



## RECOMMENDED READINGS

‘Age and Gender in Hausa Society: Socio-Economic Roles of Children in Urban Kano’, by Enid Schildkrout, was originally published in *Age and Sex as Principles of Social Differentiation*, a 1978 anthology that has long been out of print. Based on 2 years of fieldwork with a Muslim group living in an urban area of northern Nigeria, the essay is organized around a series of startling insights and questions. Schildkrout observes that children ‘rarely enter descriptions of social systems’; and she proposes that they be understood ‘as children, not as the next generation’s adults’ – a challenge to the socialization paradigm that dominated 1960s and 1970s social science research on children. Reversing the familiar equation of children with dependence, the author asks: ‘What would happen to the adult world (other than its extinction) if there were no children? In what ways are adults dependent upon children? What is the significance of children in maintaining the relative status of men and women?’

Schildkrout (pers. comm.) began to realize the research potential of working directly with children during her first stint of anthropological fieldwork in Ghana in the 1960s. As a visiting anthropologist who experienced herself as a neophyte, she came to rely on children as patient and knowledgeable informants; and she began to muse, more generally, about adult dependence upon children. These ideas animated Schildkrout’s research on age, gender and divisions of labor among the Hausa in northern Nigeria. Married men earned income away from their households as butchers and artisans; married women upheld the Muslim religious institution of *purdah* and were largely confined to domestic compounds. Yet some of these women earned significant amounts of money by cooking food and embroidering hats, trousers, and bedsheets for sale. This was only possible with the help and cooperation of children, who purchased materials, and delivered and sold the final products at the market. Prepubertal daughters were especially active in this work, which was a way to save for their own marriages and economic security.

Schildkrout provides a nuanced analysis of relations between age and gender as principles of social organization. Among the Hausa, movement into adulthood entailed increasing separation between men and women in all non-sexual activities, but these boundaries were less important in the world of children; only children had the right to casually wander in and out of people’s houses. (Note that these arrangements – with children less confined in space than adults as well as participating in income-producing labor – help westerners *recognize* children’s agency.) The author discusses Hausa beliefs about the nature and growth of children, and the diverging activities and

positioning of girls and boys. She situates, and differentiates, Hausa constructions of 'the child', attending to chronological, relative and perceived age, and key points of transition.

When Schildkrout did her fieldwork in Nigeria, more and more children were enrolled in primary school, which removed them from active trading. This made it difficult for women to pursue independent economic activities, and, especially in the lower classes (who could not hire workers to substitute for absent children), destabilized the position of women within the institution of *pardah*. Thus Schildkrout highlights the shifting dynamics of age and gender. Within the next few years Enid Schildkrout hopes to return to Kano to do follow-up research with some of the 110 children whose activities she tracked on a daily basis in the mid-1970s.





# AGE AND GENDER IN HAUSA SOCIETY

## Socio-economic roles of children in urban Kano

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Enid Schildkrout is Curator for African Ethnology in the Division of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History; she is also an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University and at the City University of New York. She has studied the fostering of children in urban Ghana and written extensively on children's work and women's work among Muslims in Kano, northern Nigeria. She has also curated museum exhibits and published books and articles about African art and material culture. In recent years, Enid Schildkrout has returned to the study of children, working with Ghanaian immigrants, who come from families she knew in Ghana in the 1960s. She is especially interested in how these children learn about Africa and how they think about their identity in New York City.

In his formulation of the 'eight ages of man' Erik Erikson observed that 'the fashionable insistence on dramatising the dependence of children on adults often blinds us to the dependence of the older generation on the younger one' (1950, ed. ed. 1963: 266). More recently, the suggestion contained in this statement has become incorporated into a reorientation in the sociological, social-psychological and historical literature on childhood. Instead of the conventional emphasis on socialisation, increasing attention has been given, in the social sciences, to the interaction of children and adults, to the autonomy of the child's world, and to the relationship between culturally distinct definitions of childhood and socio-economic factors. In this paper I attempt to apply these concerns to a study of the role of children in Hausa society. The research on which this paper is based is, at the time of writing, still in progress.<sup>1</sup> It is concerned primarily with economic roles of Hausa children and the relationship between such roles and parental economic status. This paper, however, has a broader and more modest focus: it is an attempt to outline an approach to childhood and to apply this to the Hausa material. In studying Hausa children from a perspective somewhat at variance with the traditional socialisation approach, I hope to be able to formulate a description of aspects of Hausa society, focussing specifically on the relationship between age and gender as principles of social organisation.

The traditional view of socialisation sees adult behaviour, in the context of a society and culture, as an independent variable, based on fixed sets of rules, roles and modes of conduct which children must assimilate before they become significant social actors. The role of child is the role of learner;

sociologically, unless he is a 'delinquent', the child is passive. Thus, child culture is seen as a rehearsal for adult life and socialisation consists of the processes through which, by one method or another, children are made to conform – in cases of 'successful socialisation' or become deviants, in cases of 'failed socialisation'.

As has been pointed out (McKay 1973: 29), the very dichotomy adult/child has been borrowed from the common sense world of Western twentieth century culture and viewed as a theoretical formulation. 'Under the formulation of the world as a process of socialisation, children as a phenomenon disappear, and sociologists reveal themselves as parents writing slightly abstract versions of their own or other children' (*ibid.*: 28). The view of children as passive raw material for the grist-mill of socialisation does not derive from descriptions of children extant in the ethnographic literature (e.g. Bartels, 1975; Erikson, 1950; Fortes, 1938; Mayer, ed., 1970; Mead, 1928; Raum, 1940; Read, 1959; Whiting, 1963). However, many anthropological accounts omit certain questions because of their concern with socialisation, educational methods, and the relationship between culture and personality. As Aries (1962) and others note, this conception of the child is relatively recent even in the West. It has developed as children's participation in processes of production has become more and more irrelevant. We have, after all, passed from a period in which children performed important economic roles in small-scale production units based primarily on kinship, to a period of labour intensive industrialization in which children were exploited outside the kinship context as cheap labour,<sup>2</sup> to a period in which unemployment and a capital intensive industrial economy have made the contribution of children negligible in most economic sectors (but not all – e.g. fruit picking in the U.S.A.). The concept of childhood as a period of non-productivity has also developed as part of a reaction of moral indignation to the participation of children in nineteenth century industry. It has gone hand and hand with the development of formal educational institutions and the transfer of some of the responsibilities for child-rearing to the school. The prolongation of schooling itself has also removed children further from participation in most arenas of adult social life.

Thus while there has been an increasing concern with childhood as something distinct from adulthood, the emphasis on socialization has trivialized childhood as a social status. Children rarely enter descriptions of social systems, any more than they enter the system of production (although they do, of course, enter the economic system in an important sense, as consumers). Increasingly, however, the traditional socialization approach has come under criticism, particularly from those social scientists who take an interactionist approach, influenced in part by the theoretical orientation of phenomenology (see Dreitzel, McKay, O'Neill and Raffey in Dreitzel, ed. 1973; M.P.M. Prebais, ed. 1974; J. and E. Newson, 1974 for examples. See also White 1975, for a study of children's economic roles in Jaura.).

