*Life in neontocracy?*
One big unhappy family?

Baby-parading?


A man may take his five-year-old boy visiting with him when he goes to call on friends.” (Geertz 1961:106)


“A baby of either sex likely is surrounded by women of all ages during the day, by women’s and children’s noises, their smells, their movements, their rhythms. Men rarely handle infants; they rarely provide services like feeding, washing, rocking; they rarely take infants outside. Male and female infants learn women’s patterns of living but neither learns much about the men’s. Male older infants, however, are talked to more often by men and boys than are female infants, and in more matter-of-fact ways, and will be taken into male company more frequently by their fathers.” (p. 115)
On the subject of neontocracy vs gerontocracy, I found this quote revealing:

Polygyny as the Great Compromise
Pregnancy and child-birth


“Mother and infant are treated as a unit; for about six weeks after birth they remain secluded together inside their house. A major objective of this seclusion is to build the baby's blood as it nurses at its mother's breast. In this liminal period, the sense that newborns are still in the process of coming into social being is conveyed by naming practices. Wari' babies traditionally do not receive a personal name until they are about six weeks old. Until then, in the Rio Lage-Rio Ribeirao area, babies of both sexes are called *arawet*, which translates literally as "still being made." In the Rio (672) Dois Irmaos area, newborns are *waji*, connoting immaturity. (Green, unripe fruit is *oro-waji*). An infant receives a personal name—and the mother's name changes to that of her baby—at about the time when they begin to emerge from seclusion and interact with the wider community.” (p. 673).


“A woman delivered while squatting over a bed of fine sand in which a black and white bead on a blue-and-white string may be been buried to ward of djenn and the evil eye, and to make the child beautiful.” (57)
Couvade and infanticide to equalize the sexes (like Inuit)


“Huaorani Indians of Amazonian Ecuador conceptualize human sexuality as the channel through which parenthood is created and intimate relationships are formed. Childbirth rites (known in the literature as couvade) form an essential part of this process (p. 619)…Although there is no native term for ‘couvade’, the institution exists amongst the Huaorani in ways very similar to those described in Amazonian ethnology. As elsewhere in Amazonia, Huaorani birth observances fundamentally consist in perinatal dietary and activity restriction for both parents (p. 622)…Food taboos are aimed at ‘hardening’ the body, that is, at reinforcing its intrinsic energy. The goal is to make the baby vigorous and strong, so it can grow fast and develop into an independent member of the longhouse. Men I interviewed insisted that both parents were protecting the infant’s vigour and assisting in its fast growth through fasting.” (p. 623)

“Huaorani men do not ‘imitate’ childbirth, but take an active part in it, often acting as midwives (p. 623)…Any man who has contributed semen may observe the taboos associated with the couvade, by which he publicly acknowledges his creative contribution to the making of the child (p. 624)…a popular myth about a time when babies were raised by their fathers. Because women did not know the muscular movements to expel babies and
feed them, men were obliged to cut their wives open, extract the babies and feed them until they were old enough to fend for themselves.” (p. 625)

“Most Amazonian anthropologists have insisted, like Métraux, that couvade restrictions are observed by both parents, and like him, have been primarily concerned with the active participation of the father in the birth process.” (p. 630)

“Amazonian Indians also usually: (1) conceive of the child as the product of paternal and maternal influences (in other words, the child results from the complementarity of shape and substance, or of two substances such as blood and semen); (2) believe that repeated sexual intercourse before and throughout pregnancy is necessary for the foetus to develop and grow; (3) grant a special role to the mother’s mother during delivery, sometimes in partnership with her son-in-law; (4) equate the end of the couvade with the naming (with or without ceremony) of the child; (5) prefer to space and limit the number of their children; (6) and, finally, try to achieve (and use infanticide, if necessary) an equal number of male and female children.” (p. 630)

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History Metropolitan Museum of Art www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/azss/ho_00.5.30.htm
Deity Figure (Cihuateotl), 15th–early 16th century
Mexico; Aztec
Stone; H. 26 in. (66 cm)
Museum Purchase, 1900
The Aztecs believed that the souls of women who had died in childbirth were transformed into terrifying demons called Cihuateteo, or Celestial Princesses. They resided in the west known as Cihuatlampa, or region of the women, and accompanied the sun daily from its zenith at midday to dusk on the western horizon. The Cihuateteo were the female counterparts of warriors who had perished on the battlefield and who were thought to escort the sun through the underworld to its rise each morning. On five specific days of the Aztec ritual calendar these malevolent female spirits were believed to descend to the earth and haunt crossroads hoping to snatch the young children they were never privileged to have. The sign for one of these days, "1 Calli" (1 House), is carved on the top of the figure's head. The sculpture is one of several equally fine, identical images of the goddess that have differing date glyphs on the top of their heads. The sculptures were probably once placed in a shrine dedicated to Cihuateotl in the main temple precinct in Tenochtitlan.

The fearsome goddess sits on her clawed feet, her back slightly arched and her massive clawed hands raised, ready to pounce on her prey. She is bare breasted and wears an unadorned skirt held with a belt tied in a simple knot. Her face is a skull with big staring eyes and an open fleshless mouth with prominent, bared teeth. Her hair, carved in swirls and twists, typical of the mortuary aspect of earth deities, streams down the back of her head.

“Indian Hindu children are also considered gifts from God…The fusion between mother and infant is central and starts, according to the Vedas, during the prenatal period where the fetus is considered to be *chetan*—conscious of having a soul…The mutual relationship is strengthened by *matri-rina*, or indebtedness toward the mother. This implies a lifelong relationship with the mother that includes the duties to protect and nurture the mother.” (p. 110)


“According to the Dongria, a baby receives its soul from a deceased person and the shaman can identify the name of the soul-giver by asking the gods in a ritual called *male wenbina*. The sex of the baby and of the ancestor must not be identical. Usually the baby receives the soul of a person who belonged to the village community or was cremated on the cremation ground (*mahanenga*) of the village, but the baby and ancestor must no be direct lineal relatives. This ancestor protects the infant, but when enraged may also invoke fever and other illness in the child. To please the baby’s tutelary ancestor, parents often give the baby a share of alcohol and they may even address the baby by the ancestor’s name.” (p. 66)
Gene roulette

Parent-offspring conflict—infancy evolved to provide various strategies that allows infants to “trick” parents into providing additional resources. Parents must evaluate infant’s behavior to see through the tactics. Theory of Mind (TOM) includes a bundle of cognitive attributes that could be employed to seduce or mislead parents.


