Translation attached

Desenvolvimento infantil em contexto cultural: O impacto do engajamento de pré-escolares em atividades do cotidiano familiar*

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Por que é importante estudar o engajamento de crianças pequenas em atividades da vida cotidiana? Há muito estudiosos têm reconhecido que crianças se socializam ao engajar-se com outros significativos em práticas consideradas importantes em seu grupo cultural (Cole, 1996; Harkness & Super, 1996; LeVine, et al., 1994; Rogoff, 1990; Valsiner, 1989; Vygotsky; 1987, 1997; Weisner, 1996; Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Exercitar-se pode não levar sempre à perfeição, mas desempenha certamente um papel na construção do indivíduo; crianças se tornam quem elas são efetivamente no processo de fazer. Valores culturais e crenças são aprendidos de modo similar, à medida em que algumas crianças são encorajadas a se engajar em determinados tipos de atividade e desencorajadas em relação a outrs. Estudando regularmente o que crianças fazem e como elas chegaram a se envolver nessas atividades, bem como seus papéis e relacionamento com seus parceiros, foi-nos possível compreender os modos através dos quais crianças se desenvolvem como membros de seus grupos culturais.

Entretanto, pouco se conhece sobre como crianças em idade pré-escolar passam seu tempo, pelo menos em sociedades industrializadas. A maioria das pesquisas sobre atividades e interações da criança no contexto da vida cotidiana tem sido conduzida no âmbito da antropologia cultural e da psicologia do desenvolvimento transcultural em sociedades não industrializadas (ver, por exemplo, as referências acima). Atenção menor ainda tem sido dispensada a efeitos a longo prazo do engajamento diferencial de crianças em atividades em diferentes contextos dentro de uma mesma sociedade, em função, por exemplo, de classe social ou etnicidade.

Nosso objetivo foi examinar crianças crescendo em setores urbanos numa variedade de sociedades. Para fazê-lo, empregamos uma perspectiva ecológica largamente baseada nos escritos recentes de Bronfenbrenner (1989, 1993, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Essa abordagem , assim como outras perspectivas ecológicas (see Tudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997), focaliza as interrelações multidirecionais entre indivíduos em desenvolvimento e os contextos que eles habitam. Especificamente, utilizamos um delineamento Pessoa-Processo-Contexto-Tempo (PPCT), o qual combina elementos da Pessoa em desenvolvimento, Processos de interação entre a pessoa e os que lhe são próximos, Contexto, e Tempo para compreender o modo e as implicações do uso do tempo em crianças pequenas. Os fatores envolvidos em um delineamento PPCT serão aqui tratados na seguinte ordem: contexto, processo, pessoa e tempo.

Contexto. Bronfenbrenner é mais conhecido como um teórico que diferencia várias texturas/níveis do context (o microsistema, o mesosistema, o exosistema, o macrosistema), embora estudiosos que referem apenas o seu livro de 1979 enfatizam contexto tendendo a obscurecer os outros aspectos de sua teoria de sistemas. Bronfenbrenner argumentou que, para entender desenvolvimento , o delineamento da pesquisa deve envolver "um contraste entre pelo menos os dois macrosistemas mais relevantes para o fenômeno desenvolvimental sob investigação" (1993, p. 39). Um macrosistema envolve qualquer grupo cujos membros partilham sistemas de valores ou crenças, "recursos, riscos/perigos, estilos de vida, estruturas de oportunidade, opções de trajetórias de vida e padrões de intercâmbio social" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 25). Assim, alguém pode satisfazer o requisito mínimo conduzindo pesquisa

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Children's Development in Cultural Context: The Impact of Preschoolers' Engagement in Everyday Activities

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Abstract

We used Bronfenbrenner's (1995) Person-Process-Context-Time model to examine the everyday activities of preschool-aged children in similar sized cities in the United States, Russia, Estonia, Finland, Korea, and Kenya. We studied "proximal processes" by observing preschoolers' activities, partners, roles, and settings (although only data on activities are presented here) for 20 hours over the course of a single week, and examined children's self-directedness (a "person" characteristic) in terms of the children's initiation of the activities. Context was studied not only at the level of society, but also within each society, by examining children from different social class groups. The goal of the project is to follow the children through the first years of their formal schooling, although to date we only have longitudinal data for children in the United States. Results revealed both cross-cultural similarities and differences, and also interesting variations in terms of social class.