An interactionist approach is of interest for cross-cultural research since it enables us to suspend the presumption that adult culture, or even social structure and culture themselves, are independent variables. If one focusses on the interaction of people of different ages, all as dependent variables, without assuming that one group or the other 'makes the rules', one is *forced* to reexamine the society itself and study the significance of the participation of people of different ages. It then becomes possible to study the 'value of children' in sociological terms.<sup>3</sup>

In industrialized Western societies, fragmentation of institutions according to age has meant that interaction of persons of different ages occurs less and less frequently and is of diminishing social significance. The separation of institutional structures according to age – i.e. age segregated schools, geriatric homes, age homogeneous communities – has its own social and psychological import and is well worth critical evaluation (e.g. Illich, 1971). In those societies where this institutional fragmentation is absent or less marked it is important to look at the interaction of people of different ages and not simply the progression of the individual from one age class to the next. The relevant questions then are, for example: what would happen to the adult world (other than its extinction) if there were no children? In what ways are adults dependent upon children? What is the significance of children in maintaining the relative status of men and women? Why do people want or need children? Other questions concern imminent processes of socio-economic and cultural change.

For example, in those societies undergoing rapid industrialization and socio-economic change, what may be the effects of changes in the roles of children consequent to the introduction of universal Western education and prolonged institutionalization of children in schools? In what ways does industrialization itself threaten to alter the roles of children, and how will this affect the family and the social-psychological development of the child? While the last two questions are now being asked by historians of the Western family, little has been done to apply this perspective to contemporary developing economies, where quite different cultural conditions may affect the direction of change.

If we ask these kinds of questions and look at children as children, not as the next generation's adults, we open up the possibility of finding out a great deal about the society in question. Both children and adults can be studied as social actors, as independent and mutually interacting variables. We cannot assume that dependency goes only from younger to older and we cannot let such an assumption distort our approach. The social irrelevance of children in certain societies: the advanced industrial economies and among hunters and gatherers, as James Woodburn pointed out at this conference in reference to the Hadza, and their social significance in other societies, such as that of the Hausa, deserves our attention.

## Hausa Society

There is no way of giving a brief, yet complete description of a society as complex as that of the Hausa, and the reader is referred to the existing literature for further detail.<sup>4</sup> However, certain characteristics of the society of relevance to this discussion may be summarized.

Long before European contact at the end of the nineteenth century, Hausa society had become politically and economically complex. Even before the Jihad in the early nineteenth century, which established the political hegemony of the Fulani over the Hausa ruling class, long distance trade and economic specialization occurred alongside an agricultural economy which produced the basic means of subsistence as well as a number of exports, particularly cotton and leather goods. For centuries, the agricultural areas of Hausaland have been deeply involved in an economy based on trade and in the production of crops and craft items for sale in distant and local markets. The complex nature of this economy has led to considerable economic specialization and to the common practice of men being simultaneously farmers, craftsmen, and traders with more or less emphasis on one or the other occupation. This has been true in the rural areas – i.e. those of lower population density, where farming was, and is, the primary occupation, and also in the urban centres which were established by the eighth century.<sup>5</sup> Kano is now the largest of these centres and the most important commercial centre in northern Nigeria. Despite the effects of industrialization and Westernization, and the influx of southern Nigerians and foreigners, the old walled city of Kano is spatially, socially and culturally delimited within the metropolitan area. It still possesses many of its older characteristics; its population is almost entirely Muslim Hausa, and although culturally homogeneous, it exhibits patterns of economic specialization and socio-economic stratification which have their roots in the pre-colonial era (see Tahir 1976). The old city of Kano (estimated population in 1963–64 was 165,455 [cited in Paden 1973: 18] ) is divided into 127 administrative wards (the number having increased with successive local government reforms in this century), two of which provided the sample for this study. These wards are of somewhat different characters, depending upon their particular histories, the dominant occupations of their inhabitants, and their traditional political roles and statuses. Of the two wards in which the present study was conducted, in one most men were salaried civil servants, mainly in local government. Formerly these people were in varying degrees part of the traditional Fulani ruling class, and their connections to the traditional aristocracy are still of some social, cultural and political importance. They still hold offices in Kano Emirate, on the district, municipal and village levels (see Paden 1973: chapters 6 and 9). Although the Fulani assumed political control in Kano only in the early nineteenth century, the ward itself, like other parts of Kano city, was settled earlier. The original Hausa inhabitants have been

absorbed into the settled Fulani population (see Bashir 1972). The other ward studied was probably settled even earlier, long before the Fulani entry into Kano political history. The men are mainly artisans, butchers, and merchants, many in the cattle trade but nowadays also in businesses such as the importation of building materials, transport, and contracting. Although the inhabitants in these two wards may be described and describe themselves, as Fulani or Hausa, and although there are some cultural differences between them,<sup>6</sup> these are not so great as to affect the broad generalizations which follow. What is referred to henceforth as 'Hausa culture' refers to the culture of the Hausa native speakers in Kano city, regardless of ethnic distinctions between Fulani and Hausa. These may indeed for a very long time have been more of political than cultural significance. Given the increasing hegemony of national bureaucracies and Federal institutions over local ones, and the long term effects of mass education, one must indeed question whether the distinction will for long retain any significance at all.

Due to the economic complexity of traditional Hausa society, not to mention changes in this century, and the complex political history of the area, there are today multiple ways of evaluating status, of which ethnicity is only one and no longer the most important. Occupational status, in the traditional and modern sectors, wealth, education – both Islamic and Western, past and present political, economic and kinship connections, relative age, and gender all are important. The relative status of individuals is an issue of great significance in Hausa society, as is the etiquette of deference and respect which expresses this. While there are multiple status systems (see M.G. Smith, 1959, on male and female hierarchies), in actual situations rules will operate to define the priority of various aspects of status. Thus although their situational importance cannot be stated *a priori*, that is, outside a real context where they always interact with other components of status, two aspects of Hausa personal identity are always relevant: distinctions based on age and on gender. As in all other status hierarchies, the person in the superior position (in these cases the elder, or the male) commands respect, deference and obedience from the person in the inferior position. But this way of stating the matter is too simplistic, because age and gender, like other aspects of identity, never operate in isolation. For example, men can be stated categorically to be of higher status than women, but a male servant owes deference and respect to the wife or daughter of a man of high political rank. A mother, or almost any older woman, up to a certain point in time, has authority over young boys, and women in certain kinship positions will never lose the right to respect and deference from male relatives, although they do lose authority over them. While women, on the whole, must show respect to men, this is only enforceable (in the sense that sanctions are available) between husbands and wives. In fact, the respect relationship may be reversed when a woman (not a wife, for men never marry older women) is older than a man provided other factors, such as political status, are equal.

Thus, even in dealing with the relatively clearcut dimensions of age and gender, if one examines behaviour in real situations, simple hierarchical rules, while not irrelevant, will be affected by other aspects of status evaluation.

