



Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

Guide to the Paul Riesman papers, 1966-1978

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Paul Riesman papers
<b>Date:</b>	1966-1978
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.1999-05
<b>Creator:</b>	Riesman, Paul
<b>Extent:</b>	1.25 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English , French .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Paul Riesman papers include material on the Fula peoples of West Africa from Riesman's research in Burkina Faso during the 1960s and 1970s. Riesman's research among the Fula peoples is primarily focused on social life and child-rearing practices. The collection consists of fieldnotes, journals, correspondence, and photographs.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Received from Suzanne Riesman in 1998.

### Related Materials

The Carleton College Archives holds the Paul H. Riesman papers.

### Processing Information

Original folder titles were mostly retained. Some folder titles have been created by the archivist and are placed within square brackets. Processed by Lea Sellon, December 2022

### Preferred Citation

Paul Riesman papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

Access to the Paul Riesman papers requires an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Biographical / Historical

Paul Hastings Riesman (1938 – 1988) was an anthropologist who studied the Fula peoples of West Africa and was active from the mid to late 20th century. Following the footsteps of his father, American sociologist David Riesman,

Paul Riesman graduated from Harvard University in 1960 with a B.A. in Social Relations. After completing his undergraduate degree, Riesman began his fieldwork in Burkina Faso among the Fula peoples while earning his PhD in Ethnology from the University of Paris. While researching Fula social life and child-rearing practices, Riesman also studied how the ethnographer's personal and cultural backgrounds are implicated in anthropological research. Riesman continued his fieldwork after earning his PhD in 1970 and would return to Burkina Faso frequently for research after becoming Associate Professor at Carleton College and later, Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Paul Riesman died of an aneurysm at the age of 50 in 1988. Following his death, colleagues helped to complete Riesman's unpublished manuscript on child-rearing practices based on his research among the Fula.

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## Scope and Contents

The Paul Riesman papers reflect Riesman's anthropological fieldwork among the Fula peoples of West Africa. Riesman began his fieldwork in Burkina Faso in 1966 while earning his PhD from the University of Paris. Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s Riesman resided among the Fula peoples, primarily researching social life and child-rearing practices. Riesman's research is documented in this collection through extensive fieldnotes which encompass Fula culture and Riesman's own personal reflections on life, an aspect of research which Riesman employed in his introspective approach to anthropology. Additionally, there is both personal and professional correspondence between Riesman and others. This collection contains fieldnotes, journals, and correspondence. Also present are five photographs of Riesman taken during his fieldwork.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

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## Selected Bibliography

1977. *Freedom in Fulani Social Life: An Introspective Ethnography*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1977.

1983. "On the Irrelevance of Child Rearing Practices for the Formation of Personality: An Analysis of Childhood, Personality, and Values in Two African Communities" *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 7, (1983): 103-129.

1992. *First Find Your Child a Good Mother: The Construction of Self in Two African Communities*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Fula (African people)

Cultures:

Fula (African people)

Places:

Africa, West  
Burkina Faso

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## Container Listing

Box 1, Folder 1	Fieldnotes [1 of 4] December 03, 1966 - March 08, 1968
Box 1, Folder 2	Fieldnotes [2 of 4] March 12, 1968 - May 13, 1969
Box 1, Folder 3	Fieldnotes [3 of 4] May 22, 1969 - April 14, 1971
Box 1, Folder 4	[Fieldnotes 1968 - 1970]
Box 1, Folder 5	[Research questions, diagrams, maps, and vocabulary]
Box 2, Folder 1	Fieldnotes October 1974 - April 1976
Box 2, Folder 2	Petega fieldnotes January 1976
Box 2, Folder 3	[Notes arranged by children's names] 1974 - 1976
Box 2, Folder 4	Journal and correspondence June 09, 1976 - June 09, 1978
Box 3	Field journals, undated