

38. Hunter-Gatherer Childhood

16222 - Children and childhood within ethnographic studies about Argentinian indigenous communities (Qom and Mbyá)

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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The paper points out the ways that indigenous childhood was mentioned in Argentinian ethnographic studies. With this aim, we will review the core characteristics of the ethnographic approaches that directly or indirectly refers to mbyà-guaraní and tobas/qom children, both indigenous communities in the lowlands and highlands of South America that were hunter-gatherer and inhabit in Misiones and Chaco Provinces, in the northeast of the country.

As with the approaches to childhood and the teaching-learning processes, the conceptualization marks that one has of adults of the societies that one study can also be observed. In this regard, we will analyse the different ways that children appeared in these approaches, including how children's voices are presented in dialogue with the ethnographic researcher. Specifically, we will focus in two areas. First, we will analyse the conceptualization of children as part of life's cycle. Then secondly, we will analyze teaching and learning processes that involves children. We also pay attention to the role of children in the relationship between classic ethnographic texts and recent ones.

Methodologically, this paper draws on documentary sources of ethnographers and travelers whose texts have been published. These societies have been earlier studied by ethnographers and travelers. In this paper we argue that the reflections about children have been circumvented, but more that that the voices of children themselves.

Key words: indigenous childhood; ethnography; mbyà-guaraní ; tobas/qom; Argentina

16148 - Interpreting children in the hunter-gatherer landscape: A prehistoric narrative from Stonehenge

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Wilson, Pauline (University of Buckingham, Abingdon, Un. Kingdom / Ver Königr.)*

Recently a Mesolithic site of international significance, Blick Mead, has been discovered in the Stonehenge landscape and this has been used to develop a methodological framework for interpreting the child in the archaeological record. Numerous commentators have demonstrated that, until recently, the place of children has been overlooked by archaeologists and this needs addressing. This omission is odd, since 40-60% of most populations considered by archaeologists would likely have been children. However, over the past 20 years or so, studies of the child in the archaeological record have been increasingly conducted. A number of these have considered the active roles engaged in by children rather than viewing them as simply the passive objects of adult behaviour and it is the active orientation that this study takes. There are many difficulties in accessing the child in the archaeological record, including the extent of preservation of their smaller bones, i.e. the representativeness of their presence; the problems of and assumptions relating to correlation between child and artefact; and, sometimes, their assimilation into a wider unit of analysis, such as a family, where they become invisible. Further it could be claimed that, to attempt to seek children in the context of pre-history, where there are no written signposts to their behaviour, makes the task even more demanding. Nonetheless, an attempt has been made, by using a variety of methodological approaches. These methodologies include an examination of a sample of the 33,000 flint objects recovered from the site to determine if there is any evidence of children's involvement in the production and use of flint artefacts and the significance of this; a phenomenological consideration of the site, with children's participation and archaeological experiments with children at the site. Whilst recognising the limitations of using ethnographic comparison between Mesolithic activity and that of contemporary hunter gatherers, such comparison is also used as a guide to interpretation. The paper concludes with an assessment of the usefulness of using a multiple-methodology framework to undertake interpretation of the child in the archaeological record.

16094 - Weaning practices among the Philippine Agta

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Minter, Tessa (Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands / Niederlande)*

The Philippine Agta are a hunter-gatherer population of about 10,000 people. Their life expectancy at birth - 25 years - is among the world's lowest (Early and Headland 1998: 4; 101). This is mostly the result of high child mortality levels: around one third of all live-born Agta children die before the age of five, and an Agta child's chance to reach its fifth birthday is seven times lower than that of an average Filipino child. Demographic evidence shows that two and three year olds are the most vulnerable age groups (Minter 2010: 53-8).

