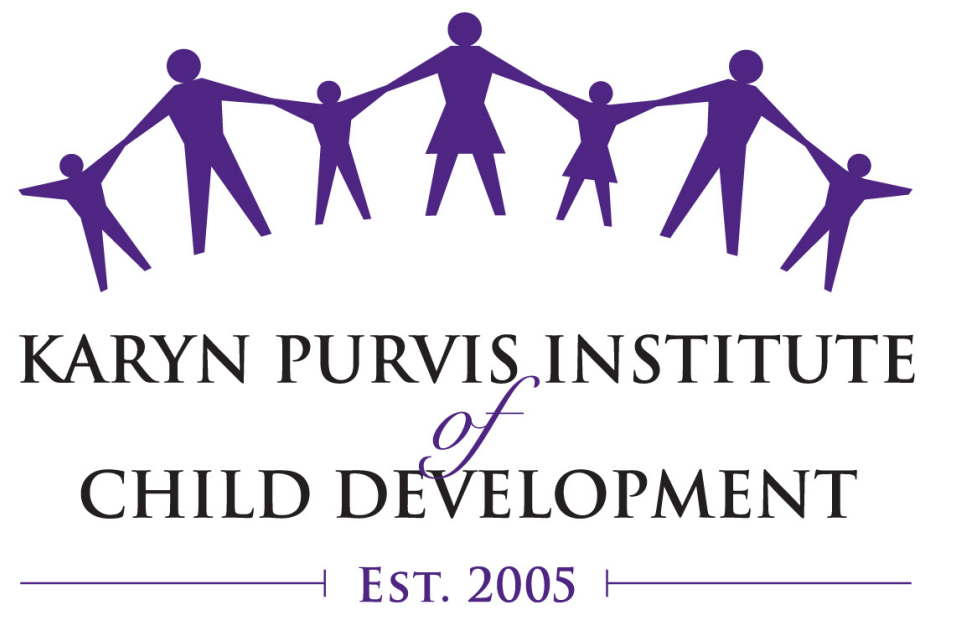




A Child's Journey: Pregnancy to Adulthood in Four Countries

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Abstract

How a child is raised and the expectations put on them is dependent on their culture. Communities around the globe have different ideals, practices, ceremonies, beliefs, and more that impact their current and future generations. The current study examines and compares the culturally perceived aspects of childhood, from pregnancy to adulthood, of four different countries. The elements of childhood included in this research relate to different attitudes towards and aspects of childhood events (e.g., childbirth, education, puberty), childhood milestones, rites of passage, and reaching adulthood. The four focus countries include France, the United States of America, India, and Kenya. To obtain data, 4-5 participants from each country were interviewed via Zoom, in-person, or by email. The objective of the research is to explore how childhood experiences vary in different communities and uncover common themes that appear in this period of life. Through these interviews, we (1) gain knowledge on how each country values children and childhood events, (2) step out of the expectations of the western world to evaluate how children globally are raised, and (3) discover common themes amongst various cultures in child rearing.

