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The Value of Children in Urban and Rural India: Cultural Background and Empirical Results

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1 Introduction

With its population of over 1 billion people India is the country with the world's second largest population. While the original value of children (VOC-) study from the 1970s (Arnold et al. 1975) did not include samples from India, samples from rural as well as urban India are included in the current interdisciplinary and cross-cultural project *"Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations"* (Nauck & Trommsdorff, 2001; Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2001). Of course these samples drawn from Varanasi and from villages about 100 km from Varanasi cannot be representative for a country where there are 17 official languages (in different regions) and where an approximate number of 1500 languages and dialects exist. Nevertheless, this study can give insight into women's family-related and child-related attitudes and values in a typical Indian city as well as in a non-mainstream group of villagers in Northern India.

The current chapter has several objectives. The first is to give a general overview over the cultural background of India and a description of mainstream and peripheral cultural groups in Indian society. Besides this, the traditional and the current situation of the family and of parent-child relationships in India are introduced. After this general introduction we give a detailed report of the data collection in the rural and urban sites and present demographic background information of the samples in the study. In the empirical part, some basic analyses regarding the value-of-children concept and other fertility-related attitudes are presented. First, we explore the dimensionality of the VOC-construct in India. On the basis of the dimensions found in this analysis the four different samples in the study are compared: a 3-generation sample consisting of grandmothers, their daughters, and the daughters' adolescent children as well as an additional sample of younger mothers. In a final part, grandmothers and mothers are compared with respect to further fertility-related measures – attitudes towards typical sizes of small, large, and ideal families. All comparisons are carried out between the respective rural and urban groups as well in order to obtain an overall pattern of similarities and differences in child-related attitudes and values over generations and regional group membership in India.

2 The Socio-Cultural Context of India

Indian society is one of the world's oldest societies. From its very beginning it has been multicultural in nature, exhibiting a relatively complex network of relationships between the groups represented in its cultural mosaic. A traditional feature of this society that makes it distinct from other societies is its hierarchical structure which divides people into four major categories (*varna*), namely *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya*, and *Sudra*. Traditionally the Brahmin group had been concerned with the pursuit (acquisition and distribution) of knowledge; the Kshatriya with administration and the skill in war affairs; the Vaishya with the skill in commerce, trades and agriculture, and the Sudra with the skill of a variety of services to groups. The traditional society of the past rated these activities and pursuits in terms of their importance in

contributing to the overall development of the society at that time. People who pursued these activities, thus, enjoyed different status in the hierarchical structure. The Brahmins (engaged in the pursuit of knowledge) were placed on the top of the hierarchy followed by the other groups respectively. While these activities dictated different forms of life on people, at the same time, the society also allowed enough flexibility for individuals to move from one category to another. In the later course of history, these categories became almost fixed; membership in the various groups became completely dictated by birth, with no flexibility for movement between categories.

In a further course of history, a number of groups emerged within each of the four broad categories. These were identified on the basis of geographical, regional, linguistic and other characteristics of people. These were designated *jaati* (castes), which were again arranged in a hierarchical order. The caste-based social status of individuals also determined the nature of their interaction with members of other groups of the society. The hierarchy became/was so well established in the society that it sometimes led to economic exploitation and social discrimination of some groups. However, the overall relationships between different groups were generally characterized by harmony based on their functional interdependence.

2.1 Mainstream, peripheral and ethno-cultural groups

While these different caste groups represent the "mainstream" society and constitute the majority of today's Indian population (about 76%), there are a number of other traditional groups that represent "non-caste" or "out-caste" groups. They exist more like peripheral groups. These groups claim to be indigenous to the soil, and are called *adivasi* (the original inhabitants of the country) or "tribal" (a particular group of people) in common man's language. At present, these "non-caste" groups constitute about 8% of the total population of the country. They live largely in remote forest and mountainous/hilly regions, practicing nomadic or agricultural life with little contact with the outside world. These groups are distributed all over the country, with major concentrations of populations in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and some Northeastern States. While these groups are considered "non-caste" they do also have their own fixed caste structure that mirrors the hierarchical caste structure of the mainstream society so closely that we find all four major caste groups represented within the tribal populations as well.

As a result of inhabiting forest, mountainous, and hilly regions of the country, the tribal groups were generally confined to the pursuit of subsistence level economy, which continues to be the case for many even today. Over the past five decades, Indian government has been making efforts to bring about changes in the lives of these people to elevate their socio-economic conditions. Through opportunities of school education, wage employment and exposure to urban industrial life, many people of tribal groups are now in full contact with members of other mainstream groups, negotiating modern life on a more or less day-to-day basis. Hence, in many areas of the

country, the term "tribal" exists only as a label. Ecological, cultural, social, economic, and educational conditions are so similar between tribal and other groups (who live in those respective areas) that the distinction does not seem to carry any special psychological meaning. However, in areas where tribal groups stay away from other groups of the population without having any major contact with them (or even with other tribal groups), the distinction of being a tribal group may be important for the study of psychological processes among these people.

Other groups represented in the Indian population are generally considered "ethnocultural" groups. Included here are the people who do not relate to traditional Hindu society or its offshoots, and are often identified on the basis of their religious affiliation. Muslims and Christians in particular are placed in this category as well as other religious groups including Parasi and Bahai. These groups represent approximately 15% of the total Indian population. They participate in the overall national economy and interact with people in the mainstream society in many effective ways. A convenient classification of these groups is attempted by placing them on the "majority-minority" dimension. This division, made on a numerical basis, serves the political and economic purposes of individuals well, but it carries little meaning for individuals' psychological understanding. Consideration of groups as "mainstream" and "peripheral" seems to make greater sense. In this kind of categorization, the latter groups can be conceptualized as moving (voluntarily or being moved through government policies) to be an effective and integral part of the larger society. Government policy that focuses on integration of smaller groups with the mainstream society welcomes and encourages the movement of peripheral groups to the central region and the participation in all aspects of mainstream life.

2.2 Traditional values of children and of relationships in Indian society

Whether we consider the mainstream or the peripheral groups, the dominant feature of both is their emphasis on relationships. Strong in-group orientation and heavy investment in the social domain has often led to the characterization of India as a collectivistic society (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994). In Indian society, children are greatly welcomed, valued and consulted for decision making on a number of matters (Mishra, 1994). Prevailing cultural belief systems in Indian society reinforce the value of children. According to the dominant Hindu belief system producing and raising children is the *dharma* (sacred duty) of every individual, and a childless couple has its place reserved in hell after death. A second belief is embedded in the concept of *rin* (debt or bondage). An individual is indebted to gods (*dev rin*), ancestors (*pitri rin*) and teachers (*risi rin*). It is only a child that can relieve the parents from these three types of debts or bondages, and contribute towards their liberation. Another widely shared belief is that a son can directly prevent parents from entering into a specific kind of hell (called *pum*). This belief system provides a special meaning and salience for sons compared with daughters, and augments a longing for a son even if one already has many daughters. Thus, besides social, psychological and economic values as conceptualized in the value-of-children (VOC) approach (Arnold et al.,

1975), children (particularly males) also carry great value for transpersonal life for Indians. Such values of children are strongly transmitted to younger generations by embedding them into several cultural practices, organized both before and after infants' births.

