PARENTING ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN

Biosocial Dimensions

Edited by

Jane B. Lancaster

Jeanne Altmann

Alice S. Rossi

Lonnie R. Sherrod

9 SOCIALIZATION FOR PARENTHOOD IN SIBLING CARETAKING SOCIETIES

Thomas S. Weisner

INTRODUCTION

Parenting and day-to-day child care are viewed quite differently in other societies. In the American middle-class pattern (although not in some North American subcultures), acquiring a mate, marriage, establishment of a new household, and child care are seen as part of a common stage in the life course, part of a process of individuation and maturation. In many non-Western societies, however, these events are separated and occur in a different order. Child-care training comes first; marriage and new households come later; a permanent established role in one's new family of procreation comes later still (Brown, 1982). Adult parenting in many horticultural and pastoral societies involves important control and management activities—decisions about allocating resources and personnel, and the training of children in culturally appropriate conduct. These are the parenting skills adults in sibling caretaking settings are struggling to develop. Western parents may first experience many aspects of child care (such as discipline, feeding, carrying, or emotional or affective nurturance and support) only as adults, after marriage. New parents in many non-Western socities have already practiced such skills through participation in the sibling care, or shared management, family system. In this context, child care is, in parents' and children's own views, more a domestic task for children to learn than a specialized task of adulthood.

The training ground for parenting skills in many non-Western societies is the shared caretaking system, in which parents, other adults, and older children are jointly responsible for younger ones. A mixed age and sex group of children share the task of child management with one another and with parents and other adults. A cross-cultural view of training for child care and parenting, then, is that child-care training occurs within the sibling group during childhood; child-care skills are learned early, from ages 5 or 6; child-care skills are separated from the social roles of parenthood, which is a later stage in life that usually includes marriage, new household formation, and changes in relations with parents and siblings; and finally, the conditions that encourage sibling care seem to stem from ecocultural character-

istics common to middle-range, labor-intensive economies and populations with high fertility rates. In most non-Western societies, training for competent, culturally appropriate child care is an active apprenticeship experience for children, usually completed by adolescence and learned along with the performance of domestic tasks essential for family, and often community, survival.

Training for parenting is a culturally expectable, "enterprise-engaged" activity (Tharp et al., 1981) that is part of normal child and early adolescent development in much of the world. It also appears to be a pattern which helps families adapt to their ecocultural circumstances; from this perspective, sibling care and shared caretaking more generally is a kind of parental investment strategy. Models of parental investment in children often separate five functions of parenting: safety and protection; provision of shelter and food; teaching and instruction in cultural meanings and scripts for appropriate conduct; direct child care (feeding, carrying, bathing, dressing, monitoring, and so on); and the provision of emotional and affective support and comfort.

There seems to be a pattern to the sequence of transfer of these care-giving functions from mothers and other adults to child caretakers in shared management societies. First, children learn direct child care, and to lend emotional comfort and support; these are gradually extended to the sibling group but remain shared with parents. Mothers gradually eliminate most direct care of older children and share affective and emotional support of older children with others. Direct commands and instruction continue from the mother, while enterprise-engaged learning increasingly occurs between sibs and peers. Fathers and mothers retain their roles in ensuring safety and security and in providing subsistence, and increasingly share these tasks with older children and adolescents. Furthermore, younger parents are not *themselves* usually fully in control of many parental investment decisions relating to subsistence, security, and domestic routines early in their own adult married life; they continue to share these responsibilities with their own brothers, sisters, cousins, and parents.

This sequence in the development of parenting skills seems almost reversed in Western societies. The Western young adult is expected first to leave the natal home and establish an independent household. Gradual independence from economic and emotional support from parents is expected to follow soon after. Thus, questions of personal and familial independence, safety, security, and responsibilities for provision of one's own food, shelter, and subsistence occupies the young Western adult first. Then it is expected that marriage occurs; children and parenthood come later still. Of course there are many obvious exceptions to this ideal pattern, and a variety of subcultural alternatives to it, but this kind of preparenthood path is a frequent, expectable, and culturally normative one for Western middle-class families.

The young adult in a shared function, sibling care family has had a very different experience and looks toward a different future. This youth already has had extensive experience in child care, providing instruction, emotional support, nurturance to others, and assistance in the management of the domestic and subsistence activities of his or her family. Marriage and parenthood occur relatively soon after menarche for girls, and may or may not involve the immediate formation of an independent household. In any event, a new parent typically continues to share decisions about community safety, subsistence, and domestic routines with parents and other siblings for some time to come. The new mother's sister or cousin may send a child to help out, or a younger sister will help out. Inheritance of land, livestock, a shop, or other trade and property by the wife or husband may remain some years in the future, and it only will be then that the parent will gain full control and responsibility for his or her own homestead.

There are ecocultural (Super and Harkness, 1980) constraints on such families that encourage the development of sibling care and shared management child-care systems. These conditions include maternal supports: the structure of the daily routine, workload, dangers and need for security, and others. Sibling care is associated with high fertility and mortality, heavy workloads for family members, and sustained functional interdependence of the sibling and cousin group across the life span, in domains such as inheritance, marriage payments, common defense and protection needs, and shared participation in essential rituals and ceremonies.

The middle-range societies that most typically practice shared management and early training in child-care skills arose recently on the scale of human sociocultural evolution and spread widely around the earth only within the past 5000 years or so. It appears unlikely that nomadic or seminomadic peoples, living through gathering and hunting, practiced the customs and trained for parenthood in the way described in this chapter (Draper, 1976; Draper, Chapter 8, this volume; Konner, 1976). Mothers probably retained responsibility for their infants for longer periods of time; large domestic compounds and multiage groups of neighboring children were not common; and formal child-nurse roles are not reported in contemporary foraging groups.

Training for parenting is shaped by a mix of (1) adaptations to ecocultural conditions of family survival and economic necessity; and (2) by parental goals and ideas concerning what Goody (1982) calls "social replacement." Social replacement includes providing children with civil and kinship status and personal identity; providing training and competence to meet adult roles; and sponsoring the child's transition into the adult world. Caretaking learned in the sibling group during childhood is influenced by ecocultural adaptations and cultural ideas about childhood and parenthood. The data that will be used to illustrate shared function parent training are drawn from mothers and children in two societies where

sibling care is common: the Abaluyia of Western Kenya and Hawaiian-American families in Hawaii.

AN OVERVIEW OF SIBLING CARETAKING

The Experience of Sibling Care for Children

What is it like to be a sibling caretaker? Several persons in Kenya were asked to write down their childhood experiences as sibling caretakers. "Jane," a 24-year-old girl, third from last in a family of nine living children, is a student at the University of Nairobi, a Muluyia from the Abaluyia, a Bantu, horticultural and migratory wage labor-based society in western Kenya. She took care of her brothers and sisters while living in her own home, but since she was next to last-born in her sibling group and had done well in school, she was sent to stay in the city with her father's brother for a number of years. This pattern of sharing children among the parents' sibling groups is common among the Abaluyia and many other societies with shared child management and early child-care training for children. Jane was also cared for by her older sisters while still living at home with her parents on their rural homestead.

> . . . The first two children I took care of liked me so much. I would teach them Luluyia words and sing songs. We would play most of the time, walk around outside . . . . At meal times, they would want to sit by my side and would cry, even up to 5 years old, if their food was not by mine. They would rather have it by me than by their mother. They shared a bed with me and would cry if put to sleep somewhere else. I was called their "auntie." They imitated everything I would do.
>
> . . . It's not to say that it was all roses. The job was so tiresome sometimes . . . the children would cry and cry, and I would wish that I was not around . . . . Feeding and changing clothes and diapers were also things I never liked. I felt so frantic sometimes when they were sick, due to the attachments between us, but could do nothing to help them.
>
> But for me, it also brought me closer to their parents [her own brother and sister-in-law], and I learned a great deal about everything connected with child care . . . .
>
> Looking generally at child care, it is a definite duty for siblings. Some parents involve their children out of their own laziness, others sincerely out of a desire for proper role preparation. The level of family wealth and the amount of property the family has is a big influence. Very wealthy families can have children and can be parents without any labor on their parts, because they hire maids or get poorer relatives to help.
>
> I have found that younger children do not always manage their duties well. Do they really offer the motherly care desired? Do they come when the child

> cries? Do they take the child's food, or bite, hit, or pinch it [the child]? Some child caretakers just see that their charge falls asleep, and then leave it . . . .
>
> On the other hand, the company of other children is essential for language, work, singing, and dancing. The whole situation is that the child feels that he belongs [in the sibling group], that there is a group that appreciates a lot of things it does, that values its noise and appreciates a lot of things not even significant to parents and much older children. One cannot escape the strong impact of all this on younger children, making them at the same time submissive, reasonable, rude, polite, abusive, or cunning . . . .

