

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational  
Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*Cambridge Studies in Social Anthropology*

*General Editor: Jack Goody*

35

PARENTHOOD AND SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## DEDICATION

To Meyer Fortes, whose pioneering research in kinship first led me to work in West Africa, and whose sensitive ethnography and acute analysis have posed the question of *how* polity and economy affect family roles.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# Parenthood and Social Reproduction

Fostering and Occupational Roles in  
West Africa

ESTHER N. GOODY

**Cambridge University Press**

Cambridge

London New York New Rochelle

Melbourne Sydney

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521227216](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521227216)

© Cambridge University Press 1982

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1982

This digitally printed version 2007

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-22721-6 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-04017-4 paperback

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Contents

	<i>page</i>
List of tables	vi
List of figures	ix
Acknowledgements	x
Introduction	1
1 A framework for the analysis of parent roles	6
<b>Part I Parent roles in Gonja</b>	
2 Kinship fostering	37
3 The Kpembe study	55
<b>Part II Parent roles in West Africa</b>	
4 The circulation of women and children in northern Ghana, With JACK GOODY	91
5 Traditional states: responses to hierarchy and differentiation	110
6 Contemporary patterns in southern Ghana	143
7 Fostering contrasted	179
8 Modern apprenticeship: response to differentiation	188
9 Creole wardship: response to hierarchy	206
<b>Part III Beyond West Africa</b>	
10 The quest for education, With CHRISTINE MUIR GROOTHUES	217
11 West African and West Indian immigrant families	234
12 Parenthood and social reproduction	250
Appendix I: Data from the Kpembe study	283
Appendix II: Data on the southern Ghana surveys	313
Notes	319
Bibliography	333
Index	341
Index of authors	347

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Tables

	<i>page</i>
2-1 Rearing experience of adults in six Gonja samples	40
2-2 Distribution of foster-children between maternal and paternal kin in seven Gonja samples	42
2-3 Crisis and voluntary fostering among men and women of northern and western Gonja	43
2-4a Comparison of rearing experience of 'successful' men and 'ordinary' men from eastern Gonja	49
2-4b Comparison of rearing experience of 'successful' men and 'ordinary' men from western Gonja	50
2-5 Comparison of rearing experience of 'successful' men and 'ordinary' men of ruling estate: western Gonja	50
2-6 Rearing experience of Bole 'successful' men related to type of position held	51
2-7 Comparison of divorce ratios of fostered and home-reared women of two Gonja samples	53
3-1 Need affiliation in relation to fostering: Modal categories	83
3-2 Comparison of frequency of 'high deprivation' food scores for boys and girls by age of fostering: Hunger cues	85
4-1 Kinship variables among the LoWilli and Gonja	92
4-2 Kinship variables in northern Ghana	93
4-3 Summary table: Kinship variables in northern Ghana	108
5-1 Relationship between status and occupational groups, closure of occupational recruitment, and rights over kinswomen's children: Dagomba (based on Oppong 1973)	115
5-2 Sample occupational census of adult men in 4 communities in rural Zaria (A, B, C, D) (taken directly from M. G. Smith 1955:242-3)	130
6-1 Relationship of child to foster-parent (by generation): Ga	153
6-2 Recency of fostering in relation to lineality of relationship to foster-parent: Ga	153

