

Chapter 12

Some Cross-Cultural Perspectives
on Becoming Female

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But we always find the patterning. We know of no culture that has said, arbitrarily, that there is no difference between men and women except in the way they contribute to the creation of the next generation; that otherwise in all respects they are simply human beings with varying gifts, no one of which can be exclusively assigned to either sex. . . . Are not sex differences exceedingly valuable, one of the resources of our human nature that every society has used but no society has as yet begun to use to the full?

—Margaret Mead, 1967 (pp. 8-9)

THE USES OF CROSS-CULTURAL DATA

Cross-cultural data on child development and the socialization of boys and girls have been used to argue for and against most of the major hypotheses concerning the origins of sex differences. Margaret Mead's *Sex and Temperament* (1950) is the most famous example of the use of cross-cultural data to celebrate the power of cultural differences. She demonstrated the potential of culture and social organization to mold and shape the sexes into behavioral styles, subsistence roles, and temperamental types. From this perspective, cross-cultural data show how differently girls and boys can be shaped in different societies.

However, cross-cultural data can also be used to show how consistently and uniformly girls and boys are treated and behave. Cross-cultural data demonstrate the universality of sex-role differences and

the consistency in certain sex-role-stereotyped behaviors in nearly all cultures. One line of argument in explaining such regularity is environmental determinism, which emphasizes the effects of differential pressures toward subsistence training, and the need for women to combine child rearing with subsistence work as adults, in distinguishing the sexes as adults—and hence boys from girls as well (Brown, 1976; D'Andrade, 1974; Whiting and Edwards, 1974).

Using the same evidence, others suggest that some innate temperamental and physiological differences between boys and girls influence sex roles, in addition to the environmental socialization pressures that are so similar in so many cultures around the world (e.g., Munroe and Munroe, 1975, Ch. 7; Freedman, 1974; Draper, 1975a).

The purely hypothetical Table 1 shows the importance of using cross-cultural data for studying a variety of different perspectives on sex-role development. This table presents a hypothetical rank-ordering of a behavior pattern measured among boys and girls in 7 different cultures around the world. For purposes of illustration, we might imagine this behavior to be a score for children's activity level, or physical aggression, or obedience to adults, or sociability, or whatever dimension of children's social behavior has been shown to be implicated in sex-role differences. Each of the following statements about these data is true.

1. In almost every culture, boys are more (fill in the blank—active, aggressive, etc.) than are the girls in that culture.
2. No two cultures have girls or boys who are equal in their mean levels of (activity, aggression, sociability, etc.). Culture thus makes a tremendous difference in the expression of this behavior by sex.
3. Around the world, on the average, boys are more (active, aggressive, sociable, etc.) than girls.
4. In some cultures, the differences between boys and girls are extremely great; in others, they are so small as to be barely noticeable.
5. Environmental pressures appear to be an important cause of cultural differences in (activity level, aggression, sociability, etc.) between boys and girls around the world; thus the mean level for horticultural societies is higher than the mean level for pastoral societies.
6. Although environmental factors, such as subsistence, play some role in the development of sex differences, the differences within a subsistence mode appear to be as great as or greater

than differences between subsistence modes. Values, ideology, or other variables must also play an important role.

There is some evidence in the cross-cultural literature to support all these hypotheses for sex differences.

Still other manipulations and complexities are possible, and still other uses have been made of cross-cultural data. For example, the hypothetical table does not mention the range of scores' within each culture. Measures of variance and individual differences across cultures indicate some sex-linked traits with widely varying expression within a given culture or within one or the other sex, and other traits with a quite narrow range of individual differences. This can result from the extent to which this trait is labile or influenceable by environment, the strength or degree of socialization for the trait, the concern and control exercised by a given culture leading to differential expression of the trait, or changes in expression of a trait over time.

Age differences in the expression of sex-role-related behaviors are also not in Table 1 but are of considerable importance. The effects of cultural differences on boys and girls often increase with age, on the premise that the greater the amount of time the culture has to influence the behavior, the more the cultural effects are going to be visible. A related argument is that innate differences are more likely to appear earlier than later in childhood. Thus, the hypothetical data in Table 1 might compare girls and boys ages 2-6 and 7-11, with an increase in sex differences in most cultures but not in all, depending on the degree of socialization pressures. Sex differences do not always increase with age across cultures, however, and innate differences do not all ap-

Table 1. Hypothetical Data on a Score for a Behavioral Difference between Boys and Girls

