Networks of Support

A Literature Review of Care Issues For Separated Children

By Gillian Mann

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Executive Summary

Networks of Support: A Literature Review of Care Issues for Separated Children examines a large body of historical, anthropological and agency literature relating to child rearing, family life and substitute family care. The purpose of this task was to explore existing understandings of the care arrangements of different groups of separated children in different cultural contexts; to establish some common themes for consideration; and to pose questions for further research.

The following main issues have emerged in this desk study:

- The role of the family is conceived differently in different communities and contexts. Household arrangements are often very fluid and responsive to social, economic, political and seasonal changes. Children and other family members may be very mobile, circulating between households and communities. Evidence suggests that straightforward, nuclear families are not the most common household form in many places and challenges the assumption that children can reliably be found in the care of parents or other adults.

- Child fostering is a widespread child care practice in many parts of the world. It takes place for a range of reasons and serves a variety of functions. Rarely is it considered a hardship for a child to be raised by people other than his or her birth parents.

- Aid agencies have made significant efforts to build on traditional child fostering practices to care for separated children in emergencies. However, the specific circumstances and cultural norms that underlie parents' and families' decisions to take in a foster child or to have their child fostered are not always well understood and interventions tend to reproduce the form, rather than the content, of traditional child care practices.

- The way that children are raised and socialised differs enormously across contexts and regions. In some communities, child rearing is shared among a wide social network, and exclusive parental care is rare. In this context, the bulk of child care tasks may be carried out by children. Caregiving is often seen as part of normal child development and an essential preparation for adulthood.

- Evidence in the anthropological literature on child rearing suggests that in many

societies, children develop diffuse attachments with their mother and close bonds with their child caregivers. Children who act as caregivers to younger children tend to transfer the nurturing behaviour they learn in this context to other relationships in their lives, and especially to peers. In this way, child-child relationships may be an important protective factor for separated children.

- Research into the importance of peer and sibling groups as support mechanisms for separated children could provide important insights into the needs and functioning of child-headed households. Children in these domestic units may be relying on the training for interdependence and affiliation that is associated with sibling care and shared management child care systems.

- Children's ability to provide support to others is not limited to the peer group. They may also provide their parents with economic, instrumental and emotional support. To date, research with separated children has focused almost exclusively on children's need for parents, and has not considered the value of children to parents.

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Gillian Mann

Chapter 1

Introduction

In recent years, the care and protection of children affected by armed conflict, political violence and displacement has become a central priority for NGOs, multilateral organisations and governments worldwide. Concern for child casualties, children recruited into combat and those who become separated from their families has fuelled the development of policy and programmes to support affected children in nearly every part of the world. The overarching framework for these interventions has been the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The design of the CRC is informed by its four main principles: these are the principles of the best interests of the child, survival and development, non-discrimination and participation. These four principles are intended to work in concert with one another to ensure that policy and programmes are optimally designed to meet the needs of targeted children and families. However, the reality of children's lives varies considerably across cultures and contexts and there is evidence from several countries that efforts to intervene on the part of children do not always achieve the desired outcomes.

For children who have become separated from their families in emergency situations, this fact may be particularly true. The nature of humanitarian emergencies is such that intervening agencies feel compelled to act immediately on behalf of separated children, yet the rapid response required rarely enables them to develop an understanding of the specific circumstances of children's lives or the cultural norms and values that have shaped their development. This lack of information about local concepts of family, child rearing practices, and different care arrangements for children has meant that interventions have sometimes been inappropriate and even detrimental to the health and development of separated children*.

The aim of this paper is to explore current understandings of the care and protection needs of separated children as they are presented in the available NGO, multilateral and academic literature. An attempt is made to analyse and augment the findings of this literature through an examination of ethnographic evidence from different parts of the world. It is argued that in order to understand the needs and circumstances of separated children, consideration of the following contextual elements is essential:

- Constructions of childhood and theories of child development
- Understandings and constructions of family
- Child care practices, with special reference to child fostering and sibling caregiving
- The meaning of parent-child separation

* In those documented instances where the programmes of international agencies have made a real contribution to the health and well-being of separated children, it has been precisely because this ethnographic information was known to those responsible for the design and delivery of programmes. Rädda Barnen's programmes in the refugee camps of Ethiopia and Kenya for separated children from South Sudan is a case in point (cf Save the Children Sweden, 1994).

- Children's relationships with one another
- Children's relationships with adults

These six points provide the main structure of this paper – see Chapters 4–9. Because the needs and well-being of children are in many cases context-dependent, it is argued that an understanding of these six elements is essential to the design of appropriate and effective interventions to assist separated children. Together, they provide crucial information about the particular circumstances of children's lives and the cultural norms and values that have shaped their development. They therefore play an important role in shaping the meaning children make of the various events in their life, including family separation.

The issues presented in this paper rely in large part on a discussion of childhood in Euro-American communities as compared with the lives of children in non-Western cultures. This lumping together is an oversimplification and is not meant to suggest that all cultures are uniform or to imply that there are not large differences in the experiences of children across all societies. On the contrary, the emphasis on broad, cross-cultural contrasts is meant to highlight the fact that childhood is defined differently in different places and contexts and as a result, children's experiences of family separation may also be different.

Chapter 2

Separated Children: Who Are They?

"Separated children" is a generic term used to describe children who have come to live apart from their parents, usually as a result of war or natural disaster[1,2]. The term describes those children who have become separated accidentally from their families, as well as those who have been orphaned, abandoned, abducted or conscripted into armies, and those who have voluntarily left their families[3]. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines separated children as those individuals "under 18 years of age who are separated from both parents or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver"[4].

Some of the ways children get separated from their families include becoming lost while fleeing from attacks on villages, while trying to escape forced recruitment into military service, and while searching for food. Parents may die while travelling or fleeing, or they may abandon children because they or the child are too weak to continue. Some parents leave their children at a hospital or centre, believing their chances of survival are better if left in the care of others. Others send their children away, in the hope that they will escape the terrors of war and perhaps succeed in making asylum claims in a neighbouring country. Some children choose to leave their families in order to gain employment, to fight in the war, to reduce the financial burden on their parents, to seek safety or to escape abuse. Many separated children have not chosen to be apart from their parents, rather war has made it unavoidable for them. In many cases, separation can be a wrenching and difficult experience for both the parents and the child.

Boys and girls of all ages become separated as a result of war and other emergencies. However, the literature says that significantly more boys become separated than do girls[5]. The reasons for this disparity are not entirely understood. It is nevertheless argued that in many cultures, boys are believed to be best able to look after and protect themselves, particularly in war time. This belief may lead parents to make a conscious decision to send their sons away, or boys themselves may decide to leave in order to escape to safety or to pursue new opportunities. The predominance of boys may also reflect the social construction of gender roles in most cultures, where girls are more likely to remain with their parents in order to support them in their domestic and child rearing tasks*.

* While the literature on separated children suggests that there are many more boys than girls who become separated from their families, evidence from other sources suggests that in many societies, families accord a higher value to male offspring. The growing body of research on child labour, for example, suggests that large numbers of girls live apart from their families in order to work in the sex trade and in domestic service, among other types of employment. The fact that more boys have been found to be separated than girls may reflect the reality that most research with separated children has taken place in the public sphere, and in most places, girls are more likely to be found in the private, domestic sphere of the household. Their existence may therefore not be readily apparent to researchers, programme designers and policy makers.

Chapter 3

What the Existing Literature Says

Available material on the care and protection of separated children in emergencies comes from three main sources. These include local and international NGO research, reports and campaign material; reports and studies conducted by multilateral agencies; and academic research. An examination of these three sources of literature suggests that certain key issues and findings can be identified.

First, an overwhelming majority of the literature asserts that children who become separated from their families face profound physical and psychological risks. Adults are seen to be crucial resources for children who are attempting to cope with chronic danger and stress. The love, warmth and affection they provide is believed to be integral to a child's sense of personal security and thus to the development of individual resilience[6]. These assertions are derived from the psychological concept of attachment and the highly influential work of John Bowlby (cf 1973). "Attachment" is a term used to refer to the psychological bond between a child and his or her parents (or others who care for the child). This relationship is considered by many to be essential to child development[7], because it enables a child to develop what Erikson (1950) called a "basic sense of trust" and to proceed into the world with a sense of competence, curiosity and self-reliance[8]. It is widely argued that "the security of the early attachment bond predicts a child's ability to adapt to future developmental tasks (such as forming relationships with peers and non-parent adults) and psychosocial stressors (for example, separation from a parent)"[9]. Secure attachment relationships with adults are thus considered essential protective factors for children who are separated from their families.

Second, the literature asserts that one of the most important determinants of the effect of family separation[10] on children is the age of the child at separation. Because children vary significantly in terms of their developmental needs, abilities and limitations, it is argued that separation at different ages and developmental stages will have different meanings and implications for every child[11]. A similar event of separation will evoke different reactions in children of different ages. For example, an infant of seven months will react differently from an eight year-old or a fourteen year-old. It is commonly understood that separated children under the age of five face serious risks because family separation at this age threatens to disrupt a child's socialisation process and growing sense of autonomy[12]. Without adult caregivers to orient a child to the world around them, it is believed that children are less likely to understand and adapt to the circumstances in which they find themselves. For children at this age, it is argued that family separation is very quickly felt as permanent loss and is accompanied by intense feelings of powerlessness and despair[13]. These feelings often mani-

fest themselves in regression of previous developmental attainments, such as bed-wetting and the re-commencement of baby-talk, and significant increases in fear, of both imaginary and actual objects[14].

It is generally agreed that school-aged and older children seem better able to cope with the stress of family separation than do their younger counterparts. Many believe this ability is due in part to a number of factors, including the growing sense of self-efficacy and independence experienced at these ages[15]. Moreover, children who demonstrate an active coping style and attempt to establish positive relationships with others are also considered to be at an advantage[16]. Those who are able to develop peer relationships have been shown to be more resilient[17]. Furthermore, it is believed that older children may be better able to understand the nature and circumstances of separation because they have more life experience and possess more advanced language and cognitive skills[18]. While there is consensus in the literature on the severity of problems that these children face, there is very little research on variations in the symptomatology of children from different cultures[19].

Third, the psychological and agency literature on separated children suggests that boys' and girls' experiences of separation are the same. This argument is not stated outright in the research, reports or campaign material. However, the virtual absence of any discussion of the differential impact of separation on boys and girls in this literature implies that parent-child separation has the same meaning for all children, regardless of gender.