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Tables*

6-3a	Child's relationship to foster-parent: Girls	160
6-3b	Child's relationship to foster-parent: Boys	161
6-4a	Generation of relationship to foster-parent: Girls	162
6-4b	Generation of relationship to foster-parent: Boys	162
6-5a	Lineality of relationship to foster-parent: Girls	163
6-5b	Lineality of relationship to foster-parent: Boys	164
6-5c	Summary of lineality of relationship to foster-parent: Boys	164
6-6	Payment of school fees for Sibling Sample	170
6-7	Reasons why parents of Sibling Sample were fostered	172
6-8	Reasons given for having fostered a sibling's child	173
6-9	Training other than school, by ethnic group	174
6-10	Summary table: Formal and informal training: Fostered Sample	175
6-11	Proportion of sibling groups and whether special training provided	176
6-11a	Individual siblings: Special training in relation to fostering	177
7-1	Gonja (northern Ghana): Generation of foster-parent for four samples	182
7-2	Generation of relationship between child and foster-parent in three southern Ghana societies: Boys	185
7-3	Generation of relationship between child and foster-parent in three southern Ghana societies: Girls	185
7-4	Generation of foster-parent: Comparison of northern and southern Ghana: Combined samples	186
8-1	List of crafts cited as traditional in accounts of nineteenth-century Yoruba (from Koll 1969)	190
8-2	Relationship between respondent's occupation and that of father (men) or mother (women) (from Koll 1969)	192
8-3	Comparison of craft and service occupations practised at different periods in Yoruba towns	193
8-4	Relationship between master and apprentice: Proportion of masters who were trained by and who have trained kinsmen (from Peil 1978)	197
8-5	Self-employed craftsmen: First job after completion of apprenticeship, by craft (from Peil 1978)	202
8-6	Craftsmen in one Ibadan workshop cluster: Number of apprentices trained (from Koll 1969)	205
9-1	Presence of wards in Creole and tribal households in Freetown (from Banton 1957)	210
9-2	Incidence of wards in eight residential areas in Monrovia (from Fraenkel 1964)	211

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Tables*

10-1	Relationship between child-care arrangements and conjugal role structure: Intensive sample	232
11-1	Children of families of three Jamaican communities who are being fostered: Per cent with kin and with others (from Clarke 1966)	237
11-2	West Indian fostering relationships: Generation	242
11-3	Comparison of northern Ghana, southern Ghana and West Indian fostering relationships: Generation	247
12-1	Paradigm of West African parental-role allocation, with examples drawn from text	275
AI-1	Matrix A: Demographic variables	283
AI-2	Matrix B: Fostering variables	284
AI-3	Matrix C: Demographic variables by fostering variables	285
AI-4	Need affiliation scores for boys and girls compared	301
AI-5	Aggression scores for boys and girls compared	302
AI-6	Nurturant males mentioned, by position in sibling group: Boys	303
AI-7a	Rating of Kpembe teenage girls: Observations and interviews	311
AI-7b	Ranking of Kpembe teenage girls on total difficulty scores and fostering status	312
AII-1	Population of four surveyed towns (Ghana Census 1960)	313
AII-2	Comparison of per cent in non-agricultural employment in four survey communities and in sample of rural hamlets from same local council areas: Males (Ghana Census 1960)	314
AII-3	Per cent of males and females with at least some school experience (Ghana Census 1960)	314
AII-4	Comparison of rural and small-town literacy	315
AII-5	Relative frequency of purposive and crisis fostering in independent sets of fostered children	315
AII-6	Incidence of crisis in family of orientation for Fostered Sample by ethnic group	315
AII-7	Whether child attended school, and how far, by ethnic group: Fostered Sample	316
AII-8	Relationship between fostering and school attendance for male siblings	316
AII-9	Relationship between fostering and school attendance for female siblings	316
AII-10	Payment of school fees: Fostered Sample	317
AII-11	Incidence of crisis in the families of orientation of the Sibling Sample	318
AII-12	Current marital status of women in Sibling Sample	318



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Figures

	<i>page</i>
1-1 The complete set of parent-role tasks vested in one pair of parents: Analytical model	20
1-2 Alliance-apprentice fosterage in Ibadan (A. Cohen 1969)	22
1-3 Nurturant fosterage: European wet-nursing	24
1-4 Kinship fosterage in Gonja	26
1-5 Ritual sponsorship in the Balkans (Hammel 1968)	28
1-6 Adrogation in Imperial Rome	30
1-7 Adoption	32
5-1 Foster-children in the family of Baba of Karo (M. F. Smith 1954)	137
7-1 The interconnection and lateral extension of claims for foster-children (based on Yalman 1967)	181
12-1 Unitary parental rearing model	257
12-2 Kin rearing model	258
12-3 Non-kin rearing model	258
A-1 Boys' and girls' picture I	289
A-2 Girls' picture II	290
A-3 Boys' picture II	291
A-4 Boys' picture III	292
A-5 Boys' picture IV and girls' picture III	293
A-6 Girls' picture IV	294
A-7 Boys' picture V	295
A-8 Boys' picture VI and girls' picture V	296
A-9 Girls' picture VI	297

