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1994 World Cultures 8(2):3-5
Analytic Technologies

Child Rearing and Socialization: SCCS Variable Descriptions and Reliability 2

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the second in a series of publications (*World Cultures 8(1)*) to provide the variable descriptions and reliability assessments for variables and data bases in the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS). This present publication makes available in the computer medium two bodies of information about the SCCS data bases and variables provided in previous *World Culture* publications. Included here are variable description (.DES) files and reliability assessment (.REL) files. The .DES files include variable descriptions of the previously published SCCS variables, providing a more detailed description of the variables and their values. Additional information often provides the theoretical context of the measures, which may be necessary for appropriate interpretation of their meaning. The .REL files provide the information available regarding the reliability of the coding process and data. This includes information about coding and checking procedures, as well as some formal assessments of reliability.

The focus of the variable descriptions and reliability assessments reported here are studies of the conditions associated with socialization and child rearing practices from infancy through adolescence. These studies are based primarily upon the research of four investigators, Herbert Barry III, Alice Schlegel, and Ronald and Evelyn Rohner.

The variables provide new opportunities for studying the causes and consequences of childhood socialization through ethnological methods made possible by the development of the SCCS as a cross-cultural data base. These variable and data sets provide an unparalleled body of data for addressing some of the most fundamental questions of the social sciences, the nature of the consequences of childhood socialization practices. Assessment of the interface of these childhood socialization data sets with other published data in the SCCS permits empirical and quantitative assessment of hypotheses about the effects of cultural, social and ecological processes on socialization, personality, and numerous other aspects of human behavior. Since the SCCS data base includes well over one thousand variables, covering virtually all major areas of social and cultural life as well as the physical environment, a wide variety of determinants of the dynamics of childhood socialization may be addressed. Relationships between these childhood socialization variables and the other data sets of the SCCS that address social and political organization provide a basis from which to investigate the structural macrolevel societal influences upon childhood socialization. Unfortunately comparable data sets on adults that would permit investigation of the outcomes of diverse childhood socialization procedures are lacking.

The .REL files provide information on data reliability, a fundamental issue in all research. Those involved in coding the SCCS data sets have all addressed reliability issues. However they vary as to whether they directly and formally assess reliability, in the methods employed, and in the success they attain. The different studies on the SCCS provide another means of assessing and establishing both reliability and validity. Studies by different investigators assessing the same or similar aspects of cultural behavior in independent studies provide the data basis for convergent validation. Establishing the validity and reliability of the SCCS data and derived measures requires analyses integrating independent SCCS studies. Thus, some of these data sets have limitations in terms of assessment of reliability. In some studies formal reliability concerns have been minimal. Another limitation on these data bases is missing data because of the lack of adequate ethnographic description to provide the requisite information. The neglect of childhood socialization in traditional ethnographies is apparent in the limited or nonexistent coverage on these practices and conditions for many societies. The data sets and variable descriptions have in many cases designated the value as missing because of inadequate coverage, rather than asserting the absence of the practices assessed by the variables. With missing variables differing across data sets, the sample from which one can assess interrelations among all variables is reduced from the 186 SCCS sample.

The references cited in the files are not included here and must be determined through access to the original sources. Most of the files presented here (02, 13, 1418, and 21) are also reprinted in Herbert Barry III and Alice Schlegel's *Cross-Cultural Samples and Codes*.

2. USE OF .REL AND .DES FILES

The .REL and .DES files are ASCII text files. If you have installed MAPTAB on a hard disk, the editors suggest that you copy the files into the same directory as the MAPTAB program and its .COD and .DAT files. The .DES and .REL files currently cannot be accessed from within MAPTAB. They can be read by any word processing program that accepts ASCII files. The files are edited portions of the original articles in which the codes first appeared. If you use a variable from the MAPTAB data base, you should consult the .DES file for that variable to get a fuller description of the definition of variable and the meaning of the scores than that provided by the MAPTAB .COD files. You should then consult the .REL file containing the variable to review author's comments on how the variable was coded and any difficulties associated with the coding of the data.

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4. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The initial work in preparing these variable description and reliability files was supported in part by a National Science Foundation Grant. This award to the Human Relations Area Files, Inc. was part of the project "The Summer Institutes for Comparative Research Using Secondary Data." I wish to thank Doug White for his assistance in this project. Thanks are also due to Marsha Schweitzer for her assistance in preparing these files for publication. Permission to reprint this material from the original sources is gratefully acknowledged.

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