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Ethiopian Childhoods

A Case Study of the Lives of Orphans
and Working Children

Thesis for the degree philosophiae doctor

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Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management
Department of Geography
Norwegian Centre for Child Research

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Preface

I started taking childhood seriously in 2002, after presenting the findings of my masters' thesis on children's well-being in southern Ethiopia at the Annual Conference of the Norwegian Geographical Society in Trondheim. Many of the participants were enthusiastic and encouraged me to develop this into a PhD project. Despite my earnest wishes, however, I did not know how to go about doing so. Some time afterwards, I and one of the participants at the same conference, namely Nina Birkeland, met at another seminar in Oslo. Upon her return by train, Nina kindly shared with me her experiences of how to write a proposal and the application process to the Research Council of Norway. Although I did not obtain funding and did not begin the research for another two years, the journey towards it surely began then.

Many people have since generously helped me, and to list them all here would cover too many pages. But for the innumerable acts of kindness, hospitality and friendship, I am profoundly grateful. Most of all, I am grateful to Professor Emeritus Asbjørn Aase, my main supervisor in the Department of Geography, who has provided tremendous support to my intellectual growth and development since I was a post-graduate student in Development Studies (Social Change). I remain deeply gratified by his prompt comments, inspiring discussions and guidance throughout this project as well. I am also very grateful to my co-supervisor, Associate Professor Anne Trine Kjørholt, Director of the Norwegian Centre of Child Research (NOSEB), for her perceptive critique and insistence on being focused, which in turn helped to sharpen my thinking, analysis and writing. Thanks are due, again, to Asbjørn and Anne Trine for joining me in the field in Ethiopia, trips which culminated in joint publications. I am also fortunate to have been mentored by Professor Jens Qvortrup, Department of Sociology, who provided me with important suggestions on my drafts and clarified many questions, particularly during the initial stages of my research.

Since this dissertation on **Ethiopian childhoods** includes five journal articles, it has benefited a great deal from the sometimes critical but always useful comments of anonymous reviewers. I am grateful to them all. Although its contents are largely academic, the insight it gives about young people's lives might have useful applications for policy. In claiming this, I am expressing my profound gratitude to the participants in the research, including the children, families and social workers, who so generously spared their time to talk to me, answer my questions and share their perspectives. Without their enthusiastic collaboration, the research would not have taken its current shape. I owe many thanks to the Research Council of

Norway for a financial grant through the award of a three-year Doctoral Fellowship and fieldwork expenses. The Faculty of Social Science and Technology Management, NTNU, kindly provided me with a salary for three months that enabled me to complete the write-up. I am also grateful to the Nordic Africa Institute for granting me a one-month scholarship to conduct research in its rich library in Uppsala, Sweden. Many thanks too are owed to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Addis Ababa University, and in particular to Dr Muluneh Woldetsadik and Dr Woldeamlak Bewket for providing me with office space during my field stays. I thank Berhanu Zewdie for being a wonderful assistant in the field, Terefe Belayneh for transcribing my field materials, Kyrre Svarva for laying out the format beautifully and Yirgalem Mahiteme for making the maps. I am also grateful to Robert Parkin, University of Oxford, for his quick and wonderful editorial work.

My colleagues at NOSEB were always very enthusiastic and provided me with a stimulating research environment. I achieved a great deal from the intern seminars, teaching engagements and lunch-time discussions. I have appreciated the constructive comments and reassuring support of Gry Mette D. Haugen, Minna Rantalaiho, Randi Dyblie Nilsen and Vebjørg Tingstad, which made the final write-up process less painful. I also express my thanks to Barbara Rogers, Stuart Aitken and, in the Department of Geography, Catherine Brun and Ragnhild Lund for their support and encouragement during different stages of my research.

I have some special words of thanks for my friends who helped me during my study. These go to Shumete Gizaw and Kiko, for their generosity and care when I stayed in their home during my fieldwork in Gedeo. My heartfelt thanks also go to Ane Hagen Kjørholt, with whom I talked long and hard about my research, and to Berihun Mebratie for giving me much needed feedback on many of my articles. I also owe a great deal to Axel Baudouin and his family, as well as to Lise Kvittingen and Richard Verley, who always welcomed me in their house and were there to assist me whenever I needed them. Many thanks too, to Anna Kvittingen and Eva Nordfjell for their moral support and inspiring networks; to Jahnavi Phalkey for her kind eleventh-hour comments, and to Berhanu Assefa, Binyam Wondirad, Biruk Melaku, Desalegn Wana and Genet Yimer for their long-term friendship, laughter and company.

Finally, I am indebted to my family in both Norway and Ethiopia. Special thanks to my wife, Wubet, and our wonderful son, Abele, for being a source of tremendous love and encouragement and, not least, for shouldering the burden of social reproduction while I strove to become academic. I would also like to thank my father, the late Abebe Mamo, and mother,

Woineshet Beyene, who raised me benevolently; as well as my brothers and sisters who, despite our spatial separation, give me gentle nudges when I am a present-absent member. I lovingly dedicate this work to them all.

Tatek Abebe, Trondheim, 31 October 2007

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Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
ILO	International Labour Office
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
NGOs	Non Governmental Organization
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nation's Children's Fund

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores two aspects of contemporary childhoods – orphanhood and children's work – in Ethiopia. By drawing on case studies from Gedeo (rural) and Addis Ababa (urban), I discuss how children and young people negotiate their lives in respect of changing politico-economic and socio-cultural contexts. The study is framed in the light of poverty, the shifting livelihood trajectories of families and the growth in the number of orphans. In Ethiopia, there are about 5 million orphans, of whom 1.5 million (30%) have become so due to HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2003). According to UNICEF, the proportion of the latter in relation to the total number of orphans is increasing alarmingly. Little is known about how these children grow up and how the extended family system is coping with the impacts of the epidemic.

Despite being objects of pity and charity appeals, orphans work for survival and to fulfil their social obligations within their households. Like their counterpart children in the context of poverty, they are vital contributors of labour and income. Although children – orphans and non-orphans – are recognised as being active in family livelihoods, in research and policy they are also viewed as vulnerable becomings. The complex material and social environments in which they live and their struggles to shape these environments are aspects that have been ignored. In particular, the familial, economic and geographical contexts of their livelihoods and how their agency is played out in everyday life have been under-researched. This thesis therefore explores the lives of children and young people and their place in both daily and generational reproduction in two contrasting settings in Ethiopia. Based on their own perspectives, I discuss how they are constrained by and try to respond to poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and 'development' processes. On the face of it, the research might appear disparate in terms of its subjects i.e. orphans as opposed to children living with their parents on the one hand and place, i.e. rural as opposed to urban areas on the other. However, as I shall elaborate here, as well as later on in the section on 'synthesis of articles', there are cutting-edge themes, structural similarities and spatial dimensions intersecting their lives.

The present chapter provides a brief overview of earlier studies of children in Ethiopia and of the literature on orphanhood and children's work in the context of the global South.[1] Since I have already discussed some of these studies in the articles, here I will focus on the relevant

[1] I use the term 'global South' in preference to the 'developing world' which suggests that economically poor countries should follow a similar path of development like those of the 'developed' ones.

debates in order to identify the gaps, indicate where my work fits in with them and contributes to filling them, and explain the overall aim of the study. Finally, I will highlight the research questions, describe the specific objectives and outline the structure of the thesis.

Previous research on Ethiopian children

The Ethiopian literature on childhood is very small. A recent annotated bibliography reveals both the paucity and the little attention that research has paid to children who grow up in rural Ethiopia (Poluha, 2007a). The limited research that has been carried out, focused on children who are believed to have been suffering from particular social and economic disadvantages, has a clear urban bias. For example, there are relatively more studies on vulnerable young people who have fallen out of the traditional social safety nets as being poor, commercial sex workers (van Blerk, 2007; Hoot et al., 2007) and on those who are conspicuous in urban street environments (Veale, 1993; Aptekar and Abebe, 1997; Heinonen, 2000; Aptekar and Heinonen, 2003; Getnet, 2003). Those who have proved less accessible by being *within* families and in rural villages are, on the contrary, accordingly less visible in research (Bequele and Myers, 1995).

The studies of street childhood explore, among other things, the reasons why children are on the streets to begin with, the impacts of this, and how they cope with being there; and staged explanations of their involvement in street life. In the *Anthropology of street children in Addis Ababa,* Heinonen (2000) destabilises the rigid classification of street children as being either 'on the street' or 'of the street' as being inadequate to capture the complex lives and networks they develop over time. Aptekar and Heinonen (2003) propose three categories of street children, namely street working children, who live at home, attend school part-time and work or trade in the streets; working children, who live at home, aged eight and older, who do not beg, do not attend school and work full time on the streets; and finally, street children who do not attend school and beg full time. These classifications, though not unproblematic, suggest that street children are not homogeneous groups of people in terms of the time they spend on the streets, their relations with their families, their survival strategies etc. Like their fellow counterparts in the global South (Evans, 2006; Rizzini and Butler, 2003), moreover, they vary in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and behavioural characteristics.

In Ethiopia, calls have been made to move away from the psychopathological model of studying street children (Aptekar and Abebe, 1997: 478) and their 'troubled' childhoods to acknowledging instead the positive aspects of their lives, in particular their adaptability and the inventive and resourceful ways in which they cope in adverse living conditions (e.g. Panter-Brick, 2002; 2003). Outside the Ethiopian context, scholars have cautioned against the construction of a unitary 'street child model' that diverts attention away from the diverse ways in which children use public spaces (e.g. Baker 1998; Hecht, 2000; Ennew and Kruger, 2003). Research has also focused on the 'time' and 'place' of street children, i.e. the ways in which children use street environments, their own socio-spatial and temporal relations (Conolley and Ennew, 1996; Young, 2003a, b) and their mobile livelihoods, and how social maturity shapes their life trajectories in public spaces (Evans, 2006; van Blerk, 2004; Beazeley; 2003), as well as the structural and political contexts of the 'street child phenomenon' (Dallape, 1996; Droz, 2006).

Another domain of research that has acquired relative attention in Ethiopia is 'children's participation' in the contexts of the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) (Berre, 2004; Kjørholt, 2006; Ayele, 2007) and the conflicting role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in fulfilling street children's rights, well-being and place in society (Nieuwenhuys, 2001, 2003). Concern over the ways in which discourses on children's rights represent new forms of cultural imperialism (Kjørholt, 2001) seems to have prompted both Berre (2004) and Kjørholt (2006) to examine how the notions of 'child participation' are translated into local realities of children in northern and southern Ethiopia respectively. Berre (2004) problematises child participation because, she argues, it creates many expectations that are alien to the local culture and society. Focusing on the 'when' and 'where' of participation, Berre shows that children often perceive participation as something they *need to* perform – as a form of tokenism – and, as the title of her essay suggests, only *for when the guests come*, rather than for local people and their families. Similarly, Kjørholt (2006) shows the incompatibility of participation as a global norm and its local interpretations in her study of children, school clubs and the political context. She points out that children are taught western liberal democracy in schools, with the intention of turning them into adults-to-be and citizens. However, like Berre (2004), she suggests that participation is restricted in its notion of not being able to capture children's social interactions in everyday life.

Scholars have argued that the notion of 'child participation' and the 'autonomous child' are impositions exerted in the era of economic and cultural globalisation, in which the state has retreated from the delivery of social services and adopted a neo-liberal stance to children's rights (Nieuwenhuys, 2001; Kjørholt, 2005a). This is also revealed in the grounding of the UNCRC in both 'the superiority of the childhood model as it evolved in the North and the need to impose this model on a global scale' (Nieuwenhuys, 1998: 270), which give others 'the right to reshape children in their own image and [remake] non-western childhoods…in western forms' (Matthews, 2003: 4). I further argue that children in Ethiopia are conceived neither as independent citizens nor as autonomous individuals with separate rights, but instead as part of a family collective. Although they have a recognised place in the productive life of their society, their roles in economic and social reproduction are rarely acknowledged as constituting participation as envisaged in the UNCRC.

There is an overall lack of research *with children* in the contexts of families and institutions (e.g. schools), with few exceptions (see Emebet, 2002; Poluha, 2004; 2007b). Poluha's (2004) (longitudinal) ethnographic research with school-age children meticulously draws on their views and shows how the school system offers insights in theorising the socio-political and cultural institutions of Ethiopian society more generally. Based on Strauss and Quinn's (1997) concept of cultural schemas, Poluha demonstrates how dominant forms of power continue to be reproduced as legitimate ways of social organisation, thus explaining processes of political transformation. She suggests that schools, which are supposed to be places where young people learn new things, become sites that reproduce existing forms of authority and social inequalities. As a result, children in school contexts are socialised into a 'hierarchy trap'. In addition, Poluha (2007a: 14) argues, despite radical government changes from 'feudal' to 'socialist' to 'democratic' regimes, relations between state and people, adults and children, teachers and pupils, and men and women are visibly authoritarian and surprisingly durable.

Methodologically, children and childhood research has largely followed an 'adultist' perspective (Kefyalew, 1996). Few studies explore how children think of their lives in their own terms or give their own viewpoints. In relation to HIV/AIDS, for example, a number of relevant studies have been conducted on the implications of the epidemic for food security (Waal 2002; Drimie, 2002), local institutions and community development (Kloos and Pankhurst, 2002; Pankhurst and Damen, 2000), as well as in the context of adolescence and youth sexuality. However, the frame of reference is behavioural – how to change behaviour –

or cultural, i.e. how to change culture, or developmental, i.e. how to mitigate the impact of the epidemic on social and economic development. The health approaches to the study of HIV/AIDS have mainly been limited to young people's sexual behaviour and KAP – Knowledge Attitude and Practice – (Alene et al., 2006) rather than the social forces behind it. One exception is Getnet's (2006) study of how, in the context of unemployment and deepening poverty, young men perceive, construct and practise sexuality and its implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS in a town in north-central Ethiopia (see also Bethlehem, 2005; van Blerk, 2007; Hoot et al., 2006, on girls, mobility and commercial sex work in Addis Ababa). Although half of the infections of HIV/AIDS occur among young people aged between 15 and 24, studies have rarely explored how they articulate its social consequences (and their lives) from their own perspectives.

Recent debates regarding orphanhood and children's work

In this section, I discuss first, conceptualisations of orphanhood and how extended families offer care for orphans; and secondly, debates relating to children's work and child labour.

Debates about orphanhood and orphan care

Conceptual and definitional drawbacks

Digging deep and being critical, I find the notion of orphanhood to be very complex. I have argued in Articles One[2] and Two[3] that first, for many children; orphanhood due to HIV/AIDS is experienced more as a gradual process than an event and that children are amazingly more resilient than they are assumed to be. Children become orphans and disadvantaged long before their parents actually die, as the 'time lag' between the infection and death of adults reduces the capacity of the latter to be productive and provide care for their children. Secondly, identifying 'AIDS orphans'[4] in a country where there is a long history of social and biological orphanhood is both complex and stigmatising. In most cases, orphans may not have a medical certificate or know the cause of their parents' deaths, and even when they do know, some children may not wish to say due to the secrecy and stigma attached to the disease. As I

[2] "Geographical dimensions of orphanhood in sub-Saharan Africa."
[3] "Children, AIDS and the politics of orphan care in Ethiopia: the extended family revisited".
[4] Although I used the phrase 'AIDS orphans' initially (e.g. Article One), I am aware of its inappropriateness, and hence have avoided using it in my subsequent writings.

explain below, conceptualisations of orphanhood locally are, moreover, suffused with the works of NGOs, which operate with predetermined global definitions.

Globally, an orphan is defined by international organizations based on age and parental status. UNAIDS (2002) has for long defined an orphan as a child less than 15 years of age who has lost its mother. Recently, however, it changed its definition to cover the loss of both parents and to include children below 18 years of age (UNAIDS 2004). A current definition of 'orphans' in use by different NGOs in Ethiopia reflects the mutually inconsistent definitions of international donor agencies: an orphan is a 'child who is less than 15 (18) years who has lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS'. However, as research elsewhere has shown, in patriarchal societies like Ethiopia, where women have a low social and economic status, a child who has lost its father suffers almost all the social and economic disadvantages of a child who has lost both its parents (Ennew, 2005; Abebe 2005). In addition, I argue, orphans may not necessarily achieve economic and social independence by turning the magic age of fifteen or eighteen.

My study suggests that the definition of who an orphan is in Ethiopia not only differs from the global model but tends to be variable within one region. In Gedeo, for example, closer scrutiny of children who are registered as 'orphans' by NGOs and local administrations revealed that many of them actually had one or both parents still living. In-depth interviews with children and community members demonstrate that many of these children, even when their parents had died, do not consider themselves orphans and would not claim to be one – under normal circumstances, they would have been looked after by extended family households. This is especially the case for the well-functioning, patriarchal family structure which traditionally takes on the responsibility for supporting children in need. Their identity as orphans is driven primarily by attempts to obtain the badly needed economic support that NGOs might offer them.

On the other hand, a review of the registration of children by an NGO in Addis Ababa suggests another aspect of orphanhood. Here, I draw a conceptual distinction between the use of Amharic terms for orphans – *Yemut Lij* and *Wola'aj Alba*. As I have argued, the former refers to a child who has lost its parent and connotes a sense of inclusion and sympathy (Abebe, 2005: 38). However, the latter suggests an increase in orphanhood, and its application is widely acknowledged as referring to children in the context of HIV/AIDS. Paradoxically,

children who qualify for the support because they are considered *Wola'aj Albas* include a long list of disadvantaged children: 'paternal' and 'maternal' orphans; children with sick, disabled or lone parents; orphan-headed households, poor children living with grandparents, orphans living under supervision of guardians, children with HIV/AIDS etc. This suggests that orphanhood is a particular form of disadvantaged childhood characterised by, among other things, economic dependence (Ennew, 2005: 128) and the shifting terrain of 'local' orphanhood prompted by donor-driven global interventions (Meintjes 2006) rather than mere biological attributes.

A single focus on orphanhood contributes to the creation of a one-dimensional view of the multiple impacts of AIDS on children (Meintjes, 2006; Young and Ansell, 2003; Oleke et al., 2005, 2006). In a study of the social consequences of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, Bray (2003) found out that in many ways it is difficult to single out the lives of the orphans as different from children who live in extreme poverty. This is perhaps not surprising, given that the impacts of the epidemic include household labour shortages, loss of income and saving due to adult morbidity and mortality, increasing number of dependents, the burden of caring for the sick etc. (Barnett and Whiteside, 2003; Masanjala, 2007). To treat orphanhood as standard fails to capture fully the complexity of the social impacts and dynamics at work. As Meintjes (2006) argues, the global focus on orphanhood consolidates stereotypes of the social circumstances of few orphans as if they are the circumstances in which the majority of children exist. I would add to this that this reflects neither the socio-temporal process of becoming an orphan nor the diversified living conditions of children within extended families, nor does it acknowledge the abilities of the latter to care for the former.

Contrasting theories of orphan care

The debates on orphan care are discussed in relative depth in Article Two, and in order to avoid repetition, I will only be very brief here. Outside Ethiopia, literature addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS epidemic on both children (Guest, 2003; Whiteside 2003; Kaliepni et al., 2004) and extended families (UNAIDS, 2004; Kalanidhi, 2003; UNICEF, 2004) has emerged. Below, I will highlight in passing two contrasting theories in relation to the capacity and sustainability of extended family households.[5] One version is captured by the 'theory of social

[5] Following Young and Ansell (2003: 465) I define 'household' as consisting of people who reside together while 'extended families' as those who are bonded through blood or kinship ties but whose members may—and often do—live apart. Extended families may be split among several households, with membership constantly changing through, for example, individual migration.

resilience', which argues that orphans are well looked after by extended families and communities and that, even in the context of poverty, the presence of support networks has an enormous impact on their well-being (Chigubu, 2000; Foster and Germann, 2004; Evans, 2005). Conversely, the second version is grounded in the 'social rupture thesis', in which the traditional family structure is no longer considered able to cope with the burden of caring for orphans. Each of these perspectives has its own implications for policy. Whereas the former focuses on empowering families, the latter calls for, among other things, external interventions of care (see Article Two for detail). In the following section, I will explore in greater detail the debates on the well-being outcomes of growing up as orphans within extended families.

Orphans and their well-being in extended families

Orphans are highly different groups of people with varying degrees of vulnerability and receiving differential treatment in their host families (Nyambedha et al., 2002; Oleke, et al., 2006). It is not possible to maintain facile generalisations about their well-being simply because we know little about their perspectives of orphanhood, that is, how they articulate the social consequences of HIV/AIDS and how the latter indirectly affects the lives of the vast majority of children. Available research from countries with a mature level of the epidemic show only mixed results. Some studies, for instance, provide a grim prognosis and disturbing accounts of the lives of orphans affected by HIV/AIDS (Hunter and Williamson, 2002; Guest, 2003). Reports by UNICEF (2003) and UNAIDS (2002, 2004) show that the well-being outcomes of being an orphan and growing up in these families are compromised by abuse, neglect and exploitation. This also leads to low enrolment in and high levels of dropping out from schools (Bicego et al., 2003) – especially for maternal orphans (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2004) – high malnutrition (Ayieko, 2003), intensified poverty, exclusion and marginalisation.

However, orphans are also found to have been well-looked after and integrated into extended family households. Masmas et al., (2004), for example, show that extended families in rural and urban areas of Guinea-Bissau care for motherless children in a non-discriminatory fashion (see also Foster 2002). Nevertheless, there are considerable variations in the life circumstances of motherless (Nyamukapa and Gregson, 2004), fatherless (Ahmed et al., 1999, quoted in Ennew, 2005:129) and parentless children. Children, including orphans, in well-functioning households and kin groups may have better life opportunities than disadvantaged

children who grow up with their poor biological parents (Abadía-Barrero, 2002; Verhoef, 2005). Age and gender (Aspass, 1997), the kin category and economic conditions of carers (Oleke et al., 2006) and geographical factors have a particular influence on the potential for care and vulnerability of orphans. There is evidence that, despite the shift from 'voluntary' to 'crisis-led' fostering (Madhavan, 2004: 1444), care for many orphans within the extended family system is experienced as change in where they grow up rather than in the circumstances of isolation and deprivation (Meintjes, 2006: 412). I argue that, since the lives of orphans are greatly entwined with those of other children, adults and their families, intervention from outside is very complex. The most pressing problems for orphans are school fees, and a lack of access to food, health and clothing (Hunter, 1990; Nyambedha et al, 2001; Meintjes and Bray, 2005). Selectively supporting them with these provisions in poor communities not only singles them out, but creates further tensions and inequalities.

By drawing on a range of methods, Articles One and Two explore orphanhood and orphan care from geographical – distributional and ecological – perspectives. I discuss the two polarized theories noted above, showing how my research fits in with, contradicts and contributes to the literature based on case studies from rural and urban Ethiopia. I also explore the economic, social and cultural factors behind different experiences of care and different typologies of extended family households, as well as the policy implications. In the following section, I will discuss the debates on children's work and child labour in the context of the global South.

Debates on children's work and child labour[6]

Although children can be seen working, their activities are perceived in a wide variety of ways, resulting in multiple constructions of child labour. An appraisal of the literature on children's work, discussed below, suggests complex discourses[7] and deep division in terms of whether children should work, what kind of work is dis/advantageous and the nature of work that is considered in/appropriate. Scholars have, for example, argued that the issue of child

[6] I prefer the term 'children's work' to 'child labour' because I believe that the latter sends out strong and often problematic messages that their participation in household livelihoods is an undesirable activity. However, when I am explaining the difficult circumstances in which children work and their unequal bargaining powers, I use phrases like 'the exploitation of children' or 'the economic exploitation of children'.

[7] Child labour as a social construction is tied to complex discourses. Ennew et al. (2005: 28) identify four distinct constructs as being influential today: the 'labor market', 'human capital', 'social responsibility' and 'child centred' discourses.

labour is contentious not only because many children work illegally, but also because their work concurrently involves interdependent realities of survival, socialisation, participation, abuse and exploitation (Bequele and Boyden, 1988; Invernizzi, 2003; Aitken et al., 2006).

Research also indicates various strands to theories of how the 'problem of child labour' should be tackled, each reflecting particular epistemological viewpoints about children and childhood. Children's work is linked to the dualistic thinking about their being either competent actors or dependent victims, as well as to their changing economic values, as shown by research in both the global North (Zelizer, 1994; Qvortrup, 2001; Solberg, 2001) and the global South (Nieuwenhuys, 1994; 1996; Bass, 2004; Ansell, 2005; Ennew et al, 2005; Bourdillion, 2006). Furthermore, the ways in which different construction of 'work' and 'labour' are subtly linked to ideologies of childhood, i.e. what children should do and how childhood ought to be, sharpen these debates. In this section, I present competing perspectives on children's work and child labour. Although some of these perspectives overlap, I find it useful to divide them into three: a) child labour as a problem; b) socio-cultural perspectives of work; and c) the political economy of child labour.

Child labour as a problem

The first of the approaches is framed in different yet interrelated strands of arguments that point directly or indirectly to the conclusion that children should not work. One dimension is captured by, for example, the works of international organisations in which interventions are aimed at guaranteeing children's well-being, as well as safeguarding their rights:

> Childhood is a time for children to be *in school and at play*, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and…*caring adult*. [As such], childhood…is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence and *protected* from abuse and exploitation". (UNICEF, 2004: 3, *emphasis* added)

UNICEF's argument resonates with those images of 'proper childhood' in the western world that expect that children 'should have a care-receiving, safe, secure and happy existence and be raised by caring and responsible adults' (Panter-Brick and Smith, 2000: 4). As Ennew and Milne (1989: 8) asserted long ago, 'children in the west go to school rather than work, they

are not expected to take on responsibilities;[8] they have special activities called play and special things called toys to play with'. It is believed that children develop their full potential – specified in terms of outcomes in adulthood such as educational achievement, economic security, healthy attachments and a lack of anti-social habits – in school contexts rather than in work (Burman, 1994; Panter-Brick and Smith, 2000; Boyden and Levison, 2000). This strand views childhood as a period of dependence and vulnerability and emphasises parental responsibility (cf. James et al., 1998: 14), both morally and economically (cf. Qvorturp, 1996: 66). Childhood is reserved for learning and leisure outside the market forces of the adult world (Ennew et al., 2005). Employment has no place in this view and, although children may work to learn and for own benefits, their involvement for economic gain or for others is deemed inappropriate. This view tends to depict any other kind of contrasting childhood as 'abnormal', 'lost' or 'stolen' (Punch, 2003: 277-8; Bourdillion, 2006: 1202).

The above views can also be related to the argument that there is a conflict between the economic 'needs' of families for labour on the one hand and the 'rights' of children to education on the other. Children's participation in work is seen as a hindrance to achieving global children's rights and millennium development goals like ensuring the universal enrolment of children in schools by 2015 (United Nations, 2007). In this approach, global legislations stress children's right to be *protected* from work, while ignoring their right to earn an income (Miljeteig, 1999: 7). For example, Article 32[9] of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[10] to which Ethiopia is a signatory, emphasises the right of children to be prevented from work that interferes with schooling, while Article 28[11] strongly expresses the conviction that it is one of a child's rights to be educated and that primary schools should be made free and compulsory for that purpose (Woodhead, 1998; 1999a). What these articles suggest is a denigration of work contrasted with an idealization of the potential of schooling.

The 'global approach' to child labour views children as human becomings, with education – though never considered as involving labour at all – being considered decisive in ensuring

[8] The notion of responsibility is nuanced and problematised in the literature.
[9] Article 32 states the right of children to protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to interfere with their education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
[10] The UNCRC and the African Charter on the Welfare of Children are closely tied to policy developments and service delivery (cf. key policy documents like 'Ethiopia's National Plan of Action for Children – 2003-2010 and beyond' (MOLSA, 2004).
[11] Article 28 establishes children's right to education and urges governments to expand free and compulsory education, particularly at the primary level.

their evolving capacities. In contrast, work is deemed detrimental to child development, both at present and in the future. This view resonates with the 'human capital discourse' (Ennew et al., 2005: 29), in which child labour undermines the healthy development, knowledge and skills of children that are needed to contribute to future economic development. It also fits the modernisation perspective, which places the western world as an ideal that the rest of the world should follow. In this perspective, a high incidence of child labour is seen a sign of underdevelopment, whereas the dissonance of childhood from the performance of valued work is a yardstick of modernity (Nieuwenhuys, 1996). As a result, the employment of children is resisted, even opposed, through international campaigns[12] which produce powerful discourses of the merits of work-free childhoods.

Although unequal relations of power ensure that children's labour is rewarded less than adults' (Nieuwenhuys, 1994; 2005), these are used as additional justifications by trade unions who believe that children's involvement in paid labour negatively affects adult employment (Ansell, 2005). Here, tighter approaches like workplace inspection by government agents, the prosecution of legal violations and the exercise of state power in terms of legislating minimum age laws are seen as protective measures (ILO, 2001). Other measures include educational laws that bring children into schools through universal enrolment (Fyfe, 1989; Kifle, 2002; ILO, 2002). However, ethnographic research reveals that the relationship between children's schooling and work is rather complex, and that children do not see their choices only in either/or terms (see Boyden, 1994; Woodhead, 1998; Bourdollion 2001; Kabeer et al., 2003; Ansell, 2002; 2004; Punch, 2002a).

Children's work has socio-cultural contexts

The second set of arguments posit that children's work has its own socio-cultural meanings and contexts. Bourdillion (2006) and Nieuwenhuys (1994) argue that children's work needs to be understood in the light of different material and cultural conditions and seen as varying according to the age, capability and gender of the children involved. Any attempt to prevent children from working is Eurocentric, as their work is an integral part of everyday life and is indispensable to family livelihoods. This approach, while asserting the right of children to protection from exploitation; sees childhood as continuous with the adult world, with children gradually moving into the activities of adults as their competencies develop and as

[12] For example, ILO's global march against child labour.

opportunities arise (Bourdillion 2006: 1202). Thus work is taken as an initiation into adulthood, and employment is seen as having a growing place in their lives.

Another argument here is that children have the right to benefits arising from work appropriate to their age (whether paid or unpaid), and poor children are often harmed rather than protected by being prevented from working (Ennew, et al. 2005). They benefit from working to earn the resources required to spend on food and clothing (Bass, 2004) and, instead of being an obstacle to education; the money they earn is vital to pay for school fees and uniforms (Bourdollion, 2002). Also, work and schooling are not necessarily irreconcilable, as many boys and girls in the global South manage to combine them, even when formal education may not be in their best interests (Ansell, 2002, 2004). As Nieuwenhuys (1994) argues, the expansion of schooling has not reduced children's work but has simply added to their duties and responsibilities. The prolongation of schooling and its growing prominence, furthermore, has removed them from certain arenas of adult social life and restricted their opportunities to learn essential life skills (Katz, 1986; 1991; Porter 1996; Schildkrout, 2002; Ansell, 2002; 2004).

Working children find friends, skills and lessons on how to look after themselves that school curricula do not teach (Woodhead, 1998; Boudillion, 2006). The knowledge they acquire from school may also be inferior to the knowledge they receive through participation in work and everyday life (Katz, 1991; Schildrout, 2002; Invernizzi, 2003). Furthermore, my own study in southern Ethiopia shows that the school calendar is not compatible with children's agricultural work-cycle, especially with respect to activities related to coffee production (Abebe, forthcoming[13]). Thus, I argue, compulsory education, which brings children to schools alone, is not enough. What is needed is proper educational policies based on children's needs and realities (Admassie, 2003), their protection from exploitation and from being harmed by working (Robson, 2005), the provision of better employment opportunities, and adequate welfare for families who cannot support their children (Ennew, 1995).

The view that not all work is bad for children commands universal agreement. Children's work and/or child labour as a crucial part of everyday life and an aspect of growing up are elaborated in various pieces of research. Children contribute to processes of social

[13] This article is not part of the thesis.

reproduction by earning economic resources, performing a range of productive and domestic chores etc. Cross-cultural research has also documented that children feel pride and a sense of self-reliance, worth and self-respect because of their ability to supplement the family income (Woodhead, 1998, 59-60; Boyden et al, 1998; Kabeer et al., 2003). As Folbre notes (1994, cited in Ennew 1995: 5), parents in the global South are often satisfied with the level of economic assistance their children provide. Likewise, many parents believe that hard work makes children more resilient as adults (Rwezaura, 1998, quoted in Ansell, 2005). Children's work is also defended on grounds that it provides apprenticeships and transmits skills, as well as producing socialization into adult roles (Bass 2004), and that culturally bounded notions of responsibility are linked to how children perceive the opportunities and constraints facing them and in making decisions about their work and future life chances (Punch, 2002b; Chant and Jones, 2005). However, this is not to suggest that there is no exploitation of children. Indeed, exploitation may be more concealed and difficult in family enterprises and contexts where work is less valued as 'help', 'training' or 'apprenticeship' (Punch, 2001; Nieuwnehuys, 1996; 2005), as also revealed by the lives of child domestic workers in Addis Ababa (Kifle, 2002), young maids in Abidjan (Jacquemin, 2004) and hidden young carers in Harare (Robson, 2004).

In respect of these arguments, I suggest that there is a need to go beyond considering child labour as something one is either in support of or opposed to and to aim at an understanding of the hugely differentiated situations in which children work. Activities undertaken by children and their valuations vary with household, society and time period, as well as according to seniority, class, gender, age, kinship hierarchies (Nieuwenhuys, 1994; 1996), birth order and sibling compositions (Punch, 2002a). Research should therefore examine the contexts that make children engage in work themselves and the dynamics that may turn work into exploitation. This requires, in Burman's words, analytical attention to the 'shifting forms and relations of children's work [and should] facilitate more differentiated perspectives on how its meanings reflect economic and cultural (including gendered) conditions, and…attends better to social inequalities' (2006: 1).

The political economy of children's work

Apart from the social and cultural factors, scholars have recently argued that children's work needs to be sufficiently grounded in particular ecological, economic and politico-historical

contexts. Much of the argument stems from the works of feminist geographers (and others) who pursue a dialectical approach between the livelihoods of young people and the need to situate these in contemporary market-led development that disadvantage poorer societies (Porter, 1996; Ansell, 2005; Robson and Ansell, 2000; Robson, 2004; Katz, 2004; Aitken et al., 2007; Panelli et al., 2007). Quoting Robson (2004), Kesby et al. (2006: 186), argue that

> While laudable, the ILO's global vision for work-free childhood is unrealistic at a time when neo-liberal macro economic policies pushed by other international institutions are handing women and children the burden of [social reproduction prompted by economic restructuring]. Moreover the paternalism inherent in such a protective vision of childhood actually obscures the capacities and contributions that children make to society in the global South.

The economic and political transformations affecting the lives of young people are varied and complex. These include poverty, debt, corruption, war, geo-political conflicts, epidemics, unfair trade, structural adjustment programs (SAP), inappropriate policies and ineffective legislation (Bass, 2004; Lund, 2007). The macro-economic policy changes imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, which forced poor countries to open up their economies[14] in response to the 'Washington Consensus', are seen as having devastating impacts on the lives of children even in remote villages (Katz, 2004; Honwana and Filip, 2005; Christensen et al., 2006). As Jenning argues (1997, in Boyden and Levison, 2000), the consequences of SAP are consistent with processes of increasing women's unpaid work in both the home and the community. And, in general, work that is shifted on to women tends to be shared by children or completely shifted on to children working under women's supervision. This means children's local work cannot be detached from material realities but needs to be situated in intersecting geographical scales and contexts (Aitken et al., 2006) within the 'global space economy' (Robson, 2004; 228). The crux of the argument, therefore, is the 'articulation between global processes and the localised experiences of individual children…to re-introduce social reproduction as an important (but often missing) aspect of debates around globalization' (Robson, 2004: 227).

[14] These include first, 'stabilization policies', designed to make certain macro-economic changes as preconditions for rescheduling of the huge debts which many countries had run up; and secondly, 'structural adjustment policies', meant to remove 'distortions' in the economy in order to facilitate the functioning of the market and foster 'economic recovery'. However, the third and often largely ignored dimension of global capitalism is the economic imbalance in the terms of trade for agricultural materials, which poor countries like Ethiopia rely on heavily.

In G*rowing Up Global*, Katz (2004) documents some of the adverse impacts of development in rural Sudan. Through a longitudinal study of children over a period of over two decades, she discusses how the incorporation of a village into a state-sponsored irrigation scheme had an enduring impact on three interrelated dimensions of children's lives in respect of learning, working and play. In brief, first, Katz explores how economic changes altered the *material practices* in which children's participation in work is both intensified and transformed. These include, among other things, the increased workload they undertake, the diminishing relation between work and play, and the spatial separation between (material) production and (social) reproduction. Secondly, Katz reveals a hidden rupture in the *social aspect* of reproduction, disruptions in the culture, knowledge and skills acquisition that bind processes of production and reproduction. Thirdly, she shows how disruption in social reproduction is embedded in ecological grounds through the degradation of *the physical environment* in which both material social practices and processes of production and reproduction take place.

By studying how a similar process of disinvestment associated with welfare reform affects children's education in working class families in New York, Katz further reveals the structural similarities that shape the lives of young people in Sudan and the United States. She argues that, despite the disparate geographies involved, young people in both countries face the brunt of marginalisation prompted by global capitalism. Because of altered processes of social reproduction, Katz argues, what and how children learn and play and what they use knowledge for showed discontinuities over space and through time (time-space distanciation, p. 226). Consequently, as they come of age, children no longer use the skills they have acquired in their childhood. Katz calls such disjunctions between what young people learn and what they are likely to need for their world of adulthood as 'deskilling', which is further manifested in the erosion of livelihoods, as well as in the altered trajectories of traditional pathways to adulthood. Children in Sudan, for example, learn agricultural skills but have no land on which to practice them; they attend school only long enough to learn skills which are inappropriate for non-agricultural employment; or they may learn to work with and use local resources, most of which are fast disappearing (see also Katz, 1986, 1991, 1994a).

How do the lives of children in Ethiopia fit in within these complex debates? What do children's own perspectives of their working lives reveal? In Ethiopia, the extended family is the central unit of social reproduction. Most of the work – including the production of necessities for life, child care, agricultural work, social relationships, the work-related

socialization of children, imparting skills etc, – is accomplished within (extended family) households. However, the lives of children within these households and the familial, economic and geographical contexts of their work have been researched less. In particular, knowledge of the resourceful ways in which young people cope under adverse conditions, how different geographies provide them with different livelihood opportunities; and how these mesh together to shape their experiences of growing up is necessary if we are to address issues that are unique to their particular contexts.

In this thesis, I argue that children's lives can best be understood in relation to social, economic and political factors that are strongly interconnected and that must be examined in context. For instance, placing children's livelihoods in local, regional and global economic transformations illustrates not only how work is tied up with processes of development and socio-cultural change, but also how it is constructed differently geographically and how it becomes either rewarding or exploitative. In addition, I argue, whether the children themselves benefit from working and their views about it are crucial because their perspectives are different from those of adults. The social meaning attached to work, how children describe their experiences and what kind of values they give to it are all shaped differently according to their family circumstances, local cultural norms and economic situations, as well as by differences between rural and urban environments. It is against this backdrop that, in Articles Three,[15] Four[16] and Five,[17] I discuss the work experiences of children and young people in Ethiopia.

Research questions and objectives

This study explores the lives of young people in rural and urban Ethiopia. It discusses how they and their families experience orphanhood. It also explores how children negotiate their socio-spatial lives through the various livelihood strategies they are involved in, both in their own right and as an integral part of (extended) family livelihoods. More specifically, the research addresses the following interrelated questions:

[15] "Changing livelihoods, changing childhoods: patterns of children's work in rural southern Ethiopia".
[16] "Social actors and victims of exploitation: working children in the cash economy of Ethiopia's South".
[17] "Earning a living on the margins: begging, work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa".

- What explains the geography of contemporary orphanhood? What is the capacity and sustainability of extended family households in the care of orphans?
- What are the interconnections between orphan care and children's work within extended family households?
- How do children contribute to family livelihoods? In what ways are these the same or different between rural and urban areas?
- What are the impacts of 'development' in children's daily lives? How do children respond to and try to negotiate disruptions in their livelihoods?

These research questions connect children's geographies[18] with development studies. As a piece of research situated in children's geographies, my study sheds light on the commonalities and differences between rural and urban childhoods in Ethiopia as seen in the lives of orphans and working children. It explores how children go about their daily lives and the ways in which "place and space matter in shaping those experiences, opportunities, life chances, behaviours and realities" (Matthews, 2003: 3-4). The multiple meanings of children's place – the spatial, social and relational – are given particular emphasis (see Part Three for a detailed discussion of children's place). First, the articles discuss the lives of children by focusing on how geographical place influences their work and childhood experiences. They also do this by exploring how age, gender, household livelihood strategies, poverty and rural or urban backgrounds mesh together to shape children's work and future life chances. The articles also discuss the ways in which extended family households, which culturally perform the role of care for orphans, have spatially different (and similar) functions and/or capacities in rural and urban geographies. Secondly, the ways in which children negotiate agency and competence and their place in society is elucidated. The focus here is the shifting positions of children within families and socio-generational hierarchies. Drawing on case studies of children's livelihoods and the care of orphans by extended families, I seek to examine the place of children in economic and social reproduction in Gedeo and Addis Ababa. In doing so, I not only make a case for how children's lives in the study areas contribute to our understandings of growing up in contemporary Ethiopian society, but also make a modest attempt to theorize their childhoods.

[18] I define children's geographies in line with Phillips (2001: 117) as the everyday spaces of growing up including those of learning, playing, working, and social interaction.

As a piece of research in development studies, the study situates children's productive and reproductive activities at the heart of livelihoods, poverty and socio-economic transformations. I discuss how children negotiate the socio-spatial and spatio-temporal dimensions of their lives in *aspects* of interrelated structural, geographical, socio-economic and cultural contexts. Even though the purview from which the materials are derived is local, some of the articles move between local and global processes. In Articles Three and Four in particular, I demonstrate the impacts of national priorities related to development on children's daily lives. In other words, I highlight both place-specific interdependence and relations with other spatial scales, as well as exploring the need for an analysis of both immediate and broader politico-economic contexts and the ways in which children negotiate growing up in these structures. In so doing, my study draws much inspiration from Katz's[19] *Growing up Global*. Like Katz's research, I explore how interrelated (global) processes (in this case HIV/AIDS, poverty and restructuring in livelihoods) are affecting children's lives and their families in real time and real spaces in Ethiopia.

Analytical framework

The focus on children's socio-spatial lives invokes the significance of social, economic and political contexts in the different yet interrelated locales of rural Gedeo and urban Addis Ababa. In this study, the roles of rural and urban geographies are conceptualized as both immediate tangible local experiences and a frame of reference to distinguish economic, cultural and environmental differences vis-à-vis other rural/urban, regional, national or global conditions or characteristics (Agnew, 1989 in Aase 1991: 222; Panelli, 2002).

One of the central features of my study is *diversity*, i.e. the spatially differentiated experiences of young people. These experiences are the outcomes of the distinctive contexts that moderate their lives differently. Differentiated experiences are also manifestations of how childhoods are variously constructed, interpreted and experienced in places that are dissimilar in relation to livelihoods, kinship, social networks and family circumstances. However, because children's livelihoods are spatially moderated, I consider the significance of geography, along with other intersecting factors like age, gender and poverty. I also explore the commonalities and differentiations of childhoods – what 'unites' and 'divides' children's lives – in order to

[19] However, this research is only cross-sectional and focuses on the place of children in household livelihoods.

allow both comparability and degrees of generalization. To do so, I highlight two interrelated dimensions: the rural-urban divide, which shows how aspects of rural childhoods are distinct from aspects of urban childhoods; and rural-urban linkages, which indicate some of the structural similarities around which childhoods generally pivot in both Gedeo and Addis Ababa.

As depicted in Figure 1 children form the core of my research in terms of both methodologies, i.e. considering them as participants in the research as well as providing its content by focusing specifically on their lives. They are a key source for exploring their own lives, through which their involvement in various livelihoods activities is documented. I argue that understanding the lives of children cannot be appreciated without acknowledging the diverse contexts that shape their experiences. As the diagram shows, these contexts include the immediate socio-cultural and broader political-economic and spatial settings and processes that shape the environments in which they exist and that constrain and or enable their lives (Panelli, 2002: 116). The double concentric circles in the diagram represent the fact that these contexts operate at the level of children's immediate rural and urban environments, while also including wider regional, national and global processes, the latter including what Philo (2002: 253) has called the 'broad-brush political economic and social cultural transformations'.

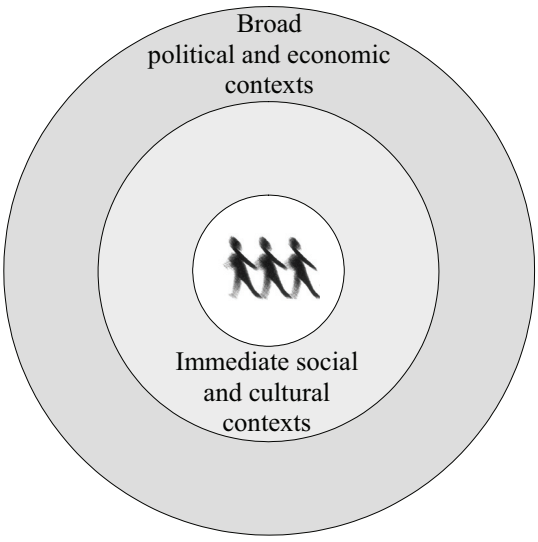

Figure 1. Growing up in rural and urban contexts (adapted from Panelli, 2002: 115)

The diagram further demonstrates that the immediate and broad contexts are equally important in shaping the experiences of children growing up in Gedeo and Addis Ababa. The *political-economic contexts* are the macro-level economic and political processes in which children find themselves. These contexts include, among others, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, development programs etc. that affect both the explicit material conditions and work requirements of young people, and the wider economic (and cultural) processes that position them. *Socio-cultural contexts* are those factors and processes that shape the practices and values in children's immediate experiences through the family and/or community (Panelli, 2002). These include different religions, ethnicities, forms of social organization like kinship obligations; household structure, lineage and extended family systems, and patriarchy. The broader and immediate contexts are also both moderated spatially, and their impacts on children's lives are readily apparent from the contextualized discussions in the articles.

Outline of the thesis

The thesis consists of five parts. *Part One: Introduction,* which includes this section, appraises the literature on childhood in Ethiopia, introduces the central debates concerning orphanhood and children's work, and outlines the main aims and objectives of the study. *Part Two: Concepts and Theories* builds on the literature review in Part One and discusses conceptual and theoretical perspectives related to the interdisciplinary social studies of childhood in general and children's geographies in particular. It also explores different ways of thinking about the spatiality of childhood and how different meanings of 'place' and 'childhood' inform the discussions in the articles. *Part Three: Methodology* describes the research design, the process of fieldwork, methods of data collection and analysis as well as the methodological and socio-ethical dilemmas I faced during the process of the research, and the approaches I used in tackling them. *Part Four: Synthesis* brings up the main themes of the articles by closely looking at the concepts and arguments that have emerged. Here I also synthesise the commonalities and differences in the lives of children in Gedeo and Addis Ababa. In *Part Five,* the five *Articles* are organised thematically and, apart from some changes in formatting, presented as they appear in the journals in which they have been published or accepted for publication.

PART TWO: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES

This chapter discusses concepts in children's geographies and the wider interdisciplinary social studies of childhood. I describe how the articles in my thesis are informed by debates over the being and becoming, and agency and interdependence of children and their families. I also foreground the spatiality of childhood: how 'children's place' has multiple meanings, how the global/local binary is approached, and how the livelihoods of young people can be studied from different theoretical points of view.

Social studies of childhood

The 'new' geographies and social studies of childhood recognize that childhood is a social and cultural phenomenon that has no universal validity (for example, James et al., 1998; Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998; Matthews, 2003; Holt and Holloway, 2006). Few if any scholars within this paradigm question the idea that it is a relative construct that varies historically, with different places and cultures. Social studies of childhood problematise and transform the 'natural' category of the child into a 'cultural' category (Jenks, 1996). As Kjørholt (2005a: 3-4) points out, when the paradigm took off, scholars added the following epistemological and methodological contributions to the existing approaches: a) that children have their own agency worthy of investigation; b) that research with children should focus on their present conditions rather than their futures; c) that children should be regarded as informants and collaborators in the research; and finally, d) that childhood constitutes a structural category in the succession of generations.

To date, researchers from a wide range of academic backgrounds have been increasingly sharpening the debate on children as social actors. They are seeking to confront the manifest diversity of childhoods and envision how best to handle childhood as a generational category while substantiating its variations over time and across space (Qvortrup 1994: 5; James et al. 1998). The need to portray the richness of children's lives across the many *contexts* in which they find themselves is considered central (Graue and Walsh, 1998). As Lan and Jones (2005: 5) point out, social studies of childhood go

> beyond the standard model of 'childhood' and seek to unpack the diversity of children's experiences, not only in different national contexts but also reflecting the variations within countries,…not limited to [critiquing] dominant western model of childhood or a national 'sociology of childhood' but rather conscientised about the rich diversity of children's experiences depending on age, gender, ethnicity etc.

In recent decades, various interrelated strands of research have emerged building on the (pioneering) sociology of childhood (Jenks, 1982; Qvortrup et al., 1994; James and Prout, 1997). These include, to mention a few, works on the anthropology and cultural politics of childhood (e.g. Scheper-Hughes and Sargent, 1998; James and James, 2004), which explore the lived experiences of children and young people in their entirety, as well as combining elements of legal, social and cultural frameworks and institutions; works on the anthropology of youth, which document both visible youth cultures and the entirety of youth cultural practices (e.g. Bucholtz, 2002; Vigh, 2003; Boyden and de Berry, 2003); and the complex process of transition from adolescence to adulthood (e.g. Panelli, 2002; Punch, 2002a; Christensen et al., 2006).

Likewise, geographers are exploring the spatially variable meanings of childhood, and how the socio-spatial and spatio-temporal lives of young people are intertwined with a myriad of geographical scales, theories, methods and politics (e.g. Holloway and Valentine 2000; Aitken, 2001a; Katz, 2004; Aitken et al., 2007). Research has also shown the growing interest among scholars in the 'new psychology of childhood', studying child development as a socio-cultural process and paying greater attention to the social constructionist critique of the developmental paradigm (e.g. Woodhead, 1999b; Montgomery et al., 2003). Finally, fresh considerations related to children's work, participation, citizenship, development and globalization (see Part One; also Stephen, 1995; Kjørholt, 2004; Ansell, 2005) and orphanhood and child abandonment (Panter-Brick and Smith, 2000; Ennew, 2005) are also documented.

Yet it was not geographers who initiated the shift in the conceptualization of childhood within the social sciences. As Aitken (2001a: 27) points out, until recently, they 'worked within commonly held assumptions about children, often without attending to the moral, cultural and political context of those assumptions'. However, geography is significant in social studies of childhood because 'space is never an issue of mere location' (James et al., 1998: 39). Presently, children's geographies and social studies of childhood draw much insight from

each other. As Holloway and Valentine (2000a; 764) point out, the latter contributes to the former the idea that children are social actors, while the former has given the latter the notion of the spatiality of childhood.

Four approaches

In their influential book *Theorising Childhood,* James et al. (1998) classify works within social studies of childhood into four relatively distinct conceptual (and methodological) approaches. These treat children as socially constructed; children as integral to wider social structures; children as 'tribal' and as worthy of study, independent of adult concerns; and children as a 'minority' group subject to discrimination. As James et al. (1998: 206) point out, using a diagram (Figure. 2) the four approaches also draw insights from critical social theory. In the following section, I will first briefly explore each of these approaches before describing how my research on children's lives in the context of orphanhood, work and livelihoods is informed by the debates that have concerned them.

The socially constructed child

According to the *socially constructed child approach*, there is no essential, universal child. Childhood is the commitment to radical relativism that is built up through constructive practices and the different social realities in which children grow up (James et al., 1998). Social constructionists reject the significance of structures which shape an identifiable childhood and argue that children inhabit a world of meaning created by themselves and through their interactions with adults (Hutchby and Moran Ellis, 1998). As James et al. (1998) point out, because childhood is not a universal phenomenon, research needs to question hegemonic notions that have been taken for granted as 'normal' by drawing insights from the children's own points of view. The idea that childhood is socially constructed suggests an emphasis on the diversities of childhoods that are contextualized in social and cultural settings as well as within everyday life (Kjørholt, 2004). I return to this point later.

The socio-structural child

The *socio-structural child* approach sees childhood from a structural point of view. It elevates the notion of children and childhood as a period in an individual's life course into a structural category in which its functions are integrated to everyday life, that is, into processes of

production and consumption (James et al., 1998). In this view, children are a recognizable group, childhood an enduring though changing feature of the social structure in all societies. Even though today's children will leave childhood, childhood as a category is a present and integral part of society. Qvortrup (1994) argues that this category may vary from society to society, but within each particular society it is uniform. The approach views childhood as one among other structural forms which continuously interact with other social categories in society. The socio-structural child is universal and global rather than local. Differences in children's lives are thus seen as resulting from structural differentiations (James et al., 1998).

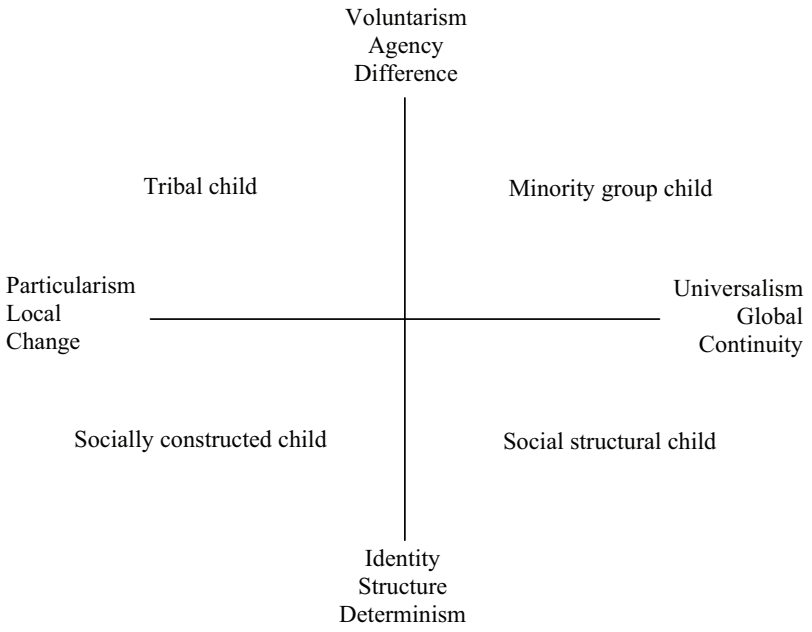

Figure 2. Theorizing childhood (James et al., 1998: 206)

The perspectives of the socio-structural child and the socially constructed child are structural approaches reflected respectively in the empirical versions of the minority group child (the politicized version of the social structural child) and the tribal child (the politicized version of the socially constructed child) (James et al., 1998).

The tribal child

The *tribal child* approach considers children to be essentially different from adults and focuses, both conceptually and methodologically, on the uniqueness of local childhoods. It

emphasises the importance of recognising the agency and social competence of children in a manner that 'sets out from the commitment to childhood's social worlds as real places and provinces of meaning formation in their own right, not as fantasies, games, poor imitations or inadequate precursors of the adults' state of being' (James et al., 1998: 29). The approach is analytically separate because it tends to focus on 'children as others'. As a result, it is considered suitable for exploring their play and sub-culture (James et al. 1998: 207).

The minority group child

On the other hand, the *minority group child* approach is described as being an embodiment of the empirical and, as noted already, politicized version of the socio-structural child. Children are structurally differentiated within societies and experience the exercise of power differently. They are marginalized and exploited by the existing socio-generational structure like other minority groups such as women or ethnic groups (James et al., 1998). The minority group child approach is universalistic, differentiated and global because it suggests that, in all societies, children are marginalized and exploited at various levels and to various degrees. Because this approach views children 'as essentially indistinguishable from adults' (James et al., 1998: 31), it is associated with the status of adulthood, which mainly means work (Punch, 2003: 282).

Dichotomies

Research with children in the global South indicates that the above approaches have been influenced by western notions of childhood (e.g. Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Schildrout, 2002, Punch, 2003; Bass, 2004; Katz, 2004; Honwana and De Boeck, 2005). As the diagram suggests, the four models are largely dichotomous, splitting childhood between the universal and the particular, agency and structure, voluntarism and determinism, continuity and change, global and local. Although James et al. (1998) point out that these models are fluid and there is a great deal of overlap between them, movement between the 'minority child' and 'tribal child' approaches, or between the 'socially constructed child' and 'socio-structural child' approaches, is considered 'relatively rare':

> The socially 'constructed child' and 'tribal' child often stand in close relation, collude or experience elision in the approaches adopted in childhood studies. And an identical

> fluidity and potential creativity exist between the 'social structural' child and the 'minority group' child. Movements in the other directions are, however, relatively rare. Thus the 'social structural' child and the 'socially constructed' child are locked in different, and even antagonistic, formulations, as are the 'minority group' child and the 'tribal' child. (James et al., 1998: 217)

Holloway and Valentine (2000a, b) argue that the above approaches suggest dichotomies in research between those that are global (i.e. those that examine the importance of global processes in shaping children's position in different societies across the world) and those that have more local concerns (i.e. studies which show how children are important in creating their own cultures and life worlds). In a similar vein, they raise questions about whether childhood should be studied as a universal or a particular phenomenon. Being the epistemological root for plural childhoods, for example, the socially constructed child, in its extreme form, holds the view that each childhood can be seen as a different childhood, with a particular point of reference that cannot be shared by others' childhoods (see West, O'Kane and Hyder, 2005). In contrast, the social structural child argues that a mere focus on the particularity of childhoods loses sight of the commonality of childhood.

Scholars caution that there is a potential risk in deconstructing our scholarship in, and foregrounding double implications of, the 'elasticity of multiple childhoods'. First, an indefinite focus on the 'preponderance of what is unique over what is common' disallows class-based, cross-cultural and intergenerational childhood research (Qvortrup, 2005: 5). While acknowledging differences, Qvortrup argues that the plurality of childhoods creates the danger of making unnecessary dichotomizations at the expense of 'eradicating the social contours of childhood'. In respect of this, I would add, it is important to explore how rural and urban childhoods, rich and poor childhoods, working and idyllic childhoods, and contributing and consuming childhoods all intersect with and dissect each other. In this respect, I argue with Jenks (1996) that the diversity of childhoods should be stratified by social traits like class, age, religion, sexuality, gender and race/ethnicity, by rural and urban location, and by disability and ill-health in specific and interconnected places. Secondly, as Philo (2000: 253) states, there is a need to 'look at the larger picture encompassing many different sets of children spread across different places, and…accept the challenge of tackling macro-scale, structure-based geographies of childhood as shaped by broad-brush political, economic and socio-cultural transformations'.

My study focuses on the lives of orphans and working children and the ways in which they seek to shape and unfold their lives in meaningful ways. Although earlier studies in Ethiopia have not used these perspectives, and although I could have approached my fieldwork and data differently had I used these perspectives as a single analytical framework, the ways in which they inform the discussions in my research and vice versa are readily apparent. Utilising my own case studies as well as the research of others, in what follows I will explore the implications of combined perspectives for understanding the lives of children and young people.

Combining perspectives

The evidence from my articles supports the findings of Holloway and Valentine (2000a) and of Punch (2003) about the usefulness of combined approaches in exploring the multiple and overlapping arenas of children's childhoods. I give four interrelated examples. First, building on Punch (2003), Katz (1986; 1991; 2004) and Kjørholt, (2003), I argue that there is an overlap between children's play (tribal child approach) and their daily and working lives (the minority child approach). As Schilkdrout (2002) argues, whereas children's work in the global South has made researchers *recognise* that they have agency, their play is less visible and more difficult to discern. Children's play also involves equipment and skills that are local and hence, unlike their work, possibly invisible to outside researchers (Punch, 2003). However, in ethnographic studies of how children combine work with school (Boyden 1994), work with play (Katz, 2004) and all three together (Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Woodhead, 1998), scholars have argued that children should not necessarily be perceived only in terms of their work from the minority group child approach, and as mere subjects of exploitation alone (Punch, 2003).

Based on research with children in rural Bolivia, Punch (2003) asserts that children in the majority world can be seen as both 'tribal children' *and* 'miniature adults' instead of just working. In her research in Sudan, Katz (1986; 1991; 2004) shows that rural children's work, whether in groups or individually, is often seamlessly intertwined with playful activities. Children's mimicry in play is partly a manifestation of the skills they acquire through experimentation in their present-day tasks and potential adult roles (Katz 2004: 17). Similarly, based on a study of how playing children create a 'place to belong', Kjørholt (2003, 2004) shows that their play reflects intergenerational interactions with adults and the wider society.

She argues that children's play culture is interrelated with wider social relationships and practices, and that it cannot be studied in its own right or separately (2004: 249.)

Although my research is not about the relationship between children's work and play, observation and interviews in my field sites support the above arguments. The work environment provides children with a forum for play, friendship and imagination. The children I worked with on streets in Addis Ababa spend much of their time performing a range of different income-generating activities while at the same time spending a great deal of their money in practices that are fun and enjoyable. For many children, being in the street is not only important from the point of view of earning livelihoods, it is also an integral part of 'hanging out together, socializing and having fun' (Article Five). They play music, football or hide and seek, beg, sleep on the pavement, mock passers-by, watch video films and play video games, physically fight, tease each other, and participate in a range of other creative forms of play that are tailored to the specific situation of public spaces (field notes, Addis Ababa, 2005, 2006). Likewise, children in Gedeo combine paid or unpaid work in subsistence production, coffee-farms and coffee-processing firms while simultaneously attending school and performing a number of self-initiated play activities among themselves. Children's work is also shown to be highly entwined with traditional apprenticeship, socialization and skill acquisition (Article Three and Four). Therefore, one cannot define childhood based either on work, school or play alone, as these offer only limited and inflexible conceptualizations of their life worlds (Punch, 2003).

Secondly, as opposed to the tribal child, which suggests the view that children are 'beings…in their own right' (James et al, 1997: 207), children in the global South form an integral part of their families and communities. As Kjørholt (2001: 71) states, the view of childhood as a separate life world (particularly in the western world) reflects the growing tension over the view that children are endangered people and that the domain of childhood is being threatened, invaded and polluted by the adult world. She further argues that emphasising *children as different,* however, risks the danger of overlooking intergenerational relationships and the wider cultural contexts which shape those cultures. In many parts of the global South, children form part of family collectives and are therefore likely to perceive their own needs and priorities as interdependent with those of their siblings, parents and other members of their family (see Kabeer, 2000; Burr, 2002; Punch, 2002b). Because their lives and livelihoods are moderated by different kinds of inter- and intra-generational relationships, to

single them out 'in their own right' is analytically inadequate. This is also because, as Holland (1992) and Burman (1994) argue in the context of children's rights, it would mean taking children outside their cultural contexts and constraints and insisting that they enter on comparable terms to adults.

Inter- and intra-generational interdependence signifies the importance of age and generation as a structural feature of society and suggests the need to look at childhood from the relational and generational points of view (Aalanen and Mayall, 2001; Panelli, 2002; Kjørholt, 2003). Following Kjørholt (2003, 2004) I argue that, as opposed to the tribal child approach, which focuses on children as different from adults, children's daily lives (and culture) can be both the same and different, as well as integrated with those of adults. As Kefyalew (1996: 209) states, for example, children in Ethiopia can be seen as being 'burdened with adult-like duties and responsibilities'. I would add to this that they perform these duties as part of their social responsibilities, either independently or in support of adults. In my study, working children contribute resources to livelihoods in their households, whereas children in the context of HIV/AIDS might also be involved as producers, carers, decision-makers and the 'heads' of households (see Robson, 2004; Robson et al, 2006; Ansell and Young 2003, 2004; Kesby et al., 2006). This suggests that drawing a boundary between what constitutes child work and adult work or viewing the former separately from the latter can be elusive.

Thirdly, as James et al. (1998) clearly state, there is an overlap between children's work and exploitation (minority child) and the structural processes, as well as the generational contexts in which it takes place (socio-structural child). Children's work is accorded a subordinate position because of their limited bargaining power in the adult-dominated world. My research suggests that children's subordination needs to be seen in the wider sense of incorporating social structures locally as well as global processes that keep them marginalised in multiple ways. The social construction of age hierarchy in which those in junior positions are unable to achieve full social status like those in senior positions, is important in shaping children's work (Bass, 2004; Nieuwenhuys, 1996). In line with Nieuwenhuys (1994, 1996, 2005), I argue that children's material exploitation is the outcome of the unequal relations of power with adults and market forces. Important arguments in my research also indicate that children's exploitation has multiple geographical scale and contexts. In Articles Three and Four, I show how the shift from local subsistence production towards export-oriented (coffee) agriculture, accompanied by the unfair trade system, has intensified the problem of children's economic

exploitation. I also argue that these changes force boys and girls to shoulder the burdens of both production and reproduction, as their families' seek alternative forms of livelihoods. This means their exploitation is related to national exploitation because, in contexts of unfair trade, peasant households are rewarded less by the coffee market chain. In arguing this, I show how children's work and exploitation are structurally highly circumscribed.

Finally, childhood as cultural phenomenon may not be separated from the generational structure and unequal power relations between children and adults (James et al., 1998). To illustrate this, I use the following quote from a girl in Addis Ababa:

> My mother, if she is worried about me when I stay long doing business [working] in the evening, prefers to treat me like a child. But if I happen to disobey, make mistakes or fail to do something according to her expectations, she will say to me, 'How come you find this difficult?' 'When I was your age, I had married your father'. (Sinidu, girl, 15 years old, fieldwork note)

Generational categories such as 'childhood' and 'adulthood' are culturally variable, also reflecting the significance of power, position and authority (Christiansen et al., 2006). As the above quote demonstrates, sociological age and social maturity are dynamic and fluid because they impinge very differently on local conceptualizations of children's physical and social skills, cultural competencies and experiences (James et al., 1998; McNee, 2000; Boyden and Levison, 2000). Sinidu's mother treats childhood as a shifting category that is imposed, negotiated and renegotiated on the basis of one's relative power in the generational structure. Sinidu's view that she is not a child, despite being fifteen years old, shows how children may view themselves and their childhoods differently from those adults. Conversely, her mother's implicit assertion that she is a child – except when she exercising her parental power – invokes the idea that childhood is a culturally and situationally diverse phase of life. This not only demonstrates how childhood as a relative social category varies according to socio-cultural contexts, gen(d)erational and child-adult relations, but also how children position themselves and are positioned by others differently within the socio-generational hierarchy (Vigh, 2003; Honwana and De Boeck, 2005; Christensen et al., 2006).

Agency, competence and interdependence

Although, for researchers in social studies of childhood, 'it is now possible to take it for granted that children are social actors' (Alanen, 1998: 29), there still is a 'ghettoization' of children's agency that has not fully permeated into all social science disciplines (Holt and Holloway, 2006: 136), nor is there a consensus on the diverse ways in which agency is constructed and constituted in their everyday lives.

James and Prout (1997: 8) define children's agency as being 'active in the construction and determination of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live'. This suggests that agency is not an innate capacity that is unnegotiated, nor that the treatment of children is on a par with adults. As Holloway and Valentine (2000) and Kjørholt (2004) argue, the recognition of children's agency does not involve the rejection of the social structures that shape their actions. Rather, it entails the need to respect their knowledge and social competencies (Kjørholt, 2004; 2005b). Although children are social agents, they exercise agency within particular "structures" that enable and constrain their differential abilities of doing so (Holt and Holloway, 2006). I thus adopt a relative perspective of agency that creates the ability to question how it 'is acknowledged and expressed or disguised and controlled in and through children's everyday relationships' (James, 1998: viii).

Children's agency need be confused neither with 'autonomy' nor with 'self-determinacy' (Kjørholt, 2005b; Holt and Holloway, 2006). It needs to be espoused in terms of power, that is, the power bestowed on children to participate, influence and control events in their daily lives (Baker, 1998; Alanen and Mayall, 2001). This argument is relevant because children live their lives structured by the imperatives of culture, livelihoods, gender, language etc. (Burman, 1995) and develop competences – cultural and social – within these imperatives only gradually and through practice, experiences and exposure. As Boyden (2006) argues, children are dependent on others in many ways that are fundamental to their survival, development, protection and well-being. Conversely, adults are also dependent upon the skills and activities of children (Porter, 1996; Schilkdrout, 2002; Kjørholt, 2005b). In my research, I conceptualise agency as a competence exercised in terms of interdependence, as well as through performance constituted from the available material and social resources. This approach makes it possible to conceive that 'relative autonomy is not a counterpart to dependency' (Kjørholt, 2004: 249), but that 'all people are simultaneously both active agents

and constantly in a state of dependency' (Kesby, 2006: 199). To illustrate how children, like adults, are interdependent actors, I therefore argue with Punch (2006: 94) that they

> should not be seen in terms of independence versus dependence. Elements of exchange in reciprocal relations between adults and children should be considered.... Adults' and children's lives are interrelated at many different levels; adults are often not fully independent beings…. It is too simplistic to use the notion of dependency, whether of children on adults, or adults on children, to explain the often complex nature of the adult-child relationship. [Such] relations should be explained in terms of interdependencies which are negotiated and renegotiated over time and space, and need to be understood in relation to the particular social and cultural context.

Following Punch (2002a), I further argue that children and young people simultaneously support, identify with and contest their part in a collective unit which includes family and kinship obligations. These inter- and intra-generational forms of interdependence, as well as interconnections between work and kinship relations, shape their choices and life chances. My research with children in the context of orphanhood (Article Two), work and livelihoods in Addis Ababa (Article Five) and Gedeo (Article Three and Four) underpin these notions of reciprocity and social interdependence. Their contribution to family livelihoods being vital, children are social actors who exercise agency in varying degrees, based on a number of factors, changing contexts and material capabilities. Young people negotiate their positions variously within the social structure they find themselves in. For example, they move in and out of relative economic dependence and independence based on the availability of jobs, rural and urban location, gender, age and social maturity. The differentiated nature of agency vis-à-vis these variables is presented in detail in the 'synthesis of articles'.

Being and becoming

Another theoretical consideration in my research – particularly in relation to the discussion of children's work/child labour in Part One – is the view of childhood as a social position in movement, as beings in the process of becoming (Vigh, 2006; Kesbey et al., 2006). As a developmental phase of the life course leading to adulthood, childhood represents, it is argued, a notion that is rooted in the concept of socialisation. Thus, debates surrounding 'child development' were reflected in the critique of socialization, which was seen as not taking

children seriously and viewed them as 'becomings' instead of as 'beings'. Hegemonic representations that cast young people as next-generation adults reproduce notions of them as incompetent and incomplete objects in the making. This further valorises 'adulthood' as a norm and 'finished article', as a 'state of human being' that 'incomplete, immature, and hence, inferior humans have to aspire to…become' (Horton and Kraftl, 2005: 135).

As I have noted already, these arguments mirror the split between the notions of 'sociological child', which views children in the 'here and now', and the 'developmental child', which views them in terms of their future. However, a mere focus on children as beings *as opposed to* becomings creates a false analytical separation between the two. In his recent book *The Future of Childhood*, Alan Prout (2005) questions the 'social' that lies at the heart of the not-so-new paradigm of social studies of childhood. He argues that works which fall into this multi-disciplinary arena of childhood studies have tended to focus on something called the 'social' at the expense of what might be thought of as the 'natural' (quoted in Horton and Kraftl, 2005: 135). Since childhood had been treated primarily as a universal phenomenon, Prout suggests, the 'social' view of childhood was opposed to the 'developmental', thus forming a binary with the older biology-centred paradigms. However, the legacy of this opposition is that terminologies that are used to 'denaturalize childhood' became analytically problematic.

The emphasis on children as 'social beings' undermines how certain universal regularities of pathways in biology interact with culture in the development of children. It also downplays the significance of early childhood development in outcomes for adulthood (Burman, 1996b; Woodehead, 1998, 1999b), as well as the interface between children's evolving capacities and competences and how that shapes their social experiences (Kjørholt, 2005b). Because of their rapidly developing bodies and minds, children growing up in extreme poverty and material deprivations are clearly susceptible to the impacts of malnutrition, a non-nurturing environment and material poverty. These are manifested in a lack of access to food, clean water, sanitation, education or health facilities, which impact on their lives in both the short and long terms (Montgomery et al., 2003; Boyden and Mann, 2005). As Ennew et al. (2005: 31) rightly point out:

> Although "childhood" is socially constructed in different ways, all are based on some observable physical facts: children are biologically immature human beings who

> initially are highly dependent on others for survival yet gradually develop capacities that decrease dependency. It is universally true also that biological survival and development are closely tied to the social arrangements through which children are nurtured from infancy to adulthood, arrangements that vary according to culture and climate, historical period, status and so forth. These social arrangements are complex systems of rules and expectations about who children are, what their role is, and what childhood is or ought to be.

The impacts of childhood deprivation resonate throughout life, with long-term consequences for capacity in adulthood (Boyden, 2006).[1] The case studies of the lives of orphans and working children make it clear that childhood experiences are shaped by and are the result of both 'nurture' and 'culture' (see LeVine, 1999; Scheper-Hughes and Sargent, 1998; Prout, 2005). Many children in my field sites struggle greatly to make ends meet, to provide their bodies with food, for which they engage in activities that might be damaging to other aspects of their physical development and well-being. As one of the child participants pointed out, growing up poor means 'being hungry now and then, sleeping rough on the streets and staying unhygienic for months and even years' (fieldwork notes, Addis Ababa, 2005). However, these physical needs – food, fluids, rest and sleep – tend to be taken for granted in 'social' studies of childhood, rather than being articulated explicitly.

Children are not only potential members but co-producers of life that enable them both to participate currently in and join particular communities of practice (Bourdillon, 2006; Katz, 2007). They develop and change and, like all human beings, they are in a state of becoming rather than of simply being. As Katz (2007: 1020) argues, learning, development and socialization are not restricted to young people, nor are they terminated at the plateau of adulthood. Researchers who view socialization as a dialectical process further argue that it does not suggest any contradiction between children's lives at present and their learning for adulthood (Nilsen, 2001; Schildrout, 2002; Kjørholt, 2004).

Schildrout (2002) rightly points out that the process of socialization has wrongly been viewed as a one-way process in which children absorb the actions and practices of adults. Similarly

[1] Boyden (2006) distinguishes between the *life course transmission of* poverty in which factors that prevent children's development have impacts on adult life, and the *intergenerational transmission of poverty*, in which poverty is being transmitted to future generations through the experiences and developmental impacts of the current generation of children.