In the following sections I first set out some of the main characteristics of male and female roles within the Hausa family and then turn to age, and the significance of children in Hausa society. One of the main arguments of this paper is that 'sex roles' in Hausa society could not be defined as they are without children performing certain roles which are distinct from and complementary to adult roles. Children are crucial in maintaining the institution of *purdah* in certain economic classes, and in maintaining the present definition of female roles. Changes in the roles of children, consequent to such innovations as universal primary education, will have far reaching effects, not only on the children themselves, but on the whole structure of the Hausa family.

In pointing out the independence of the female status system from the male, M.G. Smith brought out the fact that there are many domains in which adult men and women are virtually autonomous.<sup>7</sup> Among adults, there is a very strong notion of modesty (*kunya*) which governs female deportment and male/female interaction. *Kunya* also refers to an avoidance relationship based upon respect associated with sexual relations, between a man and his affines, or even between a man and his wife or wives. It is particularly evident in the marriage ceremony, in the deportment of young spouses, and between parents and their first born children.<sup>8</sup> While adulthood implies sexuality and sexual activity, it also imposes strict limits upon the interaction of men and women in non-sexual contexts. This is, of course, expressed in and reinforced by the institution of *purdah*, which puts limits on both men's and women's spatial mobility. Women in *purdah* (the vast majority of married Hausa women in Kano city) do not generally leave their compounds except for the specific purpose of visiting relatives or close female friends, attending ceremonies for the occasions of births, marriages and funerals, or going for medical treatment or to visit the sick. Men also do not have free access in and out of each others' houses. Even kinship does not open the door, for a man would not normally enter the house of a younger married sister. He might, but probably only with the husband's permission, enter the home of an older married sister, but even then once both siblings are fully grown their statuses as male and female take precedence over the kinship relationship, and the man does not normally enter his sister's house (Cross-cousins, however, who are joking partners, may enter each others' houses regardless of age). Nor does a man feel free to enter the female section of his younger brother's house.

In general there is very little daily interaction between adult men and women in Hausa society, even between spouses, at least in the city where most men work away from their homes. Men eat separately from women,

often outside the house, where they share food with neighbours and friends. Men often go out in the evening, but rarely with their wives, and when married women go out, this too is without men. These patterns are beginning to change among the Western educated, but the traditional mode of deportment is still evident.

In naming ceremonies, marriages, and funerals, the activities of men and women are quite separate, although both are crucial to the completion of the ceremony. Among many people, particularly the Western educated, parties in which both men and women are present are becoming more common, but even on these occasions men often do not bring their wives. The marriage ceremony takes a week to perform and the portions relating to the bride and to the groom are held separately. Men, as a group – the friends of the groom, interact with women as a group – the friends of the bride, in certain rituals which clearly express this sexual opposition. For example, in the section of the marriage ceremony known as ‘selling *fura*’ the friends of the groom have to bargain with the friends of the bride to buy a symbolic calabash of *fura* – millet porridge. The money finally agreed on depends upon the status of the bride, including her age and education, and may come to several hundred Niara (one Niara is, as of February 1978, equivalent to 84 pence), which is then shared between the friends of the bride. These elaborate and protracted ceremonies are one of the major bridges between the male and female domains outside of actual marriage and it is particularly on these occasions that prospective spouses are sought and pursued.

Very few household tasks are performed jointly by men and women in Kano city, but there is a clear division of responsibilities according to gender. On the whole, men have very little contact with infants, although they do spend time with children, especially those under six years. Grandfathers and other men who may be home more often, spend considerable time playing with children in the entrances of their compounds. Men are responsible for providing a house, or room, food and clothing for their wives and children, and for paying school fees.<sup>9</sup> In fact, it is the capacity to meet these economic obligations and not simply reproductive capacity, which makes a man eligible for marriage.<sup>10</sup>

Some Kano residents have farms outside the city, but these are worked by hired labour. Women take no part in actual production in meeting the essential needs of the household (except in female-headed households or when the husband’s income is insufficient), although they often have of their own separate incomes. But these productive activities are clearly distinct from their conjugal roles: in cases, for example, where women cook food for sale, even the firewood is likely to be distinct from that used for the family cooking – the two domains are conceptually and functionally separate although credit, gifts and debt may operate between them. Within the family, women are responsible for cooking, daily in the case of monogamous households and in rotation in polygamous families. The evening meal is cooked at

home in most houses<sup>11</sup> but food in the afternoon is very often purchased with money given by the husband for this purpose. Women are responsible for caring for children and cleaning the house, but they receive help, both from outsiders (employees) and from children – the relative balance of help from these sources depending upon income. Laundering is a man's occupation and in most families washing and ironing, particularly of the husband's clothing, is given to a washman. Some families have paid household help consisting of Qu'ranic students (*almajiroi*) who do chores and errands in exchange for room and board; or divorced or widowed women, often from rural areas, who help with cooking, carrying water or minding infants. In many households some of the most arduous tasks associated with food preparation, such as pounding grain, are given out to women who do this for an income. Grinding machines have replaced much manual labour, and one of the daily tasks of many children is to take ingredients for grinding. Some husbands help with shopping while other men give their wives money for all purchases and the wives rely on hired help, or more commonly on children, for shopping. Many purchases can be made locally, from other houses, from small shops, and from children and unmarried women selling items from house to house. However, certain purchases inevitably require a trip to one of the large markets.

Women have the right to earn and control their own incomes as long as they do not violate the obligations of marriage including purdah. They obtain capital from many possible sources: from gifts from their husbands, parents, or siblings, from savings from house-keeping money (sometimes with the husband's knowledge), from spending money given by the husband, by borrowing, or, as a last resort, by selling part of their dowries. There are a limited number of economic activities open to women in purdah which do not require the assistance of children: pounding grain, hair plaiting, embroidering men's caps and trousers, embroidering bedsheets and horse trappings, sewing (on a machine if the woman has the capital), cooking food for sale, or trading from within the house. However, even these activities require assistance from people not in purdah, for purchasing materials, delivering and selling the final products. Women who are not in purdah have other options open to them including fetching water, working as housemaids, midwifery, trading – for themselves or as brokers for women in purdah, or prostitution. Although none of the women in the present study had businesses ranging in thousands of Niara, it should be born in mind that women do inherit property, including real estate, and that there are wealthy Hausa women involved in large scale trade (including the gold trade), and in transactions involving land, houses, and in organizing the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. This summary does not include salaried jobs, such as teaching or nursing, which are open to a very small but growing number of Western educated Hausa women.

