

MOTIVES IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

Cultural-Historical Approaches

MARIANE HEDEGAARD
ANNE EDWARDS
MARILYN FLEER



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The contributors to this collection employ the analytic resources of cultural-historical theory to examine the relationship between childhood and children's development under different societal conditions. In particular they attend to relationships between development, emotions, motives and identities, as well as the social practices in which children and young people may be learners. These practices are knowledge-laden, imbued with cultural values and emotionally freighted by those who already act in them.

The book first discusses the organising principles that underpin a cultural-historical understanding of motives, development and learning. The second part foregrounds children's lives to exemplify the implications of these ideas as they are played out – examining how children are positioned as learners in pre-school, primary school and play environments. The final part uses the core ideas to look at the implementation of policy aimed at enhancing children's engagement with opportunities for learning, by discussing motives in the organisations that shape children's development.

Mariane Hedegaard is professor in developmental psychology and head of the Centre for Person, Practice, Development & Culture at the University of Copenhagen.

Anne Edwards is professor of educational studies and director of the Department of Education at the University of Oxford.

Marilyn Flear holds the foundation chair for early childhood education at Monash University, Australia, and is the research director for the research group Child and Community Development.

Motives in Children's Development

CULTURAL-HISTORICAL APPROACHES

Edited by

Mariane Hedegaard

University of Copenhagen

Anne Edwards

Oxford University

Marilyn Flear

Monash University



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Introduction: Cultural-Historical Understandings of Motives and Children's Development

How to engage children, whether pre-school or adolescents, with what is culturally valued is a universal challenge for educators and for parents. Adults expend considerable energy trying to align what matters to them and what matters to children so that cultural patterns endure and children learn to participate as productive members of society within them.

All too often these attempts at alignment are seen as a problem of how to motivate children, and the impact of such efforts is frequently short-term. However, this book is not simply about motivation. It is far more ambitious: It unravels how children's longer-term development is interconnected with why and how they take part in everyday practices.

The contributors discuss how children develop in relation to what matters for them as they are with their families, go to child-care or school and play with their friends. The central concern across the chapters is the motives that give shape to children's development as they take an active part in the practices they encounter at home, in more formal education settings and at play.

The authors come from Australia, Europe – including Russia – South America and the United States. They therefore bring together analyses of relationships between childhood and children's development under quite different societal conditions. As such, it is possible to gain a more global view of how the concept of motives has been used to solve specific cultural and local community research problems. Taken together, the country-specific studies provide a strong focus on the interplay between development, emotions, motives, identities and the social practices in which children and young people may be learners. Collectively, these chapters bring together both a historical and a contemporary view of these concepts, giving a more expansive meaning to motives.

The book has the term *cultural-historical approaches* in its title to indicate its origins in the cultural-historical approach of Lev Vygotsky, a

Russian researcher who studied the intertwining of learning, development and culture and who produced his main work between 1924 and 1934. His death, at age thirty-eight, put an end to this productive research period, which yielded an impressive collection of manuscripts. Much of his work was first published in Russian after his death and then later in English and other languages. Over the intervening period, his ideas have led to a rich vein of cultural-historical research which has continued his examination of the interplay of learning, development and culture. Much of this diversity and development is reflected in the writing of the authors of the chapters contained in this book, giving a fuller account of the concept of motives.

After eighty years, there are, of course, differences in how his analyses have been developed. Nonetheless, within this diversity, considerable coherence remains among the cultural-historical research approaches which have built on his work. Hence we have long believed that it would be fruitful to bring together researchers from these approaches to discuss the key concepts of *motives* and *emotions* in relation to children's development and to examine their interconnections with the conditions that family and professional practices provide for their development.

