

Call for Papers: “Child Development: Nurturing Our Humanity”

The editors of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies (IJPS)*, a scholarly peer-reviewed, open-access online journal, invite researchers, scholars, authors, and practitioners to submit original writing for publication in our Fall 2019 issue (Vol. 6, No.3). The submission deadline is September 15, 2019. Early submissions are welcome and will receive preference in the publication process.

How children develop is a growing theme across disciplines — and for important reasons. Those seeking improved policies and actions to help families understand that this is a critical issue, not only for children and their families, but for every society on the planet.

These advocates are also recognizing that positive changes in how children are treated and educated cannot be achieved in isolation. Our challenge is one of fundamental systems change, starting with a change in the prevailing paradigm or worldview.

Systems scientist Donella Meadows, in “Places to Intervene in a System” (2008), outlines points of influence to foster systemic change. She lists them from those offering the most leverage to those offering the least leverage, though they all have an influence. Near the bottom are numbers, such as taxes, subsidies, and standards. Near the middle are processes such as feedback loops and information flows. At the top of the list are self-organization, goals, and her top items: paradigms and transcending paradigms. She goes so far as to say, “Paradigms are the sources of systems” (p. 163).

These underlying thought structures, often below the level of consciousness, determine how we think about our world and our place in it, including key matters such as how we treat children in families and in society at large, and what kinds of social systems we create.

The interdisciplinary field of Partnership Studies is concerned with systemic change, addressing the process of cultural transformation through the lens of societies' underlying paradigms. Partnership scholars are particularly interested in the partnership/domination spectrum that influences and reflects human relationships. We recognize that the underlying paradigm of partnership versus domination permeates societies, and that this new system of classifications, in contrast to earlier social categories, takes into full account matters traditionally marginalized or ignored, including the cultural construction of childhood and gender. For example, authoritarian societies have their roots in authoritarian families; thus the domestic sphere and the public sphere are fed by the same domination paradigm, reinforced by actions that manifest that worldview.

The field of Partnership Studies and its Cultural Transformation Theory are a uniting lens for understanding and building the foundations for mutually caring relationships across realms of human activity. Partnership Studies has been applied to gender relations, education, health care, economics, the environment, and almost every other area of life (Center for Partnership Studies, n.d.). A new book by Riane Eisler and Douglas Fry, *Nurturing Our Humanity: How Domination and Partnership Shape Our Brains, Lives, and Future* (2019), applies the biocultural partnership/domination lens cross-culturally and historically, showing the key importance of child development and how it differs depending on the degree to which a culture or subculture orients to either end of the partnership/domination scale.

In this Child Development-themed issue of the *IJPS*, you are invited to propose perspectives on child development from all disciplines, and to consider how these perspectives relate to domination or partnership; what role child development plays in cultural transformation; and how this role, in turn, relates to fundamental changes in the prevailing paradigm.

Articles or essays from scholars as well as practitioners are welcomed. We invite you to explore wide-ranging questions such as:

- What have we learned in the last 50 years about child development?
- Why have medical groups issued public statements advocating leaving behind “traditional” child-rearing methods such as spanking?
- What are the effects of children’s experiences and observations on their future physical and mental health?
- What are we learning from studies about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)?
- How do childhood family experiences shape attitudes throughout life?
- How do childhood family experiences shape our governing structures?
- How do economic policies affect child development?
- What are we learning about the relationship between human development and nations’ economic success?
- How do economic valuations reflect and affect underlying attitudes of domination or partnership?
- What have you learned from applying partnership principles to your research and/or practice in relation to childhood?

Please join us in this ongoing conversation.

References

Center for Partnership Studies. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://centerforpartnership.org/>

- Eisler, R. & Fry, D. (2019). *Nurturing our humanity: How domination and partnership shape our brains, lives, and future*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Meadows, D. H. (2008). Places to Intervene in a system. In *Thinking in systems: A primer*. (D. Wright, Ed.). White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing.