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Child-Rearing Practices in the Cebuano Extended Family

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Introduction

Filipino society is undergoing a shift from a traditional to a transitional community. Although still largely rural in orientation and in locale, the Filipino family is heading towards urbanization. But while the effects of change are inevitable and sometimes undesirable, some traditional patterns and practices have remained. Time-honored observances continue to identify and to preserve Filipino indigenous culture even while new practices absorbed through education and easier means of communication are finding their way into Filipino life, producing a distinctive blend which may yet characterize the Filipino of tomorrow. The enculturation process is going on.

Of all situational determinants that have momentous effects on personality formation, none are more clear-cut and certain than those that derive from participation in particular family units.¹ It is commonly accepted that family life is a situational determinant par excellence.

¹ Franz Alexander, "Educative Influence of Personality Factors in the Environment," *Personality in Nature Society, and Culture*, eds. Kluckhohn, Murray, Schneider (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), p. 421.

The great interest of psychoanalysis and wider fields of personality research in this primary social unit is premised on the relation between personality formation and the child's early intimate relationships in his own particular family. Parental attitudes, authority patterns, child-rearing practices, composition and structure of families, number, sex and sequence of children, ethno-regional differences, socio-economic stratification, profession or occupation of parents, — are but few of the manifold variations among families within every particular society or culture.

Purpose of the Study

This paper is written with the realization of the scantiness of material on Filipino family sociology and on Filipino child psychology. The field is ripe for investigation and promises to be of value to educators and social scientists. Dr. Guthrie's monograph, *The Filipino Child and Philippine Society*, is an effort to view the Filipino child in his own setting, but it succeeds only partially because of the natural limitations of time and the lack of

² George M. Guthrie, *The Filipino Child and Philippine Society* (Manila: Philippine Normal College Press, 1961).

contact with Philippine society. Guthrie frankly admits that his knowledge of Philippine conditions was limited and therefore, "certain misinterpretations may have entered."³ He was likewise aware of another difficulty, — the heterogeneity of Philippine society, and of the low reliability of the use of a foreign instrument (The Parental Attitude Research Inventory by Earl S. Schaefer and Richard Q. Bell). Moreover, his findings were based mainly on data gathered around the Manila area, which can hardly be considered a cross-section of the country.

This study does not attempt to arrive at a more conclusive picture. Rather, it is a pioneering effort to furnish more authoritative data on actual child-rearing practices in Cebu and the neighboring provinces and to stimulate similar researches in different sectors of the country.

If an individual's early experiences exert a lasting effect upon his personality, and if similar experiences tend to produce similar personality configurations, then the following questions may be posed: Can Filipino child-rearing practices explain the Filipino's personality structure and Filipino national character? Do they throw light on Filipino characteristic traits of *amor proprio*, *utang-na-loob*, close associational ties, etc.?

Related Studies

Recent studies of personality in nature, society, and culture; social psychology, psychology, and anthropology, have drawn the focus of interest on the effects and on the relationship of child-rearing practices to character formation, personality development, behavior of children, and the origin of conflicts and abnormality. Anthropologists find a relation between child-rearing methods of nursing, weaning, and toilet training

among primitive tribes and the adult personal characteristics of their community.

Dr. Frieda Goldman-Eisler's "*Breastfeeding and Character Formation*"⁴ upholds the genetic view of the etiology of human behavior and complements results obtained in different fields of behavior study. Her investigations attempt to show the influence of breast feeding on character formation. A significant correlation exists between early weaning and oral pessimism ($r = .27$), late weaning and oral optimism ($r = .31$), but the size of the correlation shows that other factors which account for these character traits to a greater extent, await investigation. Or, she suggests, the effects of the weaning trauma may be only a symptomatic manifestation of more fundamental factors—maternal attitude, constitution of the child, mother-child interaction.

Similar studies demonstrate the impact of the child's early emotional experiences within his own family on his personality. Basic emotional patterns are universal, but there are variations from culture to culture, from family to family. Margaret A. Ribble's work with infants, "Infantile Experience in Relation to Personality Development,"⁵ shows the relationship between nursing experience and psychological reactions of anxiety and depression in the infant. She concludes that there is an innate need in the infant for contact with the mother. Hypotheses presented by Ribble,

⁴ Frieda Goldman-Eisler, "Breastfeeding and Society, and Culture," ed. Kluckhohn, Murray, Character Formation," *Personality in Nature*, Schneider (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), pp. 147-84.

⁵ Margaret A. Ribble, "Infantile Experience in Relation to Personality Development," *Personality and Behavior Disorders*, ed. J. McV. Hunt (New York: Ronald Press, 1944), II, 621-25.

