

Oromo African Immigrants' Experiences with Child Care

Deborah Ceglowski, Ph.D., Ball State University

Jaesook Gilbert, Ph.D., Northern Kentucky University

Greg Wiggan, Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Tekla Johnson, Ph.D., Johnson C, Smith University

Rosemary Traore, Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Abstract

Three families who immigrated from Oromia, Ethiopia to Minnesota participated in a two-year interview study on out-of-home child care. The Oromo immigrants' child care experiences had not been researched previously. In this study, parents provided information on their experiences with child care including: child care history, current child care, child care assistance, child care values and benefits, and projections for child care centers. Each family's experience is presented as a portraiture that includes child care history, beliefs, values, and expectations. The Oromo immigrants' experiences of child care and its connection with the families' assimilation/acculturation process are analyzed. Parents reported satisfaction with child care programs, believed that programs helped acculturate their children as well as provided educational opportunities for children, and they preferred staff and programs that understood Oromo culture and customs. However, they experienced discrimination and miscommunication with child care providers and with the Child Care Assistance Program. Understanding

immigrants' expectations for child care will improve efforts to provide quality day care for children of immigrant families.

Introduction

One of every five children under the age of 18 in the United States is an immigrant or has immigrant parents.¹ In fact, the recent wave of immigrants constitutes about 12 percent of the total population in 2003 and accounted for 35 percent of total population growth from 1990 to 2000.² The most recent wave of immigrants coming to the United States represents an increase in the diversity of countries they come from and in the number of states different immigrant groups resettle in.³

In the Greater Minneapolis metro area (referred as the Twin Cities), the recent immigration from African nations of Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Congo has added increasing number of children to the child care system.⁴ The Twin Cities area is home to the largest U.S. immigrant groups from Ethiopia, including immigrants from Oromia, a region located in southern Ethiopia. The Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area is now considered to host the "largest concentration of Oromos in the United States".⁵ The Oromo population in the Twin Cities is approximately 10,000 to 12,000 people although Oromo leaders believe the number is closer to 20,000.⁶ Half of the population is Muslim and the other half is Christian.⁷

There has been a small but growing body of research on Oromos. As Megerssa argues, "Judging by the size and diversity of the Oromo people and the scarcity of the written materials

about them, it could be argued that our knowledge of the Oromo culture is still in its infancy”.⁸

In fact, there has not been any scholarly works written on their child care needs.

In this manuscript we portray and examine the child care experiences of three families from Oromia, a region located in southern Ethiopia from the perspective of ecological and sociocultural approach. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the ecological environment is broader than the settings the individual has direct relationships with; the macrosystem (i.e., the culture, religion, or government) or chronosystem (i.e., time or historical experience) also affects how the individual makes sense of the situation or circumstances.⁹ As suggested in the ecological theory, individuals’ experiences and development are bi-directional. Vygotsky’s (1978) sociocultural theory alludes to the importance of the interaction of the social and cultural aspects of individuals’ environments in the development of individuals’ learning and decision-making.¹⁰ The child care experiences of the three families from Oromia, thus, reflect individual as well as collective experiences. Additionally, we use parental child care usage to reference child care choice because these families are limited in the child care arrangements available and affordable to them. They do not choose from a wide range of options, but most often from a limited group of programs that meet parental and children’s needs of their respective family, social, historical, and cultural environments. In order to better understand the three Oromo families, we begin first with a discussion on the historical context of Ethiopia and the Oromos. Next, we examine the literature on child care and the child care needs of immigrants. Then we present a study on the child care needs of three Oromo immigrant families in Minneapolis. Finally, we conclude with a discussion on the importance of the findings and offer recommendations.

Historical Context

Kenya, Tanzania, portions of Southern Africa and Ethiopia make up the “cradleland of humanity”.¹¹ Ethiopia, which in Greek means “land of the burnt faces,” is home to some of the world’s earliest human fossil remains, including those of the 3.5 million year old Australopithecine Afarensis, also known as *Lucy*, or Dinkeneshe as she is called in Ethiopia, meaning “she is wonderful”.¹² These early fossils make Ethiopia a principal concern in anthropological and archeological inquiries on early human ancestors. This is also the region of the primordial Cushite Empire, which predates the glory of the ancient Egyptian dynasties, or Kemet dynasties, the name used by the ancient Africans. In *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Cushite Empire*, Drusilla Houston argues that ancient Ethiopia is the fountainhead of the Egyptian dynasties. The river Nile, which is an important source of life and a resource, flows through Ethiopia and north to Egypt (Kemet), which made it a desirable home to many of the earth’s most early inhabitants. In addition to its anthropological and archeological importance, there is also a religious and mystic-romantic interest in Ethiopia because it is reputed to hold long religious traditions in both Christianity and Judaism (Falasha Jews), and a number of more ancient African religions.

In the *Kebra Negast* (The Glory of the Kings), a legendary text on Ethiopian history, the story is told of a union between Queen Makeda, or Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, and the resulting child named Menelik, or Menelik I.¹³ According to the oral tradition in the country, this union is believed to have started the reign of a Solomonic dynasty in Ethiopia. This is further highlighted in Hancock’s national best seller, *The Sign and the Seal*, which places Ethiopia in the international spotlight in the search for a sacred relic, the lost Arch of the Covenant that culminates in the ancient city of Axum.¹⁴

Global interest in Ethiopia has also been driven by the fact that it is the only African country that was able to maintain its freedom from European colonization. In 1896, during the reign of Emperor Menelik II, at the Battle of Adowa the nation mobilized and was victorious in defending itself against the Italian invasion of Oreste Baratieri.¹⁵ The Italians had severely underestimated the might of the Ethiopian military.¹⁶ Forty years later (1936), the fascist Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, invaded Ethiopia, the only independent African country. Mussolini wanted to colonize Ethiopia because of its strategic location on the continent, because of its resources, and also as reprisal for the earlier failed attempt made by Baratieri. The Ethiopian army, led by Haile Selassie I, fought off the Italian invasion with help from Great Britain, a country that had its own colonial empires throughout Africa but wanting to contain the Italians. After a brief period of exile at the outset of the Italian invasion, Emperor Haile Selassie I ruled Ethiopia without interruption until 1973.

The Oromos

Although the Amharic control most Ethiopian urban centers today, the Oromos are one of the nation's largest ethnic groups. They live in Kenya, and the highlands of Somalia and Sudan, but are most heavily concentrated in the eastern region of Ethiopia.¹⁷ Like other Ethiopians, the Oromos' experience is unique among African people in that they did not endure colonial rule by foreign forces.¹⁸ Although the Oromos are very diverse in their traditions, the cultural practices that are often associated with the group include their language, also called Oromo or Qube, and their history. The language, history, and culture of the Oromo are unique, and they form the Oromumma, or the essence of Oromo.¹⁹ The Oromos have a long oral tradition, which mythologically asserts that they descended from the Oromo, a kind of majestic figure.²⁰

Oromos are sometimes called Galla, which is more or less a derogatory word used by outsiders when referring to the Oromos as strangers.²¹ Most Oromos live outside the major cities in communal arrangements, and for the most part they lack the power of the more elite Amharas. However, there have been periods of Oromo rule and leadership in the country, often rivaling that of the Amharas.²² The Oromos and the Amharas have often been in conflict over religion, power and control for many years.

While the roots of Judeo-Christianity may have originated in Kemet in ancient times, Orthodox Judaism and Christianity reached Northeast Africa by 500 B.C.E., and the second century C.E., respectively.²³ The Monophysite Church stressed Christ's divine nature and Coptic Christians in both Egypt and Ethiopia adhered to this interpretation of Jesus' life. In the sixth century Monophysite monks established monasteries in Ethiopia and Christianity became the leading religion in the communities of the Ethiopian highlands.²⁴ The spread of Islam across North Africa and Southern Europe beginning in the seventh century resulted in the separation of the Coptic Church from much of the rest of Christendom.²⁵ Mass conversions of Ethiopians to Islam also created religious conflict within the country. In the early twentieth century, for example, Muslims made up forty percent of the population of the nation, but were not permitted to own land.²⁶ Some Oromos, many of them Muslim converts, were not reluctant to form an alliance with Mussolini when he attempted to overthrow Emperor Haile Selassie I and colonize the country.²⁷

Oromos vary in their religious preferences, ranging from Islam to Christianity, to indigenous African belief systems. In contrast, the Amharas tends to be mostly Orthodox Christians while some are Muslims, and others practice various other types of religions.²⁸

While the Amharas make up the more powerful group in Ethiopia, forming more or less the traditional elites, Oromos have customarily been pastoral herders and farmers. Their differences have created some continued struggles between Amharas and Oromos.²⁹ Although today, many Oromos are educated professionals who are represented in all areas of social life, there are still some tensions between them and the Amharas. Debella and Kassam cite an Oromo informant named Hawani who alludes to the tension between Oromos and Amharas:

And then I slowly realized that we were being treated in this way because we were Oromo. It was a strange feeling, this feeling of not being wanted. You got this feeling in the neighborhood in which you lived; you felt it at school; you got it when you went to the market-place... My father did everything to protect us from persecution. The first thing he did was to give his children Amhara names.

He kept telling us that having an Amhara name would make life easier for us.³⁰

Like Hawani, other Oromos sometimes have felt the pressures of being forced to assimilate into Amhara culture.³¹

The diversity in the country had been a major obstacle to unity and also to modernization. However, under the leadership of Emperor Selassie I, the country was formally organized as the leading African country. Selassie I who himself was an Amhara inculcated significant Amharic influence in the national government. In 1974, some of the educated Oromos participated in a socialist revolt and supported the overthrow of Selassie, resulting in the emperor of the oldest monarchy in the world being replaced by a council of Dergue led by Mengistu Haile Mariam, a communist guerrilla fighter. However Mariam's reign brought much suffering for the Oromos. As one Oromo leader stated, "Back home in Oromia, the mere act of expressing a political opinion could get you in prison for years... There are people who have been in prison for like

15-20 years never being brought before a judge”.³² The new military government ruled by creating fear in the people.³³ Ethiopia’s socialist government collapsed in the early 1990s with the fall of the Soviet Union.

