

# Cultural and Developmental Aspects of Values of Children<sup>1</sup>

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## Summary

In the first part, cross-cultural studies on values of children as reflected in parental beliefs, behavior and parent-child relationships are discussed. Considerable differences between Japan and Germany are demonstrated which mainly concern the emotional quality of the mother-child relationship. Japanese as compared to German mothers showed more flexible responsiveness across situations. Also, Japanese and German mothers' responsiveness affected their children's regulation of negative emotions and their children's task solving motivation differently. In the second part, questions on socio-cultural changes and related changes in values of children are discussed by focussing on general theories on internalization, and on specific change in Japan.

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## Introduction

More than a quarter of a century ago the concept „value of children“ had entered large comparative studies on socio-economic, cultural and psychological aspects of fertility. This study included extensive surveys in the USA, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, and Turkey which are documented in the country monographs published by the East-West Population Institute in the East-West-Center in Honolulu, Hawaii (Arnold et al., 1975).

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„Values of children“ were at this time studied with respect to its functional value for parents and for society in terms of fertility and population stability. As first step, the influence of economic and cultural factors (social norms and values) on birth rate were studied. Later-on, the interest shifted towards the understanding of psychological conditions for the decision to have a child. The work by Hoffman & Hoffman (1973) included both, situational influences and psychological conditions partly depending on cultural values and affecting individual value orientations. According to the view of Hoffman & Hoffman (1973) „values of children refers to the functions they serve or the needs they fulfil for parents“ (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973, 20).

The functional value of children for parents may vary between materialistic values such as economic benefit and social status and non-materialistic values such as “emotional” values (enjoying to have children). Results from the value-of-children-studies demonstrated that socio-economic conditions and the quality of values of children were correlated. Economic values of children were more pronounced in less industrialized societies while emotional values of children were more important in modern societies (cf. Kagitçibasi, 1982). The question is, however, whether economic and social values exclude emotional values, and whether values of children are related to the economic status of parents and the society. The assumption that the economic development of a society (e.g., modernity) predicts the quality of parents’ value of children implies that historical and cultural factors are less important. In contrast, one may as well assume that cultural values influence the way people perceive of their environment including their economic situation. Also one may expect that cultural values influence individual value orientations including values of children. More precisely, cultural values of independence as compared to interdependence may be less related to social values of children. However, it is unclear whether differences in emotional values of children occur between cultures which represent individualistic versus collectivistic values. Also it is unclear whether emotional and social values of children really constitute independent dimensions. Furthermore, the way in which “value of children” affect behavior is not really clarified. According to the value-of-children-study, fertility can be predicted from values of children. However, the decision to have children is only one aspect. Other aspects of values of children may be more closely related to the way how parents interact with their children, including their preference for emotion-focused parent-child relations.

Accordingly, „values of children“ can be seen not only as influencing decisions on fertility but also as moderator variables affecting the subjective

theories of parents, their socialization goals and behavior, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Such variables will be used here in order to test cultural differences which respect to emotional values.

In the first part, it is argued that "values of children" constitute a "developmental niche" for the children. Some empirical examples from cross-cultural studies on mother-child-interactions are presented focussing on emotional qualities of values of children. Here, it is asked which functions "values of children" (as represented in child-rearing behavior) have for children's development, referring to Super & Harkness' (1993, 1998) notion of "cultural canalization".

In the second part, it is asked whether values of children are affected by socio-cultural change or stability. Here, questions on the relation between "value of children" and intergenerational transmission of values and examples for changes of values of children in Japan are presented.

In general, the question is dealt with whether the study of values of children may contribute to the understanding of individual development and social change.

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## **1. Values of children and socialization of children**

The former value of children-study conceived of values of children as depending on the economic status (and the society) of parents. Parents from less economic advanced societies are assumed to invest in children in order to ascertain their later economic security in old age and the continuation of the family. The impact of values of children for fertility decisions was important in these studies, and the impact on children's development was neglected.

