in the expression and regulation of emotions on the part of the children. Thus, the respective mother-child interactions can be seen as transmitting culture-specific values of emotion regulation to the children, and the culture-specific quality of bidirectionality in mother-child relations allows for the development of culture-specific competence in emotion regulation.

3.3. Aggression

The most convincing facts about culture-specific mother-child interactions and their long-term effects have been found in research on aggression and altruism. Some cross-cultural research has shown that cultural differences exist with respect to aggression. On a global level, one may distinguish between more "aggressive" and more "nonaggressive" cultures when using indicators such as violent crimes (e.g., homicide, robbery), warfare, and internal violence (e.g., hostile sorcery) (Kornadt, Eckensberger, & Emminghaus, 1980). The antecedents of aggression have been seen in ecological and sociostructural conditions, which are related to socialization practices. Based on field studies and the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF), parental rejection and punishment appear to increase aggressiveness, whereas parental warmth and permissiveness appear to reduce it (Rohner, 1976; Segall et al., 1999). In addition, harsh and aggressive

initiation rites are assumed to instigate a retaliation motive (for the Masai, cf. Segall, 1983; for Sambia, cf. Herdt, 1986). Predominant contact with mothers has been found to foster aggression (Segall, 1983). According to Lambert (1992), in cultures in which one believes in "malevolent" gods, children are attacked and hurt in their early socialization, and they become more aggressive. According to the results of the Six Cultures Study by B. B. Whiting and J.W.M. Whiting (1975), the complexity of a society and household structure influence social development, including aggression. For example, in societies with nuclear families, children showed more prosocial and less aggressive behavior as compared with those with extended (e.g., patrilineal) families. However, these facts raised some interesting questions related to the idea of interactions:

The extended family not only treats aggression harshly, but also breeds aggression. Is this because, as first assumed, high density cannot easily tolerate aggression and punishes it, and then the punishment produces aggression? Or is it perhaps because the density first produces the aggression, and the punishment is a reaction to it? (Munroe & Munroe, 1975, p. 105)

To summarize, the functional relations between such global, generalized factors as the role of parent-child relations and the development of aggressiveness remain unclear. There are several psychological explanations of differences in aggressiveness: psychoanalytic approaches, the frustration-aggression theory, information processing theories, and general social cognitive approaches (for a summary, see Goldstein and Segall, 1983).

Recent cross-cultural longitudinal studies by Kornadt (1991, 2002) have provided insight into mother-child interaction processes and their influence on the development of aggressiveness and altruism. Kornadt suggests an aggression-specific motivation theory based on McClelland's (1961) work and postulates that the aggressive behavior is organized by an enduring motivational disposition for aggression; however, the aggressive act is understood as a specific reaction to frustrating conditions in the given situation. In the case of a high motive strength and low

frustration tolerance, the behavior of another person is likely to be attributed to hostile intentions; this gives rise to anger reactions that may activate retaliation. Two sources for the development of the specific aggression motive are assumed: First, the motive development is based on the biologically determined reaction tendency of anger in case of frustration, and second, the motive system develops as a result of certain experiences (see below). A similar process is assumed for altruism with empathy as its emotional basis (Kornadt, 1982, 1984a, 1984b).

In the study, samples from five cultures were included (Japan, Batak, and Bali, as Asian cultures, and Germany and Switzerland, as Western cultures). The sample consisted of adolescents as well as mothers and their 3- to 5-year-old children. The mothers and the children were investigated twice, with an interim of 9 years. Multiple research methods, quantitative and qualitative, were used (e.g., standardized questionnaires, scenario techniques, interviews, observations) (cf. Kornadt, 1991; Kornadt, Hayashi, Tachibana, Trommsdorff, & Yamauchi, 1992). The results showed both significant quantitative and significant qualitative differences in aggression in Asian (Balinese, Batak, Japanese) and Western (German and Swiss) samples. In the Asian as compared with the Western cultures, frustration is less interpreted as resulting from another person's malevolent behavior. Rather, frustrating experiences are rather attributed to one's own mistakes. This attribution tendency induces more guilt or regret than anger. But even anger does not necessarily lead to the intention to retaliate in Asian cultures; it rather induces more prosocial behavior, which is intended as compensation. According to this theory of the motivation of aggression, it was assumed that culture-specific parent-child relations may be influential in producing these cultural differences.