Famine and regional warfare coupled with State oppression and persecution were widespread in Ethiopia from the 1990s into the 21st century, which led to mass emigration from Ethiopia to developed countries like the United States.³⁴ In the state of Minnesota, the overall African immigrant population grew from two percent of the total immigrant population in 1990 to seven percent by 2000. However the number of Ethiopian immigrants increased by 24% in ten years.³⁵

Literature Review of Immigrants and Child Care Experiences

A study of immigrant families in Europe, specifically Finland, France, Italy and Portugal, by Wall and Jose found how an immigrant family copes with the challenges of child care and work differs depending on the migration patterns (i.e., why, when, and who). For example, first generation immigrant families had to use non-familial options for child care because they lacked social support network system and information about available services while needing to work, even at positions that may not be equivalent to positions in their former countries. According to Yu, Huan, Schwalberg, and Kogan, “Immigrant parents are at particularly high risk of alienation from systems of health care and support services that are available...”.³⁶ Yu, et al. cited language barriers as one of the reasons for the lack of awareness when comparing U.S.-born citizens and immigrant families’ awareness of health and community resources. Therefore, lack of knowledge for whatever reason can contribute to choices parents make for their children.

Obeng examined the 35 African immigrants from the Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Botswana, and Kenya about their child care preferences in the United States. The study indicated African immigrants preferred to rear their children at home so their children could learn the appropriate African cultural norms and behaviors. However, like other immigrants, these families used out-of-home child care programs because they had to work or go to school. These African immigrant families cited food and child-adult relationships as problems with child care centers their children were placed in. However, these families did acknowledge that the child care centers provided opportunities for their children to socialize with other children and learn English.

Likewise, Ebbeck and Cerna study of Sudanese immigrant families in Australia cited lack of familiar food at the child care centers as a concern. The researchers also found Sudanese families felt restricted in enforcing the traditional Sudanese ways of rearing a child in Australia due to differences in culture. As a result, the parents felt a stronger need to preserve their own culture and traditional child rearing practices. This cultural conflict in child rearing contributed to Sudanese families experiencing difficulty in finding appropriate out of the home care. Other problems Sudanese families experienced with selection of child care included: having little influence in the programming provided, lack of teachers who spoke their “home” language, and potential for less parental authority with their children becoming assimilated to the Australian way.

Olusanya and Hodes examined the child care practice of African immigrants in Britain.³⁷ They found that Africans who came to Britain to study and work often used private arrangements as child care, where they send their children to live with foster parents who acted as surrogate parents while they were at work or school. When asked what type of child care they would

prefer, most of the participants opted for inexpensive all day nurseries. However, for those who used private foster care arrangements, they did have some concerns about location, and the fact that their children would most often be placed with white caretakers. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2003) argue that the traditional child care model fails to account for race, ethnicity, culture, and social location in the context of child care needs.

Hijbregts, Leseman and Tavecchio study of 116 daycare providers in Netherlands highlighted “the rather big differences between Dutch and immigrant caregivers with different cultural/racial backgrounds when general childrearing beliefs-referring to root metaphors of child development, socialization goals, and socialization strategies-are concerned” . However, the researchers also found the “vast majority of caregivers in all cultural groups tended to agree more with individualistic than with collectivistic ideas” .

The study of Child Care Needs of Oromo Families

The Minnesota Study of Parental Perceptions of Child Care

The Minnesota study of parental perceptions of child care is one of several foci of the quality of child care study, part of the Minnesota Child Care Policy Research Partnership (MCCPRP). This study included quarterly interviews with parents and children over two years to ascertain families’ experiences with child care, including four families who had recently immigrated from Oromia. This paper focuses on three of the four Oromian families. The fourth family is not included because the family completed only four of the eight scheduled interviews.

Qualitative Research Methods and Theory

This is a qualitative research study designed to provide in-depth information about purposefully selected families through the use of life history portraiture. Life history method

“acknowledges that there is crucial interactive relationship between individuals’ lives, their perceptions and experiences, and historical and social contexts and events” , which then helps the outsiders access the particular negotiation process of the specific individuals, in this case three Oromo parents who are adjusting and creating a new life in their adopted homes.³⁸

Qualitative research encompasses a wide range of methods, beliefs, and disciplines .³⁹ Qualitative research, like other research genres is rigorous, systematic, and generates information about a particular topic. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies do not test a hypothesis or produce results that can be generalized. Instead, qualitative researchers provide in-depth descriptions and analyses of the people and phenomena they study in order to understand particular factors and relationships that influence people’s understandings and behaviors. In this study, the goal is not to quantify or generalize immigrant families or even of all Oromian families experience with child care in the United States but to thoroughly learn about the three particular Oromian families’ child care experiences in the Twin Cities. Because each of the three stories is unique yet need to be viewed within the broader historical Oromo culture, fully understanding these three stories requires a thorough or idiographic explanation of each parent’s experience and making sense process .⁴⁰ Thus, examining these particular families’ stories as told through their responses or lenses is critical to constructing an authentic account of how they view child care in the United States. While the accounts generated by this research cannot be assumed to accurately represent the views of all Oromo families, the accounts can shed light on the kinds of factors that influence parents’ perceptions of child care. In addition, since individuals in one context may be affected by some of the same political and social forces present in another given context, some of the findings from this qualitative research may be relevant to other locales and individuals.

Methodological theories used in this study are interpretive interactionism and portraiture.⁴¹ Denzin explains that the current practice of interpretive interactionism includes “in-depth, intimate stories of problematic everyday life lived up close”. A researcher is a “watchdog for the local community, a person who writes stories that contribute” to a public discussion of important matters. The aim of this approach to interactionism is to “tell moving accounts that join private troubles with public issues”. Writing within this framework, authors “must be honest ... the text must be realistic as to character, setting, atmosphere, and dialogue”. Researchers, through ongoing dialogue with those they study discover “the multiple ‘truths’ that operate in the social world, the stories people tell one another about the things that matter to them”.⁴²

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis created the art and science of portraiture, a process that blends narrative with quotations from research participants. Within this narrative frame, the researcher is juggling ‘any number’ of different kinds of data, discovering and providing coherence through emergent themes...”.⁴³ The aim of this writing process is to “‘create a whole that is believable’”.⁴⁴

In developing such narratives, the researcher weaves the tapestry- while attending to the four dimensions: the first is conception, which refers to the development of the overarching story; second is the structure, which refers to the sequencing and layering of emergent themes that scaffold the story; third is the form, which reflects the movement of the narrative, the spinning of the tale; and last cohesion, which speaks about the unity and integrity of the piece.⁴⁵

In utilizing the portraiture approach, the researcher develops a text that includes both narrative description and quotations from participants. The aim is to provide a portrait based upon interviews, observations, and field notes. The portraiture is based upon the qualitative methods

mentioned previously but weaves them into a narrative that is more coherent and story like than those found in most methodology sections of qualitative research articles. Thus, in the methodology section the authors use this portraiture approach to provide a coherent narrative about each of the three families' experiences. These portraitures are based upon two years of work with the families that included eight interviews and accompanying field notes.

Denzin and Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis postulate that the researcher strives to present cases in which the reader "will discover resonant universal themes".⁴⁶ Denzin refers to the individual case study using Sartre's term "universal singular:" "The person, Sartre states, is 'summed up and for this reason universalized by his epoch, he in turn resumes it by reproducing himself in it as a singularity.' Thus, to study the particular is to study the general."⁴⁷

Thus each case study has unique features yet these are tied to the local, national, and international contexts so that the case speaks both of its uniqueness and tie to larger systems and practices. Thus, in this manuscript the three case studies presented speak to the unique features of each family and also the local, national, and international forces that impacted each of the families.

Recruiting Families and Community Researchers

Staff in each of the four participating county's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) assisted the researchers in identifying families and community researchers who spoke the language families spoke. With the families, the county staff helped with the development and mailing of an invitational letter in appropriate languages to all families receiving Child Care Assistance (CCA) to participate in the study. Interested families completed a card and mailed it back to the researchers. A researcher contacted the family and asked them questions for selection purpose. The families selected to participate were based on: the number and ages of children, presence of children with disabilities, type of child care used, ethnic and linguistic background,

and the use of child care assistance programs.¹ Researchers screened families to include a diverse selection for the study including families with low and middle incomes. The three families in this study include a low income family and two middle income families. The chosen families received a \$25.00 gift certificate to a department or grocery store for each interview they participated in and each child either chose a toy or a gift certificate to a restaurant. Additional certificates were sent to families during the holiday and summer vacation seasons.

In recruiting community researchers to conduct family interviews, job announcements were sent out to county workers, Head Start staff, and through job service offices. Community researchers (CRS), representative of the diversity of the families enrolled in the study, conducted the interviews in the families' preferred language. Two community members who work with Oromo immigrants, applied for community researcher positions. These two community researchers conducted all the interviews with the Oromo families in their home language.

Community researchers received an initial intensive two day training followed by another day of full training six months later. A research team member contacted each community researcher on a regular basis, reviewed incoming interviews, field notes, and transcripts, and contacted the community researcher if there were questions or concerns about the interviews. The Oromo community researchers, also, attended a five hour training session on how to transcribe interviews because they conducted the interviews in Oromo. This included a practice session on operating a transcribing machine, reviewing examples of transcribed interviews, and discussing issues related to translation and interpretation of the interviews.

Interviews

The research team, in collaboration with county child care assistance staff partners, developed interview questions and research scripts for the interviews distributed to the community researchers. The first interview with parents included basic questions about the household, the current child care arrangements, and family income, how parents paid for child care, and how the family's child care usage. Children were asked about their summer experiences, their favorite and least favorite things about child care, and to draw a picture or write a story about child care. This interview focused on children's and parent's perceptions of child care. Interview two focused on the families' child care history, beginning with the oldest child and concluding with the youngest. This history included the type of care used, reasons for changes in care, current family income, and a description of the provider or program. The children were asked to describe a typical day in child care. Interview three asked parents to describe how they would design a child care center, specifying the aspects of care that their children enjoyed or from which they most benefited. In interview four, parents described staff education levels, the types of activities provided, the amount of outdoor play space, and other pertinent details of their current child care arrangements. During interview five, parents filled out forms that included child care histories for each child, a diary of their work schedule, and child care use for one week. Interview six focused on the father or male role model in the child's life and that person's involvement in the child's care arrangements. Questions included the degree to which men were involved in child care decision making, their impressions and observations of child care, and their experiences with the Child Care Assistance Program. During interview seven, parents used a rating scale from the research of Emlen, Koren, and Shultze, *From a parent's point-of-view: Measuring the quality of child care*.⁴⁸ The last interview, interview eight, focused on the relationship between the Child Care Assistance Program and child care usage,

how providers handle conflicts between children, the number of choices parents had when selecting child care arrangements and the relationship between child care and work.