Although as yet unmarried and, as an educated woman, in a new position in Kenya, Jane is comfortable and already familiar with children of a wide range of ages, with domestic management, with dealing with older women who have final authority over a home, and with the moods, conflicting emotions, and chicanery of children. She is likely in turn to rely heavily on such a shared caretaking system in her own family, although her university education might change that.

Characteristics of Sibling Caretaking

Children caring for other children is a common sight for even a casual traveler in non-Western cultures throughout most of the world. Descriptions can be found in life history and autobiographical materials by participants themselves (LeVine, 1979; Langness and Frank, 1981) and appear in novels, stories, and journalistic accounts.

Cross-cultural ratings and naturalistic observations within cultures confirm the importance of child caretakers and the frequency with which children are in situations where sibling care is expected. Barry and Paxson (1971) report that female children were the principal companions/caretakers of infants in 16.7% of their HRAF standard sample, and were principal caretakers of children during early childhood in 53.9% of the societies in their sample. Weisner (1979) found that children were involved in the role of caretaker or were cared for by another child in 41% of random naturalistic observations of Abaluyia girls aged 3–8, and 15.8% of the observations of boys 3–8. Although the Six Cultures Project (Whiting and Whiting, 1975; B. Whiting, 1963) did not directly record caretaking activities during field observations, three of those six societies had infant care by older children occurring some 25% of the time (Nyansongo, Juxtlahuaca, and Tarong), and occurring about 6% of the time in the other three cultures (Taira, Khalapur, and Orchard Town). Direct observations done after school among children aged 5–9 in Hawaiian-American families in urban Honolulu showed that sibling care occurred 29.5% of the time. These children were cared for by their mothers 40.0% of the time and were judged to be independent 30.5% of the time. If the situational circumstances

for child–child care occurred during these visits (e.g., if two or more children were present together in the home or outdoors), caretaking responsibility by children was observed 48.9% of the time (Weisner, Gallimore, & Tharp, 1982). Children spend much of their time in multiage, multisex groups of children, sharing responsibilities for domestic chores including child care as a normal part of the daily routine.

Although children are pressed into service as child-minders and even do errands and domestic chores by age 4 or 5, the age during which children are most often involved ranges from 7 to 13 or 14. Child care more often involves girls than boys, especially where child care occurs along with other domestic chores required of girls. Beatrice Whiting (1983) has suggested that the 7–14 age period represents the time when girls have both the requisite cognitive skills and a strong identification with and desire to emulate the female/maternal role. Adolescence frequently brings a decline in participation in more routine child-minding and domestic drudgery. By this time, younger children are usually available, or marriage may have intervened, or the adolescent has moved out to live with other kin.

Nerlove, Roberts, Klein, Yarbrough, and Habicht (1974) identified two natural indicators of cognitive skill that develop during middle childhood and that seem important in the effective performance of child management activities: *self-managed sequencing* of activity and *voluntary social activities*. Self-managed sequencing refers to the child's ability to follow a precise sequence or series of acts autonomously. Washing clothes, for example, entails gathering up a basket, clothes, and soap, then putting the clothes in a basket, then going to water or the river, and so on. These tasks require, in a correct *order*, ". . . a scanning of the model and mapping of that model onto alternatives, remembering what one had already tried and how well it fit" (*Ibid.*, p. 287). Voluntary social activities involve self-directed, shared activity with others, which assumes shared goal and rule understandings. For language-related voluntary social activities, learning ". . . to name, recognize, and verbally relate functions or attributes of objects" to others (*Ibid.*, p. 287) is crucial. This set of cognitive skills includes having learned the major kinship rules and norms of appropriate cultural and family conduct. Effective performance of child care, as a part of competencies needed to perform domestic chores and even manage the domestic routine, probably requires a minimum level of both these kinds of skills in childhood.

In turn, domestic duties help to train children in the development of more general skills. Rogoff et al. (1975, 1980) identified the 5–7 age period as a widely recognized transitional point when such skills begin to be expected. Her review used cross-cultural data on cultural beliefs about maturation and reports of age of assignment of responsibilities to children. The belief that the child is teachable and has "reason," as well as the idea that a child has a fixed personality and common sense, tends to coincide with the 5–7 shift. Children begin to be assigned child-care tasks and other household and

domestic responsibilities during this period. If 5–7 is the age of onset of this shift, the 8- to 10-year-old period is frequently seen as the time when the child has attained full competence. Children appear by this point to be capable of performing more complex tasks, which may require a more holistic understanding of context, and have the ability to integrate and coordinate different sets of information. There may be a maturational basis, then, for the assignment of responsibility to children during this period.

However, the pancultural attainment of these cognitive and social skills does not of course lead to domestic task responsibility and child care in the absence of cultural requirements and familial roles encouraging them. In societies using shared management, there does appear to be a correlation between the ages when such responsibilities are initiated (5–7), the ages when independent performance becomes more generally expected (8–10), and the maturational potentials of the child during these same developmental periods.

Antecedents of Sibling Care

LeVine and White (this volume, Chapter 10) emphasize four ecocultural features that are associated with the transformation from shared caretaking to conjugal-parental care: the transformation of agrarian societies to urban-industrial ones; the demographic transition from high to low birth and death rates; the rise of mass schooling; and public interest in children and childhood as a unique and special stage in life. These authors also emphasize that there are a variety of pathways from one pattern to the other, and many cultural differences in how they are applied. Shared caretaking and conjugal-parental caretaking each has specific kinds of ecocultural contexts, and activity settings, in which socialization for parenting occurs. These activity settings are shaped by a mix of ecological constraints and opportunities, as well as cultural goals for children and parents. They have shown a broad transformation around the world in the past 200 years from shared management with a large sibling and family group to parental management of small families, but also show considerable cultural variability. The hypothesis is that parental roles and training for parenting vary due to differences in ecocultural conditions, including cultural goals; these conditions effect the shaping of activity settings within which training for parenting occurs.

A useful way to view the context in which sibling care and shared management occur is to consider their association with more general ecocultural conditions that have been shown to affect the organization of child care and human development around the world (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Super & Harkness, 1980; R. LeVine, 1977; Whiting & Whiting, 1978). One such list has come from the collaborative work of Whiting and Edwards

(in preparation). Sibling care is favored over other strategies because in some ways it is an effective adaptation to family and community needs for safety and security, provides some protection from mortality risks, fits with other familial tasks and subsistence requirements, and supports the development of other social skills and cultural ideals valued in a community.

There are three general conditions of family environment that are likely to influence how shared child management occurs, the extent to which it occurs, and hence the ways in which children are trained in parenting skills: (1) the availability of various family and domestic group members to perform parenting activities and take responsibility for them; (2) cultural and parental goals regarding the valued developmental outcomes for children, including differences between boys and girls; and (3) the kind of continuity maintained among the sibling/cousin group across the life span.

1. *Availability of personnel.* Large families, and/or societies with joint, stem, or extended domestic group residence patterns which pool large groups of children together, encourage shared care of children. A daily routine which takes both parents away from the home for work or other activities, or a heavy work load for adult women in particular, encourages sibling care. Shared care is encouraged further if large coresident families are present. High fertility may also encourage sibling care if women are pregnant and/or breast-feeding an infant or toddler for most of their own active parenting years. These mothers will often devote more attention and care to the younger, more vulnerable children in their large families. Higher maternal involvement in infant care and a heavy work load force the care of older children out into the courtyard and the sibling group, and make child labor important for survival. Cultural rules restricting women to the home, as in some areas of the Middle East or South Asia, increase the availability of nonparent adult women and tend to encourage large family compounds. In these contexts, sibling care occurs along with care by mothers and other women.

2. *Cultural ideas regarding sex-role training and child development goals.* A family cultural style of responsibility, compliance, and obedience and deference to elders encourages an emphasis on the indirect control functions of parenting rather than on the direct, continuing intense emotional involvement of a parent with each child. Beliefs in the importance of training girls for domestic and child-care skills also are associated with early sex-role specialization.

3. A *sibling group that shares important survival and reproductive obligations throughout the life span.* Sibling caretaking systems anticipate later functions shared by the sib group. These include the management and distribution of family inheritance and marriage payments; mutual needs for protection and defense; and arrangement of marriages, initiation rites, and other life-passage ceremonies. Joint care of children within such sib groups seems to go along with functional interdependence of siblings across the life

span. Sibling care as a form of parent training anticipates the fact that as adults these children will assume joint responsibility for their families' cultural and economic continuity.

There do not appear to be data available to support the view that sibling care optimizes inclusive genetic fitness. McKenna (1979 and Chapter 6, this volume) reviews the data on functional and sociobiological correlates of alloparenting. He finds wide diversity in its forms among primates and cautions against a strict inclusive fitness hypothesis as to its functions or origins. Such parenting practices appear to evolve as part of a system of social institutions, and the use of nonparental caretakers can exist for many reasons other than the genetic fitness of parents, offspring, or siblings. The variety of ecocultural features that seem associated with sibling care in human cultures supports this view.