“Trivers showed that the optimal amount of investment in a current infant can be understood as a mathematical function that maximized the change that he infant will survive to the point at which it can reproduce but minimized costs to potential future infants (or closely related kin) in contrast to parental efforts in minimizing investment, the infant should favor increases in parental investment.” (p. 240)

“Efforts of fetal manipulations include actions that reduce the probability of marriage, actions that increase nutrient supply in maternal blood, and actions that increase the duration of pregnancy.” (p. 240)
“At least two different means of parental exploitation are available. Trivers emphasized that infants would exploit parental resources by behaving in a manner less mature, and thus in need of more resources, than their chronological age would suggest.” (p. 241)

“Although some degree of crying is likely to extract a higher degree of parental investment, extreme crying might also place infants at risk. For example, crying is the most widely cited cause of “shaken baby syndrome.”…By producing behaviors that lead to positive regard and affect, and increasing the attachment between caregiver and infant, the infant’s behaviors can reduce the very real possibilities of suffering neglect, abuse, or abandonment.” (p. 242)

“The evolutionary emergence of theory of mind might have provided infants with a new avenue for recruiting additional parental investment. Once parents began to respond to the psychological states of their infants, in addition to their overt behavioral states, infants could begin to evolve behaviors that would, in effect, manipulate this ability for their own benefit.” (p. 242)…Infants began to utilize smiling as facial gesture to ingratiate themselves in their parent’s eyes.” (p. 247)

**On the other hand…consider autistics as, in effect, changelings…**

“Suppose that the ability of human offspring to charm their parents—perhaps through language, facial expression, creative play, and coordinated social interaction—evolved as a parentally selected fitness indicator. More articulate expressive, playful, and socially engaged offspring would give a reliable warranty of their genetic and phenotypic quality and thus would solicit higher parental investment. Offspring would vary greatly in their ability to charm parents, and that variation would correlate with underlying fitness. Autism could represent the least charming, low-fitness extreme of this variation—accounting not only for the typical symptoms of autism, but also for the frustration and alienation experienced by parents of autistic children.”

“Offspring vary in genetic quality and therefore in their potential for survival and reproduction. This could lead mothers to assess offspring fitness and allocate resources accordingly. If ancestral human parents delivered more resources to babies showing indications of superior fitness, this could have lead babies to evolve traits that signal fitness. They could thereby influence how long a mother continues to breastfeed intensively enough to prevent ovulation (through lactational amenorrhea), thus delaying the appearance of a sibling rival.” (p. 392-3).

In Guinea-Bissau “…people begin to wonder if a particular infant may have been born without a human soul. A pregnant woman may become penetrated by a spirit when washing clothes or fetching water from a spring-water well. The spirit can enter the foetus in her womb and replace the human soul. Such an infant is either somehow abnormal or does not develop normally during the first months of life… They are typically described as boneless, pale and listless, with weird eyes and frothing mouths… There are two procedures to identify the true nature of infants suspected of being non-human, and both correspond to what in anthropological literature is referred to as infanticide. First, they can be ‘taken to the sea’ by elderly maternal relatives and the infant and a calabash… items such as an egg and distilled alcohol, are put on the beach. If the child is non-human, it will drink the egg and disappear with the other items into the sea and thereby the spirit will return to where it came from, its true home. Since colonial times, the law prohibits ‘taking children to the sea’. The second alternative is to take the infant to a ritual specialist who… asks for help from a spirit to identify the true nature of the infant. The specialist will define a test period, normally seven days, during which food will be arranged for the child, as the mother has to stop breastfeeding. Survival after the trial period is an indication of the human nature of the infant, which will be returned to its mother. (p. 251)

Survey of abortion in the ethnographic record…

“Women are compelled to abort:

1. Children fathered by demons (Truk, Jivaro)
2. The offspring of incest (Gunantuna, Pukapuka)
3. The children of old, ailing, or weak fathers (Masai)
4. The children of alien fathers (Cuna)
5. Adulterine bastards (Masai)
6. Legitimate children, tainted by the adultery of the pregnant mother (Ashanti)

In each of these instances there is a supposition that the birth of such children would lead to a calamity for the group, or at least for the biological family as a whole.” (p.134). Devereux, George (1955) A Story of Abortion in Primitive Societies. New York, NY: Julian Press.

Dozens of reported techniques **Effort**
- Hard work, heavy loads, climbing

**Jolts**
- Jumping, diving, shaking

**Heat (applied externally)**
- Hot water, coals, stones, the sun

**Skin irritants**
- Topical preparations

**Weakening**
- Bleeding via cuts and incisions

**Mechanical abortion**
• Weight, constriction, uterine massage, hitting fetus head with stone through abdominal wall, and more…

Genital manipulation
• Cervical and vaginal
  Coitus
  Inserting foreign bodies
  Local medication/drugs
  Magic

(p. 30-42).


“Inuit have no special term to denote a fetus in utero and by custom do not speak about it until after its birth. The fetus is never regarded as “alive” until after it is born, so Inuit never think of it as a person.” (40)

“Even birth does not insure that the newborn is accorded the status of a social person. Balikci (Balikci, Asen (1970) The Netsilik Eskimo. Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press. p.148) estimates that in some parts of the Arctic as many as 50% of all those born alive were disposed of traditionally by infanticide. An infant which was to be disposed of was not accorded the status of being a social person, though instead of being exposed or smothered it might be given in adoption to another couple who might then accord it such status. A decision had to be made with four days after parturition, for by time an infant had to be named.
And, once named, the disposal of a child would be an act of murder because a named infant was regarded as a social person and exercised a powerful claim upon the living.” (p. 40)


Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation

The subject of this dissertation is the spirit child phenomenon among the Nankani people living in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Although the primary causes of infant and child mortality throughout northern Ghana are parasite diseases and environmental factors, local discourse suggests that a number of infant and child deaths are facilitated through intentional poisoning by family members. In these cases, deformed or ailing children, births concurrent with tragic events, or children displaying unusual abilities are regarded as spirit children sent “from the bush” to cause misfortune and destroy the family. From the Nankani perspective, spirit children are not human, but bush spirits masquerading as such. p. 1

The wide variety of discourse featured the spirit child as a dwarfen capricious bush-spirit; purveyor of knowledge; a lustful and desirous ruffian; an agent of the moral imagination; a trickster; and, a malevolent being bent on destroying the family.

Nmah, meaning mother, is a generic name given to newborns before an ancestor chooses their name, usually occurring before the child’s first birthday. Although Nmah hardly appeared to have reached her first birthday, she was actually close to three years old. She looked fragile and malnourished; indeed, at age two, the last time she was weighed, according to her medical card, she was 16 lbs. She could not stand, crawl, or talk, and, had experienced several episodes of malaria, and, the primary cause of her current state, a serious case of meningitis when six months.

Indeed, when I asked people what a spirit child was, the common response was, “a child that does not possess the right qualities of a normal human being.” Families also scrutinize a child’s behavior, and are wary of children talking or walking before developmentally appropriate, to the extent that many families will place oil on the soles of an infant’s feet, so if it rises to visit the bush at night, they will see the dirt come morning.

The spirit child, as a diagnosis, is not just for sick or disabled children, “some are very beautiful,” one man remarked, “but those are the most dangerous.” Other spirit children “perform acts that are above expectations.” I recorded a case where a remarkably intelligent five year old was described as having too much wisdom. Thus, we see the local definitions of abnormality and the spirit child located at both tails of a standard distribution.
A habitually crying child is a commonly recognized criterion for a spirit child. According to beliefs, it cries because it wants to disturb the family, particularly at night after it has returned from roaming the bush.

Nmah's mother fled the village, alone, to the urban center of Kumasi, leaving the child behind. I was told that she feared that the child was going to kill her.

Nmah's crying and dependency prevented her parents from having intercourse, and "If a child cannot go off with the other children soon after it is weaned, to allow the mother to work and have another child, problems arise."