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## Acknowledgements

The studies on which this book is based have extended over twenty years and would not have been possible without the help of many people. My debt to Gonja friends and assistants is irredeemable, and to mention them all impossible. A few, however, were particularly important in work related to kinship fosterage: in Buipe, Bomunana, Kofi Maman and Adamu Dari; in Bunsunu, Damba Yiri Wuritche, Supini Wuritche, Grunshi, Nyiwuleji, and Mahama Katanga; in Kpembe, Miama, Adama, Tcheraba, Dongitche, Kelli, Soale, Ewuntoma and Aladzi of Sabon Gida, Singbung Wuritche of Singbun, and the Kasoatche, the Limam and the NsoaWura as well as Adia from Sakpare. J. A. Braimah, the KanyasiWura, was a constant source of information and insight. Of those who helped directly with the formal aspects of the Kpembe study, Mr Zakaria Allassan and Mary Braimah carried out the TAT storytelling sessions with the children with tact and persistence without which this part of the study would have been quite impossible. Salifu Seidu, Asumani Damba, James Salifu, and Paul Dari were valuable members of the team. Anna Craven, who drew the TAT pictures and worked throughout the Kpembe Study in Kpembe with me, was indefatigable, despite ill-health.

A quite special debt is owed to Shiata Bawah, who, since I first knew her in 1957, has been an unfailing source of support and always ready to share her deep understanding of Gonja life. Shiata and her husband John Bawah have contributed much to my understanding of the differences between eastern and western Gonja, and of the meaning of Gonja hospitality.

The long and complicated analysis of the Kpembe material was made possible by a grant from the Social Science Research Council (UK), which allowed me to employ Ilma Scantlebury and Nicola Tahaney (now Dr Hart). Thanks are due to both for their patience and skill, and particularly to Dr Hart who designed a number of the codes. The computer analysis was done with the help of Janet Spedding, now Dr Spedding, whose gifted assistance was most timely.

Debts to teachers and colleagues are equally numerous. I first talked about the framework for analysis of parent roles to Max Gluckman's Manchester semi-

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

nar, whose joint insistence that economic factors must be more important than I had allowed for sent me back to the data. I must record here that they were only partly right about the basis of Gonja fostering, but in the larger sense I must agree with them. Professors Meyer Fortes and Terry Turner read more recent versions of Chapter 1, and I profited much by their comments. The persistent faults are mine, however. Professor S. G. Lee gave generously of his time in suggesting approaches to the Kpembe projective material. Had I not been determined to attempt an analysis which focussed on shared experiences (age, parents' divorce, membership of a particular estate. . .) I would have made more use of his suggestions. Professor Gustav Jahoda took the time to read through the full length Kpembe Report, and I am most grateful for his thoughtful comments. Professor Jerry Kagan looked at Chapters 2 and 3 while I was putting the final manuscript together. I am grateful to him for pointing out a major methodological problem of which I had been unaware. It was at this stage too late to remedy it, but his comments confirmed the wisdom of not publishing the Kpembe study itself as a separate volume.

It is impossible to specify debts to those with whom one works closely over a long period, and so I can only say that the joint authorship of Chapter 4 with Jack Goody indicates in a very small way how much my thinking owes to his wide-ranging work on northern Ghana ethnography and in kinship theory. Christine Oppong's MA thesis on Dagomba childhood (1964) was the first detailed material on fostering in northern Ghana after my early work on the Gonja, and made it possible to see that fostering was of far wider significance, and subject to very different forms of institutionalization, than what might be found in any one society. Horace Miner's early study on Timbuctoo pinpointed the practice of placing of children with Mallams and craftsmen. Although I had read this before first going to Gonja, it was not until I began to look again at material on traditional states that I realized how seminal his observations were. Without the corpus of ethnography on the Hausa initiated by Mike and Mary Smith, Chapter 5 would not have been possible. Here I must also record my gratitude to Polly Hill and Ibrahim Tahir for discussions which deepened my understanding of Hausa society, and cleared up a number of misapprehensions. I have had several helpful conversations with Enid Schildkrout, who also made detailed comments on the Hausa analysis.