Emlen (1982a, b) has presented a model of cooperative breeding in birds which includes both inclusive fitness and ecological variables. He points out that cooperative breeding is relatively rare, and occurs only when the cost to a bird of leaving the nest is very high compared to the cost of delaying departure. In contrast, shared care of children in human societies is widespread, and is not associated with severe costs in alternative modes of care. Emlen's model refers to *adults* delaying departure from their natal home, who then assist other birds in rearing offspring, whereas sibling caretaking refers to *juveniles* assisting in the care of their parents' (or their aunts', uncles', or cousins') children.

The ecocultural features associated with sibling care and shared management of children are those which make child care more efficient, make families more adaptive in their subsistence efforts, and promote wider parental and cultural goals regarding appropriate socialization for children.

These three broad ecocultural conditions encouraging both shared child management and early training of children in child-care activities can also be broken down into more specific variables. Each of these alone does not produce shared management; but a confluence of several of them appears to make it more likely for children to learn how to care for younger children early in life.

- *Subsistence work cycle characteristics,* including wage work, work load, returns to labor-intensive investment, tending crops or animals, distance of work settings from the home, and the role of migration or transhumance in subsistence. Sibling care and shared management should be associated with wage work away from the home, subsistence tasks done away from the home, heavier work loads, labor-intensive economies, and the periodic migration of some family members, such as in the case of seasonal or recurrent migration (e.g., Ross and Weisner, 1977). This kind of subsistence pattern requires flexibility in child-care responsibilities, and usually means that there will be continuous changes in domestic group

personnel available to help in child care as children grow up. Shared functioning and early training in parenting skills should be more common under such conditions.

- *Health status and demographic characteristics* of the community, including mortality, availability of health care, birth control, fertility, family size, and residence patterns. Sibling care should be associated with large, coresident families, customs encouraging fosterage, adoption, and exchange of children between households, higher fertility, and low use of birth control. These conditions increase the range of available personnel in the household to help with child care and to learn the various roles and tasks needed to manage the family group.

- *Community safety*, such as dangers from automobiles, wild animals, community violence, warfare and raiding, and so on. Sibling care should be associated with greater environmental dangers, particularly those outside the household. Sibling care is more likely to occur where older boys and young men become involved in security and protection of the home and community. They will probably move away from the home in adolescence and young adulthood, leaving older girls and others in the domestic group responsible for child care and domestic management. These conditions may increase the need for regular monitoring and care of young children by others, and increase the likelihood that fathers and younger males are not around the home and available to assist in these tasks.

- *Division of labor* by age and sex, and the differential prestige of work activities. Shared and sibling care should be associated with sex role-specific and age-ranked tasks. Many sibling care systems are associated with clear authority hierarchies and patterns of rank and deference. Sibling care tasks typically entail (White, Burton, and Brudner, 1977) expectations that children, especially girls, will participate in the domestic task system and remain near the home.

- *Role of women* in the community and social supports for women; degree of autonomy and independence of women; institutional supports, such as female work groups and mutual aid societies; polygyny and cowives in the home; importance of church and women's ceremonial groups. The presence of such social supports for women is often associated with shared management of children and sibling caretaking. Greater female interdependence in work and cultural activities ouside the home appears related to increased interdependence and sharing of child-care and parenting functions within the domestic group as well. Maternal control of the organization of child care and the domestic domain is also associated with shared care.

- *Role of the father:* Greater male involvement in family protection and subsistence support functions outside the home, and less paternal involvement in the domestic domain, seem to be associated with more use of

sibling care. The active presence of men in supportive roles in the domestic domain, especially those involving direct care of children, would generally be associated with less need for sibling care.

- *Parental sources of information* about child care, including formal education, and modernity. Modernity and education seem to reduce exclusive reliance on sibling care, and increase variability in the available parental alternatives. There is great diversity in the choices and short-term strategies employed by such parents (Leiderman and Leiderman, 1977).

- *Community and familial heterogeneity*, particularly large differences in wealth, the presence of castes, or oppression and dominance of some groups over others. Sibling care seems influenced by such heterogeneity and differences in rank or wealth to the extent that servants or other dependent groups perform domestic work, including child care, and thus replace siblings.

Correlates and Consequences of Sibling Care

Sibling care has been directly or indirectly linked to a variety of cognitive, personality, and social relational outcomes in children (Weisner and Gallimore, 1977). "Polymatric" care of infants and young children, for instance, has been associated with a more diffused attachment to the mother and a stronger, enduring attachment to other significant caretakers (Leiderman and Leiderman, 1974a, 1974b; Levy, 1968). Maternal influence on subsequent behavioral outcomes is not necessarily displaced by nonmaternal caretakers, however. For instance, Munroe and Munroe (1980) studied the Logoli, a high sibling care culture in western Kenya, and found that infants with more maternal involvement during infancy showed evidence of more labile affective expression five years later. Indeed, learning to monitor the mother's wishes and gaining her favor through one's position in the sibling group is an important skill in sibling-care systems.

Sibling care is associated with earlier sex role training for girls in the areas of domestic management, responsibility and compliance, and prosocial and nurturant behavior. Some of these behaviors may generalize to some non-child-care situations (Whiting and Whiting, 1975; B. Whiting, 1983; Draper, 1975). Young children are likely to participate in play groups that include more older girls than boys and younger children of both sexes (Ember, 1981; Whiting and Edwards, 1973). Wenger (1983) provides an excellent example of the system of childhood socialization in a middle-level horticultural society, the Giriama of Kenya. The Giriama encourage responsible domestic work and nurturance toward young children, and emphasize these roles more for girls than for boys. In Wenger's study, girls (controlling for age and available targets for interaction) are more likely to be assigned child-care and domestic tasks, are less often found alone and in pure play

and social situations, and are more often directed toward these activities and situations by adult women.

Sibling caretaking is also associated with customs such as fosterage, adoption, and child lending. One reason for the movement of children between households is the provision of assistance in child care to kin. E. Goody (1982) and J. Goody (1969) have documented fosterage for West African societies, and Carroll (1970) and Gallimore and Howard (1968) for Oceania. Weisner (1982) describes the practice among the Abaluyia of western Kenya of sending a young girl to help her older sister with the sister's children, or to care for elderly parents. The numbers involved in such child exchanges are high; Gallimore et al. (1974) reported adoption rates of 23% in their Hawaiian-American samples, and Goody reports that of 106 sibling groups studied in three communities in Ghana, only 20, 25, and 23%, respectively, did not have a member fostered out for the purpose of learning occupations, as an aid to kin, or for other reasons (E. Goody, 1982, p. 157).

Training for interdependence and affiliation, not autonomous independence and achievement, among the peer group is associated with sibling care and shared management child-care systems (Gallimore, Boggs, and Jordan, 1974; Weisner, 1982). Children learn to work within "pivot roles" (Levy, 1973); i.e., roles where the child must at one moment defer to an elder child or mother and not long after become the primary caretaker of the home, assuming responsibility and utilizing decision-making skills. Some authors have argued that these roles produce sophisticated social skills, empathy, and role flexibility (Tharp et al., in press), while others have suggested that they lead to an early "hardening" of some aspects of personality and values (Mead, 1968; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1979). Ochs and Schieffelin (in press) present material from Samoa which suggests a resolution to this issue. They point out that sibling care giving often occurs in societies already very concerned with deference and hierarchy. Thus, a Samoan child's behavior is fluid across the day, depending on whether older, more senior family members or caretakers are present. A cross-sectional view during a period of the day when the mother, an older sister, and the father are within view or hearing might show a child caretaker displaying a somewhat rigid, limited behavioral pattern, with little vocalization or active, direct responsibility, due to the nature of the child's low status rank in that setting at that point in time. A later point in the day might find the child to be relatively senior in rank and in charge, directing other children and displaying quite different behaviors. Their interpretation is that the sibling caretaking hierarchy and its associated training for parenting teaches positional awareness and sensitivity, both in the family system generally and with respect to caretaking in particular. The result seems to be flexibility in child-care styles—but within clear and early-acquired situationally and socially defined limits. In societies where deference, hierarchy, and authority are focal cultural and familial concerns, this may prove to be a general pattern (cf. LeVine, 1973).

Children growing up in cultures practicing sibling caretaking have shown a more field dependent cognitive style (Cohen, 1969; Witkin et al., 1974; Park and Gallimore, 1975). This cultural difference in response pattern may be due in part to generalized cultural expectations of conformity and compliance pressures in societies which also practice sibling caretaking. There are no studies separating children within a culture who have had different levels of sibling care exposure and testing them on similar cognitive measures. Munroe and Munroe (1983; in press) however, clearly show birth-order effects for memory, pattern completion, and block design tests, favoring early-born children. They speculate that caretaker roles among older children, and corresponding differences in maternal involvement in child care, may contribute to these differences. Blake (this volume, Chapter 13), Zajonc and Markus (1975), and others have also noted a general decrement in mean IQ and school achievement measures correlated with increased family size and birth order. Sibling caretaking roles are associated with larger family sizes both culturally and in the incidence of sib care among families within a community. However, it is not known if there is an independent effect of participation in sibling caretaking (whether as caretaker or as charge) on IQ scores or school achievement. Some indirect evidence suggests that there is no such relationship independent of family size (Leiderman and Leiderman, 1974a; Weisner, in preparation), but research is needed on this issue.

In any event, IQ and school-related cognitive skills are unlikely to be strongly related to sibling care experience. School skills involved manipulation of symbols disassociated from everyday, enterprise-engaged activity; they require context-independent manipulation of language, with adults as teachers. In contrast, functional or adaptive measures of competence, which attempt to assess situated intelligence and social sensitivity, are the kinds of talents that might have stronger associations with sibling caretaking within societies. Nerlove et al. (1974, 1975), cited earlier, identified two such dimensions self-managed sequencing skills and voluntary social activity that were associated with both community judgments of smartness in children and cognitive test measures. Children with such skills may be selecting themselves for sibling care, or may be differentially selected by mothers for this role. In turn, participation in sibling care appears to encourage the development of these skills in all children in a culture.

Beginning with Minturn and Lambert (1964), efforts to replicate findings from cross-cultural data within cultures has been difficult (see Munroe and Munroe, 1980; Shweder, 1979a, 1979b; Lewis and Ban, 1977). In general, it is safer to make cultural-level statements about differences between sibling care and nonsibling care cultures, subcultures, or communities, than to predict intracultural or individual difference outcomes for particular children. One reason for this is that every child in a family constellation has his or her own unique interpersonal "environment." Family size, birth order, or birth spacing effects are far stronger in group comparisons across families

than they are in accounting for individual differences within a family or school or classroom (Scarr and Grajek, 1982). In addition, cultural expectations regarding socialization for parenting are transmitted through mechanisms other than direct, individual experience. A child's direct exposure to sibling care in its own family may be low or absent; but if this same child participates in a culture characterized by such a pattern, the child's training for parenting is affected. Weisner, Gallimore, and Tharp (1982), for example, found that sibling care among urban Hawaiian-Americans was pervasive and culturally recognized as a pattern of caretaking, yet also highly variable in the family's and individual child's experience. The quality of this cultural experience is described in the next section.

The Quality of Social Relationships

Tharp et al. (1984) illustrate many of the qualities of social network relations in shared care families. The Hawaiian-American or Abaluyia mother may be alternately warm or gruff and busy, but there is an understood, intense *belonging* and shared sense of responsibility between parents and children. Families encourage interdependence (not autonomous independence); responsibility to others (not expectations of services from adults); shared work and functions (rather than particular, specialized tasks); shared resources (not private space and possessions); cooperation and affiliation (not competition and individual achievement); and deference to parents (not egalitarian discussions and family "democracy").

"Children are accustomed to flexible rearrangements of work schedules and responsibilities worked out within the sibling group. Adult supervision is usually mediated by older siblings. Thus children have considerable independence, felt autonomy and competence" (Tharp et al., 1984, p. 12). There is not the same Western middle class tightrope walk between emotional and economic dependency of children on adults on the one hand, and early pressure for autonomy and independent competence outside the home on the other.

Hawaiian children are expected not to make trouble for parents— but they are expected to stand up for themselves, to be "tough" (Ibid.). Children become very sensitive to dominance relationships, along with caretaking responsibilities. Hence, life in the sibling group is not a cooperative, supportive, romantic idyll for children. Some sense of this is gained from interviews with 70 Kenyan mothers regarding what events within their sibling/courtyard group need their intervention. Most mothers mentioned more than one event. In order of frequency of mention they include: child being beaten up by others, or threatened and harassed; lack of food, and children arguing over food; child needing help with schoolwork; child being sick; child needing money or other resources and being unable to get them from other children. These examples show the two major situations in

which mothers actively become involved: intervention in physical and verbal teasing or harassment when requested; and provision of resources or information children can't or won't provide for each other.

Teaching of younger children and learning from parents and older children occurs less through verbal instruction and control and more through mixed modes of coparticipation in the task or activity being learned; through modeling and demonstrations, or through nonverbal example (Ochs, 1982; Jordan, 1981a, 1981b).

> . . . emphasis is on learning from models, shared-functioning, and on direct assistance by intervention in performance when error occurs. Learning occurs in a mode of "enterprise-engagements" in which the learner is actually engaged in performing, in some degree, the skill or task that he is learning . . . . Emphasis is not on "I'll tell you how to do it," but on "watch," "listen," "participate," "try" (Tharp et al., 1984, pp. 14–15).

The feeling of being enmeshed in the sibling or domestic compound group and doing important work competently is "one of the main ways to initiate, confirm, and signal friendship and good feeling among a group of people" (Ibid., p. 37).

The emotional or subjective experience of training for child care in particular, and future parenthood more generally takes shape along with these feelings. These are affective tones and feelings that are probably carried into adulthood through the sharing of parenting and caretaking between adults and other children in one's community. A well-established, shared caretaking community is an emotionally satisfying experience. Parenting is thus accompanied by a personal and cultural confirmation of cohort and kin membership, as well as by the more familiar feelings of intense love and protectiveness parents have for their children.

MOTHERS' AND CHILDREN'S INTERACTION: A KENYAN RURAL-URBAN EXAMPLE

Direct naturalistic observations of the social behavior of children in shared function, sibling-care cultures show high proportions of prosocial as well as task and chore behaviors. Data from the Abaluyia of western Kenya illustrate this pattern. The Abaluyia sample consists of 24 matched pairs of families. Half the families lived in their rural clan homeland, and their matched pairs lived in an urban housing estate in Nairobi. Each urban male household head was matched with his rural counterpart by age, formal education level, and local lineage membership. The sample used for field observations of children's social behaviors consisted of all children living in the rural homesteads or urban rooms with these 48 matched pairs of men.

The matched rural-urban sample design allows for a systematic compar-

ison between the evolved cultural patterns of behavior which characterize these Abaluyia families, on the one hand, and the localized ecocultural conditions which permit or encourage sibling caretaking, on the other. In the urban setting very few older children were available for child care, since most remained in the rural area to attend school and to do domestic and farm work. As a result, urban mothers were involved in more direct interaction with their children, and also had fewer tasks and chores to perform in the city. The rural-urban comparisons suggest which features of shared function families persist, even in these changed urban circumstances, and which are modified by ecocultural features of city life.

Abaluyia children spend their time in rather large sibling groups which may also include other children and some adults. The rural group size mode is 5 to 7, the urban (salient others excluding strangers) peaks at 2 to 3, with another mode at 6 to 7. There is more variety in the personnel actually available and salient for children in the *rural* setting, even though the potential numbers and variety are, of course, greater in town. Rural homesteads, however, include more different kinds of kin, usually have older children present, and, of course, have a wide range of friends and neighbors available to help and to visit.

The data analyses are based on 168 home observations 30 minutes long of 63 different children aged 2 to 8. The social behaviors are summarized by the proportion of each type (nurturance, aggression, chores, and so on) for two age categories (2 to 4 or 5 to 8), sex of child, location (rural or urban), and dyad types (child–child, or child–mother) (see Figures 9.1 and 9.6)[1]

A 30-minute continuous running written record was taken in the field of children's social behavior. The children targeted for observation were between the ages of 2 and 8, and everyone with whom these children interacted, regardless of age, was included in the observations. Data were subsequently coded using a modified version of the behavior code developed for the Six Cultures Project (Whiting and Whiting, 1975). Field observers were trained local students familiar to the families. Protocols were independently coded, with the rule that no category with reliability coefficients under .70 were retained. Most categories had agreements well over this minimum level. Reliability and validity were also assessed by obtaining a set of field protocols written simultaneously by two observers visiting the same homestead. These protocols were subsequently divided into interacts and scored by independent coders. Results indicated that the specific sequence of behaviors recorded were not necessarily identical (as to either

[1]The age of the target of interaction is not specified. Whiting and Edwards (in preparation) have examined these same dyad types in greater detail, broken down by both subject and target age, and have found age-of-target effects. However, for the general purpose of contrasting Abaluyia urban and rural profiles across broad behavior descriptions like nurturance or sociability, the aggregate data are most useful.

order or behavior type), but the overall proportions of the various behavior categories, summed across the 30-minute observation period, were not significantly different across pairs of observers. This result suggests that these observational procedures reliably capture the *patterning* of interactional styles within the family, but do not necessarily capture the details of each moment-to-moment interaction sequence. Such a level of precision could only be attained in the field by major changes in the mechanics of recording—by using fully precoded recording formats, for example, and/or videotaping of field data for later coding.