Many authors of chapters in this volume have drawn upon Leontiev's idea of motive in relation to the problems they are working on. Leontiev was one of Vygotsky's co-workers and has been a central figure within the cultural-historical tradition with his introduction of the concepts of activity and the object-motive. Leontiev has a particular view of motive, which he explained in relation to activities and what matters in those activities: 'The main thing that distinguished one activity from another, however, is the difference in their objects. It is exactly the object of activity, that gives it a determined direction. According to the terminology I have proposed, the object of activity is its true motive' (Leontiev, 1978, p. 17).

The idea of an object-motive within a system of concepts in activity theory is used throughout this book in connection with its historical roots which commenced with the theoretical writings of Vygotsky. In this volume, object-motive is critiqued (see Kravtsova and Kravtsov), elaborated upon (see Gonzalez Rey), but has also inspired well-known Russian (e.g. Elkonin, Zinchenko) and Danish (e.g. Hedegaard) scholars to put forward contemporary works which others in this volume have used to frame or analyse their scientific investigations (see, Flear, Sanchez Medina and Martinez Lozano, Stenild and Sejer Iversen, Wardekker and Boersma, Winther-Lindqvist). Many authors in this volume have also drawn upon a range of cultural-historical theories (e.g. Daniels, Edwards, Hedegaard,

Wardekker and Boersma, Winther-Lindqvist, Zinchenko) to better understand the theoretical problems they are examining. Taken together, these ideas have allowed contributors to connect the activities that arise in the practices of the home, child-care, school or playground with the thinking and actions of children so that their engagement in activities in practices is open to scrutiny. Through this empirical and theoretical activity, many challenges, possibilities, and opportunities arise for scientific research (see Chaiklin, this volume).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

The book consists of three parts. Part One draws on studies of children and young people to explain the organising principles that underpin a cultural-historical understanding of motives, emotions, development and learning. Part Two foregrounds children's lives to exemplify the implications of these ideas as they are played out in how children are positioned as learners in home, child-care, school and play environments. The two chapters in Part Three then take the core ideas to an examination of the institutional conditions for children's engagement with opportunities for learning, by discussing motives in the organisations that shape children development. The final chapter by Seth Chaiklin draws on themes discussed in a workshop of the first edition of the chapters. He points out central topics in this discussion and the challenge for future research.

The cultural-historical research traditions that Vygotsky inspired draw particularly on the idea that children are social from birth and that children's individualities develop into their personalities through becoming members of society. In this way children come to reflect the society they have grown up in, both by how their primary functions of need and perception are transformed and by how what matters in the culture influences their emotional and motivational orientation to the world.

In [Chapter 1](#), Mariane Hedegaard proposes that this view of development has to be nuanced with the concept of institutional practice. Children's everyday lives are lived across institutional practices as they move, for example, between home and school, and the objectives in these practices influence the development of children's motives. Hedegaard argues that the dynamic of children's activities and development has to be analysed at several planes, for example, at the levels of institutional practices, activity within the practices and children's actions. Such an analysis recognises that children's intentional actions within activities have to be the core object of enquiry when researching the development of

children's motives while they are participating in institutional practices. Elena Kravtsova and Genady Kravtsov in [Chapter 2](#) make a case similar to Hedegaard's, suggesting that children's perspectives have to be central to our understanding of their activity. These views, they remind us, reflect Vygotsky's analyses of human will, which for him functioned as a mediating device which links personal actions. Kravtsova and Kravtsov propose that children's will has a central role in how they live their lives and should be a primary focus in attempts at understanding the development of children's play and learning.

The remaining chapters in the collection build on Hedegaard's premise that institutional practices mediate children's learning and development. The authors therefore all recognise that the various forces emanating from cultural settings, social relations and a child's needs are interwoven to mediate a child's actions. They also work with the view that differences between institutions can be conceptualised as differences in the practices that are at the core of these institutions. Importantly for child development, these practices influence what Vygotsky termed 'the leading activity' for a child in a given period of their development and which is reflected in the child's motives, feelings, values and identity.