Nilsen (2001: 8) calls for reconstructing and reinvesting the 'socialisation concept' in her study of kindergartens in Norway. She argues that, by taking attention away from its future orientation and adult perspective, the analytical power of socialisation could be reinvested to reveal children's agency and the ways in which the process of social interaction and resistance are deeply embedded in everyday life. Doing so, I would add, enables one to study how children live their childhoods today, and how they can anticipate taking on future roles and responsibilities through training, apprenticeships and education. I therefore view the notion of a 'socially developing child' as being able to function, and, in line with Aitken (2001: 21), as an embodied experience of becoming mature and accumulating competence. As Articles Four and Five amply demonstrate, children are actors in family livelihoods *as well as* vulnerable becomings in need of social protection. And, their childhood constitutes both being and becoming.

I further argue that the debate over the being or becoming of children might fruitfully be approached from the vantage point of 'growing up' in order to conceptualize childhood as a shifting phase in a life course. As noted already, childhood is a 'state of being' which is internally and externally shaped and constructed, *as well as* a 'state of becoming' that is part of the larger social and generational process. However, what is concealed between these 'states' is the multifarious and dynamic 'process of growing up'. Childhood, however conceived culturally, is a temporal event, a stage of life before one takes up full adult roles and responsibilities. This phase of life can be viewed more holistically in terms of survival, protection, developing capacities; as 'being' (thinking, feeling, and values); and as 'functioning' (experiencing, roles, relationships) (Boyden, 2006). These interrelated dimensions, I argue, capture how growing up is flexible, agentive and ever-changing more for children than for people of any other age group.

Spatiality and the global/local binary

The concept of place is central to my research. My approach to young people's lives draws insight from the multiple meanings of children's place based on one's position in society and spatial location (Tuan 1974, quoted in Olwig and Gullov, 2003: 5), as well as demonstrating how their local lives are interconnected with dynamic global processes (see Stephens, 1995; Katz, 2004; Robson, 2004; Ansell, 2005; Holt and Holloway, 2006; Aitken et al., 2007). Relational place and scale, in particular, are useful in the analysis of geographical contexts in

which young people's livelihoods are envisaged. In the following section, I focus on three interrelated ways of thinking about the spatiality of childhood that are relevant to my research. These are: progressive understanding of place; children's place as having multiple meanings (territorial place, sense of place and social place); and place and childhood as social and cultural constructions (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a, b; Olwig and Gullov, 2003).

The global/local approach

Contemporary theorising about spatiality in geography suggests a progressive understanding of place as relational (Massey, 1995 in Holloway and Valentine, 2000). Although place is depicted in a number of disparate ways, like Holloway and Hubbard (2001: 5), I see it

> …as a space of flows (i.e. open to variable external social, economic and political influences), as a locale defined through people's subjective feelings, as the context for social and political relations [and] as a place created through media images....

Different geographical places interact in multi-directional fashion. A single, static view of place lead us to conceptualise it only partially, as independent, bounded and separate from other places. Progressive place is open, that is, receptive to ideas, people and power relations extending way beyond them (Massey, 1995). As my articles demonstrate, the day-to-day lives of children in local geographies are related to wider processes of development, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, restructuring of livelihoods and international trade. In these processes, local places are opened up to influences on a far greater scale than national ones.

Holloway and Valentine (2000b) point out that the boundaries of the 'global' and the 'local' are unstable and blurred throughout everyday practice. As the global and local are inevitably intertwined, approaches which consider only one may not only miss much of interest but are methodologically inappropriate. I further argue in line with them that global processes are not simply 'out there', but are worked out in 'local' places: they are regarded as 'global' because they are connected to or have influence upon other geographical places beyond them. These conceptualisations further indicate that

> …global and local are not conceived of in terms of universality and particularity but as shaped by a mutually constituting sets of practices. On the one hand, 'global' processes are shown to be both global and local – they operate in particular local areas,

> thus shaping that idea, but also themselves being remade in the process…. On the other hand, understandings of local social relations as locally produced systems of social interaction and symbolic meaning which are rooted in…local cultures need to be thought of as products of interaction – interactions in which both local and global influences matter – and hence neither as closed and entirely local, nor undifferentiately global. (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a: 767)

What the above quote suggests is that global and local are intimately bound together. The global is constituted by the 'local' – everything ultimately has a local expression, even if it is stretched to become 'global' (Murray, 2006: 19). Global processes are actually stretched 'local-to-local' processes. Furthermore, because they unfold in localities that have a unique history and character; they might take hybridised, 'glocal' forms (Swyngedouw, 2000, 2004). This indicates that global processes are neither unidirectional nor simply have up-down local impacts, but instead are constantly in a state of flux and are reconstituted from below (Yeung, 2005; Murray, 2006).

Many geographers have long since explored the implications of such non-dichotomous, dialectical approaches to global/local for understanding young people's lives (Katz 1994a; Robson, 2004; Jennings et al., 2006; Aitken et al., 2007). In their study of supermarket packers in Tijuana, Mexico, Jennings et al. (2006), urges us to theorise child labour in terms of the relational geographical scale and contexts. Like Jennings et al., I argue that children's work should be seen in different spatial contexts – both encompassing and ranging from their individual agency, through households where their work and contribution is a vital survival strategy, to communities where work is part of social responsibility, to the global level where child labour is both exploited and paradoxically constructed as a problem.

My research with orphans (Article One and Two), on the livelihoods of young people in rural Gedeo (Article Three, Four) and with street children in Addis Ababa (Article Five) show how entwined processes of neo-liberalism, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and deepening poverty shape their lives in disparate localities in Ethiopia. By contextualising the shifts in family livelihoods, children's lives and livelihoods in Gedeo are shown to be both global and local or *glocal* (Article Four). In 'Changing livelihoods, changing childhoods' (Article Three), I discuss how the work experiences and livelihood strategies of young people are inseparable from household and communal livelihood strategies, as well as structural problems to do with

development and North-South relations in international trade. The latter determines the value their work deserves in local places (Article Three and Four). I maintain that these processes, in which socio-spatial relations of actors are intertwined with economic changes at various geographical scales, further help us overcome the artificial analytical separation of global/local by placing them into contexts.

The idea that 'time-space convergence' contributes to the integration of the global South to the world economy finds its roots in the works of geographers (e.g. Harvey, 1989). In these arguments, enabling technologies like communication facilities, faster flows of people, goods and information, and increases in international trade are resulting in the 'annihilation of space by time' and to the phenomenon of people living in the 'global village' (McLuhen 1964, quoted in Holloway and Hubbard, 2001: 17; see also Murray, 2006). In many parts of the global South, however, the local fallout of time-space compression is experienced in contradictory ways in time-space expansion (Katz, 2004: 226-228). As Katz argues, the notion of compression obscures the lived experiences of the spatiality of everyday life. For example, the negative consequences of globalisation in Sudan (discussed in Part One) are revealed in expanded fields of livelihoods, labour mobility and the spatial separation of production and reproduction; the marginalisation of remote places from global nodes; and paradoxically, by an increased awareness by local people of their marginalisation and of the negative effects of time-space compression in their lives.

My argument that globalisation as a 'tidal wave does not lift all the boats' (Abebe 2007a: 91) supports this evidence. It underscores how children are less likely to benefit from globalisation-driven development and how its positive aspects may not reach them without fundamental structural changes. As I have demonstrated in Articles Two, Three and Four, interrelated strands of globalization (i.e. the HIV/AIDS epidemic, trade imbalances manifested in falling prices for cash crops, a shrinking commodity market, high tariffs for value-added products and the inability of coffee producers to dictate the terms of trade) are having devastating impacts on both household and regional economies. The argument is that these processes have both accelerated the poverty of households and negatively impacted on the lives of young people.

Children's place

I also draw on multiple ways of conceiving children's place. In human geography research, three meanings of place dominate: territorial place, that is, place as location in the world; 'sense of place', that is, the subjective feelings of people about a place, including the role of place in group and identity formation; and place as locale, that is, as a setting and scale for people's daily interactions (Brun, 2003; Attanapola, 2005; Vandsemb, 2007). As the extant literature by non-geographers also shows, the study of place also involves the application of metaphorical approaches in order to explore the physical site that (young) people occupy and their multiple social positions within their societies (Narin et al., 2002; Meinert 2003; Young, 2003 a, b; Hammond, 2003; 2004; Kjørholt, 2003; Nieuwenhuys, 2003). In line with these aspects, below I will highlight the social places of children and the ways in which particular understandings of 'place' shape ideals of 'childhood' and vice versa.

Children have a special social place in many societies. Among Muslims in Hausa, Nigeria, for example, movement into adulthood entails increasing separation between men and women in all non-sexual activities, but these boundaries are less important for the world of children (Schildkrout, 1982, 2002; Robson, 2003). Because of their unique positions as non-adults, children have the right to access and casually wander in and out of people's houses (see also Hammond, 2004; Bass, 2004). Due to *purdah* – the local socio-religious practice of married women being secluded away from public spaces – children also play an intermediate role between such women and the wider society by marketing products that are produced at home (Schildkrout, 1982; Robson, 2003; Bass, 2004). In these contexts, the fact that children's positions cut across gender and generational stereotypes gives them multiple positions and responsibilities through the spaces they occupy at home, as well as the socio-economic roles they play in linking up women and their domestic economy with the wider society outside it.

In my research, the interchangeability of children's social positions is reflected in how they derive their livelihoods in the context of poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The socio-spatial mobility of young people discussed in Articles Four and Five looks at the ways in which they seek alternative livelihoods and explore new places of opportunities, both outside their communities and in public spaces. The involvement of children in begging and the ways in which the HIV/AIDS epidemic alters the economic roles of children illustrate this. Expanded work responsibilities and migration away from home also results in changed social positions of children. In this way, I argue that children's 'reversed' roles and positions, as

well as their socio-spatial mobility, underpins how 'subversive places [are] created by children as they engage in various kinds of intra- and inter-generational relationships' (Olwig and Gullov, 2003: 2).

Another dimension of place mirrored in my research is how the 'place of children is often a metaphor for childhood' (Gullestad, 1996 in Olwig and Gulløv, 2003: 4). Modern childhood constructs children *out* of society. Although children in Addis Ababa use the street for different purposes, the focus is on its negative connotations (Nieuwenhuys, 2001, 2003). This is because the 'proper childhood' resonates with *domesticity*. In this view, the place for children is inside home, inside families, inside school, where they are protected by responsible adults (Ennew, 2002: 389). Hetch (2000) emphasizes that a safe childhood is one that takes place at home and in other adult-constructed worlds – not in the streets, a brothel or an institution. As Article Five illustrates, to be a child beggar in 'non-places of childhood' (Nieuwenhuys, 2003: 99) and outside adult supervision is seen as being both 'out of place' (Connolly and Ennew, 1997: 133) and 'outside childhood' (Ennew, 2002: 388).

Livelihoods

In both Gedeo and Addis Ababa, the main focus of my study is to explore the livelihoods of children and young people. The concept of livelihoods originally refers to the *means* by which people make a living. The classical definition developed by Chambers and Conoway (1992) sees livelihoods as consisting of assets, activities and entitlements, thus incorporating the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets such as stores and resources, and intangible assets such as claims and access. Over the past decade, however, the applicability of 'livelihoods' to wider social research to look at the ways in which people develop resources to improve their lives has been recognized (Long, 1997; de Hann and Zoomers, 2005).

It is also recognized that livelihoods include *ways* of living (Staples, 2007). Long (1997) states that the term livelihood best expresses the idea of individuals or groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions. In this claim, we find indications that the understanding of livelihood has to go beyond the economic or material objectives of life to include non-material aspects of well-

being too. Livelihoods cover the complexities of survival strategies that are not captured by coping strategies, subsistence, income, employment etc (Rakodi, 2002; Ellis 2000). Sørensen and Olwig (2000) usefully call for 'livelihoods' to be reinvested with the socio-cultural since the means by which people make a living cannot be detached from their wider social contexts. As Staples (2007) argues, the domain of economic activity is but one of a whole series of interconnected arenas through which social life is constituted and reconstituted.

Ellis (2000) defines livelihoods by going beyond conventional economic models to include social institutions such as the family, gender relations and property rights, as well as incomes in both cash and kind. I follow this perspective because any study of livelihoods requires an awareness of the wider spatial contexts of the unit of analysis. The livelihood framework mostly examines the world of actors and lived experiences, the micro world of family, network and community, and draws attention to poverty and marginalization (Rakodi, 2002; Lynch, 2005; Lund, 2007). By drawing insights from an actor-oriented perspective (Long, 1994, 1997), livelihood research emphasises the agency of actors in having access to capabilities and in converting assets into them (Ellis, 2000; Rakodi, 2002). However, despite its micro-orientation, accompanied by a focus on local actors, the livelihood framework tends to overlook the agency of young people. In addition, since the livelihood approach frames social life from an instrumental angle, i.e. from the viewpoint of material re-production, it fails to capture a wide array of social relationships and contexts.

A useful conceptual distinction in livelihoods research is made between coping strategies and livelihood strategies. The former generally refers to how actors respond to shocks, disasters or the impacts of epidemics. Coping strategies, sometimes called response strategies, are spontaneous measures rather than coordinated long-term actions (Vincent and Sørensen, 2001). The term 'coping' implies neither that such actions are invariably successful nor that they do not have costs or involve the implementation of a carefully prepared plan (Ansell and Young, 2004). As Ansell and Young argue in their study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on household livelihoods, to 'cope' usually involves sacrifices being made, and it takes place at the very cost of other individuals within households, including children (p. 674). On the other hand, livelihood strategies are mainly used in the context of long-term action, in which actors cope with and recover from stress and shocks to enhance their capabilities and assets, both now and in the future (Carney, 1998).

Since 'a livelihood framework recognises that *households* construct their livelihoods within broader socio-economic and physical contexts, using social as well as material assets (Carney, 1998: 4, *emphasis* mine), they are considered to be both the central unit of reproduction and a convenient unit for the collection of empirical material (de Haan and Zoomers, 2005). In this view, children and young people 'are seen but not heard'. Their perspectives and contributions are barely recognised because they belong to particular adults and heads of households who are the focus of attention. However, 'households' and 'household livelihood strategies' are not cohesive and uniform. In Ethiopia, a differentiated view of households and multiple household livelihood strategies has been documented (Degefa, 2005; Alemu et al., no date). It is also argued that a non-unitary view of households as sites of 'cooperative conflict' is necessary in the study of livelihood strategies (Sen 1990). This include, among other things, changes in membership, the dynamic nature of interactions, negotiations, bargaining, power and resistance *as well as* intra-household dynamics (including age and gender distinctions) (Young and Ansell, 2003; Brun, 2003; Vandsemb, 2007).

The concept of livelihood trajectories (Murray, 2001; Evans 2006) is winning increasing favour in research. Applied to young people, it entails determining how their livelihoods follow certain regularities of pathways, and how these change or remain the same with time, age and gender (Rizzini and Butler, 2003; Van Blerk, 2005; Evans 2006). Evans (2006: 109), for example, uses the concept of livelihood pathways to explore how age, gender, ethnicity and poverty intersect to influence young people's livelihood strategies in her study in Arusha, Tanzania. Methodologically, livelihood trajectories imply a longitudinal design to tease out major pathways over a period of time (Boyden, 2006) in order to answer the question of *why* particular groups are central or marginalised (Staples, 2007) and how these processes are intertwined with enduring, historical and structural contexts. As I show in the next chapter, although my research is cross-sectional, I apply the concept of livelihood trajectories to refer to the styles in which children and young people derive their livelihoods in the context of HIV/AIDS and changing livelihoods of communities, and how gender, age/generation, rural or urban location and families' economic circumstances influence the strategies they adopt.

Although I do not use the concepts of 'livelihoods' and 'social reproduction' interchangeably, the latter is mainly applied in order to overcome the conceptual limitations of the former. I employ livelihoods when I denote the *means* with which and *ways* in which young people and their families derive their livings. Conversely, I use social reproduction (in particular, daily

and generational reproduction) to refer to broad social and economic relations between and across generations and the connections of these with the functioning and structures of what (young) people consider are important in their livelihoods. In this way, I also understand social reproduction to include *how people live* and how existing forms of livelihoods and social relations are constituted and reproduced over time (see Article Three for further details on this).

In the following chapter, I will present the methodology of my research.

PART THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the methodology used in this study. I first describe the research design, choice of field sites and the complex decisions I took that shaped the nature and course of the fieldwork. Then, I explore the link between epistemology and methods in children's geographies on the one hand, and how the various methods used in gathering empirical materials were played out in the field on the other. I will also elaborate on the interpretation and analysis of data, as well as my multiple roles as a researcher and those of the children during the fieldwork process. In doing so, and through personal accounts, I discuss my experiences of doing research with children and offer some subsequent reflections on the methodological and ethical dilemmas that arose as a result.

Research design

Initial plan

When I started this research, my idea was to explore the lives of orphans in the context of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Nairobi, Kenya, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I drew up a comparative, cross-cultural research design to examine the ways in which children respond to and cope with the experience of orphanhood. Exciting as it sounded, however, the proposal turned out to be over-ambitious. Planning the practicalities of fieldwork in Kenya as well as Ethiopia within the constraints of the resources and skills available led me to a realization that this could only be done at the expense of the depth and quality of the research. In order to gain children's insights, it was also imperative that I use participatory research methods, which by their very nature require longer periods of time. Additionally, as discussed in Part One, not much is known as such about the lives of children and young people in Ethiopia.

Choosing field sites, redefining research questions

Having concluded that it would be more rewarding to carry out an intra-country, rural-urban comparison at this level than an inter-country comparative research, I chose the two contrasting settings of Addis Ababa as an urban area and Gedeo, a rural site in southern Ethiopia (Figure 3.). Although this shift was more processual, once I had chosen it, I found it suitable and have continued doing so for personal, practical and academic reasons. The latter

reason will be discussed separately under the 'case study research design'. First, I have always been fascinated by the complex cultural, ecological,[1] social and political history of southern Ethiopia. Although I was born and raised in Addis Ababa, I have worked and lived in Awassa, the administrative capital of the Southern Regional State located eighty kilometres north of Dilla, the district capital of the Gedeo. I also know Gedeo as having one of the highest rural population densities in sub-Saharan Africa, with concerns about children from the family planning and demographic points of view (Abebe, 1997).

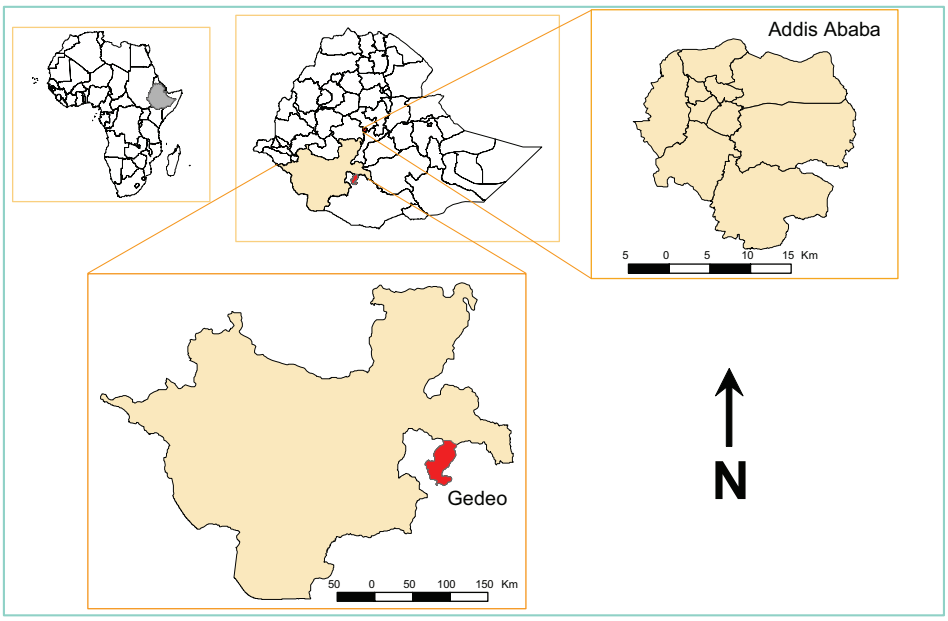

Figure 3. Map of the study areas

Secondly, my career experience in SOS Children's Villages[2] has sparked many questions concerning orphanhood and childhood marginalization, its causes and its growing significance. When I did post-graduate study (masters) in development studies, I carried out research into the quality of life of children who live in the Village on the one hand and those who work and partly live on the streets on the other (Abebe 2002a) by developing Child Well-being Indicators (Abebe, 2002b). I found out that, although the children in the former tend to be

[1] I like the Gedeo countryside, especially the fact that it is lush and evergreen, with an interesting agro-forestry system of interspersed *ensete* and the 'green-gold'– coffee and chat– vegetation.
[2] I worked as a teacher and project coordinator of a community outreach programme known as Creativity, Action and Service (CAS). CAS is a self-initiated programme in which young people voluntarily participated in different income-generating and environmental conservation activities, both within and outside the village.

secure in terms of education, health and housing facilities; they lack peer-interaction and 'social capital' and are more dependent on the institution. Working street children, on the other hand, appear to have agency in making a contribution to their families. This research not only left numerous theoretical issues unanswered, it also became an inspiration for the current study into the spatiality and temporality of childhoods.

On another level, after taking up this PhD, my theoretical exposure to the burgeoning field of childhood studies made me understand the complexity of the issues I wanted to look at and began to shape the nature of the research itself. Being inspired by my readings in the methodology of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbins, 2005), I entered the field having only a general idea of what I would like to do and how I might go about looking at it, rather than well-established procedures to be applied. My intention in being open-minded about my research is to avoid being decided about what I would explore in the field (see Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The research design need not be fixed, since the research process itself is dynamic and flexible. As Gulløv and Højlund (2006 in Sørenssen 2007: 5) argue:

> Research design can be compared to a puzzle, wherein method, theory and the analytical tools all operate as puzzle pieces, however there are some pieces that are constantly missing and those that are present don't exactly have a perfect fit. It is a puzzle of making it as we go along…both versatile and flexible.

As Gulløv and Højlund (2006 in ibid.: 5) further argue, 'because research is changeable in the fieldwork; because researchers, method, theory and field are wound up in each other; and because research statements are not fixed', describing how the process went and how the fieldwork changed the research questions themselves is important. This methodology chapter should be seen as part of an attempt to reconstruct this process in order to fit the puzzle together.

While the fieldwork was in progress, I became more interested in the ways in which children were engaged in different livelihood strategies. Repeated observation and informal dialogues with them motivated me to explore the centrality of their economic activities in the livelihoods of families. Although, at this stage, my ideas on how to proceed with the study were less clear, I was open to learning more about their daily lives. However, I also knew that I was being sidetracked by my desire to 'do geography', that is, to adopt a spatial approach to

children's livelihoods. Once in the field, I came to realise the transition in livelihoods that was taking place in Gedeo from subsistence agriculture to market-based production. This therefore became one of the many strands of questioning and analysing the ways in which the changing livelihoods trajectories of communities shape the working lives of children. I eventually redefined my research objectives and, in addition to orphanhood; focused on the role of children in household livelihoods and the complex ways in which they negotiate these in their daily lives.

Case study research design

Case study is a well-established research tradition (Yin, 1994; Bassey, 1999; Stake, 2005) and an important approach in geographical inquiry. It involves focusing on a particular case thematically and/or the entirety of a case regionally (Aase, 1991). It could be used to explain an individual phenomenon (single case study) or several phenomena (multiple case studies) separately or in a comparative perspective (Yin, 1994). Yin wrote that a case study is:

> an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (1994: 13)

Case study is not a methodology because it is defined by interest in the case rather than by the method of inquiry used (Stake, 2005). The term 'case study' draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from a particular case. As a research strategy, case studies are both a process of learning about cases and the product of learning (Stake 2005). Because they are studies of particularities, the suggestion that the findings that derive from them may be applied more widely may seem somewhat contradictory, if not invalid (Sikes, 1999). A common question in case study research design is that of *generalisability*, i.e. whether it is possible to generalise results from a small sample or cases to a larger one. However, ensuring *reliability* (whether the findings of a study can be trusted) and *validity* (the extent to which the methods investigate what they intend to investigate, and how the material from the field are fairly represented in the research) are also core issues in qualitative (case) studies (Bryman, 1995, Kvale, 1996).

Mark (1996: 213) argues that theories generated through case studies may or may not apply more widely than the case studied and must of necessity be more 'tentative'. In terms of generalising in order to create theory, Yin (1994: 30) refers to 'statistical generalisation' (which is unsuitable for case studies) and 'analytical generalisation' (which can be appropriate). Yin argues that analytical generalisation is the appropriate method of generating theory from case studies. By this he means 'a previously developed theory is used as template with which to compare empirical results of a case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory replication may be claimed' (Yin 1994: 31). Likewise, Stake (2005), although he warns us against generalising; emphasises the contextualisation of knowledge produced from particular cases. In this regard, he identifies two types of case study, intrinsic and instrumental. As opposed to *intrinsic case studies*, in which the cases themselves are regarded as of sufficient interest to merit investigation, *instrumental case studies* look in-depth at the contexts of cases because they help us pursue external interest. As Stake (2005) argues, in *instrumental case studies*, the cases are chosen because understanding them will lead to a better understanding, and perhaps better theorising, about still larger groups of cases.

Applied to my research, the case studies on orphanhood, children's work and livelihoods in Gedeo and Addis Ababa are meant to be *instrumental* for understanding young people's lives. In applying them, I focus on the children themselves and the social, cultural, economic and political *contexts* in which they live. I also discuss the contrasting and common contours of children's lives in the two study areas, keeping in mind the implications of these for theorising childhoods in Ethiopia. As Table1 shows, I use case study design as an *analytical* strategy to "situate" the cases and contextualise and view them holistically through the use of plurality of methods, perspectives and voices (Gasper, 2000). This allows me to explore structural dis/similarities between rural and urban areas about children's everyday lives and livelihoods, based on which common ground for social action could be framed (Katz, 2004).

Table 1. Case study research design

Case	Broad framework	Immediate context
Place	Ethiopia	Rural (Gedeo) and Urban (Addis Ababa)
Subjects of research	Children and young people	Orphans, working children, families in the context of HIV/AIDS and poverty
Phenomenon	Working childhood and orphanhood	Daily and generational re-production, i.e. work, care, livelihoods and familial relations

Katz (2004: xiii-xiv) calls the approach of generating geographical knowledge about particular places 'topographic descriptions'. On the other hand, she refers to the method of describing and theorising about disparate places affected by similar processes, as well as trying to produce abstract knowledge of spatial connections (and comparisons), as 'counter-topographies'. In other words, whereas topographies are ways of producing 'thick descriptions' of social relations and processes about a particular geography, counter-topographies are ways of exposing common threads of social processes that are common to two or more different places. These methodologies are operationalized in my study from the viewpoint of first producing knowledge on, and secondly analysing the similar effects of; poverty, the impacts of HIV/AIDS and the wider national development strategies in the two study areas. I examine how contrasting rural and urban environments influence children's work experiences and their growing up within (extended) family households. In doing so, I describe the 'topographies' of orphanhood and working childhoods, situating them in their local, national and global contexts. Further, I explore the differentiations and commonalities of the *contexts* as well as of the lives of children to produce counter-topographic descriptions of childhoods in Ethiopia.

Epistemology and methods in children's geographies

Conducting any kind of research enquiry involves adopting a particular kind of position in relation to the study itself and the research subjects. Epistemology and methodology are highly intertwined. Although epistemology does not determine methods, certain methods are associated with particular epistemologies (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Van Mannen, 1998; Winchester, 2000; Denzin and Lincon, 2005). Methodology indicates an approach to conducting research that is underpinned by particular epistemologies (understanding how valid knowledge can be produced) and ontologies (understanding how the world is comprised) (Holt, 2006). Following Van Manen, (1998) and Holt (2006), I define methodology so as to incorporate all aspects of research practice with children: the theory behind the method, including the ways (tools and techniques) of constructing data (nature of information), data analysis, representation, writing and dissemination.

In geography, children and childhood have only recently become prominent subjects of study. The methodological shift in research, in which young people are viewed as knowledgeable agents, finds its roots in sociological and social studies of childhood (Jenks, 1982, Qvorturp

1994; James et al., 1998; Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998; Christiansen and James, 2000). Important arguments in this field (James et al. 1998: 184-91) have emphasised the need to acknowledge the diverse voices of young people as active subjects of their own lives, capable of articulating meaning and participating in detailed research processes. Children's geographies also reflect the fact that young people know a great deal about their own childhoods (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a; Barker and Weller, 2003; Matthews, 2003). My study is underpinned by these arguments, and relies largely on children's views and perspectives.

Children's perspectives

While research with children does not necessarily entail adopting specific research methods, it has been acknowledged that methods should be appropriate to their own skills and competencies (Christensen and James 2000). Researchers have explored different ways in which children can be engaged in the research process, as well as how their own points of view can be explored most effectively. Participatory research methods have become increasingly well-established in recent years, originating in development studies (Chambers, 1997). Applied to childhood studies, these methods enable participants to produce representations of their own social worlds, including in planning interventions (Nieuwenhuys, 1997; Woodhead, 1999a; Bourdillon, 2004; Haugen 2007).

Participatory research with children has attracted different labels, including child-focused (Young and Barrett, 2001a, b), child-led (Van Beers, 1996; Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Ennew and Plateau, 2004) and 'emanicipatory methodologies' (Irwin, 2006). Christensen and James (2000) and Kjørholt (2004) identify four contexts in which research with children takes place. These are, in order of increasing degree of children's participation: children as objects, in which adults do research *on* children; children as subjects, where adults speak on their behalf; children as participants, in which their views are taken seriously; and children as researchers, in which they take part in the various activities of the research process as co-producers of data.

Being inspired by ethnography, I used multiple methods (below) that increase children's position as research participants. Although ethnography refers to a variety of methods and involves different approaches in different disciplines, the way I apply it resonates with Hammesley and Aitkenson's (1995) and Berihun's (2005) definition that it is neither

objective nor subjective, but contextual and interpretative. For me, ethnography is first-hand research *with* children in order to gain empirical material about their lives based on their articulation of their own realities.[3] However, I point out that children's perspectives need not be confused with representing 'authentic voices'. Instead, it is a matter of taking seriously the views of children. Representations of authentic views cannot be achieved in research, as the latter is variously encountered and interpreted based on the researchers' personal attributes, like age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion and social status, all of which affect the process of fieldwork (Holmes, 1998). As Ansell (2001) and Punch (2002) rightly argue, these variables have a bearing not only on the focus of the research and the choice of participants, but also on personal interactions with them, interpretations of the fieldwork and data analysis.

Being in the field

Informed consent

The research started with my obtaining clearance from the authorities concerned. Before the proposal was submitted for funding in Norway, the City Government of Addis Ababa reviewed and endorsed it. For participants who were approached through governmental and non-governmental organisations, institutional consent to incorporate them into the research was sought. In Gedeo, I contacted the local authorities (school principals, the district administration, the heads of peasant associations) and explained the purposes of the study, its objectives and intentions before commencing the fieldwork.

Many of these 'professional gatekeepers' (Cree et al., 2002: 50) recognized the value of my research and cooperated positively with it. However, obtaining parental consent for some children was not a straightforward matter. On one occasion, for example, I encountered relatives in Gedeo, both of whom thought they were the 'right fosters' who should be consulted about the child who was residing fluidly between the two households. I contacted the maternal grandparent because the child was a de facto resident there, although the patrilineal relatives were also giving her support and culturally had the 'legitimate' right over her. In such circumstances, where there is an unsettled guardianship dispute, how can one decide who the proper guardian is? Who should give consent for a child when s/he is living in

[3] As Ennew and Plateau, (2004: 34-5) state, child-centred methods mean neither solely relying on children nor ignoring adults. Instead they signify 'putting children in the picture'. In my study, while remaining focused on the child as a subject; parents, teachers, social workers and community members were sources of information on how their perspectives were congruent with or different from children's own perspectives of childhood.

different households based on convenience? How can one seek informed consent from adults in cases where one finds none?

Following Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states the right of children to express opinions in matters that affect their lives and to have that opinion taken into account; teenagers (13-18 years) were asked to provide their own individual consent. Parental consent was sought for all children below 12 years of age, as well as for those above 12 years who wanted their parents or guardians to be informed about their participation in the study. The informed consent of all the research participants took a verbal form and was preceded by explanation of the kind of research I intended to do. Throughout the research process and in publications, I made the identity of research participants anonymous.

Duration of fieldwork and sampling

I spent a total of seven months in Addis Ababa and Gedeo in two separate periods of fieldwork (January–May 2005 and January–April 2006), followed by a subsequent short visit (October 2006). The children for the study were sampled through random, purposive and snowballing techniques. Table 2 provides an overview of the sampled children in the two field sites, other participants in the research and the various methods of data collection. Throughout the research, I have been in contact with a large number of orphans and non-orphans in both school and out-of-school contexts, especially though story-writing, semi-participant observation and informal dialogues. From this wider sample of children aged 8 to 18 years,[4] 36 children (14 girls and 22 boys) in Addis Ababa and 48 children (21 girls and 27 boys) in Gedeo participated very closely throughout my research through a variety of research methods. A survey of 60 children in the context of street work (mainly begging) was also carried out in Addis Ababa. The different figures in the number of research participants in the different articles pertains to the focus of the articles in the particular field sites, mobility (withdrawal of participants), the incorporation of new participants, and changes in the research questions posed during the fieldwork.

[4] I use the terms 'children' and 'young people' interchangeably and, sometimes, in combination because my conceptualizations of the research subjects varies, based on the aspects of their lives I was looking at, as well as who the majority of the participants were in the individual articles.

Methods of obtaining empirical material

During the fieldwork, I used a range of methods to obtain empirical material, facilitate children's involvement in the research process and enhance my social relations with them. These were semi-participant observation, informal dialogues, multiple interviews, in depth- and focus-group discussions, field notes, story-writing and household visits. Each of these is discussed below.

Observations and informal dialogues

My first fieldwork began with the observation of children in school, homes, farms and institutions, as well as in informal sites in which they gather (including streets, markets, transport terminals, entertainment zones like tea houses etc.). In order to develop cooperative and close relationships, before undertaking any interviews, I spent the first four weeks identifying participants for the research and trying to build up friendship, trust and confidence. During and after observations, I carried out informal dialogues with the children. In the informal dialogues, although I took field notes in the end, I did not tape-record or use interview guides. In Addis Ababa, the holding of different sports competitions, which the children themselves chose to take part in, preceded the activity-based dialogues. Most of the boys participated in the football matches. On the other hand, the girls preferred to perform different role models. Both individually and in groups, they competed in singing the popular songs of different contemporary singers. Both boys and girls were rewarded for participation in the games.

During the games, I 'hung out' with the children, trying to participate in and learn from their discussions, engagements and embodied practices. These diverse activities were an important source of joy and cooperation among the children. They increased their opportunities to work together and foster their sense of group formation, as well as adding value to the social relationships I established with them. Most of the informal dialogues in Gedeo took place at workplaces, in their homes as well as in *shai bets* – tea houses – where I and many of the children frequently met. One of the child participants owned a tea shop, where working children often sat during their spare time, as did I during breaks from the field. In Addis Ababa too, I developed a routine of sharing meals with the children on average once a week in the restaurants they frequently ate in. In this way, *shai bets* served as spaces of friendship and reciprocity. The friendly atmosphere there enabled me to turn conversations into topics of

particular interest (see Punch, 2001; Langevang, 2007). As Leyshon (2002) points out, the advantages of informal dialogues were also that the children *opted into* the research more readily after I invited them to do so, that trust was built up and group dynamics managed more effectively, and that my own understanding of the nuances and complexities of children's lives was enhanced.

Participant observation and informal dialogues ensured that I fitted in with the plans and work activities of the children, who were thus happy to give up their time to speak to me. They also proved to be means of taking research to the places where the children were rather than separating them from where they were for the purpose of conducting the research. *Shai bets*, streets, market places, schools and playgrounds are where children are on a regular and everyday basis. Informal discussions with them in these places means engaging with them 'on their own terms, in their groups, in their words, with their time-frames' (Nairn et al., 2001: 16). It was much easier for them to speak and interact freely in these 'natural' settings. Like Narin et al., I felt that this made it more possible for the children to determine the extent of their participation in the research and their involvement in later in-depth group interviews.

Multiple interviews

In addition to observations and informal dialogues, I carried out interviews in order to allow children to elaborate on certain points of departure and to focus on time and place in relation to the different significant events in their lives. Two sessions of in-depth interviews were held during the first and second periods of fieldwork. Following Andrnæs (1991) the nature of repeated interviews consists of two forms: life-style and life-cycle interviews.[5]

In the life-style interviews, I asked the children about their everyday lives from a time-space perspective (e.g. over a day). As Andrnæs (1991) and Woodhead (1999a) stress, time is the central organising principle in which children explain in detail their activities the day before the interview. From a livelihood point of view, this includes what activities they had done, when, where, and with whom. I also explored the livelihood strategies of their families and what their roles are in these in both rural and urban areas. I paid particular attention to the age and gender dynamics of the activities that children engage in, in order to explore the ways in

[5] See Katz 1986 for similar approach to interviewing called 'oral diaries', in which child-led walks were accompanied by questions exploring children's environmental knowledge.

which boys and girls, for example, participate in different and/or similar responsibilities. The purpose of the life-cycle interviews I carried out was to explore aspects of the social spaces of children and childhood. These forms of interview enabled me to map out the relationships that were imperative for children's psychosocial and material survival (Woodhead, 1999a; Simonsen, 2003). The questions were meant to let children narrate their lives in a longer time-perspective. The open-ended nature of the questions provided them with opportunities to introduce other dimensions of their experiences. In the case of orphans, the themes I explored included the diverse ways of coping with the impacts of HIV/AIDS and with 'being an orphan'. These interviews were also based on themes that explored the extent of children's social networks and the degree to which these networks provided them with support. I paid particular attention to child-child and adult-child relationships involving social, material and emotional care, reciprocity and support (see semi-structured guides, appendix).