Why is it important to study young children's engagement in everyday activities? Scholars have long recognized that children become socialized in the course of engaging with significant others in the practices considered important in their cultural group (Cole, 1996; Harkness & Super, 1996; LeVine, et al., 1994; Rogoff, 1990; Valsiner, 1989; Vygotsky, 1987, 1997; Weisner, 1996; Whiting & Edwards, 1988). Practice may not always make perfect, but it certainly plays a role in making the individual; children become who they are in the very process of doing. Cultural values and beliefs are learned in similar fashion, as some children are encouraged to engage in some types of activities and discouraged from others. In the course of studying what children do on a regular basis, how they become involved in those activities, and their roles and relationship with their partners we come to understand the ways in which children develop as members of their cultural groups.

However, little is known about how children of preschool age spend their time, at least in industrialized societies. The majority of research on children's everyday activities and interactions in everyday life has been conducted by cultural anthropologists and cross-cultural developmental psychologists in non-industrialized societies (see, for example, the references above). Even less attention has been paid to the long-term effects of children's differential engagement in activities across different contexts within societies, for example as a function of social class or ethnicity.

Our goal has been to examine children growing up in urban settings in a variety of societies. To do so, we have employed an ecological perspective that is largely based on Bronfenbrenner's recent writings (1989, 1993, 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This framework, in common with other ecological perspectives (see Tudge, Gray, & Hogan, 1997), has at its center the multidirectional interrelations between developing individuals and the contexts they inhabit. Specifically, we used a Person-Process-Context-Time (PPCT) design, one that combines elements of the developing Person, Processes of interaction between the person and those around, Context, and Time to understand the manner and implications of young children's use of time. The factors involved in a PPCT design will be addressed in the following order—context, process, person, and time.

Context. Bronfenbrenner is known best as a theorist who differentiated various layers of context (the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem), although the emphasis on context by scholars who refer only to Bronfenbrenner's 1979 book has tended to overshadow the other aspects of his systems theory. Bronfenbrenner argued that to understand development, the research design must involve "a contrast between at least two macrosystems most relevant to the developmental phenomenon under investigation" (1993, p. 39). A macrosystem involves any group whose members share value or belief systems, "resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options and patterns of social

interchange" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 25). Thus, one can satisfy the minimum requirement by conducting cross-cultural research as it is typically understood (i.e., groups drawn from at least two different societies), or by examining groups that are distinguished by race, ethnicity, or social class within a single society.

Process. Bronfenbrenner and Crouter (1983) argued, however, that research that only relates a macrosystem or some other level of context to an outcome of interest simply employs a "social address" model. What is necessary is to examine the processes that might explain the connection between these structural characteristics and the outcomes of interest. Bronfenbrenner discussed processes in two ways, one of which relates to mediating mechanisms such as parental values, beliefs, or expectations. However, he paid greater attention to processes of a different sort, termed "proximal processes" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993). Proximal processes are the interactions "between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment" and constitute the "engines of development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1995, p. 620). Examples cited by Bronfenbrenner (1995) include parent-child and child-child activities, group or solitary play, reading, and so on. In other words, proximal processes are the essence of what occurs in the course of everyday activities on the part of developing individuals and their social partners.