In [Chapter 3](#), Fernando González Rey picks up these Vygotskian ideas by examining emotion and the part it plays in the formation of personality through the complex configurations of the emotions that constitute a child's subjectivity. In [Chapter 4](#), Vladimir Zinchenko indicates an important gap in psychology, arguing that whereas language has been seen as central in children's cognitive development, there has been a lack of consideration of language as a cultural medium for emotions. Zinchenko observes that language mediates what matters in a culture through communicating feelings from the moment that the child is born, and language thereby becomes a cultural medium that influences a child's emotional and motivational relation to the world from the first moments of life.

Illustrating these points, in [Chapter 5](#), Marilyn Flear shows, through her comparative case studies of young children, how kindergarten practices can be diverse and provide different possibilities for children to be actively engaged. Her research shows that the opportunities that children have for structuring their imitation and their creation of rules for play in the activity settings of early education can influence the development of their learning motives.

José A. Sánchez Medina and Virginia Martínez Lozano in [Chapter 6](#) show that peer interactions, even in early childhood, exhibit a marked

cultural component. The way in which peer groups are organised, the type of activity they develop, and even the conflicts issues and the way of negotiating and resolving them reflect values and norms of the adult cultures in children's motives for interacting in play. Children rebuild, in their acts, this world of reference. They re-create these values and norms conforming to a *peer culture* where those cultural issues play an important role as motives that guide and organise their own acts.

The importance of practices to the development of motives means that transitions between practices can be demanding. Examining the transition from kindergarten to school, Ditte Winther-Lindqvist in [Chapter 7](#) demonstrates that both continuity and discontinuity in children's experiences take place. Her study reveals in detail the restructuring of what matters for children as they enter school and how this influences their engagement. Establishing engagement across situations and institutionalised practices is also a theme in Harry Daniels' contribution (Chapter 11) in Part Three of the book. He points to the importance of the re-contextualisation of societal motives within concrete situations to change the situations. In this process, changes in the local arrangement of power and control are important so that children can engage in new ways and develop motives for learning in school.

Part of the educational process in school involves engaging children with what is to be learnt. In [Chapter 8](#), Kåre Stenild and Ole Sejer Iversen in their project demonstrate that mobile phones and IT technology can be used in this process. They also argue, however, that the motivational advantage of using mobile phones and IT technology in school will be evident at first as an educational tool when this technology motivates children's use of the subject matter knowledge in their everyday activities.

In [Chapter 9](#), Wim Wardekker, Annoesjka Boersma, Geert Ten Dam and Monique Volman also examine school practices. They draw on their study of motives and adolescents to discuss the mutual aligning of school motives and those of young people through an innovative curriculum development. They suggest that motivation has to relate both to the child's earlier knowledge and what is meaningful knowledge for the child in the future to achieve a 'use value' which is recognised by the child.

The importance of what matters for people in practices is also found in the final section of the book in [Chapter 10](#), where Anne Edwards's focus is the professional practices of the children's workforce, which create the conditions for children's engagement as learners. She discusses the weaknesses of practices, and therefore the experiences of children, where what matters

for practitioners does not include distinct professional knowledge which is open to scrutiny. She argues that responsible and responsive practice with children involves attention to working on and with the knowledge to be found in professional practices. In [Chapter 11](#) Harry Daniels argues that reconceptualisation of societal motives within specific situations provides an important approach to formulating a theory of how to change situations. In this conceptualisation he draws on Basil Bernstein's sociology of cultural transmission. Seth Chaiklin brings the the contributions together in [Chapter 12](#) locating motives within the wholeness approach in Cultural-Historical theory and discussing the concept of motives in relation to problems in the theory.