Fourth, because of the emotional and psychological risks faced by separated children, the vast majority of the literature argues that reuniting separated children with their families must be a central and immediate priority for intervening agencies[20]. It is widely argued that without the care and protection of adults, children are especially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, malnutrition, disease and death[21]. For example, according to the Canadian Christian Children's Fund: "with their parents unable to feed, clothe, educate or protect their health, their only inheritance is destitution and desperation"[22]. It is thus considered to be in the child's best interests, in almost all instances, to live with adult caretakers. Reconstruction of the family unit is believed to be essential to the resumption of security and normality in separated children's lives[23]. It is therefore asserted that those children who cannot be immediately reunified with their families should be placed in foster care[24].

Fifth, it is almost unanimously agreed in the literature that institutional care for separated children should be avoided unless absolutely necessary[25]. It is generally agreed that institutionalised children are exposed to multiple disadvantages and are vulnerable to many different kinds of abuse[26]. Sometimes being in an institution can increase a child's distress and anxiety, for example if a child's anxious or depressed behaviour is misinterpreted as being "naughty" or "difficult" and he or she is punished harshly as a result[27]. Low staff-child ratios mean that very often children are unable to establish a close relationship with an adult carer and some literature suggests that their needs are frequently not apparent or not of interest to those entrusted

with their care[28]. Moreover, once a child is in an institution, it is considered very difficult to assess their status and to co-ordinate efforts to reunite them[29]. This may be especially the case in those countries or regions with limited state-run child protection mechanisms.

It is not surprising that the NGO, multilateral and academic literature on separated children has produced very similar findings. Most research conducted by and for NGOs and multilateral organisations has been reproductive in nature: that is, studies often share the same design and use the same research methods and methodologies (although these are rarely spelled out). Research instruments imported from the West are commonly used. These include medical assessments, checklists of symptoms and events and structured questionnaires[30]. Many of these data gathering tools are translated into local languages in an effort to ensure their applicability to local conditions and circumstances. However, the conceptualisation and presentation of psychological problems may vary widely in different cultural contexts and the design of these instruments rarely accounts for these crucial differences. Consequently, results and recommendations do not vary enormously, despite the differences that culture and context might imply. Furthermore, research is often conducted by the same "experts" or institutional personnel who move from country to country and rely on a standard framework for assessing the needs of separated children. These are often the very same people who publish related articles in academic journals of psychology and psychiatry. If not, they are at least aware of this literature and the research methods used.

One of the challenges inherent in the examination of these three sources of literature is the extent to which one can rely, unquestioningly, on their findings. The assumptions that underlie the bulk of the research on separated children have shaped the findings to such an extent that it is often difficult to separate these two elements of the research from one another. Euro-American concepts of the family, maternal-child relationships, child-child relationships, child development, and what constitutes a "proper"[31] childhood pervade most of the psychological and agency literature on separated children.

In the following sections of this paper, an attempt is made to augment the mainstream, dominant understanding of separated children presented in the above-mentioned literature. Ethnographic evidence from different cultures and contexts is examined in order to better understand the contextual features of children's lives and the influence that these elements may have on children's experiences of family separation.

Chapter 4

Constructions of Childhood and Theories of Child Development

Robert LeVine has suggested that in every culture, parents use what they consider to be "common sense" methods of child rearing[32]. He argues that what is considered to be "sensible" parenting varies widely between human populations because child rearing practices are shaped in part by past environmental experiences and unconsciously assimilated into cultural traditions. For example, the common practice in many parts of Africa of carrying infants and young children on the backs of caregivers is said to be an appropriate way of protecting children from environmental hazards, such as cooking fires in and around the home. In many instances, this practice continues until well after the child has learned to walk because it is a successful way of limiting mobility and therefore minimising risks to child health and safety. LeVine argues that it is often difficult to elicit from caregivers the reasons why this practice is employed, but they nevertheless have become so accustomed to it that it has become the "right way" to care for a young child, and any deviation from this norm is considered "bad" parenting at best, and "neglectful" at worst.

This way of thinking about cultural values and child rearing practices can provide an important insight into why the majority of literature on separated children compares their cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural development according to the "norms" of child development established by mainstream psychological research. The majority of these studies have been conducted in Western Europe and North America by white, Euro-American researchers who share similar backgrounds to those of their sample populations. In general, children that develop within this context can be assumed to share similar cultural, social and economic environments. Albeit unconsciously, most psychologists, development workers and others consider the familiar child rearing environments of these households to be the ideal environment in which children should grow up. Any departure from this "optimal situation" is seen to be a circumstance of deprivation and thus an inadequate environment for "healthy" child development[33]. Like the caregivers in Africa who carry their infants and young children on their backs, many of us who have been raised in the West or have been educated in Western institutions, have come to see the way in which children in our own society are raised to be the "right way". That these practices reflect the particular culture and context of middle-class, White European and North American families is rarely explored or acknowledged in mainstream psychological research[34].

Given that few researchers in the West have explored the influence of the region's historical, environmental and cultural features on what has come to be seen as "normal" child development in that context, it is not surprising that they have also failed to do so elsewhere. The resultant tendency to decontextualise the circumstances of children's

lives is apparent in much of the literature on separated children, in which local context and cultural norms regarding child rearing are considered to be of secondary importance to understanding the psychological well-being of the child. While research often appears to consider culture, on closer examination it is clear that culture is seen to be an independent variable that affects child development, like gender or age, but not a system of meanings that creates alternative pathways for social, emotional and cognitive development. The literature may indicate the socio-economic level and ethnicity of a child, describe the physical environment in which he or she has been raised, and briefly outline the kinship structure particular to his or her community, yet in the end the child described is the generic child. Little attention is paid to a child's daily routine, sources of child stimulation, child care practices, how children interact with one another, and the work that boys and girls are expected to at different ages. Analysis of these and other measures is critical to understanding the immediate situational circumstances that provide the framework for how children learn to think, speak and behave[35].

Nevertheless, with a few notable exceptions*, understanding a particular culture or community's definition and goals for child development has not yet been the focus of research with separated children. Child development is assumed to take place in stages and these stages are seen to be natural and universal. Children are believed to understand and respond to the events in their lives according to their stage position, and the social and cultural construction of their responses is often not considered. For example, a widely-used field guide for working with separated children states at the outset, "Despite slight variations in timing owing to cultural and other influences, all children pass through the same stages of development from infancy, through childhood and adolescence. In normal circumstances, children of similar ages will be found to be very much alike"[36]. Differential attainment of child development goals is attributed to individual factors and rarely to population- or culture-specific patterns that shape the way children interact with the world around them.

This habit of according culture a minimal influence on child development reflects the value psychology places on standardised, universal descriptions of children and childhood[37]. But ethnographic evidence from diverse cultures suggests that there is no single, uniform approach to child rearing. Rather, the meaning of being a child or a parent in a particular population is influenced by the material, social and cultural aspects of the specific environment in which families live[38]. These macro features work in concert with one another to influence child care practices within specific communities. Together they shape cultural beliefs pertaining to childhood: opinions about the nature of infants and children, differences between boys and girls, and notions of their roles, responsibilities and appropriate behaviour at different ages inform the manner in which parents and others interact with children. This is not to say that approaches to child rearing are fixed – on the contrary, they are dynamic, negotiated and often contested. They may vary both between generations and bet-

* A few exceptions to this rule include the studies that have been conducted with separated boys from the north of Somalia (Rousseau et al., 1998) and South Sudan (Zutt, 1994, and Save the Children Sweden, 1994).

ween families. But despite these differences, all cultures develop ideas about what constitutes a "proper"[39] childhood.

Child rearing practices both reflect and reproduce these cultural concepts of childhood. In all societies, parents believe that there is an ideal investment strategy for bearing and raising children[40]. While these goals may not be consciously formulated, they nevertheless inform parental decisions regarding the optimal number of children to bear as well as the intrinsic value of children and the manner in which they are raised. For example, in the West, the majority of middle-class Euro-American households are characterised by low fertility and low infant mortality. Mothers and fathers often share child care tasks, sometimes with significant contributions from day care workers and babysitters. Nevertheless, child rearing is usually perceived to be the ultimate responsibility of the mother. The nuclear family is the ideal in this context, and people tend to live in homes that are not highly integrated with those of their extended families. Contact with other related and unrelated adults and children does not tend to occur spontaneously. Although many children have substantial interaction with peers and non-parental adults in their early years, parents nevertheless see themselves as almost solely responsible for the development of their young child's cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional development. With enrolment in school, this socialising role is seen to be less exclusive.

This approach to raising children in middle-class Euro-American families differs substantially from the norms and methods of child caregiving common in many other parts of the world. For the majority of people in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the child rearing environment is characterised by higher fertility and infant mortality than is common in Western Europe and North America. In those societies where there are significant threats to child health and well-being, parents prioritise the survival and physical health of their infants[41]. Heavy domestic workloads require that the attention and energy of the mother be directed towards subsistence and the general maintenance of the household. Sustained interdependence of siblings and cousins across the life span means that the responsibilities of child care can be shared within a large social network[42]. Children in this context typically have multiple caregivers, and experience exclusive maternal care only in the first few months of life[43]. From the time of weaning, and often before, socialisation takes place within the multi-age peer and sibling group. In some societies, parents may employ a deliberate strategy for training their children to cope effectively for periods of time with minimal or no adult involvement.

This training appears in part to explain the successful coping of the sample of separated boys from the north of Somalia studied by Rousseau et al (1998) in Montréal, Canada. Among the traditional pastoral nomadic peoples of Northern Somalia, it is common for boys from about age six onward to become responsible for tending herds and to spend increasing periods of time away from their family and homestead. By the time they have reached the age of twelve, absences of up to several months are common. During these periods, boys live among their peers and

rely upon one another for practical and emotional support. This period of family separation is traditionally associated with learning and initiation into manhood: in their own and others' eyes, the experience of adversity and the solidification of lasting, life-long peer relationships enables boys to learn self-sufficiency and autonomy and to acquire adult status in their communities. Hence, in this particular context, Rousseau et al (1998) found that for the separated boys in their study, exile and separation from family were viewed not so much as forms of deprivation or loss, but as having certain positive attributes. Their resilience could be in part attributed to the collective cultural understanding of travel and separation as a valuable life experience that brings with it knowledge and wisdom. A similar argument has been made by Zutt (1994) and Save the Children Sweden (1994) with respect to the experience of separated boys from South Sudan*.