With average birth intervals of around three years this is not surprising: many mothers start weaning their infants while they are pregnant of their next child. Weaning (the process in which infants are decreasingly breastfed) is a dangerous time for children: they receive less attention from the mother and they are exposed to possibly contaminated food and water (Sear and Mace 2008: 10; Douglass and Douglass 2008: 39). While the weaning process is critical for children's survival chances (Cassidy 1980; Sear et al. 2000), little is known about how it unfolds among hunter-gatherers.

The limited available data comes from Central Africa, and shows that Bofi and Aka foragers tend to breastfeed their children longer than neighboring farming populations because mothers leave it up to the child to end the nursing. This is attributed to a strong emphasis on personal autonomy and a belief that denying the breast results in deadly illness (Fouts 2004; Fouts et al. 2012).

This paper will present data on weaning practices among the Agta of the Northern Sierra Madre. It will focus on the following questions: 1) how do Agta mothers (and others) decide on when and how an infant is being weaned? 2) In which order and form are solid food and liquids being introduced to the child? 3) What health problems are prevalent in Agta children during and just after weaning and how are these being dealt with?

The results are obtained from long-term ethnographic fieldwork that took place between 2002 and 2005 as well as from repeated shorter fieldwork periods carried out almost yearly since 2005. Data collection took place through semi-structured and informal interviewing as well as systematic observation.

15882 - Foraging, Energetics, and Play among Hadza children

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Play, often considered to be a universal activity of childhood, is typically discussed in the context of either psychosocial development or economic productivity, with limited emphasis placed on the dual nature of play and work among children in small-scale societies. Additionally, play is a critical component of juvenile energy expenditure that is largely ignored in the evolutionary literature on human energetics and nutritional ecology. Hunter-gatherer children offer a unique opportunity to analyze foraging productivity in the context of energetic profiles, work, and play. Here, we explore food collection, daily activities, and the play complex among Hadza forager children. We aim to situate children's foraging in the larger context of play among hunter-gatherers and argue that foraging represents "work play" - both economic contribution and developmentally significant play. This talk provides a link between developmental psychology and life history, allowing us to situate children's foraging and play in an evolutionary context.

15879 - Darwin's Moral Sense and the Hunter-Gatherer Childhood Model

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): Narvaez, Darcia (University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, USA)

Darwin (1871; Gruber, 1974; Loye, 2000) proposed that humans have a “moral sense” that contributes to their evolution beyond natural selection. He described several evolved characteristics of the moral sense through the tree of life (e.g., social pleasure, sympathy for others, concern for the opinion of others, habits developed for the common good). Small-band hunter-gatherers (SBHG) demonstrate these characteristics (Ingold, 1999). Although often considered innate, the contrast between descriptions of SBHG and trends in the USA suggests that the characteristics may require post-natal support. Konner (2005) observed that SGHG universally provided a “hunter-gatherer childhood model” of caregiving to young children: Extensive breastfeeding, continuous physical contact/closeness, responsiveness to child needs, free play in nature with multiple-aged playmates, extensive support of mother-child dyads and multiple adult caregivers (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005; Hrdy, 2009; Konner, 2005, 2010). Cultures have shifted over millennia but also recently (e.g., infant formula) in terms of how much and what kind of support for child development is provided. Does it matter? The hunter-gatherer model represents a developmental manifold that corresponds to the maturational schedule of neonate development (Gottlieb, 1991). Studies of child and adult outcomes of the practices embedded in the hunter-gatherer model (aka Evolved Developmental Niche; EDN) show that each of the components is related to health outcomes (Narvaez, Panksepp, Schore & Gleason, 2013). Recent studies also indicate that they relate to sociality and moral outcomes in children and adults (e.g., greater social pleasures, sympathy and self-regulation) (Narvaez, Gleason, et al., 2013; Narvaez, Wang et al., 2013; Narvaez, Wang & Cheng, 2014; Narvaez, Wang et al., 2014). Humans are especially immature at birth and, as dynamic systems, require intensive caregiving. Thus, Darwin’s “moral sense” may require EDN-consistent support in early life when early experience established brain and body system functions and trajectories.