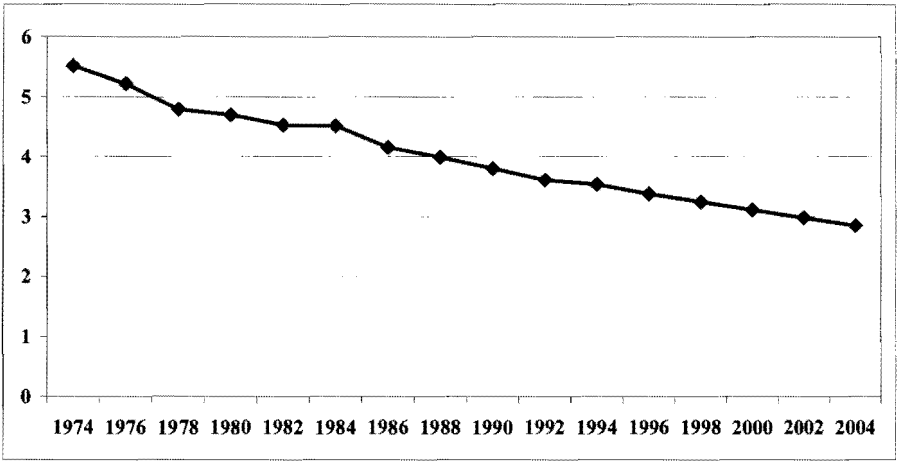
2.3 Social-demographic profile of the Indian population

The most authentic presentation of social-demographic profile of the Indian population can be found in the Economic Survey (Government of India, 2002), which is based on 2001 census reports. The Census of India 2001 reports the total population of the country to be little more than 1.03 billion, of which the male and female populations were approximately 531 and 496 million respectively. The population has steadily grown over the years from the first recorded population size of 361 million in 1951, with an average annual growth ranging from a minimum of 1.25% (in 1951) to a maximum of 2.23% (in 1981). In the year 2001, the average growth rate was 1.93%, which was 0.31% less than the rate recorded in a decade earlier. Population density has also shown a consistent increase from 117 per square km in the year 1951 to 324 per square km in the year 2001. Additionally, the female to male sex ratio per thousand was 933 in 2001, which was a slight improvement as compared to 927 noted in the year 1991.

India contains about 2.4% of the world's surface area and about 16.7% of the world's population. It is the second country in the world after China to have crossed the one billion mark of population. It is estimated that by the year 2050 India will be the most populous country on the earth, containing 17.2% of the world's population. The National Population Policy (NPP) 2000 intends to achieve a stable population by 2045 at a level consistent with the requirements of sustainable economic growth, social development and environmental protection. In view of this, the short-term objective of the NPP is to bring down the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to the replacement level of 2.1 by 2010. Although in absolute terms about 180.6 million people have been added to the population from 1991-2001, the net growth in population has witnessed a declining trend over the decades since 1961. The decadal growth of population at 21.34% between 1991 and 2001 has witnessed the sharpest decline since independence (i.e., 1947) with the average growth rate for the corresponding period declining to 1.93% per annum. This indicates that the country, witnessing rapidly declining fertility, is entering into a phase of demographic transition. The demographic profile indicates that almost nine states have already reached the replacement level of fertility. For those states that have not been able to reduce their population to manageable limits, an Empowered Action Group has been constituted in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to prepare area specific programs. These programs of population management have brought about several positive outcomes. For example, the crude birth rate has declined from 40.8 in 1951 to its current level of 26.1 (per 1000 population). The crude death rate has declined from 25.1 to 8.7, and the total fertility rate (per woman on average) has reduced from 6.0 to 3.2 during the same period. The infant mortality rate and child mortality rate have also been reduced by almost 50%. In

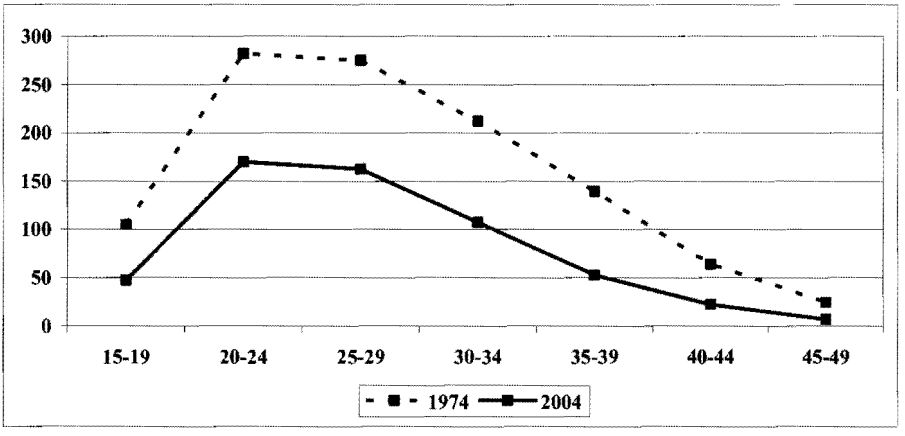
addition, there have been remarkable increases in the use of birth control (from 10.4 per cent in 1951 to 46.2 per cent in 2001) and life expectancy at birth (from 36.6 years in 1951 to 61.2 years in 2001). Additional fertility data are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (2005). Figure 1 shows a linear decline of the total fertility rate in India in the last 30 years, and Figure 2 provides a comparison of the age-specific fertility rate between the years 1974 and 2004.

Figure 1: Total Fertility Rate



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2005). International Data Base.

Figure 2: Age-specific fertility rate (per 1000 women)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2005). International Data Base.

The literacy profile of the country indicates that the rate of growth of literacy in the decade ending 2001 was higher in rural areas at 14.8% as compared to 7.2% in urban areas. In spite of these improvements, the overall literacy in urban areas (80.3%) was higher than that in rural areas (59.4%). The male literacy in rural and urban areas (71.4% and 86.7% respectively) was higher than female literacy (46.7% and 73.2% respectively), with an average difference of 26.7%.

The social-demographic profile presented above suggests several changes at the level of population that are likely to influence the value of children and intergenerational relationships in the Indian society both in rural and urban areas. With declining fertility rate, children are likely to be regarded as more valuable by parents than in the past with enhanced probability of sharing, communication, mutual support, and strong emotional bonding between the young and the old generations.

2.4 Current status of children and family in India

During the last few decades some changes in conceptions of the value of children have taken place in the Indian society as a result of the processes of socio-cultural change and development. Factors like expansion of education, urbanization, exposure to mass media, and participation in industrial-wage economy have contributed significantly to changes in the perceived value of children. A variety of family planning programs (now called family welfare programs) are underway to achieve the goal of population control. Studies indicate that while most of the groups of the Indian society hold a favorable attitude towards family planning (i.e., observing a small family norm), family planning is not practiced by many groups (Bharat, 2001; Rao, 1981). There exist cultural/ethnic group (e.g., Hindu-Muslim), regional (e.g., North-South), demographic (e.g., rural-urban, educated-uneducated) and individual (e.g., self oriented-other oriented) differences in the acceptance of family planning practices (Bharat, 2001; Rao, 1981).