³ *Ibid.*, "Preface," p. iv.

Glover,⁶ and Abraham,⁷ all point out the traumatic effect of too early weaning on character-formation. Abraham holds that "overlong" weaning produces the same effects as too early weaning.

Weaning has been defined by psychoanalysts as a frustration imposed on the child from the outer world and assumed to have a traumatic impact. Weaning, which at first glance, seems to be in itself a mere physical habit to enable the infant to shift from sucking liquid food to mastication of solids and to develop proper eating habits for nutritional needs, really provides ample opportunity for character-formation, since it involves effort of the will and great psychological skill on the part of the parent.

Ribble feels that if sucking has been satisfactory up to the *fourth month* of life, weaning does not present problems, and in fact becomes spontaneous. After a sucking period of four months, under normal conditions, weaning would meet with a more favorable instinctual situation than weaning before that period.

Hence, "too early" weaning is taken to mean weaning before the fourth month, "late" weaning, from five to eight months, (general medical opinion fixes the optimum period of sucking to not earlier than 9 months) and "overlong" weaning means beyond the 9th month. Character traits seem to group themselves into two antithetical clusters: late weaning (5 to 8 months) = Optimism (exocathexis, nurturance, sociability, ambition, change deliberation); too early weaning and overlong wean-

ing = Pessimism (endocathexis, passivity, aloofness, autonomy, oral aggression, guilt, dependence, conservatism).

Procedure and Results of Investigation

Materials presented herein have been gathered mainly from personal experience and direct observation when the writer traveled around the towns and barrios of Cebu for her study on marriage customs. To corroborate her findings and to cover a wider area, she conducted inquiries about prevailing child-rearing practices from among 111 subjects, all graduate school students of Education in the Universities of San Carlos and of the Visayas, attending courses in Family Life Situations, Character Education, and Philippine Society. The subjects who answered questions and questionnaires were parents. They were made to give information on their own child-rearing practices, with special attention given to feeding and weaning, bladder control and toilet training, and sleeping habits of their children who were less than three years of age.

Cebu has been chosen by this writer as her special field of research not only for reasons of convenience but also because this province occupies a focal point in the Philippine archipelago. Its strategic location contributes to diffusion and inter-cultural exchange. Cebuano, with a few alterations, is spoken all around the neighboring provinces,—Bohol, Eastern Negros, Western Leyte, Romblon, Masbate, northern Mindanao, and parts of southern Mindanao,—which partly explains the sharing of similar beliefs, attitudes, and practices.

From the data gathered, the following observations are made:

⁶E. Glover, "Notes on Oral Character-Formation," *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, VI (1925), 131-53.

⁷K. Abraham, "The Influence of Oral Eroticism on Character-Formation," *Selected Papers* (London: Hogarth Press, 1942).

A. Feeding and Weaning

1) Findings from the UV Group (69 subjects)

a) Thirty-two out of sixty-nine subjects (about 46%) breast-fed their babies; fifteen subjects (22%) used artificial feeding; twenty-two (32%) resorted to mixed feeding. Therefore, a total of 54 mothers (78%) actually fed their babies.

b) Fifty-four mothers (78%) followed a certain schedule; the rest fed the baby at any time, especially when it cried.

c) Fifty-one (about 74%) weaned their babies from the ages of 4 months to 2 yrs. and 5 mos., with median age of 1 yr. and a half. Five (about 7%) weaned early (4 to 8 months). Eighteen (about 26%) had not yet weaned their babies, ages varying from 6 mos. to 2 years, median age of 1 year and 3 months.

d) Too early weaning does not occur; "overlong" weaning is common.

2) From the USC Group (42 subjects)

a) Nine out of forty-two, or about 22% of mothers breast-fed their babies; sixteen (38%) used artificial feeding; seventeen (40%), mixed feeding; 62% actually fed their babies.

b) Sixteen (38%) scheduled their feedings; twenty-six (62%) did not schedule.

c) Thirty-two of forty-two had weaned their babies, ten had

not. Early weaning (earlier than 4 mos.) was practised by only four (almost 10%); six (14%) weaned their babies late, *i.e.*, from 4 mos. to 8 mos.; thirty-two (76%) practised "overlong" weaning. Median weaning age was 1 year.

d) Too early weaning is rare; overlong weaning is common.

