Culture and Social Behavior:

A Model for the Development of Social Behavior

BEATRICE BLYTH WHITING

The concept of personality has been a troublesome one for both anthropologists and psychologists. In our cross-cultural work we have varied between two conceptual systems—personality as an intervening variable that is reflected in expressive and projective behavior (J. Whiting and Child 1953; J. Whiting 1973) and personality as reflected in mundane, everyday interpersonal behavior (Whiting and Whiting 1975). In the first type of analysis the belief systems and ritual behavior are viewed as being defensive, in the service of conflict resolution. Thus, the male initiation ceremonies of sub-Saharan Africa function to aid the young boy in the transition from the world of women and children to the world of men, to resolve his conflict of gender identity (Burton and Whiting 1961). The vision quest of the Indians in the northwestern woodland areas of the United States and Canada function to aid young children to brace the wilderness and break the intimate bonds with their parents (J.
Whiting 1971) and to resolve their conflict between the desire to seek help, reassurance, and support from others and the desire to be self-reliant. Theories of disease have been interpreted as expressions of deep-seated anxieties (Whiting and Child 1953) resulting from the frustration of the desires of childhood by the rules of propriety enforced by the adults of a society.

All such interpretations are difficult to document and require the acceptance of the Freudian concepts of defense and defensive behavior. It is our assumption that many ritualistic beliefs and behaviors stem from early childhood experiences that are shared by the members of a society and that they are reinforced throughout the individual's life by the very fact that they are indeed shared. We hypothesize that these beliefs and behaviors resist extinction and are more persistent over the life course than are mundane behaviors whose roots are not in conflict and defense.

In our present work we have turned from the study of the effects of culturally determined experiences on ritual behavior and belief systems to the study of the effect of culture on mundane social behavior, the everyday social exchanges between individuals—dyadic interpersonal behavior. We are interested in the contextual variables defined by culture that are associated with types of social behavior. Cross-cultural comparisons are required to explore the generality of these associations. The present paper describes a model for the comparison of the dyadic interaction of individuals for the purpose of contributing to a psycho-cultural theory of the development of mundane social behavior and personality dispositions.

Our concept of personality follows Irvin Child's narrower definition consisting "of all those more or less stable internal factors that make one person's behavior consistent from one time to another, and different from the behavior other people would manifest in comparable situations" (1968:82–83). Personality so defined must be distilled from the detailed comparison of social behavior of individuals as it is manifested in various settings over the life course. Personality characteristics are defined in terms of dimensions that are on a higher level of abstraction than specific types of mundane behavior such as behavior that is nurturant, aggressive, or dominant.

We approach the study of social behavior with the conviction that any theories about its development must account for similarities
and/or differences across all known cultures. Studies confined to one culture, for example, are of necessity limited in their ability to evaluate the importance of social structure variables since many possible patterns are contrary to the norms of that society (J. Whiting 1954).

Our model is designed with the aim of facilitating cross-cultural research whose purpose is to explore the regularities in the contextual components of social behavior, to derive hypotheses about trans-cultural dimensions of personality as measured by preferential forms of dyadic interaction. We are limited in our present database to dyadic interaction, not yet bold enough or equipped with an adequate methodology to embark on the analysis of the behavior of small groups with all their complicated alliances.

A second divergence from the thinking implicit in the study of the relation of culture to defensive and ritualistic behavior is the evaluation of the role of child training. Our present theory does not deny that there may be some lasting effects of early experiences but dictates that we look as well to other experiences in the life course to explain social behavior. We do not deny the importance of the mother and father in molding the child but our analysis of samples of maternal behavior across cultures convinces us that the mother's and father's greatest effect is in the assignment of the child to settings that have important socializing influences (Whiting and Whiting 1971, 1975). Knowing the settings that are frequented by children in a society allows us to predict characteristic patterns of interpersonal behavior. Our theory holds that there are a limited number of types of behavior that are maximally satisfying in any setting or in interaction with specific classes of people. Children learn these, mostly by trial and error rather than instruction and external reward and punishment. We observe many examples of intrinsic reinforcement in the daily routines of children; a striking example is the 6- to 10-year-old child nurse who quickly learns effective techniques for keeping infants happy without direct tuition (Wenger 1976; Wenger and Whiting n.d.).