Figure 9.1 shows the overall levels of nurturance observed between children and between mothers with their children. Nurturance includes providing direct care; providing resources, such as food; and providing emotional support and comfort to others. Girls display nearly as much nurturant behavior as do mothers. The magnitude of these proportions is particularly large for girls, ranging from 9% of all girls' social behaviors (for girls showing nurturance to boys in the country), up to 17% (for girls showing nurturance to boys in town). Mothers showed nurturance scores ranging from 12.5 to 17.5%. Boys receive more nurturance from mothers and their sisters and female cousins in the city than in the country, and boys are less likely than their sisters to offer nurturance to others in either locale. Boys in the city are in or near their urban room more, with less opportunity to roam, and are less likely to be in caretaking roles.

Providing emotional support and comfort, in contrast to providing resources such as food or direct care, shows a pattern similar to that for overall nurturance (Figure 9.2). However, mothers are somewhat more likely than child caretakers to provide such emotional support, especially with younger children. (There were relatively few young boys in the observations, and this may have skewed the exceptional data for nurturance shown by rural girls to boys.)

Mothers are substantially more likely than children to give instructions and orders in the performance of child-care tasks, as Figure 9.3 shows. Mothers gave such direction some 8–12% of the time, compared to from 0 to 3% for children. Girls continue to offer directions regarding child care more than to boys.

Mothers are more actively directive regarding all chores and tasks, not only those related to child care (Figure 9.4): mothers' directives concerning all tasks range from 12 to 20% of their interactions, compared to none to 1.5% for children. These African parents command, manage, and verbally direct; siblings and children collaborate with one another in doing tasks and chores, including child care.

When these children are not involved in tasks and chores, they are usually engaged in friendly sociability: shows of friendliness and affection, physical contact and sitting together, seeking one or another out for shared social activities, and play (Figure 9.5). The child–child proportions for
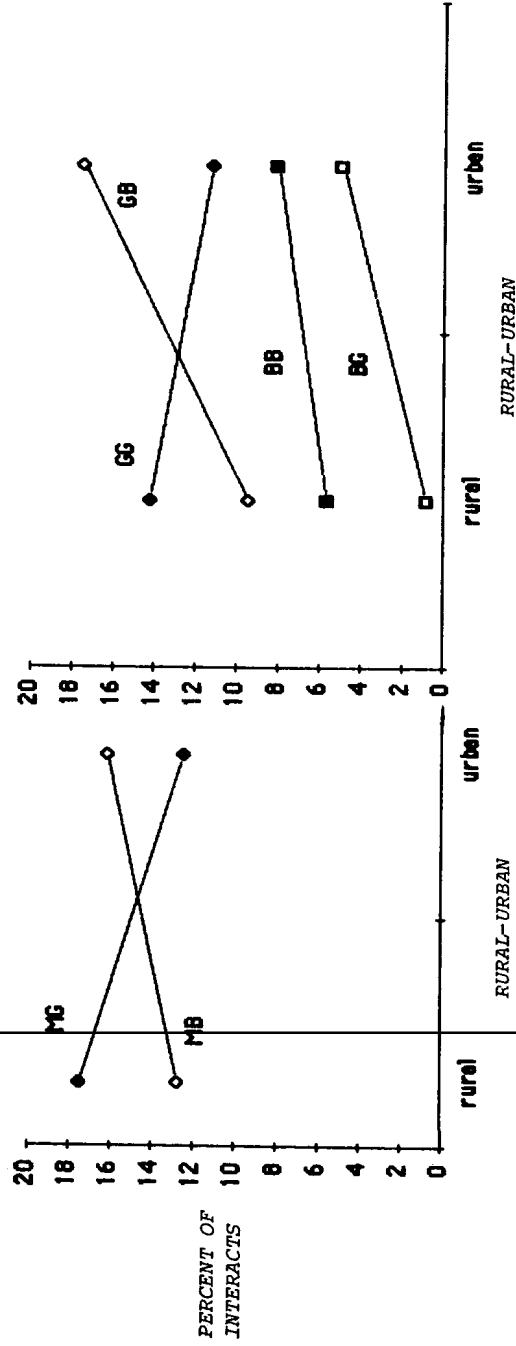
FIGURE 9.1. Nurturant interactions (direct care and emotional support) by dyad and rural-urban residence. GG, girls to girls; GB, girls to boys; BB, boys to boys; BG, boys to girls; MG, mothers to girls; MB, mothers to boys. *Left*, mothers to children; *right*, child to child.
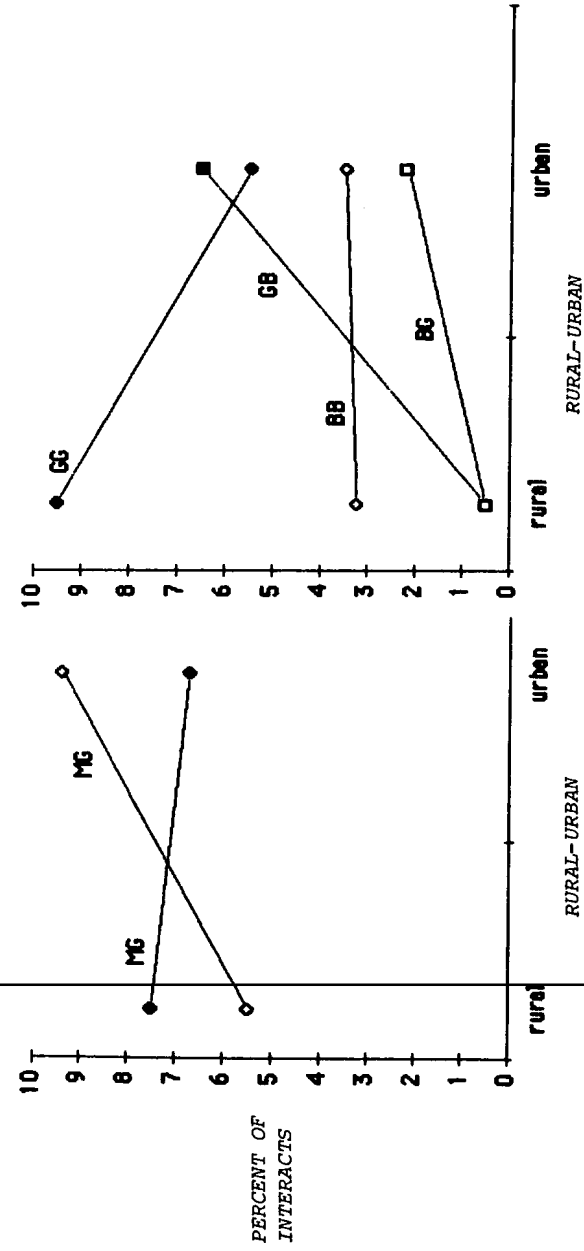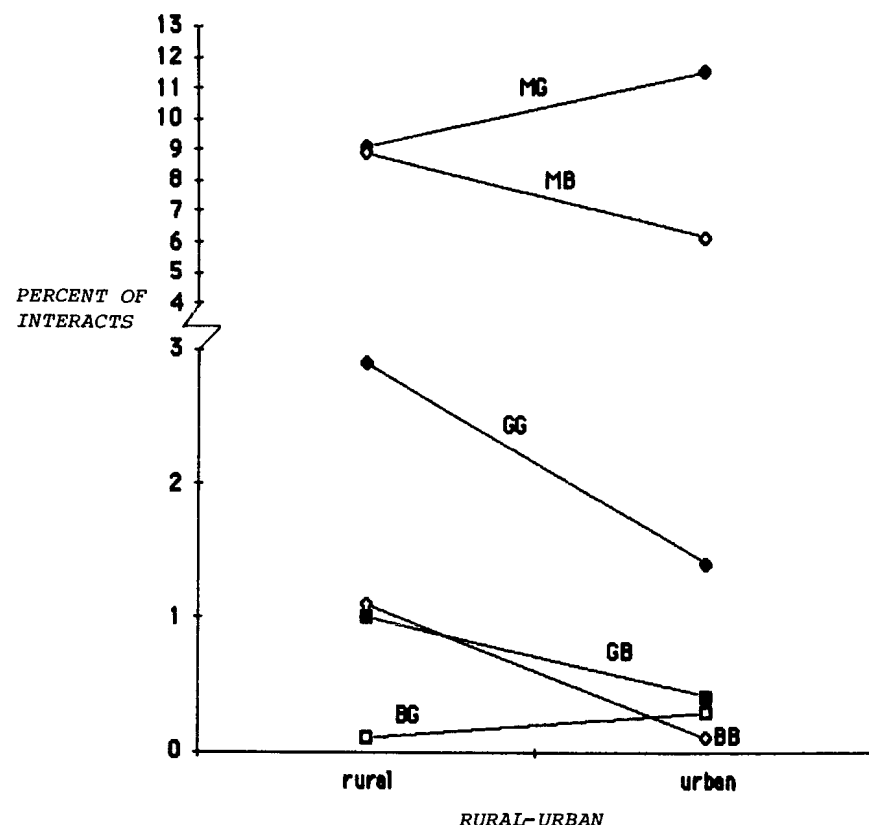
254

FIGURE 9.2. Emotional support and comfort, by dyad and rural-urban residence. GG, girls to girls; GB, girls to boys; BB, boys to boys; BG, boys to girls; MG, mothers to girls; MB, mothers to boys. *Left*, mothers to children; *right*, child to child.