Table 2. Overview of methods and research participants

Research tools	**Gedeo**	**Addis Ababa**
Repeat interviews	Fieldwork One: 24 individual interviews with children, including those affected by HIV/AIDS. Fieldwork Two: 15 individual interviews with the same children as above and 14 additional individual interviews	Fieldwork One: 22 children, including those affected by HIV/AIDS. Fieldwork Two: 12 individual interview with the same children, 28 additional individual interviews
Story-writing	140 children (in a school context)	18 children (individually handed in)
In-depth and focus-groups	Eight in-depth groups and 8 focus-group discussions with children, including those affected by HIV/AIDS; 4 focus groups with community members; 6 in-depth discussions with social/development workers	Seven in-depth group and 6 focus-group discussions with children, including those affected by HIV/AIDS; 4 focus groups and 6 in-depth discussions with researchers and development/social workers
Field notes	Yes during both fieldwork periods	Yes during both fieldwork periods
Observation and dialogues	Home, market places, farms/garden, coffee-processing firms, NGOs, informal and formal school settings. Day and night.	Streets, church/mosque yards, markets, transport terminals, feeding centers, home, street drop-in centers. Day and night.
Household visits/discussions	20 repeated and 6 one-time visits	16 repeated and 3 one-time visits
Survey	None	60 children

In-depth and focus-group discussions

I carried out in-depth and focus-group discussions with children and adults. In-depth interviews with the children involved two members (same sex), whereas children of the same and different sexes joined in the focus-group discussions. Children who were interviewed privately were not covered by the in-depth interviews, but they took part in the focus group discussions. The principal purpose of focus-group discussions with adults (i.e. parents, guardians and community members, researchers, NGOs and government social/development workers) was twofold: a) to learn how their understanding of children's work (and childhood) is congruent with children's own descriptions; and b) to identify, where appropriate, the degree to which the HIV/AIDS epidemic has affected extended family households. The aim of the latter was to produce the empirical article on the challenges of orphan care in the context of HIV/AIDS. I had anticipated that this aspect of my study would contribute to policy. During the interviews and focus groups, I thus paid particular attention to exploring the problems, priorities and capacities of families who care for orphans and to assess the extent to which intervention is needed and in what forms.

Field notes

I took field notes as a record of my experiences, mostly following observations, social encounters and interviews, and focus-group discussions. In organising the various dimensions of my field notes, I drew inspiration from and adapted Richardson's (2005) observational, methodological and theoretical notes. The first category is *observation notes*. Based on extended observations, I was able to document as precise and concrete 'facts' as possible on what I saw and my experiences in the field, including children's day-to-day work activities. I recorded personal reflections of my observations during the field separately. I also took different types of *methodological notes.* These are messages I wrote to myself regarding ways of organising the process of fieldwork: how I went about collecting data; how I approached participants; how many of them I interviewed; where, what and when I made observations; who I talked to and what I asked; how the process of interview and focus group discussions went etc. I also documented the problems and challenges I encountered during fieldwork, and the various methodological choices and decisions I made in the field. Another aspect of my field notes was the *theoretical notes*, which, according to Richardson, refers to the ways in which the researcher relates to the concepts s/he had in mind regarding the research. Theoretical notes are meant to question assumptions, prior knowledge, connections, critiques

of what one has been doing, thinking, seeing etc. As Richardson (2005) argues, these notes open texts to alternative interpretations and a critical epistemological stance. In my theoretical notes, I documented how my observations and experiences in the field affected or altered my theoretical standpoint, as well as how the changes in methods and field settings influenced my approach to the research questions.

Story writing

As Ansell (2001) points out, story-writing is a method that exploits young people's particular talents, affording them greater control over the process than many methods. During the fieldwork, I offered children a choice of topics in which they could express their thoughts and opinions in writing. These topics were meant to discover the range of activities and work that they perform on a regular basis and include: 'experiences of care', 'my childhood' and 'my contributions to family livelihoods', as well as 'what I do everyday' and 'what I did yesterday'. Story-writing enabled me to generate valuable data which reflected the children's 'authentic' views (ibid). As Robson and Ansell (2000) argue, since writing stories is a more confidential and less confrontational method, the stories proved successful in exploring issues that were difficult to discuss using other methods, such as in-depth interviews. In my research, these methods also became useful in overcoming the power hierarchies inherent in focus groups, as well as in ensuring the privacy of individual interviews.[6]

Household visits

I visited households in which most child participants resided in both Addis Ababa and Gedeo. My main aim was to document household assets and livelihood strategies through observation and dialogues with adults/heads of households.

Data interpretation, analysis and write-up

The process of data interpretation and analysis began during the fieldwork and continued well beyond it. The analysis of the data was also part and parcel of transcription, coding and write-up. As Ely et al. (1997: 140) argue:

[6] However, as Ansell (2000: 112) points out, story-writing leaves little scope to create 'oppositional knowledge for consumption in the field and relies on relationships that reproduce dominant discourses' that could not be contested through discussions.

> Qualitative research involves almost continuous and certainly progressive data analysis from the very beginning of data collection. This process of analysis guides the researcher to focus and refocus observational and/or interview lenses, to phrase and rephrase research questions, to establish and check emergent hunches, trends, insights, ideas to face oneself as a research instrument.

From the point of view of myself and the research subjects, I saw data interpretation as involving a two-stage process. First, the participants attempted to interpret the reality of their lives through both oral (interviews and focus-groups) and written language (story writing). Secondly, I tried to interpret their interpretation and link that up with my own knowledge field logs and analysis of the context. As Clark (2007) argues, in this way, I saw myself as a co-interpreter rather than a sole interpreter of data, the material produced being the result of subjective interpretations between myself and the research subjects (Ansell, 2001). It is perhaps significant that my experiences of growing up in contexts similar to those of the children I worked with (for example, in terms of performing different chores and earning an income) provided me with the advantage of being able to relate to their realities and gave me an added ability to understand the subtleties of their lives. However, there is a stage of data analysis which is 'somewhat different as it takes place when the researcher has left the field and sits' (Ely et al., 1997: 40). In the following section, I will discuss how this stage of interpretation and analysis was carried out.

Transcription and categorisation

After the fieldwork, I made an inventory of the materials I had collected. After that, all the interviews and focus-group discussions, which were conducted in Amharic, were transcribed verbatim by a research assistant. Because I was flexible and open during fieldwork, I was overwhelmed by the large mass of data I gathered. At some point, I felt I had far too much material compared to what I could really use. However, I overcame this problem by cataloguing them according to themes. Fuller and Petch (1995: 85) describe this important task of data analysis as one which involves reducing 'the initial mountain of data to an ordered set of themes'. Application of this task to my work produced categories that reflect the focus of the articles and the content of the materials I gathered. From these categories, I decided to focus on aspects of the data that pertain to children's livelihoods and lives in the

context of HIV/AIDS. This technique was instrumental in unpacking a great deal of material, and it permitted the remainder to be stored away for future use.

Coding

I coded the data by identifying them with specific labels and concepts for further analysis. I did this by re-reading the stories and transcriptions line-by-line and highlighting key words and phrases using a colour highlighter. Then, I 'read across' the whole material looking for similarities and differences, patterns and consistencies, ambiguities and contradictions among the various participants' responses. While doing this, I also identified connections throughout the material, a process Strauss and Corbin (2005: 290) refer to as 'axial coding'. This process was followed by a varying degree of abstraction of concepts based on the participants' own words and phrases. While I was analysing the data from the first fieldwork, the material from the second fieldwork was also being transcribed and coded. Likewise, the material on which some of the articles were based was, at the time of drafting, still in process of being collected. In this way, the process of data collection and interpretation was partly guided by the focus of the individual articles. This back-and-forth process supports Marshal and Rossman's (1995) argument that data collection and interpretation go hand in hand to promote the emergence of substantive concepts and theory grounded in empirical data (see also Jackson, 2001; Strauss, 2005).

Analysis and write-up

The interpretation of compositions and transcripts was carried out simultaneously and relatively speaking in the same fashion. After I had identified central lines of analysis using the key phrases, I explored the consistency and deviations of the various emergent categories. Eventually, the stories and transcripts that were found to be generally 'representative' – in terms of being able to reflect the main trends in the data – through which I could illustrate specific aspects of the children's lives, were fully translated into English (see example – Figure 4 below). The remaining transcriptions and stories were presented contextually. In these cases, I coded the concepts alongside the original material and wrote a summary of each in English at the end of the Amharic text.

As part of data analysis, I tabulated some of the qualitative data by classifying emerging themes in order to identify patterns. This was especially the case for compositions written by the children on the kinds of work they engage in and my own observations of recurrent phenomena, as well as identification of the characteristics of extended family households that look after orphans etc. Whereas this approach generally eliminates 'deviant voices' – which, as is done in this thesis, could be nuanced further in the discussion – it offered me the possibility to associate the transcribed data with other material (like field notes), as well as interpretation of general trends and scenarios in making sense of my qualitative data.

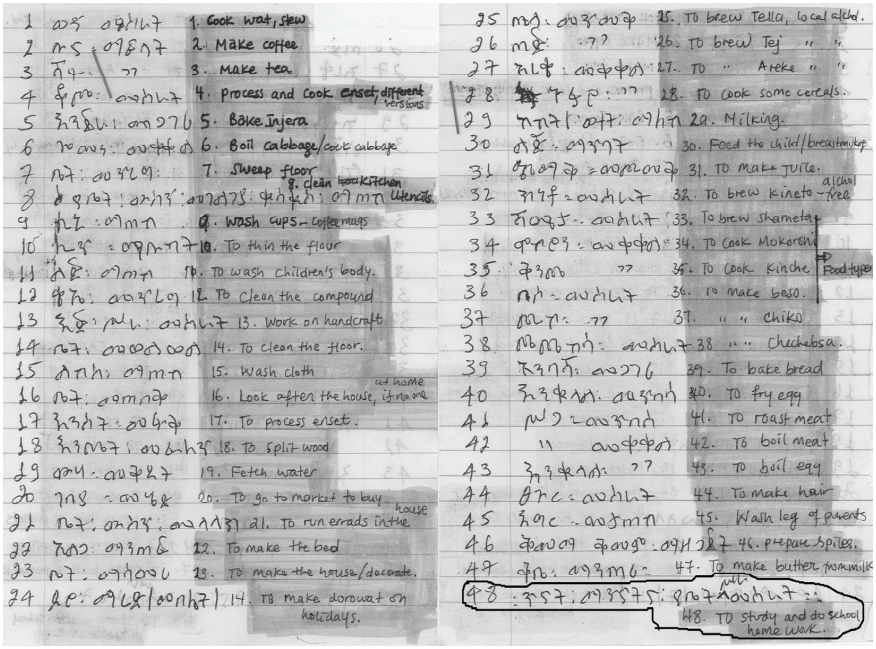

Figure 4. 'My daily activities'

During the writing-up process, I repeatedly returned to the highlighted transcripts and referred to my English summaries. I also read my field notes and made a review of literature on the study areas in order to situate my research in its social, cultural and economic contexts. I believe that the opportunities I had to co-write articles with my supervisors, who also joined me in the field during its different stages, have helped me in bringing different perspectives to bear on the same material. Their probing comments on my interpretation and questions on my taken-for-granted knowledge at times led me to re-read my field notes, listen to the tapes again, and try to remember the setting and context in which the particular words and phrases had been uttered.

Methodological and socio-ethical dilemmas

Fieldwork involves intervention in people's lives (Lund, 2002). This intervention has a positive intention, but it may have unintended negative consequences. As Young and Barrett (2001b) point out, ethical research is predicated on the expectation that the participants will suffer no harm as a result of the research process or its outcomes. At best, it is hoped that the findings will give something back to the participants which will help their situations (ibid). Ethics is central to research involving children (Boyden and Ennew, 1997; Valentine 1999; Horton, 2001; Tingstad, 2003; Bushin, 2007). Ensuring children's involvement throughout the life of the research (i.e. planning, research design, fieldwork; dissemination) is its hallmark (Lan and Jones, 2005; Hill 2006). However, while creating the conditions for participation may be wholly desirable, sustaining this involvement is far from straightforward (Mcdowell, 2001; Bourdillon, 2004; Irwin et al., 2006).

A further ethical consideration in childhood research is the recognition of the importance of the power differentials between children and adults and of the generational relationship that may intervene in the research process (Punch, 2001; Alanen and Mayall 2001; Christensen, 2004). During fieldwork, I faced considerable difficulties to do with ensuring active and sustained participation, preserving privacy and managing power relations, although none of these matters have compromised the overall integrity of the research. Some of these challenges represent common problems in conducting research with adults, while others are specific to the group of children I worked with, the context of the fieldwork and the nature of the research itself. Still others relate to introducing participatory, child-centred methods into practice. The complex issues that arose during fieldwork left me with considerable personal and ethical dilemmas. Focusing on four aspects – privacy and confidentiality, power differentials, the ethics of reciprocity, and the 'immediacy' of fieldwork – in what follows I reflect on these dilemmas, and how I dealt with them.

Privacy and confidentiality

One of the paradoxes which arose, especially during interviews, was maintaining privacy and confidentiality. This was more of a problem in Gedeo than in Addis Ababa. The problems with privacy partly related to finding appropriate places for conducting interviews. In most

cases, adults, parents and other children would simply come and join in, even if I were in the middle of conducting formal interviews with the children.

Researchers have highlighted similar difficulties in conducting a 'private interview' in the family home, where space is at a premium and other household members may be tempted to eavesdrop (see Valentine et al. 2001; Nilsen and Rogers, 2005; Bushin, 2007). In my case, it was difficult to find a private space for interviews. I felt that asking people to give us privacy was an awkward way of handling the situation, especially in a context in which members of households share very little space. In Gedeo, the problem of privacy was further complicated due to language barriers, as the children spoke not only Amharic, the lingua franca and the medium of fieldwork, but also Gedeoffa, the local language. At times, I felt that adults were interrupting interviews and trying to 'put the words in the children's mouths' by telling them to tell me what they think I would like to hear using Gedeoffa, which I do not speak. In these circumstances, it was a problem to discuss issues of particular interest and to uncover what the children wished to tell me in confidence.

I minimized this problem partly by converting the interviews into informal talks, discussions or less private events etc. However, these led my interviews to be informal and geared towards overcoming unforeseen circumstances, instead of providing insight to the research itself. In some cases, I carried out some of the interviews as informal dialogues in 'community spaces', where everyone seemed to be minding his or her own business. I also conducted numerous interviews in one of the tea houses which a child informant was running. However, despite the alternative that these places offered for private conversations, it also raised the possibility that others might overhear things said in confidence (Leyshon, 2002). As Leyshon states, finding a space where children can participate in interviews requires both flexibility and a 'degree of planning and preparedness in terms of being ready to take opportunities as they arose' (p. 183).

As I gained competence in doing fieldwork and as my relationship with the members of the community became firmer, many of the problems associated with privacy gradually began to fade away. The various perceptions people had about me changed as I continuously interacted and worked with them. Time is always a crucial factor in qualitative research, and my fieldwork was far smoother and easier during the second period. Then, some parents, whenever I came to visit their children, began to 'leave us alone' in their house either to work

in the garden or attend to chores in the kitchen. Unlike the initial phase, people ceased watching me interviewing or doing other activities with the children, as they realized that I was no longer unfamiliar.

On a comparative note, most of the children I worked with in Addis Ababa were outspoken in sharing their experiences. This is unsurprising, given that narratives form part of a livelihood strategy for some of them. Children who are begging, for example, have extraordinary skills in narrating their everyday lives. Interviews and focus-group discussions were relatively smooth compared to Gedeo. However, I also spent much time in Gedeo endeavouring to work out alternative methods of obtaining children's insights. One approach I used was to be a volunteer in a junior secondary school, where I taught social studies classes in Grades 6 and 7. In their spare time, I asked the children to write and hand in stories. As already noted, this method was used less by children in Addis Ababa. However, finding a place to carry out interviews and focus-group discussions in the city was not as problematic as it was in Gedeo. There, most of the interviews were carried out either in the children's homes or in one of the public parks they chose. In the latter, we sat on the grass with tea and soft drinks mostly accompanying the discussions (see Table 3 for an overview of main methodological challenges in the two sites).

Another dilemma which arose during interviews was the disclosure of personal or confidential information. Confidentiality can also be compromised, as Bostock (2002) points out, without the participants knowing or being prepared to tell about personal or emotional matters. For example, a handful of children talked about the HIV-status of their family members during the conversation, even if they had not expected to tell me about this. As some of them said later on, they wanted to keep these issues secret, but they turned up unexpectedly. Like Cree et al. (2002), during interviews, I found myself treading a fine line between encouraging the children to tell me their stories and yet protecting them from either disclosing something they may not wish to, or damage their fragile coping mechanisms. In a number of cases, boys and girls told me things about their private lives which they may not have wished to talk about had it not been for the nature of the interviews and our mutual trust. In other cases, many young people confided to me their involvement in illegal livelihoods like theft, pick-pocketing and selling drugs. Information on illegal livelihoods was, however, not reported to the legal institutions because to do would have meant breaking relationships of trust and confidentiality, although not doing so also carries its own ethical implications.

Power differentials

Negotiating unequal power relations with children is a central aspect of ethical research (Punch, 2001; Irwin, 2006). Researchers take different approaches to the question of power. Many suggest that adults researching children should endeavour to cast aside the trappings of power afforded by age (Valentine 1997, quoted in Ansell, 2001: 109). Corsaro (1996) uses the term 'atypical adult' and urges researchers to adopt the role of an 'incompetent adult' who does not mind being bossed around by children. By being an 'atypical' adult, Corsaro argues, researchers can learn about what is considered 'child-like' and what is considered 'adult-like'. And, by not practising the latter during the research interaction, researchers can win the children's acceptance. Similarly, Mandall (2000) argues that the researcher can minimize power differences by taking the 'least adult role'. By using different techniques, including changes in appearance, speaking styles and dress code, it is possible to reduce the inequality in power between the researcher and the children and in effect become 'one of the latter'.

However, many researchers argue that power will always be present and that adults cannot avoid being in control of research agendas. Also, adults cannot pretend not to have power over child participants and the research process. Imbalances in power are central to all relationships, but they are magnified in adult-child relationships, as research projects cannot erase the context of adult power that children face everyday in their homes, school and communities (Mayall and Alanen, 2001; Kjørholt, 2004; Irwin, 2006). However, this does not mean that power imbalances are equalised within any research endeavour. In addition, we must question how different degrees of power can affect participants and, in turn, how this might affect the knowledge that arises from the research (Christensen, 2004).

However, assuming that children are powerless is simplistic, as quite often they negotiate adult-imposed power and assert their autonomy during research in various ways (Punch, 2004). As Hill (2006: 69) argues, children negotiate different degrees of engagement related to considerations such as time control, comfort with the research medium, rewards and privacy. My research in Addis Ababa further reveals complex power relations within the 'street-children' category based on age, gender, place of work, title and length of time in the streets. For example, the first group of children I began working with in the streets constructed themselves as a 'legitimate group' who had an 'exclusive right' to work with me. As a result, other children who joined the study later were seen asking permission to participate from them, or simply had to keep a low profile while they were with them. I

overcame this problem by making them participate in group activities and plays, which reduced the hierarchy and raised their friendship levels.

Children have the ability to communicate with the researcher in a way they prefer. My earlier research with working street children suggests that they could fabricate stories, decide whether to contribute to the research in a meaningful way or not, manipulate other children in the group etc. (Abebe, 2002b). This means that there is a methodological advantage in shifting the focus from the researcher's ability to achieve equal status with the children towards finding ways of participating in the same activities as them (Gullov and Hjøland, in Sorenssen, 2007: 24). This approach worked in my case because the involvement of the children in different activities (discussed above) fostered their participation while, at the same time, enabling me to develop friendships and win their confidence and trust.

Following Mayall, my positionalities also involved accepting differences while working towards developing a 'friendly role' and relationships. In this role, I tried to minimise my power by not exerting authority over the children and by establishing a trusting relationship modelled on a bond of friendship (Mandall, 1998). Key ingredients in these roles are expressing a positive feeling and a desire to be with the children, not imposing discipline, and treating them with respect (Holmes, 1998). For example, in the school where I taught as a volunteer, I endeavoured to remain close with pupils and to avoid taking sides with teachers or other authority figures. Although I covered topics in social studies classes, I agreed with the head teacher that it was not my responsibility to check assignments or attendance or to administer tests. This approach, even though it did not erase my status as an adult; helped me adopt the role of an 'atypical adult-teacher'. In addition, since I was stepping in to hold classes when other teachers were absent, few pupils saw me as a 'typical teacher' in charge of a particular subject. This was also, perhaps, because I was known to most children as a researcher, as I had already had multiple social encounters with them outside the school compound, in cafés, market places, home visits, playgrounds and other arenas of everyday life. None of the interviews with children was carried out within the premises of the school. Similarly I did not act as a referee during children's sport and song competitions in Addis Ababa. In the streets and other sites of children's daily lives, I did not intervene in an authoritative way or attempt to discipline them, except, of course, when they quarrelled. The following table outlines some of the methodological challenges I faced in the two field sites.

Table 3. Methodological challenges in Gedeo and Addis Ababa

Challenge	Gedeo	Addis Ababa
Privacy	Lack of spaces for interview	Not a significant problem
Unexpected disclosure of information	Was a challenge	Was a challenge
Language barrier	I do not speak Gedeoffa	Not a problem
Power hierarchies	Experienced less	Pronounced within the 'street-children' category
Literacy	Was less of a problem	Many children were not literate enough to write stories

A deeper understanding of child-adult interactions in a given setting is necessary in respect of the choice and application of methods. In many cases in Ethiopia, children's discussions on equal terms as adults may not be desirable (Kefyalew, 1996). In the study areas, because children were rarely treated as equals by adults, it took a long time for them to be used to and become effective in the new kind of 'participatory' relationship I sought to develop. The repeated commentaries of adults, asking me to ask them about the children instead of asking children themselves, speak to this reality.

Many children were shy at explaining their experiences, especially in the company of their elders. In so far as my attempt to work with the children directly was considered fraught and 'silly' by others, the children were also more hesitant to adapt to these new approaches (see Ennew and Plateau, 2004). Despite this, however, I employed what James et al. (1998 cited in Ansell, 2001) call the 'adult child model' by treating the children as mature and competent persons. Like Ansell (2001), I told them how I valued their views, that they had the *power* to let me know about their childhoods and that, more than my own, it is their perspectives that were most important to the research. Thus, while accepting power hierarchies, I strove to 'manage' the effects of inequalities and invited them to let me know about their childhoods. These approaches worked because the children seemed to be empowered and so became enthusiastic both as participants in the research and as close friends.

The ethics of reciprocity

Reciprocity is a much contested concept and, since it is guided by moral questions of what is right and wrong (Bestock 2002), it is interpreted differently according to local circumstances. Gouldner (1960 quoted in Lan and Jones 2005: 2) argues that 'practices of reciprocity, such as gift giving, are systems of exchange of goods and services but the exchange goes beyond a

market transaction and is infused with social value.' This idea has practical implications for both short-term and long-term relationships with research subjects. In the short term, reciprocity means compensating the latter with material/monetary payments to offset their labour. However, long-term reciprocity goes well beyond material benefits to incorporate the ability of the researcher to communicate his or her findings back to both participants and policy-makers and to use the findings to improve the lives of the former (McDowell, 2001).

Codes of conduct and practice manuals for social researchers (Mikkelson, 1995; Ennew and Plateau, 2004) recommend not giving any money to research participants. They are also ambivalent about paying children, arguing that it creates divisions and perpetuates power differentials. However, as Grenier (cited in Lan and Jones, 2005: 5) explain:

> [R]esearch is a two-way street. The researcher can't really expect to go into local communities and just take. If a person is going to do research, something has to be given back. The community has to gain from the research process. Why would someone want to waste their time because local people's time is valuable. Moreover, before people give their knowledge you usually have to build some friendship. And until that friendship or relationship is built, people may not give you correct knowledge, or accurate knowledge or the real piece of information that is critical to your understanding.

This quote captures my own position and field experience in Ethiopia. I believe that time is a valuable resource for children and that they should be compensated. As most of the participants are from low-income groups, and many of the children, including child beggars, juggle in different places in order to earn their daily income, I felt that giving them a certain sum was an adequate reward for their time and labour and hopefully a way of encouraging their participation. Short-term reciprocity with my research participants was therefore effected by compensating[7] them. However, my relationships with many of the children were deep and mutual. Children bought me gifts on different occasions, invited me to their houses, shared their food with me, etc. Reciprocity is an integral part of their daily lives: they share what they get with each other, and I felt that they would find it both impolite and odd if I did otherwise.

[7] In addition to cash rewards, I used different approaches in different contexts. In schools, I gave children stationary materials (books, pens and exercise books). With working children, I gave money and paid for the meals we frequently shared.

Conducting fieldwork among economically disadvantaged children as a privileged, educated, car-driving researcher raised complex personal questions to do with material inequality. Looking at the harsh material deprivation, I found it very difficult to detach myself from their circumstances. While making material gifts to the children, however, I never made any promises for the future. I also knew that I was not doing some kind of philanthropic work, nor did the children perceive it as a form of charity.[8] In many ways, I got the impression that neither party felt that one was above the other, and so it was a win-win scenario.

Giving money to research participants was not an entirely unproblematic experience, however. I have many personal anecdotes and I would like to highlight some of these further here. On one occasion, during the earlier stage of my fieldwork, I gave a group of eight children (who beg) in Addis Ababa a certain sum to share among themselves. However, one of them, relatively speaking the oldest, who took responsibility for sharing it for the group, ran away with the whole sum. The other children tried to persuade him to give them their share, but without success. When I met them few days afterwards, they told me what happened.

I decided to follow the matter up (and in the process became involved in researching their lives), but could not find the boy either. I asked the children where he worked; they told me he had changed his 'business site' to another part of the city, apparently because he wanted to avoid me, perhaps thinking that I might come back. However, I was able to discover that he often met some of the children in the group when they went back to their homes, or when they watched videos. I asked these children to convey a message to him that 'If he wants to come, he may do so and we shall talk about it', but he never showed up. After some time, as the research progressed with the other children, they told me–and I believed them–that he actually would have liked to come and 'be with the other kids', because the place where we often met was in the city centre, where the children could have a lot fun at the same time.

One day, he sent a message through one of the boys asking if he could come back with the money and join one of the group's football teams. When we met him again, he was a bit embarrassed, but I deliberately downplayed the matter and asked the children what we should use the money for. All of them, including himself, agreed to spend it buying a football. With time, our relationship proved to be a very good one, and he at once became a coordinator of

[8] Perhaps my identity as Ethiopian might have helped me here somehow. I was not regarded as a *ferenji* – a white foreigner – who is commonly perceived rich and elite.

the football team he had recently joined. Although these experiences obviously did not impede my research in a significant way, it is nevertheless worth reflecting that giving money has implications for researcher-researched relationships, and is never problem-free.

On another level, the intervention contributed positively towards the children's sense of belonging to a particular group. This was because the first few children I met and gave the money to were those whom I met accidentally in the city centre. When I first gave them money, I told them that this was not something I would do all the time. And they understood this because they know from their experience of begging that '*shikella* – business – comes and goes': one day a client is positive in giving, while another day s/he may walk by. The impact of this first encounter was that, when they saw me coming, all 'members of the group' called each other and gathered to have a chat. In retrospect, I realise that it did not matter whether I gave money or not – they just liked the idea of being together with me.

I want to push the discussion of money matters one step further in order to shed light on the implications of the incident from a methodological point of view. The experience with the boy who ran off with the money was instrumental in talking about issues as they arose. On the same day that the children told me about him, we spent many hours discussing the particular theme of 'cheating' and what they usually do to get by. I asked the children if any of them have cheated themselves or been cheated by others. Not surprisingly, none of them dared tell me about their own experiences, but they talked freely enough about other children who do all sorts of cheating. In fact, they gave me many stories about others' involvement in theft, shop-lifting snatching bags etc., until I talked about my own childhood experiences with cheating. I told them how I used to sneak into the bus using the middle door (as buses are often full and the conductor cannot manage to check every passenger) when going to and from school without paying so as to keep the coins for myself. Interestingly enough, sharing my personal experience with them was very useful, as the children then opened up and started talking freely about their own experiences. Such reflexive approaches proved very instrumental on many occasions, particularly when we were discussing issues which can easily slip into judgements of 'right' and 'wrong'. Additionally, revealing things in my own past and present-day lives increased their curiosity in knowing more about me and in letting their lives become known to me.

Immediacy of fieldwork

Doing fieldwork is a personally intriguing experience. It required my involvement in the children's lives in respect of different levels, degrees and contexts. Looking back at my diaries, it is evident that I occupied multiple and sometimes incompatible positions in relation to the children. Some of these positions were moderated by the friendly role that I established and were based on solidarity. I expressed my belongingness to them in a number of ways, although perhaps many of these were not intentional at all. I would like to present one case which illustrates how the 'immediacy' of the field-work required me, in Aitken's (2001b: 125) words, to divest myself of my 'theoretical and philosophical pretensions to attend the urgency of [my] participants' context'.

One afternoon, while I was driving through one of the largest open markets for vegetables in Addis Ababa, I saw many children and adults gathered at a street corner. I spotted some of the children I was working with from a distance and became curious to know what was going on. I approached the crowd and tried to ask what had happened, but everyone's attention was directed towards one particular boy, about fourteen years old, who was bleeding heavily from his nose. I had not met the boy before, but some of the children I already knew told me that he was one of their friends. They further told me that he was bleeding because he had been hit by a policeman who believed that he and his friends had stolen or seen the person who had stolen a purse from a car parked on the other side of the street. The lady whose purse was missing accused the children of theft without having any hard evidence. She simply believed this because the children were there when she parked the car and again when she returned.

When the incident happened, the police were not there but took action to 'entice the truth' based primarily on the report of the lady. The other children were also beaten. The paradox was that, according to the children, they were where they had been playing cards, both while the lady was parking the car, and when she returned to discover that her bag had been stolen. If the children had been involved in the theft, one would normally have expected them to hide, especially as the purse contained 2500 Ethiopian birr and jewellery. In brief, my inquiries and further involvement with the children as to why the police had hit them instead of pursuing the case legally resulted in a quarrel with the one of the police officers. Subsequently I was asked to follow them to the police station, which I did in a bad temper. The police officer with whom I had had words created an excuse to leave the station, while I was simply kept there because he knew that, without his presence, 'my new found case' would not be processed!

Finally, after attempts to provoke me further and build a case in their favour against me, I was questioned by the chief officer over allegations of 'interfering with police business' before being bailed in the evening.

I tell this story because, as England (1994) notes, fieldwork is a personal experience rather than a mere academic pursuit and, in conducting research with children, I have found it difficult to maintain a distinction between my professional (objective) and personal (subjective) actions. The theoretical separation of self from other is not so easily accomplished during research. This is because the boundary between the researcher and researched became redefined and obscure continuously during fieldwork. As Katz (1994b) also points out, although the boundary between the researcher and the research tends to be constituted as if they were separate, in reality the two are tightly bound together and integral to one another.

By way of conclusion

In conducting research with children, combinations of methods yield maximum results. Semi-participant observation and interviews, while valuable in establishing a rapport with the children, also enabled me to construct rich material from the field. The informal dialogues provided textured accounts of children's lives. Interviews enabled the children to narrate their daily lives, while story-writing became very useful in generating more honest views on sensitive topics. The good social relations and mutual trust I developed over time both facilitated the research process and earned me social credit, which became a space in which I could negotiate my multiple roles during the research process. While this combination of research tools provided me with rich data and enabled me to interact with children on their own terms; individually they presented complex sets of challenges. My involvement in the children's lives also presented numerous moral and ethical dilemmas, some of which are generic to other research involving, for example, adults. However, many other dilemmas were specific to the particular context of the fieldwork, the lives of the child participants and the methods pursued.

The fieldwork in both Addis Ababa and Gedeo never went according to my plans and intentions. I re-worked my research statement many times and made changes to my objectives right through the fieldwork. The task of producing pieces for publication was largely stressful

and frustrating. Indeed, the latter task was very different from the actual field experience, which was more exciting. The two field settings also demanded my involvement with the research subjects in different ways. Being in the field and doing research is a lot messier than it looks when the final report is completed. For me, research with children was a continuous process of ups and downs, successes and frustrations, requiring my involvement in the lives of participants beyond academia. It demanded my reflexivity in negotiating my roles with them and making my own ethical judgements about what is (or is not) the right line of proceeding with the research. Leaving the field has also left me with complex questions of how to say goodbye, how I would give 'something back' to the children, and what, how to maintain relationships beyond the research setting, and ways of dissemination and communication.

PART FOUR: SYNTHESIS OF ARTICLES

In this section, I first give a brief overview of each of the five articles, and secondly bring them together while trying to tease out some of the differences and similarities in children's lives in the contrasting settings of Gedeo and Addis Ababa. I also aim to synthesise the arguments which emerge from this attempt to put them into perspective.

Summary of articles

Article One[1] explores the geography of contemporary orphanhood in sub-Saharan Africa. It juxtaposes the geography of HIV/AIDS in relation to that of orphanhood and shows how the latter is not necessarily a replica of the former. Article Two[2] explores the role of extended families in providing care for orphans, and the socio-cultural factors that influence care-giving and care-receiving practices in rural and urban contexts. Article Three[3] looks at how changes in the livelihood trajectories of families in Gedeo affect the work patterns of children. It situates children's work at the heart of the shift in rural development strategies in Ethiopia. Building on this, Article Four[4] extends the argument by looking at the daily work of boys and girls in Gedeo. It discusses how children and young people exercise agency in domestic work, entrepreneurship in market places and migratory labour. Article Five[5] focuses on the lives of child beggars in Addis Ababa. It examines their various approaches and strategies in begging, and how age, gender and social maturity shape their involvement in, and gradual withdrawal from, the activity. It should be pointed out that these articles are linked by four interrelated themes: the spatiality and temporality of childhoods; children within families; children's role in daily and generational reproduction; and agency and social competence.

Cutting-edge themes

The spatiality and temporality of childhoods

Each article deals with the concepts of place and time differently. The spatiality and temporality of children's lives are developed in the study of orphanhood and how children's

[1] "Geographical dimensions of AIDS orphanhood in sub-Saharan Africa".
[2] "Children, AIDS and the politics of orphan care in Ethiopia: the extended family revisited".
[3] "Changing livelihoods, changing childhoods: patterns of children's work in rural southern Ethiopia".
[4] "Social actors and victims of exploitation: working children in the cash economy of Ethiopia's South".
[5] "Earning a living on the margins: begging, work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa".

work varies based on rural and urban location, agricultural cycle, the availability or lack of livelihoods etc. In particular, the theme of socio-spatial mobility – the changing spatial location and social places of children within families and in intergenerational relationships – runs through nearly all the articles.

Article One maps out the geography of orphanhood from distributional points of view. Based on secondary sources of data, I show how the geography of orphanhood at any given point in time does not correspond to the geography of HIV/AIDS infection. This mismatch is first and foremost explained by the time-lag theory, according to which HIV/AIDS gradually affects an adult's immunity after it enters the blood system. I argue that the latency between infection and the death of adults (and thus the generation of orphans) explains why places with high seroprevalence may not necessarily be places with a high incidence of orphanhood. Migration of adults during this period also makes the geography of the former and the latter highly incompatible. In many cases, adults die in their home villages rather than in the places in which they became infected with HIV. In addition, in countries like Ethiopia, where over three-quarters of all orphans have become so for reasons other than the HIV/AIDS epidemic (e.g. famine, war etc), drawing up a geography of contemporary orphanhood is far more complex than what the adult seroprevalence suggests. More importantly, orphans' geographical mobility (rural-urban, rural-rural, urban-urban, urban-rural, episodic movements) in pursuit of alternative livelihoods or to join extended family households retains a map of orphanhood that is complex and fluid, especially at smaller spatial scales.

The distributional aspects of orphans are closely entwined with ecological concerns. An ecological approach implies examining the relations of orphans with extended families, the wider clan and societal structure. This approach is important in exploring the welfare of children in a holistic sense because, in the absence of biological parents, children's well-being is predicated on the ability of extended families to meet their physical, material, affective and psychological needs. A central concept in Article One, namely ecological transition, refers to the ways in which changes in cultural norms and conventions regarding fostering, material and emotional resources of care etc. are taking place in the context of increasing numbers of orphans. This perspective is discussed in detail and based on empirical material from the field in Article Two. Article Two also focuses on the lives of orphans within extended family households in order to contextualise debates about orphan care at the heart of the debate over the different strategies of interventions.