Culture	Girls		Boys		Mean score
	A	B	C	D	
Pastoral societies	1	2	3	4	1.5
	5	8	9	11	3.5
	9	11	13	15	6.5
	12	13	14	16	10.0
Horticultural societies	14	20	17	20	12.5
	9	8	14	17	17.0
			8	14	8.5
Total	53		66		59.5

Girls' mean = 7.57

Boys' mean = 9.43

Cultural mean = 8.5

Pastoral cultural mean = 3.83

Horticultural cultural mean = 12.0

pear early in life. The point is that for interpreting cross-cultural differences, age and maturational effects must be weighed for each kind of behavior. The study of boys and girls in other cultures is unlikely in itself to give us clues as to the origins of sex differences, either within any one culture or around the world. These data must be taken in combination with psychological, physical-physiological, historical, and evolutionary evidence. It is also very likely that the particular behaviors or traits selected heavily influence the effects of cultural differences. Some traits are far more difficult to measure cross-culturally than others. Some (activity level is one candidate) are probably more uniform and more biologically influenced. Some (responsibility or nurturance, for instance) are very heavily influenced by the learning environments that cultures provide for boys and girls. Others (overall intelligence) seem unrelated to cultural variables.

AN OVERVIEW

What are some broad generalizations that we can hazard about the socialization of girls in non-Western, nonindustrial societies? What things stand out from the enormous diversity that are of particular relevance to child socialization?

First, families in other societies are much more immediately involved in subsistence and survival than are children and adults in Western industrial societies. Subsistence pressures are often severe and constant, and work essential to the survival of the family unit is a part of life from early childhood. Girls and boys are drawn into important roles in the subsistence economy far more quickly and at a much earlier age than are children in a Western industrial setting. The tasks and chores they perform are important and indeed essential to the survival of the family unit. The socialization pressures for compliance in performing these jobs is commensurately strong. Even if children are attending Western-style schools, they are not excluded from this important role in the domestic and subsistence economy, a role rarely equaled in Western families.

Second, family size is far larger than it is in the Western contemporary industrial world, and the spacing between children (in the absence of effective, practical birth control) is between two and three years. Average family size commonly is between five and six surviving children. Thus, most children, as they grow up, are surrounded by large numbers of sibs and cousins. Women are heavily involved in child-care responsibilities, but they also have a great deal of help and support. In addition, the role of nonparental caretakers, and the

importance of children themselves as caretakers, is far greater than in Western cultures.

Third, the roles of girls and boys are heavily dependent on the adult roles and status differences between men and women. Cross-cultural differences in women's status and roles, therefore, are central to interpreting children's roles. These adult status differences are determined by a complex set of factors, including (1) the ecology and subsistence base of the society; (2) the importance of warfare and defense; (3) demographic increase, stability, or decrease in population; and (4) the family and kinship organization of the society, especially the presence of polygyny and unilineal descent groups.

These three cross-cultural issues related to the socialization of boys and girls provide a focus for this discussion but are far from an exhaustive or inclusive list. The important points to keep in mind are that these factors are linked to sex differences in socialization at the *sociocultural* level; and they are important in accounting for *cross-cultural variability* in sex-differentiated child-rearing patterns in all societies, including our own.

SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

None of the cross-cultural alternatives or ways to use such data suggested in Table 1 is actually hypothetical. Every instance has at least some real examples that have been reported, and these include statistical and quantitative comparisons as well as qualitative ethnographic portrayals of children growing up in other cultures. For example, aggression and rough-and-tumble play do appear to be cross-culturally higher in young boys than in young girls; the differences often decline with increasing age, but usually not enough to eliminate the differences. Individual differences in children's scores are often very great within cultures. Pastoral societies are generally more expressive of emotions, including aggression (especially in boys), than are horticultural societies (Edgerton, 1971). There are cultures in which sex-role stereotypes are minimal or even reversed for some behaviors, but there are none in which girls and boys are reared alike and behave similarly. As Mead comments in the epigram, there is a patterning of sex-role differences in every society.

Whiting and Whiting (1975) presented an analysis of child-rearing patterns and children's social behavior in six cultures illustrating cross-cultural factors. Their study focuses on cross-cultural dimensions (cultural complexity and family organization) that exert a powerful in-

fluence on children's behaviors. These cultural and familial effects are considered in the context of age and sex trends. Whiting and Whiting identified two dimensions in the social behavior of children that are influenced by cultural pressures. The first dimension contrasts children who are nurturant and act responsibly toward others with children who are dependent or attempt to dominate others. Children who offer help, support, and responsible suggestions to others are contrasted with children who are aggressive or authoritarian. Children who act sociably or playfully or touch other children are contrasted with those showing a set of assaulting or reprimanding behaviors.

