Parenting Practices & Everyday Lives

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Ann Phoenix
Diana Baumrind’s Four-part typology of US parenting style (1967)

- **Authoritative**: Ideal type
  - High Responsiveness
  - Predicts social competence & psychosocial functioning
  - Behavioural control linked with competence, self-control & attainment

- **Permissive**: Low Responsiveness
  - Predicts social competence & psychosocial functioning

- **Authoritarian**: High Behavioural control, Low responsiveness

- **Uninvolved**: Low Behavioural control, Low responsiveness
Parenting style is one aspect of difference in parenting

- Parenting practices and everyday family lives
  https://youtu.be/S0699FMsgK4

- Parenting practices not in the US
  https://youtu.be/0MBbJNsqAoo?t=78
Attention to parenting styles often

- Ignores intra-group differences
- Fixes/essentialises differences
- ‘Responsibilises’ parents
- Obscures gender differences
- Presupposes ethnicised & cultural differences
- Treats different beliefs as error.
Critiques of parenting style research

- Combining characteristics into typologies is less satisfactory than focus on components: warmth, responsiveness, regulation (Stewart & Bond)
- Distinction between parenting style (consistent across situations) & practices (situation specific).
- Parents often adjust ‘styles’ to children’s behaviours & genetics makes a difference—correlation not causation (e.g. Weiner, 2003)
- Contextual factors affect parenting (Kotchick and Forehand, 2000).
Parenting styles do not have universal impacts

- In the USA authoritative parenting is most common among white, two parent, middle-class families of European descent.

- Authoritative parenting is not associated with good academic performance for African and Asian American children (and only to a limited extent for Latino Americans).

- Danielsen and Bendixsen (2016) Migration & class differences make for a plurality of parenting cultures in the same Bergen neighbourhoods.

- Behavioural control appears to be less significant for girls' than boys' well-being (Weiss and Schwarz, 1996),
‘The basic classificatory system undergirding this work, which describes parents as either authoritarian or authoritative, came under scrutiny this past decade. Scholars of color, especially, questioned its generalizability outside a European American middle-class context and took issue with the apparently contradictory nature of the findings ... A recent study suggested that the "stricter" parenting styles of African Americans may be more in the eye of the (European American) beholder than in African American parenting…’ (McLoyd et al., 2000, p.1082)
Outline
1. Theorising social practices, psychosocial and intersectionality
2. Everyday ‘non-normative’ parenting practices: leaving children behind
3. Negotiating environmental parenting practices

Argument
• Parenting practices enable a more holistic, non-pathologising view of parenting.
• Contextualising parenting allows engagement with contradictions and behaviour. complex understandings of food practices and positioning.
• Intersectional differences between parents reproduce and unsettle normalizing discourses of parenting
• Parenting practices are psychosocial.
‘...[T]he ways in which psychic experience and social life are fundamentally entangled with each other. Psychological issues and subjective experiences cannot be abstracted from societal, cultural and historical contexts, nor can they be deterministically reduced to the social. Similarly, social and cultural worlds have psychological dimensions and are shaped by psychic processes and intersubjective relations’. (Association of Psychosocial Studies founded in 2013)
• **Material** involves the use of material artefacts.
• **Meaning** understandings, beliefs and emotions.
• **Competence** skills and knowledge required to perform the practice. (Shove, Pantzar, Watson, 2011)
• Morgan (2011): ‘family life as a set of activities’ (p. 6) that constitute family. Families as what families do, rather than what the ‘are’.
• **Family practices** require to be studied in the everyday and include family display (Finch, 2007).
Parents kept adjusting their food varieties not just to cope with their own children's 'Westernized' tastes, but also to tackle the confrontational occasions when their children’s English friends came over… Mrs Tang had experienced embarrassment and disappointment over the Chinese food she had spent a long time preparing for their children’s friends because very few of them had tried it. She was so disappointed and embarrassed by this reaction to her food that she did not know what to do in later similar events… Mrs Tang depended entirely on eight-year-old Ming to tell her what games they should play and what food to cook for the other children. (Zhiyan Guo, 2014, *Young children as intercultural mediators*)
Intersectionality
Kimberlé Crenshaw

• Heuristic for recognizing simultaneous positioning in social categories—e.g. gender, class, sexuality, ethnicity

Inductive, theory arising from observation of complexity of everyday life

(2016) Six core ideas:
1. Social inequality
2. Power
3. Relationality
4. Significance of historical social contexts
5. Complexity
6. Social justice
Parental attempts to achieve intersectional inequalities dot their children (2011)

- ‘Concerted cultivation’ (middle classes)
- ‘Accomplishment of natural growth’
- →Widening social class gap over childhood (Lareau, 2011).
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Chinese migrant workers perform low-paying jobs and live in crowded conditions in cities.