Danger may also be an expected element in children's lives in certain societies. Among the Inuit of Baffin Island in northern Canada, many parents expose their children to direct and controlled environmental risks in order to promote their child's self-sufficiency and learned responses to dangerous or problematic experiences[44]. From an early age, children are called upon to navigate their way through complex tundra and ocean environments. Parents and other adults constantly test children's knowledge as well as their abilities to identify, analyse and solve the problems or difficulties that they confront. This training in self-sufficiency is also apparent in Inuit households, where related and unrelated adults stimulate children to think and to problem-solve by presenting them with emotionally powerful problems that children cannot ignore[45]. This is often done by asking a toddler a question that is potentially dangerous to the child and dramatising the consequences of various answers, such as "Why don't you kill your baby brother?", or "Your mother's going to die – look, she's cut her finger – do you want to come live with me?"[46]. Children are presented with questions, not answers, because adults want children to make what they perceive to be their own decisions, thereby enabling each child to see him or herself as responsible for their own fate. Briggs (1998) argues that adults create these dramas in order to raise children's consciousness of the very grave events that could happen in their lives and to prepare them in the event that such events transpire. This way of child rearing may influence the meaning children make of their experiences and the way they see the world around them. Childhood in Inuit society may be very different from that assumed to be the "norm" in the literature on separated children.

As these examples illustrate, the way that children are raised and socialised differs enormously across contexts and regions. Nevertheless, the monomatric approach to child rearing characteristic of many families in the West is still considered by most psychologists to be the "normal" environment in which children are raised. In other words, the idea that a mother is the primary caregiver to her child is implicit in much of the research on child development. While basic research on new fathering

* It is also argued by Aptekar (1990) and Aptekar & Ciano-Federoff (1999) that the resilience of street boys in Cali and Nairobi can be in part attributed to a deliberate and purposeful attempt on the part of parents to train their children to be independent and self-confident.

styles in the United States has shown that some fathers share child rearing tasks with mothers much more than was previously common, the mother-child dyad is nevertheless still assumed to be the norm. This fact is reflected in the assumptions that researchers have made in their studies of the psychological health of separated children. Because these researchers consider culture to be of secondary importance to understanding child development, their theoretical and conceptual frameworks do not account for the influence of different child rearing environments on child development.

Chapter 5

Understandings and Constructions of Family

The family is widely acknowledged to be the most important institution in a child's life. It structures children's roles and provides a framework within which they come to understand and interact with the world around them. The family serves many different purposes for children, including survival; socialisation and instruction in locally-accepted ways of being and behaving[47]; a base from which to draw love, nurture and protection; provision of a sense of membership and belonging; grounding in a sense of perpetuity backwards and forwards[48]; access to resources and services; and a life-long, rooted sense of one's place in a larger social world. The function of the family changes over the course of a child's life, because as a child's capacities evolve, so does the role of the family[49]. But not all societies place the same emphasis on each of these functions and in some communities the role of the family is heavily prescribed. For example, in some contexts, the family is expected to provide a child with a physical home, in which all of its immediate members live together in the same household. However, in other societies, much less emphasis is placed on co-residence of family members. In these communities, links to ancestors and a sense of lineage may be considered to be an equally, or more important function of the family[50].

The role of the family is conceived differently in different communities and contexts. Despite this fact, Western-derived ideas of what constitutes "family" pervade the psychological literature on separated children. Family, according to this literature, is defined by two essential criteria: biology and generation. First, a family consists of individuals who are blood relations, either immediate or distant. This can mean anyone from a mother or father to a great uncle or a second cousin. Second, a family is composed of at least two generations of people, such as parents and children or grandparents and grandchildren. By this definition, a group of related children living together without adults is not a complete family, except in those cases where there is a large age difference between siblings and the older child is seen to be an adult. Even within this definition, there is a hierarchy of what is considered to be the most appropriate environment for child development. The immediate, nuclear family is viewed as the "best" place for a growing child; the extended family is considered the next best option. From this perspective, placing a child in a household with unrelated individuals is a third tier, and ultimately lamentable, option. Except under exceptional circumstances of abuse or illness, the ideal environment for a child is believed to be with his or her biological parents. Children who live in other domestic arrangements are seen to be deprived, perhaps because a family by this definition implies a household of related individuals – in the literature on separated children, household and family are seen to be one in the same. It is this definition and concept

of family that lies behind family reunification programmes for separated children.

The literature does recognise the fact that not all children grow up in households together with their immediate family. However, it is assumed that these living arrangements take place only in unusual circumstances. In "normal" situations, children live with their immediate relatives. This arrangement is seen to be their preference and that of their biological parents. Thus, in post-conflict settings, efforts to reunify children with their biological families are viewed as the best way to restore a sense of normality to children's lives.

Demographic and anthropological evidence from many parts of the world suggests that such assumptions may be mistaken. Household arrangements are often very fluid and responsive to social, economic, political and seasonal changes[51]. Children and other family members are often very mobile, circulating between households and communities. For example, household data from Demographic and Health Surveys conducted in many different countries since 1990 indicate that a significant proportion of children aged 12 to 14 years live in households without either parent. In Haiti, this is the reality for 36% of girls and 26% of boys. In many countries in Sub Saharan Africa, these percentages are just as high: in Namibia, 42% of girls and 36% of boys do not live with either parent. In Côte d'Ivoire, this is true for 36% of girls and 25% of boys, and in Benin, data indicate 33% and 19% respectively. Overall, in this region, there are at least 18% of children in this age group in any one country whose domestic arrangements do not include their parents[52].

These findings concur with other sources of the limited information available on children's living arrangements. For instance, in her study of children's lives in the shanty towns of Lima, Peru, Ennew (1985) found that nuclear families, consisting of biological families and children, represented only one third of the families in her randomly selected sample. The others included female-headed households (50%) and other family structures (20%). In her sample, Ennew found that sibling groups of one form or another were almost as common as two-parent, father-headed households. This evidence suggests that straightforward, nuclear families are not the most common household form in many places, and challenges the assumption that children can be reliably found in the care of parents or other adults. The majority of research with separated children has nevertheless assumed this to be the case.

In the next sections of this paper, the way in which different societies operationalise child care will be explored in an attempt to highlight important issues and concepts that have been largely ignored in the literature on separated children. In particular, the characteristics of shared management child care societies common to many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America will be examined. These are societies in which child rearing tasks are distributed among a large sibling and family group, rather than being considered the sole responsibility of parents. This discussion will involve an examination of the importance of child care practices such as child fostering and sibling caregiving to the acquisition of particular child development outcomes. The significance of these practices for children's relationships with one another and

with adults will also be explored in an effort to understand the meaning of parent-child separation in this context.

Shared Management Child Care Societies

According to Esther Goody[53], the role of parents is five-fold:

- giving birth
- provision of affective and emotional support
- teaching and instruction in cultural meanings and scripts for appropriate behaviour
- provision of civil and kinship status
- sponsorship into adulthood

Goody argues that in certain societies there is a conception of parenthood that sanctions the delegation of certain of these tasks under particular circumstances. It is rare, however, for all parenting functions to be given away. For example, among the Ga of Ghana, it is common for non-biological parents to rear a foster child without absorbing the child into their own lineage. In this case, the child's biological parents retain responsibility for the provision of kinship status[54]. Goody maintains that this practice of "shared management child care" is a common feature of labour-intensive, agricultural societies, such as those that exist in many parts of West Africa. Evidence from diverse cultural contexts indicates that this approach to raising children is common in many parts of the world, including among African Americans and others in the United States[55].

Examples of delegated parenting abound in the anthropological literature on child rearing[56]. For instance, among the Efe of the Democratic Republic of Congo, multiple caregiving arrangements are the norm. When a mother is working, crying babies are put to the breast of any woman, including those who are not lactating. Even when she is nearby, a mother is not necessarily the sole caregiver of her child. Tronick et al (1987) found that in a one-hour time period, a four-month old child was transferred nine times among six different people. Among the studied sample of infants, it was reported that the average number of caregivers was 14.2, with a range from 5 to 24[57]. This diffusion of child rearing responsibilities throughout a wide range of family and community members is also common amongst the Malays on the island of Langkawi, where mutually supportive households take in children of otherwise occupied parents to "stay for a while"[58]. Bodenhorn (1988) describes a similar pattern among the Inupiat of Northern Alaska[59].

Whereas popularised, dominant Western culture asserts that non-maternal care, or "multiple mothering" is a situation of deprivation and an exception to the norm of child rearing, it is clear that in many societies, child care is a social enterprise in which family and kin are ready providers of care to children. The sharing of child rearing tasks is not only culturally-sanctioned, it is encouraged. It takes place in

good times as well as bad, by rich and poor people, rural and urban families, married couples, single women and elderly people alike[60]. In shared management child care societies, parenting can be seen as an aggregate of services, sometimes provided by one or two parents, and other times provided by a series of different people at different times in a child's life. From this perspective, the term "maternal behaviour" cannot be defined as "that which is done by the mother"[61].

Chapter 6

Child Care Practices

There are two aspects of shared management child care that are relevant to understanding the care and protection of separated children in emergencies. The first is the practice of child fostering. The second is the custom of child, or sibling caregiving. These two approaches to child rearing tend to occur together[62].

Child Fostering

Child fostering is a common practice in shared management child care societies. This term means the transfer or relocation of children from their natal home to that of a related or unrelated guardian where they live for several months or years[63]. The term "fostering" is often used interchangeably in the literature with the terms "child circulation", "exchange", "relocation", "shifting", and "child minding"[64]. It refers to a widely accepted practice of sharing children among a large social network. In Africa as in other parts of the world, child fostering tends to take place within the kinship framework[65]. However, there are certain circumstances in which children are taken in by unrelated individuals, such as friends, acquaintances and elderly women. Both of these practices are called child fostering.

This definition of fostering as the care of children by kin and non-kin is the one most commonly used in the anthropological literature on child rearing and the one used in this paper[66]. It differs slightly from that currently in use by agencies working with separated children in emergencies, most of whom use the term "fostering" to refer to children being taken in by unrelated adults only. "Family reunification" is the term used by intervening organisations to describe those arrangements in which a child is taken in by related adults, no matter how distant the family connection may be. Both of these concepts are encompassed in the definition of fostering found in the literature.

In middle-class, Euro-American households, fostering is considered an exception to the norm of child rearing. The "proper" or "best" way to raise a child is in a nuclear family, with the dyadic relationship having primary importance. However, in shared management child care societies, where delegated parenting is the norm, child fostering is widespread: in this context, it is not considered a hardship for a child to be raised by people other than his or her birth parents. This pattern of the circulation of children between families is common in all shared management child care systems, in nearly every part of the world. It is especially prevalent in West Africa[67], where it is argued that "a network of kin, with the claims and obligations they exchange, may be more crucial to a child's present and future experience and achieve-

ment than the child's parents"[68].