Person. The third factor in Bronfenbrenner's theory is the person. Most scholars who restrict their citations of Bronfenbrenner's work to his first monograph (1979) imply that the theory is only contextual, examining the impact of different levels of context on the developing individual. As is clear from his work over the past two decades, however, the theory is truly ecological in that individual and context are related bi-directionally. Children influence their own environments (for example by initiating new activities, drawing others into them) while at the same time being influenced by those around them. At the level of the person, Bronfenbrenner (1989, 1993) wrote about the "developmentally-instigative" characteristics of individuals, such as their directive beliefs, their activity level, their temperament, and their goals and motivations. All of these have an impact on the way in which the context is experienced by the developing individual as well as the types of contexts to which the individual is drawn. It is also important to consider "personal stimulus" characteristics, such as gender or skin color, that have an influence on the ways in which other people deal with the developing individual and the goals, values, and expectations they have for that individual. Stimulation in the home is thus not simply a function of what parents are providing—children themselves play a highly active role in both initiating and terminating activities, not to mention in the roles they take with their social partners.

Time. The final element in Bronfenbrenner's theory is time. In part this involves what Bronfenbrenner has termed the chronosystem—setting the research into its historical setting, and

examining the development of different cohorts. Most important, however, is the study of development over time, with data gathered at a minimum of two points in time. Cross-sectional studies, while informative about groups that differ by age, only infer development rather than study it directly.

How have we instantiated Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model? In terms of context, we have examined children's development in a number of different societies (the United States, Russia, Estonia, Finland, Korea, and Kenya) and, in each society, focused on a minimum of two groups (families that by educational and occupational criteria are considered to be either middle class or working class). In the United States we are also looking at African-American and European-American families. This allows us to examine similarities and differences in children's use of time both in societies that differ in terms of their historical and cultural backgrounds and in groups within each society. In each case we chose a single city from which to draw our participants, one of medium size with a range of cultural, educational, and occupational opportunities. Families were chosen from selected communities within each city, with each family having a 2- to 3-year-old child when the study started.

We examined two aspects of process. To draw the connections between the contextual factors of interest and the ways in which parents and other significant others acted with their children we examined the parents' child-rearing values and beliefs, using both interviews and questionnaires. Of greater importance to the study, however, is our focus on proximal processes, or the everyday activities in which children engage, either alone or with those around them. The observational methods that we used allowed us to get a reasonable sense of the types of activities that typically went on around the children, the activities in which the children actually engaged, the manner in which they became engaged, their social partners, and the children's and others' roles in the activities. These methods will be described more explicitly below.

In terms of person characteristics, we focused on a single personal stimulus characteristic (the child's gender) and a single developmentally instigative characteristic (the extent to which the children initiated their own involvement in the activities, a measure of self-directedness).

Finally, we considered time in two ways. The passage of historical time has profound effects in all societies, of course, although in some societies the pace of change is particularly evident. For example, the Russian and Estonian parents in our study were all raised under the Soviet system (despite their very different cultures, languages, and histories), but are raising their own children in the post-Soviet world. And even though the pace of change has not been so dramatic, the current situation of African American families in the United States cannot be understood without considering historical factors. Similarly, although most of the data on child-rearing practices in various African nations has been collected in rural regions, urbanization has proceeded apace.

To qualify as a developmental study, however, data must be gathered over time, and an important component of this study is that the children were followed over time. This occurred not simply during the observational part of the study, when the children are of preschool age, but by virtue of the fact that data were (and continue to be) collected once the children reached school age. We are thus able to examine, for example, the connections, if any, between the types of activities in which children engaged while of preschool age, and their parents' and teachers' perceptions of their social and academic competence several years later. This is important because teachers' perceptions of children may play an important role in the ways in which the teachers deal with those children.

Participants

130 children from 28-45 months (at Time 1), and their parents.

