

JEAN KELLERHALS, CLÉOPÂTRE MONTANDON,  
GILBERT RITSCHARD

*Social status, types of family interaction  
and educational styles* \*

IT IS A well-established fact that families vary quite widely in their educational practices. In the past twenty years a certain number of studies on socialization have revealed a clear relation between the socioeconomic status of the parents and their educational style. Kohn (1977), for example, has shown that the emphasis parents put on discipline and immediate conformity is more pronounced in lower-class groups, whereas middle class groups value more the internalization of instructions and the development of personal motivations. In the same vein, psychologists and social psychologists have observed that the 'authoritarian' style of parent-child relationship (consisting of strong control and weak support) prevails more often in lower-class groups than in middle class groups, the latter being more prone to exercise strong support combined with marked control in their child's education (Bronfenbrenner 1958). Family sociologists have produced quite exhaustive articles covering the literature in this field (Gecas 1979; Peterson and Rollins 1987).

In addition, certain researchers have tried to explore the intermediate variables which may explain the relationship between social status and educational style. This article examines three main hypotheses concerning these process variables, in the light of recent research conducted in Geneva.

The first hypothesis claims that educational styles are the logical consequence of the values which are prominent in the everyday work experience of the parents, having to do with the level of autonomy requested in their work place and with the level of complexity and

\* This research was carried out in collaboration with Pascal-Eric Gaberel, Huguette McCluskey, Françoise Osiek and Massimo Sardi.

abstraction of their professional culture (Kohn 1977). In a certain way, when bringing up their children, parents reproduce or 'mimic' what they experience in their work environment.

The second hypothesis, which is complementary to the preceding one, suggests that the relationship between social status and educational styles depends on the projects parents build for the future of their children: when the child is destined to a subordinate profession, parents insist on discipline, order and control; when the child is promised to a high status profession, parents emphasize the development of autonomy, creativity and self-control.

However, both of these interpretations, whatever their merits, do not attempt to explain the children's or adolescents' education through the dynamics of family interactions. Only a few empirical studies have analyzed parental educational strategies as far as they are related, not only to the past of the parents, or to the child's future, but to the family's present. This last perspective, however, can lead to a third hypothesis, namely that the way in which the child is brought up depends on the type of family dynamics in which he or she grows up.

More precisely, educational styles may respond to two interacting characteristics of the family: cohesion and integration. When the mode of family cohesion is characterized by a high degree of fusion, or on the contrary, by the autonomy of every member, the family group 'needs' a different kind of child: more conformist, loyal to the group, respectful of the rules, heir to the family's traditions, in the first case; more independent, innovative, partner rather than heir, in the second case. Furthermore, depending on whether the family group is closed to the outside world and home-oriented, or, on the contrary, rather open and in constant interaction with its social environment, it disposes of quite different means to influence or constrain the child. If strict control has more chances to prevail in the first case, negotiation is more likely to predominate in the second one. In other words, families tend to 'produce' different kinds of children depending on their internal cohesion and on their external integration.

The aim of this paper is to evaluate the relative importance of the three above-mentioned hypotheses on the basis of an empirical study conducted amongst a representative sample of Swiss families responsible for the education of children in their early teens. Before presenting the main results of this study, we will define its main concepts and give some details on the methods and sample.

## 1. *Research framework*

### 1.1 *Family types*

As has already been attempted in previous studies (Reiss 1981; Olson, McCubbin, Barnes and Larsen 1983; Constantine and Israel 1985), one may combine the above-mentioned axes, i.e. internal cohesion and external integration, to define (Figure 1) four ideal-types of family interaction patterns (Kellerhals 1987; Troutot and Montandon 1988): *Shelter*, *Parallel*, *Companionship* and *Association* families.