**Link to Daly & Wilson…**


Center for Disease Control estimate that 1 in 50 infants in US suffer from abuse, neglect. 91,000 victims identified in a single year. Majority of cases simple neglect, also common to find infants born with drug dependency from mother's use of controlled substances.


Northern Thais, or Khon Müang, are a lowland wet-rice cultivating ethnic Thai society in Thailand’s northern Lanna region, north of the central basin. Lanna, or ‘land of a million rice paddies’, is a cultural region that has spanned northern Thailand (p. 336). This
sample includes 681 individuals from Chiang Mai and Phayao villages, 52 of whom were reported to have been ‘ever fostered’ as a child (28 boys and 24 girls). (p. 338) In environments of low paternity certainty and high marital fluidity and labour migration, parents generally trust their own lateral kin as foster caretakers for their children, regardless of distance, over close genetic kin from the other side. (p. 348)
Pink Ribbons or Blue, Many or Few?


“According to the Tibetan tradition, there are special signs to determine the sex of a baby. If the left side of the mother’s stomach is higher during pregnancy, this indicates the child is a girl. If the baby is a boy, the right side of the stomach is higher, milk comes from the right breast, and the mother likes to lean to the right when sitting or standing. They also say it is a son when the bulge of the mother’s stomach is rather pointed and high, her body feels light, and she dreams of the birth of a boy. Dreams of horses and elephants or of meeting men also signify that the child is a boy.” (p. 57)

“In Tibetan culture, the folklore belief is that a baby’s sex can change either during pregnancy, right at the moment of birth, or up to a few days after birth…Tibetan parents will sometimes say a baby is a girl—even if the child is very obviously a boy. This supposed to prevent a sex change from happening and keeps the spirits or human curses from bringing harm or illness to the baby.” (p. 101)

While researchers once thought education and wealth would dampen the preference for boys, the reverse has turned out to be true.

According to UNICEF, about 7,000 fewer girls than expected are born every day in India. According to the British medical journal The Lancet, up to 500,000 female fetuses are being aborted every year. This in a country where abortion is legal but sex-determination tests were outlawed in 1991 -- a law nearly impossible to enforce, since ultrasound tests leave no trace.

Researchers say pressure for smaller families is the most immediate problem. "Squeeze on family size is fueling the trend," said ActionAid researcher Jyoti Sapru. "For households expressing preference for one child only, they want to make sure it is a son."


“My sister had six children, two boys and four burdens.” This statement reflects the general attitude toward female children in Sicily. The primary basis for it seems to be the dowry system, which makes every daughter represent a debt that sooner or later must be paid…Blessed is the door out of which goes a dead daughter, and the older she is the greater the comfort…[Contrast with] A woman would feel her lot a hard one if she had no daughters to help her in her household.” (Chapman 1971:30).
Suggests that daughters are only appreciated during middle childhood, when their value to their mothers is greatest.

“Nevertheless, the decision of Tamang women to concentrate on infant care at the risk of neglecting older children is in a sense an appropriate choice. Survival is the key issue for Tamang infants (two-thirds of childhood deaths occur before age 1), whereas for older children the concern becomes one of nutritional wellbeing.” (Panter-Brick 1997:239)


“Parents are actually thought to give up some of their own flesh and blood to the child during pregnancy. The child grows from the mother’s and the father’s flesh and blood, not from the food that the mother ingests. **Women are thought to lose increments of their flesh and blood to each successive child they bear.** By the time a woman has finished child bearing, she should be somewhat wasted and “bloodless” (lack of blood is seen as an ailment of old age). Man also experience this gradual debilitation.” (p. 62)

If old people die slowly due to a prolonged illness, Dongria may argue that the baby of a pregnant woman takes away the ‘life’ (*jela*) of the old person. In such cases it is believed that the person is dying while the baby grows in the maternal womb. In order to prevent this ‘theft’ of soul substance, a shaman can perform a ritual. As part of this ritual the shaman forms a ball of earth which represents the soul of the baby, which is cut into two halves. One half is said to contain the soul of the old person, while the other is an empty container for the baby’s soul. The shaman utters the names of those ancestors (*mahane*), whose souls have not yet been reincarnated in a child, and requests them to give their soul to the baby. With the help of this ritual the old person can retrieve his or her own soul and recover from the illness without depriving the baby of its life-soul. (p. 79)


“In preparation for conception it is common to purify oneself by seeking release from the consequences of any harm done to living beings.” (p. 21)

“The section of human embryology begins with a description of the three stages of human growth in the womb: the fish phase, the turtle phase, and the pig phase. According to historians, this text
provides evidence that by the eleventh century a culture had identified these three evolutionary processes.” (p. 50)

“In Tibetan culture it is considered inauspicious to prepare too much beforehand—until they feel assured the baby will live. Sometimes new clothes and blankets are cut out, but they are not sewn together until after the birth.” (p. 69)

“Immediately after the birth, saffron is stamped in the form of the…seed syllable for Manjursi, the deity of wisdom…on the baby’s tongue, in order to help the child sharpen his speech and memory…As [Manjursi’s] sword symbolizes cutting through ignorance, parents symbolically bestow wisdom to their children [this] is the first step in developing the ability to speak articulately and to have clarity in communication, something that is tremendously valued in their culture.” (p. 81)

“Diarrhea, another common infant ailment, may be treated with mantra. Three long protection cords are entwined to form one cord. This is cut in two, and twenty knots are tied in each. The mantra YAMA CHO is recited a hundred times for each cord and blown on them. One cord is tied around the baby’s neck and the other around its wrist.” (p. 124)


“To have an abortion (digrogokaké, literally, “to be made thinner”) is considered a sin, especially after the first three months; before that time the fetus is considered not yet human, to be “no more alive than blood.”” (Geertz 1961:84)
“The Javanese feel that a baby is extremely vulnerable, especially to sudden shock which can lead to sickness or death. For if the baby were suddenly or severely disturbed by a loud noise, rough handling, strong taste, of physical discomfort, he would be kagét, “shocked, startled, upset,” and his weak psychic defenses would fall and evil spirits (barang alus), which hover constantly around the mother and child, could enter and the infant and cause him to be ill. All the customs of infant care can be seen as attempts to ward off this danger. The baby is handled in a relaxed, completely supportive, gentle, unemotional way. He is constantly in his mothers’ arms and lap when awake; if he is sound asleep and the mother must move around, she places him on a cushion of clean cloths, with pillows surrounding him so that he will not roll off the sleeping bench.” (Geertz 1961:92)

“Town people say that village people (who are often considered almost less than human, uncultivated, uncontrolled, unreasonable) force their babies to eat and swaddle them tightly and uncomfortably. I have no check on the statement; its importance lies in the expression of the Javanese idea that permissiveness and gentleness are civilized attributes.” (Geertz 1961:95)

“The working women, the bakuls, who sell in the market nurse their babies almost on a schedule.” (Geertz 1961:95)

“She said that some children who are always carried around in a shawl and given the breast every time they indicate a desire for it may cry a good deal at weaning. Moreover, such children, she said—for instance, the only child of a couple who want children very much—grow up without any incentive to do anything; they
won’t get ahead in school and won’t go to work because all they want to do is ask and receive from their parents; and sometimes eventually they go crazy. What she considered the best way (and what she did with her children and what her mother had done with her) is *takeran*, which means to measure out. She said that this is the custom among market women: to suckle the child in the morning before going to the market, then have the child brought to the market for a ten o’clock feeding, and then nurse the child again in the afternoon (one or two o’clock) and when she comes home from the market. She said that is makes the child strong to cry some when he wants to suckle.” (Geertz 1961: 96)

