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AUTHOR Kreppner, Kurt
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ABSTRACT

The analysis presented here focuses on different problem situations extracted from everyday interactions in which individual developmental changes of the child interfere with well-established interaction patterns of the family. These problem situations require conjoint mastery of two objectives: (a) successful integration of the child into the family system, and (b) adaptation of the interaction patterns of the family to the new abilities and needs of the child. It is hypothesized that the "course" of development of a socializing family can be likened to the process of differentiation, specification, and hierarchical integration of a developing organism, according to Heinz Werner's conception of the "orthogenetic principle," and it is suggested that this process can be confined to a few "critical" situations, over a period of time, in which new problems associated with the development of the child emerge and have to be resolved. Proceeding from Havighurst's conception of developmental tasks, one can view such critical situations in which the family system has to be newly balanced as "socialization tasks." Methodologically, this approach provides a basis for the comparison of families in their management of socialization problems in everyday situations. This approach may also lead to a new way of looking at the interplay between individual and family development. (Author)

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Family and Individual Development: Socializing
a Child within the Family

Kurt Kreppner

Max Planck Institute for Human Development
and Education

Berlin, West Germany

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Abstract

The analysis presented here focuses on different problem situations extracted from everyday interactions in which individual developmental changes of the child interfere with well-established interaction patterns of the family. These problem situations require conjoint mastery of two objectives: (a) successful integration of the child into the family system, and (b) adaptation of the interaction patterns of the family to the new abilities and needs of the child. It is hypothesized that the "course" of development of a socializing family can be likened to the process of differentiation, specification, and hierarchical integration of a developing organism according to Heinz Werner's conception of the "orthogenetic principle", and it is suggested that this process can be confined to a few "critical" situations over a period of time in which new problems associated with the development of the child emerge and have to be resolved. Proceeding from Havighurst's conception of developmental tasks, one can view such critical situations in which the family system has to be newly balanced as "socialization tasks".

Methodologically, this approach provides a basis for the comparison of families in their management of socialization problems in everyday situations. This approach may also lead to a new way of looking at the interplay between individual and family development.

Introduction

In the following contribution two theoretical perspectives will be introduced that might facilitate the handling of some of the conceptual and methodological problems connected with socialization research that tries to combine aspects of family and individual development. The study of developmental processes in context should provide a sounder basis for analyzing both the anatomy of progression during development and to the analysis of the anatomy of reciprocal processes in a specified immediate social milieu--the proximal ecology. This attempt to bring together developmental and family research also entails the effort to shape new conceptions which may help discover dimensions that these still separate fields have in common.

Mutuality in socialization: studying the caregiver-infant dyad

As a description of socialization in early infancy, the mother-infant dyad has become a model with paradigmatic character. The interplay between the individual growth of the child and the sensitivity of the primary caregiver on the one hand, and the reciprocity and mutuality of the adaptation process within the caregiver-infant dyad on the other, has been amply demonstrated (Rheingold, 1969; Sander, 1969; Lewis & Freedle, 1973).

New methodological approaches in early childhood research have revealed a multitude of previously unknown intellectual and social capabilities in very young infants (Escalona, 1973; Lewis & Cherry, 1977;

Trevarthen & Hubley, 1978). The sensitivity of infants for the quality of social relationships has become a major point of interest in particular. During the seventies there was a dramatic shift from looking at children as isolated "developing organism" to looking at them as being part of a so-called "dyadic" relationship with a caregiver, who, of course, in most cases was the mother. Besides this shift, the importance of the emotional relationship between the growing infant and the mother has been strongly emphasized, mainly in the research on the "attachment" phenomenon (Bowlby, 1969, 1973; Sroufe, 1977). Even though these studies began underlining the importance of the mutuality in sending and receiving expressive gestures, paralinguistic utterances, and other such signals between the infant and its caregiver (Bates et al., 1979), and even though a more sophisticated theoretical view on these processes of exchange has been introduced by Arnold Sameroff's (1975) "transactional" model of development, most of the empirical analyses of mother-child interactions used a developmental concept, oriented primarily to the individual. That is, changes in certain patterns of interaction taking place between mother and child were interpreted (Trevarthen, 1977; Stern, 1977) in terms of changes caused by the biological growth of the child at different levels--cognitive, social, or emotional, for example--or by personality traits of mothers--such as the degree of their "sensitivity" (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970).