Findings

The three Oromo families consist of the Siyons, Ichatis, and the Bekeles. The families' perspectives are presented through the voices of the mothers for the Siyons and Ichatis, as the mothers participated in the interview; in the Bekeles family, the father's voice is represented as he participated in the interviews. Parents provided information on their experiences with child care including child care history, current child care, child care assistance, child care values and benefits, and projections for child care centers.

The Siyons: from Tana's Perspective

Tana Siyon is a mother of two boys: Lebna, age six, and Selassie, five. She describes her sons as "handsome" and said they were blessed with "good conduct." She and her husband, Ashebir, along with her children emigrated from Ethiopia in 1997. The Siyons currently live in a neighborhood Tana loves because it is quiet and a "good place to raise kids" and close to the University of Minnesota as well as many grocery and retail stores. Tana is enrolled in the University of Minnesota's School of Management; Ashebir is employed at the University and earns a monthly salary of \$2,000.

Child care history. Lebna started child care when he was two years old and Selassie started at three months of age. "Before they started child care center, my friends were taking care of my child," Tana said, "but it was a very difficult time for me. I remembered many times when I left for work I went to my friend's home to drop my child off and they would not be there." At that time, she did not know about child care assistance and thought a licensed child care center would be unaffordable. She said that during this time she "suffered for two years."

Lebna had been with his current provider for four and a half years, and Selassie had been there for four. Tana had consulted her Oromo friends, obtained a list of local providers from her county, and conferred with Ashebir before selecting child care for her sons. At the end of her search, Tana said she had three child care options that were located close to her home. “I selected the program for my younger one because the provider is very near to my home,” she said, continuing that her oldest son’s school was the closest one to their home. “Generally, I don’t want to risk driving far from my home with my children in Minnesota weather.”

Current child care. Lebna, a first-grader, attends elementary school until three o’clock, and then goes to Kids’ Town child care center. When Tana was finished with her classes, usually around 5 p.m. she would then pick him up. Tana had transferred her sons from another center to their current center, Kids’ Town, which Tana estimated served twenty to twenty-five other children. Tana transferred her sons to Kids’ Town because of the availability of educational opportunities and the different age groups at Kids’ Town: “Before when Selassie started child care center I didn’t like it because they put all ages of kids between three and five in one class, which was difficult for the children to play together.”

In comparing Kids’ Town to the previous child care center Tana said, “I can see the difference from the previous child care center. They are learning a lot here, and this provider has monthly programs for the daily activities.” She mentioned that the boys had been on a field trip to a farm to learn about plants and animals. Tana proceeded to elaborate on the activities offered by her center by stating that beyond art projects, the children had “group time” in the morning during which staff members worked with them on reading, two or three outdoor play periods, and a variety of play materials that included blocks, computer games, and puzzles. She did not

know how long children were allowed to watch television and videos, but was aware such viewings were part of her boys' daily routine.

Tana said that Kids' Town had an educational curriculum: "They hired an outside person to teach music for half an hour two days a week." "They teach them how to read, speak and write in English, and counting numbers." She later added that the providers, all Caucasian, did not speak the family's home language, Oromo. Kids' Town was licensed and Tara believed many of the providers held advanced degrees: "They are highly educated, at the level of a master's degree, and have a lot of experience with other centers."

Although Tana thought Kids' Town was better than the previous center, she said her sons liked both places and missed some of their friends from the first center. She sometimes worried about the individual attention her sons received, given that there were four providers for 25 children: "There are times when all the kids need the same thing at the same time—it is difficult for the teacher to assist and listen to them." Nevertheless when she observed the program, she had never witnessed anything that gave her cause for alarm: "The children are friendly, happy and play together. I didn't observe bad things."

Child care assistance. The Siyons applied for and received assistance from the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Based upon their family income, their co-pay was "about \$115 monthly." Tana learned about CCAP through a friend. "She told me to go to the county," she said, admitting that she at first thought she had to go to the county medical center. Once she located the correct department, she was told there was a two-year waiting list for assistance. She registered and had eventually been approved, which is "why I am paying little money compared to the previous arrangement." Tana reported that prior to approval for CCAP they had paid \$1,300 a month for their two sons; and as a result, she had quit going to school to look after her

sons. Tana experienced that “for new immigrants there is no information available to apply for the assistance” so now she is helping other families apply for CCAP: “I learned that availability of the information is important, and now I am helping others to navigate the resources.”

Tana believed the assistance program worked well for very low-income families and parents in school but for more middle-class families, “the income guidelines are not good... [if] your income is above the income guidelines by a few dollars you lose your assistance.” This happened to the Siyons when Tana was working but not when she was in school. She also did not believe the quality of providers in urban areas matched those in the outlying suburbs, “even if the families received the same child care assistance.”

Child care values and benefits. Tana was glad her children were going to a child care center because it was helping them to “integrate” into American culture and helped Lebna transfer into elementary school: “It is very easy for children at child care to join their first grade school. Their interaction with other children and cultures is good if they have already been at a child care center.” She noted her boys were learning and were having fun: “I can tell it is a good program when I read the faces of my children when I pick them up; they want to stay there more.” Opportunities to meet other families were also important: “it is good to talk and know one another.” She wanted more information about her sons but she did not “worry about anything when my children are at child care center... they inform me immediately if something happens.”

Tana expressed sincere gratitude for the care her sons received, “I don’t have the words,” she praised. “It helped me to attend school full-time, which I will finish this year.” She noted that child care and CCAP seemed especially suited to parents attending school. Tana believed “Child care center is a good place for mothers. It encourages mothers to go to work or school.”

Another factor contributing to the overall quality of child care was the center's disciplinary policy. "It is very good," Tana said, noting her children were better behaved at the child care center than they were at home. "Sometimes it is difficult to discipline them at home, but they listen to the teachers more than us." She listed the following additional attributes as integral to child care: sanitation; safety and security; proximity; food quality; licensure; staff qualifications; and types of resources available. Tana was not satisfied with the food served to her sons: "What I don't like at child care is that almost 80% of their food is frozen," she complained. She asserted that if her sons were at home they would eat fresher meals.

Projections for childcare centers. Tana said it was important for providers to be good role models "Kids should learn from this person to have good character, patience... and good values." In Tana's view, highly qualified child care staff should be trained in child psychology and early developmental studies. Tana emphasized the importance of fresh foods and limiting canned or frozen meals. Tana said that child care centers should provide computer games, building blocks and other items to promote "creativity of the children." She also stated that "they should be educational toys" and field trips that would be fun and educational.

Centers should operate from six in the morning until six at night "to accommodate the starting times of different [work shifts]." She said \$100 a week per child would be a fair weekly rate. Tana was most concerned about children's safety. From her past experience in the city, Tana would place her center in "the areas where children can learn good things free from alcohol and drugs."

The Ichatis: from Abala's Perspective

Abala Ichati is the mother of a six-year old son, Yumio, and an eleven-year old daughter, Giti. In the summer of 1997 the family, except for Giti, came to the United States. Yumio was 18 months old at the time. In 2002, Giti was able to join her family in the United States.

At the time of first interview, Abala had just started a job as an accountant at a university and was earning \$26,000 annually. Her husband, Moyu had just begun his job as an employment counselor for a non-profit organization and was making \$1,600 a month. Four months ago, the family moved to a neighborhood Abala describes as a “very good and peaceful area” in the suburbs close to a shopping district. She was relieved that it was now safe for her son to play outside. The Ichatis were now living away from the other Minnesota Ethiopian immigrants. The family voiced their concern: “We are far from our community and the children [Yumio] knows well.”

Child care history. Yumio came to the U.S. when he was one-and-a-half years old. In Ethiopia, Abala’s relatives had helped her provide care for him, and Abala stated that she “never worried a single day” about his care. “After I came here I was challenged to raise my child alone... in a new country,” she recounted. Yumio had attended a center called Whole Child Care Center and had also been enrolled in Head Start. During summer when Abala was not taking classes, Yumio stayed home with her. When Abala graduated and started her current career, Yumio began kindergarten. This meant that Yumio attended a licensed family child care home before and after school.

The Ichatis reported that they had located Yumio’s childcare provider through their “friends and the [news] papers” as well as from information provided from the school district. Abala and Moyu had shared in the decision-making responsibility when selecting their family child care home provider. On the other hand, Giti, the older child, had never received care outside of her family and, unlike her brother, had never attended Head Start.

Current child care. Either Abala or Moyu drove Yumio to his family child care home at 7:00 a.m. during the school week. The school bus picked him up from the home and brought him

to kindergarten. Yumio rode the bus back to his family child care home at 3:30 p.m. and he stayed there until 5 p.m. Yumio got up at six o'clock, though his mother would have rather let him sleep later. Abala stated that "Since I don't have... anybody at home, he gets up in the morning with us. If we would have somebody at home he could sleep until eight o'clock and then go directly to kindergarten."

Abala and her husband asked Yumio about his daily activities when he gets home from his family child care home, and Yumio shares about "the games he played with a friend, the drawings he draws and the music he learns." Abala stated that she had thought that "when he was at [the prior] child care center, the whole day he was mistreated," although she had never actually seen any signs of abuse or neglect. Now she believes "he is treated well, equal with other children" at his current "license home child care center."

Abala was confident that Yumio's family child care home was educational: "They teach him the alphabet which enables him to read books," and "they do [things] slowly by taking time at a rate kids can understand." She believed that the providers' were "licensed and trained people." When she had spoken with the child care providers, they had told her Yumio was doing well: "They tell me he is doing fine; he is creative relative to other children." Abala beamed that her son's school had asked her if they could include him in their newsletter because of "his talents." She felt her son was "very happy now." Abala did not indicate any concern that her son's teachers were mostly Caucasians and did not speak Oromo.

