

William Damon, *Brown University*  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

## Cultural Practices as Contexts for Development

Jacqueline J. Goodnow  
*Macquarie University, Sydney*  
Peggy J. Miller  
*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Frank Kessel  
*Social Science Research Council*

EDITORS

Number 67, Spring 1995

JOSSEY-BASS PUBLISHERS  
San Francisco

*This chapter presents and illustrates the theoretical position that as people participate in sociocultural activities, they contribute to the development of community practices that simultaneously contribute to the individuals' own development.*

## Development Through Participation in Sociocultural Activity

Barbara Rogoff, *Jacqueline Baker-Sennett, Pilar Lacasa,*  
*Denise Goldsmith*

In this chapter, we argue that development is a process of participation in sociocultural activities. We regard individual development as inseparable from interpersonal and community processes; individuals' changing roles are mutually defined with those of other people and with dynamic cultural processes. We make use of "activity" or "event" as the unit of analysis, with active and dynamic contributions from individuals, their social partners, and historical traditions and materials and their transformations (see Dewey and Bentley, 1949; Leontiev, 1981).

Studying human events or activities contrasts with the more traditional approach of examining the individual in isolation or in interaction with a separate environment. In our approach, individuals' efforts and sociocultural institutions and practices are constituted by and constitute each other and thus cannot be defined independently of each other or studied in isolation. We may focus on the contribution of one or another individual or a cultural tradition, but always in relation to the whole activity rather than extracted from it. When individuals participate in shared endeavors, not only does

---

We are grateful to the Spencer Foundation for its support of the research reported here; to the Ministerio de Educacion y Ciencia de España for its support to Lacasa for her stay in the United States; to the troop leaders and Scouts who participated in the research; to Cindy White for her expert assistance; and to the personnel of the Girl Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of Greater Philadelphia, the Cedar Hill Girl Scout Museum, and the cookie companies for their help with historical information. Cathy Angelillo, Pablo Chavajay, Eugene Matusov, and Cindy White provided helpful suggestions on a prior draft.

individual development occur, but the process transforms (develops) the practices of the community.

Community, interpersonal, and personal planes of analysis can each become the focus of a particular analysis, but without being separated from each other (Rogoff, in press b). Any given plane can be viewed in the foreground of a particular analysis while the others are maintained in the background. When we consider a single person's contributions or the functioning of a whole community in the foreground, we do not assume that they are separate elements or levels but rather planes of focus on the whole activity that facilitate analysis; all are essential to understand any of them.

Rogoff (in press b) describes the three analytic planes as follows. The *community plane of analysis* focuses on people participating with others in culturally organized activity, with institutional practices and development extending from historical events into the present, guided by cultural values and goals.

The *interpersonal plane of analysis* focuses on how people communicate and coordinate efforts in face-to-face and side-by-side interaction as well as more distal arrangements of people's activities—arrangements that do not require co-presence (for example, choices of where and with whom and with what materials and activities a person is involved). Interpersonal processes are not simply facilitative of involvement in certain activities but also include restriction of the activities in which people participate—for example, the exclusion of children from some adult activities or provision of messages that they are allowed to participate only in certain ways.

The *personal plane of analysis* focuses on how individuals change through their involvement in one or another activity, in the process becoming prepared for subsequent involvement in related activities. Through engagement in an activity at one time, individuals change and handle a later situation in ways prepared by their own participation in the previous situation. Studying the process of children's participation and changing responsibility in an activity is both how researchers can understand development and how development occurs.

We argue that development (whether viewed in the personal, interpersonal, or community plane) is a process of transformation through people's participation rather than of acquisition. We illustrate our argument using observations of the developmental processes of individual Girl Scouts and of community traditions of the Girl Scouts of America through the participation of individuals in the annual community cookie sale, an activity that allows us to examine personal, interpersonal, and community processes that we ourselves have not devised, facilitating analysis of the community plane in particular.

Explanation focusing on the community aspects of an activity requires reference to the personal and interpersonal aspects of the endeavor. Likewise, to understand personal or interpersonal processes, it is essential to understand the historical, institutional context of the activity, which both defines the practices of the individuals and their companions and is transformed by successive generations. In our example, individual Scouts are active in learning and in

managing the activity, along with their companions, as they participate in and contribute to transforming community practices that began more than seven decades earlier.

We worked with two troops of ten- and eleven-year-old Scouts in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1990. In one troop, we became "cookie chairs" and underwent the training to serve as the troop's organizers of the sale (a role usually filled by a mother of a girl in the troop, which one of us was). In the other troop, we observed the process. The girls suggested that we give them tape recorders to carry around to record their sales and deliveries; their tape recorders allowed us to observe changes in their roles and participation throughout the two-month process. In addition, we videotaped or audiotaped troop meetings and interviewed the girls throughout. We investigated the history of Girl Scout cookie sales with the help of individuals associated with the activity over a considerable time (including council historians, a Girl Scout museum curator, the director of Girl Scout cookie sales at the national level, and representatives from the official bakeries), public documents such as newspapers, and archives and publications of the Girl Scouts of America.

### Development Viewed in the Community Plane

Research that focuses on development in the community plane examines transformations in the institutional structure and cultural technologies of the activity as a function of the generations of people who participate in the community. Community processes include not only formal institutions, such as schools and economic and political systems, but also informal systems of practices in which people participate. Berger and Luckmann (1966) speculate that habitual relations between people become institutionalized as expected and accepted rules and approaches that humans come to regard as external to their functioning. Shouter (1978) describes such institutional settings:

For the structure of human exchanges, there are precise foundations to be discovered in the institutions we establish between ourselves and others; institutions which implicate us in one another's activity in such a way that, what we have done together in the past, commits us to going on in a certain way in the future. . . . The members of an institution need not necessarily have been its originators; they may be second, third, fourth, etc. generation members, having "inherited" the institution from their forebears. And this is a most important point, for although there may be an intentional structure to institutional activities, practitioners of institutional forms need have no awareness at all of the reason for its structure—for them, it is just "the-way-things-are-done." [p. 70]

Our aim in the first half of this chapter is to examine historical changes in the practice of Girl Scout cookie sales as the basis of our analysis of development in the community plane, with attention to how generations of Scouts and cookie companies have contributed to the ongoing, developing community

processes constituting that practice. Analysis focusing on the community plane requires attention to the contributions of individuals and groups (the other two planes of analysis) as they participate in creating new traditions, by building on existing traditions and other communities and institutions. Because focusing on the community plane of analysis involves connecting not only with the personal and interpersonal planes of analysis but also with other communities and institutions, we examine both how the community practice of Girl Scout cookie sales has developed through the contributions of individuals and groups and how transformations in the practice relate to historical changes in other institutions (for example, family structure, maternal employment).