Married women with children old enough to help them have a much

wider choice of occupations, particularly if the children can help through street trading, or *talla*. Women's occupational histories cannot be studied in isolation from their marital and child-bearing histories. Changes in occupations are correlated time and again with changes in the age, gender, and number of children available to women. The lack of child helpers is the most frequent reason for stopping a particular occupation. With children to market their produce, women sell cooked food outside their houses, and may invest in other commodities such as detergent, kola nuts, sugar, salt, fruit – just about anything that can be transported on a tray and sold in small quantities. Women need not necessarily rely on their own children, however. Some women foster relatives' children; others may employ Qu'ranic students; and some employ neighbouring children on a commission (usually ten percent) basis. The availability of children to help is correlated not only with choice of occupations, but also with income. Of the two wards studied, in one – the predominantly Fulani ward – many of the girls, and almost all of the boys, were in both Arabic and Western school, and not doing *talla*. There, women's occupations were mainly embroidering caps, and their incomes averaged only about ₦5 to ₦15 per month. In the other ward, where very few girls attended Western school, the children were actively engaged in street trading and the women's incomes were considerably higher, often double or triple the average for the other ward. The independent income of women serves as an insurance for divorce, which is frequent; it may supplement the income of the husband, if not for basic subsistence, then for the purchase of 'extras' including clothing for the woman and her children. But the incentive for women to engage in independent economic activity does not depend entirely on the husband's income. Even wealthy husbands ration the money they give their wives, and even among the more affluent, a woman's expenses often far surpass her allowance. Moreover, there are certain areas of female expenditure which men rarely contribute to at all: one consists of gifts given to other women, known either as *biki*, within the context of friendships which entail reciprocal gift-giving, or as *barka*, on the occasions of births. Gifts are also given to friends and to the daughters of friends and relatives at marriage. The other major area of expenditure has to do with the provision of dowry. This is in the form of furnishings (a bed, mattress, cupboard, pillow and sheets provided by the bride's father) and a collection of enamel bowls and dishes known as *kayan daki* (literally, things of the room), provided by the bride's mother. *Kayan daki* are important indicators of status, as well as being a form of savings for women (see Bashir 1972). They remain the property of the bride until she bequeaths them to her daughters, or otherwise disposes of them. The provision of *kayan daki* is directly related to the use of female children in trade. Except in the poorest families, where the child's economic activity contributes directly to subsistence, the profits of most girls' trading goes towards the purchase of this dowry. The cost of a set of *kayan daki* varies considerably depending upon

its size, but it is common for women to spend ₦300 to ₦500 for one set, and among the wealthy, as much as ₦1000 to ₦3000. For the less affluent this expense often far exceeds a year's income. Nevertheless, despite the importance of *kayan daki* to most Hausa women,<sup>12</sup> not all girls engage in street trading, for this depends upon the attitude of the parents, their income, and sometimes, on the inclination of the child.

### Children in Hausa Society

As discussed above, age is an important component of Hausa status, but this refers more to relative than to chronological age. Hausa society is still one in which traditions, both cultural and religious, are revered more than, or at least as much as, change. Wisdom is a quality which is felt to come from experience, and older people receive respect, deference and obedience from the young. The status attaching to seniority applies across the broad divisions of generations, but it is particularly relevant within the categories of child, adult and old person. Even among twins, birth order is significant and kinship terminology consistently differentiates between older and younger, male and female, siblings. Mothers know the chronological ages of their very young children, particularly in the first two months after birth when they must, for forty days (or fifty for first deliveries) take hot baths in a particular manner and observe a number of special prescriptions to regain their strength. With each successive birth a mother may lose track of the exact ages of her children, although if they were born close together she can usually calculate their age by computing the age of each child, in relation to the time elapsed since it was weaned, at the pregnancy of the next.

Many people do not know their chronological age, but they almost always know who, among close associates, is older. It is important for people to know who their age mates (*sa'a*) are, for only between age mates (and certain categories of kin)<sup>13</sup> can deferential behaviour be replaced by familiarity and equality. Among adults in many situations other components of status are more important than relative age in defining social relations. Among children, however, relative age and later, around puberty, gender,<sup>14</sup> are the most important aspects of social identity and are usually more important than other factors,<sup>15</sup> which gradually assume greater significance. Children learn the importance of relative age from adults and from other children. In relations between children, they are not particularly concerned with deference and respect, which they learn to show towards adults very early, but older children do demand (but not always command) obedience, delegate tasks, and attempt to discipline younger children. Play groups reflect the significance of age divisions very early, and by five years these further divide on the basis of gender.

Although lack of space precludes a detailed discussion of ante-natal customs and the details of infant care, a number of points about the attitude

to infants and child development may be made (see also Trevitt 1973). Some Kano Hausa women deliver their babies in hospitals and clinics, particularly the first birth, but many deliver at home with the help of female relatives or a mid-wife. The notion of *kunya* discourages a woman from discussing her pregnancy or labour with others and it is common for a woman who lives in a small compound to deliver alone, sending for the midwife after the delivery. Almost immediately after the birth the mother begins receiving female visitors who hold the baby, admire it, and particularly on the third day, the day of *barka*, or greeting, bring gifts for the mother and child. During the first week the child is given a name. The selection of the name, *huduba*, is done by the father who by the third day (sometimes the fourth for girls), whispers the name to the malam. The formal naming ceremony, in which the malam publicly announces the name, occurs on the seventh day.<sup>16</sup>

During pregnancy, in her post-natal baths, and during the period of breast feeding, the mother uses a number of medicines to ensure her health and the child's, a successful delivery, and healthy milk. The traditional medicines, now often supplemented by those prescribed in modern hospitals, are in two forms: *laya* (pl. *layu*), charms made from inscriptions of Arabic texts, mainly the Qu'ran, bound in leather or from objects such as shell or animal tails, and herbal medicines. Besides ensuring physical health, some are to protect the child against the jealousy of others, to protect against witchcraft, to ensure popularity, to ensure that a daughter attracts many suitors, to ensure that the child develops an honourable character, and many other things. Childbirth and infancy are recognized as dangerous periods in which all types of medicinal and spiritual protection are needed.

On the third day after birth, most fathers call the *wanzam*, or barber (traditionally the specialist who does all sorts of cutting operations, including circumcision) to perform the excision of the uvula (*beli*). On females, part of the labia minora (also called *beli*) is removed as well.<sup>17</sup> This operation, although performed soon after birth, is part of the preparation for marriage in that it is said to facilitate sexual intercourse and make it more pleasurable for women.

The child is born without a definite character, although the birth of a Muslim child is a promise to Allah that the person will become a worthy Muslim. Parents are criticized for spoiling their children by being too indulgent (after infancy) or by setting bad examples. A number of proverbs express the attitude towards character building in childhood: 'character is like writing on a stone' and 'a stick should be bent when it is raw'. When a child grows, physical and characterological resemblances between it and its parents may be noted, but there is a strong sense in which upbringing is regarded as crucial in shaping a child's behaviour. This is so even though on another level of awareness people attribute many major events to fate, to the will of Allah, and to the mystical intervention of spirits or of humans.<sup>18</sup>

The period of infancy is said to last five months and is terminologi-

cally differentiated. The terms for male infant, *jinjiri* and female infant, *jinjiniyya*, are replaced at about the time the child can sit, with the terms for boy, *yaro* and girl, *yarinya*. During infancy the child is almost never separated from its mother. Until forty days after birth neither the child nor the mother leaves the house, except to go for medical care, or, in the case of girls, for ear piercing. At the end of the forty day period, the mother, if she can afford it, announces the completion of her ritual bathing by distributing rice and wheat cakes to other women in her compound and to close relatives and friends. Similar gifts are again distributed by the mother when the child first sits, and when it begins to walk.