Development in context: The family as proximal ecology

In the attempt to delineate a course of development in its natural context, there arises the problem of how to overcome the restrictions inherent in the paradigmatic model of mother-child interaction, which can only portray a specific detail of early interpersonal relationships and

can only show a subsystem within the natural context of interpersonal relationships. A more comprehensive picture of the natural context would include the entire family into which the child has been born. The father as a potential caregiver in his own right has won the interest of many researchers (Lamb, 1976; Parke, 1979; Pedersen, 1980), and the sibling as a socializing factor (Lamb, 1978; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982) has also gained considerable attention in recent research. All these studies do look beyond the mother-child interrelationship but still end up describing just another dyadic interaction.

Not only is there a lack of models depicting the handling of the complex interaction patterns of whole families during the developmental course of a child, there also seem to be considerable difficulties in construing theoretical baselines for these depictions, which should comprise the socializing endeavours of the family, and not merely those of mothers, fathers, and siblings, each interacting separately with a single child. Despite the obvious difficulties in establishing a proper model for family socialization, there has been considerable consensus about the fact that the study of the development of an infant in its natural environment should take account of all the complexities involved with an attempt to describe an entire family system. The family as a whole has been assessed as being a very powerful and perhaps "imprinting" agent, at least at the beginning of a child's life, an agent that generates specific modes for emotional and cognitive communication through which the child experiences his or her first models of "social reality" (Hill & Mattissech, 1979; Hill, 1981; Belsky, 1981).

Since Burgess' (1926) conceptualization of the family as a "unity of interacting persons", i.e., an organism with its own structure and rules of inner organization, and that maintains boundaries as protection against the

outside world, the family has been looked upon by many family researchers as a producer of a specific "context" for the developing child (Hess & Handel, 1959; Reiss, 1971a,b; Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1973). The newer developmental concepts have gone further and regard children themselves as socializing agents contributing to a new balance in their "context", not only as products of socialization but as producers, too (Belsky & Tolan, 1981; Lerner, 1982). But so far, there is as yet no unified conceptualization about the kind of dimensions or units that might be used to describe the interplay between family structure and individual development. Being conducted in the field of sociology, family research has used categories that characterize families rather statically in terms of their enduring structural specificities (Haley, 1959; Lidz, 1963; Mishler & Waxler, 1981; Kantor & Lehr, 1977; Klein & Hill, 1979; Reiss, 1981), which makes it difficult to depict the interactional processes within a family that is socializing a child and adapting to his or her changing needs during development. When attempting to link these activities to processes of individual development of the child, one is soon hampered by the lack of concepts and measures encompassing both developmental and structural features of the family as an agent of socialization.

Early infancy within the family: An exploratory study

In order to take a first step in exploring socialization processes in a family where a new child is born, two colleagues and I began a longitudinal study in which we observed 16 families in their homes over two years.¹ Since the study has been described in more detail elsewhere (Kreppner, Paulsen, Schütze, 1981, 1982 a,b), only the main aspects of our approach will be touched upon here. All families had a first child between one and four years of age

¹ Project 'Early childhood socialization within the family', conducted at the Max Planck Institute of Human Development by Kurt Kreppner, Sibylle Paulsen, Yvonne Schütze.

and a

second child just born at the beginning of our study. After the birth of the second child, the families were visited every month during the two year period. We made our observations in unstructured, everyday situations, having one or both parents dealing with one or both children. The main "product" of our study is the store of about 28 hours of videotapes from every family, encompassing two years of family interaction.

