

The samples drawn
solely from weird
societies. this



The over-sampling of Western, educated and from industrialized, rich, and democratic countries (WEIRD) is deviating our understanding of human behavior which is causing to generalize “universal patterns” based on a limited sample of human variation, which accounts to only 12 percent of the world’s population. This has become problematic because WEIRD contributors greatly contrast from the other populations and this is because a lot of our behaviors and observations are based on the environments and contexts in which we grew up. When recruiting for studies, researchers often make the sample as homogeneous as possible, in an effort to detect small differences. Although, many of these studies can be generalized to the many of the population it’s not representative of humanity as a whole. This essay will critically examine the context of WEIRD from Henrich et al perspective and provide a critical analysis on infant development based on the film *Babies*, following I will discuss my own development and how it has shaped the person I am now.

Behavioral scientists consistently publish assertions about human psychology and behavior in the world’s top journals centered on samples drawn solely from WEIRD societies. This is one of the central arguments that Henrich and colleagues propose. Henrich et al assess whether the assumptions of researchers that there is “little variation across human populations” is justified. They examine several areas like reasoning and self-concepts. The findings suggest that participants of WEIRD societies, including young children, are among the least archetypal populations one could find for generalizing about humans (Henrich et al 2010). Henrich et al exemplify substantial evidence that WEIRD societies are the atypical ones.:

The most general endorsed statement concerning the self is that people are motivated to view themselves positively.

Meta-analyses reveal that self-serving biases tend to be more prominent in Western populations than in the non-Western population. For example, Mexicans, Native Americans, Chileans, and Fijians score much lower on various measures of positive self-reviews than do Westerners (Henrich et al 2010). Furthermore, the analytic approach is culturally more valued in Western contexts. In East Asia, a holistic approach is more valued. As a result, cognitive strategies differ across their respective populations and among industrialized societies, show a high degree of analytical as opposed to holistic reasoning. Additionally, Henrich et al, reviewed a study by Church et al (2006). The findings suggest that people from Western populations (i. e.

, American and Euro-Australian) strongly endorsed the idea that personality remains constant over time and predicts behavior over many situations. On the other hand, people from non-Western populations (i. e., Asian-Australian, Chinese-Malaysian, Filipino, Japanese, Mexican, and Malay) more strongly endorse contextual beliefs about personality, such as ideas suggesting that a personality does not describe a person as well as roles or duties do, and that trait-related behavior fluctuates from situation to situation (Henrich et al 2010). In industrialized societies, children are taught to associate perceptual features to similarity. For example, WEIRD children when asked “What’s that?” (directing at a maple tree), their usual answer is “tree.

” On the other, in cultures where people interact with the natural world, such as Itza Maya villagers, their perceptions are not based on similarity but on knowledge of cultural ideas. As a result, the studies assessed in “ The Weirdest People in the World?” demonstrate that the findings from WEIRD samples are not universal patterns. This is problematic because WEIRD samples are a very unreliable subset and it fails to recognize observed differences in humans. The film *Babies* is a documentary that follows four newborns from diverse regions of the world. Each baby comes from a distinctive culture, which exhibits how the diverse customs of each culture can influence a child’s development. The babies are Hattie and Mari, both were from industrialized cities and were raised in a very Westernized manner, whereas Ponijao and Bayar grew up in a rural environment.

Infant-Caregiver Interactions: Caregiver and infant are mutually active contributors in the interaction and responding of each other. In most Western societies, the infant-parent relationship is thought as the major social bond, enhanced by a small number of familial relationships, but this view is not universal (Gross 2008). In some societies, infants are raised by large groups or villages. Bayar has very little interaction with his parents; he is often by himself or with his older sibling.