China’s place-based resource distribution system proscribes education and medical care for migrants (Xiang, 2007). Most rural-urban migrant workers with children cannot afford to take them, although an increasing number do (Lu, 2007).

‘Although the precise population count of left-behind children is not available, several sources estimate there are totally 10–30 million children left behind by their migrant parent(s) in rural areas (Xiang, 2007). Whether living in a single-parent family or a no-parent family and cared for by grandparents, relatives, nonrelatives, or even themselves (Liu, Li & Ge, 2009), these left-behind children have rapidly formed a special youth population in China that deserves serious attention.’ (Wen and Lin, 2012: 120)
Transnational families in global care chains (Parrenas; Hochschild)

- Children left in Eastern Europe referred to as ‘Euro-orphans’ & ‘othering’ of migrant mothers (Erel, 2010).
- ‘Civilising’ ideals & contradictions
- Mothers’ decisions made about family wellbeing.
ESRC funded: Elaine Bauer; Stephanie Davis-Gill; Leandra Box; Pat Petrie

Adults who as children:
(i) Came from the Caribbean to the UK to rejoin their parents in the process of serial migration (N = 53; 39 ♀, 14 ♂) plus 2 mothers.
(ii) Have grown up in families of visibly mixed ethnicity (N = 32; 22 ♀, 10 ♂).
(iii) have sometimes been ‘language brokers’, interpreting and/or translating for their parents (N = 23; 12 ♀, 11 ♂).
Bella: My story isn’t a very (laughs) good one. Um. (. ) I miss my children terribly when I came and, um, especially, um, yes, and the first five years in this country, five, seven years, it was terribly, terrible, you know. Um. One from missing them, one, um. It was such a different life style from the happy, free, you know, Jamaica that you leave behind. Um. (. ) You had (. ) when you have somewhere rented it was just one room and you have to everything in it for a start, ah. And then you had to personally, you want your children with you and sometimes people didn’t want you to live there.
And there’s no way I was going to get them without a house. However, um, was saving like that but then it seems as if it was taking forever. And in the meantime you have to send money back to support them. 

Bella: ..No. You see when you’re busy working and working and working you haven’t (.) I didn’t have time to start think about that... But now sometime when you sit back you think you could have maybe do some things differently [Mother in her 70s]
• Sadness & discourse of acceptance that she had little choice. Recognition of exclusion from the normative in UK.

• Protecting self from belief that her efforts and sacrifices had some damaging consequences.

• Community service & success of children allowed claim to Butler’s culturally legible, liveable life

• Redemptive narrative in midlife (McAdams 2006).
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Family Lives and the Environment

**Aim:** To improve understanding of the negotiated complexity of families’ lives in relationship with their environments, with regard to meanings of ‘environment’ in narratives of everyday and habitual family lives and family practices.

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Ann Phoenix, Natasha Shukla, Catherine Walker, Helen Austerberry, Hanan Hauari and Claire Cameron (UCL Institute of Education)
Gina Crivello, Virginia Morrow, Emma Wilson, Uma Vennam, Madhavi Latha and Renu Singh (Young Lives)
Methods

Year 1

• Secondary analysis of Young Lives qualitative data
  • *Purposive sample of eight cases*
  • *Carer and young person interviews*
  • *Three rounds (YP aged 12, 13, 15 years)*

Year 2

• New data collection: UK and Andhra Pradesh
  • *12 families in each country – India fieldwork now complete*
  • *Multi-method approach (interviews, visual data, mobile methods)*

Year 3

• Analysis, writing, TCB and dissemination
Amrutha’s family (urban Indian girl, independent school)

Aruna:  …If I switch on the AC in my car, my kids will shout, Amma you are increasing the global warming, switch it off, polar bears will die (laughs). Every time this is the fight in the car. […]

Natasha:  And what do you say when the kids say that?