In 2002, Yumio stopped attending the family child care home because Giti was reunited with the family and began attending the same elementary school as Yumio. Abala explained "it is not affordable to pay child care center for both of them." She also added, "It is very good for me to be with my children. I arranged my working time, which is [now] suitable to pick them up

from school.”

Child care assistance. When Yumio was attending childcare, the family paid \$60 a week for fifteen hours of care. Abala stated, “I used to get child care assistance since I was in school. I know I am no [longer] eligible for child care subsidies since both of us are working,” referring to herself and her husband. When the family first immigrated, Abala said that “since we were new to the system and the language,” we had hard time finding information on child care assistance. The Ichatis paid for their son’s care on their own until Abala enrolled at the University of Minnesota.

One negative experience Abala said she would never forget was when, after enduring a long waiting period, the family was “rejected” by the assistance program. This denial came after she had already started her classes. “Our income was limited to my spouse’s income, which was not enough to pay our livings—that was the time I cried,” Abala recounted. “We never gave up, then we appealed, and finally I got the assistance.” Abala angrily recalled that when she asked an assistance worker why her application had been rejected, she had been told it was because she had not been attending school. She strongly asserted that she had attached a form verifying her enrollment to her application, and fumed “If I would have known I had legal right I would have sue[d] her.”

Child care values and benefits. Abala stated that at Yumio’s child care facility, “he was treated well even if he [couldn’t] speak the language at that time. They helped him to learn quickly.” She told about a traumatic but positive experience: “One thing I will not forget in my life is he [Yumio] got sick at child care center. I was at school; my husband was at work. They [the child care center] called an ambulance and took him to the clinic.” Abala appreciated the concern expressed by her child care providers, who “were with him at the clinic treating him like

mom and dad” especially when she was so scared about her son. “I love this child care center,” she praised.

Abala liked how the child care facility screened potential staff members “when they hired a person,” she said, the employers made sure that potential employees “have certain criteria such as a person should love children and have experience and interest to work with children.” Abala would much rather have quality providers who earned a higher wage than have a somewhat incompetent but inexpensive staff. In the long run, Abala said, child care was most important because “it makes the family [able] to go to their business, [and] the child learns many things... from their teachers and from each other.”

Abala sometimes had trouble communicating with her child care providers. However, on one occasion she had been successful: “I remember when my child started child care center he used to cry when he saw one of the teachers.” Abala asked Yumio if the provider had mistreated him, but he was either unwilling or unable to tell her anything. Abala spoke with the provider: “I talked to the teacher, shared my experience how to handle my child.” Afterwards, Yumio’s attitude about the provider became more positive. The child care center’s discipline policy was similar to Abala’s, though sometimes they disciplined the children more than she would have.

Projections for child care centers. Abala said the weekly rate for child care services should be \$120 a week for full-time enrollment and \$60 a week for those attending part-time. The center should be open from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Abala felt that providers should be teachers who are “trained and educated in child psychology” and individuals who “love children and have the patience to deal with children. The person should [have]... a clean criminal background.” Abala also noted a wide variety of equipment and resources should be available such as “bicycles, swimming equipment, ice skating, computer games and activities related to

these.” She wanted center to be located in the suburbs in a “big space, areas free from criminal activities,” and the building “should be ventilated, air conditioned and large, with a basement which children can play [in] in the winter.”

When asked to identify the characteristics of quality child care, licensing and accreditation were “very important” as well as “safety, security, and accountability.” Abala also felt providers and parents needed to share concerns with one another: “I believe problems can be solved by meeting with the provider and discuss[ing] the concerns.” Providers should make themselves available to families via telephone, letters and “walk-ins.” Activities and lessons at a child care center would include “teaching family values and respect, allowing them to watch educational videos or TV, [and] reading and writing books.” Parents could support their provider by “participating in family programs, advising [children] at home, helping them in homework, revising what they learn at school when they come home, volunteering at school, [and] sharing ideas and concerns with them.” At her last interview, Abala listed characteristics of high quality child care as: a sanitary environment; staff qualifications; licensure; outdoor and indoor spaces for children to play; a separate room for naps; safety and security; and building facilities such as “air conditioning.” She also believed information on child care center centers would best be provided from brochures and the Internet.

Abala favored group gatherings where families and providers could come together to talk. She held that “it is better to have a conference potluck and different programs in which families, providers and children can participate.” These gatherings would be “a good opportunity for all to learn from each other for better service, and better for families to know what their kids are doing in school.” In an ideal situation Abala wanted “to see the child care center subsidized by [the] government,” explaining “last summer it was difficult for me to find a place to put them,

[but] finally I found a babysitter.”

The Bekeles: from Amare’s Perspective

Amare is a father of a four-year-old daughter, Seble. Seble has an older brother who is sixteen and an older sister who is seventeen. The family came to the United States in 1998 and moved to Minnesota in 1999 when Seble was two-years-old. The family currently lives in a neighborhood in South Lyle Park, a suburb adjacent to the city where they used to live. Amare prefers the suburb because his neighborhood is a good place to raise children. The only complaint he voiced was the lack of access to local public transportation, criticizing that the buses came to his stop infrequently.

Amare works in the city at an Ethiopian community center as a Refugee Services Officer; his salary is \$1,800 monthly. Previously Amare worked at a gas station and as a parking attendant. The Bekele’s received public assistance from the city and they still receive services from the Ethiopian community center. Amare’s wife did not work for a year while the family lived in the city but she had since returned work.

Child care history. Amare’s oldest children, a son and a daughter, were both cared for by their relatives in Ethiopia. Grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles also provided assistance. Amare added, “We never had any problems taking care of them.” Both of the older children began attending child care center when they were four years old and later were enrolled in a private school in Ethiopia.

In contrast, when the family arrived in the United States, Seble had attended two different child care center centers and was going to preschool. Amare had taken an active role in finding Seble’s child care center. Amare learned of the center from a friend whose children attended the center. Amare indicated that his friend’s children had provided Seble with a built-in social

network when she first arrived at the child care center. Amare reported, “Nobody helped or influenced my decision. I requested [an] application form, filled it out and decided where to send her.”

Current child care. Seble attended a child care center called Kids’ Center in South Lyle Park. Amare said he did not have many options when choosing childcare. His primary consideration for selecting a provider was the proximity of the provider to his home. He reported his childcare cost \$620 a month, a little more than a third of his income. Seble’s siblings also cared for her from time to time.

Amare was not familiar with what Seble did in child care: “I know they teach her drawing, playing with children, playing games on computer and going to parks on picnics.” Still, Amare was worried that there were few children there who shared her background and culture. There were fourteen other children in Seble’s room: “It took her a while to adjust herself, but she is doing better every day,” Amare said hopefully. “It was difficult for my child to [be] integrated with other children and learn when she went to the program since she was new [to] the country, system, community and can’t speak English.” For Seble, who spoke the Oromo language at home, the mastery of English remained an obstacle, but her father seemed confident she was making progress.

Amare left for work at 7:30 a.m. and dropped Seble off at child care. He picked her up between 5:30 – 6:00 p.m. At the beginning of the study, Seble attended child care center five days a week but then her mother changed her work schedule and Seble attended child care center three days per week. Amare would prefer for Seble to go to the center every weekday, believing “she can learn a lot of things from her program,” but said he could not afford to send her all five days.

Amare stated that the center's staff read to Seble during the day, and that she was also allowed to watch television. "Since we don't have the capacity to take her to different places for entertainment she spend[s] most of her time on watching TV," he said. Amare estimated that Seble watched between one and two hours of television a day on school days and spent four to five hours watching television on days she was at home. He believed his wife used the television to occupy Seble. Amare thought Kids' Center had an educational program that involved "reading books and figures." He did not know about the educational level of the staff but did know that the program was licensed.

The Kids' Center staff went outside with children to play and there was a variety of outdoor equipment available. Seble's favorite activities were coloring, computer games, and playing with her friends. One of her providers told Amare that his daughter was "popular, social with other children and good in attending programs." However, he said she did not care much for the food at child care center because it was different from what she was used to. At home she was served Oromo food. Nevertheless, Seble's meals were included in the cost of child care center rather than being a separate payment.

Providers communicated through written notes, telephone calls, or conversations at pick-up time. The providers scheduled a meeting with parents to discuss a child's performance: "When she had a language problem, I used to go there and discuss with the teachers about her progress in the center." Seble would talk about child care, and had recently told him that her teachers were helping her. There were monthly family gatherings at the center and Amare attended two of these gatherings. "The agenda was to how to improve their services, fundraising activities for school and how to handle children and families complaints." A family committee had been set up to work with the center's administrators on these various concerns.

Amare thought New Heights Childcare, Seble's first child care center, was better than Kids' Center. When the family was ineligible for child care assistance, he had to find inexpensive child care. The first center charged \$1,200 a month; the current center is \$600.00. "The previous provider and all the facilities including the teachers were better." He stated that the providers included African Americans and Caucasians, and the staff was friendly and polite. "The diversity of the children was good too." Amare reported, "In her current place about 90% of kids and staff persons are white" which he regards as a drawback. "I don't know if this plays a role," he observed, "but there is a cultural barrier. One day I went to the school to pick my child before the time, I saw a child crying and mistreated by his teacher--the child was black."

Amare had met new families at the monthly conferences: "I always learn from the meeting where there are different views about child [ren]. I learned [about] new culture which helps me to be integrated to other community. I share my views with other families, too." He also found out information about parenting which helps him be a better parent: "I can fulfill her [Seble's] needs since I learned what is important for the children." To Amare, the most important benefit of child care center was that Seble was cared for while her parents worked.

Child care assistance. The family was not receiving any subsidies since his wife quit her job. Regarding CCAP, Amare believes that "It is better to help in childcare when families are not working than working. If you are working at least you have some money to pay." Assistance made it possible for Seble to attend her first child care center with its bicultural and bilingual staff, an excellent facility for recent immigrants. Amare recognized that the quality of the initial child care center had justified its expense, and reiterated that without the assistance he could not afford the \$1,200 a month fee. He insisted that "The government should help working family like me, but they stopped when my wife lose her job....I don't know why they do that, they supposed

to assist us until we will be self-sufficient.” He added that Seble’s child care center was necessary for her to learn English, something her mother could not teach her at home.