On the basis of theories which view development as process in context, value of children can be regarded as a developmental niche or as part of "cultural canalization" (Super & Harkness, 1998). Therefore it is suggested here to conceive of values of children as a moderator variable, linking on the one hand the economic status and socio-cultural values, and on the other hand parental behavior as a developmental niche for the children.

## **1.1 Values of children and it's impact on socialization in different cultural context: conceptual framework**

From the perspective of modern developmental psychology development takes place in context. The context of development has to be differentiated according to different levels which interact with each other and which penetrate each other without necessarily influencing children's development directly. Therefore, multi-level approaches to contextual factors, specifying the quality of the macro-, meso-, and micro-level are relevant (cf. Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The multi-dimensional contextual model of child-development can be refined by using Super & Harkness (1998) notion of "developmental niche" and of "cultural canalization". Cultural values affect values of children and parental belief systems including their value orientations and expectations with respect to children. Thereby global cultural values indirectly affect the way children develop. According to this view it is rather the immediate social environment such as parental values and behavior which mediate the economic conditions and cultural values and affect child development. Thus, the proximal context into which children are born and in which children grow up (including siblings, other family members and peers) can be specified with respect to the underlying values of children of primary caregivers. On the other hand, cultural values are in turn affected by the child's development and behavior, they can thus either be stabilized or modified. Parents' values of children can be seen as developmental contexts which are part of the socio-economic macro-structure, the meso-structure of socialization institutions, and the micro-structure of the parent-child relationship. Accordingly, values of children may be seen as a moderator variable connecting the macro-, meso-, and micro-level of the society and constituting the "developmental niche" for the individual development.

Let us assume that on the macro-level economic hardship dominates; on the meso-level, only little differentiation of formalized institutions for socialization are available; and on the micro-level of the family, several family members are responsible for taking care of the child. This is a rough picture of less industrialized traditional societies. The question now is how do values of children enter into such a multi-contextual situation of development?

To give an example from cross-cultural studies on values of children and

child-rearing. In the context of traditional agrarian societies, children are supposed to fulfill economic duties including economic support of the family and social responsibilities for family members. Young children are supposed to engage in household-cores, to help in harvesting, or to take care of younger siblings. Later-on, children are expected to have children themselves and to support their older parents (Whiting & Whiting, 1975). Rules of reciprocity of support govern family relations between generations throughout the life span. Related activities of children and parents are learned as developmental tasks. These normative reciprocal activities are embedded in a stable family system which is differentiated according to ascribed roles such as age and gender. Values of children in these societies are based on economic and social needs and are presumably reflected by reciprocal values of parents. Such values of children and parents serve to stabilize the economic and social system and fosters continuity of the family in the specific society. However, values alone could not serve these functions unless they are transmitted in respective child-rearing practices and rules for behavior. In these societies, children are socialized to adopt to the norms and expectations of the family to fulfill prescribed social roles and to conform to cultural values.

In line with these assumptions empirical findings from the above cited values of children-studies show that in traditional societies social and economic values of children are preferred which foster tradition and continuity. This does not, however, imply that low economic development is always related to social and economic values of children or the other way round. Not only the fact of intra-cultural variations but also of socio-economic change and its impact on socialization of the next generation has to be taken into account here.

Empirical data by Kagitçibasi (1982) demonstrate intra-cultural differences in. In traditional and economically deprived families values of children were focused on material and social support; in more modern and socio-economically higher ranking families emotional investment in children was more important. According to Kagitçibasi (1982; 1996) and her extension of the value of children-study, traditional (more or less agrarian) families rather prefer values of children which are related to a materialistic orientation: Children are considered as a future investment in the economic security of the parents and the family. Parental investment is expected to be reciprocated by later investment of children.