- 40 from Greensboro, NC, USA (in this paper we use data from 29, including 20 European-American and nine African-American children)
- 20 from Obninsk, Russia (in this paper we use data from only 10 children)
- 20 from Tartu, Estonia
- 18 from Oulu, Finland (data not yet analyzed)
- 12 from Suwon, Korea
- 20 from Kisumu, Kenya

Methods

Observations. Families were asked to keep their daily routines unchanged as much as possible during the observation period. Each child was observed, wherever he or she was, for 20 hours over the course of a week to capture the equivalent of an entire waking day (the final two hours were videotaped, rather than coded live, and therefore only the first 18 hours of observation feature in these analyses). Observations were continuous in 2- and 4-hour blocks, but activities were only coded during 30-second "windows" every 5½ minutes, using modified spot observations. The remaining time was used for writing codes and field notes, as well as for observing how activities were initiated and how children became involved in them. During each 30-second window activities were coded as being "available to" the child if they occurred within his or her ear- or eye-shot. Children were coded as being "involved in" the activities if they were physically participating or were observing. As well as observing which activities were available to the child and which he or she became involved in, we coded how activities were initiated and by whom, the manner in which the child became involved in any activity, any partners in activity, their respective roles, and so on.

The activities in which we were interested were lessons (4 categories), work (5 categories), play, exploration, and entertainment (10 categories), conversation (3 categories), and "other" (6 categories,

including sleeping, eating, etc.). In brief, lessons were defined as involving the deliberate attempt to impart or receive information in four areas: academic (spelling, counting, learning shapes and colors, etc.); interpersonal (teaching etiquette or "proper" behavior); skill/nature (how things work, why things happen); and religious lessons. Work was broken down into that involving no technology, clear technology (such as sweeping with a broom), or more complex technology (such as using a vacuum cleaner). Play (including exploration and entertainment) was defined as activities that were being engaged in for fun or for their own sake, with no apparent curriculum (which would constitute a lesson). Types of play included pretend/role play, play with academic object (such as looking at a book), play with objects typically designed for children, play with adult objects, other types of play (such as chase or rough and tumble), and watching television. Thus a child looking at a book or being read to would be coded as engaging in "play with an academic object" whereas the child asking what a particular word was, or being asked to name the colors would be coded as being involved in an academic lesson. Conversation was defined as talk with a sustained or focused topic, rather than incidental chat accompanying play or work. During any 30-second window, more than one activity could occur and could be coded.

In addition to documenting similarities and differences in children's everyday activities, we wished to identify variability in those activities that might be expected to relate to later academic competence. Accordingly, we examined with particular interest the academic and skill/nature lessons in which children were involved, their play with academic objects, and their conversation with adults. Although learning is likely to occur from any activity in which a young child engages, of all the activities that we coded, these four were believed to be the most "school-relevant." Initiation of and engagement in these activities are clearly related to teachers' perception of academic performance three and four years later, at least in the European-American data—we are still collecting data in the remaining cases.

Results

We have analyzed the observational data from Greensboro (European-American children and almost half of the African-American children in the study), Suwon (Korea), Obninsk (Russia), Tartu (Estonia), and Kisumu (Kenya). In each of these cities, half of the data are from families which by educational and occupational criteria are middle class and half are working class. We will therefore focus on contextual similarities and differences. It is apparent from Table 1 that in each of the cities play was the activity in which the children were most often involved, with lessons, work, and conversation much less common. Children in Suwon were most involved in play, in an average of 127 of the 180 observations, and those in Obninsk the least, in an average of 86 observations. In terms of lessons, children in Obninsk and Tartu were more involved than their counterparts in Kisumu, Greensboro, and

Suwon. The children in Kisumu were most likely to be involved in work, those in Obninsk and Tartu somewhat less, and those from Greensboro and Suwon least of all. The groups of children also differed in terms of conversation, with children in Suwon less likely to be involved in conversation than children from the other countries.

Insert Table 1 about here

However, it was also clear that there were within-city differences as a function of social class in terms of all activities with the exception of the amount of work in which the children were involved. For example, in terms of lessons, children from middle class families were more likely to be involved than those from working class families. This was true in most cases for conversation, although working class Black children in Greensboro and children from Kisumu were more likely to be involved in conversation than were their middle class counterparts. It is also noticeable, however, that the class differences were more apparent among the White children in Greensboro, in Suwon, and in Kisumu, and did not feature among the Black children in Greensboro, in Obninsk, and in Tartu.