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Leontiev, A. N. (1978). *Activity, consciousness, and personality*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

PART ONE

MOTIVES, EMOTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Dynamic Aspects in Children's Learning and Development

MARIANE HEDEGAARD

Over the years I have pondered about the relation between Jerome Bruner's study of infants' intentional orientation to the world and Marx Wartofsky's philosophical conceptions of human's dynamic relation to objects, and how to relate this to A. N. Leontiev's activity theory. Bruner (1972) and his co-workers studied experimentally how infants from one month to seven months of age transform intention-oriented movements into the intentional act of reaching for objects. From this research Bruner proposed that what characterizes humans is that we are born with 'pre-adaptive structures that make a possible comparison of what is intended in an activity and what is accomplished' (Bruner 1972, p. 34). Wartofsky in his theory questioned the notion that human perception is 'natural' and argued that human perception is an activity that is mediated by artifacts such as tools and language. These mediating artifacts, Wartofsky argued, have to be seen as objectifications of human needs and intentions '*already* invested with cognitive and affective content' (Wartofsky, 1979, pp. 205–206).

What is special in Bruner's and Wartofsky's conceptions of the dynamic between persons and the world is that they do not conceptualize the dynamic of children's relation to the world starting with the child's primary needs. Rather, it is a characteristic in humans' general relation to the world, that can be seen as demands from the world onto the person. The aim in this chapter is to integrate this conception of how demands of being in the world can be related to the cultural-historical approach of children's development and Leontiev's theory of motives.

Leontiev's (1978) theory draws attention to how children's needs, through participating in collective activities, become attached to objects (in the form of material objects such as different kind of foods, or ideal objects such as the value of studying or religious beliefs) and thereby can turn into a person's motives. Theoretically this is conceptualised so that

a human, born as an individual, becomes a person through acquiring collective motives.

This chapter formulates a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic which includes not only human activity, but also demands by both objects and persons in different types of institutional practice. Institutional practice will be used to extend Leontiev's conception of activity and its motives.

The objectives of institutional practices, and how they create demands for children's activities, will be the central focus in the analyses. A central argument will be that on the one hand, children learn and develop through their orientation towards the demands in institutional practices for competences, motives and values; on the other hand, children's activities personalise practice in their realisation and contribution to the activity settings of practice; thereby children create conditions for their own learning and development of personal competences and motives.

In this chapter I draw on an earlier model (Hedegaard, 1999, 2009) of the relation between children's activities, institutional practices and societal conditions. The model is extended here by the concept of activity setting. Children's activities in this version (see [Figure 1.1](#)) are seen as located within activity settings that can be found in specific practices such as family or school. Demands in these settings by objects or persons can be seen as conditions for as well as motivating children's activities. For home practices this can be the meals, homework and preparation for going to bed. In school it can be the different subject matter sessions and recess. The model in [Figure 1.1](#) illustrates a dynamic where a child concurrently should be seen as participating in several institutional practices in her/his everyday life – for instance, in the family, school or day-care.

The following section contains a short introduction to a wholeness approach to learning and development, that allows us to anchor the dynamic of children's learning and development in a theoretical frame. This is followed by an overview of the main theoretical approaches to the dynamic aspects in children's learning and development. The discussion then, from these premises, focuses on the dynamic relations in children's everyday life in institutional practices, discussed in relation to a concrete example. From this example the relation between children's intentional actions and motive-oriented activities is discussed.

A WHOLENESS APPROACH

In cultural-historical approaches a salient aim is to move beyond an empirical-research approach of combining elements, and instead to