In the last half of the chapter, we shift focus to make a parallel argument: that the individual plane of analysis requires understanding the interpersonal and community planes of analysis. We hope to convince readers of the utility of thinking of developmental processes as involving personal, interpersonal, and community processes as they mutually constitute each other.

**Personal and Interpersonal Contributions to Development of Community Practices.** By 1990, when we conducted our study, cookie sales were the major annual fund-raising effort of the Girl Scouts of America, a voluntary organization dedicated to girls' moral education, development of home, academic, and outdoor skills, and career preparation (Kleinfield and Shinkwin, 1983). The Scouts meet on a weekly basis in "troops" of about a dozen Scouts and one or two women leaders.<sup>1</sup> The funds from cookie sales are used to support the troops' activities, the regional administration, and girls' participation in camps run by the organization. In 1990, the average troop treasury cookie profit was \$420 ("Girl Scouts Growing with Pride," 1991); nationwide revenues about this time period were \$400 million (Zagorin, 1993).

The Scouts compose the sales force, trained and supervised by the organization, going door to door, selling to family, friends, and neighbors, and getting their parents to sell cookies at work. Most Scouts participate in the sales and take their economic role very seriously; their parents must sign a form agreeing to be responsible for the large sums of money involved. According to the *Christian Science Monitor* (Atkin, 1990), cookie sales are considered an educational tool to teach responsibility, goal-setting, and business principles.

Billboards and other advertisements remind potential customers of the tradition of buying Girl Scout cookies: "It's Girl Scout Cookie Time." Many Scouts have older sisters or mothers who themselves sold Girl Scout cookies when they were Scouts (three of the four authors of this chapter sold cookies as Scouts), and aged customers are often eager to buy cookies as they remember their own efforts to sell Girl Scout cookies. People who are not visited by a Scout selling cookies are often upset that they missed the chance to buy. According to the official publication of the Utah Girl Scout Council ("Growing with Pride," 1991), only 38 to 41 percent of the potential market is reached by the sales force.

Cookie sales and delivery occur with the constraints and resources provided by practices of the Girl Scouts of America and large baking companies

licensed by the Girl Scouts, which set deadlines and provide organizational supports to the girls in their efforts to keep track of sales, cookies, and money and to manage their time and resources. The Scouts take orders on an order form provided by the cookie company and deliver cookies and collect money a month later, according to dates set by the regional administration. The layout of the order form is designed to facilitate calculation of amounts of money, presentation of information to customers, and the keeping track of deliveries. The order form is color-coded in a way that facilitates keeping track of the seven different kinds of cookies. (For example, customers order Thin Mints by indicating the number of boxes desired in the green column; the number of Trefoils is indicated in the yellow column. The boxes and cases of cookies and other materials maintain this color-coding.)

Today's elaborate system of color-coded order forms and sales training information evolved from a tiny form with a few printed suggestions for its use. An order form from the 1930s provided a stub for the purchaser to sign and a sticker for the purchaser to put in the window to give notice that the household had already purchased cookies. By 1951, in Newton, Massachusetts, the troop chair was supposed to meet with the girls a week before the cookie sale to "have a discussion of selling techniques and sales approaches" ("Annual Cookie Sale," 1951). By 1971, the brochure for the same area provided calculation information for the cookie chairs (1 box, \$.60, 2 boxes, \$1.20); in addition, the cookie chairs were to give selling aids and parent letters provided by the cookie company to each girl. Later in the 1970s, the order form for that area had a chart for orders with a checklist and a calculation box for the Scouts. It listed "Six Easy Lessons" on the back. By the time we conducted this study, ten tips, seven rules, and a letter of advice for parents were included on the back of the large, glossy, folded form that included a tear-off mini-form for parents to post at their workplace.

In the troop in which we served as cookie chairs, we used the materials provided by the regional organization and the cookie companies to train Scouts to become "successful" salespeople: institutionally sanctioned sales pitches, information on how to use the color-coded order forms, rules related to safety when selling, and procedures for collecting money. The organizers also provided sales incentives and other materials for the cookie chairs, including a money-counting game that uses play money and a role-playing game in which troop members work in pairs, taking turns playing the parts of customer and salesperson.

According to the person from the Little Brownie Bakers (of Louisville, Ky.) in charge of cookie sales for the Utah area, a sales representative meets with the Girl Scout Council yearly to present any new ideas for the order form or type of cookies to be sold. The Council sometimes makes small suggestions about modifications, but this is rare. The cookie company does not make any effort to ensure that the form is manageable for young children; company officials believe that young children are so skilled in selling that few extra efforts need to be made to ensure that they will handle the task efficiently.

The role of individuals in the development of both Scouting and cookie sales is apparent in historical accounts of the origins of these traditions. Prominent women organized local Girl Scout organizations and assisted in the spread of Scouting, beginning with the first U.S. troop, which was founded in 1912 by Mrs. Juliette Low (who was inspired by a friend who had founded the Scout movement in England and by the English Girl Guides). Mrs. Low invited several girls to tea at her home in Savannah, Georgia, and explained the Scout movement; that group of girls was the first troop ("The Girl Scout Movement," 1932a; Wright, 1938). The contribution of those first Scouts to the tradition can be seen in the name of the organization, which changed from Girl Guides to Girl Scouts at the Scouts' request ("Girl Scouting as an Educational Movement," 1932b).