Child care values and benefits. Amare believed in the importance of finding childcare: “I don’t have much experience in this country but what I learned is keeping the child at childcare is important and mandatory.” Children learned more at child care center than at home and that child care center helped Seble prepare for school:” My child shows a lot of improvement when she is in day care than when she was at home. Now she can draw drawings, play games on computer; she improved her language ability; she learn how to toys by cutting papers; learn how to tell history and even she knows how to open and shutdown the computer.”

Seble benefited the most from “games and educational program” at Kids’ Center. The computers were especially valuable because they are both fun and instructive. He communicated well with Seble’s providers and felt comfortable with his daughter’s relationship with the staff. “I feel good,” he remarked, “the teachers are cooperative and she is a lovely girl, too. She loves the center.” He participated in “meetings; going to the picnic with children; going to the center to read; raising funds; donating toys; sharing ideas and so on.” The center’s disciplinary policies did not reflect those of the family: “The way I grow and used to discipline my children is different from American one. I try to integrate both to avoid conflict, and I don’t see too much.”

Projections for child care centers. Amare believes staff training and experience are important: “The person should have interest, patience, training and skills in childcare, and should have experience how to use different materials to teach children.” Food served should include “milk, beef, vegetables and dessert.” Additionally, activities and materials should “make [children] happy and at the same time teach them” such as computer games and drawing materials. A large and well-ventilated room is needed for the children to play in. For outdoor

recreation “the yard should be big and accommodate all types of games and equipment on which children can play” because “children find a green, natural surrounding the most attractive.”

Amare feels all children should be treated equally, “but I like the provider [who] give[s] individual attention to my child if she doesn’t feel well [or is] behind the other children [in] education, as well as if she is the outstanding one.” Centers should create “family gathering in which the administration, family, and children can participate and discuss their concerns.” Additionally, he adds the staff should communicate with parents via the telephone or mail.

A center should operate from 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and “The childcare payment depends on the income of the family. It is difficult for me to say this amount, for a person like me with five family members with my salary I like if it will be free, if not, \$ 200 monthly.” Child care should be located in commercial areas where many people worked, and if possible inside the office buildings themselves.

Discussion

All three families would have preferred to raise their children at home within family and friends rather than send them to American child care centers. However like the first-general immigrants studied by Wall and Jose , the three families had to utilize “outside” system for child care in order to work and/or go to school to get better jobs as well as better housing in Minnesota. The parents defined quality child care as maintaining Oromo culture, heritage, and developing competencies for acculturating into the American system. Their desire for quality care for their children was the driving force behind their parental child care usage decisions, in spite of challenges experienced due to lack of knowledge and access to the American system such as Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

Struggle in the assimilation/acculturation process

The three Oromo parents in this study viewed child care system as a necessary avenue for their children to adapt to the new country they have immigrated and as a tool that allowed parents to pursue their education in the United States. However whichever “outside” program these three parents, Tana, Abala, and Amare, chose, the parents wanted the staff to respect their culture and for their children not to experience racism, prejudice, or discrimination. Amare was not confident whether a homogeneous white teaching staff may understand his child’s culture. Tana felt that her children’s experience at child care would be more positive if the child care staff knew more about the Oromo culture. Abala worried that Yumio may be mistreated because of his Oromo heritage and his limited English even though she was not bothered that the child care staff spoke only English. Included in the desire for recognition of Oromo culture is the issue with the type of food served at the centers. All three parents remarked about food and their wish for meals that are similar to those served in their homes. Amare felt the child care center should serve meals that are similar to those served in an Oromo home. Tana disapproved of the frozen or canned foods served at the center and wanted meals to include more fresh foods as they would be if she were serving food at home. They felt that the child care programs expected the Oromo children to adapt to the mainstream U.S. society menu, rather than allowing non-American families option to send food their children are familiar with and actually eats to the child care program.

For these Oromo parents, their Oromo identification and sustaining the Oromo ways are important despite each parent may be committed to different cultural components such as food or language. As explained in the historical context section, Oromos are diverse in their traditions as well as religious affiliations. The Oromos historically experienced persecutions from the more powerful Amhars, which included unwilling assimilation of Oromos to the Amhara culture.

Additional factors such as famine, regional warfare and oppressive military government presence necessitated many Oromos to emigrate to other countries including the United States. Thus, the parents' commitment to Oromo ways and the desire for their children's child care staff to recognize the Oromo culture may be a way for these parents to maintain their ethnic pride and to instill this pride as well as heritage in their children.

A contributing factor to these three parents' wish for continuing the Oromo ways may be that all three families have migrated out of the Oromo neighborhood to residential suburbs for peace, quiet, and safety. Tana's and Abala's families moved much further out from the city, and Amare's family moved to a suburb adjacent to the city. When they used to live in the urban Oromo neighborhood in the city, they were surrounded by others who shared the same cultural background, language, and immigrant experiences. The parents could rely on the neighborhood to help instill Oromo heritage and help with everything. Similar to the migratory patterns cited in Weeks 1978 book, *Population: An introduction to concepts and issues*, these three families selected to migrate out of the dangerous urban surroundings for their children when they were able to financially afford the move after getting better paying jobs. Ironically, fulfilling parents' desire for a safe, quiet, peaceful place for their children to grow up in brought about the dilemma of leaving behind an important cultural resource, the Oromo neighborhood. When these families became more apt in achieving the structural assimilation within the United States through their employment opportunities and further education, the physical distance from their Oromo home away from home (i.e., the Oromo neighborhood in the city) increased along with the parents wish for American child care programs to become knowledgeable of the Oromo culture. In a sense, these parents were hoping for their children's child care programs to supplement their prior resource, the Oromo neighborhood's facilitation of their culture.

Interestingly, the degree of physical distance also symbolizes the degree of assimilation process of these families. Amare, whose family stayed closest to the city where the Oromo neighborhood is, expressed the strongest feelings of concern for potential cultural barriers or discrimination: “In her current place, about 90% of kids and staff persons are white. I don’t know if this plays a role, but there is a cultural barrier. One day I went to the school to pick my child before the time, I saw a child crying and mistreated by his teacher--the child was black.” Amare tried to prevent such “mistreatment” for his daughter by talking with her teacher about Seble’s limited English. Amare also attended center meetings to increase cultural respect and understanding and to decrease cultural barriers. “I always learn from the meeting where there are different views about child [ren], I learned new culture, which helps me to be integrated to other community. I share my views with other families, too.” Whereas Tana and Abala, whose families re-located to suburbs further out, expressed less intense reactions. Abala stated that she was not bothered that the child care staff spoke only English but spoke with the teacher about “how to handle my child” from the family’s cultural perspective. She also wanted to have group gatherings where everyone can get to know each other better and “learn from each other for better service.” Tana stated that her children’s experience at child care would be more positive if the child care staff knew more about the Oromo culture.

These responses from Tana and Abala, as compared to Amare’s, illustrate their recognition or acceptance of their life in Minnesota and willingness to live with or adapt to their “American” child care system. Despite Amare’s expression of participating in meetings for the purpose of gaining knowledge about the “new culture,” i.e., the American way, to help with his integration effort, he still feels more attachment to the Oromo culture when he refers to his neighborhood as the “other community.” The distinction of “other” may also arise from Amare’s

position as the Refugee Services Officer at an Ethiopian community center. Amare also noticed the prevalence “whiteness” of his daughter’s child care center and attributed the child care staff’s actions as potential source of discrimination and lack of awareness with non-white American culture. For example, he interpreted his observation of a crying child as an incident of mistreatment or racism by the teacher because of the difference in color between the crying child and teacher. For Amare, the distinction between his culture and the American culture remains strong. He attributed any difference, including skin color and language, as a potential for discrimination so he tried to prevent even the possibility of “mistreatment” of his daughter at the child care center by talking with her teachers about her daughter’s limited English, thereby attempting to reduce the gap he sees between two worlds.

Difficulties in accessing the “system”

One of the difficulties all three parents experienced was how to go about selecting a good “outside” program for their children. In Oromo, there was no need for outside care or any of the formal child care settings that exist in America. This lack of prior experience in navigating the child care system resulted in Tana, Abala, and Amare relying on word of mouth, especially from their Oromo friends. Amare selected the same center where a friend sent his because Amare felt his friend’s children would provide emotional support for his daughter at the center while she was learning English and American culture. The two mothers, Tana and Abala, consulted their Oromo friends, obtained information from the Child Care Resource and Referral agency and county, and discussed child care options with their husbands. Given that outside care is a foreign notion to Oromo culture, parents looked for child care centers that were close to their homes. Tana limited her child care options to three nearby centers and selected a nearby child care center. Abala’s son attended a center that was ten minutes away from home. Amare said it was important for the child care center to be close to his home. Thus for the three families, word of

mouth (or verbal endorsement from their Oromo friends) and proximity to home were important factor in selecting child care.

The cost of child care became a big issue for all three parents even after they figured out the child care system. In order to afford the child care program parents had selected, they had to learn about the child care assistance program (CCAP) and even of their eligibility for child care assistance. Again, they relied on word-of-mouth from their Oromo friends to even find out about existence of CCAP. Even when aware of the program, mistakes were made: Tana mistakenly thought she should go to county medical center when she was told to go to the county, and Abala experienced bureaucratic difficulty even after she applied for the child care assistance because she did not know the system in the United States well.

Because the parents relied on the child care assistance program to pay for child care, the child care tuition determined the child care choices for parents. Amare had to change from a high quality center that included a multi racial and well trained child care staff to the current, less quality center when his family was no longer eligible for the child care assistance program. When Abala's daughter was reunited with the family, she withdrew her son from child care center because "it is not affordable to pay child care center for both of them." The tuition for Tana to have her two sons in child care was \$1,300 per month, which she and her husband could not afford without child care assistance.