New settings demand new learning, sometimes a change in the nature of old dyadic patterns, sometimes new patterns. Although our theory can account for lasting effects of early childhood experiences, it postulates changes in social behavior over time.

This model is the product of a series of studies conducted by
members of the Laboratory of Human Development at Harvard and our colleagues in numerous universities around the country. (They may not agree, however, with my conclusions.) The model can be best presented in historical perspective.

In 1953, the Social Science Research Council held a conference in New York City on culture and personality.1 As a result of this meeting, a summer seminar was set up to write a field manual for the cross-cultural study of child rearing (J. Whiting et al. 1953), but it was not until 1955 that definite plans for a study were planned.

In May 1955, a conference on personality was held in Kansas City.2 Our thinking was influenced by this meeting which reviewed the cross-cultural studies. At this point in time anthropologists had invested time in learning to administer and score Rorschach's Ink Blot Tests and adapt Thematic Apperception Tests with other psychological tests to field situations (cf. Kaplan 1961; LeVine 1973). The difficulty of interpreting these tests was a concern of the participants and it was suggested that the observations of social behavior might prove to be a more useful measure.

The following summer, Irvin Child, William Lambert, and John Whiting secured a generous grant from the Social Science Division of the Ford Foundation and selected five field teams.3 During the following summer the group met and with the help of the staff of the Laboratory of Human Development and David Aberle, Alfred Baldwin, James Gibson, and Robert Sears wrote the Field Guide for a Study of Socialization in Five Societies (J. Whiting et al. 1954).4 The design developed for the projected study selected social behavior as the dependent variable and parental behavior as reported in interviews as the independent variable. In addition it

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2 Conference on Cross Cultural Research on Personality Development, Sponsored by the Committee on Personality Development, Social Science Research Council, Kansas City, May 1955.

3 John L. Fischer and Ann Fischer, Thomas Maretzki and Hatsumi Maretzki, Leigh Minturn, William Nydegger and Corinne Nydegger, A. Kimball Romney and Romaine Romney. The following year, Robert A. LeVine and Barbara LeVine (Lloyd) joined the project.

4 The seminar included John Whiting and Irvin Child (Chair), Barbara Ayres, Hildred Geertz, George Goethals, Charles Holtzinger, Edgar Lowell, Eleanor Maccoby, Kimball Romney, William Steward, and John Thibault.
outlined the ethnographic data to be collected, those aspects of culture and social organization considered most relevant to the socialization of the child. The field teams agreed to interview 24 mothers and recorded the social behavior of 24 children, age 3 to 10 years old, as observed by the ethnographers and their local assistants in naturally occurring settings.

Since procedures for the systematic observation of social behavior that could be subjected to quantitative analysis had not been developed by anthropologists, the plan for the observations was heavily influenced by the work of psychologists, most notably Robert Sears, Alfred Baldwin, Roger Barker, and Herbert Wright. From Irvin Child, William Lambert, Robert Sears, and John Whiting, all trained in the Hullian tradition of behavioral psychology, came the strategy of recording behavior in sequences: the observer noted how the child being observed was instigated by the social environment and how the child responded to these instigations. Thus every observed behavior appeared as an interact with an instigation, whenever one was observed, a central act and a response act. From Alfred Baldwin came the courage to judge intention, the goal or hoped for outcome of an individual's act. From Barker and Wright came their adaptation of the Lewinian concept of field—the detailed noting of the physical and social environment in which social interaction occurred—and their analysis of the norms of expected behavior for the discrete settings (Barker and Wright 1951, 1955). These latter descriptive variables were part of the anthropological tradition. Barker and Wright and their students had used this type of analysis for the study of children in the United States.

It is not necessary to detail the plan for the observational study, as it is described in the *Field Guide for the Study of Socialization* (J. Whiting et al. 1966). Suffice it to say that the social behavior was recorded in running prose paragraphs, analyzed into interacts and recorded in sequence on IBM cards. In all, over 9,500 social interacts were recorded on the sample of children. On the average, each child was observed for 18 5-minute periods, or a total of 90 minutes (Whiting and Whiting 1975:42).