At the level of government, the norms propagated for an ideal family size have also shown considerable variation during the last three decades. During the 1970's, the government of India propagated the norm of 2-3 children through the national slogan, "*do yaa teen bachche, lagate ghar men achchhe*" (two or three children look nice in a house). During the late 1980's, the norm changed to only two children in the slogan, "*ham do hamaare do*" (we two, our two). In the last decade a one child per family norm was propagated through the slogan, "*ghar men ek bachchaa, lagtaa kitnaa achchhaa*" (how nice a single child looks in the house). The evidence suggests that there have been enormously variable responses of individuals and groups to these calls at the national level.

In spite of the acknowledged importance of family in all aspects of human development, the study of the family and its dynamics has not drawn much attention of psychologists in India. Whenever an analysis of family has been attempted, it has been done primarily in the context of psychopathology of children (Mishra, 1997; Sinha,

1988). Families were considered as units of analysis in psychological research in the most recent decades particularly because of the threats and challenges of HIV/AIDS (Bharat, 2001). Such victims often get transported to their villages from the big cities (e.g., Mumbai, Delhi) where they are diagnosed as infected. It is the family and social network of such individuals that provides them with economic, social, and psychological support in such circumstances. Consequently, family ties and relationships, which some evidence suggested were weakening during the last few decades under the influence of modernization and socio-economic change, seem to be more strongly established and solidified now. Also in studies of health and organizational behavior, family has been found to play an important role, particularly as a support system to alleviate the stress of life and work.

Family continues to be the largest support system in India, especially in the rural agriculture-based populations (Mishra, 1997), which represent almost 60% of the total population of the country. Hence, continuous growth in population in the agricultural section of the Indian society is not surprising. A multidimensional analysis of the value of children in the rural agricultural setting and its comparison with the urban setting warrants a study focusing on the family size norms, reasons for having children, perceived benefits as well as costs of small/large families, and perceived social, psychological, economic or other advantages/disadvantages of children. In order to examine the continuity and change in these aspects of behaviour, such a study has to focus on the three generations of children, parents and grandparents. Such a study design would allow for comparisons of similarities and differences in the values of children and intergenerational relationships across generations.

Intergenerational relationships constitute an important theme in the study of Indian families. In rural settings of India, joint family systems involving grandparents, their children, and grandchildren, is still the dominant norm. Nuclear families are more commonly found in urban settings. However, most of them exist as *functionally extended families*. These families have primarily migrated from villages to cities in the recent past in search of employment or for other reasons (e.g., education of children). However, these families maintain strong relationships with their larger family network in the village or other units of the family situated elsewhere. Consequently, a dynamic interaction among different units of a family is maintained even though they no longer stay at one place, and the larger family does not participate in decisions pertaining to local and routine matters. However, wider decisions relating to personal or immediate family affairs are always taken in consultation with each other (Mishra, 1994). Sharing problems and rendering help to each other when in need is a dominant characteristic of an Indian family. This provides people not only with social and cultural, but also spiritual meaning to life (Sinha, 1988).

3 The Present Study: Research Questions and Hypotheses

In the Value-of-Children (VOC) study (Trommsdorff, 2001; Trommsdorff & Nauck, 2001), various questions regarding the value of children and intergenerational relationships are investigated. The following are first basic analyses regarding the value of children construct – its dimensionality in India and the standing of the different generations and regions on these dimensions – as well as similarities and differences with respect to fertility behavior and fertility-related attitudes.

3.1 Structure of Value of Children in India

One concern of the present study is to analyze the structure of VOC in India. Drawing upon the theoretical assumptions of Hoffman & Hoffman (1973) earlier studies have demonstrated utilitarian or economic, psychological or emotional, and social or normative dimensions of VOC (Hoffman, 1988; Kagitcibasi, 1996). Whether these dimensions can be identified and used as a basis for the analysis of intergenerational relationships in the Indian cultural context is not yet known (Research Question 1).

3.2 Similarities and differences in Value of Children

A related concern is to examine the similarities and differences between generations on the VOC dimensions. Earlier VOC studies had assumed that the socio-economic and cultural contexts had great influence on the value of children (Kagitcibasi, 1996; Trommsdorff, 2001). A central hypothesis was that in social and familial contexts characterized by difficult economic situations, the desire and decision to have children would be based on the expectation of parents for economic utility of children (e.g., children will care for their parents and support them in old age), while in affluent societies and families emotional needs might be more important than economic needs (Hoffman & Hoffman, 1973). Previous studies had shown that in economically poor regions (like in Indonesia or rural parts of Turkey) the economic VOC was higher than in economically developed regions (e.g., Hoffman, 1988; Kagitcibasi, 1982b). However, a reduced importance of economic reasons for having children has been observed over time in several countries (Trommsdorff, Zheng, & Tardif, 2002). Whether this is also true for India has not been demonstrated. While a decline in traditional value orientations of younger compared to older generations has often been cited as an important factor in VOC (Inglehart, 1990, 1997; Trommsdorff, Mayer, & Albert, 2004), the Indian situation is characterized by the co-existence of traditional and modern values, both finding expression in different contexts. However, based on the dominant theoretical assumptions and the results of previous studies carried out in different parts of the world, we may tentatively expect that compared to the younger generation, the older generation will hold relatively more traditional values of children (Hypothesis 1a). Similarly, the urban as compared to the rural samples should show higher emotional values of children, while the rural as compared to the urban samples should show higher traditional (economic and normative) values (Hypothesis 1b).

3.3 Similarities and differences in fertility-related variables

Considering the tremendous differences between rural and urban areas in India, we expect that fertility behavior and fertility related attitudes differ between the rural and the urban samples. Traditional fertility behavior focusing on the continuation of the family and on the economic benefits of children indicated by producing as many offspring as possible should be more pronounced in rural areas as compared to urban areas. In urban areas costs of children rise and economic necessities are weaker. Furthermore, we expect more traditional fertility-related attitudes in the older as compared to the younger generations. To tap fertility we asked for the number of children a woman has given birth to and the number of children that are still alive. To tap fertility-related attitudes we used three different measures regarding preferences with respect to family size. How many children are there in a small family, in a large family, and in an ideal family according to the respondents' preference or opinion? Hypothesis 2a states that the older generations/cohorts describe typical small, large, and ideal families in terms of more children than do the younger generations/cohorts. Hypothesis 2b contends that mothers as well as grandmothers from rural areas show higher fertility (number of children alive) and higher small, large, and ideal family sizes in comparison to mothers and grandmothers from urban areas.

4 Method

4.1 Design

The study was carried out with 1000 participants, drawing an equal number of them from rural and urban settings (each $N = 500$) according to the general design of the VOC study used in several other cultural settings. In the three-generation sample, there were $N = 100$ grandmothers ($N = 48$ from rural and $N = 52$ from urban areas) and $N = 300$ mothers of adolescents ($N = 150$ from rural and urban areas, respectively). Of these 300 mothers, 100 were the daughters of the participating grandmothers. As for the third generation, $N = 300$ adolescents (sons and daughters of the participating mothers) were part of the study with $N = 150$ each from rural as well as from urban areas ($N = 148$ male, $N = 152$ female). Beside the three-generation sample an additional sample of $N = 300$ mothers of pre-school children participated in the study ($N = 150$ from rural and urban areas, respectively). While in the city sample only schooled children were included, the village sample comprised both schooled and unschooled children. Adolescent boys and girls were equally represented in village and city samples. Slight variation in age range of adolescents from the originally prescribed design was also made. Studies (e.g., Saraswathi & Dutta, 1988) have reported that due to nutritional and experiential factors, Indian children seem to demonstrate slightly later maturation than children in Western countries. Hence, ages 14-19 were considered as the defining age range for adolescence.