*Parallel* families are characterized by closure and autonomy. The family group lives withdrawn from the outside world, does not seek external contacts. Inside the family each member has his own territory and his own destiny: activities are rarely shared, roles are differentiated, domains of interest do not coincide. *Shelter* families are characterized by closure and fusion. Withdrawal into the family group is considered desirable whereas external contacts are considered frustrating and dangerous. But in opposition to the preceding type, the members of the family group share most activities and opinions, contribute to a common family history, define their satisfaction in mutual terms. *Companionship* families are at the same time highly cohesive and open. As in the Shelter type families, their members want to share their experiences, whilst being open to the external environment. This openness is indeed profitable to the group: it aims to enrich internal relations, to allow communication and exchange. It is considered as an input to the group. Family members pay tribute to the group, inasmuch as they value consensus and community. *Association* families are characterized by openness and autonomy. They emphasize the independence and specificity of individual members. Considerable importance is given to individualized contacts with the external world, and these contacts are not necessarily fed back to the family group. Each family member negotiates individually his relations with the social environment as well as his interactions with the other family members.

Previous research has shown that these family types are related to social class; *Parallel* and *Shelter* families are more often present in the working class, whereas *Associative* families prevail in higher social strata (Kellerhals, Perrin, Steinauer, Vonèche and Wirth 1982; Kellerhals 1987; Kellerhals and Troutot 1988). It is, therefore, important to investigate whether and how, in controlled social environments, these different types of families call for specific educational techniques and objectives (Montandon, 1987).

FIGURE I  
*Four types of family interaction*

		External Integration	
		Closure	Openness
Internal Cohesion	Fusion	<i>Shelter</i>	<i>Companionship</i>
	Autonomy	<i>Parallel</i>	<i>Association</i>

1.2 *Dimensions of education*

Child-education, which is an important part of socialization, can be analyzed as a process implying a strategy, consisting of the *goals* the parents aim at and the *techniques of influence* they resort to, and a division of labor consisting of the sharing of *educational roles* within the family and the parents' *coordination* with the other agents of education such as the school, television, peers, medical and educational specialists, etc.

1.2.1 *Objectives*

A wide range of the parents' *educational goals* can be related to the kind of social personality they would like their child to acquire. The term of 'social personality' here refers to a series of aptitudes the person needs to become a member of his society:

*Self-regulation* refers to the person's capacity to define objectives and pursue them with a certain constancy, to be autonomous and inde-

pendent, to find his bearings in the various informations which reach him and to sort them out.

*Accommodation* has to do with the aptitude of the individual to adapt to social rhythms and conventions, to show endurance and perseverance, to work on a regular basis, to honor his contracts, to associate various means to objectives not necessarily defined by himself.

*Cooperation* makes reference to the aptitudes and qualities oriented towards relations with other people: sense of devotion and civic duties, loyalty and solidarity towards the group, concern for communal cooperation and social life.

Finally, *sensitivity* indicates the constructive «poétique» qualities of the person: imagination, creativity, faith, the capability to pursue an ideal, to have esthetic taste, a sense of humor.

The educational style of the parents can place more or less emphasis on each of these dimensions and favor, in this way, a specific style of social integration for their child. In this sense one can speak of different styles of social personality. The question is then to know how the priorities, or the hierarchical order parents give to these different objectives, vary according to their level of socio-economic resources, to the occupation they aspire to for their child or according to their style of family cohesion.

### 1.2.2 *Techniques*

These goals and, more broadly speaking, the cultural parental codes can be proposed to the child through different *influence techniques*. We suggest here a distinction between four main techniques:

*Control* consists of orienting the child's behavior by constraining her or him to acts which are considered desirable, or, on the opposite, by prohibiting acts, which are considered harmful. It is an *exterior* technique in the sense that it seeks less to modify the person's subjectivity than to achieve immediate conformity through constraint (obligations and prohibitions).

*Motivation* implies an effort to modify someone's subjective costs and benefits when undertaking a specific action. In other words, it is an internal technique, aimed at modifying the 'appetite' a person can show for a certain kind of behavior (for example, explaining the food value of certain products, or describing the physiological consequences of alcohol consumption).

*Moralization* consists of appealing to superior values, accepted by the person, and likely to legitimize a particular behavior (for example,

discouraging occasional sexual intercourse by referring to religious precepts).

Finally, *relation* has to do with the manipulation of the relational context of the person in order to modify his behavior (for example, showing affection to the child so as to diminish his aggressive behavior).