Education as a tool for succeeding in America

Despite wanting to maintain the Oromo ways and language, the three parents also realized the importance of having their children learn English, American etiquette, and mainstream American values so they could integrate into American society and be ready for the elementary school. All three parents resonated with each other when they talked about the two

valued aspects of child care: education and care while they worked or attended school. This “educational” expectation may account for the difference in child care selection patterns. The Oromo parents used the resources available to them to select the best possible center for their children, despite the fact that the selection was limited to those child care centers located near to them and of reasonable cost. Additionally, they would change child care programs if they perceived their children’s needs were not being met. They attended family functions, observed at the center, and initiated conferences/meetings with the teachers at the selected centers to maximize educational benefits for their children. Therefore, Abala, Amare, and Tana valued child care outside of home even though it was contrary to their cultural norm of home care because they perceived outside American child care centers as an avenue to increase their grasp of the American language, culture, and system.

This shared perception of outside child care as a way for gaining education and smoother acculturation into the educational system for their children created a desire for trained and caring child care staff. Abala and Tana listed a specific discipline: child psychology. Tana added training in early developmental studies. Tana changed child care centers because the new center was licensed and many of the child care staff “are highly educated, at the level of a master’s degree, and have a lot of experience with other centers.” Abala she would pay higher salaries to child care staff that is “trained and educated in child psychology” than have low paid unqualified staff. Amare said that “The person should have training and skills in childcare, and should have experience how to use different materials to teach children.” Tana, Abala, and Amare also identified patience although the concept of patience is applied in a different way by each parent. Abala wanted child care staff “who have the patience to deal with children.” Tana described a teacher who can model as well as teach patience to children. Amare said the teacher should,

“give individual attention to [his] child if she doesn’t feel well [or is] behind the other children [in] education, as well as if she is the outstanding one.”

Trained and caring child care staff was critical because all three parents stressed the educational aspect of the child care center. Abala, Tana and Amare specifically mentioned computer games in their list of activities and Tana changed child care centers arrangements because she wanted a more educational program: “I can see the difference from previous child care center. They are learning a lot here, and this provider has monthly programs for the daily activities. They hired an outside person to teach music for half an hour two days a week. They teach them how to read, speak and write in English, and counting numbers.” Tana believed centers should include field trips because she had been a parent volunteer and saw how much children learned about plants and animals. The parents agreed that the program should not be just educational but also fun. As Amare said, the child care staff should: “make [children] happy and at the same time teach them.”

These parents felt attending child care centers was critical to entering the primary education system and ultimately mainstream into economically beneficial American employment opportunities. The ultimate goal was for the children to have a better life in the United States. Another consideration in their children having a better life in America is for the families to have more resources. One tool in accessing more American resources is for the parents to obtain further education in the United States. For Abala and Tana, the child care system allowed them to pursue their education. Abala completed and Tana was in the process of completing college degrees when their children were in child care centers Child care also allowed the parents to work so that they could improve their socioeconomic status/resources ; thus increasing families’ abilities to obtain more resources that affect the developmental competencies of their children.⁴⁹

However, as Coll et al. state, “Developmental competencies ... reflect both the functional competencies of a child at any one point in time and the developing/emerging skills that children bring to the multiple ecologies in which they exist” .⁵⁰ The functional role of the American child care system for the three parents allowed them to go to school and/or work while facilitating adaptive skills in their children to better negotiate America, resulting in these three Oromo families moving to suburbs away from inhibiting environment of the Oromo neighborhood in the city with higher crime rates.⁵¹ The negative impact on children’s developmental competencies is that the child care system these three Oromo parents are using is different from child care in Ethiopia where, families and friends would take care of the children. As Tana explained, “If I go out for recreation, I go with them. In our culture, we don’t leave our children with somebody and go have recreation alone.” Tana said her husband would take care of their children even if he had to take a day off from work. Abala rearranged her work schedule so she could pick up her son and daughter from public school. Seble stayed home with her mother several days a week. The way of child care as these Oromo parents knew from Ethiopia versus in the United States is one more factor these parents have to negotiate as their children are developing in their American skills. The emerging American skills and knowledge the children are being socialized into at the child care programs also shape who the children are becoming – i.e., a mix of Oromos and Americans. This also means the children are more Americanized in the home setting not just at school or child care center where they are learning the needed educational skills.

The Americanization of the children is an unintended consequence of these three Oromo families’ desire to positively impact their children’s developmental competencies when they perceived the child care system as a functional tool for educational improvement. As stated

earlier, the three Oromo parents wanted the child care system to help their children develop as competent Oromos and Americans simultaneously. Tana, Abala and Amare wanted their children learn English and the American culture without losing their Oromo cultural identity. The parents described what their children learned in child care centers. Abala stated “they teach him alphabet which enables him to read books,” and “they do [things] slowly by taking time at a rate kids can understand.” For Tana, the child care experience provided opportunities for acculturation to American educational system and culture for her children: “It is very easy for children at childcare to join their first grade school. Their interaction with other children and cultures is good if they have already been at a childcare center.” Amare felt that child care center is better than home setting in preparing his child for school: “My child shows a lot of improvement when she is in child care center than when she was at home. Now she can draw drawings, play games on computer, she improved her language ability, she learn how to toys by cutting papers, learn how to tell history and even she knows how to open and shutdown the computer. All this is helping [my daughter’s] preparation for school.”

To ensure better communication and connection between two cultures, the Oromo families preferred child care staff that provided individual attention to children, had patience to work with children, and who modeled respect for the children. They appreciated teachers’ willingness to have individual conferences with them and getting reports on their children’s progress. Abala, Tana, and Amare volunteered for field trips, attended parent meetings/events, and visited their children’s classrooms to learn about American child care and their children’s progress. The immediately went to the center whenever they suspected their children were being mistreated. Abala, Tana, and Amare wanted child care providers to be “educators” not only warm and patient adults who provide individual attention. The parents relied on child care staff

to provide their children an introduction to mainstream American culture. Specific activities like field trips, computer games, drawing, playing outside, and learning the alphabet as well as learning English are the reasons they sent their children to child care. Child care centers were critical to preparing children for American elementary schools. Therefore, the three Oromo parents viewed the child care system as providing the functional role of preparing their children for American elementary schools (which they, the parents, could not do) as well as helping the parents to complete their studies. Tana, Abala and Amare wanted their children learn English and the American ways so they could succeed in their new country. The parents themselves, especially Tana and Abala, recognized the usefulness of child care system for their adaptation and success in the United States.

Comparing the Oromo Families to American Families

American families, like the Oromo families, rely on family and friends to locate child care and carefully consider the cost of care before they select a program. ^{.52} Like their Oromo counterparts, American families are concerned about their children's health and safety ^{.53} Americans with limited incomes, just like the Oromo parents, state that child care fees are the major factor in child care usage ^{.54}

American families are less concerned with staff training and experience than the Oromo families. ^{.55} For Amare, Abala, and Tana, highly qualified and educated providers were important because child care centers were a critical factor for them and their children to learn about the American culture and the educational system. The parents wanted the child care providers to help their children learn English and mainstream American culture because they, themselves, were not experts but novices. The child care programs were expected to help their children learn to read English, speak English, and prepare for the formal school system. A striking difference among these three parents and the American parents is the Oromo parents

state that child care staff need training including education about child discipline and child development so that they can educate their children.

While American families primarily view child care as custodial, the Oromo parents relied on child care to provide education and to mainstream American experiences for their children. The three families viewed their children's child care programs as a valuable asset for their children's (and their own) assimilation processes, despite their struggle with the potential loss for continuing their Oromo heritage.

Conclusion

All immigrants face challenges because they bring values, deeply held beliefs, and a broad array of experiences with them to a culture that is foreign. Navigating the new system is a major challenge especially if there is a language difference. First-generation immigrant Oromo families in this study help explain how culture, past experiences, and systems surrounding the individual influence decisions about parental child care usage. The implication for child care providers is to recognize that mainstream American culture and values are not universal, but first-generation immigrant families do desire for their children to learn the American way. This wish for educational acculturation or successful structural assimilation within the American system does not mean the immigrant families are not experiencing tension as they are going against their cultural norms.

The three Oromo parents highlighted in this paper illustrate barriers emigrants to America face in understanding and accessing social resources. Oromo families' abilities to transverse the economic system in North America was dependent on the degree to which they and their children could gain entry and access to educational opportunities – this was to ensure their

present and future financial stability. Child care centers, even though they may not be culturally or linguistically congruent, were important to these three Oromo families as they learned about and engaged with the U.S. employment opportunities and the mainstream socio-educational structure. Child care provided two important functions; first, parents needed a safe place to leave their children while they worked or attended school, and, second a place where children could learn English proficiently; something that they could not teach them at home. Finally, child care in the United States was essential for the Oromo (minus the family child-care supports from home), parents to attend college and ultimately obtain better paying jobs.

These three Oromo parents' stories demonstrate the difficult struggle first generation immigrants face as they try to do what's best for their family, their children's success in the new country they immigrated into, and not lose their cultural identity in a foreign country. In essence to succeed in the United States, Oromos first had to find a safe educationally sound environment for their children. This meant moving to the safer suburbs away from the Oromo neighborhood in the city and locating child care programs that would care for their children physically as well as provide educational benefits. The three Oromo parents in this study would have preferred child care staff who were knowledgeable about their culture, family structure, values, aspirations and beliefs; however, these parents chose to focus on their objective of helping their children gain adaptive skills for future success in the United States and having them be more competent in their ability to provide better life for their children and their families. These three families tried to reconcile their desire to maintain and embed the Oromo pride and culture in their children by talking with their children's child care staff and attending family functions at the child care centers. All three parents put forth efforts in educating the child care staff and families about the Oromo culture so that the congruence between home and center could be strengthened more.

Further research is needed to investigate the perspectives of immigrant populations. Expanding the diversity of care providers (recent immigrants and bilingual staff) can assist in meeting the needs of recent immigrants. The study by Hijbregts, Leseman and Tavechhio supports the need for increasing immigrant caregivers so that children from different cultural backgrounds can be better understood within their cultural and social contexts. How the child care staff view child's development and the socialization process of the children they are supervising in their classrooms can impact children's well-being at home and out-of-home settings. The tension immigrant parents, especially first generation immigrants, feel in their wish for faster structural assimilation (so that their families can be better off) and continuing to value their native country's ways is real. The immigrant parents, regardless of where they emigrated from, feel loss of control as they try to learn the new bureaucratic system, language and culture. Often, these parents have to begin working in positions below their educational competencies achieved in the country they left. They also experience lack of understanding from people in the new home they immigrated into as well as discrimination or racism. This experiences, then, further strengthens the immigrant parents' wish for their children to become "American" quickly so their children do not have struggle through the negative experiences, sometimes at the expense of potentially having their children lose their heritage or culture.