However, it remains unclear in these studies how values of children are transmitted and affect socialization and intergenerational relations. The question arises whether conformity oriented parental discipline can ensure the economic survival of the family when it excludes emotional ties in parent-child-relation. This

should imply less favorable conditions for the internalization of values. According to Grusec & Goodnow (1994) and Maccoby (1992), the emotional quality of the parent-child relation and acceptance of parental authority is necessary for successful socialization of values and thus for intergenerational stability of values. The other question is, whether in modern industrialized societies less economic and more emotional values of children prevail and which consequences this may have. A lack of conformity demands and low values of reciprocity will presumably foster hedonistic socialization practice which may decrease the importance of intergenerational obligations of the family,

## **1.2 Cultural differences in socialization of children: Empirical studies**

### **1.2.1 Acceptance of parental authority in Socialization in traditional versus modern societies**

How far can the economic status predict values of children as operationalized by child-rearing? When we compare cultures of similar economic development but different cultural and historical background, do similarities or differences with respect to socialization of children occur?

In our own cross-cultural studies on parental goals and child-rearing in Indonesian, Japanese, Scottish, and German families, we studied acceptance of parental authority which can be used as indicator for different patterns of stability in transmission of values over the generations. These studies demonstrated significant differences with respect to acceptance of parental authority and the quality of parent-child relationships. These variables included differences in the acceptance of parental goals by their children. (Trommsdorff, 1995; Trommsdorff, 1985; 1986; Kornadt & Trommsdorff, 1990; 1997).

The Indonesian and the Japanese society differ economically. However, in both societies adolescents had the highest scores for obedience while adolescents from Germany and Scotland who are economically similar to Japan had the lowest scores. The results from these studies are clearly not in line with the thesis that obedience is related to a low socio-economic status of the respective country. Japanese adolescents showed higher preference for obedience and at the same time the least occurrence of parent-child conflicts as compared to German or Scottish

## adolescents.

Furthermore, significant differences occurred between the Balinese and Batak samples who were similar with respect to economic status. The Batak sample showed less values of conformity and less conflict-free parent-child relations as compared to the Balinese samples (Trommsdorff, 1995). The fact that significant inter- and intra-cultural differences in child-rearing practices occurred for cultures with similar economic status, raises the following questions:

- Which other variables beside economic status enter into the socialization of children?
- Is obedience a valid indicator for reciprocity-based materialistic values of children?

These cross-cultural studies show that values of obedience are not necessarily related to low economic status. Accordingly, it has to be questioned that the materialistic basis of values of children in families from low economic context serves to ensure the economic security of the family (and the old parents), and values of obedience are a necessary prerequisite to ensure reciprocity of investments.

The Japanese and Indonesian examples show that the value of obedience is no valid indicator for a materialistic basis of values of children. As we know from recent studies, Japanese parents decreasingly expect their children to take care of them in old age; also Japanese parents decreasingly decide to give birth to a child in order to continue the family. Accordingly, economic and social functions of children are not the only basis for values of obedience; and values of obedience are no valid indicator for economic values of children.

It seems necessary to take into account further variables on different levels of socialization. As for Japan, the value of obedience is related to Confucian beliefs in filial piety and loyalty. Here obedience is embedded into a complex system of interpersonal relationships. These are organized around cultural values which imply the legitimate bases for social rules. The legitimacy of these rules allows that they function to foster social orientation, emotional security, and interpersonal independence.

To summarize, economic status alone cannot predict values of children and values of socialization. Cultural values and their historically rooted meaning

significantly add to the values of socialization.

### 1.2.2 Emotional quality of child-rearing in Japan and Germany

The next question is whether values of socialization can be based on multiple functional values: *material or social functions* and also *emotional functions*. Can obedience demands and at the same time close emotional relationships co-exist and does this combination characterize values of socialization in economically advanced modern societies?

In the following, some data from our cross-cultural studies on mother-child interactions are presented with respect to these questions. Japan and Germany are examples for highly industrialized societies. Therefore, samples from these societies are compared in order to test whether differences in the emotional quality of child-rearing occur, and how these may affect child development.

Japanese and German mother-child-interactions were studied in various situations. The methods used were observations and interviews (cf. Kornadt & Trommsdorff 1990, 1997; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993; Trommsdorff 1989, 1997; Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1998).

- (1) Observations of mother-child-interactions were experimentally structured: (a) no induction is given; (b) the child deals with a difficult task; (c) the child deals with a playful creative task, and (d) the child encounters a frustrating situation.
- (2) Interviews of mothers focused on different conflict situations in interaction with their child (non-compliance of child with respect to mothers' requests in everyday situations).

