

Gillian Bentley
& Ruth Mace
Editors



Substitute
Parents

*Biological and Social Perspectives on
Alloparenting in Human Societies*

Volume 3 of **Studies of the Biosocial Society**

(Berghahn Books, 2009)

Who Minds the Baby?

Beng Perspectives on Mothers, Neighbours
and Strangers as Caretakers

Alma Gottlieb

Introduction

In the contemporary middle class of many post-industrialized societies, families are constructed, at least discursively if not in actual fact, as what we call 'nuclear', and babies are raised – again, at least discursively if not in actual fact – so exclusively by one person, generally the mother, that many are convinced that this must be a 'natural' phenomenon with deep roots in biological structures (see Helen Penn, this volume). Yet at the same time that this discourse has firmly taken hold, anthropologists and other researchers have quietly but strikingly been documenting a notable array of caretaking strategies across time and space for even the youngest of children – strategies that diverge significantly from those that hold at least discursive sway in the contemporary post-industrialized West. Elsewhere, these caretaking strategies routinely involve more than just the mother (or a single mother-substitute).

A small but growing literature now explores the multiple options for caretaking of infants that exist in numerous societies across the globe and through time. Indeed, the model of a mother being the exclusive or even major caretaker of her own young children – a model that still exists as normative in the American public imagination, for example, and that is still enacted in at least some middle-class American families (e.g., Richman et al. 1988) – is of decreasing relevance even in middle-class, Euro-American society (Harkness and Super 1992). It is far less relevant in other American sub-groups, as well as in many other societies (Weisner and Gallimore 1977). From Pygmies in Central Africa (e.g., Hewlett 1991; Tronick et al. 1987) and peasants in

Cameroon (Nsamenang 1992) to the highlands of Ecuador (Stansbury et al. 2000) to small-town residents in central Italy (New 1988), data are accumulating that the relatively recent, normative Euro-American model of ‘mother taking more-or-less exclusive care of her young children’ may be something of a statistical anomaly. In West Africa, the Beng pattern of caretaking fits in with this growing awareness that in many societies, the care of infants is more a collective than an individual (mother’s) responsibility.¹

First, a few brief words about the Beng. A small ethnic minority of some twelve thousand in the West African nation of Côte d’Ivoire, the Beng have been sidelined by the Ivoirian state and remain severely impoverished. Precolonially they farmed, hunted, and made some crafts items that had regional appeal, attracting long-distance traders to their villages. Cash-cropping was introduced by the colonial French about a century ago, and – ironically – is responsible for much of their current poverty (Gottlieb 2004: 266–305). Most recently the Beng region has been invaded by rebels in the continuing civil war, who have caused many to flee the region and have kept those who have remained virtually hostage in their own villages.² In this chapter I discuss the situation before the current disruptions.

Multiple Caretakers

The waking – and sleeping – hours of Beng infants are marked by a high level of active social interactions with a large number of people. Young children learn to feel physically and emotionally comfortable with a wide array of relatives and neighbours, many of whom serve as (often impromptu) caretakers; they also learn to feel comfortable with strangers. I begin this discussion by exploring the multiple social ties that Beng infants forge with a large range of familiar Others and then investigate the striking case of ‘strangers’ who form part of the social universe of village-dwelling Beng babies. Throughout the chapter, I aim to demonstrate that the Beng child-rearing agenda emphasizes as a major goal the teaching of the value of sociability. The strategy has foundations most obviously in women’s labour practices but also, perhaps even more interestingly, in religious ideology.

At somewhere between two and four months of age, a (relatively healthy) Beng baby starts to range out from the household fairly regularly. It is then that a post-partum woman (assuming she has recovered normally from the delivery) starts returning to work in the fields. By three to four months post-partum, she is generally back at her agricultural labour full time. For her part, the baby spends much of the day in a vertical position on someone’s back, often napping (see Gottlieb 2004: 165–84). Sometimes this back belongs to the baby’s mother. But undertaking very demanding physical labour with a baby attached to her back is not considered optimal for a new mother’s own health and can also seriously reduce her work productivity. For these reasons, a mother often tries to find a regular babysitter, or *leŋ kuli*, for her infant. This is especially important if a woman has other young children whom she is taking

care of, or if her fields are far and she would have to walk long distances carrying her baby on her back while carrying crops, firewood and tools on her head. A *ley kuli* can hold the baby while the mother walks to the fields balancing a heavy head load of crops, farm tools, cooking pots, or firewood.

A lucky new mother will be able to commandeer the baby-carrying services of a relative (see Gottlieb 2004: 136–64). A girl between the ages of seven and fourteen is ideal: old enough to have the strength to carry an infant, but not so old that she is working full time in her own field. Women usually choose girls rather than boys for babysitters because boys generally accompany their fathers to work in the fields. But if a competent boy is available, he will not be overlooked as a babysitter.



Figure 6.1. This young Beng girl holds a baby on her back as long as her strength allows.

Mothers also try to find someone with a ‘good character’ (*sie gɛɪ*). In some cases, the baby may grow quite attached to a young caretaker. An older child may point to the now grown woman and reminisce warmly, ‘She was my *ɛɪ kuli*’.

Nevertheless, not all babysitters can work full time. For one thing, the younger the child caretaker, the more likely that she will tire quickly, and the baby will not last long on her youthful babysitter’s aching back. For their part, adult women and even teenagers have their own fields to farm. And babies themselves may fuss in ways that adults interpret as a request for a change of carrier. Beng adults attribute a high degree of both cognition and volition to infants, due to a conception that they have recently been living another life in a place the Beng call *wrugbe* (or, the afterlife) (Gottlieb 2004: 79–104). Thus the claim that infants may request a change of carrier is consistent with a broader model of infant intelligence, memory, and emotion, and babies tend to pass quite often from one back to another on any given day.



Figure 6.2. This Beng grandmother regularly takes care of her grandson while her daughter works.

Recognizing this likelihood, many Beng mothers of infants try to create a reliable network of several potential *ley kuli* who can care for their infants intermittently while they do their work. They make the children as physically attractive as possible in order to attract a wide pool of potential baby holders. Thus mothers typically spend an hour or so every morning grooming their babies, including applying herbal medicine in attractive designs, and cleaning jewelry (Gottlieb 2004: 105–35). The morning bath routine is partly designed to ‘seduce’ potential babysitters into offering their caretaking services to an irresistibly beautiful baby.