As an initial approach to analyzing these "data", we used a hermeneutic approach to describe recurring patterns of family interaction, i.e., events from the observations (videotaped situations) were transcribed and interpreted on the basis of structural and functional aspects of interactions between the family members. To do this we drew on sociological family research, particularly such dimensions as "themes" that were discussed by family members, "strategies" that were pursued during the course of interaction in order to resolve problems emerging within the family, or manoeuvres carried out by single family members to change existing coalitions between the members of the family and to form new ones. Comparisons were made between interaction patterns within a family at different times, and between interaction patterns across families. This combination of idiographical with nomothetical procedures in analyzing everyday interactions helped to sharpen our impression both of the continuities and changes as well as of the similarities and differences that existed in these different contexts during the two year period.

Without going deeper into the many methodological problems we were confronted with, I would rather outline those considerations which in the end helped us to coordinate our dual approach and to overcome some of the problems we encountered while trying to organize the wealth of unstructured material we obtained.

Looking for a heuristic model: Structural change of the family and individual growth of the child as possible points of departure for a unifying analysis

The family's experiences with socializing a new child seem to be shaped by the infant's intrusion into an existing system on the one hand and by that infant's rapid physical and mental growth during the first two years of life on the other, thus creating a shaky, insecure, often changing base for the family's various endeavours to cope with and integrate the new member. A balance just established for handling the sitting and grasping infant is often upset again when he or she begins to crawl, thus triggering a new "round" in the need of mutual adaptation. A similar danger of losing old balances can be seen at the time when language use emerges, which often makes earlier kinds of preverbal communication obsolete and may cause trouble because of the mutual misunderstandings entailed. As the child grows older and learns to use language properly, new problems arise for the family: the child emphasizes his or her own will and strives to establish an identity in order to gain an individual and unique position within the family, distinct from both mother and father as well as from a sibling, if there is one. This developmental step directly creates controversies between the intentions of the child and those of the other family members. For example, what has been described as the "rapprochement crisis" (Mahler et al., 1975) and what has been studied empirically by her only within the frame of the mother-child dyad can also be seen as an indication that the child is resisting the integrating powers of the family system, which often impede individual development. The oft-cited "ambitendency" of the child toward the end of the second year may be an expression of this kind of crisis.

Similarly, just to give another example, what Abelin (1975) has described as the process of "triangulation" regarding the mother-father-child triad and what has been interpreted as the individuation process by which the child is able to see himself or herself as a person with unique qualities, different from both mother and father, can also be interpreted in terms of family development. A struggle that may, in turn, create the conditions that are likely to shift interaction patterns within the family to a new level also indicates a change in the extant interaction patterns of the family system.

Transferring concepts of individual development
to the study of family development

The interpretation of developmental changes presented above are based for the most part on what has been observed for individual children. From a more family-oriented viewpoint, however, these "developmental crises" could apply to the family as a whole, a unit that has its own patterns of interaction and balancing mechanisms. The family would, accordingly, have to undergo a transformation on one hand, yet maintain its "identity" on the other. The expansion of the system by the arrival of a new child and the efforts to cope with his or her developmental progressions might thus be thought of as a developmental process in itself, one that promotes the family to a new state of development.

The following sections will introduce two theoretical perspectives that might help structure the study of such development in context. With the family as the most relevant proximal ecology for a child in early infancy and with the persistent lack of concepts encompassing both individual and family development, it seemed helpful to draw on conceptualizations which try to highlight some basic aspects of development. In order to get a more general idea of the structural implications that the integration

of a new child might have for a family system, it seemed reasonable to refer to a conception that explains some universal principles underlying every developmental process in living organisms. In order to focus on possible crises during the socialization process wherein the family as a whole has to find solutions to problems caused by the existence and demands of a new member, reference was made to a conception that regards the course of development as a chain of achievements in overcoming problems that arise in family life. There are, of course, many conceptualizations for describing developmental processes, but we discuss here only those two that seem most promising for future analyses.