4.2 Description of the Indian samples

The city sample. The city sample was drawn from Varanasi City (about 1.1 million inhabitants), which is one of the oldest cities in the world, and carries the history of continuous habitation for almost the last 4000 years. Situated on the bank of the holy river Ganges, the city has been considered a "seat of learning" since time immemorial, and as a highly sacred and holy pilgrimage site of Hindus. Consequently, it draws people from all corners of the country at all times. Over the years people from different parts of India have settled down in the city and their languages, cultural practices, food habits and lifestyles vary so much that the city is regarded as "miniature India." In spite of several diversities in people's cultural, linguistic, regional, and other background factors, it has evidenced the finest example of peaceful coexistence of groups. The city is largely characterized by the existence of narrow lanes and a large number of temples. While lord Shiva is the main deity for people, Hanuman (the monkey god) and goddess Durga, including her various forms, also find an important place in peoples' psyche. The city presents an example of a fairly traditional lifestyle involving bathing in the holy river Ganges, offering prayers to the river and other gods and goddesses, taking vegetarian meals, practicing meditation and living a life full of simplicity, devotion and goodwill for others. Tranquility and peace of mind are greatly valued with strong spiritual orientations. Negotiating life in the narrow lanes requires great concern for and tolerance of others.

With the growth of few small-scale industrial sectors during the last few decades, a large-scale migration of people from surrounding areas and bordering states to the city has taken place. This has led to rapid growth of several residential complexes around the city. The inhabitants of these complexes are generally first generation immigrants, who have transported with them the dominant values and cultural practices of their original homes. At the same time, the acculturative processes of urbanization, education, industrial participation and exposure to media also seem to have introduced some changes in the original perceptions and values of people. The younger generation seems to be more influenced by the processes of change than the older generation, although to a lesser degree than one would find in larger cities such as Delhi or Mumbai.

The village sample. The village sample was drawn from several villages of Naugarh Block of Chandauli District. These villages are located around 100-120 km away from Varanasi City, and are generally accessible by road, except during the rainy season when many of the link roads are flooded. The sample was drawn mainly from the *Kharwar* community, which represents a settled agricultural group with an elaborate village life. People belonging to this community consider themselves as *Rajput.* This is a group of people described as *Kshatriya* in the mainstream society. Thus, they pattern their life according to the traditional Kshatriya model and engage in many traditional cultural practices such as worshipping weapons during *Dashehra* (an important Hindu festival) and organizing individual and collective hunts in the forest. They be-

lieve that while other *Kshatriyas* were at one time the rulers or administrators of the plains, they were the rulers and the administrators of the forest.

The houses of villagers have mud walls and tiled roofs with enough space to store agricultural produce. They have a community *Panchayat* (council) through which they resolve a variety of their conflicts and disputes, both of a personal and collective nature. Each village has a village *Pradhan* (the headman) to take care of day-to-day local affairs. All villages also have a *Baiga* (the priest), who comes from a Brahmin family, and occupies a prominent place in people's lives. Prior to the cultivation of land and the harvest, he propitiates the local deities. He also determines the auspicious days for initiating a number of activities. The Kharwar community and others inhabiting the region have a well-developed knowledge of agriculture. Since the terrain is hilly, the soil has a poor capacity for water retention and there are inadequate facilities for irrigation. As a result, the villagers grow mainly rainy season crops and constantly guard them against wild animals. Since the agricultural yield is barely enough to feed people for a few months, the villagers depend on forest resources for subsistence a majority of the year.

There is great scarcity of drinking water in the region. During summers, many villages have to depend on *chuan* (water seeping through hills), which appears to be a major cause of diarrhea among people. Medical facilities are not easily available to people in this region. Often one has to walk or ride a bicycle for 10-20 km to find a doctor. Most of the delivery deaths are reported in transit between the village and the hospital. Some people of the community have good knowledge of herbs, roots and seeds that have high medicinal values, but people today do not like herbal medicines. They prefer the products of the modern medicinal system (e.g., tablets and capsules) that are handy and easy to use. The overall health status of the community seems to be poor. Contraceptives are not readily available in the villages, and neither are other methods of family planning.

There are very few primary schools to cater to the needs of basic education of children. About ten years ago, a non-government organization (NGO), called NCDC (National Cooperative Development Corporation), started a program of primary education in some villages. Over the years, other NGOs have joined this endeavor. Medical facilities to serve to the health needs of people are still lacking. On the whole, the life of villagers is full of difficulties and constraints. Due to economic pressures and the declining value of agriculture in the community, the new generation is migrating to cities to take up wage employment. Consequently, a number of changes can be noticed in some families, while the majority of families continue to live a traditional life.

Sampling strategies. Different sampling strategies were adopted for studying city and village populations. Since in the city we worked with only schooled adolescents, it was most convenient to approach them at the school. Four such schools were chosen, and adolescents representing the age range of 14-19 years were drawn, using a ran-

dom sampling procedure within that pool. The mothers and grandmothers were approached through these adolescents. The selection of young mothers was done mainly with the help of local informants, but quite a few young mothers were also identified from child-care centers. All interviews with mothers (both young and old) were conducted in their homes, whereas most of the interviewing with adolescents took place in their respective schools. The participants generally had no difficulty in understanding questions, but some, who were less educated or uneducated, did ask for clarification on some questions/statements, which were explained by the interviewer to the satisfaction of the participant.

In Varanasi the research team consisting of two doctoral students of psychology from Banaras Hindu University was welcome in schools as well as in homes. Greeting the research team with tea, coffee and/or refreshments before, after, or during the interview, especially in the families, was a good sign of acceptance of the team by the participants. Consultation by mothers with the team members for a variety of personal or academic problems relating to their children was another good indicator of acceptance. In general, the team met very few refusals for interviews either in schools or in families. Out of a total of 500 participants, the team had problems with only seven interviews. In these cases, the interviewers were unable to set a date or time for the interview with the family. This led to the loss of data from some adolescents who had already been interviewed in the school and required the addition of new adolescents into the study. A major problem in interviewing was that several context-free questions did not make much sense to some participants, and required explanation from the interviewer. While it was easy to explain the meaning of some words or sentences, contextualization in such explanations was avoided, because it was not possible to have the same context available all the time, particularly when two assistants were interviewing separately. The women were asked to take the question or statement in their own context and render their judgement. Moreover, grandmothers and mothers of adolescents expressed embarrassment when asked questions regarding partners or remarriage. So, these questions were deliberately avoided; information about these matters was gathered from secondary sources.

Sampling process observed in the rural setting was different from the one adopted in the city, particularly for uneducated adolescents. They had to be identified on the basis of information provided by the key informants. In each village we sampled from, the local informants told us the names of adolescents who might form part of the sample. We selected cases randomly from the pool thus obtained. Rarely was the approach made through children attending schools. Additionally, mothers and grandmothers were generally approached through local people who served as key informants, and not through their children, as was the case with the city sample.