Indeed, significant differences between the cultures have been observed with respect to mother-child interactions. Japanese mothers exhibited closer emotional relations (one-ness), expressed fewer malevolent attributions, and punished their children less, as this was believed to have a negative effect on the children's self-concept. Because of the need to preserve social

harmony, Japanese mothers avoided conflicts by making use of culture-specific accommodation techniques (see above). They did not expect their children to obey immediately; they were more inclined to attribute children's negative behavior to immaturity (the child is just a child, is too much absorbed in playing, is too tired) rather than to malevolent intentions. They were also more willing to give in while at the same time not giving up or questioning the rule on which their demands were based.

In contrast, German mothers were more likely to attribute their children's misbehavior to malevolent intentions ("he wants to make me angry"), reacting to misconduct with more anger. German mothers also expected more self-reliance and autonomy from their children. They were less restrictive and interpreted their child's misbehavior as an expression of the desired autonomy and willfulness, thereby partly accepting their child's misbehavior. The cross-cultural results showed that conflict escalation was observed more frequently in the German than in the Japanese samples (Kornadt, 1999; Kornadt & Trommsdorff, 1997).

The longitudinal study revealed a significant long-term effect of the early mother-child interaction on aggressiveness and empathy-based altruism 9 years later (Kornadt & Tachibana, 1999). One of the most influential factors was the escalation of conflicts as a typical interaction process. Presumably, no children anywhere always do immediately what their mother wants them to do. When children disobey, mothers' reactions and the subsequent interaction sequences can be very different.

In Germany, we observed the following pattern of interaction: The German mothers expected and insisted that their children comply and got angry if they did not. The children then felt misunderstood or even rejected, and many protested. This, in turn, induced the mothers to believe that they needed to assert themselves and threaten to punish their children. In the end, the conflicts remained unresolved and were often postponed. Both the mothers and the children felt hurt and angry; they believed they had lost their self-esteem and expected the same kind of angry conflict to occur again and again. This pattern of interaction is clearly one condition for the development of aggressiveness (see Figure 14.1).

Figure 14.1 Mother-Child Interaction in a Conflict Situation: German and Japanese Dyads

In Japanese mother-child dyads (see above), in which there is a feeling of security in the

empathy-based relationship, a different interaction sequence was observed. The Japanese mothers

accepted their children's behavior at least temporarily, viewing them as "still immature," "too tired," or simply "too absorbed in the game." To avoid conflict, the Japanese mothers postponed or modified their demands. These processes are summarized in the model presented in Figure 14.1.

Regression and path analyses over all cultures showed that these socialization conditions were related to differences in aggression and altruism in the children 9 years later, as predicted by the theory. In the German sample, a lower sensitivity on the part of the mothers and a higher conflict escalation in the mother-child interactions had an effect on the development of aggression in the children (Kornadt, 1999). In addition, conflict escalation had a significant effect on the German children's aggressiveness 9 years later ($r = .36$ and $r = .28$). In the Japanese sample, conflict escalations occur rarely, and when they occur, their effect is reversed. Such conflicts do not end in a mutual grudge; they are much shorter and induce feelings of shame or guilt in the child ($r = .41$). At the same time, mothers feel sympathy with their child, and the interaction ends with reestablished mutual positive feelings. All of this results in low aggressiveness ($r = .21$). These effects cannot be understood as a unidirectional influence but only as a result of complicated interactions that stabilize over time and thereby intensify their influence on the social development of the child.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present analysis has shown that parent-child relations vary in different cultural contexts. We have shown above that the extent of bidirectionality and the relation between unidirectionality (effects of parents on child) and bidirectionality (interaction processes between parents and children) in parent-child relations depend on several culture-related factors. Such cultural differences influence the developmental or *ecocultural niche* of children or families (Super & Harkness, 1997). The *ecocultural niche*, including such features as "objective" socioeconomic conditions and "subjective" values, beliefs, attitudes, and habits, is the context

in which parental theories and values concerning the child, the family, and child-rearing practices are developed. Parent-child relations are therefore culture-specific, although certain universalities are present. Parent-child relations are intimate, enduring, mostly nonvoluntary relations that are influential in a child's development, and individual development may be seen partly as adaptation to the given *ecological* and *sociocultural* conditions. Such adaptations are guided by the need to understand the world and create meaning. Cultural meaning systems affect parent-child relations and individual development. Furthermore, several studies have shown how the *socioeconomic* system is functionally related to parent-child relations. In pastoral as compared to hunter-gatherer societies, different kinds of developmental goals are relevant. The tougher the economic conditions and the more difficult it is to survive under these conditions, the fewer degrees of freedom parents have to react to their children's individual needs and wishes.