The first of these theoretical perspectives is Heinz Werner's (1948, 1957) concept of "orthogenetic principle" for the description of developmental processes; the second is Robert Havighurst's (1953) concept of "developmental tasks" as a sequence of problems that every human individual encounters during his or her growth. Each of these perspectives will be explicated in terms of what it can contribute to the explanation of family socialization processes.

Though the two concepts start from quite different points,--Werner's from biology and evolution theory, Havighurst's from the learning paradigm and pedagogical considerations,--both focus on the transitional process of development, and, in a way, try to take account of constitutional and contextual factors of development. Both conceptions try to depict the changes that occur during development and to delineate how the growing organism strives for achievement in its attempt to overcome developmental problems. Of special interest is the possibility of taking these conceptions that describe individual developmental processes and transfer them to family development (the family being understood as an "organism" in itself). Accordingly,

the main goal of introducing these two concepts is to find a way to interpret socialization processes within the family as reciprocal events that have implications for all members of the family system. Another goal of introducing them is to help find ways to deal with the still unsolved methodological problem of recognizing what one must focus on while observing everyday interaction within a family.

Differentiation, specification, and hierarchical organization of the family: A basic principle of development

Heinz Werner (1937, 1948, 1957) created a comparative approach for the study of development by emphasizing the "orthogenetic principle"--known from biology and evolution theory as a "heuristic definition" (1957, p. 126), a basic rule dominating growth in every organism--and transferring it to developmental psychology. Accordingly, the notion that there is a process of differentiation, specification, and hierarchical integration within a growing individual has been used to delineate a kind of inner mechanism of organismic development and to throw some light on what appear to be earlier stages of development as they can be found in children in an early developmental state, in cases where development has been stopped by pathological impairment, and in other cultures that, according to Werner, have not reached the "developmental" level of western societies. This "orthogenetic principle" also implies that the direction of development runs from unstructured "global wholes" or from "originally juxtaposed, relatively isolated global units" (1957, p. 131) to differentiated, specified and integrated organisms, i.e., to hierarchically organized and well integrated systems. The actual developmental process, however, may often involve discontinuity or even regression. Having attained a certain level of stability during development, further

progress is only "accomplished through partial return to a genetically earlier, less stable level. One has to regress in order to progress." (1957, p. 139). Progression, thus, does not occur through a simple continuation, starting from the level which has been stabilized during development, but through a process in which the existing balance of the organism is destabilized. This means, on the other side, that the stability which has been achieved at one level should retain a certain degree of flexibility, a "paradoxical stable flexibility" (1957, p. 140). Those apparently regressive movements occur when the organism is trying to cope with new problems that arise either with the unfolding of new capacities, and/or with the emergence of new demands from the environment. According to Werner, for example, the integration of new capacities that emerge during human development--perceiving, locomotor activity ranging from crawling to walking, language acquisition, and the ability to remember objects, for example--may be compared to the emergence of new "organs", which have to be integrated 'in any developing organism and which may thus spur further development. Using this concept, in a family oriented context one may depict the integration of a new child into an existing proximal/ecology, i.e., a family system, by comparing this process to the emergence of a new ability or a new organ within an individual developing organism. By the same token the family that is striving to achieve a new equilibrium while integrating and socializing a new child can be conceptualized as a "developing" organism that is functioning according to the developmental principles of differentiation, specification and hierarchical integration.

Problems arising when trying to study actual "family" development

Reflections on the importance of proximal ecology for individual development go back to Charlotte Bühler (1927), William Stern (1935), and Kurt Lewin (1946), who in different ways emphasized the complexity of interpersonal relationships in the growth of the individual personality. But looking at the uninterrupted stream of everyday interaction, who can say, in Werner's terms, where or when "specification", "differentiation", and "hierarchical integration" occur during development? In terms of family research, in what situations do families abandon "old" balances and try out "new" ones? And when it finally comes to the question of reciprocity in the newer models of the parent-infant relationship, how does the infant "produce" his or her development? Taking the family as the "proximal ecology" that provides a climate of emotional warmth and acceptance, how can one assess the degree of influence that the "emotional context" might exert on developmental processes encompassing both child and family?