According to the Girl Scout Council Headquarters in New York (E. Christie, personal communication, 1991), cookie sales were first recognized in 1920, though they began on a small scale before then. The honors for originating the sales are claimed by various individuals and regional groups. The obituary for Bella Spewack, the Romanian-born co-writer of the Broadway musical *Kiss Me Kate*, reported that she had invented the Girl Scout cookie around 1922, when "she hit upon the now-familiar seal-embossed cookie as a promotional and money-making idea for Girl Scouts. She suggested that if the Scouts sold cookies at a flower show attended by actresses, the resulting publicity could launch national sales" (Oliver, 1990).

Each region seems to have its own "origin story" for the cookie sales. Wright's (1938) history of Girl Scouting in the Great Lakes region reported that the Chicago Girl Scouts held their first cookie contest and sale in 1923, using a national recipe to bake as well as sell the cookies, and that "the first trefoil-shaped cookie emerged from an Indianapolis oven, golden as a new-minted coin, which it proved to be! Since that first fragrant batch, annual cookie sales have furthered Girl Scouting over the entire United States. Like the house in Hänsel and Gretel, many a Girl Scout structure has been built out of cookies. In 1926, Detroit built a camp house and unit kitchens out of sixteen thousand dozen—\$1,200!" (Wright, 1938, p. 34).

The archives of the Girl Scouts of Greater Philadelphia report that the first cookie sale was held in 1932 in the windows of the Philadelphia Gas and Electric Company. The Scouts were running baking demonstrations, and passersby asked to buy the freshly baked cookies. By 1934, 110,000 cookies baked in the shape of the Girl Scout trefoil insignia were made by a commercial Philadelphia baker for the sales (at 23 cents per box). In 1935, the sale was organized with a flyer and elaborate promotion plans, including notices in church calendars, radio and newspaper items, and announcements in neighborhood theaters in which Girl Scouts also sold cookies and served as ushers (Garhart, 1961).<sup>2</sup> The next year, cookie sales became a national event, and the national organization began franchising bakeries throughout the United States to make the cookies.

The fund-raising idea was so successful that by 1937 more than 125

regional councils had adopted it, according to S. Nowicki of the ABC "Official Girl Scout Cookie Bakers" (personal communication, June 1992). The Girl Scout council under whose auspices our Salt Lake troops worked began cookie sales in 1928; nationally endorsed sales began in 1936 (Lund, 1986).

In 1991, 7,500 Girl Scouts in Utah participated in cookie sales (Free, 1991) out of 10,307 Girl Scouts ("Membership Update," 1991); in 1990, Utah Girl Scouts sold an average of 179 boxes of cookies each—the highest average in the nation. The first-place seller in the Utah Girl Scout Council in 1991 sold 4,104 boxes, gaining membership in the 500-Cookie Club for her sixth year ("Looking Back," 1991). Nationally, 165 million boxes of cookies were sold in 1990 (Smith, 1991) by 1 million girls who were assisted officially by 400,000 adults (E. Christie, Girl Scout Council Headquarters, New York, personal communication, 1991).

Some of the transformations in the practice of cookie sales over the decades apparently derived from issues faced by individuals in the process, as is reported in the following account of the early Utah sales: "Cookies were ordered and when they arrived they were sold door to door and in shopping malls. Unfortunately, they occasionally miscalculated the number of boxes they could sell and a distraught cookie chairman was left with a garage full of cookies which she had to return to the manufacturer. This problem was remedied when they switched to pre-order sales in the 1950s" (Lund, 1986, p. 69).

From the historical accounts reported in this section we can see the role of individual contributions and of interpersonal contacts and efforts in the development and continual transformation of the tradition of Girl Scout cookie sales. Of course, the institutional context of Girl Scout cookie sales also relates to other institutions, such as cookie companies, family life, and the workplace, discussed below.

**Involvement of Other Institutions in Girl Scout Cookie Sales.** The unit of analysis to which we are referring in the community plane of analysis is not fixed; we could, for example, have referred to changing national events and practices in analyzing the community plane (as in Elder and Caspi, 1988). The focus of a particular plane can broaden or widen according to the analysis; it is not an operational definition. We consider people to be members of a variety of interrelated communities (which may be commonly defined in terms of their family membership, religious involvement, occupational or gender organization, ethnic involvement, and so on).

From its early days, the Girl Scout movement had obvious relations to other institutions, including the Scouting movement in England and the Boy Scouts of America. In addition, some of the adults facilitating the early growth of Scouting, such as Mrs. Herbert Hoover and Jane Addams of Chicago (Wright, 1938), were active in other important political, educational, and social-welfare organizations.

A 1932 Girl Scout publication ("Girl Scouting as an Educational Movement," 1932b) noted the relation of the Girl Scout educational philosophy to educational movements and institutions of the time. The following passage

from that publication beautifully indicates the historical links between the activities of Scouting (including cookie sales) and those of other community institutions:

Fundamentally, the educational principles of Girl Scouting are those underlying all progressive educational thinking and progressive educational experiments [for example, the educational philosophy of Dewey]. . . . They are being put into practice with all the resources of modern psychology and modern social and scientific theory.

Girl Scouting believes that education is life, not merely preparation for life—in other words, that living the present fully, intelligently, and wholeheartedly at any stage of development is the only true preparation for living later stages. It begins, therefore, with the interests and enthusiasms of a particular group of girls and provides a series of experiences which widen and enrich these interests and enthusiasms.

Girl Scouting believes in the immense educational value of the small group, managing its own affairs and making its own plans as far as possible and learning in this way the first lessons of cooperation and good citizenship.