The final sample was obtained from 16 villages. There were problems in determining the exact age of young and adolescent children. Many parents did not remember their children's date of birth, and the families did not keep any record of it. Hence, these were approximated with certain historical or local events that were salient to the life

of village people. Several mothers would also not know the level of education of their husbands. These had to be ascertained from other members of the community who knew the husbands well. Although we took all care to be accurate, lapses are quite likely in estimating the exact age of participant mothers or their children.

The research team consisted of two other female doctoral students of psychology from Banaras Hindu University and a contact person with Ph.D. in Extension Education. Interviews were often welcome and the research team met very few refusals; and when we encountered these, they were largely due to the pressure of economic activities on women. Although the questions were asked in the local language (a dialect of Hindi), the uneducated participants had difficulty rendering judgement on a five-point scale. We used a tiny ladder with five bars, and placed it before participants in a vertical manner to elicit appropriate ratings by them (called "ladder rating," Sinha, 1969). Problems were encountered on some of the measures, in particular the individualism-collectivism value scale. Items on this scale were too abstract to convey clear meaning to participants even though they all were rendered in Hindi (participant's language) using translation and back-translation procedures. In such cases, some explanations were needed, which the interviewers readily offered. In general the interviewing was quite spontaneous.

4.3 Socio-economic background characteristics of the Indian samples

In the following, background information concerning the different samples is given. Table 1 summarizes this information for the samples of mothers of pre-school children, mothers of adolescents, and grandmothers, both from rural and urban areas. Clear differences with respect to rural and urban areas occurred for the number of children: 21.1% of rural but only 5.3% of urban mothers of adolescents had 6 or more children, and 17.0% of rural but only 3.8% of urban grandmothers had 8 or more children. Further analyses regarding number of children are reported in the results section.

There were strong regional differences with respect to school attendance and degrees obtained: while nearly all mothers and grandmothers from rural areas received no schooling at all, average school attendance (including college/university education) of urban mothers of pre-school children was 14.7 years, of mothers of adolescents 11.2 years, and of urban grandmothers 3.8 years. Regarding participants' religion, in rural areas about 98% were affiliated with Hinduism and about 2% with Islam. In urban areas, about 20% of grandmothers were Muslims (about 80% Hindus), while about 10% of the two mothers' samples were Muslims (about 90% Hindus).

Adolescents' background information is summarized in Table 2. Information is given for rural and urban as well as for male and female adolescents separately. While almost none of the urban adolescents were married, in rural areas 37.0% of male and 27.5% of female adolescents were already married. With regard to schooling, the average of school attendance was about 6 years in rural as compared to 12 years in ur-

ban areas, and only about half of the rural adolescents were currently going to school as compared to 92.6% (male) and 81.3% (female) of the urban adolescents. While all rural adolescents were Hindus, 5.9% of the urban male and 17.3% of the urban female adolescents were Muslims.

Table 1: Mothers' and grandmothers' background information

	Rural			Urban		
	MP	**MA**	**GM**	**MP**	**MA**	**GM**
N	150	150	48	150	150	52
Mean age	25.1	40.3	64.0	28.1	41.7	67.6
(*SD*)	(3.7)	(7.0)	(6.5)	(3.9)	(5.1)	(7.9)
Age range	16-36	30-65	48-80	15-38	34-59	52-85
No. of children (%)						
1	34.0	3.5	2.1	56.4	2.0	15.4
2	51.3	11.1	8.5	43.0	31.3	1.9
3	12.0	25.0	17.0	0.7	34.0	7.7
4	0.7	23.6	17.0	0.0	16.0	28.8
5	0.0	16.0	14.9	0.0	11.3	26.9
6	0.0	11.8	14.9	0.0	3.3	7.7
7	0.0	4.9	8.5	0.0	1.3	7.7
8+	0.0	4.2	17.0	0.0	0.7	3.8
Marital status (%)						
Married	98.7	97.3	64.6	100.0	100.0	48.1
Remarried	1.3	2.7	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Widowed	0.0	0.0	31.3	0.0	0.0	51.9
Schooling						
Mean years	0.3	0.6	0.0	14.7	11.2	3.8
(*SD*)	(1.4)	(2.0)	(0.0)	(3.5)	(5.6)	(4.5)
Range	0-12	0-17	0	0-22	0-21	0-17
Highest degree (%)						
No school/certificate	98.7	97.3	100.0	3.7	25.2	88.9
Lower education, 6+	0.7	1.3	0.0	5.9	8.1	4.4
Middle educated, 12+	0.7	0.7	0.0	26.7	26.1	4.4
Higher education, 16+	0.0	0.7	0.0	63.7	40.5	2.2
Religion (%)						
Hinduism	98.0	98.7	97.6	93.3	88.5	78.8
Islam	2.0	1.3	2.4	6.7	11.5	21.2

Note. MP = Mothers of pre-school children; MA = Mothers of adolescents; GM = Grandmothers.

Table 2: Adolescents' background information

	Rural		Urban	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
N	76	74	72	78
Mean age (*SD*)	16.4 (1.7)	15.4 (1.5)	16.4 (1.2)	16.4 (1.3)
Age range	14-20	14-20	14-20	13-20
Marital status (%)				
Unmarried	63.0	72.5	100.0	97.6
Married	37.0	27.5	0.0	2.4
Schooling				
Mean years (*SD*)	6.8 (4.3)	5.6 (4.3)	12.1 (1.6)	12.1 (1.9)
Range	0-14	0-12	5-16	1-16
Go to school now? (% yes)	52.6	52.7	95.8	93.6
Religion (%)				
Hinduism	100.0	100.0	92.6	81.3
Islam	0.0	0.0	5.9	17.3
No religion	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.3

4.4 Description and reliabilities of the instruments

Only the instruments used in the current analysis are reported. For an overview of all instruments from the VOC-study see Schwarz, Chakkarath, Trommsdorff, Schwenk, & Nauck (2001).

Value of children. "Value of children" refers to reasons to have a(nother) child. These values were assessed through a selection of original items from the VOC study of the 1970s (Arnold et al., 1975) as well as newly developed items and some items from the Family and Fertility Survey (FFS) (Pohl, 1995). The instrument consisted of 27 items for the two mothers' samples. In the grandmothers' and adolescents' questionnaires some of the items that did not fit these specific age-groups were deleted. Thus, in the grandmothers sample there were 23 VOC-items, and in the adolescents' sample there were 18 VOC-items. All items are self-report questions and had to be rated on five point scales (1 = "not important at all" to 5 = "very important"). In the current analysis we wanted to obtain dimensions that fit all Indian sub-samples to be able to compare all subsamples. Therefore, we decided to include only those 16 items that appeared in all questionnaires. Through principal component analysis (for a detailed description see 4.1) the two positive VOC dimensions Emotional VOC (6 items; e.g., "Because of the special feeling of love that develops between a parent and a child") and Traditional VOC (6 items; e.g., "To have one more person to help your family economically") were identified. Scales were built by averaging across items. For Emotional VOC, Cronbach's Alphas of .84, .84, .83 and .89 resulted for mothers of adolescents, mothers of pre-school children, adolescents, and grandmothers, respectively; in the same order of samples, reliabilities of .76, .79, .85, and .80 resulted for Traditional VOC. Thus, for all samples satisfying reliabilities were obtained. Scales were constructed by averaging across items.

