



# The Cultural Nature of Human Development

By Barbara Rogoff

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Three-year-old Kwara'ae children in Oceania act as caregivers of their younger siblings, but in the UK, it is an offense to leave a child under age 14 ears without adult supervision. In the Efe community in Zaire, infants routinely use machetes with safety and some skill, although U.S. middle-class adults often do not trust young children with knives. What explains these marked differences in the capabilities of these children?

Until recently, traditional understandings of human development held that a child's development is universal and that children have characteristics and skills that develop independently of cultural processes. Barbara Rogoff argues, however, that human development must be understood as a cultural process, not simply a biological or psychological one. Individuals develop as members of a community, and their development can only be fully understood by examining the practices and circumstances of their communities.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

" Barbara Rogoff's new book is an excellent compilation of the last three or four decades of work by anthropologists and human developmentalists who study the cultural processes inherent in human development. ... highly recommended for scholars of human development and their advanced students."  
--*Anthropology & Education Quarterly*

#### From the Back Cover

"This book is ***absolutely refreshing and revolutionary***. I applaud the breadth of human experiences that Barbara Rogoff draws on to document the range of variation as well as the limits of human developmental trajectories. I know of no other work that has accomplished what Rogoff has in this book. I have underlined so much that the book reeks of magic marker colors. It is a brave effort on her part and one that is sorely needed in the field. Rogoff clearly breaks new ground here."

--**Carol D. Lee**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University

"This book convincingly demonstrates for the first time how developmental studies can go beyond an ethnocentric view of human beings. Drawing on impressive examples from Asia and Africa, as well as from minorities in the U.S., Rogoff offers a number of advanced theoretical concepts regarding the cultural nature of human development. The carefully chosen and arranged photos make this book ***as appealing to look at as it is enjoyable to read.***"

--**Giyoo Hatano**, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Science, University of the Air, Japan

"The *Cultural Nature of Human Development* is ***a significant contribution***. It encourages us to think in fresh ways about both regularity and variation in individuals and the cultural groups of which they are a part. By focusing on the way people participate in the cultural practices of their communities, this work moves us beyond the tendency to conflate culture with racial or ethnic identity. It provides a more productive way to understand how issues of ethnicity, nationality, and language are necessarily involved in the histories of individuals and the cultural practices of their communities. These are conversations that should be part of scholarly work and study across disciplines, including education."

--**Kris D. Gutierrez**, Ph.D., Professor, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles

"Barbara Rogoff's book is ***fresh, engaging, and challenging: must-see material*** for all interested in the way development unfolds in social contexts."

--**Jacqueline J. Goodnow**, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, Macquarie University, Australia

"This book is **essential reading** for any psychologist, but particularly for anyone concerned with the role of culture in the process of human development. Barbara Rogoff has done the field a great service by writing an account of the role of culture in development that will be of equal interest to undergraduates, graduate students, and professional in the field."

--**Michael Cole**, Ph.D., University Professor of Communication and Psychology,  
Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition, University of California, San Diego

#### About the Author

**Barbara Rogoff** is UCSC Foundation Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She has been a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, a Kellogg Fellow, and Editor of *Human Development*. Her books *Apprenticeship in Thinking* (OUP, 1990), *Learning Together* (OUP, 2001), and *The Cultural Nature of Human Development* (OUP, 2003) have received awards from the American Psychological Association and the American Educational Research Association. Her current book, *Developing Destinies*, deepens the ideas presented in her previous books, building on her three decades of research on human development in a Mayan community in Guatemala.

*Barbara Rogoff received the 2013 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Cultural and Contextual Factors in Child Development, from the Society for Research in Child Development.*

*The citation read: "For her brilliant insights about and specification of development as a cultural process; For her highly influential research and writing underscoring the influences of parental practices; For illuminating how inclusion and participation in adult settings are critical to children's development; For underscoring the necessity of multicultural perspectives on development through her exemplary contributions to the development of ethnic minority scholars."*

## Users Review

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