Nor are these the only problems that are left unsolved if our proposed approach to the study of family development is based solely upon Werner's concept of the developing organism. There are also methodological questions. First, looking at the interplay between individual development and continuing structures of the family system, for example, what kind of "real life events" might be used as indicators of "critical incidents"--those that reflect such reciprocal processes in development? Second, looking at the family as a developing system in itself, to what extent can descriptive measures of actual interactions between the members be used to describe developmental changes? And third, what kind of situations might properly depict continuity and change in patterns of family interaction? Clearly, there is a need for a tool to help the researcher recognize and interpret the many situations in which parents interact with their children, instruct them directly or indirectly, and receive lessons from their children at the same time.

"Socialization tasks" as a possible tool for describing family development

To overcome at least some of these theoretical and empirical problems of using a longitudinal approach to study family interaction and infant development in everyday settings, it may be expedient to take the notion of "guiding" factors involved in an individual's development and use it when describing families devoted to the job of socializing children. Thus, we have drawn on Havighurst's conception of "developmental tasks." According to Havighurst,

A developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks. (1953, p.2)

Every developmental task has a certain time schedule and three different bases, the first base being constituted by the biological changes of the organism as its organs form, the second base by cultural and social norms and expectations as these are determined by the social system into which the child is being socialized, and the third base by the values of the self and the aspiration of self-actualization and self-realization rooted in the goals and motives of the individual. To illustrate the concept of developmental tasks that arise in childhood, Havighurst cited achievements such as learning "to take solid food," "to walk," "to talk," or "to form simple concepts of social and physical reality" and "to relate oneself emotionally to parents, siblings and other people" (1953, pp. 9-17 passim).

Havighurst's considerations on developmental tasks seem fruitful for our proposed approach as they allow an important parallel to be drawn. Just as there is a set of developmental tasks that the individual living organism must achieve in the course of his or her development, we suggest that there is also a set of socialization tasks the family must achieve in its "course of development". These familial tasks involve the integration of the child, the pro-

cess of adapting to new demands and changing balances. As an expanding system, the family does not cope properly with its tasks if it merely tries to "reestablish" the balance that had existed before the arrival of the new member. It is necessary for the family to adapt to the varying needs of the developing child and to reconcile the differing and changing interests of all the members in the expanded system. Such adjustments might trigger new forces of integration within the family system that may not only induce the family members to differentiate themselves from one another at the same time that they integrate the new member, but may also promote new patterns of interaction and problem solving that, in turn, foster "development" of the family as an interacting system.

When applied to the family as a whole, then, the concept of "socialization tasks" makes it possible to explain familial "development" not merely as a shift from one level to the next in the process of socializing a new child, but as a long process of mutual action and reaction in response to the urges to accomplish these different "socialization tasks." This process may encompass various "phases." For example, a new task may arise and upset the equilibrium. The family might try to cope with that new task by applying old strategies, may repeatedly fail to accomplish it, and may then cast about for new coping-strategies, eventually establishing a new balance. The need for change may bring out capacities of which the family members had been unaware and which, in the end, may push their family system to a new level of functioning and a different way of managing everyday routines.

The conceptualization of "socialization tasks" in empirical research: Two examples

The study of families that are socializing a second child, then, could be conceived of as the search for a series of actions taken by the family

system as a whole in its attempt to accomplish specific "socialization tasks". This conception might eventually make it possible to break the family interaction down into the discrete aspects involved in the attempts of the individual members to deal successfully with these tasks and may help differentiate, specify, and order them more clearly than has been the case in the past.