Analyses of the observational studies produced data on mother-child interactions. The interviews were analyzed according to mothers' values, beliefs, subjective theories and their emotional reactions.

- (1) In case of a conflict with their child, Japanese as compared to German mothers avoided escalation of conflicts by giving in. This behavior was related to their positive attributions of children's behavior.

(2) When children were engaged in solving a task, Japanese as compared to German mothers made less demands and give significantly more support to their children.

(3) When children were engaged in solving a difficult task, Japanese as compared to German mothers showed different emotions. They showed

- less anger
- more empathy
- less self-focused emotions
- more child focused emotions.

(4) When children tried to cope with a stressful situation Japanese as compared to German mothers showed differences in responsiveness.

(a) Degree: While no differences for mothers of the 2-year-olds occurred, significant differences occurred for mothers of the 5-year-olds. Japanese as compared to German mothers showed significantly more responsiveness towards their 5-year-old children.

(b) Quality: The quality of responsiveness of Japanese as compared to German mothers differed in various ways (cf. Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1993, 1999; Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1998, 1999).

Japanese mothers varied their responsiveness according to the given situation whereas German mothers reacted quite stable independent from the situational demands. Japanese mothers acted responsively in order to monitor their child according to the situational demands whereas German mothers responded according to their personal preference. Japanese mothers took into account both, the needs of their child and the situational demands. Responsiveness can be characterized as a state variable for Japanese mothers and as trait variable for German mothers.

Japanese mothers did not react to their children's expression of needs as German mothers did but they anticipated their children's needs and acted before their children reacted.

Japanese mothers made use of several subtle strategies to avoid stressful reaction of their children. They could foresee possible negative emotional

reactions of their children and successfully employed strategies of distraction, positive interpretation of the situation or denial.

To summarize the results: Japanese as compared to German mothers were more closely emotionally attached to their children as compared to German mothers. This could be seen in their

- more child-focused and less self-focused emotional reactions
- stronger responsiveness
- more situational dependent responsiveness
- more pro-active child-focused responsiveness.

If we define values of children as preferred parental belief system, and as preferred behavior in interaction with the child, the main results of these studies can be summarized as a stronger preference of emotional values of children in Japan as compared to Germany.

### **1.3 Empirical studies on cultural differences in child development**

What is the function of emotional values of children and an emotional basis of parent-child relationship for child development?

Our results showed that Japanese as compared to German mothers' higher responsiveness was more effective to improve their children's task orientation and their emotion regulation (Friedlmeier & Trommsdorff, 1998, 1999; Trommsdorff & Friedlmeier, 1999).

These differences may reflect different values of children and child-rearing. In Germany, children's independence is more highly valued than in Japan. Therefore, it may be inappropriate if German mothers behave in a responsive way towards their 5-year-old children while this behavior may be normal in Japan and it may constitute a part of the emotional bonding in mother-child-relations. This interpretation is supported by our findings that nearly 50 % of 5-year-old German children regulate negative emotions without support of their mothers while nearly 50 % of Japanese children did not.

Our cross-cultural studies clearly show that cultural values affect the developmental niche and the developmental pathways of children in culture-specific ways. A rather ideocentric value orientation in Germany is reflected by parental beliefs to rear children as independent partners; in contrast, a rather sociocentric value orientation in Japan is reflected in the more pronounced child-centeredness and a more pronounced emotional quality in mother-child interactions. This emotional quality seems to be based on a feeling of oneness ("Itaikan") (Azuma, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

To summarize: Our results show that considerable differences exist with respect to the emotional quality of values of children in Japan and Germany. First, Japanese mothers' child-oriented emotions differ from German mothers' self-focused emotions. Second, the emotional investment of mothers affects child development differently. In case of Japanese children, their emotional dependency is increased. In contrast, the emotional investments of German mothers affect the emotional independency of their children. These different qualities of investment and the different outcomes may demonstrate that the basis for transmission of values of children differs between cultures and may at the same time affect social change in different ways.