The Girl Scout leader is a friend and guide of her girls, rather than a grown person in absolute authority. She makes suggestions as a member of the group, but respects the girls' proposals and ideas. [pp. 3-4]

Links with other community institutions are apparent in the impact of the structure of family and neighborhood life in the United States on the organization of Girl Scout cookie sales. Stresses in family stability (for example, the increase in divorce) and mothers' role changes have changed the supports available at home for children's endeavors. In addition, the prevalence of women working outside the home has led to changes in the way the sales occur. Decades ago, Scouts could count on finding customers at home throughout the day; now they have to return many times to find their customers at home or limit deliveries to evenings and weekends. It is also regarded as less safe for girls to go door to door in their neighborhoods now than in previous eras.

These changes may have contributed to the development of greater reliance on parents selling in the workplace. Some zealous parents use fax machines to take orders. One mother sent out an e-mail message to co-workers at her company, seeking orders (saying, "I don't have the luxury of taking her out to sell cookies," Smith, 1991, p. L3). She had sold about sixty boxes when two Girl Scout fathers—influential people in the company who until that year had dominated the office cookie sales—took her aside and pointed out that she had started before the official start date for sales. The company's personnel office then worked out a way for employees to pool their cookie orders and divide the proceeds evenly.

According to Smith (1991, p. L3), "Girl Scout officials say that . . . changing families and neighborhoods have altered the sweetest of U.S. institutions.

'Long ago, the streets were safer and the little girls used to go around in neighborhoods. Those were the halcyon days when everybody was home,' said Cece Sander, director of product sales for the Orange County council. Now an increasing number of Girl Scouts are in single-parent homes. 'The workplace has become in many cases a substitute for the prior activity. One, it's safer, and two, it's more effective,' Sander said."

It is not just the parents who are transforming sales practices to make use of current technologies (such as the fax and e-mail) and institutions (such as the company organization). Over the years, older Scouts have found themselves at a disadvantage in door-to-door sales as the sales force has changed to include younger Scouts, who have the personal resource of being "cute" and therefore more successful in the neighborhood sales. In 1989, the San Geronio Council instituted a toll-free phone number for customers to place orders directly; older Girl Scouts packaged the orders for delivery by United Parcel Service, yielding a 28 percent surge in orders. In 1990, the Girl Scout Council in Los Angeles began teaching older Scouts to function as sophisticated telemarketers (LaGanga, 1990).

This section has focused on the evolution of community practices, with reference to the contributions of individuals and groups as well as to connections with other societal changes. Understanding the processes that become the focus in personal, interpersonal, and community/institutional planes of analysis relies on understanding the processes in the background as well as those in the foreground of analysis.

### Development Viewed in the Personal Plane

In this section, we consider how a participation perspective leads to different assumptions and questions about the processes of development. We provide a conceptual analysis of development as a process of participation rather than of acquisition and illustrate our points with observations of the Scouts and accounts of several individuals for whom this year's sale was their first. Our dual aim is to show how an analysis of individual development requires reference to other planes of analysis and to examine changes in how we conceive of development from a participation perspective.

Individuals transform their understanding of and responsibility for activities through their own participation, and in the process they become prepared to engage in similar subsequent activities. By functioning in an activity, participating in its meaning, people necessarily make ongoing contributions, whether in concrete actions or in stretching to understand the actions and ideas of others. Communication and coordination in the course of participation in shared endeavors involve adjustments between participants (with varying, not necessarily compatible roles) to stretch their common understanding to fit with new perspectives in the shared endeavor. Such stretching to accomplish something together during participation in activities is development. As Wertsch and Stone (1979, p. 21) put it, "The process is the product." No

particular event is privileged as the "outcome" (see Rogoff, Radziszewska, and Masiello, in press). In Dewey's words, "The living creature is a part of the world, sharing its vicissitudes and fortunes, and making itself secure in its precarious dependence only as it intellectually identifies itself with the changes about it, and, forecasting the future consequences of what is going on, shapes its own activities accordingly. If the living, experiencing being is an intimate participant in the activities of the world to which it belongs, then knowledge is a mode of participation, valuable in the degree in which it is effective. It cannot be the idle view of an unconcerned spectator" (1916, p. 393).

Children and their social partners are interdependent; their roles are active and dynamically change in activities of the community. In Girl Scout cookie sales, individuals learn to solve complex problems that have been defined and organized by their community, their own changes in roles and understanding extend to their efforts and involvements on similar occasions in the future and simultaneously contribute to transformation of the activities in which they participate.

For example, in our observations, the girls began to use and extend cultural tools for calculating and keeping track of amounts due from customers that tied their efforts in this activity to practices in other institutions of their culture, including the number system used in their community and the calculation box on the order form provided by the organization. Their means of handling the problems of sales and delivery involved using various tools developed in the process and borrowed from others. In organizing the individual orders, the girls often bundled together the boxes for each order using a technique that in some cases we could track as being borrowed from other Scouts or from mothers (for example, putting a rubber band around the boxes and labeling the bundle with a Post-it adhesive note with the customer's address and the amount due). In calculating amounts due, the girls had available to them their mothers' help in talking them through the calculations for many orders and the model of their customers' talk-around calculation at the time of the sale (while the customers filled out the order form) that demonstrated how calculations on a unit price of \$2.50 could be handled by thinking of a box costing a fourth of \$10 rather than by multiplying out each digit.

Viewing development as participation challenges the idea of a boundary between internal and external phenomena (for example, between arithmetic knowledge and availability of order forms listing price information)—a boundary that is derived from use of the isolated individual as the unit of analysis. A person is a part of an activity in which he or she participates, not separate from it. Our perspective discards the idea that the social world is external to the individual and that development consists of *acquiring* knowledge and skills. Rather, a person develops through participation in an activity, changing to be involved in the situation at hand in ways that contribute both to the ongoing event and to the person's preparation for involvement in other, similar events.

If development is seen as a process of transformation of responsibilities and understanding, as we suggest, cognition need not be defined as a collec-

tion of stored possessions (such as representations of spatial routes or plans for making deliveries). Instead of studying a person's possession or acquisition of a capacity or a bit of knowledge, the focus is on the active changes involved in an unfolding event or activity in which people participate (see Gibson, 1979; Leontiev, 1981; Meacham, 1984; Pepper, 1942; Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, and Matusov, in press).