The first dimension is influenced by the degree of cultural complexity (occupational specialization, differentiation of patterns of settlement, and the centralization and hierarchy of political authority, including stratification and religious specialization). Hierarchical, complex societies with specialized roles train children to be egoistic and independent and encourage attempts to dominate others. Societies low on cultural complexity encourage cooperation, compliance, and help within the family and within the village community. Children in less complex cultures are observed to be more nurturant and responsible, whereas children in the more complex cultures tend to exhibit more dependent-dominant behavior. The necessity for subsistence activities to be carried out responsibly by children and for child care and other domestic activities to be in the charge of children shapes a more nurturant and responsible boy or girl in less complex societies. Girls receive more of these pressures toward early nurturance, responsibility, and compliance than boys.

The second behavioral dimension (sociable and intimate versus authoritarian and aggressive) is influenced by the kind of family and household structure characteristic of different cultures. The argument here is that the small, nuclear family encourages sociable, intimate behaviors between children and between children and parents, whereas the children in extended polygynous families have more authoritarian behavioral profiles. Cultures in which the nuclear family is independent, where the father, mother, and children tend to eat together and men are more involved in child care, produce girls and boys who are sociable and touch others more than in patrilineal, extended family systems, in which corporate hierarchical authority exists within the family and village community (Whiting and Whiting, 1975, pp. 127-128). These two dimensions distinguish children in less complex, extended-family cultures from our own and identify two general aspects of sociocultural organization that contribute to cross-cultural differences in all children's behavior, boys and girls alike.

What about the impact of sex differences on these social behavior

variables? Whiting and Edwards (1974) reported on seven societies (the same six as in the earlier study and an additional East African horticultural community) where various children's social behaviors were systematically observed and compared. Whiting and Edwards compared boys and girls along a series of dimensions relating to behavioral domains having a clear Western sex stereotype. The dimensions and their Western stereotypes include dependence (girls are thought to be more dependent than boys); sociability (girls are thought to be more social); passivity (girls are thought to be more passive than boys); nurturance (girls are thought to be more nurturant); responsibility (girls are thought to be more responsible); dominance (boys are said to be more dominant); and aggression (the stereotype is that boys are more physically aggressive and girls are more verbally aggressive).

Whiting and Edwards found some behaviors with clear cross-cultural consistency, differentiating boys from girls; others appeared to be quite mixed and inconsistent, with strong indications that environmental and subsistence pressures produce these differences. Girls did tend to seek help and sought or offered physical contact more than boys; seeking attention (the "male" dependency) was more characteristic of boys. Girls tended to be more sociable, but these cross-cultural differences were not strong. Little evidence was found that girls were more passive than boys on a variety of measures. Girls, however, were consistently more nurturant than boys between ages 7 and 11, but not in general ages 3 and 6. Younger girls, ages 3-6, were more responsible where boys markedly increased their rate of responsible suggestions. Boys were more often egoistically dominant than were girls (as the stereotypes would predict). Boys tended to be more aggressive, but the differences were strong only for rough-and-tumble play and for some forms of verbal aggression.

Whiting and Edwards (1974, p. 200) summarized their cross-cultural study by suggesting that (1) there were fewer universal sex differences than current literature would suggest; (2) task assignment and the frequency of interaction with different individuals (infants, adults, or peers) strongly affected children's behaviors; (3) boys showed more aggression and rough-and-tumble play; and (4) male and female behavioral characteristics are "remarkably malleable under the impact of socialization pressures." Many of the differences in behavior between boys and girls cross-culturally seem to be of style rather than intent. For instance, girls seek help rather than attention, but seeking from others is about equally frequent for boys and girls. Similarly, girls appeal to the rules when trying to dominate others, while boys simply

try to dominate, either through direct demands or through physical aggression.

Draper (1975a) studied the !Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert of southern Africa. She pointed out that unlike families in most horticultural, pastoral, and agricultural economies of the world, the !Kung do not have strong subsistence pressures and requirements for child work. The !Kung are important as a cultural case study because there is *little* cultural pressure for boys and girls to act differently. In spite of this, Draper found a number of sex differences in boys and girls among the !Kung (1975a, pp. 605-606) and suggested that the sex differences that do exist "can be regarded as untapped productivities for the more overt forms of the female behavioral stereotype of dependence, compliance, nurturance and sensitivity to the needs of others." She found that girls among the !Kung tend to stay closer to home; show preference for face-to-face groups that include more adults; gravitate less often to peer-only play groups; are more frequently in physical contact with others; and have adult women make requests and commands of them more often than of boys.