A question for further studies on values of children can be whether values of children are related to economic and to social and at the same time to emotional functions. Social and economic functions on the one side and emotional functions on the other side need not necessarily constitute mutually exclusive aspects of values of children but they can rather be combined in various ways. At least the data from our cross-cultural studies on mothers' beliefs and mother-child interactions showed the following:

- (a) Norm-orientation (obedience) in child-rearing is not necessarily related to low emotional quality of mother-child relation.
- (b) In comparably economically advanced societies the emotional quality of mother-child relations can differ considerably. This should be related to underlying cultural values.
- (c) Depending on the cultural values and independent from economic status, child-rearing values can be related to normative and/or emotional functions.

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## 2. Socio-cultural change and socialization of values

Our results comparing aspects of socialization in Germany and Japan demonstrate different parental theories and practices. How are the underlying values socialized and transmitted to the next generation? Therefore, the next question is how cultural values and related values of children are transmitted in the process of socialization. According to our previous studies on socialization including parental beliefs and parent-child-reactions one may very roughly differentiate between so-called ideocentric (individualistic) and socio-centric (collectivistic) cultures.

### 2.1 Transmission of values as part of internalization

Recent developmental theories conceive of the child no more as a passive recipient of rules and behavior regulations but as actively constructing his/her own development. However, what are the options and what is the range for constructing one's own development? Here a look on cultural contexts is useful. In traditional societies the range for departing from social rules and norms is much smaller as compared to modern societies where division of labor, urbanization and the value of individuality have imposed life-long decision making processes on the individual actor.

The cultural contextual including parental beliefs and behavior can only partly explain cultural differences. Transmission of cultural values does not simply follow the rule of imprinting, classical conditioning or modeling. The *active construction* of these values by the child on the basis of *internalization* of these values and by enacting these values in adequate behavior is the necessary prerequisite for effective socialization. The transmission of values of children depends on the active construction of values by the child. Recent studies by Kochanska (1997) and Grusec, Rudy, & Martini (1997) point out to a multidimensional process for internalization of values basing on cognitive appraisal and emotional bonding of parent-child relationships.

The process of internalization and enacting again depend on the child's

developmental age, the way the caretakers interact with the child, and the quality of the wider developmental niche including other family members and peers. E.g., certain cognitive and social abilities, and furthermore, a certain social motivation have to be developed when values of reciprocity, social responsibility and family orientation are internalized in a way that conforms to culturally prevalent values.

To give an example on different parent-child interactions during socialization of values: Children's nonconformity may be interpreted by parents in very different terms: e.g., as an act of aggression implying negative relations of the child or as the child's immaturity. Depending on parents' attributions of children's misbehavior children's understanding and acceptance of parents' values can be influenced in a way the child may willingly conform and accept parental expectations. We have carried out several studies comparing the way Japanese, Indonesian and German mothers are handling conflicts with their children. Our data demonstrate that depending on mothers' beliefs and behavior children can accept parental goals, and internalization of parental values takes place. E.g., mother-child conflicts were successfully solved in case of mothers' positive attribution of their child's intention, and in case of mothers giving in themselves. This occurred more often in Japan than in Germany. Japanese children more willingly developed a tendency to accept parental regulations and even conceive of obedience demands from their parents as an indicator of parental warmth (Trommsdorff, 1985, 1995).

To summarize, internalization of values bases on processes of interactions between parents and children, the underlying beliefs of both, and the quality of their relationship. These factors have to be taken into account when predicting whether and how cultural values including values of children are affecting the development, the children's later interaction with their parents, and their later relation to their own children in case they decide to have own children. This view takes into account parents as socializing agents and children as agents of their own development, and interactions between both. However, so far the role of cultural context and the role of genetic factors has been neglected.

## **2.2 Value change and change of utility for having children**

From the point of view of the rational choice model parents calculate the utility whether and how many children are born.