By observing children engaging in their everyday activities in these different contexts, we studied more than context, of course. We were also focusing on the proximal processes in which they engaged. According to Bronfenbrenner, differential engagement in activities (either alone or in conjunction with social partners) should lead to different outcomes. As one of the outcomes in which we were interested was academic competence, we examined with particular attention two sub classes of activities that we expected to relate to later academic competence. These were academic lessons, skill/nature lessons, play with academic objects, and conversation with one or more adult. Academic lessons were defined as those in which there was a deliberate attempt to impart information (or receive information, for example by asking a question) about something of relevance to school or preschool. Asking a question about how many sides a square has, or information about a word when looking at a book would be examples of this type of lesson. As is seen in Table 2, children in Kisumu, Obninsk, and Tartu were somewhat more likely than the others to engage in these types of lessons. In terms of social class differences, middle class children, among the White Greensboro children and those from Suwon, Tartu, and Kisumu, were more likely than their working class counterparts to engage in these types of lessons. Exceptions to this pattern were found among the Black children in Greensboro and in Obninsk.

Insert Table 2 about here

A similar pattern was found in terms of skill and nature lessons. These lessons were defined as ones in which there were deliberate attempts to impart or receive information about the workings of the natural world (such as why the sun rises, or why it gets cold in winter) or about how to do things, such as tying shoelaces, mending a broken toy, and so on. Lessons about health and safety also were included in this category. Children in Obninsk and Tartu were far more likely to engage in these types of lessons than their counterparts in Kisumu, Greensboro, and Suwon. In each of these cities except Kisumu, however, social class differences were such that middle class children engaged in more skill/nature lessons than those from working class backgrounds.

Play with academic objects was defined as play with any object that was relevant to preschool or school, but when there was no specific attempt to receive or impart information. Thus, for example, if a child was looking at a book, or being read to, or playing with magnetic numbers on the refrigerator he or she was playing with an academic object but not engaging in an academic lesson. Our goal was not to distinguish between occasions when children were learning or not learning, because our assumption was that children are likely to learn no matter what activity they are engaged in. Looking at a book or playing with blocks or drawing or helping a parent cook are all opportunities in which learning may occur, but lessons were explicit (often didactic) attempts to teach the child something or explicit attempts to get information from someone viewed as more competent (usually, but not exclusively, an adult). Children in Suwon were almost twice as likely to play with academic objects that children in the other cities, and more than three times as much as those in Tartu. However, it is apparent (see Table 2) that there were large differences between middle class and working class Suwon children, with the former playing with academic objects far more than any other group. In all groups except Obninsk the same was true, though to a lesser extent—that middle class children were more likely than their working class counterparts to play with academic objects.

The final activity of interest was conversation involving an adult. A conversation was defined in such a way that it was distinguished from talking that was simply an accompaniment to play, or work, or the talk that necessarily went along with lessons. Talking was defined as a conversation if it involved turn-taking between interlocutors with the topic of conversation being something separate from any other activity that was occurring. Thus if two children were playing, but talking about something that they had seen on television the night before, that would count as a conversation. Similarly, talk between child and mother featuring what had happened at school earlier in the day or about where they would go on vacation would count as conversation.

Looking first at the city level, these groups of children clearly differed in the extent to which they were involved in conversation with, with White children in Greensboro most likely and children in Suwon the least likely. However, as has been consistently the case, there were also some social class differences, with middle class children in most of the cities more likely to be involved in conversation with adults than their working class counterparts. As can be seen from Table 2, these class differences were particularly noticeable among the White children in Greensboro and Korean children in Suwon, less so in Obninsk and Tartu. Black children in Greensboro and Luo children in Kisumu were the exceptions in that, on average, working class children engaged in somewhat more conversations than did their middle class counterparts.