In societies where delegated parenting is the norm, child fostering is a seen as beneficial to the child, his or her biological parents and the foster parents. Children are fostered for many different reasons. These include, but are not limited to:

- educational reasons, usually to acquire formal education in school
- apprenticeship, to learn economic or culturally-valued skills
- improved discipline (parents are widely believed to "spoil" their birth children)
- support for kin without children (for spiritual, emotional, cultural and economic reasons)
- payment of a debt
- establishment of alliances between families
- help kin and non-kin to meet their child care needs
- improve the safety of children in a crisis situation
- provide for an orphaned child

Child fostering takes place for a wide range of reasons and serves a variety of functions. In societies where resources, claims and responsibilities are shared within the extended kin group, fostering is just one example of such sharing[69]. For example, in Antigua, Gordon (1987) argues that children are viewed as a resource to be shared, and fostering is a means of "evening out access to children"[70]. This redistribution can take place because a particular family desires an additional child, or wishes to reduce its household size, or as a way to assist kin in difficult times. Among the Fulani of Mali, for instance, it is socially unacceptable for a man to refuse to care for his sibling's child, regardless of the size of his family. If it is believed that he can provide the child with improved opportunities, he has an obligation to do so, when asked[71]. The deliberate and considered placing of children with kin and non-kin is one way of distributing obligations and rewards within the extended social network characteristic of shared management child care systems.

The literature on child fostering and circulation highlights the fact that in shared management child care societies, children have traditionally been fostered in crisis situations. It is this traditional practice of caring for orphaned children that governments and aid agencies rely upon in humanitarian emergencies. In recent years, it has been considered "best practice" to establish large-scale child fostering programmmes for separated children who cannot be reunited with their families in the medium or long-term. This intervention is considered to be an effective, culturally-appropriate approach to meeting the care and protection needs of separated children. It is also a concrete example of an intervention informed by the belief that children are ultimately dependent upon the care and protection of parents or other adults in order to mitigate the damaging effects of war.

Aid agencies have made significant and important efforts to build on traditional child fostering practices to care for separated children in emergency and crisis situations.

However, the nature of what can be deemed "crises" differs between and within communities, and some societies may have more or less experience with the fostering of children under the types of circumstances that are increasingly common today. For example, it may at one point have been that children whose parents had died were absorbed into the extended family network that is so essential to the functioning of shared management child care societies. This was certainly the case among many East African cultures, for example[72]. While the taking in of an orphaned child may have implied some level of sacrifice on the part of the foster family, it is likely that the inclusion of one more child in the family network was not considered to be so burdensome as to be prohibitive. On the contrary, an additional child was attractive in part because he or she could contribute to the economic, social and political power of the foster family. Taking in an orphaned child might also imply the transfer of property and inheritance rights to the "new" family. Moreover, in many cultures, having many children is considered a blessing and a sign of prestige. Child fostering in this type of "crisis" could be assumed to benefit both the child and the foster family.

However, the mutual benefits of crisis fostering may not be so apparent to parents in many developing countries today. Industrialisation has brought with it labour migration which, in many cases, has altered the nature of family life, social relationships and the structure of family and community support networks. The introduction and spread of formal schooling has meant that parents have had to pay for their children's education, either in terms of direct or opportunity costs. Fertility behaviour has changed in many places, and with it patterns of child care. The increasing spread of HIV/AIDS and its related illnesses has placed additional stress on family and kin-based networks. In this context, traditional mechanisms of caring for orphaned and separated children may no longer be as adaptive as they once were.

For example, in Zimbabwe today, the large number of young adults dying of HIV/AIDS has resulted in a massive increase in the number of orphans requiring care and support. The traditional practice of caring for orphaned children within the extended family is becoming increasingly difficult because many of those most likely to care for orphaned children are themselves suffering from illness, acute poverty and death[73]. Similarly, research with AIDS-affected children in Kisumu and Siaya districts of Kenya showed that although Luo tradition does not allow an adult to refuse to take in the orphaned child of their sibling or other family member, owing to economic hardship, refusals are becoming increasingly common, without rebuke[74]. Children in this context are seen as financial obligations and liabilities to be avoided. Hunter et al (1997) found this to be the case with respect to children orphaned by AIDS in Tanzania as well, where the "social norms for fostering relatives' children are strong, but the circle of responsible relatives is decreasing and the costs of raising children are increasing"[75]. While in most cases, adults try to support them as best they can, children are generally viewed as *mzigo*, a burden[76].

These issues are pertinent to the care and protection of separated and orphaned

children in times of armed conflict and displacement. In Rwanda after the 1994 genocide, large numbers of children were reunified and subsequently rejected. The reasons for this pattern may relate to a family's inability to refuse to care for an orphaned child, despite their lack of economic means to do so[77]. It may also explain the numerous accounts of abuse and exploitation among those children who were fostered. Furthermore, the inter-ethnic nature of the conflict in Rwanda has resulted in many places in the total elimination of trust at the community level. In these instances, neighbours no longer feel able to turn to one another for help and support in times of crisis. This lack of trust, coupled with conditions of often serious deprivation, can be a serious impediment to the establishment of community mechanisms of support for foster families and for separated and orphaned children.

Humanitarian emergencies in the late 20th century have occurred with increasing frequency, and large-scale population displacement and family separation have become more and more common occurrences. In post-conflict settings in recent years, there has been greater awareness on the part of agencies that fostered children are often treated in a less favourable manner than are other, non-fostered, children in the family. In Rwanda, concerns were expressed about some fostered children's heavy domestic workload and lack of access to school. In a region where child fostering within the extended family was considered to be a traditional cultural practice, many aid workers wondered why some children were treated differently from others[78].

The literature on child fostering indicates that all types of fostering, including crisis fostering, are apparently established to benefit both the child and the foster family. While this mutual benefit is not always equal to all parties, especially it seems, to the child, there are nevertheless several examples in the literature in which child fostering does not appear to harm a child. For example, in Mozambique, Charnley (2000) found that fostered children were shown a large measure of goodwill, regardless of whether or not they were related to their foster parents. They were not treated any differently from other children in the household and were made to feel a sense of belonging in their new domestic setting. Castle (1995) found that fostered children in a rural Malian Fulani community did not exhibit poorer health outcomes than non-fostered children. Studies in rural Swaziland[79] and among the Turkana of Kenya[80] also found no significant differences in the nutritional and physical health of children who had been fostered. However, because very few studies have actually asked children about their experiences as foster children, and because opportunities for children to express their dissatisfaction with these arrangements have so far been limited, it is difficult to establish the true nature of fostering and its emotional and physical impact on children.

Typically, children who are fostered by non-kin are not treated as though they are the birth children of their foster parents. For example, among the Inupiat of Northern Alaska, Bodenhorn (1988) asserts that orphans who are not taken in by extended family members are often pushed from house to house and treated as *savikti*, meaning slave[81]. In cases such as these, the common pattern is that wealthier and hig-

her-status households receive children from poorer, lower status households. For instance, in the case of debt fosterage, or "pawning", in West Africa, a child is sent to a creditor as a means of paying interest on a debt[82]. The fostered child is expected to perform extensive domestic tasks in exchange for minimal food and basic lodging. Similarly, in Bangladesh, some parents "give" their children, and especially their daughters, as domestic servants to other families. They do so in order to reduce household costs, to safeguard a girl's reputation and as a means of preparing her for the tasks she will perform in marriage[83]. This practice is also common for boys and girls in Haiti, the Philippines[84], Colombia[85], Algeria[86], Brazil[87] and numerous other countries. The reasons for sharing children may differ in different places. However, in all of these instances, there is rarely any pretence that fostered children are to be treated the same as other, non-fostered children in the home: it is often not expected that the fostered child will attend school, or even that he or she will be granted time to play or to relax. As previously mentioned, many parents send their children away to be raised by other families in order that they *not* be treated "too" well by their birth parents. Strict discipline and hard work imposed by foster parents are believed in many cases to be good for a child.

There is significant evidence to suggest that sometimes separated children are taken into families that abuse them, force them to engage in long, arduous and hazardous work, use them in prostitution, and subject them to other forms of exploitation. Reported cases of such abuse are rare, yet their existence is a reminder of the need for socially and culturally appropriate protective services for separated children. In these instances, it is clear that fostering is not a panacea, especially in post-conflict situations in which people's emotional and material resources are heavily strained and suspicion and mistrust may be common[88].

It is the specific circumstances and cultural norms that underlie parents' and families' decisions to take a foster child in or to have their child fostered that need to be well understood by agencies when fostering programmes are established in emergency situations. Despite efforts to design and implement culturally-appropriate programmes for the care and protection of separated children, very often agency-run programmes reproduce the form, rather than the content, of traditional child fostering practices[89]. This point is clear, for example, when agency staff express surprise and concern that fostered children in some cases are not treated as well as other, non-fostered children, even though child fostering is a common practice among the people with whom they are working. In many cases, agency-run programmes do not recognise that fostering arrangements are based on exchange and perceived mutual benefit. Parents, foster families and sometimes, children themselves, make considered, strategic decisions in order to maximise opportunities for survival as well as economic, political, social and spiritual gain. They make social choices and these choices are not made arbitrarily. Furthermore, the extent to which different parenting tasks are delegated, and to whom, may vary significantly within a particular society.

The choices that parents and foster families make also reflect the fact that in many

cultures (and arguably all cultures), not all children are equally valued by adults. Within the general category of "children", there are many structural and personal differences that separate individual children and groups of children. Blanchet (1996) argues that this is the case in Bangladesh, where children's needs are defined by a variety of factors, including their gender, class, ethnicity, religion and urban or rural origin. These differences influence people's conceptions of individual children's needs. A child's age and personal attributes such as physique, temperament and cognitive ability, as well as their sex and birth order may crucially influence his or her status and treatment within the family and the community[90].

Gender is one of the characteristics that most influences whether or not a child will be fostered. In those communities where land inheritance goes to the first born son and/or where the family receives a dowry payment upon their daughter's marriage, the rate of fostering of girls is higher and faster than that of boys[91]. In these cases, girls may be fostered more easily because with marriage, they move away from the foster home and are thus not viewed as permanent members of the foster family. In this way, girls are not seen as long-term competitors for family resources with caregivers' own children[92]. Boys are seen to take longer to mature, and to require more resources in terms of land and money for dowry payments. Moreover, Ayieko (1997) argues that among the peoples of Western Kenya, some families believe that an orphaned boy is "likely to thrive and crowd-out other sons in their foster home"[93]. In Rwanda, in one children's centre, 126 of the 128 children who remained to be fostered were boys[94]. Finally, girls are seen as easier to place because of their domestic labour potential. While both boys and girls are expected to help with household chores and other domestic responsibilities, it is assumed that girls work harder than boys, even when they have more to do[95].