This data became the base for a countless number of analyses by

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5 The guide includes not only the original plan for the research, but the field teams' comments as to the feasibility of the various instruments. *Children of Six Cultures: A Psycho-Cultural Analysis* (Whiting and Whiting 1975) describes the steps in the coding and analysis.
doctoral students in the Laboratory of Human Development at Harvard University. Each cohort tried the latest computer programs. Richard Longabaugh, in particular, devoted hours to the analyses and published several papers on a theory of social interaction (1963, 1966). His analysis of the interacts in terms of exchange transaction was influenced by Leary (1957), Homans (1961), Thibault\(^6\) and Kelley (1959) and added clarity to our thinking. In 1975, we finally called a halt to the analyses and published *Children of Six Cultures: A Psycho-Cultural Analysis* (Whiting and Whiting 1975).

By the time the volume appeared we had profited by its findings and moved into an analysis of dyadic interaction. In *Children of Six Cultures* the majority of our findings were based on scores derived from the sum of the proportion of 12 types of social behavior of girls and boys of two age groups, 3 to 6 and 7 to 10, regardless of the sex and age of the persons with whom they were interacting. For example, we computed the number of times a child sought help or emotional support from children and adults and divided it by the total number of social interactions of the given child to derive the child’s proportion score of seeking help. Similarly we computed his or her score on seeking attention, seeking dominance, suggesting responsibly, offering support, offering help, acting sociably, touching, reprimanding, horseplay, assaulting, and symbolic aggression. These 12 behaviors were combined into six major types of social behaviors (intimate-dependent, nurturant, dominant-dependent, aggressive, sociable, and prosocial), and these types of social behavior were related to sex, age, societal complexity, and household structure.

Of particular importance for our future research, however, were our initial attempts to assess the effect of the status of the person with whom the child interacted (Whiting and Whiting 1975: chapters 7–8). The focal question was the extent to which one could predict the behavior of a child if one knew the age, sex and kin relation of the adult or child with whom he or she was interacting. Our analysis indicated, for example, that in all the societies, infants, peers, and adults elicited a high proportion of discrete types of social behavior from children 3 to 10 years of age. In particular, interacting with infants elicited a higher proportion of nurturance, interacting with

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\(^6\) It should be noted that John Thibault was a member of the 1954 conference and his influence was evident at that period as well as during the year both he and John Whiting were Fellows at the Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford.
peers a higher proportion of dominant aggression, and interacting with parents elicited a higher proportion of intimate-dependent behavior (Whiting and Whiting 1975: Table 31, p. 158, and Table 33, p. 166).

These findings focused our attention of the status of both the actor and the person with whom he or she was interacting and suggested that there was a likelihood that individuals who spent time interacting with specific classes of alters who elicited characteristic types of behavior would bring this experience to their behavior in other types of dyads. We made a preliminary attempt to assess the generalization (transfer) of types of social behavior from one responder to another by computing correlations of the scores among three classes of alters—infants, children, and adults. The results were encouraging.

At the time we were working on this analysis, Mischel published Personality and Assessment (1968), in which he concluded that the evidence for personality traits was very tenuous, that in the last analysis social behavior was contextual and varied from one setting to another.7

D'Andrade (1965) also called into question the validity of personality concepts; he demonstrated that personality traits were cognitive constructs used by individuals to characterize the behavior of others and that as such they reflected cultural systems of attribution rather than actual behavior.

Shweder's research (1972) corroborated Mischel's and D'Andrade's. In a recent article in Ethos (1979), Shweder presented the findings of the Six Culture Study as evidence of the contextual nature of social behavior. He argues that the findings on generalization reported in Children of Six Cultures are unconvincing, the correlations low and significant in only 5 of the 12 computations. He fails to take into consideration, however, the strength of the class of alters in eliciting specific behaviors. Since the effect of alters on ego's choice of behavior accounts for an average of 26% of the variance with as much as 43% of the variance for intimate-dependent behavior, 25% for nurturant behavior, 25% for aggressive behavior, and 23–31% for sociable behavior, it seems to us that

7 Mischel has taken a more moderate position in his latest works, one more compatible with our theory.
these results are about what might be expected and indicate that generalization across categories of alters does indeed occur.