Typically, a baby will not spend more than an hour or two with a given person. In a quantitative study that I conducted, the commonest length of time that infants remained with a given caretaker was a mere five minutes (see Table 6.1). The next commonest duration for remaining with a single caretaker was ten minutes. After that, the next three most common durations were fifteen, twenty and twenty-five minutes (the latter two times were tied for fourth place). During the forty-one two-and-a-quarter-hour sessions that we observed, the babies were engaged with an average of 2.2 people, but in many cases they were engaged with three to four people, and in two cases they were engaged with five or six people (see Table 6.2).³

The quality of Beng caretaking is as intense as its quantity is dense. When adults and older children are around infants, it is common for them to engage actively with



Figure 6.3. Mothers typically spend an hour or so every morning grooming their babies.

Table 6.1. Number of minutes spent with a given caretaker.

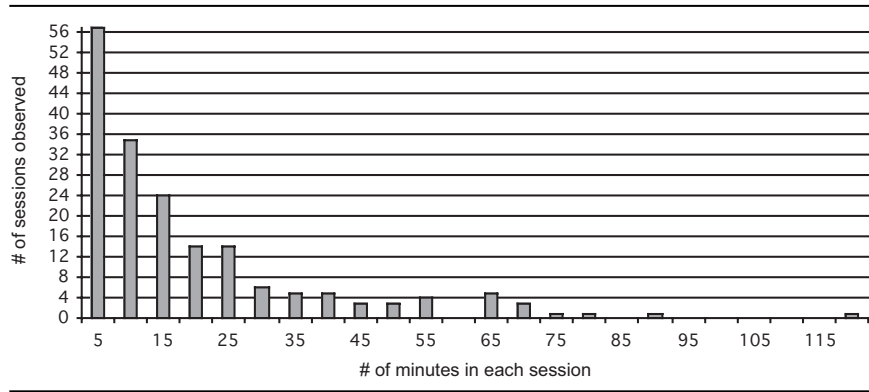
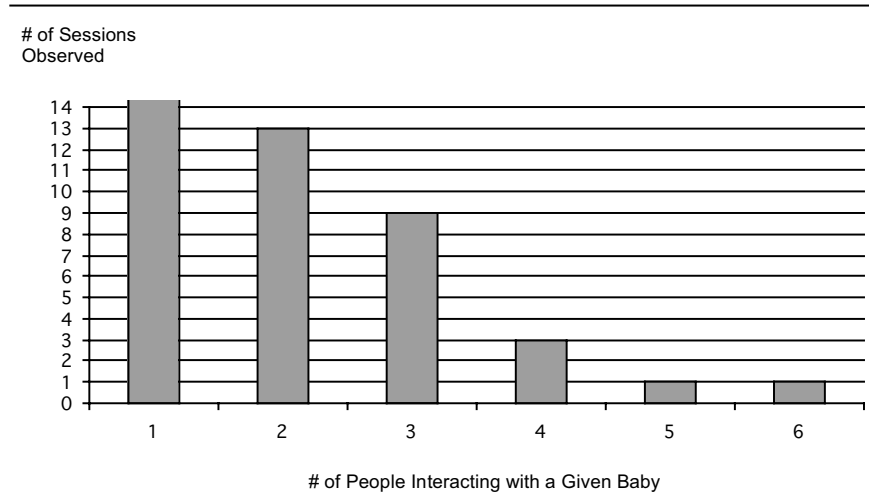


Table 6.2. Number of people with whom babies interacted during forty-one 2½-hour periods of observation. (Average 2.2 people per baby.)



the babies. Traditionally, infants enjoyed any number of body-oriented games and songs (but see Gottlieb 2004 266–305 for recent changes). There is much face-to-face engagement, and frequent changes of the faces in the baby’s line of vision, at any given moment. Babies often play together and with toddlers in their family or in neighbouring compounds, with much social stimulation for much of the day.

Babies also change position frequently. Adults and older children may place infants in moving positions in which they gain a great deal of physical as well as social stimulation – such as being enthusiastically dragged about for a rough ride in an old



Figure 6.4. This Beng grandmother offers her empty breast to her grandson—who is content to suck on it as a pacifier for some time while awaiting his mother’s return.



Figure 6.5. Beng infants benefit from much face-to-face engagement. This mother, Tahan, is enjoying her infant son, Sassandra.

box by an older sibling, or sitting on the handlebars of a bicycle for a playful ride around the courtyard with a favourite uncle. Through the abundance of caretakers and the common pattern of actively playing with and talking to them, Beng babies learn early to value sociability.

After infancy, this casual passing among a large and fluctuating group of caretakers takes on new dimensions. My notebooks are replete with examples of the casual movements of toddlers, as adults care for them in rotation. To provide the flavor of such practices, I quote from three typical entries from my field notes regarding a single child, not-quite-three-year-old Chantal and her mother, M'Akwe:

13 July 1993

Today M'Akwe brought Chantal along with her to the fields. But when she got to her sister Véronique's fields, she left Chantal with her brother's son, Kouakou Alphonse, to serve as the girl's *ley kuli* for the day. Alphonse was weeding the fields of his father's sister, Véronique [who was there with another of Chantal's aunts], and myself. For her part, M'Akwe was going to work in a field that's very far away, helping her cross-cousin Akissi harvest rice. Chantal could not walk the long distance to the fields, nor would M'Akwe want to carry her all that way. It would be even more difficult to carry Chantal back to the village while also carrying a heavy load of rice on her head.

Chantal spent the morning contentedly grilling forest snails and playing around her various older relatives working in her aunt's fields. But at noon, when two of her aunts and I mentioned that we were getting ready to return to the village, Chantal decided to come along. At not-quite-three, she had already learned that she might join any number of caretaking groups, and when there were reasonable alternatives, the adults in her life generally allowed Chantal to choose her preferred option at any given moment.

8 August 1993

This morning, M'Akwe went off to [the somewhat distant Beng village of] Manigbe to work in the fields with a friend from the village. The friend has parents living in Manigbe, and it's their fields that M'Akwe will be weeding with her friend. Because she'll be too busy working, she left Chantal in Asagbe for the day. [Chantal moved casually between many caretakers during the course of the day.]

9 August 1993

Today, M'Akwe went to the fields and left Chantal behind in the village. She is left in the care of whoever is in the courtyard. [Once again, Chantal moved casually between many caretakers during the course of the day.]

In the middle-class sector of the post-industrialized nations, such casual comings and goings of young children might easily be taken as a 'risk factor'. But the anthropologist Mary Douglas and her colleagues have argued that the concept of 'risk' is as much a matter of cultural perception as it is pharmacological or physical reality (Douglas 1966, 1970, 1992: 3–121; Douglas and Wildavsky 1982; also see Gottlieb 2004: 105–35; Rizzini and Dawes 2001: 316). Thus, in the Beng context, casual comings and goings of even very young children are meant to convey to the children themselves a feeling of safety, not one of risk. Indeed, they should have the effect of socializing young children to feel comfortable with most transfers of caretaking responsibility over them. Adults view children's lives as normatively somewhat peripatetic, and they do not consider this a risk for healthy emotional development. Mothers take this overall child-rearing strategy farther in teaching their children to feel comfortable not only with a broad array of relatives and neighbours, but even with strangers.