Families can make use of these four techniques more or less frequently and can combine them in various configurations. Furthermore, still in the field of influence techniques, it is possible to classify families according to the greater or lesser emphasis they put *a*) on *empathy*, i.e. on the understanding and support of the child, and *b*) on *discipline*, i.e. on the everyday surveillance of the behavior of the child.

### 1.2.3 *Role structure*

In the family these educational strategies are dealt with according to the division of labor prevailing among the parents. The parental role structure can be defined, on the one hand, by the *differential participation* of both parents in the educational process, and, on the other hand, by the degree of *specificity of their contributions*: in some cases specialization can be strong, as the father, for example, looks after technical education, while the mother looks after moral education; in others these contributions can be very diffuse, when for example parents propose identical resources and share an equal part in the different spheres of socialization. Thus, when the degree of participation and the contributions of the father and mother in the socialization process are different, we are in a situation of *double differentiation*. A simple differentiation exists when the participation of the father is considerably inferior to that of the mother, but with both parents offering the same resources to the child. Finally, one may speak of a lack of differentiation when neither the participation nor the resources are significantly different.

### 1.2.4 *Coordination*

The division of educational labor, however, does not occur within the family alone. Parents have to coordinate their action with external socialization agencies, such as the school and the peer group. The way parents mediate educational influences from these other agents of socialization has two dimensions. One refers to the importance attached by the parents to the mission (tasks or competence) of the different agents of socialization. School, for example, can be limited, from the

parents' point of view, to its role of technical formation (spelling, counting, etc.), or can also be considered as including tasks of moral and social education. It is the same as far as television and friends are concerned. The second dimension refers to the way a family group relays the influence exercised by the other actors. The family can ignore them (even if they are legitimate) or, on the contrary, try to comment on, or encourage their action. This explains why certain families look after their child's home-work, whereas others do not care at all, or why certain families make comments to their children on television programs, while others use television as a baby-sitter. By combining these two dimensions, it is possible to determine four *modes of coordination*:

*Opposition* designates the case when only a very specific competence is attributed to another agent, and when it is not considered necessary, or desirable, to intervene.

*Delegation* characterizes the situations when the mission given to the other agent is very diffuse (and corresponds largely to the family's mission), while at the same time no mediation is undertaken (in practice, one is not interested in what the other agent is doing).

*Mediation* refers to the cases when one accepts the specific competence of another agent, while still relaying his efforts or messages (assistance for home-work for example).

*Cooperation* includes situations when the competences attributed to the other agent are very diffuse and when the efforts and messages of this agent are mediated (relayed, criticized, encouraged).

Having retained the above dimensions of the educational process we formulated the following hypotheses:

- a) In the first place, we have hypothesized that parental educational behavior presents a certain coherence with respect to these four dimensions. Accordingly, it should be possible to define inductively—by means of a cluster analysis, based on indices of the four educational dimensions—a typology of educational *styles*, i.e., to characterize principal profiles in terms of these four dimensions. For example, one can expect a strong emphasis on autonomy to be associated with a more frequent use of the motivational and relational techniques of influence, as well as with a higher coordination with external educational agents. Likewise, a strong emphasis on accommodation, a systematic use of control and a high differentiation of paternal and maternal educational chores, can compose a specific 'style'.
- b) We also hypothesized that these educational styles depend on the

socio-economic status of the families. The emphasis on self-regulation, the appeal to a relational technique of influence, and the indifferentiation of parental roles, directly increase when the socio-economic status of the family increases.

c) We further made the hypothesis that these styles are directly linked to the cohesion of the family group (the Parallel, Shelter, Companionship and Association families), which is correlated to the social status of the families. Association families emphasize more autonomy, indifferentiation and cooperation, whereas Shelter families insist more on accommodation and control.

d) A final hypothesis was that these styles are directly influenced by the plans the family has for the future of the child. We hypothesize that the higher the value parents place on the autonomy and internal motivation of the child, the higher are their aspirations for her or his future.

Let us now discuss how we have dealt with these hypotheses.