The Scouts' participation in cookie sales and delivery inherently involves planning and adjusting their approaches as they learn to manage the complex planning involved in developing spatial routes with sufficient flexibility to be efficient given the interpersonal and material resources and constraints of the situation (for example, customers that are not home, routes that require revision, helpers that wear out). Flexibility in planning—rather than possession of a plan independent of action—is paramount, with a planner observing the changing circumstances, ready to adjust plans or take advantage of an opportunity (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, and Matusov, in press).

While planning, a person necessarily coordinates his or her efforts with those of others, while anticipating and building on opportunities and barriers to their efforts that involve events requiring analysis in the interpersonal and community planes as well as the individual plane of analysis.

The focus in a participation model of development thus turns to how planning, remembering, relating to others, and so on involve participation in cultural practices with other people (even when a person is alone for a while). Change and development in the process of participation are assumed to be inherent.

An important difference between viewing development as a matter of transformation and viewing it as a matter of acquisition is in assumptions about time. The notion of acquisition rests on the assumption that time is segmented into past, present, and future, which are treated as separate. This yields problems of accounting for relations across time—problems that are often handled by assuming that the individual stores memories of the past, which are somehow retrieved and used in the present, and that the individual makes plans in the present and (if the plans are stored effectively) executes them in the future. The links between these separate time segments are bridged in mysterious ways, to bring information or skills stored at one point in time to use in another. The acquisition view of development involves a storage model of mind—with elements stored in the brain that requires a homunculus or difficult-to-specify executive process to bring the elements stored at one epoch to implement at another epoch (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, and Matusov, in press). This is the same mysterious executive process that is required to bring external pieces of knowledge or skill inside the person if learning is seen as the acquisition and accumulation of objects stored in the brain.

From our perspective, on the other hand, time is an inherent aspect of events and is not divided into separate units of past, present, and future (see Rogoff, in press *b*). Any event in the present is an extension of previous events and is directed toward goals that have not yet been accomplished. As such, the

present extends through the past and future and cannot be separated from them. When a person acts on the basis of previous experience, that person's past is present. It is not merely a stored memory called up in the present; the person's previous participation contributes to the event at hand by having prepared it. The present event is different than it would have been if previous events had not occurred. This explanation does not require a storage model of past events.

An analogy illustrating the superfluency of a storage model of past events can be drawn from the way we conceive of organizational change. Changes in the structure of Girl Scout cookie sales, for example, are not stored anywhere as accumulated units of some kind; they are built on the efforts of previous years in ways that prepare current and future practices. Both continuity and change are inherent in activities. Therefore it appears to us more parsimonious to examine the changes and continuities in the activities themselves than to add a construct of storage.

In our view, development is a dynamic process characterized by change throughout rather than the accumulation of new items. There is no need to conceive of development in terms of the acquisition or transmission of stored units, since development through participation is an aspect of ongoing events (see also Rogoff, in press a). People change through their participation and handle subsequent events in ways prepared by their changes in previous events.

From the perspective that development occurs through participation, it follows that personal, interpersonal, and cultural processes all constitute each other and develop in sociocultural activity. This contrasts with a model that casts development as acquisition, in which one looks first for exposure to external knowledge or skill and then for evidence of acquisition as the person retrieves the acquired knowledge or skill independently (Rogoff, Radziszewska, and Masiello, in press). In such a model, the individual would be viewed as either a passive recipient of external social or cultural influence—a receptacle for the accumulation of knowledge and skill—or an active seeker of passive external social and cultural knowledge and skill.

The questions to investigate are different if we move from seeing development as acquisition to viewing development as a process of transformation through participation in sociocultural activities. Questions of where memories are stored or how information is taken from external events or how children accumulate knowledge or implement plans all become less relevant ways to study development from this sociocultural approach. (Rogoff, Baker-Sennett, and Marusov [in press] do not argue for necessarily dropping the stored mental representation metaphor but for recognizing it as a *metaphor*; one perhaps useful for communication between scholars but not to be assumed to characterize the functioning of the people studied. Greater clarity may result if the metaphor is dropped for some research questions.)

From a participation perspective, we begin to examine in closer focus the actual processes by which children participate with other people in cultural

activity and the ways they transform their participation. The investigation of people's involvement in activities becomes the basis of our understanding of development rather than simply the surface that we try to get past. The central question becomes how people participate in sociocultural activity and how their participation changes from a relatively peripheral involvement, observing and carrying out secondary roles, to assuming various responsible roles in the management of such activities. As Lave and Wenger (1991) note, "Viewing learning as legitimate peripheral participation means that learning is not merely a condition for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership. We conceive of identities as long term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice. Thus identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another" (p. 53).

The transformations are developmental in the sense that they are changes in particular directions. The direction of development varies locally (in accordance with cultural values, interpersonal needs, and specific circumstances); it does not require specification of universal or ideal endpoints. In addition, the applicability of these ideas is not restricted to activities and development that are considered desirable by experts or other segments of the community. They apply equally to explaining how people develop through participation in community activities that many would criticize.

Given our emphasis on development as changing forms of participation, key questions for developmental research are these: How do the activity, its purpose, and people's roles in it transform as it proceeds? How do different activities relate to each other and to prior events? How do people prepare now for what they expect may happen later? How do the activities of previous generations prepare the current situation? We would want to know the following:

What roles people play, with what fidelity and responsibility  
Their changing purposes for being involved, commitment to the endeavor, and trust of unknown aspects of it (including its future)

Their flexibility and attitude toward change in involvement (that is, their interest in learning versus their rejection of new roles or protection of the status quo)

Their understanding of the interrelations of different contributions to the endeavor and their readiness to switch to complementary roles (for example, to fill in for others)

The relation of their roles in this activity to those in other activities (such as the relation between participation in roles at school and at home or their involvement in several different ethnic communities)

How their involvement relates to changes in the community's practices.