Lawrence Baldwin and Michael Burton later refined the dyadic analysis by clustering and multidimensional scaling taking into account the relative age of the actors and targets, but their work was after the volume had been drafted and a moratorium seemed essential if we were ever to publish. It should be noted that the analysis of over 9,000 interacts would not have been possible without the aid of computers.

Of particular importance to the confirmation of our theory that patterns of interpersonal behavior generalized across alters was a study conducted by Carol Ember in Kenya (1973).\(^8\) Instigated by the finding of the Six Culture Study that infants elicited nurturance, she designed a study to test the extent to which extended time spent caring for infants predisposed children to be more nurturant than their peers to other individuals. It happened that due to a skewed ratio of male to female births in the age cohort assigned to care for infants in the community of Oyugis where she was doing research, there were a sufficient number of male child nurses to make it possible to compare their behavior with that of their male peers who were not child nurses and with the behavior of female children of the same age. (Infant care was preferentially assigned to girls if there was one available of the appropriate age.) She observed the sample children when they were not caring for infants. Her findings indicated that the boys who were child nurses were more nurturant than their male peers to individuals who were not infants.

With this background, students and colleagues embarked on new studies of social behavior in other parts of the world using similar techniques of observing and recording interacts. The database on file at the Laboratory of Human Development now includes 10 new samples\(^9\) that lend themselves to comparison along similar dimensions. These have been incorporated in a new cross-cultural study financed, as in the case of the original Six Culture Study, by the Ford Foundation (B. Whiting et al. 1977, n.d.).

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\(^8\) This important research was unfortunately omitted in Shweder's article.

\(^9\) Susan Abbott (Kikuyu, Kenya); Elinor Ames (Jamshedpur, India); Gerald Erchak (Kpelle, Liberia); Sara Harkness (Kipsigis, Kenya); Susan Seymour (Bhubaneswar, India); Maxine Schoggen (Tennessee, U.S.A.); Charles Super (Kipsigis, Kenya); Thomas Weisner (Baluya, Kenya); Beatrice Whiting (Kikuyu, Kenya). See also Patricia Draper and Sara Nerlove for other samples.
This is a study of sex differences of 21 types of social behavior of girls and boys between the age of 2 to 10 based on the analysis of norms in interpersonal behavior within dyad types as observed in naturally occurring settings. Thus we compare the social behavior of mothers to sons, mothers to daughters, girls/boys to infants, girls/boys to adjacent same-sex or cross-sex siblings, older siblings and same-sex or cross-sex peers, and so forth. We identify the similarities and differences of the proportion of social behavior within these dyad types across cultures. In order to make comparisons between cultures we have of necessity looked at social behavior as it changes with age. Each dyad is identified by the age, sex, and kinship of both the actor and the responder.

On the basis of these three research projects—the Six Culture Study, Carol Ember's work, and the larger cross-culture study of sex difference—we have developed a theory of the development of mundane social behavior that stresses the importance of environmental factors, in particular the age and sex of the company a person keeps. This theory says that patterns of interpersonal behavior are developed in the settings that one frequents and that the most important characteristics of a setting are the cast of characters who occupy the set, in particular the age and sex of these characters. The settings one frequents are in turn related to the activities that occupy males and females of various ages in the normal course of living, activities that are determined by the economic pursuits and social structure and organization variables. These most frequented settings have specific categories of individuals that may be classified by age, sex, kinship, and relative status. Our analysis reveals that the age and sex of the person with whom one interacts has a massive effect on social behavior. It further reveals that different classes of individuals as defined by sex, age, and kinship status spend significantly different proportions of time interacting with adults, infants, peers, and older and younger children.

Our theory also hypothesizes that the habits of interpersonal behavior that one learns and practices in the most frequented settings may be overlearned and may generalize (transfer) to other settings and to other statuses of individuals. These transferred patterns may or may not be appropriate to these new settings and can conceivably lead to maladaptive social behavior.

In the normal course of living, in as much as the settings one fre-
quents change as one grows older and moves from childhood to adolescence to adulthood and old age, a person must be able to learn new behaviors especially if the changes in his or her life-style involve interaction with different categories of individuals or are in settings that are focused around new activities, settings with different standing rules of behavior.