Children are said to begin to develop intelligence, awareness or cleverness (*wayo*) during infancy. A child who discriminates between breast and bottle and rejects the latter is said to have *wayo*. This quality does not necessarily develop from experience or from the process of learning, but it refers to the child's capacity to mature and learn on its own. Each new accomplishment is approvingly noted by adults and older children. When a child begins to talk it is taught new words, and its mistake may be laughed at, but adults never use 'baby talk' to speak to children. Older children and adults set examples and young children follow them by being eager and accepted participants in group life. In fact, the term for imitate and the term for learning derive from the same root, *koyo*.<sup>19</sup> Once the hurdle of weaning is over, children appreciate and enjoy the freedom and mobility of childhood, and younger children are as eager as their parents are for them to join the world of those older than themselves. Once children are about seven they are expected to be able to do things on their own, assume responsibility, and carry out tasks independently.

In addition to *wayo* Hausa children are said to develop wisdom (*hikima*) and creativity (*dabara*) quite early. A four year old who shaves a large stick to fit it into a small hole is said to be demonstrating *hikima*, while older girls who invent new embroidery designs, or boys who build airplanes and cars out of millet stalks or old tin cans, are demonstrating *dabara*.

By about seven years, children are said to develop *hankali*, understanding or sense.<sup>20</sup> Before age six or seven, children rarely are said to have *hankali*, and boys are said to attain this, as well as other characteristics of maturity, later than girls, partly because girls are 'constantly exposed to their mothers'. By seven, both boys and girls should have *hankali*. Unlike *wayo*, this develops from experience, although not from direct teaching. It relates to – among other things – the beginning of an understanding of correct behaviour associated with gender. Boys are usually circumcised in the harmattan, or cold season of their sixth year, although traditionally the age was later, nine for the Hausa and seven for the Fulani, and today it is occasionally done earlier, even in infancy. By the traditional age of male circumcision, both boys and girls are supposed to understand some of the rules of avoidance between males and females. The boy is a 'grown up child' and he

knows he cannot sleep near his mother. Girls can still sleep near their mothers, but not where their father sleeps. For both, *hankali* implies the ability to discriminate between actions that are morally good and those that are bad. This understanding is said to develop with and be part of the understanding of the significance of male/female differences. The strictness with which this avoidance behaviour between the sexes is enforced among children varies from family to family, and from village to city. Many parents watch the movements of their daughters closely, and the daughters are often kept more busy and given less freedom than the sons.

After circumcision, and generally about the time that *hankali* develops, children are expected to show much more independence and responsibility. Once a child has reached this stage, punishment for misbehaviour may be more severe than earlier, for the child is expected to understand the purpose and meaning of discipline. Corporal punishment, in moderation, is felt to be educational, but too much is felt to be counter-productive, in that the child gets used to it and simply ignores it. After circumcision, a boy is expected to be able to stay away from his parents, for example to follow a malam to another town for education. Kinship fostering for both boys and girls also often begins at this age, except in cases of crisis fostering – that following divorce or the death of a parent.

Another important Hausa character trait *kunya*, or modesty, is also developed in childhood. Before age four, children do not know about *kunya*, but by this age they are expected to begin learning gender specific behaviour associated with the expression of *kunya*. Girls, for example, are supposed to wear clothing and sit in such a way as to cover their thighs. The most commonly heard reprimand, said even to infants who are not expected to understand (although the adults around do note such rhetorical statements) is *maras kunya*, which can be roughly translated as ‘without shame’ or ‘without modesty’. But this is a mild reprimand; it does not communicate the idea that the child has done anything for which he or she would be punished, but rather that he or she should know better and should exercise self-control. Thus a four year old girl was told ‘maras kunya’ when she tugged on her mother’s breast. The mother laughed as she said this, and the child protested and laughed at the same time (she had long since been weaned but was the youngest of eight children). The expression is used to correct what is felt to be regressive behaviour, and it is also used in teaching certain specific manners such as eating with the right hand, or in toilet training (a noticeably untraumatic process – see also Dry, 1949).

The major trauma in the life of most Hausa children is weaning, particularly if this is immediately followed by another birth. Until weaning, the child is given the breast on demand and when the mother feels the need to breast feed. By five months, other foods are added to the diet, and breast feeding becomes less frequent as the child grows, but it does not cease until formal weaning (*yaye*) has taken place. Boys generally are weaned at seven-

teen to eighteen months and girls at twenty to twenty-one months. The earlier age for boys is said to be because of *karatu*, reading. The sooner they are made independent from the mother, the sooner they are ready to start attending Qu'ranic school. Also, too much milk is said to be bad for their memories and an impediment to learning. It is important that a child should be weaned soon after it can walk, for if another birth follows right after, the child can then join the group of older children, in and around his or her own compound. Most children are physically removed from the mother's presence for one week, from one Friday to the next. The woman who cares for the child in this period may be the maternal grandmother, or another woman of her generation. During the *yaye* the child is given various medicines to ensure its strength and to help it forget the breast. In fact, if there is no new birth, some children continue to reach for the breast (this is one of the privileges of the *auta*, the last born). Most mothers are fairly indulgent about this behaviour although they do not encourage it. For the child who is displaced by another birth,<sup>21</sup> the transition may be more difficult. These children may be morose and sullen for a short time, but they soon become absorbed into the older sibling group and begin to enjoy the freedom and mobility characteristic of Hausa childhood.

Hausa children enjoy a freedom that no other group in the society commands – the right to wander in and out of people's houses. Children are not expected to observe formal greeting behaviour, and they casually walk into the houses of neighbours, relatives, friends and even strangers, to look for playmates, to make purchases, to offer things for sale, or to carry messages. There are many important implications of this including the educational experience the children gain by observing many facets of the society that they will be excluded from as adults. All children, even when they come from small families,<sup>22</sup> can join a large group of children their own age and older, consisting of siblings, cousins, neighbours and schoolmates. Within this children's world, older children do a great deal of direct and indirect teaching of younger ones. Given the restrictions on the spatial mobility of adults, this is a vitally important part of Hausa traditional education.

Parents also specifically delegate the care of young children to older ones. Until about the age of seven or eight, children are not usually allowed to carry babies on their backs or pick them up. However, as soon as they can walk, children act out the carrying of babies. Until about age four both boys and girls can be seen carrying plastic dolls, cushions, bits of firewood, or just about any object they can find, on their backs in the manner in which women and older children carry babies. Boys generally cease this form of play by about four years, but girls continue until they are entrusted with the real responsibility which they assume with pleasure and pride. By nine and ten, boys and girls will be entrusted with the care of young children, including infants. Older children bathe younger ones, play with them, and take them when they do errands. Young children who can walk accompany their

older siblings to Arabic school. There the children sit with their age mates and the malam gives each age group lessons according to their capability.

By the time a girl marries, then, she has already had considerable experience with many aspects of child care. However, caring for young children is only one of the many tasks which children perform for adults in Hausa society. In the next section, the distribution of rights over children, and the nature of the services children perform for adults are discussed.