Aruna:  We just laugh (laughing). We keep telling them it is not just because we switch on the AC. It is one of the factors though.

Natasha:  So then what happens, who wins?

Aruna:  Definitely them, you cannot argue with them, then after a couple of minutes they will forget and then I will switch it on. I am not supposed to lie though (laughing). Especially this girl is very particular, ‘let’s open the windows as we drive, because we will be killing the polar bears’. I say where do you see polar bears here (laughs)… And whenever she turns on the AC when she wants to sleep, I tell her ‘polar bears are crying, why are you switching on the AC’ (laughs).
Aruna: One quick you can call it as a joke, if I switch on the AC in my car, my kids will shout, Amma you are increasing the global warming, switch it off, polar bears will die (laughs). Every time this is the fight in the car.

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Nathan’s family (urban UK, state school)

**Jordan:** What goes on in our lives every day (.) matters to me more than (...) what goes on in the environment. It's more important… I'm not saying that it's, it's (.) the environment’s not important. But for me (...) doesn’t (...) that (...) what goes on in our everyday lives over (...) powers anything else.

**Nathan:** Did you know, pollution can kill you?

**Jordan:** Because that’s what affects us the most.

**Helen:** Are there any particular things in your immediate environment… that affect you more than other things?

**Jordan:** Well just every general daily life. Like making sure the kids get to school, the sh-the shopping’s done. … You know, it's just (...) washing. Everything (...) general living… that’s what we have to deal with.
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- ‘Family display’ and temporality in the everyday, mundane tasks of social reproduction.
- Environmental issues subordinate to everyday life.
- Identity as a responsible mother who fulfils care responsibilities.
it's really, really hard (...) to think, right, I'm going to change my lifestyle and make things maybe a bit more difficult for me and do this, and put in a bit more effort and do that. When actually, you’ve got this bigger global picture where you’ve got these multi-national companies... that are actually (...) causing so many problems and issues anyway. So (...) hang on a minute; why does the responsibility sit with me? Then you have the other side... that says, well if you don’t start small it will never get big will it?... So (...) you know (...) there's that. And also I have the little, my little voice of (...) conscience through there who... pipes up with the, we should really be recycling this mum. Where's our recycling boxes? (Laughs) In the shed. Um (...) you know... So it's kind of a catch 22 really.
Instilling a common world environmental perspective

HUGH: Yeah. We do, you know we do talk about environmental issues. Um (...) so we talk about you know (...) um (...) I mean global warming’s quite big on the agenda at their schools, so you know, they, they come back and initiate conversations about climate change (...) and, and, and have views on that. And you know, well sit and discuss that round the (...) dinner table. /…/ Um (...) and you know, we try and involve them in (...) thinking about using the recycling...scheme properly. Um (...) you know, we try and involve them in, in, in sort of walking and cycling rather than nagging us to drop them off places. /…/ (Um (laughing))... You know, we get them to think about energy use. I mean we've had a, had a little bit, a little bit of a drive recently to try and get Adrian to spend less time in the shower /…/
SASKIA: They're conscious of water as well, because we took them to Africa for an experience [...] and we went into a village where they have to get water from a well... We tried to give these guys respect for the planet, because they are rather lucky I think just to have all the nice, the simple things that come into their life, like water, food, and nice schools. Um so we do like to give them a bit of the wild west every now and then and then just to... (laughter) ...just to ground them.

- Culture ‘as therapy’ (Wetherell & Potter 1992)
- Children found the experience exciting.
Everyday parenting/environmental practices

- Situated, intersectional nature of environmental practices and diverse meanings of environment—differences of social class and context
- The centrality of the everyday and of past, present and imagined futures.
- Ways in which families are displayed in narratives have social policy relevance:
  - Children as the ‘future’ can influence parents’ environmental practices only in limited ways that are context dependent.
  - Socioeconomic circumstances, identities and place are central to imagined environmental influence.
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