Each setting is characterized by an activity in progress, a physically defined space, a characteristic group of people, and norms of behavior—the blueprint for propriety in this setting. Thus a child moving from the classroom to the playground interacts with adults and peers in a different manner. The standing rules for these settings do not prescribe the same type of social interaction. A mature individual may learn setting-specific patterns of behavior, but his or her dyadic patterns are influenced by previous experience and habits. His or her perceptions of the responses of people in the new setting may be blinded by expectations carried over from the old frequented setting.

The evidence for transference comes from many sources. As naive psychologists we have noted the professor who continues to profess when returning home in the evening or the mother who nurtures adult guests as if they were small children. A similar transfer of inappropriate behavior from the home setting to the school has been documented by researchers in a study of the adjustment of Hawaiian children to school (Gallimore and Howard 1968; Howard 1974).10 Children growing up in homes where they are taught not to initiate to adults do not have the interpersonal behavior patterns expected of children in classrooms designed by middle-class American educators. Their behavior is not attuned to the expectancies for teacher-student relations. Further documentation of the necessity for correcting for the transfer of inappropriate patterns of interaction from frequented settings comes from the work of sociolinguists who have studied the change in styles of communication that a child must learn to function successfully in new settings (Cook-Gumperz 1975; Ervin-Tripp 1973, 1976; Hollos 1977, 1978; Labov 1973).

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10 Here we see yet another disagreement with Shweder's article (1979), a disagreement that results from a conflict of values concerning the nature of evidence. One or two laboratory experiments that attempt to simulate real life conditions do not convince me, as they seem to convince Shweder, that there is no generalization across similar classes of individuals. Transference in the analytic situation, as well as free association revealing the transfer of feelings and behavioral expectations, is continually documented in clinical case material.
Psychotherapists are concerned with alerting their patients to unrealistic behavior developed in early experience with parents or siblings that they transfer to adults and peers in the settings of adulthood with the expectancy that these people will enter into a similar choreography of dyadic interaction. There is ample clinical evidence that individual's behavioral expectancies of new respondents result from a projection onto them of emotional, cognitive, and social behavior profiles of significant others in their early life (Miller and Dollard 1950). It should be noted that with maturity most individuals learn new, appropriate forms of social interaction and that our theory does not expect behavioral profiles to remain stable throughout the life course. We should not look alone to early childhood for patterns of behavior that may be transferred to new settings. Consider, for example, the hours individuals spend in educational institutions in the company of peers or in the work place with its special rules of status relationships. We should ask if habits of interpersonal behavior learned in these settings transfer to familiar and other dyads.

The ability to label responders correctly, predict their behavior, and judge their intentions increases with age. The child's ability to learn to discriminate by the characteristics of alters is illustrated by the development of their techniques of persuasion. In a study (Lubin 1978; Lubin and Whiting 1977) based on data collected by the author on the social behavior of Kikuyu children in the village of Ngeca in Kenya (J. Whiting, B. Whiting, and Herzog n.d.), David Lubin traces the age changes in children's reaction to non-compliance of their child companions. Children in the 2 to 3-year-old age class repeated their mands (as defined in the transcultural code, mands are attempts by one individual to change the behavior of another; cf. B. Whiting 1968). With age, children begin to change their strategies, trying different techniques of persuasion depending on the relative age and status of the person they are trying to influence. Thus a child would try a submissive technique, for example, begging or pleading, with an older child or a child with more status—in Kikuyu society, a male child would use a more dominant mode with a younger child and a more aggressive mode with a child near his own age. More detailed analysis suggests that the choice of techniques of persuasion will also vary depending on who else is present on the set and the standing rules specifying ap-
appropriate behavior. Thus a child learns to respond to contextual cues.

Relevant here is the research of Kohlberg (1969) and of Selman (1976) on the maturing child’s ability to take the role of another. Our theory would stress the importance of the interaction of experience in new settings with neurological maturation. The studies of role-taking ability and attribution in young children suggests that they will not be cognitively mature enough to make all the discriminations required in new settings. It would be interesting to observe, however, if their behavior changes before or coterminous with their verbal responses in test situations.