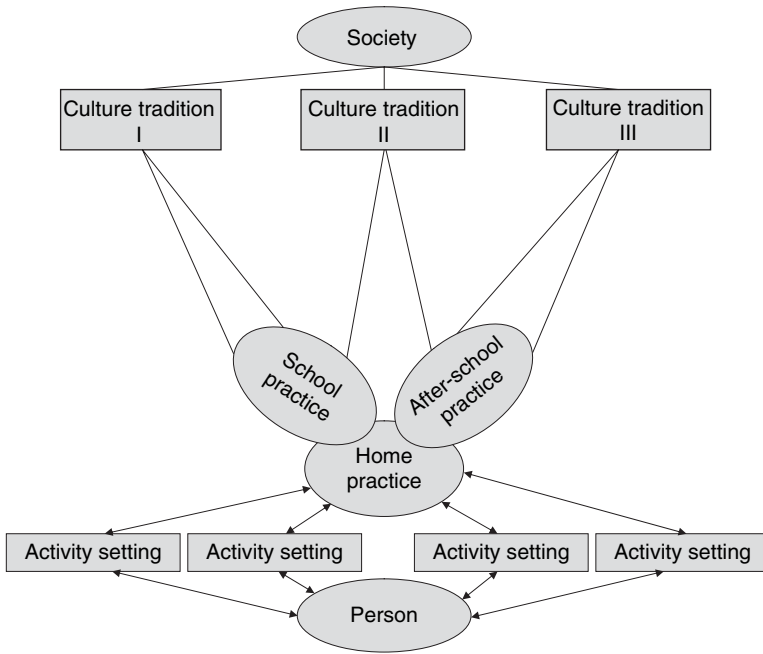


FIGURE 1.1. Model of the relations between cultural tradition, practice, activity settings and children's activities as the core in a cultural-historical approach to children's learning and development.

define the area of study as a whole, anchored in historical values where the processes are in focus (such as practices, social situations, activities and actions) (Bozhovich, 2009; Hedegaard, 2002; Iljenkov, 1977; Leontiev, 1978; Vygotsky, 1998; Zinchenko, 2002). Therefore a theoretical outline of learning and development which can be seen as a wholeness approach will focus on children's activities in activity settings located in institutional practices that have a history embodied in traditions and framed by societal conditions.

In Vygotsky's and Leontiev's theories the focus is on how societal objects are mediating between the child and the world in his/her social situation, and how this mediation leads to the individual's learning and development as a personality. Vygotsky's wholeness approach to children's development relates the emergence of different development periods to changes in the child's social situation. The concept of the social situation of development is the key to understanding this dynamic and how the world is seen from a specific child's perspective in a given age period. It is important to note that Vygotsky did not refer to biological age in itself, but rather to age periods defined by societal traditions which then

become reflected in the child's experiential relation to the world: 'The social situation of development represents the initial moments for all dynamic changes that occur in development during a given [age] period.... The social situation of development specific to each age [period] determines strictly regularly the whole picture of the child's life or his social existence' (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 198).

Leontiev similarly pointed to the necessity to overcome the nature-nurture split which in different theoretical refinements has dominated psychology as a two-factor model of children's development – either inner factors or outer factors (or both) determining development. He wrote:

Of course, no development directly comes from what comprises only the prerequisites necessary for it, no matter in what detail we might describe it. The method of Marxist dialectics requires that we go further and investigate the development as a process of 'self movement', that is, investigate its internal moving relations, contradictions, and mutual transitions so that its prerequisites appear in it as its own changing moments. (Leontiev, 1978, p. 105)

To extend Vygotsky's and Leontiev's points I will introduce the concepts of practice. The relation between institutional practice and its objective and the person's motivated activity within his/her social situation of development can be seen as the core in conceptualisation of the developmental process as self-movement. By distinguishing between practice and activity one can better see the inner relation between a child's activities and the societal conditions as mediated by the institutional objectives of practices and thereby get deeper into the analyses of a self-movement of development which is cultural and historical.

I conceptualise Vygotsky's and Leontiev's concepts of the collective and the social as institutional practices which are created and re-created by a person's activities in the activity settings of the practices (such as breakfast in the family, lessons in school), while at the same time the collective institutional practices are the social conditions for a person's activities. People learn when their activities change their social relations in a practice and thereby give them possibilities for new activities. Development occurs when a person's learning takes place across institutional practices and changes the person's relation qualitatively across all the practices in which the person participates. This is what Vygotsky meant when he wrote: 'The social situation of development specific to each age determines strictly regularly the whole picture of the child's life or his social existence' (1998, p. 198).