The capacity and sustainability of the extended family to care for orphans is found to be highly variable. These variations occur within and between extended family households in both rural and urban geographies. Extended families are also diverse in their functions and capacities – social, economic and emotional – to care. As the case studies illustrate, these diversities are the function of individual household livelihood trajectories, material resources, and emotional capacity and social networks of relationships. Moreover, material resources (or the lack of them) are not only vital for the well-being of children, but are also important in determining the type, duration and quality of care that families are able to provide. Household poverty, the number of children in care-giving families, the situation of the children to be fostered (age, gender and social maturity), the social bond between deceased and adopting families etc. are important variables that operate in particular ways in Gedeo and Addis Ababa. As I argue, these economic, social and cultural factors, as well as the complex ways in which the contributions of orphans to household economy are interwoven with care issues, often go unnoticed. However, their labour makes a considerable difference in their relations with extended families; and the implications of this for care cannot be overemphasised.

There is a great deal of overlap in the four typologies of the extended family households, namely 'rupturing', 'transient', 'adaptive' and 'capable' families. These families should be carefully read as prototypes which suggest the coexistence of vulnerability and resilience and how families cope with impacts of HIV/AIDS differently. Extended families also move in and out of one category for a number of reasons. Not all economically capable families have sufficient emotional and material resources; conversely, families who are poor materially may not necessarily lack social and emotional resources. The article contradicts the dualism that seems to prevail in the literature, concluding that oppositional binaries of extended families as *either* 'rupturing' *or* 'resilient' should be seen as potentially complementary rather than being mutually exclusive.

Spatial mobility for work and for earning livelihoods is often necessary for most young people in Ethiopia. In Articles Three and Four, I focus on the geographical contexts of work and the ways in which mobility is crucial in enabling them to acquire resources both temporarily and on long-term basis. Children are engaged in periodic migration when work in the agricultural season is restricted and based on particular family circumstances. They are also highly mobile within different households, based on the need for agricultural activities, to assist relatives in domestic chores or to enable adults to participate in migratory labour. These

types of intra-household mobility are moderated by cultural expectations, intergenerational responsibilities and kinship obligations, and tend to be more marked in Gedeo than in Addis Ababa.

With specific reference to Addis Ababa, I discuss the socio-spatial experiences of child beggars in public spaces in Article Five. In addition to being first- or second-generation migrants, in the context of begging many children are autonomously mobile within the city space. Begging as a way of life requires mobility of actors based on the presence of actual or perceived livelihoods. Moreover, as the livelihood trajectories of children on the streets are, to a large extent, influenced by their experiences of the public, the police, the city planning authorities and ideologies of development (which push them away from the streets) and the availability of potential alms-givers in churches, market places and at traffic lights (that pull them into the streets), there is a great deal of geographical movement. However, although the spatial disciplining of the use of public spaces by child beggars suggests that children are denied a particular place in the territorial sense, they can still have a social place in society. This is because, even when they are viewed as being 'out of place', many street children consider themselves and their lives in relation to home and their families through social networks and the socio-economic obligations they fulfil.

Spatial mobility is intricately entwined with the temporality of children's lives, particularly the seasonality of their work. This time dimension is vital as it reflects the ways in which they negotiate their livelihoods during different periods of the day or night, month and year. Children are, for example, involved in either full-time or part-time begging due to schooling, the availability (or lack of) alternative work, their degree of poverty, the potential for begging etc. The length of time they spend in begging and the perceptions of the public about them, as well as of the children about themselves, shape the temporality and degree of participation in, and gradual withdrawal from, the activity. In addition, begging is temporarily practised in relation to religious ceremonies, the material circumstances of the children and their growing physical size and age. In a similar way, children's work in agriculture and market-based activities in Gedeo are subject to both seasonality and wider spatial contexts. The type, intensity and duration of different kinds of productive and reproductive work that boys and girls perform vary, based on the seasons for land preparation, production, harvesting and marketing in any given year (Articles Three and Four).

Children within families

All the articles situate children within families, whether nuclear or extended. They demonstrate the inseparability of the livelihoods of children from the livelihoods of the families of which they form an active part. This does not contradict the principle that they should be taken seriously and in their own terms. Instead, it highlights the fact that the lives, agency and capabilities of children are an integral part of, and are shaped by, the capability of households and diverse forms of social relations constituted by a web of interaction with others. Using children's perspective, Articles Three, Four and Five in particular demonstrate the complex ways in which young people and their families attempt to rework and cope with disruptions in social reproduction in the context of livelihood transition, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and material deprivation.

The place of orphans and other children alike in household livelihoods is central and dynamic. Growing up in rural and urban contexts is governed by varying forms of reciprocity and care in which the relative flow of resources (material and social) between children and adults is embedded in mutual expectations and support. The intergenerational social contract which entails the changing positions of children is a central concept that cuts across the experiences of orphans and working children.

The particular sets of 'implicit social contract' that exist both between and within different generations discussed in the articles can be conceptualised in two ways. The first is the intra-household social contract, which involves the immediate members of a particular family or household, mainly parents and siblings. Different forms of intra-household contract position one generation at the core of the flow of resources in particular circumstances. These contracts explain the centrality of children's work and their role in family livelihoods, as well as the ways in which parents invest their resources in raising children and improving their life chances. The second form of contract, the inter-household social contract, is extended outside given household units to incorporate extended families. Inter-household contracts include extra familial obligations and function either as one of the ways in which traditional societies are structured or in response to the stylised 'fracturing' of the inter-household bargain over care and reciprocity (Kabeer 2000: 463). In the former, the contract is governed by the wider norms and values of the society that members should conform to and is built on the 'moral economy'. In other words, whereas the intra-household social contract explains the ways in which children contribute to household livelihoods (Article Five), the concept of the inter-

household social contract is useful in understanding the care of orphans by extended families (Article Two). However, I point out that reversals in generational relations brought about by HIV/AIDS and spatial mobility could disrupt both patterns in particular ways (Article Three and Four).

Negotiating livelihoods, gender and generational relations

At the core of each piece is an attempt to offer a nuanced discussion of the role of children in production and reproduction. The articles report on the lives of children who must earn resources to contribute to their household's survival in the context of pervasive poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic and macro-economic changes. They illustrate how children are crucial to income-generating activities and the performance of domestic chores, as well as in sustaining families on a daily basis, although these contributions tend to be overlooked.

In Addis Ababa, the major livelihoods of children discussed are begging in streets (Article Five). I document how begging, which is often constructed as a 'social problem' and an 'ill of society', is regarded by the children themselves as a crucial aspect of work through which they earn resources to contribute towards vulnerable family livelihoods. I explore the perspectives of children who view their engagement differently from mainstream society. Children beg as part of the household survival strategy and in order to fulfil an economically meaningful role in their households. They also practise begging for a range of other reasons: to escape the constraints of poverty, unfavourable environments at home, assert their freedom on the streets, develop social networks of relationships and interact with the general public, as well as redefine their position in their households through material contributions.

The lives of child beggars further demonstrate that their life circumstances on the streets do not remain the same. The social meaning they attach to begging provides us with alternative knowledge that contradicts the generally held assumptions of the mainstream society (the media, the general public etc.). Many children construct begging from the perspective of its income-generating potential within the wider context of *shikella*, or business. Whereas this indicates how they value it as a means to an end, the public's perception of them as either risks or at risk suggests ambivalent attitudes associating them with the culture of poverty. This problematic view also illustrates various discourses of childhoods that circulate on the basis of class, age and gender, which fuel the state's and NGOs' ideologies of street-free

childhoods in which children should be kept within their homes to preserve their childhood innocence (Boyden, 1997; Ennew, 2002; Nieuwenhuys, 2003).

On the other hand, for Gedeo children work is constructed within a rural socio-economic context and cultural expectations of responsibilities. It involves domestic and income-generating activities in subsistence agriculture (maize, potatoes, ensete, root crops), cash crops (sugarcane, coffee, *chat* etc.) and work in market places and within households (Articles Three and Four). As opposed to Addis Ababa, the economic importance of agriculture in Gedeo is crucial in shaping children's experiences of rurality, work and everyday life. In general, children's work includes paid and unpaid work, caring responsibilities, domestic and reproductive chores, migratory labour, work on family farms etc.

Variations in family livelihoods, age, gender and poverty find their expression in many aspects of children's lives, including schooling, work and informal interactions both among themselves and with adults. Boys are increasingly involved in commercial cropping, especially in the marketing of farm proceeds to generate an income for themselves and their families. Within households, gender shapes divergent trajectories and opportunities among children, although not in the same way between rural and urban areas. For example, girls in rural Gedeo enter the world of adulthood well before their counterparts in Addis Ababa or boys in their own locality.

Likewise, the work experiences of children are not gendered in the same way as those of adults. The involvement of boys and girls in market places and coffee production, from which men (but not women) are largely excluded, clearly contrasts with the adult division of labour. I also note that the transitions that are taking place in livelihoods in Gedeo are shaping gendered work in particular ways (Article Three). Girls are increasingly involved in paid work and participation in cash-cropping; especially in coffee-picking, drying and sorting beans in coffee-processing firms, than was previously the case. This is contrary to the traditional socialization, through which they grow up to become women with the social skills necessary for running household economies rather than engaging in paid employment.

Gendered variations in children's work can further be theorized with reference to space, time and the nature of the contributions they make to their families. In Addis Ababa, girls' work experiences on the streets are shaped in part by the perception of the public, who consider that

they should be located inside the home and perform traditional gender roles, rather than beg outside in the streets. However, their responsibility towards their families forces them not only to engage in 'wrong careers' and at 'wrong places' (Evans, 2006: 117-118), it also obliges them to bringing life-sustaining necessities back to their households. As a result, they tend to save much of their daily income in order to give it to their parents, compared with boys, who appear to have a more relaxed attitude towards how their financial resources should be used. Poor children are also involved in numerous domestic tasks. Girls in Addis Ababa, like their counterparts in Gedeo, shoulder numerous domestic responsibilities, including cooking, caring work, fetching water, collecting, selling firewood etc., which increases their workloads but reduces their chances of success in school. In addition, although I do not have hard evidence to support this, it is apparent that poor children take on adult roles sooner than better-off children who might attend school and extend their spaces of childhoods further.

Apart from participation in agricultural production and/or contributions of money on a daily basis, children's roles in households assume complex patterns. These include shouldering domestic responsibilities, especially when parents have to seek alternative livelihoods involving labor migration. In both Addis Ababa and Gedeo, girls appear to be more responsible in their caring and domestic chores. When parents are sick or die from HIV/AIDS, the loss of income forces them to share the burden of work among themselves. In other instances, children migrate to join extended family households elsewhere, or else elder boys leave for the towns while girls are left at home to care for their siblings. These subtle burdens of social reproduction borne by children are too often neglected, although they constrain their living conditions in the present and have clear implications for their future lives. Likewise, as shown in Articles Three and Four, the impact of the global restructuring of the coffee market, unfair trade in the niche market for it and the ways in which these affect Ethiopia's economy and disrupt the livelihoods of peasant families in Gedeo is a central aspect of this research. The disruption in social reproduction associated with the shift from subsistence agriculture to the cash economy and how this further intensified the reproductive work of boys and girls, both at home and outside it, are exemplary.

A common feature of all the articles is, therefore, that they focus on **contributing childhoods.** These childhoods feature the lives of boys and girls who make meaningful contributions to daily and generational reproduction. They represent children who view themselves, and are viewed by their families, as having the potential and even the responsibility to be competent

contributors to livelihoods. Many contributing children, both in Gedeo and Addis Ababa, seem to have little choice other than to work, and participation in work may be at the expense of their social and emotional well-being. Some are, for example, unable to attend school or have opted to drop out themselves in order to contribute to their households' need for labour. As the lives of child beggars' suggests, parents too are hard-pressed to provide real opportunities for them. When children decide to be involved in labour, in most cases this is a collective decision made as part of a household livelihood strategy. Often, the short-term survival needs of many families are also at odds with the long-term well-being and development of children (Bass, 2004). However, as children's role in economic reproduction also takes place in the context of self-initiative, a considerable number of them are positive about their work, which, in its turn, gives them a sense of renewed identity, confidence and self-worth.

Differentiated agency and social competence

All the articles provide a contextualised discussion of children's differentiated agency and social competence. They dwell, explicitly or implicitly, on the debate generated by the distinction between the vulnerable, dependent child on the one hand, and the competent, capable child on the other. As I argue, especially in Articles Four and Five, children shape the social and material environments in which they live. However, this agency is something that is negotiated in various ways and contexts, rather than being realised autonomously. Children exercise agency through work and by fulfilling their social and economic obligations, based largely on the resources they are able to draw on in their physical and social environments.

In Gedeo, agricultural entrepreneurship – skill and knowledge in tapping resources from the physical environment, along with participation in the production and sale of commercial crops to earn money – are a form of both socialisation and participation in livelihoods that require their competence in environmental knowledge and trading skills. They apply the knowledge they acquire from their everyday working lives in harnessing the field, producing an income from the sale of farm proceeds and participating in income-generating activities. The ways children and young people are involved in the cash economy, as well as in the informal rural economic sector, is a revelation of how they use agency. Moreover, as I discuss in Article Four, agency is exercised in the context of the 'glocalised' cash economy, that is, in respect of

how the unreliability of the cash economy forces them to be flexible and earn their living from alternative activities.

Boys and girls of different ages have different abilities that shape how they respond to different circumstances. For example, younger children are more dependent on the actions and decisions of others than are older children. Girls appear to be relatively less independent compared to boys, especially in rural Gedeo. Whereas the latter are mainly engaged in the production and sale of cash crops, the former are more reliant on their families, although there are variations within each gender. The agency of children is also negotiated in an interdependent way within families, between children and parents, among the children themselves, and among other constitutive members of a given household. Because of their significance in providing substantial incomes, in both contexts working children are able to assert agency in ways that situate them at the centre of the household economy. In this case, agency is a function of the relative flow of resources from children to their households. I have also documented how agency is negotiated both within and between households, based on intergenerational social contracts which function differently between genders and age groups and in rural and urban areas.

Children differ in their resilience and ability to earn resources. In Addis Ababa, child beggars assert their competent identities between the various settings of work, street, school and home. They have variable networks of relationships and abilities to negotiate their socio-spatial exclusion. Most importantly, their competence is reflected in to the skill with which they can turn their poverty into viable livelihood opportunities through individual and group-based agency. These involve, among other things, group begging, itinerant begging, combining begging with other activities; adopting a 'victimcy approach', singing begging songs etc.

Rural and urban childhoods: binaries and beyond

My whole thesis stemmed from an interest in exploring the lives and livelihoods of young people in contrasting settings of rural and urban Ethiopia. Since there are differences and similarities moderated by spatiality – in addition to the ones pointed out already – in the following section I compare and contrast further the *contexts* of growing up in rural and urban areas while recognizing the diversity of their lives within each of them.

Rural-urban divide

Although the articles are not written in a comparative manner, the discussion in each highlights the clear differences in the lives of children in at least two ways, namely: a) the opportunities and constraints of livelihoods; and b) family circumstances.

The rural-urban divide, which is primarily an economic divide, shapes how childhood is viewed differently and the ways in which contrasting environments present differentiated livelihood opportunities and constraints. Although interdependence in individual and family livelihoods is crucial in Gedeo and Addis Ababa, the ways in which these take place are not the same. In Gedeo, for example, the economic importance of agriculture is crucial in shaping children's experiences of rurality, work and everyday life. Conversely, child beggars' livelihoods in Addis Ababa are built on public space in the city. Whereas many poor children in the latter work in the informal urban economic sector, children's work in the former predominantly involves assistance with the family farm or business. Nearly two-thirds of working children in Addis Ababa are also employed outside unpaid family work-status groups[6] (see CSA, 2002). Conversely, subsistence farming, work in the rural informal economic sector and the cash-based economy of coffee, and *chat* and fruit cultivation and sale are central in shaping both the livelihood activities and the nature of the contributions that Gedeo children make to their households. Most of these activities are, needless to say, physically more arduous compared to the tasks children perform in Addis Ababa.

Concepts of childhood and expectations of family life are defined differently in rural and urban areas. This is because family composition and systems of social organization, which influence livelihood activities, show remarkable differences in distinct social and cultural contexts. For example, lineage-based families, which are prominent in Gedeo, determine land inheritance rights through the bloodline. Children's living conditions in rural areas are also closely tied up with place-specific villages and communities as both physical and socio-cultural entities. Communities and families in Gedeo appear to be more closely knit than is the case in Addis Ababa. As argued in Articles Three and Four, Gedeo society is predominantly patriarchal, with generational relations based on age, gender, class, title etc. These social structures organize the range of social practices, livelihoods and what is considered productive by the community. Work is a family affair, although it is distributed

[6] These include work as domestic helps, employees in the informal sector, self-employment etc.

variably according to skill, age, gender, maturity. The role and place of children within the society is also mediated by relatively strong inter-generational relations of power, hierarchy and reciprocity (Hamer, 1987). Young Gedeo children are traditionally supposed to be growing up alongside parental relatives of the patriarchal kin group and are only gradually incorporated into the worlds of adults. Marriage is an important rite of passage that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. Men are encouraged to be polygynous,[7] though this depends upon a man's wealth and local prestige.

As opposed to Addis Ababa, where nuclear family units tend to be a central feature of family life, raising children in Gedeo still 'takes a whole village'. Child care is seen as a joint responsibility and collective venture by the members of the extended family and the wider clan system. This is because social parenting is a deeply embedded form of shaping children's bodies and minds. In periods of crisis, the relative of a child's father continues to be responsible for ensuring its welfare. In Gedeo, the practice of levirate or widow inheritance (Bevan and Pankhurst, 1996), by which a man takes the wife of his deceased brother, is considered socially proper and has two pivotal functions. First, it ensures the preservation of clan land, as marriage involves clan exogamy and inheritance rights follow the patrilineage. Secondly, it is a form of social and economic security, as the man assumes the responsibility for taking care of the wife and children of his deceased brother as an 'heir' to his family.

These social, economic, cultural and environmental contexts are contrasted for the lives of children in Addis Ababa. The livelihoods of most of the participant children and their families here are based on the informal urban economic sector in public spaces or streets. Like many major cities in the developing world, however, Addis Ababa suffers from particular sets of social and economic problems, including widening income disparities, deepening poverty, rising unemployment, severe housing shortages, poorly developed physical and social infrastructures, and the proliferation of slums (see UN-HABITAT, 2007). Most children in this study reside in one of the squatter settlements, which have largely been neglected by the urban development programmes.

[7] There is however an increasing shift towards monogamous conjugal relations due to altered values associated with the spread of Christianity (from 'traditional' religions) and the economic pressure of having more than one wife and family.

Divorce and widowhood[8] appears to be high among the parents of the children with whom I conducted research. In addition, disability, sickness, poor incomes and a lack of work were common problems among many of these poor families. Most destitute husbands desert their wives due to unemployment, inability to support the large size of the family; job-hunting or quarrels (Feleke et al., 2006). Divorced and widowed mothers are involved in the sale of local liquors (*tella, areke, borde* and *shameta*) and, in order to augment their income, often tend to have multiple sexual partners and more than one marriage during their lives. This can result in their having children by different fathers, which may lead to a lack of love and to quarrels among siblings. They also face serious economic problems, especially as there is a lack of social security programmes. A number of the children from these families are sent to earn money by begging, shoe-shining, fetching water, providing domestic help, fetching firewood, being a *weyalla* (taxi attendant), selling *kollo* (roasted cereals) and looking after babies. Children are also forced to leave school because they lack school materials and uniforms and are unable to afford school fees. Most importantly, they are unable to incur the opportunity costs of losing a daily income from working in the informal sector by going to school.

Rural-urban continuum

The boundaries of rural and urban childhoods are fluid for a number of overlapping reasons. This is first because, although they appear to be disparate, rural and urban geographies are in practice interrelated. Like all other geographies, they are bound up in cultural, social, political and economic processes that are reproduced at a variety of interconnected spatial scales (see Holt and Holloway, 2006). In addition, fluidity is being inserted into the rural-urban dichotomy because of rapid urbanization and improvement in transportation and communication facilities.[9]

Children's everyday lives, especially their work, are characterized by close rural-urban linkages. Their migration and rural-urban continuum in livelihood strategies is a crucial dimension that contributes to the fluidity. Many rural children migrate to urban areas with or without their parents to perform domestic, market and apprenticeship work. Their childhoods remain similar to their rural pasts in that their labour is vital either for survival or to secure

[8] Widowhood is becoming a common phenomenon in Gedeo as well owing to the abandonment of widow inheritance following Protestantism and the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
[9] Gedeo District lies across the international highway between Ethiopia and Kenya, an asphalted road that has served the region since the early 1930s.

long-term training and apprenticeships that will prepare them for the future (Bass, 2004: 38). Moreover, many children who migrate to urban areas are tied to their rural families through remittances, visits, and the exchange of labour and goods. In a similar vein, urban areas rely on resources produced in the countryside, while trade and economic processes *blur* the boundary between urban and rural environments. Rural/urban childhoods are, therefore, context-specific experiences that are fused in various ways and degrees with one another, as well as with other spatial contexts, rather than being entirely unique and oppositional.

Secondly, the diversity of young people's experiences within rural and urban areas needs to be acknowledged. This acknowledgment opens up the possibility to explore the ways in which other social variables like class influence their lives. In many cases, poverty shapes the lives of children within the same area differently. According to functional definitions,[10] it is children in rural rather than urban areas who might be assumed to be deprived of access to health, education, clean water facilities etc. However, children in urban areas could miss out on these services, even when they know they do exist, largely due to poverty. A study of the educational enrolment of children based on socio-economic status suggests that disadvantaged urban children are more likely to drop out of schooling and that they perform less well than children from average families in rural areas (CSA, 2002). Although it is well-established that more urban children that rural children and more boys than girls have the chance to go to school, this is clearly subject to variations based on the economic conditions of particular families. Many urban children from economically disadvantaged families do not attend school regularly. This not only challenges the conventional 'urban bias' that urban children are advantaged, it also makes the rural-urban dichotomy highly problematic.

There are noticeable similarities in the material contexts in which children in Addis Ababa and Gedeo grow up. Many children in both settings face similar social problems that constrain their childhoods: lack of access to clean water and electricity, obstacles to education, health-care outreach, poverty etc. Nearly half of Addis Ababa's inhabitants live below the conventional poverty line of one dollar a day. Housing problems are a paramount difficulty. Children in slums are exposed to a range of potentially lethal diseases, including parasites and acute respiratory and gastrointestinal infections. These challenges are shared by children in southern Ethiopia, where 71% of children below six years of age have not received any

[10] The Central Statistics Authority (CSA, 2002) defines a given locality in Ethiopia as 'urban' if it has a threshold population size of 2000 inhabitants, a health post and a police station.

vaccinations (CSA, 2005). The infant mortality rate is 128 per 1000 births, while the under-five mortality rate is 189 per 1000 births, are not substantially higher than the national average of 110 and 158 respectively (Kiros and White 2004; CSA, 2005). These figures reveal that children in Addis Ababa and Gedeo are disadvantaged in a similar way, and that class is crucial in shaping opportunities and life chances.

Thirdly, political economy associated with development programmes affects children's access to livelihoods in interrelated ways. For example, children in the rural peasant associations in Gedeo are engaged in the production of commercial crops that are meant for consumption in urban Ethiopia and for export globally. The prevalence of cash crops and its subsequent impacts in respect of livelihoods reflects how neo-liberal philosophy of 'development' is translated in the lives of children and young people in local contexts. The need for the state to promote national revenues from export-oriented crops has led local livelihoods to be undermined, while at the same time the return from earnings in the global market has failed the livelihoods of young people and their families. These processes have led many young people to engage in, among other things, periodic migration and alternative livelihood activities. Rural poverty and urban poverty are interdependent, and the lives of poor children cannot be detached from the failures of the agriculture-led form of economic development. And, as the articles demonstrate, these structural and politico-economic processes operate at intersecting and multiple geographical scales, and in rural as well as in urban areas.

Concluding remarks

The five articles that follow illustrate the need to understand the lives of young people by the standards and values relative to their families and communities. Normative ideals of what and how children should or ought to be is not helpful either analytically or from a policy perspective. It does not also give us a complete picture of what it means to be a child in contemporary Ethiopian society. In claiming this, I highlight the importance of researching the specific circumstances, experiences and planning issues with policies that respond to the children's specific needs. As Kesby et al. (2006: 186) suggests, if the real needs of children are to be met, there is a need to conceptualize their lives as *they are*, not in terms of what they are not. Efforts to mitigate the impacts of AIDS on children should be enabling, recognising their agency and contexts, and should be extended to other children with similar material and social difficulties.

I suggest that more research is required that explores how childhood is organised, both socially and spatially. We need to learn more about the effects of orphanhood on children's lives, as well as the positive and negative aspects of their work. Knowledge of the interrelationship between young people as social actors and the context in which their action is embedded as well as how they respond to and shape socio-economic and cultural changes themselves is crucial. In introducing the section containing the Five Articles, I conclude by again calling for action that takes seriously the experiences of young people and attempts to interpret their lives from their own points of view.

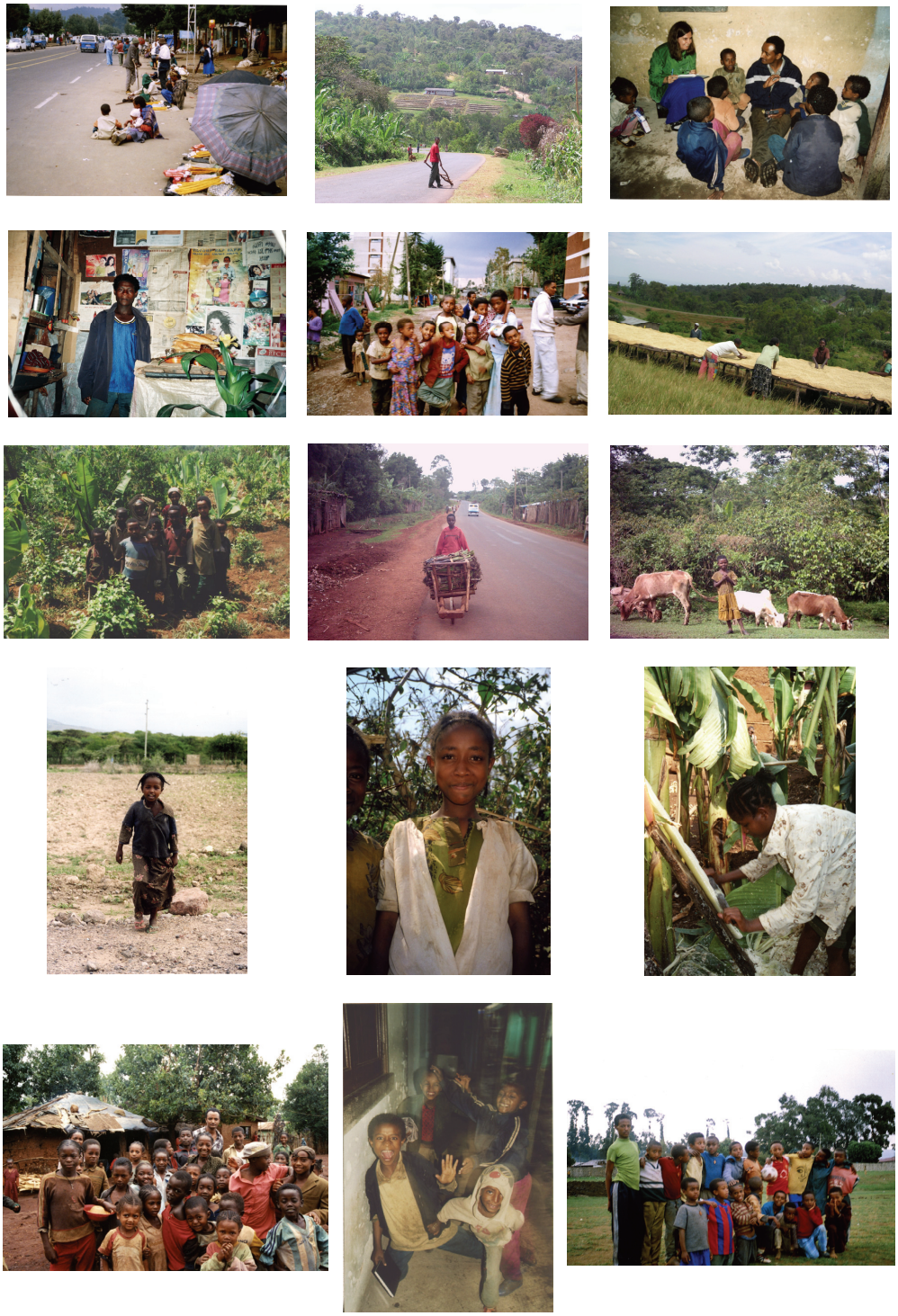

Figure 5. Pictures from field

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Children, AIDS and the politics of orphan care in Ethiopia: The extended family revisited

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Abstract

The astounding rise in the number of orphans due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic has left many Ethiopian families and communities with enormous childcare problems. Available studies on the capacity and sustainability of the extended family system, which culturally performs the role of care for children in need, suggest two competing theories. The first is grounded in the social rupture thesis and assumes that the traditional system of orphan care is stretched by the impact of the epidemic, and is actually collapsing. By contrast, the second theory counter-suggests that the flexibility and strength of the informal childcare practise, if supported by appropriate interventions, can still support a large number of orphans. Based on a seven-month period of child-focused, qualitative research fieldwork in Ethiopia involving observations; in-depth interviews with orphans (42), social workers (12) and heads of households (18); focus group discussions with orphans (8), elderly people and community leaders (6); and story-writing by children in school contexts, this article explores the trade-offs and social dynamics of orphan care within extended family structures in Ethiopia. It argues that there is a rural–urban divide in the capacity to cater for orphans that emanates from structural differences as well as the socio-cultural and economic values associated with children. The care of orphans within extended family households is also characterised by multiple and reciprocal relationships in care-giving and care-receiving practices. By calling for a contextual understanding of the 'orphan burden', the paper concludes that interventions for orphans may consider care as a continuum in the light of four profiles of extended families, namely rupturing, transient, adaptive, and capable families.

Keywords: Ethiopia; HIV/AIDS; Orphans; Extended families; Children

Introduction

The number of children experiencing orphanhood is increasing at an alarming rate. Although specific data on the number of orphans are highly inconsistent, most of this increase is explained by HIV/AIDS-induced adult mortality. The impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in creating a burden of care of orphans for the traditional family structure is well documented in a handful of culture-specific studies (cf. Foster, 2000; Hunter, 1990; Oleke, Blystad, & Rekdal, 2005). However, large-scale orphanhood is not a new phenomenon. In Ethiopia, there are ca.5 million orphans—defined as children under 18 years of age who have lost one or both parents—of which 1.5 million (30%) are due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic (UNICEF, 2003). The

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remaining 70% of orphans are non-AIDS orphans, often classified as 'famine orphans,' 'war orphans,' 'malaria orphans,' and 'social orphans,' i.e. children who have been abandoned mainly due to poverty.

Orphanhood, both biological and social, is a significant structural feature of Ethiopian society. Despite this, research on present-day orphans seems to send a panic message that they pose a *threat* and a *crisis* to society. The lives of orphans are negatively—and sometimes apocalyptically—portrayed by the media as well as in academia as crisis-childhood: a 'ticking time-bomb,' 'silent crises,' 'lost generation,' 'robbed childhood,' and 'childhood in the sun.' These constructions are based on the assumption that orphans are simply *burdens* who require care and support, and that adults know what is in the children's 'best interest.' The assumption is also rooted in the traditional developmental perspective of childhood in which orphans' resourcefulness is downplayed and their vulnerable, dependant and care-seeking position emphasised. The counter-productive effect of these stereotypes is enormous, because the children face stigma and discrimination in addition to their material deprivations. At present, there are many studies on the bio-medical, social and economic impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa and beyond (cf. Subbarao & Coury, 2004; White, 2002). However, the agency and resilience of orphans and extended family households in mustering resources and getting on with life has not been researched, with the exception of a few recent works (Evans, 2005; Robson, 2004; Young & Ansell, 2003). Equally lacking is cross-cultural research on the social history of orphanhood and how extended families deal with what Madhavan (2004) calls 'involuntary fostering.'

Based on qualitative data of different kinds, this article offers a critical and alternative look at how children and families in Ethiopia experience and cope with the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. This will be done by providing a systematic account of existing approaches in orphan-care and discussing the complexities and spatial diversities inherent in extended family households. The specific objectives of the article are twofold: (1) to analyse, using cases from rural and urban areas, the capacity and potential sustainability of the extended family households to care for orphans; and (2) to explore the dynamics of care (i.e., economic, social, cultural, and geographical factors) that explain why some orphans receive proper fostering within extended families while others do not. Each of these aspects is discussed consecutively following the contextual, theoretical and methodological sections below. Finally, we explore the policy implications of the study in the light of four categories of extended families that emerged from our empirical material.

Traditional childcare in Ethiopia

The role of the State in the care of orphans and other children in need in Ethiopia is minimal. In the 1980s, there were attempts to develop social welfare programs for disadvantaged social groups based on the Western, modern welfare state model. However, lack of resources and reductions in social spending associated with rising military expenditure, foreign debt and structural adjustment programmes hindered such development. With recurrent drought and famine, and also increasing pressure from the State for taxes, there emerged organised charitable NGOs and institutions. The functions of these institutions have been to provide a home where infants are brought up, to serve as 'alternative actors' in welfare and development, and to supplement the 'failed' role of the State. Nevertheless, child welfare organisations operate in accordance with different principles, have limited outreaching capacities, are partial, cost in-effective and do not reach the poorest of the poor. As a result, like many societies in Africa, the extended family networks in Ethiopia continue to function as a social security system by helping relatives during times of illness, famine and war.

Traditionally, children in Ethiopia are purposefully sent to live with relatives in normal times for reasons that are different from resolving the problems of orphanhood and child destitution (Kayongo-Male, 1984). Although various forms of extended family networks exist that are based on class, gender, title, ethnicity, and geographical proximity, two patterns of extended family structure in general can be identified in most parts of the country. The first is based on blood relationships and includes 'front-line' family members and relatives such as uncles, aunts, grandparents, cousins, etc. This family structure may also incorporate distant relatives which are tied to a given family based on marriage, lineage, social proximity, and economic support. The second type is 'fictive kinships'—people who have no blood relationship with each other but have deliberately created social ties that would enable them to co-operate with each

other during normal times as well as during periods of stress. Examples of extended family networks forged in this way include religion-based fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, and sisterhood.

The significance of fluid family relationships in ensuring the welfare of children is very significant. The 'back on track' role of the social networks of families and kinships, of absorbing orphans and helping them to cope with the distress of parental death, is well-documented in a number of studies (Nyambedha, Wandibba, & Aagaard-Hansen, 2002; Nyamukapa & Gregson, 2005). These studies seem to confirm the importance of kinship support as a culturally appropriate form of family life in Africa (Verhoef, 2005). This is because children benefit socially and psychologically from the availability of extended relatives, particularly during periods of economic difficulty. Indeed, the traditional support system of childcare in many African societies has proved its resilience even to major social changes—including rapid urbanisation and extensive economic restructuring—which otherwise seem to weaken traditional social ties and obligations (Therborn, 2004). In the following, we provide a systematic account of existing research on the capacity and sustainability of the extended family system in absorbing orphans and suggest there are two competing theories of care.

Theories on orphan care

The first theory is grounded in the social rupture thesis and assumes that the traditional system of orphan care is overstretched and eroded by the strain of AIDS, and is actually collapsing. Kaleeba (2004) notes that AIDS has depleted the traditional social safety net system to breaking point, reducing the number of adults in their prime age and piling fresh responsibilities on the elderly, who themselves will soon die. A number of studies also appear to hold a pessimistic view that the absorptive capacity of the social safety net has become saturated and its complete breakdown is imminent (Ayieko, 2000; Foster, 2000; George, Oudenhoven, & Wazir, 2003; UNICEF, 2003). Likewise, Guest (2003) alludes to the severe economic stress that the extended family system is confronted with due to the huge burden of accommodating orphans according to African cultural norms and traditions. This view seems to base its legitimacy on the plight of child-headed households, female-headed households, and grandparent-headed families, as well as escalating problems of streetism, delinquency and child labour. The solution to the problem includes promoting 'external' interventions of care in foster homes, children's village and orphanages.

By contrast, the second theory suggests that the capacities and strengths of the informal, traditional childcare system can still support a larger number of orphans, despite the huge threat posed by the AIDS epidemic. This rather optimistic view critically challenges the notion of societal breakdown (Bray, 2003; Chirwa, 2002; Madhavan, 2004; Meintjes & Giese, 2006). It maintains that the flexible traditional arrangements for children during normal courses of events, if nurtured by appropriate interventions, offer a range of possibilities for care of orphans. Chirwa (2002) asserts that communities in Malawi are employing innovative and complex strategies of orphan care within the existing extended family structure. He further argues that 'alternative forms of social organisation and new social relationship patterns, with broad adaptive capacities, are emerging as a result of the HIV/AIDS crisis' (Chirwa, 2002, p. 93). Other studies also point to the capacities of different indigenous coping mechanisms that are amazingly resilient in finding ways to build livelihoods, muster resources and care for those affected by the devastation of HIV/AIDS (Kalipeni, Craddock, Oppong, & Ghosh, 2004). According to this view, internal arrangements continue to cope with the 'orphan crisis' as they always have in response to other crises (Ankrah, 1993; Hunter, 1990). The view also suggests the necessity of preserving the strength of traditional family responsibilities and advocates promoting culturally appropriate orphan-care interventions to manage the problem.