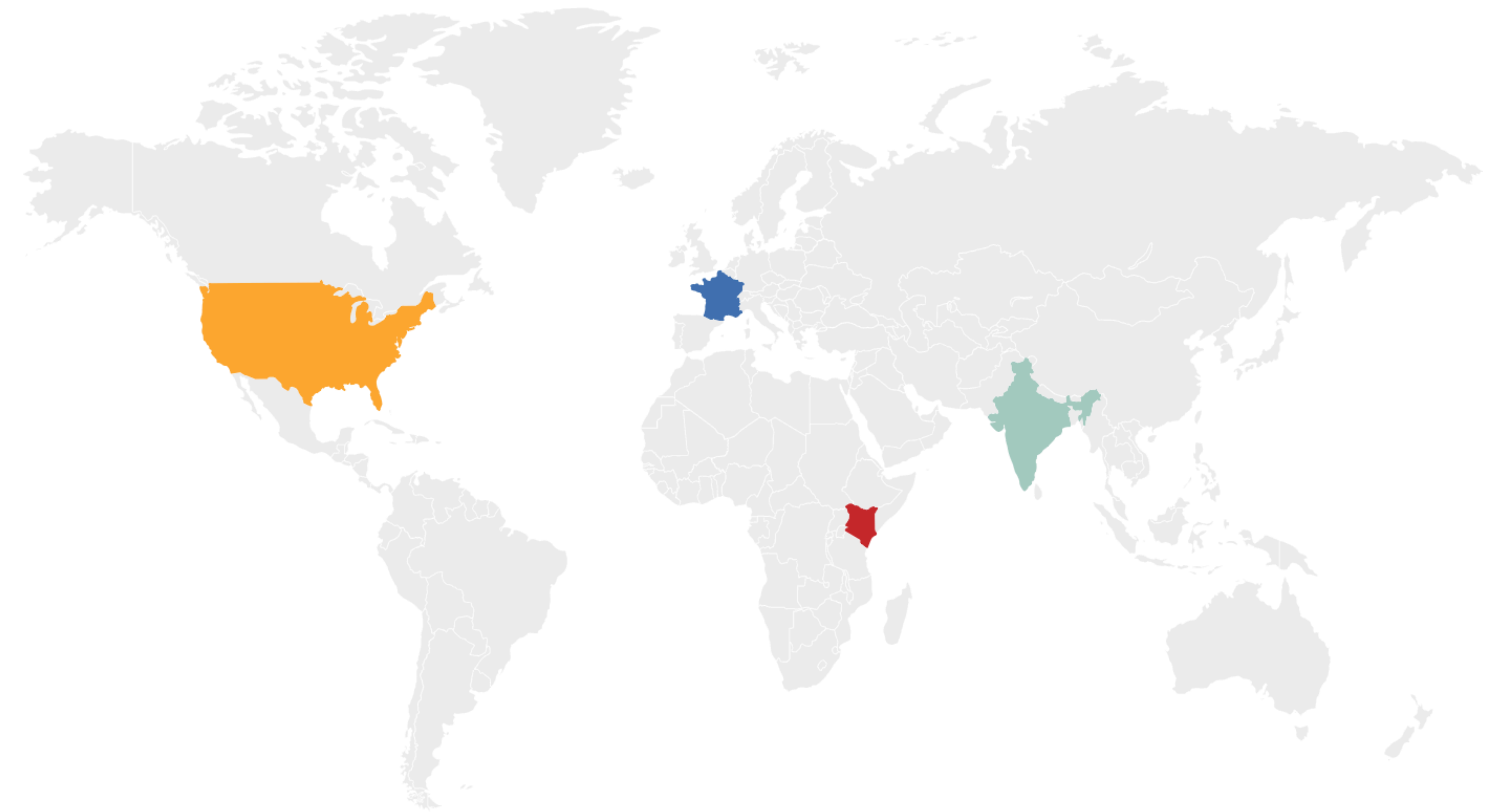
Methods

The participants in this study came from various regions in four countries: the United States of America, France, Kenya, and India. To contribute participants had to be 18 years of age or older, fluent in English, and both born and currently living in the country they were representing. All participants were recruited through an email in which they filled out an electronic consent form to participate.

The data was collected through a 10-question interview either in-person or electronically via email or Zoom. The questions covered topics that ranged from pregnancy to the commencement of adulthood. The questions asked about birth processes, childhood milestones, puberty, rites of passage, and marriage. After the data was collected, recorded, and transcribed, the information was analyzed qualitatively through ATLAS.ti, a software that allows written documents to be