### 1.3 *Sample and methods*

The study was conducted amongst the parents of a random sample of 309 girls and boys living in the Canton of Geneva, Switzerland, and aged 13 at the time of the survey (1988). The sample was drawn randomly from a complete list of children of this age attending public school in the Canton of Geneva.

The parents were interviewed twice at their home. Both mother and father were present at the interviews and responded to different types of questions (open-ended, closed, problem-solving 'scenarios', etc.). The children provided data through a self-report questionnaire. Various questions and indices were designed to fit the main concepts of the study (for more details on the research instruments and indices cf. Kellerhals and Montandon 1991).

In order to verify empirically the existence of educational styles presenting a correlation between educational objectives, techniques of influence, role structure and coordination, we carried out a cluster analysis on the basis of 22 dichotomous variables referring to the four components of the educational process (5 variables for the objectives, 6 for the techniques, 5 for the roles and 6 for coordination). These variables are listed in Table 1 (details on the variables can be found in Kellerhals and Montandon 1991). A hierarchical method was used to build the clusters. Broadly, the method consists of grouping successively the two most similar units, i.e. the families or previously formed groups of families, which have the most similar education profile in terms of our



22 variables. At each step the clusters satisfy two conditions: minimal distances between the units belonging to the same cluster and maximum distances between the clusters (for more details on clustering methods, see Anderberg 1973). Thus, as long as the distance between the two last aggregated groups remains sufficiently small, the families belonging to the same cluster exhibit obviously strong similarities. It is therefore legitimate to consider that each main cluster corresponds to an educational style which can be characterized through the particular educational behavior shared by its members.

Before proceeding to the clustering, one has indeed to choose a measure of proximity between cases, i.e. families, as well as a distance between groups. For our study, we measured proximity between families by means of the *simple matching* indicator. This measure is simply given by the proportion of common states taken by the two families over the 22 variables. It is well justified in our case where the variables are all of equal importance and are all dichotomized with balanced states. For the distance between groups, we used the *average of the proximity measures* between their members.

In the following section we present the main educational styles produced through cluster analysis, and we investigate their relationship with the social status of the families, the type of cohesion and the plans for the child's future, first (section 2.2), by means of single cross-tables and second (section 2.3), by means of a path-analysis, using ordinal association measures for quantifying the paths.

No doubt these styles are not universal; they are not culture-free or independent of the particular historical context. They have been constructed inductively through statistical analysis. The extent to which they can be applied to other societies or social groups deserves investigation. However, they can prove very useful, as we shall now see, when one wishes to compare parental educational strategies among families of different social status and social cohesion.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 Three main educational styles

Our data (290 families after deletion of the cases with missing values) clustered into three main groups or educational types. Two residual groups, one of 14 and another of 22 family units, were too small to be considered in the present analysis. Table 1 shows the strength, as

TYPES OF FAMILY INTERACTION

TABLE I  
The three main educational styles

	Cramer's V	Cluster		
		I Statutory	II Materialistic	III Contractualistic
<i>Indicators of Objectives:</i>				
High value on long term self-regulation	0.29**	62 %	39 %	66 %
High value on accommodation	0.50**	68 %	79 %	25 %
High value on sensibility	0.41**	38 %	13 %	65 %
High value on cooperation	0.25*	39 %	57 %	51 %
Emphasis on short term self-regulation	0.29**	42 %	41 %	67 %
<i>Indicators of Techniques (a):</i>				
Frequent use of control	0.31**	67 %	68 %	36 %
Frequent use of relation	0.38**	24 %	34 %	67 %
Frequent use of motivation	0.15	32 %	34 %	36 %
Authority relying on coercion	0.33**	53 %	61 %	26 %
Empathy	0.27**	28 %	25 %	53 %
High control on identity	0.24**	35 %	29 %	21 %
<i>Indicators of Role structure:</i>				
High paternal implication	0.19*	31 %	18 %	33 %
High value on role indifferenciation	0.29**	35 %	23 %	53 %
Frequent communication parents/child	0.39**	29 %	54 %	58 %
Frequent mother/child activity sharing	0.57**	5 %	77 %	36 %
Frequent father/child activity sharing	0.52**	4 %	57 %	46 %
<i>Indicators of Coordination (b):</i>				
Frequent extra-curricular stimulation	0.37**	15 %	16 %	42 %
Frequent appeal to external agents	0.32**	56 %	77 %	83 %
High parental implication vis-à-vis TV	0.41**	33 %	64 %	78 %
Frequent presence of peers at home	0.44**	30 %	39 %	79 %
High control on peers	0.30**	40 %	50 %	14 %
Strong diffusion	0.49**	18 %	43 %	73 %
Cluster size		109	56	89

NOTES: The Cramer's V marked with \*\* are statistically significant at the 1 % level, and those marked with \* at the 5 % level.