Family size judgements/preferences. Three questions were asked with respect to the women's judgement/preference regarding the size of a typical small, a typical large, and an ideal family. The respondents answered by indicating the number of children living in a family of small, large, or ideal size. These questions applied only for the grandmothers' and mothers' sample.

5 Results

5.1 Dimensions of VOC

Principal component analysis. The common structure of the value of children in India was analyzed by a principal component analysis of all participants (N = 1000) (Research Question 1). The sixteen positive VOC-items included in all generational subsamples were used for this analysis (see section 3.4). Results showed two factors according to the eigenvalue > 1 and scree-plot criteria, explaining 50% of the variance. The varimax-rotated solution showed six items containing emotional reasons for having children loading on one factor labeled Emotional VOC. Six other items representing economic, social-normative, and old-age security values of children formed another factor labeled Traditional VOC (Table 3).

Table 3: Principal component analysis of Value of Children dimensions: Combined sample

	Components	
Variable	**Emotional VOC**	**Traditional VOC**
Increases sense of responsibility	**.77**	.12
Pleasure watching children grow	**.75**	.18
Feeling of love between parent and child	**.74**	.13
Fun to have young children around	**.71**	.20
Makes family more important	**.66**	.16
Raising child helps to learn about life/self	**.65**	.31
Standing/reputation among your kin	*.57*	*.40*
Child helps around the house	*.47*	*.24*
To carry on the family name	.23	**.78**
To help your family economically	.10	**.77**
Life will be continued through child	.21	**.71**
Children can help you when you're old	.24	**.63**
A duty according to your belief	.28	**.62**
Less likely to be lonely in old age	.27	**.52**
To be sure that enough children will survive	*-.42*	*.52*
To have someone to love and care for	*.44*	*.52*

Note. Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. Factor loadings in bold print mark items that are included in the respective scales. Items in italics were not included due to cross-loadings.

Four items (*standing/reputation among your kin, child helps around the house, to be sure that enough children will survive,* and *to have someone to love and care for*) showed strong cross-loadings or did not load high enough on either factor to be included in the scale construction. Since definite criteria for a simple structure (Thurstone, 1947) are not available, criteria for inclusion of an item in the scale were set to a minimum loading of .50 on the respective factor and to a difference in loadings between the respective factor and loadings on other factors of more than .20.

Correlations between VOC-dimensions. The two identified VOC-dimensions were substantially correlated. The correlation between emotional VOC and traditional VOC was $r = .39$ ($p < .01$) for mothers of adolescent children, $r = .52$ ($p < .01$) for mothers of pre-school children, $r = .51$ ($p < .01$) for adolescents, and $r = .54$ ($p < .01$) for grandmothers.

5.2 Generational and regional comparisons of VOC

Three-generation sample (N = 100 triads). Hypotheses related to these analyses stated that older generations/cohorts would show a higher traditional VOC than younger generations (Hypothesis 1 a) and that urban as compared to rural samples would be higher on emotional VOC but lower in traditional VOC (Hypothesis 1b). In the 3-generation-sample a main effect for Region and an interaction effect of Gender x Region occurred for emotional VOC (Table 4). For grandmothers and mothers, emotional VOC was higher in the urban sample than in the rural sample, but no difference occurred in the adolescent sample. With regard to differences between generations, the only significant effect showed that urban adolescents were lower than their mothers and grandmothers in emotional VOC.

Table 4: Value of children in three generations

VOC	Rural		Urban		ANOVA *F*		
	M	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)	Generation	Region	G x R
Emotional					1.67	77.57**	9.89**
Grandmothers	3.80_{a}	(.52)	4.78_{c}	(.44)			
Mothers	3.88_{a}	(.55)	4.68_{c}	(.52)			
Adolescents	4.01_{ab}	(.66)	4.31_{b}	(.85)			
Traditional					24.19**	0.51	11.67**
Grandmothers	4.16_{bc}	(.67)	4.46_{c}	(.60)			
Mothers	3.90_{b}	(.64)	3.95_{b}	(.95)			
Adolescents	3.94_{b}	(.78)	3.33_{a}	(1.10)			

Note. Repeated Measurement ANOVAS. $N = 100$ per generation, each cell n = 50. Means with the same subscript were not significantly different at $p < .05$ in least-square mean tests given a significant interaction effect. **$p < .01$.

For traditional VOC a significant main effect of Generation and a significant Generation x Region interaction occurred. While there were no significant differences among generations in the rural samples, in the urban samples grandmothers showed a higher traditional VOC than mothers who in turn showed higher traditional values than adolescents. Grandmothers and mothers showed no significant urban-rural differences but rural adolescents were higher on traditional VOC than urban adolescents.

Two-generation sample (N = 300 dyads). In order to test whether the results found in the 3-generation analysis also hold for the larger 2-generation sample of mothers and their adolescent children further analyses were carried out (see Table 5). The means for the full sample were similar to those of the partial sample, but the level of significance of effects was partly different. For emotional VOC, the difference between rural and urban adolescents was significant: Urban adolescents showed a higher emotional VOC than their rural counterparts. For traditional VOC, the pattern of differences was the same as in the partial-sample analysis. While rural mothers and adolescents did not differ in traditional VOC, urban mothers showed significantly higher traditional VOC than their adolescent children.

Table 5: Value of children in two generations (mothers and adolescents)

VOC	Rural		Urban		ANOVA *F*		
	M	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)	Generation	Region	G x R
Emotional					33.72**	86.52**	35.09**
Mothers	3.96_a	(.59)	4.78_c	(.41)			
Adolescents	3.97_a	(.72)	4.22_b	(.81)			
Traditional					36.28**	10.39**	43.47**
Mothers	3.90_b	(.65)	4.04_b	(.92)			
Adolescents	3.93_b	(.76)	3.27_a	(1.11)			

Note. Repeated Measurement ANOVAS. $N = 300$ per generation, each cell $n = 150$. Means with the same subscript were not significantly different at $p < .05$ in least-square mean tests given a significant interaction effect. $^{**}p < .01$.

Mothers of pre-school children and mothers of adolescents. We conducted a further analysis comparing mothers of pre-school children ($N = 300$) and mothers of adolescents ($N = 300$) on the two VOC dimensions. Results showed significant cohort and region main effects for emotional VOC as well as for traditional VOC (see Table 6).

Mothers of adolescents (both rural and urban) showed a higher emotional VOC than did mothers of pre-school children, and urban mothers showed significantly higher emotional VOC than rural mothers. Rural as well as urban mothers of adolescents also showed a higher traditional VOC than mothers of pre-school children. Urban mothers showed a significantly higher traditional VOC compared to rural mothers.