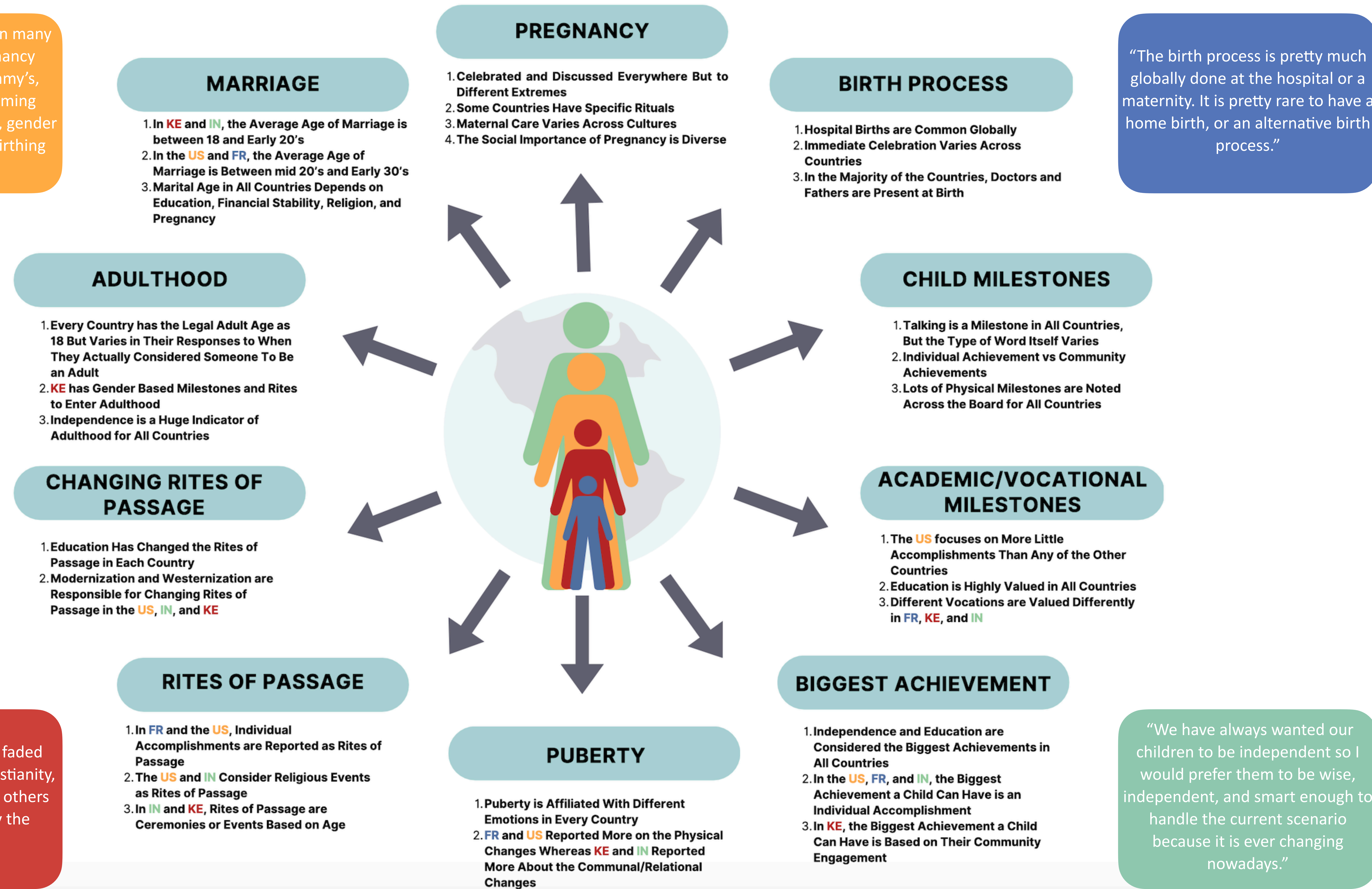
Participants:

- 17 Participants
 - France - 4 Participants
 - Age: 31.5 (M)
 - United States - 5 Participants
 - Age: 34.6 (M)
 - Age: 34.5 (M)
 - Gender: Female (65%) and Male (35%)
- Kenya - 4 Participants
 - Age: 40 (M)
- India - 4 Participants
 - Age: 31.8 (M)



Results

"Pregnancy is celebrated in many forms, women do pregnancy photos, cast of their tummy's, blessing ceremonies, naming ceremonies, baby showers, gender reveal parties, do yoga, birthing classes etc."



"Almost all of them have faded because of education, Christianity, advanced technology and others are being prohibited by the government."

"The birth process is pretty much globally done at the hospital or a maternity. It is pretty rare to have a home birth, or an alternative birth process."

"We have always wanted our children to be independent so I would prefer them to be wise, independent, and smart enough to handle the current scenario because it is ever changing nowadays."

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that countries such as India and Kenya are more community-based compared to individualist countries like the United States and France. These countries also perform more rituals and ceremonies during their childhood years. However, the results also demonstrated that Western ideals are changing collectivist cultures to value individuality, modernity, and education. While there are a multitude of differences in these four countries, the results showed that there were also some similarities in the milestones that caregivers look for in their developing children.

Limitations of the study include a narrow group of participants: all participants were fluent in English, well-educated and had access to technology. Therefore, the group was not fully representative of the marginalized or minority communities in each of these countries. In addition, the sample size was not large enough to represent the reality of the whole population.

Future research should focus on how childhood experiences and child rearing varies within one country; there are numerous different cultures represented within the border of one nation. This process would allow for a better representation of one geographical location. Additional research could also focus on one of the ten events included in this project exclusively, lending a more whole understanding of a crucial childhood experience.

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