Strangers in a Beng Land

Following Mary Douglas, I suggest that the ways in which members of a society conceive of dangers – as localized internally or externally, for example, or as sited in tangible or invisible loci – says much about how they imagine the notion of community, and how they imagine their ideal model for relations among neighbours. Thus it is significant that the generalized fear of the Stranger-as-Dangerous-Other occurs in contemporary societies in which the bonds of family are themselves often strikingly attenuated. Concomitantly, child development researchers working largely in Western (and Westernized) countries have noted that infants and young children in these nations tend to establish a relatively small number of emotionally intense relationships, or 'attachments' – generally to those in their nuclear families, and especially to their mothers. Accordingly, the bulk of the voluminous 'attachment' literature in the field of psychology still remains decidedly matricentric, although some contemporary developmental psychologists and other scholars are endeavouring to forge a culturally nuanced model of emotional attachment by expanding the focus of their research to include infants' emotional 'attachments' to fathers, day care teachers, and other adults.⁴

In any case, unlike many middle-class Euro-Americans, Beng adults do not socialize their youngest members to fear strangers, with the goal of defining the very category of 'stranger' as socially/symbolically/legally threatening. Instead, Beng adults train children to view 'strangers' as friendly.

'Strangers' in Beng Infants' Lives

Let us start with the local meanings of the concept of 'stranger' itself. By Beng definition, a stranger, or *tiniŋ*, is neither (intrinsically) morally good nor bad, neither threatening nor protecting.⁵ However, far more often than not, *tiniŋ* are seen in a positive

light. To refer to most *tiniŋ* who enter a Beng village, ‘visitor’ or ‘guest’ would be a better English translation than ‘stranger’. Yet in some contexts, the English ‘stranger’, with its typically negative connotations, does fit well. For it is true that some *tiniŋ* do in the end turn out to be unwelcome, occasionally even threatening. But on initial encounters, the benefit of the doubt regarding the character of the *tiniŋ* is routinely accorded, and ‘strangers’ are generally assumed innocent unless proven guilty.

That *tiniŋ* occupy a categorically valued social space in Beng thought is revealed in architectural practice. While building a new house, a homeowner often incorporates one log of a particular tree somewhere in the construction. People refer to this as the *tiniŋ yri*, or ‘stranger/visitor/guest/tree’ because this arboreal species is said to house benevolent spirits (*boŋzɔ*) that, when incorporated into a house frame, will attract numerous strangers/guests to the home. Rural Beng women are careful never to chop down these trees as firewood, otherwise the resident spirits would curse the offending woman by never allowing *tiniŋ* to visit her home.

Moreover, in most situations, strangers don’t remain ‘strangers’ for more than a few moments at most.⁶ Beng hosts and hostesses welcoming a stranger exhibit a range of behaviours that ‘de-strangerize’, we might say, the stranger. For example, they use a formulaic welcoming greeting that is repeated in all such encounters, which itself puts a familiar linguistic frame around the unfamiliar.⁷ In the course of this greeting sequence, adults may initiate eye contact and usually shake hands; and the host(ess) inevitably offers the visitor both a chair and a drink of water. Beng infants witness such predictable behaviours regularly. This predictability may incline infants to interpret encounters with strangers in a manner that reduces or obviates any anxiety that a newcomer might otherwise produce. Observing that adults in the compound are exhibiting friendly and familiar behaviour to a visitor should key a young child into the friendly status of the guest – as psychologists have noted occurs in Western experimental situations (e.g., Clarke-Stewart 1978: 115–19).

If Beng villagers attempt to familiarize the stranger, many middle-class Euro-Americans often attempt to do the opposite: to estrange the familiar. Nowadays, websites with write-in advice are replete with the pleas of adults who are torn between whether or not to intervene when they perceive neighbors’ or strangers’ children acting unhappily, or even being neglected or abused (<http://episteme.arstechnica.com/eve/forums/a/tpc/f/34709834/m/288004007931>); lamenting the sort of non-community-oriented society we live in that can produce extreme neglect and abuse that goes unnoticed by neighbours (<http://www.shoutdaily.com/2008/08/do-we-ignore-our-neighbors-too-much/>); and, by contrast, bemoaning meddling adults who inappropriately attempt to discipline their friends’ and neighbours’ ‘misbehaving’ children (http://www.cafemom.com/answers/106825/When_is_it_okay_for_a_friend_neighbor_to_discipline_your_Child_ren). Although some adults might well intervene in cases of strangers’ or neighbours’ children being abused or neglected, and some might elegantly defend their right to discipline others’ misbehaving children, there is a widespread perception among Euro-Americans that child-rearing is now,

for better or worse, the nearly-exclusive domain of the parents, and especially of the mother. The law formalises this perception. Consider the following commentary by a legal scholar examining the American legal basis for absolving people of responsibility to rescue minors who are in grave danger unless they are close relatives or people over whom they have specific, legally constituted authority:

One judge explained it this way: ‘I see my neighbor’s two-year-old babe in dangerous proximity to the machinery of his windmill in his yard and easily might, but do not, rescue him. I am not liable in damages to the child for his injuries ... because the child and I are strangers, and I am under no legal duty to protect him.’ The judge wrote that in 1897 – over one hundred years ago. And it’s still true today (Gajda 1999).⁸

A similar situation in a Beng village would be evaluated quite differently. There, villagers would condemn anyone who did *not* attempt to rescue a young child – or anyone else – who was obviously in grave danger, regardless of their relationship (or non-relationship) to the person at risk. That is, in Bengland, people witnessing a dangerous situation – whether or not they are close kin, neighbours, or even strangers – are considered morally bound to ‘attempt a rescue’. Unlike in the American juridical context, the notion of ‘stranger’ here constricts to the irrelevant.

In Beng villages, other culturally mandated infant care practices teach even very young babies to welcome people who are unfamiliar. The first image the newborn sees is the presence of several people, typically all women, in the birthing room.⁹ Of course at this early stage, the newborn knows nothing about kinship and is unable to distinguish between kin and non-kin, stranger and non-stranger. But very soon, the baby will learn that the faces and voices of those first unfamiliar people in the birthing room show up regularly and begin to seem familiar.