Some of the social class differences are clear enough to make one suspect that the various settings in which the middle class children find themselves provide more opportunities for these types of activities. Such an argument could support a unidirectional view of development, the direction of influence moving from context to child. Using a systemic perspective, however, one should predict multidirectional effects. In this case, we were interested in one "person" characteristic, namely children's self-directedness, as indexed by children's initiation of the activities in which they were involved. It was clear that the children fairly often became involved in these activities because they started them. Social class mattered here, too, as it was apparent that middle class children across the cities were more likely than their working class peers to initiate academic lessons, play with academic objects, and conversation with adults, although they were not significantly more likely to initiate skill/nature lessons. (Full details are provided in Table 3.)

Insert Table 3 about here

We are not yet ready to discuss the final element of Bronfenbrenner's PPCT design—that of time, because we only have the school data from the first group on which we collected the observational data, the White children from Greensboro. However, these data are quite striking (Tudge, Odero, Hogan, & Etz, 1999). Within both social class groups, those children who, as preschoolers, had initiated and engaged in more academic lessons, skill-nature lessons, and conversation with adults were much more likely to be perceived by their teachers as academically competent three and four years later. Play with academic objects had no such effect. The three activities that were linked to later academic competence, interestingly enough, were those that necessarily involved some interaction with a social partner. It remains to be seen whether the same pattern is found for the long term effects of activities with the other groups of children.

Discussion and Conclusion

We had several goals in mind when designing this program of research. The primary goal was to try to understand the way in which children become competent members of the culture into which they are born. The research was set within an ecological systemic framework derived from Bronfenbrenner, and for this reason it was important to examine macrosystemic variation—examining groups that were likely to differ in terms of values, beliefs, and practices. We were dissatisfied with comparisons of societies at different levels of technology, typical of much cross-cultural research, and were interested in examining societies that were either already industrialized or, as in the case of Kenya, examine children from families in a schooled and urban setting. This allowed us to focus on cultural groups without the confounding influence of such factors as schooling and urbanicity.

However, according to Bronfenbrenner, macrosystem and society are not synonymous, and there are within-society groups which qualify as macrosystems. Bronfenbrenner's theory thus forces researchers to at least consider the within-soceity heterogeneity that is the feature of all societies, particularly those that are industrialized. In our case we decided to focus on social class, but also examine race in the United States city in which we gathered data.

From Bronfenbrenner's perspectives it is crucial not simply to focus on culture or social class as a means of "explaining" development. Instead, it is necessary to examine what Bronfenbrenner termed the "proximal processes" of development—children's everyday activities within their microsystems. Another goal was therefore to discover the extent of similarities and differences in children's repeated everyday activities (a measure of proximal processes) both across societies and, within societies, by social class. Although some revealing differences were found in activities considered at the most general of levels (for example, that the children in Kisumu were more likely to engage in work, or that children in each society spent the majority of their time in play and entertainment), more interesting were the patterns found when we focused on those activities most linked to future academic competence. For the most part, middle class children were more likely than those from a working class background to be involved in academic lessons, skill/nature lessons, play with academic objects, and conversation with adults. The exceptions included the Obninsk children, who were not distinguished in terms of academic lessons and for whom working class children played appreciably more than their middle class counterparts with academic objects. The working class children from Obninsk, in addition, were only slightly less likely than those from the middle class to engage in conversation with adults (the magnitude of the difference was less than in any other city). Black children in the US and Luo children from Kisumu also did not fit the typical pattern of social class differences, although the fact working class Black children were more likely to be involved in conversation than middle class Blacks can be

explained simply by reference to one working class child who initiated and was involved in far more conversations than any other child from her community.