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FIGURE 9.3.   Requests and instructions regarding child caretaking, by dyad and
rural-urban residence. GG, girls to girls; GB, girls to boys; BB, boys to
boys; BG, boys to girls; MG, mothers to girls; MB, mothers to boys.
Top, mothers to children; *bottom*, child to child.

sociability range in magnitude from 21 to 46%, with girls somewhat more
likely to be involved in such interactions; mothers' sociability scores range
from 6 to 10.5%.

But children also try to dominate and disrupt each others' activities
(Figure 9.6). They engage in physical assaults and insults, seek to annoy
each other, and try to get other children to submit to their demands. This is
so more often with boys than with girls, although boys are less rambunctious
in the city with other boys. This result appears due to the ecological features
of urban versus rural households. In the city mothers are present more of the
time, and older boys are seldom in the city for long periods. Older siblings
are often not present to watch over their activities. In general, dominance
and disruptiveness increases among city children due to these features.

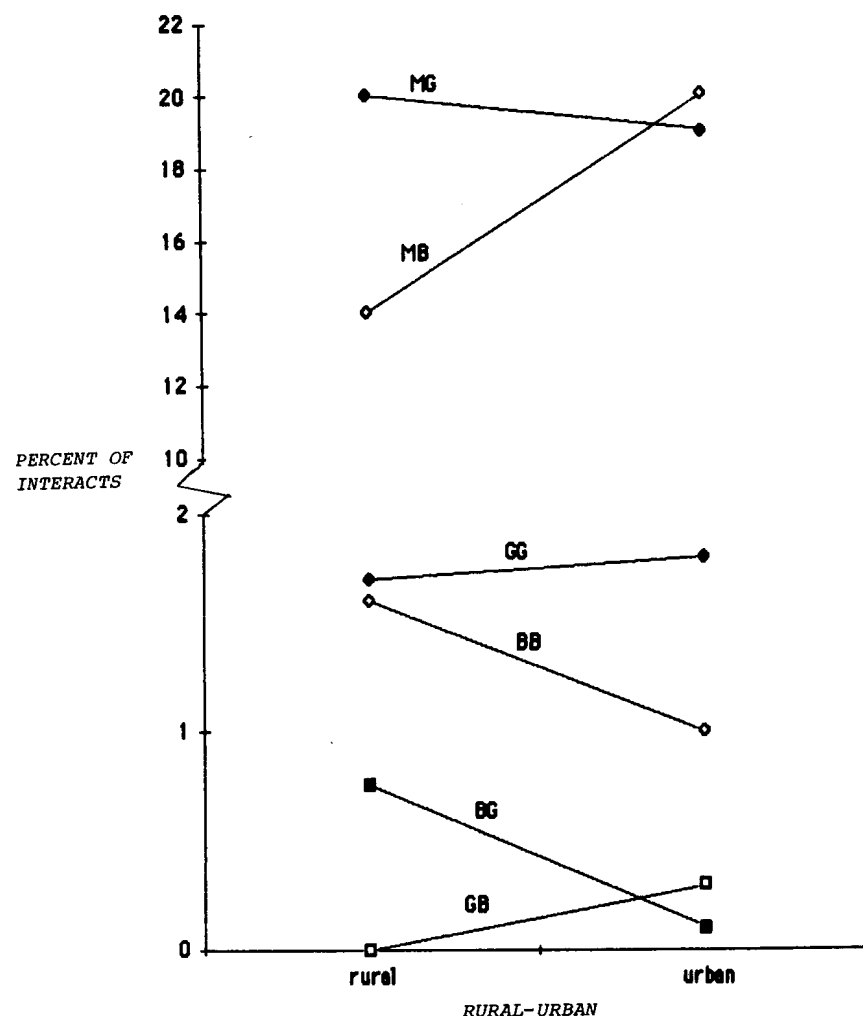City life does not substantially reduce the amount of child–child nurtur-

FIGURE 9.4.   Requests and instructions regarding domestic tasks and chores, by
dyad and rural-urban residence. GG, girls to girls; GB, girls to boys;
BB, boys to boys; BG, boys to girls; MG, mothers to girls; MB,
mothers to boys. *Top*, mothers to children; *bottom*, child to child.

ance or the number of tasks and chores children are expected to do.
However, the absence of older children in urban households does appear to
increase the extent to which mothers directly intervene and respond to
children's requests, and the degree to which they give instructions and
directions to their children. Disruptiveness among the smaller, younger,
more crowded sibling group also increases in town.

Although city life in Nairobi hardly exemplifies the ecological conditions
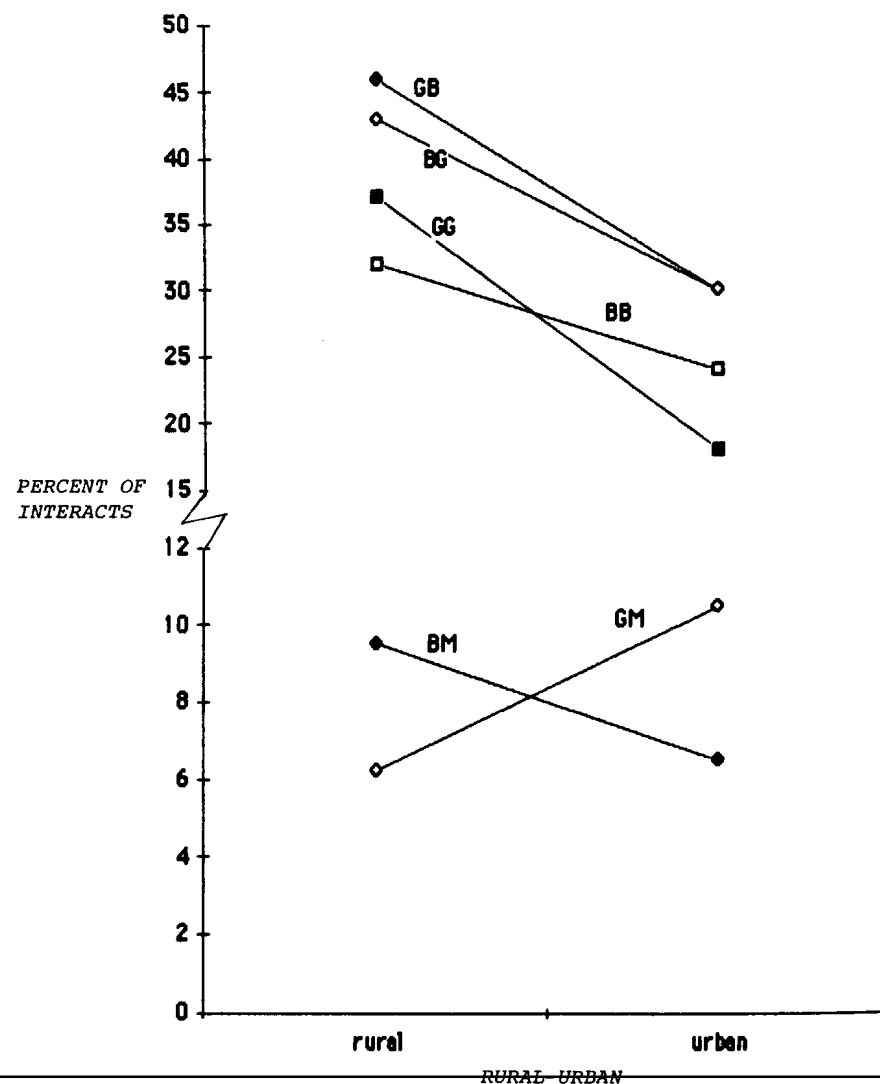
PERCENT OF
INTERACTS

FIGURE 9.5.   Sociable interaction (affection, physical contact, seeks proximity, sitting together), by dyad and rural-urban residence. GG, girls to girls; GB, girls to boys; BB, boys to boys; BG, boys to girls; GM, girls to mothers; BM, boys to mothers. *Top*, child to child; *bottom*, child to mother.

