

INFANT FEEDING PRACTICES AND BELIEFS: MALI, BRAZIL, AND THE UNITED STATES



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INTRODUCTION

- Biocultural perspective
 - Biological requirement
 - Practices vary by cultures
- Mothers influenced by biomedicine and culture
- Malnutrition can often result

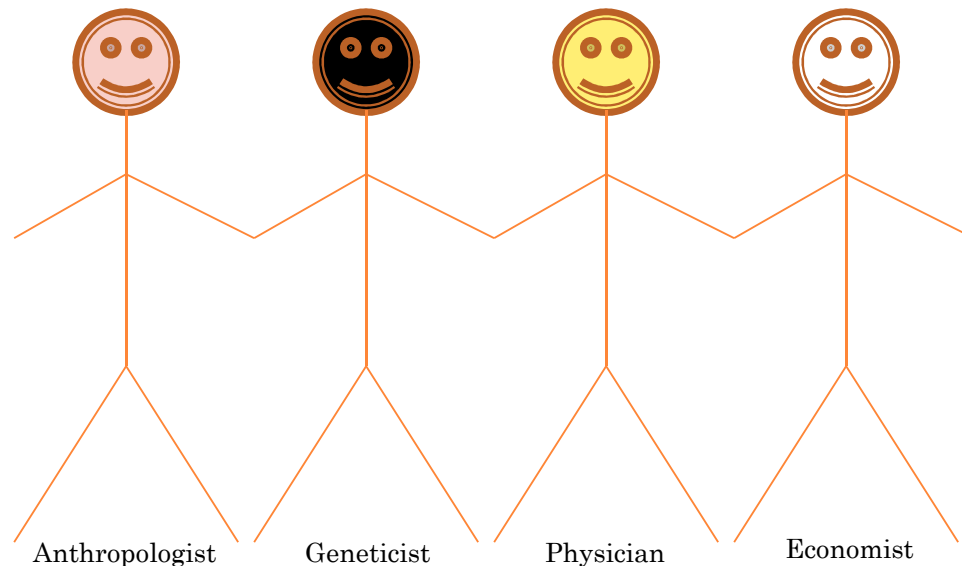


<http://news.softpedia.com/images/news2/Breastfed-Infants-Less-Stressed-2.jpg>

CRITICAL THEORIES

○ McElroy and Townsend

- Prevalence, why it's happening, and even solve problem
- Look at economic, political, historical data
- **Interdisciplinary** research



MALNUTRITION

- Some feeding practices can lead to malnutrition
 - Broad term with several categories
 - Compare height to weight
- Edema – swelling of face or stomach; indicator
- Kwashiorkor – moon shaped face
 - Lack of protein
- Marasmus – swollen stomach
 - Lack of protein and calories



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Kwashiorkor_6180.jpg



http://www.asnom.org/image/510_nutrition/116_327_kwashiorkor.jpg

MALI, AFRICA

- Mothers breastfeed
 - Kwashiorkor and marasmus still prevalent
- Inadequate amount of breast milk = inadequate nutrients for disease recovery
- 50% of child deaths due to malnutrition and disease



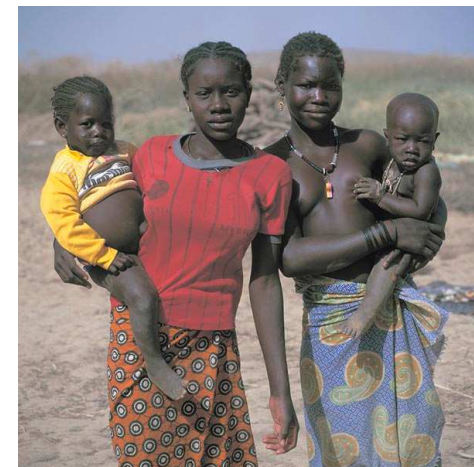
http://www.poisedfit.com/images/map_africa_mali_sm.jpg



<http://www.unfpa.org/about/report/2000/photos/ch7ph1fx.jpg>

MALI, AFRICA

- Premature weaning due to another pregnancy
 - Not very common – postpartum sex taboo
- Dettwyler averages:
 - Introduction of solid foods 7.9 months
 - Eat adult staples (rice and millet) 14.4 months
 - Weaning 20.8 months
 - Lactational amenorrhea 10.1 months
 - Pregnancy interval 19.4 months
 - Birth interval 26.5 months



<http://www.tombullock.com/images/maliMoms.jpg>

MALI, AFRICA

- Some villages believe infants are not worthy of good foods
 - Contribute even more to malnutrition and improper brain development
- Children with disabilities = evil spirits
- Parents benefit from nutritional and health education?



<http://www.arzount.com/images/baby.jpg>

ALTO DO CRUZEIRO, BRAZIL

- Northeastern Brazil shantytown
 - Plantation economy, destitute laborers
- Mothers do not become emotionally attached to children in case they do not survive
- Soon after birth, mother decides if infant possesses will to survive
 - No will to live is socially recognized as a deficiency— infant dies *a mingua*
- Mothers of twins will leave the weaker infant



ALTO DO CRUZEIRO, BRAZIL

- Nearly 80% of children perish within first year of life
 - Child funerals almost daily
 - Mothers expected not to grieve
 - Mostly children in funeral procession
 - Mayor of Ladeiras – free infant coffin for registered voters
 - Every northeastern Brazil town, specialized infant coffin makers



<http://www.newint.org/issue254/Images/mother3.jpg>

ALTO DO CRUZEIRO, BRAZIL

- Historically, women only breastfeed a few weeks
 - Introduce staple diet of rice cereal
 - In lieu of breast milk: herbal tea, vegetable soup, fruit juice
- Breastfeeding becomes unconventional option
 - Infant accustomed to staple foods, will not breastfeed as much, mother produces less milk
 - Mothers believe milk is foul, infected or sour since infant rejects breast
 - Leads to malnutrition
- Parents benefit from nutritional education?