Some of the differences in patterns force us to examine our data from different perspectives. For example, the socio-political changes that have occurred data from Obninsk and Tartu may perhaps be explained by the fact that in the face of greater uncertainty that the State will look after its citizens parents are more interested in providing their children with the skills they view as essential. In Obninsk, moreover, any connection between occupation, education, and income is likely to be weakened by the fact that many of the parents (but particularly those with higher education), like those in Russian society as a whole, have to work at two occupations in order to make sufficient income, and are much less likely than in the past to find occupations that fit their particular specialities (Kashenov, 1995; Khabibovskaya, 1995).

Patterns of historical change also help us make more sense of our data from Greensboro. It was apparent that the same patterns of class-based variations in engagement in activities that we had found in the European-American communities were not present in the African-American communities. This was the case despite the fact that in both racial groups we distinguished by social class in the same way, and in both groups there are clear differences in parents' educational background and current occupation. These data can perhaps be explained by the fact that social class has a different meaning in the Black and White communities. In the White communities, differences in education and occupation are linked to differences in income, type of housing, and neighbourhood. No such differences were found in the Black community.

We were also able to look more directly at self-direction in the children, by examining the extent to which the children themselves were involved in initiating these activities. Again, the results were revealing—in virtually every case middle class children were more likely than those from working class families to have initiated them. Of course, if middle class parents believe that these activities are more important for their children to engage in they may provide more of them than do working class parents. But at least some of these activities were started by the children themselves, an indication that they have already internalized their parents' value for self-direction. It also indicates the extent to which children are co-constructing their own environments, rather than simply being the objects of a simple unidirectional transmission of values and practices.

What is crystal clear from these data is that we can no longer ignore the heterogeneity involved in all societies, particularly those that are industrialized or currently industrializing, or developing in other ways, such as the social/political changes currently taking place in the former Soviet Union. In this study we focused on variations as a function of education and/or occupation, two of the critical attributes

of social class. In each of the countries in which we collected data, we studied families from only one city (so holding regional differences and urban/rural differences constant), in which the participants did not differ by race or ethnicity. Nonetheless, the within-city differences, solely a function of social class, were at least as large as the cross-city (cross-societal) differences. When contrasting groups at different levels of industrialization, to find differences in patterns of child-rearing or beliefs about child-rearing is not altogether surprising. Interest in cross-cultural differences must not blind us, however, to the heterogeneous nature of all cultures.

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Table 1: Children's involvement in all activities, by city and social class

	Play		Lessons		Work		Conv.		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	N
US (White)—all	94.6	25.2	11.5	5.7	13.9	7.2	19.7	11.0	20
middle	81.1	20.5	13.1	5.7	13.3	9.3	24.7	11.5	11
working	111.0	20.8	9.6	3.5	14.7	3.5	13.6	6.5	9
US (Black)—all	112.2	19.6	9.7	5.3	14.6	4.4	11.0	11.5	9
middle	116.2	19.5	11.0	6.7	12.2	2.1	7.4	3.3	5
working	107.3	21.4	8.0	3.2	17.5	4.9	15.5	16.4	4
Kisumu (Kenya)—all	107.4	18.7	12.5	5.2	48.7	15.4	15.2	9.4	20
middle	105.8	37.5	15.4	7.7	31.9	15.1	13.4	7.5	10
working	109.8	20.0	10.6	4.6	65.6	19.6	17.8	11.1	10
Obninsk (Russia)—all	86.5	11.6	21.4	6.2	20.1	6.9	17.1	7.5	10
middle	83.5	7.9	23.7	6.6	20.0	7.1	19.0	8.9	6
working	91.0	15.9	18.0	3.9	20.2	7.8	14.2	4.3	4
Tartu (Estonia)—all	105.5	15.1	16.9	5.9	23.7	10.3	19.3	11.1	20
middle	109.5	16.6	18.8	6.4	27.5	10.5	23.2	12.9	10
working	101.5	13.1	15.1	5.0	20.0	9.1	15.4	7.8	10
Suwon (Korea)—all	126.7	13.8	8.1	4.2	14.9	6.3	10.2	6.8	12
middle	122.5	10.2	10.5	4.8	12.7	5.1	15.2	5.8	6
working	130.8	16.6	5.7	1.0	17.2	7.1	5.3	3.0	6