Orienting our inquiry by focusing on how people participate in sociocultural activity and how they change their participation demystifies the processes of learning and development. Rather than searching for the mechanisms of acquisition or the nature of internalization as a conduit from external bits of

knowledge or skill to an internal repository, to see development we look directly at children's efforts and the efforts of their companions and the institutions that they constitute and upon which they build.

In the study of Girl Scout cookie sales and delivery, we were able to observe changes in how the girls participated in a number of aspects of the activity and how, through participation, they developed in responsibility and understanding of the practice. One purpose of our account, as we have noted, is to illustrate how a focus on the developmental process of individuals requires reference to (not separation from) their involvement with others and the traditions of the community (in the other two planes of analysis). We focus here on the development of the girls through their participation in this activity; similar analyses could be done of the development of the troop leaders, family members, customers, and researchers through their participation in the activity.

The girls, as well as their social partners, actively borrowed and developed one or another approach and made use of available resources; they also negotiated a balance of responsibility for shared efforts. For example, in the calculation of charges to customers, we could track in many cases how the girls took on greater responsibility over the course of the delivery, with their mothers often initially managing the calculations and supervising the girls in keeping track of customers who had paid; in the course of participation in a system that was often set up by the mothers, the girls took on greater responsibility for handling these complicated and important aspects of the activity.

Our observations revealed developmental processes that occurred as the girls participated in this sociocultural activity. Through the girls' participation in the activity, they developed in ways that we could see leading to changed later participation. To support these points, we describe the changing roles and forms of participation of the four Scouts in our study (two from each troop) for whom this year's sale was the first.

**Learning and Changing Roles in Becoming a Seller.** We observed that the process of participation in cookie sales involved changes in the girls' roles as they became salespersons—changes that were apparent in their treatment of their own roles over the course of the activity. We hope that readers will notice that our account of the developmental changes for the girls as salespersons involves not only a focus on their own efforts and transformations (in the personal plane of analysis) but also necessary reference to their involvement with other people (in the interpersonal plane of analysis) and the traditions of the practice (in the community plane of analysis).

The process of becoming cookie sellers had both commonalities and important differences from girl to girl. The commonalities had to do with transformations in their confidence and their growing identity as cookie sellers who coordinated with the community practices of cookie sales. Some of the differences had to do with the kind of support offered by other people and the roles of the other people. The family circumstances of the girls were quite different, and these differences seemed to relate to variations in their adoption of the

main responsibility for the role of seller. All the girls marshaled or were offered support by others in making the transformation: one struggled with the primary responsibility herself, two collaborated with others who provided a great deal of support, and one remained somewhat peripheral to the process as organized in her family. The people supporting their transformation varied, with major aid coming in different cases from troop leaders, customers, other Girl Scouts, parents, and siblings.

Thus the girls transformed in their roles as Girl Scout cookie sellers, and they did so with the assistance of others as they came to participate in the tradition of cookie sales (which, by their participation, they contributed to creating). Understanding the Scouts' changing roles requires attention not only to their own efforts but to their coordination with and guidance from others and from the organization of the activity (through the materials and practices developed over the decades by prior Scouts, adult leaders, and customers) and through the changes in other institutions (such as family structure).

**Darlene.** Darlene's parents were divorced, and she spent much of her after-school time at home by herself. Darlene treated the sales as primarily her responsibility and asked many anxious questions regarding potential problems at troop meetings. Her struggles to manage the sales and delivery illustrate the necessity of considering the interpersonal and community planes of analysis in understanding how a person develops as a cookie seller.

At first, Darlene had many difficulties with implementation of the sales script. For example, although she had been instructed not to collect money from customers until the cookies were delivered, she collected some money during the sales period. As she explained to one of the cookie chairs in requesting clarification of the procedure, "Well, I've been kind of collecting some money now. . . . A lot of [customers] just shove it in your face and slam the door." Darlene's troop leader and the cookie chairs took on several roles related to Darlene's participation that were ordinarily filled by the girls' mothers (such as picking up the cases of cookies from the cookie chair).

Over Darlene's six different sales trips (the first five of which were done without a companion), there was a noticeable change in her comfort with the role of salesperson. Her transition in skill and identity as a salesperson was supported not only by the script suggested on the order form and the training provided by the cookie chairs but also by the customers. The script on the order form provided specific wordings for the girls to introduce themselves, explain what they were doing, and take the order, along with suggestions for successful sales. The training provided in the role-playing game suggested by the regional Girl Scout organization gave Darlene and the other Scouts the opportunity to practice the complementary roles of seller and customer during a troop meeting.

Nonetheless, during her first sale, Darlene struggled with the identity of a cookie seller as she approached a neighbor: "I was wondering. . . . What you're supposed to say is, 'My name is Darlene, I'm from Troop 23, and we're selling Girl Scout cookies.'" Assuming the role and the language of a sales-



person was not yet comfortable for Darlene. However, the neighbor was sympathetic and suggested that Darlene return to sell to her roommates. When Darlene returned, the neighbor encouraged her to practice her sales pitch on each roommate. Darlene later practiced her sales pitch on her father and step-mother as well; they pretended to be ordinary customers, with her father refusing to buy and her stepmother encouraging Darlene to provide information on each type of cookie (and commenting, after they bought three boxes, "We're just very impressed. I've never had a salesgirl quite that good"). Another customer, who said she "used to do this," helped Darlene use the form properly, telling her that customers should fill out the form with the number of boxes they want, not just use checks.

As the sales progressed, Darlene became a skilled seller, effectively communicating knowledge of her product, using the order form effectively, and adjusting her sales pitch and interpersonal manner to fit each customer. However, Darlene also had difficulties managing the complexities of cookie delivery with little assistance: she collected too much money for the number of cookies sold.

Carla, unlike Darlene, depended heavily on the leadership of family members. Either her sister or her mother or both were with her at all times; her mother called friends throughout the sales to let them know that Carla was selling Girl Scout cookies, gave Carla ideas about where to sell, and routinely checked the order form throughout the sales phase to make sure that amounts due were tallied correctly. Carla did not regard herself as the person responsible for selling. On one occasion, she told her sister to knock on a customer's door, saying, "I don't understand, why I always have to do it."

