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12-2008

### What Benefits Do Parents Reap from Helpers at the Nest?

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phases on differences/similarities color our choice of taxonomy or vice versa.

It is also worth stressing that this is a book for the reference shelf, not the nightstand or backpack. Read straight through, cover to cover, it is highly redundant, even within chapters. But this redundancy is intentional, and the authors allow each section to stand on its own.

Those looking for insights on Dian Fossey or historical accounts of the early days at Karisoke will not find them here (but instead see Weber and Vedder 2001). That said, the book is peppered with accounts from the field reminding the reader that Harcourt and Stewart's knowledge comes from firsthand (and in some cases simply first) observations. I was amused by their mention of how it always came as a surprise to them when a female transferred out of a group, or how some gorillas (e.g., Fuddle) had baffling personalities, a reminder that interindividual variation must always be considered.

For primate socioecologists, especially those studying great apes (comparisons with chimpanzees and bonobos are made throughout), this book is a fabulous, indeed probably necessary, resource. But its greatest value will no doubt be in capitalizing on the broad public interest in gorillas and, in the process, attracting a new audience to the field of socioecology.

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## What Benefits Do Parents Reap from Helpers at the Nest?

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*Maya Children: Helpers at the Farm*. By Karen L. Kramer. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Whether children are net producers or consumers in traditional societies is a question that has long interested scholars of anthropology, economics, and demography. Axiomatic to discussions of this issue in peasant societies is the notion that subsistence farming demands large households to meet labor requirements. One way to meet the labor demands of farming systems is to maintain high fertility. However, detailed studies

of the productivity of children in societies engaging in a variety of subsistence farming systems have called into question the notion that children's productivity balances their consumption. Some studies find that children benefit their parents economically, and parents do well to have lots of them (e.g., White 1975; Nag et al. 1978; Munroe et al. 1984; Turke 1989; Lee 1994a, 1994b, 1994c; Stecklov 1999), while others find that children are a net cost to their parents (e.g., Vlassoff 1979; Lindert 1983). Since Chayanov (1986 [1925]) published his seminal work on the productivity of children relative to their consumption of household goods in 1925, anthropologists have conducted studies aimed at untangling this issue. In *Maya Children: Helpers at the Farm*, Karen Kramer wed human evolutionary ecology and economic demography, the two theoretical frameworks typically employed to understand the significance of children's help in traditional societies. By doing so, Kramer gives us an analysis of this issue that breaks new ground both methodologically and theoretically.

Setting her work apart from previous studies of children's helping behavior, Kramer simultaneously analyzes the consumer/producer ratio and productivity of children in households of Xculuc Maya farmers of the Yucatan Peninsula and maps the timing of changes in those ratios and juvenile production capacities onto the fertility schedules of the conjugal pair in each household. This allows us to reconsider questions that are classic to both the demographic and evolutionary literatures: what are the economic costs and benefits to having children in an agricultural economy, and what is the evolutionary significance of these little "helpers at the nest," to their parents' reproductive success? One of the strengths of Kramer's work is that by weaving the economic/demographic and evolutionary anthropological perspectives together and enriching them with detailed and empathetic ethnography, she offers us a fresh framework on the significance of children's work altogether. The approach she has crafted to analyze the significance of children's helping and the relationship between their help and their parent's fertility evokes the highly nuanced style of the "activity-in-setting" analyses of fertility developed in recent highly acclaimed work coming from demographic anthropology (e.g., Carter 1995; Johnson-Hanks 2006).

To accomplish this task, Kramer collected and analyzed detailed demographic histories of the members of the community's 55 households and conducted 18,500 scan observations in a time-allocation study of 133 individuals (42% of the village population). The methods she used to sharpen the measurement of labor depending on the age, sex, and type of work of the individual, compared with previous studies, are sophisticated, and a close reading of them would benefit all researchers interested in quantifying behavior. The refinements Kramer introduces demonstrate the myriad benefits of multidisciplinary approaches to the analysis of human behavior and her rich conceptual background rooted in economic demography, evolutionary ecology, and statistics. Kramer ultimately finds that while Maya children represent a net

cost to their parents, the cost is smaller for girls than for boys, and the timing of the peaks of children's economic productivity in their natal households is crucial to their parents' further reproduction. Without the assistance of children, parents in this Maya community would have to double or triple their work levels beyond observed values. Help from children enables parents to continue childbearing at times when they themselves may not have sufficient time and resources to support their family (p. 168). This finding represents a critical enhancement of our understanding of the role played by high fertility in farming communities and shows us how the timing of children's productivity is linked to their parents' reproductive success.

Despite its emphasis on quantitative modeling and analysis of behavior, Kramer's study does not shy away from rich ethnography. This is particularly evident in her writing at the beginning of the book, in which the historical and contemporary political economic situation of the villagers is described, and even more evocatively and poignantly in the postscript about the unfolding world of the Maya. The ethnographic material she includes on the thought processes of the villagers themselves as they weigh the work and reproductive choices facing them is lean, however, and more attention to these perspectives would further enrich the reader's understanding of the material and ideological features of the contemporary Maya landscape.

This book's chief strengths are theoretical and methodological, and I would recommend it to scholars interested in the measurement of human behavior and those looking for good examples of a study that weaves together multiple disciplines interested in the same problem.

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## Women's Constant Endeavor to Be "Real" Police

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*Profession—Policier, Sexe—Féminin*. By Geneviève Pruvost. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2007.

In *Profession—Policier, Sexe—Féminin*, Geneviève Pruvost examines the dilemmas of policewomen in France. Her organizing theme is the different dynamics that create resistance to women filling the policing role on individual and institutional levels, a collusion made up of stereotypes that women are faced with as they struggle to survive in their jobs and the occupational strategies they must develop to negotiate multiple situational prejudices at different organizational levels as a reaction. To accomplish this, she gives an account of the interactions of policewomen both with and in different social institutions based on a seven-year study that she conducted. The study includes interviews with female and male police officers and observations and questionnaires profiling the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents. Although in 2005, female police comprised 14% of the total force in France, research on the conditions of female policing has been almost nonexistent. Pruvost's work is intended to fill this gap.

Pruvost examines different aspects of the process of converting women into police officers. In this process, women develop a new institutional identity through submitting their