However, despite these insights into the different value accorded to children in different contexts, those intervening on behalf of separated children in emergencies are often blind to, or feel unable to address, these inequalities. Agencies need to be aware of the complex nature of fostering arrangements and the fact that in all cultures there are numerous and elaborate reasons why some children, and not others, are sent away, and why some are taken in and others are not. Conceptions of childhood vary not only between cultures, but also within them.

An examination of child fostering in emergency situations clearly requires a thorough and in-depth understanding of the specific traditions and norms that govern the treatment of children who live with families other than their own. It is important that children's views help to inform this understanding. Do foster children expect to be treated in the same way as the birth children of their foster parents? In their view, what is considered "acceptable" or "unacceptable" treatment? How do these views relate to those of adults and the aid agencies that intervene on their behalf? In-depth qualitative research with children is required in order to understand their perspectives and experiences. This information is important because current agency understandings of fostering are adult-centred, and largely influenced by Western notions

of family relations and structure. Moreover, a better understanding of children's experiences will improve programme effectiveness.

In the following section of the paper, a second important element of shared management child care societies is examined. Like the practice of child fostering, an examination of sibling caregiving may also provide important insights into our understanding of the care and protection needs of separated children in emergencies. The institution of child fostering encourages socialisation practices that are similar to those associated with sibling caregiving. According to Weisner (1984), these include: "diffusion of affect, attachment to community, early expectations of prosocial, mature behaviours, strong compliance and deference expectations, work and responsibility expectations imposed early in life, and others"[96].

Sibling Caregiving

In many agricultural and pastoral societies, child care is seen to be a child's responsibility, rather than a specialised task of adulthood[97]. The notion that children should have unlimited access to their mothers is impossible given the heavy domestic workloads, economic reality and family size of most people in this context. When older siblings and peers take care of young children, mothers are able to direct their energies elsewhere, either toward the family's subsistence needs, or toward the care of a new born child. In this way, sibling caregiving is an essential contribution to household livelihood in many communities.

In almost all societies, child care tends to be the role of girls[98], although sibling composition and birth order play an important role in determining whether it is sisters or brothers who look after their younger siblings[99]. These roles are not static and do change over the course of childhood[100]. Children tend to take on increasingly gender-specific roles as they grow older, and during the period of middle childhood, girls' activities in particular become much more restricted to the domestic sphere than do boys'. This global pattern is evidenced in many cultures and communities. For example, Pulsipher (1993) argues that in the English-speaking West Indies, girls, as they mature, are steered increasingly towards domestic tasks that keep them in the yard, such as laundry, food production and child care. Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to be found outside the yard, looking after animals, and running errands farther from home. Because much of girls' work takes place within the private sphere of the home, it is often subsumed under and accounted for as work done by the mother. In this way, girls' labour is often not seen as an essential contributor to the household economy.

In shared management child care societies, the care of infants and young children is a an expected stage in the lives of most children and a central activity in their daily lives[101]. From almost as early as they can remember, children begin to learn alongside their parents to care for their younger siblings and to provide them with emotional support and comfort[102]. As child caregivers come to understand the tasks that they

are observing and practising, they are expected to take on increasing levels of responsibility for meeting the direct child care needs of their younger sibling[103]. From as early as 2 months of age, mothers leave their infants in the care of an older child, first for a few moments, and later for longer periods of time. This graduated process enables mothers to resume the performance of other domestic tasks. It also enables child care-givers to slowly develop a relationship, or an "unhurried attachment bond" with their infant sibling[104, 105]. Mothers usually stop providing direct care at about the time of weaning, and these tasks come to be primarily performed by the child caregiver and the multi-age sibling or peer group to which he or she belongs[106]. From this point on, mothers play a supervisory, rather than an implementing role, in meeting their young child's needs for direct care[107]. For instance, Hawaiian children as young as 1 or 2 begin to spend time in the exclusive company of other children, under the care of an older sibling. By the time they have reached the age of 3 or 4 years, they spend the majority of their day in this group[108]. This delegation of certain child care tasks to child caregivers does not represent a transfer of maternal authority and control. Mothers remain responsible for the overall care of their young children, but with increasing levels of assistance from older children in the family.

Sibling caregiving works in most traditional agricultural and pastoral societies because it increases the efficiency of child care, subsistence can be more easily achieved and it serves to promote cultural goals for appropriate child development[109]. It has been widely noted that the age at which children become extensively involved in caring for their younger siblings begins when they are approximately 5 to 7 years old and by the time they are between the ages of 8 and 10 years, they are expected to be competent caregivers, capable of carrying out a wide variety of associated tasks without being asked to do so by their parents[110]. For example, among the Kwara'ae of the Solomon Islands, by the time a boy or girl has reached the age of 7 or 8, he or she will be entrusted with an infant of 4 months or older for 2 or 3 hours at a time. Once a girl (or a boy in those households which lack elder daughters) has reached 11 years old, she will be responsible for performing a series of household chores, including caring for an infant all day, with the help of younger siblings, while her parents work in the gardens[111].

It is argued by some researchers that child care tasks may be developmentally appropriate for children in this age range[112]. This time period is said to coincide with a young child's cognitive development: the ability to perform complex tasks in a self-directed manner[113], and the ability to understand, integrate and co-ordinate different sets of information[114] are believed to be established in this period. Children at this age are also believed to have a natural playfulness that does not change until they reach adolescence[115]. Moreover, given that the majority of child caregivers are girls, the fact that this age range is assumed to correspond with a young girl's increasing identification with and emulation of the female/maternal role[106] may also be significant. Edwards (1993) also argues that there is considerable evidence of "self-socialisation", a process whereby children begin to emulate those individuals whom they choose as

mentors. These people may be peers and older children, and not necessarily parents or other adults.

In many cultures, this period of middle childhood corresponds with what many parents refer to as the "age of reason"[117]. For example, among the Mayan people of Yucatan, Mexico, children who can independently accept responsibility for domestic and child care tasks are referred to as those "having-reached-understanding"[118]. The Gonja of northern Ghana also see "lack of sense" as a defining feature of early childhood and assert that children "have sense" by the age of 6 or 7[119]. In Bangladesh, children approximately 5 years of age are said to emerge from *sisukal*, a stage of non-reason, to *balyakal*, a stage of partial reason[120]. And among the Navajo in the United States, children between the ages of 6 and 9 years are considered to have reached *Nitsidzikees Dzizii*, a period in which "one begins to think"[121]. In their analysis of ethnographic data from 50 cultures, Rogoff et al (1975) determined that in the age period between 5–7 years, parents begin to delegate to children responsibility for a number of domestic chores, including child care and animal tending.

That the assignment of child care tasks to children of this age range is so common in shared management societies reflects the fact that parents believe children have a capacity to care for other children and that doing so is also good for them. In many cultures, children learn through participation in and exposure to adult life[122], rather than being isolated from it in schools or in the home. Moreover, many cultures have a view of development in middle childhood which is very different from that dominant in the West, which tends to keep children in suspended social immaturity at school[123]. In fact, Western developmental psychology is particularly weak in the area of middle childhood. Despite much evidence to the contrary, the assumption is that very little happens in this period. Sigmund Freud famously called middle childhood the "latency" period.

In shared management child care societies, sibling caregiving is seen as part of normal child development and an essential preparation for adulthood[124]. In this way, child care is not only seen as the "proper" role for children, it is also seen as a predicted stage of life for children themselves. From an early age, children learn that the tasks they perform are important to the welfare of the family, and thus come to appreciate the social utility and legitimacy of their labour. Mothers inculcate in children a desire to work as a means of feeling important and valued in their family and community by encouraging them to take on tasks that are congruent with their developing capacities[125]. In fact, often a mother who does not expect her child to work is considered negligent in her child rearing role[126] because it is through child care and other forms of work that children are expected to learn responsibility and the value of co-operation.

For children in shared management child care societies, being given responsibility for the care of a younger sibling or cousin is a way of being recognised as competent. In their study of child behaviour in 12 communities around the world, Whiting and Edwards (1988) assert the importance a growing child feels when included in the do-

mestic work force. In "Children of Different Worlds", the authors convey the childhood remembrances of Kenyan researchers who felt that "to be assigned a chore was to be a part of the family, to be important in the mother's eyes. To be overlooked when work was being handed out was interpreted as disapproval – what some might call withdrawal of love"[127]. Several other authors also argue that children desire these domestic roles and derive great satisfaction from their participation in them[128]. While some children resent these responsibilities[129], they nonetheless recognise that being given responsibility and training in domestic tasks signals to a growing child his or her acceptance and integration into community and family life.

In shared management societies, work is a mechanism for social integration as well as a way of providing social support to children. For example, among the Abaluyia of Kenya, social support for children is "more sociocentric, requiring the children to seek and offer assistance in the context of a large, hierarchical network of siblings and adults, who are doing joint tasks"[130]. Children give and receive support to one another by doing chores for the family, caring for younger siblings, sharing food, and teasing each other. Help and assistance are given through "indirect chains of support" from one child to another. A child who has received assistance from another child will in turn assist a third child, and along this chain verbal acknowledgements or thanks are rarely given. In his study in Kisa, Weisner (1989) found that mothers were the exclusive providers of support to their children in only 23% of all of the supportive behaviours in the sample. He observed that when parents do intervene to provide help and assistance to children, they often do so by providing the child with a job to do – that is, by asking the child to help rather than helping the child, *per se*. Sometimes, when a child is very young or incapable of performing certain tasks, adults will give him or her "mock work" to do, such as fetching water in a very small jug or collecting small bits of kindling for the cooking fire.

The high levels of instrumental support provided to children in shared management societies were also apparent in Mozambique in 1993, during the period following its longstanding civil war. Research with children and families in Milange showed that adults tried to support children to put their lives back together in the period of reconstruction by showing them how to work, telling them that they must work, and letting them know that without work, there would be no food[131]. Children worked together building, planting and cultivating as a means of healing and coping with the suffering that they had experienced. Similarly, among the many boys who became separated from their families as a result of the war in South Sudan, it was common for them to express a desire to assist others, as they had been assisted by their parents, friends, siblings and other adults[132]. Zutt (1994) argues that they saw "themselves caring for others not only in the distant future, when their own children and their elderly parents will need help, but also in the immediate present, when younger children and other persons in their presence show demonstrable need"[133].