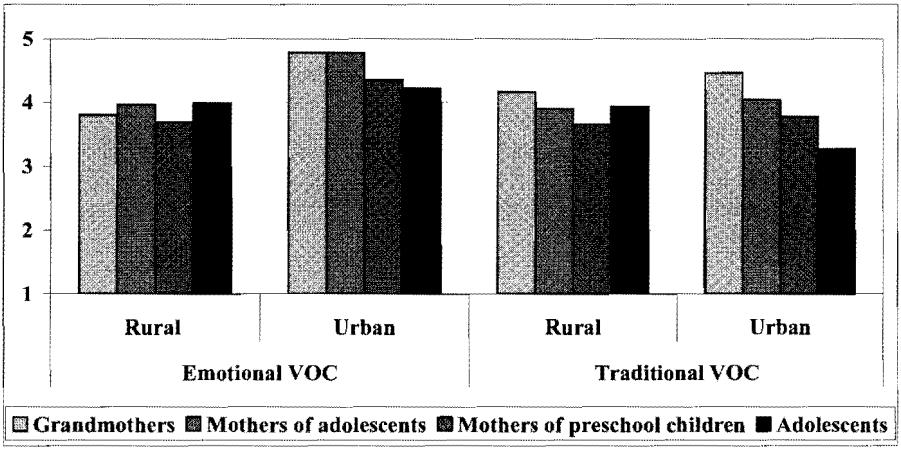
Table 6: Value of children in two cohorts of mothers

VOC	Rural		Urban		ANOVA *F*		
	M	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)	Cohort	Region	C x R
Emotional					59.09**	258.75**	2.98+
Mothers of pre-school children	3.69	(.59)	4.35	(.64)			
Mothers of adolescents	3.96	(.59)	4.78	(.41)			
Traditional					16.29**	3.91*	0.27
Mothers of pre-school children	3.65	(.61)	3.77	(.88)			
Mothers of adolescents	3.90	(.65)	4.04	(.92)			

Note. Two-way ANOVAS. Mothers of adolescents (N = 300) and mothers of pre-school children (N = 300) (each cell n = 150). **p < .01. *p < .05. +p < .10.

A summary of the results regarding differences and similarities in values of children in the Indian samples is given in Figure 3. Differences mainly occurred in the urban samples where the younger as compared to the older generations held higher emotional as well as traditional values of children. With respect to rural-urban differences, the high emotional VOC of urban grandmothers and mothers of adolescents as well as the low traditional VOC of urban adolescents have to be emphasized.

Figure 3: Comparison of VOC between generations and regions



Note. Values for mothers of adolescents and for adolescents come from the respective full sample of N = 300 mothers and N = 300 adolescents, not from the reduced samples used in the 3-generation analysis.

5.3 Generational and regional comparisons of fertility-related variables

Hypotheses related to these analyses stated that older generations/cohorts as compared to younger generations/cohorts as well as urban as compared to rural samples would have more traditional attitudes towards family size (Hypothesis 2a and 2b). Additionally, we hypothesized that there would be a higher actual fertility in rural areas. Hypotheses were tested between the two connected generations of grandmothers and mothers as well as between the two cohorts of older and younger mothers. Adolescents are not included in these analyses since the corresponding items were not part of their questionnaire.

Two-generation sample of grandmothers and mothers (N = 100 dyads). With regard to actual fertility, grandmothers had significantly more children than their daughters (Table 7). This effect has to be taken with caution since some mothers of adolescents may still have more children in the future. Also, rural grandmothers as well as their daughters had significantly more children than their urban counterparts. Grandmothers as compared to mothers preferred significantly more children in a typical small family as well as in a typical large family. Additionally, rural as compared to urban grandmothers and mothers reported significantly more children as characteristics of typical small and large families. According to rural grandmothers and mothers a typical large family consists of about two children *more* than according to urban grandmothers and mothers. No generational or regional differences occurred for the variable ideal family size. All sub-samples considered an average of slightly more than two children as the ideal family size.

Table 7: Fertility indicators in two generations: grandmothers and mothers

	Rural		Urban		ANOVA *F*		
	M	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)	Generation	Region	G x R
No. of children alive					10.56**	.78**	0.07
Grandmothers	5.09	(2.21)	4.28	(1.86)			
Mothers	4.23	(1.39)	3.56	(1.50)			
Small family size					13.94**	8.16**	2.24
Grandmothers	2.87	(.80)	2.30	(.76)			
Mothers	2.40	(.58)	2.10	(.51)			
Large family size					8.07**	57.70**	0.23
Grandmothers	7.36	(1.89)	5.48	(1.73)			
Mothers	6.68	(2.26)	4.52	(1.83)			
Ideal family size					1.07	0.02	1.07
Grandmothers	2.15	(.72)	2.27	(.73)			
Mothers	2.15	(.75)	2.06	(.69)			

Note. Repeated Measurement ANOVAS. $N = 100$ per generation, each cell $n = 50$. $^{**}p < .01$.

Mothers of pre-school children (N = 300) and mothers of adolescents (N = 300). Mothers of adolescents had significantly more children than mothers of pre-school children (Table 8). This cohort effect can be attributed to the fact that most of the mothers of pre-school children will have more children in the future while most of mothers of adolescents are at the end of their reproductive periods. Furthermore, mothers from rural areas had significantly more children than mothers from urban areas, but there was a significant interaction effect indicating that this difference was only significant for mothers of adolescents. With regard to attitudes towards family size there was a significant cohort effect for the size of a small family. Mothers of adolescents thought that slightly more children live in a typical small family than mothers of pre-school children did. Additionally, rural as compared to urban mothers reported a greater size of a small family. With respect to the size of a large family there was no significant cohort effect, but a large regional effect. Again, according to rural mothers in a large family there should be about two children more than according to urban mothers. Regarding the size of an ideal family there were no differences, neither between cohorts nor between regions, all sub-samples reporting an average of about two children in the ideal family.

Table 8: Fertility indicators in two cohorts of mothers

	Rural		Urban		ANOVA *F*		
	M	(*SD*)	*M*	(*SD*)	Cohort	Region	C x R
Number of children alive					476.29**	45.78**	9.75**
Mothers of pre-school child	1.79_a	(.67)	1.44_a	(.51)			
Mothers of adolescents	4.16_c	(1.73)	3.22_b	(1.28)			
Small family size					12.76**	54.19**	0.05
Mothers of pre-school child	2.26	(.68)	1.91	(.48)			
Mothers of adolescents	2.41	(.62)	2.09	(.43)			
Large family size					0.28	174.30**	0.43
Mothers of pre-school child	6.58	(1.73)	4.47	(1.79)			
Mothers of adolescents	6.56	(2.22)	4.65	(1.68)			
Ideal family size					0.21	0.12	0.58
Mothers of pre-school child	2.15	(.61)	2.08	(1.03)			
Mothers of adolescents	2.13	(.80)	2.16	(.76)			

Note. Two-way ANOVAS. Mothers of adolescents ($N = 300$) and mothers of pre-school children ($N = 300$) (each cell $n = 150$). Means with the same subscript were not significantly different at $p < .05$ in least-square mean tests given a significant interaction effect. $^{**}p < .01$.

6 Discussion

This country report aimed to provide an overview over the socio-cultural context of India with a focus on child-related values and family relationships. The purpose of the empirical study was threefold: 1) The structure of VOC in India was explored, 2) regional and generational differences with respect to VOC were analyzed, and 3) regional and generational differences with respect to fertility and fertility-related attitudes (preferences regarding the size of a small, large, and ideal family) were examined. The following discussion of results is related to the empirical study and proceeds along the above agenda.