“Since infants are thought to not like the very peppery spicing of adult food, the nursing mother uses no strong seasoning for fear the baby will be “startled” (*kagét*) by it.” (Geertz 1961:99)

“The fetus is said to be “meditating spiritual matters” (*tapa*, the withdrawal from the world of the mystic), fasting, and going without sleep within the cave of his mother’s womb for nine months in preparation for his emergence into the disturbing world. While this is the period of highest vulnerability, especially the first seven months, the period immediately after birth is not much safer. The first five days, until the falling-off of the stump of the umbilical cord and the *pasaran* ritual meal, at which he is given a name, are the most dangerous. For the next thirty days thereafter the infant is kept in the house, especially at sunset, and various magical spirit deterrents, such as a very sharp knife, are kept by his side. The next recognized state is marked by the seventh-month *slametan*, at which the child is allowed to touch the ground for the first time. Before this ritual he is too vulnerable to the spirits,
which find is particularly easy to enter people through the feet.” (Geertz 1961:104)

**Perspective of an anthropologist who brought her infant into the field…**


“They also made constant efforts to teach Jim and me how to care for her…For instance, they reprimanded us for picking her up by hooking our hands under her armpits. Fijians maintain that a cough is produced in a child by this kind of treatment. I was also berated when she developed a heat rash our first month in the village.” (Turner 1987: 105)

“…a young woman…pinched Megan’s nose as I nursed her. This woman did it because she believed, as most villagers, that a child should be weaned soon after its first birthday. Prolonging breastfeeding is said to prevent the child from eating other foods that will make it strong. There is also the connotation that such extended nursing keeps the child in babyhood and develops a weak, simpering person. Fijians are often eager to have another child and believe the first child should be weaned before the mother becomes pregnant.” (Turner 1987:107).

**Three stages of infancy…**

“Infancy (*bala*) comprises three stages according to Hindu ethnotheory: (a) *Ksirada*, when the child depends exclusively on milk for nourishment; (b) *Ksirannada*, when the child depends on both milk and cereals for nourishment; and (c) *Annada*, when the child depends solely on cereals for nourishment.” (p. 111).

**Interesting twist on sacred child theme…**


“This is the first full length account of the Uduk people of the Sudan, who live uneasily between the northern and southern regions of the country, in the borderland close to the Ethiopian frontier.” (preface)…subsistence way of life, based today on hoe cultivation of sorghum and maize, hunting and fishing, and the rearing of a few domestic animals. Hunting was probably far more important in the past than it is today.” (p. 4)

“The Gurunya rites and practices, for example, are specifically concerned to ensure the survival of a child born to a woman who has already lost a number of children in infancy…This notion, that through special treatment children can be saved from the death which has overtaken their predecessors, finds widespread expression in eastern Africa. Among the Akamba of Kenya, for example, such a child may be given a name which will denigrate the child, and deflect the interest of the spirits which took his elder siblings, such as ‘hyena.’...Similar rites among the south-eastern Nuba …special protective rites in childhood, in the same circumstances, and who retain throughout their lives special privileges in relation to the rest of the community (p. 204)
“The children involved are *gurunya* after the blue-black glossy starling.” (James 1979:205)

“But the adults who run the cult are without exception women, although male diviners may be called in to assist the *gurunya* specialists at certain points. All adults regard the cult as a whole as the business of women, and its ceremonies as occasions for the children…The great procession which passes round the hamlets of a neighborhood, singing and soliciting greetings and presents from every household…” (p. 206)

“Gurunya children are given very special treatment…often given eggs, sometimes raw eggs to suck, and they are given bits of chicken when it is available…Any special snack or delicious tidbit will be saved and given to the Gurunya; and small gifts of food, especially, will be solicited from any one who is preparing a meal. If the child cries, every effort is made to comfort him; he is cuddled, given tidbits, and women sing the Gurunya song for him.” (p. 210)

“The Gurunya is spoken of in more general terms as a *cinkina*: a waif, a foundling, without kin and without any hope of survival on his own…If you ask why a baby Gurunya is a *cinkina*, you are told that it is because he has lost his brothers and sisters; he has no kin. The mother, similarly, is a *cinkina* because she has lost all her children, she has no child in her hand, she is alone.” (p. 211) When a woman has no children, or when they die, it is a serious matter for her whole community; the local birth-group will die out if its womenfolk fail to bear and to bring up children, especially daughters. The aim of the Gurunya rites could not be clearer: they
are concerned with the saving of life and not merely that of individual women’s children, but of the whole community.” (p. 212)

“The normal rite for taking a baby out consists of carrying him through the front door of the hut…But the Gurunya baby does not come out by the front door. A special hole is made in the hut wall (p. 213)The child is carried round…the village and laid at the door of each hut, where he is given some little presents such as a cob of maize…Two important themes dominate this rite, which partially introduces the baby to the social world. One is the idea of his being ‘led’ carefully into it…The other important theme, which is developed through the (p. 214) whole series of rites, it is that of the child being a charge upon the whole community. Everyone should contribute to his ‘rescue’ or ‘adoption.’ (p. 215)


“More than 60 percent of all children born in Miang Tuu die before the age of three…The death risk is highest during the first three or four months. This grim fact may be reflected in the attitude toward infants. The major goal of their parents during the first three years is to keep them alive; the demands of enculturation are low.” (Broch 1990:19)


“Nyasaland in Central Africa.” (p. 17)
“The falling of the cord was the signal that the baby was read to 'come out of the hut' and be presented to the village.” (p. 53)
Illness and death


“The care of newborns…the grandmother or another woman immediately dipped a finger in cow dung and stuck it deep into the newborn’s mouth. This was meant as an aid against the dangers of the child-stone, but also as a gesture of subjugation…In order to purge the child’s body from the impurities that eating the mother’s blood in the womb had produced, incisions were made with a knife or a razor blade (*tikh, tikh zadan*) on various parts of the body. A baby was said to need such purging again whenever it cried a lot.” (p. 59)

“Djenn are said to be after the mother’s liver (*jigar*). They are also jealous of the baby, especially during the first ten, or better, forty, days; they might steal the baby or exchange it for their own, sickly one. A baby indicates that it might be a changeling by fussiness, weakness, or lack of growth.” (p. 69)

“Deadly but rare is the child-stone or child-bead (*mohre bacce*), a smooth, reddish to black pebble with a hole through it for a sting. A sickly infant who dies despite all efforts is take to have been killed by some woman’s hidden child-stone.” (p. 70)

“Because of these dangers, pregnant women and new mothers are wise to stay at home, to avoid places where many women gather such a wedding parties.” (p. 71)
“The baby was sickly, small, weak. When she was a year old she could hardly sit. Everybody expected her to die—her father even suggested that her mother let Mozhgan die; they would make another, better child, he said. From several signs the mother came to suspect that the baby was a changeling, a djenn’s child substituted for her own when she had been left alone for a moment sometime soon after birth. An amulet-writer in Deh Koh wrote three prayer-amulets. (One to burn under the cradle; one to cover with beeswax, put in water, and then wash the child with the water; the third to be sewn into a piece of fabric and hung around the baby’s neck until the string broke). He also suggested changing her name to Masume Zahra, a religious one. Since then, as Masume Zahre, she has been doing well, and her parents like her very much; obviously, they say, the djenn had exchanged the sickly child for their real, well child again.” (p. 81)