The focus of this calculation in traditional societies is the economic and

social function of children for parents and the family. The value of children in pre-industrialized societies is usually seen in their economic contribution to the family and to the village and in their contribution to stabilize and continue the family (e.g., by having children of their own, by following the established rules and by conforming to existing cultural values). Accordingly, rules of reciprocity exist between parents and their children. These rules and obligations are internalized during socialization.

In contrast, in modern societies the decision whether and how many children are born depends to a large degree on a cost-benefit analysis where children are not necessarily an investment to ensure the future economic stability of parents and the continuity of the family. In contrast, to have own children requires to engage in economic investments. The expected reward may be to have an emotionally satisfying relationship, or to ensure self-fulfillment.

According to Çigdem Kagitçibasi's (1998) summary of the findings from the previous Values of children-study, a *shift from materialist to emotional outcome* expectancies has occurred in societies changing from traditional to modern economic status. However, it is unclear whether further change can be expected and into which direction it may go. Will there be a *shift to hedonistic outcome* expectancies?

### 2.2.1 Changes in socio-economic indicators

Until very recently, the Japanese culture has appeared to conserve traditional Confucian values of social orientation, based on filial piety, loyalty, and emotionally based in-group relationships which partly transport the interpersonal dependency of "amae" beyond mother-child-relations. Even though individualistic and hedonistic values were increasingly favored by adolescents, the principle of life-long commitment in closely knit interpersonal relationships clearly set limits to hedonistic orientations and individualistic tendencies. These historically based rules for interpersonal behavior presumably served as a stabilizing factor during times of dramatic socio-economic and technological change. However, it also was the basis for the serious socio-political disruptions which have shaken the Japanese society in the past decade. Misuse of power, corruption, and the principle to protect in-group members even in case of failure are only some factors which before have partly contributed to the economic success, and have been balanced by the ability to absorb failures but now they have contributed to the economic recession and political difficulties (Trommsdorff, 1998; Kornadt, 1998).

The decline of the Japanese economic power and the strong import of western individualistic ideology presumably contribute to ongoing tendencies of fundamental change. This change has many consequences partly relating to the changing family system, and the changing role for women who are no longer willing of sacrifice their career and take the role of life-long care-taker: first serve as mothers and then serve as caretakers for their parents in law. Changes in the role of women may affect changes in values of children.

### **2.2.2 Changes in the role of women**

Let us review some "objective" indicators for changes role of Japanese women. The total fertility rate in Japan was 4.27 in 1970, and fell to 1.43 in 1995. This number is similar to Germany and indicates a decline of the country's population. Also, the age of mothers who have their first child is raising from 25.6 years in 1960 to 27.5 years in 1995. The divorce rate in Japan with 1.60 per 1.000 population is one of the lowest as compared to other industrial democracies. However, the divorce rate is raising for couples married less than five years and for those who were married for 20 or more years. About more than 60 % of women work in the labor force, however they have less qualified positions and less income than men.

32 % of Japanese women are fulltime home makers (Foreign Press Center, Japan, 1996). Japanese women are supposed to take care of their child/ren and take the responsibility for the child's upbringing especially since the father is considered to be responsible for the household income and spends only very little time at home. Demographic changes with an increasing number of old aged people who cannot count on sufficient public welfare and who face increasing economic hardship have strong effects on women whose life expectancy is growing more than anywhere else in the world.

### **2.2.3 Changes in values of children: ambivalence in the value of children**

Indicators of cultural differences in child-rearing attitudes. According to the international comparative survey by the Youth Affairs Administration (1996), some information on differences with respect to values of children in Japan and in the USA can be observed which point out to a relative ambivalence of values of

children in Japan. Since these data are not including time series studies, it is difficult to decide whether these data indicate changes. At least they point out to differences between cultures.

The goals parents pursued for children in Japan was “to have a happy family life (62 %) and less to live a life suited to child’s personality and taste (25.6 %) (respective numbers for USA: 44 % and 49 %). This demonstrates more family orientation than hedonistic orientation of Japanese parents.

In the same line, more Japanese than US parents pursued child rearing goals of social orientation. The two most desirable goals were: considerate to other people: 62 %; to observe rules of conduct: 45 % (respective numbers for USA: 27 % and 25 %; US parents wanted their child to be responsible: 50 %; and fair 32 %).