These facts are important to consider in the design of psycho-social interventions for separated children because in certain cultures, a child may feel that he or she

needs to do specific tasks or have specific skills in order to become a respected member of the community. What does it mean for a child if he or she is unable to undertake these responsibilities? Research with teenage girls in a residential institution in Nepal highlighted the girls' concern that they were not given any opportunities to care for younger children and as a result they were being denied the experience of traditional roles and relationships[134]. Furthermore, research with Eritrean orphans living in a large institution found that both younger and older children felt better cared for, protected and nurtured after the institution changed the dormitory groups to include children of different ages[135]. The authors of this study argue that enabling older children to care for younger ones resonated with the particular social worlds which these orphans had experienced and to which they would be introduced as adults.

Sibling caregiving has an important long term impact on children's relationships with one another over time[136]. After infancy, child caregivers (and not mothers) are the ones responsible for a young child's physical stimulation, in the form of carrying, and psychosocial stimulation, in the form of social interaction[137]. This fact has led some to argue that child-child caregiving exerts a more extensive and perhaps more developmentally important role on child development than does direct maternal care[138]. This assertion has important implications for the care and protection of separated children and the meaning of parent-child separation in different cultural contexts.

Chapter 7

The Meaning of Separation

Because mainstream psychology usually assumes the mother to be the primary caregiver of children in Euro-American households, as discussed above, the bulk of the literature on separated children assumes that the mother-child dyad is the most important and secure relationship in a child's life[139]. It is widely argued that without this crucial relationship, separation can have a devastating social and psychological impact on children[140]. The literature does acknowledge the importance of other relationships in a child's life, such as those with fathers, siblings, relatives and other caring adults. However, the mother-child relationship is still considered to be of paramount importance to the psychological health of separated children.

Certainly in all societies, including shared management child care societies, parents protect and care for their children according to the norms and practices predominant in their specific communities. Children rely on their parents for those things that they are accustomed to receiving from them. But an analysis of child rearing practices in shared management child care societies indicates that the nature of parent-child relationships differs in important ways from Euro-American households. It therefore cannot be assumed that parent-child separation will have the same meaning for all children in all parts of the world.

There is ample evidence in the anthropological literature on child rearing to suggest that in sibling caregiving societies, children develop diffuse attachments with their mother and close bonds with their child caregivers[141]. In fact, among the pastoral and tribal peoples of East Africa, where sibling caregiving is "ubiquitous"[142], Harkness and Super (1992) argue that there are some babies that are more fond of their child caregiver than their mother. Whiting and Edwards (1988) also found that in many of the Sub-Saharan communities that they studied, young children often approached older siblings for help and support rather than their mothers[143]. Moreover, Nsamenang's (1992a) research on child care patterns in Cameroon may offer important insights into the care and protection of children in times of stress. He comments, "even a casual observer could not fail to remark how, in stressful situations like illness, some children preferred being handled by their sitters than by their mothers". Some argue that this diffusion of early attachment may also increase a child's sense that others in the community will care for him or her[144]. According to Weisner (1984), "sibling care may reduce the strength of the internalised parental role model and increase the influence of community constraints based on shared function"[145].

These findings may be especially relevant to separated children in the many parts of the world. Weisner (1987) argues that in places where there are significant threats to community safety, such as communal violence and warfare, sibling caregiving is

more likely to occur. In these instances, adults (especially men) and adolescent boys may be involved in community protection away from home. The absence of these family members may intensify children's, and especially girls', responsibility for looking after one another. In dangerous situations, children, and girls in particular, may play a more important role as buffers of stress than is commonly understood. Child-child relationships may be an important protective factor for separated children.

Despite these findings, the evidence to suggest that child-child attachments are more important to children than parent-child attachments is inconclusive. Not enough is known about the qualitative nature of these relationships and the meanings that they hold for children. Conclusions in the anthropological literature are based on observations, and not on discussions with children themselves. What remains to be well understood is the way in which children interact with and use these various relationships to meet their individual needs for love, care, affection, support and protection. To whom do they turn for protection in times of stress? Do they always turn to the same person, or does their choice change according to the type of stress or the circumstance in which it is experienced? Is it the sum of a child's relationships with others that ultimately influences his or her psychological well-being, rather than the presence or absence of a particular individual *per se*? Is the security of his or her attachment relationships founded upon the fact that a child has several people on whom he or she can rely for care? The answers to these and other questions are critical to understanding the needs of separated children in emergency situations and how they can best be addressed.

Chapter 8

Children's Relationships With One Another

There is evidence to suggest that children who act as caregivers to younger children tend to transfer the nurturing behaviour they learn in this context to other relationships in their lives, and especially to peers[146]. Munroe et al (1984) found this to be the case in their study of children's social behaviour in four communities with heavy subsistence workloads, including the Logoli of Kenya, the Garifuna of Belize, the Newars of Nepal and American Samoan[147], as did Werner and Smith (1982) in their research with children on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. Mead (1968) also observed that in societies where child caregiving relied more on children than on parents, there was usually a "fostering group" of peers[148]. Indeed, in his exploration of what he determined to be strong, supportive relationships between children on the street in Cali, Colombia, Lewis Aptekar (1991) found that sibling caregiving was the dominant mode of child rearing in the sample children's families. He argues that Mary Ainsworth's original attachment research showed that separation from home was less stressful for children who had been reared in this way[149, 150]. This assertion is substantiated elsewhere in the literature, where it is generally believed that children who care for other children experience an acceleration of what are assumed to be universal stages of child development, especially in the development of pro-social, nurturing and responsible behaviour[151]. Aptekar (1991) argues that for most street children in Colombia, their developmental experiences are closer to those of adolescents or early adolescents than to "childhood" as defined by dominant Western thinking. The same contention may apply to separated children in emergencies.

Many other researchers have explored the value of peer relationships to the psychological well-being of children who live apart from their families. The bulk of this literature has focused, like Aptekar, on the lives of street children and their moral development[152]. It stresses the crucial nature of the emotional and material support that peers provide to one another. To date, these issues have not been a focus of the literature on children who are separated from their families in emergencies, despite the fact that street children and separated children share a common base of experience (both groups of children are effectively looking after themselves), and the fact that many street children come from war zones. The circumstances of these two groups of children are rarely examined alongside one another. Consequently, programmes for separated children in emergencies are rarely informed by "best practices" in programming for other groups of children who live apart from families, and vice versa.

Similarly, issues of social power in childhood have also been ignored in the literature on separated children. Children's relationships are not always supportive and "happy". Dominance and cruelty in sibling relationships and children's friendships are not

unusual. Some children do threaten, harass and physically abuse one another. While the literature on children in Europe and North America does tend to explore these negative aspects of children's relationships, these issues are not apparent in the literature on separated children, perhaps because it is assumed that children in shared management societies do not behave cruelly toward one another. But this assumption remains to be proven. This is an important area for further research.

One notable exception to the lack of research on the role of peers in the lives of separated children, however, is the post-World War Two research conducted by Anna Freud and her colleagues. It involved a group of six young children between the ages of three and four who were brought to England after having survived a Nazi concentration camp. All of the children had lost their parents in the first year of life and had been cared for by a series of unrelated adults in the camp, none of whom survived. Through it all, the children had remained together and were devoted to one another:

> *There was no occasion to urge the children to "take turns"; they did it spontaneously since they were eager that everybody should have his share… They did not tell on each other and they stood up for each other automatically whenever they felt that a member of the group was unjustly treated or otherwise threatened by an outsider. They were extremely considerate of each other's feelings. They did not grudge each other their possessions, on the contrary lending them to each other with pleasure… On walks they were concerned for each other's safety in traffic, looked after children who lagged behind, helped each other over ditches, turned aside branches for each other to clear the passage in the woods, and carried each other's coats… At mealtimes handing food to the neighbour was of greater importance than eating oneself.* [153]

These separated children clearly developed strong bonds with one another and were capable of anticipating and responding to one another's needs. Having experienced terrible losses and much suffering, the children banded together in the face of external threats, be they from adults in the institution or the natural environment around it. The relationships that they formed were powerful and reliable, and as a result provided them with much-needed security. When one of Anna Freud's collaborators, Sophie Dann, was interviewed in 1982, when the children were about 40 years old, she apparently replied that they were "leading effective lives"[154].

The role of peers in the lives of separated children must be explored in depth in order that policies and programmes be designed to operate in their best interests. For example, research with a group of former residents in a large residential institution for boys in Nepal revealed the way in which children's relationships with peers had protected them from the otherwise harsh and uncaring atmosphere of the institution:

> *Sometimes we feel so sad at not having a mother and father to love us and do other things for us, but in our group we don't feel so bad… We were close as brothers*[155].

Similarly, research with separated boys from South Sudan has shown that although many of the boys had experienced high levels of violence and terrible loss, these experiences did not have a negative impact on their ability to feel empathy for one another[156]. With few exceptions, they travelled, worked and stayed together, supporting each other along the way.

It should not be underestimated that peers are crucial supports for separated children: the majority of the separated children in the world today have been raised in shared management child care societies, and in this context, the sharing of domestic responsibilities and tasks promotes interdependence among siblings, parents, cousins, peers and neighbours. In these multi-age peer and sibling groups, children learn important survival skills, as well as how to relate to one another, to lead and follow others, to agree and disagree, to negotiate with one another and to support one another in the achievement of shared tasks. Membership in the multi-age peer and sibling group also enables children to set the terms of their relationships and collaboration themselves. Perhaps most importantly, it is widely argued that participation in this group eases the child's transition away from the mother[157]. Tietjen (1989) argues that "it appears that in households with many children, parents must spread themselves more thinly among the children, and the siblings, in turn, may come to rely on each other and on peers more than on adults"[158]. These facts alone should warrant further research in this area.

Research into the importance of peer and sibling groups as support mechanisms for separated children might provide important insight into the needs and functioning of child-headed households. Children in these domestic units may be relying on the "training for interdependence and affiliation, not autonomous independence and achievement, among the peer group"[159] that is associated with sibling care and shared management child care systems. They may be accustomed to being the primary caregivers and socialising agents of their younger siblings. Again, insights from research with street children might be relevant to the experiences of separated children in this context: Verma (1990) argues that children who live apart from their families on the streets of Delhi, India, gained enough exposure as young children to the various roles that different family members occupy, that they replicate these roles through role playing the tasks of mother, father, etc. Similarly, Barker and Knaul (2000) suggest that street girls in Kenya and Bolivia often form common-law families with street boys through which they attempt to replicate their experiences of family life. These findings suggest that children on their own still know how the family works and functions and that they replicate these processes in their relationships with one another. This way of learning fits with the pattern of "legitimate peripheral participation"[160] common in shared management child care systems and has important implications for our understanding of the care and protection needs of separated children.