At the same time, the newborn’s social circle widens dramatically almost immediately following the birth. As soon as a (healthy) infant emerges from the mother’s womb and is taken to be washed by one of the older women present, someone from the mother’s family announces the baby’s arrival to every village household. On hearing the news, people flock to the courtyard to welcome the fresh arrival to the village, and to this life. Within about an hour, a long line forms outside the birthing room. One by one, men and women approach the doorway and address the new mother with a formulaic exchange:

V(isor): *ná ka kwàu* [Mother, good afternoon].

M(other): *áúúúú, mú wiyau* [Good afternoon].

V: *áúú. ka n gbà pɔ* [Mm-hmm – what have you given me?]

M: *leŋɛ* [or] *gɔŋɛ* [A girl (or) A boy].

V: *kà núwaliaà* [Thank you].

(The visitor may then toss small change to the mother.)

M: *áúú* [Mm-hmm].

This exchange is repeated over and over as a representative of (ideally) each household arrives to congratulate the new mother. Every village birth I observed or heard about was followed by such a large-scale, ritual greeting.

Of course, Western-trained psychologists would point out that a newborn's memory function is not capable of remembering this point. Yet the general lesson concerning the positive value of a wide range of social contacts, including with strangers, will remain well past the ritual welcoming line, and as the brain develops, the growing child will internalize the lesson.

Over the first few weeks following the birth, the new baby will receive dozens, perhaps hundreds more visits. The new mother should allow each visitor to connect actively with the newborn. Indeed, the newborn is given early instructions in greeting, in which the mother or another caretaker 'speaks for' the baby in encounters with the guest (Gottlieb 2004: 79–104). The typical such encounter involves direct eye contact between the baby and whoever is speaking for him or her – a critical feature for inclining young children to engage in friendly social encounters (e.g. Clarke-Stewart 1978: 121–27).

A Beng baby is frequently introduced to visitors not only visually and verbally but also somatically: normally, someone who travels from another village to visit a new baby should immediately be offered the child to hold. It is considered preferable for the baby to be awake so that the two can be introduced. The mother or an attending kinswoman addresses the baby directly, introducing him or her to the person-who-is-at-first-a-*tiniñ*. The caretaker points to the guest and then turns to the infant, asking the child directly, 'Who's that?' (*dé kánà?*). If the question is greeted with silence, the caretaker may repeat the question. Depending on the little one's age, the baby may answer with a noise such as 'Mm' or 'Eh'. The caretaker may interpret this as the correct answer, and may then say, pleased, 'Yes, that's your cross-cousin' (*ah-beh, mi penaë*) or 'Yes, that's your little mother' (*ah-beh, mi da kroë*), and so on, thereby placing the guest in a meaningful social universe.¹⁰ After such a formal introduction, the visitor can now have a face-to-face conversation with the little one.

Of course, such an exchange is problematic if – as happens often in the lives of infants – the baby happens to be sleeping when a guest arrives. In such cases, it is common to awaken the little one. Beng villagers extend the principle behind this practice in a dramatic way. They maintain that in theory, any young child is eligible to be adopted by anyone else in the village, emphasizing the extent to which the bonds of community define many visitors to the household as friendly to the utmost degree.

The contrast with models of appropriate levels of social involvement for newborns that are common in many middle-class, Euro-American households is stark. In the U.S., many middle-class parents are instructed by others around them, including not only their friends and relatives but also professionals such as pediatricians and pediatric nurses, as well as trained advice columnists, that they should pursue a strategy of minimizing – rather than maximizing – social contacts for the newborn and

young infant. For example, a recent ‘Baby Health & Safety’ column in the popular magazine, *Parents*, was subtitled ‘Limit visitors to keep baby healthy’. Here, the first-time parent eager for authoritative advice could read:

It’s natural to want to show off your newborn to family and friends. But since even a simple illness is much more worrisome in a young baby than in an older one, try to limit her contact with others – and thus her exposure to bacteria and viruses – for the first four to six weeks, says Thom M. Pantino, M.D., a pediatric urgent-care physician at Egleston Children’s Health Care System, in Atlanta. ‘There’s no harm in stopping by the office or your neighbour’s with the baby,’ says Pantino. ‘Just don’t stay more than an hour or so, or expose her to lots of people.’ (Parents 1996; emphasis in the original)

A Beng mother would at best be perplexed by this advice, and might even consider it selfish, cruel, or even mad.¹¹

In Beng villages, the somatic lessons of sociality extend from holding the baby to breastfeeding. In the Beng setting, breastfeeding is a social act that potentially encompasses more than the classic duo of lactating mother and child. A casual attitude toward wet nursing offered as an improvisatory feeding strategy produces the possibility that Beng babies experience the breast as a site not just of nourishment but also of sociability (cf. Kitzinger 1995: 390).¹²

Now let us look at the broader and longer-term implications of the patterns of early infant care that we have so far explored.

Stranger Anxiety?

In the U.S. today, many middle-class mothers who read popular child development books and articles recognize that the onset of ‘stranger anxiety’ some time toward the end of the first year of life is somewhat expected (if not necessarily desirable). We can take this question-and-answer column by pediatrician William Sears from the popular magazine, *Parents*, as typical of this abundant literature:

Soothing Stranger Anxiety

Q: How long does stranger anxiety typically last? Our 21-month-old daughter gets upset around unfamiliar people. How can we make her more comfortable meeting strangers?

A: Stranger anxiety usually begins at around 8 months, and can intensify when a child is 1 to 2 years of age, when she becomes more discerning about who gets close to her. It commonly subsides by the age of 3. Rest assured that this behavior isn’t a reflection on parenting skills or an indication that a baby is insecure. In fact, some of the most emotionally secure children go through many months of this common phase before they become comfortable meeting new people. (Sears 1999: 37)

Popular pediatrician-authors such as Sears take their cue from research conducted by developmental psychologists demonstrating that fear or wariness of strangers by older infants and young toddlers, although not universal, is frequently considered normal. As one influential developmental psychologist specializing in this issue has recently written: 'It is clear that negative stranger reactions are common in infancy' (Sroufe 1996: 111).

Some professional research challenges at least implicitly the universality of the 'stage' of 'stranger anxiety' insofar as its authors argue that the context of particular stranger–infant interactions determines much of a given infant's reaction to a given stranger (e.g., Décarie et al. 1974; Mangelsdorf 1992; Rheingold and Eckerman 1973). Clarke-Stewart wrote early on that 'fear of strangers is neither as predictable nor as universal at any one age as once was thought' (1978: 111). Notwithstanding such important caveats in the professional literature, popular opinion nowadays among the Euro-American middle-class tends to valorize the normalcy of 'stranger anxiety'. Is there a place for the concept of 'stranger anxiety' as a normal stage of development in Beng understandings of young childhood?