The value of bringing up a child was significantly different for Japanese and US parents. The highest percentage of Japanese parents expected to “mature and emotionally enrich” oneself (69 %) while the highest percentage of US parents wanted “to experience the joy of raising a child” (68 %). The second important goal was “to strengthen family ties and bonds”. For Japanese parents, duty and emotional bonding was more important than enjoying to raise the child. Considerable less Japanese as compared to US parents consider “raising children as enjoyable experience” (44 % vs. 77 %). In contrast, Japanese as compared to US parents consider “raising a child more as causing a lot of pain and trouble” (50 % vs. 36 %).

These data on negative or at least ambivalent attitudes to raising children correspond to the results of Kashiwagi (1998). Japanese fathers who were less involved in child care reported the highest “feelings of oneness”. Does daily child care reduce subjective feelings of oneness with the child? Kashiwagi (1998) also showed that education was another factor influencing values of children: the higher the education of mothers, the lower their feeling of oneness with their child. Do these mothers tend to rather prefer western values of independence?

Indicators of change of child-rearing attitudes. More obvious data on ongoing change are available when comparing cohorts of mothers with respect to their attitudes and beliefs. In a further study Kashiwagi (1998) asked for reasons why Japanese mothers of different age groups (40 vs. 60-years-old) decided to have children. Her results demonstrate that the younger generation more often focused

on own needs rather than on family or social concerns. These "self-enhancement values" were related to a hedonistic orientation quite different from the family and duty-oriented values of the older generation. Starting from these observations, the question must be raised in which direction values of children will change, and which effects of such value changes on personality development of children and adolescents will occur.

According to the longitudinal study ranging over 14 years of Kornadt & Eisler (1998) considerable changes in the way mothers transmit their values to their children occurred. Do general cultural and socio-economic changes on the macro- and meso-level affect the role of women and induce changes in values of children? These changes, especially when going into the direction of less emotional bonding between parents and children, may contribute to a decrease of attachment quality and related working model thus affecting the socio-emotional development over the life span and furthermore, to the transmission of values to the next generation.

In conclusion, it may be asked whether values of children are a moderator variable partly affected by socio-economic conditions and cultural values, partly affecting the proximal context in which children develop thereby affecting individual child development. Can values of children be conceived of as a developmental niche which differs between various cultures?

It has been shown here that it is useful to differentiate the emotional values of children according to a child-focused and self-focused emotional quality.

In further studies, the function of values of children for the culture and for individual development should be studied in the context of the broader system of socialization conditions. From the point of view of stability and change of societies, both the group-oriented and the dyadic-focused emotional quality of values of children can be seen as an important stabilizing variable.

Both, the group-oriented and the dyadic-emotional quality serve as a stabilizing factor which induces successful internalization of parental goals and which ensures the socio-emotional security and attachment of children in a context of social relatedness.

On the other hand, the self-oriented value of children focusing on independence of parents and children, adds new qualities in values of children. These consist among other factors in:

- a variety of alternatives in the choice and pursuit of values, e.g., with respect to the individual decision in family size (having children or not, raising children in a single or conventional parent family), quality of socialization and life style when bringing up children;
- investment in children without expectation of reciprocity;
- socialization behavior disregarding objective parent-child asymmetry.

Non-material, emotion-based values of children do not necessarily consist in child-focused emotional investment may reduce emotional satisfaction. Empirical data on German and Japanese mothers point into this direction of experienced discrepancies between children's and mother's needs. Related self-focused negative emotions of mothers and their children presumably are not functional for building up feelings of security and attachment in the child.

After having observed the shift of developmental theories from mechanistic to organismic and constructivist approaches, the question arises in how far developmental theories take into account the interplay between culture and the emotional quality of values of children.

The quality of values of children may be seen as an effect of culturally constructed beliefs about the self and the child. It remains to be studied in how far the emotional quality of values of children is part of future socio-cultural changes-- as a dynamic factor in promoting such changes and as a product of such changes.

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