(a) The moralization technique was used very rarely and is not included in the cluster analysis.

(b) The variable 'strong diffusion' is an index combining the significance the family allows to the educational influence of the external educational agencies, such as the school, television and the peer group (cf. the first dimension of coordination as defined in 1.2.4). The remaining indices refer to the emphasis placed on the mediation between the family and the external socialization agencies (cf. the second dimension of coordination in 1.2.4).

measured by Cramer's V, of the association between the clusters and each variable. It also provides, for each of the 22 components of education considered, the proportion of members in each cluster which put strong emphasis on it.

These three educational styles can be defined as follows: the first style, called 'statutory', is characterized by a rigorous division of labor between spouses, but also by a considerable distance between parents and children (low communication and practically no sharing of activities). The quality of accommodation is highly valued, whereas sensibility does not score very high among their educational goals. Control is most prevalent as a method of education and authority relies most frequently on coercion. Parents who adopt this style insist more on conformity than on innovation. They are quite hostile to external educational influences considered as intrusion: coordination is low.

The second style, called 'maternalistic', shares with the preceding one a clear division of educational roles within the family (the mother is expected to be more expressive and the father more instrumental), a high emphasis on accommodation, a frequent use of control. Authority relies on coercion. A specific, narrow role is attributed to external educational agencies. This style, however, differs in one important way from the preceding one: considerable proximity is observed between the mother and the children (high communication, many activities in common, high empathy).

Finally, the 'contractualistic' style is characterized by a high emphasis on self-regulation and sensibility, by the use of relational methods and a reliance on verbal exchange between the parents and the adolescent. It presents a lack of differentiation between paternal and maternal roles, and the mother shares few activities with the child. One encounters a high permeability to external influences: an important role is recognized for the school, television, the peer group (cooperation is relatively frequent).

## 2.2 *Social status, family interaction and educational styles*

These three educational styles are highly correlated to the socio-economic status of the parents. In the first place, the *contractualistic* style increases regularly from 22 % among lowerclass parents, to 77 % among university trained professionals (Table 2). A more detailed analysis shows that it reaches its lowest score among the subordinate public service employees: 5 %. This high tendency is compensated for by a curvilinear distribution of the *statutory* style: its frequency

TYPES OF FAMILY INTERACTION

TABLE 2

*Educational style according to social status*

Social status	Educational Styles			Number of cases
	Statutory	Maternalistic	Contractualistic	
Workers and employees	49 %	29 %	22 %	126
Junior executives	53 %	17 %	30 %	64
Senior executives	31 %	19 %	50 %	26
University-trained professionals	12 %	12 %	77 %	34
Total number of cases	108	56	86	250
Percentages	43 %	22 %	35 %	

NOTE:  $\chi^2 = 41.1^{**}$  (df = 6), Cramer's V = 0.29.

increases from 37 % among workers to approximately 55 % among employees, to attain its lowest rate among university trained professionals (12 %). The *maternalistic* style decreases as the socio-economic status of the family increases, but this tendency, while clear, is of a lesser amplitude.

These educational styles are also highly correlated to the types of family interaction (Table 3). The contractualistic style occurs in six out of ten families characterized as associative. This proportion is much lower among Companionship families: less than four out of ten are contractualistic. Among Shelter families, the rate is still lower: only one family out of ten presents a contractualistic educational style. The statutory style offers a contrasting picture: it is twice as frequent among Shelter families than among Associative families (64 % vs. 27 %). As for the maternalistic style, its variation is quite perceptible but somewhat weaker: it is less present among Associative families. In brief, three Shelter families out of four have a normative style, as opposed to one Associative family out of three.