Socioeconomic conditions alone, however, cannot fully explain such differences. Parent-child relations differ considerably among various complex industrialized societies, as comparisons between samples from the United States or Germany, on one hand, and Japan and other Asian societies, on the other hand, have shown. Therefore, the manner in which cultural *value orientations* affect parent-child interactions should likewise be studied. Social norms that have been transmitted for centuries as part of the adaptation to economic conditions sometimes restrict the alternatives in parenting for the sake of the society's survival. For example, individualistic and collectivistic values, or values of independence and interdependence, and more specifically, the value of children and family, affect parent-child interactions likewise. However, a simple dichotomization of such values is unjustified and should be avoided.

A further condition influencing the relation between uni- and bidirectionality is the extent to which parents' behavior adapts to the *developmental conditions* of the child. Parents can take the developmental status of their children more or less into account, thereby restricting the variance of their own behavior. For example, Japanese parents' behavior is strongly influenced

by their children. Parents aim to fulfill their infants' needs as much as possible; later on, they set strict rules for their children. In other cultures, this developmental sequence can be very different: Either the enforcement of rules starts very early, irrespective of the needs of the children and the children's capacity to adapt to these norms, or such enforcement does not take place during childhood at all, and children are expected to develop rule-oriented behavior all by themselves.

Parent-child interactions not only affect child development; they also affect the quality of the *parent-child relationship over the life span*. However, the processes for these influences are still not clear; they may vary among cultures. Also, too little is known about the relative predominance of uni- and bidirectionality (including aspects of independence and interdependence) of parent-child relationships in different stages during the life span. Possible changes in predominance presumably differ cross-culturally. In any event, the function of the parent-child relationship for child development is the result of mutual influences between parents and their children that include the exchange of cultural meaning. As such, these mutual influences may be regarded as co-constructive processes in the given context, based on the interpretation of and acting on the context.

The influence of children on their parents is much greater in individualistic as compared to collectivistic societies. In individualistic societies, in which independence and autonomy are highly valued, children are granted specific rights, and they are expected to have and display their own will and engage in negotiations with their parents (see Kuczynski, Chapter 1, this volume). In contrast, for example in collectivistic societies, the whole sociocultural context expects and demands that parents as well as children accommodate to given social rules and norms. Accordingly, social norms and practices, and the culturally transmitted belief in their value, can limit children's influence on their parents and, conversely, parents' influence on their children.

Furthermore, the Japanese case has shown that bidirectionality does not necessarily adequately describe the culture-specific quality of the Japanese mother-child relationship and

interactions. When a relationship is based on the empathic mutuality of interrelated people, the meaning of their interactions is very different from that in a relationship based on an exchange between separate entities, as is the case in modern Western societies. Thus, to better understand the quality of interactions and the quality of bidirectionality, the primary question should focus on the *quality of the relationship*.

To summarize, cross-cultural research warns against the uncritical use of general concepts such as uni- or bidirectionality and mutuality in parent-child interactions. It is more fruitful to specify the quality of the relationship and to take into account the context in which the relationship develops. On this basis, one may specify the extent to which parent-child interactions are structured by the cultural context, the quality of the specific relationship, and the individual needs and abilities of parents and children. Whether and under which conditions parent-child interactions imply unidirectional or mutual influence (with an equal or unequal power structure) has to be analyzed in the given cultural context.

In this chapter, we were not able to deal with some of the questions that are of considerable importance to the study of parent-child relations. For example, how does the parent-child relationship change over the life span? The parent-child relationship is not confined to childhood. The quality of the parent-child relationship can become very important for aging parents who need material, financial, or socio-emotional support. To study changes in the parent-child relationship over the life-span, more cross-cultural studies are needed, ideally incorporating cross-sectional and longitudinal methods.

Another question concerns the kinds of processes that account for the functions of parent-child relations with respect to both individual and social development. Here, more research is needed pertaining to how cultural values inherent in parent-child relations are transmitted to the next generation and how parent-child relations contribute to continuity and change in a society. This is especially relevant in the face of significant changes in the world population, including overpopulation in some parts of the world and declining fertility rates in

other parts and their respective effects on the quality and function of parent-child relations. The modified "Value of Children" study (Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2001) is an example of such research, investigating the relationship between cultural context, social change, and age, on one hand, and parent-child relations over three generations, on the other. In conclusion, the study of parent-child relations provides an opportunity to gain insight into the nature of cultural dynamics and to increase our understanding of individual development and social change.

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