When we asked how she had delivered the cookies, Carla's response made it clear that her mother had organized most of the delivery from the time they picked up their cases of cookies from the cookie chair: "My mom took all of the boxes and we stuck them in the front room and then Mom went through them. . . . First my mom called everybody . . . and then we went to their houses. . . . She wrote down everybody's name . . . and then she stuck the cookies and the piece of paper with their names and how many they ordered and how much money [in a plastic bag]." Carla's mother was with her for every delivery except one to help keep track of the money; this may have contributed to the fact that Carla was one of the first girls in the troop to turn in all her money.

Lorna was assisted in becoming a cookie seller by her friend Elaine, a more experienced seller from the same troop whom Lorna treated as an expert. Lorna, like Darlene, seemed unsure of herself at the beginning of the first sales trip; she asked Elaine to do the speaking at the first house, for example. At first Lorna resisted Elaine's idea that they separate to visit different houses, protesting, "I don't know." After they went to one house together, Lorna agreed with Elaine's suggestion that the two girls go to different houses and then meet up; by the third stop, Lorna was the one proposing that they go to different houses; and after about ten stops, Lorna was proposing the specific route, although this was Elaine's and not Lorna's neighborhood.

Amy, like Lorna, began her sales with the support of an experienced Scout from her troop. On her first selling trip, Amy went with Sue to keep her company and learn a little about how to sell; she made no sales of her own. On that trip, Sue gave several tips to Amy, worded in ways that made her advisory role clear (for example, "I'd advise you one thing . . ."). Sue explained to Amy how to approach customers and how to use the order form to facilitate calculations:

SUE: Well, what you do is, you know how it's two-fifty a box?  
AMY: I guess.

SUE: Well, it's two-fifty a box. So what you do is, it helps to fill this out [the box in the corner of the order form with blanks for prices for different numbers of boxes], if it doesn't take too much time. Write two-fifty, and then for two boxes it's five dollars, . . .

AMY: Mmm hmm.

SUE: Three boxes seven-fifty, four boxes ten dollars, and so on. . . . You just fill that out. So what you do is they [the customers] just add up. [We can see from Amy's order form that she followed this advice and wrote in the prices.] . . . And then they put how much it is right here.

In her first sale after her practice trip with her friend, Amy spoke with confidence as a seller: "I was wondering if you would like to buy any Girl Scout cookies." Nonetheless, she still had difficulty with some aspects of the sales procedure, including not having the customers fill out the order form themselves. The customers assisted her in solving some problems: "Okay. Let's see, you put that in the wrong thing. Should I cross that out? . . . You didn't put anything down on our line." Amy acknowledged this correction, "Okay, thanks."

### Conclusions Regarding Development Through Participation and Three Planes of Analysis

We hope that it is apparent in our account of these four cases that these Scouts, new to cookie selling, changed in the process of their participation with others to become sellers, dealing with issues of planning, calculation, keeping track of progress, and managing the seller's role in ways that fit with the socio-cultural organization apparent in their particular circumstances. We want to emphasize three points regarding the girls' development:

- The girls' development cannot be explained in terms that would isolate them from the contributions of other people and of the traditions of the practice in which they were participating; focusing on the personal plane of analysis requires background analyses of the interpersonal and community planes of analysis.
- Rather than seeing the girls' development in terms of acquisition of skills (plans, mathematical heuristics, and so on), we regard the process as one of personal transformation, with changes in how an endeavor is handled as a

function of the girls' participation in the activity. As Lave and Wenger (1991) argue, learning and identity are inseparable aspects of the same phenomenon: "Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities" (p. 53).

• The girls' participation in the meaning of shared endeavors varied regarding the nature of their engagement. It did not necessarily involve symmetrical (that is, equal) relations and often did not entail direct joint action with others in the activity. A person who is actively observing and following the decisions made by another is participating whether or not he or she contributes directly to the decisions as they are made. And a person who is for a time acting alone is also engaged in sociocultural activity as he or she follows and builds on community traditions for the activity. All four girls participated in the activity of selling cookies, with undoubtedly differing preparation for future selling as a result of the roles that they played.

The importance of learning through varying roles, especially peripheral involvement and observation, which have often been overlooked, have been emphasized by Lave and Wenger (1991), Rogoff, Mistry, Göncü, and Mosier (1993), Heath (1983), and Ward (1971). New members of a community are active in their attempts to make sense of activities and may be primarily responsible for putting themselves in a position to participate. Communication and coordination with other members of the community stretch the understanding of all participants as they seek a common ground of understanding in order to proceed with the activities at hand. The search for a common ground, as well as extensions from it, involves adjustments and growth of understanding.

Elaborating on White and Stegels' (1984) notion that child development consists of participation in widening contexts of the community, we argue that children participate in a number of different communities, such as those represented by their ethnic groups, school, neighborhood, extended family, gender group, and religious and other affiliations. How people integrate (or struggle to integrate) their roles, knowledge, and identities across different communities entails an active process of coming to participate more fully in overlapping and/or conflicting communities. For example, Carla (and her mother) sold to "church people"; thus Carla's selling involved coordinating her roles in the communities of Scouting, church, and family life. The juxtaposition of roles in different communities was apparent for the girls; for example, their leadership roles in selling cookies and their junior roles in relating with church members overlapped and sometimes came into conflict. Adjustments in responsibilities—learning to manage differing expectations, identities, and roles—are an inherent aspect of development, and they also provide researchers with a window on the classic issues of transfer of learning and change and continuity across situations.

This account of the Girl Scouts' activity illustrates how understanding

both the development of individual Scouts and that of the practice of Girl Scout cookie sales requires understanding personal, interpersonal, and community planes of analysis together. The girls and their companions participated in and contributed to intellectual and economic institutions and traditions of their society and the Scout organization with associated cultural values (such as efficiency, persuasion of others within societal bounds of propriety, competition for achievement, and responsible completion of agreed-upon tasks).