“A boy infant needs less cleaning and changing of diaper-rags than a girl because his penis can be stuck into a wooden or metal pipe that drains into a can hung outside the cradle footboard. Baby girls are wet pretty much all the time—wet and uncomfortable because they do not have a penis, women explain.” (p. 83)

“A dead young infant is washed quickly at home, wrapped, and buried unceremoniously in a shallow, unmarked grave.” (p. 84)

“A mother’s first milk is said to be “very strong.” A weak newborn therefore might be fed sugar-water from a spoon or a bottle until its mother can provide regular milk.” (p. 85)
“In cases of a woman’s serious resentment of her husband, not nursing a child is a way of getting back at him, no matter how great the emotional costs may be to the mother...Written amulets, a hair or tooth of a wolf, the head of a rooster, something made of iron such as miniature replicas of tools or a bangle, a Qoran [spelled like this in book], all kept near the cradle or pinned to the infant’s clothing, and fumigation with the burning seeds of wild rue are said to ward of djenn.” (p. 87)

“A clean baby is beautiful (tamiz, clean, is a metaphor for beauty), yet this very beauty may attract fatal attention from a djenn or the evil eye of an admirer. A dirty, smally, “ugly” (zesht) baby is, in this sense, much safer than a clean, nice one “Look how dirty he is!” a mother will exclaim happily.” (p. 88)


“...2.2 million infant and child deaths are the result of dehydration caused by persistent diarrhoea.” (p. 191)

“Mothers have various explanatory models for classifying diarrhoea in their offspring, and each of these represents their cultural construction. They distinguish among the ‘precipitating’ agents:

- food: that may be dirty, rotten, or can be indigestible for the child’s stomach such as beans, vegetables, stiff millet or sorghum porridge;
• exposure to seasonal changes: especially when particular trees, *mpela* (baobab), *mnyanga* (unclassified), and *mpululu* (unclassified), bloom in the bush before the wet season starts;

• physical factors: such as milestones of physical development, especially standing up, sitting on the floor, crawling, walking, and teething;

• moral misbehavior of the parents: as when the parents, together or individually, break the traditional taboos; and Supernatural causes such as sorcery or evil eye. (p. 195)

According to these causes, there are different explanations as to whether the diarrhoea is serious, and even potentially fatal, or whether it is to be considered a normal occurrence in the baby’s growth. Consequently, there will be different treatments and patterns of help-seeking.” (p. 195)

“In the mind of Gogo mothers the baby should look for the breast by itself or cry when it wants to be nursed. But if a baby is affected by acute diarrhoea for several days, it may be possible that it falls into a state of apathy, due to loss of appetite and vomit, and does not cry or look for the breast by itself. The result is a reduced breastfeeding that may expose the child to the risk of severe protein-energy malnutrition. A mother, moreover, does not consider it necessary to replace the fluid lost in order to prevent dehydration because she does not recognize dehydration….In the presence of chronic diarrhoea, unresponsive to any treatment, the mother gets anxious and asks herself if there has been some change, some *specific* alteration in her breast milk…If a baby continues to have diarrhoea that means that the mother’s breast
mild has become hot…The most important change in breast milk…is when the milk is spoiled by wrongful or neglectful parental sexual behaviour…Every breach of post-partum taboos by the parents is believed by Wagogo to be the cause of serious forms of diarrhoeal disorders in their child which can even kill it.” (p. 196)

“It is common belief among the Gogo women that a new pregnancy alters the physiological equilibrium in the woman’s body and her breast milk turns into colostrum. When an infant sucks this breast milk—of the unborn baby—it will start having diarrhoea and vomit…When faced with this kind of diarrhoea a mother must immediately stop breastfeeing (kulesa) and give her baby a special medicine so that the bad milk flushes out of the baby’s stomach. This is an oil obtained by cooking a sheep’s tail…together with a medicine that a traditional healer…extracts from a particular parasitic plant…The fat tail of the sheep is supposed to have a cooling effect on the ‘hot’ stomach of the baby.” (p. 197)

When this occurs “….The old women…called a meeting and with harsh words blamed the mother for not having been able to deny her favours to her husband.” (p. 197)

“When a sucking baby has watery diarrhoea, with blood…a very bad smell, and…vomiting it is the sign of promiscuous affairs (mchanganyiko, literally, a mixture) of parents.” (p. 198)

“The Barue do not give the first name before the child is six months old. They are particularly strict in this respect. For the first half year they call the male baby marumbra, the female ntsiye. After this the father gives the names to the boys and the mother to the girls.” (p. 498).


“General or prolonged fussiness, a refusal to eat (p. 41) or outright sickness—all these may be diagnosed as symptomatic of the spirit’s withdrawal from the body. To secure its permanent integration with the body, the family and others make every effort to encourage it to remain. The measures necessary to insure this are thought to be the maintenance of a congenial atmosphere in which the infant spirit will be happy, expressions of concern and affection for the infant, and the creation of important ritual ties to members of the community outside the natal household.” (p. 42)
The Extremes of High and Low Fertility

Otavalo (Ecuador) Market

Nine of the 12 countries with the world's highest rate of child deaths are West Africa, according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) State of the World's Children 2008 which was released on 22 January. According to the report, the region is the only one in the world showing "no progress" on reaching the Millennium Development Goal to reduce under-five mortality by two thirds by
2015. On average 18.6 percent of children in West Africa die before their fifth birthday, while one in 10 will die by their first.

Malnutrition is a leading cause of death in the region, killing half of all children under five, according to UNICEF. This is because it weakens children's ability to fight other diseases, such as malaria or pneumonia.

But giving birth also leads to death for simpler reasons that are easier to rectify, such as the lack of a clean blade to cut umbilical cords and cultural behaviours such as an avoidance of breastfeeding.

**Compare to Guinea-Bissau: Paradox of high fertility in an environment in which children inevitably suffer…**


“This is a place where it is not at all uncommon for children to die of starvation or sores, thirst. Add to this the rampant gun violence and civil terror that has served as the backdrop of everyday life in Haiti for the past half-century, and it becomes immediately apparent that if there is any place in the world in which children have no business growing up, it is in the Republic of Haiti.” (p. 1)


“[Deh Koh is a] village in the high mountains of southwest Iran…The population of Deh Koh has grown steadily from a few
dozen people in a small huddle of stone-and-adobe houses at the
turn of the century to close to four thousand on last count, mostly
by a combination of high birth rate and falling infant mortality
rates. About half the people in Deh Koh are younger than fifteen
years of age. This growth rates leaves its marks on the shape of
the village.” (1)

“In the summer of 1994 the local physician said that pregnant
women in Deh Koh are in very poor health. With few exceptions
they are anemic and malnourished. They are having too many
pregnancies, too closely spaced, and many miscarriages.
Newborns look like premature babies, birth weight is low, and
mothers have insufficient milk. It was worse in the past, though.
Women claim negative side effects for every birth control device.
They use contraceptives unreliably; men reject condoms…If it is
again legalized by the government women will use abortions to
space children…The doctors claim that women are not serious
about birth control because they are afraid that their husbands will
take another wife if they do not have a child every year.” (p. 38)