Dichotomous and either/or discourses on care are problematic analytically and from a policy perspective for a number of reasons. First, there is a striking geographical disparity in the level of infection with HIV, and hence in the number of children orphaned. In Ethiopia, over two-thirds of the total numbers of orphans due to HIV/AIDS are found in cities and urban areas (Abebe, 2005). This is because of the high incidence of AIDS-related mortality there, as well as migration linked to a perception of better livelihoods and caring environments. Most orphans experience multiple migrations spatially and temporally (Ansell & Young, 2004) and are amazingly resilient in coping with orphanhood (Evans, 2005). Polarised debates overlook historical factors rooted in family

dispersal associated with colonialism and forced labour migration (Madhavan, 2004). Nor do the debates pay enough attention to contemporary structural inequalities which perpetuate childhood poverty and marginalisation. The impact of global capitalist economic systems in altering intergenerational relations and in eroding the capabilities of self-reliant families is shown in some recent studies (Katz, 2004; Robson, 2004). Romanticising the extended family system without critical assessment of its constraints would result in the placement of orphans in unprepared families, to the detriment of the children's physical and social well-being. Likewise, implementation of external programmes without looking into the potentials of families can waste crucial resources and supplant existing structures of care at the risk of being socially unsustainable.

Methodology

The empirical material for this study was gathered through repeated periods of fieldwork carried out in 2005 and 2006 with children and families in Ethiopia. Field settings in rural and urban areas with large numbers of children experiencing orphanhood were chosen to explore how families respond to HIV/AIDS and the growing challenge of child destitution. Methodologically, our approach is not, in the strict sense, to compare families and/or urban areas against rural areas. Rather, it is intended to map the contrasting and common features of orphan care within the extended family system. We allude to an actor-oriented, child perspective in which children are recognised as social actors and informants of research (Christensen & James, 2000).

Fieldwork for the rural case study was carried out in southern Ethiopia—400 km from the urban fieldwork site (Addis Ababa)—in two suburban peasant associations of the Gedeo district, located on the very green but deprived edge of the Rift valley. The first author spent 7 months altogether collecting ethnographic-oriented data (Punch, 2001). In Gedeo, this involved story-writing by students in classrooms of Grade Six and Seven of a junior secondary school where he taught social studies voluntarily. In Addis Ababa, the children were accessed through two NGOs which work to improve the lives of orphans and vulnerable children. In the stories, 140 children reported on their everyday lives and livelihood strategies, focusing on 'stories of care,' 'own childhood,' 'contribution to family livelihoods,' 'person[s] that matter in [their] life,' and 'growing up poor/non-poor.' This method has enabled us to explore complex and sensitive issues from the children's own perspectives in a less confrontational manner and has been successfully used by other researchers in similar contexts (Ansell & Robson, 2000). It also ensured confidentiality in discussing taboo subjects such as HIV/AIDS and to overcome problems of power relations—often a problem in research involving children—between ourselves as researchers and the children as social participants.

In addition, we tape-recorded and transcribed semi-structured lifestyle and lifecycle interviews in order to establish a rapport in the life history of selected sub-samples of 42 orphans aged 8–17 years old. The children were identified using the snowballing technique. Of these children, 27 were interviewed during both the first and second fieldwork period and an additional 15 children were interviewed during the second fieldwork period only. Repeated interviews with orphans allowed the exploration of continuity and change in their livelihood strategies, social networks of support and relationships within the extended family households in which they live. In addition, eight focus group discussions with orphans, 12 in-depth interviews with social workers, and six focus group discussions with community leaders were carried out. We also visited the families of 22 orphans and held interviews/dialogues with 18 of the heads of households. The interviews with adults focused on household livelihood sources and capabilities, local constructions of 'orphanhood,' and what communities perceive to be 'appropriate' care for orphans as well as the challenges of catering for them.

Empirical findings and discussions

A closer scrutiny of the qualitative data suggests patterns of families that do not fit into the two polarised theories of care. In the study areas, there appears to be a considerable difference in the capacities and resources of extended family households to cater for orphans, thus contradicting the pessimistic social rupture thesis as well as the optimistic theory rooted in social resilience. At the core of this disparity lie the points of departure for data analysis, which include (a) culturally objectified concepts of care (cf. Christiansen, 2003); (b) indicators of capabilities, i.e. household assets, activities and entitlements; and (c) reciprocity and

social resilience in care provision and care receiving practices (cf. Evans, 2005). The following section conceptualises the resources of care-giving households, presents four categories of extended families and discusses economic and socio-cultural dynamics of care in rural and urban areas in Ethiopia.

Multiple dimensions of care—multiple layers of resilience

The data from the interviews reveal that 'good care' for orphans is based on reciprocity, willingness and the capacity of care-givers to avail the necessary resources for the children. Here, the notion of *capacity* needs to be deconstructed because it connotes multiple layers and dimensions of care rather than just a mere provision of economic resources. In Ethiopia, as is the case in many other African countries, perceived and actual economic inability of extended families to cater for orphans is depicted as a cause and a factor which destroys social cohesion. However, as the discussion with adult informants suggests, economic hardship due to erosion of material resources does not necessarily diminish the social capacity of families for sharing the non-material resources of care and solace, nor does it damage deeply embedded emotional exchanges with which poor people cope through crises. This fact is also corroborated by the interpretations of children's stories on what care-providing households are capable of providing (or not providing) to ensure their well-being. The stories suggest the need to conceptualise the 'capacity to care' by disaggregating it into its various components—economic, social and emotional—instead of lumping the parts together and assuming that they all function the same. To deconstruct these concepts allow us to see the multiple functions of families and explore how they are responding differently to the 'orphan burden.' It also enables us to examine the potential sustainability of extended family households to care for orphans in the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Economic capacity encompasses the material capability of families to take in orphans accompanied by the proper allocation and provision of resources needed for their well-being. In this respect, HIV/AIDS leaves families and communities struggling to accommodate many orphans who are in dire need of food, clothing, shelter, education, medical facilities, and other material support. This aspect of care can be placed within the wider discourses of poverty, vulnerability and lack of financial resources from social welfare organisations. *Emotional capacity* includes the willingness and the ability of those who provide care to offer psychological and emotional support to the children. This dimension of care, which communities extend to members as part of deeply embedded socio-cultural responsibilities, has a long-term implication for the psycho-social competencies and development of children as productive members. By contrast, *social capacity* refers to the ability and willingness of relatives and kinship groups to socialise orphans with social and cultural skills necessary for present and future life. It is based on the ideal that social parenting is a collective and appropriate form of child-rearing in most African family structures (Kayongo-Male, 1984). Social capacity also resonates with what Christiansen (2003) argues is the broader developmental perspectives of care which involves approaching orphans as youngsters who have to deal with the loss of one or both parents and develop competencies to manage as adolescents and later on as adults within the local reality.

Four typologies of extended families

The four profiles of extended families identified are rupturing, transient, adapting, and capable. These families—which are examined through case studies—should be seen as part of a fluid continuum and reflecting the three dimensions of care. They indicate the diversities in the resilience of families in reworking, resisting and coping with the disruptions caused by HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the families mirror economic and socio-cultural dynamics of care in rural and urban settings as well as the potential of extended family households in absorbing orphans. Table 1 shows the distribution of the profiled families in Addis Ababa and Gedeo.

Type One (rupturing): The first (worst case) scenario is illustrated by the case study of a rupturing family in Gedeo. This family consists of three generations, wherein the middle-generation parents died of HIV/AIDS leaving behind five children to the grandmother (maternal), who herself is a widow with four children. All the household members, except for one who lives and works in a town further away, reside in a small hut of approximately 20 m^2. Occasionally, the orphans spend nights in their maternal uncle's household, which is also the main source of support, particularly during

Table 1
Profiles of extended families

Types	Addis Ababa	Gedeo	Total
Type 1			
Rupturing	6	4	10
Type 2			
Transient	5	5	10
Type 3			
Adaptive	4	7	11
Type 4			
Capable	5	6	11
Total	20	22	42

Source: Complied from field data.

times of food shortage. Their uncle also works on the land that the children inherited from their parents under a sharecropping contract, presumably because they are not old enough to fully manage it themselves. The family lives in an extreme form of impoverishment: the children are barefoot, sleep on mattresses made of dried grass, and do not have a blanket to cover them at night. The day we visited the household, it rained torrentially throughout our stay. As a result, the thatched roof was leaking and the floor where the family members sleep became wet as the water started to run across the room. The sanitation in the house is very poor, as a cow—probably the household's only asset—shares the space with them.

Abiti (pseudonym) is a 9-year-old orphan in the family and is in Grade One. However, unlike his friends, he does not have books or a pen to write with. He showed us his 10-page exercise book, which was already falling apart due to the sweat from his hands. Every page of the exercise book was filled with different subjects—science, maths, language, etc. Alaba, an elder brother to Abiti, is 13 years old although he looked underweight for his age. He had dropped out of school because he felt that he could better spend his time looking after the cow together with other children in the neighbourhood who do not attend school. The rest of the children combine work with schooling but they reported that most of the time they have to look for everyday means of survival. Although the grandmother is the principal breadwinner, the children also contribute to the family's livelihoods by working in other people's gardens as farmhands, and receive remuneration either in cash or kind. They also work on their grandmother's backyard plot of 0.65 hectare where they subsistence-farm maize, sweet potato, *enset*, and coffee. Clearly, the children's most important concern is the difficulty of attending school which conflicts with meeting immediate life needs and priorities.

The context of the above household illustrates how a family which experiences ruptures struggles to cope with the impacts of HIV/AIDS. It also indicates the changes and transformations in cultural conventions regarding fosterage in an ethnic community such as the Gedeo, which is patrilineal and patrilocal. This is evident by the shift towards a matrilineal care of orphans to cope with the experience of orphanhood. The inability of the grandmother to provide essential life-support resources is shown in the failure to avail immediate and long-term social development opportunities for the children. Grandparents might be best providers of emotional and non-material needs of orphans (Guest, 2003; Young & Ansell, 2003). However, their economic insecurity, 'fear of the future' and inability to properly 'discipline' may not offer orphans a stable childhood. Moreover, although the children in the above family work hard to make ends meet, their precarious day-to-day survival needs are not helping them move further to improve their quality of life. Most families that fall within the rupturing category (10 cases) are those that have already been deprived of income and labour through the death of the principal members of the family. The death of adults erodes household assets through the care of the sick, medical and funeral expenses, and by reducing the capacity to undertake productive and domestic works (Young and Ansell, 2003). In these contexts, where poverty hits hardest, orphans are in desperate search of both cash and care.

Type two (transient): As opposed to rupturing families, which are characterized by chronic poverty and destitution, 10 of the families were found to be living in relative poverty and deteriorating living conditions. These *transient families* are not presently living in a situation of extreme poverty but may easily sink *into* deprivation, and they include, among others, female-headed households and grandparent-headed families. A common feature of these families is fluidity and lack of a principal adult breadwinner who is at the same time the head of the household. In some of them, which might otherwise be defined as 'child-headed households,' the children either live in their parents' house or under the care of guardian relatives, with a male figure overseeing their everyday lives. The case of

Zulfa's (a guardian) three children in Addis Ababa, who live on their father's pension after both biological parents died of HIV/AIDS, is a typical example:

> The children's [maternal] uncle lives a few miles away together with his own family, but he works at his car-washing site around here. He visits us regularly and eats dinner with us every three days. If he is not able to come, he phones and tells us the evening before. He provides us with supplementary expenditure for food, clothing and soap (Zulfa, 22 years).
> Q: Do you want to move into his household?
> A: He asked us after our mother died, but we wanted to be here (Sisay, boy 14 years).
> Q: Why?
> A: Because we want to live in our own parents' house. (Sisay).

A similar family situation was observed in Gedeo. Taye (17) and Nicko (14) are two boys who live in a house that they built in their paternal grandfather's compound. Previously, they worked on the farm which they inherited from their deceased parents, but recently Taye opened a consumer store where he sells different commodities:

> We have land in the countryside, but we are scared to be there alone … so we rent it out and came here to do something else. I opened this shop a few months ago but the business is not good all the time. Sometimes there is a market and at other times there is not enough income.
> Q: How much do you make per day?
> A: It depends–previously I used to make four birr [$0.45 per day] in profit, but now it is difficult because there are many shops around … and a few weeks ago thieves stole our property. There are people who are not happy when we grow economically. They took everything we had in the evening while we were asleep. The shop was full before [a capital of over $140], and I bought a horse cart for my brother. Now we survive on the income from that. (Taye)

In a story, Taye wrote about his shifting livelihood strategies 1 year later, documenting his engagement in another economic activity:

> After my shop became bankrupt, I decided to move to Awassa [the capital of the Southern Regional State], leaving behind my younger brother with my grandfather. I worked in cafeteria as a waiter: the hours were very long and the work tough, and the owner could make all the employees work at anything that was associated with his business. The payment was not bad though, and so was my saving because I did not spend for my food and accommodation as I ate and slept there. After working there for about four months, I returned with my salary which I used to open up this teashop. I now sell biscuits, bread, candies, ice, tea, charcoal, etc. Presently, we get support from our grandfather, but he is poor himself. He lives with our step-grandmother who is not good towards us in her character; she does not like us because she thinks that we inherited the land away from her children. The main problem [with respect to our business] is that we don't have enough subsistence to live on by now so we consume whatever we earn in profit.

The aforementioned two families demonstrate how front-line relatives gradually experience worsening poverty as a result of HIV/AIDS. Children in both households lost breadwinners to the epidemic, and their lives are going through tremendous transitions. These transitions are marked by impoverishments due to the overstretched resources of the care providers. They also represent the mobility of orphans who migrate to cities to improve their living conditions or to join other households in order to cope with the impact of the epidemic. In addition, while Taye's and Nicko's lives suggest vulnerability and family politics involving conflicts over resources between orphans and biological children, they imply that child-headed households are not permanent structural features in the study areas. Rather, they are episodic experiences characterized by temporality and existing, in most cases, immediately after the death of their biological parents (Meintjes & Giese, 2006). Following Meintjes and Giese (2006), and unlike studies which associate the HIV/AIDS epidemic with the plight of child-headed families, we argue that there are adult co-residents who eventually take on the responsibility of caring for the children when the biological parents die. As one NGO informant suggested: '[I]n Gedeo, the age of children as a biological attribute does not distinguish childhood from adulthood or the responsibilities children share within their household,' rather, what is important is the 'social boundaries of maturity and children's gradually developing experiences in response to life

circumstances.' Indeed, conceptualisations of these families require recognition of the children's evolving experiences in view of local expectations and cultural perceptions of care and responsibilities.

Type three (adaptive): The third category of caregiving families is well-functioning households which we describe as *adaptive families.* These families (11 cases) are typical of ordinary households in terms of possession of household resources and livelihood assets. Their relative economic security, presence of viable sources of livelihood and general level of well-being is demonstrative of 'less-than-average' family circumstances, as illustrated by the following case from Addis Ababa. This family consists of two orphans, Menkefe (girl, 12 years) and Sisay (boy, 8 years), whose mother died 2 years ago, while their father, who at the time when this study was conducted was terminally ill, lived in another town. They moved from a rural village to their maternal grandmother's house, where they have remained since their parents separated. Unlike other children in the neighbourhood, Menkefe and Sisay attend a private school, not because they could afford it but because an NGO is willing to pay the monthly school fees for them. Both the grandmother and the children, however, complained about this because the children would have liked to go to a government school, where education is supposed to be free, and they could then have used the money for their everyday needs.

This family has basic social amenities, including a telephone, and electricity which they sometimes use for cooking. They can also afford to have piped water which saves time and energy for the children, as compared to other poor children in urban slums of Addis Ababa who spend much time carrying water from communal pipes. Although the grandmother initially wanted to conceal the fact that she has support from other relatives, probably due to a perceived loss of support from NGOs, a later discussion with the children revealed that their uncle (on the mother's side) lives in the house next to them, where they usually go to watch television and play with the children in the family. They also receive regular financial aid from a local NGO which was founded by people living with HIV, including the children's mother before she died.

Menkefe is responsible for most of the household chores. She claims that she has enough leisure time to study and socialise with other children. Her educational achievement in the previous academic year was very impressive, as she was in fifth position in a Grade Five class of over 60 pupils. Her younger brother, Sisay, attends Grade One. Looking at his exam papers, it was realized that he could be positioned in the average group within his class, which in turn led us to think about the stereotypical images often held regarding orphans' school performances as being generally low. The grandmother describes her life with the children as a 'mixed blessing' because the children are an important source of emotional security in her old age: she turns to the children for support and caters for them as she is able to, although she is insecure about how long she will be able to do that due to her old age.

Type four (capable): In the remaining 11 households which are *capable families,* the material and social capacities of care-givers were found to be viable even in the absence of external material support.

Economic and socio-cultural imperatives of care

Interpretation of the data on the capacity of the extended family system in Gedeo is demonstrative of not only the strength—which is remarkably better and different from economic capacity—but also of how childhood is socially and culturally constituted. In Gedeo the responsibility of supporting orphans is primarily left to the male clan which culturally inherits the land of the deceased (Bevan & Pankhurst, 1996). In economic terms, the extended family is the central unit of production and reproduction (cf. Verhoef, 2005), and children are expected to perform useful tasks such as caring for younger children, working in the fields, running errands, and household chores, from an early age as possible. In contrast to Addis Ababa, where poor children earn their livelihoods in the informal economic sector, children in Gedeo actively participate in the production and marketing of commercial crops, such as coffee, fruits and vegetables and chat (a stimulant with a mild narcotic effect). As children are structural necessities in the process of social reproduction, childbearing and raising are considered to be an investment, not only by the biological parents but also by the community as a whole (Abebe, 2007). Moreover, having fluid relationships among members of the patriarchal extended family who must contribute to the overall well-being of children is crucial in the structuring of a 'good childhood.' This relationship is governed by the 'intergenerational contract' in which reciprocity is vital in shaping the kind and degree of

commitment extended family members have towards each other. As a result, large family size is not seen as an expensive venture. Indeed, the Gedeo district has one of the highest fertility rates in Ethiopia and a rural population density exceeding 400 per km^2 (CSA, 2002). This is mainly explained by the role children play in the production of commercial crops and the fact that social capital is measured by the number of people a given tribe is married to (Hamer, 1987). As a result, structural differences and the economic value of children are significant in explaining the apparent rural–urban divide in the capacity and sustainability of extended family systems to function and cater for its orphan members.

Based on class, livelihood strategies and differing everyday experiences, the lives of children in Ethiopia could be theorized along two types of 'ideal childhoods': consuming and contributing children. *Consuming children* are less 'resourceful' subjects who rely on other members of their family to meet their basic welfare and life needs. Unlike contributing children, who actively participate in household production and reproduction activities, consuming children fall into a 'dependant childhood' category, reflecting dominant models of childhood as being playful, vulnerable, work-free, and in the care-receiving phase of their life course (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Such a childhood is neither common in Gedeo nor is it an incentive for the majority of the poor households in Addis Ababa who, despite their material inability, happen to be willing to take in extra children.

By contrast, *contributing children* shoulder many responsibilities in terms of the well-being and smooth functioning of households in which they form an active part. These children seem to rely on the labour and economic contribution they make towards the households' survival. One of the factors that motivate families in Gedeo to take in orphans, especially boys, is the immensely valuable labour contribution of children, which is required in agricultural and domestic activities. In Gedeo, children's productive work takes different forms, but can be summarised as 'agricultural entrepreneurship' (Abebe, 2007). These include agricultural tasks combined with off-farm income generating activities whereby the children work on other people's farms, and carry out informal work in nearby towns and trading activities in market places. Most children including orphans in Gedeo work in backyard gardens and on the coffee farms of their own households as well undertaking work for cash for other families who lack labour. Children's labour in coffee production is particularly welcomed because picking coffee beans is a tedious, labour-intensive job at which children are considered to be more adept than adults. Contributing children are also engaged in diverse household reproduction activities including childcare, care for ailing relatives, cooking, fetching water, cleaning, etc. as part of the social responsibility which is structured on the basis of age and gender.

The implications of various reproductive roles of contributing children are an ignored dimension in the contemporary orphan-care debate. The significance of these roles tends to vary in Addis Ababa and Gedeo. Although children's work seems to form an integral part of family livelihood strategies in both contexts; the role of children in Addis Ababa seems to be less well-defined compared to the contribution children make in Gedeo. Moreover, children in Gedeo seem to be an integral part of household labor reserve with flexible and fluid family environments, and in which they freely participate in everyday re-productive activities.

Further analysis of the interviews and focus group discussions suggest that social and cultural contexts of families are crucial in understanding care in the study areas. The preference of families to take in orphans is influenced by not only the conditions of the children who need support but also by the emotional imperatives of those who adopt them. Many of the social workers interviewed agreed that the quality of care orphans receive is affected by the bond between the deceased and adopting parents. A number of care-giving families also mentioned that they treat orphans in their households in the best possible way. One informant asserted that she gave extra attention to three of the orphans she cared for because she had given her promise to their parents when they died that she would do so. Likewise, orphans seem to feel more secure in their adopting families when they know that the latter had a good past social relationship with their deceased parents. However, some orphans indicated unwillingness to go and face difficulty with neatly fitting into their well-off relatives because they believed that the latter might consider their presence as being driven by material prosperity.

Although care-providing families claim that they make no distinction between their own biological

children and orphans in their households, some accounts of the latter were found to be rather the opposite. Orphans in focus group discussions mentioned different layers of bias they face from guardians, indigenous children and neighbours. According to one child informant in Addis Ababa, such biases reminded him that he was not a 'core member of the family.' Others witnessed subtle ways and degrees of exclusion—differential treatment between orphans and biological children—which reflect the differing social position that the former hold within particular families. Whereas this suggests the need for ethnographic research about the complex 'cultural politics' of care, it would be incorrect to generalise that orphans experience social exclusion and marginalisation. Indeed, the majority of our child informants felt included in the everyday lives of families and communities. They were integrated to the social and economic life of their care-providing families, relatives and neighbourhood in many ways, as were other children with biological parents. Similarly, a number of interviewed parents who were fostering orphans, both in rural and urban settings, emphasised being unbiased towards the children in their care. They talked about the importance of being fair when buying clothes for or feeding the children in the household. Foster grandparents in particular mentioned the emotional satisfaction they had from being a care provider, and some emphasized the spiritual reasons for doing so. Indeed, the consequences of care within extended families on child well-being, schooling and health and leisure time showed mixed results, depending partly on economic resources and how the culture treats children outside their maternal homes (Aspaas, 1999; Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985; Verhoef, 2005).

Policy implications

This article has explored the multiple dimensions of care, spatial diversities in functioning capabilities of extended families and the potential these entail for the care of orphans. Although the four scenarios presented feature a great deal of overlap, their implications in rethinking orphan care-giving practices in Ethiopia are readily apparent. We stress the continued importance of extended families as a resource-effective and appropriate form of orphan care. As Ansell and Young (2004) spell out, despite the fact that most AIDS policies emphasise the role of communities, the responsibility for care ultimately lies with extended family households. In conclusion, we highlight three perspectives to inform research and public policy and practise.

First, conceptual complexity and cross-cultural variability of 'orphan-hood' is at the heart of the debate in orphan-care strategies. Orphanhood is a culturally and socially distinct phenomenon, which never remains the same, either historically or geographically. However, with the onset of HIV/AIDS, this notion has been made problematic on grounds of making it operational for intervention. Consequently, ambiguous and contradictory notions of *orphanhoods* have been constructed by donor organisations, which prompted by the immediacy to act, reproduce stereotypical images which are unrepresentative of the 'normal' and everyday lives of the vast majority of those affected by HIV/AIDS. Children who are eligible for support by donor agencies are those whose (one or both) biological parents have died from HIV/AIDS. As some of our child informants working on the streets in Addis Ababa witnessed, such delineation has negatively discriminated poor and destitute children. They suggested that because they were not orphans in the biological sense of the term, they did not 'qualify' for financial assistance from welfare organisations.

Second, many of the hurdles orphans face are poverty-related, such as lack of access to food, education, medical care, and sanitation facilities. The challenges also include structural processes amplified by urbanisation-, monetarisation- and globalisation-driven social inequalities, all of which impact on the lives of other children as well (Abebe, 2006, 2007; Hunter, 1990; Therborn 2004). In a country as poor as Ethiopia, where close to half of all the children under 18 years of age live on less than one dollar a day, social support programmes should be able to stimulate growth and development. They must support livelihoods, build assets and generate gainful income to lift families out of poverty. In other words, focus should be on strengthening the capabilities of families' resilience to orphanhood rather than implementing resource-intensive approaches for a limited number of beneficiary orphans. Apparently, the politics of orphan care are inseparable from the politics of development. As Collins & Rau (2000, p. 2) lucidly express, placing the HIV/AIDS epidemic within the context of 'development issues and drawing on the resources and experiences of local initiatives might at first appear to step back from the urgency

demanded by [the] epidemic; but in fact, it is the only effective response.'

Third, strategies to promote the capacities of extended family households need to pay particular attention to the structures of extended family systems, their multiple functions and resources, and the complexities and reciprocities involved during exchange of care. The social position which orphans have within families and how this position is negotiated in everyday life require further elucidation. The fact that orphans, in many instances, contribute substantially to the livelihoods of extended families questions normative, one-dimensional notions of care whereby adults provide resources to children. Research that draws on the perspectives of the children, and challenges the taken-for-granted premises that orphans are burdens not resources, is crucial. Moreover, it is essential to place orphanhood within the context of socio-economic changes, and explore care from a perspective of social dynamics that explains continuities and change over space and through time. Care should be regarded as a continuum in the light of the four categories of resilient families, social networks, welfare organisations as well as the State, instead of as isolated intervention.

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ARTICLE THREE

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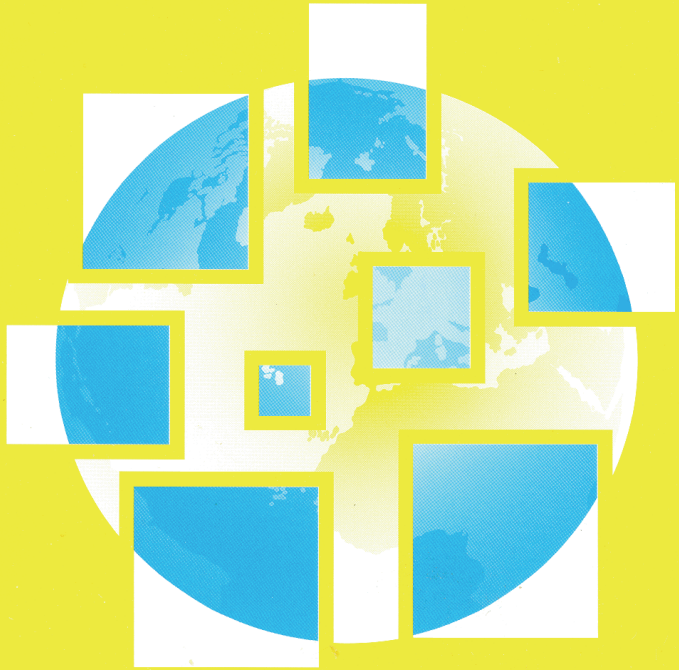

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ARTICLE FOUR

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SOCIAL ACTORS AND VICTIMS OF EXPLOITATION: WORKING CHILDREN IN THE CASH ECONOMY OF ETHIOPIA'S SOUTH

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Abstract

This article explores the role of children in household livelihoods among the Gedeo ethnic community in Ethiopia. We discuss three themes – reproductive activities, entrepreneurial work in market places and socio-spatial mobility – in the context of recent theoretical debates over children's social competency. With shifts in rural livelihoods, children have developed new agentic and entrepreneurial skills in domestic work, trade and migration. This agency is negotiated in everyday life, but it is also structurally highly circumscribed. Situating children's work within post-rural economic development offers insight into the ways in which regional and global political economy shape their local livelihoods.

Key words: children's work, socio-spatial mobility, rural livelihoods, development, Ethiopia

[1] First author

> My name is Alemnesh. I am 12 years old, and live with my parents, a grandmother, three of my brothers and four of my sisters. Every day, after I return from school, I go to the daily market, where we own a regular pitch, to sell salt, beans, kerosene and *enset*. In the late afternoon, I keep an eye on my siblings or go along with my friends in the village to the collective tap to fetch water, and assist my mother in the kitchen when she prepares dinner. I also make and serve coffee to my parents, and to the neighbors, who usually come by. With the little time I have left in the evening, I try to do my school homework for the next day. But if I am tired I simply sleep, and go to school early in the morning to finish my assignment before classes begin.

This quote from a story written by Alemnesh gives us a brief insight into a typical day for a rural girl in Gedeo, Ethiopia, and beyond. It demonstrates how she juggles her responsibilities at home with school work and how she uses her time creatively. It also provides us with an important anecdote about the significance of work as a crucial dimension of children's lives in rural agricultural contexts. Alemnesh's life is different from, and lacks the essential ingredients of, the normative and urban, middle-class childhood: full-time schooling, being inside the home, being dependent on adults for provision, and becoming vulnerable to environmental and social risks by being 'out of designated children's spaces'. By working in a family business in the market, looking after her siblings and supporting her parents, Alemnesh fulfils the socially meaningful and valuable role of being a child growing up in traditional, local community setting.

The role of children in economic and social reproduction in the global South has not been adequately explained. Much of the research seems to focus on the difficulty work presents to schooling or to attaining universal child rights. Although the work undertaken by children in the course of everyday life are not 'damaging' to their physical, intellectual and social development, they are increasingly becoming an integral part of, and are being transformed by, complex socio-cultural and political-economic processes. Previous texts on the relationship between 'development' and children's livelihoods is limited but growing (see Bass, 2004; Katz, 2004; Ansell, 2005). Key literature on how children's work is embedded in the material and social conditions of society, unequal relations of power and discourses that are shaping national and international legislation regarding child labor have also emerged (Nieuwenhuys, 1996; Ennew et al., 2005; Bourdillion, 2004, 2006). These studies indicate, among other things, that material transformations associated with development not only alter children's

livelihoods, but also render them subject to inequality and new forms of exploitation, both directly and indirectly.

In Africa, calls to study children as both actors in and victims of socio-economic changes have recently been made (Kesby et al., 2006: 199). Although the economic role of children in household survival strategies has long been recognized, the social meanings of their work and its geographical context have been researched less. There is also a general paucity of studies on the experiences of rural children, who are believed to have either been 'cut off' from external influence or are not being affected by the capitalist system. However, families and their children in remote villages are facing the brunt of unfettered globalization, prompted by the rapid penetration of capital, in multiple ways (Porter, 1996; Katz, 2004). In a cash-crop agricultural context, the literature is replete with how export-oriented commercial farming has intensified child labor, social inequalities and economic differentiation, as well as how it has led to the entrenchment of new forms of patriarchy in which economic control of household assets by men is producing an increased subordination of women (Grier, 1994; Lange, 2000). Cash-crop agriculture is also seen as having disrupted complementary gender relations between men and women in southern Ethiopia (Hamer and Hamer, 1994), disempowering the latter by taking land away from the production of a local staple – *enset* – commonly known as the 'women's crop'. In Gedeo, where subsistence agriculture formerly met basic household needs, the ways in which transformations in the livelihood trajectories of rural communities prompted by the restructuring of the global market for export-oriented crops, mainly coffee, is having an enduring impact in reshaping local reproduction patterns has been documented by the first-named author (Abebe, 2007).

This article explores the livelihoods of children and young people among the Gedeo ethnic community in southern Ethiopia. We aim to: a) track the shift in the livelihoods of peasant households from subsistence agriculture to cash-crop production; b) explore the impact of this on children's livelihoods; and c) examine their agency and social competence using their own perspectives of work and contributions in daily and generational reproduction. We document a wide range of paid and unpaid economic activities in which they take part, as well as issues of their socio-spatial mobility, trading activities, caring work and domestic responsibilities. In so doing, we elaborate children's participation in diverse livelihoods and place ongoing debates in childhood studies over agency and social competence within the context of post-

rural development in Ethiopia. Each of the above objectives is pursued consecutively following the sections on the conceptual frameworks and methodology, to which we now turn.

Theoretical framework

Our theoretical point of departure is the construction of children as human subjects who not only move between different social positions, but also, in complex ways, negotiate vulnerability, dependence, autonomy and agency. Contemporary research in childhood studies acknowledges the agency of children in shaping their own life worlds and actively participating in taking decisions in matters that affect them (James et al. 1998). This recognition has, however, sparked intense debate on how the 'agency' and 'competency' of children in both the global North (cf. Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 1998; Kjørholt 2004; Brembeck et al., 2004) and the global South (cf. Punch, 2002; Bourdillon, 2006) can be explored.

The emphasis on children's agency within social studies of childhood implies critiques of the developmental psychology research paradigm (James et al., 1998). In these critiques, children are problematically constructed from a 'social actor perspective' as active, independent human beings on the one hand, and as vulnerable, dependent, adults-in-the-making in need of care and protection on the other. Dichotomous constructions of children in banal terms of *either* autonomous and competent actors *or* vulnerable and dependent subjects has, however, been criticized from different angles (Kjørholt 2004). It has, for example, been argued that this represents an oversimplification of a variety of different and nuanced perspectives within contemporary developmental psychology, which approaches 'child development' from the viewpoint of society and culture (Woodhead, 1999; Hobbs, 2002). It risks the danger of overlooking how competences – for adults as well as children – are relational in that they are developed through participation in social practices in particular cultural contexts and enmeshed in a web of relations with others (Kjørholt 2004).

Children, like adults, are resilient, capable and knowledgeable in some ways, while being vulnerable and dependent human beings in others. They are social actors whose relative abilities to exercise agency are rooted within 'structures' that can be either enabling or constraining. In Ethiopia, children are valued as part of the family collective, not as autonomous individuals occupying independent positions in society. They are likely to

perceive their needs as interdependent with those of other family members rather than taking priority over them. Following Punch (2002: 124) we argue that children tend to experience *interdependent* rather than in-dependent social relations. Within this interdependence, kinship, familial, spatial and livelihood systems are woven together in a series of relations and expectations mediating the ways in which they position themselves and negotiate this position in different circumstances (Punch, 2002; see also Christiansen et al., 2006: 11-12). We further argue that acknowledging the *contexts* in which young people live and the *negotiations* and multiple relations they themselves engage in (Panelli, 2002: 117) offers us insights in viewing agency and competence in *relative* terms. Such conceptualization not only opens up the possibility of questioning how agency is acknowledged and expressed or disguised and controlled in and through children's everyday relationships (James 1998), it also provides a frame of reference for exploring the broad cultural, social, economic and political ecologies within which it is envisaged (Katz, 2004).

Methodology

The research draws on seven months of qualitative fieldwork carried out in January–May 2005 and January–April 2006 with children and families, together with a subsequent visit in October 2006. The methodology is reviewed separately, and we only make some brief remarks here. We carried out random observation of children at school and in community spaces (e.g. playgrounds, tea shops etc.), as well as overt, semi-participant observation of children in farms, market places and in the home, accompanied by informal dialogues and discussions. Following this, we explored the perceptions of children by asking them to write essays about their experiences of work. Story writing is a research method that exploits young people's particular talents, affording them greater control over the process than many methods (Ansell and Robson, 2000). Children were offered a choice of topics, and were able to express their thoughts and opinions in a class room setting of Grade 6 and 7 where Tatek taught social studies classes as a volunteer. The topics were meant to uncover the range of activities they perform on regular basis, where they took place and with whom. These include 'what I did yesterday', 'my domestic works', 'my contributions to family' etc.

The materials drawn up using these methods were compared and contrasted with the data obtained from field notes and in-depth interviews. A total of 28 group and individual (narrative) interviews were carried out, which involved forty children approximately 10-18

years old. Fifteen of the children were interviewed during both the first and second periods of fieldwork, twelve during the first period and the remaining thirteen during the second period only. The interviews focused on the spatial and temporal organization of children's lives, paying particular attention to age, gender, inter- and intra-generational and inter- and intra-household relationships, and the allocation of labor. A livelihood perspective was emphasized because we believe that the livelihood strategies of children are closely intertwined with the work and survival strategies of households. Adult informants were also interviewed to explore to what extent their perspectives of child labor were congruent with children's own narratives of their livelihoods. We visited the children's households to document the diversification of livelihoods, i.e. tangible assets such as resources and stores and intangible assets such as claims and access, abilities and strategies. We also held informal dialogues, in-depth and focus-group discussions with heads of households, social workers and development agents. This article, while drawing on these ranges of material, contextualizes the direct quotes of child participants whose views are used to illustrate the main tendencies of the data and the overall findings of the study.

Rural Development in Gedeo

Gedeo District, which lies within the Southern Regional State of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, has a total population of 820, 944 inhabitants, 86% being rural dwellers dependent on sedentary agriculture (CSA, 2002). The farming communities belong mainly to the Gedeo ethnic group and, until the predominance of Protestantism, which has been introduced into the region recently; the majority were followers of traditional religions. Farms are small in scale, with highly fragmented holdings ranging from 0.25 to 1 ha (average: 0.5 ha). Until the gradual predominance of coffee and *chat* (a mild stimulant leaf), in the past the Gedeo have ran a mixed economy of *enset* in conjunction with dairy farming, cereal production (mainly maize and horse beans), and a variety of fruits and vegetables (sugarcane, pineapple, mango, papaya, banana). *Enset*, also known as the 'false banana', produces non-edible fruit, but the trunk and root are processed as food. It takes four to six years for the plant to build up a sufficient store of carbohydrates to be used as food. During this time, it requires large amounts of manure or it will exhaust the soil, hence a symbiotic relationship has developed between the plant and cattle (Hamer and Hamer, 1994). As long as this relationship can be maintained, *enset* has an advantage over cereal grains in that it will support a higher

density of population, has a high caloric yield per unit of land and is far more drought-resistant (Brøgger, 1984; Tadesse, 2002).