The efforts of generations of individuals and their historically changing institutions form what we study in the community plane of analysis. This is the basis for our perspective that development (of individuals, groups, and the community alike) occurs with people's changing participation in sociocultural activities.

## Notes

1. We write of the situation in 1990 in the present tense, though practices continue to evolve, of course, and some features will have changed by the time you read this.
2. Promotions continue. A kickoff in 1990 included a cookie sculpture contest for leading Boston hotels and bakeries, won by the Westin Hotel for its rendition of the Boston Public Gardens, made with 27,684 cookies (Atkin, 1990).

## References

- "Annual Cookie Sale." Newton, Mass.: Newton Local Council of the Girl Scouts, 1951.
- Atkin, R. "As American as Girl Scout Cookies." *Christian Science Monitor*, Mar. 26, 1990.
- Berger, P. L., and Luckmann, T. *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Doubleday, 1966.
- Carhart, M. L. Interoffice memo re: history of cookie sale, Mar. 1961. (Available from Eileen Honert, archivist, Girl Scouts of Greater Philadelphia, Inc.)
- Dewey, J. *Democracy and Education*. New York: Macmillan, 1916.
- Dewey, J., and Bentley, A. F. *Knowing and the Known*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1949.
- Elder, G. H., Jr., and Caspi, A. "Human Development and Social Change: An Emerging Perspective on the Life Course." In N. Bolger, A. Caspi, G. Downey, and M. Moorehouse (eds.), *Persons in Context: Developmental Processes*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- "Everybody's Pulling for the '71 Cookie Sale." Newton, Mass.: Newton Local Council of the Girl Scouts, 1971.
- Free, C. "Girl Scout's Cookies as Irresistible as Sales Pitch." *Salt Lake Tribune*, Feb. 25, 1991, p. B1.
- Gibson, J. J. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.
- "Girl Scout Cookies and How to Sell Them." Lowell, Mass.: Megowen Educator Food Company, 1951.
- "Girl Scout Movement, The." New York: Girl Scouts, Inc., 1932a.
- "Girl Scouting as an Educational Movement." New York: Girl Scouts, Inc., 1932b.
- "Girl Scouts Growing with Pride: 1991 Cookie Sale Parent Information Booklet." Salt Lake City: Utah Girl Scout Council, 1991.
- "Growing with Pride: 1991 Cookie Campaign." *Trooper*, Jan. 1991, p. 6.
- Heath, S. B. *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Kleinfield, J., and Shinkwin, A. "Lessons Out of School: Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H

- Clubs as Educational Environments." Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Apr. 13, 1983.
- LaGanga, M. L. "Your Number Will Soon Be Up in Girl Scout Cookie Sale." *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 2, 1990, pp. A1, A18.
- Lave, J., and Wenger, E. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- Leontiev, A. N. "The Problem of Activity in Psychology." In J. V. Wertsch (ed.), *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1981.
- "Looking Back: Celebrating Accomplishments of 1990-91." *Trooper*, Fall 1991, p. 4.
- Lund, J. "The Girl Scouts in Utah: An Administrative History 1921-1985." Unpublished master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1986.
- Meacham, J. A. "The Social Basis of Intentional Action." *Human Development*, 1984, 27, 119-124.
- "Membership Update." *Trooper*, Spring 1991, p. 3.
- Oliver, M. "Bella Spewack: Writer, Scout Cookie Inventor." *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 29, 1990, p. A40.
- Pepper, S. C. *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942.
- Rogoff, B. *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Rogoff, B. "Developmental Transitions in Children's Participation in Sociocultural Activities." In A. Sameroff and M. Haith (eds.), *Reason and Responsibility: The Passage Through Childhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in press a.
- Rogoff, B. "Observing Sociocultural Activity in Three Planes: Participatory Appropriation, Guided Participation, Apprenticeship." In A. Alvarez, P. del Rio, and J. V. Wertsch (eds.), *Perspectives on Sociocultural Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press, in press b.
- Rogoff, B., Baker-Sennett, J., and Matusov, E. "Considering the Concept of Planning." In M. Haith, J. Benson, B. Pennington, and R. Roberts (eds.), *Future-Oriented Processes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, in press.
- Rogoff, B., Mistry, J. J., Göncü, A., and Mosier, C. *Guided Participation in Cultural Activity by Toddlers and Caregivers*. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, no. 58 (entire issue 7), 1993.
- Rogoff, B., Radziszewska, B., and Masiello, T. "The Analysis of Developmental Processes in Sociocultural Activity." In L. Martin, K. Nelson, and E. Tobach (eds.), *Cultural Psychology and Activity Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, in press.
- Shotter, J. "The Cultural Context of Communication Studies: Theoretical and Methodological Issues." In A. Lock (ed.), *Action, Gesture, and Symbol: The Emergence of Language*. San Diego, Calif.: Academic Press, 1978.
- Smith, L. "How the Cookie Crumbles: Girl Scout Sales Become Office Politics." *Oregonian*, Feb. 10, 1991, p. 13.
- Ward, M. C. *Them! Children: A Study in Language Learning*. Troy, Mo.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971.
- Wertsch, J. V., and Stone, C. A. "A Social Interactional Analysis of Learning Disabilities Remediation." Paper presented at the International Conference of the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, San Francisco, Feb. 1979.
- White, S. H., and Siegel, A. W. "Cognitive Development in Time and Space." In B. Rogoff and J. Lave (eds.), *Everyday Cognition: Its Development in Social Context*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.
- Wright, K. O. *Girl Scouting in the Great Lakes Region: A History*. Chicago: Girl Scouts, Inc., 1938.
- Zagorin, A. "Remember the Greedy." *Time*, Aug. 16, 1993, pp. 36-38.

BARBARA ROGOFF is professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

JACQUELINE BAKER-SENNETT is assistant professor of educational psychology and special education, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

PILAR LACASA is professor of psychology, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid.

DENISE GOLDSMITH is doing child clinical work in Salt Lake City, Utah.