“A woman who wants to abort a fetus is likely to swallow a
handful of pills from her drug cache of unconsumed
medicines….People know of a severely handicapped child in
another village, the result of the mother’s failed attempt to abort it
with pills.” (p. 45)

patterns of infant mortality and maternal fertility among Pumé
713-726.
The Pumé are a group of native South Americans who have inhabited the llanos of southwest Venezuela for at least the past several hundred years.” (714)

“Those who live along the Capanaparo, Cinaruco, and Riecito Rivers reside in permanent villages and have a mixed subsistence base of fish, manioc horticulture, animal husbandry, wild foods, and occasional wage labor. In contrast, the Pumé who live in the savannas between these major river courses are mobile foragers, subsisting on hunting fishing, wild root and mango collection, and, to a much lower extent, manioc horticulture.” (714)

“The Pumé results add to these studies by demonstrating that population growth during the earliest stages of economic acculturation occurs through not only higher child survival but also an increase in birth rates.” (721)

“Greater accessibility of agricultural and market foods improves the diets of young children, less through absolute availability than by reducing the periodicity and amplitude of nutritional stress. Cross-cultural evidence suggests that among traditional populations, improved children’s diets can introduce substantial gains in survival.” (722)

“Nursing infants are particularly susceptible to gastrointestinal diseases after they are introduced to supplementary foods. Infants exclusively fed breast milk are at considerable reduced risk of diarrhea compared to infants who are introduced to (722) supplementary foods.” (723)

In Durantini’s book, there are scenes of mothers reading with children at home. The mothers are dressed rather elaborately in comfortable if not lavish surroundings, seated at ease with one child or two. These are women with the leisure to enjoy and entertain their (relatively) small broods.


“Tender domestic scenes, including fathers feeding and singing to their infants, occasionally appear in Dutch art of the seventeenth century.” (p. 87)


“At the end of the eighteenth century the Quakers became the first group to deliberately limit births, and by 1810 the impulse to control births spread to all parts of the country. Relying primarily upon abstinence, coitus interruptus, and the rhythm method, supplemented by abortion (usually chemically induced or a result of trauma to the uterus), parents dramatically reduced the birthrate.” (p. 77)

“The drop in the birthrate also reflected new cultural ideals, including a rejection of the view that women were chattels who
should devote their adult lives to an endless cycle of pregnancy and childbirth.” (p. 78)

Demographic Transition doesn't just affect the # of children, but views on what constitutes "normal" childhood as well...


The article examines the concept of childhood in an African society and tracks a contemporary shift in thinking about what a child is when a major sociocultural transformation effects a large segment of that population. The Pare, traditionally patrilineal highland cultivators, have recently experienced a change in their subsistence base from hoe cultivation to wage labor. This brought about a shift away from reliance on lineage authority to more couple-centered relations in some couples. A consequence of this has been a reduction in fertility in these couples and a view on children which departs from the traditional one. The article compares the daily lives of the children and the two types of parents’ conceptualizations of childhood. (p. 167)

The data show that there are important differences in the lives of children in the two kinds of households. Children in small, so-called ‘partnership’ families work little, play a lot, rest quite a bit and study. Their experience seems to resemble the one that Zlata considered desirable and which we in the West consider to be a
‘normal’ childhood. The parents of these children consider them to be an important part of their lives in terms of the enjoyment, companionship and love they provide and want to ensure that they have a happy and fulfilled life. To them, this happiness and fulfillment comes through freedom to play and loaf and through achievement in school. They try to ensure that this opportunity is available to their children. Children in the larger, so-called ‘lineage-based’ families work a lot, play little and rest and study even less. These parents have a utilitarian view on children: they consider them to be valuable as part of a joint family enterprise and workforce and as potential support in their old age. Thus there is a convergence between the differences in the children’s daily lives and the notions their parents hold about childhood. So, in the context of this small African community we can observe two different conceptions and experiences of childhood, coexisting. (p. 187)

Accessed 7/1/08

No Babies?

By RUSSELL SHORTO


http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/29/magazine/29Birtht.html?ei=5087&em=&en=bed...

The cover story investigates Europe's "baby bust." Contrary to the analysis offered by social conservatives, who believe secular lifestyles based on nontraditional gender roles are to blame, sociologists attribute rapidly shrinking European populations to a
lack of support for working mothers. The theory plays out in the fertility rates—countries with "greater gender equality have a greater social commitment to day care and other institutional support for working women," like the Netherlands and Norway, which have more births than more traditional countries like Italy, where "society prefers women to stay at home after they become mothers, and the government reinforces this," even though fewer Italian women work outside the home than their Scandinavian counterparts.

When Aassve moved from Norway to Italy last year to study fertility issues, he said, he found himself with a case of culture whiplash. As women advanced in education levels and career tracks over the past few decades, Norway moved aggressively to accommodate them and their families. The state guarantees about 54 weeks of maternity leave, as well as 6 weeks of paternity leave. With the birth of a child comes a government payment of about 4,000 euros. State-subsidized day care is standard. The cost of living is high, but then again it’s assumed that both parents will work; indeed, during maternity leave a woman is paid 80 percent of her salary. “In Norway, the concern over fertility is mild,” Aassve told me. “What dominates is the issue of gender equity, and that in turn raises the fertility level. For example, there is a debate right now about whether to make paternity leave compulsory. It’s an issue of making sure women and men have equal rights and opportunities. If men are taking leave after the birth of a child, the women can return to work for part of that time.”
What Aassve found in Italy was strikingly different. While Italian women tend to be as highly educated as Scandinavian women, he said, about 50 percent of Italian women work, compared with between 75 percent and 80 percent of women in Scandinavian countries. Despite its veneer of modernity, Italian society prefers women to stay at home after they become mothers, and the government reinforces this. There is little state-financed child care, especially for new mothers, and most newlyweds still find homes close to one or both sets of parents, the assumption being that the extended family will help raise the children. But this no longer works as it once did. “As couples tend to delay childbearing,” Aassve says, “the age gap between generations is widening, and in many cases grandparents, who would be the ones relied upon for child care, themselves become the ones in need of care.” p. 9

If this reading of southern European countries is correct — that their superficial commitment to modernity, to a 21st-century lifestyle, is fatally at odds with a view of the family structure that is rooted in the 19th century — it should apply in other parts of the world, should it not? Apparently it does. This spring, the Japanese government released figures showing that the country’s under-14 population was the lowest since 1908. The head of Thailand’s department of health announced in May that his country’s birthrate now stands at 1.5, far below the replacement level. “The world record for lowest-low fertility right now is South Korea, at 1.1,” Francesco Billari told me. “Japan is just about as low. What we are seeing in Asia is a phenomenon of the 2000s, rather than the 1990s. And it seems the reasons are the same as for southern Europe. All of these are societies still rooted in the tradition where
the husband earned all the money. Things have changed, not only in Italy and Spain but also in Japan and Korea, but those societies have not yet adjusted. The relationships within households have not adjusted yet.” Western Europe, then, is not the isolated case that some make it out to be. It is simply the first region of the world to record extremely low birthrates. p. 10