The Beng language indeed includes a term that might be translated loosely as 'stranger anxiety'. In describing some babies, Beng mothers use the word *gbane*, explaining that these babies 'do not go to [other] people' (*ɲà ta soŋ kle*). As with their Western counterparts, Beng infants classified by their mothers as *gbane* are subject to noticeable wariness of strangers, and they exhibit a strong preference for their mothers over all others. And as with their Western counterparts, these infants first exhibit these qualities some time during the second half of their first year.

But unlike their Western counterparts, Beng mothers maintain that the appearance of any level of 'stranger anxiety' at all is rare, and very few Beng babies are classified as *gbane*. In a large Beng village (pop. ca. 1,500), only one infant was identified to me as *gbane*. Although there may well have been a few others whom I did not come to observe, they were certainly not abundant.

Equally important, children who are classified as *gbane*, even mildly so, are considered by the Beng to be 'difficult' (*ɲo sie gégré* – 'their character is difficult'). Therefore, they are frequently criticized and derided, and Beng mothers and others actively socialize their babies to avoid this type of behaviour. Mothers of such children view themselves as unfortunate for having to deal with what they consider an excessive attachment to them. How will they get their work done? The mother of the *gbane* child will have to keep the baby with her at all times, and for a full-time farmer this is quite physically demanding. An excessively *gbane* baby can threaten the mother's ability to complete all the labour, both agricultural and domestic, that is required for her to run and feed a large household, and may even put at risk the food supply of the household.¹³

Thus a baby who exhibits even the mildest form of 'stranger anxiety' or wariness toward strangers – which might be considered normal and even somewhat expected by many Western parents and developmental psychologists alike – is judged at best a

nuisance, and at worst a failure, by Beng standards. That is, some babies who would be categorized as emotionally healthy and securely attached to their mothers by psychologists would instead be categorized by Beng mothers as *gbane*, hence emotionally unhealthy, as well as socially problematic, and even a threat to the household's economic productivity.¹⁴

By contrast, most babies are classified by the Beng as 'not *gbane*', are typically quite independent, and are appreciated by their mothers for it. In explaining to me that none of her children had ever exhibited signs of being *gbane*, one mother told me proudly, '*ηο ta son kle -- ηà gbane*' ('they go with [other] people, they don't cling/stay attached [to me]').

Most Beng babies seem equally comfortable and happy with their mothers and, generally, with a variety of others, including, often, with strangers. In Beng villages, I watched infants daily being passed from person to person – sometimes to people with whom they were quite familiar, at other times to people who were new to them: *tiniη* (including myself). In almost all instances, the babies I observed went willingly to their new (temporary) caretakers, and it was rare for them to cry or otherwise express regret, fear, anxiety or anger when their mothers disappeared from view. Later, when they were reunited with their mothers, babies might smile with mild pleasure at the sight of their mothers – especially if they were hungry and hadn't been able to breastfeed while under their babysitter's care. But that pleasure was fairly quiet, and it almost never involved obvious relief from reducing anxiety at being left in another's charge. Indeed, separating from one's mother to be given to someone else – whether or not that someone else is known to the baby – is expected *not* to induce anxiety but rather should ideally be perceived as a routine event that happens without stress many times over, in a typical Beng baby's day. Accordingly, in the Beng view, a mother's return should not normally be the occasion for major rejoicing.¹⁵ In short, I suggest that the tendency for the vast majority of Beng babies and young toddlers to exhibit little or no anxiety around strangers is due to a dual child-rearing agenda: the efforts that Beng mothers make to train their infants to be, in effect, somewhat minimally attached to them; and the complementary efforts that they make to provide abundant social networks, multiple reliable caretakers, and a high comfort level with strangers.

In addition to the methods we have already considered that Beng mothers use to lessen the chance that their children will become singularly attached to them, there is another particularly striking technique that some mothers employ specifically to ensure that their infants do not become *gbane*. To explain that strategy, I reproduce part of a conversation I had with my field assistant, Amenan:

Alma: Is it possible to know in advance which [babies] will be *gbane*? Is there a sign?

Amenan: Those who will become like that [*gbane*] look [a lot] at their mother [when they are quite young].

Alma: When can a child notice the mother?

Amenan: When he or she is one month old.

Alma: Maybe because the mother is doing something intriguing?

Amenan: Me, when [my] babies look in my eyes, I blow in their face; this way, they don't become *gbane*. ... If you get used to a child, you can't work. There are times to work. You can't, if you have a child [you like too much]. You should give him to somebody else [regularly]. It's not good to like the child too much.

In her own parenting efforts, Amenan deliberately endeavoured to reduce her children's emotional attachments to her, and she used such direct and self-conscious methods as trying to break her infant's gaze at herself. Although not all Beng mothers resort to such a dramatic strategy, Amenan is not alone in her use of this technique. And the technique itself is certainly not disapproved of by other Beng women who do not use it themselves. In Amenan's statement, we see encapsulated an extreme version of a child-rearing agenda that is vastly different from that which is common in many middle-class, Euro-American households today.

Interpreting Strangers and Sociability in Beng Villages

What might account for the distinctive pattern of childcare practices and behaviours that we have traced in this chapter? I would like to suggest three factors – concerning religion, political economy, and history – that together may go some way in accounting for the childcare patterns and behaviours we have observed for the Beng.

First, the practise of welcoming 'strangers' into their midst, and the associated habit of encouraging the creation of a broad variety of social ties and emotional attachments, accords well with Beng religious ideology. As I explore elsewhere (Gottlieb 2004), Beng adults maintain that babies come to this life after a previous existence in an afterlife they call *wrugbe*. Put differently, we might say that the birth of a baby is not seen as the occasion to receive a strange new creature but rather someone who has already been here before and then left, and is now returning as a reincarnated ancestor. I suggest that the ideology of reincarnation provides a template for welcoming the young 'stranger' as a friendly guest with social ties to the community. In turn, the baby-as-stranger being welcomed actively into the village echoes the formal structures for welcoming adult guests to the village. Moreover, the perceived temptation for the baby to 'return' to *wrugbe* must be constantly combated by those who care for the child. The more people embrace an infant – both literally and emotionally – the more welcome to this world the infant will be (Gottlieb 2000). Encouraging high levels of sociability is in effect one means the Beng adopt to combat high rates of infant mortality.