It is worth mentioning that these styles hardly vary according to the sex of the child. No significant differences are observed for girls or boys. Neither do educational styles globally vary according to the birth rank of the child. However, some particularities emerge in this respect. In the case of eldest children, self-regulation is more encouraged, fathers are more cooperative and generally speaking parents are more present (either to control or to support). But these 'local' correlations do not contribute to a significant association between educational style and birth rank.

TABLE 3

*Educational style according to family interaction type*

Family type	Educational Styles			Number of cases
	Statutory	Maternalistic	Contractualistic	
Parallel	40 %	30 %	30 %	20
Shelter	64 %	24 %	12 %	67
Companionship	38 %	24 %	38 %	115
Association	27 %	11 %	62 %	52
Total number of cases	109	56	89	254
Percentages	43 %	22 %	35 %	

NOTE:  $\chi^2 = 35.3^{**}$  ( $df = 6$ ), Cramer's  $V = 0.26$ .

### 2.3 *Explaining educational style: a tentative model*

The empirical evidence just discussed is based on the individual association linking the educational style with the social status on the one hand, and the family interaction on the other. These explanatory factors are clearly not independent. In order to get a more global insight on their effects, it is therefore necessary to examine how they concurrently influence the educational style. This is done here through a path analysis.

The postulated model assumes that the family interaction depends on the social status of the family's members, both of these factors providing some explanation of the educational style. The model includes also, for test purposes, the plans parents have for the future of their child. This third explanatory factor is supposed to be itself dependent on the two others.

Classical path analysis (see for instance Blalock 1972, or Asher 1983) has been developed for metric variables, while ours is obviously not. Their states can, however, be reasonably placed in a hierarchical order ranking from low to high for the social status ('Workers or Employees', 'Junior Executives', 'Seniors Executives', 'University-trained professionals'), from closed to open for the family interaction type ('Parallel or Shelter', 'Companionship', 'Association'), from less to more ambitious for the plans for the child's future ('Primary school', 'High school', 'College/Graduate studies'), and from rigid to more compliant for the educational style ('Statutory', 'Maternalistic', 'Contractualistic'). This

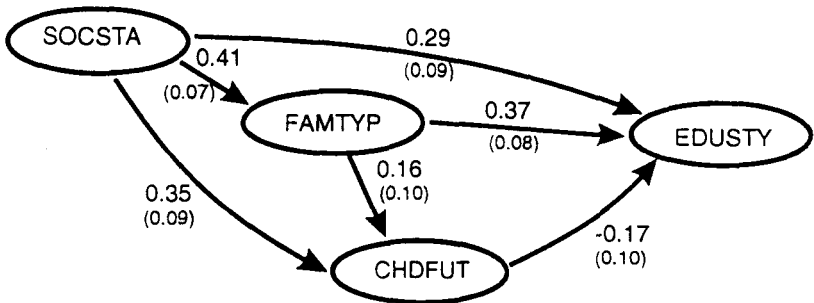
TYPES OF FAMILY INTERACTION

allows the use of partial ordinal association measures to value the paths. We retained partial measures founded on Goodman and Kruskal's (1954)  $\gamma$ .

Recall that  $\gamma$  measures the proportion of reduction in the error of prediction of the order on the second variable when the first is known. More precisely, it considers only the pairs of cases which can be strictly ordered on the two variables considered, and it is defined as the difference in the number of concordances and discordances in the order appearing in the two variables, divided by the total number of pairs. A partial  $\gamma$  between two variables is obtained by controlling the effects of other variables. Formally, the partial measure can be expressed as a weighted average of the conditional  $\gamma$ 's associated with each state, or combination of states, of the variables controlled. To evaluate their reliability, we provide approximate standard errors. These are obtained from the asymptotic standard errors of the conditional  $\gamma$ 's. They are conditional to the observed distribution of the variables under control.

The results for the 254 families classified as statutory, maternalistic or contractualistic are given in Figure II. At each vertex, an incoming path is valued by the partial association computed by controlling the effect of all other incoming variables. The approximated standard errors are given between brackets.