Differential cultural pressure for training for subsistence roles does not account, according to Draper, for these observed sex differences in the behavior of the foraging !Kung bush children. Children are not directly assigned work at all; children caretaking other children is not an important task that segregates the sexes. Hence, "sex differences are apparently the result of different choices made by the girls and boys themselves. I could detect no attitudes or values on the part of the adults which may have influenced the behaviors of the children" (p. 610). In another study, Draper (1975b) compared the foraging !Kung to a group of sedentary, horticultural-pastoral !Kung. The sedentary !Kung have developed many of the characteristic sex-stereotyped subsistence and work pressures that have been shown for many societies at the horticultural level of economic development. These mothers and children show the characteristic patterns and task assignment differences that distinguish boys and girls in nonforaging societies.

Draper's use of cross-cultural data led to her hypothesis that there are some *innate* differences among boys and girls expressed during infancy and early childhood. Whiting and Edwards' (1974) study added data to show differences in which *kinds* of social behaviors appear to be related to sex-role development in all, or only some cultures, and at which ages. Whiting and Whiting used cross-cultural data for these same cultures and behaviors to illustrate (among other findings) certain *pan-cultural* dimensions (complexity and family organization)

which affect girls and boys. These examples from a similar research program show how varied are the uses of cross-cultural data.

AGE AND SEX DIFFERENCES. When do most societies differentiate children by sex through the use of systematic division of labor or other culturally defined symbolic and status distinctions? Rogoff, Sellers, Pirota, Fox, and White (1975) compared the ages at which 50 cultures assigned responsibility or began to demand more mature social, sexual, and cultural behavior of children. Their data demonstrate 16 different variables that were strongly differentiated for the 5- to 7-year age range (pp. 365-366). These include several that relate to sex differences. Rogoff et al. found that cultures tend to separate male and female play groups between the modal ages of 5 and 7, although there is a fairly wide spread around this modal range. The same is true for proper sex-role behavior in the sphere of games, chores, and social intercourse (p. 359). While many cultures begin to exert pressure for sex-differentiated behavior when children are between 5 and 7, a few begin sex-differential assignment at ages 1, 2, and 3, and a few between 10 and 13. The emphasis on sexual attractiveness tends to have a modal incidence of importance at age 13 in most cultures, although a smaller group of societies begin such emphases between 6 and 8 (p. 364). Being trained to care for one's siblings, for example, begins to become the responsibility of children between ages 5 and 7, and girls care for children more than boys.

Rogoff et al. were very cautious in their interpretation of these cross-cultural survey data, pointing out that some of their cultural indicators appear to be sensitive to the 5- to 7-year age period, whereas others were more evenly spread across ages in different societies. However, given the limitations and the potential sources of bias in such surveys, they concluded as follows:

There is a large amount of Western data supporting the hypothesis that there is some change in children at this time (ages 5-7). There is, in the cross-cultural studies of cognition reviewed earlier, the possibility, if not the certainty, that broad changes in information processing come at this time. For these reasons, one might use the pattern established in this survey to explore the generalities and diversities in cultural ascriptions of social maturity to children in the 5-7 age range. (p. 367)

This generalization appears to hold for the initial instructions in sex stereotypes and sex-role-differentiated behaviors among boys and girls cross-culturally as well. However, there is considerable range and diversity in the age at which pressures for sex-role-stereotyped behaviors begin in different societies.

INFANCY. The modal, characteristic life of the infant of either sex in

other cultures is one of relative indulgence compared to infancy in our own society. It is hazardous to overgeneralize, but this description of infancy among the Mundurucu of Brazil (Murphy and Murphy, 1974) is not unrepresentative of the first two to three years of life:

The mother provides an almost complete environment for the newborn baby, just as the baby is the mother's constant and total concern. During the first three months or so after birth, she is rarely absent from her baby. If she is working in the house, the infant either rests in her arms or is put to sleep in a small hammock next to her. . . . This intimate connection between mother and child carries over into the use of the carrying sling. . . . The child is placed in the sling facing the mother's front and side, its body resting on the sling and the mother's hip, and held gently by her arm. . . . The position of the child in the sling is such that its face is no more than a couple of inches from the mother's breast. . . . The intimate contact of the day is, if anything, increased at night, for the women sleep with the babies against their breasts, occupying the same hammock until the child is about two years old. (pp. 166-167)