Some of the solutions are at the macro level beyond the scope of what child care staff can do to facilitate a more balanced assimilation or acculturation process for immigrant families. However given the aim of this work is to develop theoretical, not statistical generalizability; that is, how these case studies help us understand the lived experiences of Oromo families seeking child care. Thus, this paper provides a descriptive model rather than a predictive model.⁵⁶ By providing in-depth case studies of three Oromo families' experiences with the child care system,

the authors provide a framework to understand some of the processes used by other Oromo families with similar circumstances. Therefore, the suggestions will be limited to ideas that can be incorporated at the child care program level. Some of the ways that child care staff can better serve recent immigrant children is to better understanding the cultural backgrounds of their immigrant families and communicate with parents about the individual family's values and goals. Child care staff can become more knowledgeable about children's cultures, family structures, values, aspirations, and beliefs when they invite the families to share their cultures and practices as the three Oromo parents indicated in their stories. Another assistance child care staff can provide for immigrant families is to facilitate immigrant families in their efforts to learn about available resources. This includes informing families about existing social and economic resources (e.g., child care assistance program, WIC or eligibility requirements for Head Start or other programs targeting lower income families.) and how to access these resources. Another strategy may be for the child care programs to provide opportunities for immigrant families to meet and network with each other. Some of the issues immigrant families, regardless of what country the emigrated from, face can be similar by the nature these families have to make sense of a new country and system. These ways may facilitate immigrant parents to feel a sense of control as well as reducing segregation and isolation of the immigrant group from mainstream American society. This process can also facilitate individual immigrant to develop adaptive strategies to simultaneously acculturate into the American culture as well maintain their own traditions and culture, especially with their children who are rapidly being socialized into the American way.

References

- "A Description of the Immigrant Population." CBO Paper, Congress of the United States Congressional Budget Office, Washington DC, 2004.
- Aamot, G. "Minnesota Sees Surprise Increase of Ethiopian Refugees." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. July 16, 2006. [http://nazret.com/blog/index.php?title=minnesota sees surprise increase of ethi&more=1&c=1&tb=1&pb=1](http://nazret.com/blog/index.php?title=minnesota+sees+surprise+increase+of+ethi&more=1&c=1&tb=1&pb=1) (accessed February 5, 2007).
- . "Demographers Puzzled by Influx of Ethiopians: Refugee Immigration Was Steady Until 63 Percent Spike in 2005." *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 17, 2006: B-3.
- Ainsworth Salter, M.D. *Infancy in Uganda: Infant Care and the Growth of Love*. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967.
- Americanoromo. "Welcome to American Oromo Community of Minnesota! ." 2007. <http://americanoromocommunity.org/> (accessed November 16, 2007).
- Azibo, D.A. *African Psychology in Historical Perspective & Related Commentary*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1996.
- Babbie, E. *The Practice of Social Research*. 9th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001.
- Baxter, P.T.W. "The Creation & Constitution of Oromo Nationality." In *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, edited by K. Fukui and J. Markakis, 167-186. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994.
- Baxter, P.T.W. "Towards a Comparative Ethnography of the Oromo." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 178-189. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.
- Baxter, P.T.W., J. Hultin, and A. Triulzi, . *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.
- "Introduction." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 7-25. Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.
- Bayley, Nancey. "Comparisons of Mental and Motor Test Scores for Ages 1-15 Months by Sex, Birth, Race, Geographical Location, and Education of Parents." *Child Development* 36, no. 2 (1965): 379-411.
- Benefice, E. "Social Anthropology [Review of the Book L' Enfant Africain Dans un mondede Changement: Etude Ethno-psychologique Dans Huit Pays Sud-africans]." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, no. 3 (1998): 501.

Ben-Jochannan, Y. *African Origins of the Major "Western Religions"*. Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1991.

Bogat, G.A., and L.K. Gensheimer. "Discrepancies Between the Attitudes and actions of Parents Choosing Day Care." *Child Care Quarterly*, 1998: 159-169.

Brazelton, B.T., B. Koslowski, and E. Tronick. "Neo-natal Behavior Among Urban Zambians and Americans." *Journal of Child Psychiatry* 15, no. 1 (1976): 97-107.

Bulcha, M. "The Survival and Reconstruction of Oromo National Identity." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Inquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 48-65. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

Camarota, S.A., and N. McArdle. *Where Immigrants Live*. Center For Immigration Studies Backgrounder, Washington DC: Center For Immigration Studies, 2003.

Coll, C., and et al. "An Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children." *Child Developmet* 67 (1996): 1891-1996.

Debella, H., and A. Kassam. "Hawani's Story." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Inquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 26-36. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

Denzin, D. "The Practices and Politics of interpretation." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 897-922. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000.

Denzin, D., and Lincoln Y. "Strategies of Inquiry." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 366-378. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000.

Dodoo, F. "Assimilation Differences Among Africans in America." *Social Forces* 76 (1997): 527-546.

Emlen, A.C., P.E. Koren, and K.H. Shultze. *From a Parent's Point-of-View: Measuring the Quality of Child Care*. Portland State University, 1999.

Fidazzo, G., L. Schmidt, and A. Bergsman. "Enhancing Child Care for Refugee Self Sufficiency: A Training Resource and Toolkit ." 2006.
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/EnhancingChildCare.pdf> (accessed December 1, 2007).

Gable, S., and K. Cole. "Parent's Child Care Arrangements and their Ecological Correlates." *Early Education and Development*, 2000: 549-565.

Geber, M. "Gesell Tests on African Children." *Pediatrics* 20 (December 1957): 1055-1065.
—. *L' enfant Africain Dans un Monde en Changement*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998.

Geber, M. "The Psycho-motor Development of African Children in the First Year, and the Influence of Maternal Behavior." *Journal of Social Psychology* 47 (1958): 185-195.

Goodson, I., and P. Sikes. *Life History Research in Educational Settings: Learning From Lives*. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 2001.

Hancock, G. *The Sign and the Seal: The Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant*. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1992.

Hassen, M. "The Development of Oromo Nationalism." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquires*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 67-80. Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

Hillebrand, B., R. Kok, and W. Biemans. "Theory-Testing Using Case Studies a Comment on Johnston, Leach and Liu." *Industrial Marketing Management*, 1996: 651-657.

"How the Oromo Came to Minnesota." *Oromo Community of Minnesota*. 2006.
<http://www.oromocommunitymn.com/html/aboutmnoromo.html> (accessed November 17, 2006).

Hughes, A. *Oromo Immigrants Strive to be Heard*. May 18, 2005.
http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2005/04/27_hughesa_oromo/ (accessed November 17, 2006).

Huntingford, G.W.B. *The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kaffa and Janjero*. London: International Africa Institute, 1955.

"Immigrant Gateway: Framing the Issue." *McKnight Foundation*. 2005.
http://www.mcknight.org/hotissues/framing_immigrants.aspx (accessed November 17, 2006).

Ispa, J.M., K.R. Thornburg, and J. Venter-Barkley. "Parental Child Care Selection Criteria and Program Quality in Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Communities." *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 14, no. 1 (1998): 3-14.

Jackson, Jackson &. *Infant Culture*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1978.

Johansen, A., A. Leibowitz, and L. Waite. "The Importance of Child Care Characteristics to Choice of Care." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 58, no. 3 (1996): 759-772.

Johnson, D., E. Jaeger, S. Randolph, A. Cauce, and J. Ward. "Studying the Effects of Early Child Care Experiences on the Development of Children of Color in the United States: Toward a More Inclusive Research Agenda." *Child Development* 74, no. 3 (2003): 1227-44.

Jones, A.H.M., and E. Monroe. *A History of Ethiopia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.

Kassam, A. "Ritual and Classification: A Study of the Booran Oromo Terminal Scared Grade Rites of Passage." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1999: 484-503.

- King, K.L., and B. Seegmiller. "Performance of 14-to-22-Old Black, Firstborn Male Infants on Two Tests of Cognitive Development: The Bayley Scales and the Infant Psychological Development Scale." *Developmental Psychology* 8, no. 3 (1973): 317-326.
- Kontos, S., C. Howes, M. Shinn, and E. Galinsky. "Children's Experiences in Family Child Care and Relative Care as a Function of Family Income and Ethnicity." *Merrill Palmer Quarterly* 43 (1997): 386-403.
- Larner, M., and D. Phillips. "Defining and Valuing Quality as a Parent." In *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services*, edited by P. Moss and A. Pence, 43-60. New York: Teachers College Press, 1994.
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., and J. Davis. *The Art and Science of Portraiture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.
- Leiderman, P.H., B.B. Babu, J. Kagia, H.C. Kraemer, and G.F. Leiderman. "African Infant Precocity and Some Social Influences During the First Year." *Nature* 242 (1973): 247-249.
- Leslie, L.A., R. Ettenson, and P. Cumsille. "Selecting a Child Care Center: What Really Matters to Parents?" *Child Youth Care Forum*, 2000: 299-321.
- Lewis, H. *A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965.
- Lewis, H.S. "The Development of Oromo Political Consciousness From 1958 to 1994." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 37-47. Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.
- Lowe, E.D., and T.S. Weisner. "'You Have to Push It. Who's Gonna Raise Your Kids?'" Situating Child Care and Child Care Subsidy Use in the Daily Routines of Lower-Income Families." *The Next Generation*, 2001: 1-36.
- Marcus, H. *A History of Ethiopia (Updated ed.)*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2002.
- Megerssa, G. "Oromumma: Tradition, Consciousness and Identity." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 92-102. Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.
- Negash, A. *Haile Selassie*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989.
- Oliver, R. *The African Experiences: From Olduvai Gorge to the Twenty-First Century*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.
- Olusanya, B., and D. Hodes. "West African Children in Private Foster Care in Cit and Hackney." *Child: Care, Health and Development* 26, no. 4 (2000): 337-342.