Structural change and its possible impact on the emergence of socialization tasks: Example 1

From a structural viewpoint, the host of problems confronting a formerly triadic constellation composed of mother, father, and child after the birth of a second child result from the fact that quite different dyadic and triadic constellations can emerge within the family system. In a triad there are potentially three dyadic relationships possible; in a tetrad, i.e., a family comprising four members, six dyadic and four triadic relationships are possible. The tetrad, thus, dramatically enhances the chances for mutual communicative exchange in different constellations. Thus, the father of the expanded family may find that his share of familial responsibility increases because the mother must devote herself to the new family member and because the first child responds to the unfamiliar situation by seeking more attention from the parents. More specifically, the concept of "socialization tasks" may also help the researcher to interpret the parents' individual actions as being part of events contributing to the search for a new balance of the family system. Suppose, for example, that the father frees the mother from a squabble with the older child by proposing a new game, thus allowing the mother to concentrate on, say, feeding the newborn baby. The father's intervention may be seen as an individual act or as his reaction to the disturbance caused by the first child. To take the analysis one step further, that intervention may be seen

as a reaction of the father, to the somewhat helpless mother, who had not been able to attend to both children at the same time. Of course it is all this, but what are the implications for family's socialization processes? This single act by the father might also be interpreted as one embedded in a series of actions which reflect a certain way of resolving problems brought about by the arrival of the second child. Such an act might well suspend established patterns of interaction, and affect the search for a new and more stable equilibrium, in the above example, for instance, by creating two dyads (mother-second child, father-first child) instead of a former triadic constellation (mother-child-child with the father not being involved). This event, then, need not be seen any longer as a chance intervention but can be taken as an act that shows the effort to establish a new balance within the expanded system. Striving for a new balance, the family "demands" a more active father now that there are two children instead of one.

Individual growth of the child as a factor generating socialization tasks: Example 2

Apart from these structural aspects individual growth of the new member may also generate a set of tasks for the family to deal with. During the first two years of life a child runs rapidly through a series of developmental steps and stages that may also change the established balance of the family on different levels.

Motoric development, for example, allows the infant to progress from grasping to sitting, from rotating to crawling, and from standing to toddling to walking. During the sensorimotor stage, there are, according to Piaget, six steps between the first and the eighteenth month in which the infant develops from a primarily reflex-based organism to a human being able to recall objects from memory alone, without seeing them in reality, and

to build a symbolic representation of the world. The child's emotional development is also marked by salient events like attachment, emergence of self, and the differentiation of emotional expression. Where social development is concerned, the most eminent jump seems to be that from primary to secondary intersubjectivity as it has been described by Hubley and Trevarthen (1978).

A review and reassessment of the family system trying to cope with these developmental changes may identify more such "socialization task." When the second child begins to expand his or her range by crawling, for instance, the family members are more aware of the child's presence than before, this might trouble the first child, who could begin to feel more restricted and disturbed in his or her playing activities than was the case prior to that developmental step. The parents, too, may have to readjust as they become more involved in reconciling incipient rivalries between their two children. In short the family itself is being "socialized". Taking the family also as a self-regulating system, one may regard it as a kind of "problem solver" that deals with conflicts more through the common effort of all its members than through the isolated actions for a particular member. (Tallman, 1970, 1971)

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Conclusion

Since past analysis in the field of infant development has focused only on the mother-child, father-child, or sibling dyads within a family and since the whole network of complex communications within the family system as a whole has not been under systematic study, we have proposed an approach with which both aspects--the developmental processes of individuals and the processes of integration and adaptation occurring within the family system--are considered at the same time. Underlying this approach are two concepts: 1) The concept of a "developing family" that, like Werner's "developing organism," goes through a "course" of differentiation, specification, and hierarchical integration according to an "inner principle" of development, and 2) The concept of "socialization tasks," which function as a kind of reification of factors "guiding" family development in much the same way that Havighurst's "developmental tasks" function in individual development. Linking these two lines of thought may thus help to clarify the reciprocal nature of socialization processes within a family and may provide a more solid basis for analyzing the everyday family interactions through which socialization occurs. Pinpointing the family's various specific "socialization tasks" in this way may well facilitate future empirical research on socialization and ultimately afford a more thorough understanding of the interplay between the child's developmental processes and the structure of his or her immediate social milieu.

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