At another level, the pattern of encouraging children to form multiple emotional attachments with a variety of people from the earliest days of infancy works well with

the demands of women's labour. As has long been documented for much of rural Africa (e.g., Boserup 1970; Bryceson 1995; Coquery-Vidrovitch 1997: 9–20), Beng women's lives are circumscribed by enormous labour demands. Most obviously, they are all full-time farmers. In addition, Beng women have sole responsibility for chopping and hauling firewood from the forest; fetching water for the household water supply; hand-washing the laundry for a large family; and doing the vast majority of food preparation for that family, including pounding, cooking, and dishwashing – much of this while pregnant or breastfeeding. It is hard to imagine a woman performing all these tasks continually on her own, day in and day out without relief, while taking competent, full-time care of several small children – including, frequently, a baby and a toddler. To keep her household running and the family's food supply intact, virtually every mother must arrange either for a single regular babysitter or a network of potential baby carriers for dependable childcare. In this way, the typical Beng mother's habit of encouraging an infant to be accepting of strangers, to forge satisfying emotional attachments to many people, and to discourage her infant from forming an especially strong and singular emotional attachment to her, makes pragmatic sense as situated in the universe of women's labour.

Finally, there is the obvious question of history. In what sort of historical circumstances would an effort to embrace strangers be a reasonable strategy? Here we are awash in a sea of irony. For at least the brief period for which there is some documented history – barely more than a century – the Beng have appeared to be a relatively remote and insulated group. Yet their apparent isolationism belies a deep social, linguistic, and economic engagement with the neighbouring world and beyond. The precolonial Beng economy included a long-distance trade in kola nuts with Jula traders, and other goods with Baule, Ando and Jimini neighbours (Gottlieb 2004: 62–75). To engage in these transactions, most Beng were (and still are) multilingual. The precolonial Beng were intricately engaged in regional and long-distance networks in both economic and other forms of commerce. In such a setting, perceiving ties with 'strangers' as unwelcome could well disrupt crucial economic links in potentially disastrous ways. By contrast, welcoming those strangers who did appear in the villages – and training their children to do so from the earliest days *ex utero* – would have made supreme economic and political sense.

And of course, from the perspective of the infant, in addition to such true 'strangers' – i.e., adults who are 'strange' not just to the young children of the village but also to the adults – there are, in the early weeks and months after birth, many people who appear 'strange'. Indeed, if we consider such people (from the infant's perspective) as 'strangers', it is ironic that Beng infants probably encounter far more 'strangers' – that is, people who are 'strange' to themselves – than is the case with Euro-American, middle-class infants, who are typically far more protected from social encounters in general. Thus, although there may be fewer absolute 'strangers' entering the lives of village-dwelling Beng infants than is the case for urban-dwelling Western infants, who are sociologically surrounded by 'strangers', the actual Beng infant's experience

of interacting with those who (at least initially) seem like ‘strangers’ is probably far richer than it is for many Western infants.

Moreover, in recent years (before the nation’s civil war), economic routes to a wider world were even more open, as many Beng farmers sold crops to (non-Beng) middlemen who came to the villages from Abidjan to buy their harvest; other Beng farmers travelled to nearby towns or distant cities themselves to sell their agricultural wares at a greater profit. Still other Beng villagers hired themselves out as labourers on distant commercial plantations run by members of other ethnic groups, and still others migrated to the cities to seek their fortunes (see Gottlieb 2004: 266–305). In all cases, engaging productively with ‘strangers’ continued to be critical to their survival.

I began this chapter by mentioning that shared caretaking patterns such as the one I have outlined for the Beng may be far more common around the globe, and through history, than we have realized. While families in post-industrialized societies both shrink and become more isolated and scattered, it is imperative for us to remember that in the rest of the world, and perhaps for most of human history, variations in caretaking have abounded based on alternative family and community structures. The intentionally high levels of sociability and shared caretaking that characterize the lives of Beng infants may be extreme, but they serve as a salutary reminder that the full story and history of human caretaking is not yet written. The other essays collected in this volume constitute an important contribution to that story-in-the-making.

Notes

1. Two notable exceptions documented in the ethnographic literature are the cases of rural Maya in Mexico and the Dani of Irian Jaya. In both groups, young infants are cared for mostly or exclusively by their mothers and are kept in very quiet, dark places for several months (Brazelton 1977; Butt 1998). These examples remind us not to generalize about ‘the non-Western world’, which itself contains a diverse collection of practices overdetermined by historical layers of culture and political economy.

Conversely, some scholars have recently documented contemporary challenges to the traditional non-Western model of collective childcare, due to a variety of both local and, increasingly, global factors (e.g. Swadener et al. 2000). Such sweeping changes have not yet affected Beng village-based child-rearing structures to the extent that they have in some other parts of the world; elsewhere, I discuss other changes that are more pertinent to the Beng context (Gottlieb 2004: 266–305).

2. The ‘ethnographic present’ of this work is 1993. As in all my published writings to date, my discussion concerns Beng villages, where I have concentrated my research (for general background on Beng society, see Gottlieb 1996; Gottlieb and Graham 1994). My informal observations among the still relatively small group of Beng families now living in towns and cities would suggest a fair amount of continuity in infant care practices with

those reported in this work. This accords with the work of a new generation of scholars who argue that rural/urban relations in Africa may be more productively thought of as a continuum than a divide and, moreover, may be far more porous than was previously assumed. Exciting studies of urban migration within Africa as well as the contemporary urban African diaspora in Europe and the U.S. show an often provocative combination of predictable ruptures and surprising continuities between 'traditional' rural practices and new urban lives (e.g., D'Alisera 2004; Hutchinson 2001; Johnson 2001; Stoller 1996, 2002). Among urban Beng families, infant care practices seem to vary depending on a host of factors, especially the mother's education level, whether or not she has married a Beng man, and whether or not she is surrounded by Beng neighbours. Examining to what extent, and in what ways, Beng families now living in cities in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere replicate – or challenge – the model I discuss in this chapter requires further field research. The contemporary crisis in Beng families' lives caused by the nation's current civil war is likewise a pressing topic for further investigation.

3. Dieudonné Kwame Kouassi carried out most of the observations in this quantitative portion of the study. In total, we observed 25 babies in 43 observational sessions over a total of 5,745 minutes, or 95.75 hours. Of the 43 sessions, 41 were 135 minutes in duration; 1 was 120 minutes in duration; and 1 was 90 minutes in duration. The babies ranged in age from three months to twenty-four months, with the average age being 11.4 months.
4. On relations with fathers focusing largely on European and other post-industrialized nations, see especially the work of Lamb and his colleagues (e.g., Lamb 1987, 1997, 1999; Lamb et al. 1999). On meaningful emotional attachments between young children (including infants) and their caretakers, including daycare teachers in post-industrialized settings, see, for example, Cummings (1980); Kearsley et al. (1975); Lamb (1999); Lamb et al. (1992); and Sroufe et al. (1983); for helpful overviews of this controversial literature, see Karen (1998: 313–44) and Sroufe (1996). For parallel work looking at the lives and experiences of fathers cross-culturally (mostly conducted by anthropologists), see Hewlett (1993).