THE UNITED STATES

- Mothers rely upon guidance from doctors about infant feeding practices
 - Mothers know to use formulated milk if they do not/cannot breastfeed
- Deters mothers from introducing staple diet too early
 - Malnutrition – over nutrition?



<http://www.impactlab.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/jolie-breast-feeding-436.jpg>

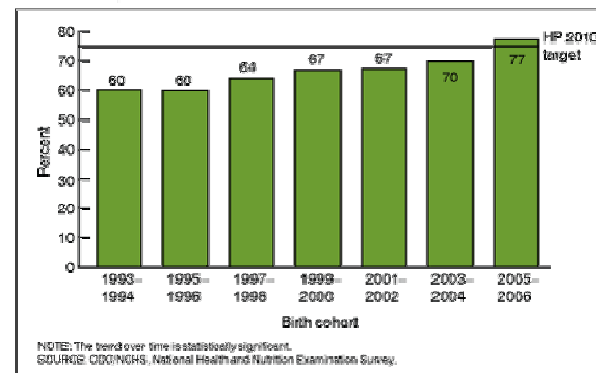


http://hydroflask.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/ht_formula_071210_mn.jpg

THE UNITED STATES

- 1916 – formulated feeding introduced; a more “modern” alternative
 - Formulated supplemental feeding freed mothers from rigorous breastfeeding schedule
- 1950’s – 20% of mothers breastfed
- Late 1960’s – movement back to natural feeding
- 1974 – 50% of college educated mothers were breastfeeding
- 1993 – on the rise

Figure 1. Percentage of infants who were ever breastfed by birth cohort: United States, 1993–2006



INTERVIEWS

- Mother #1 – 2 children
 - Doctor explained breastfeeding beneficial
 - Breastfed first child 3 months, second child 4 months before developing breast infections
 - Formulated milk
- Mother #2 – 3 children
 - Doctor said breast milk and formulated milk contained same nutrients
 - Formulated milk much easier for busy lifestyle
 - All children fed formulated milk

INTERVIEWS

- Mother #3 – 2 children
 - Doctor explained breastfeeding unquestionably better, passes immunities, encouraged to breastfeed at least 2 weeks
 - Unable to produce breast milk for either child, formulated milk
- Mother #4 – 3 children (set of twins)
 - Doctor recommended breastfeed 6 months to pass immunities, help reduce allergies
 - Breastfed for emotional bonding
 - First twin breastfed 4 months, second twin 6 months, third child 9 months
 - Alternated formulated milk and breast milk

INTERVIEWS

- Mother #5 – 2 children
 - Doctor did not advocate either method
 - Breastfed first infant 2 months, did not produce enough milk, fed formulated milk
 - Second child fed formulated milk
- Mother #6 – 2 children
 - Doctor explained breastfeeding is better
 - Mother breastfeed to help strengthen infant immunity, health, wanted bonding time
 - Breastfed first child 11 months, plans to breastfeed second child longer
 - Uses breast pump in the workplace to avoid formulated milk

INTERVIEWS

- Mother #7 – 2 children
 - Doctor did not encourage either method
 - First child premature, evaporated milk 8 months
 - Did not breastfeed second child, fed formulated milk for 7 months
- Mother #8 – 2 children
 - Doctor explained breastfeeding better
 - First child breastfed 3 months, milk production slowed, formulated milk used
 - Second child was breastfed 2 months, milk production slowed, formulated milk used

INTERVIEWS

- Mother #9 – 1 child
 - Doctor encouraged breastfeeding, many benefits: cheaper, convenient, bonding time, passes immunities
 - Breastfed infant 6 weeks on maternity leave
 - No time to breastfeed after returning to work, introduced formulated milk

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION

- Spanned 3 generations
- Doctors try to provide up to date information
- Decisions always up to mother
- Majority of mothers believed breastfeeding important
 - Recognize benefits
 - Some mothers had complications
- Mothers who did not breastfeed may not have been influenced by their mother
 - May have had to return to work

CONCLUSIONS

- Infant feeding practices of Mali, Africa and Alto do Cruzeiro, Brazil are more similar
 - Mothers breastfeed, tend to introduce infants staple foods too early
 - Mothers do not make sure enough breast milk is offered after infants begin eating staple foods
 - Malnutrition can result
- Education?

CONCLUSIONS

○ United States

- Mothers have more access to hospitals and medical advice
- Understand benefits of breastfeeding
- Mothers wean earlier because they need to go back to work
- Breastfeeding becoming more popular



http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/photos/uncategorized/2009/02/11/motherbaby_0211.jpg



<http://images.vortala.com/chiropractor/complementary/alternative/medicine/choosenatural/SiteGraphics/health-images/colic-relief-picture.jpg>

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