6.1 Structure of VOC in India

The value of children in India can be best conceptualized as consisting of the two dimensions traditional VOC and emotional VOC. Thus, economic, social-normative and old-age security reasons to have children combined to form one dimension while emotional reasons formed a second dimension. This structure of VOC is different compared to results from other countries where some of the traditional aspects formed separate dimensions (for example Germany, see Mayer, Albert, Trommsdorff, & Schwarz, this volume). A sense of personal fulfillment for Indian women comes through motherhood. A childless woman is considered as problematic. Thus, a child is highly valued in all segments of the Indian society. Since having children is seen as a natural (and necessary) aspect of life in India there may be fewer differences among various values of children as compared to other cultures where the question of having or not having children is of primary interest. Furthermore, the two dimensions were substantially correlated, again reflecting a very strong general value of children.

6.2 Regional and generational differences of VOC in India

Though India is still a very traditional society in many respects, recent history has contributed to large-scale social and cultural change in the cities and peripheral villages with a lower rate of change in remote rural areas. There has been much debate about the degree to which modernization (i.e., technical, economic, and often political modernization) is associated with Westernization (Kagitcibasi, 2005), and a change of value systems and family structures in the direction of individualism, liberal values, and nuclear families. Former studies have shown that social change and modernization are reflected in values of children and fertility (e.g., Arnold et al., 1975). In Western countries, a reduced traditional value of children and a heightened emotional value can be observed, and fertility is declining to a level threatening the existence of societies in the long run. The problems presently experienced by many European countries (aging and shrinking population) are not yet relevant for India. However, social and cultural changes may have a differential impact on the values and fertility behavior of women from different generations and of different regional origins.

Our results indicate that the processes of modernization and related value changes for the most part follow generational and regional lines. First, in urban but not in rural areas, older generations preferred a higher traditional VOC as compared to the younger generations. Thus, in urban areas the younger generations are affected by a value change while the older generations still adhere to their high traditional values. The high traditional VOC of urban grandmothers may reflect a reaction to modernizing influences giving traditional values even more priority. Though urban adolescents were lowest in traditional VOC, with a mean value above the scale mean of 3 they still consider traditional values of children as rather important. In rural areas, all three generations hold similarly high traditional values.

While mothers and grandmothers showed no regional differences for *traditional VOC*, urban grandmothers and mothers were significantly higher in *emotional VOC* than rural grandmothers and mothers. While in rural areas emotional VOC is of medium to high importance, in urban areas it is of high importance. It seems that living in a city does not necessarily lower the traditional value of children (at least not for the adult generations) but it surely heightens the emotional value of children. Former studies have shown that with economic development the traditional VOC goes down and that emotional VOC becomes higher or stays high (Arnold et al., 1975, Kagitcibasi, 1982a). In India, this pattern was confirmed with respect to rural-urban differences: traditional values remain important but emotional values become more important in a more modern living context. The rather low traditional VOC of urban adolescents might reflect a future change to generally lower traditional values in urban contexts. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that adolescents do not value traditional values as much simply because their life phase may de-emphasize traditional values.

Apart from the generational differences in the 3-generation and 2-generation biologically connected samples, we also wanted to explore possible differences between two cohorts of mothers: mothers of adolescents (from the connected sample) and mothers of pre-school children (the additional sample of young mothers). We found a clear difference showing higher values of children for mothers of adolescents as compared to mothers of pre-school children for both emotional VOC and traditional VOC. It is rather likely that this difference is due to different life-stages the mothers are experiencing and not due to a real cohort-effect caused by differential socialization of the two cohorts due to social change. This is because the pattern is not only present in the urban samples but also in the rural samples. Thus, for Indian mothers the older their children are the more they seem to value them, for emotional reasons as well as for more traditional reasons. Possibly, experiences with their children as well as positive experiences with the social context reacting to their motherhood cause mothers of older children more than mothers of younger children to feel that their children are of great value to them.

6.3 Regional and generational differences of fertility and family size preferences in India

While values of children are important to understand the motivations for having children, the actual average number of children women give birth to more directly reflects social and cultural changes in a society. Specifically, the differences between urban and rural areas in actual fertility are of interest for the future development of a country. Our results show that in India, rural grandmothers, mothers of adolescents, and mothers of pre-school children all have more children than the respective samples from an urban area. For the sample of mothers of adolescents and for the sample of grandmothers, rural women on average had one child more than urban women. While mothers of pre-school children are still in the middle of their reproductive phase, the reproductive phase of mothers of adolescents will be ending soon, and grandmothers are generally beyond their child-bearing age. Therefore, comparisons of actual fertility across generations and cohorts cannot be interpreted as changes towards lower fertility though some results may indicate such a development.

In addition to their actual number of children we asked mothers and grandmothers about the size of a typical small family, a typical large family, and an ideal family, i.e., how many children there are or should be in a family of the respective size, according to their judgement or preference. In line with our hypothesis, clear rural/urban and generational/cohort differences appeared for the size of a small family and the size of a large family. Respondents from rural areas as well as from older generations/cohorts thought that more children live in small and large families, respectively, than their urban and younger counterparts. Regarding generations/cohorts, differences were larger between grandmothers and their daughters than between mothers of adolescents (grandmothers' daughters) and mothers of pre-school children. In fact, there was no difference between rural mothers of adolescents and mothers of pre-school children with regard to the size of a *large* family. These results correspond to a smaller age difference between the two mothers' cohorts (around 15 years) as compared to the grandmothers' and mothers of adolescents' sample (around 25 years).

Contrary to our hypothesis, all participants – rural and urban, younger and older mothers as well as grandmothers – on average thought that about two children would be the ideal family size. Women from rural areas did not believe that more children would be ideal as compared to urban women, and also all generations agreed upon the ideal family size. This ideal number of children is significantly below the actual fertility rate of mothers of adolescents and of grandmothers in our samples. More surprisingly, with the exception of urban mothers, the ideal family size is even numerically below the judgement/preference regarding the size of a small family. The cultural imperative thus seems to be that fewer children should be born than currently is the case, and this cultural norm seems to be valid regardless of age or regional origin. The already reported government policy to reduce fertility levels in India thus may have reached people's ideals but not (yet) their reality. While preferences re-

garding the size of small and large families seem to be more 'reality-bound,' the ideal family size seems to have a more normative component, and the cultural norm seems to have changed to having fewer children in India. One reason for the higher fertility (and for the higher judgements/preferences regarding the size of small and large families) in rural areas may be that birth control devices and aids are still very limited in rural areas.

7 Conclusions

Analyses on the value of children in India indicate that both emotional and traditional values of children are of high relevance for the Indian women in our study. Beside this commonality, marked differences exist between rural and urban areas. Urban grandmothers, their daughters, as well as their adolescent children, hold very high emotional values of children as compared to their rural counterparts. Unexpectedly, no regional differences exist with respect to traditional values of children, but in urban areas the younger generations hold somewhat lower traditional values. Fertility is higher in rural as compared to urban areas and judgements regarding the size of small and large families showed marked regional and generational differences. Ideal family size, however, is the same across generations and regions. Thus, an interesting pattern of values of children and fertility-related variables was observed that partly follows the proposed hypotheses but also shows culture-specific tendencies of the current Indian situation.

Future analyses in the current project have to go beyond comparisons of child-related values and fertility measures. For example, the predictive value of the different VOC-dimensions for fertility and fertility-related attitudes has to be studied. Furthermore, the question of the relevance of VOC for mothers' parenting goals and actual parenting behavior is an important theme. Thus, the study of the function of values of children for fertility behavior and for the parent-child relationship once children are born is a major objective for future analyses that could not be included in the current chapter due to limitations of space.

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