3) Summary of both Groups

a) About 37% breast-fed their babies; 28% used artificial feeding; 35% used mixed feeding; a total of 72% actually fed their babies.

b) Sixty three per cent followed a feeding schedule; 37% did not.

c) Only about 4% weaned their babies too early; 10% weaned their babies late; 51% practised "overlong" feeding; 35% had not yet weaned their babies, ages ranging from 6 mos. to 2 years.

e) The most popular method used in weaning was placing something bitter or hot, *panyawan* (*Tinospora romphii* Linn.), ginger (*luy-a*), or red pepper (*siling kolikot*) on the mother's nipple. A good number (20%) separated the baby from the mother for a couple of nights, during which the grandmother, or an aunt, or an elder sister, or sometimes even the father took care of the baby and gave it milk from a glass or bottle. This was an ordeal to mother and child, and to the whole family who likewise

lost some nights of sleep and whose members took turns in pacifying the baby.

B. Bladder Control and Toilet Training

(2 Groups combined)

- a) About 93% taught their children regular bladder control beginning as early as the baby's first month to as late as 2½ years, the median age being 6 months. Infants finally acquired the proper habits at ages of 4 mos. to 3 years, the median age being 1 year.
- b) Toilet Training began as early as a month to as late as a year, the median age being 5 months.

C. Sleeping Habits (both Groups combined)

- a) Seventy four per cent of the parents put their babies to sleep at regular intervals.
- b) The most common methods used were patting the child (*pik-pik*), rocking the child in a cradle or hammock, singing to it while carrying it. Forty-one per cent made the baby sleep by patting it or rocking it in a cradle or hammock; 19% carried the baby in their arms and sang to it. The others placed big pillows on both sides of the baby to simulate the mother's arms. For older children, telling stories was the most common way.
- c) In 60% of the cases, the baby slept with the parents, grandparents, siblings, or maids in

the same room, or with some relative on the same bed. Forty per cent of the babies were made to sleep alone, either in the cradle or hammock, or in a crib. Two cases reported the whole family sleeping together on a mat.

- d) The elder sister, aunt, grandmother, or other relatives took over the task of putting the baby to sleep, especially when the baby was being weaned from the mother, to minimize contact with her and to lessen the weaning trauma.

Comments, Conclusions and Implications

- 1) Since this investigation was conducted among graduate school students in two universities of Cebu City, it may be safely assumed that the findings presented herein are representative of the educated middle class of parents not only from Cebu but from the near-by provinces: a fine admixture of rural-urban elements.
- 2) This paper has limited itself to a few child-rearing practices having to do with the child's physical growth and development. The research actually covered other areas: emotional control, discipline, sex education.
- 3) No claim is made to interpret the findings but it seems a highly tenable hypothesis to trace some relation between these child-rearing practices and Filipino psychology and personality structure. Child-rearing practices are part of the mores of a society,⁸ which in turn help shape the individual's personality. This writer

⁸ Guthrie, p. 6.

is of course aware of the danger of generalizations.

4) Child-rearing customs reveal characteristics of Cebuano family life and Filipino life in general—over-protectiveness, close cooperation, a far-reaching kinship system,⁹ hospitality, cohesiveness, intimacy, and Filipino behavior, patterns. Filipino children in general are exposed to a wide family circle in their upbringing. Many

⁹ Robert B. Fox, "The Family and Society in Rural Philippines," *Area Handbook on the Philippines* (Chicago: Human Relation Area Files, 1956).

are involved with his care and training.

5) Educators, psychologists, social scientists could explore the extensive field of child-rearing practices and carry the study further to behavior patterns and national character. Social change, cultural uplift, educational reforms, and economic improvement would be impossible without an understanding of the Filipino in the natural setting of his family and society. This is not feasible without *insight*, and insight implies *knowledge*.

A Brief Report on Protohistoric Trade Potteries from Burial Sites in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro

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It has been said that, "pottery is the excavator's alphabet of discovery." Because they defy total destruction, potsherds have proven to be the scientific researcher's most frequent index to the chronological setting and cultural context of a people's history. As a consequence of this fact, it is probably now possible to make an accurate chronology of Philippine protohistory from at least the 10th century to the coming of the Spaniards, through trade potteries which have been recovered in numerous archaeological sites in the islands.

Largely through the efforts of one man, Fr. Erwin Thiel, SVD, parish priest of Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro, a scientific study was made possible on hundreds of trade potteries which have been salvaged, and painstakingly recon-

structed from sherds which have been left over from the looting of major archaeological sites in the area by amateur collectors and treasure hunters. A preliminary study has pointed to a chronology of trade contacts with neighboring countries such as China, and later, elsewhere in Southeast Asia over a period of at least six hundred years.

Puerto Galera is the northwestern boundary town of Oriental Mindoro, and is 47 kilometers west of Calapan, the provincial capital of the island. It is characterized by jutting peninsulas, coves and islets, and the principal site from which the bulk of the specimens in the study collection have been recovered is in the sitio of Bayanan, approximately eight kilometers west of the town proper. The second major