Before, during and after socialism, Gedeo has generally been marginalized in respect of state development projects, despite being a pivotal source for generating national revenues. The interest of the state in the region has been mainly in extracting resources, and the native population has received little in return. Historically, the Gedeo have been subject to *neftenya-gebar* (patron-client) relations (Bevan and Pankhrust, 1996) in which the ruling class from the north of Ethiopia conquered and exploited the resources of the 'virgin, green territory of the south' in the pretext of the 'nation-building project' (Brøgger, 1984: 22).

Before the 1974 revolution, based on the hierarchical system of administration, the Gedeo were alienated from the ownership of land and its produce and were made *gebar* for the new settlers (Bevan and Pankhrust, 1996). This was reinforced by the growing interest of the latter in the production of commercial crops geared towards the regional and global markets (Tadesse, 2002). This resulted in a livelihood transition from *enset* to coffee and later on to *chat*, which increased the economic value of the land and reinforced the dependence of the peasants on the landowners. The economic shift towards cash crops also increased peasant households' reliance on the state for marketing purposes, whilst it simultaneously trapped rural livelihoods within the scaled-up production of commercial crops at the expense of the scaled-down production of subsistence crops (Abebe, 2007).

The sustained production of cash crops to promote national revenue continues to be reflected in Ethiopia's current development philosophy of 'agriculture-led rural development' (MOPED, 1996). This macro-economic strategy focuses on the performance of the agricultural sector where the production of export-oriented crops and participation in the international market are considered vital in an increasingly globalized world economy. However, the performance of agriculture has been sluggish owing to, among other things, recurrent drought, crop diseases and falling prices of agricultural products in the global commodity market, sharp rise in land taxes and farm inputs, and withdrawal of market support/incentives. These processes have failed the livelihoods of peasants, including children and young people. Focusing in what follows on three aspects – reproductive activities, work in market places and socio-spatial mobility – we will discuss the ways in which boys and girls

in Gedeo negotiate their work and everyday livelihoods in the face of such rapid politico-economic transformations.

Earning livelihoods on various fronts

Children's work in household re-production

Interviews and semi-participant observation reveal that children's reproductive work assumes different patterns, including work as farmhands for subsistence purposes and income-generation activities in the informal rural economic sectors. Many children perform different reproductive activities within the household as part of their social responsibilities. In Gedeo, childhood is perceived as a phase of life in which work should be contributed to the household. Their participation in the labor force is part of a system of reciprocal exchanges, beginning in the early stages of childhood, and continuing through adolescence. Children are expected to help their parents and work for them, while they also have expectations of being rewarded with food, clothing, schooling, land, wedding expenses and inheritance. In their essays, the children documented the extent to which they are in charge of different productive and reproductive chores, including running errands, tending/feeding cattle, collecting and splitting firewood, harvesting grass, weeding, chopping *enset*, fetching water, milking, cooking, sweeping the floor, washing, making coffee etc. Some of these tasks are highly gendered, as Hamer and Hamer (1994: 190) observe:

> In childhood both boys and girls are …encouraged to identify with prescribed gender activities of their respective parents. Girls learn to avoid laziness and to be helpful to all adults, but especially to assist their mothers in enset preparation and in caring for younger siblings… Boys by working with their fathers in [hoeing, planting, weeding and harvesting], gardening and pasturing animals, learn more community oriented values of wealth acquisition and its redistribution.

Despite divisions of household responsibility and stereotyped socialization by gender, some activities in Gedeo are performed by both boys and girls, especially in early childhood. As we shall demonstrate, however, in late childhood more boys than girls are engaged in the production and selling of cash crops in the market, and children's age, gender, competence and social maturity play crucial roles in the distribution of household work (Table 1).

Table 1. Seasonality of children's work (observation, interviews and essays)

Season	Major activities	Children's roles	Gender/generation
Bonno: Harvesting season (August – December)	Coffee	Weeding beans, coffee and enset; picking berries; washing and drying	Men along with boys; Girls may work in coffee-processing Firms sorting beans
Ba'leessa: Season for land preparation (January – March)	Subsistence agriculture; off-farm labor (by men)	Hoe-digging and planting maize, fertilization and soil preparation, sorting coffee beans; marketing; work on coffee-processing firms; harvesting vegetables and other agricultural products	Men and mainly boys; women and girls work on maize farms
Haarsso: Major planting season (April – May)	Subsistence agricultural work	Planting cabbage, nuts, potato and cassava; work on other root crops; weeding *gesho*, enset, planting eucalyptus and bamboo	Mainly women, boys and girls (men labor migration)
Adoolessasa: Major rainy season (June – July)	Subsistence agricultural work	Weeding coffee, maize and enset; harvesting of maize; sowing beans, root crops	Mainly women, boys and girls
All year round	*Enset (kocho)*; fruits (pineapple, banana, mango, avocado); animal husbandry; *chat;* harvesting and selling; domestic chores; off-farm supplementary work	Work on nurseries, transplanting seedlings, chopping, processing and storage of *enset;* harvesting grass for cattle, milking, feeding animals; tending sheep and goats, harvesting of different crops; marketing; cooking, cleaning, washing; trading and work as daily laborers; going to mill, collecting dung-cases etc.	Relatively gendered: collecting dung-cases and processing and storage of *enset* is exclusively women's/girl's work; marketing of many of the cash crops is done by boys; girls participate in domestic chores and selling fruits in markets

In addition, as work requires the cooperation of different households and lineage-based families, the life worlds of children, especially boys, are shaped by various social organizations within communities. These include *debbo*, a temporary work group in which young men pool skills and labor during house construction, and *gollo*, a task force set up especially during the (coffee) harvesting seasons. Men, especially elders, tend to make decisions on the allocation of household labor. However, women, although they are associated with reproductive activities, are also pivotal in agricultural and gardening work within the rural economy. Hence, they control the labor of the younger children and girls that enables them to perform more specialized chores, while also relieving them to participate in periodic paid work outside the home. Shitaye (girl, 14 years) who is currently living with her sister, explains:

> I keep an eye on my sister's children, who are now three years and eight months old. My sister works for the coffee-processing firm in sorting coffee beans, so when my grandmother is not around, I am in charge of them. I get them meals wash their clothes and bodies.

Many girls in Gedeo are also responsible in caring works for the sick and the elderly, often in the absence of adults:

> I had been helping my grandfather, who was sick for about two years before he died. I first told my father [who lives far away] that he was ill, but he thought that it might be a simple cold. But as his cough got worse and worse, he became weaker. We went to the clinic which referred him to the hospital where the doctor said that it was tuberculosis, and prescribed him medicines. We bought the medicines and got him home. I used to wash his clothes and take him to the clinic to get his regular injection for three weeks. I got him his food and coffee in the morning, and in the afternoon I prepared his bed and helped him walk around. He was very old and weak, and I wanted to help him for as long as possible. (Fikre, girl, 15 years)

The above stories provide examples of the substantial domestic responsibilities that children carry out within the household. They reveal that the lives of children are not work- or care-free, but rather characterized by structured and intensified participation in various reproductive tasks. Unlike many boys, who assist in the manual aspects of farming and are seasonally involved in the coffee economy or casual labor, girls are socialized to perform the

daily domestic and caring works within the household. Their work, although they tend to be invisible because conventional economic measures focus on the households' productive activities, are nonetheless indispensable in reinforcing boys' and adults' work by freeing them to participate in income-generating activities as well as in maintaining the overall system of household reproduction.

As Table 1 shows, children's participations in reproductive (and paid work) are also organized unevenly, both spatially and temporally. From a temporal point of view, the work calendar of farmers and their families, which is organised around four major seasons – the rainy, harvesting, land preparation and planting seasons – are crucial in shaping the nature, intensity, seasonality and work cycles of children. The table also illustrates how the burden of agricultural work is distributed within rural households and the role of boys and girls in different seasons.

Entrepreneur children in the daily market

A viable livelihood strategy in Gedeo requires an adequate mastery of the local environment and the 'agro-forestry system' of coffee, *enset* and other plants. From the livelihood point of view, agricultural entrepreneurship – in which children are encouraged to combine skills in harnessing the resources of the land to produce items which can be traded along with earning money from supplementary off-farm activities – is a crucial aspect of childhood socialization (Hamer, 1987: 241). Like their counterparts in rural Sudan (Katz, 1991) and Tanzania (Porter, 1996), Gedeo children learn about work and the environment in conjunction with play, through participation in light household chores and on farms, by observation and instruction from adults and through trial and error. Parents in Gedeo encourage children to learn to trade from the early age of seven or eight. The cash economy, especially the money from coffee, fruit and *chat*, is a pivotal source of family livelihoods, but it also provides a space of work for children to generate income to supplement household income. Children's involvement in income generation is closely related to their roles in market places. On our repeated visits to one open-air market, we documented the range of items that were traded by both children and adults on a regular basis, as well as a dozen more seasonal products which are offered for sale at certain periods of the year only. As a market that is typical of self-sufficient communities, different products, ranging from perishable foods to cash-generating items and electronic goods, are traded.

Children are indispensable actors in the various activities and stages of the buying and selling process. Their important role in the market begins with their work as *delela*s or brokers, as Negara, a boy of fifteen years, explained:

> I help people who come from the towns to buy fruit in large quantities by helping them select the best quality, those that will not easily be destroyed when they are transported to far distant places. I also work as a middleman between the sellers and the buyers in the price-negotiation process. So my work is to get the right buyers and right sellers to meet. In doing so, I make both parties happy and get a commission.

The brokerage service that children offer is not restricted to finding the right product and trading partners, but includes taking goods to the market, fixing the means of transportation and delivering the product from the market place to the transport terminals. Negara continued:

> My friend has a rickshaw with which he transports items from the daily market to the roadside so that cars can load up the products. He also brings to the market items which cars cannot deliver to the market place [due to accessibility problems]. So, whenever my customers demand a service like this, I recommend him to do it for them.

Negara is one of the many typical *delala*s in the daily market in Gedeo. Due to his honesty and hard work, both the local population where he lives and the outside traders who regularly come to the area consider him to be the most popular and reliable *delala*. Likewise, Biruk (boy, 16 years old), who works as both a *delala* and an assistant to a truck-driver, always tries to live up to people's expectations and to prove his reliability to his increasing number of clients:

> I am very careful and serious when I work with my clients. I do not want them to buy bad things from here because, when they come back again, I don't want them to complain that they had been cheated. I will never let that happen, so I respect them, and do not sell items favoring my own people.

'Business boys' develop effective networks of relationships with friends, wholesale and retail traders and transport providers as part of their work in facilitating the exchange of goods. Their competences suggest that they are contributing actors whose skills are developed

through participation in different social practices and complex networks of relationships with others. Like any other relationship, their interactions in the market and their social positions within the community are characterized by trust, reciprocity and mutual dependence. Negara's and Biruk's competences have also been gradually developed and elaborated through time deriving from their inclusion in a variety of reproductive activities on a daily basis, and based on expanding networks of relationships with people both within and outside their community.

Children's involvement in trade enables them to earn resources, while it also allows them to acquire valuable skills, like making computations and dealing with customers. Buying and selling various commodities on both a wholesale and a retail basis is an important aspect of children's 'trading careers', as Digafe, a thirteen-year-old girl, explained:

> I buy and sell seasonal fruits like papaya, mangoes, avocado, bananas and pineapples during different periods of the year. Now it is the season for mangoes. I buy twenty mangoes for one birr and retail each at ten cents [two birr in total]. In a good day I can make two to three birr in profit. But nowadays, there is not enough money because most people want to retail instead of wholesale, so there is a lot of competition. I am now considering buying cane sugar from the lowland peasant associations and retailing it here. It is much more profitable than fruit [which also quickly becomes perishable, due to the hot and humid nature of the area], and has high demand during drier seasons.

Although children's economic independence in the marketing process is encouraged and although they begin managing revenues themselves from an early age, relative freedom is achieved only gradually. Adults are in control of most of the resources that children earn. As the main objective of their economic activities is family well-being, sharing resources between children and adults is done in such a way that the former manages at least a proportion of the money he or she earns. Schildrout (2002) argues that the child's relative autonomy in small-scale entrepreneurship and household economics increases in accordance with his or her ability in managing work and its proceeds, based on competence and the increase in experience gained. In our study, an implicit child-parent contract, a form of intra-household social contract, seem to govern reciprocity and dependence, and children have a range of obligations they fulfill towards their families. Mesay (girl, 15 years old) mentioned that she covers much of her family budget from 'local beer-brewing, scraping and chopping

enset and retailing food and alcoholic drinks in the market and, that without [her] financial contributions, the household is not viable economically'.

Boys and girls are not simply commonplace individuals in markets but are independently engaged in a range of activities in their own right. Items that are sold in the daily market show remarkable degrees of age and gender differentiation. Men are engaged in the selling of relatively expensive and specialized products like consumer items, furniture, handicrafts, electronic goods, meat and clothing, while women sell cereals, spices, dairy products (eggs, butter, cheese, and milk), alcoholic beverages and various types of processed *enset* and cassava, the local root crops. Most girls are involved in the retailing of especially cooked food items (bread, *injera*, cereals, spices, sweet potatoes) and vegetables. On the other hand, cash crops (*chat*, sugarcane, fruit and coffee) are sold mainly by boys who are also engaged in labor-intensive activities such as portering. This occupational segregation by age and gender provides the context in which men and boys' products are more highly valued and profitable than women and girls' products, which mostly include local goods and services that are created through their manual labor.

The age of children, which in Gedeo is understood as a relative criterion leading to progressive social maturity, is one measure of children's social competences. The latter, which remarkably influences the nature of the activities children perform, is in turn shaped by the children's physical and social maturity, their experience, exposure and practice, as well as the expectations placed upon them by their families. For example, older boys in poor households are kept at home in order to assist their parents in agricultural tasks and have more social obligations than physically weaker or younger children who might be sent to school. Similarly, other labor-intensive activities in market places like transporting goods, loading and unloading are carried out by physically strong young men. Ayele, a well-built seventeen-year-old boy, explained:

> I work as porter in the bus stations and transport terminals along the roads and in Dilla. We load and unload goods which need to be transported to or are coming from elsewhere. It is a difficult job, and the nature of the work makes your relationship with people rough. Sometimes we have to lift goods which are too heavy and back-breaking. Some people do not understand this, and all they think about is the money they are paying. But what else can we do? It is better than being a thief or becoming a beggar.

Most young people in Gedeo are flexible and industrious in adapting to the changing business environment locally. Teklu (boy, 16 years old), who runs a tea house in Gedeo, narrates his shifting livelihood strategies as follows:

> In the summer holidays there is little work here, so I go to Awassa [regional capital of the Southern Region] to work as a daily laborer…. Before I opened this tea house [formerly a commodity store which went bankrupt], I worked in cafeteria there as a waiter. The job was very long and tough, and the owner could make all the employees work in whatever kind of job is associated with the cafeteria. The payment was good, though, and so were my savings, because I did not spend anything on my food and accommodation, as I ate and slept there. After working there for about four months, I returned with my salary, which I used to open this tea shop. I now sell biscuits, bread, candies, ice, tea, charcoal etc. My brother brings me different items from Dilla [district capital of Gedeo], which we retail alongside the tea shop. I hope our business will flourish. I dream of having many regular customers, and most of all, that when they ask me for this or that item, I say, 'Yes, I have everything; the only thing I do not have is "nothing"'.

These narratives demonstrate how entrepreneurial children's livelihoods are characterized by flexibility and business orientation according to changes in market conditions, the shifting demands of the local community and the products that are produced and exchanged seasonally. The industriousness of the children is well reflected in the activity of Teklu, who converted his commodity shop into a tea shop when the former activity failed, based on the new experience he had acquired from working as a waiter in a cafeteria. It demonstrates how children switch gear, negotiating roles and responsibilities, as well as setting realistic targets in their lives. For Teklu, his short-term target is to recover from the shock which his commodity store experienced, but his long-term aim is to ensure that his business is sustainable and solid and will develop into one of the big stores in the community. When thieves robbed Teklu's commodity shop, his business collapsed, and as a result for a while he was gripped in a phase of vulnerability until he managed to find new and creative ways of reconstructing his business. The meaning of success through work is to realise that his shop has every item demanded by the local population and that what he does not have is 'just nothing'. More importantly, most children believe that meeting their goals will enable them to fulfill their social obligations, assist their families and achieve a 'good enough' quality of life.

In trading activities, children are not only agents of exchanges, but also buyers and consumers. Selamu, a boy who vends different items for school-age children, explains:

> Most of my clients are children from the school. During the tea break or outside school hours, they come to me and buy different items. They could also take things on a *dube* [credit] basis, and pay me when they are able to earn an income. Others bring me things from distant places which I can retail here as an expression of appreciation for the favors I do them.

Gedeo children become greatly involved in the cash economy, where they sell goods in markets or alongside their parents as an extension of maximizing their household's earning potential. In addition to their participation in it through the production and sale of farm proceeds, they involve themselves in employment for cash in off-farm activities. Children pick coffee berries seasonally and work in coffee-processing sorting, drying, picking beans etc. on a long-term basis. This suggests that the lives and work of children are at one and the same time both 'local' and 'global' (Holloway and Valentine, 2000: 769-70), or 'glocal'. As pointed out already, the predominance of the cash economy has allowed children to generate incomes and help their families. However, weak infrastructure, inaccessible regional markets, low monetary rewards and unequal relations of power that affect them both locally and in relation to the global chain of the coffee market have led them to be exploited. In Gedeo, production from subsistence agriculture has declined substantially, while the revenue from the export of coffee in the global market has continually been declining too (see OXFAM, 2002, UNDP, 2005). The restructuring of the global coffee market – following the collapse of the International Coffee Association, which formerly regulated supply and price – meant that unfair global trade and capital has become closely entwined with and determines the value that children's work deserves locally. In this way, children's livelihoods become *glocal*, situated in local contexts, but increasingly subordinated to the global capitalist system.

Despite disruptions in livelihoods, however, the 'glocalised economy' in Gedeo is sustained in part by the effective performance of what Schildkrout (2002: 360) calls 'children's cash economy'. The cash economy of Gedeo children is deeply rooted in the exchange of productive labor for money, making their own investment in the buying and selling of farm proceeds, as well as in consumption. As the quote from Selamu demonstrates, one feature of this economy is the way it functions by involving both direct monetary transactions and a

credit system in which the children buy items and pay when they are able to secure an income later on. Their informal organizations are also illustrative of how alternative economies, i.e. forms of social reproduction that do not take the neo-liberal market as their primary organizing principle, offer children and young people the different types of agency they are denied by mainstream economic development.

Mobile livelihoods, mobile childhoods

In contrast to an ideal pre-transitional, agricultural population, where 'wealth tends to flow from children to parents, making large families and unrestricted fertility advantageous to parents' (Hollos, 2002: 13), children in Gedeo have paradoxically become burdens, as economic transformation has made their labor less rewarded. Formerly, household organization based on a collective, food self-sufficient production system meant that children's contributions were both a structural necessity and an integral part of the labor reserve. Then, the conditions for the optimum number of children were set by the productiveness of the less-globalised rural economy in which children's labor was crucial. As Porter (1996) observes, however, with surplus cheap labor and the monetization of everyday life, the need for cash pulls villagers into the market economy in multiple ways. Families must rely on the diversification and intensification of production to meet the increasing demand for cash, which, in its turn, has led to a phenomenon in which both the specialization and the spatial separation of labor, production and reproduction become necessary.

In Gedeo, the specialization of household labor, intensification of agriculture and diversification of livelihoods are among the three ways in which peasants struggle to cope with disruptions in household economy. These strategies are also vital, given shortages of arable land – the basic means of production – the decline in agricultural production for local staple food and the large family sizes that characterize the demographic structure of Gedeo. According to the CSA (2002), the Total Fertility Rate of 7 children per woman and a rural population density exceeding 500p/km² is higher than the national average, as well as the average for rural areas in most parts of Africa. Although earlier ethnographic works in the region (Brøgger, 1986; Hamer, 1987) suggest that this is mainly because of the increasing demand for children's labor and the cultural value of large family size being associated with security and high social prestige, given contemporary livelihood insecurity and plummeting revenues from the sale of coffee, this is not always the case. The fertility level, which was

kept high, now made families less capable of sustaining many children when the resources from the sale of crops is unreliable. The consequence is that children began increasingly to shoulder the burden of social reproduction.

As the livelihood strategies of families become dependent on adult labor migration, children's work has begun to assume different forms. This includes, among other things, increasing the pressure on them to earn economic resources and participate in multiple domestic activities to maintain the disruptions in social reproduction (Abebe, 2007:78). But as their labor also became redundant, young people are left with few options and, hence, migrate to urban areas to seek alternative livelihoods in the informal economic sector. This in its turn not only affects their education, but also makes them increasingly reliant on livelihood activities which are non-rural. The socio-spatial and spatio-temporal mobilities of children are part of the long-term household's adaptive strategy and, as we show in more detail below, they include geographical migration, alterations in patriarchal relations and increased social responsibilities. The case of Lulu (boy, 16 years old) below offers us insight into how multiple geographical mobility is crucial to secure alternative livelihoods for many young people in Gedeo:

> I was born and spent the earlier part of my childhood in Moyale [border town with Kenya] with my uncle, who had a shop, and where I assisted him in selling things. When I was in grade four, we came back to Dilla with my mother, where we stayed with her sister, but when she got sick I dropped out of school. Later on, I decided to return to my uncle, so I asked my mother if she could give me some money, but she didn't have any. After working as porter in the market and later on in the flour mill for few months, I saved some money to pay my transport…. Now I work as an assistant to a truck-driver.

Due to his mobile livelihoods, Lulu has not been able to continue formal education since he dropped out of school at the age of twelve. However, he is undertaking vocational training, which will qualify him to be a driver in the future:

> I am putting money aside to pay for my third-grade driving license. If I get that, I can be employed formally and be able to earn a better income, and also do less difficult work than I do now. This will also enable me to help my brothers and sisters, who live with my aunt in Gedeo, to pursue schooling.

alued opportunities, particularly in the context of pursuing education beyond the primary level, are clearly not equally accessible to all children. As the recent child labor survey has found (CSA, 2002), because the school calendar is not compatible with children's planting and harvesting responsibilities within the agricultural cycle, in the *enset* and cash-crop regions of Ethiopia nearly 53% of children who are enrolled in September drop out by the end of term. This is especially the case in Gedeo, where selective picking of *luuollo* (red and mature coffee berries) from the tree tops is a tedious job requiring much concentration and time, for which children are considered more adept than adults.

As adults must struggle to make ends meet, their migration transfers the burden of domestic responsibilities on to the children, especially girls. Consequently, they are pressured to negotiate multiple roles at home, in schools and within the wider community, further suggesting how their childhood is characterized by shifting social positions in different contexts. Meku (11 years), who previously used to live with her biological parents, offers an excellent example of how changes in place of residence have intensified her social roles and responsibilities:

> I came to nurse my aunt [who had given birth to a new child]. I have been living with her for this year; she buys me cloth for New Year and will pay my school costs until I return to my parents' house, probably next year. I do all the work in the house; it is more difficult because there are no other children who could help me....

Like many girls, Meku serves as a bond that facilitates the maintenance of close family ties among relatives of the female clan, who, according to Gedeo tradition, leave for their husband's clan after they marry. However, her responsibilities indicate that a change in residence entails a change in the nature of the work she performs and in the patterns of intergenerational relationships. Although Meku has aspects of her childhood met by her aunt, exemplifying the social and spatial context of family obligations, her labor contributions, rooted in participation in domestic work, have become subject to temporal intensification. Likewise the fact that she intends to return to her biological parents after a period of time shows how her life worlds may expand and shrink, both spatially and temporarily. On the other hand, alterations in patriarchal relations due to changes in who is important in providing livelihood assets in households are illustrated by how young people are pressured to seek gainful employment by participating in wage labor. This is reflected in the lives of Desta and

his siblings, who live with a grandparent following the deaths of their biological parents due to HIV/AIDS:

> We had some land which we inherited from our deceased parents, but it is far out in the countryside. We are scared to live there alone, so we decided to rent it out to someone on a share-cropping basis.
>
> Question: How do you make your living now?
>
> We have no regular work and live from hand to mouth. I work on my grandfather's farm, but he is poor himself. Sometimes I sell bananas, at other times I go to Shakisso to work in the gold mines…. Before, I used to rent bicycles and so we had a better income and were able to pay the school fees. I also bought a tape-recorder and connected our house to the electric light. But I sold them when our mother got sick, to take her to the clinic.

The increased responsibilities and family obligations experienced by Meku and Desta were echoed by many of the research participants. Although inter-household and intra-kinship network mobility, in which children conventionally reside in the patrilineal family system, is far from being new, it seems that children are increasingly playing a part in shaping its patterns, the forms they take and the frequency with which they move about. This is well illustrated by the lives of Desta and his siblings, who have been deprived of a potential source of care and support from their parents. The strain put on the scarce resources of extended kin networks represents a growing economic and social problem, showing how children's vulnerability should be framed within the wider context of rural poverty and the impacts of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, among others. Their stories also reveals how children's competence and autonomy change and fluctuate through time, based on the availability (or lack) of social networks of support, livelihood assets to draw on, and complex contexts of poverty and marginalisation. In the following section, we further discuss how the foregoing materials from the field inform the theoretical debates over children's agency and social competency.

Discussion

The self-described stories provide insights into the lives of a great majority of children in Ethiopia who regularly carry out such work as part of the livelihoods of their families. They

illustrate the involvement of boys and girls in various productive and domestic activities, and how work is an arena in which they learn essential life skills that are required locally, both at present and in the future. Gedeo children are actors in the rural livelihood strategies of their families through agricultural and household reproduction, migratory labor and active participation in the cash economy, whose products are intended for both the local and global markets. They play crucial role in filling in the gap in social reproduction produced by the spatial separation of household labor through adults' migration, as well as disruptions in household systems of production and reproduction. They do this by relying on their labor and income contributions, which are immensely crucial for their own and their households' survival. However, children also play an active role in the changing nature of household livelihoods. As argued here, rural livelihood strategies in Gedeo are based, among other things, on the relative importance of different activities in the regional economy and money derived from the sale of different commercial crops. Because these products become available at different periods of the year, their relative significance in shaping the nature, type, intensity and temporality of children's work is immense. The children's own stories illustrate not only how their cash-based economy is intertwined with the household and local economy, but also its centrality in the country's macro-economic, agriculture-led, rural development program.

Research with working children contributes significantly to debates over agency and social competence, showing that they are valuable actors in intergenerational bargaining over care, production and reciprocity. The competency of children on the one hand, and their dependence and vulnerability on the other, are not opposite and irreconcilable attributes. Instead, they are closely interdependent and fluid characteristics. As Kisbey et al. (2006) argue, there is no contradiction between socialization (children's orientation for the future) and their social competence at present. This is because children are not merely about-to-become adults who are undergoing socialisation in order to shoulder their responsibilities in the future, but producers, entrepreneurs, carers, decision-makers and consumers. Our material from Gedeo confirms that whereas children's attempts to earn their livelihoods in changing economic contexts demonstrates that they are *contributing* 'beings', their life-aspirations and reflections about the future suggests that they are 'human becomings'. Their experiences support the evidence of other research that children not only move in and out of relative autonomy and dependence (Kjørholt, 2004; Kesby et al, 2006), but also draw on household resources in times of scarcity and make substantial contributions to them in periods of sufficient work and income (Punch, 2002; Ansell, 2005).

The role of Gedeo children in reproductive work begs a reconsideration of how they negotiate multiple livelihoods in the wider context of ecological and political and economic transformations. Although they have entrepreneurial skills locally, these skills are anomalous to market-oriented entrepreneurship embedded in global trade, where structural flaws constrain their abilities to be productive. These resonate with the idea that these abilities change as the material, livelihood and, consequently, social contexts in which they grow up undergoes rapid transformations (Abebe, 2007). This paper has demonstrated a case in which children struggle to sustain the livelihoods of rural households which have been marginalized locally by the historical and political economic context, as well as by the global, market-driven economy. These structural contexts have clear implications for children's lives and work experiences. As Ennew (1995) argues, children's material exploitation take different forms: a) age-based exploitation, related to the inability of children to understand the circumstances in which they perform particular work; b) class-based exploitation, in which poor children are engaged in difficult working conditions and low payment; and c) societal exploitation, in which social structures value children's work less than that of adults. The latter two are linked to the meager incomes from coffee – in which children help in the production process – their households derive from the global market, and suggest the entrenchment of yet new structures that are making and remaking their livelihoods. However, children's active participation in diverse livelihood activities means that they try to negotiate and respond to the uneven social and spatial impacts of rural development in everyday life context. This further illustrates the more complex picture of (economic) development that is emerging involving children as actors and contradicting what it formerly represented, namely children as its beneficiaries. Children's agency and competence need to be contextualized at different yet interrelated geographical scales, i.e. local, regional, national and global, as well as in the socio-economic contexts which not only shape their coping strategies, but also the value and meanings of the work they perform.

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ARTICLE FIVE

Abebe, T. *In press.* Earning a living on the margins: begging, street work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa, *Geografiska Annaler – Series B: Human Geography,* Blackwell.

EARNING A LIVING ON THE MARGINS: BEGGING, STREET WORK AND THE SOCIO-SPATIAL EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN IN ADDIS ABABA

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Abstract

This paper explores the everyday lives of boys and girls who beg on streets in Addis Ababa. Based on seven months of child-focused research, it discusses begging as an often overlooked but crucial aspect of daily and generational reproduction in which children earn resources in order to contribute towards their household livelihoods. It is argued that child beggars are not passive victims of their circumstances, but are aware of the fact that begging is not a perpetual predicament in their lives. The activity of begging is complex and fluid, and is based on the changing nature of the children's experiences, livelihoods and socio-economic conditions. Age, gender, social maturity and availability (or lack) of alternative income-generating strategies are important variables shaping both their spatio-temporal participation in and withdrawal from the activity. The perception of the public towards the children's involvement in begging and the children's own perceptions and reactions to it differ. The findings suggest that, as opposed to most children who construct their engagement as *shikella*, or simply business, the public has an ambivalent attitude, associating children with aspects of the culture of poverty, and considering them either 'at' risk or 'as' risks. The study concludes that interventions to improve these children's lives need to take more seriously their transient experiences, resources and social skills.

Key words: begging, children's work, household livelihoods, streets, Addis Ababa

Introduction

> When we beg people for their kindness, they give us coins, but others don't give us any. They tell us to "Go away – earn a living instead of begging". When we want to carry things and make money, people prefer to let others carry them instead of us. They want older children, or boys. They don't like girls. Some people, however, buy us bread. Others don't trust us at all, so when we approach them to beg, they chase us away and sometimes hit us. (Melat, girl, 12 years old)

This extract is taken from in-depth interview of children in Addis Ababa who have formed part of research examining their livelihood strategies and experiences of begging which this article reports on. To a casual observer, children who beg on the streets appear to all intents and purposes as delinquents, risky and gone 'outside childhood' (Conolley and Ennew, 1996). In other instances, they might be regarded as helpless and vulnerable victims, or separated from their families, orphaned or abandoned (Panter-Brick, 2000). The lives of children on the streets tends also to be easily contrasted to hegemonic, normative idea of childhood that state that, instead of working or begging in public spaces, children should be in the home, nuclear families, school and private dwellings (Ennew, 2002). By living outside the home and performing adult-related roles, children on the streets contradict the ideals of 'proper childhoods' locally and core ideologies of what Boyden (1998, p. 191) calls 'global models', namely that of childhood dependence, domesticity, and adult care and supervision.

The views of children who beg on the streets are seldom heard, but photographs and stories *about* them are very common. There are many reasons for employing images of poor and vulnerable children. First, children signify both our past and our futures, and their images symbolically represent truth, nature, spontaneity, innocence and dependence (Burman 1994). Fund-raising by charities is often based both on the mobilization of universal notions of care and childhood, *and* a detached analysis of the lives of 'children in distress', i.e. poor, sick, beggars, disabled, and those suffering from starvation. As Hewitt (1992 cited in Panter-Brick, 2000, p. 2) points out, 'they have been relatively successful in raising funds but have done little to portray full picture of the lives of children', their history and identity. Secondly, stories of 'crisis childhood' help capture the attention of the public as well as in selling newspapers and magazines although they also lend interpretation of such childhoods as being 'troubled',

'dislocated' and 'abnormal' (Burman, 1994). Paradoxically, it is these constructions that are used as a reference to sharpen ideas on how childhood ought to be in the rest of the world.

There has recently been a growing body of literature on the livelihood trajectories of working (street) children in many parts of Africa. These include, to mention just a few, studies of how children earn livelihoods in the urban, market-based, informal economic sector, with examples from Nigeria (Robson, 1996), Senegal (Bass, 1996) and Zimbabwe (Bourdillon, 2001); the complex migration geographies of children in the context of poverty in Uganda (Young, 2003; van Blerk, 2005); and the role of political economy and discourses of children's rights in shaping their experiences on the streets in Nairobi, Kenya (Droz, 2006). Others have focused on children's diverse 'street careers' by drawing insights from gender, age, ethnicity and everyday life perspectives in Tanzania (Evans, 2006). These works suggest that working and/or street children are highly differentiated groups of people in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, class, livelihood sources, social capital, personal social skills and the networks of relationships that crucially affect their negotiating power in the labour market and future life chances (see also Bequele and Boyden, 1988; Woodhead, 1998; Bass, 2004). It is widely acknowledged that the emphasis in research should shift away from a discussion of working children's vulnerability to demonstrations of agency and resilience (Boyden and Mann, 2005). Moreover, research should explore the structural (i.e. socio-economic and political) factors that explain why children work (Dallape, 1996), as well as re-examine their spatial and temporal relationships with urban street environments (Conolley and Ennew, 1996; van Blerk, 2005; Evans, 2006; Beazley, 2000; 2003).

The Ethiopian literature on the lives of working children is relatively scant. Notable exceptions, however, are studies on child domestic workers (Kifle, 2002) and the livelihoods of working street children in selected towns (Veale, 1993), including Addis Ababa (Aptekar and Abebe, 2001); their sexuality, health and well-being (Getnet, 2005); and children's perceptions about their working lives as part of comparative cross-cultural research (Woodehad, 1998). The place of children in the mainstream society (home, family and politics) has also been examined by taking the formal school system as a point of departure (Poluha, 2004; see also Admassie, 2003 and Emebet, 2004 for policy-oriented discussions of child labor and girls schooling respectively). Outside the home and schools, recent research has discussed girls' socio-spatial mobility in connection with commercial sex work and the HIV/AIDS epidemic (van Blerk, 2007; Hoot et al., 2007), the impact of the latter on orphans and how they negotiate care and

reciprocity along with extended family households (Abebe and Aase, 2007), and the livelihood strategies of rural children in the face of the changing global economic system (Abebe, 2007). However, the complex ways in which disadvantaged boys and girls, particularly those who beg on streets in cities, are affected by and try to respond to the multiple impacts of poverty and impoverishment remain unexplored. Existing works in Ethiopia either treat the practice of begging as an activity that constitutes 'social ills' and 'problems of society' (MOLSA, 1994) or else mention it in passing when discussing disability, homelessness or the lives of adult street beggars (Woubishet, 2003; 2005) without considering children's involvement. Despite this, children and young people are engaged in begging, whether full-time or part-time, as a way of earning their entire livelihoods or of supplementing their income from other activities.

This paper explores children's perspectives with regard to begging on the streets in Addis Ababa along with their involvement in other livelihood strategies. Streets are widely conceived as 'places on the margins', including public areas like avenues, mosques and churches, which offer children 'the space and opportunity to pull away from the constraints of childhood' (Matthews, 2003, p. 114). More specifically, the paper explores a) how children whose households are impoverished are forced to become involved in begging; b) children's perceptions and experiences of begging as a way of life; and c) the agency of children in converting their poverty into viable livelihood opportunities. In so doing, I discuss the daily lives and spatial activities of children, which is crucial to understanding their families' livelihood trajectories. In what follows, I will first present the research methodology and socio-cultural context within which begging takes place. I then explore the socio-economic characteristics of participant children, their own perspectives and the ways in which they negotiate their lives within this marginal social space, *as well as* viewing their work as an integral part of the implicit household social contract (cf. Kabeer, 2000). Finally, I will briefly highlight the implications of begging for the generational and life-course transmission of poverty for children who easily move in and out of the activity.

Methodology

The research is based on empirical material derived from seven months of child-focused qualitative fieldwork with children in Addis Ababa. Time-series data were gathered in January–May 2005 and January–April 2006, followed by a brief field visit in October 2006. I use multiple methods to explore the views of children about their work and their social

relationships both among themselves and with their families. Repeated individual interviews based on a life-history approach with 28 children, seven in-depth group interviews (each with two children) and six focus-group discussions (each with four to six children) were carried out to document a range of themes: the 'art' and experiences of begging; social and economic situations; networks and friendships; perceptions of the general public towards them; and what they liked and disliked about the activity they were engaged in etc. Apart from role play in which the children participated in various music and sport competitions I organized, I used extended observations in different sites and contexts (on streets, market places, at work, home and drop-in centers). The interviews and focus-group discussions, which took place in one of the public parks chosen by the children themselves, were tape-recorded, transcribed and translated from Amharic into English.