But this early physical contact, indulgence, and high nurturance by the mother and others in the extended household characteristically comes to an end with the arrival of the next child. If there is no new child born to the mother within two to three years, weaning and the end of close maternal and other caretaker contacts is more gradual, but it still occurs:

When a younger sibling is born, the unweaned child is sharply and suddenly denied the breast in favor of the newcomer. The Mundurucu mother makes little attempt to prepare her child for the birth of an infant. . . . A Mundurucu mother devotes much of her time and affection to infants, and, when a baby is born, her attention is immediately transferred to it, to the loss of her older children. From being the center of the maternal universe, the child is instantly put on its periphery. . . . This pattern is characteristic of many primitive societies. (p. 168)

This quotation expresses the style of breast-feeding, touching, and high frequencies of holding characteristic of infant rearing in many other cultures, but it overstates the role of the mother. Older siblings and other adult women living in the infant's home provide important care as well. Leiderman and Leiderman (1973) described this as a "poly-matric" pattern of infant care. Infants may have two or more individuals (a mother and an older sister or an aunt for instance) providing both physical needs and social stimulation, or the mother may provide nursing and physical care, but social interactions tend to be with another caretaker, often an older sister. This pattern differs from the monomatric caretaking mode characteristic of the United States. These infant-care differences affect both sexes.

LeVine (1977) links this pattern of close and constant attention

during infancy, very frequent holding and breast-feeding, and so on, to infant mortality. Infant caretaking practices must ensure optimal physical protection (constant holding) and frequent breast-feeding, due to the very real threat of death during the first few years of a child's life. Intensive early social and cognitive stimulation and high affective involvement with the baby is of reduced importance. Thus "indulgence" for LeVine refers not to socioemotional interactions but to the consequences of this more protective physical care. These patterns of indulgence and the mix of monomatrix and polymatrix caretaking are among the most striking cross-cultural differences in care during infancy and early childhood and affect both boys and girls.

It is the period beyond infancy, and usually beyond the 5- to 7-year-old period of childhood, when the strongest sex-role-related changes occur. From a period in infancy and early childhood of relatively undifferentiated sex-linked experiences, boys and girls are increasingly sharply divided. These divisions occur in the context of differential subsistence pressures and strongly different adult social role models for manhood and womanhood in non-Western cultures. Once again, however, the point to emphasize is that infancy and the earliest years of childhood are very different from in the West and provide the essential setting for later, sex-linked changes.

FAMILY SOCIALIZATION AND SUBSISTENCE. There are a number of ways in which children in horticultural or pastoral societies differ from those in Western industrial societies but none is as prominent as the difference in the subsistence pressures impinging on the family. Children are essential for the survival of the domestic economy; they are trained to do essential tasks and chores early and are expected to accept responsibility for this work and to carry it out. A host of differences in socialization patterns of children flow from this close and more intimate involvement in the subsistence economy. The most important are increases in prosocial, responsible activities and behaviors for both boys and girls; stronger discipline and compliance pressures from adults and other caretakers; and more nurturance, helping activities, and cooperative work activities.

In addition, the daily routines and the availability of adults to children are affected. Mothers are often not around the home and engaged in child care, since they are frequently involved in work that takes them from the home. Fathers are also seldom in the home and are working away as well. Children are often also engaged in work but tend to be nearer the home and assisting in the care of younger children. The main point to emphasize is that subsistence pressures frequently make mothers not available for full-time child care around the home; these activities are thus shared in a multiple-care-

taking and shared-functioning system (Gallimore, Boggess, and Jordan, 1974) for child care and tasks. Children play an important role in this nexus of daily routine arrangements.

A young woman from an East African horticultural society recalled her own childhood and the responsibilities and work she performed after she was 6 or 7 years old. Contrast this description with the life of an American girl of the same age:

For the girls of primary school age their time of playing is nearly over. Home training and stricter discipline begin. At this age the girls must stop eating chicken or any kind of fowl. (An Acholi village woman does not eat any part of a fowl.) The child now has real duties to perform. If she has younger sisters or brothers, she will be a nurse. If she does not have a younger child to look after, and in some cases even if she does, the little girl is expected to make two or three journeys to the well, carrying a small container on her head in which to fetch water. She may be told by her mother who is cooking beans or meat to keep the fire burning. It may be her job also to look after the millet or peas spread out in the sun to dry, keeping the chickens away, collecting and putting the food in the house if it rains. A girl of eight or nine may be expected to grind millet or simsim with her mother, or to accompany her mother into the field to help dig. If her father is away at meal time, the little girl may be asked to take the responsibility of cooking for him, having the food ready by the time he comes back. There is a dual purpose for this thorough training of the girl. It is partly to prepare her for her future duties as a housewife and a mother, and partly to help the mother who, in the Acholi village, has many pressing jobs to do. (Apopo, 1967, pp. 60-61)