I deploy the term 'attachment' in a somewhat looser way than developmental psychologists usually deploy it. I do so deliberately, in order to expand the parameters of discussion to encompass indigenous models of 'attachment' whose content may look somewhat different from how it is represented in the models that have been identified by Western-trained researchers for Western(-ized) populations. Researchers steeped in Western contexts may be surprised to learn of the relatively large number of meaningful emotional 'attachments' that Beng infants, as with many others in West Africa, have with a large array of adults and older children.

In this section, I also link two bodies of work: on the one hand, work by historians, sociologists and other scholars on strangers; on the other hand, work by developmental psychologists on emotional and social attachments as well as on relations of infants to strangers. Concerning the latter, I further combine discussion of two technical bodies of literature in developmental psychology: writings on 'attachment', and writings on fear of, or wariness toward, strangers. In some work by developmental psychologists, these two

topics of inquiry have been inextricably linked; in other works they have been considered as independent; and in still others they are seen as related but in complex and not easily predictable ways. I lack space here to expound on the implications inherent in this issue (for one early, thoughtful discussion, see Clarke-Stewart 1978). Briefly, my own perspective is that the two parameters of ‘attachment’ on the one hand and attitude toward strangers by young children on the other hand are indeed linked, but in compound and subtle ways. In referencing these discrete bodies of literature, I will explore how the issues implicated in these two sets of writing speak to each other in striking ways in Beng villages.

5. This echoes an observation made for the linguistically related northern Mande groups by Jansen: ‘A stranger in Mande is, in fact, not “strange” at all; the term “stranger” is as neutral as, for instance, the term “hunter” or “brother”’ (1996: 26).
6. The pattern I have described may be common in other villages throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa; for a Ugandan case with certain similarities to what I have described, see Obbo (1979).
7. In Beng, the greeting (which incorporates words from the Baule language) is as follows for a hostess welcoming a male visitor (with minor variations for different gender combinations):

Hostess: *aba ka kwen* [Father, welcome].
 Male guest: *maa, nye wiau*. [OK.]
 Hostess: *aún. blíni ka. we ná ɲo grè?* [OK. Have a seat. Are the folks where you’re coming from all well?]
 Male guest: *we ná ɲo myankalo*. [Those folks are all fine.]
 Hostess: *aún. mu wiau*. [OK.]
 Male guest: *màà*. [OK.]
8. For the New Hampshire legal case cited, see *Buch v. Amory Mfg Co.* (1898).
9. In the case of a very difficult childbirth, a male healer may be called in to administer herbal remedies, and/or a male Master of the Earth may enter to offer prayers and sacrifices.
10. Beng terms for relatives group together individuals of different genealogical categories to place them in the same conceptual universe according to a combination of complex principles. For instance, two girls or women who are called ‘sisters’ might be first- or second-degree matrilineal or patrilineal parallel cousins, or even more distantly related clan-mates. The details of this system are not relevant to this discussion. Suffice it to say that in learning that, for instance, a boy is called an ‘elder brother’, a young girl does not confuse this boy with her own (genealogical) brother but comes to understand that the two boys are of the same generation and gender and may also belong to the same (matri- or patri-)clan as herself. In Beng villages, only children younger than oneself are addressed by name; all others are accorded kinship terms as a sign of respect, whether or not the two people are actually related. From the infant’s perspective, this means that virtually everyone the small child meets – including strangers – will be introduced by a kin term and not a name.
11. The tendency to restrict social engagements during an infant’s first few months of life is not monopolized by Western societies – some non-Western societies have their own

reasons for restricting social contacts to an even greater extent than is common in the contemporary Euro-American middle-class. Writing of the Dani of Irian Jaya (Indonesia), Butt explains that the first three to four months of life the young infant is never exposed to the sun (1998: 119). Instead, the child is almost constantly wrapped up in several layers of net bags, staying in virtual darkness: 'The point is not to stimulate the child, but to sedate through darkness, quiet, routine breastfeeding on demand, and through providing stimulation only when the child [later] comes to demand it' (1998: 15). During these early months, when a mother takes her infant to the gardens she encloses her child under ten or twelve bags to protect her against the sun, where it is so cool and dark that the baby can often sleep for hours. The rationale for this set of practices is well thought out: young babies are said to be frightened easily (ibid: 121) and are also considered vulnerable to spirits' or ancestors' attacks that can sicken the child (ibid.: 121–22); in the face of these culturally constituted risks, Dani parents maintain that babies grow best without too much talking or stimulation (ibid.: 119). It is only by the fourth or fifth month that Dani mothers allow their babies to play with other adults (ibid.: 122).

12. I explore some detailed examples of this pattern elsewhere (Gottlieb 2004: 185–219).
13. For an incisive, comparative analysis of the cybernetic relations among mothers, infants and others in the family from the standpoint of the household food supply, see Popkin et al. (1986). For further discussion of food and Beng infants, see Gottlieb (2004: 185–219).
14. The likelihood that a particular Beng baby who exhibits 'stranger anxiety' would be classified by a developmental psychologist as emotionally healthy and properly 'attached' (to the mother) depends on several factors about which the relevant psychology literature has much to say. A discussion of the nuances and technical details underlying the classificatory schema is beyond the scope of this essay; for one clear summary of the relevant issues, see Sroufe (1996: 112–13).
15. These informal situations of separations and reunions that I observed in daily life loosely approximated the 'Strange Situation' test that is administered by 'attachment' researchers in developmental psychology to test for the degree and kind of infants' attachments to their mothers (or other primary caretakers). However, I did not administer the formal 'Strange Situation' test as such during fieldwork for a variety of reasons, including the pragmatic consideration that it would not have been possible to replicate the carefully controlled laboratory conditions created for such studies as conducted by most developmental psychologists.

References

- Boserup, E., 1970. *Woman's Role in Economic Development*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Brazelton, T.B., 1977. Implications of infant development among the Mayan Indians of Mexico. In P. H. Leiderman et al., eds., *Culture and Infancy: Variations in the Human Experience*. New York: Academic Press, 151–87.
- Bryceson, D.F., ed., 1995. *Women Wielding the Hoe: Lessons from Rural Africa for Feminist Theory and Development Practice*. Oxford: Berg.