FIGURE II



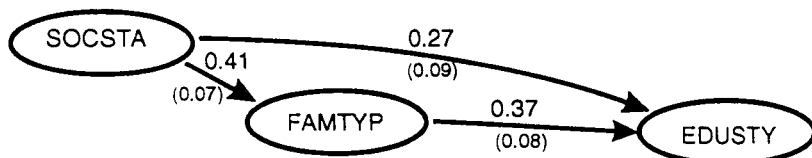
Paths valued with partial  $\gamma$ 's. Figures between brackets are conditional standard errors. The vertices are: SOCSTA, the social status (4 categories); FAMTYP, the family interaction type (3); CHDFUT, the plans for the child's future (3); EDUSTY, the educational style (3) as defined by the clusters.

The main conclusions from this path analysis are as follows:

a) First, the coefficient 0.41 (with a 0.07 standard error) of the path SOCSTA-FAMTYP shows clearly that the social status of the family strongly conditions its interaction type. At the bottom of the social scale, the interactions are more enmeshed. They are also more confined inside the family, i.e. impervious to external influences. More associative forms characterize the high social status level families.

b) Likewise, the social status obviously influences the plan for the child's future. The higher the social status, the more ambitious is the family. The role of the family interaction type is empirically less clear (0.16, for a standard error of 0.10) in this context. The assumption that associative families are more ambitious for their child does not seem verified. Furthermore, if we consider the impact of the plan for the future on the pedagogical style, i.e. the CHDFUT-EDUSTY path, the results indicate that rigid styles are more likely when the plans are ambitious. However, this effect is not statistically significant (-0.17, with a standard error of 0.10). This lack of significance is even confirmed by the raw association measured by the zero order  $\gamma$ , which is also statistically insignificant, i.e. 0.08 with a standard error of 0.09.

FIGURE III



Model after deletion of the insignificant variable CHDFUT. Paths valued with partial  $\gamma$ 's. Figures between brackets are approximate standard errors.

c) Finally, the analysis provides some evidence of the direct impact on the educational style of both the social status and the interaction type of the family (both coefficients are more than three times greater than their standard errors). The variables SOCSTA and FAMTYP influence positively the educational style. This means that the higher the social

status, the more likely a family is to be contractualistic. Likewise, families of the Association type exercise more often a contractualistic education, while Parallel or Shelter families prefer, comparatively, a statutory style. The former put more emphasis on self-regulation, prefer a mode of coordination characterized by cooperation, and insist comparatively more on relation as a technique for influencing the child. The latter give more value to accommodation and control, differentiate more educational roles and are relatively less open to the influence of external agents. Note also that the indirect effect of the social status, which acts through the family interaction type, amounts to half of its direct effect. Figure III shows that these impacts, as well as their statistical significance, remain practically unchanged when we remove the statistically insignificant variable CHDFUT from the analysis.

### 3. *Conclusion*

In summary, the results show that education in the family is related not only to the past of the family or the social inheritance of the parents (structural effect) but also to the family's present, that is to the prevailing relational dynamics. A very important aspect—although less investigated until now—of this association is the high relation between the family's interaction type and its coordination with the external educational agencies. Association families are conspicuous in their ability to actively integrate external influences.

The importance of the relational factor in the determination of the educational style is probably the most obvious sign of post-industrial attitudes, which are not always apparent in the educational practices of the parents. The child's education in post-industrial societies seems to be associated as much with the relational processes inside the family as with the family's social resources.

Finally, it has to be noted that we studied the educational process from a unilateral point of view: parents influencing children. It would be worthwhile to proceed into investigating the relationship between social status, family interaction and educational style the other way round: how does the child's reaction feed back on parental attitudes and how is the child's ability to influence her or his parents related to the factors considered in this study? Research on these questions remains to be done.

A first step in this direction has already been taken on the basis of this study. It concerns the relation between the educational styles



experienced by adolescents and their self-esteem. This is an important question because an adolescent's self-esteem affects to a certain extent her or his future reactions to the social environment, particularly her or his adaptation to change, learning capacity, and aptitude to develop a social network.