The responsibilities and work given to girls are related to the kind of responsibilities and work given to adult women. Adult women are seldom engaged in hunting or in heavy labor, such as the clearing of fields. However, adult women do sometimes engage in long-distance trade or gardening or weeding in distant fields. In such cases, young children would be a hindrance and usually do not accompany their mothers or the other women in these activities. Women's duties more typically include maintaining the household, preparing food, keeping a fire, caring for children and managing their activities, and weeding, hoeing, gardening, planting, and caring for yard livestock around the home. Girls are heavily and actively involved from an early age in all of these activities. As a result, girls stay closer to home, are more heavily involved in interchanges and activities with adult women, and engage in tasks that are routinized, interruptible, and repetitive.

Boys in horticultural and pastoral societies participate in subsistence in a somewhat different fashion. If their mothers or fathers are doing heavy physical labor, traveling long distances, or engaging in hunting or long-distance foraging, children are a hindrance and are not

included until early adolescence. The activities that boys typically do engage in, however, take them farther from home than girls. For example, young boys care for livestock and may herd animals long distances; girls or adult women rarely engage in these activities. Although boys do engage in domestic tasks and are given such tasks by their mothers, they are given them less often and less consistently than girls. Girls are usually chosen to do domestic chores and tasks when both sexes are available. As a result, boys engage in peer-related play and activities more often than girls and are less often engaged in interaction and activities with adult women. Activities that co-occur with adult men are less frequent and tend to occur at later ages than is true for girls' interactions with women.

FAMILY SIZE AND MULTIPLE CARETAKING OF CHILDREN. Cross-cultural evidence also suggests a difference in caretaking experience for children in non-Western societies. Briefly stated, children live in larger, expanded, or extended families more often, and they are cared for by a greater number and a more diverse set of people than is characteristic of Western families. In most societies, parents and children are in residential groups where other kin are nearby or co-resident. D'Andrade (1974) counted only 28 societies out of a cross-cultural sample of 428 where residence was neolocal (separated from both the husband's and the wife's kin), as it is normatively in the United States. Thus, in most settings, parents have relatives to rely on for the care of their children.

Barry and Paxson (1971) rated 186 societies in a cross-cultural sample of societies where information on children and caretaking was adequate. In 46.2% of the societies, the mother was the principal (43.5%) or exclusive (2.7%) caretaker during infancy. In another 33.9% the mother provided "half or less" of the infant care; the remainder was uncodable or consisted of nonmaternal care (7%). Beyond infancy (after about 18 months to 2 years of age), the majority of societies did not have primarily maternal care of young children. No societies were judged to provide exclusively maternal care, and in only 19.4% was care principally maternal. In 32.3% of the societies, the child "spends half or less of the time with mother," and in 20.4%, the "majority of time is spent away from mother." These summary data, along with other information on the principal companions and caretakers of children during infancy and early childhood, illustrate that mothers in most cultures around the world are not the principal companions or caretakers of young children and that they share important infant- and child-care responsibilities with others.

Weisner and Gallimore (1977) reviewed the data on antecedents and correlates of sibling caretaking, which after infancy is the predomi-

nant alternative to parental care in most societies. A combination of *availability* of others to help care for children and the pressure of *subsistence* and *economic requirements* on mothers and fathers appears to be related to the use of older siblings or cousins for the care of younger children. Availability of alternative caretakers is of course heavily influenced by residence, family size, and the daily routines of family members. The presence of formal schooling also increasingly influences the availability of other caretakers in non-Western communities. If mature, adult, working-age women are needed for subsistence activities (such as horticultural work) or domestic activities (such as gathering wood, water, and so forth), their available time for direct child care is reduced. Societies with such pressures on mothers, and with other caretakers available, should be those with the greatest reliance on nonparental and sibling caretaking.

These are conditions of childhood care that influence *both* boys and girls and that provide a powerful contrast to the child's experience in most parts of the United States. Multiple caretaking, especially sibling caretaking, has further effects specifically on sex differences in children. Weisner and Gallimore identified a number of consequences of child-caretaking arrangements that influence girls and boys. The most important effect is to provide earlier and stronger sex-role training for girls. Although both boys and girls care for their younger brothers and sisters, girls are given this task more often than boys and are usually preferred over boys if both sexes are available for child care.

