Who helps single mothers in Nairobi? The role of kin support /
Qui aide les mères célibataires à Nairobi ? Le rôle du soutien familial

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Certaines situations familiales sont-elles défavorables aux enfants ?
Questioning the detrimental impact of specific family contexts on children
Who Helps Single Mothers in Nairobi?
The Role of Kin Support

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Motivation

- In SSA, kin play an important role in child care, in general, and in care for foster children and orphans, in particular.

- To date, there are few studies on kin support of single mothers in SSA.

- This is surprising because single motherhood is common in SSA.
  - In Kenya, 60% of women will become single mothers.
Research Questions

1) How large and strong are the kinship networks of single mothers?

2) What predicts transfers of financial resources and child care from extended kin to single mothers?
1) How large and strong are the kinship networks of single mothers?

- **Large and Strong**
  - High expectations of assistance and reciprocity
  - Strong patrilineal/matrilineal kin ties and identities
  - Emphasis on extended kin rather than nuclear families

- **Small and Weak**
  - Less involvement of extended kin in spousal selection
  - Greater reliance on “less preferred” kin to care for orphans
    - More maternal than paternal kin
    - More grandparents than aunts or uncles
2) What predicts transfers of financial resources and child care from extended kin to single mothers?

**Structural**

- Need among mother’s = more support
- Greater kin’s ability = more support

**Cultural**

- Ethnicity
- Type of kin
  - Generational (grandparents, aunts/uncles, siblings)
  - Gender
  - Paternal vs. Maternal
Study Site

- *Korogocho* is a Swahili term meaning crowded shoulder to shoulder.

- The slum is home to ~31,000 residents and is characterized by abject poverty and lack of adequate access to necessary amenities.

- APHRC has been running a Demographic Surveillance System in this community since 2002.
Sample

- 462 single (i.e. not currently married or cohabiting) women with at least one child under age 7

- 5,344 kin members, including the child’s siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and the child’s biological father

- 3,453 potential kin, which excludes those age <= 7, deceased, or with unknown survival status
Measures - Dependent Variables

- **Financial Support**: “In the last month, has [kin member’s name] provided any financial or in-kind support for you?”
  - Contributions to household expenses
  - Monetary or in-kind support for focal child

- **Child Care Support**: “In the last month, has [kin member’s name] assisted you with child care in any way?”
  - feeding, bathing, playing with or reading to the child, providing instruction or discipline
Measures of Size and Strength

- **Size**
  - Average # of kin who provide support
  - “Lone mothers” or “many helping hands”

- **Strength**
  - Proportion of supportive kin
  - Dependence on preferred kin
Measures—Structural and Cultural Factors

Structural Factors

- Mother’s Needs
  - Age
  - Relationship with child’s father
  - Education
  - Employment status
  - HH income
  - Wealth quintile
  - Number of children < 7

- Kin’s Ability
  - Age
  - Proximity to child
  - Employment status
  - Education

Cultural Factors

- Mother’s Ethnicity

- Relationship to child
  - Bio. Father
  - Brothers and Sisters
  - Mat. Uncles and Aunts
  - Mat. Grandmother and Grandfather
  - Pat. Uncles and Aunts
  - Pat. Grandmother and Grandfather
Models - Logistic Random-Effects

\[ \log \left( \frac{P_{ij}}{1 - P_{ij}} \right) = MC_j \beta_1' + KC_{ij} \beta_2' + Kin_{ij} \beta_3' + Size_j \beta_4' + \alpha_j + u_{ij} \]

- \( MC \) = Mother (i) characteristics (Level 1)
- \( KC \) = Kin (j) characteristics (Level 2)
- \( Kin \) = Relationship to child
- \( Size \) = Size of potential kin network
1) How large and strong are the kinship networks of single mothers?
How Large are the Kinship Networks of Single Mothers?

Number of Kin Who Give Support to Each Mother

- Financial Support
- Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Kin Who Give Support</th>
<th>% of Mothers Receiving Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 kin</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 kin</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 kin</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 kin</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 kin</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ kin</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 kin</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 kin</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 kin</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 kin</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 kin</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ kin</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Strong are Kin Networks?

**Financial Support**
- Financial Support: 84%
- No Support: 16%

**Child Care**
- Child Care: 82%
- No Support: 18%
Which Kin are Most Likely to Support Single Mothers?

Percentage of Kin Providing Support among Potential Kin by Kin Type

- Father: 18 (Child Care), 5 (Financial), 1 (Both)
- Sister: 58 (Child Care), 34 (Financial), 2 (Both)
- Brother: 12 (Child Care), 6 (Financial), 1 (Both)
- M. Aunt: 16 (Child Care), 7 (Financial), 9 (Both)
- M. Uncle: 14 (Child Care), 36 (Financial), 9 (Both)
- M. Grandmother: 31 (Financial), 9 (Both)
- M. Grandfather: 12 (Child Care), 4 (Financial), 6 (Both)

M. = Maternal; P. = Paternal
2) What predicts transfers of financial resources and child care from extended kin to single mothers?
Financial Support - Significant Predictors

Structural Factors

- Mother’s Needs
  - Younger mothers (<25)
  - Never married or living with child’s father
  - Not working
  - Living in poor hh (income <5,000 KSH)

- Kin’s Ability
  - Age (30-39)
  - Living in HH
  - Employed
  - Completed secondary school

Cultural Factors

- Ethnicity (no sig. differences)
- Relationship to child
  - Mat. grandmothers provide most financial support
- Gender
  - Mat. grandmothers twice as likely as mat. grandfathers
  - No sig. differences
    - brothers vs. sisters
    - uncles vs. aunts
- Lineage
  - No sig. differences
    - mat. and pat. grandmothers or grandfathers
    - mat. and pat. uncles or aunts
Child Care - Significant Predictors

Structural Factors

- **Mother’s Needs**
  - Younger mothers (<25)
  - Not working (unexpected)

- **Kin’s Ability**
  - Living in HH (huge effects)
  - Employed
  - Some primary school

Cultural Factors

- **Ethnicity (no sig. differences)**
- **Relationship to child**
  - Grandmothers and sisters provide the most child care
- **Gender (Big differences)**
  - Grandmothers > grandfathers
  - Sisters > brothers
  - Aunts > uncles
- **Lineage**
  - No paternal kin included
Conclusions - Size and Strength of Networks

- **Size**
  - Small active kin networks (1.2 financial & 1.4 child care)
  - 18% of single mothers receive neither financial or child care support

- **Strength**
  - Less than 18% of kin provide child care and less than 16% provide financial support
  - Single mothers rely heavily on less preferred kin
Conclusions - Structural vs. Cultural Factors

- **Structural Factors**
  - More significant for financial support
  - Yet, matters less for child care

- **Cultural Factors**
  - Gender is more important for child care, but less for financial transfers
  - Family Lineage does not matter for financial support
What Else Can Support Single Mother?

- Create employment opportunities and vocational training programs
- Encourage unmarried adolescent mothers to stay in school
- Increase maternal and child services for single mothers
- Provide high quality and affordable day care
Acknowledgements

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