In our model the history, physical environment, cultural traditions, and maintenance systems of a society prescribe the settings that an individual frequents and define, with the symbolic systems, the cast of characters, activities, and standing rules of the setting. The individual as a human being with biological needs and drives, cognitive capacities, and habits of thought and action learned in previous experiences enters these settings and adapts with various degrees of success.

Some cultures require that individuals learn to behave in a comparatively small number of discrete types of settings. Others require the individual to frequent many. In some cultures there are abrupt changes during the life course, in others more comfortable and predictable continuities. Some cultures celebrate the transitions in such a way as to aid the individual, specifying the changes in the standing rules and the blueprint for propriety. Initiation rituals announce to both the participants and the society as a whole the prerequisites of the new status and the adjustments to be made in interpersonal behavior, often in line with new rules of respect, deference, or avoidance, new regulations for cross-sex interaction, or new prosocial responsibilities. Rituals at the onset of adolescence have been most frequently described. In some there are extensive periods allotted to this training.

The maintenance and symbolic systems and the map of the settings they provide the individual during the life course must be synchronized with an individual’s needs and drives. The structure and organization of the society must meet the imperatives for survival but must also ensure psychological health for the majority of its members (Murdock 1949; Malinowski 1960; also the discussion of social imperatives, Goldschmidt 1959).
In our model there are some axiomatic assumptions about these universal requirements for psychological well-being that have emerged from our study of social behavior. We assume that an individual has both innate biological needs and derived motives or drives (what we call desires). There is less disagreement about universal biological needs than about motives or drives. As Roger Brown (Brown and Herrnstein 1975) states, theories of motivation are not noted for their scientific evidence; however, since they influence our strategies for defining the goals of social behavior to be observed, they should be made explicit.

We assume that all human beings seek responses from other individuals and from the physical environment. Robert White has described the motive for effectance or competence (1959), others the desire for mastery (cf. Brown and Herrnstein 1975:163–198 for a summary). These motives may well be derived from a more basic need for stimulation. Our label for these motives is the desire for responsiveness from the environment. A second motive or drive, also perhaps a need,\(^{11}\) is the desire for predictability. In interaction with the social environment an individual learns to expect certain responsive reactions on the part of alters, what Mischel calls behavioral expectancies (1978).\(^{12}\) Related to this desire for predictability is both the desire to control and curiosity, the latter a response to unexpected responses from others or novel occurrences in the physical environment.

We also assume that every individual seeks reassurance and physical or verbal comfort when frightened or anxious; that every individual desires what Maslow calls love (1954, 1968), here defined as the desire for physical contact (not necessarily as escape from fright), emotional comfort, support and approval, and with maturity, sexual responsiveness from an alter. Some of these responses from the social environment are fundamental to an individual's self-esteem, the desire for which is assumed to be universal. At various times an individual also desires autonomy, freedom to explore and freedom from interaction with others.

We assume that individuals have emotions such as anger and fear that are evoked by the frustration of these desires or from the con-

\(^{11}\) We use the concept of need for those material and psychological goods that are necessary for maintaining the life of an individual.

\(^{12}\) See also Robert Cairns (1979) for a discussion of similar concepts.
Conflict that may ensue when the attainment of one goal results in the loss of another. Overt expression of these emotions can be observed in mundane behavior but where the conflict and anxiety is great these emotions will be repressed and emerge in defensive and ritualistic behavior.

Interpersonal behavior must reconcile individual needs and desires to the social imperatives as they are met by the setting-specifications of the society. Within the overall framework of the settings that an individual frequents during the life course he or she seeks to satisfy his or her individual desires. Developing strategies to satisfy these personal goals within the cultural context of the settings requires what has been called coping behavior.

We view interpersonal behavior as transactions between individuals in which there are exchanges of resources that are relevant to these desires (B. Whiting 1968). Resources here are defined as what ego desires from an alter. It includes satisfaction of all the desires we have outlined and includes goods, services, affection, comfort, the expression of anger and discomfort in those one wishes to hurt, and so on. In the transactions individuals seek and offer resources. The seeking and offering is sometimes for the benefit of ego, sometimes in response to the perceived needs and desires or request of others, and sometimes in response to what ego considers to be congruent with the requirements of group living—that is, in accord with the cultural blueprints for propriety in the context of the setting in which the individuals are interacting.