As a study of children's geographies, my methodology was meant to bring to centre stage the experiences of children who are engaged in begging rather than the institution of begging as such. Among the recurrent motives that the children mentioned during the interviews and focus-group discussions on how and why they were drawn into begging was that a considerable number of them had parents who were widows, disabled or themselves beggars. Others, however, started begging while they were helping members of their family with mobility difficulties in going to and from different begging sites. This prompted me to administer a survey of sixty children, selected through snowballing, to document their family backgrounds, household structure, major livelihoods, ethnicity, networks of relationship, marital conditions, types and degrees of (dis-)ability, age, gender, economic situations etc.

In addition, the research involved repeated social encounters with the children, along with informal dialogue, sharing meals in restaurants and, where appropriate, writing stories. These encounters enhanced my social relations with them by revealing the establishment of mutual trust and reciprocity between myself as a researcher on the one hand and the children as participants in the study on the other. They also helped me in collecting valid and reliable information—often problems in research involving street children (Aptekar and Heinoen, 2003)—as well as in acquiring an 'insider perspective' of the sensitive and complex world of childhood begging. The research tools I used and the multiple positions I held during the fieldwork correspond with methodologies that have been used successfully by other researchers (Woodhead, 1998; Young and Barrett, 2001).

The social context of begging in Ethiopia

The historical roots of begging are very ambivalent and controversial, although the practice of alms-giving supported by religious teachings and beliefs has always been found in Ethiopia (MOSLA, 1994). In Amharic, there are two co-existing terminologies in use for 'beggar': *lemagn* and *yene bitae.* Unlike *lemagn*, which is often employed when one wants to create a social boundary of 'I' as opposed to the 'other beggar', *yene bitae* is a sympathetic and socially inclusive term, widely used, and literally meaning 'someone like me'. Begging is a common practice near churches, but also near hotels, restaurants, traffic lights, shopping areas, etc. As Niewuenhuys (2001) notes, during special religious festivities, as people walk long distances to attend mass; the sidewalk may be literally lined with beggars humbly emphasizing the extent of their terrestrial suffering. Alms are routinely given at other moments in the day as well, for example, car drivers normally keep small change within reach for the beggars who crowd around at traffic lights holding out their hands and mumbling blessings (ibid.). In this context, begging is constructed as a 'win-win scenario' between the alms-giver and the receiver (Kassah, 2005), although this scenario 'legitimise[s] wealth as a sign of merit and imposes upon the wealthy a moral pressure to be generous' (Bowie 1998, cited in Niewuenhuys, 2001, p. 544).

Giving alms to the needy is a customary practice in Orthodox Christianity as well as in *zakat*, one of the five pillars of Islam. The Orthodox Ministry and Muslim education both require their disciples to run the religious educational system entirely by begging. This includes the begging of food items, clothing and materials for education. In northern Ethiopia, a system of schooling, traditionally known as *yek'olo temari*, still exists. *Yek'olo temari*s are students who receive a religious education including basic literacy and computational skills. They are required to find their own food (and occasionally their teachers'), clothing and stationary materials by begging from people in the neighbourhood, market places and churches. In these contexts, begging serves socio-religious functions and is believed to instil a sense of humility and discipline in the child pupil (Bass, 2004).

Contemporary begging in Ethiopia is inseparable from deep-seated poverty associated with recurrent civil wars, famines and massive population displacement, along with socio-economic crises. Economic recessions and extensive restructuring have created conditions in which families are finding it difficult to cope with childhood deprivations. Moreover, although the

post-1991 ethnic-based federal system seems to have limited the inter-regional mobility of people except for government-sponsored, drought- and development-induced relocations, it has heightened ethnic conflicts and encouraged mass rural to urban migration (Kiros and White, 2004). Evidently, there has been an erosion of the traditional forms of social security with which families formerly dealt with their economic and social problems. Following the withdrawal of the state from provision social services after structural adjustment programmes, the emergence of organised modern charitable organizations in welfare provision has fostered institutional sources of aid and support from whom 'to beg off' is becoming common. In urban areas today especially, begging is a livelihood strategy for many for whom there are inadequate livelihoods and welfare provisions.

Presentation and discussion of empirical material

Socio-economic profile of participant children

It is very difficult to give a statistical estimate of the number of children who beg in Addis Ababa. This is first because, although children may go into the streets to beg, they do so in combination with school and other activities, such as working as messenger boy or girl, as porters, selling chewing gum, soft papers, lottery tickets etc. Secondly, child beggars are highly mobile spatially and, as a result, are difficult to trace or secure information about. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA, 1994) has provided a base line study of the problem of begging in Addis Ababa, indicating that a significant proportion of those who earn their living by begging are disabled, widowed, abandoned children or the elderly. Another recent study, however, shows that the number of able-bodied, impoverished people who beg on the streets and in the mosque- and churchyards is increasing (Woubishet, 2003). Thirdly, some children in my study stated that they did not want to be associated with begging, especially among their school friends, in order to avoid the stigmatising label of *borko* (dirt, filth, helplessness), which in its turn leads them to conceal their status as beggars. A further problem is that begging is not a permanent predicament and—as I shall show later on—children go in and out of the activity for a number of reasons.

Most of the children who participated in this research are either first- or second-generation migrants. The background survey revealed that, of the total of 60 children, about 31 (53%) had been born outside Addis Ababa. Most children do not know their age exactly, but they ranged

approximately between 8 and 16 years old (median age=12). About a third of the informants were girls. This is slightly above the estimate given by other studies, which put the ratio of street boys to street girls in Addis Ababa as 4:1 (Aptekar and Heinoen, 2003). It is significant that, contrary to the popular belief that most children who beg on the streets in urban areas are unaccompanied or orphans due to HIV/AIDS, the overwhelming majority of the research participants (84%) were living at least with one parent and 67% with both parents.

Further examination of the data reveals that nearly half (46%) of the children sampled were living with step-parents, since their biological parents had died, were divorced or separated. The divorce rate among these children's parents appears to be high (34%). Most children reported that their step-parents, especially their step-fathers, were abusive. Another factor associated with begging is the disability status of the children, whether involving visual, mental or physical impairment. Even though only three of the children were found to have an outward physical disability, a considerable proportion of child beggars said they had been born to parents with visible disability problems (deformity, blindness, mentally retarded etc). As a result, they went begging with them during their early childhood, suggesting an intergenerational transmission of poverty, a concept to which I shall return later.

The religious background of the children was found to be relatively uniform. As opposed to other studies in which begging is associated with Quranic school pupils and training associated with Islam (Bass, 2004), all but three of the participants were followers of Orthodox Christianity. Another common feature of the children is that they have not become full-time street children in the sense of sleeping outside the home on the pavements or at street corners. With the exception of eight children (14%) who sleep on hotel verandas or street drop-in centres, the majority of the children (80%) beg on the streets either full-time or part-time and mostly return to their homes. The remaining 6% were staying in rented accommodation, with friends, in churchyards etc., depending on the degree of proximity, the economic and social circumstances of the house they were returning to, the availability of potential livelihood sources in the evenings etc. This finding supports the evidence from other studies that many street-based working children return home in the evening (Aptekar and Abebe, 2001). Nearly half the child beggars come from households with four to six members and still attend school, although ten (16%) dropped out in the years the research was carried out. Most children live in extremely poor housing and unsanitary conditions, with 90% residing in one-room

accommodation rented from private owners. In some cases, one room was shared between two families, suggesting that they constitute the core urban poor in Addis Ababa.

Begging as household livelihood strategy

Children in the context of poverty in Addis Ababa are engaged in a wide range of different economic activities in the urban informal sector. These include busking, hawking, shoe-shining, peddling, portaging, daily labour, working as *weyallas* (filling in taxis with passengers and collecting fares) etc. Begging is one of the marginal jobs in the hierarchy of 'street careers' (cf. Evans, 2006). Evidence from my field research suggests that poverty is a major trigger for children to come out on to the streets to work. Family disintegration, abuse and neglect by parents and the lack of social services are also noted as the main factors for children being forced into begging (Veale, 1993). Other disruptive reasons which children cite include the failure of rural livelihoods (displacement due to drought, famine and war), harmful traditional practices (e.g. early marriage), hostile step-parents, peer pressure, lack of opportunities for social mobility and uncaring environments at home.

Zemach is a fifteen-year-old boy whom I found begging at traffic lights in Addis Ababa. He was born in Gojjam in north-western Ethiopia to a visually impaired mother and a father who, since their first arrival in Addis five years ago, decided to return to his home village. When they came their plan was to obtain eye treatment for his mother, for whom Zemach was company. However, the hospital gave them an appointment a long time in the future, he recalled:

> We did not have enough money to buy food with or to spend on hotels. Then my mom decided to sit in the St George Church with the assistance of myself. I took her around. Later, the doctors in the hospital told us that they could not treat her illness, so she lost the motivation to return home. My father had visited us with four of my siblings […]. But they say that there is not enough harvest in the countryside either, so the last time we met was two and half years ago. In his last visit he left one of my younger sisters with us, who my mom now calls 'my eye' on the world.

After his mother re-married, Zemach, his younger sister and three of his step-siblings lived in a small plastic and tin-roofed shelter they rented in the northern part of Addis Ababa. He used to go to school every morning and beg in the busiest part of the city in the afternoon and the

evening. Returning home where he is not particularly welcome if he comes empty-handed, involves a bus trip and a treacherous two-kilometre walk through one of Addis Ababa's shanty towns. However, if he decides not to sleep at home, as he occasionally does, he sleeps on a hotel veranda by sharing what he has obtained from his day-long activities with his friends. Like Zemach, interviews with the children revealed that switching alternatively between home and streets is one of their survival strategies. They reported that despite their poverty, they do not consider themselves as having been abandoned by their families. Instead they think that their parents are so deprived that they have to do what they do as a contribution towards the survival of a household of which they form an active part. Their main justification for being involved in begging is dire poverty and the need to support their vulnerable household livelihoods. By begging and earning resources, they fulfil an economically valuable role in everyday life.

In addition to the material grounds for begging, some children alluded to the moral imperative of being dependent on their parents, and of not sharing their financial resources upon returning home in the evening.

> We do not like going back home without having some money to provide—it is shameful. For us, simply to sit and wait for our weak parent to feed us is [morally] unacceptable. Moreover, to ask our mothers to give us coins in the morning to go downtown by bus makes us uncomfortable. So we go out and find something to work at and earn money, including begging. (Tebeje and Demissie, boys, 13 years old)

However, unlike Tebeje and Demessie, some children do not beg full-time, a reflection of the fluidity of the activity:

> My brother and I, we don't beg every day. Our father is a metal-worker. He gets a good sum of money, but he spends it out with his friends. He comes home drunk, and sometimes he never comes at all. He does not give my mother money even to pay the house rent. Our mother has some casual work. She bakes *injera* for other people during feasts, weddings and holidays. When we see that she is stressed, we go out and do some business [i.e. beg]. She blesses us because we're doing this to help her and ourselves. (Wondessen, boy, 11 years)

The above examples illustrate how children's feelings of responsibility towards their family's stressful material situations force them to participate in income-generating activities. Children recognise that their contribution plays a pivotal role in sustaining their households' livelihoods which may serve the purpose of buying food, paying house rent or ensuring that there are sufficient resources to run household economies smoothly. Although some children like Wondossen beg on the street only sometimes, their *raison-d'étre* for begging also entails the moral question of their dependence on their mother, who struggles hard to make ends met for the family. His mother's relationship with him is one of praise and appreciation, which in its turn entails a sense of belongingness and solidarity at home. By contributing to their family's daily income, many children find that they are able to redefine and strengthen their position within their families. Sinidu, a girl 16 years old, noted: 'It makes me feel that I am valuable and important and that I can make a difference to alleviate the financial burden of my family'. Like Sinidu, interview with children revealed that they feel proud and worthy, and that participation in family livelihoods restores their sense of confidence and self-reliance.

Many children save up a good deal of the money they earn to give it back home but also spend it on the streets reasserting their personal freedom, autonomy and independence. During my field observations, I made a note of how children spent their daily income. This involves the consumption of candies and chewing gum, watching street-corner games, films, footballs, etc. Most children reported that they save from a third to a half of their income for a contribution to the family. Desta (boy, 13 years old) explained: 'When I have made up two birr before lunch, I am very happy because I have enough to take back home, and I have got the whole afternoon to get additional money that I can spend in whatever way it pleases me'. Unlike 'full-time street children' who tend to be detached from their families, children like Desta come to the city for the purpose of harnessing its income-generating possibilities and for the nurture of a home (cf. Hecht, 2000). However, children's work on streets also seems to involve a careful balance in terms of the time spent bringing home coveted life-sustaining necessities while at the same time ensuring the pleasures of being there, which, according to Desta, include socially meaningful relations of 'hanging out together, socialising and having fun'.

On the other hand, some children are simply dragged towards begging because of the influence of their friends, who bring new experiences and stories from the city to the neighbourhood where they live. Tesfa (a 12-year-old boy) explained how his 'episodic experience' in street-begging began four years ago:

> I first came to this place with my friend and met many of the children from my neighbourhood. I have no problems at home. Both my parents are healthy and working. After school, I tell my mother that I am playing football, but I hang out with my friends to make business here. I like to play with them; it's a lot more fun than home. When my sister told [my mother] that I am doing this [begging], she beat me a lot. Two days afterwards, she reported my misbehaviour to my teacher, who created an excuse to make me clean the school toilet. I still sneak out to the city in the evenings.…

Despite the usual belief of mainstream society, children who beg on streets are not necessarily malnourished or badly catered for regarding their social and psychological needs. Instead their social life is sustained by interpersonal relationships, mutual support, help and care, which enrich their experiences of childhood, despite their material deprivation. My observation in Addis Ababa confirms findings from other studies that children in street circumstances have their own complex networks, groups and hierarchies (Hecht, 2000; Beazley, 2003). During my successive periods of fieldwork, in various ways the children demonstrated, defined and redefined how those of them who 'befriended' me for the first time constituted the 'legitimate group' working with me. As a result, this group remained very much intact while it was with me, and other children who joined the study later were either prevented from participating freely in some of the activities or had to obtain specific permission to do so. In such contexts, the children might seem to be involved in conflicts over scarce resource and over my attention as their common friend. However, they were also observed to give each other information frequently about potential livelihood possibilities in as much as they competed to secure the best out of them. They cooperated and helped each other in saving and exchanging material and emotional resources, skills, supporting one another's families and defending their own group, all of which activities are based on friendship, personal proximity and group affinity. Their complex lives demonstrate that they have a considerable amount of personal and group-based agency through which they convert their impoverishment into viable livelihood strategies.

Children's perspectives and approaches of begging

Multiple approaches

The need to secure livelihoods is instrumental in shaping child beggars' work and everyday geographies. This is simply because the nature of begging is such that spatial mobility is

crucial. Geographically, the children usually move back and forth between the city centre, commercial districts and transportation hubs, where there are relatively large transient populations, depending upon the availability of the perceived livelihoods. However, the streets within the city are not the only places that the children visit frequently: they also tend to concentrate in the yards of churches and mosques, especially during weekends and at prayer times. As Gough and Franch (2005) point out, for them, these places are spaces where they make a living and build their material and symbolic culture, providing them with important social arenas for interactions with other children or their peers. The temporal activities of child beggars often begin in the morning, but peak during the evenings and on holidays. Many children (28%) in this study perform begging periodically, in connection with a particular religious ceremony. The remaining 72%, however, beg full-time to generate most of their daily income, or else combine it with other activities on the streets. During holidays, their mobility is greatly influenced by the transient nature of religious ceremonies, particularly in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in which they practice what might be called 'itinerant begging' with their friends, parents or other family members:

> On the 1st, 3rd, 16th and 21st of every month,[1] my father [who is blind] and I always go to Bata Mariam Church. I take him round the church compound, where he begs using his [pitiful] expressions and singing skills. My role then is to show him where there are potential almsgivers, and make sure that he is not cheated. (Teklu, 13 years old)

There are, however, often different constraints and regulatory regimes about the use of space for begging and the timing of those uses. For instance, itinerant begging in churches may be restricted to certain occasions on religious grounds. Fikre (girl, 15 years old) told me how she used to take her blind mother into a church compound every Sunday:

> We wake up at 6 o'clock in the morning. We get into the church before other beggars overcrowd the area. After we enter, I carefully walk my mother around so that we are not noticed. If the church guards see us, they will expel us. It is not allowed to beg while the church is still holding the ceremony for the mass. When it is nine o'clock, I leave her in the churchyard so that she can beg by herself for the rest of day. She always finds her own way back home during the evening.

[1] These are dates when the Orthodox Church commemorates the days of St. Mary.

Apart from spatial mobility, children's approaches in begging are to present stories that are dramatic, and in some cases, might not represent their current situations. These include exaggerated stories of neglect and abuse, and the absence of anyone to turn to at home, which are soulfully narrated as an integral part of their everyday survival strategies on the streets. By presenting stories which highlight their vulnerabilities and dependence, child beggars stand to elicit the sympathy of the public and perhaps action in making others improve their lives (Beazley, 2003). I noted that to appear sick, starved and defenceless are some of the skills embedded in the activity of begging. Such 'victimcy approach' (see Utas, 2005) becomes evident as children who at one time might be performing other activities on streets immediately become starved when they notice a potential alms-giver coming along. This victimcy speaks to the public's perceptions and views of the children as 'helpless' and 'destitute'. It also adds to the construction of the children as being highly vulnerable beings subject to aid interventions. Notwithstanding their deprivations, however, observation and in-depth interviews reveal that the children do not view their lives as bleak and negative as it appears. Indeed, as they demonstrated in their songs (below), in spite of their pessimism about their present situation, which appears 'unfortunate', they are happy amongst themselves, are optimistic about what tomorrow will bring them and hope that their 'destination will also be bright'.

While begging, some children directly ask for money, explaining why they use it to buy cigarettes, alcohol or *chat* – a mild stimulant with a narcotic effect – in the hope that the 'honesty approach' will gain them sympathy. One boy (16 years old) mentioned how he and his friends beg when they do not have enough resources for their *chat* ceremony:

> When the time for *duu'aa* [chewing] is due in the afternoon we approach [young] people whom we think understand our problems. We tell them that we need some cigarettes and the leaf to chew. Those people who have a sympathetic understanding will give us money, but others simply ignore us.

Children mostly beg for money, but they may be given help in kind, which includes clothing and stationary materials. People also give the children tools for work in order to encourage them take up a small-scale job rather than begging. In difficult circumstances and when they are hungry, they may rely on leftover food they collect from hotels, restaurants and cafeterias:

> We receive food from a wedding ceremony and/or *tezkar* [a feast prepared to remember the dead]. If we are hungry, we also go to restaurants to ask for *bule* [left-over food] to eat. Some people working in the restaurants give us food for free, but others ask for a cash payment. If we do not have money, we provide a service by emptying the waste products of the restaurants in order to get the food. In the worst times, we scavenge through garbage cans for food. (Tedla, boy, 14 years old)

Boys and girls in the focus-group discussions agreed that not all children have equal agency in begging. Some have the talent to ask people for help, with which new beggars want to associate in order to learn. They mentioned that group begging is not only a collective effort which requires the agency of the individual member, but an activity with a difficult ticket of entry. New beggars should patiently serve the older ones in order to learn the styles and routines of the activity. Unlike adolescents who beg independently, younger children often beg along with their parents:

> I was accompanying my mother when she went begging until when I was in Grade 2, and then I started to do it on my own. Now she works with my younger sister. I abandoned working with her because, like my friends, I want to earn money on my own. (Fekadu, boy, 13 years)

Fekadu and his friend Bedilu often beg together while they also perform occasional jobs like peddling and transporting items for people who need labour. On the streets, they share not only food and financial and emotional resources, but also successful approaches in begging, which seem to attract more attention, entice pity and entertain passers by. Some of these approaches may consist of a collective presentation of their plight in well-rehearsed begging songs. The following is an excerpt from the lyrics of the song that children wrote to convey their stories of 'being at home in the streets':[2]

> The street has become my home
> The wind and cold my relatives
> The rain is my dearest neighbour
> No blanket, no plastic, no bedsheets

[2] In Amharic the song is popularly known among street children as *Godana new bete*.

A paper is my mattress
Please people, look around you – and see
Give us what you have
The amount does not matter.

If my life wasn't unfortunate
I wouldn't have come forward to beg.
I wish you a long and healthy life
I know that my destiny will be bright
Wearing dirty clothes, eating whatever [we] find
Being happy amongst ourselves
This is how we fare our lives
Those boys and girls who live in villas
Come over here to see our plastic houses…

This excerpt mirrors a range of issues that depict the plight of the children, their living conditions associated with bad housing conditions, absence of household materials and lack of basic needs in life. It illustrates how children solicit the pity of potential almsgivers and thus encourage generosity. In the first section the children tell how the street is a place in which they 'play out' their childhoods, with all its constraints. Begging children compare 'home' and 'ideal childhood' with respect to what the street does not provide (cf. Beazley, 2000). In this comparison, home is constructed as a site for a 'proper childhood'—and as an antipode to the street—that ceases to be the centre of play and daily life. On the other hand, the street takes over the functions of an arena of exchange and social interaction. Moreover, the song contains moral imperatives and invites comparison of their lives with the lives of, for example, other children who live in well-established homes and families. Despite the increasing time spent outside home, many child beggars continue to view their lives from the viewpoint of their families. As noted already, most of them have their parents living and they return home in the evenings. Their narratives of being 'out of place' partly reflect the taken-for-granted idea of mainstream society about what children should do and what their relationship with families and communities ought to be.

Begging in public spaces in Addis Ababa seems to have a gender dimension. Unlike boys, girls seem to find it more shameful and so are inhibited from begging, particularly on the main

streets, except in the evening. During the day most girls combine begging with other activities like selling food items, chewing gum, soft and lottery papers, cigarettes etc. As Evans (2006) argue in her study of street children in Arusha, they do this in order to reduce the social stigma of their presence in 'wrong places' and engagement in 'wrong careers', since the domestic sphere or home is the 'right place' that the society expects them to occupy.

The livelihood strategy of Amina (a 16-year-old girl) who formerly begged—and still sometimes does when her business declines—is illustrative of the centrality of gender, both in the construction of begging vis-à-vis the public, in street children's economy as well as in their daily interactions. Amina sells tea, bread and biscuits in her 'mobile café', which consists of two thermoses and a food-carrying basket. Many children who participated in this study are her main customers. In wandering from one place to another, she is able to find customers and remain in frequent contact with, for example, other clients who are themselves spatially mobile. Mobility is also a crucial strategy that protects her business and items from being confiscated by the police on grounds of illegal activity, which might happen if she sat on a street corner all day in the city centre.

Girls also find that public tolerance of their street presence is limited and that life on the street may become increasingly dangerous for them. Melat, the girl whom I introduced in the beginning of this paper, told me that 'people get very angry when I beg from them. When I beg from mini-bus taxis, they dismissively tell me to "work instead of disrespecting my family."' To avoid public distrust, some girls perform what Woubishet (2003) calls 'passive begging' by simply sitting on street corners, as well as 'advocacy begging', in which they take their younger and 'dependent' siblings with them, thus suggesting that they are not the main beggars. Others develop 'geographies of resistance' by begging on less congested feeder roads instead of main avenues or at transport terminals. Their strategies include the appropriation of 'spaces of begging' between genders, often with the assistance of a male group leader.

Begging during the evening is an elusive way of combining the activity with transactional sex. On one occasion I encountered two girls approaching a car at a traffic light intersection. When a police officer saw them and began to chase them, they ran away to escape, but one of them screamed from a distance: 'We are just begging, we are not doing business' [i.e. prostitution]. Recent studies confirm that teenage girls in Addis Ababa are involved in commercial sex work in bars and red-light districts (Bethlehem, 2005; van Blerk, 2007). These girls, who reject the

prevalent gender and generational hierarchies, negotiate their multiple yet seemingly conflicting identities of being adolescent in their private lives and prostitutes in their working lives by changing their sites of work frequently and having conspicuous appearances and names (van Blerk, 2007).

Begging may be considered a cultural taboo among some working street children in Addis Ababa. Ethnic Guraghe children are often known for their industriousness and business orientation. Most children who work as shoe-shiners and hawkers on the streets and in the markets are children from this ethnic group. Guraghe children, even though they are on the street working at an early age and live in rented accommodation as migrant children with little adult supervision, are not delinquent or abusing drugs or receiving alms (Veale, 1993). None of the children in my sample were found to be from this ethnic group.

Children's perceptions and reactions towards begging

Children are not passive subjects of the negative reactions of the public towards their activity. Instead, they employ a range of coping strategies to negotiate and continually resist their marginal position as beggars. These strategies could be conceptualised as adaptive, resilience and defensive in kind. First, some children isolate themselves in response to perceived and real hostility by avoiding any direct face-to-face confrontation with people while begging. Instead they simply sit, individually or in groups, on street corners and write notes about their plight and the kind of support they are seeking from the public. Such *adaptive* practices can be accompanied by a change in physical appearance because of apathy and a lack of access to clean water, clothing and sanitation. Further survival strategies providing these children with protection from potential harassment are exhibiting bizarre behaviour and using slang. This is because reacting to what is considered 'normal' by mainstream society can be an adaptation to the vagaries of life on the street and the stigmatising effects of begging. Through their body language, action and speech, child beggars adopt defiant stances, these being essential components in the process of spatial and social withdrawal. In this way, they also develop *resilience* with which they counteract the negative perceptions of society or the dominant culture, which view them as social pariahs infesting public spaces (see Beazley, 2003).

Some children may completely deny their status as beggars and simply think of the activity they are doing as a 'pastime' job. For these children membership of the category of child

beggar is limited to a certain period of time. They see the activity as a temporary phase from which they will eventually 'move out', based on a number of social and economic factors, of which the most important are age, gender and social maturity:

> When I grew older, I felt that I'd better stay at home and do the housework. My father has asthma, and my mother can't see. I cook what they bring. In the morning, I go to the daily market to buy things to cook, wash dishes and fetch water. When I get back from school in the afternoon, I carry these things and go downtown to sell them. (Beletu, girl, 16 years old)

Another strategy is to consider begging as work in its own right, a view shared by the majority of the children I interviewed. According to this approach, children perceive begging as an activity which needs skill and the ability to do business. In their everyday language, the children do not use the term 'begging' to describe the activity they are engaged in, but instead refer to it as *shikella* or simply a business. The linguistic root of *shikella* can be traced to the Arabic *shighul*, which literally means 'work'. In Amharic, *shikella* is a collective term for a wide variety of different activities that young people carry out in the informal sector as sources of livelihood. It connotes a great deal of dynamism, agency and entrepreneurial skills, as well as the freedom to use the financial resources thus obtained. The euphemism used by child beggars in considering their activity as work illustrates how they seek to develop a sense of normality and comfort in what they do, as well as trying to reconstruct a positive self-identity that is free from stigma. In doing so, they also *defend* their activity as legitimate and productive that generates money based on effort. Indeed, most children in the focus-group discussions mentioned that they are not ashamed of begging; instead, what they are ashamed of is theft. Nevertheless, children are also dissatisfied with their social position as beggars and hence take initiatives to alter their situations. For instance, many older boys and girls wanted to be involved – and some of them actually participated – in other economic activities than begging. These children have taken novel steps in the direction of upward social mobility:

> I begged for many years. Then, one day my customer gave me 100 birr, which I used to buy this equipment for shining shoes. I also have materials which I am selling on the side. My sister and two of my brothers beg around the Stadium area. I keep an eye on my youngest sister, who sells tissues to people around here. (Shegaw, boy, 16 years old)

Shegaw's experience demonstrates that the involvement of children in begging gradually changes with age. For younger children, who are able to win the sympathy and compassion of alms-givers, begging can be a lucrative source of income. However, street youth find that their income-generating potential from begging is limited by their growing age and size, their role often being reduced to one of supervising and protecting younger children in a street group. The temporality of begging among children is also the outcome of their gradual transformation into socially mature individuals who are concerned with their emerging identities of 'the self' (Evans, 2006), which are shaped by the presence of 'significant others', including the general public, girl/boyfriends, and changes in self-perceptions associated with being part of a street sub-culture. This also demonstrates that children are engaged in begging due to compelling situations at a certain period and that the activity is transient in their complex livelihood trajectories on streets.

Conclusion and implications of the study

The empirical materials presented in this paper provide insights into a much neglected dimension of poor children's everyday livelihoods in cities and broaden our understanding of childhoods. They demonstrate how, for some children, begging is a way of life that they have followed since early childhood, while for others it merely is a temporary survival strategy. They also illustrate how some children view begging as a shameful activity that they would prefer to avoid, while others construct it positively as a central part of their livelihoods, depending on which they fulfil expectations and share responsibilities in the households of which they form an active part.

Poverty is the underlying reason that explains why children beg. The impact of poverty on these children's lives is not restricted to lack of access to food, shelter or other material resources, but entails multiple deprivations manifested in, among other things, social exclusion and sustained forms of structural inequality. Generational contracts between children and their families require the former to shoulder some of the responsibilities of meeting basic needs. Although begging enables children to secure a daily income, it restricts their opportunities for improving their future life chances. As some of the interviews demonstrate, there is an intergenerational transmission of the values of begging, which children acquire from going begging along with their parents, as well as from their poverty (cf. Kabeer, 2000). Children are forced to beg by poverty to reproduce the poverty of their families by not going to school or

acquiring the skills to help them find better paying jobs. For many of them, education and skill development remains a distant dream, thus keeping them in vicious circles of impoverishment. The impact of childhood deprivation resonates throughout life, with long-term consequences for health and capacity in adulthood (Boyden and Mann, 2005). What are the direct and indirect effects of parental poverty on the life chances of children? What are the pathways through which deprivations in childhood are translated into poverty in adulthood? These questions, neither of which I will dwell on here for reasons of space, obviously need further elucidation.

Begging as a way of life for children changes with time as they experience their environment along with their physical and social maturity. Children's participation (and success) in begging is contingent upon access or lack of access to work, age, gender and social maturity. Social maturity and the availability of alternative livelihoods are also crucial factors that shape children's gradual withdrawal from begging. Children in street circumstances are often involved in different income-generating strategies and, especially as they grow older, they find, in one informant's words, 'standing in front of people to beg very embarrassing.' Moreover, withdrawal from begging is explained by negative experiences and the fact that children who were seen as 'vulnerable' by the general public when young become associated with the culture of poverty, of not being willing to work, or of being 'lumpen', 'dangerous' and 'risky' as they come of age.

Child beggars perform a multitude of roles in different social contexts: families, peers, school, church, home, the workplace and interactions on the streets. Despite the popular wisdom of the mainstream society that these children are alienated subjects whose relationship with society is adversarial, they have not lost the usual reference of social life and their individual identity. The perceptions of the children themselves and the general public of the practice of begging differ, as do the ways in which they construct and negotiate their transient and fluid identities. The problematic construction and socio-spatial exclusion of children on the streets has been widely documented in research (Ennew, 2002; van Blerk, 2005; Evans, 2006). These studies attend to the children's apparent dislocation from places that are commonly regarded as normal for 'modern' (Western) middle-class children's lives. However, the stigmatising effect of presenting the lives of child beggars in banal binary terms of their being either simply victims or delinquents are enormous.

In Addis Ababa, although it is recognised that children use the streets as a zone of both work and play, the emphasis is on their negative connotations: the streets are primarily viewed as spaces where crime, prostitution, gambling and drug abuse thrive unhindered, thus exposing children to the loss of their childhood innocence (Nieuwenhuys, 2003). As a result, children's location and protection inside the home, rather than their being outside on the streets, is considered ideal and 'good'. Moreover, I argue, the spatial disciplining of children's use of the streets is constituted in the works of different actors who share a common discourse or ideology of the 'child-free street'. First, there is what is locally known as the 'investment community', for whom the 'regulation' of non-tax-paying informal street vendors, including children, who compete with well-established, formal businesses; are priority concerns. Secondly, there are middle- and upper-class families whose views of childhood converge with western ideals of domesticity. Thirdly, one finds numerous NGOs (some of which are driven by the protestant ethic of work rather than begging) advocating the view of institution- and/or home-based childhood, especially for child beggars. Finally, the state reserves the city space for business, administrative and diplomatic purposes.[3] By engaging in activities which are invariably considered unlawful and morally inappropriate, child beggars contradict normative assumptions of modern childhood as a precious, playful, work-free and care-receiving phase of the life course.

The practice of begging will not readily go away in the near future, but it will eventually recruit new, younger beggars, while releasing older and more capable ones into other forms of economic activities. A crucial aspect to consider when planning interventions is the duration of children's involvement in the activity. For those with many years of experience, begging can be a street occupation with which they are so familiar that they might find it difficult to revert back easily to the strict disciplinary regimes of institutions. When asked, children who beg on the streets have a number of clear priorities in trying to overcome the problems they face on a daily basis, as well as long-term developmental constraints. It is essential to understand the specific context within which children's own experiences of begging is embedded. Preventive and rehabilitation programmes need to define the children's focus by responding to their shifting needs, skills and social experiences in a sustainable manner.

[3] Addis Ababa is the headquarter for many international organizations including the African Union (AU), the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

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APPENDICES

1. Semi-structured guide for individual and in-depth interviews
2. Themes for in depth/focus groups discussions (community members and stakeholders)
3. Survey guide for children in the context of begging (Addis Ababa)

Semi-structured guide for individual and in-depth interviews[1]

- Age?
- Where do you live?
- With whom?
- Size, gender and age composition of household?
- Head of family?
- Recent births and deaths? Orphans if any?
- Career's background (literacy, language, religion, resource to get on)
- Tell me about the nature of work you do? About the hours, place, income, diversity of jobs you perform?
- What do you do in a day?
- Where do you work? When? With whom?
- What is difficult? What is easy?
- Do you do seasonal works? When do you do what?
- Are there differences in work in different seasons? What work do you do? With whom?
- When do you play? What and with whom do you play?
- Do you attend school? Which grade?
- What type of school do you go to? How often? Length of time in school?
- Who pays your school fees? Who buys stationary materials etc?
- What do you like/dislike about school?
- What are your likes and dislikes about the work you do?
- What other activities are you engaged in to get money?
- What are the main problems in your life?
- Is what you earn enough? Is it consistent (i.e. increasing or decreasing)? If so, why?
- How do you handle your financial problems? What are your needs, problems and priorities in life etc.? How much do you earn per day?
- Have you experienced any recent illness? Where do you go when you're sick? Who pays for your health care? Have you been vaccinated etc.?
- Could you describe the economic activities of all household members? What are their sources of income?

[1] Some of the questions are applicable or not applicable according to the conditions of the participants (e.g. orphans).

- Do you have support from external organisations? Do you have government support? If so, what types?
- Who is the closest person in your family?
- Do you have support from community members? What kind of support?
- What do you think about your kin? Do you like them? Why?
- Do you have any links with the authorities? NGOs?
- Economic changes and events (natural disaster, income fluctuation of families, victim of crime, illness)
- Do you/your family own land? House? Other assets?
- Tell me about your childhood before your parents died? During the sickness of your parent? Who took care of your father/mother during sickness?
- What is it like to be an orphan?
- Could you tell me about the differences in your life before and after the death of your parent/s? What has changed for since the death of your parent (s)? Why?
- Tell me about your childhood.
- How is it different to live with a parent and with a relative?
- Children's perspectives of well-being (things that make a child happy or unhappy, likes and dislikes about their immediate environment).
- How do you explain your life?
- How do you describe your childhood?
- What is a good childhood according to your perception?
- Where have you been outside this neighborhood? Why? For how long? With whom?

Themes for in depth/focus groups discussions (community members and stakeholders)

- Assessments of access to key services: education, health, sanitation, housing, etc.
- Work patterns and social relationships of orphans
- How is childhood (changing) with time?
- Economic indicators such as household assets
- Notions of child/childhood, orphan/orphanhood
- HIV/AIDS, AIDS orphanhood
- Parenting, meeting needs for children
- Caring for orphans, role of traditional social support system
- What are the main problems facing orphans? Role of families and communities
- Childhood poverty
- Stigma/discrimination
- Capacity of kin, caring for orphans
- What are the determinants of/factors in caring for orphans?
- Who among relatives usually help orphans? In what ways do they help them? Possible differences between natal and foster parents? Possible differences in treatment of birth and adopted children?
- What are the perceptions of caring families towards adopted orphans? What are the perceptions of adopted children towards the adoptee family?
- What are the main problems involved in caring for orphans? What influence does it have over the adopting family?
- What things do you think make caring better?
- Discussions of examples of cases of orphan-headed families/girl-headed families, female-headed households/grandparent-headed households
- Social capital (belonging to groups, ‘connectedness’ with peers, time spent playing with friends? Sources of support? What are your perceptions of wealth? Feeling part of the community? ‘Quality’ of relationship with care-giving families?)

Survey guide for children in the context of begging (Addis Ababa)

- Age?
- Sex?
- Parental status?
- Where do you live?
- Where do you often sleep?
- With whom?
- Number of siblings?
- Where do you work?
- Schooling?
- How do you spend your income?
- How often do you come to this place?
- With whom do you spend the day?
- When did you start begging?
- How did you start begging?
- What do you parent/s do for a living?
- About parental disability?
- About child disability?
- Any support from organisations?
- Do you go to school?
- Housing conditions?