- Buch V. Amory Manufacturing Co., 1898. *Buch v. Amory Mfg Co.*, 44 A. 809 (N.H. 1898).
- Butt, L., 1998. *The Social and Political Life of Infants among the Baliem Valley Dani, Irian Jaya*. PhD Thesis. McGill University, Montreal.
- Clarke-Stewart, K.A., 1978. Recasting the lone stranger. In J. Glick and K.A. Clarke-Stewart, eds., *The Development of Social Understanding*. New York: Gardner Press/Halsted Press/John Wiley and Sons, 109–76.
- Coquery-Vidrovitch, C., 1997 [1994]. *African Women: A Modern History*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Cummings, E.M., 1980. Caregiver stability and day care. *Developmental Psychology* 16: 31–37.
- D'Alisera, J., 2004. *An Imagined Geography: Sierra Leonean Muslims in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Décarie, T.G., et al., 1974. *The Infant's Reaction to Strangers*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Douglas, M., 1966. *Purity and Danger*. London: Routledge.
- 1970. *Natural Symbols*. New York: Pantheon.
- 1992. *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Douglas, M., and Wildavsky, A., 1982. *Risk and Culture: An Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fogel, A., 1993. *Developing through Relationships: Origins of Communication, Self, and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gajda, A., 1999. *Legal Issues in the News* [commentary on 'duty to rescue']. WILL-AM radio (Urbana, IL), 22 March 1999.
- Gottlieb, A., 1996 [1992]. *Under the Kapok Tree: Identity and Difference in Beng Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 2000. Luring your child into this life: a Beng path for infant care. In J.S. Deloache and A. Gottlieb, eds., *A World of Babies: Imagined Childcare Guides for Seven Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 55–89.
- 2004. *The Afterlife Is Where We Come from: The Culture of Infancy in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gottlieb, A., and Graham, P., 1994 [1993]. *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Harkness, S., and Super, C.M., 1992. The cultural foundations of fathers' roles: evidence from Kenya and the United States. In B.S. Hewlett, ed., *Father-Child Relations: Cultural and Biosocial Contexts*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 191–211.
- 1991. *Intimate Fathers: The Nature and Context of the Aka Pygmy Paternal Infant Care*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Hewlett, B.S., ed., 1993. *Father-Child Relations: Cultural and Biosocial Contexts*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Hutchinson, S., 2001. The Nuer diaspora and the rise of 'segmentary Christianity'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, Houston, TX, 15–18 November 2001.

- Jansen, J., 1996. The younger brother and the stranger in Mande status discourse. In J. Jansen and C. Zobel, eds., *The Younger Brother in Mande: Kinship and Politics in West Africa*. Leiden: Research School, Center for Non-Western Studies, 8–34.
- Johnson, M., 2001. On the road to *Alijana*: reconfiguring Islam and ‘Mandinga-ness’ in the ‘new’ African diaspora. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, Houston, TX, 15–18 November 2001.
- Karen, R., 1998 [1994]. *Becoming Attached: First Relationships and How They Shape Our Capacity to Love*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kearsley, R.B., Zelazo, P.R., Kagan, J., and Hartmann, R., 1975. Separation protest in day-care and home-reared infants. *Pediatrics* 55(2), 171–75.
- Kitzinger, S., 1995. Commentary: Breastfeeding: biocultural perspectives. In P. Stuart-Macadam and K.A. Dettwyler, ed., *Breastfeeding: Biocultural Perspectives*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 385–94.
- Lamb, M.E., 1999. Nonparental child care. In M.E. Lamb, ed., *Parenting and Child Development in ‘Nontraditional’ Families*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 39–55.
- 1997. *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, Third Edition. New York: Wiley.
- Lamb, M.E., ed., 1987. *The Father’s Role: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- 1999. *Parenting and Child Development in ‘Nontraditional’ Families*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Lamb, M.E. et al., 1999. Parent-child relationships: development in the context of the family. In M.H. Bornstein and M.E. Lamb, eds., *Developmental Psychology: An Advanced Textbook*, Fourth Edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 411–50.
- Lamb, M.E. et al., eds., 1992. *Child Care in Context: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Mangelsdorf, S., 1992. Developmental changes in infant–stranger interaction. *Infant Behaviour and Development* 15, 191–208.
- New, R.S., 1988. Parental goals and Italian infant Care. In R.A. Levine, P.M. Miller and M.M. West, eds., *New Directions for Child Development, no. 40. Parental Behaviour in Diverse Societies*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 51–63.
- Nsameng, B.A., 1992. Early childhood care and education in Cameroon. In M.E. Lamb et al., eds., *Child Care in Context: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 419–39.
- Obbo, C., 1979. Village strangers in Buganda society. In W. Shack and E. Skinner, eds., *Strangers in African Societies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 227–41.
- Parents, 1996. Baby health & safety: limit visitors to keep baby healthy. *Parents* 21(11) (November), 47.
- Popkin, B.M., Lasky, T., Spicer, D., and Yamamota, M.E., 1986. *The Infant-feeding Triad: Infant, Mother, and Household*. New York: Gordon and Breach.
- Rheingold, H.L. and Eckerman, C.O., 1973. Fear of the stranger: a critical examination. In H.W. Reese, ed., *Advances in Child Development and Behaviour, vol. 8*. New York: Academic Press, 185–222.

- Richman, A.L., Miller, P.M., and Solomon, M.J., 1988. The socialization of infants in suburban Boston. In A.L. Richman, P.M. Miller and M.M. West, eds., *New Directions for Child Development*, no. 40. *Parental Behaviour in Diverse Societies*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 65–74.
- Rizzini, I., and Dawes, A., 2001. Editorial: On cultural diversity and child adversity. *Childhood* 8(3), 315–21.
- Schütz, A., 1944. The stranger: an essay in social psychology. *American Journal of Sociology* 49(6), 499–507.
- Sears, W., 1999. Answers from Dr. Sears: soothing stranger anxiety. *Parenting* (May 1999), 37–38.
- Sroufe, L.A., 1996. *Emotional Development: The Organization of Emotional Life in the Early Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sroufe, L.A., Fox, N., and Pancake, V., 1983. Attachment and dependency in developmental perspective. *Child Development* 54, 1615–27.
- Stansbury, J.P., Leonard, W.R., and Dewalt, K.M., 2000. Caretakers, child care practices, and growth failure in Highland Ecuador. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 14(2), 224–41.
- Stoller, P., 1996. Spaces, places, and fields: the politics of West African trading in New York city's informal economy. *American Anthropologist* 98(4), 776–88.
- 2002. *Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Swadener, B.B., with Kabiru, M., and Njenga, A., 2000. *Does the Village Still Raise the Child? A Collaborative Study of Changing Child-Rearing and Early Education in Kenya*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Tronick, E.Z., Morelli, G.A., and Winn, S., 1987. Multiple caretaking of Efe (Pygmy) infants. *American Anthropologist* 89(1), 96–106.
- Weisner, T.S., and Gallimore, R., 1977. My brother's keeper: child and sibling caretaking. *Current Anthropology* 18(2), 169–90.