The studies reported in Chapter 6 were made possible by the help of Dr D. K. Fiwoo and Mr Emanuel Mends of the University of Ghana, Legon, and the skill and energy of Gladys Azu in organizing and carrying through the Krobo survey. I hope the publication of the material at last will make clear the size of my debt to them. The task of coding the data from the southern Ghana surveys was ably carried out by Dr Jeremy Eades. The analysis in Chapter 7 owes much to talks over the years with Dr Margaret Peil, whose generous permission to use unpublished data is most gratefully acknowledged. Discussions with my colleague Carol MacCormack about patterns of parenthood among the Sherbro with whom she

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)*Acknowledgements*

worked were particularly useful in gaining an impression of what might be called a situation of 'endemic fostering' on the Atlantic coast.

The study of West African student families in London was carried out in the field by Christine Muir (now Christine Groothues). She not only managed the survey phase in which a complicated sampling scheme required unusual patience of the interviewers, but herself conducted the interviewing over 18 months of the 20 families in the 'in depth' phase of the study. It is more her study than mine. The comparison with West Indian immigrant families was made possible by Dr M. T. Spens who arranged and supervised the interviewing. It also owes much to Margaret Sanford's dissertation on Child Keeping in British Honduras (see Sanford 1971 and 1975). The analysis is, however, my own, and so are the shortcomings.

Martha MacIntyre's editorial endeavours are gratefully acknowledged; she is not responsible for persistent infelicities.

Field research in 1956-7 was sponsored by the Ford Foundation's Foreign Area Fellowship Program. The Kpembe Study was jointly sponsored by the Wenner Gren Foundation and by the Child Development Research Unit of the University of Ghana, Legon. The coding and analysis of the Kpembe Study material was supported by the Social Science Research Council (UK), who also funded the London Immigrants study. The African Studies Centre at the University of Cambridge has repeatedly rendered assistance on bibliographic and other matters. A Fellowship year at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford in 1979-80 provided time to rethink the earlier work and write new chapters. Without the pause of this year, a book would never have emerged.

Chapters and parts of chapters have previously appeared in the following places:

Part of Chapter 1 as 'Forms of pro-parenthood: the sharing and substitution of parental roles'. In J. Goody (ed.), *Kinship: Penguin modern sociology readings*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex. 1971

Chapter 2 in P. Mayer (ed.), *Socialization: the approach from social anthropology*. Published by the Tavistock Press, London. 1970

Chapter 3 is based on the final chapters of *The Kpembe study: a comparison of fostered and non-fostered children in eastern Gonja*. Report submitted to the Social Science Research Council, London. 1970

Chapter 4, with J. Goody first appeared in *Man* (NS)2, 1967

Chapter 7 and Chapter 11 are partly based on 'The delegation of parental roles in West Africa and the West Indies', first published in T. R. Williams (ed.), *Socialization and communication in primary groups*. Published by Mouton, The Hague. 1975

Chapter 10 with Christine Muir Groothues as 'The West Africans: The quest for education'. In J. L. Watson (ed.), *Between two cultures*. Published by Blackwell, Oxford. 1977

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-04017-4 - Parenthood and Social Reproduction: Fostering and Occupational Roles in West Africa

Esther N. Goody

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

### *Acknowledgements*

Part of Chapter 12 appeared in 'some theoretical and empirical aspects of parenthood in West Africa'. In Christine Oppong *et al.* (eds.), *Marriage, fertility and parenthood in West Africa*. Published by Canberra University Press, Canberra, 1978

Appendix 1 is also drawn from *The Kpembe study*.

Grateful acknowledgement is made of permission to republish these here.