But one other factor affecting the higher U.S. birthrate stands out in the minds of many observers. “There’s much less flexibility in the European system,” Haub says. “In Europe, both the society and the job market are more rigid.” There may be little state subsidy for child care in the U.S., and there is certainly nothing like the warm governmental nest that Norway feathers for fledgling families, but the American system seems to make up for it in other ways. As Hans-Peter Kohler of the University of Pennsylvania writes: “In general, women are deterred from having children when the economic cost — in the form of lower lifetime wages — is too high. Compared to other high-income countries, this cost is diminished by an American labor market that allows more flexible work hours and makes it easier to leave and then re-enter the labor force.” An American woman might choose to suspend her career for three or five years to raise a family, expecting to be able to resume working; that happens far less easily in Europe. pii

**Because labor union influence is much stronger in Europe than in the US.**
Two Exceptions

Jayson, Sharon 2008. Waiting for the right time. *USA Today*, Nov. 10th p. D1

In US median age of marriage now 26 women, 28 men.


“…Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study. This longitudinal study is following a birth cohort of nearly 5,000 children and their parents randomly…There are 3,712 non-marital children. The typical unmarried mother and father are in their late twenties. More than one-third of the unmarried mothers are Hispanic, 44 percent are non-Hispanic African-American…The more times a mother gives birth, the more likely it is that she will have those children with different partners.” (p. 2)

“Black non-Hispanic mothers and fathers are much more likely to have children from more than one partner than parents of other racial/ethnic groups. Mothers who had their first child at a young age are much more likely than others to have several partners. (Corresponding data are not available for fathers). Fathers who have been incarcerated are twice as likely as fathers who have not been incarcerated to have children by more than one partner…74 percent of fathers either have children with more than one partner
or have been involved with someone who has children with another partner.” (p. 3)


“…urban African American teen mothers.” (9)

“We began our study of [18] neighborhoods, teen parents, and multigeneration families in the summer of 1989 in a medium sized, predominately African American northeastern city.” (9)

“The baby parades consisted of young mothers strolling up and down the street, in groups, pushing their babies in carriages. The young mothers and their babies were dressed “to kill,” often sporting the latest athletic wear. The baby strollers were the best that money could buy. The higher quality of a young mother’s stroller, the higher status in the baby parade. The young mothers saw the baby parades as an opportunity to engage in “girlfriend talk” and to see and be seen by neighborhood audiences that were gathered for other purposes.” (16)

**Teen pregnancy…**


“But with one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in Europe, the British government is bringing sex education to all school in England—including kindergarten-age children.” (A20)
The teen birth rate in the United States rose in 2006 for the first time since 1991.

The largest increases were reported for non-Hispanic black teens, whose overall rate rose 5 percent in 2006. The rate rose 2 percent for Hispanic teens, 3 percent for non-Hispanic white teens, and 4 percent for American Indian or Alaska Native teens.

The study also revealed that the percentage of all U.S. births to unmarried mothers increased to 38.5 percent, up from 36.9 percent in 2005.

The percentage of births delivered before 37 weeks of gestation has risen 21 percent since 1990.

The low birthweight rate also rose slightly in 2006, from 8.2 percent in 2005 to 8.3 percent in 2006, a 19 percent jump since 1990.

As a result of the increases in the birth rates for women aged 15-44, the total fertility rate — an estimate of the average number of births that a group of women would have over their lifetimes — increased 2 percent in 2006 to 2,101 births per 1,000 women. This is the highest rate since 1971 and the first time since then that the rate was above replacement — the level at which a given generation can replace itself.

“The children are more likely to be in foster care, less likely to graduate from high school,” he said. “The daughters are more likely to have teen births themselves, the sons are more likely to be incarcerated. There are more than 400,000 teen births annually in the United States, most of them to unmarried mothers on welfare.” (A20)

Linda Hirshman, Slate, Sept. 2, 2008
http://www.slate.com/id/2199132/?from=rss

The fact sheets from the well-respected National Campaign To Prevent Teen Pregnancy describe a bleak prospect: Even controlling for social and economic backgrounds, only 40 percent of teenage girls who bear children before age 18 go on to graduate from high school, compared with the 75 percent of teens who do not give birth until ages 20 or 21. Less than 2 percent of mothers who have children before age 18 will earn a college degree by age 30, compared with 9 percent of young women who wait until age 20 or 21 to have children.

Overall, teenage mothers—and their children—are also far more likely to live in poverty than females who don't give birth until after age 20. Two-thirds of the families begun by a young unmarried mother are poor. These families are more likely to be on welfare and to require publicly provided health care. Eighty percent of these young mothers do not marry, and they will get almost no support from the fathers, who are usually also poor.
After 10 years, 48 percent of marriages by brides under 18 have ended. Only 24 percent of brides married at age 25 or older are so fated.

Also, using seven months as a marker for a premarital pregnancy, having a baby within the first seven months of marriage raises the odds of divorce in every ethnic group. Black and Hispanic couples who marry when pregnant are twice as likely to divorce as couples who marry when the bride is not pregnant; non-Hispanic whites are 50 percent more likely to divorce if the bride is pregnant than if they marry before conception. When polled, male teenagers are less supportive of having babies outside of marriage than female teens are. In the one part of the MySpace site about children, the prospective father of Bristol Palin’s Levi Johnston wrote, "I don't want kids."

Statistically, the children of teen mothers aren't all that well-off, either. More of their mothers smoke. The babies are more likely to be smaller at birth, suffer higher rates of abuse and neglect, and do poorly in school. They are also likelier to go to prison and to have teen pregnancies themselves, to stay back a grade, to be involved in violence, to go to foster care.


“The U.S. infant mortality rate is just under seven for every 1,000 live births.” (A14)
“In 1990, about 20 black babies died for every 1,000 born in Shelby County, and about 7 white. In 2006, the numbers were little changed: 19 black, seven white.” (A14)

“Premature birth and low birth weight are by far the biggest cause of infant death.” (A14)

“These are the basics. Many young mothers in Memphis are lacking prenatal care and with it they are lacking some of the most basic do’s and don’ts about carrying a child to term.” (A14)

“If you raise your hands over your head your baby will become wrapped in the umbilical cord. If you feel sick, open the medicine cabinet, any bottle will do. Or just as bad: Stay away from everything in the medicine cabinet. “What makes people believe things that have no medical basis?” Taylor says, “It’s been passed down.”” (A14)

“At the moment health leaders in Memphis are placing their faith in a relatively new idea called centering pregnancy,” which gathers about a dozen women with similar due dates and coached them through their pregnancies as a group. Two studies have found the models led women to be better prepared to handle their pregnancies.” (A14)

Loomis, Brandon 2008. A new growth star is born: Utah. Salt Lake Tribune December 23rd p. Ai , A4 Census results show Utah lead nation in growth in 2007, 2008. 64% of the growth came from an excess of births over deaths. In spite of the grim forecasts for everything from water shortages to traffic congestion to
overcrowded classrooms and the loss of farmland, the State Planning Coordinator says: “We’re pleased.” p. A4


Hoping to escape increasing scrutiny and prosecution by authorities, one fundamentalist Mormon community uprooted itself from Southern Utah and moved to an isolated compound—Yearning For Zion Ranch near Eldorado, Texas. But Texas authorities were even less forgiving of the religious group’s pronatalist practices. In April 2008, authorities raided the sect’s compound and from that point on, TV cameras showed matriarchal figures dressed in the style of frontier farm-wives surrounded by their large broods entering and exiting various government offices as the legal investigation unfolded. In December a report was issued that documented the very high number of girls (12-15 years old) who were bred to community elders and added to polygynous households. The teenaged brides had all borne one or more children at the time the raid was conducted.
The Next Transition

Contra “hooking up”…


With the increasing emphasis on abstinence the perception was that adolescents where engaging in oral sex to preserve their virginity. Lindberg's research indicates otherwise; those who engage in vaginal intercourse also engage in oral sex and anal sex at around the same time.