that promote sibling and other nonparental care of children, the families in this sample in fact participate part-time in rural cultural life, so the influence of rural customs persists in modified form in the city. The city-dwelling families in this sample intend to return to their rural homes, and there is, in

PERCENT OF
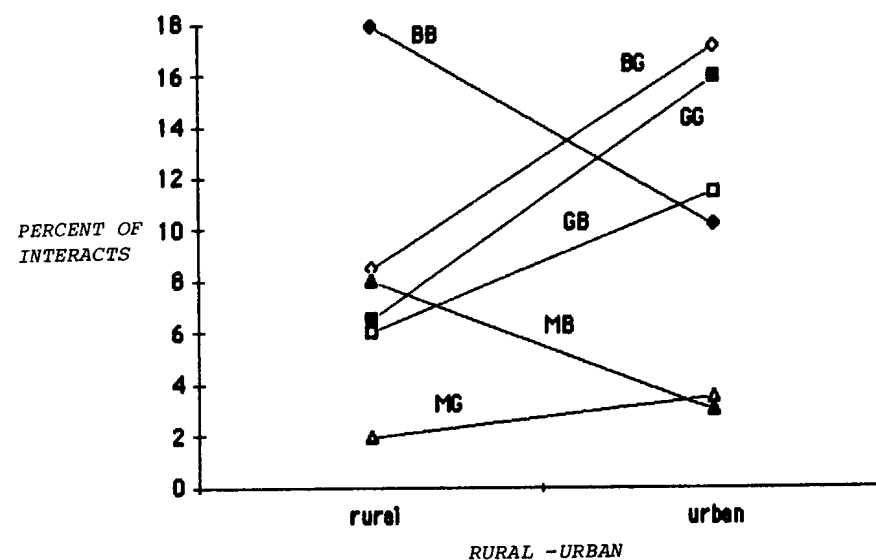INTERACTS

RURAL —URBAN

FIGURE 9.6.   Dominance (physical assaults, insulting, annoying others, seeking submission) by dyad and rural-urban residence. GG, girls to girls; GB, girls to boys; BB, boys to boys; BG, boys to girls; MG, mothers to girls; MB, mothers to boys.

fact, frequent commuting back and forth by most family members, including children. The features of child caretaking that persist are those related to: (1) the expected performance of chores and tasks by children; (2) the preference for girls doing child-care and domestic tasks; and (3) the continued nurturance and prosocial behavior shown between children. Those features that change include: (1) increased disruptiveness among family members and (2) increased direct intervention and involvement of mothers in domestic activities and child management.

MOTHERS' VIEWS OF SHARED MANAGEMENT AND SIBLING CARETAKING

This chapter began with a glimpse of one African girl's view of her experience with child care in Kenya. She vacillated between her pleasure and confidence in her experience, and the annoyance and insecurity she felt in the role. In her report and in other discussions with her, however, there was little doubt that she considered this experience a central part of normal development. Whatever other personal experiences she had as a child, not to have been given any responsibility and training in child-care roles within her extended family group would have implied a lack of acceptance. The

same pattern of feelings about this kind of training for parenting—ambivalence along with a sense of cultural acceptance—emerges from the data available on mothers' views of sibling care and other forms of nonparental care. The mother's views also reflect a distinction between *control* and authority over the domestic domain (which is still clearly seen as under maternal direction), and *responsibility* for work as part of that daily routine (which is seen as widely shared with others).

In interviews 73 urban Hawaiian mothers were asked a series of questions about assignment of domestic and child-care tasks to children (Weisner *et al.*, unpub. ms.). Two independent dimensions emerged from a factor analysis of these items: a *responsibility expectation* dimension and a *task assignment* factor. The first dimension taps the concern for control and compliance; the second focuses on domestic management aspects of a shared caretaking milieu. Mothers emphasized the importance of generalized expectations of responsibility for other children independently from their reports of how they specifically assigned jobs to children (e.g., bathing younger sibs, taking them on shopping trips, cooking, and so on). Regardless of any particular child's experience (due to the particular family vagaries of birth order, sex, or family size), he or she learns to deal with other children within the shared management and responsibility patterns characterizing sibling care arrangements.

Seventy Abaluyia mothers in Kenya were also asked about their views of child training and preparation for parenting (Weisner, n.d.). These semistructured interviews probed for the individual feelings and opinions of these mothers, in addition to obtaining their more culturally stereotyped responses. In order of mention and importance to this group of mothers, parental goals included:

- Knowing the proper Abaluyia customs—particularly concerns for respect and deference
- Eating properly (good diet, sufficient food)
- Health and safety of children
- Doing work properly
- Understanding how to talk to strangers and to be hospitable, including cooperating and playing well with other children
- Doing well in school and securing employment
- Respect for parents and compliance to adult requests
- Religious training (for Christian mothers)
- Learning English and Kiswahili

We also asked the African mothers about the costs and benefits they saw in the practice of sibling caretaking; how sib care related to other kinds of tasks and chores for children, and how sib care was changing with the growth of schooling for girls and boys. There were maternal worries about how well children are being prepared for a changing and uncertain

economy. Mothers' responses to the interviews items on these topics can be summarized as follows:

- Competence, obedience, and the attention children should pay to the hierarchy within the family and domestic group were emphasized as important skills learned by children in the sib group;
- Boys and girls can and should assume child-care duties if needed, but girls are preferred for reasons of convenience and role training;
- Mothers usually mixed domestic tasks and child care in their answers, and typically had to be prompted to separate the two kinds of tasks;
- Verbal and maternal "stimulation" being provided for each child is seldom mentioned; on the other hand, school-learned literacy training is frequently mentioned as a valued trade-off for less sibling care help for mothers in the home.

Mothers did not view child care, and training for it, as a particularly special, high-level skill, outside of its general merits for inculcating family responsibility. Of the mothers, 68% believed that going to school was preferable to a child staying home for sibling care purposes, since school widened a child's opportunities. But the remaining 32% emphasized traditional role training benefits in preparing for marriage and rearing healthy children. In either event, however, sibling care experience continues outside school time; the two are not viewed as mutually exclusive childhood experiences.

Of the African mothers in this sample, 74% reported that as children they had been sent out to others' homes to do child care while they were growing up, and/or had had substantial sib care responsibilities in their own homes. These mothers tended to be oldest or earlier-born children in their own families (but not statistically significantly more so). In addition, 54% of the mothers reported that they had had relatives or hired maids in their own homes doing domestic and child care-related duties during their own childhoods. These characteristics of the mothers' own families of origin and their own sibship parity might have been influential in their decisions as parents concerning sibling care and in their attitudes toward the practice. However, statistical relationships were not found between parents' own childhood experiences and their responses to interview items regarding sibling care and parenting in their own families of procreation. Parents with different childhood experiences in their family of orientation were neither more nor less likely to practice sibling care now that they were parents themselves, and were neither more nor less likely to promote its value. Mothers' formal educations and their own current family size appear to be better predictors of differences in attitudes and practice. Three educational levels were compared: no schooling ($N = 26$), 1–4 years of primary school ($N = 19$), and 5–10 years of school ($N = 22$); data for 3 women was lacking. Age and educational experience remain partially confounded, however,

since younger mothers have more formal education. There is a tendency for better educated, younger mothers to report that sibling care limits their children if it is a major ongoing role; that it can teach children to be passive, and that this is not good in today's Kenyan society. More educated mothers also emphasized the menial nature of domestic work, including child care. Better educated women more often distinguished between goals concerning their children's future as parents, on the one hand, and as adult workers, on the other. The contrasting view among uneducated mothers is that these goals are one and the same, and that sibling care trains for respect, for being a proper Luyia child, and for learning to share and cooperate as adult parents later in life. These latter themes were clear in the analysis of interview data, but none reached statistical significance.

Mothers who believed that sibling care is declining at present in turn more often emphasized the obvious effect of schooling in removing children from the home for part of the day. These mothers more often had migrated to Nairobi for periods of time, and had had their own family group divided between city and country. Even these mothers, however, emphasized that control and management remained, as always, in their (the mothers') own hands. This fact had not changed, in their view. They felt that younger preschool-age children were now far more involved in sibling care and less lazy than they would have been allowed to be in the past, since they were now taking on more tasks and child-care roles. Leiderman and Leiderman (1977) also found such a child-care pattern in their more acculturated Kikuyu samples.

Of mothers in our sample, 38% reported sending their own children to relatives' homes to help with domestic tasks and child care. Parents believe that this practice is declining due to schooling, available cash for hiring help, and parents' increasing reluctance to send their children to do such "menial" work. Some mothers emphasized that this practice has been used for sending away somewhat troublesome children, children who were harder to manage, in hopes that a new family setting and work tasks might benefit such a child. This practice may be declining, but is still culturally accepted.