What kinds of social behaviors and expectations go along with the child-caretaking role? Whiting and Edwards (1974) suggested that those caring for others develop more nurturant, responsible, and prosocial behaviors and generally are more alert and responsive to the social and physical needs and requirements of their younger charges. Since girls are trained for and expected to perform child care more often than boys, and since girls in most societies are expected to contribute to the domestic, family domain earlier and more regularly than boys, cultures with multiple caretaking provide earlier and stronger sex-role-differentiated training for girls.

Child caretaking also has consequences for other areas related to the differential experiences of boys and girls. For instance, the organization of children's play groups and the social settings of girls are influenced by sib care. Older girls in overall charge of younger children often get together and "pool" their charges or keep their younger siblings nearby while they engage in other chores around their homes. In many cultures, this pattern of responsibility leads to age-segregated

play and social groups of older children, with mixed-sex groups of younger children. Older boys are more likely either to be engaged in other tasks taking them away from the home or to "escape" the home and play with other boys, thus roaming beyond the immediate neighborhood. The basic point is that family subsistence and daily routine circumstances influence the social experience of boys and girls differently in many other societies; that mothers are less predominant as daily, regular caretakers; and that this pattern of child care leads to earlier and strong sex-role training for girls.

The contrast with our own society—as well as some implications for the future—is striking. Jessie Bernard (1974) has surveyed the state of American motherhood and documents the increasing flexibility in the role—and the need for still more flexibility in order to counteract the (cross-culturally) highly unusual American pattern of a neolocally resident, kin-isolated, child-caretaking young motherhood. The cross-cultural perspective shows how powerful these structural constraints are on the American mother. This American mother has few available helpers for child care: her 5-year and older children are off to school for a large part of the day; work is separated from the home, making its integration into the daily routine with children difficult; and there are relatively few really essential tasks and chores for children to perform for the domestic economy. The cross-cultural data indicate that such structural and family-economic features as these play a powerful role in shaping ideologies of parenting and sex-role training for children, whatever the ideals families have concerning sex-role training.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S AND MEN'S ROLES AND STRATUSES. Girls in other cultures grow up less insulated from the outside world of work and kin and from the environmental pressures influencing the family. They also grow up with neither a full-time mother who is home all the time, nor an absent mother, nor one on a rigid schedule at work. They experience a variety of caretakers, including their mother, other adult women, and older siblings, in a diverse mixture during their childhood. For these reasons, the factors that help account for the division of labor by sex in other cultures are extremely important to an understanding of how girls and boys grow up in other cultures. Brown (1976) reviewed the main arguments to date concerning relationships between subsistence pressures and sex-role differences. D'Andrade (1974) and Ember and Ember (1971) have reviewed cross-cultural division of labor by sex, and Sanday (1974), Schlegel (1977), and Quinn (1977) studied the relationships between subsistence contributions and the power and status of men and women.

Every society differentiates subsistence and domestic tasks and

activities between men and women. This differentiation makes men and women socially and economically interdependent and produces powerful social alliances between men and women and between families. Which tasks are given to which sex and whether they are proscribed, permitted, or encouraged for one or both sexes are more complex questions. Brown (1976) suggested two primary factors predicting variations in the differential division of labor. First, women must make their child-care and childbearing functions compatible with their work and subsistence activities. This necessity places limitations on the amount of physical work women can do and the distance they can be from their homesteads. D'Andrade (1974) and Barry, Bacon, and Child (1957) have argued that sex differences in socialization increase in societies that emphasize physical strength and the importance of warfare and defense for men. Murdock and Provost (1973) focused on cross-cultural sex differences in the performance of tasks and identified a number of factors that appear to favor men or women and identified a number of factors that appear to favor men or women doing subsistence activities, including physical strength (favoring men), interruptibility of tasks (high interruptions favoring women), the daily or routine character of the tasks (routine favoring women), the character of the materials worked with (hard or tough materials favoring men), tasks in a sequence related to one of these major factors, societal complexity (craft tasks going to men), and nomadism (women do certain tasks like house building in more nomadic societies) (pp. 210-213). This formulation conforms to the general hypothesis that links sex differences in childhood to tasks of the subsistence economy, women's child-care obligations, and warfare and defense needs.