Some observations we were able to make among the adolescents belonging to the families of this study, show quite clearly that if their self-esteem is not related to the social status or the social cohesion of their families, it is quite strongly related to their parents' educational styles. The adolescents raised according to a contractualistic educational style, present a much higher self-esteem than the adolescents who have experienced a statutory educational style (Kellerhals, Montandon, Ritschard and Sardi, 1992). Given these results, it remains to be seen in what respect the degree of self-esteem in adolescents influences in return the educational attitudes of their parents\*.

\* Support was provided for the early stages of the research by a grant from the Swiss National Research Fund.

## REFERENCES

- ANDERBERG, Michael R., 1973. *Cluster Analysis for Applications* (London, Academic Press).
- ASCHER, Herbert B., 1983. *Causal Modeling* (London, Sage).
- BLALOCK, Huber M., 1988. *Social Statistics* (New York, McGraw Hill).
- BRONFENBRENNER, U., 1958. Socialization and Social Class through Time and Space, in E. E. MACCOBY, T. M. NEWCOMB and E. L. HARTLEY (eds), *Readings in Social Psychology* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston).
- CONSTANTINE, L. L. and J. T. ISRAEL, 1985. The Family Void: Treatment and Theoretical Aspects of the Synchronous Family Paradigm, *Family Process*, XXIV, 525-548.
- GECAS, V., 1979. The Influence of Social Class on Socialization, in W. R. BURR, R. HILL, F. I. NYE and I. L. REISS (eds), *Contemporary theories about the family*, Vol. I (New York, Free Press).
- GOODMAN, Leo A. and William H. KRUSKALL, 1954. Measures of Association for Cross Classification, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, XLIX, 732-734.
- KELLERHALS, J., 1987. Les types d'interaction dans la famille, *Année sociologique*, XXXVII, 153-179.
- KELLERHALS, J., J. F. PERRIN, G. STEINAUER, L. VONÈCHE and G. WIRTH, 1982. *Mariages au quotidien* (Lausanne, Favre).
- KELLERHALS, J. et P. Y. TROUTOT, 1988. Une construction interactive de types familiaux, *Annales de Vaucresson* [Paris], 367-417.
- KELLERHALS, J. et C. MONTANDON, avec P. E. GABEREL, H. MCCLUSKEY, F. OSIEK, M. SARDI, 1991. *Les stratégies éducatives des familles. Milieu social, dynamique familiale et éducation des préadolescents* (Neuchâtel/Paris, Delachaux & Niestlé).
- KELLERHALS, J., C. MONTANDON, G. RITSCHARD, M. SARDI, 1992. L'estime de soi des adolescents : un aspect central du processus de socialisation, à paraître dans la *Revue française de sociologie* XXXIII, 313-33.
- KOHN, M. L., 1977. *Class and Conformity: a Study in Values* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press).
- MONTANDON, C., 1987. Pratiques éducatives et paradigme familial, in C. MONTANDON et P. PERRENOUD, *Entre parents et enseignants : un dialogue impossible ? Vers l'analyse sociolo-*

## TYPES OF FAMILY INTERACTION

*gique des interactions entre la famille et l'école* (Berne, P. Lang).

OLSON, D. H., H. I. McCUBBIN, H. BARNES, A. LARSEN, M. MUXEN and M. WILSON, 1983. *Families: What Makes them Work* (Beverly Hills CA, Sage Publications).

PETERSON, G. W. & B. C. ROLLINS, 1987. Parent-Child Socialization. Pp. 471-507 in M. B. SUSSMAN and S. K. STEINMETZ (eds), *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (New York, Plenum Press).

REISS, D., 1981. *The Family's Construction of Reality* (Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press).

TROUTOT, P.-Y. and C. MONTANDON, 1988. Systèmes d'action familiaux, attitudes éducatives et rapport à l'école : une mise en perspective typologique. Pp. 133-157 in Ph. PERRENOUD and C. MONTANDON (eds), *Qui maîtrise l'école? Politiques d'institutions et pratiques des acteurs* (Lausanne, Réalités sociales).