"…54% of adolescent females and 55% of adolescent males have ever had oral sex, and one in 10 has ever had anal sex. Both oral sex and anal sex were much more common among adolescents who had initiated vaginal sex as compared to virgins. The initiations of vaginal and oral sex appear to occur closely together; by 6 months after first vaginal intercourse, 82% of adolescents also engaged in oral sex. White and higher SES teens were more likely than their peers to have ever had oral or anal sex" (Lindberg 2008: abstract).

Why Russian children aren't adopted by childless Russians..

“The Russian Children’s fund estimated in 2001 that approximately 2.5 million children were living on Russia’s urban streets and 250,000 were surviving in Moscow alone…113,000 children in Russia have been abandoned to the state each year since 1996.” (Fujimura 2005:5)

“The Russian public views orphans as a threat. Rather than helpless victims, the children are seen as hopeless cases who threaten the well-being of society…Russians also believe that the purity and innocence are not (Fujimura 2005:16) automatically conferred upon every child. Those traits depend on the purity of the child’s parents. “Just look at the adults who abandon their children or who have them taken away!” One caretaker exclaimed. “How can the child be different? She has their blood.” Many Russians believe that orphans are inherently different from children who have homes. Neurologically they are wired differently, according to the caretakers of one home, because they have not received the same love and attention that a “normal” child receives from his or her mother…This concept of the worthlessness of an orphan is one reason few Russians adopt children…Once a couple has adopted a child, the family will often move to another city so that no one will find out that the child was an orphan.” (Fujimura 2005:17)

**a la carte…women electing to carry their child but not deliver:**

In the last 20 years a steady increase in pre-term births has lead to an alarming result of one in eight babies born too early. “A full-term pregnancy lasts from 38 to 42 weeks. Babies born before completion of week 37 are premature[, and it is those born before 32 weeks who, despite advances in the neonatal ICU, are most likely to die or suffer devastating disabilities, such as cerebral palsy or retardation.

Evidence is growing that pre-term births—those that occur between 34 and 37 weeks—may be due to unnecessary Caesarean sections” A study conducted by the March of Dimes and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention point to a connection between the rise in pre-term births and the increase of Caesarean sections.


“A team of maids, cooks, and doctors looks after the women, whose pregnancies would be unusual anywhere else but are common here. The young mothers of Anand, a place famous for its milk, are pregnant with the children of infertile couples from around the world…More than 50 women in this city are now pregnant with the children of couples from the United States, Taiwan, Britain and beyond…The women earn more than many could make in 15 years…[offering their] “wombs for rent”… (p. A6)

“U.S. rates of premature births climbed steadily during the past two decades, reaching an estimated 12.8 percent of births in 2006, government figures show. More than 540,000 babies were born premature that year. Fertility treatments that result in multiple births and older mothers contributed to the rise…In the United States, there is an epidemic of preterm birth, and prevention is absolutely critical…As expected, babies born early were more likely to die during the first year of life compared to babies born at term. Surprisingly their increased risk of death persisted as they aged.” (p. A9)

http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/downs-syndrome--the-baby-clock-14087757.html

The risk of a Down's syndrome pregnancy is 16 times greater in a mother over 40 than in one aged 25.


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Russian attitudes changing. Gov’t making significant increases in investments in abandoned children, encouraging domestic adoption, improving conditions in orphanages, funding foster care, providing subsidies for extended family members who care for abandoned kin. And the rate of foreign adoptions has dropped dramatically from 6000 in 2004 to 1600 in 2008. And perhaps the stigma has been lessened as well.
“Parents no longer feel they have to hide the fact that a child was adopted,” she says. “My sister adopted a 3-year-old and we don't hide that fact.”


“Scott and Karen Banks, former operators of the Wellsville-based adoption agency Focus on Children, are expected to enter guilty pleas related to a criminal adoption fraud case involving Samoan children.” (Geraci 2009:A3)

“According to the indictment, parents in Samoa were duped into giving up their children under the promise that they would receive an American education, return to the country at age 18, and remain in contact with their birth parents. Adoptive parents in the United States reportedly were told they were adopting orphans living in dire conditions.” (Geraci 2009:A3)


Who wants to buy a baby? Certainly not most people who try to adopt internationally. And yet too often that's how their dollars and euros are being used. The idea that the developing world has millions of healthy infants and toddlers in need of new homes is a myth. In poor countries as in rich ones, healthy babies are rarely abandoned or relinquished -- except in China, with its one-child policy. The vast majority of children who need adoption are older,
sick, disabled or traumatized. But most Westerners waiting in line are looking for healthy infants or toddlers to take home. The result is a gap between supply and demand -- a gap that can be closed by Western money. In some countries, Western cash has induced locals to buy or kidnap children or defraud or coerce their families into giving them up, strip the children of their identities and transform them into orphans for Western adoption. In 2008, Vietnam stopped adoptions to the United States because of these concerns.

Graff, E.J. 2008. The lie we love. *Foreign Policy*. November/December
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UNICEF’s “millions of orphans” are not healthy babies doomed to institutional misery unless Westerners adopt and save them. Rather, they are mostly older children living with extended families who need financial support.

The exception is China, where the country’s three-decades-old one-child policy, now being loosened, has created an unprecedented number of girls available for adoption. But even this flow of daughters is finite; China has far more hopeful foreigners looking to adopt a child than it has orphans it is willing to send overseas. In 2005, foreign parents adopted nearly 14,500 Chinese children. That was far fewer than the number of Westerners who wanted to adopt; adoption agencies report many more clients waiting in line. And taking those children home has gotten harder; in 2007, China’s central adoption authority sharply
reduced the number of children sent abroad, possibly because of the country’s growing sex imbalance, declining poverty, and scandals involving child trafficking for foreign adoption. Prospective foreign parents today are strictly judged by their age, marital history, family size, income, health, and even weight. That means that if you are single, gay, fat, old, less than well off, too often divorced, too recently married, taking antidepressants, or already have four children, China will turn you away. Even those allowed a spot in line are being told they might wait three to four years before they bring home a child. That has led many prospective parents to shop around for a country that puts fewer barriers between them and their children—as if every country were China, but with fewer onerous regulations.

“Guatemala is a perfect case study of how international adoption has become a demand-driven business,” says Kelley McCreery Bunkers, a former consultant with UNICEF Guatemala. The country’s adoption process was “an industry developed to meet the needs of adoptive families in developed countries, specifically the United States.”