Parkin (1979, pp. 329–333) and Wenger (1983, pp. 185–188) have suggested that the terminology used to describe work in many Bantu languages encodes many of the cultural ideas about sibling caretaking and shared functioning reflected in these Abaluyia women's interviews. Among the Giriama, for example, girls before marriage " . . . are likely to live at a close relative's home as a mu-kazi [worker]. In this role she helps look after young children in the homestead. . . . This role, they say, is so named because it is an unmarried girl's 'work', and also prepares her for the 'work' she will have when she married . . . The use of the suffix -kazi [work], or a similar form, to denote a woman or female roles is in fact widespread in Bantu languages" (Parkin, 1979, p. 329). The Mkazi is in this sense a woman

who participates in the sociocultural work of the village and kin group, combining subsistence, reproduction, and parenting roles. Kazi in its original cultural meanings retains a sense of female gender, familial continuity, sustenance. Sibling caretakers as mukazi had a subordinate but enmeshed role in this system. A sibling caretaker is learning parenting as cultural work—the "work" of fertility, of the soil, of cultural continuity.

But contemporary ideas about work are beginning to alter conceptions of the child caretaker role and the roles of girls and women in the subsistence economy. In the current world economy Kazi means paid work, a job, as opposed to subsistence work. This change separates -kazi as a part of domestic subsistence responsibilities from -kazi for wages (Parkin, 1979). This distinction is similar to that expressed by the Abaluyia mothers about the changing importance of schooling and urban migration vis-a-vis sibling caretaking skills and training for parenting. If one enters an Abaluyia household today and asks where an absent male migrant wage worker is, the (Kiswahili) response would probably be, "ameenda kazini" (he or she has gone to work, or to the place of work). One then looks about the homestead, with cooking, clothes washing, food preparation, and child tending going on all around, and asks what others in the homestead are doing. A typical reply might be, "sisi tuko nyumbani, tu" (we are just here at home). As males have migrated in search of wage employment beyond their own local communities, the traditional blending of work done for one's home compound and participation in kin and parenting roles has begun to be transformed. The status attached to work for the homestead has declined, and thus the status of the mukazi and the status of girls and women within this system relative to wage employment is lower. Traditionally, training for parenting occurred within a system in which women were major contributors to the subsistence economy; parenting skills were embedded in this larger context. One of the effects of the penetration of the world economy on middle-level societies in much of the world appears to be the increased separation and alienation of parenting from other forms of work children are trained for throughout childhood and adolescence.

CONCLUSION

The Polynesian and African examples used in this chapter illustrate a style of sibling care that includes recognized caretaker roles and responsibilities and sharing of nurturance and discipline. Yet it is also clearly a family system where mothers and fathers retain overall control. Both conditions (maternal control and culturally recognized role training) vary among sibling care societies. For instance, older girls in some black American households act as "boss girl," managing virtually all aspects of household and child care (e.g., Stack, 1974, 1975) without much maternal control. Indeed, many of these girls may soon have children of their own who will

be incorporated in these same households. And sibling-care roles are not always well-defined or named. Children watch out for each other without the clear role assignment and hierarchical domestic structure that characterizes the kinds of societies focused on here. Cohorts of children play with one another, and in the course of the day children offer nurturance and advice to one another without having had the role training within the domestic group that characterizes many middle-level African and Polynesian societies. A good deal of nonformal training in child caretaking skills occurs in the context of such groups, whether or not there is a more organized cultural plan and value attached to nonparental child care.

Sibling care occurs along with continued maternal involvement in child care and domestic management. Ethnographic data, mother interviews, and systematic observations all are consistent on this point. Maternal and child roles are not mutually exclusive ones; the term shared management, or shared parenting, further emphasizes this point. The involvement of mothers in direct caretaking is greater during infancy and the early toddler periods, but continues with the help of others throughout childhood.

The contrast between the North American middle-class model and the shared management model is between two different kinds of training for parenting—not between the absence of such training in America and its presence elsewhere. Many students of sibling relationships in Western cultures (e.g., Dunn, 1983; Bryant, 1982) show clearly that Western children are learning about relationships and caregiving, just as are the African or Hawaiian children in the preceding examples. The relevant contrasts are in the ecocultural pressures in each respective society, and in the cultural goals and desires regarding social replacement that are reflected in how children learn parenting.

Training for parenting is changing as societies around the world face intense cultural, ecological, and demographic changes which affect their adaptive choices and their family functions. In many parts of the world catastrophes of war, exploitation, and ecological degradation make any attempt to find a culturally viable pattern of parental training secondary to a struggle for sheer survival and safety. It does not seem as though either of the two opposing patterns of child care and parent training sketched herein is likely to continue in its pure form. The data available on the effects of ecocultural changes on child socialization and parenting in the contemporary non-Western world do not suggest a linear evolution toward the Western middle-class, ideal-typical pattern. Rather, a tremendous variety of adaptive family forms is emerging around the world, in Western and non-Western societies alike. These transformations are influenced by survival pressures, as well as by proactive family efforts to implement their cultural goals and ideals for their children in new circumstances (Weisner, 1982). This is what should be expected; after all, the ecocultural conditions promoting sibling care itself are diverse and can vary widely, and did not

characterize human families until the recent evolutionary past. At the same time, the variables reviewed here that seem linked to patterns of parental training (ecocultural conditions; cultural values and relationship styles; the performance of parental functions essential for development) continue to be powerful in shaping the further evolution of parenting.

SUMMARY

In many societies around the world training for parenthood is an apprenticeship experience, learned along with the performance of domestic and subsistence tasks within shared-function family systems. In such shared caretaking families, child-care skills are acquired first, followed only gradually by autonomy from parents and siblings, and then by full managerial control of a household. Parenting skills are learned within the sibling group which continues to remain functionally interdependent throughout the life span, helping with and feuding over inheritance, marriage arrangements, or needs for community defense and protection. Child-care and parenting roles are widely diffused within a group of kin. In contrast, in our own society establishment of a new household typically comes first, followed by acquisition of a mate and marriage and only then by parenthood and child care.

Training for parenting in shared management systems is a joint process involving mothers and the sibling group. There may be a series of stages in how such societies develop parenting skills: (1) training in direct child care (feeding, carrying, etc.); (2) provision of emotional and affective support and comfort; (3) teaching, supervision, and monitoring of others doing these tasks, along with the mother; and (4) assumption of the primary responsibility for providing shelter, food, and protection for the child and the family.

Data from the Abaluyia of Kenya and Hawaiian-Americans are used to illustrate the process of acquiring parenting skills in a shared function, sibling caretaking system. Girls in the Kenya studies do over twice as much direct child care as boys and show proportions of nurturant and emotionally supportive interactions similar to those of mothers. Mothers are far more likely to show managerial, directive, and commanding behaviors, however, then sibling caretakers. Task and chore performance by children is also high compared to Western samples. Interviews with Kenyan and Hawaiian-American mothers show that their views on child caretaking and training for parenthood combine two independent dimensions: (1) the importance of children learning generalized responsibility within the family, including compliance; and (2) specific needs for domestic management and task performance. There is also a statistically nonsignificant tendency for more educated Kenyan mothers to report that heavy sibling care responsibilities teach children to be too passive and compliant.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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10 PARENTHOOD IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Robert A. LeVine
Merry White

INTRODUCTION

During the past 200 years the conditions of child development in much of the world have changed more drastically than they had in millennia—perhaps since the spread of agrarian conditions after 7000 B.C. The history of this recent change can be traced numerically, with school enrollments rising and infant mortality rates falling as countries industrialized, populations moved to the city, and families reduced their fertility. It can be told as a moral tale, with the elimination of child labor and illiteracy, when parents and public policymakers alike recognized the rights and expanded the opportunities of children. It can be, and often is, looked upon as a struggle for the welfare of children that is not yet won, particularly since many of the conditions abolished in the industrial countries (e.g., high infant mortality, illiteracy, and child labor) still exist in the Third World.

However one regards this shift, it represents a fundamental change not only in the means by which children are raised but in the reasons for which they are brought into the world and the goals they pursue during their lives. It is a change that is only beginning to be understood in terms of its history, its causes, and its contemporary directions. This chapter provides an overview of its major elements, particularly in the West, and considers its implications for the comparative analysis of parenthood and child development. The social changes reviewed here have undermined traditional agrarian conceptions of the life span, particularly the centrality of fertility and filial loyalty in the social identities of men and women. This shift has occurred in the industrial countries of the West, Eastern Europe, and Japan. It has been occurring, and continues, in certain countries of the Third World, although not uniformly within those countries. That the shift deserves to be called "revolutionary" can hardly be disputed; the question is whether it should be thought of as one revolution or many. Are all the socioeconomic, demographic, educational, and ideological changes involved but different aspects of one comprehensive process of social transformation (e.g., "modernization"), or separable processes that happen to be linked in particular