The Hausa kinship is cognatic, but with a strong patrilineal emphasis. Women are said to bear children 'for their husbands' and in cases of divorce, any children already weaned remain with the husband or someone he delegates. In fact, men sometimes allow one female child to remain with the divorced wife, but they are not obliged to do this. Fostering is common and occurs mainly between relatives; a child's older married sibling, a parent's (usually father's) sibling, a grandparent, a father's wife other than the mother (particularly after the divorce or death of the mother) and occasionally more distant relatives or non-relatives, such as malams, are delegated the responsibility of raising the child. The term *riko* refers to raising someone else's child, while a *mariki* (male) and *marikiya* (female) may be distinguished from a *mahaiji* (genitor) and *mahaijiya* (genitress). The biographies of many children, particularly those whose parents are divorced or deceased, include several changes of residence and caretakers. Note that fostering of this type is not to be confused with adoption, which if it occurs at all, is rare except in cases when both parents are deceased (see Schildkrout 1973). Parents do not give up all rights in their children, nor do children give up all claims upon their parents, although responsibility for caring for children and rights to children's services may be delegated.

Rights over children's services belong with its parents and or guardian but all other relatives, and many other adults living in the same compound, or even neighbourhood, may use the services of a child, for limited tasks, without asking permission of the parents. Even strangers ask children to do errands, however, although when there is no relationship to the child, the adult will reward the child with a gift (*lada*) of a small amount of money. Thus, even given restrictions based on adult status, there may be dozens of adults who have rights to the services of a child. In the same way, adults other than a child's parents may discipline children. Adults have these rights by virtue of being adults, not by virtue of being parents. Children, on the other hand, are taught very early to obey the orders of adults, and they almost never directly refuse to do what is asked of them. They may, however, devise numerous means of non-compliance, such as claiming that another adult has already co-opted their time, or simply leaving the scene and ignoring the command.

Although rights over children are, in the formal sense noted above, vested with fathers, it is mothers, and women in general, who have the greater use of their services, simply because women and children spend most

time together. Were this not the case, women, except in the wealthier families, where paid labour can replace the services of children, could not remain in *purdah* and carry out their domestic responsibilities, not to mention their independent economic activities. It should be noted that the restriction of child participation to the female domain relates to the fact that Kano city is an urban setting with most men working away from their homes, and many children attending both Arabic and Western schools.<sup>23</sup> In farming families children are likely to be given more tasks to perform in association with men such as weeding, minding animals, and carrying farm produce. However even in Kano city, the large markets are filled with children, girls doing *talla*, and boys, about eleven and twelve, who are not attending primary school, who accompany their fathers to market to learn their trade.

In Kano city both male and female children grow up, at least until about age twelve, primarily under the authority of women. Numerous household tasks are performed by children, and the degree to which these are gender specific depends to some extent upon the number, ages and gender of the children available to help. Certain tasks, such as sifting flour, or virtually anything to do with food preparation, are done by girls, but if there are no girls available boys may be called in to help (although they may be ridiculed by other children). Girls more often mind younger children, but boys may also do this, in which case there is no ridicule, for men also play with children. Boys more often take out refuse, but both boys and girls shop, take food for grinding, fetch water, carry goods and messages, and sell food. Girls more frequently accompany women out at night, bathe younger children, wash dishes and sweep. Both boys and girls wash their own clothes. Thus, although differences in gender are not absolutely crucial in determining the allocation of tasks to children, certain spheres of activity are defined as male and female, and children gradually fit into this. Once gender becomes a determinant of the assignment of roles, the transition to adulthood has occurred.

I have noted that gender is not crucial in determining the tasks that children perform for adults. However, in interaction among children, it becomes increasingly important from about age seven. In play, children often imitate adult roles, which are inevitably gender specific. Thus little girls spend a lot of time 'cooking' with mud and sand; boys build tiny cars and airplanes, engage in sports and games which test strength, physical endurance and tolerance of pain. Boys gamble (often for food or playing cards) and nowadays play cards, while girls play clapping and singing games. The play of boys is, in general, much more competitive and aggressive than that of girls.

As pointed out above, adult female dependence on children is apparent not only in the domestic sphere but also in women's independent economic activities. Many men object to their daughters doing street trading, or *talla*, and in some families *talla* is specifically forbidden. In one of the two wards

studied, where most of the men were in salaried government jobs, most of the girls were in both Arabic and Western school and there was a strong feeling on the part of the men against their daughters doing *talla*. In the other ward, where the men were traders, butchers or artisans, most girls were doing *talla* and attending only Arabic school. In some cases women send their daughters to trade over their husband's objections. One, for example, sent her four year old, and explained. She said that until the child was of school age, she had 'nothing to do' at home, and moreover, the small income would help. Older girls, although they risk being 'spoiled' before marriage, also attract prospective husbands in this way. This is a major reason why some parents encourage it. They realize, too, that children learn many valuable skills by trading, in making mathematical calculations, in learning about trade, and in dealing with people.

There is some evidence, from the life histories of adult women, that the prevalence of children doing *talla* has increased in the past twenty years in Kano, perhaps as the scale of women's independent economic activities or even the institution of *purdah* itself, has increased. At the same time, the massive enrolment of children in primary school is increasingly removing children from trade. Whether or not a specific child does *talla* depends on many factors, but in particular on the economic position of the family, their attitude towards Western education for girls, and the mother's occupation. Girls in fatherless families inevitably help their mother by trading, either for the purpose of providing money for subsistence or in preparation for their own marriages. In Kano, boys who have left their families in rural areas as they have followed a malam to the city may do *talla* on a straight commission basis in order to support themselves. They also do other work such as cleaning gutters, carrying loads and begging.

All children become highly involved in the cash economy very early. Besides their participation in it for adults – shopping and selling – they also participate in what might be termed a 'children's economy'. Children have their own money, from school allowances given them daily for the purchase of snacks, from gifts, from work they may have done for strangers, and from their own investments. Most children regard the economic activity they do for profit, such as *talla*, as work done for themselves, even though they may hand over the money to adults for safe-keeping. Besides doing chores for adults, boys make toys for sale, and they rent out valued property (such as slide viewers or bicycles). By the age of ten many girls begin to practice cooking. They do not help very much in the preparation of the family food, for this is strictly the wife's responsibility, but they do sift flour, wash dishes, and help with other tasks. By age twelve many girls help their mother's in all stages of preparing food for sale. By ten, many girls cook food for sale on their own. With initial help from their mothers, or other adult female relatives, who may give them a cooking pot, charcoal, or a small stove, they purchase small amounts of ingredients and prepare various snack foods. These

are then sold in very small quantities to other children. As the sellers will sell for less than the price of any item of food sold by an adult woman, and as the quantities are extremely small, the customers are mainly children. These child sellers extend credit to other children, which is usually honoured. In one case an eleven year old girl began doing *talla* but did not enjoy it and rarely made any profit. In fact she began losing money and went into debt to her grandmother in order to pay back her mother's original investment in the goods she was supposed to sell. After some time, she began to sell miniature *waina* to children and in four months she made enough money to buy herself a new dress and begin saving for a pair of shoes (the mother was divorced and she and the daughter were self-supporting).