While the role of peers as social supports has been underestimated in the literature on separated children, so too has an analysis of the role that parents play in the esta-

blishment and functioning of these supportive relationships. It is true that in shared management societies, children are expected to perform many important domestic tasks, including child care. However, children reared in these environments are also expected to turn to adults and other, more experienced people in their immediate family and communal environment when they need help and support in their child rearing tasks[161]. The reality is that a child's (just as an adult's) support network is a complex web of relationships with all kinds of different people, and the amount of time spent with each individual in this network does not necessarily reflect his or her meaning or importance to the child. It may be that the very existence of a particular adult is just as important to a child than is the direct involvement of that adult in his or her daily activities. Take, for example, the words of Nyandwi, an adolescent girl who heads a household in Rwanda:

> *Sometimes I feel that there is no one to take care of my sisters and brother and that is why I do it. I care for them; I find food for them; I find money for school fees; I find clothing; I cultivate the land. I do all this by myself. It has become a much larger project than I imagined… I feel sometimes that there are certain things that an adult knows that are above my thinking*[162].

Nyandwi may have been responsible for most of these tasks before her parents died, but the implicit support and guidance their presence provided is no longer accessible to her.

Some authors suggest that children who live apart from adults, such as street children, do provide one another with social support, friendship and protection, but the fact that this happens in the absence of adult supervision means that the negative features of these relationships cannot be well monitored[163]. In their studies of Kikuyu child caregivers in Kenya, Leiderman and Leiderman (1977) found that child caregivers usually took their responsibilities very seriously. Nevertheless, most children at one time or another gave in to the temptation of playing with peers, and in doing so, often ignored the needs of the younger child under their care. That children were not always the most responsible caregivers of their younger siblings is not surprising, given the obviously more attractive option of recreation and leisure. Adults, too, are often drawn away from their child care tasks and may not always care for children in reliable and responsible ways.

Not enough is known about the way in which children interact with one another in the absence of adults – after all, researchers are almost always adults. However, existing studies indicate that children's involvements with one another may not be as straightforward as they appear. For example, a pattern commonly observed in children's groups that span a range of ages is that older children tend to have the highest status, with younger children having to perform certain tasks on their behalf. But in his research among street children in Cali, Colombia, Aptekar (1988) observed that this assumption does not always hold true. He found that young children living on the street were more powerful vis-à-vis older street children in some very important

ways. He suggests that young children are better able to manipulate adults because they are small and cute, and do not therefore pose the same physical and ideological threat as do adolescent boys. Their child-like appearance and childish antics enabled them to access the resources that they needed, thereby increasing their economic productivity and hence their status within the group. In this instance, older children were forced to rely upon their younger peers for material support. This dynamic freed the younger children up to do what they wanted and to rely on older boys for protection, when required.

Chapter 9

Children's Relationships with Adults

Childhood, according to middle-class Western ideals, is a period of vulnerability in which children are dependent on parents for love, care and affection as well as socialisation, skill development and economic security. Certainly no one would dispute the vital role that loving parents play in guaranteeing the survival and healthy development of their children. Adults who nurture their children, economically provide for them and support them to develop into competent and confident individuals help to equip their children with the skills and attitudes needed to live happy and successful lives. Adults the world over agree that children need parents. What is rarely recognised is the fact that parents also need children.

Parents and children are interdependent beings. This is true in all cultures, and is especially obvious in those societies where the majority of children's roles and tasks are designed to prepare them for adulthood in general, and parenthood in particular. Sibling caregiving is an important part of this training, as is a growing child's increasing participation in the domestic economy. In this context, becoming a parent is seen as a natural part of the life course. The importance of this process is often reflected in the fact that in many societies, after a woman has borne her first son, she is no longer referred to by her given name. Instead, she is effectively renamed "Mama so-and-so", after the name of her new-born child*. Furthermore, in societies where political power comes from having a following, such as those in many parts of West Africa[164], having many children means having more power. This is one of the reasons why parents foster children.

The pragmatic reasons for bearing children in shared management child care systems are inseparable from the spiritual and moral values of these cultures. For example, in many communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, parents see children as necessary for the survival of kin groups based on descent[165]. It is widely believed that ancestors live on in the lives of individuals, families and communities. Therefore, having numerous children is an important way to ensure personal, social and spiritual continuity in death[166]. Parents with many children are considered blessed with good fortune in the form of wealth, security, prestige and immortality. They thereby gain a sense of seniority and respect in the community. Those without children are pitied: Nsamenang (1992) argues that among the agricultural peoples of Cameroon and the Ashanti of Ghana, childlessness is "felt by both men and women as the greatest of all personal tragedies and humiliations"[167]. In shared management child care systems, the value of children to parents is reflected in nearly every aspect of adult life. This is exemplified in the traditional Yoruba worldview that children are the summum

* The fact that a woman's name is sometimes informally changed after the birth of a son (and not a daughter) also demonstrates the higher value accorded to male children in many societies.

bonum, or chief good, in life[168].

A great deal has been written on the economic value of children to parents, in terms of the contributions children make to family survival and subsistence. While this area has been a major focus of much of the literature on child labour, it has not been addressed directly in the literature on separated children. However, growing recognition of the potential for the labour exploitation of fostered children has meant that children's economic value is increasingly appreciated by those working with separated children. People have seen that families often foster children in order to have an additional hand to help them in the house, in the fields and in other domestic tasks.

What remains to be understood or addressed in the literature on separated children is the emotional value of children to parents. In many cases, caring for children (whether through direct or more supervisory care) may be an important coping mechanism for parents, because in so doing, they may be distracted from their concerns about safety and security. Thus, supporting children may indirectly be supportive to parents. But children are more than distractions for parents in stressful situations: they may also offer essential emotional support and actively contribute to their parents' emotional well-being. From a very young age, children become aware of their parents' need for support and many develop strategies to meet these needs. They may take on extra responsibilities without being asked, behave in an especially "good" manner, or attempt to improve the family's situation in other ways. These behaviours have been found in many of those children in the UK who care for parents with an illness or disability[169]. Moreover, in her research with Bhutanese refugee children in Nepal, Hinton (2000) found that some children of depressed mothers regularly elicited caring behaviour, thus enabling their mothers to resume their socially-valued role as providers of care and protection to their children. While children may consciously plan these behaviours not in all instances, a thirteen year old girl in Hinton's study clearly did, explaining:

> *Sometimes I play at being a child, I am grown up now, but my mother likes to have babies, and it makes her happy when I sit by her and she gives (spoon-feeds) me food"*[170].

Easing her mother's depression may also benefit the child because the restoration of typical adult-child roles may also be an important ingredient in his or her emotional and physical wellbeing.

Children's ability to provide support to others is not limited to the peer group. Among Burmese refugees in the camps in Thailand, for example, some adults believe that children's play and song helps parents to forget their displacement, if only temporarily, and to feel blessed[171]. In other words, parents gain a sense of balance and security in the appreciation of their children and the joys that their physical presence and very existence brings.

The value of children to parents, especially in the provision of emotional support, is not reflected in the literature on separated children. The implicit message in this

literature is that children need parents. This is a valid perspective. However, parents also need children, and the two-way nature of parent-child relationships needs further exploration. Research on the care and protection of separated children should focus not only on the meaning of parent-child separation to the psychological health of separated children. It should also explore what it means for a parent to be without their child. This area of inquiry may also provide important insight into child fostering arrangements, in particular the emotional advantages provided to adults who decide to take a child into their family. Evidence from Sierra Leone[172] and Mali[173] suggests that parents are not unaware of the positive emotional contributions that children make to their lives. These known benefits were certainly incentives for parents in Rwanda, many of whom fostered children in order to replace those offspring killed in the genocide[174]. To date, research in this area has focused almost exclusively on the economic, political and spiritual benefits of child fostering and has not addressed this critical question.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

The academic and agency literature on the care and protection of separated children in emergencies highlights some important issues for consideration in the design of policies and programmes to assist them. In particular, attention to the needs of children at different ages, the importance of at least one nurturing and reliable relationship, and the influence of children's individual characteristics on the way in which they experience separation are significant factors for consideration. To date, these and other identified factors have provided a way of understanding the circumstances of separated children and a basis upon which to intervene on their behalf.

However, there are certain limitations to this research. Foremost among these is the lack of attention to the context in which children have been raised and the differential impacts contextual variations may have on child development. The assumption inherent in the vast majority of the literature is that children's experience of parental separation will have the same meaning in all contexts. Yet ethnographic evidence from many different societies suggests that this assumption may be mistaken: in communities where shared management child care is the norm, child rearing tasks are distributed among a large sibling and family group, and exclusive parental care is extremely rare. In these circumstances, children may rely as much, or more, on their siblings for nurture and support than they do on their parents. Furthermore, they may be very mobile and accustomed to living in households that do not include their parents. In this context, concepts of family and parent-child relationships may be very different than is generally assumed in the literature on separated children.

The implications of these issues are significant and wide-ranging. Not enough is known about the actual circumstances of children's lives. To date, the dominant belief has been that children are raised in certain ways in particular kinds of families, but these assumptions are valid only in limited contexts. Due consideration must be given to local concepts of childhood and child development, understandings of family, child care practices and children's relationships with one another and with adults. These contextual elements play an important role in shaping the way children understand and experience the world around them. Most programmes and policies for separated children have been designed for a generic, decontextualised child and on the basis of perceived, rather than actual needs.

Interventions to assist separated children must understand and engage with local conceptions of child development and existing child care arrangements. Supporting indigenous practices means recognising that they are often heavily prescribed and governed by specific social norms. Lack of recognition of the particularities of community child care practices can have serious implications for the care and pro-

tection of separated children. By imposing systems of support that appear to outsiders to fit the local context, but which in reality may not recognise the specific content of existing practices, agencies can undermine traditional support mechanisms for children. Past ways of caring for children in crisis may be rejected in favour of new, externally-imposed arrangements. These interventions may function well in the midst of an emergency, but may be difficult to sustain in the long term. In these circumstances, children may face risks from which they have been traditionally protected.

Much more research is needed on the impact of policies and programmes for separated children. Monitoring and evaluation of existing interventions needs to be done in order to determine to what extent children's best interests are being met. This process should engage with all members of the community, and most especially, with children. We have a great deal to learn from them about their views and experiences. After all, they are the ones for whom our interventions become everyday life.