Many researchers have developed codes for recording interpersonal behavior. Although they vary in level of abstraction, they are remarkably similar in basic content. The greatest controversy has centered on the issue of whether or not the observer and coder should attempt to judge the intention of the actor, that is, attempt to identify the goal of an observed act. The human ethologists eschew judgements of intent and restrict their observations almost exclusively to body language, the manipulation of interpersonal space, and the coding of activities such as work, play, and ritual. They have had little experience with the interpretation of verbal behavior. Some linguists, on the other hand, have tended to become engrossed in the analysis of form, a limitation that Sapir (1931) noted and that the sociolinguists are correcting as they turn their attention to understanding the social meaning of utterances.

In our own work we have focused on what we call manding
behavior, attempts of one individual to change the behavior of an alter. We assume that the individual who mands has an intention (goal) and that his or her intentions may be classified according to the type of response he or she seeks to elicit from an alter. It is further assumed that a mand involves an exchange of resources and that the beneficiary of the exchange may be the mander (ego), the manded (alter), or some other alter or group of alters. Thus each mand is classified with respect to resources and beneficiaries.

The resources include instrumental help, comfort, food, material goods, information, attention, privileges, permission, control, physical pain, psychological pain (insults, derogation, annoyance), friendship, social participation, cooperation, competition, services, and compliance to group norms.

Mands are delivered in a variety of styles. Styles vary with age, and preference for style varies among individuals, families, and societies.

The receiver of a mand may comply or consciously not comply. There are a variety of styles of compliance and noncompliance. When a mander does not succeed in reaching his or her goal, the mander may give up the set and renounce the goal or may try again to reach the goal (remand) using the same or a different style. As mentioned above, with age, he or she may develop a variety of strategies for reaching the goal. Strategy, by definition entails conscious planning and the coordination of a set of acts with the same or differing styles focused on attaining a specific goal.

It is assumed that in the majority of instances members of a society must be able to judge the intentions of the alters with whom they interact. The ability to interact with other individuals depends on the use of a system of symbols that are understood by the members of the social group who share language, beliefs, values, and rules of behavior. The symbolic systems include language with all the nuances of style, gestures, postures, and facial expressions. It is assumed that a normal individual learns the language of social interaction as he or she matures and is socialized into his or her native social group. This being the case, the observer and judge of intention must be a member of the same cultural group. We have even speculated that he or she should be as close of an age as possible since there are styles of interaction and instigational cues that vary with age. In collaboration with a researcher who is oriented to the transcultural code of behavior, sequences of interaction as recorded
by the observer can be translated into the code with his or her assistance.

It is worth noting here that in cross-cultural research problems of validity seem more important than those of a reliability. In field situation it is often difficult to find a sufficient number of research assistants to make it possible to have a large sample of simultaneous observations. It is difficult enough for one observer to accustom a family to his or her presence; introducing two people or a series of observers is a more difficult task requiring a longer preliminary period for the observers to become accepted as part of the noninteractive environment.

Checks on validity can be made by asking subjects how they interpreted both their own behavior and that of the alters. This can be facilitated by the use of videotape (Erickson 1977).

Although the maintenance and symbolic systems of a society require that an individual frequent some settings, there are parameters of autonomy, choices that are possible between settings or between the individuals in the setting that one can and may engage in interaction. It is in these choices that we may identify characteristics of the individual that can be called personality dispositions. Thus he or she may seek the company of infants and enjoy the simple sociability and responsiveness of the interaction and the nurturant behavior that is elicited, or the company of peers with its more challenging sociability and dominance struggles, or the company of adults who offer support and attention.

Some settings are restrictive and do not afford the individual much choice. The classroom is certainly one such setting and our categories of manding behavior have never been found to be useful in this setting. Settings that are focused on work or training do not usually afford the individual with as much choice as those focused on leisure activities but even these settings are constrained by ecological and cultural imperatives. One cannot engage in challenging competitive interaction, for example, if there is no one who has similar skills. So we will not expect games of skill if these peers are not available. Children who grow up in isolated nuclear homesteads, in nomadic bands (Draper 1976), or even in large extended or polygynous compounds may not have appropriate opponents; in sharp contrast is the child attending an age-graded school. Our theory would predict that children who attend school or live in nucleated villages, towns, or cities, where they frequent set-
tions that allow for participation with children who have similar skills, will be more competitive in their dyadic interaction (Madsen 1971; Madsen and Shapira 1970; Whiting and Whiting 1975; Hollos 1980; and Seymour 1979).