Burton, Brudner, and White (1977) recently reported a series of studies of the Human Relations Area Files data on 50 tasks in 185 societies, coded for the extent of male and female participation in each task. Their study examined these tasks for (1) the extent to which they need to take place far from the home and (2) their potential or actual danger. The authors hypothesized that these are the primary factors that influence whether men or women will predominate in the performance of the task and that constraints of childbirth, child rearing, and nursing, in particular, underlie the importance of mobility and danger in task performance:

We do not rely upon assumptions concerning differences in physical strength, since constraints that derive fundamentally from childbirth and nursing are more pervasive than any constraints that derive from sexual dimorphism. In no societies are men capable of bearing children. In very few societies (depending upon the availability of baby bottles and other factors) are men more capable of nursing infants than women. However, in

all societies, some women will be physically stronger than some men. The physical strength constraint on task allocation by sex, then, is the weakest of the three constraints (geographical mobility, danger, and strength). Combining this argument with the fact that in many societies women regularly do heavy physical work, we find it unnecessary to invoke differences in physical strength as a factor in a general explanation for the main cross-societal patterns in the sexual division of labor. (pp. 228-229)

The models presented to boys and girls as the results of these task differences have powerful consequences for socialization in other domains. However, although women's childbearing and child-care roles and men's roles in defense and warfare are important, they do not determine men's and women's status in all domains or the sex-role differences learned by children. Women's control over production, as well as the importance of that production to the economy, also influences women's status and prestige. Nonetheless, production limited to the domestic sphere, however important to the community, is usually excluded from prestige activities and ritual recognition. Girls heavily involved in domestic activities also are learning, therefore, that their activities have less overall societal prestige in formally recognized terms.

Quinn (1977, pp. 219-222) emphasized the variety of ways in which women's and girls' status is both expressed and influenced, including political (formal or informal) power and prestige, ritually recognized activities, production and control of food, individual autonomy (domestic or public, formally recognized, group autonomy), public and private shows of deference, and myths regarding differential prestige between the sexes. Each of these domains contributes to women's status. They can have very different causes and are not necessarily correlated, consistent, or co-occurring. For instance, male involvement in formal political life is more likely in societies with hierarchical political offices. However, in egalitarian societies without elaborate formal offices, women often exert a major influence. In hierarchical settings, the existence of formal women's groups encourages political involvement.

Cross-cultural theories advanced for the differential status of men and women and for sex-role-linked participation in different social institutions thus have many different variables used as explanations. In addition, "women's status" is clearly not a single dimension nor necessarily amenable to a small set of clear-cut explanatory factors. In some areas of adult sex-role differences, marriage and domestic patterns influence differential status (for example, domestic autonomy, marriage relations, and deference). In other areas, cultural complexity and the formation of sodalities appear to be crucial to explaining

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status differences (for example, differential political power in public versus private spheres). Girls' and boys' role models thus vary widely in the specifics of the kinds of prestige and status "messages" they imply.

The general picture is one of a few fundamental cross-cultural near-universals in adult sex roles coexisting with great diversity in relative sex-role differences in other domains such as prestige and status. Thus, women are nearly everywhere more involved in child rearing and child care than are men and are more closely identified with the domestic sphere of activities. Men are everywhere more involved in defense and warfare and in other activities taking them more frequently away from the home and the domestic sphere. Boys and girls receive differential task and other training in childhood based on this difference. Beyond this general pattern, however, it would be hazardous indeed to hypothecate sex-linked differences in roles that do not have many exceptions and that would not have to be explained by a wide range of socioecological variables.

CONCLUSIONS

Rosaldo (1974) concluded a review of cross-cultural studies of women by focusing on the split between the public and the domestic domains and the role that this division plays in women's status and the way girls and boys learn their places in society. She suggested that more egalitarian societies tend to be those where men play an important role in the domestic life of the home and/or where women enter the public world beyond the domestic limits and create sodalities among themselves. This chapter has emphasized how domestic and public life are structured by subsistence and economic pressures impinging on the domestic unit, and how the training of boys and girls in other cultures differs according to the way tasks, family size and caretaking, and women's status affect the domestic group. Both public and domestic domains are affected, not always in the same ways, by subsistence and economic factors.

The cross-cultural variables discussed have direct parallels to contemporary influences on the American family; cross-cultural data are not qualitatively different from those affecting American families' rearing of boys and girls. Cross-cultural comparisons need not and should not be used only to illustrate the way cultural factors make boys and girls different or only to show how malleable gender differences are under cultural pressures. Cross-cultural data can also be useful in searching for universals in sex-role differences and for broad cross-cultural regularities in sex-role socialization.

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