DRIVES, NEEDS, MOTIVATION AND MOTIVES AS DYNAMIC
FORCES IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The role of drives, needs, motivation and motives has been formulated in different theories as forces giving rise to how persons relate to the world and how this relation develops. Broadly they can be divided into theories which conceptualise these dynamic aspects of a person's relation to the world (1) as building on inborn drives and needs and modification of these drives and needs (psychoanalytical, humanistic and behaviourist approaches); (2) as societal demands which become appropriated as motives for cognitive conduct (cognitive anthropological and sociological approaches); and (3) as forces, both in the person and in the environment, that together create a dynamic field which accounts for a person's activity and learning (wholeness approaches).

Drives, Needs and Their Transformation into Motivation
as Dynamic Explanations for Human Activity

Theories within the drives-and-needs approach focus on drives, needs and motivation as explanations for human activity, and especially on problems in a person's activities and conduct. The psychoanalytic tradition, with Freud (1983) as the main figure, belongs to this category. To understand human activity Freud used drives (sex and death/aggression) to explain human activity. The theory points to the modification of these drives, especially in early childhood, through children's relations with their parents. In this modification culture is seen as a burden which regulates the development of a human's relation to the world.

The humanistic tradition in psychology, with Murray (1938) as well as Maslow (1955), also falls within this category, conceptualising the dynamic aspects of human conduct as coming from the person. They both argued that the concept of drives is too simple and supplemented biological drives and needs with learned needs. Murray conceptualised that humans are characterised by two types of need – primary biological needs and psychological learned needs – that are derived from primary needs. The problem with Murray's list of learned needs is that one could suggest a need for every type of a person's activity, so instead of explaining activity, the list becomes more of a circular conceptualisation of needs nested in the American-Western societal tradition. Maslow pointed out that physiological need gratification as the origin for human conduct is too simple. He therefore introduced the concept of growth-motivated perception and the motive of

self-actualisation. Growth-motivated perception introduces variations in how timid or positively oriented different people are towards life and other persons (Hoffman, 1988; Maslow 1955).

The conceptualisation of needs as learned was refined in the behavioural and cognitive traditions into the concept of motivation. This conception has been important in learning theory and cognitive theory (Ames & Ames, 1984; Covington, 1992; Maehr, 1983; McClelland, 1965; Pintrich, 1991, 2000; Pintrich, Marx, & Boyle, 1993; Weiner, 1990). The core in these theories is how children appropriate motivation for learning. The research within this tradition has focused on achievement and mastery motivation. In principle children's appropriation of achievement and mastery motivation has been conceptualised as a process based on success and failure from children's early experiences. In principle these theories could also be categorised as forces both from within and from the environment, but they are included here because they are conceptualised as forces directed at the person's relation to the world, basically oriented towards reducing harm or attaining pleasure.

Societal Demands as the Primary Forces

Theories in the second approach to explaining the dynamic in human learning and development have conceptualised the forces for human actions and conduct as societal demands that persons in a given society gradually internalise. In this category we find cognitive anthropology and sociological approaches. In cognitive anthropology motives have been connected to cultural models, schemas or scripts where these are seen as forces for people's conduct (D'Andrade, 1992; Holland, 1992; Strauss, 1992). In this theoretical approach the dynamic comes from appropriating cognitive schemas. Goal schemas are treated as motives. It is a theory of motives as located in the person's cognitive representation of the world (D'Andrade, 1992, p. 30).

Societal demands as the primary forces of human conduct can also be found in the sociological approach of C. Wright Mills. Mills (1940) formulated a theory of motives as values of public conduct. In this meaning motives are related to practices and values in a society; therefore, motives are seen as coming from the collective: Rather than fixed elements 'in' an individual, motives are the terms with which interpretation of conduct by *social* actors proceeds (Mills, 1940, p. 904).

Mills argues that there is a stable repertoire of motive vocabularies connected to different practices. Business practices have one set, religious