Our theory has been particularly useful in accounting for many of the sex differences that have been reported in the literature. The higher proportion of responsive nurturance observed in the behavior of girls to all familiar alters reflects a universal trend for girls to interact with infants more frequently than do boys (Whiting and Edwards 1978; B. Whiting et al. 1977, n.d.; Edwards and Whiting 1979). Whether this is primarily at the dictate of adults or by choice remains to be studied. Similarly many of the age changes that have been reported in the literature on child development may be the result of frequenting new settings as well as gaining new physical and cognitive skills.

The power of parents and other agents of socialization is in their assignment of children to specific settings. Whether it is caring for an infant sibling, working around the house in the company of adult females, working on the farm with adults and siblings, playing outside with neighborhood children, hunting with adult males, or attending school with age mates, the daily assignment of a child to one or another of these settings has important consequences on the development of habits of interpersonal behavior, consequences that may not be recognized by the socializers who make the assignments.

Our model for the study of dyadic interaction makes it possible to scrutinize the effects of different types of means of production on the assignment of individuals to settings and associated patterns of social behavior. The activities that characterize work settings can be analyzed in detail, as can the standing rules of behavior and the possible types of social interaction. Kohn (1977) and his colleagues’ dimensions for describing the characteristics of a work place are useful in alerting us to important socializing aspects of these settings.

We assume throughout that comparisons of dyadic interaction are possible across cultures and that just as it is possible on a high level of abstraction to develop a transcultural code of social behavior, it is also feasible to develop a transcultural code for types of settings, described in terms of the number, age, sex, and status of relation of the individuals who frequent the setting and the characteristics of the activities that customarily take place, with
associated patterns of frequently occurring types of interpersonal behavior.

Whether there are also predictable beliefs and values and standing rules of behavior associated with types of settings and frequently occurring types of dyadic interaction has yet to be explored. Our analysis of what LeVine (1975) has labeled parental goals suggests that hierarchies of values may be shared by societies in which parents and children frequent similar settings. Initial findings reported in Children of Six Cultures (Whiting and Whiting 1975; see also B. Whiting 1971) indicate that there are parental values associated with maternal and child work settings. Thus a working mother who delegates important chores to a child values obedience and responsibility. In constrast, mothers who do not work outside the home and are bringing up young children in small isolated nuclear families value self-reliance. Perhaps, on the basis of detailed analysis of the patterns of the activities and behavior associated with settings, we will be able to predict hierarchies of the culturally defined value of personal goals and the styles of attaining them (cf. J. Whiting et al. 1966).

SUMMARY

1. A distinction should be made between mundane social behavior and defensive behavior. The learning of the former takes place in the everyday settings that individuals frequent during the life course. Defensive behavior is developed in coping with conflict between an individual's desires and the rules for propriety enforced by the members of a society or by the conflict between desires.

2. Mundane social behavior is shaped in large part by intrinsic reinforcement and trial and error.

3. The power of parents and other socializing agents to mold social behavior thus lies more in their role in the assignment of children to settings than in their role in providing direct tuition and reward and punishment.

4. There is a universal and perhaps innate tendency for certain social behaviors to be elicited by certain alters. Thus, the power of settings is in the cast of characters who frequent the settings.

5. Habits of social interaction—interpersonal behavior—are developed in the settings that are most frequented. These habits
change over the life course as there are changes in settings one fre-
quents.

6. To be explored is the degree to which the social habits
developed in frequented settings transfer to other settings and from
one class of alters to another.

7. To be explored is the possibility of transcultural measures of
personality dispositions that are based on
a. the hierarchy of social behaviors developed in the most fre-
cently occurring settings;
b. the ability of members of a society to discriminate appropri-
ately between alters and settings and to adapt to new settings;
c. the type of settings individuals choose to frequent when there
is freedom to choose;
d. the choice of alters with whom to interact when there is free-
dom to choose.

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