All children are expected to gradually assume more and more responsibility in performing socially significant tasks which are complementary to tasks performed for adults. Many tasks are delegated to children, and some can be performed only by children, or by other persons who for one reason or another, are not bound by the 'normal' adult roles of husband and wife. This includes domestic servants, elderly women, and divorced women who are not in *purdah*. However, it should be noted that children's roles are to some extent dependent upon the economic status of their parents, particularly their fathers. In Kano city, the income producing work of most men is done away from the home, and most children grow up as economic dependents, contributing little or nothing, directly, to subsistence. With the increase in time spent in formal educational institutions, children are in fact becoming more dependent, for longer. However, even when children are dependent, when their 'cost' exceeds their productive capacity, the errands and household chores they perform are still of economic significance, for were there no children to perform these tasks, hired labour would be required. In this sense, except in families where hired labour does in fact replace children for tasks such as shopping, taking errands, and minding young children, children's roles, even when non-income-generating are economically significant. Moreover, there are, in Kano city, children who are partly responsible for their own subsistence – the *almajirai*, or Qu'ranic students who often live with malams away from their families (who often are in rural areas), and children of very poor families, sometimes in female-headed households. Other children, while not responsible for supporting themselves, still generate income which is part of their preparation for adulthood. Many boys provide the expenses for their weddings, after they become self-supporting and capable of supporting their own families. Girls who do *talla* contribute to their dowries. Thus growing up is not a transition from being an unproductive member of society to becoming a productive one. In Kano city, children participate in socially and economically significant activities as children, gradually assuming greater responsibilities and more independence from their parents. At the same time, they gradually observe certain modes of behaviour that socially mark them as fully adult, for example, performing

greetings properly, praying regularly and, in the case of boys, attending mosque, and most important, avoiding frivolous contact, in public, with the opposite sex.

The symbolic transition from childhood to adulthood really comes about when the freedom to move inside and outside houses, between the male and female domains, is restricted. This transition is associated with the full assumption of adult sex roles, and it occurs somewhat differently for boys and for girls. Until puberty, both boys and girls live primarily in the sphere of women, although they may move in both domains (very obviously spatially delimited in Kano). For girls, the transition to adult status occurs at marriage which ideally coincides with sexual maturation, specifically reproductive capacity. Marriage for girls takes place generally between twelve and sixteen, but sometimes as young as ten, and sometimes particularly among girls receiving Western education, later.<sup>24</sup> At marriage, all girls move into their husband's house. This may or may not be with the husband's parents, who, in first marriages especially, are often relatives – for a large proportion of first marriages are between cross-cousins. If a girl is married as early as ten, she may not cook for her husband or have sexual relations with him for some time, but she enters *purdah* and loses the freedom associated with childhood.

For boys, the transition to adulthood does not immediately involve marriage, for a boy rarely marries until he is economically productive, often in his late twenties or older (although this varies with the economic status of the father particularly for first marriages). However, although he does not immediately marry, after puberty a boy must move out of the sphere of women into the world of men. Boys whose fathers are traders or artisans may apprentice themselves to their fathers or to other adult men by age eleven or twelve. But even those going to school and planning on higher education spend less and less time at home after puberty. The process of separation begins by age ten. A boy of this age refuses to eat with his sisters and carries his food outside to share it with his male friends. He spends more and more time outside, reporting in from time to time to see if the women have errands or chores for him. And the women depend on him less and less for performing household chores; younger children or female children of the same age will more and more take over the chores the boy performed previously.

Adulthood means separation, even avoidance, between male and female in all non-sexual activities, while childhood is a period in which these boundaries are not important. Children in fact are the only persons entirely free to cross the boundaries between the male and female domains. Until they develop sense, *hankali*, they are not expected to understand the full significance of these boundaries, but once they do understand they are expected to demonstrate this understanding through behaviour exhibiting the

quality of *kunya*, modesty. If children were not free to cross the boundaries between the male and female domains, women, quite obviously, could not take the major responsibility for raising all of their children, male and female. For boys it is important to note as well that being a child implies being jurally and economically dependent, and being under the authority of adults, male and female. But as men in Hausa society, although they may in some respects remain under the authority of men of higher status than themselves, they cannot remain under the authority of women. Inevitably, then, the transition to manhood means moving out of the domain of female authority, into the world of men, and ultimately into the relationship of marriage, where male dominance is as yet unchallenged.

At this point one may enquire as to the extent to which Western education is changing the role of the Hausa child, and the roles of adults who interact with children. Hausa children have been attending formal schools, in Qu'ranic studies and Arabic, for several centuries and continue to do so. In the North of Nigeria, Western education has been slow to take hold on a large scale mainly because of a colonial policy which, for a number of complex political reasons (Hubbard 1975; Hiskett 1975) discouraged the establishment of schools in the region. Since much early Western education was indeed Christian education it engendered resistance among the educated Muslims. The British, in order to preserve the special political relationships they had built up in the North, catered to the most conservative of these interests, which included not only the religious leaders, but also the traditional aristocracy which was less than enthusiastic about mass non-Islamic education. Moreover, the traditional educational system in the North provided judges (*alkalis*) and scribes in sufficient numbers to run the administration and the courts. Therefore, given the resistance to Christian mission schools, the colonial government was able to carry on without investing heavily in education. The result of this policy was an increasing imbalance in the extensiveness of Western education in the former three regions of Nigeria (now superseded by the nineteen states). With the intention of correcting this imbalance, the present Federal Military Government has embarked upon a program of universal free primary education (known as U.P.E.) aimed at full enrollment at the primary level by 1982.

The number of children in school has indeed increased in the North, although it is still relatively low in rural areas and lower for girls than for boys. Between 1968 and 1975 the number of primary school children more than tripled in Kano State, and this was before the massive enrolment campaign associated with the U.P.E. program. In the same period, while the number of girls in school has tripled, the enrolment of boys has almost quadrupled, and there were still in 1975/76, more than three times as many boys as girls in primary school (*Educational Statistics for Kano State 1975-76*). In Kano metropolitan area, in 1975-76, approximately one out of

three boys was in primary school (106,792 out of 647,229 school age children – both sexes) while only approximately one out of six girls attended school (45,205).

For the purpose of this paper, I will restrict this discussion to a number of observations on the changes that Western education makes in children's roles, and the effects of this on the family, omitting any comment on the significance of Western education for the individual child's future, or on the problems, foreseen by many, of a rapid expansion of primary education in the context of an economy which may not be able to offer continuing education on a large scale or absorb the products of the educational system in meaningful employment.

Since the vast majority of Hausa children continue their Arabic education while attending primary school, they are now busy, almost full time, with formal education. This explains the resistance on the part of some parents to Western education, for it deprives them of the presence of their children. This objection depends upon other factors, for men with salaried jobs are less likely to miss their children's daily presence than are men who are farmers, traders or artisans – men who traditionally would have handed down their skills and their assets to their sons. Since more boys than girls are attending school another consequence is that the burden of household tasks performed by young girls has increased, and the interchangeability in the allocation of tasks to boys and girls below a certain age, noted above, is becoming less noticeable. Among children, and adults, to the extent that Western education is more a prerogative of males than of females, it adds a further dimension of inequality to the relationship between men and women.