Paquette, D., and Ryan J. *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory*.
<http://pt3.nl.edu/paquetteryanwebquest.pdf> (accessed November 17, 2006).

Pungello, E.P., and B. Kurtz-Costes. "Why and How Working Women Choose Care: A Review." *Developmental Review* 19 (1999): 31-96.

Reardon-Anderson, J., R. Capps, and M. Fix. *The Health and Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families*. Vols. B-52. Washington DC: Urban Institute, 2002.

Robertson, C.L., and et al. "Somali and Oromo Refugee Women: Traum'a and Associated factors." *Journal of Advance Nursing* 56, no. 6 (2006): 577-587.

Stewart, N.A. "Melanin: The Melanin Hypothesis, and the Development and Assessment of African Infants." In *African Psychology in Historical Perspective & Related Commentary*, edited by D.A. Azibo, 99-138. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1996.

Sullivan, B. "The Strategy of the Decisive Weight: Italy, 1882-1922." In *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, edited by M. Williamson and et al, 307-351. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Takyi, B. "The Making of the Second Diaspora: On the Recent African Immigrant Community in the United States of America." *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 26 (2002): 32-43.

Terman, L.M. *The Measurement of Intelligence: An Explanation for the Use of the Stanford Revision and Extension of the Binet-Simon Intelligence Scale*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

Villicana, R.L, and M. Venkataraman. "Public Policy Failure or Historical Debacle? A Study of Eritrea's Relations with Ethiopia Since 1991." *Review of Policy Research*, 2006: 549-572.

Weeks, J.B. *Population: An Introduction to Concepts and Issues*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1978.

Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development.

<http://www.simplypsychology.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/vygotsky.html> (accessed November 17, 2006).

Werner, E.E. "Infants Around the World: Cross-Cultural Studies of Psychomotor Development From Birth to Two Years." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 3, no. 2 (1972): 111-134.

Wilson, A. *Awakening the Natural Genius of Black Children*. New York: Afrikan World InfoSystem, 1991.

"World Report 2005: Ethiopia." *Human Rights Watch*. 2005.

<http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/ethiop9833.txt.htm> (accessed November 17, 2006).

Your Gateway to Census 2000. 2000. <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html> (accessed November 17, 2006).

Yu, Stella, Zhihuan Huan, Renee Schwalberg, and Michael kogan. "Parental Awareness of Health and Community Resources among Immigrant Families." *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 9, no. 1 (2005): 27-34.

Zitelmann, T. "Re-Examining the Galla/Oromo Relationship: The Stranger as a Structural Topic." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 103-113. Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

Endnotes

¹ J. Reardon-Anderson, R. Capps, and M. Fix, *The Health and Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families*, Vols. B-52, Washington DC: Urban Institute, 2002.

² "A Description of the Immigrant Population." CBO Paper, Congress of the United States Congressional Budget Office, Washington DC, 2004.

³ S.A. Camarota, and N. McArdle, *Where Immigrants Live*, Center For Immigration Studies Backgrounder, Washington DC: Center For Immigration Studies, 2003.

⁴ *Your Gateway to Census 2000*, 2000. <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html> (accessed November 17, 2006).

⁵ A. Hughes, *Oromo Immigrants Strive to be Heard*, May 18, 2005, http://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2005/04/27_hughesa_oromo/ (accessed November 17, 2006).

⁶ G. Aamot, "Demographers Puzzled by Influx of Ethiopians: Refugee Immigration Was Steady Until 63 Percent Spike in 2005," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 17, 2006: B-3, Americanoromo. "Welcome to American Oromo Community of Minnesota!", 2007, <http://americanoromocommunity.org/> (accessed November 16, 2007).

⁷ A. Hughes, op cit.

⁸ G. Megeressa, "Oromumma: Tradition, Consciousness and Identity," In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 92-102, Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996, 94.

⁹ D. Paquette, and Ryan J, *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory*, <http://pt3.nl.edu/paquetteryanwebquest.pdf> (accessed November 17, 2006).

¹⁰ *Vygotsky's Theory of Social Development*. <http://www.simplypsychology.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/vygotsky.html> (accessed November 17, 2006).

¹¹ R. Oliver, *The African Experiences: From Olduvai Gorge to the Twenty-First Century*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.

¹² H. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia (Updated ed.)*, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2002.

¹³ A.H.M. Jones, and E. Monroe. *A History of Ethiopia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955.

¹⁴ G. Hancock, *The Sign and the Seal: The Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant*, New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1992.

¹⁵ H. Marcus, op cit.

¹⁶ B. Sullivan, "The Strategy of the Decisive Weight: Italy, 1882-1922," In *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War*, edited by M. Williamson and et al, 307-351, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

¹⁷ P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin, and A. Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

¹⁸ P.T.W. Baxter, "The Creation & Constitution of Oromo Nationality," In *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, edited by K. Fukui and J. Markakis, 167-186, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994, P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin, and A. Triulzi, *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

¹⁹ M. Bulcha, "The Survival and Reconstruction of Oromo National Identity," In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 48-65, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

²⁰ H. Lewis, *A Galla Monarchy: Jimma Abba Jifar, Ethiopia*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965.

²¹ G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kaffa and Janjero*, London: International Africa Institute, 1955, T. Zitelmann, "Re-Examining the Galla/Oromo Relationship: The Stranger as a Structural Topic," In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 103-113, Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

²² H. Lewis, op cit.

²³ Y. Ben-Jochannan, *African Origins of the Major "Western Religions"*, Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1991.

²⁴ R. Oliver, op cit.

²⁵ A. Negash, *Haile Selassie*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ H.S. Lewis, "The Development of Oromo Political Consciousness From 1958 to 1994," In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthrpological Enquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 37-47, Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

²⁸ A. Kassam, "Ritual and Classification: A Study of the Booran Oromo Terminal Scared Grade Rites of Passage," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 1999: 484-503.

²⁹ R.L. Villicana, and M. Venkataraman, "Public Policy Failure or Historical Debacle? A Study of Eritrea's Relations with Ethiopia Since 1991," *Review of Policy Research*, 2006: 549-572.

³⁰ H. Debella, and A. Kassam, "Hawani's Story." In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Inquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 26-36, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

³¹ M. Bulcha, "The Survival and Reconstruction of Oromo National Identity," In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Inquiries*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 48-65, Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996.

³² A. Hughes, op cit.

³³ M. Hassen, "The Development of Oromo Nationalism," In *Being and Becoming Oromo: Historical and Anthropological Enquires*, edited by P.T.W. Baxter, J. Hultin and A. Triulzi, 67-80, Lawrence, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1996, H. Marcus, *A History of Ethiopia (Updated ed.)*, Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2002.

³⁴ C.L. Robertson, and et al. "Somali and Oromo Refugee Women: Trauma and Associated factors," *Journal of Advance Nursing* 56, no. 6 (2006): 577-587.

³⁵ S.A. Camarota, and N. McArdle, *Where Immigrants Live*, Center For Immigration Studies Backgrounder, Washington DC: Center For Immigration Studies, 2003.

³⁶ Stella Yu, Zhihuan Huan, Renee Schwalberg, and Michael kogan, "Parental Awareness of Health and Community Resources among Immigrant Families," *Maternal and Child Health Journal* 9, no. 1 (2005): 27-34.

³⁷ B. Olusanya, and D. Hodes, "West African Children in Private Foster Care in Cit and Hackney," *Child: Care, Health and Development* 26, no. 4 (2000): 337-342.

³⁸ I. Goodson, and P. Sikes, *Life History Research in Educational Settings: Learning From Lives*, Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press, 2001.

³⁹ D. Denzin, and Lincoln Y, "Strategies of Inquiry," In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 366-378, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000.

⁴⁰ E. Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*. 9th edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001.

⁴¹ D. Denzin, "The Practices and Politics of interpretation," In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 897-922, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000, S. Lawrence-Lightfoot, and J. Davis, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

⁴² D. Denzin, "The Practices and Politics of interpretation," op cit., 901-903

⁴³ S. Lawrence-Lightfoot, and J. Davis, op cit

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 247.

⁴⁶ D. Denzin, op cit., 897-922, S. Lawrence-Lightfoot, and J. Davis, op cit.

⁴⁷ D. Denzin, "The Practices and Politics of interpretation," In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln, 897-922, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000.

⁴⁸ A.C. Emlen, P.E. Koren, and K.H. Shultze, *From a Parent's Point-of-View: Measuring the Quality of Child Care*, Portland State University, 1999.

⁴⁹ C. Coll, et al, "An Integrative Model for the Study of Developmental Competencies in Minority Children," *Child Developmet* 67 (1996): 1891-1996.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² M. Larner, and D. Phillips, "Defining and Valuing Quality as a Parent," In *Valuing Quality in Early Childhood Services*, edited by P. Moss and A. Pence, 43-60, New York: Teachers College Press, 1994.

⁵³ G.A. Bogat, and L.K. Gensheimer, "Discrepancies Between the Attitudes and actions of Parents Choosing Day Care," *Child Care Quarterly*, 1998: 159-169, J.M. Ispa, K.R. Thornburg, and J. Venter-Barkley, "Parental Child Care Selection Criteria and Program Quality in Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Communities," *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 14, no. 1 (1998): 3-14.

⁵⁴ E.D. Lowe, E.D, and T.S. Weisner, "'You Have to Push It. Who's Gonna Raise Your Kids?' Situating Child Care and Child Care Subsidy Use in the Daily Routines of Lower-Income Families," *The Next Generation*, 2001: 1-36, E.P. Pungello, and B. Kurtz-Costes, "Why and How Working Women Choose Care: A Review," *Developmental Review* 19 (1999): 31-96.

⁵⁵ S. Gable, and K. Cole, "Parent's Child Care Arrangements and their Ecological Correlates," *Early Education and Development*, 2000: 549-565, L.A. Leslie, R. Ettenson, and P. Cumsille, "Selecting a Child Care Center: What Really Matters to Parents?", *Child and Youth Care Forum* 29, no. 5 (2000): 299-321.

⁵⁶ B. Hillebrand, R. Kok, and W. Biemans, "Theory-Testing Using Case Studies a Comment on Johnston, Leach and Liu," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 1996: 651-657.