Table 2: Children's involvement in activities most related to future competence, by city and social class

	Academic lessons		Skill/nature lessons		Academic play		Conversation with adults		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	N
US (White)—all	2.6	3.6	3.8	2.6	8.1	6.8	18.3	10.0	20
middle	3.7	4.4	4.6	3.1	9.5	7.4	23.0	10.7	11
working	1.2	1.6	2.8	1.5	6.6	6.2	12.7	5.2	9
US (Black)—all	2.2	2.6	4.2	2.6	3.8	2.8	8.2	5.7	9
middle	3.0	3.3	5.0	3.4	4.8	3.2	6.2	2.8	5
working	1.3	1.0	3.3	1.0	2.5	1.7	10.8	7.8	4
Kisumu (Kenya)—all	5.6	4.9	2.6	2.1	9.0	6.9	5.2	4.2	20
middle	8.1	4.8	1.2	1.2	12.0	5.5	5.1	3.7	10
working	3.1	3.7	3.9	1.9	6.0	7.1	5.4	4.8	10
Obninsk (Russia)—all	4.1	2.2	11.8	5.0	9.0	4.7	14.2	5.9	10
middle	4.0	2.2	14.2	4.4	7.8	3.7	14.8	7.0	6
working	4.2	2.1	8.2	3.9	10.7	6.0	13.5	4.7	4
Tartu (Estonia)—all	2.6	3.1	9.2	4.6	5.4	4.8	16.8	11.1	20
middle	3.3	3.9	11.1	4.3	7.3	5.7	19.9	13.4	10
working	1.9	2.2	7.3	4.2	3.5	2.7	13.7	7.8	10
Suwon (Korea)—all	3.4	2.7	2.0	2.1	17.3	11.0	8.4	6.1	12
middle	4.7	3.0	2.2	2.8	25.5	8.5	12.3	6.0	6
working	2.2	1.7	1.8	1.5	9.2	5.4	4.5	2.9	6

Table 3: Children's initiation of activities most related to competence, by city and social class

	Academic lessons		Skill/nature lessons		Academic play		Conversation with adults		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	N
US (White)—all	0.9	1.6	0.9	1.4	5.1	4.1	8.7	6.6	20
middle	1.4	2.0	1.4	1.7	5.9	3.7	11.5	7.7	11
working	0.3	0.7	0.3	1.5	4.1	4.6	5.3	2.4	9
US (Black)—all	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	1.3	1.2	3.8	4.0	9
middle	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.6	1.0	1.2	2.0	1.6	5
working	0.2	0.5	0	0	1.7	1.3	6.0	5.3	4
Kisumu (Kenya)—all	1.5	1.5	0.2	0.3	6.9	5.4	1.8	2.3	20
middle	2.4	1.6	0.2	0.4	9.2	4.7	1.5	1.9	10
working	0.7	0.9	0.1	0.3	4.7	5.5	2.2	2.8	10
Obninsk (Russia)—all	1.0	1.6	2.6	1.9	3.8	2.5	6.5	3.2	10
middle	1.0	1.5	3.2	1.9	3.7	2.5	6.5	3.5	6
working	1.0	2.0	1.7	1.7	4.0	2.9	6.5	3.1	4
Tartu (Estonia)—all	1.2	1.6	2.5	2.7	3.2	3.1	7.0	5.6	20
middle	1.7	1.9	3.3	3.3	4.5	3.6	8.3	6.5	10
working	0.8	1.1	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.7	5.8	4.5	10
Suwon (Korea)—all	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.0	11.6	9.5	3.6	2.7	12
middle	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	16.5	10.6	5.0	2.7	6
working	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	5.1	2.2	1.9	6