On the other hand, Hattie’s parents are regularly involved in her day-to-day life, responding immediately to her needs. Ponijao had a lot of interactions with people in her community, in fact it was hard to tell who was the baby’s mother. As discussed in lecture, infant-caregiver interactions is fundamental to the child’s later social and emotional outcome. Infant-caregiver interactions are essential for cognitive and language development, for

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example, in the film, the babies that had the most infant-caregiver interaction, like Hattie and Marie, showed to start babbling first because they regularly had their mothers talking and singing to them. Resources: In this film, we can observe the role of accessible resources in their development.

Hattie and Mari had several toys and objects to interact with, while Ponijao and Bajar played with rocks, sticks, and animals. Young children's play is influenced by resources and opportunities that are accessible (Ross 2008). Bajar and Ponijao don't have toys, books, or special classes like Hattie and Marie but they were given the freedom to explore and play with what was available to them.

This parenting style is significant because it fosters creativity and personal growth. Hattie and Mari's parent seemed to use toys or special classes as the center to gaining knowledge which limits their growth and creativity. Even though it's relatively true, the best "toy" that all kids need in order to learn and grow is in their environment. Access to Experiences: Early experiences postulate the base for the brain's structural development and functioning throughout life (Ross 2008). The four children in the babies had different access to experiences and different ways that their parents expose them to partake in their environment. For example, Bayar was often tightly wrapped in a cloth which limited his movements.

Ponijao was never draped but he was constantly in his mother's lap or arms. In lecture, we discussed the different types of play. At ages from birth to 4 months children engage in exploratory play which consists of repetitive motor movements.

This type of play is composed of the child kicking their legs, reaching for and sucking their toes, practicing moving and rolling over (Ross 2008). Swaddling or having a child constantly in lap or arms can have a potential impact on an infant's development. This parenting practice does not allow the child to focus on their own body which can potentially affect their evolving motor and cognitive skills. Social & Environmental Interactions: Socialization practices vary widely across cultures. Hattie and Marie have a disadvantage in regard to social interaction. Their parents have them involved in play dates or special classes in order for them to interact with other peers. However, Bayar has an older brother and Ponijao lives in a large community where there are several playmates. Although, there is a parallel in interactions with other children and playing with toys, there is a limitation in the freedom to discover things and express their independence between the children that live in an urban environment.

Hattie spent most of her day in indoor spaces. On the other hand, Ponijao spends most of his day outside, joyfully wallowing in mud and playing with sticks and rocks. As discussed in lecture, experiences with peers and the environment allows the children to develop a relationship with the world. This parenting practice has an influence on how children develop social and emotional abilities as well as learning skills. My parents always gave me the opportunity to explore the environment. Before I moved to California, I lived in a rural environment. My play time consisted of dirt and water puddles.

They never set a limitation to what I could explore in my surroundings.

Engaging and exploring the environment allowed me to understand and

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makes sense of the world around me. My younger cousins grew with very overprotective parents who didn't allow them to play with anything that would get them dirty. They spent most of their time playing inside with their electronics so the rare times they would play with dirt or with puddles they would get sick. The parenting practices my parents employed throughout my childhood influenced my intellectual, social, physical, and emotional development.

The family-environment feature in my early development shaped an ambiance where I was able to foster a unique identity and have my own individual thoughts. Relying heavily on WEIRD populations is causing overinterpretations which is putting at risk results in a global context. It's crucial we involve a diverse human society to diversify the approach to understanding human psychology and behavior which will allow us to evaluate the psychological and behavioral variation.

It is necessary to expand our study of infant development beyond WEIRD samples. By diversifying populations in studies, it will bring results into a whole new light. Ending the WEIRD-centric approach in infant development will help build an improved set of encompassing theories about the development of the human mind and human behavior. Understanding infant development through an international lens gives us the opportunity to gain more knowledge to apply different parenting practices that can be beneficial for the child.

Also, it will help us understand how different experiences affect each individual differently rather than generalizing behavior. Furthermore, it can

help us understand that each culture is characterized by diversity which ultimately shapes how we think and behave.