End Notes

1. Tolfree, 1995, p. 39.
2. Although they do not mean the same thing, the term "separated children" is often used interchangeably with the term "unaccompanied children".
3. Tolfree, 1995, Pl 39.
4. UNHCR, 2000.
5. Ashabranner & Ashabranner, 1987; Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock, 1988; Baker, 1982.
6. Werner, 1990.
7. Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996; Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock, 1988; Garbarino, Kostelny & Dubrow, 1991; Werner, 1990; Raundalen & Stuvland (undated); Boothby, 1984.
8. Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock, 1988.
9. Macksoud, Aber & Cohn, 1996, p. 220.
10. Goyos, 1997; Tolfree, 1995; Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock, 1988; Baker, 1982.
11. Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock, 1988.
12. Werner, 1990.
13. Boothby, 1984.
14. Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock, 1988; Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996.
15. Werner, 1990.
16. Garbarino et al, 1991; Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996.
17. Werner, 1990; Eunson, 1996; Rousseau et al, 1998; Boothby, 1984.
18. Tolfree, 1995.
19. Rousseau et al, 1998.
20. Williamson & Moser (1987); UNHCR (1995); UNHCR/UNICEF (1994); Ressler, Tortorici & Marcelino (1993); Ressler, Boothby & Steinbock (1988); Save the Children (1996); Evans (undated); Boothby, 1992; Petty & Jareg, 1998.
21. Machel, 1996.
22. Canadian Christian Children's Fund, 1999, cited in Ledward, 2000.
23. Williamson & Moser (1987); UNHCR (1995); UNHCR/UNICEF (1994); Ressler, Tortorici & Marcelino (1993).
24. See, for example, Charnley, 2000; Boothby, 1992, 1993.
25. Tolfree, 1995; Petty & Jareg, 1998; Mupedziswa, 1993; Phiri & Duncan, 1993; Radda Barnen, 1994; Boothby, 1992; Charnley, 2000.
26. See, for example, Tolfree, 1995.
27. Petty & Jareg, 1998.
28. See, for example, Petty & Jareg, 1998.
29. Petty & Jareg, 1998.
30. Gibbs & Boyden, 1995.
31. Boyden, 1994.

32. See, for example, LeVine, 1977.
33. LeVine (1989) calls this the "optimality assumption".
34. A few notable exceptions include the work of Göncü (1999); Rogoff et al (1993); Woodhead et al (1998); Harkness & Super (1996); Burman (1994); Dawes (1999).
35. Weisner, 1984.
36. UNHCR (PTSS/Community Services), 1994, p. 3.
37. Göncü, 1999.
38. LeVine, 1989; Kagitcibasi, 1996; Shweder et al, 1998.
39. Boyden, 1994.
40. LeVine, 1989; Goody, 1982; Hrdy, 1992.
41. LeVine, 1994.
42. Nsamenang, 1992; Weisner, 1987.
43. Harkness & Super, 1992; Nsamenang, 1992; Leiderman & Leiderman, 1977; Weisner, 1984.
44. Briggs, 1986.
45. Briggs, 1998.
46. Briggs, 1998, p. 5.
47. Ledward, 2000.
48. Boyden, 1993.
49. Ledward, 2000.
50. Boyden, 1990.
51. Ledward, 2000.
52. DHS figures cited in Mensch, Bruce & Greene, 1998, p. 15.
53. See, for example, Goody, 1978.
54. Fiawoo, 1978.
55. Jackson, 1993; Stack, 1975.
56. For instance, Inupiat of Alaska (Bodenhorn, 1988); Herero and Mbanderu pastoralists of Botswana (Pennington, 1991); Nso of Cameroon (Nsamenang, 1992a, 1992b); Gonja and Ashanti of Ghana (Goody, 1978; Fiawoo, 1978); Abaluyia of Kenya (Weisner, 1987); Turkana of Kenya (Shell-Duncan, 1994); Kpelle of Liberia (Erchak, 1977; Bledsoe, 1980); Fulani of Mali (Castle, 1996); Yoruba of Nigeria (Oni, 1995); Sereer Ndut of Senegal (Dupire, 1988); Mende of Sierra Leone (Bledsoe, 1985); Kwaio of the Solomon Islands (Keesing, 1970); Ganda of Uganda (Ainsworth, 1967); African Americans in the USA (Jackson, 1993; Stack, 1975); as well as other groups in Brazil (Fonseca, 1986); Haiti (Rawson & Berggran, 1973); West Indies (Sanford, 1975; Soto, 1992); Malaysia (Massard-Vincent, 1983; Carsten, 1991); Oceania (Carroll, 1970); Swaziland (Sudre et al, 1990); Uganda (Tuhaise, 1994); and West Indies (Sanford, 1975).
57. Tronick, Morelli and Winn, 1987.
58. Carsten, 1991.
59. Bodenhorn, 1988.
60. Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985.
61. Goldberg, 1977.
62. Weisner, 1987.
63. Goody, 1982. This definition is the one most commonly used in the literature on child fostering.
64. Soto, 1992.
65. Shell-Duncan, 1994.
66. See, for example, Goody, 1982; Bledsoe, 1989; Castle, 1995; Massard-Vincent, 1983; Carsten, 1991; Shell-

Duncan, 1994; Soto, 1992.

67. Several anthropologists have explored the prevalence of child fostering in West Africa. However, Goody, 1982, is considered a key text in this regard.
68. Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985, p.55.
69. Goody, 1975.
70. Gordon, 1987, 438.
71. Interview with Dr. Fayiri Togola, Director "Enfants en Crise", Save the Children Fund-UK, Mali Field Office, July, 2000.
72. See, for example, LeVine et al, 1994.
73. Drew, Makufa & Foster, 1998.
74. Ayieko, 1997.
75. Hunter et al, 1997, p. 408.
76. Hunter et al, 1997.
77. Reiseal Ni Cheileachair, personal communication, November 2000.
78. Mann & Ledward, 2000.
79. Sudre et al, 1990.
80. Shell-Duncan, 1994.
81. Bodenhorn, 1988.
82. Goody, 1982; Zeitlin & Babatunde, 1995; Erchak, 1977.
83. Blanchet, 1996.
84. Camacho, 1999.
85. Aptekar, 1988; Poluha et al, 2000.
86. Jansen, 1987.
87. Scheper-Hughes, 1992.
88. Reiseal Ni Cheileachair, personal communication, November 2000.
89. I thank Jo Boyden for her insights on this aspect of NGO policy and practice.
90. Boyden & Mann, 2000.
91. Reiseal Ni Cheileachair, personal communication, November 2000.
92. Ayieko, 1997.
93. Ayieko, 1997, p. 12.
94. Reiseal Ni Cheileachair, personal communication, November 2000.
95. Reynolds, 1991; Johnson et al, 1995; Punch, 1998.
96. Weisner, 1984, p.347.
97. Weisner, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982.
98. Reynolds, 1991.
99. Punch, 1998; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1991.
100. Punch, 1998; Schildkrout, 1981.
101. Harkness & Super, 1992.
102. Rogoff et al (1993) refer to this process of learning as "legitimate peripheral participation".
103. LeVine et al, 1994; Nsamenang, 1992a; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1991; Harkness & Super, 1991.
104. Nsamenang, 1992.

105. Leiderman & Leiderman, 1977.

106. Goldberg, 1977; Nsamenang, 1992a.

107. Weisner, 1982.

108. Weisner, 1987.

109. Harkness & Super, 1992.

110. Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1991.

111. See, for example, Rogoff et al, 1975.

112. See, for example, Whiting & Edwards, 1988.

113. Weisner, 1987.

114. Harkness & Super, 1992.

115. Whiting & Edwards, 1988.

116. Weisner, 1987; Bledsoe, 1980; Rogoff et al, 1975.

117. Gaskins, 1996.

118. Goody, 1982.

119. Blanchet, 1996.

120. Chisholm, 1996.

121. See, for example, Rogoff et al, 1993.

122. Boyden, personal communication, July 2000.

123. Weisner, 1982; Weisner & Gallimore, 1977; LeVine & White, 1987; Whiting & Whiting, 1963; Nsamenang, 1992b.

124. Wenger, 1989.

125. Wenger, 1989.

126. Whiting & Edwards, 1988, p. 185.

127. See, for example, Wenger, 1989; Weisner, 1984, 1987, 1989; Harkness & Super, 1992; Nsamenang, 1992a, 1998; Varkevisser, 1973.

128. See, for example, Song, 1996; Johnson et al, 1995.

129. Weisner, 1989, p.72.

130. Gibbs, 1994.

131. Zutt, 1994.

132. Zutt, 1994, p, 33.

133. Tolfree, 1995.

134. Wolff et al, 1995.

135. Wenger, 1989.

136. Leiderman & Leiderman, 1977.

137. See, for example, Nsamenang, 1992a.

138. As mentioned previously, studies of the psychological health of separated children are heavily reliant on the work of John Bowlby (cf 1973).

139. See, for example, Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996.

140. Leiderman & Leiderman, 1977; Weisner & Gallimore, 1977; Weisner 1997; Konner, 1977; Harkness & Super, 1992; Whiting & Edwards, 1988; LeVine 1994.

141. Harkness & Super, 1992, p. 448.

142. Nsamenang, 1992a, p. 424.

143. Weisner & Gallimore, 1977.

144. Weisner, 1984, p. 347.

145. Whiting & Edwards, 1988.

146. Cited in Edwards, 1993, p. 336.

147. Cited in Aptekar, 1988, p. 185.

148. Mary Ainsworth was a close colleague and collaborator of John Bowlby.

149. Aptekar, 1991.

150. Whiting & Whiting, 1963; Whiting & Edwards, 1988; Weisner, 1984,1987,1989; Harkness & Super, 1992; Leiderman & Leiderman, 1977; Nsamenang, 1992a; Aptekar, 1988; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1991.

151. See, for example, Baker, Panter-Brick & Todd, 1997; Aptekar 1988; Connolly, 1990; Swart, 1990; Verma, 1990; Felsman, 1989; Patel, 1990; Ennew, 1994.

152. Freud & Dann, 1967, p. 497 – 500, cited in Harris (1998).

153. Harris (1998).

154. Cited in Tolfree (1995), p. 72.

155. Zutt, 1994.

156. See, for example, Konner, 1977.

157. Tietjen, 1989, p.47.

158. Weisner, 1987, p. 248.

159. Rogoff et al, 1993.

160. Weisner, 1997; Harkness & Super, 1992; Dembele (undated).

161. This quote appears in Cohen & Hendler, 1997.

162. See, for example, Campos et al, 1994.

163. Goody, 1970; Okonofua et al, 1997.

164. LeVine et al., 1994.

165. LeVine et al., 1994.

166. Nsamenang, 1992, 422.

167. Zeitlin, 1996.

168. Deardon & Becker, 2000.

169. Hinton, 2000, p. 207.

170. Interview with Lily Pyu, Mae Sot, Thailand, August, 2000.

171. Bledsoe, 1989.

172. Interview with Dr. Fayiri Togola, Director "Enfants en Crise", Save the Children Fund-UK, Mali Field Office, July, 2000.

173. Reiseal Ni Cheileachair, personal communication, November 2000.

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