In Kano city, I have noted that in those neighbourhoods where the majority of children are in school, one notes that it becomes more difficult for married women to pursue independent economic activities. Their incomes are lower, and their position within the institution of *purdah* is more difficult. While women do manage to get their household tasks performed, by employing the services of children in non-school hours, and by employing those children who do not attend school, the children are kept very busy (with little time for studying) and the women are able to use them only for the most essential tasks. Without children around, women in *purdah* are more cut off from information and communication with the outside world. In families where paid labour can be employed to assist in household tasks, adults are not as dependent on children and women do not suffer as much from the loss of their services. Nevertheless, unless they have a great deal of capital, their independent economic activities are likely to be curtailed. Western education, then, besides changing the opportunities for and roles of children, also in a very direct and practical way challenges the position of women within the institution of *purdah*, particularly in the lower classes. While very few people object to what are perceived as the long term benefits of Western education, such resistance as there is (and it is not as great as has

been made out), is very often based upon those very realistic appraisals of its immediate socio-economic consequences.

In summary, this paper has stressed that in studying children it is important to take a perspective in which one views children and adults as complementary participants in the social system. In Hausa urban society, although most children do not play a significant role in providing basic subsistence, they are crucial in social structural terms: the social, economic and political definition of adult roles, particularly those based on gender, cannot be understood without taking account of the roles of children. In Hausa society, in all but the wealthiest and most non-traditional families, certain tasks are inevitably relegated to children, for adults cannot perform them, limited as they are by the social definition of gender. The Hausa child does not simply imitate adult behaviour in rehearsal for adult life. Childhood is qualitatively different from adulthood, for the child does not have to observe many of the rules that regulate the behaviour of adults. The suspension of these rules is a crucial part of the learning process, for it gives the child particularly the boy, whatever insight and understanding he may later have of the lives of women.

## Notes

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2. Also, children's small fingers were those best suited for operating early textile machinery, while their small bodies were 'ideal' for cleaning chimneys.
3. With few exceptions, the emphasis in most of the 'value of children' studies is demographic, concerned with the issue of population growth and limitation.
4. There is a large bibliography relating to the Hausa, including numerous works in Arabic and Hausa, cited in the bibliographies of Tahir (1976) and Paden (1973), works related to economics cited in Hill (1972), and items regularly noted in the bibliography of the journal *Savanna* published by Ahmadu Bello University. Works related specifically to this paper include: Adamu (1976); Barkow (1972); Bashir (1972); Dry, E. (1949); Dry, D.P.L. (1950, 1953); Greenberg (1946); Hill (1969, 1972); Jaggar (1973); Madauci, Isa, Daura (1968); Mortimore and Wilson (1965); Paden (1970, 1973); Palmer (1928); Smith, M.F. (1965); Smith, M.G. (1952, 1959, 1962, 1966); Tahir (1976); Trevitt (1973); Trevallion (1966).
5. See Paden (1973: 46) and Palmer (1928, iii, pp. 100-1) cited in Hodgkin (1975: 92).
6. For example, details of the marriage ceremony differ. There is also a greater emphasis on the notion of *kunya* among the Fulani, and possibly a greater emphasis on patrilineality and first-child avoidance.
7. I would also suggest that as a result of this Hausa women do not develop the psychological dependence on men typical of Western women. However, the areas in which they are able to exercise this independence are severely limited.
8. Dry (1950: 103) suggests that the notion of *kunya* as applied to the first-born child is an extension of its importance for a young married couple, where the greatest modesty must be

shown in all matters related to sexuality. This, he suggests, is done so that the young couple will not seem too eager to advance quickly vis-a-vis the older generation.

9. In Qu'ranic schools this consists of *kudin laraba* (money of Wednesday), a nominal fee of about 10 kobo (8.4 pence) per week, and gifts to the malam depending upon the father's status and income.

10. According to Dr. Ibrahim Tahir (personal communication) the age of marriage for both men and women has lowered considerably in recent years. In the last century, as today, however, the affluent married earlier than others.

11. Except in those houses where food is received from patrons or more affluent relatives, or in those in which the husband is absent and the wife is helped by relatives or friends.

12. Western educated women also have *kayan daki* but its content is changing to include more dishes and fewer enamel and brass bowls. Formerly, calabashes were used.

13. Joking partners, cross-cousins and grandparents and grandchildren, but in the latter case the authority that comes with age is not entirely absent.

14. Dry (1953: 40) observes that 'in childhood authority is conferred by age not sex, and girls give orders to boys younger than themselves . . . The unmarried girl is not obliged to observe respect to younger adult males, especially if they are not married.' However, I would note that since girls marry around age twelve, and since boys are thought to mature later than girls, these younger males would not be regarded as adult.

15. The major exception noted so far was the ostracism and bullying applied to one boy whose mother was not married and who was said to be a prostitute. Increasingly, status differences among children based on Western school attendance are noted. The ways in which school-attenders and non-school-attenders spend their time is so different, that the division among children is inevitable. Also, they do not fail to note the future status differences education may lead to.

16. If a child dies before the naming ceremony, it is buried, a prayer said, but no funeral held.

17. This is not always done (but usually is in Kano city, and may be limited to people from certain areas of Hausaland. In the literature reference is made to clitoridectomy, but I have some doubts as to whether this was practiced, even in the past. The description of 'cutting' may have been mistakenly translated as clitoridectomy.

18. Spirit possession, as institutionalized in the *bori* cult, remains from pre-Islamic Hausa religious beliefs (see Greenberg, 1946; Tremearne, 1914). Humans are thought by many people to be able to cause harm either through witchcraft or through the maleficent use of Islamic charms.

19. The word for imitate is *kwaikwaiyo*, a reduplicated form of *koyo*, to learn.

20. It is interesting to note that these Hausa concepts correspond closely with the developmental stages outlined by Piaget (1967). *Hankali*, at age seven, corresponds with the stage at which Piaget says children develop a sense of morality, and *kunya*, at about age four, corresponds with the stage at which Piaget says children understand the notion of respect.

21. The traditional period of post-partum abstinence is eighteen months to two years, but in reality it is often less.

22. There is a great range in family and household size, from the three person 'nuclear family' to large polygamous families and extended families living in a single compound of up to one hundred persons or perhaps more among the very rich.

23. In Hausa, both Arabic school and 'Western school' are known as *makaranta*, distinguished as *makarantar Arabia* and *makarantar boko*. This dualism in the educational system of the north is a result of the imposition of the Western education on a highly developed and formal traditional educational system. Attempts are being made by the educational authorities to unify the system. The Islammiyya schools, in fact, are government approved schools which combine the curriculums of the two types of education.

24. In recent years there has been a campaign launched on the part of the Kano State Government to discourage early marriage.

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